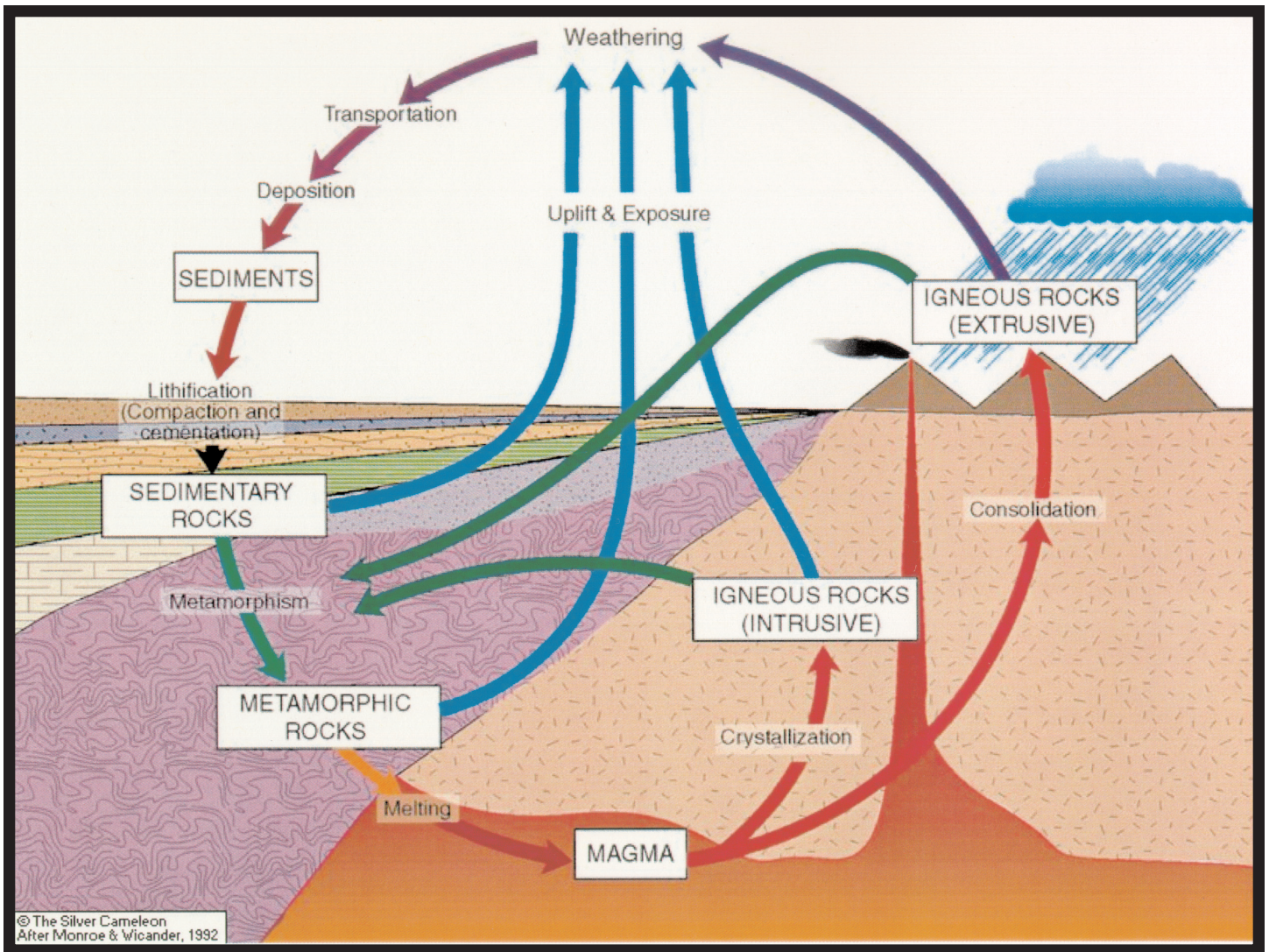


THE ROCK CYCLE



IGNEOUS ROCK

Deep in the earth's crust there are places where the rock has melted into magma which is a mixture of crystals and liquid rock. Sometimes the magma erupts out of the earth through a volcano and then it is called lava. When the lava cools and hardens on the earth's surface, it is called volcanic igneous rock. If the magma cools and hardens under the ground, it is called plutonic igneous rock.

SEDIMENTARY ROCK

Wind and water cause erosion, breaking off pieces of rock and carrying them from one place to another. Gradually these pieces along with sand, pebbles, shells and plant matter gather into layers and is called sediment. Over a long period of time the sediment hardens into rock. That is how sedimentary rock is formed. Most of the rock on the earth's surface is sedimentary.

METAMORPHIC ROCK

Just as cookie dough changes as it is baked, rock changes as it is heated, squeezed or both. Rocks deep within the earth are put through intense heat and pressure. In time, these forces change sedimentary or igneous rock into another type of rock which is called a metamorphic rock.