

Micropalaeontology and Hydrocarbon Exploration in the Middle East

edited by **M. D. Simmons**, published by Chapman & Hall, 2-6, Boundary Row, London SE1 8HN, UK in 1995, ISBN 0-412-42770.

Review by Christopher G. Kendall

This book consists of some 16 papers which deal with the micropalaeontology of a variety of different geological settings within the Middle East region. The objective of the editor was to try to assemble a series of micropalaeontological studies of the Middle East which catch the flavor of the extensive work that has been carried out with the micro faunas and microfloras of the geological section of this region. This book does not pretend to be a comprehensive text for all the sedimentary sections of the Middle East or to list every associated species. A much more extensive series of books would be required for this. However it does provide an overview of the kinds of work going on in the region, and will be a useful text to those who need biostratigraphic data for the Mesozoic sediments of the Arabian Gulf area or are interested in studies of the Late Devonian through Tertiary ranging from localities in N. Africa, Yeman, Oman, the UAE, Saudi Arabia to Iran..

The book is illustrated by clear maps and cross sections and sharp photomicrographs of the faunas being described in the text of the different papers. In fact, this book represents more than just a collection of papers on microfacies but is a compendium of geological studies for the area, all of which are helpful to those of us who have interest in the Middle East. The geological character of the sedimentary sections of the region are extended with new data. The problem, as Mike Simmons identifies, has been that information in the public domain has been kept fairly restricted by the major oil companies working in the area, but now much of this information is being released through publication and the growing pool of highly talented service industry biostratigraphers who have left these companies. It is with the arrival of these people in the world after big oil that is causing the geological Renaissance we are experiencing with books like this one. For those of you who have need of geological of micropalaeontology information on the Middle East, this book is for your shelves or library. It is a specialized field, but those who need data will find this a well written and well illustrated and informative book.