

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

## Assessing Source Region Characteristics from Gale crater Lacustrine mudstone

Conference or Workshop Item

How to cite:

Bedford, C. C.; Bridges, J. C.; Schwenzer, S. P.; Wiens, R. C.; Rampe, E. B.; Frydenvang, J. and Gasda, P. J. (2017). Assessing Source Region Characteristics from Gale crater Lacustrine mudstone. In: 7th Astrobiology Society of Britain Conference, 13-14 Sep 2017, Milton Keynes, UK.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© [not recorded]

Version: Not Set

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)

## ASSESSING SOURCE REGION CHARACTERISTICS FROM GALE CRATER LACUSTRINE MUDSTONE.

C. C. Bedford<sup>1</sup>, J. C. Bridges<sup>2</sup>, S. P. Schwenzer<sup>1</sup>, R. C. Wiens<sup>3</sup>, E. B. Rampe<sup>4</sup>, J. Frydenvang<sup>5</sup>, P. J. Gasda<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Open University (Candice.bedford@open.ac.uk)

<sup>2</sup> University of Leicester

<sup>3</sup> Los Alamos National Laboratory

<sup>4</sup> NASA Johnson Space Centre

<sup>5</sup> University of Copenhagen

The NASA *Curiosity* rover has encountered mudstones deposited in a lake environment within the respective Yellowknife Bay<sup>[1]</sup> (YKB) [Bradbury Group] and Murray<sup>[2]</sup> [Mt Sharp Group] formations of Gale crater, Mars. Chemical and mineralogical studies conducted on YKB mudstones show a habitable lake environment at the time of deposition<sup>[1]</sup>. The Chemistry and Camera (ChemCam) instrument suite has acquired major, minor and trace element compositions through Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy<sup>[3,4]</sup> generating an extensive dataset of ~9500 observation points (where one observation point is the average of 30 – 50 spectral analyses). This study has excluded targets that have not hit *in situ* host rock to assess host rock geochemical variation between stratigraphic groups<sup>[5]</sup>.

Our results show that Murray is enriched in SiO<sub>2</sub>, Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and K<sub>2</sub>O, but depleted in CaO and MgO compared to YKB mudstone. Despite Murray demonstrating higher Chemical Indices of Alteration than YKB<sup>[6,7]</sup>, Murray's dominant basaltic mineralogy and secondary mineralogy infers that open system alteration has not masked source characteristics<sup>[8]</sup>. Hence, we hypothesise that Murray's geochemical difference is related to a change towards a more silica-rich, tholeiitic provenance from the regional, subalkaline basalt that was initially eroded and deposited at YKB<sup>[9,10]</sup>.

References: [1] Grotzinger et al. (2014) doi:10.1126/science.1242777. [2] Grotzinger et al. (2015) doi:10.1126/science.aac7575. [3] Wiens et al. (2012) doi:10.1007/s11214-012-9902-4. [4] Maurice et al. (2012) doi:10.1007/s11214-012-9912-2. [5] Bedford (subm.) *GCA*. [6] Siebach et al. (2017) doi:10.1002/2016JE005195. [7] Mangold (2017) *LPSC XLVIII*, Abstract 1894. [8] Rampe et al. (2017) doi:10.1016/j.epsl.2017.04.021. [9] Anderson et al. (2015) doi:10.1016/j.icarus.2014.07.025. [10] Sautter et al. (2015) doi:10.1038/ngeo2474.