

Book Review

The Geology of Central Europe, by Tom McCann (ed), The Geological Society London, 2008, vol. 1: Precambrian and Palaeozoic; ISBN: 978-1-86239-245-8 (hardback), 978-1-86239-246-5 (paperback), vol. 2: Mesozoic and Cenozoic; ISBN: 978-1-86239-264-9 (hardback), 978-1-86239-265-6 (paperback)

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Two hefty volumes make one of the most important synthetic treatises on the geology of Central Europe. Roots of this edition go back to the early 1990s, when an idea for the international and multidisciplinary project across the European lithosphere, called Europrobe, was conceived as a follow up of the European Geotravers, the program carried out under the auspices of the International Lithosphere Program (ILP). Europrobe was accepted by the ESF in 1992, and turned out to be a major venture, which successfully brought geologists and geophysicists over many countries, particularly from these of previously different economic and political systems of the Western and the Eastern Europe.

The geophysical and geological definition of Central Europe has a rather conceptual meaning. In the books under review, depending on the geological event under review, a reader is acquainted with geology of different regions, the core area being situated between Belgium to the west, Poland to the east, Germany to the north, and Switzerland to the south. In some cases, such as with the Caledonian orogeny or Silurian period, the volume on the geology of the Baltic countries covers the British Isles and Ireland as well.

The volumes are arranged in a stratigraphic order. Volume 1 comprises Precambrian and Palaeozoic, while Volume 2 includes Mesozoic and Cenozoic. The first-order tectonic events (Cadomian,

Caledonian, Variscan, Alpine) and issues related to fossil fuels, ore and industrial minerals, are treated in separate chapters. Individually discussed is the subject of the Palaeozoic magmatism (by Martin J. Timmerman).

Altogether, both volumes contain an enormous compendium of knowledge, being an up-to-date, unprecedented compilation of so-far published works on the regional geology of Central Europe. Although the books provide us with the results already published, many of them were supplemented with newer data, reinterpreted and envisaged in a new graphic form. The chapters are very professional. The figures are black-and-white or in shades with two color geologic maps of Bohemian Massif, and are legible and informative, although some editorial omissions and errors were unavoidable given the large amount of data, figures and references. An example is Figure 5.18, where a better resolution and more careful editorial work might be expected. Volume 2 contains a disc with a map of the natural resources of the Central Europe. The greatest words of praise should be addressed to Dr. Tom McCann for his great editorial work. In fact, this synthesis includes achievements of many hundreds, if not thousands, of individual geologists working over last century or so. Additionally, the opening chapter by Tom McCann is an excellently written treatment, embracing both a history of geological research in Europe, and a general overview of its geologic structure. I read it with the greatest interest and satisfaction.

Authorship of the volumes is really international, involving over 200 authors from almost all European countries. However, the content of the volume is lacking in at least one separate chapter, devoted to the

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results of seismic projects performed because of the Europrobe program. Reviewing the authors list, I noticed with regret the absence of deceased Professor Jean-Louis Mansy of the University of Lille-1, France. Fortunately, his name is mentioned at the footnote of the coauthored chapter “Variscan Tectonics?”, so I would like only to remind the reader of his great contribution to the Europrobe program, both in scientific and social dimensions.

“Geology of Central Europe” will be the most valuable reference for geologists, researchers in

different fields of Earth Sciences, and postgraduate students in geosciences.

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