

A RECORD OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE FROM THE ORANGE RIVER MUDBELT, SOUTH AFRICA

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The Orange River system which drains a large part of the southern African interior plateau, is responsible for large scale transportation of sediment westwards towards the Atlantic Ocean where it is deposited on the inner continental shelf, in the form of the Orange River (or Namaqualand) mudbelt. This mudbelt represents a semi-continuous depository of the Quaternary palaeoenvironmental record and forms an invaluable archive of sedimentation, vegetation and anthropogenic induced environmental change. This paper represents results of geochronological and palaeoenvironmental research conducted on marine cores retrieved from the mudbelt. Radiocarbon, Lead(210) analyses, palynological and sedimentological analyses have been carried out in addition to carbon stable light isotope and flood analysis.