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*Mesozoic brachiopods of the Hallstatt-Dachstein-Salzkammergut UNESCO
World Heritage Site:
History of Research*

A series of famous personalities in geology took part in the palaeontological research of the Hallstatt-Dachstein area already in the second half of the 19th century and left essential knowledge of the local palaeontology and stratigraphy. A series of localities have become classical since. From among those scientists at least von HAUER, E. SUESS, OPPEL, MOJSISOVICS and later SPENGLER should be mentioned. Rich content of the fossil fauna at some localities of those times is one of the reasons why some local names have been used since for the designation of types of limestones or beds. Except for stratigraphically most important animal group of ammonites, another group - the brachiopods - play a significant role in the fossil assemblages as they are often the commonest fossils to be found at the Triassic and Jurassic localities of the area. At present, Middle Triassic Schreyeralmkalk, Upper Triassic Hallstätterkalk, Lower Jurassic (Liassic) Hierlatzkalk and Middle Jurassic Klauskalk are terms used all over the world in the scientific literature. The same is valid in the case of the Upper Jurassic Plassenkalk and Cretaceous Gosau Group, where the brachiopods are rather scarce, however. Brachiopods most probably were the commonest bottom dwellers in the past seas and their study helps in getting better notion of the bottom life of the time. First note on „Hierlatz“ brachiopods was published already by E. SUESS in 1852. Shortly, more detailed studies or monographs followed. Paper on the Hallstätterkalk brachiopods by E. SUESS appeared in 1855, on brachiopods of the Hierlatzkalk in 1861 and of the Klauskalk in 1863, both by OPPEL. Gosau brachiopods were made known by E. SUESS in 1864, Hierlatz brachiopods monographed by GEYER some years later (1889). Brachiopods of the Schreyeralmkalk and Hallstätterkalk were studied in detail by BITTNER in his large monograph on Alpine Triassic brachiopods issued in 1890. It appeared during all these studies that many brachiopods were found for the first time, and thus a series of the new brachiopod species could be established. Since this classical period of the brachiopod research in the Hallstatt-Dachstein area only rare short notes or faunal lists have been published on brachiopods. In the last years a revisional study was started, to bring some newer data on the classical locality of Hierlatz, and on the Triassic and Liassic brachiopod fauna of the Hallstatt area.

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