Geochemical dispersion patterns associated with submarine geothermal activity in the Bay of Plenty, New Zealand

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(Received August 27, 1975)

Abstract-Trace element analyses of marine sediments from the Bay of Plenty indicate that submarine geothermal activity does not contribute significantly to the trace element geochemistry of sediments in this locality. The terrigenous sediments are similar in composition to North Island greywackes and are probably derived principally from the erosion of Mesozoic greywackes on the western flanks of the Huiarau Ranges rather than from the Quaternary acid volcanics of the Taupo region. There is no evidence for the diagenetic remobilisation of manganese or other trace elements in the sediments of this locality.

INTRODUCTION

Recent evidence has indicated the influence of submarine geothermal activity on the trace element characteristics of marine sediments (NIINO, 1959; HARDER, 1960; ZELENOV, 1964; SKORNYAKOVA, 1965; BONATTI and JOENSUU 1966; MILLER et al., 1966; DEGENS and ROSS, 1969; BOSTRÖM, 1970a; TOOMS, 1970), particularly in the region of the East Pacific Rise (BOSTRÖM and VALDES, 1969; FISHER and BOSTRÖM, 1969; BENDER et al., 1970; BOSTRÖM, 1970b, c; HOROWITZ, 1970; VEEH and BOSTRÖM, 1971; ANDERSON and HULUNEN, 1974; MCMURTY and BURNETT, 1975). Since submarine volcanism has been widely considered to be a major factor in controlling the deposition of authigenic marine minerals (ARRHENIUS et al., 1964; ARRHENIUS and BONATTI, 1965; BONATTI and NAYUDU, 1965; Bostrom, 1967), a more detailed study of the trace element characteristics of marine sediments from a region of known submarine geothermal activity has been undertaken. The area selected for study lies to the south of Whale Island in the Bay of Plenty. New Zealand. Submarine geothermal activity within this area has previously been reported by DUNCAN and PANTIN (1969), GLASBY (1971) and LYON *et al.* (in press) and evidence of volcanic activity within the surrounding region has been extensively described in the literature (see KOHN and GLASBY, in press, for references).

SAMPLE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

During previous cruises of the MV Taranui and MV Ikatere to the Bay of Plenty in June and July 1970, detailed echo sounding observations indicated the occurrence of a well-defined bubble zone to the south of Whale Island (GLASBY, 1971). Although no influence of the emanations on the hydrological characteristics of the bottom waters could be detected, subsequent studies of the chemical and isotopic composition of the gas bubbles from this region confirmed this as a zone of geothermal activity (Lyon et al., in press). In this paper, the trace element geochemistry of piston cores taken in the region of the geothermal activity during the MV Taranui Bay of Plenty cruises of June 1970 and January 1971 is described and the implications of the data to theories of authigenic

Schematic diagram showing sta-Fig. 1 . tion positions in the Bay of Plenty. Contours in metres.

mineral formation are discussed. Station locations are illustrated in Fig. 1. The cores consist of greygreen terrigenous mud interbedded with well-defined tenhra lavers. A more detailed account of the sediment distribution in the area, together with precise locations of station position, is published elsewhere (KOHN and GLASBY, in press).

METHODS

Sediment cores were sectioned longitudinally into halves and one half of the core was retained for reference purposes. Five centimetre sections of the core were then taken at approximately 30cm intervals, dried at 80°C overnight and sieved to pass 240mesh. Subsamples were analysed for a series of elements by atomic absorption spectrophotometry with standard corrections being applied for blank samples. In order to minimise sampling errors only green muds were analysed except where otherwise stated (Appendix) and sampling procedures were adopted to optimise analytical reproductibility (ONDRICK and SUHR, 1969). Analytical precision for individual elements is shown in Table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The influence of submarine geothermal activity The most characteristic feature of the data (Table 1, Appendix) is the extreme uniformity in composition within each sediment core and the lack of any marked variation in composition between sediment cores. Analytical data within individual cores generally lie within the precision limits of the analytical method and t test analysis indicates that, with the exception of cores 192-95 which were sampled immediately to the south of White Island, differences in composition between cores are not generally significant at the 99% confidence level.

The most interesting feature of the data is the lack of any significant enrichment of ferrides in core J82 which was taken directly over the zone of geothermal activity compared with cores from the surrounding region. This suggests that submarine geothermal activity is not a significant contributor to the trace element distribution in sediment cores from the Bay of Plenty. This lack of enrichment of ferrides in the sediments from a region of well-defined submarine geothermal activity may reflect either the small quantity of geothermal waters discharged into the overlying bottom waters in this region (GLASBY, 1971)

	v	$_{\rm Cr}$	Mn	Fe, %	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn
J 74	79	41	308	2.59	42	58	22	69
75 T	68	30	294	1.97	38	36	12	58
76 J	74	26	299	2.33	41	38	12	64
77 J	64	21	320	2.10	41	33	10	57
78 J	47	22	312	1.77	39	27	τ	53
79 J	73	28	298	2.43	34	32	11	68
J80	63	20	363	2.15	37	31	11	60
J81	45	11	388	1.78	31	28	9	51
J 82	80	21	268	2.19	38	26	15	67
J 84	78	37	313	2.09	54	33	11	42
J 85	71	24	308	2.37	31	21	13	80
J86	81	25	289	2.27	33	29	11	67
87 J	81	27	283	2.16	54	40	12	66
88 L	74	23	307	2.21	48	36	12	65
89 J	70	26	359	1.95	51	36	13	84
J 90	89	33	269	2.30	51	38	15	67
J 91	68	38	354	2.04	53	43	13	53
J 92	110	51	284	2.71	53	50	22	68
J 93	185	112	539	3.41	69	75	32	71
J 94	169	140	650	3.48	72	104	45	73
J 95	88	37	354	2.33	69	38	62	69
J 96	68	19	362	2.26	53	47	18	64
J 98	117	53	355	2.61	46	45	22	57
J 99	82	25	306	2.41	50	26	19	56
J100	53	10	452	1.84	68	24	25	45
% Precision								
(20)	±19	±32	± 7.1	±6.7	±32	±30	±32	±32

Table 1. Summary of mean analyses of sediments from each core station (see Appendix for complete data). Analyses in mg/kg, except where otherwise stated. Percentage analytical precision at the 95% confidence level (2σ) is given at the base of the table. Analyses by atomic absorption spectrophotometry.

or the low trace element abundance in the thermal waters (Table 2). Other factors such as the high bottom current velocity in the area and the low salinity of the thermal waters compared with normal seawater may contribute to the rapid dispersion of ferrides in the Bay of Plenty and the high rate of terrigenous sedimentation may mask the contribution of geothermally derived trace elements to the sediments. Because of the high pH and ionic strength of seawater (BOSTRÖM, 1967; ATKINSON and STEFANSSON, 1969), however, the ferrides would not be retained in solution on mixing of the geothermal waters with seawater and would therefore be incorporated in the sediment column.

Re-examination of the rock samples from five adjacent seamounts in the Bay of Plenty (DUNCAN 1970) indicates a complete absence of manganiferous coatings on outcrops within the area and iron staining occurs as a thin veneer in samples from only one station (E637). This suggests that submarine geothermal activity has no direct influence on the deposition of manganiferous and ferriferous coatings on rock fragments within this locality (ARRHENIUS et al., 1964; ARRHENIUS and BONATTI, 1965; BONATTI and NAYUDU, 1965). Similar conclusions hold for rock samples taken from regions of active submarine volcanism on the flanks of the Kermadec Ridge to the north (BROTHERS, 1967).

Since submarine geothermal activity appears to have no role to play in controlling either the trace element distribution in sediment cores or the deposition of authigenic marine minerals in a region of known submarine geothermal activity in the Bay of Plenty, the argument of previous authors (see earlier) that submarine geothermal activity is a major contributor to trace element abundance patterns in regions of supposed geothermal activity requires more detailed examination. This is particularly apparent in the case of the East Pacific Rise where the only evidence indicating the occurrence of geothermal

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Table 2. Trace element analysis of Whale Island and White Island thermal waters. Whale Island sample collected in January 1971 and analysed by J. BINNS, Chemistry Division, D.S.I.R.; White Island sample collected and analysed by W. F. GIGGENBACH, Chemistry Division, D.S.I.R., represents the acid stream which forms the main drainage of the White Island crater floor. Major element analyses published elsewhere (GLASBY, 1971). See KOGA (1967a, b) and WILSON and MOORE (1970) for comparison. Analyses in mg/kg.

 $ND = Not detected$

* Other characteristics of White Island sample:

 T 27^oC: flow rate 15.6 1 sec⁻¹; pH 1.78; Cl 17.050 p.p.m.; Na 3,310 p.p.m.; K 510 p.p.m.; Mg 1,850 p.p.m.; Ca 1,650 p.p.m.; Al 870 p.p.m.; B 80 p.p.m.; SiO, 380 p.p.m.; Pb 0.9 p.p.m.

activity is the high heat flow associated with the crest of an active mid-ocean ridge system with no direct evidence of submarine geothermal activity or volcanism such as observed on the flanks of the Kermadec Ridge (KIBBLEWHITE, 1966, 1967). Although direct comparison of the two regions may be of limited value in view of possible differences in sedimentation characteristics and geothermal activity between the two areas, the data indicate the need for caution in interpreting trace element enrichment patterns in sediments in terms of submarine geothermal activity (GLASBY, 1973).

Comparison of the data with previously obtained analyses Provenance of sediments of geological samples from the North Island of New Zealand (Tables 1 and 3) indicates a marked similarity in composition between the marine sediments analysed in this study and the greywacke facies, the trace element abundance of the rhyolites being significantly lower than that of the marine sediments, particularly in the concentrations of V, Cr, Co and Ni. Although comparisons of data in this way may not be strictly valid because of inter-laboratory bias, the data suggest that the parent material for the terrigenous green muds in the eastern sector of the Bay of Plenty is derived principally from the erosion of the Mesozoic greywackes of the axial ranges with only minor contributions from the Quaternary acid volcanics of the Taupo region. This conclusion is supported by the much lower porosity of the acid volcanics compared with the greywacke facies and the fact that the acid volcanics lie in a downfaulted region whereas the greywackes lie in a tectonically rising area; both factors favouring the erosion of the greywackes. This enhanced erosion of the greywackes is best illustrated by the incised nature of the valleys and gorges of the principal rivers draining the greywacke ranges (the Whakatane, Waimana, Waiotahi, Waioeka and Motu) compared with the rivers draining the acid volcanics (Kaituna, Tarawera and Rangitaiki) which display extensive flood plains and show evidence of coastal progradation (PULLAR and SELBY, 1971). In the central sector of the Bay of Plenty, however, volcanic material from the Tarawera and Rangitaiki rivers may play a more important role in marine sedimentation processes. Tephrachronological evidence also supports this conclusion and indicates severe erosion of the greywacke ranges between the Rotoma and Waiohau eruptions (ca. $8,000 \sim 11,000$ y B.P.) and between the Waiohau and Rerewhakaaitu eruptions $(11,000 \sim 15,000$ y B.P.) (PULLAR, pers. comm). Similarly, the area to the east of the Rangitaiki River and comprising largely Cretaceous and Tertiary greywackes is mostly devoid of ashes older than the Rerewhakaaitu (ca. 15,000y B.P.). The area to the west comprising ignimbrite sheets and domes has old ashes (Hamilton and

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	V	Cr	Mn	Fe, %	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	
Argillaceous greywacke	74	26	318	1.70	76	24	10	30	
Arenaceous greywacke	116	46	450	3.14	76	48	30	54	
Rhyolitic pumice (EWART et al., 1968)	2.2	0.8		1.72	ND	ND.	24		
Rhyolitic lavas (EWART et al., 1968)	4.6	ND.		1.04	ND	ND.	3.2		
Rhyolitic ignimbrites (EWART et al., 1968)	12	1.6		1.23	ND	ND	3.0		
Dacite (EWART et al., 1968)	26	0.9		3.38	4.6	2.8	5.9		
Andesite (EWART et al., 1968)	145	35		4.38	20	18	39		
Basalt (EWART et al., 1968)	255	140		7.80	37	32	35		
"Andesitic" greywackes and argillites (EWART et al., 1968)	97	27		3.93	13	15	39		
Mt. Edgecumbe andesites and dacites (DUNCAN, 1970)	142	28	930	4.31	13	7.6	17		

Table 3. Mean analysis of rock types from the North Island. New Zealand. All analyses in mg/kg, except where otherwise stated

 $ND = Not detected$

older) $(ca. 100,000y)$. The implication is that the tephra (air-fall) material to the east of the Rangitaiki River must have been buried by later greywacke material eroded and transported during the last ice age and continuing to $8,000y$ (PULLAR, pers. comm.).

Although sediment discharge data for the rivers draining the Bay of Plenty are sparse, the data presented in Table 4 indicate that, for those rivers gauged, the total mean annual run-off into the Bay of Plenty is of the order of 11,789 cusecs and the total mean annual sediment discharge, calculated by the mean flow method, is of the order of 2184 tons/day. Assuming that primary terrigenous sedimentation in the Bay of Plenty is significant over a shelf area of some 60 nautical miles by 100 nautical miles and that the sediments of the Bay of Plenty have a mean density of $1.6g$ /cc, it can be calculated that the mean sedimentation rate within the shelf area of the Bay of Plenty is of the order of $2.5 \text{ cm}/10^3$ y. Although this figure is considerably lower than previously determined rates of continental shelf sedimentation around New Zealand of $69 \sim 230$ cm/ 10^3 y in Hawke Bay (PANTIN, 1966), $0 \sim 360 \text{cm}/10^3 \text{y}$ in the region Napier to Castlepoint (Lewis and KOHN, 1973) and $15 \sim 28 \text{ cm}/10^3 \text{ y}$ in the Bay of Plenty (KOHN and GLASBY, in press), the actual

Table 4. Summary of sediment discharge into the Bay of Plenty using mean flow method. Data supplied by Ministry of Works, Hamilton

River		$Log_{10} Gs^* = a log_{10} Q + b$			Gs (tons/day)
Kaituna	2.9331 log_{10} 1451 - 7.2851				97.5
Tarawera	2.0947 log_{10} 1261 - 4.2992				157.8
Rangitaiki	3.1106 log_{10} 2530 - 8.2433				222.2
Whakatane	2.4743 log_{10} 2100 - 5.5363				481.9
Waioeka	2.25	log_{10}		$913 - 4.1495$	325.1
Motu	2.7529	log_{10}		$3534 - 6.8138$	899.5

* Gs is the sediment discharge in tons/day, Q is discharge in cusecs and a and b are constants, Total sediment discharge into the Bay of Plenty is therefore 2184 tons/day.

rate of sedimentation may be significantly higher than the calculated value, since $-$ 1. The mean flow method of calculating sediment discharge rates employed in this

study generally give rise to low sediment discharge values compared with the flow-duration method.

2. Not all rivers draining into the Bay of Plenty were considered in this calculation because of the lack of sediment discharge data.

3. The shelf area in which terrigenous sedimentation was considered may have been overestimated.

4. Erosion of the greywacke ranges may have been more rapid during the Quaternary glaciations (McLEAN, 1969). Other errors present in this calculation have been discussed by MEADE (1969).

5. Sediment discharge may be significantly higher during periods of flood. According to W. A. PULLAR (pers. comm.), the 1964 Whakatane River flood (85,000 cusecs) was very dirty with much greywacke in suspension.

6. Mass movement on slopes may be an important mode of sediment transport (SELBY, 1967; PAIN, 1969).

It is therefore concluded that sediment deposition within the Bay of Plenty is derived principally from river run-off. The data also indicate that sediment discharge from the rivers draining the greywacke belt (Whakatane, Waioeka and Motu) is much higher (1706 tons/day) than that of the rivers draining the acid volcanic zone (Kaituna, Tarawera and Rangitaiki) (478 tons/day) confirming the conclusion that terrigenous sedimentation in the eastern sector of the Bay of Plenty is derived principally from the erosion of greywacke beds. The observation of abundant volcanic glass shards in the sand size fraction of the sediments, however, indicates that erosion of the acid volcanics must play some role in defining the sedimentation characteristics of the region.

Although the trace element compositions of sediments from the Bay of Plenty lie within relatively narrow limits, certain deviations from the mean concentration of terrigenous sediments are observed. Sediments from cores J92-95 taken immediately to the south of White Island, for example, show a significant enrichment in all elements analysed, particularly V, Cr, Ni and Cu, compared with the sediments from other localities. Although the precise origin of this element enrichment is not known, it may be related either to the outpouring of acid waters enriched in ferride elements from the crater of White Island (Table 2) or to the contribution of andesitic material from White Island (DUNCAN and VUCETICH, 1970; KOHN and GLASBY, in press), in either case leading to ferride element enrichment in the sediment. Since inter-element ratios of the "excess" abundance of elements in the sediments taken to the south of White Island do not correspond closely to those in either the White Island thermal waters (Table 2) or andesite (Table 3), it is possible that a combination of the two processes is being observed. It should be emphasised, however, that a substantial amount of iron is being discharged into the sea from the White Island crater each year (of the order of $1,000$ tons/y) and that this could scavenge substantial quantities of trace elements from seawater as colloidal ferric hydroxide.

In the case of the one discrete ash layer analysed from the onshore volcanic zone $(177, 122 \sim 127 \text{cm})$, the tephra show a marked depletion in the contents of V, Cr, Ni and Cu compared with the surrounding green muds and are more similar in composition to the central North Island rhyolitic pumices reported by EWART *et al.* (1968) (Table 3).

Finally, there appears to be no evidence of enrichment Influence of diagenesis of manganese and other ferrides in the upper layers of the sediment cores from this region. This suggests that diagenetic processes such as suggested by LYNN and BONATTI (1965) are not important in controlling element migration in this sedimentary environment. Enrichment of ferrides in the upper layers of the sediment column is observed, however, in sediments taken in the north of the study area in a deep water environment (Tables 5 and 6) (KOHN and GLASBY, in press). This suggests the occurrence of a distinct geographical boundary at a depth of approximately 1,500m at which diagenetic remobilisation of ferrides becomes important.

Depth (cm)	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe, %	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn
Station H209									
$0 - 2$	3232	88	32	1294	2.39	32	39	27	57
$91 - 97$	3426	108	52	328	2.63	32	38	26	61
Station H210									
$0 - 2$	3168	78	41	363	2.31	34	34	24	49
$61 - 66$	3841	96	45	373	2.81	41	37	26	56
Station H211									
$0 - 4$	3252	100	48	647	2.50	38	38	24	51
$305 - 310$	4305	113	41	311	2.77	40	34	25	58
Station H212									
$0 - 2$	3410	66	45	688	2.39	37	36	33	58
$91 - 97$	3802	90	58	393	2.77	40	36	37	68
Station H213									
$0 - 5$	2369	44	18	5320	1.81	28	45	34	49
$122 - 127$	2879	67	38	392	2.13	36	37	36	55
Station H214									
$0 - 2$	2369	48	22	6095	1.81	30	69	34	58
$91 - 97$	2669	33	48	512	1.81	26	33	30	49
Station H215									
$0 - 5$	3178	63	30	717	2.30	32	33	31	49
$91 - 97$	3314	67	28	360	2.42	30	41	35	49

Table 5. Trace element analyses of sediment samples collected from the Bay of Plenty during the MV Taranui cruise of January 1971. All analyses in mg/kg, except where otherwise stated.

Table 6. Semiguantitative analyses of sediments by optical emission spectrography. Analyst H.J. TODD. Chemistry Division, D.S.I.R. All analyses im p.p.m.

Depth (cm)		Сr	Mn	Cu	Ni	Ba	v	Sr	Be	Zт	\mathbf{P}	Zn	Pb	Sn	Ga
Station H213															
$0 - 3$	150.	25	>1000	500	25	500	50	25	5	50	100	25	25		10
$122 - 127$	-50	50	1000	300	50	500	100	25	5.	100	100	25	25		10

Not detected: Mo, Co, Hg, As, Sb, Tl, Au, Ge, W, La and Ag. Copper values possibly contaminated from Cu arcing rods.

SUMMARY

The present evidence indicates that no detectable ferride element enrichment is observed in the associated sediments in a zone of known submarine geothermal activity in the Bay of Plenty, New Zealand. This conclusion is not unexpected in view of the low ferride element contents of geothermal discharges (GOGUEL and RITCHIE, 1975). However, this does not preclude the possibility that submarine volcanism may contribute to the metal content of seawater and therefore indirectly to the formation of metalliferous sediments and manganese nodules in other parts of the world's oceans.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Dr. R. GOGUEL, Mr. H. J. TODD and Miss J. BINNS, Chemistry Division, D.S.I.R., for assistance with chemical analyses; Dr. D. SEWARD, Victoria University, who identified the volcanic fraction in the sediments; the Ministry of Works, Hamilton, who supplied the catchment data; and Drs. W. F. GIGGENBACH, Chemistry Division, D.S.I.R. and W. A. PULLAR, Soil Bureau, D.S.I.R., who reviewed the manuscript.

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APPENDIX

Trace element analyses of sediment samples collected from the Bay of Plenty during the MV Taranui cruise of June 1970. All analyses in mg/kg except where otherwise stated. All samples are green muds except where indicated to the contrary.

* Not included in calculation of mean

 $NA = Not$ analyzed

 $(Cont³d)$

 $(Cont³d)$

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 $\rm (Cont^3d)$

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Depth (cm)	v	$_{\rm Cr}$	Mn	Fe, $%$	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Remarks
Mean	53	10	452	1.84	68	24	25	45	
Std dev.	6.4		117	0.44	23.3	2.2		-12.8	
Arenaceous greywacke									
	74	26	318	1.70	76	24	-10	30	
Argillaceous greywacke									
	116	46	450	3.14	76	48	30	54	