Geology of the western Swiss Alps, a guide-book

Stampfli G.M.

This guide book presents 6 field trips divided in two sections corresponding to the Alpine Externides and Internides, of the western Swiss Alps. A good share of basement geology is included in the guide, and two field trips (Ft1 and Ft5) are mainly devoted to Variscan and pre-Variscan rocks outcrops. Other field trips lead the geologist up to exceptional places like Zermatt, presenting the main key areas of geological and geodynamic interest along a complete cross-section of the western Swiss Alps.

We felt that it was also necessary to present in such a document the latest ideas on Alpine and pre-Alpine geology of the western Tethys realm. Parts of recent publications were used for that matter, they were updated, and put in a general introduction with numerous figures, mainly devoted to the geodynamics of this area in space and time. A special emphasis is put on the reconstruction of the Alpine Tethys paleo-margins.

Coloured Alpine cross-section and block diagram, and excerpts of the new 100'000 structural map of Western Switzerland have been put in annex, in a pouch on the back-cover. Similar excerpts of the topographic map of Switzerland, on which stops are located, accompany each field trip.
The Swiss Alps are often characterized as the most spectacular part of the Alps. It's almost needless to say that the Alps are what Switzerland is famous for. They cover about 60% of the country. The Swiss Alps attract lots of tourists. Mountaineers climb the Swiss peaks since the early 19th century, and they still do. Additionally, Switzerland has a relatively high population density, and the Swiss Alps are a very popular holiday destination. This results in an excellent network of (cogwheel) trains, funiculars, cable cars, post cars and boats. Like in other parts of Western Europe, larger wild animals have been almost or completely extinct in Switzerland. However, wildlife organizations managed to re-introduce animals such as the ibex, the fox, the lynx and the wolf. Wolves.