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Developments in Alpine Geodynamics

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The Fourth Workshop on Alpine Geological Studies was held in Tübingen during September 1999. Tübingen is a small, old town dominated by the university (some say Tübingen *is* a university) and its students. Its ancient core is characterized by the Gothic cathedral, the Renaissance town hall, and the typical timber-framed houses, some going back to the Middle Ages. The university was founded in 1477 by Eberhard im Barte (Eberhard the Bearded), whose guiding principle was *attempto*, I dare, an appropriate motto for starting a place of independent learning and research. Since then, the University of Tübingen has had quite an illustrious history, with many famous people, such as Kepler, Melanchthon, Uhland and Hölderlin, being one-time students.

The Fourth Workshop on Alpine Geological Studies followed the meetings in Grenoble (1992), Basel (1995) and Biella-Oropa (1997), which made this workshop an established event among geoscientists working in the Alps. Several attempts have been made in the past to shape the general structure of the meetings. The first meeting in Grenoble was conventional in style and focused on the Western and Central Alps. The second meeting in Basel introduced a completely different approach, with platform discussions on specific topics encouraging lively debate. The Biella-Oropa meeting tried to give to a great number of geoscientists the possibility of reporting their new results, and thus enabled a broad range of topics, both field- and process-oriented, to be presented.

In Tübingen, an attempt was made to follow a middle way between a conventional meeting and a discussion meeting focused on a limited number of hot topics. The final result was a mixture of both thematic and regional topics. There were thematic sessions with a conventional presentation schedule, but with one important difference: discussion time was not scheduled at the end of every talk, but sessions were discussed as an entity with ample time at the end of each session. Another unconventional feature of the meeting was that block presentations, in which a team could present its results in 45 min, were encouraged. The internal structure of the block presentations was entirely up to the team. For the discussions, colleagues were asked in advance to chair a certain session and to prepare for this session, with the aim of provoking stimulating questions. This approach did indeed produce the desired lively discussions.

The Proceedings Volume “Developments in Alpine Geodynamics” cannot be a true image of the full range of presentations at the meeting, but it does give some insight into current topics of Alpine research. A surprisingly high number of submitted papers forced us to perform a strict selection, and we feel honestly sad that not all the manuscripts could be included in this volume. Seventeen papers, out of the 26 submitted, are presented herein. We thank the large number of reviewers for the excellent job they did. We also thank both authors and reviewers for making it possible to stick to the planned time schedule. As a result, the complete package of reviewed and revised manuscripts selected for the “Alpine Workshop Volume” could be submitted to the editor-in-chief in October 2000.

Reviewers for this special volume were Philip Allen, Michel Ballèvre, Jean-Pierre Berger, Daniel Bernoulli, Riccardo Bersezio, Carsten Bükler, Martin Burkhard, Giorgio Dal Piaz, Kurt Decker, Gerhard Eisbacher, Fritz Finger, Klaus Fischer, László Fodor, Wolfgang Franke, Reinhard Gaupp, Andreas Henk,

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