

**GEOLOGICAL
GLOSSARY. FOR THE
USE OF STUDENTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649335978

Geological glossary. for the use of students by Thomas Oldham

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Cover @ 2017

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THOMAS OLDHAM

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FOR THE USE OF STUDENTS.

BY THE LATE

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LONDON:

EDWARD STANFORD, 55 CHARING CROSS, S.W.

1879.

188. / 8

P R E F A C E.

THE object of this work being, not to supplant those glossaries which aim at the enumeration and explanation of all the various terms which are made use of in works on geology, but to act as a companion to the recognised text-books for the use of students, it has been necessary to avoid erring in either of two directions. While it was necessary to explain all the terms in ordinary use, it was also necessary to make these explanations short and concise, and to omit many words and terms which are infrequently used, or which should more properly be looked for in works on mineralogy, palæontology, &c. ; such, for instance, as the various species of minerals and rocks, or the genera of fossils, which, if admitted, would have swelled this work to an inconvenient bulk.

It is hoped that this object has been attained, and that in the following pages no omissions of importance will be found.

R. D. OLDHAM.

RUEBY, *May 27, 1870.*

GEOLOGICAL GLOSSARY.

- Abnormal.**—Not in the usual course of events. *See* NORMAL.
- Abrasion.**—A wearing away by friction or rubbing, such as that caused by currents of water charged with sand or other débris, by glaciers, by icebergs, &c. *See* DEGRADATION, DENUDATION.
- Accretion.**—An addition of new matter externally: used only with reference to increase of mineral or inorganic bodies. Plants and animals assimilate additional matters; minerals increase by accretion.
- Acicular.**—Like a needle; occurring in needle-like prisms having acicular structure.
- Acinose.**—Granulated, like seeds: applied to mineral texture.
- Adamant** (*ἀδάμας*, unsubdued).—A term applied to several minerals, all agreeing in the property of extreme hardness, such as the diamond. ADAMANTINE, hard as adamant, or having the lustre of a diamond; often used, too, in the general sense of being very strong or hard.
- Adit.**—A mining term; a roadway or tunnel or level driven in horizontally, from side of hill or lower level, as an entrance to a mine or for removal of ores, or as a passage for the water.
- Aërial.**—Relating to the air, or atmosphere. *Sub-aërial*, occurring under the atmosphere, as different from *sub-aqueous*, under water.
- Aëriiform.**—Like air, opposed to solid and liquid.
- Aërolite.**—*See* METEORITE.
- Affluent.**—A stream flowing into or joining another is called an *affluent*, the stream into which it flows being the *recipient*. *See* TRIBUTARY.

- After-damp or Choke-damp, or Carbonic acid.**—So called as occurring in mines *after* an explosion of fire-damp or carburetted hydrogen.
- Agglomerate.**—"A coarse breccia composed of fragments of rock cast out of volcanic vents, for the most part angular, and without any admixture of water-worn stones."—*Lyell*.
- Aiguille.**—A needle: applied in physical geography to the sharp peaks or needle-tops of lofty mountains.
- Air-course.**—In mining, especially in coal-mining, where artificial ventilation is carried out, the fresh air is carried down from the surface by what is called the *down-cast* to the level of the workings, and the current is then *coureed* along through the workings, and, having passed through all parts of the mine requiring ventilation, is again discharged to the surface by the *up-cast*.
- Alloy.**—A combination of two metals, either natural or artificial: thus, brass is an alloy of copper and zinc; bell-metal is an alloy of copper and tin; bronze is the same alloy in different proportions; type-metal is lead and antimony.
- Alluvium.**—Literally, washed down. Matter washed down or accumulated by the ordinary action of water, and deposited, when dry constitutes alluvium. *Alluvial* soils or rocks are in this way formed of mud, sand, or silt, brought together by the ordinary action of water in lakes, in estuaries, on banks of rivers, &c. &c.
- Alveolus.**—Literally, a small trough or channel. A term applied in various ways. The conical chamber of the *belemnite* is called the *alveolus*.
- Amalgam.**—A mixture of mercury with other metals; an alloy in which one of the metals is mercury.
- Amber.**—A well-known fossil gum or resin (*Pinites succinifer*).
- Amorphous** (α , $\mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta$).—Without definite form or structure; massive.
- Amphibia.**—Capable of living either on land or in water: used as a distinctive name for an order of animals (*e.g.* frogs and newts) which have both lungs and gills at some period of their life.
- Amygdaloid.**—When volcanic rocks have certain almond-shaped cavities, either wholly or partially filled with minerals, such as agate, calcspar, &c., they are called *amygdaloid*; the filled or half-filled cavities looking like almonds in a cake.

The cavities were originally hollow and due to air-bubbles imbedded in the mass; but subsequently water filtering through the pores of the rock, and carrying with it various substances in solution, has deposited the matter in the cavities, which have thus become either partially or entirely filled.

Analogue and Homologue.—Contradistinguishing terms, used in description of structure in organic life. Analogue has reference to a similarity of function; homologue to an identity of parts. Thus the humerus or bone of the fore-limb is homologous, whether we find it in the arm of man, in the wing of a bird, in the paddle of the cetacea, or in the fore-leg of a hare; while the wing of a bird and the dermal expansion of a bat are analogous, both contributing to a similarity of function, *i.e.* enabling the creature to fly.

Anemometer.—An instrument for ascertaining the direction and force or intensity of the wind.

Aneroid.—Without fluid: the designation given to a peculiar form of barometer, in which no fluid, either mercury or spirit, is used. The variations in the pressure or weight of the atmosphere are measured by the elevation or depression of the thin flexible surface of a partially exhausted metallic box.

Anhydrous.—Without water: applied to minerals which do not contain water of crystallization—that is, water as an ingredient of the mineral. *Anhydrous* is the opposite or corresponding term.

Annealing.—A gradual and slow cooling down of molten matter, such as glass or porcelain, by which they are rendered much less brittle, and become tougher and more malleable. An analogous result is seen in lavas. If molten lava be cooled rapidly, it becomes glassy (obsidian, &c.); if slowly, it becomes granular and stony: the more rapid the cooling, the more glassy the result.

Antarctic.—Opposite to Arctic. The regions, &c., round or near to the South Pole, as opposed to the Arctic, are called Antarctic, as Antarctic Seas, &c.

Anthracite.—A coal consisting almost entirely of carbon, often called stone-coal; has generally a more or less compact texture, a conchoidal fracture, and metallic lustre; burns with a very weak flame or none. Vegetable structure still traceable under the microscope.