

**A stratigraphic study of the Palaeogene
succession East of the Central Graben
in the Danish North Sea sector:
executive summary**

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GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF DENMARK AND GREENLAND
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



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Introduction

The results from the EFP 2000 project on the stratigraphy of the Palaeogene succession in the central and eastern North Sea is presented in this volume by four reports, three of which represent manuscripts at various stages of preparation for submission to international journals. This introductory summary outlines the main results obtained and provides an overview of the project.

Aims

The main aim of the project was to improve existing knowledge of Palaeogene hydrocarbon prospects in the Danish North Sea sector through a multidisciplinary geological study of the stratigraphic succession East of the Central Graben. Fulfilment of the main aim required an improved understanding of the nature, morphology and distribution of the Palaeogene sediment bodies as well as an improved biostratigraphic framework to determine their age relationship. Therefore, the project has focussed on a lithostratigraphic description of the succession encountered, with special emphasis on the morphology and distribution of sand bodies, and on the creation of a consistent and robust biostratigraphical framework for the Palaeogene. Hence, the establishment of a revised lithostratigraphy for the Danish North Sea sector became a unifying aim for the project.

The subject areas within the project were:

- 1) The creation of an improved biostratigraphical framework
- 2) A detailed log interpretation and correlation
- 3) The establishment of a revised lithostratigraphic scheme

The results are summarised overleaf. As the well coverage East of the Central Graben is scattered, it has been necessary to build on data from Central Graben wells also in order to meet the aims of the study.

As the revised lithostratigraphy presented in report 2003/72 encompasses confidential well data the summary of the revised lithostratigraphic framework below is necessarily generalised.

Material and methods

Biostratigraphy

Biostratigraphic consultancy reports on 29 selected North Sea wells have been reassessed in order to create a biostratigraphic platform for the Palaeogene interval. A database has been created encompassing the results of the reassessment. Further biostratigraphic sample material from 11 North Sea well has been prepared for palynology and microfossils at GEUS in order to cast further light on the biostratigraphic event succession. When available and needed, core material was prepared and study result incorporated. These data have also gone into the database.

Wells reassessed (see Fig. 1a for well location):

Alma-1
Bertel-1/1a
Cleo-1 (partly, Lark Formation only)
Diamant-1
Elna-1
Frida-1
Gert-1
Gulnare-1
Gwen-2
Ibenholt-1
Ida-1
Inez-1
Karl-1
Kim-1
Lone-1 (partly, Lark Formation only)
Mona-1
Nini-1
Nora-1 (partly, only microfossils)
Rigs-1
Roxanne-1
S-1x
Sandra-1
Saxo-1
Siri-2
Tabita-1
Tordenskjold-1
Vanessa-1
Wessel-1 (partly, only palynology)
Westlulu-3

Additional well material prepared at GEUS (see Fig. 1a for well location):

Alma-1 (palynology)
Francisca-1 (palynology and microfossils)
Frida-1 (palynology and microfossils)
Ida-1 (palynology)
Inez-1 (palynology)
Karl-1 (palynology)
Roxanne-1 (palynology and microfossils)
S-1x (palynology and microfossils)
Sandra-1 (palynology)
Ugle-1 (palynology and microfossils)
Wessel-1 (palynology)

Lithology and sedimentology

Inspection of cuttings samples from the following 16 key wells has formed the basis for the lithological study (see Fig. 1a for well location):

Alma-1
Bo-1
Cecilie-1
Cleo-1
Gert-1
Inez-1
Karl-1
Kim-1
Lone-1
Mona-1
Nora-1
Rigs-1
Saxo-1
Siri-2
Tabita-1
Westlulu-3

Detailed sedimentological studies have been carried out on the Francisca-1 core by GEUS staff and on cored sections from 20 wells drilled in the Siri submarine Canyon system by DONG E&P staff.

Petrophysical data

Petrophysical logs from all seventy wells shown in Fig. 1a have been studied and correlated. Five key correlation panels were constructed and served as the backbone of the well correlation. The correlation panels illustrate the morphology and extent of individual units in

the Palaeogene sediment package. The five correlation panels are enclosed with report 2003/72 as Enclosures 1–5, the location of the 5 correlation lines is shown on Fig. 1b herein. The panels encompass the wells:

Saxo-1, Lone-1, Gert-1, Mona-1, Westlulu-1, Cleo-1, Siri-1, Sandra-1, Ibenholt-1, Ida-1, Inez-1 (Enclosure 1)

Westlulu-3, Tabita-1, Gulnare-1, Adda-1, G-1x, Alma-1x, Tove-1 (Enclosure 2)

Lone-1, Sten-1, Diamant-1, Ravn-1, Falk-1, Edna-1, John Flanke-1 (Enclosure 3)

Nini-3, Nolde-1, Sandra-1, Siri-1, Frida-1, L-1x, V-1x, Alma-1x, John Flanke-1 (Enclosure 4)

K-1x, F-1x, Inez-1, R-1x, S-1x (Enclosure-5)

Seismic interpretation

Seismic profiles from the surveys CGD85, DK-1, RTD81-RE94, UCG96 and UC GE97 were interpreted in the present project. The interpreted profiles were used to further guide the petrophysical well correlation and to determine the spatial distribution of stratigraphic units in areas with only scattered well coverage.

Results

Biostratigraphy

The palynological and micropalaeontological studies undertaken in this project has resulted in the establishment of a robust, yet detailed, succession of key palynological and microfossil events (Fig. 2a–c). The majority of samples dealt with in the project are cuttings samples which are notoriously subject to downhole contamination. Therefore, focus has been on first downhole occurrence (FDO =highest stratigraphic occurrence) of taxa. The down-hole event succession established has been correlated with the major zonation schemes covering the area, with international chronostratigraphy and with geochronology (Fig. 2a–c, 3a–c).

The FDO succession established has been used to support the petrophysical log correlation of the present project and to date the lithostratigraphic units in a more precise and consistent way than previously possible.

Lithostratigraphy

A revised lithostratigraphic scheme for the siliciclastic Palaeogene succession of the Danish North Sea sector has been established based on the results from the log correlation and examination of cuttings samples, supported by new biostratigraphy and seismic interpretation (Fig. 4). The revised lithostratigraphy builds on the initial lithostratigraphic subdivision by Deegan and Scull (1977), and takes advantage of the subsequent improvements of that subdivision by Hardt *et al.* (1989), and Knox and Holloway (1992) (see Fig. 5 for correlation between the revised lithostratigraphy and the lithostratigraphy of other authors).

The lithostratigraphy presented in Fig. 4 has its genetic base at the top Chalk Group surface. Although the uppermost formation of the Chalk Group, the Ekofisk Formation, is of Early Palaeocene (Danian) age and therefore belongs to the Palaeogene Period by definition, the present study does not deal with that formation. The reason for this omission is that the Ekofisk Formation, like the rest of the Chalk Group, represents an entirely different sedimentary regime, far from that of the overlying siliciclastic sediments both by nature, depositional mechanism and host basin configuration. The top of the study section is constituted by the Mid-Miocene Unconformity, a basin-wide erosional surface that separates two thick and very different sediment packages, the Oligocene to mid-Miocene Hordaland Group and the Mid-Miocene to Recent Nordland Group.

The study section has been subdivided into 7 formation containing 11 new members. Vaale, Lista, Sele, Fur, Balder, Horda and Lark Formations of previous lithostratigraphic schemes are adequate for a subdivision of the Danish sector at formation level and are retained herein largely unchanged. Bor is a new sandstone member of the Vaale Formation. The Lista Formation is subdivided into the three mudstone members Vile, Ve and Bue

and the three new sandstone members Gerd, Idun and Rind. Sif is a new sandstone member of the Sele Formation. Nana is a new sandstone member of the Horda Formation. The two new sandstone members Freja and Dufa are established in the Lark Formation. Type and reference sections are erected for the new members, and Danish reference sections are established for the formations. Isochore maps have been produced for each unit and detailed sedimentological descriptions are provided whenever core material has been available.

The revised lithostratigraphy is correlated with Danish onshore stratigraphic units and with the sequence stratigraphic scheme for the Eastern North Sea of Michelsen et al. (1998).

Conclusion

The EFP 2000 project on the stratigraphy of the Palaeogene succession in the central and eastern North Sea has resulted in:

- 1) A revised and refined, integrated biostratigraphic scheme based on first downhole occurrence of microfossils and dinoflagellate cysts. The scheme is calibrated with geochronology.
- 2) A revised lithostratigraphic subdivision of the Palaeogene siliciclastic sediments in the Danish North Sea sector that include the establishment of eleven new members.
- 3) An improved understanding of the distribution and age-relationship of the lithological units of the Palaeogene sediment package, in particular its sandstone bodies.

References

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Figures

Fig. 1a. Well location map showing all wells used in the study.

Fig. 1b. Position of log panels shown as enclosures 1–5 of GEUS Report 2003/72 (this Volume).

Fig. 2a. Paleocene chronostratigraphy and biostratigraphy. The chronostratigraphy is based on the scheme of Berggren *et al.* (1995). The majority of the selected microfossil and dinoflagellate events are chronologically placed according to the age estimates by Hardenbol *et al.* (1998, chart 3). In the microfossil event column, the planktic foraminiferid events have been written in normal, benthic foraminiferids in italics and diatoms and radiolarians are underlined. The microfossil events are correlated with the biostratigraphic zonation of King (1989), and - together with the dinoflagellate events - further correlated with the main lithostratigraphic units (full references may be found in the reference list of GEUS Report 2003/72, this Volume).

Fig. 2b. Eocene chronostratigraphy and biostratigraphy. Explanation as in Fig. 2a.

Fig. 2c. Oligocene and Lower to Middle Miocene chronostratigraphy and biostratigraphy. Explanation as in Fig. 2a.

Fig. 3a. Correlation of selected Paleocene biostratigraphic standard biozones and North Sea biozones. The standard biozones are adopted from Berggren and Miller (1988) with later revisions of Berggren *et al.* (1995) (planktic foraminiferids) and from Martini (1971) (nannoplankton). The correlation follows the scheme by Hardenbol *et al.* (1998). The North Sea biozones, which serve as a biostratigraphical base for the present paper, are adopted from King (1989) (foraminiferids) and Costa and Manum (1988), Köthe (1990) and Mudge and Bujak (1996) (dinoflagellates) (full references may be found in the reference list of GEUS Report 2003/72, this Volume).

Fig. 3b. Correlation of selected Eocene biostratigraphic standard biozones and North Sea biozones. Explanation as in Fig. 3a.

Fig. 3c. Correlation of selected Oligocene and Lower to Middle Miocene biostratigraphic standard biozones and North Sea biozones. Explanation as in Fig. 3a.

Fig. 4. Revised stratigraphic column for the Palaeogene of the Danish North Sea sector.

Fig. 5. Stratigraphic correlation between key lithostratigraphic schemes for the Central and Eastern North Sea, formations and members.

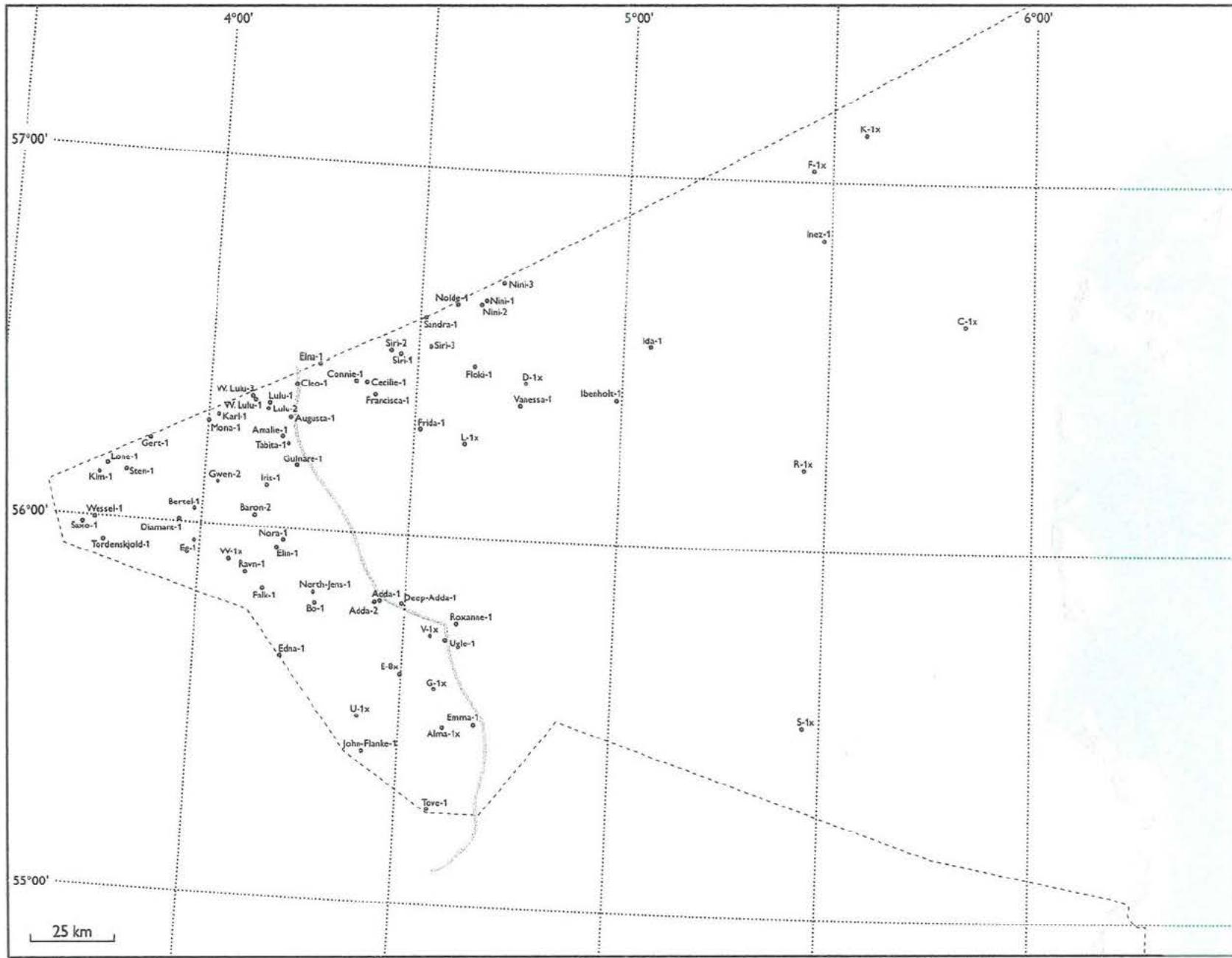


Fig. 1a

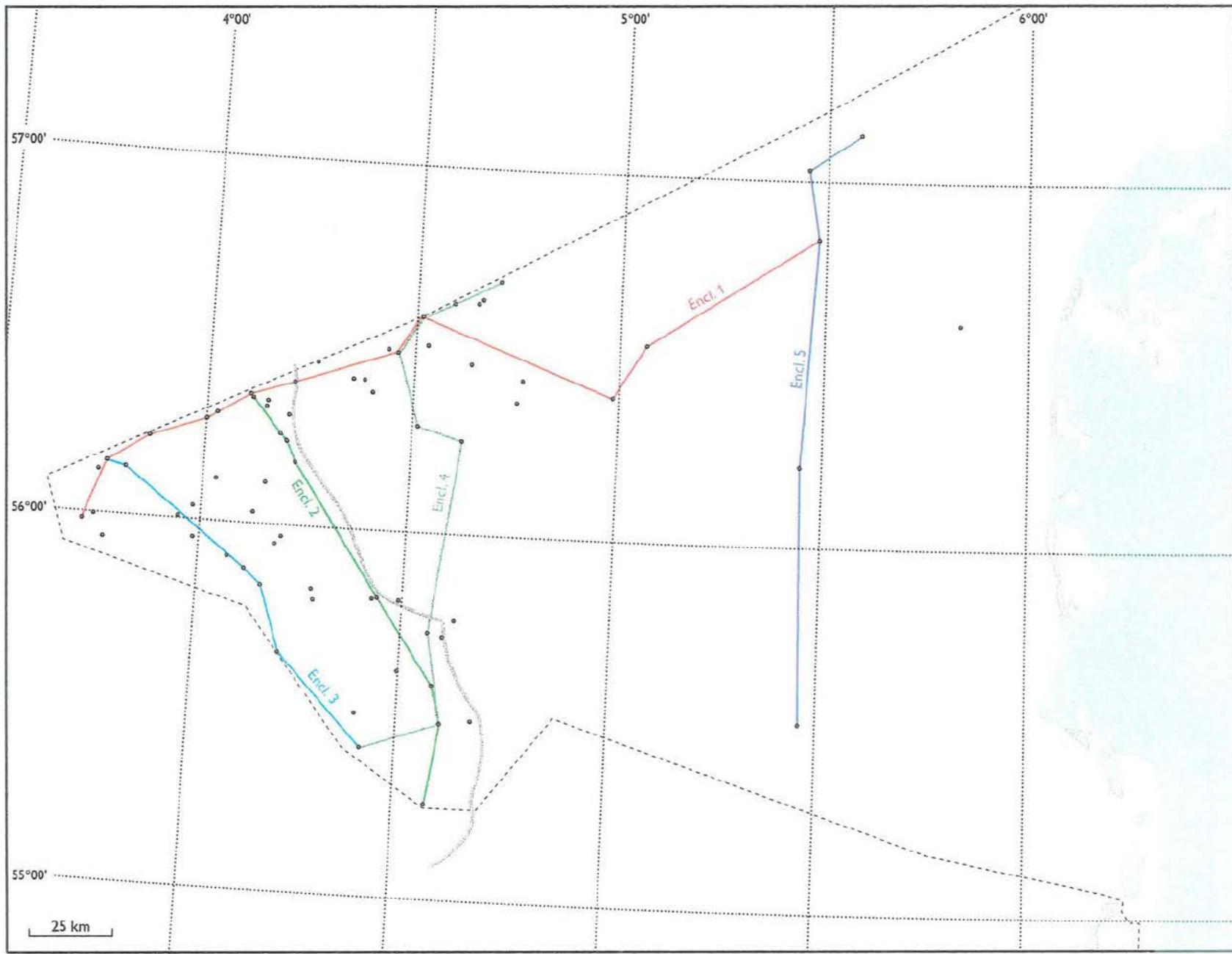


Fig.1b

Chronostratigraphy (Berggren et al. 1995)			Selected biostratigraphic events used in the present study		North Sea Biozones (King, 1989)		Litho- strati- graphy Fm. Mb.	
Time (Ma)	Series	Stages	Planktic foraminifera Benthic foraminifera Diatoms and radiolaria	Dinoflagellate cysts	Planktic micro- fossils	Benthic micro- fossils		
50	Eocene (pars)	Lower (pars)	Ypresian (pars)	Cancris sp. A Uvigerina batjesi Turillina brevispira Gaudryina hillermannii Abundant Subbotina ex gr. llnaperta	Dracodinium varfelongitudum Dracodinium condylus	NSP6	NSB4	Horda
55				Fenestrella antiqua, Foraminiferids very rare common F. antiqua and Coscinodiscus morsianus	Hystrichospaeridium tubiferum, common Deflandrea loebisfeldensis acme Cerodinium wardenense Apectodinium augustum A. augustum, acme Apectodinium	NSP5b	NSB3b	
55.5			Thanetian	Impoverished benthic agglutinated assembl.	Alisocysta margarita Acme Areoligera gippingensis Palaeoperidinium pyrophorum	NSP4	NSB2	
57.9			Selandian	Cenodiscus spp., Cenosphaera spp., Increasing diversity of calcareous benthic foraminifera Reappearance of planktic foraminifera	Isabelidinium? viborgense	NSP3	c	Bue
60.9			Danian	Increasing calcareous foraminiferal diversity Globoconusa daubjergensis	Spiniferites "magnificus" Alisocysta reticulata Senonisphaera inornata	NSP2	b	Ve Lista Vile
65.0	Cretaceous (pars)	Upper (pars)	Maastrichtian (pars)	Cretaceous foraminiferids	Cretaceous palynomorphs	NSP1	a	Vaale Eko-fisk
								Tor

Fig. 2a

Chronostratigraphy (Berggren et al. 1995)			Selected biostratigraphic events used in the present study		North Sea Biozones (King, 1989)		Litho- strati- graphy Formation
Time (Ma)	Series	Stages	Planktic foraminifera Benthic foraminifera Diatoms and radiolaria	Dinoflagellate cysts	Planktic micro- fossils	Benthic micro- fossils	
	Oligocene (pars)	Rupelian (pars)	<i>Uvigerina germanica</i>		NSP9b	NSB7a	
	Lower (pars)		<i>Cibicidoides truncatus</i> <i>Vaginulinopsis decorata</i>	<i>Areosphaeridium diktynoplakum</i>	NSP9a	NSB6b	Lark
35	Upper	Priabonian	<i>Globigerinatheka index</i>		NSP8c	NSB6a	
			<i>Planulina costata</i>	<i>Areosphaeridium michoudii</i>	NSP8b	NSB5c	
40	Middle	Bartonian	<i>Lenticulina gutticosata</i> , <i>Spiroplectammina spectabilis</i>	<i>Heteraulacocysta porosa</i>	NSP8a	NSB5b	
			<i>Pseudohastigerina spp.</i>	<i>Diphyes colligerum consistent</i>			
45	Lower	Lutetian		<i>Diphyes pseudoficusoides</i> <i>Phitanoperidinium clithroidum</i> <i>Diphyes ficusoides</i>	NSP7	NSB5a	Horda
50	Upper	Ypresian	<i>Abundant radiolaria</i> (<i>Cenosphaera sp.</i>)	<i>Eatonicysta ursulae</i>	NSP6	NSB4	
			<i>Cyclammina amplexens</i>	<i>Eatonicysta ursulae</i> common	NSP5b	NSB3b	
55	Paleo.	Thanetian (pars)	<i>Cancris sp. A</i> <i>Uvigerina batjesi</i> <i>Turritella brevispira</i> <i>Gaudryina hiltmanni</i>	<i>Dracodinium variolongitudum</i> <i>Dracodinium condylus</i>	NSP5a	NSB3a	Balder
			<i>Abundant Subbotina ex gr. linaperta</i>	<i>Hystrichosphaeridium tubiferum</i> , common			
			<i>Fenestrella antiqua</i> , Foraminiferids very rare	<i>Deflandrea loebisfeldensis acme</i>			
			common <i>F. antiqua</i> and <i>Coscinodiscus morsianus</i>	<i>Cerodinium wardenense</i>			
			<i>Impoverished benthic agglutinated assembl.</i>	<i>Apectodinium augustum</i> <i>A. augustum</i> , acme <i>Apectodinium</i>	NSP4	NSB2	Sele
				<i>Alisocysta margarita</i> <i>Arenigera gippingensis</i>	NSP3	NSB1	Lista

Fig. 2b

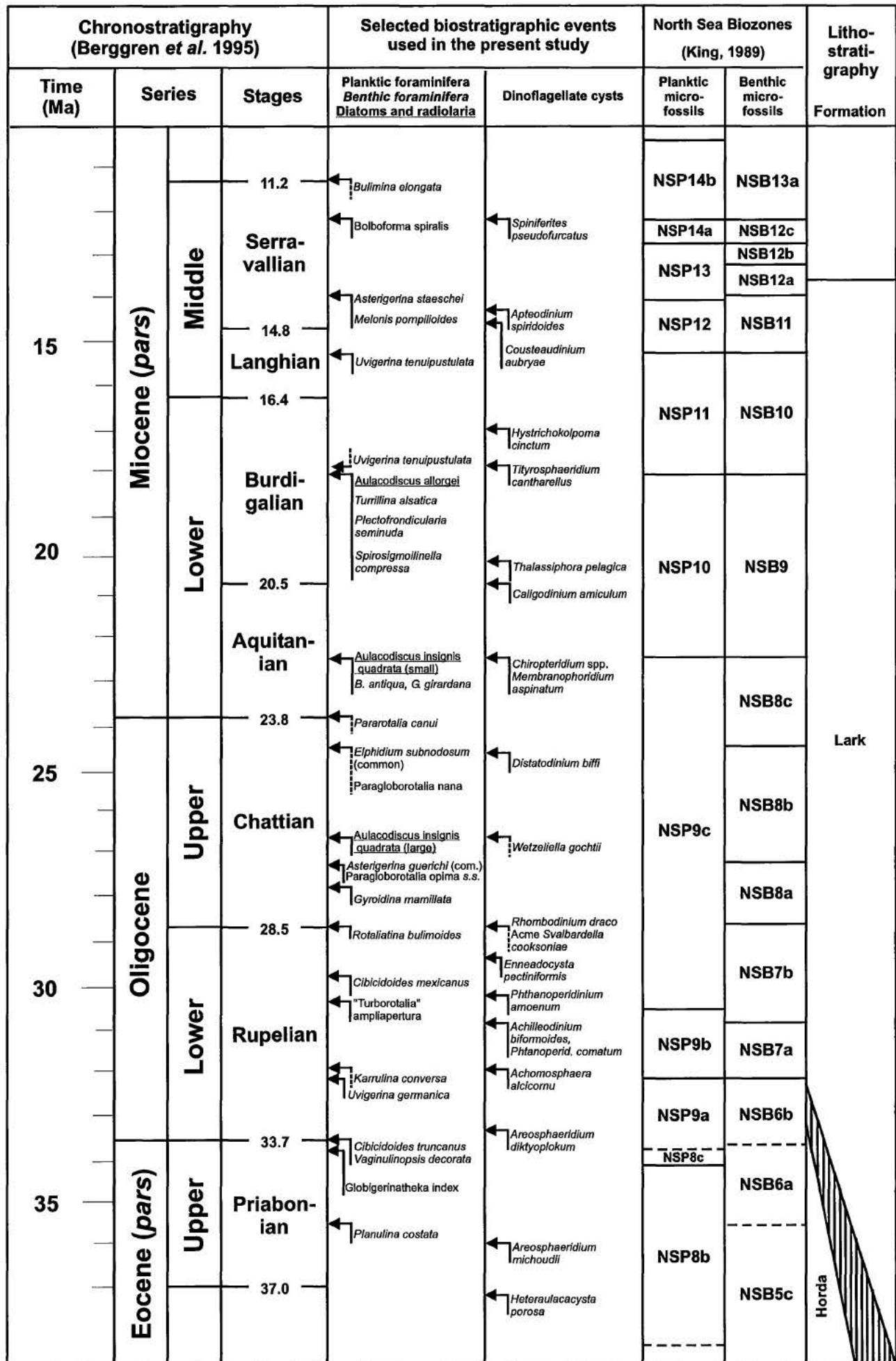


Fig. 2c

Chronostratigraphy (Berggren et al. 1995)			Standard biozones		North Sea biozones		
Time (Ma)	Series	Stages	Berggren & Miller (1988), Berggren et al. (1995)	Martini (1971)	King (1989)		Costa & Manum (1988)/ Köthe (1990), Mudge & Bujak (1996)
			Planktic micro- fossils	Calcareous nanno- fossils	Planktic micro- fossils	Benthic micro- fossils	Dinoflagellate cysts
50	Eocene (pars)	Lower (pars)	P9		NSP6	NSB4	E3c E3b
			P8	NP13	NSP5b	NSB3b	E3a
			P7	NP12			E2c
			P6	NP11	NSP5a	NSB3a	E2b
			b				E2a
			a	NP10	NSP4	NSB2	E1c E1b
			P5	NP9			L
			c	NP8	NSP3		E1a
			b	NP7			P6
			a	NP6			P5
55	Paleocene	Upper	P4	NP5	NSP2		P4
			c				P3
			b	NP4	NSP1	NSB1	P2
			a	NP3	c	b	
			P3	NP2	b	a	P1
			b	NP1	a		
			a				
			P2 + P0				
57.9							
60.9							
65	Cretaceous (pars)	Upper (pars)	Maastricht- ian (pars)	Abathom- phalus mayaroensis	CC26	Pseudotextularia elegans	
					CC25 (pars)		

Fig. 3a

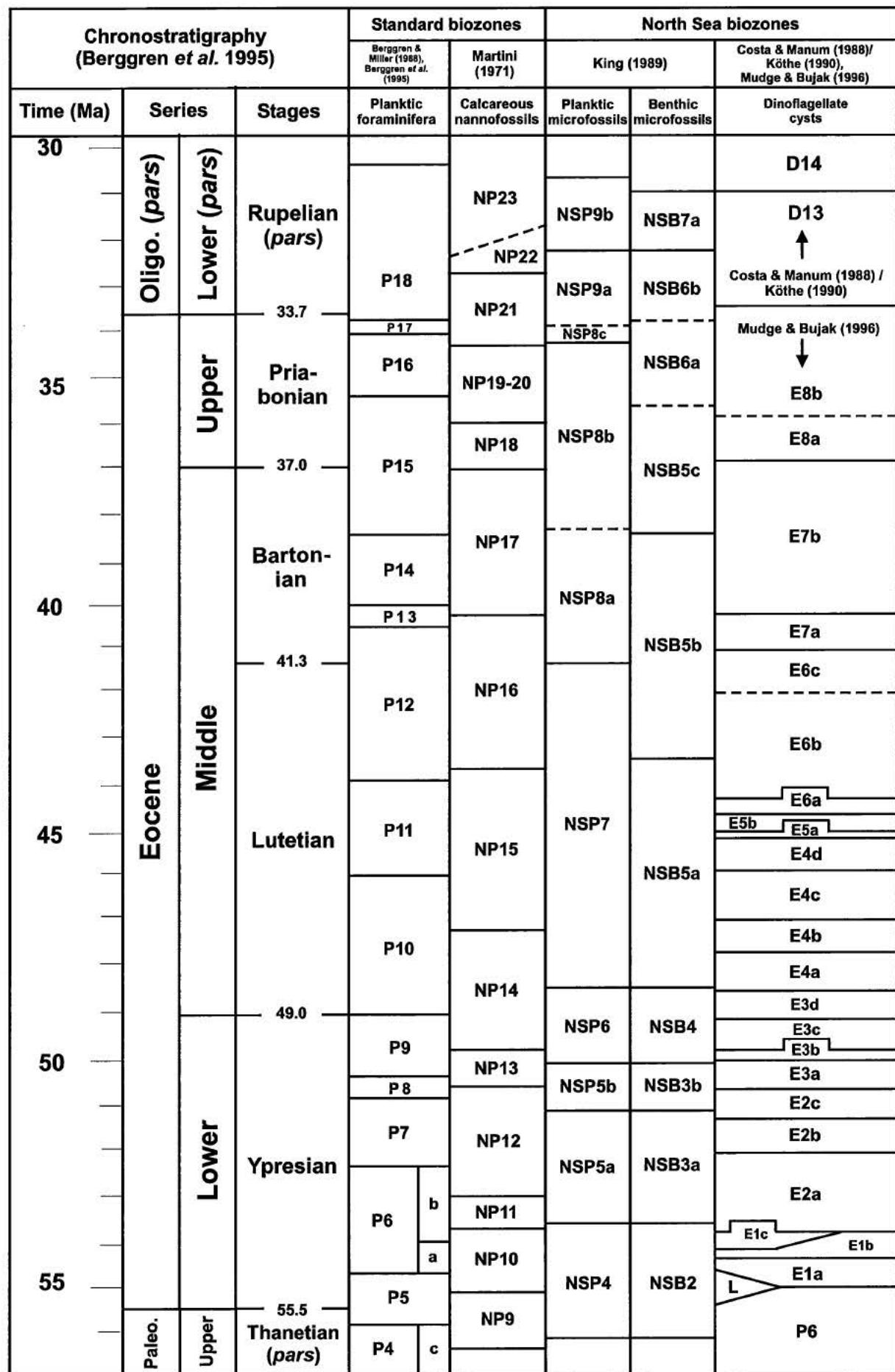


Fig. 3b

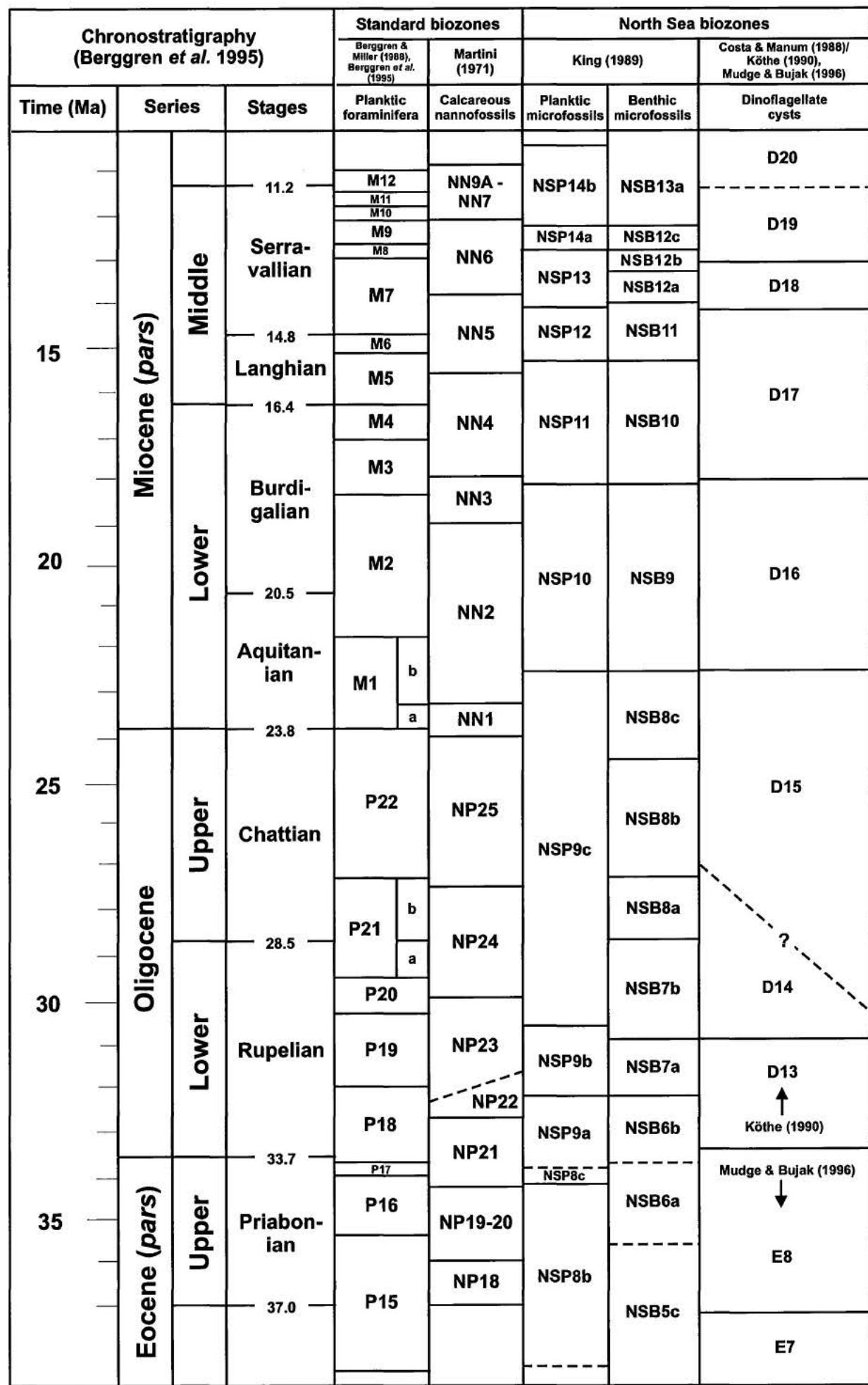


Fig. 3c

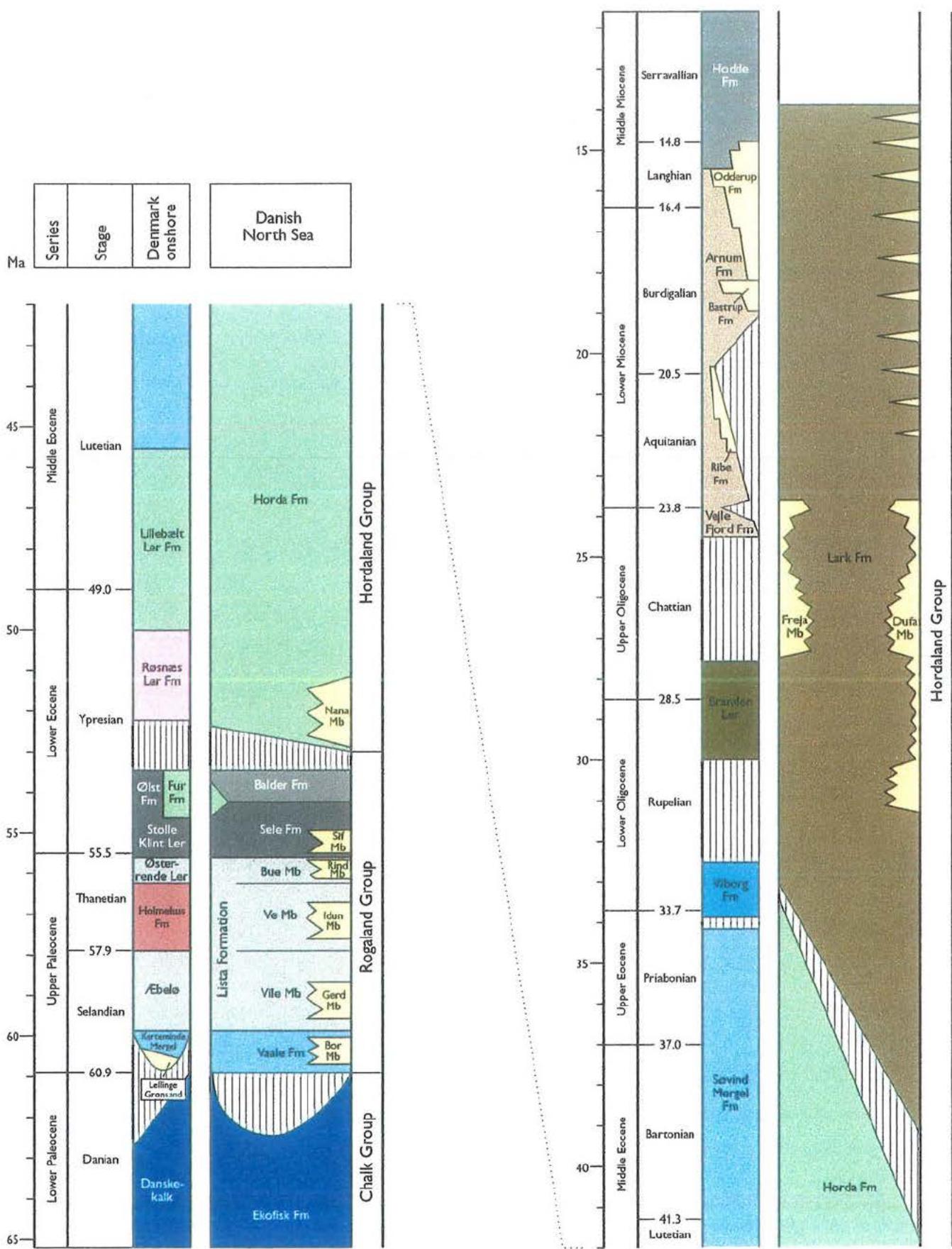


Fig.4

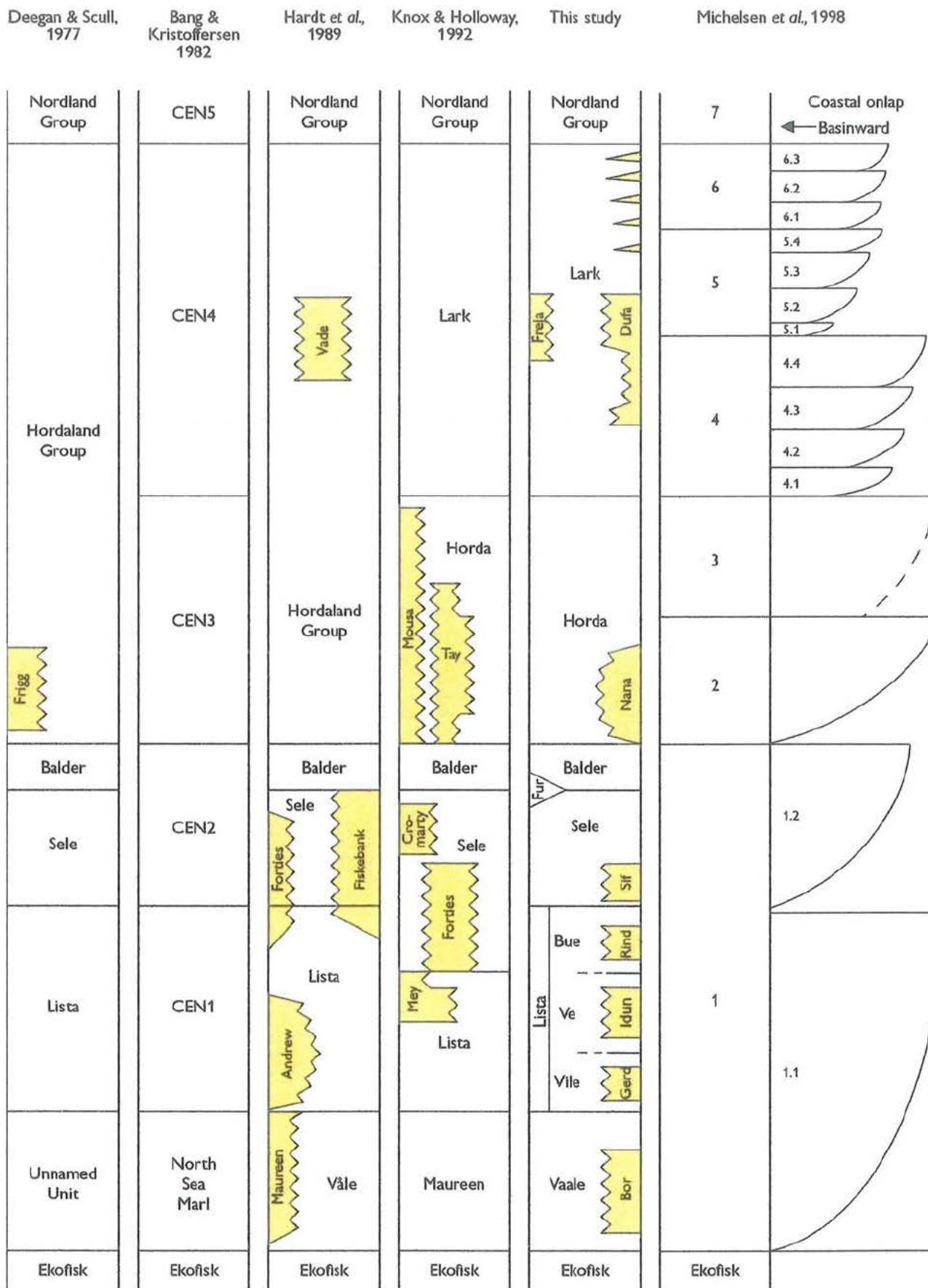


Fig.5