

Muschelkalk (approx. 244–231 million years ago)

Lower Muschelkalk – When the Sea Returned

After the end of the Buntsandstein period, sea level in the Germanic Basin rose once again. A shallow sea spread from the southeast and southwest, covering large parts of Central Europe. Numerous bivalves and other marine animals lived in this warm shallow sea.

Over millions of years, their shells accumulated on the seafloor and became fossilised. The striking abundance of these fossils gave both the rock and the geological period their name: **Muschelkalk**.

The layers of the Lower Muschelkalk consist of massive limestone and marl rocks. Between thin-bedded limestones lie solid building-stone beds that have been used as construction material since the Middle Ages. Important buildings made from Muschelkalk include the Kaiserdom in Königslutter and the Bremen Roland.

Tilted layers of the Lower Muschelkalk with a massive building-stone bed, formed by deposition in a shallow sea around 240 million years ago.



Did you know? - A Stone with a Story

Muschelkalk was once part of the seafloor. It contains the shells of countless marine animals that lived here more than 240 million years ago. Much later, people used this strong stone for building.

What do you think: why is a hard stone from the sea well suited as a building material? And what might happen if softer rock were used instead?

