

Contents

Introduction	xi
Nicolas BELLAHSEN and Claudio L. ROSENBERG	
Chapter 1. Paleozoic Evolution and Variscan Inheritance in the Alps	1
Jean-Baptiste JACOB, Stéphane GUILLOT, Denis THIÉBLEMONT, Jonas VANARDOIS, Pierre TRAP, Michel FAURE and Didier MARQUER	
1.1. Introduction.	2
1.2. The Paleozoic setting in Europe.	3
1.2.1. General setting: a crustal basement structured by Paleozoic orogenies	3
1.2.2. Pre-Variscan history of the European basement	5
1.2.3. The Variscan orogeny in Europe	6
1.3. The basement outcrops in the Alps	10
1.4. Paleozoic evolution in the Alpine basement.	13
1.4.1. Late Proterozoic evolution: an active margin setting along northern Gondwana.	13
1.4.2. Cambrian–Ordovician extension and opening of eastern Rheic Ocean.	14
1.4.3. Ordovician to Silurian crustal extension	18
1.4.4. Devonian–Carboniferous convergence and Variscan collision	20
1.4.5. Crustal extension and post-orogenic collapse	23

1.5. Discussion	25
1.5.1. Place of the Alpine domain in the Variscan puzzle	25
1.5.2. Pre-Variscan position of the Alpine basement units.	28
1.5.3. Significance of Variscan high-pressure metamorphism in the Alps	29
1.6. Conclusion	31
1.7. Acknowledgments.	32
1.8. References	32

Chapter 2. Paleogeography and Architecture of the Alpine Tethys Margins 45

Yves LAGABRIELLE

2.1. Introduction: conjugate passive margins.	45
2.2. The contours and the internal division of the Adria plate	48
2.2.1. Situation in the Triassic (250–200 Ma)	48
2.2.2. Opening of the Piemont-Liguria Ocean (200–145 Ma).	51
2.2.3. Fragmentation of the Adria plate	54
2.3. The Alpine passive paleomargin of Europe	54
2.3.1. General information	54
2.3.2. The Delphino-Helvetic domain: the external (or proximal) margin	58
2.3.3. The Briançonnais domain: the internal margin.	67
2.3.4. The internal crystalline massifs and their detached covers (Briançonnais domain in the broad sense).	79
2.3.5. The Piedmont zone: from the continental margin to the ocean	85
2.3.6. The Briançonnais and pre-Piedmont of the Chablais-Romande Prealps and of the Valais.	89
2.3.7. The Valais domain	94
2.3.8. The Maritime and Ligurian Alps	101
2.4. The Alpine passive paleo-margin of the Adria plate.	102
2.4.1. Introduction	102
2.4.2. The Central Alps	104
2.4.3. The Eastern Alps	108
2.4.4. The Southern Alps	115
2.5. Architecture of the Alpine paleomargins: from the model of tilted blocks to the concept of crustal hyper-thinning.	121
2.6. By way of conclusion, the contours of the Piedmont-Ligurian oceanic paleo-domain: how many passive continental margins have been inverted in the Alpine belt?	134

2.7. Acknowledgments	137
2.8. References	138

**Chapter 3. One View on the Petrology and Geochemistry
of the Mantle and Oceanic Crustal Remnants in the Alps,
Reconciling Rifts and Ultra-slow Seafloor Spreading 157**

Othmar MÜNTENER and Anders MCCARTHY

3.1. Introduction.	157
3.2. Geological constraints on the Alpine Tethys seafloor	158
3.3. Alpine-Apennine peridotites: fingerprints of (ancient) melting and syn-rift re-fertilization.	161
3.3.1. Three main groups of peridotites	161
3.3.2. Bulk rock chemistry: fertile versus re-fertilized	163
3.3.3. Mineral chemistry: inherited versus re-fertilized	165
3.4. Gabbroic rocks: small volumes of crystallization – differentiation, mostly in the mantle	171
3.5. Basalts: records of low-degree melting of garnet-bearing sources.	175
3.6. Timing of magmatism of Alpine-Apennine ophiolites: a short-lived event	181
3.7. A brief overview of isotopic (dis)equilibrium between magmatic and mantle rocks	186
3.8. Conclusion and outlook.	189
3.9. Acknowledgments.	191
3.10. References.	192

**Chapter 4. Oceanic Subduction in the Alps: Lessons
from the Rock Record 205**

Philippe AGARD

4.1. Introduction: how important is “oceanic” subduction in the Alps?	205
4.2. Petrology and geodynamics	206
4.2.1. Remnants of subducted oceanic lithosphere	207
4.2.2. Geodynamic setting and boundary conditions for oceanic subduction	210
4.2.3. Material types: ultramafic, mafic and sedimentary	211
4.3. Subducted oceanic fragments scattered throughout the Alps.	214
4.3.1. Metasedimentary-dominated (S) units from the Western Alps	214
4.3.2. Mafic/ultramafic dominated (MUM units from the Western Alps).	215

4.3.3. Subducted fragments from the Central and Eastern Alps.	218
4.3.4. Comparing restorations at ~60 Ma	219
4.4. Discussion: subduction dynamics through space and time	223
4.4.1. Contrasting recovery through space and time	223
4.4.2. Four distinct sectors: paleogeographic contrasts in subduction dynamics	225
4.4.3. A fragmentary yet faithful (rock) record of subduction.	228
4.4.4. What the Alpine example typifies	230
4.5. Conclusion	232
4.6. Acknowledgments.	233
4.7. References	234

**Chapter 5. Continental Subduction in the Alps: From Field
Data to Kinematic Models 255**
Paola MANZOTTI and Michel BALLÈVRE

5.1. Historical background and main questions	255
5.2. A reference P-T space.	258
5.3. A reference map and cross-section of the Alps.	260
5.3.1. Large-scale overview of the Alpine belt	260
5.3.2. Large-scale structure of the Western Alps	263
5.4. Subduction of the Mesozoic cover	266
5.4.1. Petrological evidence for subduction metamorphism in the Mesozoic covers.	266
5.4.2. Structural considerations.	267
5.5. Subduction of the Paleozoic basement.	268
5.5.1. The pre-Alpine crust of the Adriatic plate	269
5.5.2. The pre-Alpine crust of the Briançonnais domain	277
5.5.3. Tectonic implications for building the Alpine stack.	277
5.6. Deformation history of the subducted crust in the Alps.	280
5.6.1. Evidence for heterogeneous deformation during subduction	280
5.6.2. Rheological behavior of the subducted continental crust.	285
5.7. Metamorphic history of the subducted crust: P-T paths and timing.	290
5.7.1. Incompleteness of the rock record	290
5.7.2. Types of P-T paths of the subducted crust in the Alps	292
5.7.3. Metamorphic gradient at the scale of the Alpine belt	296
5.7.4. Timing of the continental subduction in the Alps	300
5.7.5. The exhumation record in syn- to post-orogenic sediments	303
5.8. A dynamic view of continental subduction in the Western Alps.	306
5.8.1. Kinematics of the subduction and collision.	306
5.8.2. Exhumation mechanisms of UHP-HP rocks	310

5.9. Prospects for the future	312
5.10. Acknowledgments	313
5.11. References.	313
List of Authors	341
Index	343
Summaries of other volumes	345