

PERMIAN PALAEOGEOGRAPHY OF THE TETHYAN REALM

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The distribution of key species of Permian foraminifers has been reported on a new plate tectonic model of the Tethyan realm for the Late Paleozoic. To the rather uniform distribution of Early Permian foraminifers corresponds a simple plate tectonic model where a single PalaeoTethys ocean occupies the whole Tethyan realm. This ocean is subducting northward under Eurasia after the Carboniferous accretion of the Variscan terranes. This scheme changed into a rather complicated distribution of micro-continents derived from both sides of the PalaeoTethys ocean during the Middle to Late Permian times. The drifting of the Cimmerian blocks off the coast of Gondwana opened the NeoTethys ocean and the East-Mediterranean basin in Late Permian times within the southern passive margin of PalaeoTethys. Simultaneously back-arc oceans opened within the northern Palaeotethys active margin. The distribution of Late Permian foraminifers is largely affected by this changing palaeogeography and endemic species developed. Generally speaking the distribution of Permian foraminifers is also influenced by paleolatitudes. The non uniform distribution of Permian foraminifers is questioning the validity of certain species as good biostratigraphic markers.