

Journal of Sedimentary Research

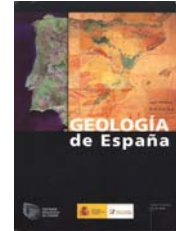
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Geología de España, edited by Juan Antonio Vera, 2004. Sociedad Geológica de España (SGE) / Instituto Geológico y Minero de España (IGME), Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad de Salamanca, Plaza de la Merced s/n, E-37008 Salamanca, Spain. Soft cover, 884 pp. Price EUR 50.00. ISBN 84-7840-546-1.



The book on *Geología de España* was presented in July 2004 during the Congreso Geológico de España organized by the Universidad de Zaragoza. It has its origin in 2002, when the SGE-IGME link commission decided to publish a new and updated book on the geology of Spain, as had earlier be done in 1986 by the IGME when honoring J.M. Ríos.

It was decided to produce a book that should be authored by specialists in each of the main geological units of the Spanish territory, with the objective to provide a new state-of-the-art of the research into the geology of Spain. Some controversial interpretations providing the readers with a variety of arguments, and with the most significant references to support the different points of view, are included for the purpose.

The principal editor, Prof. J.A. Vera, was assisted by an Editorial Board composed of a relatively small number (14) of co-ordinators in charge of the main geological units. Each coordinator was responsible for a team of specialists working on these units. This new approach results in a division of the Spanish territory into large geological units, reflected in chapters about the Iberian Massif (114 authors), Pyrenees (59 authors), Betics and Balearic Ranges (57 authors), Iberian and Catalan Coastal Ranges (48 authors), Cenozoic Basins (40 authors), Alpine structure of the Iberian foreland (25 authors), and Canary Islands and Neogene Peninsular volcanism (18 authors). More than 350 authors from Spanish universities and research centres contributed, while authors from countries such as Argentina, Chile, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom and USA were also involved.

The geological aspects of the continental margins surrounding the Iberian Peninsula are outside the scope of this book. Geomorphology and economic-geological aspects are not covered either, because they are treated in detail in other monographs. The Quaternary sediments and rocks are only dealt with when they infill the Cenozoic basins but not with their relation to the development of the present topography.

In addition to the vast amount of printed information (an introduction, 682 pages of text with the chapters mentioned above, including 459 figures and tables of which some 20% in colour, 150 pages of references, an index of 27 pages, a glossary of 32 pages, and 3 pages of appendices), the book also contains a CD with complementary information. This includes all the figures (the majority in colour), tables and graphics of the book in digital version, a data base of Spanish geology with more than 20,000 bibliographic references of publications from the last 25 years, a list of the lithostratigraphic units that characterize the main geologic units, figures and tables that are not included in the text, and the IGME Web page providing a list of all the published geologic and thematic maps. The book also includes a structural and a geological map of the Iberian Peninsula and surrounding areas at a 1:2,000,000 scale, both on the CD and in normal print.

In 2002, a comparable book (“The Geology of Spain,” edited by Wes Gibbons and Teresa Moreno) was published by the Geological Society of London. This 2002 book reflects the classical approach of Spanish geology, dealing with the successive geological periods in a systematic way. In my opinion, the result is a correct but somewhat old-style book. I prefer the 2004 book with its new approach and its more modern viewpoints regarding the problems of Spain’s geology.

Geología de España is written in a concise, elegant and readable Spanish. It uses geological terms that facilitate the reading and understanding of the text that is accompanied by a large number of excellent graphics and figures. The “paperback” edition is not a paperback in a strict sense, considering its A4 size (29.5 x 21 x 4 cm) and weight (2.8 kg). For this reason, it is not easy to take the book into the field, but this disadvantage is certainly compensated by its contents.

This is a comprehensive book but I found it a good read and I believe it will prove useful not only for students and professional geologists, but also for other persons interested in the earth sciences. The book offers, at a reasonable price, a large amount of revised and updated information on the fascinating and complex geology of Spain.

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