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Provenance evolution and chemostratigraphy of a Palaeozoic submarine fan-complex: Tanqua Karoo Basin, South Africa

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Abstract

Geochemical studies of mudstones from boreholes in the deep water Permian Skoorsteenberg Formation in the Karoo Basin of South Africa were undertaken to assess stratigraphic and provenance evolution and the feasibility of chemostratigraphic correlation in this sedimentary setting. Data for 38 major and trace elements including rare earth elements were obtained from four boreholes from 304 samples covering proximal to distal parts of the turbidite complex. There are geochemical signals displaying systematic stratigraphic trends across the basin that imply a continuous evolution of one pre-eminent source terrain that supplied the sediment. Changes in ratios of $\text{TiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$, $\text{La}/(\text{La} + \text{Lu})$ and $\text{Th}/(\text{Th} + \text{Y})$ suggest an increasingly mafic contribution to the depositional system with time. Perversely, however, increasing Zr and Hf abundance up the stratigraphic succession suggest that there was also an increase in the felsic content with time. These apparently conflicting interpretations may be explained by a single source terrain that became increasingly igneous (e.g. less sedimentary rocks being weathered and supplying new sediment) with time although the progressively denuded rocks must have been predominantly mafic. The chemical index of alteration decreased with time possibly suggesting that a less intense weathering regime in the hinterland developed with time. The geochemical data set from the Skoorsteenberg Formation in the Karoo Basin have demonstrated that chemostratigraphy is not an ideal approach to correlation since the geochemical signals have substantial statistical noise that is not easily related to lithology.

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1. Introduction

The conventional objective of provenance studies is to reconstruct and interpret the history of sediment supply, from initial erosion of a parent rock to the final burial of its detritus and so to eventually deduce the geographic location and characteristics of the source area. However, the source area of a sedimentary basin is seldom static through time. Under ideal circumstances, changes in the nature of the hinterland can be recognised in the ultimate composition of the sedimentary succession. Important factors such as the location and nature of source area, hinterland drainage pattern and pathways through which sediment has been transferred from source to basin and factors that influence the composition of the sedimentary rocks (e.g. relief,

climate, tectonic setting) generally evolve with time. This evolution may be recorded in the characteristics of the sediment that was deposited in the basin (Cox, Lowe, & Cullers, 1995; Davies & Pickering, 1999; Jarvis, Moreton, & Gerard, 1998; Nesbitt, MacRae, & Kronberg, 1990; Nesbitt & Young, 1982; Pearce & Jarvis, 1995; Vital, Stattegger, & Garbe-Schonberg, 1999).

Several studies have documented the viability of bulk elemental analysis in sedimentary provenance studies (Morton, Todd, & Haughton, 1991). Many of the early studies concentrated on the application of major element data (Bhatia, 1983; Roser & Korsch, 1986) however, with significant advances in analytical geochemistry (e.g. ICP-AES, ICP-MS) it is now also possible to reproduce high-quality data for minor and trace elements (see Jarvis and Jarvis (1992a,b) for reviews). Recent studies have emphasized the importance of the relative immobility of certain elements (e.g. REE, Th, Sc, Zr, Y) for the interpretation of

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sediment provenance (Davies & Pickering, 1999; Preston et al., 1998; Svendsen & Hartley, 2002).

Correlation of biostratigraphically-barren strata in the sub-surface is difficult and is often achieved based only on broadly similar lithological or petrophysical properties. To improve the stratigraphic resolution of such sections, heavy mineral analyses, palaeomagnetic data and isotope techniques are sometimes applied. An alternative, rapid, and relatively low cost method of performing correlation is chemostratigraphy, or ‘chemical stratigraphy’. This technique involves the geochemical characterization and then correlation of strata using major and trace element geochemistry and has been useful when applied to sequences with poor biostratigraphic control (Jarvis et al., 1998; Pearce & Jarvis, 1995; Preston et al., 1998).

In a pilot study of Permian deep-water mudstones of the Skoorsteenberg Formation that crop out in the Tanqua area of the Karoo Basin, Andersson and Worden (in press) applied geochemical and spectral gamma ray techniques. Based on conventional sedimentary logging, two types of mudstones were identified; thick sequences of interfan mudstones that were deposited between sand rich submarine fans and intrafan mudstones which are thinner units deposited between sand layers within each fan. Geochemically-systematic differences between interfan and intrafan mudstones were recorded. The interfan mudstones showed lower SiO_2 , $\text{TiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$, Zr and Y values than the intrafan mudstones. These differences were interpreted to be controlled by slightly different source lithologies within the same hinterland and changes in relative sea level exposing different parts of the hinterland to erosion and sediment supply. An alternative interpretation involving systematically fluctuating weathering conditions in the hinterland regions was rejected because of seemingly uniform chemical index of alteration (CIA) values for both types of mudstones. The similarity of the rare earth element patterns between the interfan and intrafan mudstones suggested that the two types of mudstones were probably genetically linked and it was unlikely that the two types of mudstone were supplied from radically different landmasses. Stratigraphic trends of $\text{TiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ ratios for both types of mudstones were explained by gradual denudation, exposure and weathering of the different lithologies within the same source area. A relative uranium increase, for both types of mudstones, in the depositional dip direction was recorded from the spectral gamma ray data. The absence of correlation of other uranium-associated characteristics (e.g. total organic carbon) led the authors to interpret this trend as the result of reduced clastic dilution of uranium-bearing pelagic rain into the basin.

The study reported here used core samples of the Skoorsteenberg Formation and aimed to further investigate the inorganic geochemistry of these mudstones as indicators of source area and provenance evolution. Core samples have several advantages over outcrop samples: (1) they have no recent weathering to obscure and pervert the geochemical data, (2) it is easier to obtain a large sample population (note

that mudstone is commonly poorly exposed at outcrop), and (3) there is a better overall stratigraphic control (core material provides a continuous record of the stratigraphy) between samples in any given section. A chemostratigraphic approach was also tested to evaluate this technique in comparison to traditional stratigraphic correlation methods.

Four cores from the Tanqua area were sampled for geochemical analyses. The cores were drilled as part of the European Union Framework 5 NOMAD project in order to develop a predictive 3D geological model for deep-water sediments from data collected from the Tanqua submarine fan-complex. In addition to extensive sedimentary logging covering most of the available outcrop and core, comprehensive geological digital data were collected in order to produce detailed correlation panels. Wireline logs and borehole image data (FMI) from the wells were incorporated into the extensive dataset to produce a refined model of the Tanqua submarine fan-complex. There are no biostratigraphic signals with which to correlate the sediments. To improve the stratigraphic control and the prospects for a chemostratigraphic interpretation of the submarine fan-system, a much higher density sampling strategy from the cores was adopted in comparison to the outcrop.

In this paper, we will address four relevant questions inherited from previous geochemical studies on outcrop material.

1. Are there stratigraphic successions with diagnostic geochemical signatures, i.e. ‘fingerprints’, that are uniform across the submarine fan-system and can be correlated from core to core?
2. How did the provenance of the Skoorsteenberg Formation mudstones evolve through time and what geochemical trace of this evolution can we see in the sedimentary record?
3. How many source terrains were actively supplying sediment to the Tanqua submarine fan-complex?
4. Were different source terrains active during deposition of intrafan mudstones and interfan mudstones?

2. Geological background

The Karoo Basin is a Palaeozoic sedimentary basin (Figs. 1 and 2) developed on top of the Archean Kaapvaal Province, the Kheis Province, the Kibaran Namaqua-Natal Belt and the Pan-African Saldania-Gariep Province (Cole, 1992). The Karoo Basin is generally interpreted to be a foreland basin that formed in front of an advancing thrust and fold belt, the Cape Fold Belt, which wrapped around the southwestern margin of South Africa (Hällbich, 1992; Theron, 1969; Figs. 1 and 2). Following the terminology of Dickinson (1974), the Karoo Basin is a retro-arc foreland basin associated with the formation of the Cape Fold Belt and a magmatic arc south of the fold belt has been inferred (see Johnson (1991) for reviews). The Cape Fold Belt to

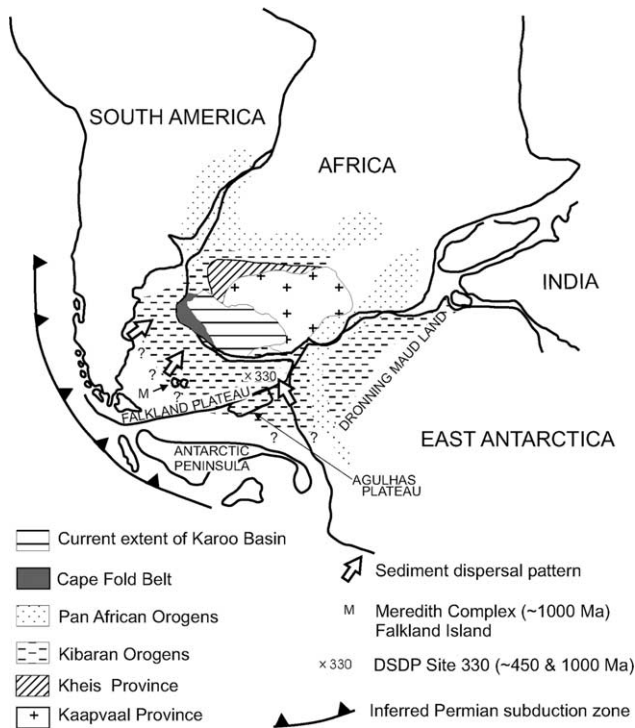


Fig. 1. Location of the Karoo Basin and crustal terranes of South Africa, Antarctica and the Falkland Plateau prior to the break up of Gondwana, modified after De Wit (1977), Duane et al. (1989), Thomas, Agenbacht, Cornell, and Moore (1994).

the south and west of the Karoo Basin contains Neoproterozoic and lower Palaeozoic sedimentary successions and a suite of Pan-African granitoids (Armstrong, de Wit, Reid, York, & Zartman, 1998; Da Silva et al., 2000; Rozendaal, Gresse, Scheepers, & Le Roux, 1999).

The sedimentary fill of the Karoo Basin, the Karoo Supergroup (SACS, 1980), can be divided in the south-western Karoo basin into the Dwyka Group (Westphalian to

early Permian), Ecca Group (Permian) and the Beaufort Group (Permo-Triassic; Fig. 3). The Dwyka Group consists of glacial deposits. Following the Dwyka deglaciation and the concomitant marine transgression, mudstones of the Prince Albert and Whitehill Formations of the Ecca Group were deposited in a large shallow sea that was initially marine but later became brackish (Visser, 1991). The overlying distal turbidites and volcanic ashes of the Collingham Formation provide evidence of active arc volcanism to the south. Mudstones of the Tierberg Formation rest on top of the Collingham Formation and are succeeded by the Skoorsteenberg Formation, the subject of this paper, which contains sand-rich turbidites interbedded with mudstones (Wickens, 1984).

Previous sedimentological outcrop studies of the Skoorsteenberg Formation defined five extensive basin-floor fans in the Tanqua area (Figs. 3 and 4) called informally Fan 1 to Fan 5 from oldest to youngest (Wickens, 1984, 1992). More recent work reinterpreted Fan 5 as a slope fan (Johnson, Flint, Hinds, & Wickens, 2001). Laterally extensive mudstones separate the sandstone-rich basin-floor fans. These interfan mudstones (Fig. 3) have been interpreted to represent times of maximum sediment starvation. The interfan mudstones are thought to be time-correlative with the whole transgressive system tract (TST) and most of the highstand system tract (HST) on the coeval shelf (Johnson et al., 2001), which is not exposed. Basin floor fans 2, 3 and 4 have been interpreted as composite sequences, each composed of several high frequency Exxon-type sequences in which extensive sand-rich ‘growth phases’ represent lowstand systems tracts (Johnson et al., 2001). Mud-prone units within the fans, here labelled intrafan mudstones, are less laterally extensive than the interfan mudstones and were interpreted by Johnson et al. (2001) as the corresponding TST/HST to the high frequency lowstand systems tracts. Fans 1, 2, 3 and 5 were emplaced in a north-easterly direction based on palaeocurrent data (Johnson et al., 2001; Wickens, 1994), while Fan 4 was interpreted as of westerly derivation (Bouma & Wickens, 1991).

Several authors have suggested that the Cape Fold Belt was the source area for the Ecca and Beaufort Groups of the Karoo Basin (Adelmann & Fiedler, 1998; Cole, 1992; Hålbich, 1983; Kingsley, 1981). This interpretation was challenged by Johnson (1991) who inferred a southern magmatic arc beyond (south of) the Cape Fold Belt as an additional source area for these successions. Electron microprobe studies of heavy minerals in sandstones from the Skoorsteenberg Formation, Vischkuil Formation (equivalent to the Tierberg Formation in the Tanqua area) and Laingsburg Formation by Scott (1997), suggested that the source for these successions also included a high-grade metamorphic terrain. He proposed that this source was located between the magmatic arc on top of the subduction zone and the rising, but still submerged fold-thrust belt.

It is possible that the late Palaeozoic thrust belt was wider than the present Cape Fold Belt. High-grade metamorphic

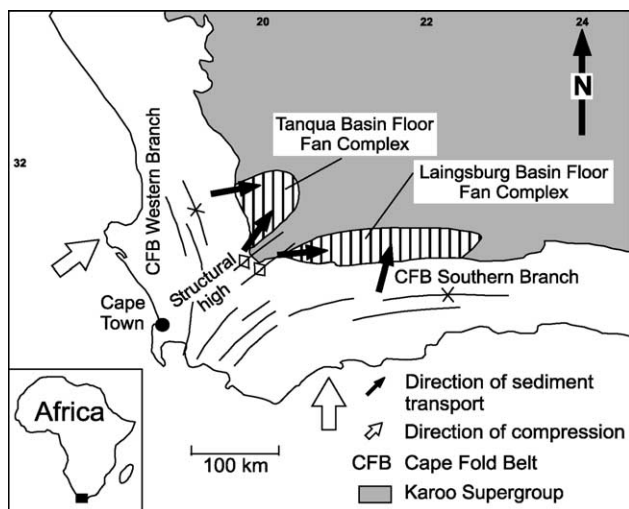


Fig. 2. Location of the Tanqua and Laingsburg basin floor fan-complex in the southwestern corner of the Karoo Basin shown in relation to the two branches of the Cape Fold Belt. (After Wickens, 1992).

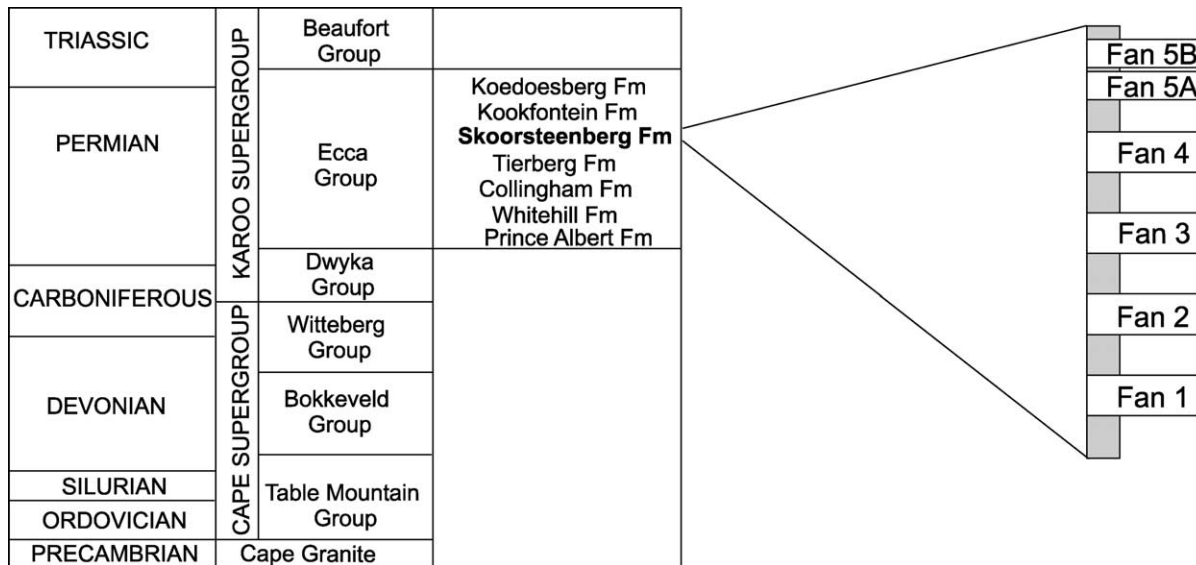


Fig. 3. Stratigraphy of the Cape and Karoo Supergroup in the Western Cape. A schematic stratigraphic log of the Skoorsteenberg Formation submarine fan succession is shown to the right in the figure. Within these fans (Fan 1–5B) are the less extensive intrafan mudstones interlayered while laterally extensive interfan mudstones are deposited between the sand-rich fans (after Bouma & Wickens, 1991).

rocks could have been brought into this belt by reactivation and reverse faulting of the Mesoproterozoic basement, which probably extended more than 100 km south of present-day South Africa (Fig. 1 Beckinsale, Tarney, Darbyshire, & Humm, 1977; De Wit, 1977; Marshall, 1994; Thomas, Jacobs, & Eglington, 2000). Andersson, Johansson, and Kumpulainen (2003) used Sm–Nd data from six sandstone samples from the Skoorsteenberg Formation, representing each of the five submarine fans, to conclude that there was either little or no variation in provenance between the different fans. They suggested that the source areas of the Skoorsteenberg Formation were probably a combination of the late Palaeozoic thrust belt and a contemporaneous magmatic arc to the south that is now not exposed.

Rowsell and De Swardt (1976) suggested that maximum palaeotemperatures in the main Karoo Basin were between 150 and 300 °C from vitrinite reflectance data. Zircon fission track analysis in the southwestern Karoo Basin indicated maximum palaeotemperatures somewhat greater than ~200 °C (Brown, Gallagher, & Duane, 1994). We do not deny the possibility that the mudstones of the Skoorsteenberg Formation may have been affected by later post-depositional diagenetic processes due to the burial history of the Karoo Basin. The diagenetic effects on the mudstones, however, would be similar and relatively symmetrical for the whole studied succession and the geochemical effects comparable. Moreover, the effects of diagenetic alteration on the geochemical signature will be minimal since these are low permeability rocks, thus whatever effects there are will be similar for all the mudstones thus rendering them insignificant.

3. Samples and methods

More than 1300 m of core from four slim boreholes (ns1–4) and three wide boreholes (nb2–4) were recovered

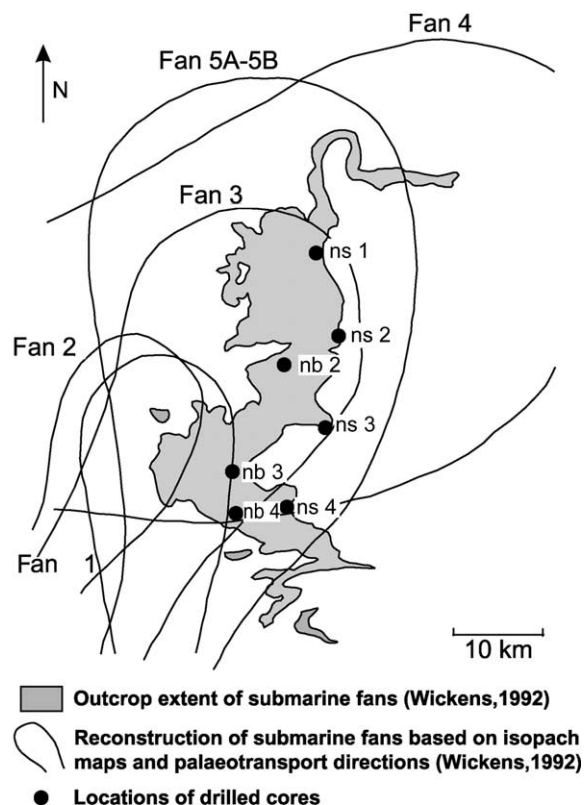


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of the outcrop extent of the Tanqua submarine fans and location of drilled cores (after Wickens, 1992).

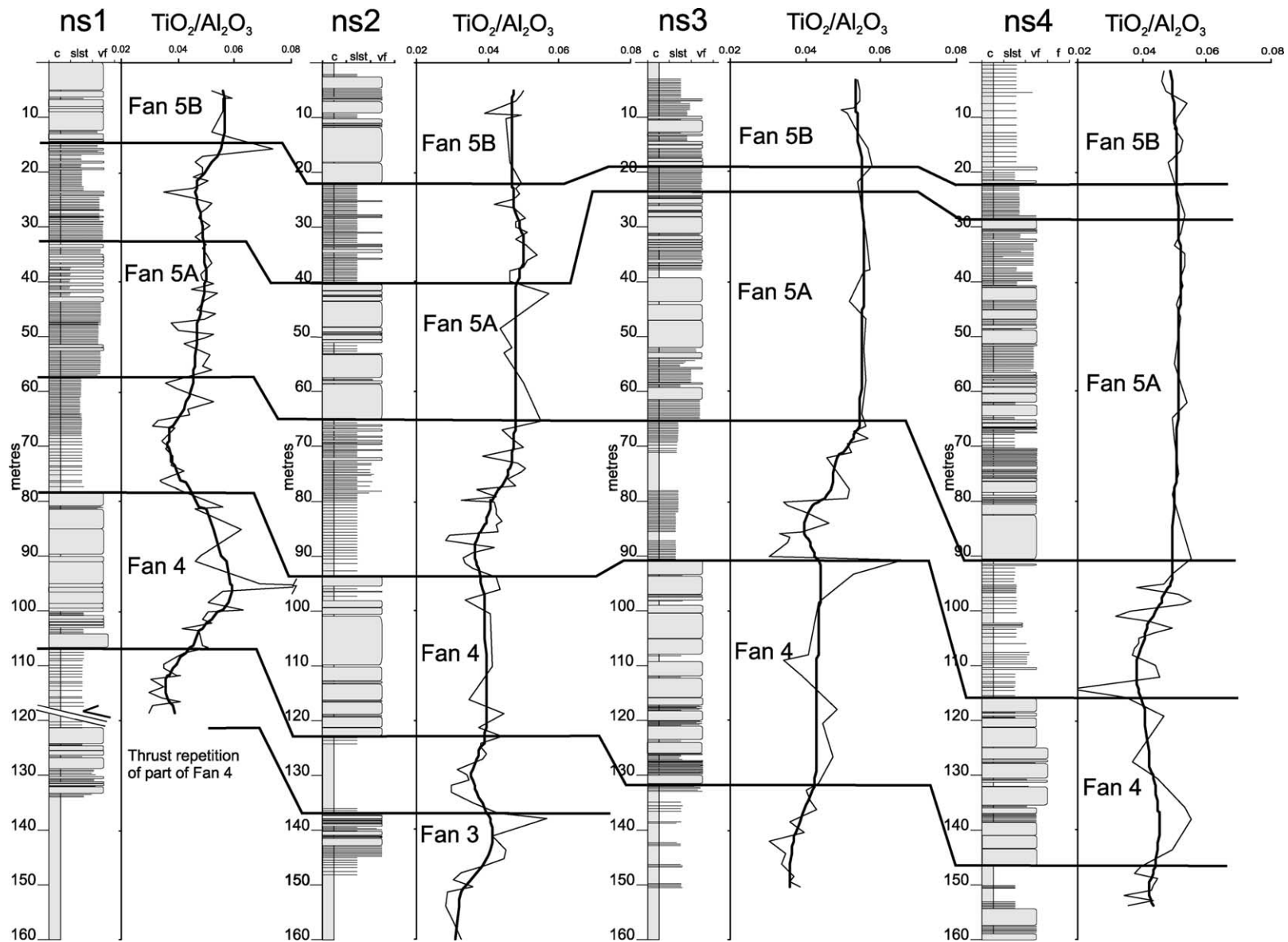


Fig. 5. Chemostratigraphic correlation between core ns1 and ns4 based on TiO_2/Al_2O_3 ratios. Thin lines represent measured element ratios and sample locations are indicated by breaks in the curves. Thick line is recalculated data using a Gaussian running mean filter to produce a smoother average curve. Note the negative peaks in the intervals below Fan 4 and between Fan 4 and Fan 5A in all four cores.

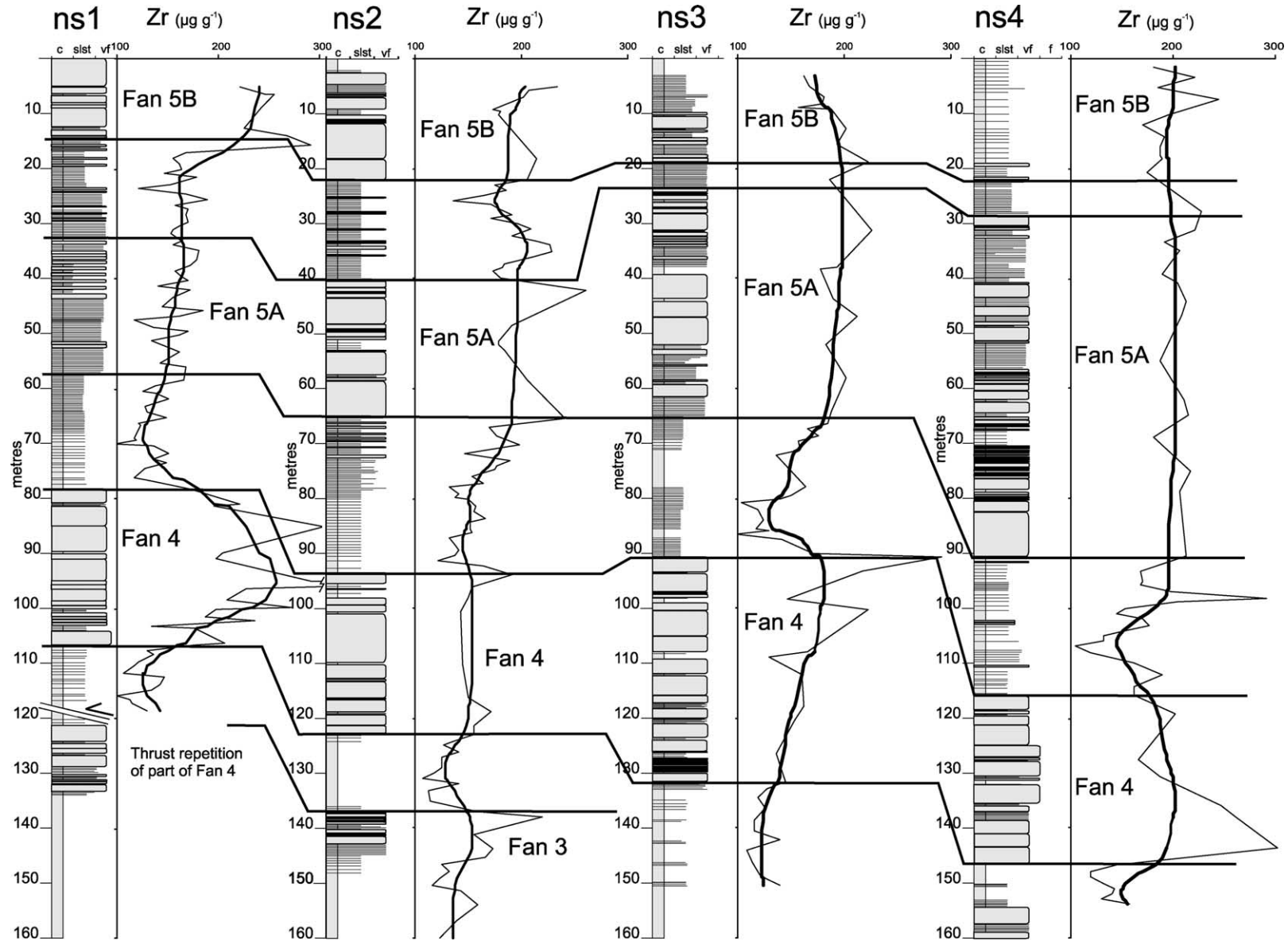


Fig. 6. Chemostratigraphic correlation between core ns1 and ns4 based on Zr data. Thin lines represent measured element ratios and sample locations are indicated by breaks in the curves. Thick line is recalculated data using a Gaussian running mean filter to produce a smoother average curve. Note the negative peaks in the intervals below Fan 4 and between Fan 4 and Fan 5A in all four cores.

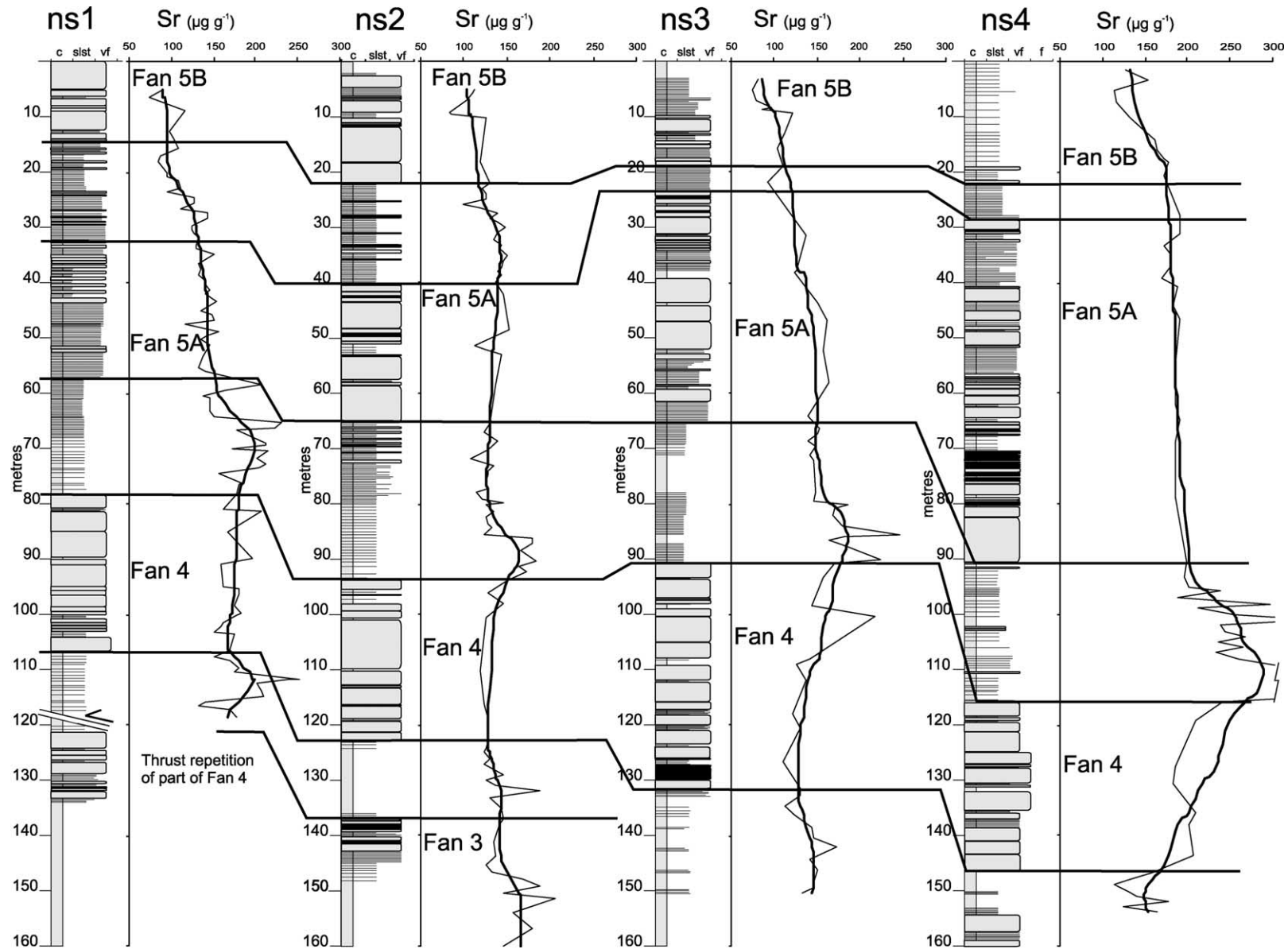


Fig. 7. Chemostratigraphic correlation between core ns1 and ns4 based on Sr data. Thin lines represent measured element ratios and sample locations are indicated by breaks in the curves. Thick line is recalculated data using a Gaussian running mean filter to produce a smoother average curve. Note the positive peak in the interval between Fan 4 and Fan 5A and the general decrease in Sr content from base of Fan 5A and up the stratigraphy in all four cores.

from the Skoorsteenbergh Formation (Fig. 4). The drill locations were designed to optimise examination of the sedimentary architecture and geometries of the fans. Recent and ongoing work within the NOMAD project (Hodgson et al., in prep) has developed a high resolution correlation of the submarine fans and their internal growth phases using a combination of core sedimentological logs and wireline logs from the boreholes, supported by more than 200 sedimentological logs of nearby outcrops plus continuous helicopter-based oblique aerial photography of the outcrops. The resultant physical correlation (Figs. 5–7) is considered to be accurate and thus forms a known template against which to test chemostratigraphic techniques.

For a better understanding of provenance and geochemical trends within the fan system 304 mudstone samples from cores ns1–4, covering Fan 3 to Fan 5; were chosen for the determination of major and trace elements. One centimetre slices of the core were cut approximately every metre from the fine-grained intervals between the sand-rich fans. Within the fans one centimetre slices of mudstone were sampled between the major sandstone units. Samples with interbedded coarser grained material were avoided to reduce the geochemical effects of grain size variations. The mudstone samples were jaw-crushed and pulverised in a tungsten carbide ring-and-puck mill. All samples were fused with LiBO₂ flux in a graphite crucible at 1000 °C for 30 min and dissolved in 5% HNO₃ (Jarvis & Jarvis, 1992a).

Samples from cores ns1, ns3 and ns4 were analysed at ACME Analytical Laboratories Ltd, Canada using an ICP emission spectrograph (Jarrel Ash AtomComp Model 975) for the determination of major elements and an ICP mass spectrometer (Perkin–Elmer Elan 6000) for trace elements. Analytical quality control included adding duplicate samples to measure the precision of the method, two analytical blanks to measure background and aliquots of in-house reference material SO-17, CSB and DS4 to measure accuracy in each analytical batch of 34 samples. SO-17, CSB and DS4 were certified in-house against 38 Certified Reference Materials including CANMET; SY-4, TILL-4, LKSD-4, STSD-1 and USGS; AGV-1, G-2, GSP-2 and W-2. Reproducibility for the major elements was generally better than 3% and for trace elements better than 5%. With reference to in-house standards (Table 1) absolute accuracy is considered generally to lie within the range of reproducibility.

Samples from core ns2 were analysed in the Department of Geology and Geochemistry, Stockholm University. The element abundances (SiO₂, Al₂O₃, Fe₂O₃^{Tot}, MgO, CaO, Na₂O, K₂O, TiO₂, MnO, Ba, Cr, Sc, Sr, V, Y, Zr) were measured using an ICP optical emission spectrometer (Spectro, Spectroflame Modula). Calibration curves were constructed for major and trace elements using standard reference materials. Analytical precision was determined by replicate analyses of multiple digestions of rock reference material SCo-1 and was within 3% for all major elements and 5% for trace elements. Accuracy was considered to lie

Table 1

Results from analyses of in-house materials for assessment of analytical data quality

Element	Mean <i>n</i> = 8	SD	Official values	Upper limit	Lower limit
<i>Majors (%)</i>					
SiO ₂	61.70	0.23	61.17	63.00	59.39
Al ₂ O ₃	13.80	0.10	13.72	14.13	13.32
Fe ₂ O ₃ T	5.79	0.07	5.80	5.98	5.63
MgO	2.35	0.02	2.33	2.40	2.25
CaO	4.64	0.05	4.64	4.78	4.50
Na ₂ O	4.12	0.06	4.09	4.21	3.97
K ₂ O	1.41	0.02	1.37	1.44	1.30
TiO ₂	0.60	0.01	0.59	0.63	0.55
P ₂ O ₅	0.98	0.02	0.98	1.03	0.93
MnO	0.53	0.01	0.53	0.57	0.49
Cr ₂ O ₃	0.435	0.005	0.433	0.466	0.420
<i>Traces (µg g⁻¹)</i>					
Ba	408	11	398	418	378
Co	18.9	0.6	18.7	19.7	17.7
Cu	125.4	3.4	124.7	-	-
Hf	12.2	0.5	11.9	13.1	10.7
Ni	35.1	1.8	34.5	-	-
Rb	23.4	0.6	22.8	24.0	20.6
Sc	23.4	0.5	24	27	21
Sr	306	6	300	315	285
Th	11.8	0.6	11.3	12.4	10.1
U	11.5	0.6	12.4	13.6	11.2
V	133	3	128	141	115
Y	27.0	0.4	27.2	28.5	25.9
Zr	358	3	348	365	330
La	11.0	0.4	10.5	12.0	9.0
Ce	23.5	0.6	23.0	24.2	21.8
Pr	2.92	0.08	2.88	3.02	2.74
Nd	13.0	0.6	13.7	15.1	12.3
Sm	3.3	0.1	3.1	3.4	2.8
Eu	1.03	0.05	0.99	1.08	0.90
Gd	3.75	0.09	3.91	4.30	3.50
Tb	0.68	0.09	0.65	0.72	0.58
Dy	4.18	0.04	4.16	4.37	3.95
Ho	0.93	0.03	0.89	0.98	0.80
Er	2.77	0.08	2.72	2.86	2.58
Tm	0.43	0.01	0.41	0.46	0.36
Yb	2.89	0.06	2.89	3.04	2.74
Lu	0.44	0.02	0.42	0.46	0.38

Data obtained from analyses of in-house reference materials SO-17, CSB and DS4 at ACME Analytical Laboratories Ltd which was run concurrent with the core ns1, ns3 and ns4 samples. In-house reference materials was certified against 38 Certified Reference Materials including CANMET; SY-4, TILL-4, LKSD-4, STSD-1 and USGS; AGV-1, G-2, GSP-2 and W-2.

within the range of reproducibility. Interlaboratory comparison of core samples and reference material SCo-1 show equivalent results.

4. Results

A complete record of the geochemical results obtained in this study from the Skoorsteenbergh Formation sedimentary rocks are presented in Appendix A.

4.1. Geochemical correlation between the cores

Cluster and principal component analyses (Swan & Sandilands, 1995) show that the variance in the geochemical composition for the mudstones from different stratigraphic intervals is not statistically significant enough to discriminate them into distinct geochemical groups. Instead an empirical approach has been applied to the geochemical data. Only a few elements and element ratios show stratigraphic patterns that seem to be traceable across the basin. The ratio $\text{TiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$, and the quantities of Zr and Sr have been plotted stratigraphically with the sedimentary logs of the four cores (Figs. 5–7). A Gaussian running mean filter (Mitchell et al., 1966) has been used to recalculate the data, giving a smoother average curve to simplify identification of potential stratigraphic trends. The interfan mudstone intervals between Fan 5A and 4 (IF5A-4) and between Fan 4 and 3 (IF 4-3) are both characterised by negative anomalies for $\text{TiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ and Zr and generally increasing ratios towards the base of overlying sand rich fans. A distinct positive Sr peak can also be seen in the IF5A-4. Intrafan mudstones of Fan 4 (F4) have medium to high ratios of $\text{TiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ and Zr while the Sr ratios increase upward throughout this whole interval. In ns1, ns3 and ns4 Fan 4 contains mudstones that have relatively high ($>250 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) Zr content.

Taylor and McLennan (1985) showed that Zr occurs mostly in the heavy mineral assemblage and thus fractionates together with quartz and feldspar into the coarse fraction. The elevated Zr quantities in Fan 4 might best be explained by a higher sand and silt ratio in these samples. However a plot of Zr against SiO_2 (which can be a good proxy for coarser grained material) from ns1 mudstones and sandstone samples from outcrop (Fig. 8 and Appendix A), show a group of samples that diverge from the general trend and are considerably enriched in Zr relative to SiO_2 . These anomalous samples have unusually high Zr that cannot be related to sand enrichment in the sediment.

Sr quantities generally decrease from F5A through IF 5B-5A to Fan 5B, otherwise these intervals do not show any diagnostic geochemical trends that can be traced across the basin.

4.2. PAAS normalised data

The distribution of major and trace elements in the Skoorsteenberg Formation mudstones has been examined in a multi-element diagram. The plot in Fig. 9 compares average ratios of major and trace elements for each stratigraphic interval against a normalised shale standard, the post-Archean average shale (PAAS; Taylor & McLennan, 1985). The main feature to note is the degree of conformity of the values with those of the PAAS. Most element values are evenly spread out around the PAAS values although certain components (Na_2O , Rb, Y, Th, U) show a slight enrichment and others (CaO, Sr, Cr, V, Ni) a slight depletion, for nearly all inter- and intra-fan mudstones.

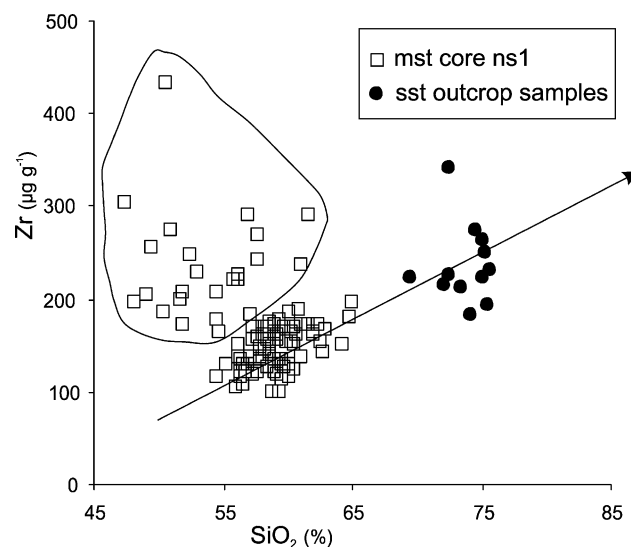


Fig. 8. Bivariate plot of SiO_2 and Zr for mudstones from core ns1 and outcrop samples of sandstones from Fan 1 to Fan 5B (Appendix and Fig. 6). The majority of the mudstones show a positive correlation with SiO_2 and Zr and follow a regression line where the sandstone samples represent the coarse grained end member. A group of mudstones (encircled), mainly derived from Fan 4, diverge from this trend and are considerable enriched in Zr relative to their SiO_2 ratios.

4.3. REE data

Rare-earth element (REE) data are conventionally interpreted in terms of a comparison to internationally accepted standards. The REE data have thus been normalised to chondritic meteorites (Taylor & McLennan, 1985). The results of REE analyses of core ns1, ns3 and ns4 are shown, together with PAAS (Taylor & McLennan, 1985) and two reference samples; granite G1 and dolerite W1, as chondrite-normalised patterns in Fig. 10. The chondrite-normalised REE spectra for the Skoorsteenberg Formation mudstones are characterised by significant enrichment of light REEs (where the LREE include La, Ce, Nd, Pr, Nd, Sm), relative to heavy REEs (where the HREE include Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, Lu) and the presence of a pronounced negative Eu/Eu^* anomaly (0.56–0.63) comparable to typical post Archean average shales ($\text{Eu}/\text{Eu}^* = 0.65 \pm 0.5$). The Eu/Eu^* anomaly was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Eu}/\text{Eu}^* = \text{Eu}_N / [(\text{Sm}_N)(\text{Gd}_N)]^{1/2}$$

The subscript N denotes chondrite-normalised values and Eu^* represents the Eu value expected for a smooth chondrite-normalised REE pattern (McLennan, Taylor, McCulloch, & Maynard, 1990).

4.4. Stratigraphy vs geochemistry

Linear regression models have been produced to display the abundance of elements and element ratios relative to stratigraphic intervals in order to show time-related trends in

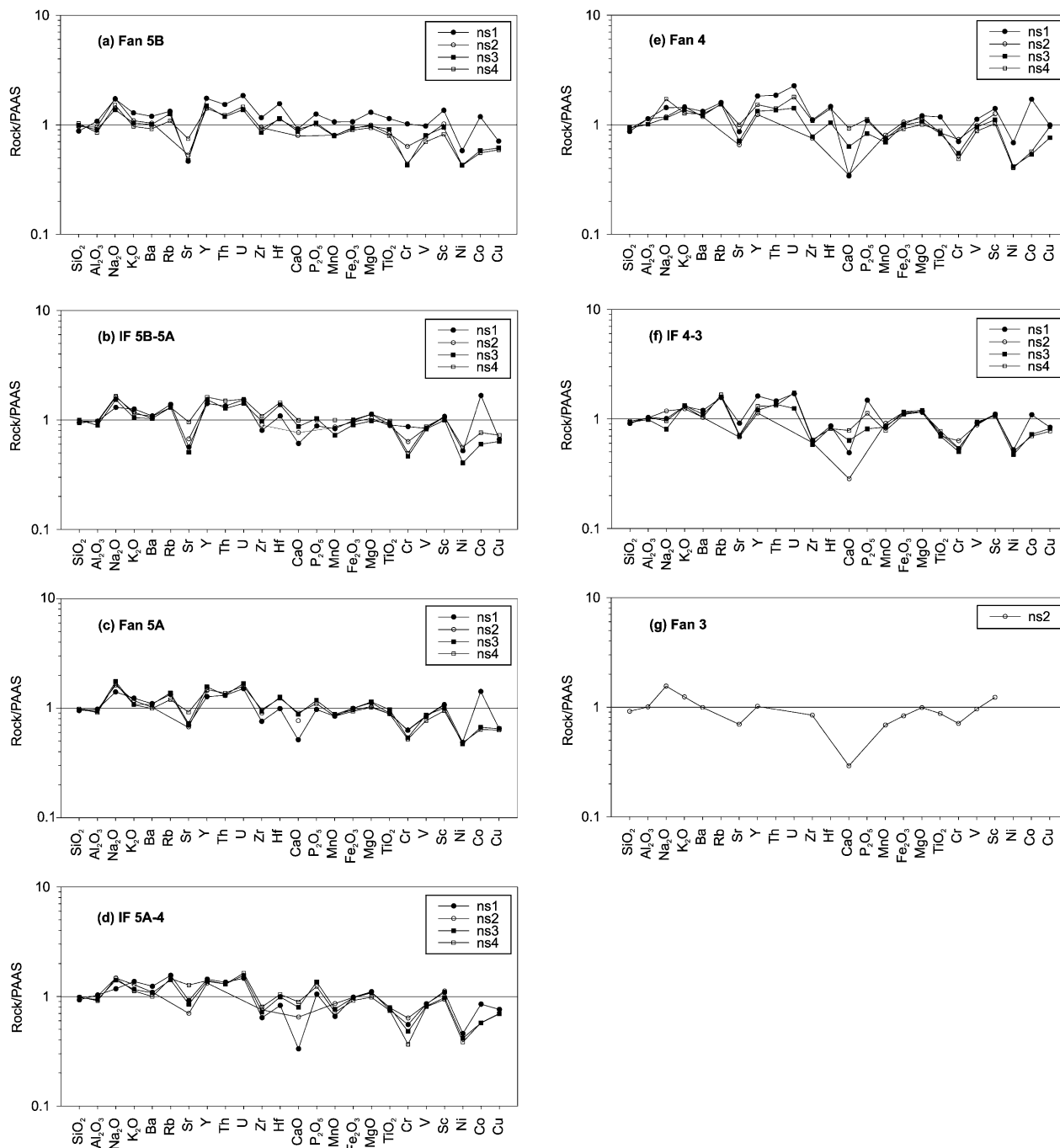


Fig. 9. Average PAAS normalised element ratios for mudstones of F5B (a), IF5B-5A (b), F5A (c), IF5A-4 (d), F4 (e), IF4-3 (f), F3 (g). Note the relative enrichment in Na_2O , Rb, Y, Th, U and slight depletion in CaO, Sr, Cr, V, and Ni for nearly all intervals.

the mudstones of the Skoorsteenberg Formation (Fig. 11). In the figures, circles represent group medians. Vertical bars represent errors on the estimated averages at a 95% confidence level. The statistical function p that is shown on each graph reflects the probability that the slope of a regression line through the data is zero (i.e. there is a change in the parameter as a function of stratigraphic position). The smaller the p number, the higher the probability that the line slope is non-zero. Data distributions with p values of 0.050 or less show time-related trends that are significant at, or

above, the 95% level. Data distributions that have p values greater than 0.050 do not show statistically significant trends (Cox et al., 1995; Swan & Sandilands, 1995).

5. Discussion

5.1. General geochemical composition

Normalised multi-element data (Fig. 9) and chondrite normalised REE patterns (Fig. 10) from the Skoorsteenberg

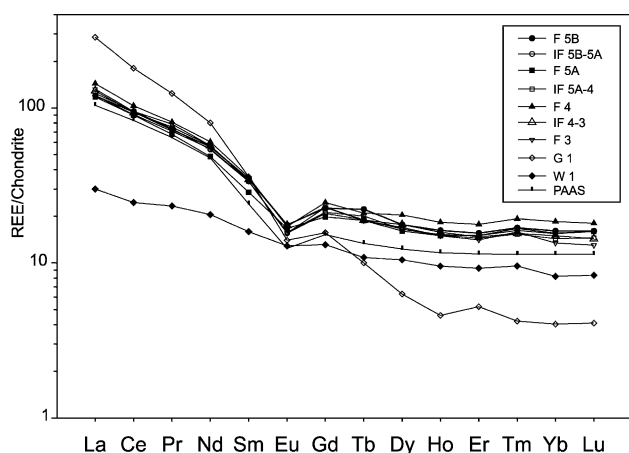


Fig. 10. Comparison of average chondrite-normalised REE pattern of the interfan and intrafan mudstone intervals of Skoorsteenberg Formation and a granite (G1), dolomite (W1) and PAAS. Chondrite normalizing factors and PAAS are from Taylor and McLennan (1985), G1 and W1 from Mason and Moore (1982).

Formation mudstones generally show a good conformity with the PAAS values. The PAAS standard is considered to reflect the upper continental crust (McLennan, 1989) and the overall geochemical data set from the mudstones points towards a similar source terrain. Subtle deviations from the PAAS values, however, have been identified in the Skoorsteenberg Formation and the implications of these are discussed below.

Enrichment of Na_2O may be due to the presence of abundant plagioclase feldspar (albite) in the coarser grained fraction of the mudstones. Petrographic and electron microprobe studies of sandstones from Fan 3 revealed that the sandstones are arkoses with more than 25% feldspar and that quartz and albite are the dominant minerals (Den Boer, 2002). It should also be noted that the highest Na_2O ratios (>1.70) are from the intrafan mudstones, suggesting a higher silt and sand component than in the interfan mudstones, in agreement with previous sedimentological studies (Johnson et al., 2001).

In contrast to CaO , Na_2O and Sr, which are relatively mobile and can be lost from a mudstone, Rb tends to be incorporated into clay minerals by adsorption and cation exchange during chemical weathering of fresh continental rock (Nesbitt, Markovics, & Price, 1980). A strong negative correlation between Na_2O and Rb ($r = -0.75$) indicates that clay minerals in the clay mineral-rich fraction host the Rb. Elevated Rb and depleted CaO and Sr relative to PAAS might suggest more intense weathering conditions in the hinterland but could alternatively be explained by a more felsic, Rb-rich source rock. Incompatible elements such as Rb, Y, Th and U are preferentially fractionated into melts during crystallization (e.g. Hall, 1996 and references therein) and as a result these elements are enriched in felsic rather than mafic rocks. The relative depletion of the ferromagnesian-associated elements Cr, V, and Ni,

commonly associated with mafic rocks, also support a slightly more felsic source terrain in comparison to PAAS.

The Skoorsteenberg Formation mudstones are slightly enriched in both HREE and total REE relative to PAAS. The REE are strongly incompatible elements that are concentrated in partial melts and so should be enriched in sediments derived from granitic rocks (Cox et al., 1995). The relatively higher total REE ratios, therefore, typically reflect more fractionated igneous material in the source terrain relative to the upper continental crust. The slight enrichment of HREE could be explained by high concentrations of heavy minerals such as zircon and garnet which are fractionated in HREE relative to LREE. However Zr/Yb ratios are typically greater than 1000 in zircon (Taylor & McLennan, 1985) and 100–200 ppm higher Zr concentrations relative to PAAS (210 ppm) would be required to account for the recorded Yb enrichment (Fig. 10 and Appendix A). Fig. 9 show that the PAAS normalised Zr concentrations are evenly distributed around 1. The presence of garnet (e.g. pyrope and almandine), which has much lower Zr/Yb ratios than zircon, has been reported from the sandstones of the Skoorsteenberg Formation (Scott, 1997). A relatively small enrichment in the mudstones of this heavy mineral may account for the high HREE concentrations.

5.2. Inter- and intra-fan mudstone sources within and between fans in turbidite systems

An important issue in deep-water sedimentary systems is the supply of the sedimentary material. In terms of the finest fractions, this distils down to the question of whether mudstone found as thin layers within turbidite fans has the same source as much thicker mudstone packages that occur between sand-rich fans. Does the mud that gets deposited during short-duration sea level cycles have the same origin as that deposited during longer-term periods of sea level rise and storage of sand on the coeval shelf?

Despite distinct anomalies, there are quite pronounced geochemical temporal trends in the entire successions (Fig. 11). The interfan mudstones and the intrafan mudstones seem to form part of the same evolutionary pattern since the changes occur for all the mudstones. For example, the $\text{K}_2\text{O}/(\text{K}_2\text{O} + \text{CaO})$ patterns typically decrease up the stratigraphic section in all wells for both mudstone types. The homogeneity of the patterns through all mudstones strongly suggests that the sediments in both interfan and intrafan mudstones have one common origin. The patterns lead us to conclude that there is only one discernible source for both the intrafan and interfan mudstones. There is thus no need to examine the sedimentary system for discrete sources of mud.

This interpretation of core geochemistry differs from the interpretation of the outcrop geochemical study (Andersson & Worden, in press) where there were differences in SiO_2 , $\text{TiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$, Zr and Y between the interfan and intrafan

mudstones. The uniformity in mudstone character reported in this core study may result from the exclusion of Fan 1 and Fan 2 from this study (Fans 1 and 2 were not cored), the effects of weathering in outcrop (possibly preferentially altering one type of mudstone) and/or the outcrop study involving fewer samples (with less certainty of the results). It is difficult to assess the significance of the different conclusions from the two types of geological material although we have more confidence in the geochemical data from the (absolutely unweathered) core reported in the present study.

5.3. Stratigraphic variation and provenance evolution

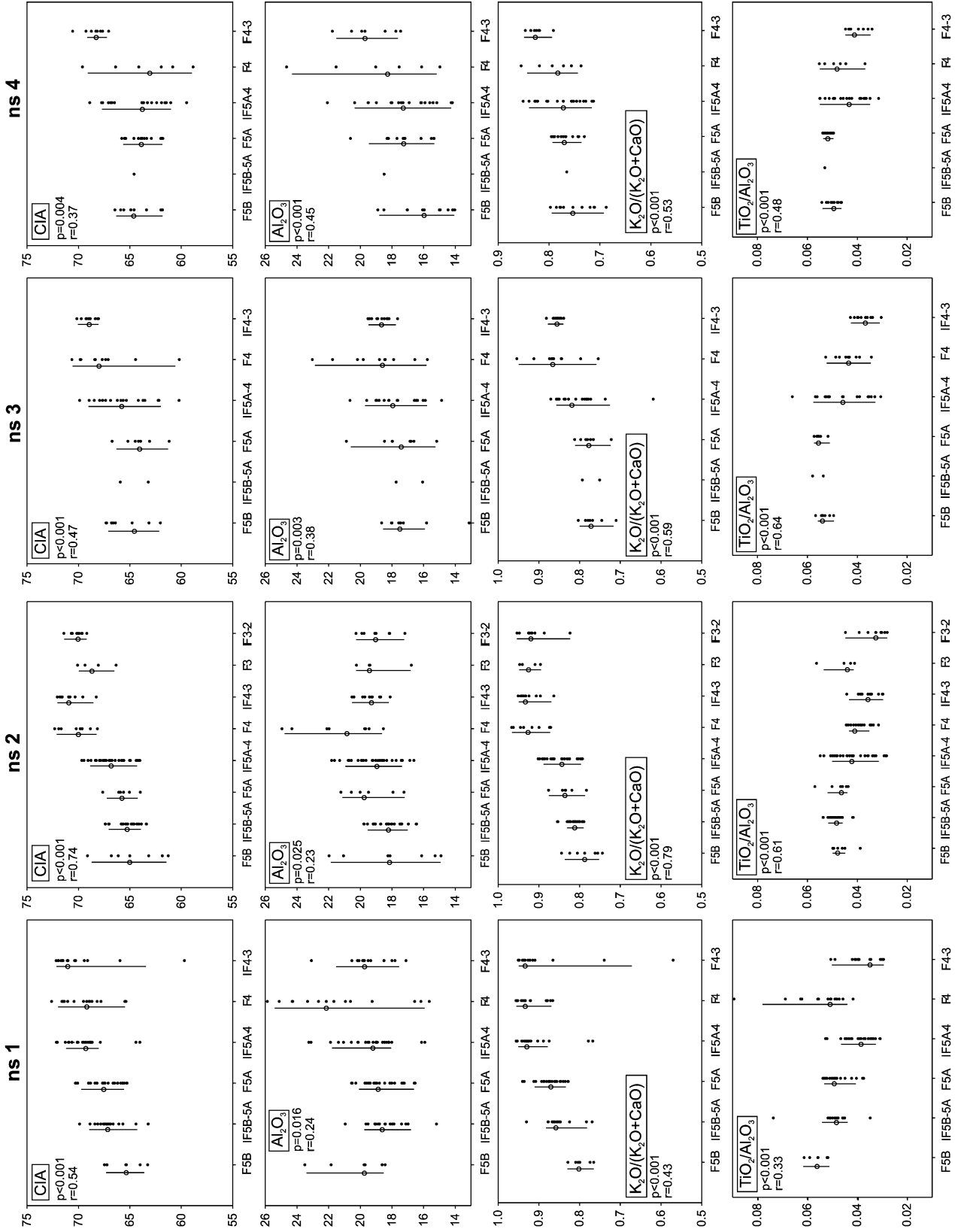
The $(CIA = [Al_2O_3/(Al_2O_3 + CaO^* + Na_2O + K_2O)] \times 100)$ has been interpreted as an indicator of major element changes due to weathering and the conversion of feldspars, volcanic glass and other labile components to clay minerals (Nesbitt & Young, 1982). The CIA, therefore, could potentially be a useful index to characterise mudstones in terms of the degree of weathering of the sediment source and in terms of variable source terrains for the Skoorsteenberg Formation. Worldwide average shale CIA values range between about 70 and 75; fresh granites give values of around 50 (Visser & Young, 1990) while extreme weathering could produce values approaching 100. Mudstones of the Skoorsteenberg Formation all have CIA values between 58.8 and 72.6 indicative of a slightly to moderately weathered source terrain. There is a significant decrease in CIA values up the stratigraphic succession ($p < 0.001$ to $p = 0.004$). In order to eliminate the possibility that aluminium is the pre-eminent controlling factor on the CIA trend, Al_2O_3 has been plotted in the same manner. The results show that Al_2O_3 remains approximately constant throughout the stratigraphic intervals and has relatively higher p values (< 0.001 – 0.025) indicating that variations of CaO, Na_2O and K_2O must dominate the observed CIA trend. It thus seems that the source terrain underwent progressively less intense weathering over the time period of the deposition of the Skoorsteenberg Formation. Less intense weathering might have been the result of either a cooler or less humid climate, or some combination of these two changes. On the other hand a tectonically active hinterland with progressive uplift of younger igneous rocks and high erosion rates might also produce successively more unweathered material and hence decreasing CIA values.

Trace elements are usually considered to be a more useful indication of the tectonic setting than the major elements, discussed above, due to their very short residence times in freshwater or seawater and their characteristic behavior during fractional crystallization, weathering and recycling (Taylor & McLennan, 1985). Some of the element abundances and element ratios commonly used in the literature in provenance studies (Bhatia & Crook, 1986; McLennan et al., 1990; Floyd, Shail, Leveridge, and Franke, 1991) here reveal no discernable variations with stratigraphic position in the Skoorsteenberg Formation (Appendix A). REE have historically been applied to many rock types to help decipher the origin and provenance evolution of rocks (Bhatia, 1985; Davies & Pickering, 1999; McLennan et al., 1990; Vital et al., 1999). Given the relative uniformity of the chondrite normalised rare earth element pattern it is possible to conclude that the landmass that contributed sediment to the Skoorsteenberg Formation was relatively constant and that one dominant terrain supplied the sediment.

The La/(La + Lu) ratio succinctly mirrors the fractionation of the light REE relative to the heavy ones. In basaltic and andesitic melts the REEs are incompatible in minerals such as olivine, orthopyroxene and clinopyroxene and are only slightly fractionated. Most upper-crustal granitic rocks are thought to have been derived through partial melting of the crust (Wyllie, 1977) and should therefore be fractionated in the same way. Fig. 10 demonstrates the considerably more fractionated REE pattern for a reference granite G1 relative to a dolerite W1. A statistically significant ($p = 0.001$) decrease in La/(La + Lu) ratios up the stratigraphy, meaning less fractionation (where decreasing fractionation implies an increasing ratio of mafic to granitic source material), can be seen from core ns1 and ns3 (Fig. 11). La/(La + Lu) data from core ns4 show little stratigraphic variation ($p = 0.530$) and seemingly do not support the trend seen from the other two cores.

Th and Y are elements that are enriched in felsic rather than mafic rocks. However, geochemical analyses of reference rocks (Govindaraju, 1989) show that the relative enrichment is generally much greater for Th than for Y in granites in comparison to basalts. Decreasing Th/(Th + Y) ratios ($p < 0.001$ to $p = 0.064$) up the stratigraphy can be seen in core ns1, ns3 and ns4. This trend suggests an increase of a mafic component in the sediment supply with time. Hf occurs in many different minerals but replacement for Zr in zircon is by far the most mineralogically common site for this element. Abundances of Zr and Hf generally

Fig. 11. Abundance and ratios of major and trace elements as a function of stratigraphic intervals. Dots represent individual data points. Circles represent group medians. Vertical bars represent errors on the estimated averages at a confidence level of 95%. The p statistical function shown on each graph reflects the probability that the slope of a regression line through the data is zero (i.e. no regular variation with stratigraphy). The smaller the number, the higher the probability that the line slope is non-zero: i.e., data distributions with p values of 0.0500 or less show time-related trends that is significant at or above the 95% level. Data distributions that have p values greater than 0.0500 do not show significant trends with stratigraphy. The r value (correlation coefficient) is a measure of the goodness-of-fit for the regression line. CIA values (CIA) were determined using mole proportions, as follows; $CIA = [Al_2O_3/(Al_2O_3 + CaO^* + Na_2O + K_2O)] \times 100$ where CaO^* is defined as CaO in the silicate fraction (Nesbitt & Young, 1982). In this study there was no objective way to distinguish carbonate CaO from silicate CaO, so total CaO is plotted here. This is justified on the basis that none of the samples appeared calcareous and all samples except five contained less than 1% CaO (Appendix A).



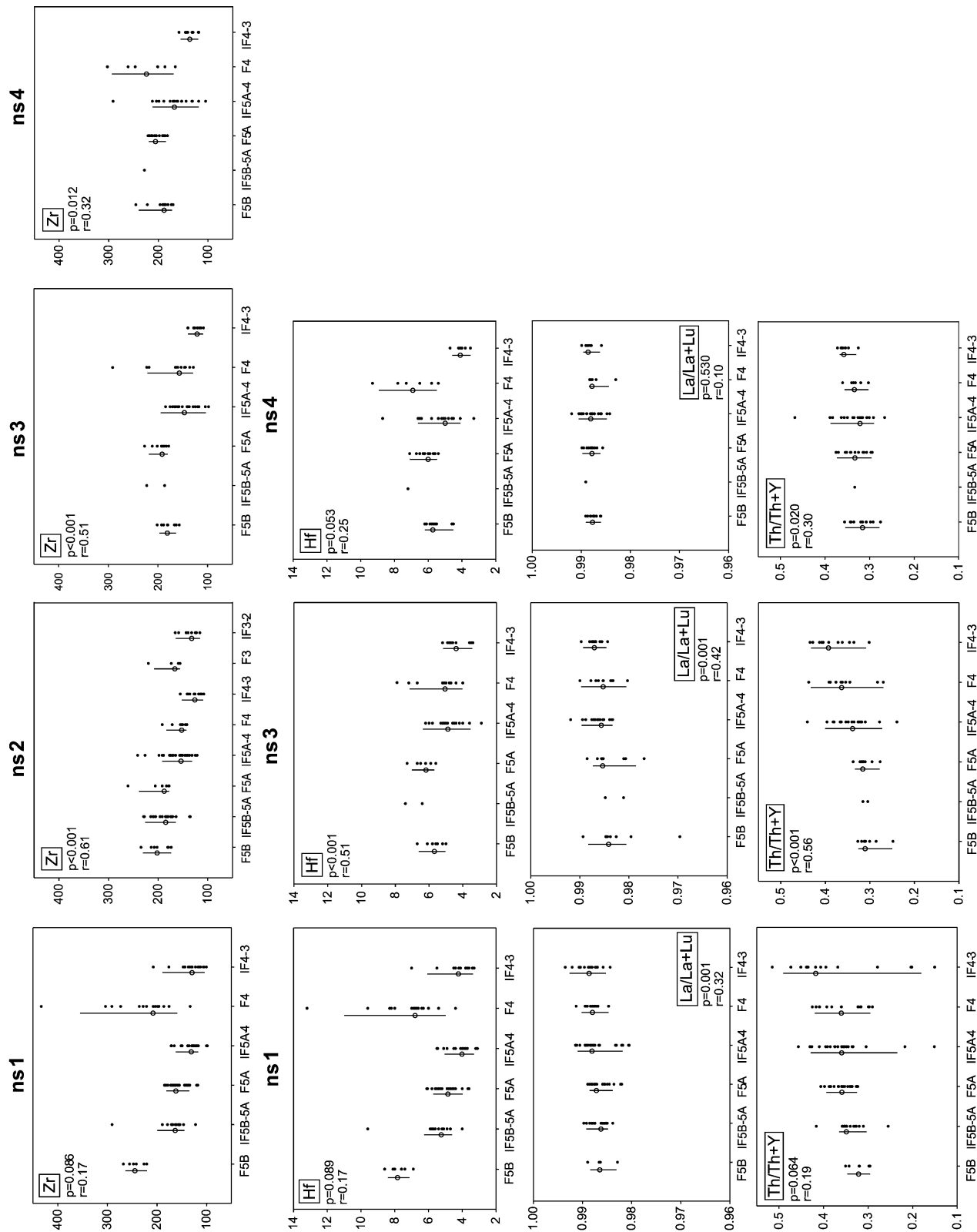


Fig. 11 (continued)

increase up the stratigraphy with statistical significance in nearly all of the cores (Figs. 6 and 11). Increasing Zr and Hf abundance with time (Fig. 11) suggests, contrary to the other element trends, that there seems to have been an increase in supply of a felsic or recycled source (Bhatia & Crook, 1986) with time.

TiO₂ and Al₂O₃ are refractory oxides that are highly resistant to weathering in all but the most extreme environments, for example in long-lived weathering profiles in hot and humid conditions (Hill, Worden, & Meighan, 2000a). In mudstones, Al is broadly indicative of the overall clay content, while in sandy sediments, TiO₂ can be abundant in heavy minerals such as rutile, ilmenite or anatase. However, significantly for mudstones, TiO₂, together with Cr and Sc are elements that can be characteristic of primary, pre-weathering, ferromagnesian minerals such as biotite, amphibole, pyroxene and olivine (Nesbitt, 1979; Taylor & McLennan, 1985). These high-temperature minerals alter readily to clay minerals so that variation in the TiO₂ content of a clay-rich rock may reflect variations in the initial rock material that weathered to clay. It is unlikely that TiO₂ represents the presence of heavy minerals since these are concentrated in the coarser grained fractions and are thus relatively unlikely to be present in mudstones. Individually, mudstone TiO₂ and Al₂O₃ contents might vary due to dilution by quartz, calcite or other non-clay minerals, so that it is best to use a ratio of these two resistant oxides as an indicator of provenance. The mudstone TiO₂/Al₂O₃ ratios show a significant ($p < 0.001$) increase up the stratigraphic succession in all wells (Figs. 5 and 11). The geochemical data reveal subtle stratigraphic changes. These are best viewed by examining the entire mudstone database on a well-by-well basis and by grouping the data into discrete clusters for each fan and for each interfan body (Fig. 11). The increasing ratio of TiO₂/Al₂O₃ as well as the increasing quantities of Zr and Hf can be seen in the data (Figs. 5, 6, and 11). In addition to TiO₂, Zr and Hf are considered to be highly resistant elements although mobility during extreme weathering has been reported (Hill, Worden, & Meighan, 2000b). In all of the mudstones, stratigraphic evolution patterns in the TiO₂/Al₂O₃ ratios are reasonably well defined as are increasing Zr and Hf quantities. There are three possible ways to explain the stratigraphic variation in the mudstones:

1. One single source terrain underwent increasingly extreme degrees of weathering from mild to extreme (required to mobilise Al relative to Ti);
2. One sediment source terrain underwent progressive denudation and incision into different bedrock lithologies. The more deeply buried and later exposed bedrock was presumably more mafic than the first exposed rocks.
3. Two completely isolated source terrains supplied sediment in steadily changing proportions through time.

Mudstones vastly dominate the sedimentary fill in the majority of the global basins. Blatt (1970) estimated that

close to 65% of the sedimentary record is made up of mudstones, 25% of sandstones and 10% of carbonate rocks. Element concentrations of the PAAS may therefore be used as a proxy for sedimentary and metasedimentary source rocks in comparison to felsic and mafic igneous source rocks. TiO₂/Al₂O₃ ratios increase from approximately 0.03 below Fan 4 to 0.06 at the top of Fan 5B in core ns1 (Fig. 11 and Appendix A). Corresponding average ratios of rock reference granites and gabbros (Govindaraju, 1989) are 0.02 and 0.17, respectively, while the PAAS have an intermediate ratio of 0.05. The easiest way to explain the increasing TiO₂/Al₂O₃ ratios up-section would be a progressive increase of a mafic igneous component to the sedimentary system. The decreasing CIA counters option 1 above. The CIA values are everywhere indicative of a mild weathering regime. Indeed the weathering seemingly became less intense with time.

Although potassium is thought to be highly soluble in water it tends to be conserved in mudstones because of the chemical stability of illite (Norrish & Pickering, 1983). Illite is relatively resistant to weathering and is potentially stable in soils except under extreme weathering conditions (Norrish & Pickering, 1983). In poorly weathered material K₂O may represent the amount of felsic material in the rock while CaO may represent the mafic component. From the stratigraphic data, the ratio of K₂O/(K₂O + CaO) shows a significant ($p < 0.001$) decrease with time. Alternatively progressively more mafic sediment could have been supplied since the former ratio is a proxy for a K-feldspar-plagioclase ratio. La/(La + Lu) and Th/(Th + Y) ratios also show decreasing signals with time supporting option 2 above. These trends are not as statistically rigorous as for the other parameters. The relative uniformity of the chondrite normalised rare earth element pattern (Fig. 10) suggest that option 3, above, is not generally viable.

The increasing Zr and Hf values up-section are seemingly in contradiction to option 2 above (the bedrocks undergoing weathering in the hinterland became more mafic with time). Zr and Hf are routinely enriched in granitic (felsic) rocks. The Zr content in the Skoorsteenberg Formation increases from approximately 120 ppm below Fan 4 to 280 ppm at the top of Fan 5B in core ns1 (Fig. 11 and Appendix A). Average Zr concentrations of rock reference granites and gabbros (Govindaraju, 1989) are 245 and 120 ppm, respectively, and 200 ppm for the PAAS. A progressive denudation of a Zr rich granitic source rock could best explain the increase in Zr content with time. The anomalous increase of both mafic and felsic signals could be explained by the bedrock (sediment source terrain) becoming enriched in granitic rocks as well mafic rock, relative to the initial sediment-supplying rocks. Signals that decrease up-section such as K₂O/(CaO + K₂O), La/(La + Lu) and Th/(Th + Y) are direct indicators of the mafic/felsic contribution to the sediment supply so that while the granitic supply might have increased in absolute terms, the mafic supply must have increased even more.

The overall picture that emerges from the data is somewhat paradoxical, the mudstones of the Skoorsteenberg Formation had one pre-eminent source and display major and trace element patterns that indicates increasing input from both mafic and felsic sources in the hinterland with time.

5.4. Implications for the evolution of the sedimentary systems: source, climate, dispersal, hinterland evolution

The previous discussion led to the general conclusion that there was one evolving source terrain that was being progressively unroofed into rocks of increasingly igneous type. The source terrain supplied sediments that were overall slightly more felsic in comparison to PAAS. However, the more deeply buried and progressively denuded rocks must have been predominantly mafic to have led to the changes characteristic of the succession. It is worth reiterating that the CIA decreases up the stratigraphy in all wells. One possible explanation for this is that the weathering regime became less intense with time. Such a conclusion is a vital clue to the reconstruction of the conditions that gave rise to the sedimentary succession. However the CIA data no more than suggest that the climate changed (to less humid and/or cooler) during the generation of the sediments of the Skoorsteenberg Formation. Proof must come from other sources.

In many of the changing geochemical data patterns, there is a common anomaly of varying magnitude. Fan 4 displays unusual data for many parameters in many wells. The clearest anomalies lie in the Zr data in Fig. 6 and in Zr, Hf and TiO₂/Al₂O₃ data in Fig. 11. Zr, Hf and TiO₂ are elements often associated with heavy mineral assemblages in sedimentary rocks and thus fractionate towards the coarse grained fraction. If selective size-sorting were the only process responsible for the elevated Zr ratios it might be anticipated that the samples would plot on a slope between fine and coarse grained samples as shown in Fig. 8. However a divergent group of samples (mainly from Fan 4) that are relatively low in SiO₂ and high in Zr instead suggest enrichment of Zr, Hf and TiO₂ due to a 'true' change in composition of the source rock rather than dilution by silt or sand. Palaeocurrent data suggest that Fan 4 was derived from the west to southwest rather than from the south (Wickens, 1994; Fig. 4). The anomalies may thus be accounted for by suggesting that at least some of the sediment in Fan 4 may have had a slightly different source terrain to the bulk of the sediment in the fans and interfan mudstones, or a different shelf and slope transport regime. The geochemical data thus support the sedimentological data since the intrafan mudstones in Fan 4 have a slightly different provenance than the rest of the mudstones. Although the overall geochemical character, and thus source type, of these mudstones is similar to the others there are subtle differences that show up through many geochemical parameters.

5.5. Chemostratigraphy and correlation of turbidite systems

The correlation of geological formations is a perpetual issue when there is an incomplete picture of the rocks (e.g. in the subsurface over great distances). For turbidites the question distils down to the way in which discrete sand-prone intervals in various wells should be correlated. We aimed to see whether geochemical data could provide a viable mechanism for deciding on, or supporting, detailed correlation schemes. The logs presented in Figs. 5–7 show some of the benefits and problems of geochemical correlation. The continuous log shows a relatively noisy pattern that could not easily be used for ab initio correlation in the absence of other data types. The smoothed logs, produced by running a Gaussian filter, helps somewhat to remove the noise but it also makes the trends relatively bland thus removing detailed correlation possibilities. If the geochemical data were produced for these four wells with no supporting core or wireline data, correlation would not be possible with any degree of confidence. The geochemical data have proved to be useful indicators of the nature and evolution of the sediment hinterland but they cannot easily yield credible independent high resolution correlations of mudstone units.

5.6. Lateral differences within mudstone units

Most of the fan and interfan mudstones display the same general stratigraphic variations (Figs. 5, 6, 7 and 11). This observation strongly suggests that there are limited proximal to distal and axial to marginal changes along the general sediment dispersal pattern. The uniformity of the geochemical signals shows that they are robust to the inevitable depositional variations that occur in all widespread sedimentary depositional systems. It shows that mudstone geochemical signals are insensitive to minor changes in sediment flux or the exact locus of sedimentation.

6. Conclusions

1. Geochemical data from one sedimentary rock type (mudstones) have helped to reveal details about the evolution of the long-vanished hinterland, palaeoclimate and sediment dispersal patterns.
2. The geochemical data from major and trace elements, including rare earth elements, have helped to demonstrate that the mudstones that are interbedded with turbidite fan sandstones probably have the same origin as the mudstones in thick interfan successions.
3. The geochemical data have also helped to reveal subtle changes in mudstone provenance up the stratigraphic succession. The changes include increasing TiO₂/Al₂O₃, Zr and Hf and decreasing Sr, K₂O/(CaO + K₂O), CIA, Th/(Th + Y) and La/(La + Lu) although some

Appendix A

Stratigr.	SiO2	Al2O3	Fe2O3	MgO	CaO	Na2O	K2O	TO2	P2O5	MnO	LOI	SiM	Ba	Sr	Co	Cu	Zn	Ni	Rb	Sr	Th	U	V	Cr	Zr	La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu		
ns1	50.99	22.64	6.87	2.91	0.49	1.74	5.72	1.42	0.21	0.09	6.6	99.71	51.3	985	184.8	63.7	80	138	285.6	28	182	29.0	8.1	61.0	19.0	61.4	18.3	13.5	10.4	18.3	29.3	15.6	10.6	2.24	6.17	0.37	5.73	0.94			
ns1	100.28	51.66	23.33	6.81	1.28	1.25	6.26	1.18	0.17	0.09	6.6	99.79	44.5	988	258.3	63.7	80	138	285.6	28	182	29.0	8.1	61.0	19.0	61.4	18.3	13.5	10.4	18.3	29.3	15.6	10.6	2.24	6.17	0.37	5.73	0.94			
ns1	101.50	50.38	24.30	6.27	1.01	1.77	6.12	1.19	0.13	0.07	6.2	99.77	41.1	1105	188	36.1	60	267	309.0	25	167	28.1	6.1	164	44.7	18.5	40.5	18.6	64.7	11.3	12.5	48.2	8.8	1.7	7.5	1.38	8.06	1.71	4.64	0.78	4.83
ns1	102.39	60.99	15.64	6.80	2.22	0.39	2.18	2.90	0.81	0.18	0.09	7.7	49.7	99.78	43.1	109.3	8.2	37.1	140.3	15	160	21.2	9.3	118	49.6	28.3	54.3	99.9	11.46	48.2	8.1	1.7	8.99	1.47	9.86	1.84	5.03	0.76	5.02	0.76	
ns1	103.32	56.31	20.62	7.17	2.77	2.25	1.05	1.58	0.86	0.13	0.08	5.3	99.83	47.9	797	21.1	35.0	4.4	25.8	269.0	19	152	22.4	5.1	148	39.8	13.3	51.1	10.35	39.4	8.1	1.6	6.90	1.11	6.89	1.42	4.01	0.60	3.84	0.82	
ns1	103.76	56.60	19.95	6.06	2.46	0.63	1.68	4.70	0.91	0.16	0.08	5.2	99.82	43.9	729	29.6	48.2	5.4	30.8	302.9	24	168	28.9	7.4	186	37.0	20.7	68.4	11.74	13.35	47.9	9.8	1.6	7.35	1.01	6.91	1.44	3.60	0.69	4.79	0.68
ns1	104.45	51.95	23.09	6.95	2.87	0.33	1.39	6.02	1.13	0.16	0.08	5.7	99.80	37.6	849	24.5	40.3	5.0	31.8	302.9	24	168	27.7	6.5	166	47.4	16.7	107.4	19.14	22.73	87.4	20.1	3.6	17.06	2.80	18.5	3.83	9.57	1.21	7.59	1.14
ns1	104.82	54.51	20.53	7.18	2.81	0.83	1.53	3.10	1.04	0.15	0.09	5.4	99.83	37.6	849	24.5	40.3	5.0	31.8	302.9	24	168	27.7	6.5	166	47.4	16.7	107.4	19.14	22.73	87.4	20.1	3.6	17.06	2.80	18.5	3.83	9.57	1.21	7.59	1.14
ns1	105.16	53.56	19.95	6.95	2.87	0.33	1.39	6.02	1.13	0.16	0.08	5.7	99.80	37.6	849	24.5	40.3	5.0	31.8	302.9	24	168	27.7	6.5	166	47.4	16.7	107.4	19.14	22.73	87.4	20.1	3.6	17.06	2.80	18.5	3.83	9.57	1.21	7.59	1.14
ns1	106.94	53.56	19.95	6.95	2.87	0.33	1.39	6.02	1.13	0.16	0.08	5.7	99.80	37.6	849	24.5	40.3	5.0	31.8	302.9	24	168	27.7	6.5	166	47.4	16.7	107.4	19.14	22.73	87.4	20.1	3.6	17.06	2.80	18.5	3.83	9.57	1.21	7.59	1.14
ns1	109.71	56.75	20.58	7.39	2.68	0.33	1.39	6.02	1.13	0.16	0.08	5.7	99.80	37.6	849	24.5	40.3	5.0	31.8	302.9	24	168	27.7	6.5	166	47.4	16.7	107.4	19.14	22.73	87.4	20.1	3.6	17.06	2.80	18.5	3.83	9.57	1.21	7.59	1.14
ns1	110.94	56.41	19.74	7.70	2.79	0.36	1.01	5.03	0.69	0.18	0.08	5.7	99.83	37.6	849	24.5	40.3	5.0	31.8	302.9	24	168	27.7	6.5	166	47.4	16.7	107.4	19.14	22.73	87.4	20.1	3.6	17.06	2.80	18.5	3.83	9.57	1.21	7.59	1.14
ns1	111.96	56.63	17.81	8.17	2.69	0.34	1.02	4.03	0.68	0.19	0.08	5.7	99.84	37.6	849	24.5	40.3	5.0	31.8	302.9	24	168	27.7	6.5	166	47.4	16.7	107.4	19.14	22.73	87.4	20.1	3.6	17.06	2.80	18.5	3.83	9.57	1.21	7.59	1.14
ns1	112.54	57.93	20.17	8.95	2.23	0.47	1.08	3.31	0.61	0.20	0.09	5.8	99.79	40.3	831	4.73	0.73	0.80	216.1	17	181	23.3	5.1	119	28.9	10.4	32.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44				
ns1	113.77	58.69	19.78	5.94	2.20	0.40	1.56	4.70	0.69	0.12	0.07	5.8	99.79	40.3	831	4.73	0.73	0.80	216.1	17	181	23.3	5.1	119	28.9	10.4	32.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44				
ns1	114.72	59.85	19.74	6.26	2.20	0.41	1.56	4.70	0.69	0.12	0.07	5.8	99.79	40.3	831	4.73	0.73	0.80	216.1	17	181	23.3	5.1	119	28.9	10.4	32.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44				
ns1	116.02	58.74	18.51	7.65	2.57	0.37	1.01	4.67	0.84	0.18	0.09	5.3	99.82	27.4	726	26.7	36.7	3.6	30.4	241.7	16	141	18.6	4.6	114	25.2	14.4	38.7	53.0	6.1	85.0	6.74	3.29	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns1	116.52	59.59	18.00	8.01	2.65	0.28	1.16	4.39	0.73	0.11	0.10	4.7	99.81	27.4	726	26.7	36.7	3.6	30.4	241.7	16	141	18.6	4.6	114	25.2	14.4	38.7	53.0	6.1	85.0	6.74	3.29	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns1	117.40	60.20	18.50	7.02	2.32	0.41	1.80	4.11	0.57	0.09	0.09	4.6	99.81	37.6	702	31.0	33.4	4.7	25.1	214.8	15	169	17.5	4.7	136	21.3	11.5	29.6	58.7	6.27	24.2	4.4	0.6	3.55	0.65	3.89	0.89	2.48	0.42	2.97	0.47
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8	306.7	18	177	20.1	5.2	153	30.8	12.9	37.1	51.1	0.9	3.82	0.67	4.48	0.97	2.98	0.48	3.31	0.44			
ns3	3.10	60.93	17.49	6.25	2.22	1.15	1.38	4.06	0.94	0.16	0.08	5.4	99.80	44.5	822	16.8	39.0	4.4	23.8																						

Appendix A

Table with 48 columns representing various elements (Sr, Th, U, V, Cr, La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, Lu) and rows representing different samples (ns2, ns3, ns4, ns5, ns6, ns7, ns8, ns9, ns10, ns11, ns12, ns13, ns14, ns15, ns16, ns17, ns18, ns19, ns20, ns21, ns22, ns23, ns24, ns25, ns26, ns27, ns28, ns29, ns30, ns31, ns32, ns33, ns34, ns35, ns36, ns37, ns38, ns39, ns40, ns41, ns42, ns43, ns44, ns45, ns46, ns47, ns48, ns49, ns50, ns51, ns52, ns53, ns54, ns55, ns56, ns57, ns58, ns59, ns60, ns61, ns62, ns63, ns64, ns65, ns66, ns67, ns68, ns69, ns70, ns71, ns72, ns73, ns74, ns75, ns76, ns77, ns78, ns79, ns80, ns81, ns82, ns83, ns84, ns85, ns86, ns87, ns88, ns89, ns90, ns91, ns92, ns93, ns94, ns95, ns96, ns97, ns98, ns99, ns100, ns101, ns102, ns103, ns104, ns105, ns106, ns107, ns108, ns109, ns110, ns111, ns112, ns113, ns114, ns115, ns116, ns117, ns118, ns119, ns120, ns121, ns122, ns123, ns124, ns125, ns126, ns127, ns128, ns129, ns130, ns131, ns132, ns133, ns134, ns135, 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ns994, ns995, ns996, ns997, ns998, ns999, ns1000).

Appendix A

Core level	SiO2	Al2O3	Fe2O3	MgO	CaO	Na2O	K2O	TiO2	P2O5	MnO	Cr	Ba	Sr	V	Y	Zr	SiO2Zr
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	% ppm
n82	60.40	18.32	6.16	2.35	0.96	1.99	4.42	0.85	0.10	0.10	68.7	677	17	137	123	38.0	180
n82	42.24	6.00	1.99	0.88	0.33	1.24	2.97	4.45	0.11	0.10	16.9	791	30	157	147	48.9	192
n82	51.26	63.30	17.63	5.80	2.21	0.82	1.87	4.40	0.82	0.08	67.5	657	17	113	122	34.8	178
n82	52.02	64.80	17.24	6.24	2.25	0.91	1.95	4.09	0.81	0.09	62.9	664	16	124	115	38.8	178
n82	53.00	59.20	20.65	7.03	2.73	1.01	1.95	5.10	0.91	0.11	74.9	750	19	144	135	42.1	183
n82	58.42	60.80	20.01	6.52	2.44	0.67	2.00	4.71	1.00	0.09	69.7	720	19	137	131	40.3	206
n82	65.37	57.70	20.14	6.95	2.67	1.20	2.40	4.69	1.11	0.12	84.4	728	22	130	173	45.1	241
n82	67.16	61.60	18.65	6.95	2.66	0.89	1.86	4.55	0.82	0.12	75.0	693	17	124	120	38.2	170
n82	68.60	59.00	19.90	6.63	2.60	1.00	1.65	5.13	0.93	0.10	85.8	732	21	140	142	41.4	177
n82	70.28	60.00	19.93	7.03	2.80	1.05	1.93	4.91	1.00	0.12	90.0	728	21	129	143	40.2	198
n82	71.72	59.00	21.30	6.46	2.53	0.73	1.50	5.62	0.82	0.09	83.9	718	21	108	152	30.6	146
n82	73.05	64.80	17.41	6.16	2.37	0.97	2.22	4.04	0.85	0.11	64.0	677	16	135	113	41.1	189
n82	73.94	62.10	17.35	6.24	2.38	0.99	2.10	4.02	0.88	0.11	72.4	660	17	129	119	38.8	176
n82	74.63	63.30	16.61	6.51	2.31	0.95	2.17	3.64	0.82	0.12	68.2	634	15	129	108	36.4	175
n82	74.68	60.90	18.33	6.26	2.45	0.84	1.82	4.49	0.84	0.10	64.3	690	18	128	138	33.8	165
n82	74.76	60.00	20.70	6.32	2.51	0.82	1.87	4.44	0.84	0.09	63.8	680	18	128	138	33.8	165
n82	76.15	60.00	20.70	6.32	2.51	0.82	1.87	4.44	0.84	0.09	63.8	680	18	128	138	33.8	165
n82	79.15	61.20	18.68	6.02	2.36	0.72	1.68	4.84	0.80	0.09	85.2	673	19	122	129	29.5	142
n82	79.75	68.20	20.56	6.94	2.56	0.69	1.22	5.52	0.67	0.09	69.7	751	19	146	130	34.8	138
n82	80.27	66.80	17.99	6.23	2.32	0.88	1.92	4.33	0.75	0.10	64.7	655	16	126	113	35.7	151
n82	81.47	19.80	6.35	2.35	1.02	1.61	4.98	0.84	0.08	0.08	67.6	707	19	135	128	42.3	157
n82	82.40	65.70	19.02	6.24	2.19	0.72	1.71	4.68	0.80	0.08	61.3	672	17	127	119	37.9	156
n82	83.56	65.50	18.77	6.51	2.24	0.73	1.72	4.57	0.83	0.09	62.3	677	16	128	117	39.7	165
n82	84.38	62.80	18.64	6.62	2.35	0.78	1.53	4.93	0.83	0.09	67.6	685	18	133	125	39.3	152
n82	85.56	65.10	18.60	6.11	2.21	0.69	1.66	4.57	0.80	0.08	62.6	661	16	125	118	36.6	151
n82	86.34	57.80	21.81	5.93	2.31	0.62	1.39	5.64	0.64	0.07	56.4	654	19	178	127	35.2	154
n82	87.07	59.40	20.76	6.29	2.32	0.64	1.67	5.11	0.59	0.08	54.3	631	18	179	122	30.8	132
n82	88.56	64.50	17.34	6.50	2.15	0.80	2.19	3.95	0.72	0.09	61.1	704	15	165	111	32.1	138
n82	89.37	61.70	19.19	6.69	2.28	0.78	1.74	4.86	0.68	0.08	61.3	704	15	165	111	32.1	138
n82	90.36	64.90	18.78	6.90	2.36	0.66	1.50	4.84	0.64	0.09	53.1	702	17	184	129	30.1	137
n82	92.42	62.70	17.73	6.73	2.60	0.83	1.59	5.75	0.84	0.09	82.9	715	16	172	114	34.2	165
n82	93.75	60.30	22.11	6.73	2.40	0.67	1.41	4.50	0.81	0.10	97.0	763	23	151	170	40.8	192
n82	96.02	60.30	18.77	7.16	2.63	0.52	0.99	5.66	0.74	0.09	67.9	762	21	145	156	34.7	154
n82	98.12	55.90	19.72	6.81	2.39	0.35	1.35	4.91	0.80	0.09	68.9	717	18	125	130	35.1	142
n82	100.22	62.00	19.44	6.27	2.32	0.27	1.61	4.72	0.81	0.08	67.9	691	17	118	128	35.0	145
n82	116.37	54.80	24.32	7.01	2.70	0.23	1.10	6.56	0.84	0.08	86.9	911	22	124	167	26.6	151
n82	118.89	59.40	19.66	7.09	2.47	0.30	1.99	4.41	0.87	0.10	69.9	651	17	128	127	34.1	172
n82	121.26	49.88	24.95	6.26	2.71	0.26	1.28	6.64	0.93	0.08	90.5	981	24	127	169	23.1	155
n82	123.10	61.40	19.42	6.24	2.36	0.29	1.86	4.96	0.86	0.08	71.8	681	18	128	133	32.1	155
n82	124.10	59.10	20.52	7.60	2.68	0.27	1.28	5.15	0.78	0.10	90.9	721	20	121	147	35.9	136
n82	124.95	59.60	20.40	7.69	2.70	0.29	1.34	4.97	0.78	0.10	79.9	670	19	130	132	37.0	147
n82	127.05	60.30	19.24	8.08	2.68	0.37	1.36	4.56	0.75	0.11	75.1	638	18	125	132	29.3	126
n82	129.05	60.70	19.71	7.98	2.56	0.31	1.37	4.63	0.82	0.10	64.8	687	17	147	129	25.4	126
n82	130.04	59.70	19.29	7.85	2.53	0.29	1.22	4.65	0.66	0.10	71.6	666	18	127	133	29.5	118
n82	131.05	60.40	18.71	7.92	2.61	0.51	1.38	4.36	0.65	0.11	68.8	628	17	137	128	29.9	108
n82	131.95	63.00	18.78	6.87	2.11	0.63	2.00	3.97	0.56	0.09	51.7	667	16	188	121	28.7	140
n82	133.16	57.60	18.78	7.22	2.33	0.33	1.06	4.57	0.86	0.09	64.8	697	17	131	130	26.4	112
n82	135.05	55.90	18.11	7.80	2.55	0.43	1.34	4.15	0.65	0.11	65.1	647	17	143	128	29.5	115
n82	137.03	57.20	19.39	5.18	2.16	0.67	1.69	4.90	0.83	0.08	81.8	675	21	145	148	25.8	159
n82	137.93	61.60	16.77	5.23	1.94	0.35	2.52	3.46	0.85	0.08	67.3	494	17	141	125	30.7	220
n82	141.00	53.60	20.24	5.99	2.29	0.29	1.48	5.25	0.83	0.07	83.5	737	21	134	148	22.4	156
n82	143.73	57.20	19.43	5.80	2.30	0.30	1.77	4.74	0.88	0.08	79.9	671	20	137	154	30.9	173
n82	145.20	57.20	19.08	5.64	2.26	0.28	1.87	4.72	0.85	0.08	86.3	657	20	125	147	30.2	196
n82	146.48	57.20	18.14	6.20	2.51	0.40	1.35	4.97	0.64	0.11	88.4	657	20	125	147	30.2	196
n82	149.05	60.30	19.24	6.90	2.56	0.37	1.36	4.63	0.75	0.10	88.7	672	18	168	133	30.6	133
n82	150.31	57.30	19.00	7.18	2.32	0.52	1.41	4.02	0.68	0.11	58.1	673	17	189	122	27.6	123
n82	150.31	57.40	18.17	7.48	2.48	0.45	1.15	4.50	0.85	0.11	65.9	648	18	146	124	31.2	116
n82	150.31	55.50	19.90	6.15	2.13	1.05	1.03	4.87	0.68	0.08	61.2	818	18	206	128	59.6	144
n82	154.01	57.20	20.27	6.42	2.27	0.25	1.29	5.13	0.57	0.08	59.1	754	18	156	117	28.8	159
n82	156.95	59.60	18.15	6.26	1.95	0.31	1.89	3.80	0.55	0.08	48.0	676	15	179	113	26.4	140
n82	160.10	60.70	17.18	6.50	2.05	0.31	1.65	3.79	0.56	0.09	56.6	619	16	145	120	22.2	123

parameters, e.g. chondrite normalised rare earth element patterns, remain approximately constant.

4. These changes suggest that there was an increasingly mafic contribution to the sediment with time although the increasing Zr and Hf suggest that there was a (lesser) increase in the felsic contribution. These apparently conflicting conclusions may be reconciled by acknowledging that the sediment source terrain may simply have become more igneous (e.g. less sedimentary rocks being weathered and supplying new sediment) although the progressively denuded rocks must have been predominantly mafic.
5. The decreasing CIA may be explained by either a progressively *less* intense weathering regime, possibly due to a less humid climate prevailing in the source terrain during the formation of the younger Skoorsteenber Formation mudstones, or progressive uplift of younger unweathered material in the hinterland.
6. The uniformity of the rare earth element data in different fans suggests that there was only one landmass that contributed sediment to the mudstones. In general, there is little evidence for multiple sources of sediment into the basin from different landmasses.
7. Distinct anomalies occur in mudstones in one of the fans (4) in terms of many geochemical parameters. The anomalies have different magnitudes but seem to be traceable across the basin. The conventional sedimentological correlation is robust and statistically defensible. The cause of the anomalies is uncertain although introduction of a unique transient source of sediment may be invoked. The orientation of the axis of the fan for the anomalous case is at about 60° to the rest of the fans possibly supporting the case for a subtly different sediment source.
8. Geochemical data from mudstones from boreholes in the deep-water Permian Skoorsteenber Formation in the Karoo Basin South Africa have demonstrated that chemostratigraphy is not an ideal approach to independent sedimentary correlation since the signals have substantial noise that is not simply related to lithology.

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Appendix A

Results from geochemical analyses of all major and trace elements from the Skoorsteenber Fm sedimentary rocks are shown.

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