

THE USE OF THE $\text{CaO}-\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3-\text{MgO}$ TRIANGLE
TO CHARACTERIZE ROCKS AS KOMATIITIC

By

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Abstract: In this contribution evidences are presented showing that the $\text{CaO}-\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3-\text{MgO}$ trigonal diagram after Coleman (1977), cannot be used generally for the characterization of rocks as komatiitie or not. The use of the term «ophiolitic» is also discussed in connection with the nature and the age of the Thessaloniki gabbros.

The motive for writing this paper was given by a critical note by Dimitriadis (1980), who using chemical data of the Thessaloniki gabbros (data from Sapountzis, 1979), plotted on the $\text{CaO}-\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3-\text{MgO}$ Coleman's (1977) diagram, expressed the opinion that the Thessaloniki gabbros are unlikely to be related to komatiites. He also discussed the nature as well as the age of these rocks, points for which we would like to give an answer.

I believe that Dimitriadis is wrong when saying that «The paper by Sapountzis (1979) on the Thessaloniki gabbros does not adequately examine the possibility that they might be members of an ophiolite suite.....» because this is obvious self-evident from Sapountzis (1979).

Introducing the «Thessaloniki gabbros» (Sapountzis, 1979) I write that these rocks are part of a basic and ultrabasic series which belongs to the Mercier's (1966) Peonian unit of the Axios (Vardar) zone and that Hiessleitner (1951) and Monod (1965) distinguished in this unit various types of basic and ultrabasic rocks the mineralogy of which has been described in detail by Sapountzis (1969).

The sequence of these basic and ultrabasic rocks is also shown on the geological map of the Thessaloniki area (Sapountzis, 1979). I believe that this sequence implies «ophiolites» as they have been defined by Coleman (1977) who writes: «Ophiolite, as used by those present at the G.S.A. Penrose Conference on ophiolites, refers to a distinctive assemblage of mafic and ultramafic rocks. It should not be used as a

rock name or as a lithologic unit in mapping». In addition in a figure of a paper (Sapountzis, 1980) which had been sent for publication four months before the Dimitriadis (1980) note, are shown all basic and ultrabasic rocks (ophiolites) that occur in the part of Axios zone lying SE of Thessaloniki and up to Chalkidiki Peninsula (Fig. 1). So I think that Dimitriadis has added nothing to «The Thessaloniki gabbros» by writing at the end of his note: «The writer feels that the geology, mineralogy and geochemistry all clearly favour the interpretation that the Thessaloniki gabbros are mafic cumulates of an ophiolitic sequence» because (a) he has given no new geological, mineralogical or geochemical evidences apart from those given by Sapountzis (1979), (b) the characterization of these rocks as cumulates was given by Sapountzis (1979), and (c) the ophiolitic nature of them is self-evident from Sapountzis (1979).

The age determination of these rocks was not the subject of «The Thessaloniki gabbros» so that a chance to be given for criticism and discussion at the very moment. It was done by Sapountzis (1969) and I assume that Dimitriadis found the referred age of 1300-1400 m.y. in this paper. He must, however, be more careful because nowhere in this or other papers I write that the Precambrian age quoted depends on a single K/Ar whole rock determination. In p. 101 of this is referred that the age determination, done on a sample from one locality with K/Ar whole rock analysis, was found to be 1400 m.y. Since this date was considered too high in comparison with the opinions of the researchers of that time (Osswald; 1938; Mercier 1961, 1966) who assumed a Mezozoic age, a second age determination was done with the same method and on a sample from the same occurrence but 200m apart from the first locality. The date was about the same 1300 m.y. So it was suggested that these rocks should be of at least Precambrian age.

The problem, however, stayed open and for its solution it was proposed a more detailed study proved by geological data.

A recently published paper (Sapountzis, 1980) gives some more data concerning the age of the gabbroic rocks and the ophiolitic series of the southeast part of the Axios zone and the author of the discussion can find information in this paper. What I can say here is that again the data given - radiochronological, microtectonical, mineralogical and geological - contradict the Mezozoic age of these rocks and argue for an older age. In the future I hope that the age problem of these gabbros will be clarified with a more detailed and widespread inve-

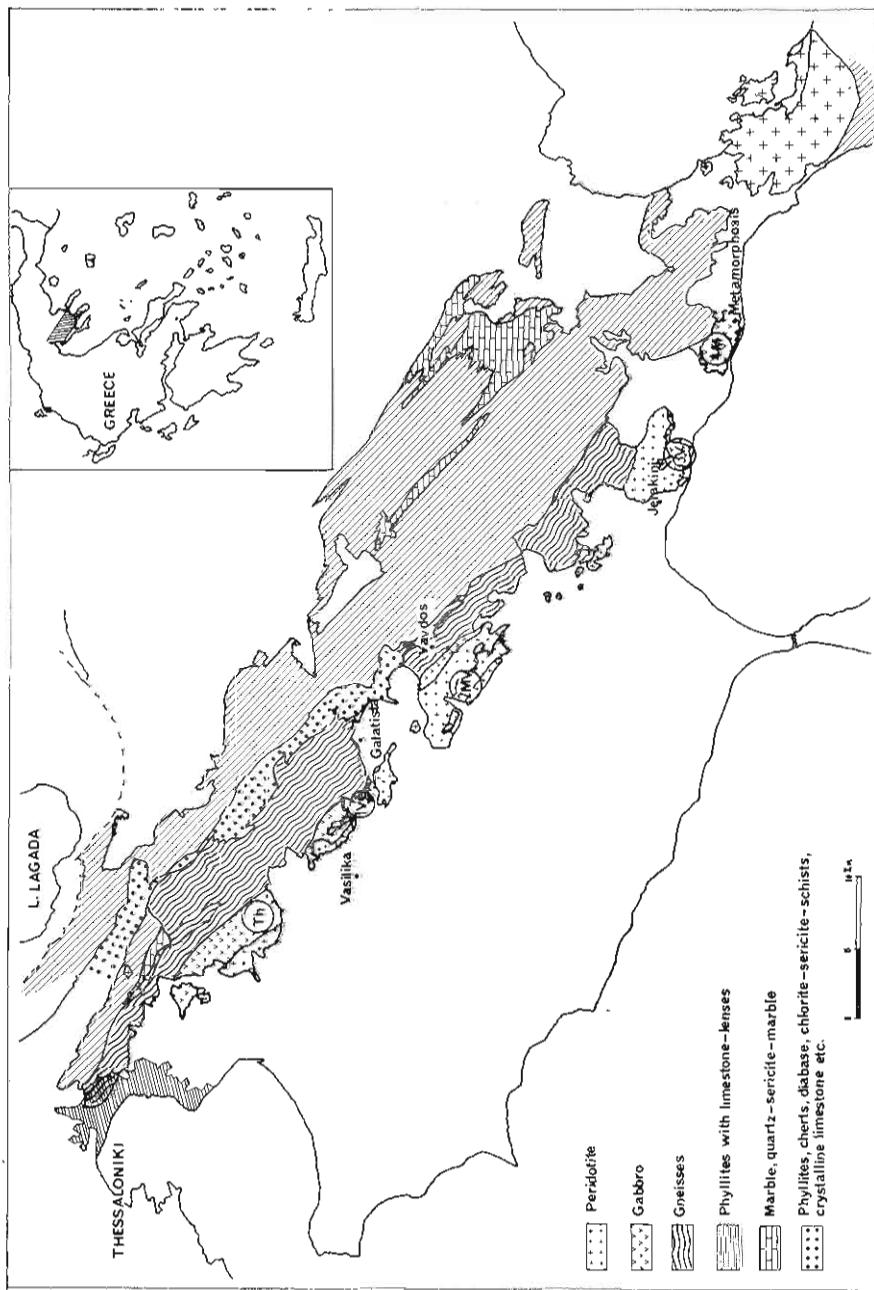


Fig. 1. Ophiolitic sequence in the southeastern part of the Axios (Vardar) zone (North Greece).

stigation and not only just by referring to the literature data as Dimitriadis done.

Concerning the origin of the Thessaloniki gabbros whether they are of komatiitic parentage or not my opinion is clear.

I have just said that «The tholeiitic nature of the rocks is indicated by the normative composition of pyroxene, the contents in Si, Al and Ti and also by the coexisting Ca-rich and Ca-poor pyroxenes which frequently contain exsolution lamellae. Following Yoder & Tilley's (1962) magma classification, these rocks belong to the olivine-tholeiitic magma type... These rocks do, however, exhibit similarities with some Archaean basic rocks believed to be derived from peridotitic basaltic-komatiite type magmas».

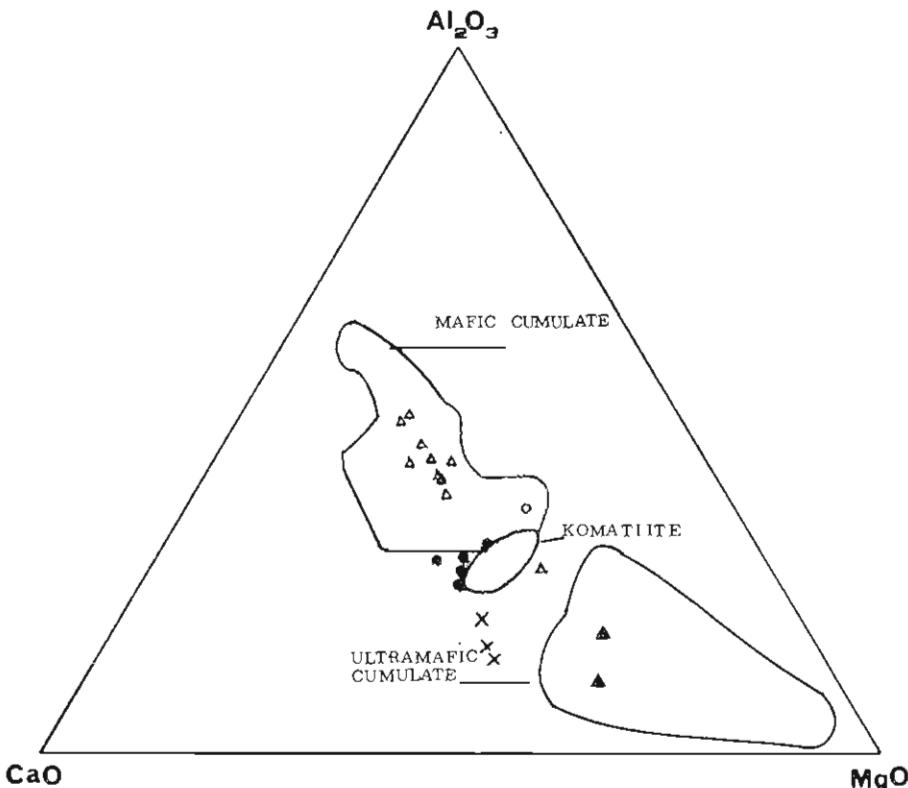


Fig. 2. $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-CaO-MgO}$ diagram after Coleman (1977). The samples plotted are: Gabbroic rocks from the Thessaloniki gabbros (●), gabbroic rocks of the Yilmia sills (Δ) after McCall (1973), and basaltic komatiites-Badplaas (X), Barberton (○) and Geluk (Δ) type after Viljoen & Viljoen (1970). None of the samples plot inside the komatiite field of Coleman (op. cit.).

Nevertheless, Dimitriadis, based on a plot of analysed Thessaloniki gabbros (data from Sapountzis, 1979) on the CaO-Al₂O₃-MgO Coleman's (1977) diagram, quotes: «.... shows they all lie inside the area outside the komatiite field, and thus are unlikely to be of komatiitic parentage».

I disagree with his opinion because:

a) His plot is not entirely correct as five of the analysed samples (8, 35, 3, 18 and 22) are projected outside the field of the mafic cumulates (ophiolites) and very close or on the margins of the komatiites field (Fig. 2).

b) The plots on the same diagram (Fig. 2) of gabbroic rocks of the Yilmia sills, which according to McCall (1973) approximate in average composition to basaltic Komatiite-Barberton type after Viljoen and Viljoen (1969) - as well as of basaltic komatiites - Badplaas, Barberton and Geluk type after Viljoen (1970) - fall outside the komatiite field of Coleman (1977). Note that the term komatiite was introduced by Viljoen and Viljoen.

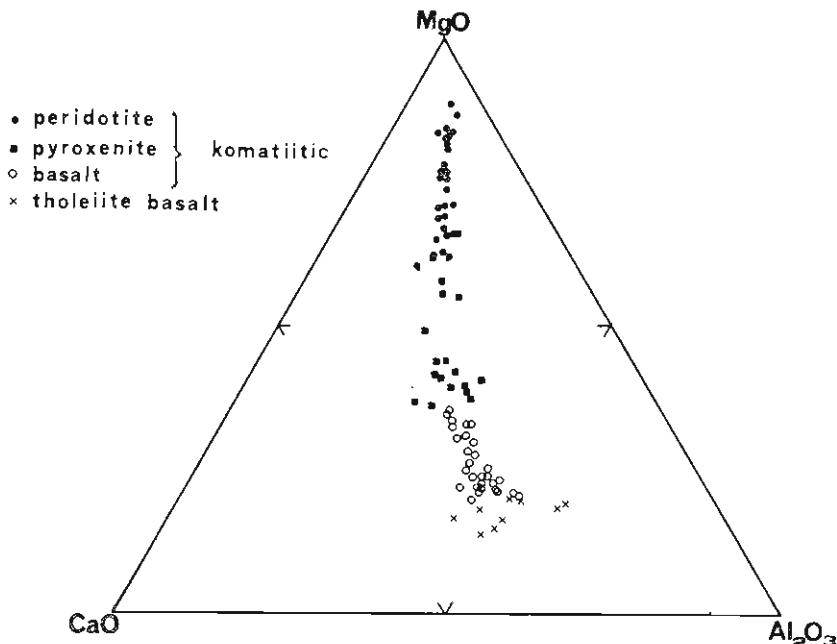


Fig. 3. MgO-CaO-Al₂O₃ diagram showing composition of komatiitic and tholeiitic lavas of Munro Township. (After Arndt N.T. et. al., 1977).

c) Arndt et al., (1977) used also the CaO-Al₂O₃-MgO diagram but their analysed komatiitic and tholeiitic rocks plot on a very wide range (Fig. 3).

d) To quote Coleman's (1977, p. 46) comments on this diagram«... it is interesting to note where the average oceanic tholeiite and the more primitive komatiites fall on this diagram. It seems possible that perhaps the original liquid from which ophiolite layered sequences crystallized may have been similar to the komatiites and that at least some oceanic tholeiites may owe their composition to partial fractionation of a more magnesium-rich parent liquid».

e) Francis & Hynes (1979) proposed that the tholeiitic and komatiitic lavas of the volcanic bodies of New Quebec were comagmatic the former derived from the later via low-pressure crystal fractionation.

f) Arndt et al., (1977) concluded that «.....as in case with other groups of rocks, it is difficult to specify distinguishing characteristics of a single rock type such as a peridotitic komatiite; a more practical method is to treat the rocks as members of a series and to define the characteristics of the series as a whole».

In conclusion I believe that Dimitriadis is quite wrong to discuss the Thessaloniki gabbros analyses in the CaO-Al₂O₃-MgO triangle in trying to clarify the origin of the magma because I think there is some magic vacant space between mafic and ultramafic cumulates where komatiites fall. It is my opinion that the separation of cumulate composition into mafic and ultramafic cumulates with komatiites in between is really not justified. There must be some sort of transition in composition between mafic and ultramafic cumulates and I believe that komatiite composition would have to be defined in a more precise way before any further discussion followed on whether rocks were of komatiitic parentage or not.

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η ΧΡΗΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΤΡΙΓΩΝΟΥ CaO-Al₂O₃-MgO ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΙΣΜΟ ΠΕΤΡΩΜΑΤΩΝ ΩΣ ΚΟΜΑΤΙΤΙΚΩΝ

‘Υπδ

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Στήν έργασία αύτή έξετάζεται ή χρησιμοποίηση τοῦ τριγωνικοῦ διαγράμματος προβολής CaO-Al₂O₃-MgO γιὰ τὸ χαρακτηρισμὸ μελετουμένων πετρωμάτων ὡς κοματιτικῶν ἢ μῆ. ‘Η ἀφορμὴ γιὰ τὴ μελέτη δόθηκε ἀπὸ σημείωση κριτικῆς στήν έργασία «The Thessaloniki gabbros» Sa-pountzis (1979) ποὺ ἔγινε ἀπὸ τὸν Δημητριάδη (1980) ὁ ὄποιος μὲ τὴ χρησιμοποίηση τοῦ παραπάνω διαγράμματος προσπάθησε νὰ δεῖξε ὅτι οἱ γάβροι τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης εἶναι ἀπίθανο νὰ ἔχουν κοματιτικὴ καταγωγή.

Παρὰ τὸ γεγονός, ὅτι στήν έργασία «οἱ γάβροι τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης» δὲν ἔκφράστηκε ποτέ ἡ ἀποψὴ πώς τὰ πετρώματα αὐτὰ προέκυψαν ἀπὸ κοματιτικὸ γενετικὸ μάγμα, ἡ χρησιμοποίηση τοῦ διαγράμματος CaO-Al₂O₃-MgO γιὰ τὸ σκοπὸ αὐτὸ ἀπὸ τὸ Δημητριάδη (1980), θεωροῦμε ὅτι ἔγινε ἐντελῶς ἐσφαλμένα γιὰ τοὺς παρακάτω λόγους:

α) ‘Η προβολὴ τῶν δειγμάτων αὐτὴ καθ’ ἔσωτὴ δὲν εἶναι πλήρως σωστὴ γιατὶ πέντε ἀπὸ αὐτὰ (τὰ 3, 8, 18, 22 καὶ 35) προβάλλονται ἀπὸ τὸ Δημητριάδη λανθασμένα.

β) ‘Ο Coleman (1977) ἀπὸ έργασία τοῦ ὄποιου πάρθηκε τὸ διάγραμμα ποὺ προαναφέραμε, σὲ σχόλιο ποὺ κάμνει στήν σελίδα 46 ἀναφέρει ὅτι, εἶναι πιθανὸ τὸ ἀρχικὸ ὑλικό, ἀπὸ τὸ ὄποιο προέκυψαν οἱ σωρειτικὲς ὀφειολιθικὲς σειρές, νὰ εἶναι ὅμοιο μὲ ἐκεῖνο τῶν κοματιτῶν. ‘Επομένως, κατὰ τὴ γνώμη μας, καὶ ὅταν ἀκόμη τὰ δείγματα προβάλλονται σὲ διάφορες περιοχές ἀπὸ αὐτὴν ποὺ καθορίζεται στὸ τριγωνικὸ διάγραμμα γιὰ τοὺς κοματιίτες εἶναι πιθανὸ αὐτὰ νὰ ἔχουν κοματιτικὴ γένεση.

γ) Καὶ ἄλλοι ἔρευνητες ὅμως π.χ. (Francis & Hynes, 1979) ἀποδεικνύουν τὴν γένεση θολειιτικῶν ρευστῶν ἀπὸ ἀρχικὸ κοματιτικὸ μάγμα.

Γενικότερα ὅμως ὅταν προσπαθήσουμε νὰ προβάλλουμε στὸ διάγραμμα ποὺ προαναφέραμε ὄρισμένα πετρώματα, ποὺ χαρακτηρίστηκαν σὲ ̄ργα-

σίες ώς κοματιτικά άπό διάφορους έρευνητές και ιδιαίτερα άπό τους Viljoen & Viljoen (1969, 1970) που έκαναν πρώτοι την είσαγωγή του δρου τῶν κοματιτῶν, παρατηροῦμε ότι αύτά προβάλλονται σε διάφορους χώρους τοῦ τριγώνου και μάλιστα έξω άπό την περιοχή που καθορίζεται άπό τὸν Coleman γιὰ τοὺς κοματίτες.

Συμπερασματικά λοιπὸν θεωροῦμε ότι ὁ Δημητριάδης κάνει μεγάλο λάθος όταν προσπαθεῖ νὰ καθορίσει τὴ γένεση τοῦ μάγματος μὲ τὴν προβολὴ τῶν χημικῶν ἀναλύσεων τῶν γάββρων στὸ τρίγωνο CaO-Al₂O₃-MgO. Στὸ τρίγωνο αὐτὸ κατὰ τὴν γνώμη μας θὰ λέγαμε ότι ὑπάρχει ἐνα περίεργο χάσμα μεταξὺ τῶν βασικῶν καὶ ὑπερβασικῶν σωρειτικῶν πετρωμάτων ὃπου πέφτουν οἱ κοματίτες. Γενικότερα δὲ πιστεύουμε ότι ἡ σύσταση τῶν κοματιτῶν θὰ πρέπει νὰ καθοριστεῖ μὲ κάποιον ἀκριβέστερο τρόπο πρὸς ἀκολουθήσει ὅποιαδήποτε συζήτηση γιὰ νὰ ἀποφανθοῦμε ἂν πετρώματα ἔχουν κοματιτικὴ γένεση ἢ οὔχι.

Σχετικά μὲ τὴν ἡλικία τῶν πετρωμάτων αὐτῶν δὲν ὑπῆρχε θέμα κριτικῆς, γιατὶ αὐτὴ δὲν ἦταν στὸ ἀντικείμενο τῆς ἐργασίας «οἱ γάββροι τῆς Θεσ/νίκης» ἀλλὰ παλαιότερης (Σαπουντζῆς, 1969).

Ἐν τούτοις ὁ Δημητριάδης κάνει ἀστοχὴ καὶ ἀτεκμηρίωτη κατὰ τὴ γνώμη μας κριτική. Κατ’ ἄρχας δὲν ἀκριβολογεῖ όταν ἀναφέρει ότι ἡ ἡλικία προσδιορίστηκε μὲ μιὰ μόνο ἀνάλυση K/Ar. Στὴν ἐργασία, Σαπουντζῆς (1969) ὃπου βρῆκε τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἡλικίας τῶν 1300-1400 ἑκ. ἐτῶν ποὺ παραβίτει (γιατὶ μόνο σ’ αὐτὴν ἀναφέρονται αὐτά), θὰ ἔπειπε νὰ προσέξει ότι ὁ προσδιορισμὸς ἔγινε δύο φορὲς σὲ δείγματα ἀπὸ διάφορες περιοχές. Ἔπειπε ἀκόμη νὰ προσέξει ότι τὸ πρόβλημα ἔμεινε ἀνοικτὸ μιὰ καὶ ἡ ἡλικία θεωρήθηκε πολὺ μεγάλη σχετικὰ μὲ τὶς ἀπόψεις ποὺ ἐπικρατοῦσαν μέχρι τότε. Σὲ πρόσφατη ἐργασία ὅμως, Σαπουντζῆς (1980) ποὺ στάλθηκε γιὰ δημοσίευση τέσσερις μῆνες νωρίτερα ἀπὸ τὴν κριτικὴ τοῦ Δημητριάδη, μπορεῖ νὰ βρεῖ κάθε ἐνδιαφερόμενος πρόσθετα στοιχεῖα σχετικὰ μὲ τὸ πρόβλημα αὐτό. Πάντως πρέπει νὰ σημειωθεῖ ότι καὶ πάλι τὰ ραδιοχρονολογικά, δρυκτολογικά, γεωλογικὰ καὶ τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς μικροτεκτονικῆς ἔρχονται σὲ ἀντίθεση μὲ τὴ μεσοζωϊκὴ ἡλικία ποὺ ὑποστηρίζουν πολλοὶ ἔρευνητές καὶ συνηγοροῦν γιὰ μιὰ παλιότερη ἡλικία.

Ἐλπίζουμε πῶς στὸ μέλλον τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς ἡλικίας τῶν πετρωμάτων αὐτῶν θὰ διαλευκανθεῖ ὕστερα ἀπὸ λεπτομερὴ καὶ ἐκτεταμένη ἔρευνα καὶ οὕτι μὲ τὴν ἀπλὴ παράθεση τῆς γνωστῆς σὲ ὅλους βιβλιογραφίας ποὺ κάνει ὁ Δημητριάδης.

Στὴ συνέχεια ἔξετάζεται ἡ χρησιμοποίηση τοῦ δρου ὁφειόλιθοι καὶ ἀπορρίπτεται ἡ ἀποψὴ τοῦ Δημητριάδη (1980) ότι δὲν ἔξετάστηκε ἀπὸ τὸ Σαπουντζῆ (1979) ἡ περίπτωση πῶς οἱ γάββροι τῆς Θεσ/νίκης μπορεῖ νὰ εἶναι μέλη μιᾶς ὁφειολιθικῆς σειρᾶς. Καὶ τοῦτο γιατὶ αὐτὸ θεωρεῖται ότι εἶναι προ-

φανές και αύταπόδεικτο, τόσο άπό τὰ γραφόμενα στὴν εἰσαγωγὴ τῆς ἐργασίας «οἱ γάββροι τῆς Θεσ/νίκης» δσο καὶ ἀπὸ τὸ γεωλογικὸ χάρτη ποὺ ἐπισυνάπτεται σ' αὐτῇ, ὅπου ἀναφέρεται ὅτι οἱ γάββροι ἀποτελοῦν μέλη μιᾶς σειρᾶς βασικῶν και ὑπερβασικῶν πετρωμάτων. Συνεπῶς τὰ πετρώματα αὐτὰ ἀποτελοῦν μὲ βεβαιότητα ὁφειόλιθους, ὅπως τουλάχιστον ἀποδόθηκε ὁ ὄρος αὐτὸς ἀπὸ εἰδικὸ συνέδριο γεωλόγων γιὰ τοὺς ὁφειόλιθους ποὺ ἀναφέρεται ἀπὸ τὸν Coleman (1977), ὁ ὅποῖς γράφει ὅτι: «Ο ὄρος ὁφειόλιθοι, ὅπως χρησιμοποιήθηκε ἀπὸ τὰ μέλη τοῦ συνεδρίου G.S.A. Penrose γιὰ τοὺς ὁφειόλιθους ἀναφέρεται σὲ μιὰ διάκριτη ἀκολουθία βασικῶν και ὑπερβασικῶν πετρωμάτων και ὅτι δὲν πρέπει νὰ χρησιμοποιεῖται σὰν ὅνομα πετρώματος ἢ σὰν λιθολογικὴ μονάδα στὴ χαρτογράφηση».

Τέλος στὸ συμπέρασμα ποὺ καταλήγει ὁ Δημητριάδης στὴν κριτικὴ ὅτι: «Ἡ γεωλογία, ἡ δρυκτολογία και ἡ γεωχημεία συνηγοροῦν πὼς οἱ γάββροι τῆς Θεσ/νίκης εἶναι βασικὰ σωρειτικὰ πετρώματα μιᾶς ὁφειολιθικῆς σειρᾶς», εἶναι βέβαιο ὅτι δὲν προσθέτει τίποτε τὸ καινούριο γιατί: α) Δὲν δίνεται ἀπὸ αὐτὸν κανένα γεωλογικό, δρυκτολογικό και γεωχημικό στοιχεῖο πέρα ἀπὸ αὐτὰ ποὺ δόθηκαν ἀπὸ μᾶς, β) ὁ χαρακτηρισμὸς τῶν πετρωμάτων αὐτῶν ὡς σωρειτικῶν δόθηκε και μάλιστα γιὰ πρώτη φορὰ ἀπὸ μᾶς και γ) ἡ ὁφειολιθικὴ φύση εἶναι προφανής και αύταπόδεικτη, ἀπὸ τὰ γραφόμενά μας στὴν ἀντίστοιχη ἐργασία.

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