



## FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

# MASTER'S THESIS

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## Abstract

Southeast directed fluvio-deltaic systems transported across Svalbard during Early Cretaceous are age correlated to southeast progradation deposits in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin. Both local (few km) and distal (>300 km) source regions has been suggested for this system. The recent exploration well 7321/4-1 drilled on the flank of the basin encountered sandstones in the Lower Cretaceous interval. This well data has not been implemented in the previous studies.

This study uses detrital zircon U/Pb geochronology from well 7321 / 4-1 and 7322 / 7-1 in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin to interpret the source of coarse grain sediments. Palynological analyses, well and seismic data are integrated to interpret the distribution of the sandstones encountered in recent well 7321 / 4-1. The aim of this study is to evaluate the provenance of Lower Cretaceous sandstones in encountered by well 7321 / 4-1 and the implications for reservoir development in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin.

Two seismic units (SU1 and SU2) is defined based on seismic downlap terminations and seismically guided well correlations. The SU1 shows wedge-shaped packages thickening towards fault in the central part of the basin. The SU2 consist of the encountered by well 7321/4-1 and is characterized by shelf-edge clinoforms that prograded southeast into the basin. The dominant detrital zircon age populations in SU2 unit from well 7321 / 4-1 is: (1) 2.6-2.75, (2) 1.7-1.5 Ga and (3) 1.2-1 Ga. Only a few Detrital Zircon ages were measured in well 7322 / 7-1 and it was thus not possible to compare the result with this well. By comparing Detrital Zircon Ages from the SU2 unit with Lower Cretaceous formations on Svalbard and in the Barents shelf, it became clear that both regions contain similar dominant age distribution.

The source of sediment is interpreted to originate from north Greenland and/or Arctic Canada based on the similar detrital age distribution and the southwestern progradation direction of the clinoforms. Seismic interpretation suggests that the well 7321 / 4-1 penetrates the topsets segment of the shelf-edge clinoforms, which interpreted as a potential sandy system in the topsets.

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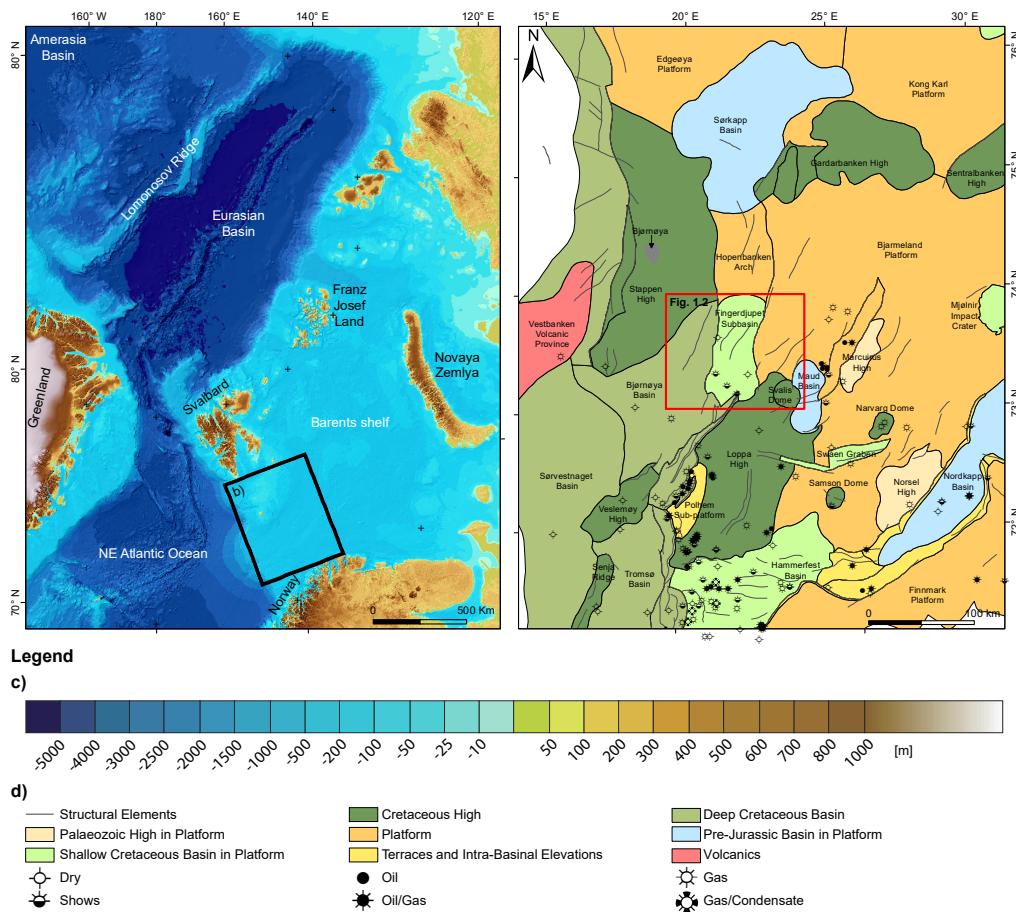
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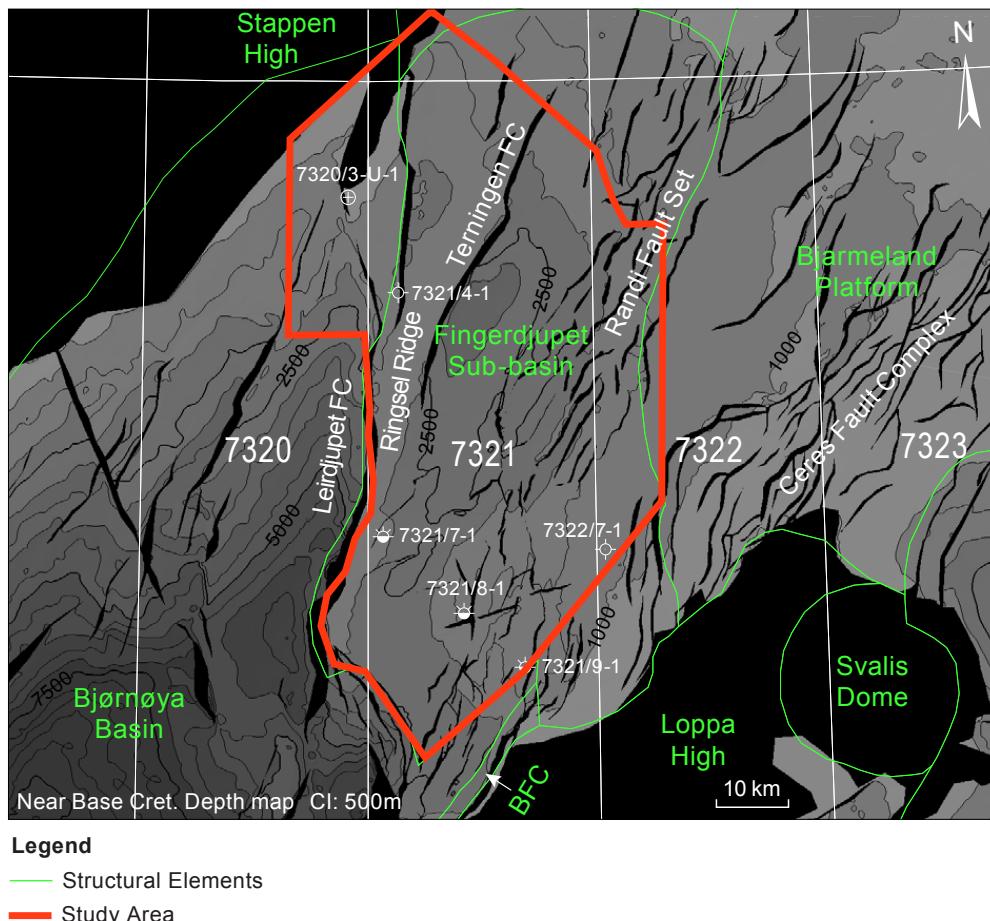
# 1 INTRODUCTION

The western Barents shelf borders the mainland of northern Norway in the south, Northeast Atlantic Ocean in the west and is exposed in the Svalbard archipelago in the north-western corner (Fig. 1.1a) (Smelror et al., 2009). The northern margin of the Barents shelf is interpreted to have been uplifted during Cretaceous time (e.g. Maher, 2001; Polteau, 2015). Outcrop studies on Svalbard suggests that a northern tilt of the shelf triggered a southeast evolving paleoshoreline during Barremian (Early Cretaceous, Steel & Worsley, 1984; Gjeldberg & Steel, 1995; Worsley, 2008; Midtkandal and Nystuen, 2009). This regressive system consists of sandy fluvio-deltaic deposits visible in outcrops across Svalbard and are interpreted to extend into the south-western Barents shelf (Fig. 1.1b, e.g. Grundvåg et al., 2017; Midtkandal et al., 2019).



**Fig. 1.1 Structural elements in the Arctic and the southwestern Barents shelf** a) Map view of topographic and bathymetric features in the Arctic region after Jakobsson et al., (2012). The coordinate system used is the WGS 1984 with polar stereographic projection. The square marks the map area in Fig. 1b. b) Regional map of the southwestern Barents shelf showing the structural elements based on NPD (2020). The square marks the map area in Fig. 1.2. c) Color coding used in Fig. 1a and the corresponding meters above and below mean sea level. d) Color coding and well symbols used in Fig. 1b.

The terminal deposits of the regressive system observed on Svalbard are age correlated to a southeast directed clinoform system in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin and on the western Bjarmeland Platform (Grundvåg et al., 2017; Midtkandal et al., 2019). Recent exploration well 7322/7-1 targeted topsets of southeast prograding, delta-scale (25–80 m), clinoforms in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin (Fig. 1.2, Bryn et al. 2019). The well penetrated the topsets less than one kilometer away from the delta-scale foresets which were interpreted to be of coarse-grained lithology based on the high angle foresets (10–12°) and modern quantitative clinoform analysis (Bryn et al., 2019, Patruno & Helland-Hansen, 2018). The reservoir proved to be gas-charged siltstones of Barremian age with a non-commercial volume. Bryn et al. (2019) studied the reservoir potential of clinotherms in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin and argued that the high angle foresets near the well may still be sand-prone. Thus, the reservoir potential of the Barremian clinoform system in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin remains unproven. Furthermore, Bryn et al. (2019) concluded that linking a coarse-grained source area to clinoforms of coarse grain character can be an important first step towards predicting the reservoir potential of the Barremian clinotherms.



**Fig. 1.2 Study Area.** Depth structure map of a reflector near the Base Cretaceous Unconformity (edited from Bryn et al. (2019)). The study area is illustrated in red color. For location of map see Fig. 1.1b.

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Three source regions have been suggested to supply coarse grain sediments to the southeast directed clinoform system observed in the Barents shelf. (1) A western region corresponding to north-eastern Greenland (Grundvåg et al., 2017), (2) a north-western region corresponding to Crockerland (Paleohigh in northern Canada, Midtkandal et al., 2019) and (3) the Stappen High, located at the western margin of the south-western Barents shelf (Fig. 1.1b, Bryn et al., 2019). Hence, the source of sediments is poorly constrained.

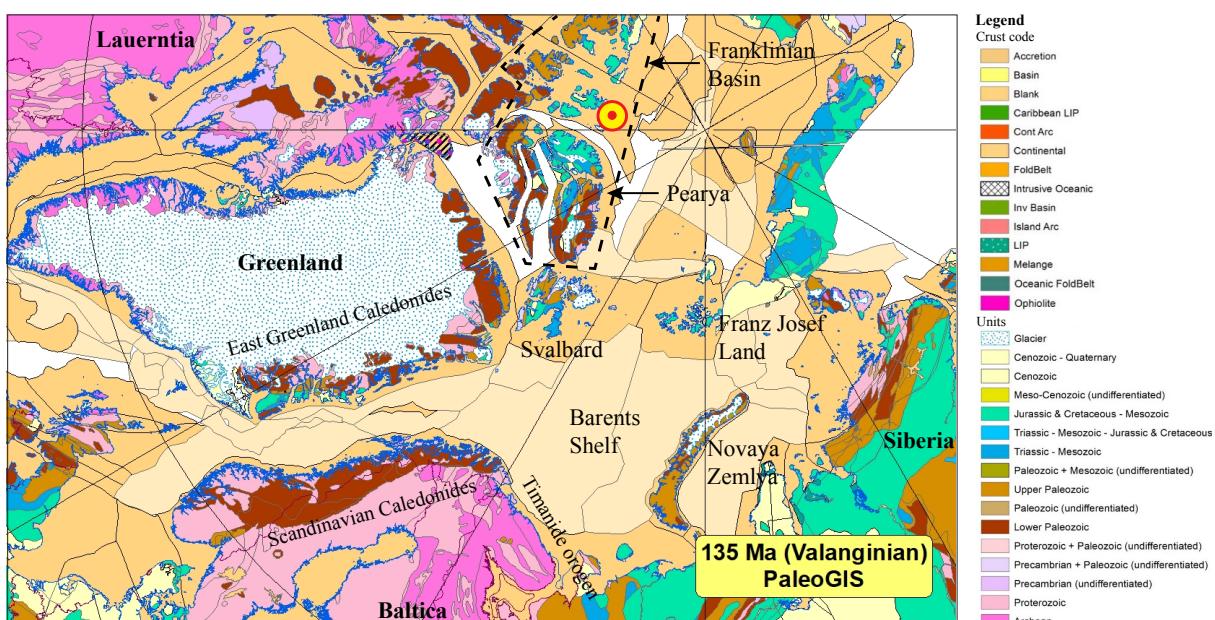
Recent exploration Well 7321/4-1 (2018) was drilled on the Ringsel Ridge, a horst structure defined by the Leirdjupet Fault Complex (LFC) and the Terningen Fault Complex, in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin (Fig. 1.2). This well targeted Jurassic and Triassic sandstones but also encountered sandstones in the Lower Cretaceous interval (B.K. Bryn. 2019. Pers. Comm.). This well data has not been implemented by previous studies.

This study uses biostratigraphic data and detrital zircon U/Pb geochronology (provided by GEUS) to interpret the age and origin of the Lower Cretaceous sandstones in well 7321/4-1 and the siltstones in well 7322/7-1. Biostratigraphy and petrophysical logs from the southern wells (7321/7-1, 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1, Fig. 1.2) and seismic data is used to interpret the distribution of the sandstones encountered in well 7321/4-1. The aim of this study is to evaluate the provenance of Lower Cretaceous sandstones on the Ringsel Ridge and the implications for reservoir development in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin.

## 2 GEOLOGICAL SETTING

### 2.1 Potential Source Areas

During the Early Cretaceous a widespread epicontinental sea (Boreal Sea) covered the present day Barents shelf, parts of northeast Greenland and Sverdrup Basin. The northwest hinterlands facing the Barents shelf were Svalbard, Pearya and Laurentia (Fig. 2.1). The Baltic plate was situated along the south-western margin and Siberia in the south-eastern margin of the Barents shelf (e.g. Torsvik et al., 2002; Torsvik et al., 2012, Fig. 2.1.).



**Fig. 2.1 Plate Reconstruction (Valanginian, 135Ma)** Plate tectonic reconstruction of the Barents shelf and basement geology (figure modified from LOCRA Final Report. (2017)).

The crystalline basement of the northeast Laurentia interior consists of Archean cratons, reworked Archean rocks and intervening Palaeoproterozoic orogenic belts (Fig. 2.1, 2006). Towards the border of Franklinian Basin (Fig. 2.1), the basement is of Archean to early Proterozoic age with intrusive igneous rocks of mafic to felsic composition, in addition to Proterozoic sedimentary and volcanic rocks (Trettin, 1991). Large parts of the Laurentia basement in the northern part are covered by Neoproterozoic to Devonian siliciclastic and carbonate rocks in the Franklinian Basin (Fig. 2.1), interpreted to represent a passive margin succession (Dewing et al., 2008).

The Pearya Terrane (Fig. 2.1) is located in the northernmost region of Ellesmere Island (Canada) and has been characterized as an accreted or exotic terrane(relative to the adjacent terranes) along the northern margin of Laurentia (Trettin, 1991). Accretion against the Franklinian Basin has been inferred

to occur during the middle Palaeozoic Ellesmerian Orogeny (Malone et al., 2017; Piepjohn & Von Gosen, 2017), interpreted as being the equivalent to the Caledonian Orogeny along the North Canada and Greenland margins (Gasser, 2014; Gee, 2015). The basement in the Pearya Terrane is dominated by metasedimentary rocks and granitoid gneiss (Trettin et al., 1991) of Tonian age (972–962 Ma) (Malone et al., 2017). The basement is overlaid by Neoproterozoic to Middle Ordovician metasedimentary and metavolcanic rocks (Fig. 2.1). These deposits also includes igneous intrusions of ultramafic-mafic composition aged 481 Ma and younger felsic intrusions of 462 Ma age. The intrusions were followed by nearly unmetamorphosed volcanic, siliciclastic and carbonate sedimentary rocks of middle Ordovician to late Silurian age (Trettin, 1991).

The northeastern margin of Laurentia is dominated by the 1300 km long East Greenland Caledonides (Fig. 2.1, Gee et al., 2008; Higgins et al., 2008). As a result of the collision of Laurentia and Baltica which culminated during the latest Silurian–early Devonian (Gee et al., 2008). The East Greenland Caledonides can be divided into three segments: northern (80–82°N), central (76–80°N) and southern (70–76°N) (Gasser, 2014). The crystalline basement is dominated by gneisses and metagranitic rocks (2 - 1.85 Ga) which are exposed in the central segment (Kalsbeek et al., 1999; 2008). Caledonian thrust sheets are composed of Paleoproterozoic to Neoproterozoic rocks of mainly siliciclastic and sedimentary carbonate, volcanic and metasedimentary rocks (Fig. 2.1, Higgins et al., 2008). While Lower Paleozoic sediments occupies large parts of western foreland and the upper sheets of the orogenic belt in the northern and southern segments (Smith and Rasmussen, 2008). Caledonian granites is only present in the southern segment of the orogen (Gasser, 2014).

Svalbard (Fig. 1.1a, Fig. 2.1) can be divided into the Eastern (Western Ny Friesland and Nordaustlandet terranes), Northwestern and Southwestern basement terranes (Gee and Teben'kov, 2004). The relative origins of the different terranes are poorly constrained (e.g. Gasser, 2014). The oldest rocks on Svalbard are late Archean to late Paleoproterozoic (c. 2.71 - 1.75 Ga) granitic gneisses found in the Eastern terrane (Western Ny Friesland) (Johansson et al. 1995; Wellman et al., 2001;). Apart from the gneisses, the Eastern terrane is dominated by Mesoproterozoic metasedimentary and metavolanic rocks, intruded by Tonian and subsequent Silurian aged granitoids (McClelland et al., 2019), overlain by Neoproterozoic to Early Palaeozoic siliciclastic and carbonate sedimentary rocks (Witt-Nilsson et al., 1998; Sandelin et al., 2001). The Northwestern Terrane is dominated by late Mesoproterozoic to Neoproterozoic metasedimentary rocks intruded by Tonian (c. 0.96 Ga) and Silurian (c. 0.42 Ga) aged granitoids (Petterson et al., 2009). The Southwestern Terrane constitutes Mesoproterozoic and Neoproterozoic ortho gneisses (c. 1.2 Ga

and 0.95Ga) (Majka et al., 2014) and metaclastic rocks subjected to metamorphism reaching upper amphibolite facies conditions during Torellian (c. 640 Ma) (e.g., Majka et al 2010) and eclogite facies during Ordovician (e.g., Kosminská et al., 2014). These units are followed by Ordovician to Silurian siliciclastic and carbonate sedimentary rocks with no evidence of Silurian magmatism or high-grade metamorphism (Gasser & Andresen, 2013).

The interior of north-western part of Baltica (Fig. 2.1) is dominated by Archean (3.5 – 2.73 Ga) granitoid-gneiss (Holtta et al, 2012), Paleoproterozoic (2.44 - 1.92 Ga) metavolcanic and metasedimentary rocks (Fig. 2.1, Lahtinen et al., 2010; Koykka et al., 2019). During the latest Neoproterozoic Timanide orogen (610-640 Ma), the northeastern margin of the Baltica experienced subduction and accretion (Pease, 2011). Late Neoproterozoic metaclastic rocks along the orogenic belt and granitoids of same age are common along the Timanide segment in Arctic Russia (Lorenz et al., 2004). The Timanide structures in the northern Norway are overprinted by the Scandinavian Caledonides in the north-western margin of Baltica (Fig. 2.1, Pease et al., 2014). The Scandinavian Caledonides are interpreted to extends into the Barents Sea region (e.g. Corfu et al., 2014). Along the length of Scandinavian Caledonides, Archean to Neoproterozoic rocks of Baltica are followed by metaigneous and metasedimentary rocks of Neopoterozoic and younger age, interpreted to represent the thrust sheets of the orogenic belt. During the closure of the Iapetus Ocean (paleocean between Laurentia and Baltica), the Batic plate is interpreted to be subducted below Laurentia, stacking the Baltica crust, followed by Iapetan oceanic crust and Laurentia crust (Roberts and Gee, 1985; Corfu et al., 2014). The subduction phase is constrained to Mid-Silurian and the continent–continent collision phase, referred to as the Scandian Orogeny, to mid-Silurian to late Devonian (430-380 Ma, Corfu et al., 2014).

The Uralian Orogeny closed the Uralian Ocean along the eastern margin of Baltica (Fig. 2.1, Arctic Russia) during the Carboniferous-Early Triassic times. By the end of Triassic, erosional products covered the entire eastern Barents shelf (Petrov et al., 2008). The Pai-Khoi-Novaya Zemlya fold belt is a segment of the orogenesis (Korago et al., 2004) and was deformed during thrusting of Novaya Zemlya (Fig. 1.1a, Fig. 2.1) above the Barents plate in the Triassic times (Petrov et al., 2008). The basement of the Novaya Zemlya Archipelago is dominated by Meso- to Neoproterozoic metasedimentary rocks and associated igneous intrusions. The igneous intrusions are of mafic to felsic composition and the oldest granite is dated as 1300 Ma (Korago et al., 2004).

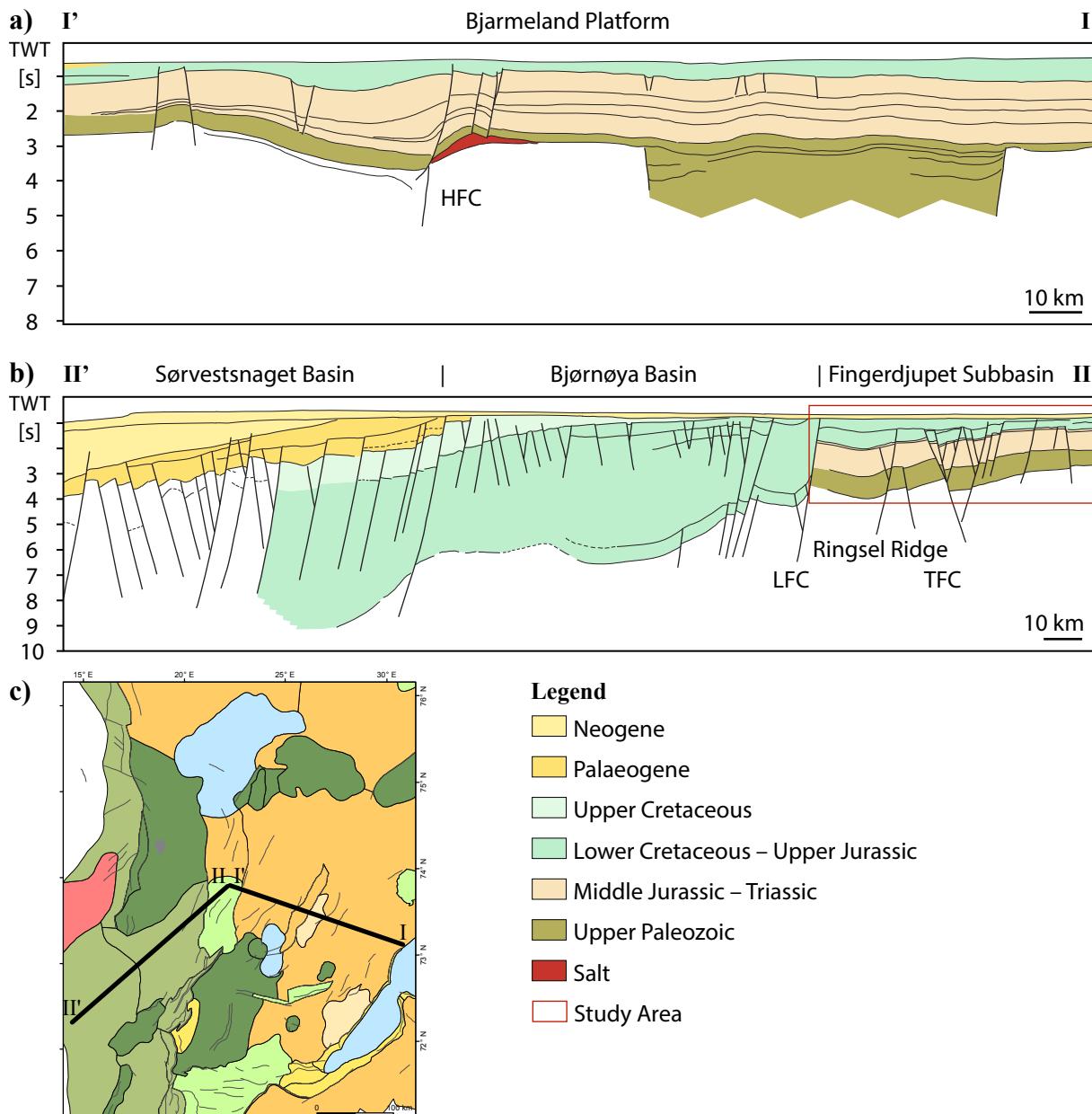
## **2.2 Tectonic Framework**

North-northwest-oriented structural trends of the Scandinavian Caledonides are inherited in the basement of the Barents shelf (e.g Gernigon and Brønner, 2012). These lineaments are interpreted to have played a significant role in the generation of the present-day rift systems in the Barents shelf (Fig. 1.1b, Doré et al., 1991; Gudlaugsson et al., 1998; Ritzmann and Faleide., 2009; Faleide et al., 2010; Gernigon and Brønner, 2012). The post-Caledonian evolution of the shelf can be divided into three main extensional phases: late Paleozoic, Late Jurassic to Early Cretaceous and early Cenozoic. In addition to two uplift phases during Early Cretaceous and Palaeogene to recent (Faleide et al., 1993; Dore, 1995; Anell et al., 2014; Faleide et al., 2015; Riis & Fjeldskaar 1992; Riis 1996; Henriksen et al., 2011).

The tectonic setting during the Early Cretaceous was influenced by the opening of the Amerasia Basin (Grantz et al., 2011) and the North Atlantic rift system (Faleide et al., 1993). The breakup of the Amerasia Basin and the associated High Arctic Large Igneous Province (HALIP; Petrov et al., 2016) is interpreted to cause uplift of the northern margin of the Barents shelf (Gjelberg & Steel, 1995; 2012; Worsley, 2008; Midtkandal & Nystuen, 2009). This is supported by southeast directed fluvio-deltaic and clinoform systems on Svalbard and in the south-western Barents shelf, respectively (e.g. Midtkandal & Nystuen, 2009; Midtkandal, 2019). Intrusive and extrusive igneous rocks on Svalbard and Franz Josef Land suggest that the uplift peaked around latest Barremian (Maher, 2001; Corfu et al., 2013; Polteau, 2015).

The North Atlantic rift system, between Greenland and Baltica (Fig. 2.1), continued into the present day south-western Barents shelf during the Late Jurassic to Early Cretaceous. The earliest Cretaceous (Berresian–Hauterivian) structuring is characterized by north-northeast trending normal faults. Large throws and deep depocenters defined by the Harstad, Tromsø and Bjørnøya basins at the present day western margin (Fig. 2.2b, Faleide et al., 1993). Strike-slip movements accompanying the normal displacement are also recognized, especially in the eastern margin of the Bjørnøya Basin (Bjørnøyrenna Fault Complex). Further east, the north to northeast trending faults developed significant subsidence in the eastern flank of the Bjørnøya Basin and established the Fingerdjupet Subbasin (Fig. 1.1b, Fig. 2.2, Serck et al., 2017). Minor fault activity is also recognized in the Hoop Fault Complex on the Bjarmeland Platform (Fig. 2.2a, Faleide et al., 2019). The fault activity is suggested to have terminated in the northernmost part of the Barents shelf (Faleide et al., 1993), where compressional tectonic activity occurred (Kairanov et al., 2018). North oriented fault activity on Svalbard is suggested to be expressed as collapse structures within delta fronts on the eastern Spitsbergen (Onderdonk & Midtkandal, 2010).

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**Fig. 2.2 Regional Seismic Line** Regional seismic line showing the structural elements of the Fingerdjupet Subbasin in a regional context (figure modified from Faleide et al., 2015).

Tectonic quiescence is inferred during the Barremian in the Bjørnøya Basin (Blaich et al., 2017), Fingerdjupet Subbasin (Fig. 1.1b, Fig. 2.2b, Serck et al., 2017) and in the Hoop area on the Bjarmeland Platform (Fig. 2.2a, Faleide et al., 2019). Crustal stretching and thinning in Tromsø and Bjørnøya basins from the earliest Cretaceous fault activity is inferred to have caused uplift and sub-aerial exposure of the Loppa High during early Barremian (Indrevær et al., 2016). The uplift has been suggested to have occurred through different stages from Late Jurassic/earliest Cretaceous times (Gabrielsen et al., 1990; Glørstad-clark, 2011) and to have reached its peak during the Barremian (Indrevær et al., 2016). The differential uplift was accompanied by inversion tectonics in the faults surrounding the Loppa High and in the adjacent Hammerfest Basin (Fig. 1.1b, Indrevær et al., 2016). Indrevær et al. (2017) suggests that the uplift model

for the Loppa High (phase change driven vertical movements) also could explain the uplift of the Stappen High, but the timing of the uplift phase developing the present-day Stappen High is poorly constrained (Anell et al., 2016). The present structural configuration of the Stappen High is suggested to have developed during Cretaceous–Cenozoic (Anell et al., 2016) and early Cenozoic (Faleide, 1993; Worsley et al., 2001; Blaich et al., 2017).

A second extensional event occurred during Aptian, caused renewed fault activity along north-northeast trending faults. Previous established depocenters such as the Tromsø Basin, Bjørnøya Basin and Fingerdjupet Subbasin experienced subsidence (Fig. 1.1b, Fig. 2.2b, Faleide et al., 1993; Blaich et al., 2017; Serck et al., 2017), as well as the Hoop area on Bjarmeland Platform (Fig. 2.2a, Faleide et al., 2019). The Albian succession is characterized by post-rift subsidence and rapid infill of previous established paleotopography with increasing magnitude towards the western basins (Faleide et al., 1993).

## **2.3 Stratigraphy**

### **Svalbard**

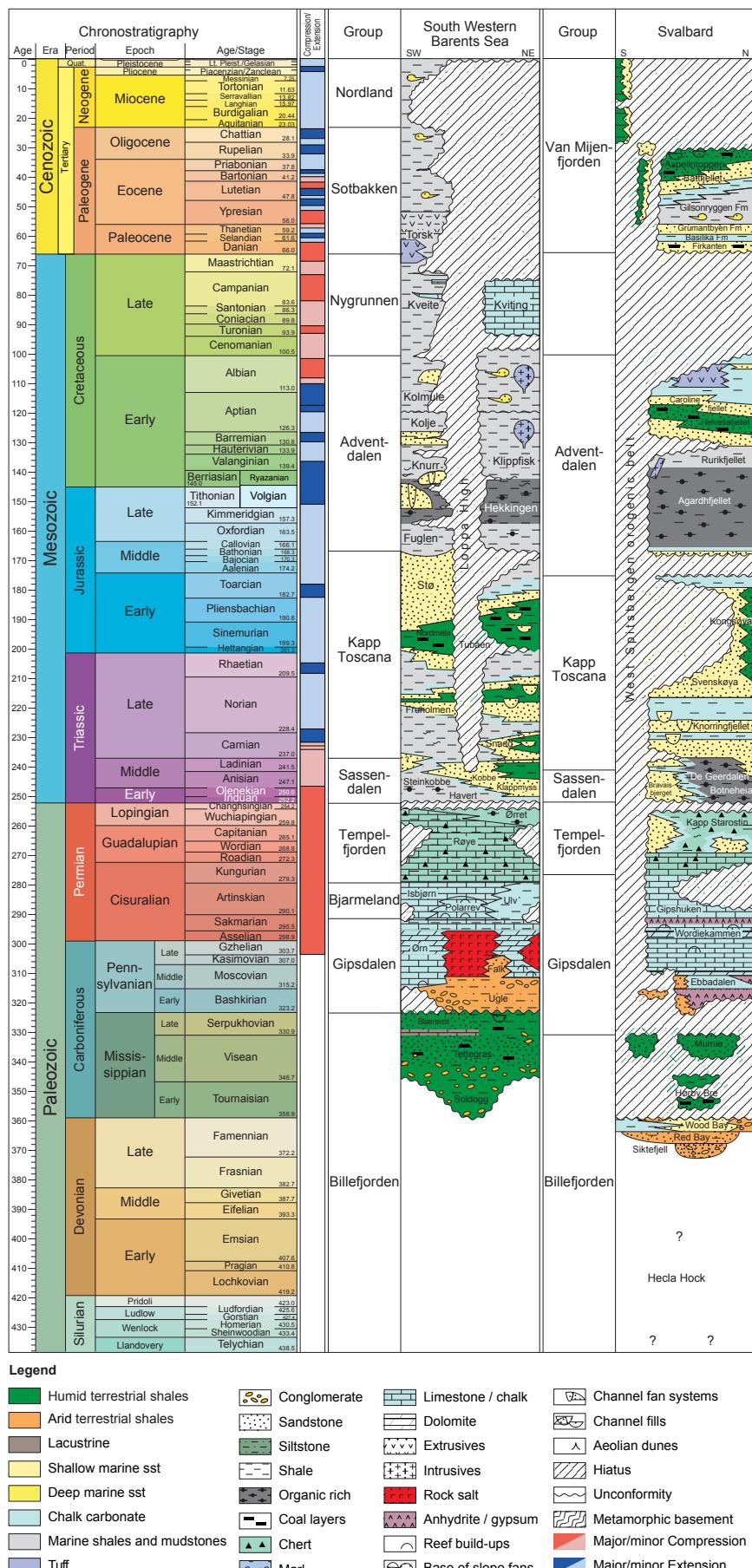
The Lower Cretaceous succession in Svalbard consists of Rurikfjellet (Valanginian–Hauterivian/early Barremian), Helvetiafjellet (Barremian–early Aptian) and Carolinefjellet formations (early Aptian–Albian) (Mørk et al., 1999, Fig. 2.3). The base of the Lower Cretaceous succession is a regional marker (Dypvik et al., 2017) interpreted to be age equivalent to the Base Cretaceous Unconformity (BCU) offshore in the Barents shelf (Fig. 2.3, Grundvåg et al., 2017). The Rurikfjellet Formation (Fig. 2.3) is dominated by open marine shales that pass vertically into shallow marine, delta-front sandstones in the southeast Svalbard. The coarsening upwards trend are interpreted as a regression induced by the uplift and southern tilt of Svalbard (Gjelberg and Steel, 1995). The source of coarse-grained sediments is linked to the west-northwest hinterlands based on the southeast directed paleocurrents and thinning of the unit (Grundvåg et al., 2017). The lower boundary of Helvetiafjellet Formation (Fig. 2.3) is a regional unconformity of Barremian age (Fig. 2.3, ranging from 129–117 Ma, Midtkandal et al., 2016; Vicker et al., 2016). The Barremian unconformity has been inferred to represent a subaerial unconformity associated with deep incisions in the south-west Svalbard (Nathorst Land) as a result of increased slope gradient caused by the emerging northern margin of Svalbard (Midtkandal and Nystuen, 2009). The Helvetiafjellet Formation (Fig. 2.3) is subdivided into an extensive sand sheet of the Festningen member followed by the heterolithic Glitrefjellet Member (Midtkandal et al., 2008). The Festingen Member (Fig. 2.3) consists of coarse grain fluvial braided-plain deposits interpreted as a forced regressive unit extending across the entire southern

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Spitsbergen (Gjelberg & Steel, 1995). At the southern edge of Spitsbergen, these sandstone packages are interpreted to either pass laterally into marine mudstone (Gjelberg & Steel 1995, 2012) or continue into the Barents shelf (Midtkandal et al. 2009). Southeast paleocurrents indicate that a north-western source region also existed for the Festingen Member (Grundvåg et al., 2017; Midtkanal et al., 2019a). Glitrefjellet Member consists of fluvio-deltaic deposits with alternating mudstones, sandstones and thin coal beds reflecting a tide dominated coast (Gjelberg and Steel, 1995; Midtkandal and Nystuen, 2009). The base of the Carolinefjellet Formation (Fig. 2.3) forms an regional flooding event marking a return from a coast to an open marine shelf environment (Grundvåg et al, 2017). This unit consists of storm-influenced and storm-dominated sand sheets alternating with outer shelf mudstone(e.g. Hurum et al., 2016).

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**Fig. 2.3 Lithostratigraphic chart** Lithostratigraphy of the southwestern Barents shelf and Svalbard (figure modified from Gradstein et al., 2010)

### **Barents shelf**

The Lower Cretaceous succession in the south-western Barents shelf is divided into the time-equivalent Knurr and Klippfisk formations (Berriasian to early Barremian age), overlain by Kolje Fomation (early Barremian to late Barremian/early Aptian age), followed by Kolmule Formation (Aptian to mid-Cenomanian, Fig. 2.3, Dalland et al., 1988; Mørk et al., 1999). The base of the Lower Cretaceous succession is referred to as the Base Cretaceous Unconformity (BCU), representing a regional unconformity and a correlative conformity (e.g. Mørk et al., 1999). The BCU separates the deep marine deposits of the Upper Jurassic Hekkingen formation and shallow to open marine deposits of the Klippfisk and Knurr formations (Fig. 2.3, Arhus et al., 1990; Faleide et al., 1993; Mørk et al., 1999). The shallow marine Klippfisk formation consists of limestone and marl interpreted as a transgressive condensed deposits on the western platforms and highs, such as on the Ringsel Ridge and on the Bjarmeland Platform (Fig. 1.1b, Fig. 2.2a, Smelror et al., 1998; Århus and Kelly, 1990). The Klippfisk Formation passes laterally into the Knurr Formation (Fig. 2.3) which is composed of open-marine claystone interbedded with thin limestone and dolomite beds (Mørk et al., 1999). Sandstones and conglomerates are also present within the Knurr Formation in shallow marine wedges (well 7120/1-2 and 7122/2-1), deep marine wedges and fans (well 7120/10-1 and 7120/10-2) in the Hammerfest Basin (Fig. 1.1b, e.g. Seldal, 2005; Marin et al., 2018). The coarse grained deposits are interpreted to be erosional products of older rocks on the adjacent Loppa High and the Troms–Finnmark Platform (Fig. 1.1b, Seldal, 2005; Marin et al., 2018). The Klippfisk and Knurr formations are age correlated to the Rurikfjellet Formation in Svalbard (Fig. 2.3, Grundvåg et al., 2017; Midtkandal et al., 2019). The base of the Kolje Formation (Fig. 2.3) has been interpreted as a regional unconformity and correlative conformity (Smelror et al., 1998) referred to as Lower Cretaceous Unconfimrity (LCU) (Midtkanal et al., 2019). The LCU is inferred to represent a regressive surface of marine erosion (Midtkandal et al., 2019). The Kolje Formation is dominated by shales and claystones with minor interbeds of limestone and dolomite interpreted as open marine deposits. Sandstones and siltstones also occur in the upper part of the formation (Dalland et al., 1998). The Kolje Formation is age correlated to the Helvetiafjellet Formation on Svalbard (Fig. 2.3, Grundvåg et al., 2017; Midtkanal et al., 2019a). Kolmule Formation (Fig. 2.3) is also considered to be open marine deposits of claystone and shale, with minor interbeds of thin siltstones in addition to limestone and dolomite stringers (Dalland et al., 1998). Sandstones (well 7120/6-3S, 7120/2-3S and 7220/10-1) and

conglomerates (well 7120/6-3S) are also encountered within this unit (NPD, 2020). The Kolmule Formation is considered to be time equivalent to the Carolinefjellet Formation on Svalbard (Fig. 2.3, Grundvåg et al., 2017; Midtkanal et al., 2019).

### **Lower Cretaceous Clinoforms**

Cliniforms within the Lower Cretaceous succession in the south-western Barents shelf are characterized as two large scale progradation systems; a system with an dominant southeast direction and a system with south-west direction.

The southeast-directed system in the south-western Barents shelf extends from the Bjørnøya Basin (Midtkadnal et al., 2019), across Fingerdjupet Subbasin and onto the Bjarmeland platform (Grundvåg et al., 2017; Hinna, 2017; Marin et al., 2017; Bryn et al., 2019; Faleide et al., 2019; Midtkandal et al., 2019).

The clinoforms on the eastern Bjarmeland Platform are interpreted to be older than on the western part of the platform and in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin based on onlap relations (Faleide, 2017; Faleide et al., 2019). The southeast-directed system has been interpreted to be of Hauterivian–early Barremian (Grundvåg et al., 2017), Barremian–Aptian (Marine et al., 2017) and Barremian age (Bryn et al., 2019; Faleide et al., 2019; Midtkandal et al., 2019). Several sources located to the west-northwest of the Barents shelf have been suggested for the southeast-directed system, including northeastern Greenland, the Lomonosov high, Chukchi Borderland and Crockerland (Grundvåg et al., 2017; Midtkandal et al., 2019).

The southwest-directed system advanced across almost the entire Bjarmeland Platform and Nordkapp Basin in the estern part of the Barents shelf during Hauterivian–Albian (Grundvåg et al., 2017), Valanginian to middle Cenomanian (Marine et al., 2017), or Aptian–Cenomanian time (Midtkandal et al., 2019) age. The source regions are suggested to be in the east-northeast (Marin et al., 2017; Midtkandal et al., 2019), such as the Taimyr and North Kara region in north Russia (Midtkandal et al., 2019).

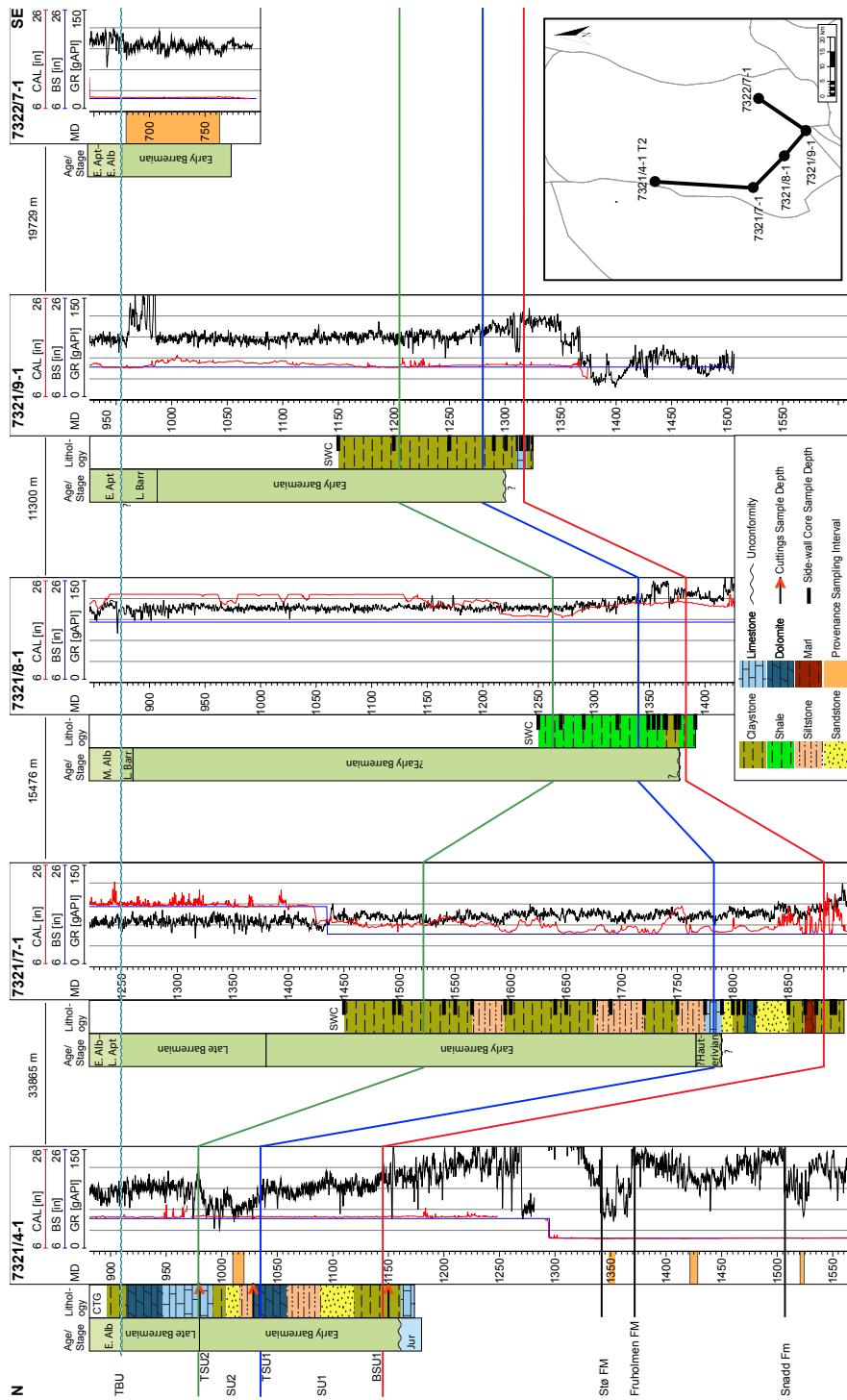
## **3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Data**

#### **Well and seismic data**

The wells used in this study include five exploration wells (7321/4-1, 7321/7-1, 7321/8-1, 7321/9-1 and 7322/7-1, Fig. 3.1 and ) located in the southern and in the north-western part of the study area (Fig. 3.2). All of the wells have check shot survey, petrophysical well logs and cuttings descriptions (Table 3.1 ). Well 7321/4-1 and 7322/7-1 were used for the provenance analysis (detrital zircon U/Pb geochronology) and all of the wells were included for biostratigraphic age dating (Table 3.1 ). The caliper log (hole diameter) relative to the bit size shows large size difference for wells 7321/7-1, 7321/8-1 and intervals in well 7321/9-1 (Fig. 3.1). Irregular boreholes and large spacing between the tool and borehole wall may cause inaccurate well log readings. Therefore, the readings from 7321/7-1, 7321/8-1, and parts of 7321/9-1, are considered to be less reliable than those from wells 7321/4-1 and 7322/7-1(Fig. 3.1).

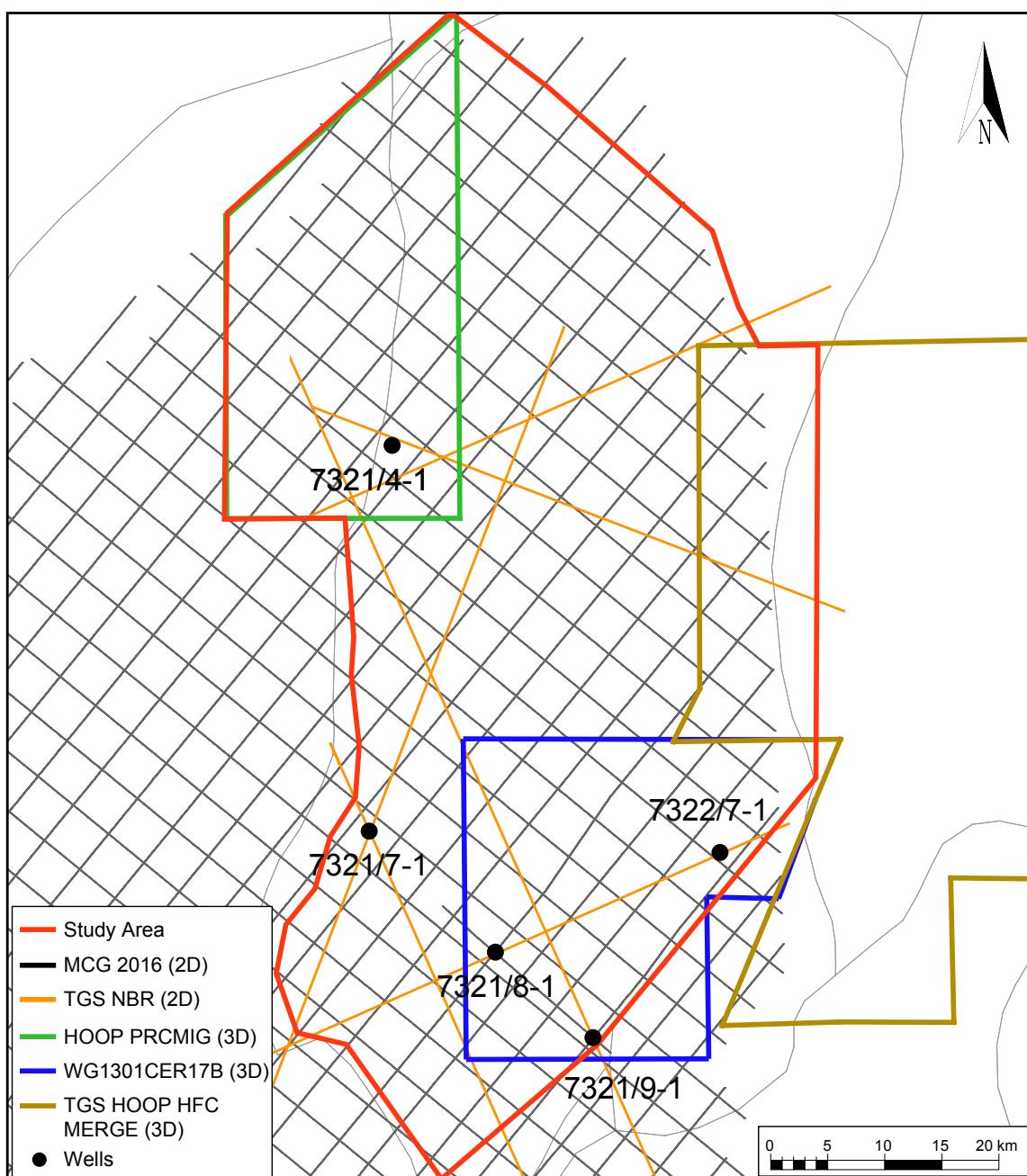
# Provenance Evaluation of Lower Cretaceous in the Stappen High Area and Implications for Reservoir Development



**Fig. 3.1 Well Correlation** North-Southeast Well Correlation. MD = Measured Depth, CAL = Caliper, BS = Bit Size, GR = Gamma Ray, TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, FM = Formation, E. Alb = Early Albian, L. Apt = Late Aptian, M. Albian = Middle Albian, L. Barr = Late Barremian, CTG = Cuttings, SWC = Side-wall Core. The well logs are flattened on TBU and include Age/Stage columns showing the result of the palynological analyses. Lithology columns are included for well 7321/4-1 (based on cutting descriptions), 7321/7-1, 7321/8-1, 7321/9-1 (based on cutting descriptions). The MD column for well 7321/4-1 and 7321/7-1 display intervals used for provenance sampling. Inset map in the lower right shows the location of the wells. The seismic units (SU1 and SU2) are penetrated by four of the wells and not well 7322/7-1.

**Table 3.1 Well Data** PL = Petrophysical Logs (caliper, gamma ray, neutron porosity, sonic velocity and resistivity), L = Lithostratigraphic Information, CTG = Cuttings, SWC = Side-wall Core, C = Conventional Core, DML = Dip-meter Log, IL = Image Log, B = Biostratigraphic Information, P = Provenance Data, CS = Check-shot

Well	Year of completion	Oldest penetrated age	Type									
			PL	L	CTG	SWC	C	DML	IL	B	P	CS
7321/8-1	1987	Late Permian	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
7321/7-1	1988	Middle Triassic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
7321/9-1	1988	Late Triassic	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
7322/7-1	2018	Early Cretaceous	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
7321/4-1	2018	Late Triassic	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓



**Fig. 3.2 Wells and seismic data** Map of well data and seismic data within the study area.

The seismic data covering the study area consist of 2D and 3D reflection seismic data (, , Fig. 3.2). The 2D dataset includes four TGS NBR 2D lines and the MCG2016 survey which consists of a dense grid of 2D lines, with around 4 km spacing, covering the study area. The 3D dataset covers the north-western corner (HOOP PRCMIG) and south-eastern part of the study area (WG1301CER17B and TGS Hoop HFC Merge). Average seismic velocities in the Lower Cretaceous, between horizon TBU and BSU1, Fig. 3.1, interval ranges from 2761 m/s to 3362 m/s (). The measured dominant frequency in the same interval and calculated wavelength indicates that the vertical resolution range from 23-35m ().

**Table 3.2 Seismic Dataset** The five different seismic surveys used in this study.

Name	Type	Year	Courtesy
MCG2016	2D	2016	TGS/Searcher/Spectrum/PGS/ VBPR
TGS NBR	2D	2008, 2009 and 2011	TGS
HOOP PRCMIG	3D	2017	TGS
WG1301CER17B	3D	2017	Spirit Energy
TGS Hoop HFC Merge	3D	2016	TGS/Searcher/Spectrum/PGS/VBPR

**Table 3.3 Average Seismic Velocity** Table with calculated average velocities at four of the wells. MD = Measured Depth, TWT = Two-way-time, D = Difference (e.g. MD top - MD base).

Well	MD top [m]	MD base [m]	TWT top [s]	TWT base [s]	D MD [m]	D TWT [s]	Average Velocity (v=2xDMD/DTWT) [m/s]
7321/4-1	910	1145	0,962	1,105	235	0,143	3287
7321/7-1	1250	1882	1,232	1,608	632	0,376	3362
7321/8-1	875	1383	0,985	1,353	508	0,368	2761
7321/9-1	955	1317	1,039	1,299	362	0,260	2785

**Table 3.4 Vertical Resolution** Table with approximate dominant frequency measured in the seismic, calculated wavelength and vertical resolution.

Seismic Survey	Well	Approximate Dominant Frequency (fd) [Hz]	Wavelength (wl) (v/fd) [m]	Vertical Resolution, (wl/4) [m]
HOOP PRCMIG	7321/4-1	25-35	131-94	33-23
TGS NBR	7321/7-1	25-35	134-96	33-24
MCG1401	7321/8-1	20-30	138-92	34-23
WG1301CER17B	7321/9-1	20-30	139-93	35-23

## 3.2 Methodology

### 3.2.1 Biostratigraphy and detrital zircon U/Pb geochronology

Palynological analyses and detrital zircon U/Pb geochronology was carried out by the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS) in Denmark. Palynological dating (for details, see Nøhr-Hansen et al., 2019) was carried out in order to establish age control and correlate key events (e.g. unconformity)

through the five wells in the Fingerdjupet Subbasin (Fig. 3.1). For the palynological analysis, 30 ditch cutting samples were studied from well 7321/4-1, two in the Upper Jurassic and 28 in the Lower Cretaceous. The Lower Cretaceous interval was sampled from 29 ditch cutting samples in well 7321/7-1, 23 ditch cutting samples in 7321/8-1 and 38 ditch cutting samples in well 7321/9-1. Three sidewall cores and 34 ditch cutting samples were studied from well 7322/7-1.

The samples for the detrital zircon U-Pb geochronology were made from average samples in well 7321/4-1 and in well 7322/7-1 ( ). Four average samples from cuttings were made from the following four intervals in well 7321/4-1; (1) 1521 – 1524 m MD (Snadd Formation), (2) 1422 – 1428 m MD (Fruholmen Formation), (3) 1348 – 1354 m MD (Stø Formation) and (4) 1010 – 1020 m MD (SU2, Fig. 3.1). For well 7322/7-1, one average sample were made from cuttings and sidewall cores in the interval between 679 to 763 MD (Kolje FM, Fig. 3.1).

**Table 3.5 Zircon U/Pb Samples**

Well	Sample Interval [MD]	Unit
7322/7-1	679-763	Kolje FM (Lower Cretaceous)
7321/4-1	1010-1020	SU2 (Lower Cretaceous)
7321/4-1	1348-1354	Stø FM (Lower – Middle Jurassic)
7321/4-1	1422-1428	Fruholmen FM (Upper Triassic)
7321/4-1	1521-1524	Snadd FM (Middle – Upper Triassic)

The analysis of zircon for U/Pb isotopic dating were performed using laser ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (LA-ICPMS). The equipment used included a NWR 213 laser ablation instrument from Elemental Scientific lasers (ESL) that was coupled to an Element2 magnetic sector-field ICPMS from Thermo-Fisher Scientific. The analyses was carried out on zircon grains mounted in epoxy pucks, polished, and imaged by SEM using either cathodeluminescence (CL) or back-scattered elecetrons (BSE) prior to the LA-ICPMS analyses.

For quality control of the geochronology analyses, the secondary standards, Plešovice and Harvard 91500 was measured during the zircon analyses, yielding an average accuracy and precision ( $2\sigma$ ) on the dates within 3% deviation. Zircon U-Pb ages ( $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$ ,  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  and  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$ ) presented in this study have  $2\sigma$  error and are constrained by a concordance-discordance criterion of 10% (see appendix).

The ISOPLOT program (Ludwig, 2008) was used to present the zircon U-Pb ages in histograms and probability density plots. These plots includes concordant  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U} < 1000$  Ma and  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb} > 1000$  Ma.

### **3.2.2 Well logs and Seismic interpretation**

The seismic stratigraphic framework was interpreted using petrophysical logs, palynological analyses and seismic interpretation. Two seismic units (SU1 and SU2) bound by three key seismic surfaces (BSU1, TSU1 and TSU2, Fig. 3.1) were defined mainly based on seismic downlap terminations and seismically guided well correlations. This is due to poor identification of maximum flooding surfaces on the gamma ray logs and poor correlation of the NPD lithostratigraphic units. The interval of interest (between BSU1 and TSU2) is locally eroded by an unconformity in the top of the Barremian aged interval (TBU, Fig. 3.1) and by an unconformity in the top of Lower Cretaceous succession which is interpreted to represent Base Quaternary Unconformity (BQU). These reflectors were mapped but will not be described in any further detail.

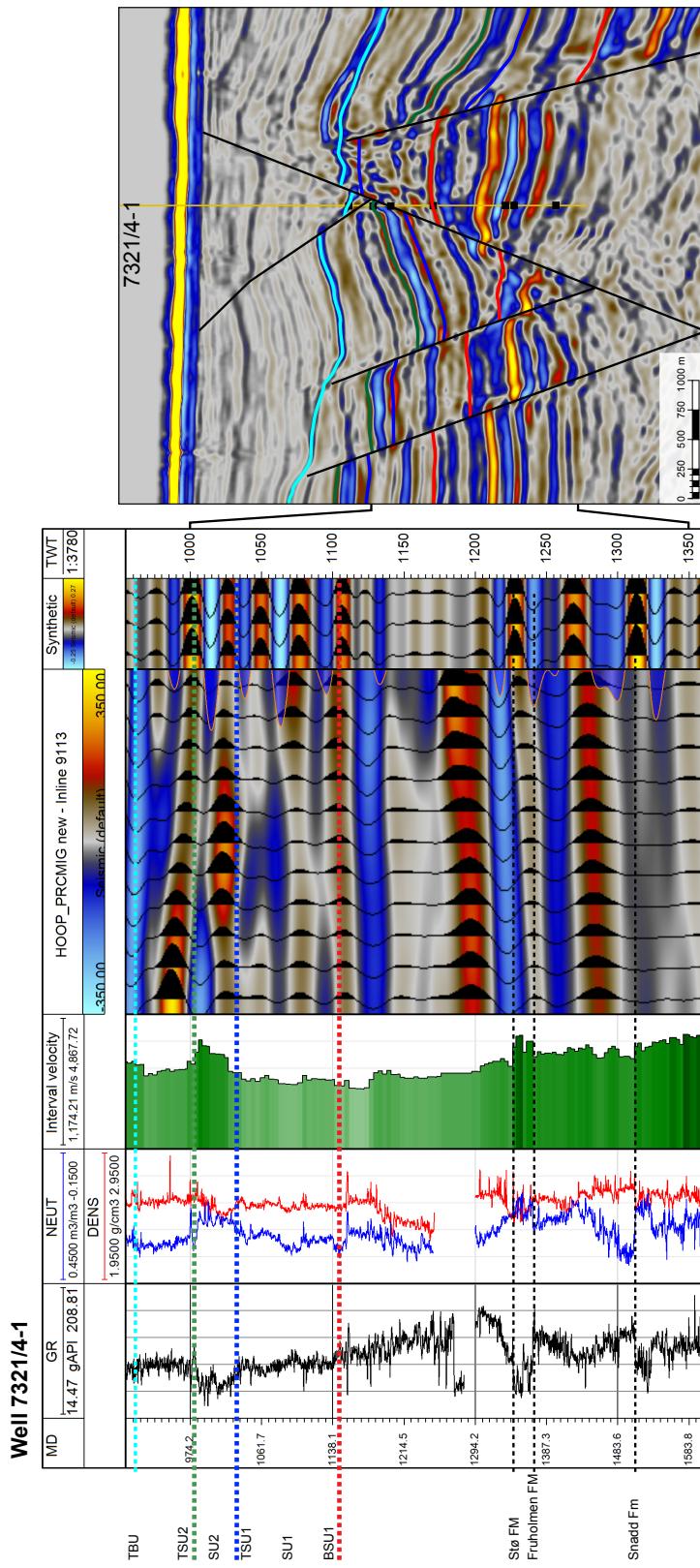
The seismic units were correlated in the wells and the faults affecting the units were mapped throughout the seismic dataset. Fault interpretations and time thickness maps generated from the seismic interpretation were used to describe the main structures and to interpret the infill of the basin. The seismic character of the seismic units is described based on main reflector characteristics including continuity, amplitude and geometry. Seismic sections parallel to the clinoform progradation direction are flattened along the clinoform downlap surface (BSU1), considered to be closest to paleo-horizontal datum in the studied interval, to describe the clinoform geometry and the trajectory of the rollover point (shelf-edge).

Identification of lithological trends and interpretation of the sandstone distribution were based on gamma ray logs, cuttings from well 7321/4-1 and sidewall cores from well 7321/7-1, 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1.

### **3.2.3 Seismic-Well Tie**

The integrated seismic well-tie suite in the Petrel Schlumberger software were used to perform the seismic-well tie. Checkshot data from the wells were used to establish a time-depth relationship, by calibrating (correct the sonic log to seismic times) the sonic log. In order to produce a synthetic seismogram, the density log and the sonic log were used to compute acoustic impedance and the reflection coefficient for normal incidence. Furthermore, the reflection coefficient was convolved with a zero phase wavelet to generate synthetic traces to match with the seismic traces. The Ricker wavelet were used to compare synthetic traces with the real seismic traces. The frequency of the Ricker wavelet was adjusted to obtain

the best possible match with the frequency spectrum of the seismic traces. The BSU1 and TBU were used to tie the seismic data and the well data in the study area. The BSU1 is modelled as a positive reflector with high amplitude in the synthetic seismogram and correlates good with the seismic data (Fig. 3.3). A negative amplitude reflector was picked for the TBU which shows medium to high amplitude in the synthetic and high amplitude in the seismic, giving a moderate good correlation (Fig. 3.3).

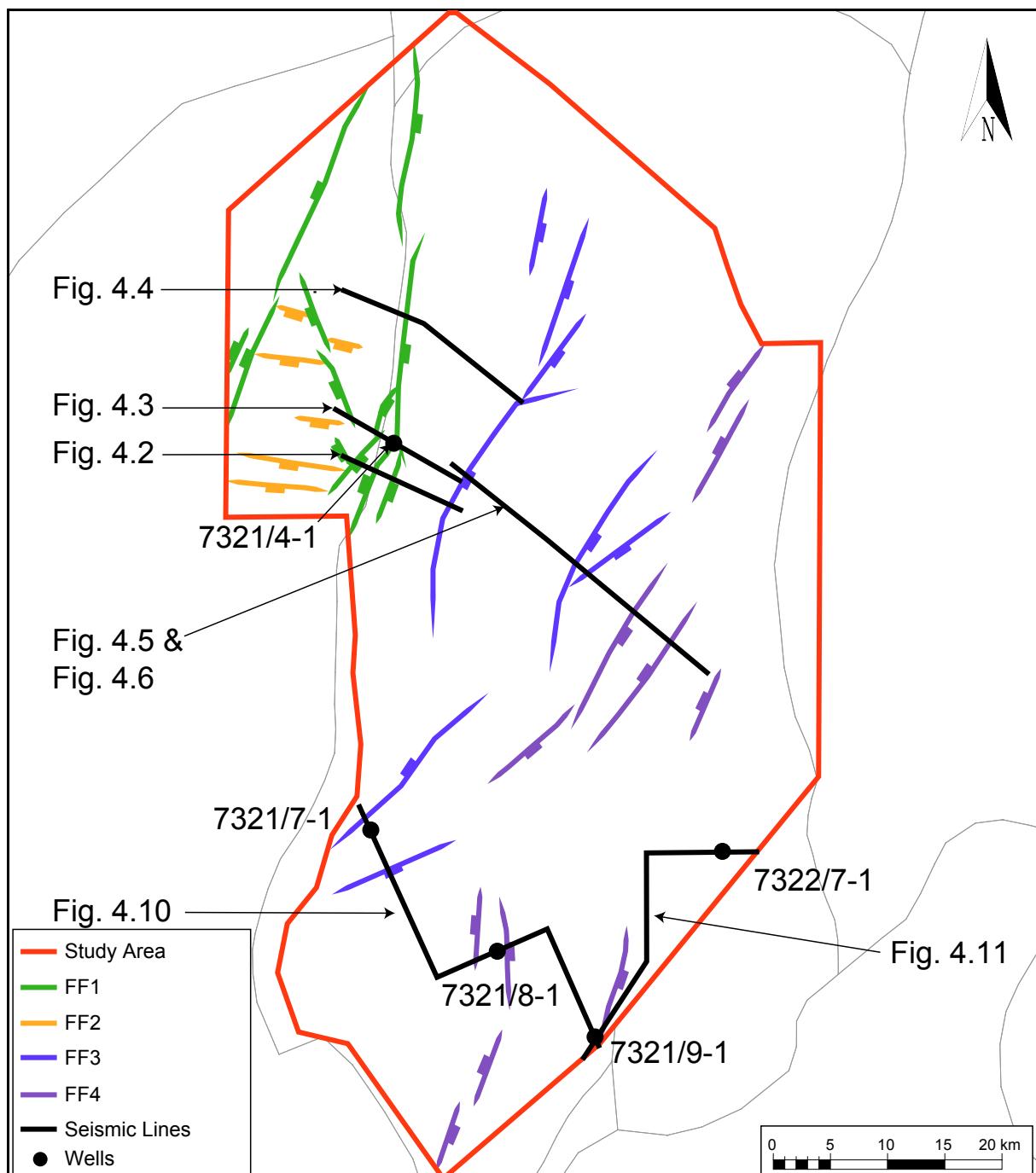


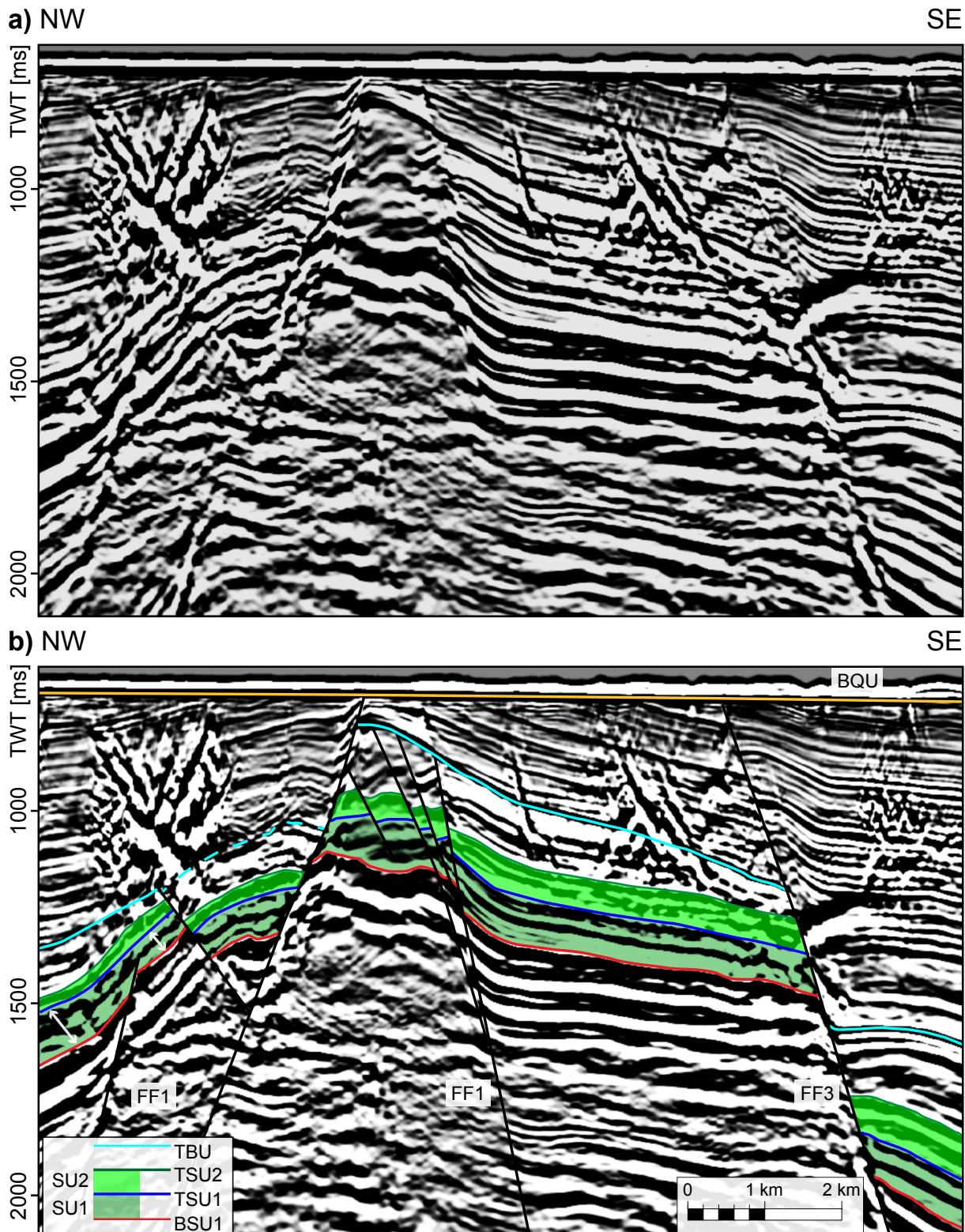
**Fig. 3.3 Synthetic Seismogram** Well logs, seismic data and synthetic seismogram are shown to the left. An NW-SE arbitrary seismic line across well 7321/4-1 is shown to the right. MD = Measured Depth, GR = Gamma-ray log, NEUT = Neutron log, DENS = Density log, TWT = two-way-time, Unc. = Unconformity. The seismic data display an N-S inline across the well. A 25-30-35 Hz zero phase Ricker wavelet was used to compute the synthetic seismogram. A increase in acoustic impedance yields positive amplitude displayed as a red reflector. The picked horizons for the interval of interest is defined two positive reflectors named Base Seismic Unit 1 and Top Seismic Unit 2.

## **4 RESULTS**

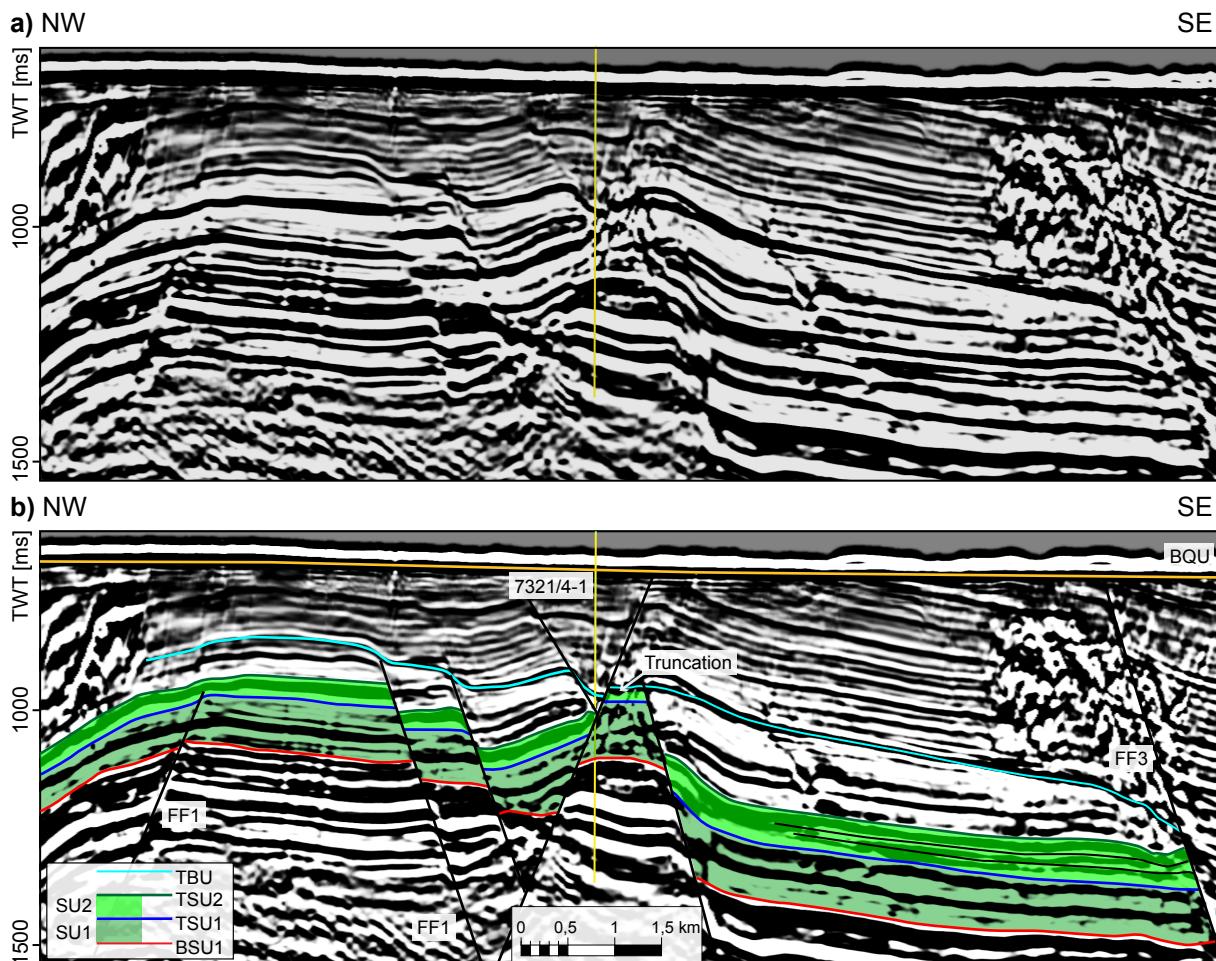
### **4.1 Fault Families**

The main faults affecting the seismic units in the study area are divided into four fault families (FF1-FF4) of similar trend and age (Fig. 4.1). Fault Family 1 (FF1) offset both of the seismic units and constitute normal fault striking NNW-SSE, N-S and NNE-SSW located in the north-western part of the study area (Fig. 4.1, Fig. 4.2, Fig. 4.3, Fig. 4.4). Well 7321/4-1 penetrates the fault plane of a NNE-SSW striking fault segment of FF1 at 1035 m MD, in this location the TSU1 is displaced out of the wellbore and the well penetrated the middle part SU1 (Fig. 4.3). Fault Family 2 (FF2) consist of south-dipping normal faults striking E-W between the individual segments of FF1 (Fig. 4.1). Most these fault offset both of the seismic unit in the north-western part of the study area. Fault family 3 (FF3) offset both of the seismic units and constitute normal faults striking N-S to NE-SW along the central part of the study area (Fig. 4.5 and Fig. 4.6). Fault Family 4 (FF4) is located in the south and northeast and consists of normal fault striking N-S to NE-SW and offset both of the seismic units (Fig. 4.1, Fig. 4.6).

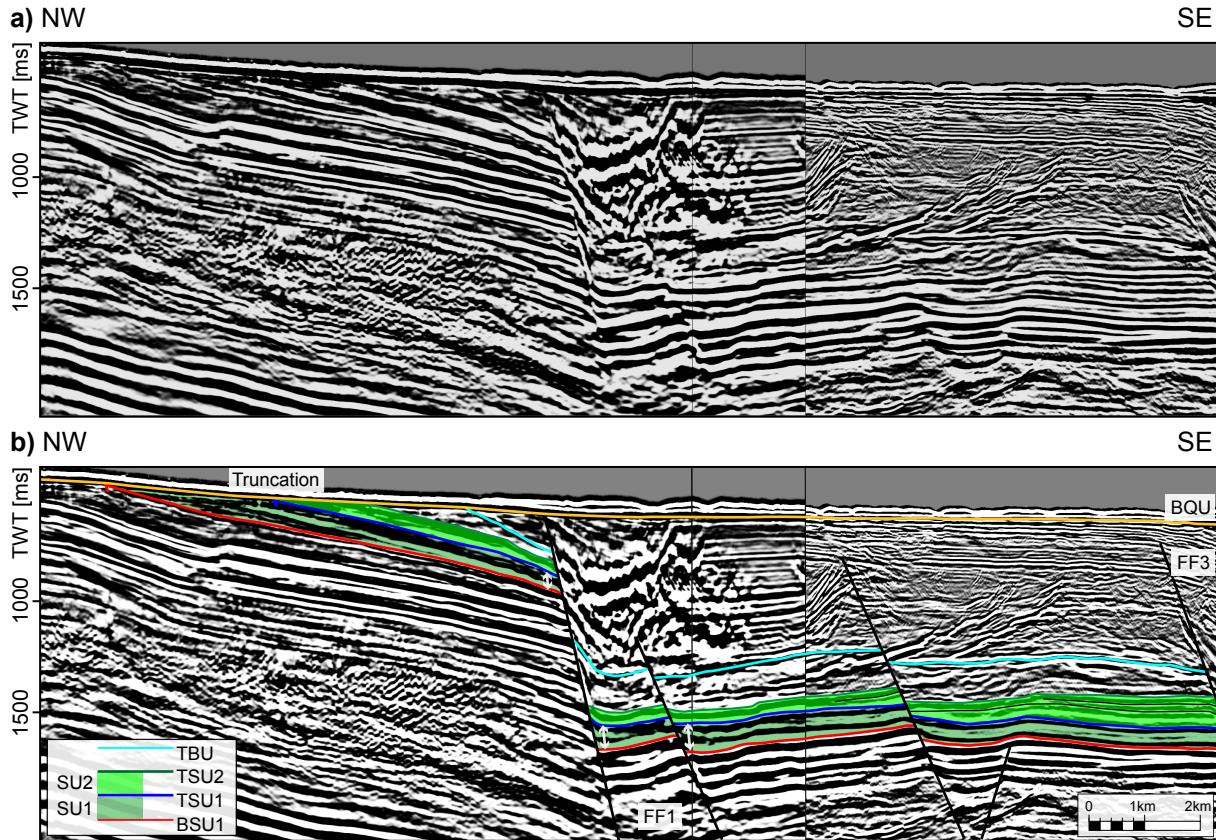




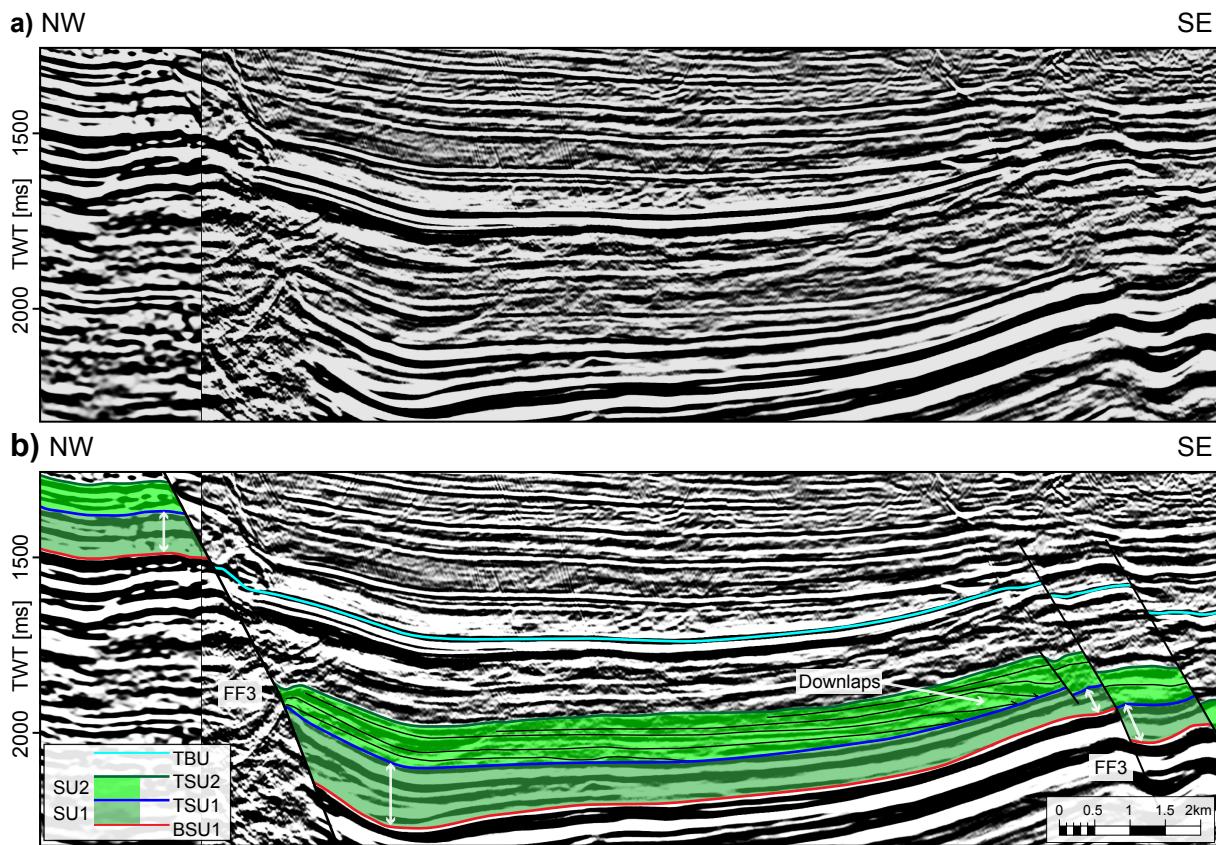
**Fig. 4.2 Crossline 1** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) northwest-southeast crossline (see Fig. 4.1 for orientation of the line). BQU = Base Quaternary Unconformity, TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1 = Base Seismic Unit 1, FF1 = Fault Family 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3. The SU1 show a thickness growth in the hanging wall of FF1. The SU2 display a thickness increase from the NW towards the SE.



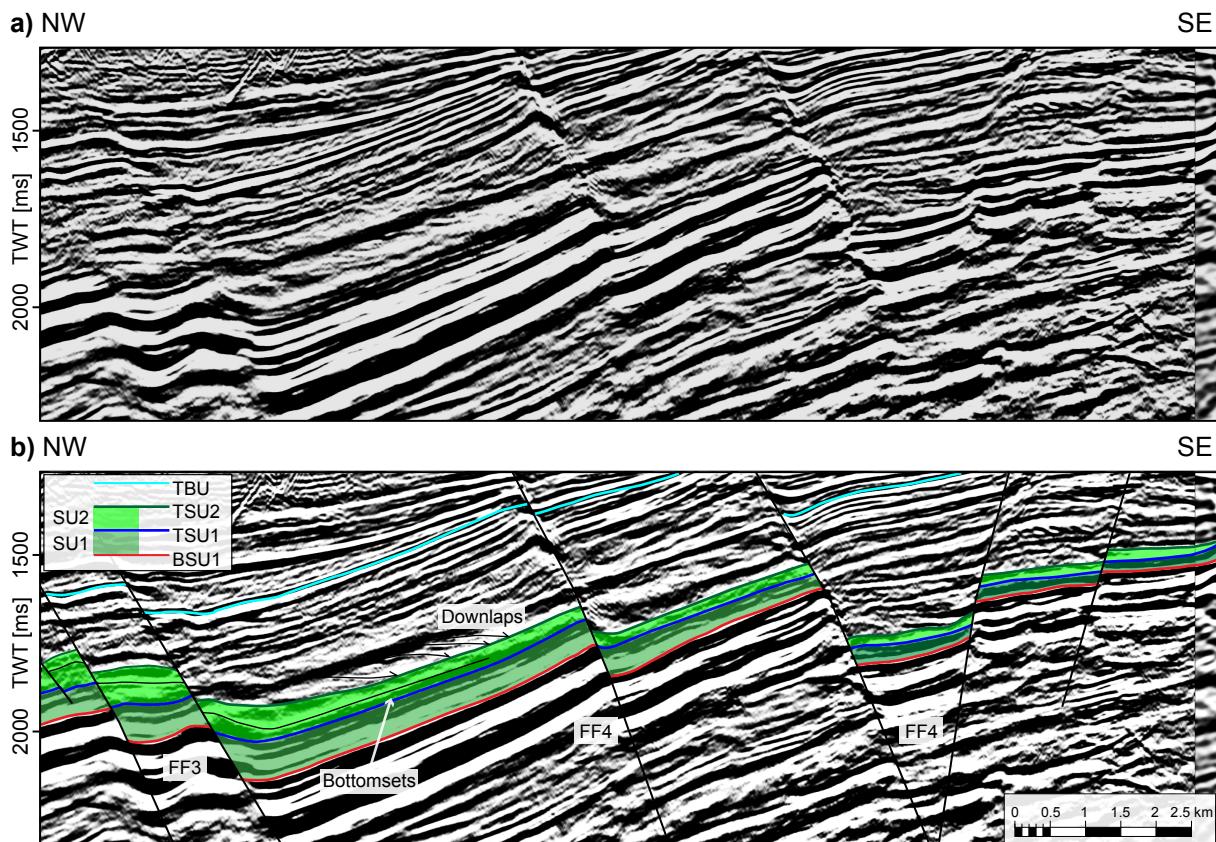
**Fig. 4.3 Crossline 2** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) northwest-southeast crossline (see Fig. 4.1 for orientation of the line). BQU = Base Quaternary Unconformity, TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1 = Base Seismic Unit 1, FF1 = Fault Family 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3. The TSU1 is not penetrated by well 7321/4-1 and the TSU2 is truncated by TBU.



**Fig. 4.4 Composite Line 1** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) northwest-southeast composite line (see Fig. 4.1 for orientation of the line). BQU = Base Quaternary Unconformity, TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1= Base Seismic Unit 1, FF1 = Fault Family 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3. Minor thickness differences in SU1 is observed between the footwall and hanging wall of FF1. The SU2 display a thickness increase from NW towards SE.



**Fig. 4.5 Composite Line 2a** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) northwest-southeast composite line (see Fig. 4.1 for orientation of the line). TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1 = Base Seismic Unit 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3. The SU1 show thickness growth towards the fault plane of FF3 and internal reflectors in SU2 show a sigmoidal clinoform geometry.



**Fig. 4.6 Composite Line 2b** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) northwest-southeast composite line (see Fig. 4.1 for orientation of the line). TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1 = Base Seismic Unit 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3, FF4 = Fault Family 4. The SU1 thins towards the SE and reflectors above SU2 downlaps onto the TSU2.

## 4.2 Age Model and Seismic Unit Definition

The age of the Lower Cretaceous succession in Fingerdjupet Subbasin spans from ?Hauterivian to middle Albian (Fig. 4.7, Fig. 4.8, Fig. 4.9 and Fig. 3.1). The Jurassic-Cretaceous transition is only indicated in well 7321/4-1 at 1145 m (Fig. 4.7a and Fig. 3.1.) and has not been identified in the other wells (Fig. 4.7-Fig. 4.9 and Fig. 3.1). A unconformity is present in the base of the ?Hauterivian in well 7321/7-1 (Fig. 4.7a and Fig. 3.1) and the early Barremian in well 7321/4-1, 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1 (Fig. 4.7a-Fig. 4.9 and Fig. 3.1). A second unconformity is present in the top of an interval dated ?Hauterivian–late Barremian which is penetrated by all of the wells (Fig. 4.7a-Fig. 4.9 and Fig. 3.1). The upper part, above the second unconformity, is dated early Aptian to middle Albian (Fig. 4.7a-Fig. 4.9 and Fig. 3.1).

# Provenance Evaluation of Lower Cretaceous in the Stappen High Area and Implications for Reservoir Development

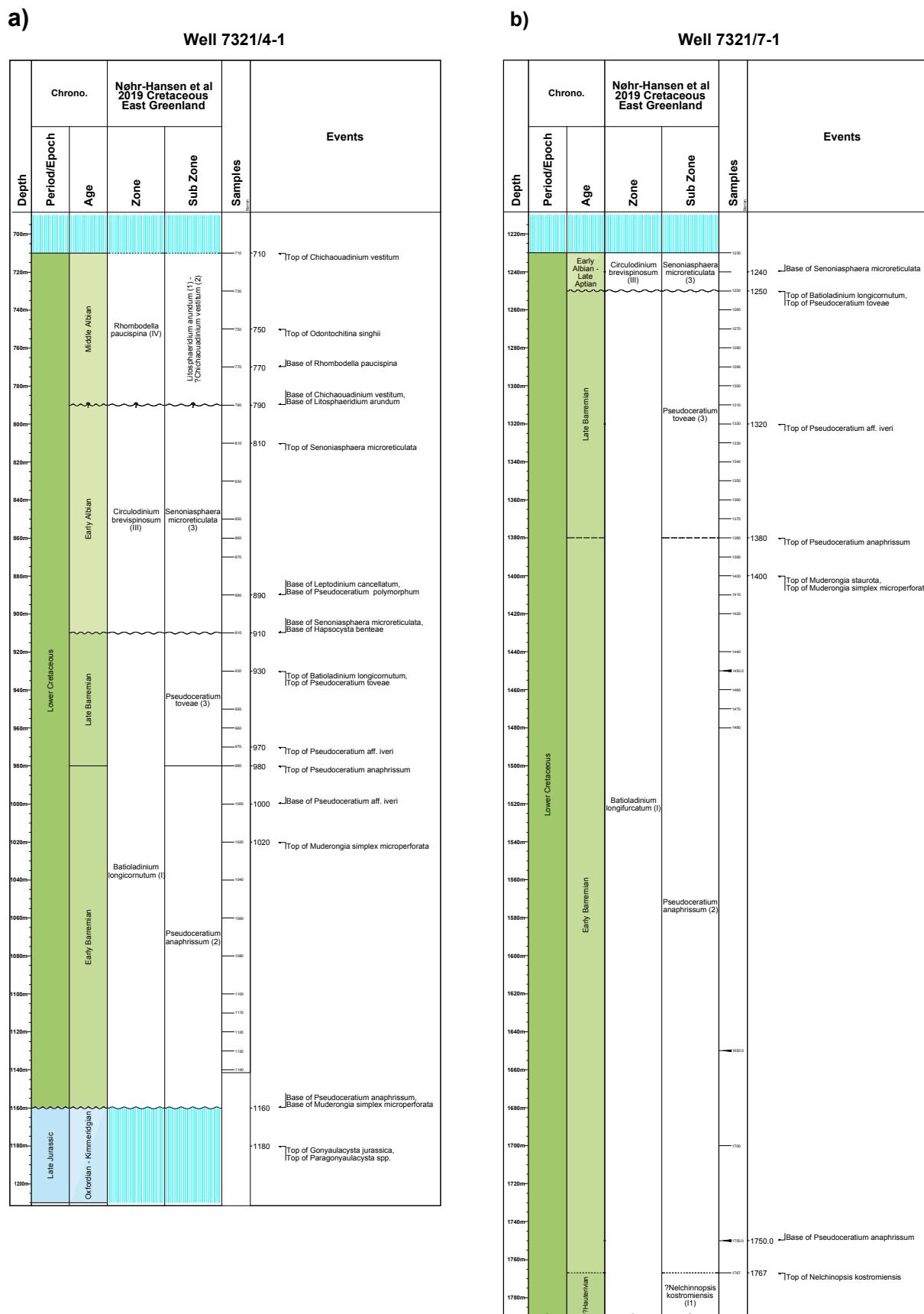


Fig. 4.7 Biostratigraphy for well 7321/4-1 and 7321/7-1

# Provenance Evaluation of Lower Cretaceous in the Stappen High Area and Implications for Reservoir Development

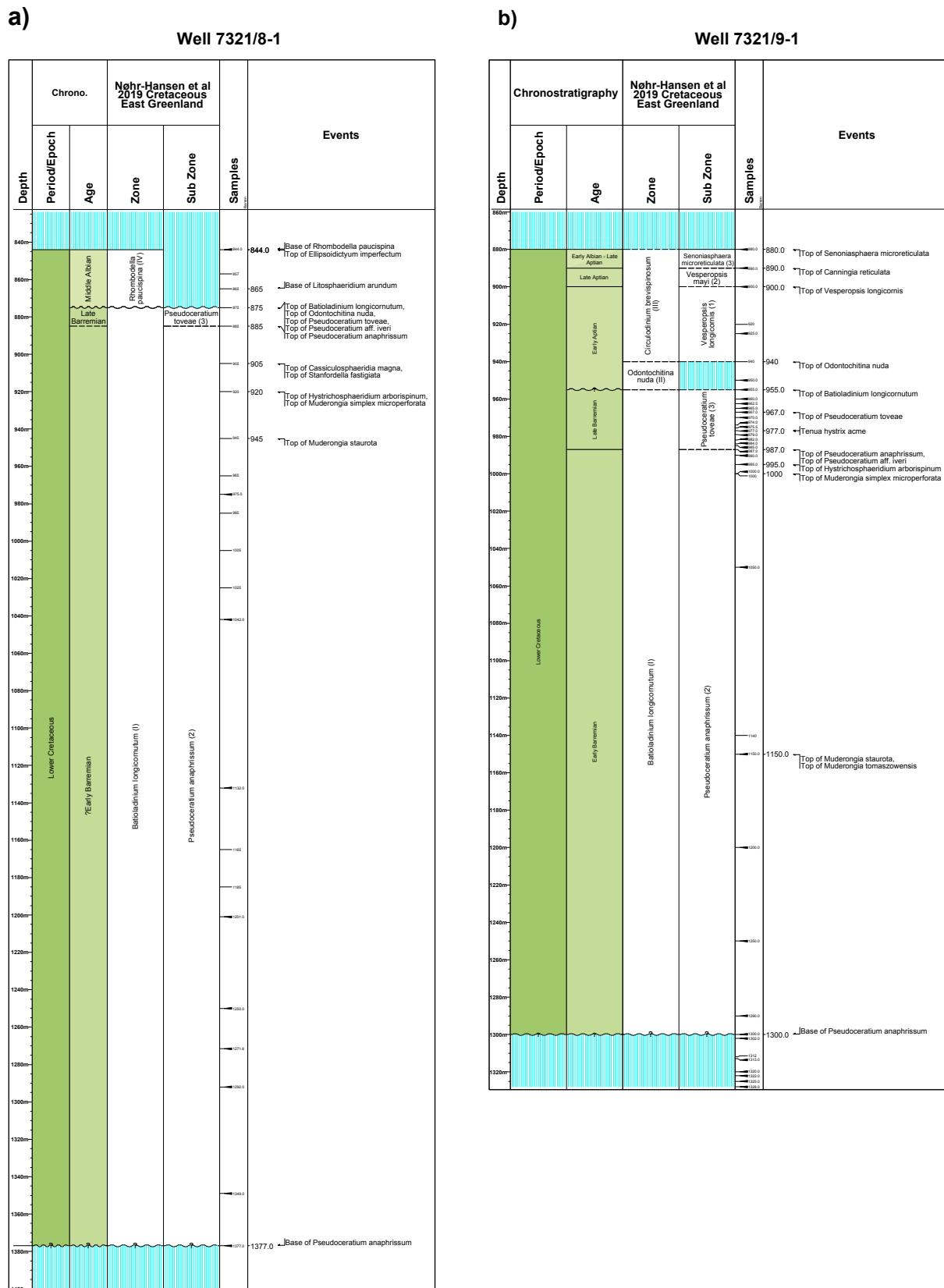


Fig. 4.8 Biostratigraphy for well 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1

### Well 7322/7-1

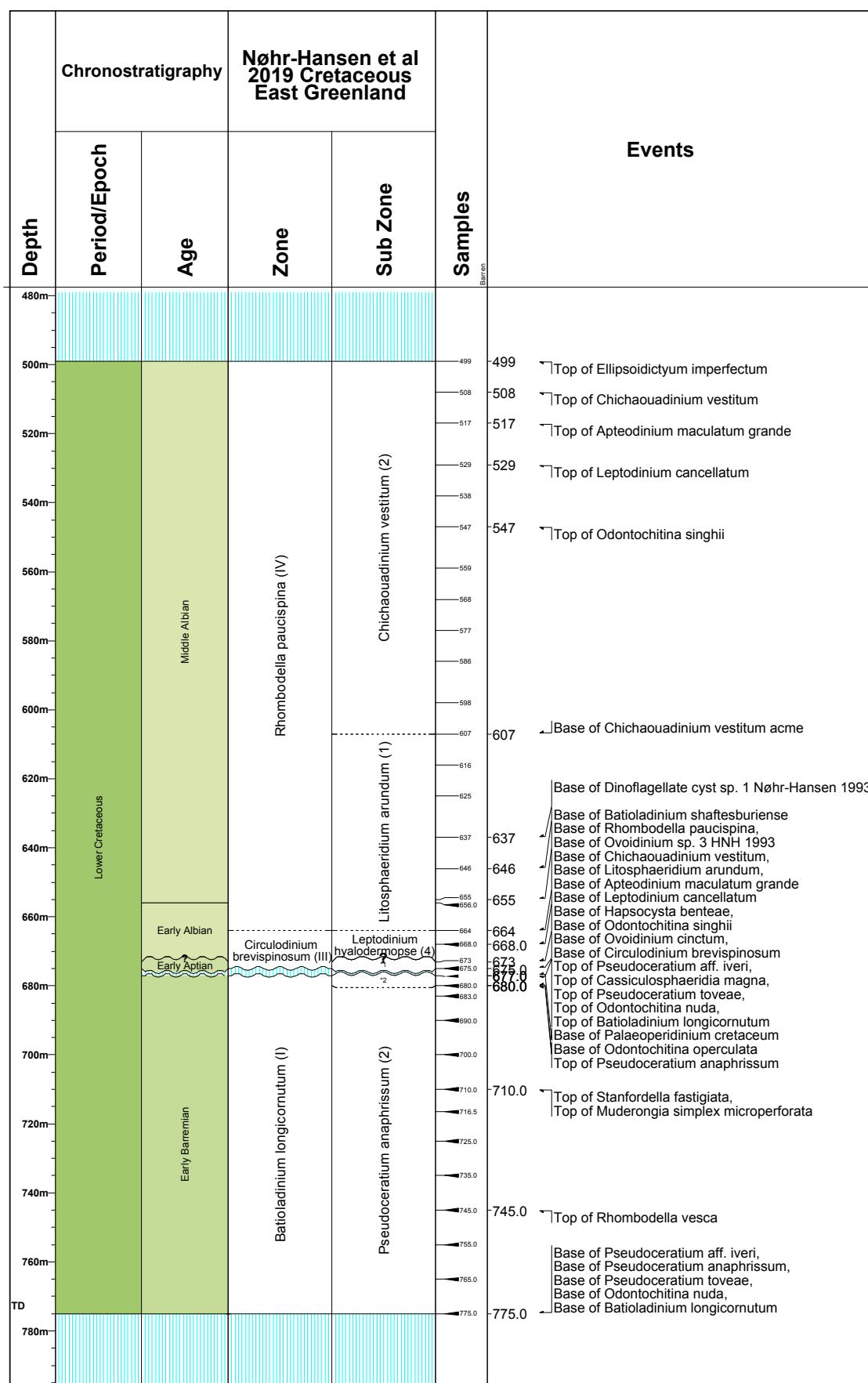
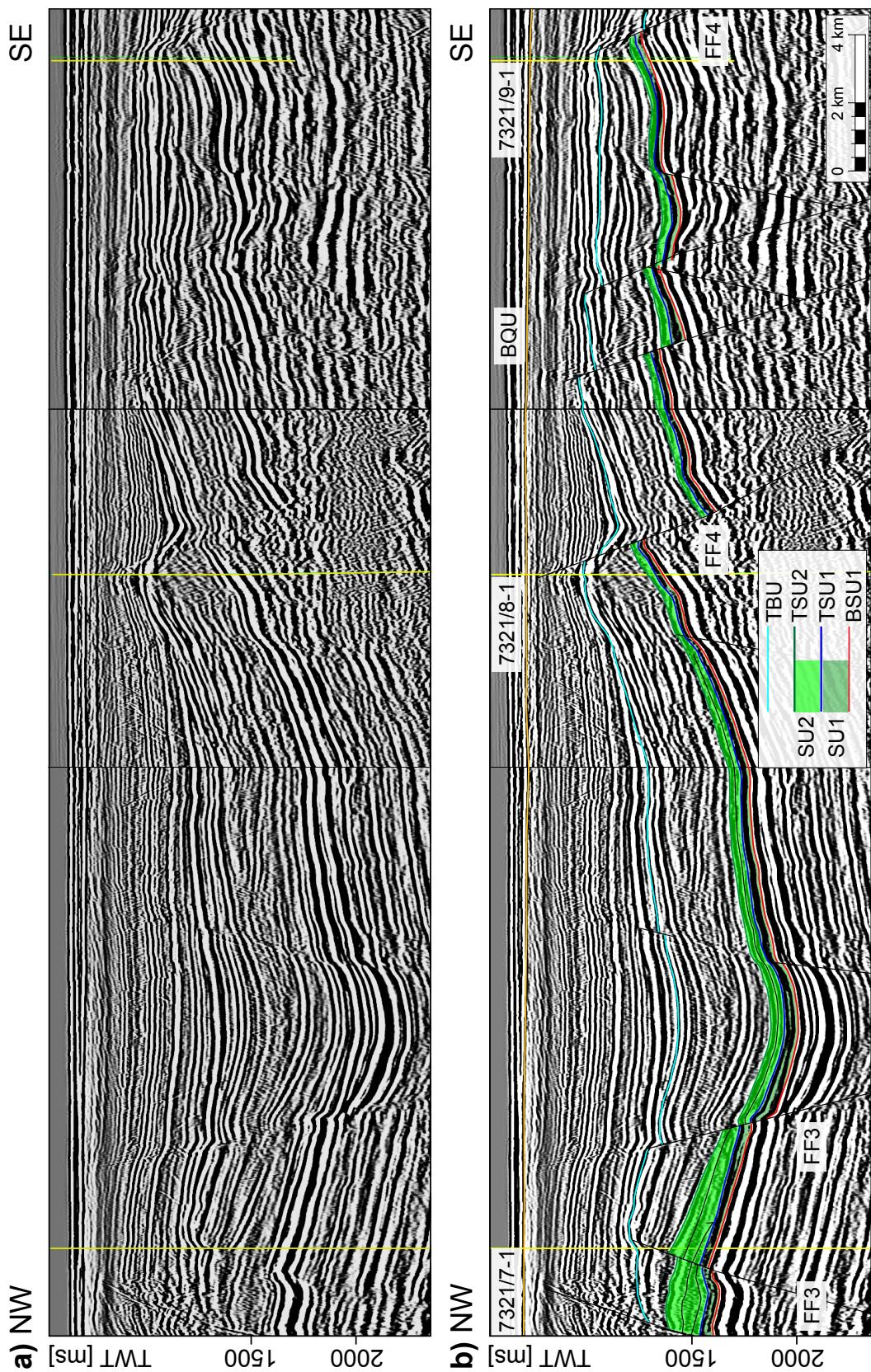


Fig. 4.9 Biostratigraphy for well 7322/7-1

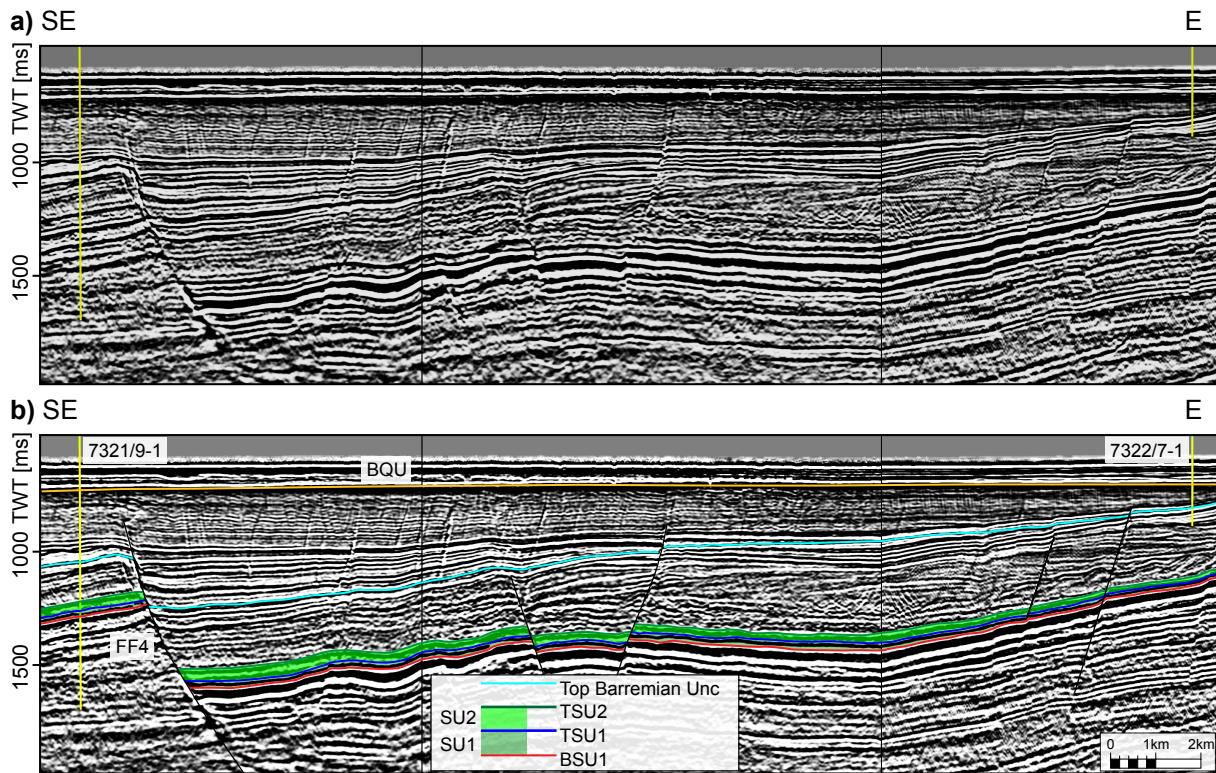
## **Provenance Evaluation of Lower Cretaceous in the Stappen High Area and Implications for Reservoir Development**

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The seismic units are penetrated by all of the wells except for well 7322/7-1 (Fig. 3.1, Fig. 4.3, Fig. 4.10 and Fig. 4.11). The seismic horizon defining the base of unit 1 (BSU1) is a seismic surface near the regional Base Cretaceous Unconformity characterized as a reflector with medium to high amplitude. For BSU1, the gamma ray log show high values with increasing and decreasing trends at the pick of this horizon (Fig. 3.1). The age of BSU1 is early Barremian in well 7322/4-1 and age control is missing for well 7322/7-1, 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1 (Fig. 3.1). By comparing the BSU1 with official well tops from NPD, the BSU1 correlates to the Kolje Formation (Barremian to early Aptian) in well 7321/7-1 and Hekkingen Formation (late Oxfordian/early Kimmeridgian to Ryazanian) in well 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1 (NPD, 2020), suggesting a Ryazanian to early Barremian age for BSU1 (Fig. 3.1). The top of Seismic Unit 1 (TSU1) is characterized as a reflector with medium to high amplitude and seismic reflectors downlaps onto the top of this surface (Fig. 4.5, Fig. 4.10). High gamma ray values with decreasing and increasing trends are observed for the TSU1 (Fig. 3.1). The age of TSU1 spans from ?Hauterivian to early Barremian, suggesting a Ryazanian to early Barremian for SU1 (Fig. 3.1).



**Fig. 4.10 Composite Line 3** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) northwest-southeast composite line (see Fig. 4.1 for orientation of the line). TBU = Top Barrenian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1 = Base Seismic Unit 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3, FF4 = Fault Family 4. The thins in the footwall of FF3. Well 7321/7-1 penetrates the lower part of the foresets in SU2. Well 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1 penetrates the bottomssets.



**Fig. 4.11 Composite Line 4** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) southeast-East composite line (see Fig. 4.1 for orientation of the line). TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1 = Base Seismic Unit 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3, FF4 = Fault Family 4. Well 7322/7-1 do not penetrate the units.

The top of Seismic Unit 2 (TSU2) is characterized by a reflector with medium to high amplitude and seismic reflectors downlaps onto the top of this surface in the central (Fig. 4.6) and eastern part of the study area. The gamma ray character of the TSU2 varies from a peak of high gamma ray values in well 7321/4-1 to increasing and no change in the log response in the other wells (Fig. 3.1). The TSU2 is aged early Barremian to late Barremian, suggesting a ?Hauterivian to late Barremian age for SU2 (Fig. 3.1).

## 4.3 Seismic Unit 1

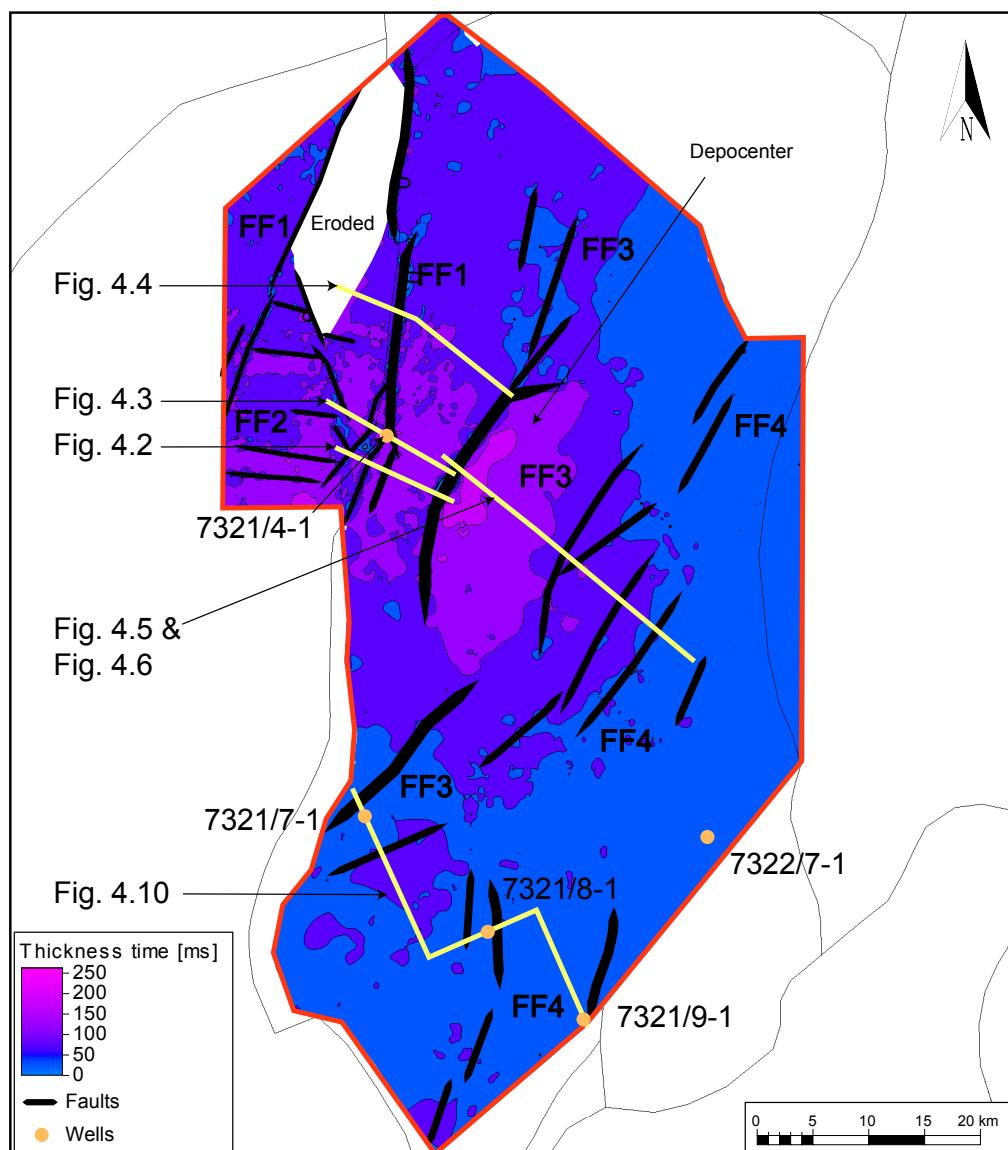
### Observation

#### Well Character

The gamma ray pattern in well 7321/4-1 and 7321/7-1 show two intervals of coarsening to fining upward trends followed by a coarsening trend in the top (Fig. 3.1). Drill cuttings and SWC from these wells show sand, silt and caly in addition to dolomite, limestone and marl. Well 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1 display overall higher reading with a signature characterized by low gamma ray values in the lower part followed by a fining to coarsening trend in the upper part. The SWC in these wells are dominated by fine-grained sediments.

#### Thickness Variations

Seismic unit 1 show a thickness decrease from the from 110 meter in well 7321/4-1 to 90 meter in well 7321/9-1 in the east (Fig. 3.1). The time thickness map indicates that the unit is thickest in the northwestern part of the study area and thins towards the southeast (Fig. 4.12). A thickness increase is observed towards the fault plane of FF3 in the southwest (Fig. 4.10) and in the center of the study area, where the thickness reaches around 200 ms (Fig. 4.5 and Fig. 4.12). The thickness of the unit increase in the hanging wall of the southern segments of FF2 (Fig. 4.12) and locally in the hanging wall of FF1 (Fig. 4.2, Fig. 4.4 and Fig. 4.12). No thickness variations is obeserved in hangingwall of FF4 (Fig. 4.6, Fig. 4.10, Fig. 4.11 and Fig. 4.12).



**Fig. 4.12 Time Thickness Map of SU1** Time thickness map of Seismic Unit 1 (SU1), fault families and location of seismic lines.

### **Seismic Character**

The SU1 is truncated by the BQU in footwall of FF1 in the northwest and is not present in the northeast trending horst structure defined by FF1 in north-western part of the study area (Fig. 4.12 and Fig. 4.4). The internal reflectors of SU1 vary from discontinuous to continuous reflectors with low to high amplitude (e.g. Fig. 4.2) and characterized by sub-parallel reflector patterns. Growth wedges related to FF3 occur in the central part (Fig. 4.5) and in the southwest (Fig. 4.10). Reflectors downlap onto the top of SU1 in the northeastern, central (Fig. 4.5) and southwestern part of the study area (Fig. 4.10).

### **Interpretation**

The SU1 unit was deposited during active faulting controlled by FF2 and locally by FF1 in the north-western part of the study area. A depocenter developed in the central part of the basin and a syn-rift wedge developed along the fault plane of FF3. The constant thickness of the unit in the southeastern part indicates that FF4 was not active (Fig. 4.12). The discontinuous to continuous reflectors with sub-parallel geometry indicate stable and unstable low energy during deposition of SU2. The SU1 comprises dominantly fine-grained rocks with the occurrence of carbonates, which could indicate a shallow to deep marine environment. Sandstone is encountered by the wells in the west (7321/4-1 and 7321/7-1) which indicate a source of coarse-grained sediments existed for this unit. The source of these sediments was most likely in the west or north based on the southeastward thinning of the unit.

## **4.4 Seismic Unit 2**

### **Observation**

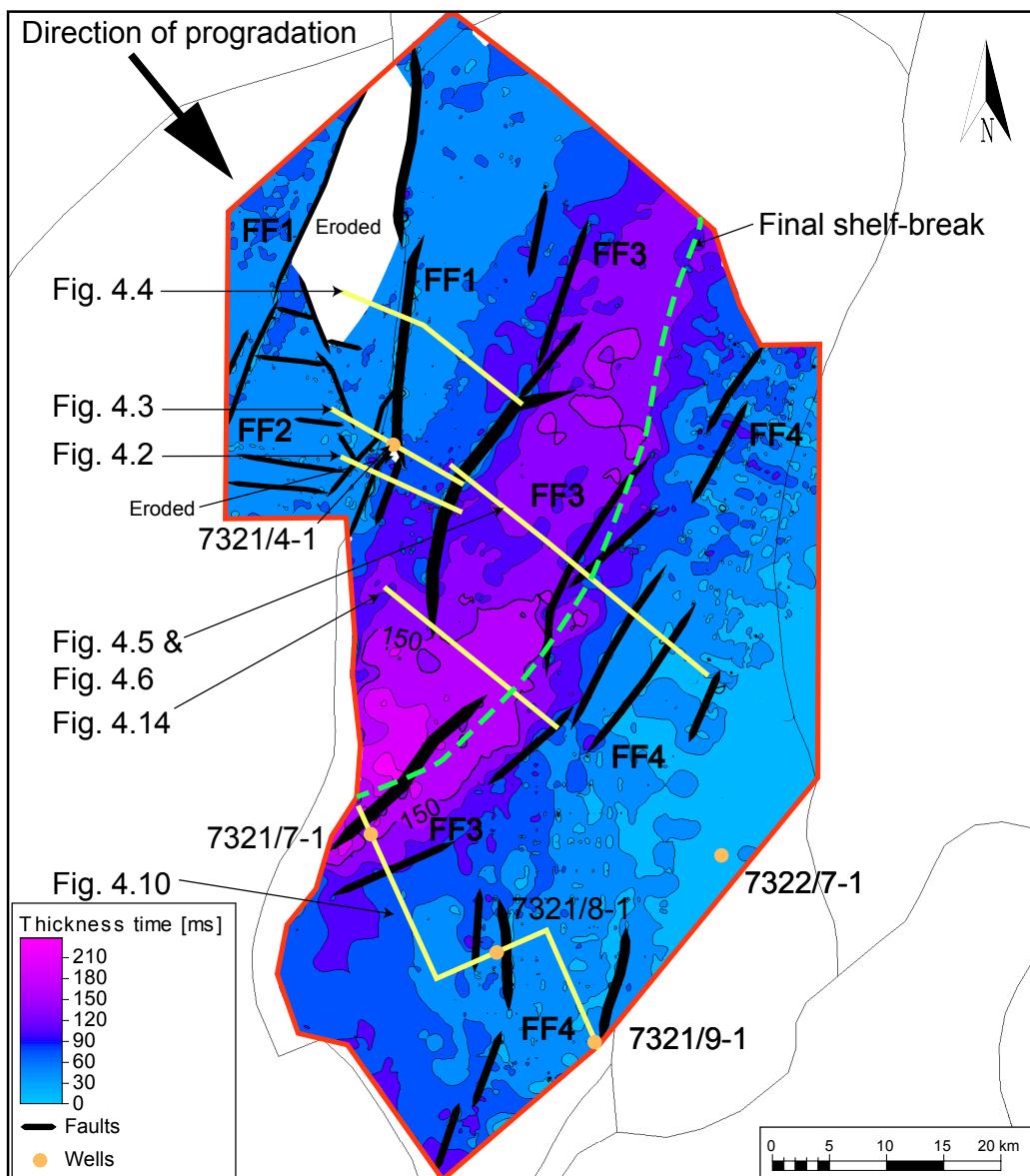
#### **Well Log Character**

Well 7321/4-1 displays a coarsening to fining upward trend in the lower part (Fig. 3.1). The upper part is characterized by a coarsening upward trend followed by a serrated signature with intervals of low gamma ray and a fining upward trend reaching a peak of high values in the top of the SU2 (TSU2). Drill cuttings from the same interval include clay, silt, sand and limestone. The lower part of well 7321/7-1 shows two intervals of coarsening to fining upward trends, followed by an interval with a serrated signature and two intervals of coarsening to fining upward trends in the upper part. The sidewall cores from well 7321/7-1

shows limestone in the lowermost part followed by alternating siltstone and claystone. The gamma ray pattern for well 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1 is characterised by a coarsening upward trend followed by a serrated signature. The sidewall cores from these wells is dominated by shale and claystone.

#### Thickness Variations

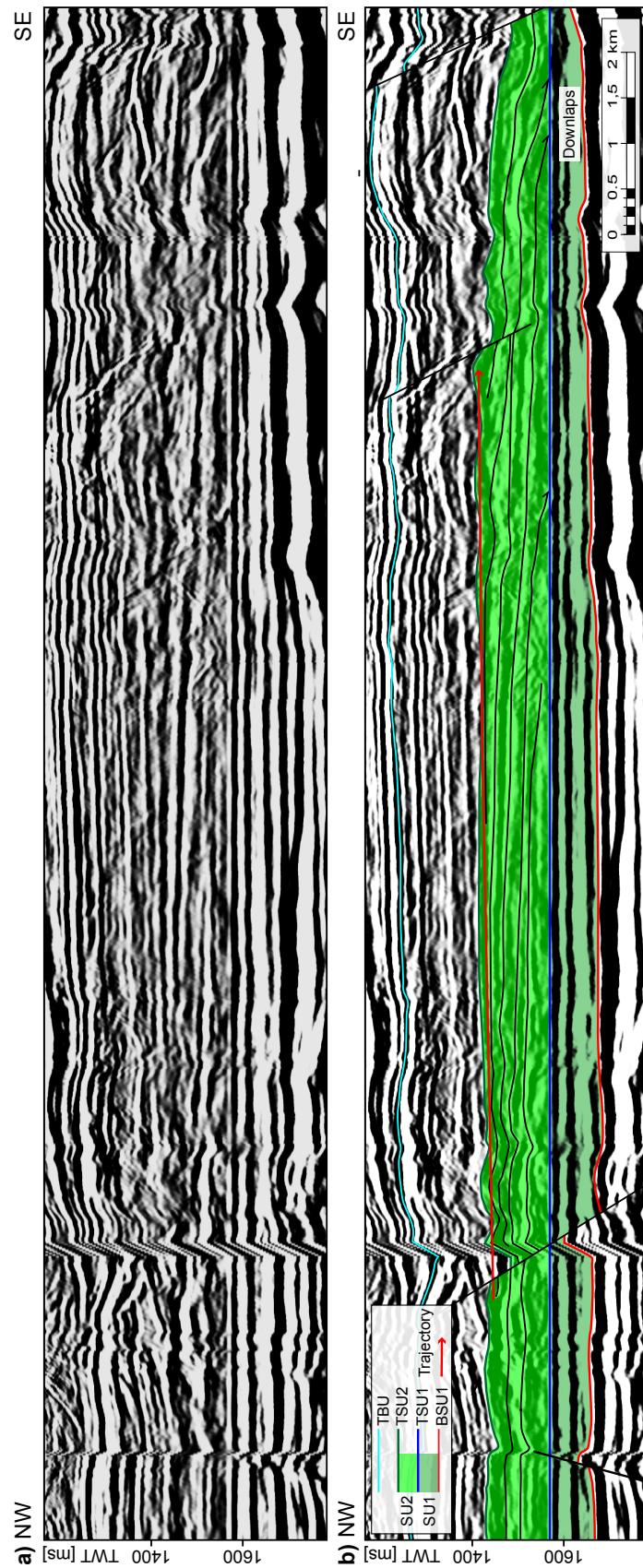
The thickness increase from the northwest to a depocenter located in central axis of the basin and thins towards the southeast of the study area (Fig. 4.13). The same trend is observed in the wells, thickens from 56 meter thick in well 7321/4-1 to 261 meter in well 7321/7-1 and thins to 75 meter in well 7321/9-1 (Fig. 3.1). The SU2 show a gradual increasing to decreasing thickness trend.



**Fig. 4.13 Time Thickness Map of SU2** Time thickness map of Seismic Unit 1 (SU2), fault families and location of seismic lines.

### Seismic Character

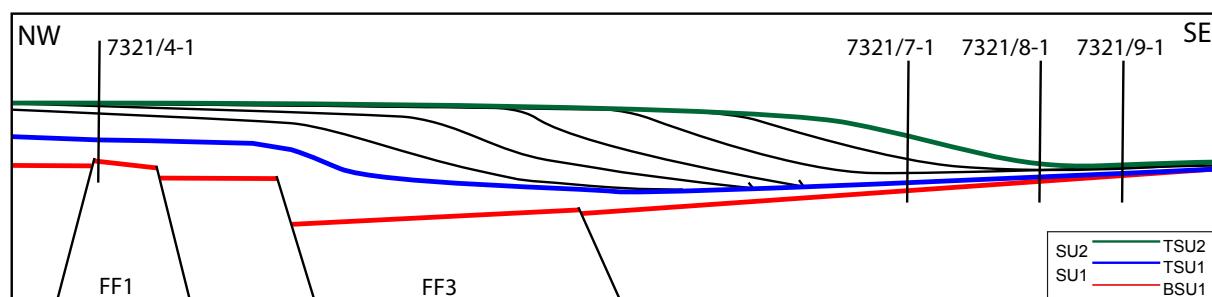
The TSU2 is truncated by the TBU in BQU in the footwall of FF1 in the northwest and is not present in the structural high defined by FF1 in the northwest (Fig. 4.4 and Fig. 4.13). The internal reflectors of SU2 consists of continuous reflectors with medium to high amplitude in the north-western part of the study area (Fig. 4.2-Fig. 4.4). Further southeast, subparallel to gently dipping continuous reflectors occur with low to medium amplitude (Fig. 4.5, Fig. 4.6, Fig. 4.10, Fig. 4.11). These reflectors displaying a sigmoidal clinoform geometry prograding towards the southeast. The upper boundary of the clinoforms is characterized by thin topsets with medium to high amplitude and low angle foresets which display a rising trajectory (Fig. 4.14). The clinoforms downlap onto the TSU1 in the central part of the study area and bottomsets are observed further southeast-east in the the study area (Fig. 4.5, Fig. 4.6, Fig. 4.10, Fig. 4.11).



**Fig. 4.14 Crossline 3** Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) northwest-southeast crossline line (see Fig. 4.13 for orientation of the line). TBU = Top Barremian Unconformity, TSU2 = Top Seismic Unit 2, SU2 = Seismic Unit 2, TSU1 = Top Seismic Unit 1, SU1 = Seismic Unit 1, BSU1 = Base Seismic Unit 1, FF3 = Fault Family 3, FF4 = Fault Family 4. The crossline is flattened on TSU1. Internal reflectors in SU2 downlaps onto the TSU1.

## **Interpretation**

The sigmoidal clinoform geometries are interpreted to represent clinoforms prograding towards the southeast. Well 7321/4-1 is interpreted to penetrate clinoform topsets (Fig. 4.15) consisting of shales coarsening upwards into silty sandstones overlaid by shales and possibly carbonates. This stacking pattern reflects a prograding trend in the lower part followed by a middle aggrading trend and a upper retrograding trend. Well 7321/7-1 is interpreted to penetrate the middle slope which consisting of alternating siltstone and claystone. The final shelf-break occurs few km north of well 7321/7-1 (Fig. 4.13). The bottomsets is interpreted to be penetrated by well 7321/8-1 and 7321/9-1, fine-grained basin floor deposits. The southeast prograding direction of the clinoforms indicate that the source of sediment was located in the northwest. Based on the gradual increasing to decreasing thickness trend of the unit, the faults in the study area was not active during deposition of SU2.



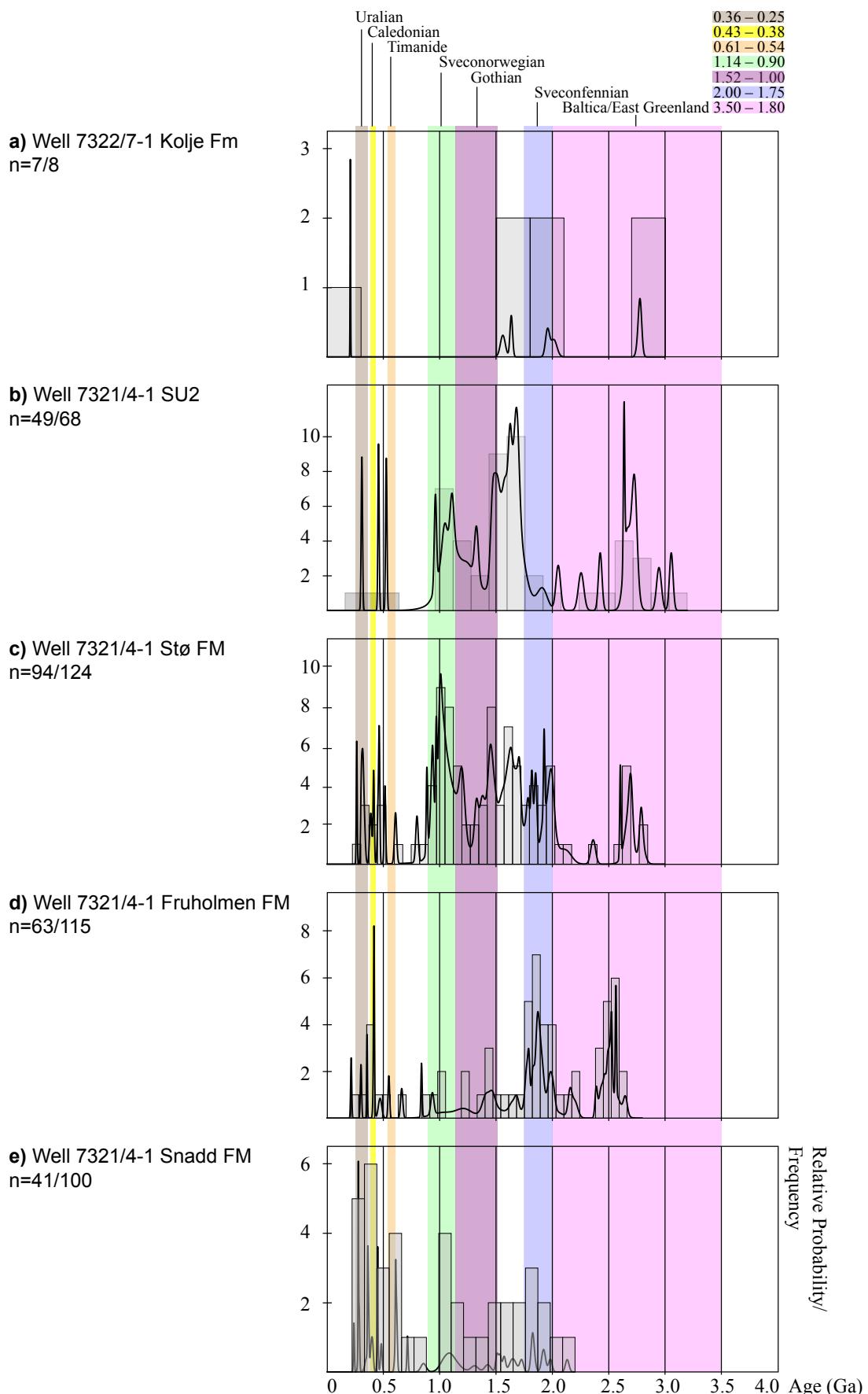
**Fig. 4.15 Interpretation of SU2** Conceptual sketch of a cross-section showing the SU1 and the SU2 just after deposition of S2. The wells have been projected to show where they are inferred to penetrate the clinoforms. Well 7321/4-1 is inferred to penetrate the topsets, Well 7321/7-1 penetrates the middle part of the foresets. Well 7321/8-1 and Well 7321/9-1 penetrates the bottomsets.

## **4.5 Detrital Zircon Ages**

### **Snadd FM (Middle – Upper Triassic)**

The detrital zircon age spectra within the Snadd FM samples in well 7321/4-1 lacks grains with Archean ages and display two main younger age populations (Fig. 4.16). A population from 2 to 1 Ga with similar frequency except for the populations from 1.1 to 1 Ga (Late Mesoproterozoic). The second population, between 0.6 – 0.24 Ga (Late Proterozoic – Early Mesozoic), are all of similar frequency.

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**Fig. 4.16 Detrital Zircon Ages** Zircon data from well 7321/4-1 and 7322/7-1. Probability density plots and histograms. n = number of <10% discordant samples/total number of samples.

### **Fruholmen FM (Upper Triassic)**

The Fruholmen FM samples (well 7321/4-1) contain abundant grains of Archean ages from 2.6 to 2.4 Ga (Fig. 4.16). The Proterozoic age distribution show a significant population between 1.75 – 2.0 Ga (late Paleoproterozoic) and smaller amounts of 1 to 1.5 Ga (late Mesoproterozoic). Grains of 0.47 Ga to 0.4 Ga (mid-Ordovician to early Devonian) are abundant among the younger dated samples.

### **Stø FM (Lower – Middle Jurassic)**

The Stø Formation (well 7321/4-1) consist of Archean dated grains in the interval between 2.8 – 2.6 Ga (Fig. 4.16). The Proterozoic age distribution is dominated by grains dated between 2.0 – 1.0 Ga characterized by two main age populations. The oldest population, between 2 – 1.3 Ga, show the highest frequency at c. 1.4 Ga (early Mesoproterozoic) and the younger population, between 1.2 – 0.9 Ga, display the highest frequency from 1.1 Ga to 0.9 Ga (late Mesoproterozoic). The most significant population among the youngest dated grains are the intervals 0.46 – 0.4 Ga (mid-Ordovician – Early Devonian) and 0.4 – 3.0 Ga (Early Devonian – Late Carboniferous).

### **Seismic Unit 2 and Kolje FM (Lower Cretaceous)**

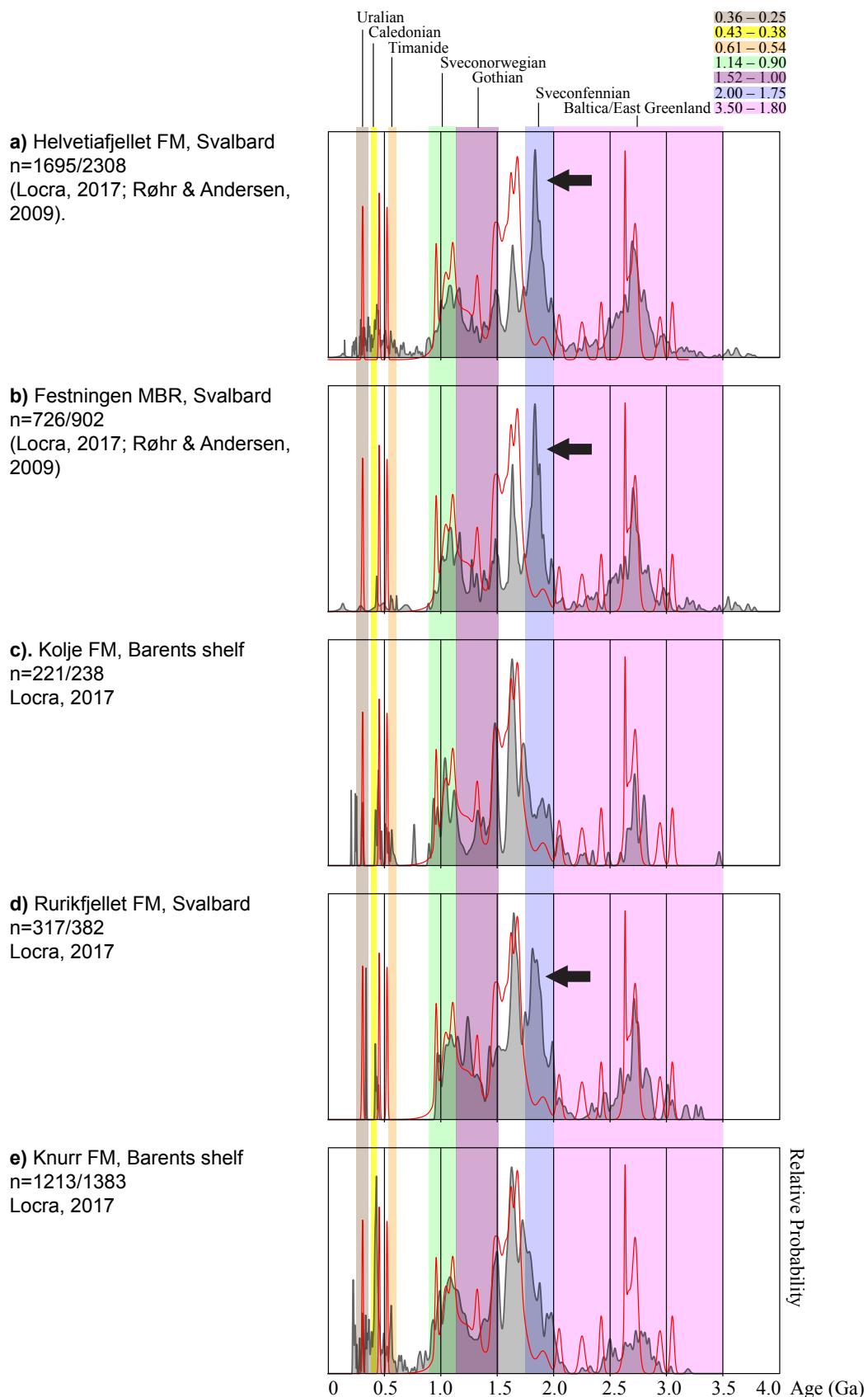
The SU2 (well 7321/4-1) have highest frequency of Archean aged grains in the 2.6 – 2.75 Ga interval (Fig. 4.16). The dominant age populations in the Proterozoic ages range from 1.7 to 1.5 Ga (Paleo- Mesoproterozoic) and between 1.2 – 1 Ga (late Mesoproterozoic). Three younger dated grains are of 0.52 Ga (late Cambrian), 0.45 Ga (late Ordovician) and 0.30 Ga (late Carboniferous) age.

Kolje FM in well 7322/7-1 contains seven dated grains. The two oldest are dated Archean (c. 2.8 Ga), followed four Proterozoic aged grains (2, 1.9, 1.6, and 1.5 Ga) and the youngest sample is of Late Triassic age (0.21 Ga).

## **5 DISCUSSION**

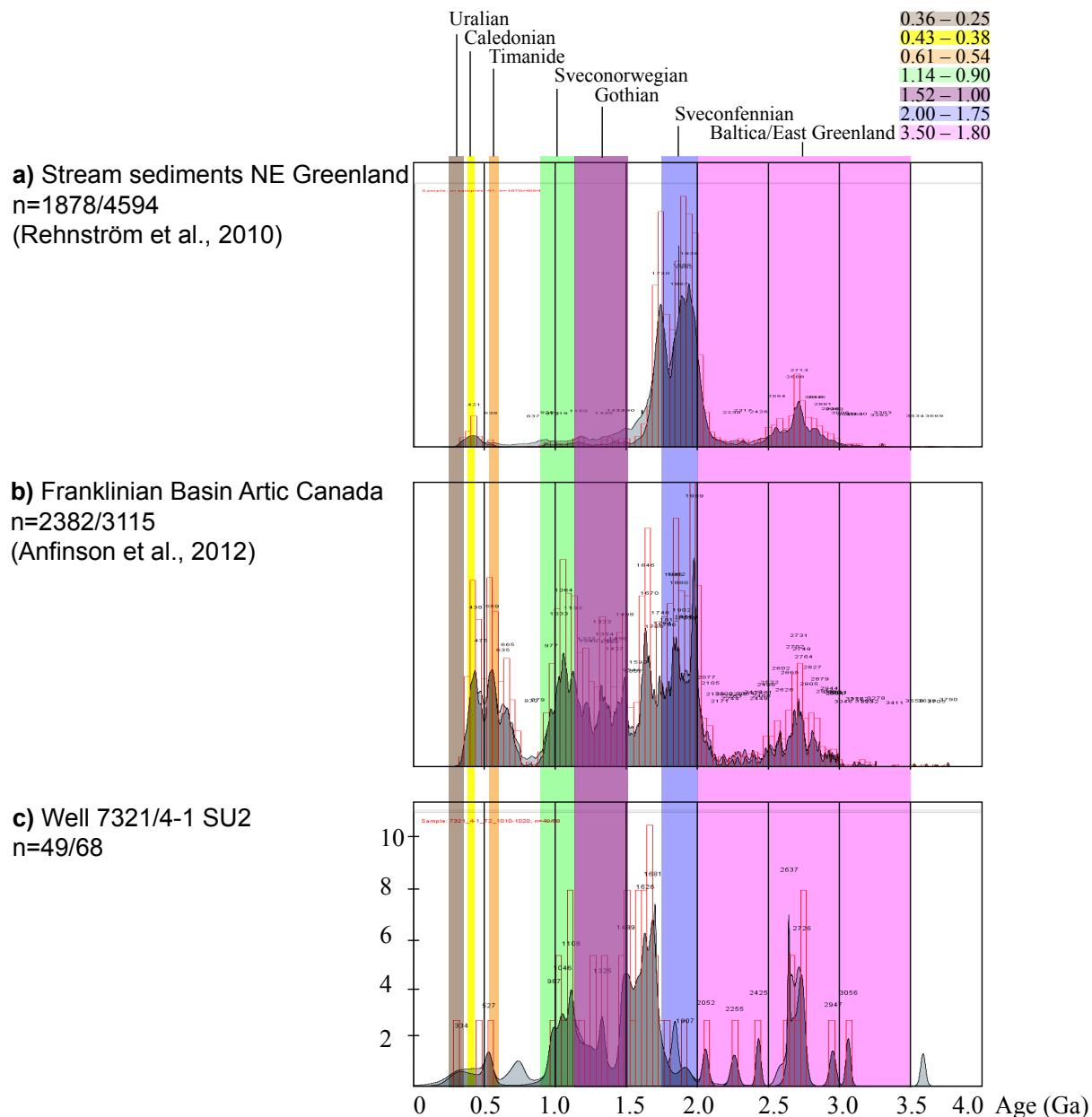
### **5.1 Provenance Evaluation and Implications for Reservoir Development**

The northern part of Greenland and Canada (Laurentia) are potential source regions situated in the north-western corner of the Barents shelf during the Early Cretaceous. Because the clinoforms observed in the ?Hauterivian to late Barremian aged unit (SU2) in this study evolved from the northwest to the southeast in the Fjerdjupet Subbasin. The detrital zircon abundances of the studied SU2 unit (Well 7321/4-1) is similar to the zircon age signatures in Lower Cretaceous strata on Svalbard including Rurikfjellet Formation, Festningen Member and Helvetiafjellet Formation (Fig. 5.1 a,b and d). The main difference is the 1.8–1.9 Ga age population in the Svalbard samples appears to be different (Fig. 5.1). The Helvetiafjellet Formation on Svalbard, Lower Cretaceous sediments in Wandel Sea Basin (northern Greenland) and Sverdrup Basin (Arctic Canada) also shares similar detrital zircon abundances (Røhr et al., 2008, 2010; Røhr & Andersen 2009). Detrital zircon ages from Lower–Middle Triassic sediments on Svalbard also show similar age distribution as the Helvetiafjellet FM (Bue and andersen, 2013). In addition to older deposits, Cambrian aged sediments in Northwest Territories (northern Canada, Hadlari et al., 2012), Neoproterozoic to late Devonian aged sediments in Franklinian Basin (Arctic Canada, Anfinson et al. 2012) and Mesoproterozoic to early Cambrian sediments in Peary Land (North Greenland, Kirkland et al. 2009), display similar age distribution as the Helvetiafjellet FM and Lower–Middle Triassic sediments on Svalbard (Bue & andersen, 2013). The provenance of the Lower–Middle Triassic (Svalbard) and Lower Cretaceous (Svalbard, Wandel Sea Basin and Sverdrup Basin) detritus are interpreted to be older deposits in the Franklinian Basin (Artic Canada) and the North Greenland (Fig. 5.2, Røhr et al., 2008, 2010; Røhr & Andersen 2009; Bue% Andersen, 2013). The similar detrital zircon abundances of the Barremian strata in the Fjerdjupet Subbasin (this study), the Lower Cretaceous succession in Svalbard, Wandel Sea Basin and Sverdrup Basin indicate that they originate from the same source area located in the northern Greenland and Franklinian Basin (Fig. 5.2) The reason why the dominant 1.8–1.9 Ga peak is not present in studiet unit could due to the distribution of the detritus characterized 1.8–1.9 Ga protosource could be limited to the north and did not reach the Barents shelf.



**Fig. 5.1 Lower Cretaceous Comparison of Zircon Ages** The red curve represents the SU2 in well 7321/4-1.

Probability density plots and histograms. n = number of <10% discordant samples/total number of samples.



**Fig. 5.2 NE Greenland and Franklinian Basin** a) Stream sediments in NE Greenland. b) Franklinian Basin. c) SU2

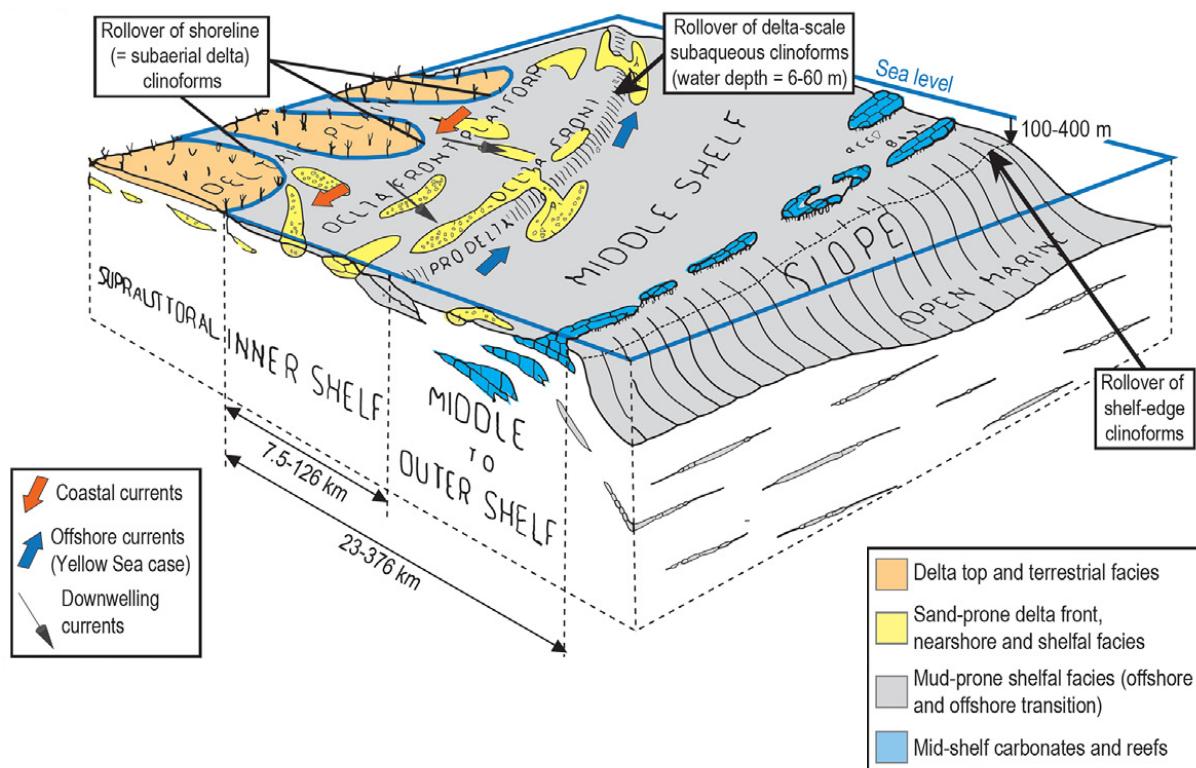
The uplift and present day structuring of the Stappen high is suggested to occur during early Cenozoic (Faleide, 1993; Worsley et al., 2001, Blaich et al., 2017). However, the northern part of Stappen High (not open for petroleum exploration) is poorly constrained (e.g. Anell et al., 2016; Blaich et al., 2017) and could represent a potential source region. Permian to Middle Triassic rocks outcrops in the highest point of Stappen High (Bjørnøya, Vigran et al. 2014) and the Middle Jurassic Stø Formation is interpreted to be present in the southern margin of the Stappen High (Blaich et al., 2017). The detrital zircon abundances of the studied SU2 unit is similar to age signatures of the Stø Formation, in well 7321/4-1 (Fig. 4.16) and in the Barents shelf (Klausen et al., 2017), Knurr Formation and Kolje Formation (Fig. 5.1 c and e). Exposure and recycling of underlying Stø Formation on the northern Stappen High could explain the

similar detrital zircon abundances observed in the studied SU2 unit (Well 7321/4-1) and in Knurr and Kolje formations. This may also explain why the dominant 1.8–1.9 Ga age population observed in the Lower Cretaceous succession on Svalbard is not present in the SU2 unit, Knurr and Kolje formations (Fig. 5.1). The inferred northern position of the northern Stappen High also supports the southeast prograding direction of the clinoforms in SU2. Although, petrographic and geochemical analysis preformed on the Knurr and Kolje formations in the Hammerfest and Tromsø basins do not indicate a complete recycling of younger or older strata (Locra, 2017). Locra (2017) suggest Baltica as the main provenance for the Lower Cretaceous succession in addition to a exotic source area located to the north of the Barents shelf. The exotic source is characterized by 0.4 – 0.225 Ga (Early Devonian – Late Triassic) aged sediments, intermediate to mafic detritus and strongly reworked material of Gothian and Neoarchean age (Locra, 2017).

The Loppa high is another potential source area situated in the southeastern margin of Fingerdjupet Subbasin (Fig. 1.1) The upflit the Loppa High is interpreted to reach a peak during Barremian (Indrevær et al., 2016) and may provide sediments influx from the southeastern margin of the Fingerdjupet Subbasin. However, based on the southeast prograding direction of the clinoforms in SU2, the Loppa High was unlikely the the source of SU2.

### **Implications for Reservoir Development**

The clinoforms penetrated by well 7231/7-1 suggesting they are of shelf-edge delta scale (relief between 100 - 1000 m, e.g. Patruno et al., 2015) based on the thickness in well 7321/7-1 (261m) penetrating the middle part of the slope . The topset segment of shelf-edge delta clinoforms includes paralic to shallow marine facies which can be prolific reservoirs (Porebski and Steel 2003). Transport of sediment across the shelf is largely controlled by the successive migration of repeated regressive-transgressive delta scale clinoforms and draping clinoforms (compound clinoform systems, Patruno Helland-Hansen, Fig. 5.3) The interaction of mud-prone draping with mud-prone and sand-prone shoreline progradation gives a mixed facies relationship within shelf prism clinoforms (, Patruno & Helland-Hansen, 2018).



**Fig. 5.3 Depositional Environment** 3D cartoon illustrating facies related to a shoreline, subaqueous delta-scale and time equivalent shelf-edge clinoform system (figure modified from Patrunoa & Helland-Hansen, 2018).

Well 7321/4-1 penetrates the topset segment of the clinoforms at a position which could represent inner to middle shelf environment. The overall coarsening to fining upward trend in SU2 can indicate a regressive lower part followed by a transgressive interval in the top. This trend may represent a shoreline system followed by transgressive shales in the top. Thus, be a system of a potentially laterally extensive shorelines systems. Example, the Battfjellet Formation (Eocene) on Svalbard consists of 20 sand-prone shelf-margin clinoforms. The topsets of these clinoforms consists of a regressive lower part of fluvial-wave dominated delta-front deposits overlain by tide-influenced estuarine deposits (Steel and Olsen, 2002). Thick sand wedges can develop at the shelf-edge consisting of upward coarsening delta-front, mouth bar and channel system. Sand sheets of turbidite deposits commonly form in the upper to middle slope and deep water fans sand may accumulate in both during rising and falling sea levels (porębski & Steel, 2003). Hence shelf-edge delta systems can form good reservoirs in the shelf, slope and in the basin floor.

The only indicator of sand in the SU2 clinoforms is in well 7321/4-1 which corresponds to the topset segment of the clinoforms. The middle part of the slope is penetrated by well 7321/7-1 which show dominant fine-grain rocks. Well 7321/8-1 and well 7321/9-1 penetrated the bottomsets which is also

## **Provenance Evaluation of Lower Cretaceous in the Stappen High Area and Implications for Reservoir Development**

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dominated by fine-grain rocks. There are no seismic evidence of delta scale clinoforms with steep foresets and base on dominant fine grain deposits in the slope and bottomsets penetrated by the other wells, sand is probably restricted to the topsets.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

Well 7321/4-1 penetrates a unit with relative low gamma ray values compared to the other exploration wells in the Fjorddjupet Subbasin. Palynological analyses (carried out by GEUS) indicated a ?Hauterivian to late Barremian age for this interval and seismic interpretation shows that this interval corresponds to southeast prograding clinoforms.

Detrital zircon U/Pb geochronology (carried out by GEUS) from samples in well 7321/4-1 and from well 7322/7-1 was performed to interpret the source of these sediments. The samples from well 7321/4-1 are dominated by three age populations: (1) 2.6 – 2.75 Ga, (2) 1.7 to 1.5 Ga and (3) 1.2 – 1 Ga. While the samples from well 7322/7-1 contain only seven dated grains, thus making it difficult to interpret the origin of these siliciclastics. The dominant age populations observed SU2 turns out to be quite similar to the age distribution that dominates several chronostratigraphic units in the northern Greenland, the Arctic Canada and on Svalbard. Based on the similar age signatures of SU2 with these and southeast prograding direction of the clinoforms in SU2, the source of sediments to the Fjorddjupet is suggested to be North Greenland and/or Arctic Canada.

The sandstones in well 7321/4-1 are interpreted to be the topsets of shelf-edge delta scale clinoforms that prograded from the Ringsel Ridge in the northwest and into the Fjorddjupet Subbasin. The gamma ray signature of the topsets indicates a coarsening to fining upwards stacking pattern which can potentially form good shallow marine sandstones. The lack of coarse clastics in wells penetrating the slope and basin floor segment of the system constrains the lateral distribution of sandstones in the study area.









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