

analyses of the rock types discussed. Both these and the text contain detailed lists of trace element abundances and ratios but their significance is difficult to grasp when packaged in this manner. The early chapters give no assistance in interpretation to the reader at this point as the principles of trace element and isotope geochemistry are disposed of in chapter 1 in four pages, packed with symbols and numbers and totally devoid of illustrations. Similar examples could be adduced for most topics. Not only does the book contain no locality maps, but the last eleven chapters contain only seven diagrams in all—two of which are merely expanded tables. The only adequately illustrated chapter is the one dealing with classification (one of the author's pet subjects).

These deficiencies are only slightly compensated for by the inclusion of twenty-two colour plates, ten dealing with aspects of field relations and the tectonic setting of igneous activity, and twelve photomicrographs reproduced from the *Atlas of Igneous Rocks and their Textures* by Mackenzie *et al.* (also published by Longman). Their main contribution to the book, however, is to provide the reader with a sorely needed colourful interlude to the rather indigestible text. I would have preferred to see a larger number of carefully described black and white diagrams included at appropriate points in the text than photographs of volcanic eruptions from which much detail has been lost as a result of the small scale of the reproduction.

Despite these drawbacks the book is likely to prove popular. The concise chapters on specific

rock groups, together with the extensive reference list, will be perceived by many readers as providing a much needed precis of a voluminous literature. Whilst it would not be my first, or even second, choice textbook to recommend to students, no other available text competes with it in terms of price and inevitably they will vote with their cheque books. In this they will unfortunately be encouraged by the publishers somewhat misleading advertising (lavishly illustrated . . . provides a step-by-step guide).

M. A. MORRISON

Thorpe, R. S., and Brown, G. C. *The Field Description of Igneous Rocks*. Milton Keynes (Open University Press) and New York (Halsted Press), 1985. vi + 154 pp., 107 figs., 16 maps. Price £6.50.

This latest in the Geological Society of London Handbook Series offers an intensely practical guide to the study and description of all types of igneous rocks in the field. It is written to complement textbooks on igneous petrology and deals with observations ranging from the scale of hand specimens and outcrops to regional mapping of field relationships. It is copiously illustrated with diagrams, photographs, and maps; its genuine 'handbook' size (18 × 11.5 cm), flexible cover, and realistic price should make it an affordable part of field equipment for all geology students.

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