

# Paratethys 1



During the early Tertiary about 40 million years ago, large parts of the Alps already protruded from the sea, whereas the Carpathians were still submerged. In a large bend, the Paratethys, or Molasse Sea, stretched from the mouth of the Rhône over Lake Geneva to the Alpine foreland in Bavaria and Austria in the east. There were extensive connections between the Paratethys and the Mediterranean Sea.

# Paratethys 2



States, Museum of Lower Austria

Towards the end of the early Tertiary 25 million years ago, the western Molasse basin temporarily ran dry; from the east, the sea still extended to near Munich.

# Paratethys 3



along the whole Alpine arc through the Rhône valley.

# Paratethys 4



The Molasse Sea retreats eastwards up to Vienna. Curiously, where the Danube today flows from west to east, a river was then flowing in the opposite direction: the Rhône originated in the Mostviertel Region west of St. Pölten (Lower Austria) and flowed to Marseille (France) through the valleys that today are the passages of the upper Danube and the Saône.

# Paratethys 5



The Molasse Sea loses its connection with the Mediterranean Sea and the other seas. The forelands of the Alps and the Carpathians dry up; around 11.5 million years ago a brackish lake - Lake Pannon (Austria) - forms inside the Carpathian arc. The Danube flows northeast through Krems and Hollabrunn (Lower Austria). In the Mistelbach area (Lower Austria), it discharges into the Vienna basin, filled by Lake Pannon.