INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CORRELATION PROGRAM

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The Logistics of Proofing

This circular is being sent to all correspondents of the project who are now on record as "contributors". To those who have not yet begun sending in completed coding forms it will serve as a reminder. We would like to begin increasing the flow of material through the central office. Can you help?

To those who have already submitted data – and may have begun to feel their efforts lost or unappreciated! – it brings the first evidence that the long central office logjam has been broken. We are at last able to move data from hard copy to machine readable form with reasonable proficiency. A much improved version of the conversational program described in circular 79-1 was put into service early in January and, as promised in circular 80-1, the accumulated backlog of over 1500 coding forms has been eliminated. Herewith 'galley proof' of any contribution(s) of yours that may have been part of that backlog.

We believe transcription errors have been removed, but of course want to know about any that have escaped clerical proofing – or perhaps may have been inserted during subsequent editing by which the electronic file was 'corrected'. That, however, is not the principal reason for sending you a listing of your contribution(s).

Two problems previously remote and academic are now both practical and immediate. One is substantive, the other procedural. Considering the substantive one first, your name, or the first 12 letters of it, will be part of the electronic image of each of your contributions. This is intended as an acknowledgement of the time and effort you have contributed to the work of the project, but it also creates a responsibility for you, and, hence, for us. For ultimate users of the base may well consider that transcription or factual errors in a record of which you are listed as contributor are yours, which may or may not be true. Accordingly, you should have an opportunity to compare the final electronic record with the source references and/or the coding forms, and the right to refuse permission for its inclusion in the base if you feel it is not a satisfactory copy. Your contribution(s) will be held in a separate mass storage file and will not be incorporated in the base or circulated outside the project until we receive your approval. (If you did not make copies of the coding forms you sent in and wish the originals for comparison, they can be returned to you.)

The question of how you will decide whether the copy is satisfac-

tory or not leads directly into the procedural problem we must now solve. The only way to detect transcription errors committed here and still uncorrected, of course, is to compare the accompanying list with your coding forms. Unless you suspect malice or utter incompetence, however, a large investment of time in such a comparison seems unwise. What really matters now is how well the electronic record reports information in the source reference(s), for that is clearly what ultimate users of the base will be concerned about.

Ideally, every specimen description in each contribution should be checked against the source description of the same specimen. Except in short records, however, this is probably impractical. Perhaps you should work out a systematic or random sampling scheme, according to which some percentage of descriptions will be fully checked, another percentage checked only with regard to certain blocks of the coding form. Mail discussion of inspection procedures is invited, and the subject will be fully aired at the fall meeting. For the present, the central office will rely wholly on your judgement as to whether your copy is ready for use. Only, let us know, in a reasonable time, what your decision is and how you reached it.

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Finally, for those who receive galleys with this circular, a few notes about how to check them. The listing follows exactly the syntax and grammar described in circular 78-3d; in most copy, in addition, some items in the 'Additional Information' block of the coding form are tagged and framed in the fashion proposed in section III of circular 80-1.

Each line of the listing is a card image, and is identified by its first 6 characters, the 'identification field'. The first 3 characters are the system symbol for the record, the next 2 identify the specimen within the record, the 6th identifies the card within the specimen description. If columns 4 and 5 are blank, there will be a '1' or '2' in column 6, signifying that the card is part of the 'record preface'; i.e., that information on it is drawn wholly from the 'title-reference' sheet of the coding form. If column 6 contains a letter, the card is part of a specimen description. Literal entries in column 6 have the following significance:

'A' - specimen location, rock name , geological unit

'B' - major oxides, preceded by a digit which is the position of the source reference number in the vector of reference numbers on the preceeding '2' card, and followed by the code number of the rock name, from table II of circular 79-2.

'C', 'D', . . - other information in a specimen description, partitioned by colons. Status indicators lie between column 6 and the 1st colon on card 'C'. Remaining colons may occur on this or any later (alphabetic) card of the specimen description, because the lists are optional and of variable length. Trace components are stored

between the 1st and 2d colons, age data between the 2d and 3d, petrographic descriptors between the 3d and 4th, mineralogical descriptors between the 4th and 5th, additional information between the 5th and 6th. Adjacent colons indicate that there is no information of the type stored between them.

Experience here suggests there is a real advantage in minimizing the amount of paper that has to be scanned, but that it is difficult to insert corrections - and to read them! - on single-spaced listings. If only incidental corrections are required, please write them out on a separate piece of paper, tagging each one by the contents of the 1st 6 characters of the line on which it occurs, i.e.

        BC DE   change 'xxx...' to 'yyy...'
        ABFCGD   change 'qqq...' to 'rrr...'

and so forth. If there are many mistakes in your copy, it will be much easier to insert corrections directly on a double-spaced version of the list, obtainable on request. If you can't stand counting colons at all, request a 'full' or 'labelled' list. But, if your file is long, please don't do this unless you're really desparate; a full list generates so much paper that it is difficult to scan and mark, difficult to use as keyboard copy, and horribly expensive to mail back and forth.

Thanks and Good Luck! Please let me hear from you soon.

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