

VIERSEN, A.P. VAN & PRESCHER, H., 2011. *Devonian trilobites from Belgium*. Abstracts, 2. Trilobiten-Tagung, Frankfurt am Main.

Trilobites have long been known to occur in Belgium in strata of Ordovician, Devonian and Carboniferous age. Devonian rocks are the most widespread of Palaeozoic outcrops there, yet the trilobites that they yield are the least known by far. Records (usually lists of species without illustrations or type numbers) frequented the old literature until the late 1940s, when trilobite research in Belgium came to a standstill. At that time, the state of knowledge was comparable to that of the late 19th century Germany. In 2003, Devonian trilobite research was resumed, so that it seems possible to provide a preliminary update at present.

During the Devonian, Belgium was part of the outer shelf of Laurussia, to which southern England, central Germany, southern Poland and Moravia also belong. Early Devonian sedimentation here is characterised chiefly by shaly and sandy clastic sequences, the deposition of which was controlled by detritic influx from the northern lying Old Red Continent.

It has been assumed that the trilobite fauna associated with this environment was poorly diversified, being dominated by homalonotids and acastids that favoured nearshore waters. The discovery of phacopids, lichids, proetids and scutelluids in Pragian strata of SE Belgium, however, predates considerably the putative latest Emsian introduction of these families in the region.

Early Middle Devonian trilobite assemblages have proved to be surprisingly rich, demonstrating comparatively high alpha diversity locally in the shales and limestones of the Jemelle and Hanonet formations. To date, Givetian to Famennian trilobites remain mostly unexplored.