

shape, orientation, and distribution of faunal elements), and the taxonomic composition, diversity, and abundance representation of species in assemblages are of particular importance in interpretations of paleoecology and depositional environments.

Three facies are recognized vertically within an alluvial-lacustrine system. The interfluvial lake and lake splay facies is characterized by sequences of coarsening-upward detritus, abundant continuous limestone beds, and few beds of discontinuous coal and continuous carbonaceous shale. Limestones contain two lacustrine mollusk assemblages: a locally reworked assemblage dominated by the bivalve *Plesielliptio* (two species), and the gastropods *Viviparus*, *Lioplacodes* (three species), and *Clenchiella*; and a quiet-water assemblage dominated by sphaeriid bivalves. This facies reflects development of numerous lakes bordered by well-drained backswamps in interfluvial flood basins. Lakes were repeated infilled by carbonate mud, splay detritus, and backswamp deposits.

The interfluvial crevasse splay-crevasse channel facies is characterized by sequences of coarsening-upward detritus and few discontinuous limestone beds, separated vertically by thick, continuous coal and carbonaceous shale beds. This facies includes small crevasse channel sandstones which scour into splay sandstones. Biofabric of lacustrine mollusk assemblages, which are identical in composition (but with dwarfed species of *Plesielliptio*) to locally reworked lacustrine assemblages of the interfluvial lake and lake splay facies, reflects deterioration of lakes through active infilling by crevasses.

The fluvial channel and interchannel facies is typified by thick channel sandstones laterally separated by sequences of coarsening-upward detritus, overbank sediments, and rare limestones. This facies includes thick, continuous coal and carbonaceous shale beds. Muddy-substrate flood basin lakes are characterized by an untransported lacustrine mollusk assemblage differing from those of the interfluvial lake and lake splay facies in both composition and relative abundance of species. Transported mollusk assemblages dominated by the gastropod *Hydrobia eulimoides* occur in crevasse sandstones. Relative to northerly flowing major channels, proximal and distal parts of splay deposits can be differentiated by their mollusk assemblage composition. The fluvial channel and interchannel facies reflects deposition on flood basins that were formerly occupied by lake, crevasse, and backswamp deposits. Thick, continuous coal beds reflect the spread of backswamps from interchannel depressions to abandoned major channel ridges. Cessation of fluvial channel and interchannel sedimentation was marked by widespread lacustrine deposition.

The vertical sequence of facies just described also reflects the areal distribution of deposits of major channels that pass laterally into overbank and crevasse splay channel areas, which in turn merge into large and small lakes. Alluvial-lacustrine deposition in the upper part of the Tongue River Member is similar to that of anastomosed reach of the Saskatchewan River, Canada, as reported in a 1980 study by Smith and Putnam.

HARGRAS, M., GUPCO, Cairo, Egypt, G. HUNTER, EQPC, Cairo, Egypt, and A. E. M. NAIRN, Univ. South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Oil Potential of Western Gulf of Suez

Since 1886, Egyptian and foreign companies have explored the Gulf of Suez by classical mapping and geophysical techniques. During that time 13 oil and gas fields have been discovered. Average daily production currently is of the order of 50,000 BOPD. Structurally, the western Gulf of Suez is divided into two major provinces: West Bakr and West Zeit. In the former, beds charac-

teristically dip to the northeast; in the latter, they dip to the southwest, both in surface outcrop and in subsurface. Within each province, fields are located over structural traps.

As a result of drilling it is apparent that the structures resulted from major movement during the early Miocene. A major unconformity occurs at the top of the lower Miocene Nukhul Formation; and the beds of the overlying middle Miocene Belayim Formation transgress on to rocks as old as Precambrian.

The Nubia Sandstone, one of the best reservoirs, is a blanket deposit over the whole gulf ranging in thickness from 130 m (425 ft) to in excess of 660 m (2,150 ft). The Miocene sands are more sporadic in their distribution and thickness. Three depocenters are known in West Bakr, Shukheir, and Wacdi Dib areas. Further reservoirs of lesser importance are Cretaceous sands, 6.5 m (21 ft) to 32 m (105 ft) thick throughout the area, Eocene carbonates, and Miocene reefs.

Production up to the present has been from structural traps; future expansion of production will depend upon our ability to locate stratigraphic traps. Sands sourced by the shales have seldom given high yields. The hope is that through the generation of depositional environment models it will be possible to define prospects where the optimum sand/shale ratio of 1/4 to 1/6 can be found.

HARPER, GERALD G., Amoco Production, New Orleans, LA, FREDERICK H. MANLEY, Enserch Exploration, Inc., Dallas, TX, and ALBERT C. STAHELI, Univ. Mississippi, Oxford, MS

Seismic Stratigraphy and Clay Mineral Distribution in Shallow-Marine Siliciclastic Deposits, Central Mississippi Sound, North-Central Gulf of Mexico

Three north-south high-resolution (7 kHz) seismic profiles and 16 20-foot cores taken at shot-point locations in central Mississippi Sound were utilized to determine: (1) any meaningful seismic reflector configurations in the subsurface; (2) the clay species dispersal pattern and its relation to transport systems that move sediment into the depositional basin; (3) any change in clay mineral species that has occurred through time with respect to deposition of 5 to 6 m (16 to 20 ft) of sediment; and (4) the geologic history and sedimentary processes acting within central Mississippi Sound and adjacent areas.

Interpretation of shallow seismic events (20 m [66 ft]) and clay mineral analysis indicates that extrinsic factors largely determined the clay mineral species and geologic history of Pleistocene and Holocene sedimentation in central Mississippi Sound. Trend surface maps, residual maps, profiles of the smectite (montmorillonite) to kaolinite ratios, and seismic profiles illustrate that: (1) Mississippi Sound has been influenced by transgressions and regressions associated with proglacial and interglacial stages; (2) a toplap seismic reflection configuration forms the probable Pleistocene-Holocene boundary; (3) at least one ancient barrier island is located inside the Holocene barrier system; (4) there is a late date for sea level reaching its present location (2,500 years B.P.); (5) the influence of the Mississippi River system on sedimentation is soon after inundation of Mississippi Sound; (6) the longshore currents and flood tides supplied sediment rich in kaolinite to the study area; (7) the drainage systems emptying into the study area have local influence on clay mineral distribution; and (8) the dredging of ship channels affects the clay-mineral distribution within the sediments immediately below the sediment-water interface in central Mississippi Sound.