

THE GOLD DISTRICTS OF WEST AFRICA WITHIN THEIR PALEOPROTEROZOIC GEODYNAMIC AND PALEOGEOGRAPHIC SETTING

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The map of gold mineralization in West Africa (Milési et al., 1989) places hydrothermal activity, the origin of the mineralization, within the lithostructural setting of the Birimian (Paleoproterozoic). The map presented here summarizes the mapping and compilation work carried out by BRGM in West Africa from 1990 to 1999. This synthesis is based on new data, namely cartographic, geochronological, geochemical, structural, petrological (metamorphism), geophysical and geological. It represents a revised interpretation of the West African craton in terms of the Archean-Proterozoic boundary, magmatic and/or tectonic accretion onto the Archean Man craton margins, tectonic accretion of terranes, tectonic style, and orogenic process. A series of sketch maps and cross sections illustrate the history of the craton from 2.6 to 2.0 Ga. They reconstruct the sequence of magmatic and tectonometamorphic events responsible for the building up of the Birimian crust and the Eburnian orogenic belt and place the metalliferous crisis and mineralized districts within their geodynamic and paleogeographic setting.