



EXPLANATION

PRINCIPAL INFORMATION SOURCES

- Data from Wm. H. Muller and Co. files, minerals exploration survey 1967-1971
- Helicopter-traverse coverage by M. R. Brock and A. H. Chidester (USGS)
- Foot-traverse coverage by M. R. Brock (USGS), A. H. Chidester (USGS), and Jenkins Dunbar (LGS)
- Foot-traverse coverage by M. W. G. Baker (LGS) and S. P. Srivastava (LGS)

OTHER SOURCES

- M. R. Brock (USGS)
- A. H. Chidester (USGS)
- R. L. Eubank (USGS)
- T. D. Hain (USGS)
- P. T. Hayes (USGS)
- J. F. Seitz (USGS)

SOURCES OF FIELD DATA

Base compiled by photo-planimetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1968-69. Controlled from 1:50,000-scale photostereos by Aero Service Corporation.

Prepared by the U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY and the LIBERIAN GEOLOGICAL SURVEY Under the joint sponsorship of the GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA and the AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

INTRODUCTION

Liberia was mapped by geologic and geophysical methods during the period 1965 to 1972 as part of a program undertaken cooperatively by the Liberian Geological Survey (LGS) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), under the sponsorship of the Government of Liberia and the Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State. The resulting geologic and geophysical maps are published in ten folios, each covering one quadrangle (see index map). The first systematic mapping in the Harper quadrangle was a scale of 1:50,000 in the vicinity of Harper in the southeastern part of the quadrangle and of Kakole in the northeastern part in 1969-71. M. R. Brock and A. H. Chidester carried out systematic mapping of the quadrangle at a scale of 1:250,000 in the period September 1971-May 1972. The geologic map was compiled from field data gathered by project geologists and private companies (as indicated in the source diagram), photogeologic maps, interpretation of airborne magnetic and radiometric surveys, field mapping, and ground-based radiometric surveys in which hand-held scintillators were used. R. W. Bromey, C. S. Watson, and J. C. Behrend contributed to the interpretation of geophysical data. Total-intensity aeromagnetic and total-count gamma radiation maps (Behrend and Watson, 1974a, b) and unpublished data derived from these maps, including the near-surface and the regional magnetic components and aeromagnetic/radiometric correlations, were used in the interpretation.

Relief in the Harper quadrangle is about 300 meters. Coastal areas are characterized by narrow sandy beaches separated by rock promontories and are backed by broad rolling savannas; these areas contain irregularly distributed but locally abundant outcrops of unweathered rock. Inland areas are hilly and covered by dense high forest, interspersed with patches of low bush and small farms; a thick cover of saprolite and laterite commonly obscures the bedrock, except locally in the larger streambeds and on some of the steeper hills. In many places the ranges of hills and courses of streams reflect the structural grain and lithology of the country rock.

The coastal area and the Cavalla River area contain several small towns; inland there are only small villages and scattered farms. Access by motor vehicle is limited to the main road north from Harper and to a few short side roads and lumber roads. Elsewhere, travel is by streams navigable by small boat and by foot trails between villages. Beaches and savannas along the coast offer many sites of readily accessible inshore, inland, numerous small airstrips for light planes provide access to otherwise isolated areas.

ROCKS

The Harper quadrangle is entirely in the Eburasian age province of Harley and others (1971) at the western margin of the Guinean Shield. Bedrock consists of metamorphic gneiss and schist of Precambrian age, scattered small bodies of unfoliated granitic rocks of probable Precambrian age, diabase dikes of Jurassic age, and a few intermediate and felsic dikes of probable Jurassic or Cretaceous age. In general, rock units were distinguished primarily on the basis of field observations, but magnetic and radiometric properties were used extensively in delineating units on the geologic map. Map units are designated by a symbol appropriate for the rock type or range of rock types that characterizes a unit. Units that are appropriately characterized by the same symbol, but which differ distinctly in some aspects, are shown by separate but related symbols. The discussion below is organized by rock types and has no stratigraphic implication. Beach sands and lagoonal deposits of Quaternary age, narrow-river deposits, and laterite and saprolite, which obscure much of the underlying bedrock, are not distinguished on the map.

METAMORPHIC ROCKS

Gneiss and schist are the predominant metamorphic rocks in the Harper quadrangle. Amphibolite and quartzite are minor but common. Iron-formation and manganese formation are quantitatively very minor, but they commonly crop out in bold and distinctive ridges. The simple classification of gneissic rocks that is used follows the broad igneous compositional parameters based on the ratio of plagioclase to potassium feldspar (see map explanation). No implication of igneous origin is necessarily intended. For gneisses that do not fall readily into such a classification, or where there are insufficient data for such classification, appropriate mineral or sulfide descriptive terms (for example, leucocratic gneiss) are used.

Granite gneiss

Narrow bands of granite gneiss (gng) are delineated on the basis of a few outcrops, high radioactivity as determined by surface scintillation readings, topographic expression, and magnetic pattern in the northeast and southeast parts of the quadrangle. The few outcrops observed are biotite granite gneiss, and they range in texture from massive to weakly foliated.

Granodiorite gneiss

Biotite granodiorite gneiss (gngd), chiefly associated with belts of schist, forms several small bands in the eastern part of the quadrangle. The foliation is generally weak and is imparted chiefly by the subparallel orientation of biotite. A few small masses of granite, locally pegmatitic, are associated with this unit.

Granitic gneiss

Granitic gneiss (gng) forms a small body in the northeastern part of the quadrangle, as well as a broad belt that extends east-northeastward across the quadrangle from just north of Sasstown. The gneiss ranges in composition chiefly from granodiorite to granite, but it also includes minor amounts of quartz diorite and intercalated amphibolite. Porphyroblasts and augen of microcline, some as much as 7 cm long, characterize zones that can be traced for several kilometers, such as those in and north of Sasstown. The gneiss unit is characterized by magnetic variations of low amplitude and by moderately high aeroradiometric counts.

Quartz diorite gneiss

Four major belts and several smaller belts of quartz diorite gneiss (gndq1) underlie about half the Harper quadrangle. Both biotite and hornblende facies are interlayered locally at outcrop scale. Pronounced layering and parallel foliation reflect alternation in relative proportions of light and dark minerals. The units include appreciable but minor amounts of interlayered amphibolite, quartzite, and muscovite schist, plus reported small occurrences of ilabirite.

Leucocratic gneiss

A unit designated as "leucocratic gneiss" (gnt) is centered about 25 km northwest of Grand Cess. Almost no outcrop of the unit has been seen. It is distinguished by a flat, low-intensity magnetic pattern such as would be expected to characterize a rather homogeneous body of leucocratic gneiss.

Composite gneiss

A composite gneiss unit (gnt2) in the northwesternmost part of the quadrangle consists predominantly of biotite quartz diorite, but the unit contains abundant interstratified amphibolite and quartzite; it is characterized by several zones that contain abundant graphite. Several small aeroradiometric highs suggest the presence of small granitic bodies. Some of the quartz diorite gneiss contains abundant magnetite, which imparts moderate to strong magnetic contrasts.

Migmatite

Migmatite (m) underlies a broad area in the south-central part of the quadrangle, and it is strikingly displayed in bold outcrops along the coast and in the savanna near Sasstown. Foliated fragments, lenses, and layers of mafic rock form the palaeosome (Mehner, 1968, p. 8-17), commonly within the same outcrop. Amphibolite is a massive to weakly foliated leucocratic matrix or neosome. The migmatite displays striking variations in texture and structure, ranging from agmatite (breccia) to schollen (traff) (Mehner, 1968, p. 8-17), commonly within the same outcrop. Amphibolite is the predominant palaeosome, but biotite quartz diorite gneiss is common. Amphibolite agmatite is magnificently exposed on the coast near Sasstown.

The migmatite is characterized by, and delineated largely on the basis of, moderately high amplitude magnetic contrasts and by a varied aeroradiometric pattern.

Mica schist

Mica schist (sm) underlies a broad area in the eastern part of the quadrangle. It is predominantly medium- to coarse-grained quartz-muscovite schist, with minor amounts of quartz-biotite schist. Sillimanite is common in the northeastern part of the unit, and staurolite forms conspicuous prismatic crystals 2-3 cm long just south of Kakole. Garnet and tourmaline are locally conspicuous. Biotite schist crops out in a wide band along the left bank of the Cavalla River near Nyaaak. The schist is poorly exposed and deeply weathered, so observations on fresh outcrop are rare; however, terranes underlain by micaceous schist are generally distinguished by abundant flint of coarse muscovite on the ground surface and by the distinctive texture and appearance of the saprolite. Included within areas designated as schist are minor, though locally abundant, interstratified amphibolite, quartz, and quartz diorite and granite gneisses. Dikes and lenses of pegmatite are abundant.

Quartzite

In the southern part of the quadrangle, in the vicinity of Pibo, quartzite (q) forms conspicuous marker belts associated with belts of muscovite and biotite schist. The quartzite upholds prominent ridges. It is predominantly massive and medium to dark gray; where it intertongues with schist, rillet bedding is locally discernible. In terranes consisting predominantly of quartz diorite, quartzite has been reported at numerous localities; however, most of these reports have not been verified, and the character and relation of the quartzite are unknown.

Amphibolite

Amphibolite (am), which upholds prominent ridges because of its resistance to weathering, crops out in the vicinity of Harper in several bands as much as 2 km wide. The amphibolite is medium to coarse grained, and it consists of roughly equal proportions of hornblende and plagioclase, commonly with accessory spheer. Variations in the relative proportions of hornblende and plagioclase produce varied, intergradational, and distinctive mafic to felsic interlayers on a scale ranging from a few millimetres to as much as several tens of centimetres. A pronounced though imperfect foliation is nearly everywhere parallel to the layering. Commonly, felsic veins associated with felsic layers impart a migmatitic aspect to the rock.

Iron-formation

Iron-formation (if) is mapped in four places in the east-central part of the quadrangle. Identification and delineation of the units are based upon a few observed ilabirite outcrops and upon associated moderately strong, negative aeromagnetic anomalies. Minor amounts

of interbedded schist and amphibolite are included with the iron-formation.

Silicic facies iron-formation is reported (H. W. van Grifthoven, written commun., 1970) to be associated with schist in a belt 25 km north of Pibo. This marker belt is shown on the geologic map by the symbol (is).

Ilabirite (it) is distinguished by the map in widely scattered marker beds based upon reported observations, only a few of which were verified by project geologists. The rock is a fine- to medium-grained bluish-gray quartzose rock rich in magnetite and hematite.

Manganese formation

Silicic facies iron-formation is characterized by a soty-black manganese rind on weathered surfaces. The rocks crop out in narrow linear bands within belts of schist (sm) in the south-eastern part of the quadrangle. Both silicic facies and carbonate facies occur; the silicic facies is a massive quartz-manganese garnet rock; the carbonate facies is a thinly laminated quartziferous manganese rock. The characteristic soty-black rind grades sharply into the less weathered rock along an irregular boundary.

Composite unit

A composite unit (z) consisting chiefly of mica schist with abundant interstratified amphibolite and quartzite is associated with iron-formation in the east-central part of the quadrangle. The unit is surrounded by a broad terrane of mica schist and is probably intergradational with it. It is distinguished from the schist by the magnetic pattern, which is attributable to the strong magnetic contrasts of the interstratified iron-formation, amphibolite, and quartzite.

HYPABYSSAL IGNEOUS ROCKS

Dikes of hypabyssal igneous rock in the quadrangle trend north-westward and lie within a broad belt of dikes that extends across the full length of Liberia. Most of the dikes in the quadrangle are diabase, but two other kinds have been found: a single dike of hornblende andesite porphyry and a single occurrence of bostonite porphyry.

Diabase

Diabase dikes (dj) occur mainly in the northeast part of the quadrangle. The largest dike is about 30 km long and several tens of

meters thick. Most dikes show typical medium-grained diabase texture, but the central zones of some of the larger dikes are gabbroic. The diabase dike on the coast near the mouth of the Duhio River has pronounced trachytoidal texture with labular plagioclase phenocrysts (1-1 1/2 cm long) enclosed in a diabasic groundmass.

Bostonite porphyry

A single dike of bostonite porphyry (bp) crops out in a small stream about 12 km northeast of Sasstown along the Kahwea-Sasstown trail. The pink fine-grained groundmass consists of about equal amounts of albite and potassium feldspar, with abundant light-gray 2-5 mm plagioclase prisms.

Hornblende andesite porphyry

A lavender-gray (fine-grained andesite (kja)) believed to be a dike, crops out along the trail about a half-mile south from the locality of the bostonite porphyry.

STRATIGRAPHY AND STRUCTURE

Schist and intercalated gneiss in the eastern part of the quadrangle are inferred to be metasedimentary, but the nature of the parent rock of much of the gneissic terrane is uncertain, and both ortho- and paragneiss are probably present. Consequently, no systematic stratigraphic relations can be demonstrated beyond the approximate contemporaneity of interstratified metasedimentary and metavolcanic rocks within limited areas. The general equivalence of separated tracts of schists and associated rocks, such as iron-formation, is suggested by similarities in lithology and rock associations and is compatible with available structural information; however, such correlations are only tentative at best.

Because rocks are tightly folded about east-northeast-trending axes, layering in steep limbs of folds imparts a pronounced structural grain approximately parallel to the strike of the fold. This grain is the Dube shear zone, which trends northeast and separates gneissic terrane on the northwest from interlayered schist and amphibolite facies (see examples of hornblende-epidiorite-plagioclase gneiss). East of the Dube shear zone, interstratified schist and gneiss of approximately the same age is in the lower and middle amphibolite facies. The schist is predominantly quartz-muscovite rock containing variable amounts of biotite, sillimanite, and garnet, chiefly derivatives from pelitic sedimentary rocks. West of the Dube fault, schist is greatly subordinated to gneiss or is absent, and the rocks are in the middle or upper amphibolite facies.

Some of the nonfoliated, medium- to coarse-grained granitic rocks observed in isolated outcrops throughout the quadrangle may represent postmetamorphic igneous bodies. Identification and delineation of such postmetamorphic granitic rocks will require more detailed study than was possible during this reconnaissance mapping program.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Mineral production in the quadrangle has been limited to small amounts of placer gold from a few streams within the schist zones. Although manganese oxides are concentrated in the weathered zone of manganese-rich metasedimentary carbonate and siliceous rocks within the schist zones, none is known to be of commercial value. Sheet mica as much as 10 cm in diameter is fairly common in pegmatite bodies within muscovite schist in the northeast section of the quadrangle.

Bedrock quarry material for construction purposes is available in the vicinity of the larger villages and towns along the coast and can be obtained from the weathered zone of the many inland ridges and hills. Siliceous laterite soil, a good unprocessed road-surfacing material, is sparse within a coastal belt 15-25 km wide, but the soil is abundant in many of the interior region.

REFERENCES

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GEOLOGIC MAP OF THE HARPER QUADRANGLE, LIBERIA
By
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