

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S1367-9120(18)30157-3
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jseaes.2018.04.038>
Reference: JAES 3492

To appear in: *Journal of Asian Earth Sciences*

Received Date: 21 November 2017
Revised Date: 3 March 2018
Accepted Date: 30 April 2018

Please cite this article as: Fan, A., Yang, R., (Tom) van Loon, A.J., Yin, W., Han, Z., Zavala, C., Classification of gravity-flow deposits and their significance for unconventional petroleum exploration, with a case study from the Triassic Yanchang Formation (southern Ordos Basin, China), *Journal of Asian Earth Sciences* (2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jseaes.2018.04.038>

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Classification of gravity-flow deposits and their significance for unconventional petroleum exploration, with a case study from the Triassic Yanchang Formation (southern Ordos Basin, China)

Aiping Fan^a, Renchao Yang^{a,b,*}, A.J. (Tom) van Loon^{a,c}, Wei Yin^d, Zuozhen Han^a, Carlos Zavala^e

^aShandong Provincial Key Laboratory of Depositional Mineralization & Sedimentary Minerals, Shandong University of Science and Technology, Qingdao 266590, China

^bLaboratory for Marine Mineral Resources, Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology, Qingdao 266071, China

^cGeocom Consultants, Valle del Portet 17, 03726 Benitachell, Spain

^dSinopec Petroleum Exploration & Production Research Institute, Beijing 100083, China

^eGCS Argentina, Calle Interna 1320, Bahia Blanca (B8JUF), Argentina

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: xiaofan781026@sina.com (A. Fan), yang100808@126.com (R. Yang), Geocom.VanLoon@gmail.com (A.J. van Loon), yinwei.syky@sinopec.com (W. Yin), hanzz@163.com (Z. Han), czavala@gcsargentina.com (C. Zavala).

Abstract

The ongoing exploration for shale oil and gas has focused sedimentological research on the transport and deposition mechanisms of fine-grained sediments, and more specifically on fine-grained mass-flow deposits. It appears, however, that no easily applicable classification scheme for gravity-flow deposits exists, and that such classifications almost exclusively deal with sandy and coarser sediments. Since the lack of a good classification system for fine-grained gravity flow deposits hampers scientific communication and understanding, we propose a classification scheme on the basis of the mud content in combination with the presumed transport mechanism. This results in twelve types of

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