

# A new model for cold climate source rock preservation in the Arckaringa Basin

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## **TITLE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The controls on organic carbon preservation in sediments are poorly understood, however there is a first order association between high total organic carbon concentration (TOC), warm climates and fine grained sediments with mature mineralogy in the geologic record. Permo-Carboniferous marine sediments in the Arckaringa Basin, however, present an exception with anomalous organic carbon concentration (<11% TOC) occurring within mineralogically immature siltstones deposited in deep, narrow (marine) fjords during glacial conditions. Organic matter (OM) is not refractory terrigenous material, but rather hydrogen-rich and labile, thus identifying an active preservational mechanism that differs from conventional organic carbon enrichment controlled by mineral preservation effects. Energy Dispersive Spectrometry (EDS) reveal an association between labile OM and high sulphur concentrations, and EDS mineral mapping identifies a cyclic millimetre alteration between sulphur/OM rich laminae and manganese carbonate (kutnohorite) laminae, identifying oscillating benthic redox conditions similar to annual varves in proglacial environments. Framboidal pyrite (<5  $\mu\text{m}$ ) is abundant only within organic-rich laminae, indicating sulphate reduction in euxinic conditions resulting from restricted sea water exchange and the development of strong density stratification. Seismic profiles indicate that deposition occurred in fjord-shaped troughs, with restriction resulting from end moraines acting as sills to the open ocean. Thus, organic carbon enrichment is attributed to restriction in the ancient fjords, leading to periods of hydrogen sulphide build up within the water column that were annually flushed with seasonal change in temperature and runoff. The reducing conditions of the fjord provided a chemical trap for S leading to its enrichment in organic matter. Similarly, Mn within carbonates was enriched in the same manner. Excess dissolved sulphur build up in the water column and sediments resulted in vulcanization (sulfurization) reactions polymerizing labile organic compounds (lipids and carbohydrates) and their preservation as organosulphur compounds during early diagenesis.

## **KEYWORDS**

Arckaringa Basin, organic carbon, preservation, vulcanization, icehouse, source rock

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title .....	i
Abstract .....	i
Keywords.....	i
List of Figures.....	3
List of Tables .....	6
Introduction .....	7
Geological Setting/Background.....	9
Formation of basin troughs and influences on deposition .....	14
Methods.....	14
Sample Collection.....	14
Geochemical Analysis.....	15
Mineralogical Analyses.....	16
Petrographical Analyses.....	16
Observations and Results .....	17
Facies 1: Proglacial facies .....	24
Facies 2: Pelagic facies .....	25
Sub-facies 2a (Cyclic varve unit) .....	32
Sub-facies 2b (Massive black shale).....	32
Sub-facies 2c (Lensed mudstone).....	33
Facies 3: Bioturbated facies.....	34
Facies 4: Mass flow facies.....	35
Source Rock Characterisation .....	36
Discussion .....	40
Conclusions .....	50
Acknowledgments .....	52
References .....	52
Appendix A: Extended basin history and influences on deposition .....	57
Appendix B: Extended methods .....	60
1 Sample collection and preparation.....	60
2 Analyses .....	62
2.1 Total Organic Carbon (TOC) analysis .....	62
2.1.1 Pressure Calcimeter standard procedure .....	63
2.1.2 Elemental Analyser .....	64

2.2 Source Rock Analyser (SRA) and RockEval Analysis .....	65
2.2.1 Sample preparation standard procedure .....	65
2.3 GC-MS Analysis .....	67
2.3.1 MSSV-GC-MS thermal maturity analysis.....	67
2.3.2 Palaeoredox determination .....	68
2.3.3 Solvent extraction preparation .....	69
2.4 X-ray Diffraction (XRD) analysis.....	69
2.4.1 Bulk mineralogy and mineral identification .....	69
2.4.1 Clay fraction .....	70
2.5 Thin section analysis .....	74
2.6 Organic petrography analysis .....	75
2.7 Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) analysis .....	77
Appendix C: XRD Results .....	78
Appendix D: Supporting sub-sample data .....	79

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Location map of the Arckaringa Basin in South Australia (inset) and the position of the Boorthanna Trough and Southern Arckaringa Troughs. The locations of Arck 1 and Cootanoorina 1 within the Boorthanna Trough are also shown, intersected by section line A–B. Permian isopach lines illustrate the thickness of the subsurface Permian sediments across the basin. Modified after Hibburt (1995) and Menpes (2012). ..... 10
- Figure 2: Schematic cross section through the Arckaringa Basin along section line A–B, showing the geometry of the Boorthanna Trough and the formations intersected by Arck 1 and Cootanoorina 1. The sedimentation of the Permo-Carboniferous succession extends from the depocentres and covers the less disturbed areas of the basement highs. Unconformably underlying this succession is the Cootanoorina Formation, which is restricted to the Boorthanna Trough. Modified after Hibburt (1995) and Harvey and Hibburt (1999). ..... 11
- Figure 3: Scanning electron microscope (SEM) photomicrographs showing the compositionally immature nature of the detrital mineral component within the Stuart Range Formation and its relationship organic matter (OM). OM is bounded by sub-angular quartz (qz) grains and detrital mica surrounded by a clay and quartz (cl+qz) matrix that is likely dominated by illite and kaolinite. Altered mica grains show extensive fraying and contain pyritic (py) replacement. Gypsum (gyp) within close proximity of OM is also apparent. Kutnohorite (kut) is observed in some samples. (a) Sample 2053188 (sub-facies 2b, TOC: 8.18); (b) 2053194 (sub-facies 2a, TOC: 3.04); (c) 2053196 (sub-facies 2b, TOC: 7.74); (d) 2053198 (sub-facies 2c, TOC: 4.64); (e) OM-rich sample (2053191 sub-facies 2b, TOC: 8.24) with sporinite and minor lamalginite; and inset (f) indicating no association between OM and diagenetic components, which are only minor in the high TOC samples. .... 18
- Figure 4: Representative images and characteristic features of the four facies identified within the lower Stuart Range Formation, Arck 1: (a) Facies 1, proglacial facies; (b) Sub-facies 2a, cyclic varve unit (pelagic facies); (c) Sub-facies 2b, mass black shale (pelagic facies); (d) Sub-facies 2c, lensed mudstone (pelagic facies); (e) Facies 3, bioturbated facies; and (f) Facies 4, mass flow facies. .... 20
- Figure 5: The abrupt upper boundary (at 960 m) between the mass flow facies, heading into the cyclic varve sub-facies (pelagic facies) within the lower Stuart Range Formation, Arck 1. High resolution total organic carbon (TOC) data was obtained from slivers of core (<4 mm) and has been plotted against depth, indicated by the scale bar on the left. The colours in the legend represent sedimentological observations. The calcareous zone subsamples (within the mass flow facies) and the kutnohorite laminae subsamples (within the cyclic varve 2a, pelagic facies) have low TOC values. The light mudstone, as part of the transition to the dark varve laminations, has a medium TOC value, and the dark laminations have high TOC values. .... 21
- Figure 6: Core logs of Arck 1 and Cootanoorina 1, illustrating lithological and geochemical variability. The Arck 1 log comprises the upper Boorthanna Formation to the lower Mount Toondina Formation, and the Cootanoorina 1 log comprises the upper Cootanoorina Formation to the lower Stuart Range Formation. Total organic carbon (TOC) data from core and cutting sub-samples was plotted with depth. Note that the Arck 1 depth scale is double the Cootanoorina 1 depth scale. Lithological observations presented in Harris and McGowran (1968) were followed as core for lithological analyses of Cootanoorina 1 was limited. .... 22
- Figure 7: Core log of Arck 1 illustrating lithological and geochemical variability (left), with total organic carbon (TOC) data from core sub-samples plotted against depth. A subsection from 970–940 m was studied at higher resolution (right) and four facies were identified. Note that the subsection depth scale is three times the Arck 1 core log depth scale. .... 23
- Figure 8: Scanning electron microscope (SEM) and integrated energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) photomicrographs of polished blocks taken from the pelagic facies in Arck 1. (a) SEM photomicrograph of sample I at 958 m (sub-facies 2a) and (b) accompanying EDS map of elemental distributions, where red = iron, green = calcium, and blue = manganese. This confirms the dominant mineralogy of the thin, light kutnohorite intervals that occur after every

dark couplet. The important minerals identified are gypsum (gyp) and kutnohorite (kut), surrounded by a primarily clay and quartz (cl+qz) matrix with framboids of pyrite (py). (c) SEM photomicro-graph of sample 2053196 at 959.97 m (sub-facies 2b) and (d) accompanying EDS map of elemental distributions, where red = silicon, green = calcium, and blue = manganese. The small red ovoid shapes correspond to pyrite. (e) SEM photomicrograph of sample 2053198 at 955.79 m (sub-facies 2c) and (f) accompanying EDS map of elemental distributions, where red = manganese, green = phosphorus, and blue = calcium. Apatite (ap) was present within the matrix and pyrite (py) is represented by light yellow-green. ....26

Figure 9: Clay mineral fraction X-ray diffractogram of Arck 1 core samples 2053194 (red, sub-facies 2b) and 2053198 (blue, sub-facies 2b), with both air dried (solid line) and ethylene glycol (dashed line) treatments. The diffractograms have been shifted upwards for clarity. The phyllosilicate mineral compositions were determined by applying the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Clay Mineral Flow Diagram of Poppe *et al.* (2001). Mixed layer illite-smectite (mixed I-S), illite (I), kaolinite (kao), natrojarosite (nj), and quartz (qz) were identified in both samples. Data based on Appendix C, Table C2. ....27

Figure 10: Reflected light (left) and ultra-violet (right) photomicrographs showing the organic components within the Stuart Range Formation, from low total organic carbon (TOC) contents (a, b) to 9 TOC contents (e, f). (a, b) Sample 2053339 at 923.03 m, with a TOC value of 2.11, Facies 3. Dominated by a terrigenous source of organic matter, comprising sub-angular and unstructured telinite (tel) and semifusinite (sf). Sporinite (sp), also of terrestrial origin, is present in minor quantities. A high proportion of carbonates are present, which is typical of low TOC samples. (c, d) Sample 2053197 at 957.60 m, with a TOC value of 4.78, sub-facies 2a. Semifusinite surrounded by abundant sporinite, framboidal pyrite (py), lamalginite (lam), and minor telinite. (e, f) Sample 2053196 at 959.97 m, with a TOC value of 7.74, sub-facies 2b. Abundant lamalginite, sporinite, and framboidal pyrite, with minor alginate (alg) and telinite. Lamalginite, alginate, and framboidal pyrite are of marine origin. No carbonates are present within the higher TOC samples. The classification table for the identification of organic macerals in Appendix B, Table B3, was followed during analysis. ....28

Figure 11: Scanning electron microscope (SEM) photomicrograph of polished blocks taken from Arck 1. Energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) spot analysis within discrete particles of organic matter was performed to determine elemental compositions. The results are illustrated graphically to the right. Peaks indicate the presence of carbon (C), oxygen (O), aluminium (A), silicon (Si), sulphur (S), potassium (K) and iron (Fe). 'Clay matrix' indicates where spot analysis has also analysed the clay matrix, and 'Matrix' indicates where the carbonate matrix has been analysed. (a) 2053196 at 959.97 m, total organic carbon (TOC): 7.74, sub-facies 2b; (b) 2053188 at 966.35 m, TOC: 8.18, sub-facies 2b; (c) 2053307B at 952.59 TOC: 1.76, Facies 3. ....30

Figure 12: Solvent extracted, gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) chromatogram of sample 2053334, with a high total organic carbon content of 5.97 mg/g. Octacyclosulphur (S<sub>8</sub>) is the major peak, with sulphur allotropes hexacyclosulphur (S<sub>6</sub>) and heptacyclosulphur (S<sub>7</sub>) as minor peaks. The double peak for S<sub>6</sub> is likely to be an artefact of instrument error. The background peaks indicate the hydrocarbon profile for this sample. Inset is an ion chromatogram of the S<sub>8</sub> peak (*m/z* 64) showing cyclic sulphur complexes and ions associated with S<sub>8</sub>. ....31

Figure 13: Quantitative Evaluation of Minerals by Scanning electron microscopy (QUEMSCAN® by FEI Company) mineral map of a polished block taken from the massive black shale (sub-facies 2b) in Arck 1 (sample 2053196 at 959.97 m) using energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) for data acquisition. The legend to the right illustrates the colour assignment of the minerals present. The inset further details mineral associations and distributions to a higher resolution. The repetitive laminae (50–800 µm width) illustrated by the blue–purple shades that primarily represent gypsum ± anhydrite (purple), and rhondochrosite (± anhydrite), and kutnohorite (blue). The higher resolution mineral map inset also demonstrates the compositionally immature nature of the detrital mineral component within the Stuart Range

Formation, with sub-angular to sub-rounded quartz grains, poorly sorted K-feldspar, and detrital mica surrounded by a clay and quartz matrix dominated by illite and kaolinite. ....34

Figure 14: Sealed vessel thermal extraction (TH-GC-MS) and micro-scaled sealed vessel pyrolysis coupled to gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (MSSV-GC-MS) chromatograms of a representative high total organic carbon (TOC) sample (2053188, at 966.35 m, TOC: 8.18, sub-facies 2b) and a low-medium TOC sample (2053367, at 975.60 m, TOC: 4.23) from the Arck 1 core. (a) TH-GC-MS chromatograms of samples 2053188 (red) and 2053367 (grey), and MSSV-GC-MS chromatogram of sample 2053367 (blue) which is a close approximation of what would be expected if sample 2053367 had naturally undergone further maturation to produce free hydrocarbons. (b) TH-GC-MS chromatogram of sample 2053188, focussing on the pristane (pr) and phytane (ph) biomarker parameter for the assessment of redox conditions. A pr/ph value >1 indicates oxic conditions and a pr/ph value <1 reflects anoxic conditions at the sediment/water interface, following Didyk *et al.* (1978). In this case, pr/ph = 0.92, suggesting deposition during anoxic to sub-oxic conditions. (c) MSSV-GC-MS chromatogram of sample 2053367, showing that pr/ph = 2.37, suggesting deposition during oxic conditions. ....37

Figure 15: The types of hydrocarbons and the maturity of a selection of Arck 1 and Cootanoorina 1 core samples, based on source rock analysis (SRA). The Stuart Range Formation (box), taken from the Arck 1 core, is primarily Type II–III oil-gas-prone to Type III gas-prone as indicated by the low hydrogen index (HI) values. It is immature to mature, heading into the oil generation window. The Stuart Range Formation samples have been coloured according to their facies. Samples without an assigned facies have not been coloured. The Cootanoorina Formation (red triangle), taken from the Cootanoorina 1 core, is Type IV inert to Type III gas-prone as indicated by the extremely low HI values. This formation has no potential to very minimal potential to produce hydrocarbons. ....39

Figure 16: Representative source rock potential pyrograms of the Stuart Range Formation and the Cootanoorina 1 Formation based on source rock analysis (SRA). The plots show the proportions of free (S1) and potential (S2) hydrocarbons as artificial maturation is induced by incrementally increasing temperature over a period of time. (a) The Stuart Range Formation (2053193 at 963.04 m), taken from the Arck 1 core, has a significant hydrocarbon potential, as indicated by the large S2 peak. The comparatively low S1 peak indicates a low proportion of free hydrocarbons. (b) The Cootanoorina Formation (2066664 at 948.06 m), taken from Cootanoorina 1, has multiple S2 peaks, suggesting multiple stages of maturation and multiple phases of migration. ....40

Figure 17: Schematic diagrams illustrating the interpreted depositional environments for the six facies identified in the lower Stuart Range Formation in the Arck 1 core. Features within these models are further detailed in Figure 19. The pycnocline (water density gradient) is represented by the red dashed line. (a) Proglacial facies depositional model. Very low sea level, shallow sill conditions due to the presence of glaciers and icebergs. Rare deep water renewal and a shallow pycnocline, with occasional fresh water replenishment as ice melts. (b) Mass flow facies depositional model. Low sea level, shallow sill conditions. Rare deep water renewal and a shallow pycnocline, promotes the development of stratified, euxinic bottom water conditions. Though this is disrupted with mass flow events that result in a surge of sediment deposition and brief bottom water oxygenation. (c) Bioturbated facies depositional model. High sea level, deep sill conditions. Frequent deep water renewal and a pycnocline within the interstitial waters a few centimetres below the sediment–water interface. Mixing of the water column with oxygen and nutrients promotes benthic fauna activity within the oxic sediments (bioturbation). (d) Pelagic facies depositional model. Low sea level, shallow sill conditions. Rare deep water renewal and a shallow pycnocline, promotes the development of stratified, euxinic bottom water conditions. However, this is episodically interrupted by oxic conditions following the bioturbated marl depositional model, on a seasonal timescale. ....42

Figure 18: Interpretation of seismic line 86AK-7 of the Southern Arckaringa Basin troughs (West Trough and Phillipson Trough), showing the current geometry of the troughs

(unflattened). These troughs have been interpreted as incised glacial valleys, i.e. fjords. From Menpes *et al.* (2010). .....45

Figure 19: Schematic diagram illustrating the changes in water exchange across the sill and changes in bottom water redox conditions, as sea level rises and falls. Connection with the open ocean water across the sill allows sulphate (SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>) replenishment. This diagram also shows the fluxes of fresh water, terrigenous material, and organic matter (OM) during deposition of the Stuart Range Formation, within the Arckaringa Basin troughs. (a) Low sea level, shallow sill conditions. Rare deep water renewal and a shallow pycnocline, promotes the development of stratified, euxinic bottom water conditions. The sulphur cycle, occurring within the euxinic zone, shows the partial removal of SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> by bacterial sulphate reduction to make sulphide or hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S). H<sub>2</sub>S can then react with the iron (Fe) minerals within the water column to precipitate pyrite (FeS<sub>2</sub>). Fine-grained sediments are deposited as laminations in this undisturbed setting. (b) High sea level, deep sill conditions. Frequent deep water renewal and a pycnocline within the interstitial waters a few centimetres below the sediment–water interface. Mixing of the water column with oxygen and nutrients promotes benthic fauna activity within the oxic sediments (bioturbation). .....47

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Stratigraphic descriptions of the Arckaringa Basin formations and underlying Cootanoorina Formation, including age based on palynology and interpreted sedimentary environment of deposition. ....11

Table 2: Summary of the drill core and sampling information for Cootanoorina 1 and Arck 1, acquired from the Cootanoorina 1 and Arck 1 well completion reports. ....14

Table 3: Characteristics and interpretations of the six facies identified within the lower Stuart Range Formation, as observed within Arck 1. ....18

Table 4: Typical mineralogy of the six facies identified within the lower Stuart Range Formation, X-ray diffraction (XRD) of bulk powders (Appendix C, Table C1). The presence (%samples) of mineral phases has been grouped into 'all samples', 'most samples', and 'few samples', and 'N/A' has been assigned to facies with only 2 XRD sample results. The number of XRD samples is bracketed beside each facies number. ....23