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The Boundaries of the West African Craton

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Preface

This special publication was generated by the UNESCO International Geological Correlation Program (IGCP) 485 named 'Cratons, metacratons and mobile belts; keys from the West African craton boundaries: Eburnian versus Pan-African signature, magmatic, tectonic and metallogenic implications', in short, 'The boundaries of the West African craton', the title of this book. A main issue of this IGCP485 was to bring African geologists from different countries together with European and American geologists in the same African region and to promote geological research across political boundaries. The fact that this ambitious goal was attained in Saharan regions is due to the energy and enthusiasm of geologists, colleagues and friends, from the countries where these field trips were organized, who gave a great deal of their time to organize these huge events. We are extremely grateful to Ezzoura Errami, Abdelilah Fekkek from El Jadida University and Hassan Admou from Marrakech University (Anti-Atlas field trip, Morocco 2003), Khalidou Lô, now Director of the Office mauritanien de recherche géologique (Reguibat field trip, Mauritania 2004), Dramane Dembélé, now Director of the Direction Nationale de la Géologie et des Mines and Samba Sacko, who sadly died a few weeks after the conference (Gourma field trip, Mali 2005), Khadidja Ouzegane and Abla Azzouni-Sekkal, professors at the Université des Sciences et Techniques Houari Boumedienne à Alger (Hoggar field trip, Algeria 2006), Hassan Ouanaïmani from the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Marrakech and again Ezzoura Errami from El Jadida University (Anti-Atlas and High Atlas field trip, Morocco, 2007). These remote field trips provided an extraordinary crucible for African geologists and African geology. The fifth and final field trip in late 2007 completed a geological cross-section from the Anti-Atlas through the High Atlas to reach the Meseta in Morocco. The IGCP497 'The Rheic Ocean' has also been associated with this project. Indeed a main conclusion of this study is that the boundaries of cratons are susceptible to reactivation or even to leave the craton as occurred when the peri-Gondwanan terranes left the West African craton, generating the Rheic Ocean.

This Special Publication would not have been possible without the participation of the contributors to this volume. We are grateful for their submissions and their willingness to enhance their papers as much as possible. The support of many colleagues who acted as reviewers is also greatly appreciated. Their conscientious work was necessary to ensure

the high quality of this volume. We are indebted to them and we warmly thank them.

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