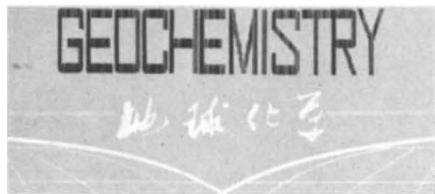


contributions from an international group of authors on a wide variety of subjects, dealing with rocks from several continents which extend over an age span of 3,000 Myr. Admittedly, with one or two exceptions, most of these articles could have been published in one or other of the established journals without significant modification, so it remains to be seen whether the new journal will develop a character of its own: only time will tell, but the promise is there. The standard of presentation is high, the style conforms fairly closely to that of other journals published by Blackwell, and altogether JMG represents fairly good value for money.

Geochemistry, a Chinese journal which for the past two years has also appeared in an English-language version, is rather different. Of the several dozen articles which have appeared so far, almost all are written by Chinese authors (although one article has a non-Chinese co-author) and they deal almost entirely with Chinese geological and geochemical problems. Clearly, on the one hand, Chinese geochemists have accepted that English has become, for better or worse, the



international language in the geosciences; on the other, we see here implicitly their strong desire to participate fully in geochemical research at international level in future.

The range of topics covered is comprehensive — various aspects of igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rock geochemistry, meteorites, marine geochemistry, economic geology and mineralization, organic geochemistry, isotopic dating, experimental studies and new instrumental techniques — and several articles on crystallography and new minerals have also been included. The scope, then, is wider than that of international geochemical journals, and extends into fields normally covered by journals of mineralogy, petrology and economic geology. The standard of presentation and the scientific content of the articles is generally high.

Now that several Chinese institutes have furnished themselves with a range of advanced geochemical instrumentation, comparable with that of any laboratory in the world, we can look forward to an increasing number of important contributions from Chinese geochemists. If that proves to be the case, *Geochemistry* will become necessary reading for many geoscientists. □

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Heart of Gondwana

Paul Mohr

Journal of African Earth Sciences.
Editor-in-chief Cornelius A. Kogbe.
Pergamon. 4/yr. £49, \$90.

AFRICA is no longer “the black continent with the big blank spaces on its map” — the description of Hans Cloos en route to his first employment as a geologist in German West Africa. Africa’s geology, mostly the preserve of European explorers before the First World War, has painstakingly become revealed through the work of colonial geological surveys and, especially since 1945, by an enthusiastic influx of European and American university personnel. Most of their work has been published in “international” (i.e. European and North American) journals.

Aside from geological survey reports, not notable as repositories for intellectual discussion and new ideas, the African geological literature has been scant (South Africa providing an outstanding exception). Now there appears the *Journal of African Earth Sciences* (JAES). Although published outside Africa, and with its chief and regional editors likewise resident outside the continent, it makes a bold beginning. African geologists and geophysicists have had increasing need for a publishing forum that transcends national boundaries yet keeps to the heart of Gondwana.

The format of JAES is African in its

spaciousness (21×30cm), it is well produced (the photographic plates are sharp, the line-drawings large and readable), and the print is a boon to eyes overly strained from reading some established journals. The first volume comprises 37 articles, not including book reviews and conference reports. The quality varies, generally in direct proportion to article length. Interestingly, Nigerian and Egyptian geological topics (there are no geophysical articles in this first volume) together make up more than half the volume. Only five articles deal with Francophone Africa, four of these in French. Southern Africa and Zaire are conspicuously unrepresented. Of the authors, about half are based at African institutions, which is a fair achievement.

Clearly the infant journal has some growing up to do before it can justify its continental scope and ambition. On the other hand, one notes that there is as yet no *Journal of European Earth Sciences*. Here, then, is a medium for the propagation of that natural entity, African earth science, and, more than that, for indigenous African geologists and geophysicists to develop their scientific mettle. On this first showing, JAES promises well and deserves every success. Its cost is not too unreasonable by wealthy European standards, but, ironically, it has priced itself out of the greater part of the African market it is designed to serve. □

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Birth in decay

Norman K. Grant

Isotope Geoscience: An International Journal.
Editor-in-chief G. Faure.
Elsevier Scientific. 4/yr. Dfl. 237.

IF the distinction and international character of an editorial board are sufficient to ensure the success of a new journal, *Isotope Geoscience* (IG) should do well. The first six issues suggest that the editorial resources available to the editor-in-chief will lead to the publication of critically reviewed descriptive, theoretical and review papers of an attractively high standard. So far about two-thirds of the articles have been on the systematics of radiogenic isotopes, and about one-third on stable isotopes, the average time from manuscript acceptance to publication in the latest number being six to seven months. Book reviews are also published.

Elsevier has introduced IG into our libraries as a daughter journal to *Chemical Geology*. Whether the newcomer can meet its ambitious goals of fostering “scholarly communication between isotope

geoscientists of the world”, and “form a bridge” between them and other geoscientists remains to be seen. Isotope geoscientists are not a homogeneous group, and the range of interests which the journal proposes to serve is extremely wide — radiogenic and stable isotope and radiochemical systematics in inorganic and organic terrestrial and extraterrestrial materials.

It could be argued that the most fruitful approach for isotope geoscientists is to communicate first of all with scientists in complementary and converging disciplines. For this reason it seems likely that many of the most influential papers in isotope geoscience will continue to be published in established journals of a more general nature, such as *Contributions to Mineralogy and Petrology*, *Journal of Petrology* and *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*. If IG is read only by specialists its importance will be limited. So, for the time being, my advice to librarians is to place the highest priority on the purchase of the journal only when their institution includes staff actively engaged in isotopic research. □

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