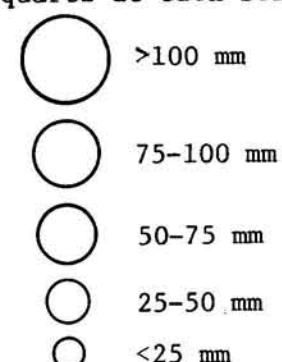


Base from U.S. Geological Survey  
National Atlas, Northern Alaska, 1967

## EXPLANATION

Mean size of 10 largest clasts of  
vein quartz at each station:



Vector mean of current directions  
and number of readings (5 or more)

Current directions and number of  
readings (less than 5)

Current direction indicator with  
indeterminate sense

Generalized distribution of Endicott  
Group and correlative rocks—Modi-  
fied from Lathram (1965; also unpub.  
revisions), Reiser and others  
(1971), Pessel and others (1973),  
Reiser and others (1974), and unpub-  
lished maps of the Baird Mountains  
by G. H. Pessel and R. E. Garland,  
and by W. P. Brosge and I. L. Tailleux

## INTRODUCTION

The Devonian-Mississippian Endicott Group (Tailleur and others, 1967) is an important geologic unit in the Brooks Range of northern Alaska. It reflects a major tectonic event in the middle and late Paleozoic history of the North American Cordillera. Tailleux and Brosge (1970) interpreted the Endicott as a clastic wedge derived from land to the north during the Late Devonian and from land to the northeast during Early Mississippian, when a shallow sea transgressed the area. In the north-central and eastern parts of the range, the Endicott is composed of three formations, in ascending order, the Upper Devonian Hunt Fork Shale and Kanayut Conglomerate and the Lower Mississippian Kayak Shale; in the western part of the range, the stratigraphic relations of these formations with formations in the Endicott is uncertain. Donovan systematically collected paleocurrent and clast-size data from the Endicott Group along the Brooks Range for Mobil Oil Corporation in 1967 and 1968. In recognition of the general interest in the information, Mobil has permitted its release. I. L. Tailleux summarized the regional geologic information.

The thickest parts of the clastic wedge, more than 2 km thick, have been compressed into east-west-striking folds and faults that form a belt across the north-central part of the range (Porter, 1966). In the central and eastern parts of the range, the lower part of the wedge consists of marine shale and sandstone of the Hunt Fork Shale, with quartzite and intertongues southward with quartzite and conglomerate of the Kanayut Conglomerate. The top of the wedge is the marine Kayak Shale, which also contains subordinate amounts of sandstone and limestone. The clastic wedge may have no roots in subjacent sequences (Tailleur and others, 1967, p. 1359; Brosge and others, 1974), and the whole wedge may have been underthrust southward by the southern margin of the old source area during late Mesozoic orogeny (Tailleur and Snelson, 1968).

Westward, the Endicott Group consists of the Hunt Fork Shale, which is possibly a slightly more distal continuation of the Kanayut Conglomerate, and sandstone and shale of the Upper Devonian and Lower Mississippian Noatak Sandstone (Dutro, 1953). In the Sivuk Mountain area west of the lower Noatak River, the Endicott includes quartzite and conglomerate (Martin, 1970), allochthonous upon a Mesozoic terrane and structurally unconnected to eastern clastic units. On the west coast of Alaska and the west limb of the Chukchi syntaxis (Tailleur and Brosge, 1970), paralic deposits intertongue with Upper Mississippian carbonate (Armstrong and others, 1970) in the lower part of the Lisburne Group. These paralic deposits are about 1 km thick and contain plant remains of Early Mississippian age and minable amounts of low-volatile bituminous coal (Tailleur, 1965). Tailleux found that these deposits overlie, with uncertain relations, clastic rocks of uncertain age (U.S. Geological Survey, 1972).

The north-transgressive phase of the clastic wedge in the northeastern mountains and in the subsurface to the northwest is considerably thinner. A variable, conglomeratic and paralic unit, Kekiktuk Conglomerate (Brosge and others, 1962), lies on deformed and penneplaned(?) Devonian and older rocks (Reiser and others, 1971, 1974). The overlying Kayak Shale grades upward into the carbonate beds of the Lisburne Group and is of Early(?) and Late Mississippian age in the north (Armstrong, 1971). The transgressive phase has probably been structurally juxtaposed with thicker deposits to the south.

The clastic wedge is similar to other, better understood Devonian-Mississippian rocks on the North American craton and around the periphery of the North Atlantic. It may, therefore, have been part of the same tectonic and depositional cycle in both North America and Europe. Probably, it was once connected with the Upper Devonian Nation River Formation (Brabb and Churkin, 1969) of east-central Alaska, along the Yukon River. This Upper Devonian turbidite was deposited in a deep marine basin (Wilsen and others, 1974). Summarized descriptions of basal and pre-Mississippian rocks in northern Alaska were presented by Brosge and Tailleux (1971).

## METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Directional features that were measured include, in decreasing order of abundance, cross-bedding, current lamination, groove and flute(?) casts, ripple markings, cut-and-fill structures, and oriented fossil plant stems. Uncommon transverse-crack casts (Daley, 1968) were also measured. Crossbedding and current lineations are the most useful directional features in the Kanayut and Kekiktuk Conglomerates. Tabular, festoon, and intermediate types of crossbeds exist. They range in amplitude from a few centimetres to a metre (largest observed). The orientations of linear features were measured directly by Brunton compass. Crossbedding was measured by taking the strike and dip of the plane of foreset beds exposed by two intersecting outcrop faces. The conditions of exposure at most localities dictated the number and quality of measurements that effectively could be made. Severely frost-heaved units, extensive lichen growth, and lack of intersecting outcrop faces in well-indurated units often precluded measurement of directional features.

All measurements were corrected for structural tilt when necessary. It was possible to correct for tilt in the field in a few instances, but most corrections were made in the office using a stereonet (Potter and Pettijohn, 1963, p. 259-262). Directional features having an indeterminate current sense were assigned the sense determined for adjacent crossbedding or for another appropriate indicator. The vector means of the paleocurrent directions for each station with five or more individual measurements were calculated by computer and plotted. All readings were plotted for stations with less than five measurements. One hundred and seventy-seven measurements were taken at 38 localities.

The mean maximum clast size at each station was determined by measuring the maximum diameters of the 10 largest white vein-quartz clasts (determined by inspection) and computing their average (Pelletier, 1958). All clasts appear well rounded. Only white vein-quartz clasts were measured, in order to avoid lithologically controlled variations in resistance to abrasion, and because they are ubiquitous in both the Kanayut and Kekiktuk Conglomerates.

## CONCLUSIONS

Inspection of the paleocurrent data indicates that the Kanayut originated from a northern source and the Kekiktuk from an eastern source. The large area covered and the limited data do not permit a refined interpretation. However, directional features are remarkably consistent over wide areas, and the decrease in maximum clast size from east to west and from north to south is pronounced. The abrupt decrease in clast size over relatively short distances is probably exaggerated because of appreciable crustal shortening by folding and over-thrusting. The dispersal patterns suggest that the Kanayut was derived from a westerly or northwesterly-trending source area and that the

Kekiktuk was derived from a more areally restricted source area, somewhere near the present United States-Canada border. This is in agreement with the field and petrographic evidence of Reed (1968, p. 33), who made a similar conclusion regarding the source of Kekiktuk sediments.

These paleocurrent and clast-size determinations serve two useful purposes: they provide some quantitative information for the Endicott Group, and they demonstrate the need for more data. Additional measurements at numerous localities should refine the source indication and yield criteria for distinguishing structural displacements.

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## MAP SHOWING PALEOCURRENT AND CLAST-SIZE DATA FROM THE DEVONIAN-MISSISSIPPIAN ENDICOTT GROUP, NORTHERN ALASKA

By  
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1975