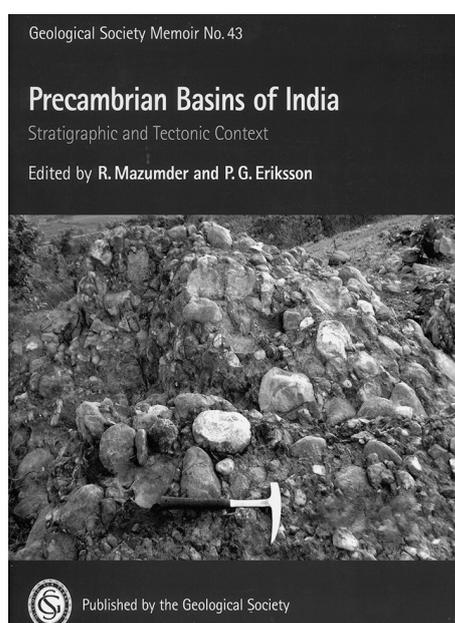


Precambrian basins of India – Stratigraphic and tectonic context, edited by Rajat Mazumder & Patrick G. Eriksson, 2015. Geological Society Memoir 43. The Geological Society, London. viii + 352 pages. Hardcover. Price GBP 120.00, GBP 60.00 (fellows), GBP 72.00 (members of associated societies). ISBN 978-1-86239-723-1.



The ever ongoing specialization in science has numerous disadvantages. One of them is that the great majority of books are aimed at small groups of specialists; more general books are commonly textbooks aimed at students. Consequently, books at a high professional level that provide a good and up-to-date overview of a rather wide field are scarce nowadays. Fortunately, however, there are still researchers who dare accept a challenge, and start the preparations for such a book. It is no longer possible for individuals to write such a book alone. You have to do it as a team, or to edit a volume written by experts. But even that is a long-lasting, time-consuming and commonly stressful activity, which does certainly not always result in a book that receives the attention that it deserves.

Yet, some pearls are published every now and then. This book is such a pearl. That makes it even more unfortunate that the title is not ideal. It may be true that the word 'basins' in the title should imply that the book is sedimentology-oriented, but the

subtitle suggests a focus on stratigraphy and tectonics. In my opinion, the subtitle better was deleted.

Enough about the dust on this pearl. It is an amazing work about the Precambrian basins that developed on the four major Archaean nuclei of India. The basins jointly cover some 500,000 km², and there is still much to be investigated. And what has been investigated, is internationally poorly known because many data have been published in internationally not very well known journals. Fortunately, there are some overview works, but these deal with only part of the basins (e.g. Naqvi & Rogers, 1987; Mazumder & Saha, 2012) or form part of a much wider-oriented scope, thus paying relatively little attention to the Indian basins (e.g. Eriksson et al., 2004; Reddy et al., 2009). It is therefore most welcome that now a truly extensive overview of India's Precambrian basins is available.

After an introduction by the two editors, the book is subdivided into six sections. The first section has 2 chapters, dealing with the classification of (particularly Proterozoic) basins, and the tectonic framework for Indian Precambrian basins, respectively. Both chapters are essential, because they provide the fundamentals for a good understanding of the field data in the following sections.

The next four sections deal each with the basins of one of the four major Indian cratons. These are the Aravalli-Bundelkhand craton (3 chapters), the Singhbhum craton (4 chapters), the Bastar craton (4 chapters), and the Dharwar craton (5 chapters). Some of the chapters deal with specific field data (but none of these chapters would have fitted better in a journal, as all deal with major aspects), but all cratons are also discussed in some review-like chapter. This approach clearly helps to understand the nature and the development of the various basins.

The next 'section' consists of only 1 chapter, which deals with the provenance, timing of sedimentation and metamorphism of metasedimentary rock suites of a granulite terrain. This is followed by

the sixth section, which comprises three chapters of a concluding nature. The book ends with a 4-page index.

The book clearly shows how much progress was made in the past few decades (there was for about half a century hardly any investigation of the Indian Precambrian since the British colonizer had withdrawn). Remarkable is therefore that there is only rarely a more or less well-defined lithostratigraphy. The various terms for the same rock unit can be confusing, and even formation have often no defined lower and upper boundary! The numerous authors that contributed to this book have, however, done their utmost best to reach optimum clarity.

In this context it must be mentioned that, unfortunately, the numerous figures are all in black/white; only rarely this poses a problem, but it would have been much more reader-friendly if some colour had been used, particularly for the photos. On the other hand, much more effort than is common nowadays has been made to make the text readable. It is most probably the Society that has been editing so thoroughly, because I know from other publications that some of the authors, how good they may be in their geological profession, are not brilliant authors. But also the book editors deserve credit for this: they apparently succeeding in stimulating the Society to make this book a pearl.

I'm not really surprised: both editors are well known for their earlier editorial work on articles and, particularly, books on the Precambrian of India (see the references below for only some of their works). I want to congratulate the authors, the editors, the publishers and, last but not least, the readers of this book that, in my opinion, will be a benchmark for a long time.

References

- Eriksson, P.G., Altermann, W., Nelson, D.R., Mueller, W.U. & Catuneanu, O. (Eds), 2004. The Precambrian earth: tempos and events. *Developments in Precambrian Geology* (Elsevier, Amsterdam) 12, 941 pp.
- Mazumder, R. & Saha, D. (Eds), 2012. Palaeoproterozoic of India. *Geological Society, London, Special Publication* 365, 294 pp.
- Naqvi, S.M. & Rogers, J.J.W., 1987. *Precambrian geology of India*. Oxford University Press (Oxford), 223 pp.
- Reddy, S.M., Mazumder, R., Evans, D.A.D. & Collins, A.S. (Eds), 2009. Palaeoproterozoic supercontinents and global evolution. *Geological Society, London, Special Publication* 323, 362 pp.

A.J. (Tom) van Loon
Geocom Consultants, Benitachell, Spain
e-mail: Geocom.VanLoon@gmail.com