

The Cape Supergroup in Natal and the Northern Transkei

SIR,—The rocks of the so-called Cape System (Cape Supergroup) of South Africa outcrop in two coastal belts, separated by 300 km of younger rocks (see map). In Cape Province, a full succession has been described (see Table 1), extending from possible Lower Cambrian to Upper Devonian. The Natal sequence is incomplete, and consists of 'thick . . . sandstones, with grits and conglomerates' (Anderson, 1901), resting on Precambrian rocks and overlain by Karroo strata. In his *First Report of the Geological Survey of Natal and Zululand*, Anderson (1901) observed that: 'Petrologically, they are very unlike the quartzites and grits of the Table Mountain Sandstones of Cape Colony.' In his *Second Report*, however, Anderson (1904) concluded: ' . . . I think that there is no doubt as to the correlation of the formation spoken of in my first report as "Palaeozoic Sandstones", with the Table Mountain Sandstones of Cape Colony'. No palaeontological evidence existed to confirm or disprove this identification, but subsequent authors have accepted Anderson's conclusions, and reference to the 'Table Mountain Sandstones of Natal' is encountered commonly.

Late in 1970, a few poorly preserved fossils were found by quarry workers at a locality about 5 km W of Port St Johns, in Pondoland. Originally thought to be fish, they were sent to Grahamstown, where they were identified as protolycopods. Similar lycopods are known from the upper parts of the Bokkeveld Group, and from the Witteberg Group. Although rare lycopods have been recorded from the Early Devonian, the class did not become abundant until later in the period; it is thus improbable that any strata containing lycopods are correlatives of the pre-Devonian Table Mountain Group. It is likely that the Natal rocks are lateral equivalents of the Witteberg Group of Cape Province.

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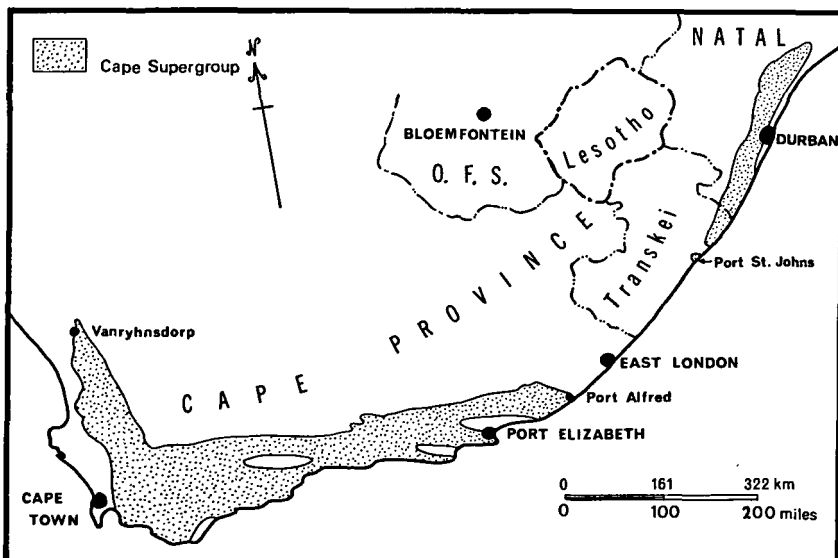


Figure 1. Map of part of South Africa, showing the distribution of the Cape Supergroup.

Table 1. Outline stratigraphy of the Cape Supergroup of Cape Province, South Africa

| | Rock units | Lithologies | Ages |
|-----------------|----------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | Karoo supergroup | | Early Carboniferous and younger |
| | Witteberg Group | Non-marine ortho-quartzitic sandstones, with shale units at base and top | ?Middle to Late Devonian |
| Cape supergroup | Bokkeveld Group | Non-marine shales, with sandstone units | |
| | | Marine shales, with sandstone units | Early Devonian |
| | Table Mountain Group | Ortho-quartzitic sandstones, with shale units | Late Cambrian to Late Silurian* |

* See Cocks and others, 1970.

References

- Anderson, W. 1901. *First Report of the Geological Survey of Natal and Zululand*. Pietermaritzburg, 137 pp.
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- Cocks, L. R. M., Brunton, C. H. C., Rowell, A. J. & Rust, I. C. 1970. The first Lower Palaeozoic fauna proved from South Africa. *Q. Jl geol. Soc. Lond.* **125** (for 1969), 583–603.

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