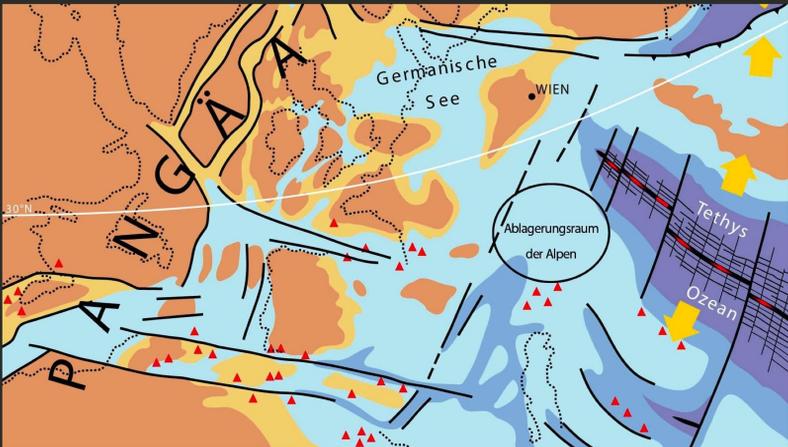


Travelling through Time



Traces leading back in time are fascinating and attract many people. In the Carnic Alps the rock record dates back almost 500 million years. At that time the predecessors of the Alps were located on the southern hemisphere in an approximate position of present day South Africa.

Since that time they made a real odyssey around half of the globe. They travelled from high latitudes during the Ordovician through moderate climatic conditions into tropical latitudes in the Devonian. Reefal and lagoonal deposits at Kellerwand cliff, Roßkofel, Gamskofel, Polinik, Seewarte and other mountains can document this interval of time.

At the end of the Paleozoic Era, the Permian Period, a dry and arid climate prevailed and red rocks were deposited reflecting desert conditions north of the Gail Valley. South of it, however, fossiliferous limestones, marls and mudstones were deposited indicating a shallow sea which transgressed from southeastern Europe. The Reppwand and Trogkofel cliffs are witnesses of this time.

During the following Triassic Period the continental plates including the forerunners of the Alps crossed the equator to move continuously to their present position. Some 20 million years ago the Alps started their uplift which has continued until today. During the ice age, some 1.8 million years ago, glaciers were responsible for scouring the valleys while during interglacial periods thick gravel deposits were carried from mountainous regions into foreland depressions and valleys. Finally, after the climax of the last ice age between 22.000 and 18.000 years ago vegetation started upon the collapse of up to 1000 m thick ice streams. Renewed afforestation began between 14.000 and 13.000 years ago and finally – man invaded the region of the Geopark.