

PREFACE

The continental Permian of central and western Europe rests either between the marine Zechstein and the Carboniferous, as for instance in northern Germany, or between the latter and the Bunter, as for instance in parts of France, the area of the Alps, and southern Germany. In the first case, the Permian comprises the Rotliegend, which is subdivided into Lower and Upper Rotliegend or Autunian and Saxonian. The youngest depositions of Rotliegend or Saxonian are considered as representations of marine Zechstein=Thuringian if they are overlain by Bunter.

In the area of the Alps, the sequence of the continental Permian is subdivided, from bottom to top, into the Eo-Permien, Neo-Permien inferieur and Neo-Permien superieur without postulating a correlation to the Rotliegend or Autunian and Saxonian.

These deposits, products of the Variscan folded mountains and partly of Rotliegend volcanism, have always caused scientific investigations as the palaeogeographic and climatic situation of the Rotliegend may be derived from their manifold composition etc. Owing to discoveries of natural gas trapped in these sediments, the scientific interest has increased since the war. In the last years, detailed investigations and results of many exploration bores have contributed further knowledge of this period of the earth's history. However, at the moment economic aspects prevent the publication of many of the drilling results; furthermore, part of the investigations have not yet been concluded. Nevertheless, it seemed justifiable to give a tentative summary of the present day knowledge and its scientific consequences—which is the purpose of this book.

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