crustal composition, role of fluids, deformation and emplacement mechanisms, physical properties, geophysical investigations and philosophical overviews of the importance of exposed continental sections in understanding earth history and processes. If the editors are to be criticized it is for being too modest in putting their own paper at the very end; that paper should be read first to establish a framework for the processes and specific field examples presented in the other chapters.

The field examples generally discuss structure and petrology, with gravity, magnetic and seismic reflection/refraction studies included for many. Exposures resulting from Phanerozoic orogeny include the Ivrea and Calabria zones in Italy, Fjordland, New Zealand, metamorphic core complexes of the western United States, the Sierra Nevada batholith, the North Cascades of Washington, the British Columbia Central Gneiss Complex and the Kohistan Island Arc of the Himalaya in Pakistan. This pot-pourri of tectonic settings illustrates that mechanisms of emplacement of the deeper parts of continental crust can be quite variable, including rifting, collision and erosion of batholith belts in island arcs. The Precambrian terranes (Kapuskasing zone in Ontario, central Australia, Dhwar craton of India, western Superior Province of Manitoba and the Grenville Front in Canada), with their variability in composition, age and physical properties, illustrate the complex history of formation and structural and metamorphic alteration of continental crust.

The papers on geophysics highlight differences in signature between the upper and lower parts of continental crust, and on how these differences might relate to chemical composition, rheology, structural and magmatic history, and to the role of fluids. These differences include general observations that the lower crust has higher seismic velocity, reflectivity and conductivity than the upper crust. The book is quite thorough in its discussion of processes that might have resulted in these signatures, as well as in its treatment of the selectivity and alteration of crust during exposure.

Overall the book is a valuable tool to structural geologists trying to relate field observations to processes occurring in the deep crust, as well as geophysicists looking for constraints on their interpretations. It is a bit long and perhaps weighted too heavily by North American examples; indeed the price might make it prohibitive to all but those directly involved in studies of deep-crustal processes. But I would recommend that other earth scientists at least browse through it to appreciate what has been learned over the last decade about the nature of the continental crust, as well as the practicalities of relating surface observations to what one sees on geophysical profiles.

Robert J. Lillie

Corvallis, U.S.A.

Precambrian crust and its treasures

Naqvi, S. M. (editor) 1990. *Precambrian Continental Crust and its Economic Resources*. Developments in Precambrian Geology 8. Elsevier, Amsterdam. 669 pp. Price Dfl.240.00; U.S.$123.00 (hardback).

This collection of papers was compiled in honour of the 70th birthday of Dr B. P. Radhakrishna, one of the pioneers of Precambrian geology in India. It is a fitting tribute; an up-to-date compilation of Precambrian crustal matters, and including several chapters about economic resources contained in the old, cold Precambrian crust.

There are 30 articles by 52 authors in total, in 669 pages of text. All is composed in camera-ready Courier type, which, unfortunately, is not the easiest of text types on the eye. Of the papers, 18 deal solely (or almost so) with India, and there are one each for Australia, Canada, China, Finland, Greenland, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The remaining five papers offer a bemusing mixture of topics, some fascinating and others just a little curious.

The first paper, by Bill Fyfe, is very appropriate for this volume—a short but visionary contemplation of the Archaean. Fyfe discusses how then, as now, the inner Earth, the Earth's surface, all creatures great and small (or rather, at that time, great aggregations of small creatures), and the Earth's atmosphere are interrelated in one system of majestic simplicity, driven by transfer of energy between its parts. As Fyfe says, "we live on a water cooled plant"—not a Volkswagen, but a Rolls-Royce, and we should treat it with due deference. I wish Bill Fyfe would write more; ideas spring from every line of his works.

The papers dealing with India are quite useful. There are several summary articles and several more specifically-targeted works, which combine to give a reasonably balanced overview of Indian Precambrian geology. As one might expect from the very unequal geographic distribution of papers, other areas receive far less balanced coverage. The sole paper on South Africa (surely one of the most important Precambrian areas on earth, from all geological perspectives) contains very little that is new. The same can unfortunately be said about the single papers on Australia, Canada, and the orthopyroxene isograd. There are a few gems, however—the papers by Fyfe, Rogers (comparing the Indian and Nubian–Arabian shields), Sugden, Deb and Windley (tectonics and mineralization in the Delhi belt), Dazhong and Songnain (North China platform), and Schidlowski (life in the Precambrian and its part in the genesis of mineral and hydrocarbon deposits) spring to mind.

Structural geologists could be fascinated for hours; however there are some very outdated and generally strange ideas presented throughout the book, on rheology, structural development, and tectonics. The book might be the basis for a higher-level undergraduate or graduate seminar series, but would need to be heavily supplemented by readings from current journals, especially to deepen the coverage of areas around the world other than India. In view of its high cost, the rather specific geographical coverage (generally good treatment for India, very spotty for the rest of the world), the review nature of a number of papers, and the limited shelf-life of some of the more specific contributions, I would be very hard-pressed to recommend that any single geologist buy this book. In these hard economic times, it becomes increasingly difficult to convince oneself that even libraries should pay the exorbitant charge that many publishers charge for these types of books—they are neither fish nor fowl; neither a specialist text nor an all-encompassing general treatise. However, if a certain library services a group that specializes in the Precambrian, then I would say (guardedly) that they should consider getting a copy.

Chris Mawer

Brisbane, Australia

North American granitoid magmas

Anderson, L. J. (editor) 1990. *The Nature and Origin of Cordilleran Magmatism*. Geological Society of America Memoir 174. Geological Society of America, Boulder, CO, U.S.A. 414 pp. Price $65 (hardback).

The Nature and Origin of Cordilleran Magmatism (Geological Society of America Memoir 174) edited by J. L. Anderson, was produced from a GSA Symposium held in Hawaii. The 23 chapters in this volume are a synthesis of the works of the 57 co-authors and constitute a major contribution to the understanding of Cordilleran magmatism. The data and interpretations on the Mesozoic and Tertiary igneous suites of the Cordillera from Alaska to Baja, California, represent a new stage built on earlier, broader based work on circum-Pacific terrains reviewed by Roddick (1983, Geological Society of America Memoir 159). The book is not a collection of review papers, rather individual studies of specific areas with a strong emphasis on magma genesis and evolution.

Specific studies include the Peninsular Range Batholith, Sierra Nevada Batholith and Salinan magmatic arc, Great Basin plutonism, Klamath Mountains pluton, Idaho Batholith, Colville Igneous complex (Washington), Coast Batholith (Alaska and British Columbia) and Transverse and Mojave Desert plutons.

Much of the book is concerned with magma genesis, and specifically the role of multiple sources in controlling the chemical and isotopic composition of the plutons. This is meat and grist for petrologists, geochemists and isotope workers, but it can certainly be rather dry, esoteric fodder for the non-cabalist! It seems to me that endless major and trace element diagrams, some purporting to show tectonic setting, plus Σ Nd–Sr diagrams with Lewisian amphibolite and granulite facies fields are tedious and do not help us to really understand the sources of *American* granitoid magmas. Attempts to identify specific source materials for most granitoids is difficult at best, for the crust is not homogeneous, and actual compositions of the lower crust at any given place almost unknown. Furthermore nice simple crutch-like classifications based on source such as the 'I' and 'S' classification, unfortunately travel abroad rather poorly and certainly not *in toto* to America.

Many of the papers also explain in some detail the evolution of the magmas by crystal fractionation, assimilation crystal fractionation,