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THE ORDOVICIAN PALEOGEOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIA

P.J. COOK AND J.M. TOTTERDELL



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BUREAU OF MINERAL RESOURCES,
GEOLOGY AND GEOPHYSICS

ONSHORE SEDIMENTARY &
PETROLEUM GEOLOGY

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THE ORDOVICIAN PALAEOGEOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIA

by

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**BUREAU OF MINERAL RESOURCES/
AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM INDUSTRIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
PALAEOGEOGRAPHIC MAPS PROJECT**

1990



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This record contains early drafts of material to be edited for eventual publication as part of the Palaeogeographic Atlas of Australia, and is issued to make it publically available at an early date. Copies of the data maps, on which the interpretation maps are based, are available separately (1: 5 000 000 scale) from BMR Copy Service (Tel: 062-451374; fax: 062-472728) at a cost of \$5.00 each plus postage.

FOREWORD

Palaeogeographic maps are commonly used by research and teaching institutions to present concepts on the geological evolution of a region. They are widely used by the petroleum and minerals industries as an aid to exploration, and by government and industry as the basis for a broad scale assessment of undiscovered resources. Despite their importance, a comprehensive series of Phanerozoic palaeogeographic maps has yet to be produced for Australia as a whole. In order to fill this gap a palaeogeographic map project was initiated in 1984 within the Division of Continental Geology of the Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology and Geophysics. The project was funded through the Australian Mineral Industries Research Association (AMIRA). Geoscientific input has come not only from BMR geologists and the many exploration geologists with the sponsoring companies, but also from the State Geological Surveys and Mines Departments, universities and individuals with specialist knowledge. We have endeavoured to summarize and interpret this wealth of published and unpublished information in this collection of maps and charts.

Maps of each geological Period are being published as they are completed. The final product of the project will be a complete series of Phanerozoic maps with a common legend. For each period the same approach to data compilation and interpretation has been taken in order to produce a uniform series of maps, but the authors are individually responsible for interpreting the data for each period.

The compilation of basic information was inevitably one of the most protracted phases of the project, requiring the perusal and summarising of many publications and other documents and the preparation of a comprehensive bibliography. For the most part the data used were in the public domain, but where previously confidential information was released to the project, then this too was incorporated into the data base. Well completion reports were consulted wherever possible and a summary of subsurface data prepared. Detailed stratigraphic data columns were compiled in order to summarise the stratigraphic information for each basin or area in a uniform manner. Rather than trying to compile the maximum number of stratigraphic columns possible, this phase of the project aimed at using the minimum number of columns required to characterise the stratigraphy of a basin as well as the continent as a whole. Two types of information were compiled for each column: basic data and interpretative data. The basic data include formation name, thickness, grain size, lithology, sedimentary structures, fossil assemblages, and biochronological or isotopic age. The interpretative data include inferred depositional environment, provenance, tectonic environment, sea-level changes, and palaeocurrent directions. This detailed stratigraphic information was summarised in a single column and placed within biochronological and radiometric frameworks. A composite set of columns for the whole continent (correlation chart) was then prepared for each period.

The geological time-scale of Harland & others (1982) was used wherever possible, although it was frequently necessary to modify their epoch/stage nomenclature for Australia. The summary stratigraphic columns were used not only for intrabasinal and interbasinal correlations, but also to delineate major time breaks or to determine where major changes in sedimentological or tectonic style took place. The major lithological and tectonic changes and time breaks were then used to determine the palaeogeographically significant time slices in each period.

"Time slices" rather than "snapshots" were used as the basis for the palaeogeographic maps. The difference in the two approaches is that in the case of a snapshot the palaeogeographic map is an attempt to represent the palaeogeography at an instant in time, rather than being a summation of a period of time or time slice. If precise biostratigraphic control is available the snapshot approach gives an accurate representation of the palaeogeography, but it suffers from the disadvantage that data between snapshots are essentially lost. For this reason, and also because of the imprecision of a number of the Phanerozoic time lines, the time slice approach was taken. However, it was also decided that the greatest possible resolution should be attained with the time slices, so that within the limits of our present knowledge the time slices would be short, that is, cover a minimum time span. Nevertheless there is a practical limit to the number of time slices that can be delineated, and in a number of cases significant, but very short-lived, highstands and lowstands of relative sea level cannot be shown. Where several rapidly changing environments succeeded each other in the same area within a time slice, it may be possible to only show one, or if they developed in different areas at different times, although within the same time slice, they may have to be shown as contemporaneous. These limitations should be constantly borne in mind by the user.

With the time slices established, data maps were compiled for each at a scale of 1:5 000 000, summarising the most important data. These maps show areas of outcrop, subcrop (where established by drilling) and inferred subcrop, and well intersections of rocks within the time slice, and their lithology (using the standard symbols already used for the stratigraphic columns), including the presence of such environmentally significant minerals as evaporites, collophane (phosphorites), glauconite and organic matter. Where available, measured current directions are indicated, and generalised isopachs or spot thicknesses shown.

Maps showing the structural elements for each period were compiled, as major structural features are likely to have profoundly influenced the palaeogeography. Palinspastic reconstructions have not been used because of the lack of an accepted set of reconstructions for much of the Phanerozoic.

Finally, the palaeogeographic maps were interpreted from the data maps for each time slice. Early in the project it was decided that all maps would be compiled and drawn using computer-assisted drafting techniques, not only because this was more economical, but also because data can be manipulated and the maps readily upgraded as new data become available.

It is our hope that this series of palaeogeographic maps together with the stratigraphic columns, data maps, structural elements map, and the accompanying text provides an account of the Phanerozoic history of the continent that is not only comprehensive and informative, but will also prove to be a valuable aid in the search for and assessment of Australia's mineral and energy resources.

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SUMMARY

Initial compilation for this study of the Ordovician palaeogeography of Australia was carried out at the Australian National University in 1980-81 in conjunction with a study of the Cambrian. The Ordovician study was incorporated into the BMR-APIRA Palaeogeographic Maps Project in 1984; since then it has undergone considerable revision.

Forty-five summary stratigraphic columns representing the Australian Ordovician sequences were compiled. Four time slices were then selected to illustrate the Ordovician palaeogeography of the continent: 1. Datsonian-Bendigonian (505-484 Ma); 2. Chewtonian-Yapeenian (484-479 Ma); 3. Darriwilian (479-469 Ma); and 4. Gisbornian-Bolindian (469-438 Ma). The time scale used is that of Harland and others (1982), however the Ordovician/Silurian boundary follows Strusz (1989). Data maps and interpretive palaeogeographic maps were compiled for each time slice. A Cambro-Ordovician structural features map was used to aid compilation of the palaeogeographic maps.

Biostratigraphic correlation between the Ordovician cratonic and Fold Belt areas is often difficult to establish. Sequences throughout the Fold Belt can be correlated using the Victorian graptolite zonation, which can also be tied to the international schemes, however its usefulness in the cratonic basins is limited. Conodont faunas provide a means of correlating both within Australia (including between the craton and the Fold Belt) and internationally; shelly faunas are also used for interbasinal correlation.

During the Ordovician Australia lay on the northern margin of Gondwana, the craton bordered by a tectonically active margin (now represented by the Tasman Fold Belt System). There is considerable debate about the nature of this margin (convergent or not?) and about the nature of the crust in eastern Australia at this time (continental or oceanic?). The model used during compilation of these maps is that the relatively stable Australian craton was flanked to the east by a convergent margin with a westerly dipping subduction zone; a marginal sea lay to the west of the volcanic arc (which may have developed on a sliver of continental crust), and an abyssal plain and trench to the east. Arc volcanism

and deep water turbidite deposition occurred in the Fold Belt throughout the Ordovician, however Late Ordovician volcanics and turbidites are especially abundant. Gold and copper mineralisation is associated with the arc volcanics in a number of localities in New South Wales.

The most striking palaeogeographic feature of the Early Ordovician was the establishment of the Larapintine Sea, a trans-cratonic seaway linking the Canning and Amadeus Basins with the open ocean to the east and west. This seaway probably developed in response to a eustatic sea level rise and was the site of deposition of phosphorites and organic-rich shales. The seaway reached its maximum extent during the Middle Ordovician, but had disappeared by the Late Ordovician. The fall in relative sea level that is reflected in the Late Ordovician palaeogeographic patterns may be due to eustasy, regional tectonics or both. Nevertheless, a marked change in palaeogeography occurred in the Late Ordovician, with the marine environments that had prevailed in most cratonic basins replaced by paralic and continental depositional environments, or by the complete cessation of deposition.

Much of the southeastern part of the craton and parts of the Fold Belt were affected by the Late Cambrian-Early Ordovician Delamerian Orogeny. This period of folding, metamorphism and uplift was accompanied by the emplacement of mostly granitic intrusives. Coarse detritus was shed off uplifted highlands in the southeastern corner of the craton, however the effect on most cratonic basins appears to have been minor.

INTRODUCTION

This record is the preliminary edition of the Ordovician palaeogeographic maps folio. The folio is one of a series depicting the palaeogeographic evolution of Australia through the Phanerozoic, and together with a set of Cambrian maps, was the first period to be compiled in the Phanerozoic Palaeogeographic Maps of Australia study. The early Palaeozoic is perhaps the most difficult era for which to provide palaeogeographic maps; this is the result of limited biostratigraphic control for many sequences, the difficulties in correlating from the Fold Belt to the craton, and the structural complexity of the Fold Belt. Despite these difficulties a number of generalized Ordovician palaeogeographic maps for the continent have been produced, notably by Brown and others (1968), Cook (1972), Veevers (1976), Webby (1978), Veevers (1984) and Wilford (1983). Detailed palaeogeographic studies have also been undertaken in specific areas such as the Amadeus Basin (Wells & others, 1970; Wells, 1976; Gorter, in press; Walley & Cook, in press), the Georgina Basin (Shergold & Druce, 1980; Radke, 1980; Draper, 1977), the Canning Basin (McTavish & Legg, 1976; Brown & others, 1984; Legg, 1987), and the Tasman Fold Belt (Crook & Powell, 1976; Cas & others, 1980; Cas, 1983; Powell, 1984).

However, given its economic significance in Australia, it is perhaps surprising that greater attention has not been paid to the Ordovician, particularly to its palaeogeography. This economic significance is derived, for example, from the presence of mineralization throughout the Tasman Fold Belt. Ordovician sediments in the Amadeus Basin and Canning Basin are host to oil and gas and, in addition, there are thick sequences of black organic rich mudstones and claystones which may constitute petroleum source rocks. Similarly there are important Ordovician evaporites which could potentially contain potash-rich salts, and Ordovician phosphorites are widespread in the Amadeus and Georgina Basins. The occurrence of virtually all of these resources can be related to Ordovician palaeogeography. It is hoped that the maps provided in this record/folio will assist the search for, and the assessment of, resources that occur within rocks of Ordovician age.

Initial compilation of the Ordovician palaeogeographic maps and correlation chart took place in 1980/81. They were considerably revised in 1984 when the Harland

and others (1982) time scale was adopted. Further updating was done in 1987, 1989 and 1990, however the revised time scale of Webby and Nicoll (1989) could not be incorporated. The Ordovician/Silurian boundary used here (434 Ma) follows Strusz (1989).

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CORRELATIONS

As an essential adjunct to the preparation of maps for the Palaeogeographic Maps Project, a number of detailed biostratigraphic charts and accompanying notes are being prepared for all Periods. The recently published Ordovician biostratigraphic charts and explanatory notes (Webby & Nicoll, 1989) document all the primary biostratigraphic data on which many of the maps and summary charts in this folio are based. Therefore discussion herein is restricted to the major biostratigraphic features and problems of the Ordovician as they relate to the preparation of the palaeogeographic maps.

Correlation of Ordovician sedimentary sequences throughout the continent is difficult to achieve, with few common faunal elements between the shallow "shelly" faunas of the craton and the deep water faunas of the Tasman Fold Belt. The original zonation for the Fold Belt was based primarily on the graptolite zones and stages of the Victorian succession (e.g. Thomas, 1960; Beavis, 1976; Webby, 1976) which have in turn been linked to the European and North American stages with varying degrees of confidence. Graptolites, whilst not abundant, do occur in some of the cratonic sequences, notably in the Canning and Amadeus Basins. However, as pointed out by previous authors (McTavish & Legg, 1972; Webby, 1978), there are major differences in the graptolite faunas of the cratonic and Fold Belt areas; for example, *Didymograptus artus* is abundant in the Canning and Amadeus Basins, but it does not occur in the Victorian succession - the reverse case can be demonstrated for other species and faunas (Webby, 1978). There are also few radiometrically-dated Ordovician sequences in the Fold Belt or the craton. Ordovician ages have been obtained for a number of granites in the Kanmantoo Trough area which provide a minimum age limit for the sediments; within the craton there are no Ordovician volcanics or granites to date. Glauconitic sequences exist and may hold some promise for dating, however the precision likely to be achieved from such dating is presently less than that achievable through biostratigraphy.

Perhaps the best tie lines are those provided by conodonts, which give a link between international zonations, the Fold Belt and basins of the craton. Conodont faunas have been described from the Warburton (Cooper, 1986), Amadeus

(Cooper, 1981; Shergold & others, in press), Georgina (Druce & Jones, 1971; Shergold & Druce, 1980) and Canning (McTavish, 1973; McTavish & Legg, 1976) Basins, and from a number of localities in the Tasman Fold Belt including Tasmania (Burrett, 1979) and the Canberra area (Nicol, 1980). However, conodonts provide only a limited number of ties and a considerable amount of extrapolation is necessary for the intervals between them. Shelly faunas offer good prospects for inter-basinal correlations. The Ordovician faunas of the Amadeus Basin in particular are well developed and together with the coexisting conodont and graptolite faunas should provide a higher degree of inter-basinal correlation than is currently achievable. Work on this is presently in progress (Shergold & others, in press). Shelly faunas may also provide the potential for more accurate correlation between the craton and the Ordovician sequences of Tasmania, and perhaps also with Asia. Jell and others (1984), Burrett and Stait (1985, 1987) and Stait and Burrett (1987) have demonstrated the value of shelly faunas, including nautiloids, for correlation between southeast Asia and Australia.

Within individual cratonic basins the degree of biostratigraphic resolution is quite variable.

AMADEUS BASIN

The Ordovician sequence of the Amadeus Basin comprises up to 2000 m of sediments of the Larapinta Group in the northern part of the basin but thins considerably to the south. The Larapinta Group was defined by Wells and others (1970) following the earlier work of Tate (1896), Madigan (1932), Chewings (1935) and Prichard and Quinlan (1962). The Ordovician rests conformably on the Cambrian in many parts of the basin, and is overlain by ?Silurian-Devonian Mereenie Sandstone. Although the Ordovician Larapinta Group contains a diverse and abundant fauna, including bivalves, brachiopods, trilobites, gastropods, nautiloids, conodonts and other microfossils, detailed work on the biostratigraphy of the basin has only recently been undertaken (Cooper, 1981; Shergold & others, in press). It is anticipated that this will ultimately lead to a well defined faunal scheme that will provide a standard for all the cratonic basins. At present, only a generalized zonation is available.

CANNING BASIN

Ordovician sediments crop out mainly on the northern margin of the Canning Basin, but are present in the subsurface throughout most of the basin, reaching a thickness of greater than 2000m. The base of the Ordovician has not been reached in outcrop, however rocks as old as late Tremadocian were encountered in Sapphire Marsh No. 1 (McTavish & Legg, 1976). The base of the Ordovician section, where it has been intersected in sub-surface or seen in outcrop, is an unconformable contact between Ordovician sediments and Precambrian rocks or Early Cambrian basalts. Cambrian sediments have not been intersected in the Canning Basin but they may be present. The upper contact of the Ordovician sequence is somewhat uncertain; well-dated middle Ordovician sediments are overlain by the Carribuddy Formation, which has uncertain biostratigraphic affinities. Koop (1966), Veevers (1967, 1971) and Glover (1973) have all suggested that the Carribuddy Formation may be in part Ordovician. McTavish and Legg (1976), however, favoured a Devonian age for the Carribuddy Formation, as originally suggested by Combaz and Peniguel (1972). More recent information now supports inclusion of at least the lower part of the Carribuddy Formation in the late Ordovician (R.S. Nicoll, BMR, pers. comm.). Various biostratigraphic schemes have been suggested for the Canning Basin. The most comprehensive of these, based on both microfossils and macrofossils, was developed by McTavish and Legg (1976). They proposed a scheme comprising 10 macrofossil zones, 10 conodont zones and 5 microflora zones which provides ready correlation with the Amadeus Basin in particular, although recent information (Nicoll & others, 1988) suggests a need to revise some of the earlier correlations between the Amadeus and the Canning. Legg (1987) suggested that it is possible to recognize six discrete periods of Ordovician deposition in the Canning Basin based on six faunal (trilobite-graptolite-conodont) units.

GEORGINA BASIN

A well developed sequence, spanning almost the entire Ordovician, occurs along the southern margin of the Georgina Basin, reaching a thickness in excess of 1000 metres in places (Draper, 1980b). The Ordovician rests conformably on the Cambrian and is unconformably overlain by ?Devonian or younger sediments. Using

trilobites and conodonts Shergold and Druce (1980) developed a biostratigraphic scheme based on the earlier work of Jones and others (1971) and Shergold and others (1976). This scheme provides a high degree of biostratigraphic resolution within the shallow marine carbonates and allows correlation between the Lower Ordovician successions in the Georgina, Daly and Bonaparte Basins. Webby (in Webby & others, 1981), however, suggested that the scheme was of limited usefulness for correlation purposes outside northern Australia. Nevertheless, the scheme makes it possible to develop a fairly accurate picture of the Cambro-Ordovician palaeogeography of northern Australia, particularly the Georgina Basin (see Shergold & Druce, 1980).

DALY BASIN

In excess of 500 m of Ordovician sediments occur in the Daly Basin, resting conformably on Cambrian sediments in some areas and unconformably on Cambrian sediments or volcanics elsewhere. The top of the Ordovician interval is everywhere an erosional surface. Biostratigraphic control, whilst not well defined, allows correlation with the Georgina Basin sequence to the southeast; the sequence appears to be entirely of early Ordovician (Datsonian to Bendigonian) age (Jones, 1971).

BONAPARTE BASIN

The Ordovician section in the Bonaparte Basin is composed of up to 180 m of sandstone. It conformably overlies Cambrian sediments but the top of the sequence is everywhere eroded. The age of the sequence (Early Ordovician) has been established on the basis of conodonts and a shelly fauna (Kaulback & Veevers, 1969). A single radiometric age on glauconites from the Pander Greensand indicates a minimum age of Lower Ordovician (Kaulback & Veevers, 1969). There is no well-defined Ordovician biostratigraphic scheme available for the Basin.

WISO BASIN

A sequence of sediments containing shelly fossils and conodonts of Ordovician (Arenig-Llanvirn) age (Hanson River beds) occurs in the Wiso Basin. The upper and lower contacts are probably disconformable. No detailed biostratigraphy is available for the Wiso Basin but Kennewell and Huleatt (1980) proposed correlation with the Amadeus (Larapinta Group) and Georgina (Carlo-Mithaka-Nora Formations) sequences. Radiometric ages ranging from 465-441 Ma obtained on glauconites from Unit 2 of the Hanson River beds (Kennewell & Huleatt, 1980), appear to be too young in relation to the overlying faunas.

NGALIA BASIN

Up to 1000 m of ?Ordovician sediments are present in the Ngalia Basin but fossils are absent and the suggested Ordovician age (Wells & Moss, 1983) is based solely on lithological similarity with the Larapinta Group of the Amadeus Basin. Cooper and others (1971) provided a few ages on glauconites in the Ngalia Basin. The Djagamara Formation gave a late Ordovician (447 Ma) age although they considered that this was a minimum age and that a true age of around 475 Ma (Early Ordovician) was more likely (Wells and Moss, 1983).

OFFICER BASIN

There is no biostratigraphic scheme available for the Officer Basin. Correlations are based essentially on lithological similarity (Jackson & van de Graaff, 1981; Kreig, 1973). Up to 2000 m of ?Ordovician sediments are present in the eastern parts of the basin, resting disconformably on probable Cambrian sediments and unconformably overlain by ?Devonian sediments.

WARBURTON BASIN

A large number of exploration wells have intersected the Ordovician Dullingari Group, which may be several kilometres thick, but only three of these have provided biostratigraphic information (Gatehouse, 1983, 1986). Grapolite remains indicate an Early to Middle Ordovician age (Daily, 1963). The discovery of

conodont remains in the partly coeval "Innamincka Red Beds" (Cooper, 1986) provides a more definite age of early Arenig for part of the Dullingari Group, slightly older than the mid-Arenig Horn Valley Siltstone of the Amadeus Basin (Cooper, 1981).

BANCANNIA TROUGH/GNALTA SHELF

A thick sequence (approximately 2800 m in the Scopes Range area) is present in this region but, in general, ages are poorly constrained. Webby (1976) and Shergold (1971) reported that there are faunal similarities between the Horn Valley Siltstone of the Amadeus Basin (which has a well-constrained Arenig age) and the Tabita Formation of the Gnalta Shelf area, but few other biostratigraphic control points are available.

KANMANTOO TROUGH

The Kanmantoo Trough is a Cambrian depositional feature; sedimentation ceased in the Late Cambrian as a result of the commencement of the Delamerian Orogeny. During the orogeny a series of granites with ages extending into the Ordovician were intruded into the sedimentary sequence (White & others, 1967; Thomson, 1969; Webb, 1976; Milnes & others, 1977; Cooper & Grindley, 1982). These do not provide any stratigraphic control, other than minimum ages for the sediments they intrude, but do provide some age constraints for the Delamerian Orogeny.

LACHLAN FOLD BELT

Tasmania: The Ordovician sequence comprises the clastics of the upper Denison Group and equivalents, and the carbonates and minor siliciclastics of the Gordon Group. This sequence contains a varied fauna (including stromatoporoids, corals, brachiopods, bivalves, gastropods, cephalopods, trilobites, conodonts and graptolites) which allows correlation within Tasmania, regionally and internationally (Banks & Baillie, 1988). Banks and Burrett (1980) proposed a preliminary biostratigraphic system for Tasmania based on these faunas, which comprises twenty faunal assemblages (OT 1 to 20). These assemblages can be correlated with North American and Asian assemblages.

Victoria: The Ordovician sedimentary sequence of eastern and central Victoria contains an extremely rich and diverse graptolite fauna. It provides the type sequence for the biostratigraphic subdivision of the Ordovician in eastern Australia and New Zealand, and can be correlated with the standard British Series. The Lower Ordovician sequence was divided by Hall (1895, 1899, 1912, 1914) into stages or series. This scheme was further developed and refined by Harris (1916, 1933, 1935), Harris and Keble (1932), Harris and Thomas (1938b), Thomas (1960) and VandenBerg (1981). The Upper Ordovician sequence was first subdivided by Thomas and Keble (1933) into three stages. This scheme was further subdivided and refined by Thomas (1935, 1960), Harris and Thomas (1938b) and VandenBerg (1981). In recent years conodonts have also become important biostratigraphic tools for dating both the graptolitic and non-graptolitic Ordovician sequences (Cas & VandenBerg, 1988).

New South Wales: The Upper Ordovician limestones of New South Wales contain a rich coral-stromatoporoid fauna. Webby (1969, 1972, 1975) proposed a biostratigraphic subdivision for use in local correlation, based on four faunal assemblages (Faunas I-IV); Fauna III has since been divided into IIIa and IIIb (Webby & others, 1981). Both Sherrard (1954, 1962) and Sherwin (1971, 1973) have produced Ordovician graptolite zonal schemes for sequences in New South Wales, however their correlation with each other or with the Victorian scheme is imprecise (Webby, 1976).

TAMWORTH TROUGH

Allochthonous limestone blocks within a number of fault blocks in the Tamworth Trough have yielded Middle-Late Ordovician conodonts and diverse Late Ordovician coral assemblages, both with North American affinities (Webby, 1987).

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

The Cambro-Ordovician rocks of the Mount Windsor Subprovince are assigned to the Seventy Mile Range Group, a possibly 12 km thick sequence of volcanics and marine sediments. Henderson (1983) recognised four biostratigraphic assemblages (A-D) within the two youngest formations of the group, which could be correlated with

the Victorian Stage divisions. A coral fauna in the Carriers Wells Limestone (a partial equivalent of the Wairuna Formation) of the Broken River Province can be correlated with Fauna IV assemblages of the Molong High in New South Wales. Some aspects of the fauna indicate affinities with Asia and Alaska (Webby, 1987). A diverse conodont fauna has been described from Ordovician sediments of the Anakie Inlier. This fauna has some North American links (Webby, 1987).

This biostratigraphic framework has allowed the correlation of Ordovician sequences across the continent, and the subsequent delineation of four time slices. The limits of these time slices are generally based on the recognition of regionally significant breaks or changes in sedimentation and changes in depositional environment. The duration of the time slices ranges from five to thirty-five million years.

TECTONICS

INTRODUCTION

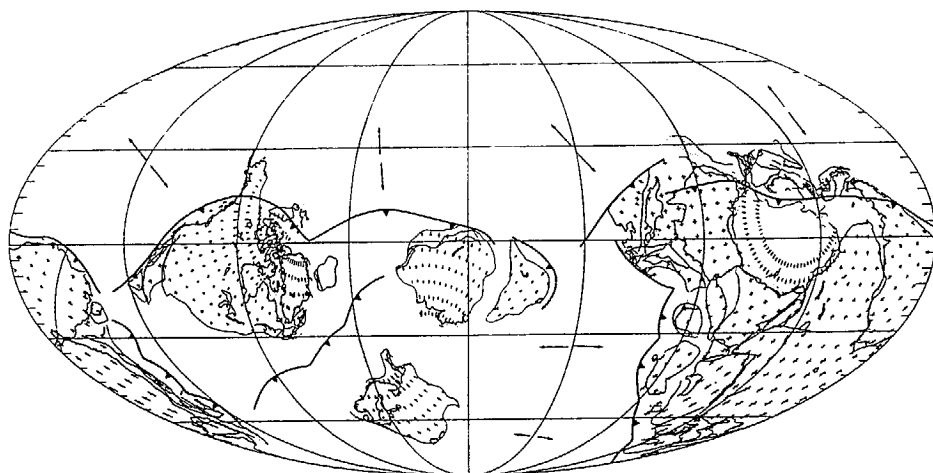
During the Ordovician Australia lay in low to equatorial latitudes on the northern margin of Gondwana (Scotese, 1986, in press; Fig. 1). A broad, relatively stable Proterozoic craton was flanked to the (then) south and west by a number of southeast Asian microcontinents, and to the (then) north by a probably convergent margin, now represented by the Tasman Fold Belt System. Various models have been proposed to explain the tectonic evolution of the Tasman Fold Belt System, particularly the Lachlan Fold Belt and some of these are discussed below. Orogenesis affected the southeastern corner of the craton and adjacent areas of the Tasman Fold Belt System in the Late Cambrian-Early Ordovician (Delamerian Orogeny) and most of the Lachlan Fold Belt in the latest Ordovician-Early Silurian (Benambran Orogeny). Deposition occurred throughout most of the Ordovician in a number of intracratonic basins such as the Amadeus, Canning, and Georgina basins; in other intracratonic basins (for example, the Bonaparte, Wiso and Warburton basins) deposition was less continuous. A period of uplift and deformation, the Rodingan Movement, affected a number of the central Australian basins, possibly in the Late Ordovician.

The Cambro-Ordovician structural features map included in this folio is the same as that published previously in the Cambrian palaeogeographic atlas (Cook, 1988). This map illustrates the major tectonic features that influenced deposition during the Cambrian and Ordovician; the reader is referred to Cook (1988) for a full discussion of the map. Aspects of Australia's tectonic history particularly relevant to the Ordovician are, however, outlined below.

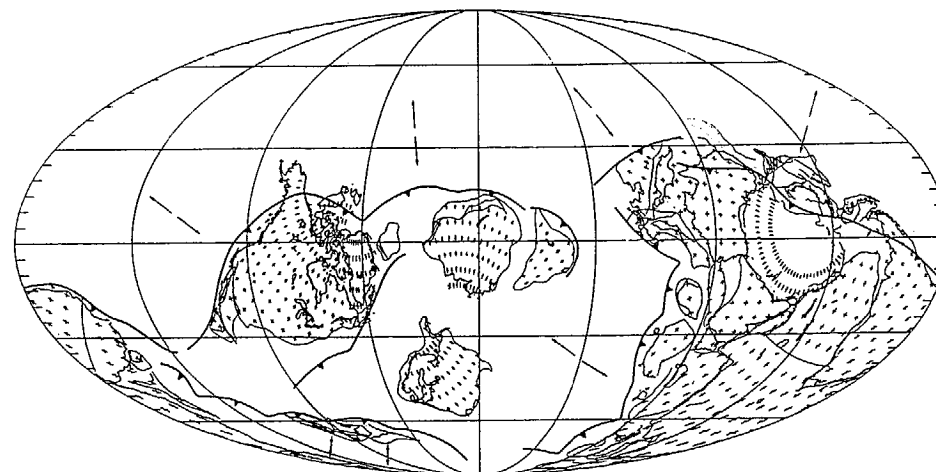
PLATE TECTONIC SETTING

Lachlan Fold Belt

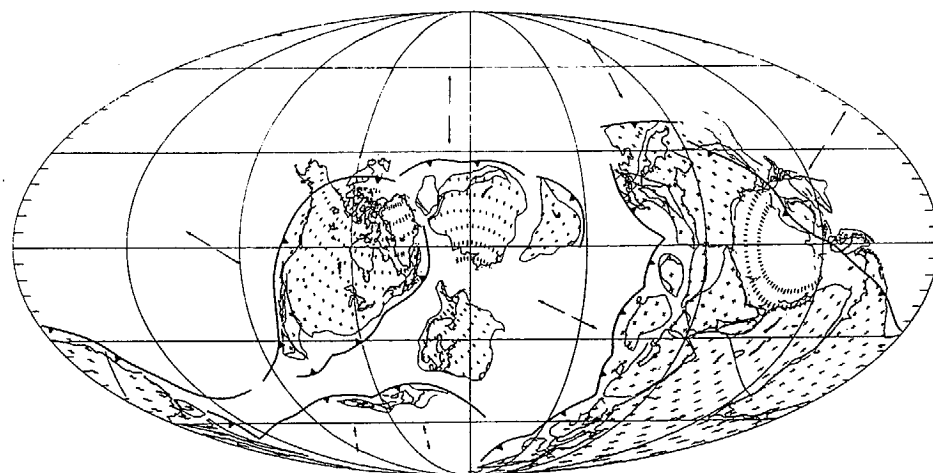
In order to compile palaeogeographic maps of fold belt areas, a model of the tectonic evolution of the region needs to be adopted. However, despite the amount of work that has been done on the Tasman Fold Belt, its palaeogeographic



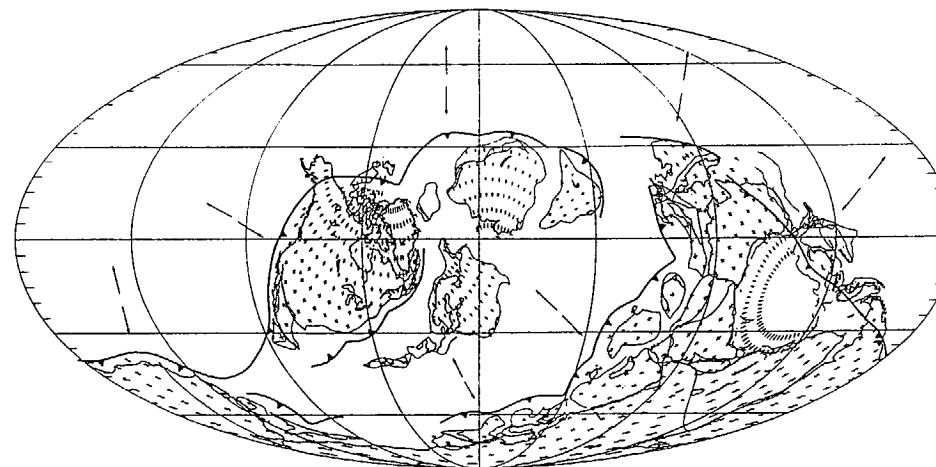
Earliest Ordovician (Tremadoc)



Early Ordovician (Arenig)



Middle-Late Ordovician (Llandeilo-Caradoc)



Late Ordovician (Ashgill)

Figure 1. Ordovician plate tectonic reconstructions; arrows indicate areas of probable plate divergence (courtesy of C.R. Scotese).

and tectonic settings remain obscure. As Coney (1988) noted, "unambiguous plate tectonic settings are not commonly recognised, or those that are recognised are not always agreed upon by general consensus". Numerous tectonic models have been put forward to explain the distribution of facies in the Ordovician of southeastern Australia (Lachlan Fold Belt). Most of the proposed models (e.g. Oversby, 1971; Solomon & Griffiths, 1972; Packham, 1973; Scheibner, 1973a, 1976, 1985, 1989; Cas & others, 1980; Cas, 1983; Powell, 1983, 1984) agree on a number of basic tectonic and physiographic elements, i.e. a westerly dipping subduction zone, the volcanic arc flanked to the west by a marginal sea, and to the east by abyssal plain and trench (Fig. 2). Crook (1980) interpreted the tectonic development of the Lachlan Fold Belt in terms of the successive accretion and subsequent cratonisation of a number of intra-oceanic volcanic arcs. The apparent presence of some pre-Ordovician continental crust in the Fold Belt (see below) and the lack of demonstrable successive arc - fore-arc - accretionary prism sequences argues against this model. Crook's model was used for the Cambrian palaeogeographic atlas, including the Cambro-Ordovician structural features map (Cook, 1988), as this was thought to be the most applicable model available at the time of compilation (i.e. 1981). The "terrains" and Siluro-Devonian extensional features shown on the structural features map in southeastern Australia are therefore those of Crook (1980). The Ordovician palaeogeographic maps, however, are based on the tectonic model for the evolution of the Lachlan Fold Belt of Cas and others (1980) and Powell (1983; 1984). This model, which retains and incorporates some features of models developed by earlier writers, particularly Scheibner (1973a, 1976, 1985, 1989), is one of continental-margin arc-splitting with marginal sea formation, i.e. a continental volcanic arc or continental sliver split prior to the Ordovician, creating a passive continental margin and a young, ocean-floored marginal sea behind it. The volcanic arc, which by the Late Ordovician stretched from Louth, near Cobar, south to Kiandra, was thus established on a basement of pre-Ordovician continental crust or on the remnants of a postulated Cambrian island arc. This is similar to Scheibner's model, in which the Ordovician volcanic arc developed on the eastern margin of the hypothetical Molong microcontinent in the Late Cambrian-Early Ordovician. Scheibner suggested that the Wagga Marginal Basin (Wagga Trough) may be partly, or wholly, a remnant from an earlier marginal sea between the Victorian and Molong microcontinents. Scheibner's model differs from

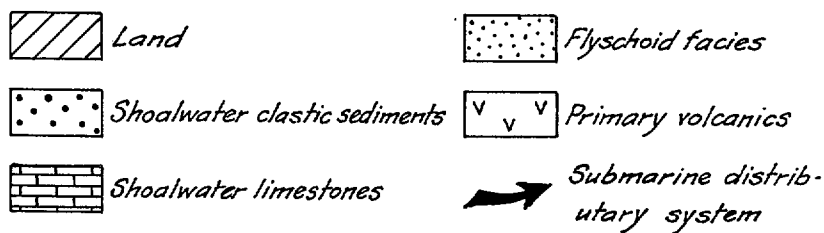
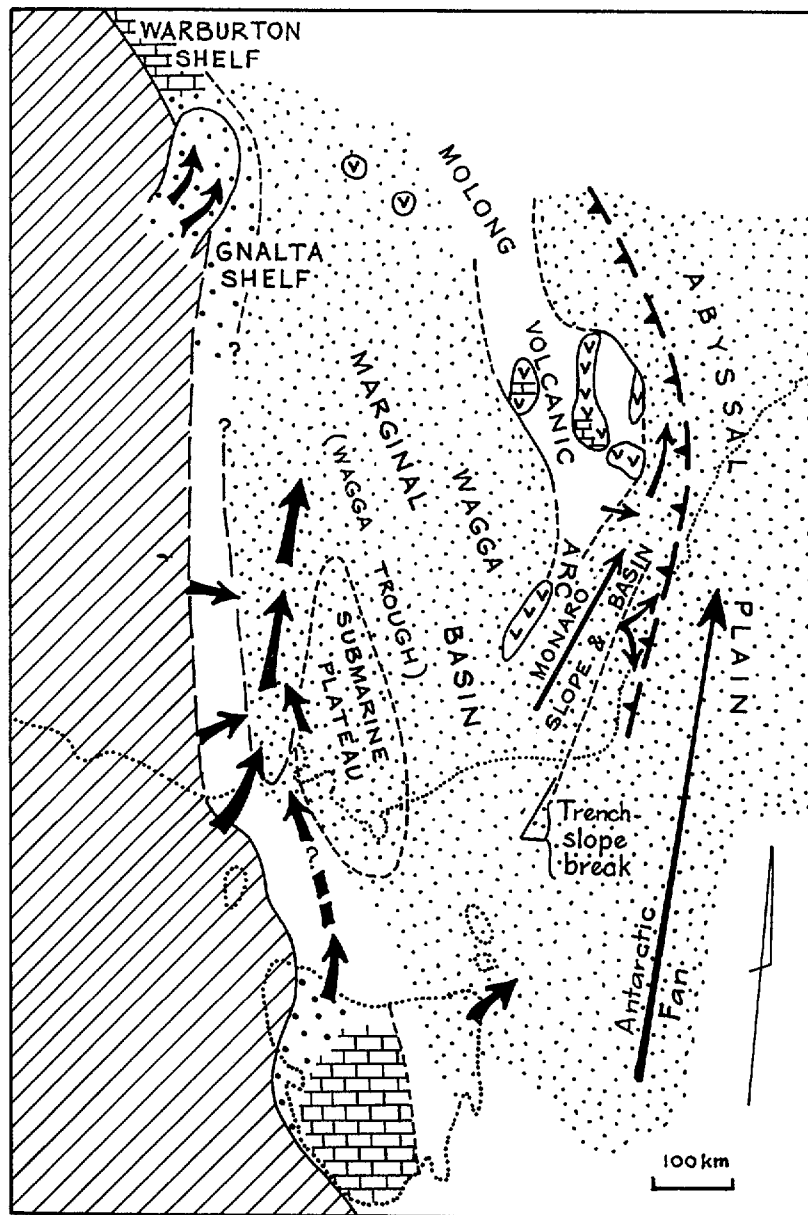


Figure 2 Late Ordovician facies patterns of southeastern Australia (adapted from Powell, 1983)

that of Cas and Powell in that it invokes interarc rifting in the Parkes area in the Early Ordovician, and the arrival of an oceanic plateau at the subduction zone in the Late Ordovician, with subsequent tectonic underplating, and arc reversal in the latest Ordovician. Scheibner (1989) also argued that on geophysical evidence (e.g. Murray & others, 1989), the volcanic arc had a near meridional orientation and did not veer northwestwards, as suggested by Cas and others (1980).

Using the Cas/Powell model, the Ordovician of southeastern Australia can be divided into four main depositional and tectonic realms (Cas, 1983; Powell, 1984; Fig. 2): a western belt of shallow-water marine to terrestrial clastics and carbonates, commonly with conglomerates towards the base, deposited in continental shoreline and shelf environments; an extensive central zone of relatively deep-water clastics (turbidites) deposited in a marginal sea (Wagga Marginal Basin or Trough); a central-eastern belt of mafic-intermediate volcanics and associated limestones deposited in a volcanic island arc; and an eastern zone of turbiditic terrigenous clastics, black shales and mafic volcanics that are interpreted as fore-arc basin and accretionary prism deposits. The Ordovician sedimentary sequences in the Lachlan Fold Belt are dominantly quartz-rich indicating derivation from the craton; volcanoclastic sediments are much less abundant and are found only in association with mafic-intermediate volcanics and carbonates of the volcanic arc.

A number of authors, however, disagree with such models and have questioned the existence of any oceanic crust or subduction related processes during the Ordovician. Rutland (1976) proposed that thin, Precambrian continental crust extended under most of the Lachlan Fold Belt. Geochemical studies of the Silurian-Devonian granitoids of southeastern Australia (e.g. Wyborn & Chappell, 1979; Compston & Chappell, 1979; McCulloch & Chappell, 1982) also suggest that some pre-Ordovician continental crust was present in the Fold Belt. Using geochemical characteristics, Chappell and White (1974) divided granitoids into two distinct groups, I-type and S-type: I-type granitoids are those derived from igneous source rocks, and S-type granitoids from sedimentary source rocks. Chappell and others (1988) argued that most S-type granitoids in the Lachlan Fold Belt were produced by partial melting of thick, unexposed pre-Ordovician

metasedimentary crust, and that the I-S line, which separates I-type granitoids in the east from dominantly S-type granitoids in the west (White & others, 1976; Shaw & others, 1982), represents the eastern limit of that crust. Chappell and others (1988) proposed that the Lachlan Fold Belt consists of a number of distinct blocks of continental lithosphere, which they termed basement terranes. They interpreted these basement terranes as Proterozoic microcontinents which assembled prior to the Ordovician.

Owen and Wyborn (1979) demonstrated that many of the Ordovician volcanics have the chemical characteristics of a particular basaltic association, shoshonites. They argued that the controversy surrounding the tectonic setting and petrogenesis of Cainozoic shoshonites prevented a determination, by analogue, of the plate tectonic setting of the Ordovician Molong Volcanic Arc. Morrison (1980) proposed that shoshonites are characteristic of orogenic areas and occur above the deeper parts of the Benioff zone. Other authors (e.g. Meen & Eggler, 1987; Wyborn, 1988), however, have argued that subduction has little or no influence on the genesis of shoshonites and that they are derived from older subcontinental lithospheric mantle. The role of subduction in the genesis of shoshonites is therefore equivocal. Owen and Wyborn (1979) argued that the most that could be said about the tectonic conditions under which the Ordovician shoshonites had been generated was that the mantle underlying the arc had been modified. This modification may have been caused by subduction (although subduction need not have been contemporaneous with volcanism) or by the incorporation of material from the low-velocity zone into the mantle (Owen & Wyborn, 1979). Wyborn (1988) argued that the contrasting Late Ordovician and Early Silurian tectonic regimes are not easily resolved with models involving continental collisions and proposed that the Ordovician volcanics developed on thin continental crust. Certain conditions in the mantle (perhaps foundering of the subcontinental lithosphere) triggered melting of the lithosphere to produce the shoshonites, which show a broader distribution pattern (see Fig. 2) than the curvilinear belts typical of island arcs (Wyborn, 1988). Scheibner (1989) attributed this distribution to Silurian extension.

Northern Tasman Fold Belt System

The tectonic relationships between the Lachlan Fold Belt and sections of the Tasman Fold Belt System further north are difficult to establish. The palaeogeographic and tectonic significance of allochthonous blocks of fine clastics and limestones of Ordovician age in the Tamworth Trough (Tamworth Terrane of Cawood & Leitch [1987]) is poorly understood (Webby, 1987). Their occurrence within Devonian-Carboniferous convergent margin sequences suggests that they are probably allochthonous, and therefore they may have little bearing on the Ordovician palaeogeography of southeastern Australia (Powell, 1984). However, it has been suggested (Cawood & Leitch, 1987) that the Tamworth Terrane and Lachlan Fold Belt were in close proximity during the Early Palaeozoic and that the Cambro-Ordovician clastics of the Tamworth Terrane were sourced by the arc volcanics of the eastern Lachlan Fold Belt.

Henderson (1986) proposed that the Lower Ordovician succession near Charters Towers in northern Queensland (Mount Windsor Sub-province) was deposited in a north-south oriented back-arc basin, formed by continental extension, which lay to the west of an Andean-type volcanic chain (as the palaeogeographic maps are not palinspastic it is difficult to illustrate these tectonic relationships accurately). An early bimodal phase of the Ravenswood Batholith was intruded into rocks of the Mount Windsor Sub-province during the ?Early-Middle Ordovician. Partial melting was probably caused by the underplating of thin Proterozoic to Early Palaeozoic continental crust by mantle derived mafic material; this event took place about 480 Ma (Hutton & others, 1990). These conclusions are not inconsistent with Henderson's (1986) back-arc spreading hypothesis. The Middle-Upper Ordovician rocks of the Broken River Province are also believed to have been deposited in volcanic arc and back-arc basin settings (Withnall & others, 1988). The relationship or connection between the proposed convergent margin segments in the Lachlan Fold Belt and northern Queensland is uncertain, as this area is obscured by younger fold belts and basins. Powell (1984) proposed that much of the plate boundary between these segments was a transform margin.

Tasmania

The geographic position of Tasmania (or the terranes that subsequently made up Tasmania) during the Early Palaeozoic has been the subject of some debate. Many

authors have favoured the view that Tasmania occupied essentially its present position and was part of the cratonic margin of Australia during the Ordovician (e.g. Solomon & Griffiths, 1972, 1975; Webby, 1976, 1978; Cas & others, 1980; Cas, 1983). Crawford and Campbell (1973), however, proposed that Tasmania originally lay further east and that it was transported to its present position during the Early Ordovician when 300 km of dextral movement occurred on a mega-shear parallel to the southern margin of Australia. Daily and others (1973) argued that there was no geological evidence to support such large scale horizontal displacement. Findlay (1987) also proposed that the Tasmanian microcontinent lay well to the east of its present position in the Cambrian, but argued that it reached its pre-Mesozoic break-up position adjacent to northeastern north Victoria Land during a Late Cambrian-Early Ordovician collisional event. Harrington and others (1973) proposed that Tasmania originally lay to the south of the Adelaide Fold Belt and that sinistral movement on the postulated Gambier-Beaconsfield fracture zone took place between the Late Ordovician and the middle Devonian.

Western margin

The tectonic nature of the western margin of the craton during the Ordovician is largely unknown. Various authors (see e.g. Veevers, 1984) have speculated that a divergent continental margin developed along the western edge of the craton during the Cambrian as a result of spreading of the Tethyan Ocean, and interpret the voluminous, probably Early Cambrian Antrim Plateau Volcanics as a product of this rifting. Veevers (1984) suggested that the Early Palaeozoic sediments of the Bonaparte, Canning and Carnarvon basins represent the subsequent fill of "failed arms" initiated during rifting of the northwestern margin.

DELAMERIAN OROGENY

During the Late Cambrian and Early Ordovician, much of South Australia, western Victoria, western New South Wales, Tasmania and parts of Antarctica were affected by the Delamerian Orogeny (Thomson, 1969), a series of at least two, possibly four, orogenic events (Parker, 1986). In South Australia and western Victoria, sediments of the Late Proterozoic-Cambrian Adelaide Fold Belt and the Cambrian

Kanmantoo Trough were uplifted, folded and regionally metamorphosed (Webby, 1978). Preiss (1987) reported that two distinct Delamerian fold phases (an initial meridional to northwest trending set and a second east to east-northeast trending set) can be identified in the Adelaide Fold Belt. Most of the Fold Belt was affected by low-grade (up to greenschist facies) metamorphism, although some areas, such as the eastern and southern Mount Lofty Ranges, underwent higher-grade metamorphism (Preiss, 1987). Syn-orogenic and post-orogenic intrusives of Ordovician age were emplaced throughout the Kanmantoo region and in the Mount Painter Block at the northern end of the Adelaide Fold Belt. These intrusives are predominantly granitic but include some mafic intrusives and dykes. The bimodal nature of the post-tectonic intrusive suite may suggest a period of extensional tectonics shortly after the close of the Delamerian Orogeny (Turner & others, 1989). Parker (1986) suggested that the initial Delamerian orogenic event occurred prior to the emplacement of the Encounter Bay granites at about 515-500 Ma, and the second major event at 495-470 Ma, prior to the intrusion of the Murray Bridge granites. Large bodies of carbonate-cemented breccias that occur in the Flinders Ranges have been interpreted as diapirs (Webb, 1960), many of which show evidence of intrusion during a late phase of the Delamerian Orogeny (Preiss, 1987). Some diapirs that first developed in the Precambrian or Cambrian were remobilised during this period; the late-phase breccias were emplaced as apophyses or plugs (Preiss, 1987).

There is sedimentological evidence of uplift during the Late Cambrian-Early Ordovician. At this time there was an influx of coarse clastic material into shallow marine and non-marine environments in western New South Wales and Tasmania. A delta was established on the Gnalta Shelf fed by the uplifted hinterland of the Adelaide Fold Belt to the south and west. In western Tasmania the Cambro-Ordovician Owen Conglomerate and equivalents were derived from the uplifted Precambrian basement (Tyennan Block) to the east and south. There is also evidence of a widespread Early Ordovician thermal event in western Tasmania which reset Rb-Sr and K-Ar systems (Adams & others, 1985). Deformation of Cambrian sediments at Rosebery has been dated at 470 ± 8 and 474 ± 3 Ma (Adams & others, 1985) and Rb-Sr dating of the Leven Gorge dyke in the Dial Range Trough has given an age of 480 ± 18 Ma (Jago & others, 1977); the associated Lobster Creek Volcanics have been dated at 456 ± 22 Ma (Adams & others, 1985). Stratabound base-

metal sulphide mineralisation within the Gordon Limestone has also been attributed to this thermal event (Collins & Williams, 1986).

The Delamerian Orogeny has been attributed to convergence between a microcontinental block (the "Victorian microcontinent" of Scheibner [1985]) or a rifted marginal plateau, and the Precambrian cratonic margin (Brown & others, 1988). Scheibner (1985) regarded the Kanmantoo plutons as terrane stitching orogenic granites. However, Preiss (1987) has argued that until the former existence of oceanic crust and a subduction related trench has been established, the application of a convergent margin model to explain the Delamerian Orogeny will remain speculative, and that an intra-plate origin should be considered as an alternative.

The Delamerian Orogeny has been correlated with the Ross Orogeny that affected areas of neighbouring Antarctica (particularly northern Victoria Land) at the same time (Oliver, 1972; Findlay, 1987). Findlay (1987) interpreted the Cambrian-Ordovician tectonic history of northern Victoria Land, Tasmania and New Zealand in terms of the collision of a tectonically linked system of island arcs and microcontinents with the East Antarctica-Australian sector of the Gondwanan margin.

Large areas of New South Wales and Victoria underwent deformation and granitic emplacement during the latest Ordovician-Early Silurian Benambran Orogeny. This has been discussed in considerable detail by Walley (1987) and Walley & others (in press), and will not be covered in these notes.

INTRA-CRATONIC BASINS

The effect of the Delamerian Orogeny on the cratonic basins is less marked. There, the role of tectonics versus eustasy is often difficult to determine. The hiatus within or at the top of the Kelly Creek Formation in the Georgina Basin (Shergold & Druce, 1980) possibly reflects a local tectonic event, the Kelly Creek Movement (Webby, 1978; Nicoll & others, 1988), and may correlate with a later phase of the Delamerian Orogeny. However, Nicoll and others (in press)

proposed that this hiatus, which can be correlated with a break between the Pacoota Sandstone and the Horn Valley Siltstone in the Waterhouse Range area of the Amadeus Basin, is the result of a sealevel lowstand (the Kelly Creek Eustatic Event). Shergold (1986) attributed time breaks within the Late Cambrian Goyder Formation of the Amadeus Basin and its equivalents in other basins to the effects of the Delamerian Orogeny.

Korsch and Lindsay (1989) and Lindsay and Korsch (1989) proposed that the evolution of the Amadeus Basin during the Ordovician was driven by thermal recovery and subsidence following two earlier phases of extension at about 900 and 620 Ma. Thermal subsidence was probably the dominant controlling mechanism behind the evolution of other intracratonic basins, such as the Bonaparte, Ord, Wiso, Georgina, Ngalia, Officer and Warburton, as these basins had also undergone one or two earlier periods of extension (Lindsay & others, 1987). No sediments older than Ordovician occur in the Canning Basin, however, as mentioned previously, it is possible that an early period of extension also took place there, and that subsidence during the Ordovician was therefore controlled by thermal subsidence. Sediment thickness patterns indicate that syndepositional movement took place in the Canning Basin on the bounding faults of grabens (e.g. Willara Sub-basin) and basement highs during the Ordovician (Brown & others, 1984).

Parts of central Australia, including the Arunta Block and Amadeus Basin, were affected by the Late Ordovician Rodingan Movement. The exact timing of this event, however, is the subject of some debate. Wells and others (1970) placed the Rodingan Movement in the Silurian(?) following deposition of the Carmichael Sandstone, stating that a low-angle unconformity exists between the Carmichael and Mereenie Sandstones in the northern and northeastern parts of the basin. Lindsay and Korsch (1989), however, argued that the major break occurs beneath the Carmichael Sandstone, but suggested that as this erosion surface is seismically conformable in large areas of the basin it may be related to basin dynamics rather than orogenesis. Nicoll and others (in press) proposed that the Rodingan Movement occurred during the Late Ordovician following deposition of the Stokes Siltstone, which accumulated during a long period of relative tectonic stability. The sudden change in deposition from mudstone (Stokes Siltstone) to

coarse clastics (Carmichael Sandstone) is believed to be a reflection of tectonic activity (Nicol & others, in press). This view is supported by M. Owen (BMR, pers. comm.), who suggested that the Carmichael Sandstone is more closely related to the Mereenie Sandstone cycle of deposition than it is to the Larapinta Group, and as such could be considered as the basal member of the Mereenie Sandstone. Shaw (in press), however, proposed that the tectonic activity preceding deposition of the Carmichael Sandstone was a precursor to the larger Rodingan Movement, which, as originally defined by Wells and others (1970), is represented by a long time break between the Carmichael and Mereenie Sandstones. However, recent work on the Carmichael and Mereenie Sandstones indicates that the two are conformable with a gradational boundary (M. Owen, BMR, pers. comm.). Based on the isopach maps of Wells and others (1970), Warren (1983) suggested that up to 4000 metres of uplift may have occurred in the Arunta Block to the northeast of the basin during the Rodingan Movement. The northeasternmost part of the basin, adjacent to the Arunta Block, was also uplifted and appears to have been high ground from the time of the Rodingan Movement until the Devonian. In the eastern part of the basin, regional tilting that has been attributed to the Rodingan Movement resulted in the erosion of up to 3000 metres of section (Shaw & Wells, 1983; Lindsay & Korsch, in press). There is evidence of structural growth on anticlines such as the Waterhouse Range Anticline during the Rodingan Movement, probably driven by salt tectonics (Nicol & others, in press).

PALAEOGEOGRAPHY

TIME SLICE 1: DATSONIAN-BENDIGONIAN (505-484 Ma)

For much of the Late Cambrian a large part of the Australian craton was sub-aerially exposed (Cook, 1988). This may be attributable largely to the effects of the Delamerian Orogeny; the published sealevel curves of Vail & others (1977) and Hallam (1984) show a steadily increasing sealevel in the Late Cambrian, with a possible fall in the latest Cambrian (Struckmeyer & Brown, 1990). The Delamerian Orogeny, and syn- and post-orogenic emplacement of granites, continued well into the Ordovician in the southeastern part of the craton. At about the beginning of the Ordovician, marine conditions once again returned to the central part of the craton. In the Bonaparte Basin region there was essentially continuous marine sedimentation from the Cambrian into the Ordovician, possibly a consequence of an earlier phase of sea floor spreading to the northwest, with the development of a "failed arm" providing access to open marine conditions to the west and northwest (Veevers, 1984). In the Bonaparte Basin itself, glauconitic and slightly phosphatic sands were deposited under relatively shallow marine conditions. There may have been a connection further to the east into the Daly Basin where carbonates were deposited, possibly under semi-emergent marine to emergent conditions. Hypersaline conditions occurred at times and some thin evaporites (halite and sulphates) were deposited (the area was at a palaeolatitude of about 15° at this time). Minor sedimentation may have taken place at this time in the Ngalia Basin. There, thin, partly glauconitic sandstones of the Djagamara Formation were deposited under very shallow marine conditions, with a possible marine connection to the south and east.

The only evidence of Ordovician sediments in the Georgina Basin is in the southeast corner, where a broad zone of shallow submergent to semi-emergent ooid shoals developed. Locally, emergent and evaporitic conditions existed. In the south there was some clastic sedimentation, represented by the Tomahawk Beds, but overall, sedimentation was dominated by carbonates of the Ninmaroo and Kelly Creek Formations. Sedimentation may have been discontinuous in the southeast Georgina Basin area as a consequence of the latest Tremadoc Kelly Creek Movement (Nicol & others, 1988). In the Amadeus Basin, deposition at this time was

dominated by the Pacoota Sandstone. This unit, which extends down into the latest Cambrian (Payntonian), comprises thick sequences of mature quartz sandstones showing, for the most part, a well-defined westerly source. Glauconitic and phosphatic intervals are consistent with fairly open marine conditions. The clastic intervals were generally deposited on a shallow shelf, with intertidal and subtidal sand sheets, and offshore bar and bank deposits in places. Kennard and others (1986) suggested that water depths reached a maximum during deposition of the middle part of the unit, however there is little doubt that shallow marine conditions predominated throughout the eastern end of the Basin. A thin clastic unit, the Mt Chandler Sandstone, may have been deposited at this time in the Officer Basin to the south.

An important feature of this first Ordovician time slice was the initiation, possibly in the latest Tremadoc, of sedimentation in the Canning Basin. This was a result of the development of the Larapintine Sea in response to a eustatic sea level rise (Nicol & others, 1988). Although biostratigraphic control in the early part of the sequence is poor, it appears that there was a well-defined link between the Georgina, Amadeus and Canning Basins by the late Tremadoc (McTavish & Legg, 1976; Webby, 1978; Nicol & others, 1988). Carbonates of the Emanuel Formation were widespread on the northern margin of the basin (the Lennard Shelf) at this time. Fine argillaceous sediments were deposited adjacent to the area of carbonate deposition, with the sedimentation pattern probably strongly controlled by bathymetry. As pointed out by Brown and others (1984) and other writers, the sedimentation patterns in the Canning Basin, commencing in Ordovician Time Slice 1, were strongly fault-controlled, with various grabens such as the Willara Sub-basin, and basement highs such as the Broome Platform exerting a profound influence. In the more marginal areas relatively coarse clastics such as the Carranya Beds were deposited. These are interpreted by Yeates and others (1984) as beach deposits composed of sandy detritus derived from the coastal erosion of basement rocks. The shoreline and nearshore sandstones of the lower Nambett Formation, the Carranya Beds and perhaps also the Wilson Cliffs Sandstone of the Kidson Sub-basin were deposited around basement highs and along the basin margins under very shallow marine conditions. The shales and carbonates of the Nambett Formation were, by contrast, deposited in subsiding intertidal to shallow subtidal environments. It is probable that there

was a connection from the Canning Basin west to the open ocean. On the basis of faunal evidence, Legg (1987) proposed that during the Early Ordovician, the sea encroached from the west in two tongues on either side of the Broome Platform. The nature of the marine connection to the east during this time slice is less certain. Fluctuations in sealevel probably resulted in the severing and re-establishment of the connection before it was fully developed as a seaway by the beginning of Ordovician 2.

On the eastern side of the craton, there was probably an open connection between the Amadeus Basin and a shelfal area in the Warburton Basin. A thick sequence of argillaceous sediments of the Dullingari Group was deposited on this shelf at this time. In the vicinity of the Packsaddle No. 1 well in northeastern South Australia, sediments of Time Slice 1 age known as the "Innaminka Red Beds" (Cooper, 1986), suggest nearshore-paralic conditions and close proximity to a source of sandy detritus, perhaps reflecting the continuation of the Delamerian Orogeny.

A thick sequence of Upper Cambrian-Lower Ordovician fluvial to shallow marine, quartz-rich sandstones, conglomerates and carbonates occurs in western New South Wales on the Gnalta Shelf (Wopfner, 1967; Rose & Brunker, 1969; Shergold, 1971; Webby, 1976). Sediments in the southern part of the shelf (Scopes Range) were deposited in a large deltaic complex derived from part of the uplifted Adelaide Fold Belt to the south and west. Shallow to marginal marine sediments which crop out further north (Bynguano Range and Mt Arrowsmith) were deposited further offshore, beyond the dominating influence of the delta (Webby, 1976). Paralic to shallow marine sediments of this age are also present in western Tasmania, where coarse clastics predominate (Reeds, Owen and Duncan Conglomerates) (Corbett & Banks, 1974; Corbett, 1975a; Corbett & others, 1977; Burns, 1964). These Tasmanian sediments, derived from the Precambrian Tyennan Block, are a product of deformation and uplift during the Late Cambrian-Early Ordovician Delamerian Orogeny. An isolated area of shallow marine sediments (Digger Island Limestone) occurs in Victoria towards the southern end of the Mount Wellington Axis (Singleton, 1973). Elsewhere on the axis, the occurrence of carbonaceous sediments and the local presence of phosphorites, suggests the development of some areas of high organic productivity at this time.

To the east and north of this zone of shelf facies is a zone of deep water terrigenous clastics. Bathyal-abyssal graptolitic shales and turbidites were deposited by north-flowing currents in the Ballarat and Melbourne Troughs (Kemble, 1950; Beavis, 1976; Vandenberg, 1978); similar distal turbidites (Mathinna beds) may also have been deposited at this time in northeast Tasmania. Deposition of graptolitic shales ("Eskdale beds") in the Wagga Trough (or Wagga Marginal Basin of Scheibner, 1973a) commenced in the Bendigonian (Kilpatrick & Fleming, 1980). The Jindalee beds, a sequence of metamorphosed mafic volcanics, cherts, quartzites and ultramafics in the Cootamundra area, are possibly of this age (Basden & others, 1975). Scheibner and Pearce (1978) suggested that the metabasalts within the Jindalee beds represent ocean-floor basalts of marginal basin origin. To the north, deposition of the turbiditic Girilambone beds probably continued from the Cambrian.

Mafic to intermediate volcanics (Nelungaloo Volcanics, Fairbridge Volcanic Group) are present around Parkes and Molong in central western New South Wales (Adrian, 1971; Sherwin, 1973, 1979; Sherwin & others, 1987). Sediments associated with these basaltic andesites (Yarrimbah Chert Member, Hensleigh Siltstone) indicate that deposition occurred in marine environments; the absence of associated limestones could indicate depths below the photic zone (Cas, 1983).

A westerly-dipping subduction complex was initiated in the latest Cambrian or Early Ordovician in the Narooma-Batemans Bay area. The Wagonga beds, abyssal plain deposits comprising cherts, mudstones, greywackes, mafic volcanics and limestones, are thought to represent the accretionary prism (Packham, 1973; Powell, 1983). The limestone and basalt are believed to have been deposited on the flanks of a seamount from the Middle Cambrian to the Early Ordovician. Westerly-derived turbidites (coastal greywackes and slates) were deposited at the foot of the outer-arc slope of the subduction complex by an eastwards-prograding submarine fan. These sediments interfinger with the abyssal plain deposits and contain latest Cambrian-Early Ordovician conodonts (Prendergast, 1987; Bischoff & Prendergast, 1987).

Possible Lower Ordovician marine fine clastics (Pipeclay Creek Formation) are present in the Tamworth Trough in northeastern New South Wales. These sediments

appear to have been derived from a westerly source and were deposited in a submarine fan complex (Cawood & Leitch, 1985). Although the relationship of the Tamworth Terrane (Cawood & Leitch, 1987) to other Ordovician elements is unclear, biogeographic evidence suggests closer links with North American faunas than with faunas of the Gondwanan margin (Webby, 1987).

In the Mount Windsor Subprovince in northern Queensland (see Lolworth-Ravenswood Block column on correlation chart), siltstones, shales, sandstones and volcanics of the Trooper Creek and Rollston Range Formations (Seventy Mile Range Group) were deposited in moderately deep marine environments in a back-arc basin. This basin was probably oriented in a north-south direction and lay to the west of a volcanic chain of Andean type (Henderson, 1986). The Balcooma metavolcanics of the Georgetown Inlier are possible equivalents of the Seventy Mile Range Group (Henderson, 1986). Extensive, steeply-dipping, phyllitic and quartzitic sediments and mafic volcanics occur throughout the subsurface in western Queensland. The age of these rocks is uncertain, however, limited radiometric dating indicates an Early-Mid Palaeozoic age (Murray & Kirkegaard, 1978). These rocks possibly correlate with the Lower-Middle Ordovician sequence in the Warburton Basin to the west.

TIME SLICE 2: CHEWTONIAN-YAPEENIAN (484-479 Ma)

Palaeogeography during Time Slice 2 was dominated by the establishment of a well-defined trans-cratonic seaway, the Larapintine Sea (Kebble & Benson, 1939; Webby, 1978), which extended across the Warburton Basin, into the Amadeus Basin and through to the Canning Basin. The southeastern Georgina, Wiso and Ngalia Basins lay on its northern margin, and the Officer Basin on its southern margin. In the Canning Basin sedimentation patterns continued to show the strong structural control evident in Time Slice 1. The rise in sea level reflected in the establishment of the Larapintine Sea is evident from changes in the depositional patterns. Legg (1987) noted that at this time pelitic facies (represented by the Gap Creek Formation) extended eastwards into the Kidson and Gregory Sub-basins, whilst the sandy facies (represented by the Wilson Cliffs Sandstone) was deposited only in the eastern extremities of the Basin.

Further east in the Amadeus Basin, sedimentation during Time Slice 2 was notable for the deposition of the organic-rich shales, siltstones and thin limestones of the Horn Valley Siltstone. This interval contains abundant fossils including graptolites and a distinctive conodont and trilobite fauna which has been used to correlate this interval and delineate a marked highstand of sea level in the Amadeus, Georgina and Canning Basins (Nicol & others, 1988). Kennard and others (1986) suggested that the Horn Valley Siltstone was deposited on a "normal marine shelf" with "normal marine salinity" although the presence of abundant black shales is taken to represent euxinic bottom conditions (in which the pelagic fauna is well preserved) with more oxygenated conditions represented by limestones. The present Chile-Peru shelf, where the oxygen minimum zone periodically impinges upon an open shelf, may provide an alternative model. Alternatively the high organic productivity conditions evident from the sediments of the Horn Valley Siltstone may be a consequence of upwelling generated within the Larapintine Sea in response to the coastal configuration, bathymetry and prevailing current directions.

Outside the Amadeus Basin, the sedimentation patterns are much less distinctive. The interval is represented in the southeastern Georgina Basin by the thin siltstones and carbonates of the Coolibah Formation, however, much of the Time Slice 2 section may have been lost from this area as a result of an episode of sub-aerial exposure and erosion. In the Wiso Basin, deposition of the sandstones and siltstones of the Hanson River Beds may have commenced during Time Slice 2. Biostratigraphic control in the Officer Basin is poor, but on lithological grounds it is assumed that the Indulkana Shale is the time equivalent of the Horn Valley Siltstone and was deposited during Time Slice 2, (Krieg, 1973), though under more oxidizing conditions than those of the Amadeus Basin to the north. Sediments of the Dullingari Group, which were deposited throughout much of the Warburton Basin, are predominantly argillaceous, but include minor sandstones and limestones. Rare fossils within the Dullingari Group include graptolites, which strongly suggests a connection to the open sea further to the east. Closer to the shoreline, sands and muds of the Innamincka Red Beds were deposited (Gatehouse, 1986).

Deposition of predominantly clastic facies (Tabita, Pingbilly and Rowena Formations) on the Gnalta Shelf/Bancannia Trough continued under open marine shelf conditions (Wopfner, 1967; Rose & Brunner, 1969; Shergold, 1971). During this time interval a shallow marine carbonate shelf became established in western Tasmania (Gordon Group and equivalents) with clastic sedimentation locally dominant (e.g. Dial Range Trough). Lower Ordovician, possibly Castlemainian, graptolitic shales of distal turbidite facies (Mathinna beds) were deposited in northeastern Tasmania by north-flowing currents (Banks & Smith, 1968; Powell, 1984). Palaeofacies remained much the same in Victoria, with the deposition of a turbiditic sequence. Accumulation of the Girilambone beds in western New South Wales probably continued during this time slice.

Mafic-intermediate volcanism continued in the central-eastern volcanic chain. Again, deposition was probably submarine; pillow basalts occur in the Walli Andesite (Packham, 1969). The Jagungal Basalt, which occurs further south near Kiandra, is possibly of this age (Owen & Wyborn, 1979; Cas & others, 1980). Palaeogeographic and sedimentation patterns in the subduction complex on the south coast of New South Wales were probably similar to those described for the previous time slice.

Sedimentation patterns in the Mount Windsor Subprovince were similar to those in the previous time interval, with deposition in moderately deep marine environments of the youngest formation of the Seventy Mile Range Group, the Rollston Range Formation (Henderson, 1986).

TIME SLICE 3: DARRIWILIAN (479-469 Ma)

At about the close of Time Slice 2 there appears to have been a major regression in the Amadeus, Georgina and Canning Basins and probably elsewhere. Nicoll and others (1988) related this to a global eustatic event evident in other parts of the world including Canada (Miller, 1984) and Scandinavia (Linstrom & Vortisch, 1983). However, early in Time Slice 3 this regression was followed by a major transgression, and Time Slice 3 palaeogeography is for the most part dominated by high relative sea levels and the maximum Ordovician marine inundation of the

craton. The Larapintine Sea was well developed at this time and had an important influence on sedimentation.

In the Canning Basin, deposition during Time Slice 3 is represented by the interbedded siltstones, claystones, sandstones, limestones and dolomites of the Goldwyer Formation and by the dolomites of the overlying Nita Formation. Deposition took place under relatively shallow, warm marine conditions (Foster & others, 1986). Brown and others (1984, Fig. 9) have proposed a facies pattern for this time consisting of shallow sub-tidal to intertidal platform carbonates over the Broome Platform with possible basinal shales to the north in the Fitzroy Sub-basin. To the east and south conditions became progressively shallower, with shallow sub-tidal carbonates and rare clastics followed by intertidal muds and finally supratidal carbonates. A notable feature of Canning Basin sedimentation at this time is the occurrence of organic-rich sediments of algal origin (Foster & others, 1986) particularly within the Goldwyer Formation.

To the east there was limited shallow marine sedimentation in the Wiso Basin where siltstones, limestones and dolomites of the Hanson River Beds were deposited (Kennewell & Huleatt, 1980). There may also have been limited deposition in the Ngalia Basin at this time (Wells & Moss, 1983).

The main marine connection to the east was through the Amadeus Basin. There the Stairway Sandstone and the lower part of the Stokes Siltstone were deposited under predominately shallow marine conditions, with a well-defined current direction from the east and southeast (Cook, 1972). Maximum water depth was attained during deposition of the middle and upper parts of the Stairway Sandstone, at which time black shales and phosphorites were deposited throughout much of the basin, probably in a high organic productivity system; the association of phosphorites and organic matter is characteristic of sediments deposited in an upwelling zone (Parrish, 1982). Sandstones were deposited under shallower conditions ranging from intertidal to sub-tidal. The depositional conditions in both the Canning and Amadeus Basins were very similar at this time, a reflection of the marine connection between them. In the southern Georgina Basin, the sediments were mostly siltstones, shales and sandstones with minor carbonates. The dominant depositional conditions were probably paralic (barrier-

lagoon) to shallow marine, but it is evident from the presence of phosphorites that at times the conditions were more marine, for example during deposition of the Nora Formation. A tidal to sub-tidal origin is apparent for sandstones such as the Carlo Sandstone (Draper, 1977; Green & Balfe, 1980).

To the south, in the Officer Basin, biostratigraphic control is poor but lithological similarities between the Stairway Sandstone and the Blue Hill Sandstone-Cartu Beds interval (Krieg, 1973) suggest that a marine environment may have existed. Similarly in the Warburton Basin it is possible that sedimentation of the Dullingari Group extended into Time Slice 3.

In western Tasmania there was continued deposition of extensive shelf carbonates (Gordon Group). Deep water turbidite deposition continued in Victoria and possibly in northeast Tasmania. Further north, Late Darriwilian-earliest Gislbornian conodonts have been recorded from the Girilambone Group (Stewart & Glen, 1986). Graptolite faunas from the Tallebung Group in western New South Wales indicate that turbidite deposition probably commenced in this area during the Darriwilian (Sherwin, 1983). Similarly, a graptolite fauna recorded from slates of the Wagga Metamorphic Complex suggests a Middle Ordovician age for at least part of this sequence (Webby & others, 1981).

Submarine mafic to intermediate volcanism may have continued in the Wellington-Molong region and near Kiandra (Jagungal Basalt). To the east of the arc represented by the Jagungal Basalt, quartz arenites, siltstones and shales of distal turbidite facies (Boltons and Nungar beds, Pittman Formation) were deposited in a deep water environment at the outer front of a large submarine fan (Owen & Wyborn, 1979). Further east, Darriwilian graptolites have been found in turbiditic sediments inland of the coastal Wagonga beds (Jenkins, 1982). These sediments (the "inland greywacke and slate association" of Powell [1984]) were deposited in a fore-arc basin (Bischoff & Prendergast, 1987). The Cambrian limestones and associated volcanics within the Wagonga beds are thought to have formed on a seamount which was incorporated into the accretionary prism during subduction in the Middle to Late Ordovician (Bischoff & Prendergast, 1987).

Darriwilian conodonts have been recorded from allochthonous limestone clasts in a sequence of debris-flow breccias and limestones in the Tamworth Terrane. Stratigraphic relationships imply a more or less contemporaneous age relationship between the faunas and the deposition of the limestone (Cawood, 1976; Cawood & Leitch, 1985).

In the Lolworth-Ravenswood Block in northern Queensland, the initial intrusions of the Ravenswood Granodiorite Complex (470 ± 30 Ma) were synchronous with regional deformation and metamorphism. Deformation and syntectonic plutonic activity also occurred at this time in the Anakie Inlier to the south (Day & others, 1983). In the Broken River Province further north, quartz-rich turbidites, volcanoclastic sediments and tholeiitic volcanics (Judea and Carriers Well Formations) were deposited in an extensional back-arc basin which developed on the edge of the craton behind a volcanic arc represented by the Everetts Creek Volcanics (Withnall & others, 1988). Metamorphosed volcanics and possible clastics (Lucky Creek and Paddys Creek Formations) present in the Georgetown Inlier to the west (Withnall, 1982) may be of similar age.

TIME SLICE 4: GISBORNIAN-BOLINDIAN (469-438 Ma)

During the Late Ordovician the sea retreated from most of the craton. The Larapintine Sea, which was such a prominent feature of Ordovician Time Slices 2 and 3, no longer existed, although the possibility of a tenuous connection between the Canning and the Amadeus Basins cannot be completely ruled out. Time Slice 4 sediments are absent from many of the cratonic basins, but there is evidence that at least part of the Carribuddy Group, which consists of dolomite, mudstone and evaporites, is of Late Ordovician age (Legg, 1987; Nicoll & others, 1988). This unit was deposited under hypersaline conditions, suggesting little or no connection to the open ocean. It is unclear whether any connection of the Canning Basin to the open sea was to the west, or to the east through the Amadeus Basin; the former is favoured. This is supported by the fact that the most saline conditions and the thickest evaporites are found in the southeast corner of the basin, however, there is considerable debate about how much of the Carribuddy Group is Ordovician in age. In the Amadeus Basin, Time Slice 4

sediments are represented by the upper part of the Stokes Siltstone and the Carmichael Sandstone. For at least part of this time, conditions were hypersaline; abundant casts of halite crystals occur in the Stokes Siltstone. Nicoll and others (1988) have suggested that this phase of hypersalinity is the consequence of eustatic sea level fall combined with tectonic uplift at the eastern end of the Amadeus Basin. The Carmichael Sandstone was probably mainly a non-marine unit, and the clastic material may have been derived from this uplifted area, although isopach maps for this unit (Wells & others, 1970) suggest a southerly source area. Kennard and others (1986) suggested that a marine facies, derived from both the north and the south may also be present within the Carmichael Sandstone. During Time Slice 4, the connection between the Amadeus and Georgina Basins may have been rather tenuous. Whilst biostratigraphic control is not good it is likely that both the Mithaka Formation and Ethabuka Sandstone occur within this time slice. The lower part of the Ethabuka Sandstone is partly marine (Draper, 1980b) but the environment became progressively more paralic (in part deltaic) and non-marine. The depositional conditions of the Carmichael and Ethabuka Sandstones may therefore have been similar at times. There is no evidence of Time Slice 4 sediments in the Warburton Basin, although it is possible that the Dullingari Group sedimentation continued into the Late Ordovician. Similarly, the Cartu Beds of the Officer Basin, which contain no diagnostic fossils, may extend into the Upper Ordovician.

In contrast to the craton, Time Slice 4 rocks are widely distributed throughout southeastern Australia, although no sediments of this age are known from the Gnalta Shelf. In western Tasmania, deposition of the Gordon Group limestones and shales continued on a broad, stable shelf. Deep, quiet water facies predominate throughout Victoria and New South Wales, with extensive turbidite deposition both in the Wagga Trough and further east in the forearc areas ("eastern zone" of Powell, 1984). The Coolac Serpentinite and Honeysuckle beds, which crop out to the east of the Jindalee beds in southern New South Wales, are of (?)uppermost Ordovician-Lower Silurian age. These mafic-ultramafic rocks are probably related to the initiation of the Tumut Trough (Basden, 1974, 1982), possibly as a back-arc or marginal basin (Scheibner & Pearce, 1978; Stuart-Smith, 1987).

Thick sequences of Upper Ordovician mafic to intermediate volcanics occur extensively in New South Wales. Mafic volcanics are present at Louth and Mt Dijou in the northwest and mafic-intermediate volcanics (e.g., Goonumbla Volcanics, Oakdale Group, Angullong Tuff, Cheesemans Creek Formation, Rockley and Sofala Volcanics) are widespread in the central eastern part of the state (Stanton, 1956; Sherwin, 1973; Webby, 1976; Pickett, 1978). Dominantly mafic volcanics (Gooandra and Nine Mile Volcanics) also occur further south near Kiandra (Owen & Wyborn, 1979). The Upper Ordovician volcanics are often associated with limestones (Louth, Parkes, and the Wellington-Molong area), and some include pillow lavas (Mt Dijou, and Gooandra Volcanics), suggesting deposition at shallow to emergent levels in a volcanic island or pedestal environment (Cas, 1983). The Sofala Volcanics, on the other hand, appear to have been deposited by mass-flow mechanisms in deep, quiet water (Cas, 1983). Similarly, the association of the Rockley Volcanics with the quartz-rich greywackes and slates of the Triangle Group may indicate a relatively deep marine environment of deposition (Cas & others, 1980). Deep water submarine fan deposits (Nungar and Adaminaby beds, Pittman Formation) continued to accumulate to the east of the volcanic arc (Owen & Wyborn, 1979), as did the accretionary prism deposits of the Wagonga beds and the overlying greywacke-slate unit (Jenkins & others, 1982; Bischoff & Prendergast, 1987).

The inter-arc rifting model of Scheibner (1973a, 1976, 1985) considered the Parkes volcanic belt, the Molong volcanic belt and the Sofala Volcanics to have been contiguous during the Ordovician, forming a single north-south trending arc which was rifted apart during Ordovician and Silurian-Devonian interarc basin formation. However, Cas & others (1980) suggested that the original palaeogeographic trend of the arc was northwesterly with the arc extending over 800km from Louth (north of Cobar), through the Wellington-Bathurst area, southwards to Kiandra, and partially enclosing the marginal basin (Wagga Trough) to the west. An arc of this size would have been comparable to modern arcs such as the Andaman-Nicobar arc, which has been proposed as a palaeogeographic and tectonic analogue (Cas & others, 1980; Cas, 1983; Powell, 1984). Cas and others (1980) have speculated that the I-S line in the Siluro-Devonian granites, separating I-type granites to the east from dominantly S-type granites to the west, could correspond with the eastern edge of the volcanic arc.

Limestones of Upper Ordovician age (Trelawney and Uralba beds) are found in fault blocks along the Peel Fault System in the Tamworth Terrane. The Trelawney beds may possibly be allochthonous blocks within the Devonian sequence. They contain a rich, well-preserved coral fauna and were deposited under shallow marine conditions. The Uralba beds contain allochthonous blocks of shallow marine limestones within a deeper water sequence of bedded cherts and mudstones (Cawood, 1976; Philip, 1966). The faunas contained in the limestones show some affinities with North American faunas, so their palaeogeographic significance is uncertain. They may represent displaced portions of the Ordovician arc to the southwest, however Webby (1987) believes that the biogeographic evidence does not wholly support this idea.

In central eastern Queensland (near Clermont), siltstones and limestones (Fork Lagoons beds and possible correlatives in the Anakie Inlier to the west) were deposited under shallow marine conditions (Anderson & Palmieri, 1977; Day & others, 1983). In the Broken River Province, craton-derived quartz-rich turbidites and arc-derived volcanoclastics (Judea beds and equivalents), continued to be deposited in the back-arc basin (Withnall & others, 1988).

ORDOVICIAN MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES

OIL AND GAS

Sediments of Ordovician age are of considerable economic significance. In both the Amadeus and Canning Basins they provide the source and potential source respectively, for commercial quantities of hydrocarbons, and are the target of continuing exploration programs. Elsewhere, for example in the Warburton Basin, there are indications of Ordovician oil and gas, though to date not in commercial quantities.

Ordovician source rocks are widespread, particularly in Time Slices 2 and 3. In the Amadeus and Canning Basins there is strong evidence to show that the good source rock qualities of the Horn Valley Siltstone (up to 2.75% TOC - Gorter, 1984) and the Goldwyer Formation (up to 6.4% TOC - Foster & others, 1986) respectively, are a direct result of the presence of the alga *Gloeocapsamorpha prisca* (Foster & others, 1986; Hoffmann & others, 1987), which has also been identified as the source for hydrocarbons in several North American Ordovician basins. Foster and others (1986) suggested that *G. prisca* flourished in low latitude, warm, shallow epeiric seas. Its development in the Canning and Amadeus Basins may have been enhanced by the presence of the transcratonic seaway, in which upwelling systems produced areas of high organic productivity. The phosphogenic conditions associated with the Stairway Sandstone in the Amadeus Basin were also responsible for the development of relatively widespread organic rich shales. This is significant in view of the fact that phosphatic sediments constitute major petroleum source rocks in many parts of the world.

Reservoir rocks of Ordovician age are also widespread. Sandstones such as the Pacoota Sandstone have good reservoir properties. They appear to be most widespread during Ordovician Time Slice 1. Nicoll and others (1988) have suggested that Ordovician reservoir sands were preferentially formed during times of low sea level. Carbonates are even more widespread, with potential carbonate reservoirs present in the Canning and Georgina Basins. However, the only Ordovician carbonate reservoirs of real economic significance to have been recognised are those in the Nita Formation of the Canning Basin.

Potential caprocks also occur in the Ordovician section. The Horn Valley Siltstone of the Amadeus Basin (Time Slice 2) is particularly notable in that not only does it constitute an important source rock but it also provides a caprock for the oil and gas trapped in the underlying Pacoota Sandstone. Perhaps the most important caprocks occur within the Carribuddy Formation and the upper part of the Stokes Formation, both of which contain evaporites. All the known Ordovician evaporites occur within sediments of Time Slice 4 age.

Within the Canning Basin there are a number of significant Ordovician oil shows mostly in the vicinity of the Broome Platform (Brown & others, 1984), with some oil being recovered from the Nita Formation in Great Sandy No. 1 (Alexander & others, 1984) and from the Goldwyer Formation in Dodonea No. 1 and Acacia No. 1 (Woodhouse, 1982). In all cases these oils were sourced from the algal-rich kerogen of the Goldwyer Formation. It is estimated that under optimum maturation conditions, the Goldwyer Formation in the Canning Basin would be capable of generating 61×10^9 barrels of liquid hydrocarbons (Foster & others, 1986).

In the Amadeus Basin, the Horn Valley Siltstone constitutes the major source rock. Whilst the formation is over-mature on the northern margin of the basin, significant parts of the unit to the south are within the oil window (Gorter, 1984). The black phosphatic shales of the Stairway Sandstone also constitute an important potential source rock. Commercial quantities of gas (with some oil) are produced from the Pacoota Sandstone of the Mereenie and Palm Valley structures and minor shows have been reported from the Stairway Sandstone in a number of areas (Jackson & others, 1984; Ozimic & others, 1986). Whilst most of the obvious major structures in the Amadeus Basin have now been tested, there are undoubtedly many more subtle structural and stratigraphic traps still waiting to be tested.

In the Warburton Basin, lower Palaeozoic (mainly Ordovician) sediments were the initial target for petroleum exploration in the 1960's. Although the oil staining encountered in Gidgealapa No. 1 (Delhi Australian Petroleum Ltd & Santos Ltd, 1966) was in Cambrian sediments (Gatehouse, 1986), a number of the shows in other wells may be from the Ordovician section. The Ordovician of the Warburton

Basin is therefore regarded as having some petroleum potential, although it must be regarded as much less prospective than the Canning and Amadeus Basins.

Wells and Moss (1983) suggested that the Ordovician Djagamara Formation in the Ngalia Basin may contain some poor quality petroleum source rocks; this unit also contains some sands with possible reservoir potential. However, the Ordovician of the Ngalia Basin has generally poor petroleum prospectivity. The same is probably true for the relatively thin Ordovician sequences of the nearby Wiso Basin, although Kennewell and Huleatt (1980) suggested that the Hanson River Beds may be the most prospective section in the Lander Trough with possible source, reservoir and caprocks all located within the formation. Within the trough the section may be sufficiently thick for oil and gas to be generated but in most parts of the basin the section is thin and immature.

There is no hydrocarbon production from the Georgina Basin but Draper and others (1978) documented a number of oil and gas occurrences in Ordovician sediments, including gas in the Coolibah Formation in Ethabuka No. 1 (Alliance Oil Development, 1975) and bitumen in the Ninmaroo Formation and the Toko Group in various drill holes. In general, however, the Ordovician sediments of the Georgina Basin have poor source rock characteristics (Green & Balfe, 1980). There are good Cambrian source rocks in the basin, however, and this, coupled with the good reservoir characteristics of the Carlo Sandstone, the Kelly Creek Formation, and to a lesser extent the Ninmaroo Formation, suggests that the Ordovician of the Georgina Basin has some prospectivity, especially in the southeastern corner of the basin where the section is relatively thick.

In conclusion, the hydrocarbon prospectivity of the Ordovician can be closely related to palaeogeography. The best source rocks are found in Time Slice 2 and 3 when sea level was relatively high and a well-defined transcratonic seaway extended conditions of high organic productivity across the craton. Some of the best clastic reservoir rocks were deposited during Time Slice 1 when sea level was relatively low. Caprocks occur throughout the sequence, although evaporitic caprocks were deposited only during Time Slice 4 when sea level was very low and evaporites were widespread.

METALLIFEROUS DEPOSITS

There are minor metalliferous deposits hosted in rocks of Ordovician age on the craton. For example, small secondary copper deposits have been reported from the Djagamara Formation in the Ngalia Basin (Wells & Moss, 1983), and sphalerite occurs in the Ordovician Ninmaroo, Kelly Creek and Nora Formations of the Georgina Basin (Green & Balfe, 1980). There are minor occurrences in other basins but no deposits of commercial significance are known and the metal potential of Ordovician cratonic rocks is considered to be very minor.

By contrast, Ordovician mineralization is widespread in the Tasman Fold Belt System, and is generally related to volcanic activity along the convergent margin and to periods of orogenesis. Ordovician mineralization in the Lachlan Fold Belt was largely restricted to the areas of volcanism along the island arc (Degeling & others, 1986). Three distinct metalliferous associations occur within both the Lower-Middle and Upper Ordovician volcanics: 1) disseminated copper sulphide and native copper mineralization; 2) stratabound disseminated to semi-massive copper sulphides; and 3) vein and stratiform gold and copper-gold deposits (Bowman & others, 1983 - the reader is referred to this reference, from which much of the following is derived, for a more complete discussion of mineralization within the island arc successions of the Lachlan Fold Belt). All of these mineralization types are believed to have been associated with volcanic complexes which were partly emergent at some stage. Type 1 mineralization appears to have been related to late-stage fumarolic activity towards the emergent tops of the volcanoes (Manto deposits). Deposits of this type occur in Lower-Middle Ordovician rocks at Walli and Woodstock near Cowra and at Narragal near Wellington, and in Upper Ordovician andesites north of Wellington. Type 2 deposits form the most important deposits of Late Ordovician age. These stratiform deposits formed in the tuffs and sediments which accumulated in the craters of andesitic stratovolcanoes and within the tuffaceous sediments in the surrounding lagoons. Deposits of this type are found in the area around Blayney (e.g. the Blayney, Cadia and Browns Creek mines). Lower-Middle Ordovician deposits of this type occur in the Bowan Park gold-copper district. Type 3 stratiform deposits were probably derived from volcanogenic hydrothermal solutions and accumulated within fine-grained tuffaceous sediments in quiet

shallow-water marine environments adjacent to the volcanic centres. The vein deposits appear to be related to late-stage epithermal activity and formed in fracture zones around the subsiding volcanic pile. Type 3 deposits occur within Lower-Middle Ordovician rocks near Cowra, and in Upper Ordovician rocks near Wellington. The origin of the major gold (with lesser copper) mineralization in the Upper Ordovician Sofala Volcanics is unclear, however regional metamorphism has been suggested as the mechanism for its concentration and deposition. Porphyry copper-gold mineralization near Parkes (the Goonumbla deposits), which was previously considered to be of Middle Silurian age (Jones, 1985), has recently been dated as latest Ordovician (439 ± 1 Ma) (Perkins & others, 1990). The host rocks for the mineralization are quartz monzonite pipes that intrude a sequence of comagmatic intermediate volcanics (Krynen & others, 1987; Perkins & others, 1990). The deposits are believed to have formed in the central part of a large collapse caldera (Jones, 1985). Stratabound iron lenses in sediments overlying Lower-Middle Ordovician volcanics at Carcoar, south of Orange, are believed to have been deposited by submarine hot springs. Stratabound copper-uranium-molybdenum lenses in the same area were probably formed during early diagenesis, with some of the metals derived from nearby intrusions.

Ordovician mineral deposits are also found elsewhere in the Lachlan Fold Belt. Minor gold mineralization at Mt Dijou in northwestern New South Wales is associated with mafic volcanics of Upper Ordovician (Time Slice 4) age (Gilligan, 1974). Significant copper mineralization occurs in the Cambro-Ordovician Girilambone Group at Tottenham, Girilambone-Hermitdale and Canbelego in western New South Wales (Glen & others, 1985). These deposits are associated with mafic volcanics, mafic and ultramafic rocks, and chlorite schists, respectively. Small, auriferous quartz veins also occur throughout the Girilambone Group. The Cambro-Ordovician Jindalee beds, near Cootamundra in southern New South Wales, contain syngenetic manganese deposits in association with a mafic volcanic sequence (Fitzpatrick, 1974). Chromite, gold, and various sulphide minerals occur in the Coolac region in ultramafic rocks of possible Upper Ordovician age (Ashley, 1974).

Tin-tungsten granitoid-hosted mineralization in northern Victoria commenced during the latest Ordovician-Early Silurian Benambran Orogeny; these deposits are

generally small (Ramsay & Vandenberg, 1986). In Tasmania, the Gordon Limestone (Time Slices 2-4) at Zeehan is host to stratabound disseminated and veined base metal (lead-zinc) sulphides. Collins and Williams (1986) believe that this may represent a minor Ordovician phase of metallogenesis and thermal activity. Mineralization in the Kanmantoo Trough is largely Cambrian, however there is some evidence that copper, and to a lesser extent silver, lead, zinc and gold, were locally remobilised during the Late Cambrian-Early Ordovician Delamerian Orogeny (Parker, 1986).

Syngenetic copper and gold mineralization is present in the ?Cambro-Ordovician Anakie Metamorphics in central-eastern Queensland; at Peak Downs the copper mineralization occurs within a banded-iron formation (Murray, 1986). In the Lolworth-Ravenswood Block in northern Queensland, some gold mineralization near Charters Towers is related to the intrusion of the Ravenswood Granodiorite Complex (Day & others, 1983); isotopic age determinations give a Time Slice 3 (470 ± 30 Ma) age for the earliest intrusions (Webb, 1969; Day & others, 1983). Further north in the Mount Windsor Subprovince, stratiform massive sulphide bodies (copper, lead, zinc) of submarine exhalative origin are found at the base of, and within, the Trooper Creek Formation of the Seventy Mile Range Group, at several localities including Thalanga and Lione (Henderson, 1986). In the Georgetown Inlier, base metal sulphide deposits (copper, silver-lead-zinc, gold) have recently been discovered in the Cambrian-?Ordovician Balcooma metavolcanics, and small gold and copper deposits occur in possible Late Ordovician volcanics of the Lucky Creek and Paddys Creek Formations (Murray, 1986).

NON-METALLIFEROUS DEPOSITS

Ordovician phosphorites are present in the Amadeus and Georgina Basins and occur predominantly in sediments deposited during Time Slice 3. Those of the Amadeus Basin are the most widespread, although generally their grade is relatively low and the beds thin. For this reason they are unlikely to be of commercial interest for the foreseeable future. The occurrences show few lithological similarities with the economically more important Cambrian deposits of the Georgina Basin, however the overall depositional setting of the Cambrian and the

Ordovician deposits is strikingly similar in that both were deposited during a time of high sea level, within an elongate transcratonic seaway. The phosphorites occur within organic-rich sediments that contain abundant fossils and were probably deposited under relatively shallow marine conditions with high organic productivity (Cook, 1972). The Ordovician was a time of fairly widespread phosphogenesis in many parts of the world (Cook & McElhinny, 1979) either as a consequence of changes to global seawater chemistry, or the location of continental margins with the right configuration and palaeolatitude to produce oceanic upwelling. It is likely that the Ordovician of the Australian craton has further potential for discovering major phosphate resources but for the present there is little incentive to undertake phosphate exploration programs in view of the fact that massive phosphate resources of Cambrian age have already been delineated in the Georgina Basin.

Ordovician sediments of Time Slice 4 also have some potential for containing potash salts. In general the potential is low because the evaporites are typically thin and discontinuous. The important exception to this is the Canning Basin where the Carribuddy Formation contains abundant evaporites. At least the lower part of this unit is believed to be Ordovician (Time Slice 4) in age. Although potash exploration programs have been undertaken in the Canning Basin, little information has yet been released on the results. Other Ordovician intracratonic basins may contain evaporites of Time Slice 4 age but their potential for potash is likely to be very minor, with most of the known evaporites (generally occurring as pseudomorphs) having fairly strong marine affinities.

DISCUSSION

The palaeogeographic maps shown in this volume summarize the results that large scale processes such as sealevel change, climatic change, variations in the chemistry and circulation of the oceans, and tectonism, have had on the region of Gondwana that now constitutes the Australian continent. These large scale processes are not independent of each other; plate tectonic movements can lead to changes in oceanographic circulation patterns and ultimately to changes in climate. Similarly, climate change can lead to variations in eustatic sea level. For the present, many of these interactions are imperfectly understood; further back in time they are both poorly understood and poorly documented. The Ordovician Period lasted approximately 70 million years. Because of the lack of biochronological precision for this Period it is difficult to recognize more than the gross changes. For example, from the four Ordovician maps a first order relative sea level curve can be delineated; an intermediate relative sea level during Time Slice 1 was followed by a high sea level during Time Slice 2. Sea level reached a maximum during Time Slice 3 before falling to a low point during Time Slice 4. Superimposed on this pattern are other changes that are probably equivalent to second and third order sea level curves. Preliminary Ordovician onlap and relative sea level curves determined by Nicoll and others (1988) for the Canning, Amadeus and Georgina Basins provide an indication of the scale of these changes, demonstrating that superimposed on the major cycle, with a periodicity approximately equivalent to the whole of the Ordovician (70 million years), were four or five second order cycles of sea level change. The extent to which these changes were eustatic is not clear, although Nicoll and others (1988) related some of the more major changes to global eustasy rather than regional tectonic events. For example, the major sea level fall in Time Slice 4 may well be a reflection of low global sea levels associated with a late Ordovician phase of glaciation (Sheehan, 1988).

Tectonism in the Australian region inevitably had an important effect on change of relative sea level. In the latest Cambrian to Early Ordovician the Delamerian Orogeny, in particular, elevated much of the southeastern corner of the craton. This area was to remain high throughout the remainder of the Ordovician and beyond. More localized uplifts, such as the Rodingan Movement in the Amadeus

Basin region during Time Slice 4, had an important local effect on patterns of deposition and erosion.

One of the most striking features of Ordovician palaeogeography is the Larapintine Sea, a well-defined yet quite narrow feature through which marine conditions were able to extend across a large portion of the craton. Initiation of the seaway was the result of a rise in relative sealevel (Nicol & others, 1988). Nevertheless, it is possible that within the seaway, and particularly on its margins, tectonism had some effect on relative sea level changes. Similarly, the onset of the Rodingan Movement in the eastern part of the Amadeus Basin may have not only produced local changes in relative sea level, but may also have partly closed off the eastern end of the Larapintine Sea resulting in the development of hypersaline conditions during Time Slice 4.

The whole question of sea level change has been a controversial one in recent years, with the significance of the changes, their magnitude, and the driving processes all a matter of much debate. As noted previously, the Australian Ordovician record has the potential for providing at least first and second order relative sea level curves, which reflect the interplay of tectonics and eustasy; determining the relative importance of these two components is difficult. During the Ordovician in Australia, sea level change exerted a fundamental influence on the existence or absence of the Larapintine Sea and on the nature and distribution of sediments. These in turn had a profound effect on the distribution of resources, particularly organic-rich sediments and phosphorites, the occurrence of potential reservoir rocks and the existence of evaporites.

It is likely that throughout the Ordovician, the Australian craton was located on the margins of Gondwana at low latitudes (Fig. 1) (Scotese & others, 1979; Scotese, 1986, in press). Ziegler and others (1981) and Parrish (1982) have proposed models for atmospheric and oceanic circulation during the Ordovician based on the continental reconstructions of Scotese and others (1979), and sediment distribution patterns. During Time Slices 2 and 3, when the Larapintine Sea was well established, the currents flowed predominantly from east to west (consistent with a low latitude position). These currents are likely to have produced upwelling in the narrow seaway as a result of entrainment of coastal waters and interaction with bathymetric highs. This was probably responsible for

the development of organic-rich and phosphatic sediments. Upwelling would have also accentuated the aridity of the coastal climate thus minimizing the input of clastic sediments from the adjacent hinterland. There is also some evidence of high productivity conditions in the Fold Belt, with organic-rich sediments found on some of the palaeo-bathymetric highs.

The warm arid climatic conditions evident during the Ordovician are consistent with a low palaeolatitude. The maximum input of clastic sediments into cratonic basins was during Time Slice 1. This may have been a response to a higher rate of precipitation, however the maturity of sandstones such as the Pacoota Sandstone is consistent with a mature and fairly arid landscape. Clastic sediments may have been derived from nearby areas uplifted during the Delamerian Orogeny. During Time Slice 2 and 3 there was no prolonged period of clastic input, and overall conditions were probably fairly arid and warm. As noted previously, upwelling within the seaway would have resulted in enhanced aridity in the coastal zone. The most arid part of the Ordovician was during Time Slice 4 when the evaporites of the Stokes Formation and particularly those of the lower part of the Carribuddy Formation were deposited. This also appears to have been a time of low sea level possibly associated with glaciation in other parts of Gondwana. Therefore at the close of the Ordovician, conditions were probably slightly cooler but more arid.

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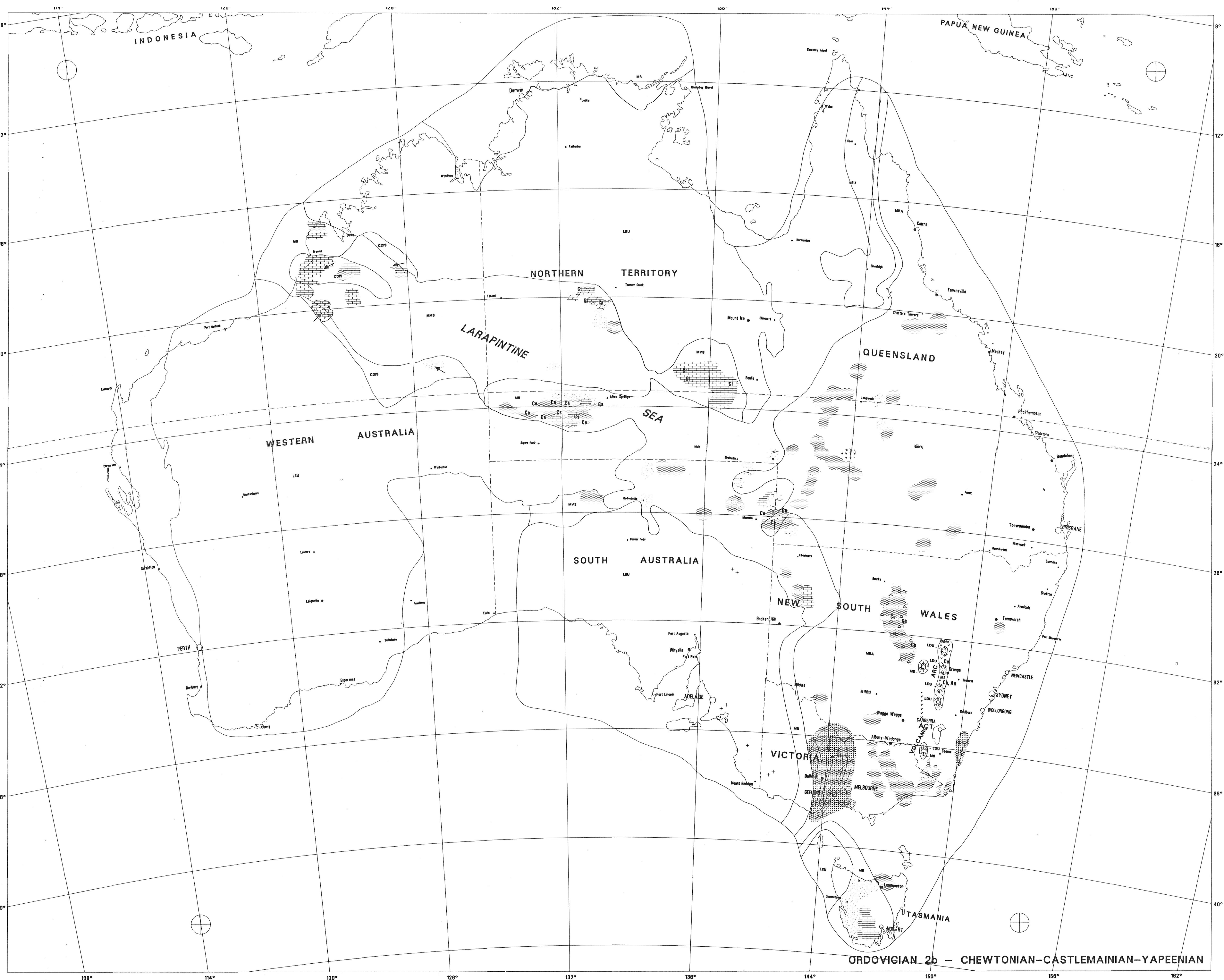
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ORDOVICIAN 1b — DATSONIAN—LANCEFIELDIAN—BENDIGONIAN



ORDOVICIAN 2b - CHEWTONIAN-CASTLEMAINIAN-YAPEENIAN



ORDOVICIAN 3b - DARRIVILIAN



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ORDOVICIAN 4b - GISBORNIAN-EASTONIAN-BOLINDIAN



PALAEOGEOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIA

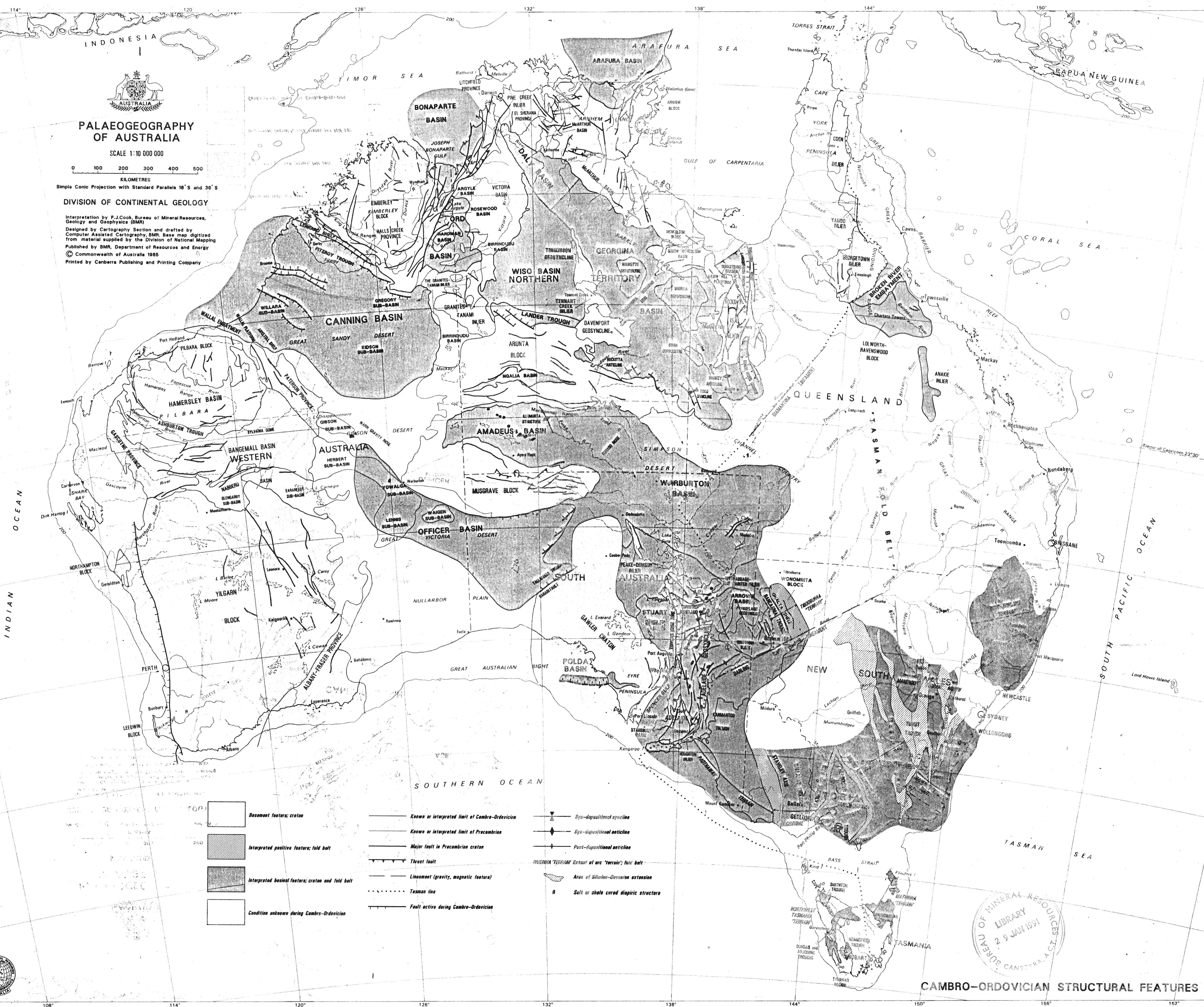
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Simple Conic Projection with Standard Parallels 10°S and 30°S

DIVISION OF CONTINENTAL GEOLOGY

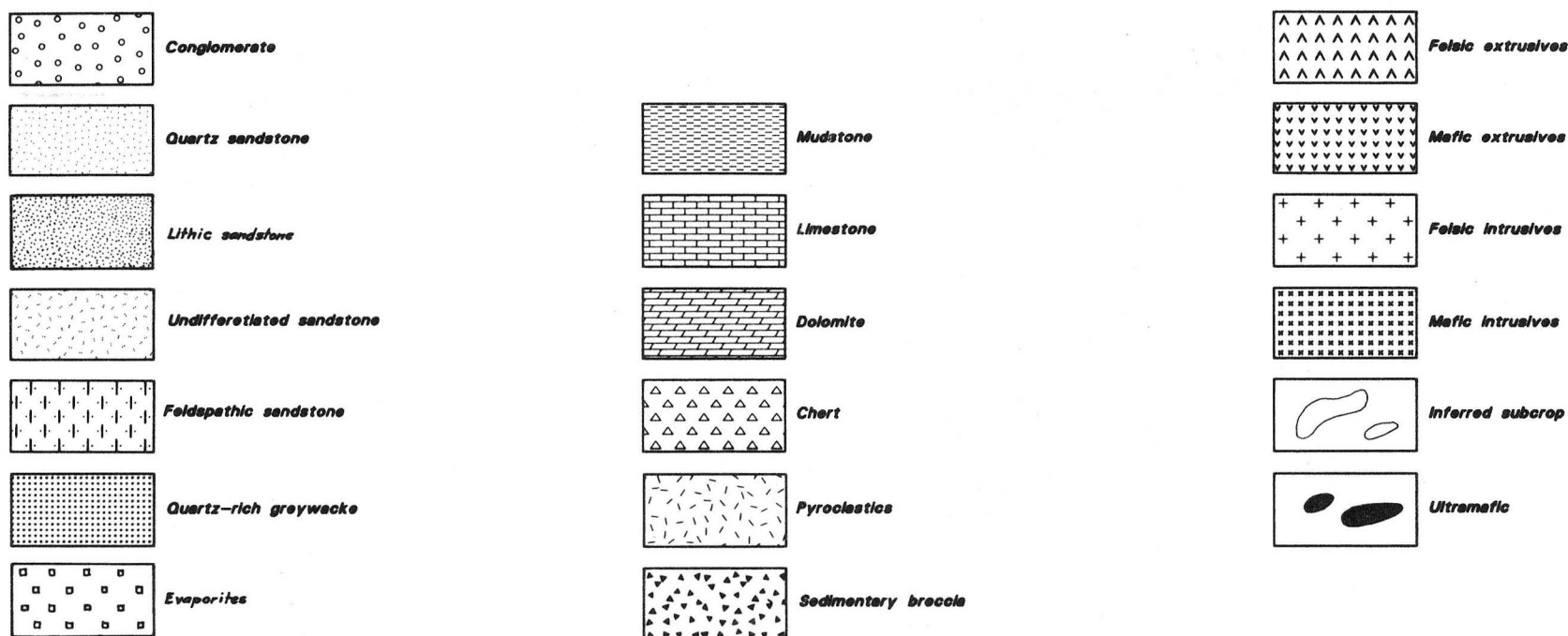
Interpretation by P.J. Cook, Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology and Geophysics (BMR)
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|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Basement feature; craton | Known or interpreted limit of Cambro-Ordovician | Syn-depositional syncline |
| Interpreted positive feature; fold belt | Known or interpreted limit of Precambrian | Syn-depositional anticline |
| Interpreted basinal feature; craton and fold belt | Major fault in Precambrian craton | Post-depositional anticline |
| Condition unknown during Cambro-Ordovician | Thrust fault | RIVERINA TERRANE Extent of arc 'terranes'; fold belt |
| | Lineament (gravity, magnetic feature) | Area of Silurian-Devonian extension |
| | Tasman line | Salt or shale cured diapiric structure |
| | Fault active during Cambro-Ordovician | |

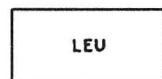


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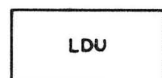


LAND

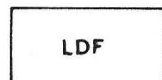
UNCLASSIFIED ENVIRONMENT



DEPOSITIONAL ENVIRONMENT



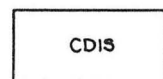
Undifferentiated



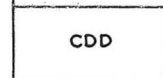
Fluvial

COASTAL

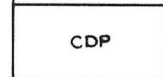
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Intertidal-supratidal



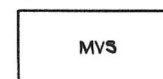
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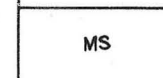
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SEA

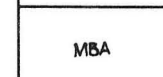
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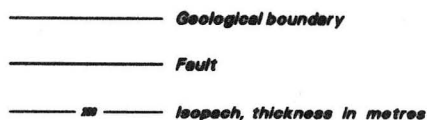
Very shallow (0-20m)



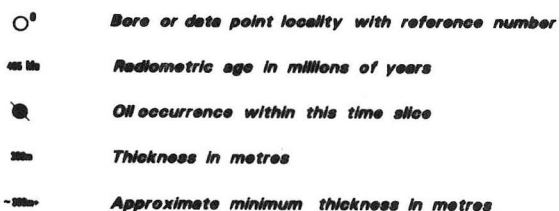
Shallow (0-200m)



Bathyal-abyssal (>200m)



Where location of boundaries, faults and isopachs is approximate, line is broken; where inferred, queried



Cs - Mineral occurrence; Au - Gold, Cr - Chromium, Cs - Carbonaceous sediments, Cu - Copper, Gl - Glauconite, Gp - Gypsum, Mn - Manganese, Na - Halite and other chlorides, Pb - Lead, Ph - Phosphate, Py - Pyrite, Sa - Sulphate, Zn - Zinc

