

Jurassic arc volcanism on Crimea (Ukraine): Implications for the paleo-subduction zone configuration of the Black Sea region

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ABSTRACT

The early Cretaceous and younger opening of the Black Sea has obliterated much of the older record of Tethyan subduction below southeastern Europe. The earlier Mesozoic evolution was dominated by opening and closure of Tethyan oceans between Gondwana and Laurasia with their consumption, at least in part, accommodated along the southern Eurasian margin. Crimea (Ukraine), a peninsula in the northern Black Sea, represents the northernmost region of southeastern Europe that exposes a record of a pre-Cretaceous Tethyan active margin. To shed new light on the paleosubduction zone configuration of the southeastern European margin in the Jurassic, we report ⁴⁰Ar/³⁹Ar isotope dating on 10 samples and whole rock geochemistry on 31 samples from supposedly Jurassic magmatic rocks from the Crimean peninsula. The samples can be subdivided into two age groups: middle Jurassic (~172–158 Ma) and uppermost Jurassic to lowermost Cretaceous (~151–142 Ma), that both have a subduction-related geochemical signature. The ages of the younger group are in conflict with previously assigned biostratigraphic ages of the units under- and overlying the volcanic complex. This might suggest a scenario where the latter were juxtaposed by faulting. We argue that the Crimean volcanics represent a fragment of a volcanic arc overlying the southeastern European continental margin. These data therefore provide evidence for Jurassic northwards subduction below the Eurasian margin, preceding the opening of the Black Sea as a back-arc basin. We argue that the corresponding Jurassic trench was already positioned south of the Turkish Pontides and the Caucasus belt, implying a very shallow slab angle in the Jurassic.

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1. Introduction

Much remains to be understood about the Mesozoic configuration of subduction zones in the present-day Black Sea region. Fundamentally different views on the number, as well as the location and polarity of subduction zones in this region in Jurassic times prevail in literature (Barrier and Vrielynck, 2008; Dercourt et al., 2000; Kazmin et al., 1987; Kent and May, 1987; Moix et al., 2008; Robertson and Dixon, 1984; Şengör and Yilmaz, 1981; Stampfli and Borel, 2002). Geodynamic reconstructions display a complex subduction zone configuration in the present-day eastern Mediterranean region (Figs. 1 and 2), resulting from two simultaneously interacting large-scale plate tectonic processes: 1) the early stages of Pangea break-up by the opening up of the central Atlantic ocean, imposing a widely

dispersed sinistral strike-slip movement of Laurasia to the north relative to Gondwana to the south (Favre and Stampfli, 1992; Stampfli and Borel, 2004), and 2) south-to-north motion of blocks rifting away from Africa, accommodated by subduction of the (Paleo- and Neo-) Tethys oceans beneath the southern Eurasian margin (Fig. 2) (Şengör and Yilmaz, 1981). The Jurassic paleo-position of the subduction zones and continental blocks along the southern Eurasian margin in the present-day Black Sea region, however, is poorly constrained, because opening of the Black Sea since the early Cretaceous has obscured much of the geological record. A key area in the present-day Black Sea region is the Crimean peninsula. Here, heavily deformed Triassic–lower Jurassic turbiditic sediments are covered by an upper Jurassic carbonate platform (Mileyev et al., 1997; Voznesensky et al., 1998). Magmatic intrusions that are observed within the Triassic–lower Jurassic sequence are of unknown geochemical composition. Whether these magmatic intrusions and associated extrusive volcanism along the southern European margin relate to rifting in a back-arc setting or locate the volcanic arc of a Jurassic subduction zone is a

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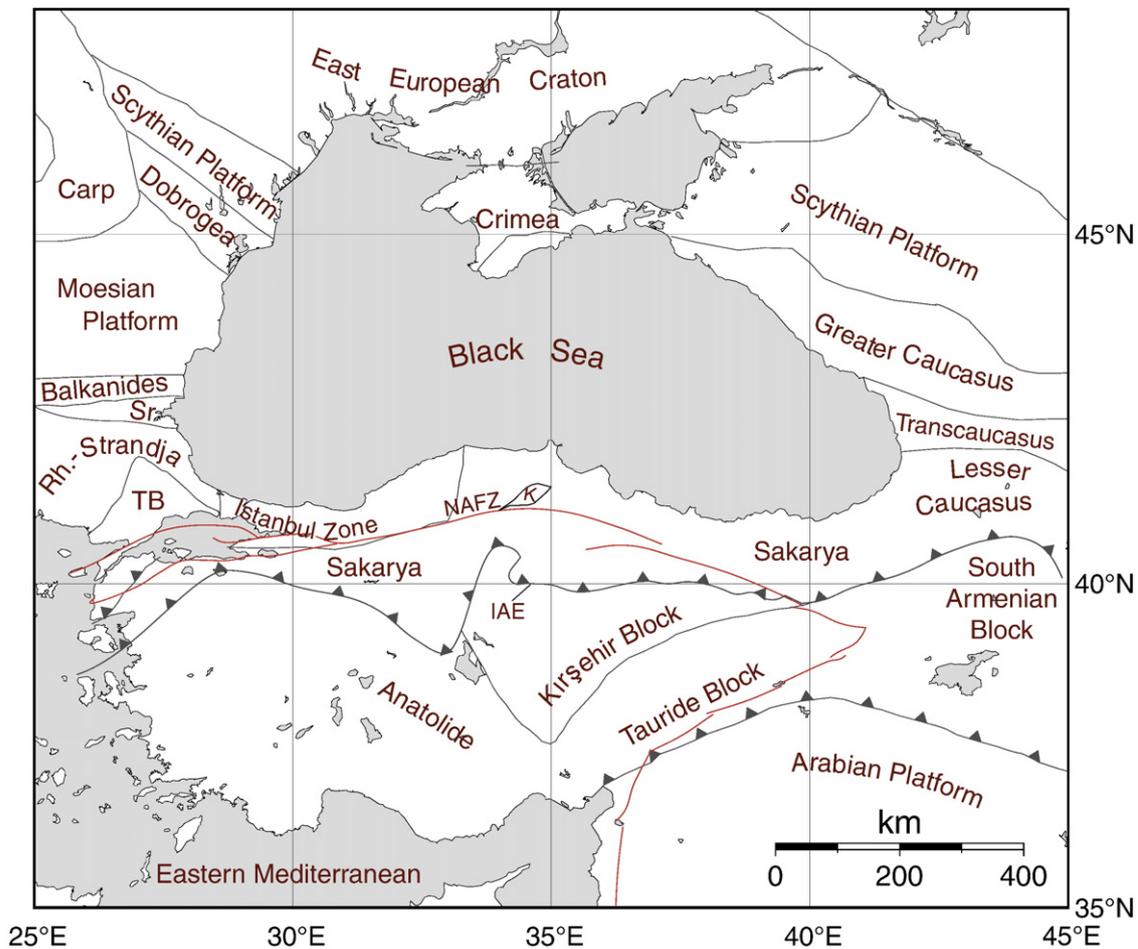


Fig. 1. Map showing the most important tectonic blocks and sutures in a present-day geographical map. Carp = Carpathians, IAE = İzmir-Ankara-Erzincan suture, K = Kargı Massif, NAFZ = North Anatolian Fault Zone, Rh. = Rhodope, Sr = Srednogorie, TB = Thrace basin.

matter of debate (Nikishin et al., 2001; Saintot et al., 2006b, 2007). Here, we provide critical constraints on the genesis of Jurassic magmatism on Crimea. To this end, we carried out $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ isotope dating and major and trace element X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis on supposedly Jurassic Crimean volcanics. The results will be used to infer the plate tectonic setting for Crimea during volcanism, and we place this interpretation in context with respect to the Greater Caucasus and Turkish Pontides.

2. Geological setting

2.1. Main geological units in the circum-Black Sea region

The circum-Black Sea region contains a number of continental terranes and oceanic units, which are briefly reviewed here.

In northern Turkey, three continental units are combined into the Pontides belt. This belt comprises the Strandja Massif and the İstanbul Zone in the west, the bulk is represented by the Sakarya Zone (Fig. 1) (Okay et al., 1996). The Pontides are bounded in the north by the Black Sea and in the south by the İzmir–Ankara–Erzincan ophiolitic suture zone. The İstanbul Zone is structurally the highest zone, and the Sakarya Zone is structurally the lowest zone (Okay et al., 2001a). For the purpose of this study, we will only describe the İstanbul and Sakarya Zones.

The İstanbul Zone comprises non-metamorphic Paleozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic sedimentary sequences overlying pan-African/Cadomian crystalline basement (Chen et al., 2002; Ustaömer et al., 2005). The Paleozoic affinity of the İstanbul zone is debated (Chen et al., 2002), but

there is a general consensus based on its stratigraphy and lack of metamorphism – that in Mesozoic times it can be considered as a fragment of Moesia that rifted southward during the opening of the western Black Sea basin in the late Cretaceous (Okay et al., 1994; Ustaömer and Robertson, 1993).

The Sakarya Zone has a crystalline basement with Carboniferous metamorphic ages (Bozkurt et al., 2008; Okay et al., 2008; Topuz and Altherr, 2004; Topuz et al., 2004, 2007) and is overlain by the locally metamorphosed Karakaya Complex of Triassic to earliest Jurassic age, and a younger discordant Mesozoic to Cenozoic (volcano-)sedimentary cover (Chen et al., 2002; Ustaömer et al., 2005). Blueschists and eclogites have been recovered from the Karakaya complex, marking its affinity with a latest Triassic subduction zone (Okay and Monié, 1997; Okay et al., 2002). Triassic deposits present in the Karakaya Complex are either interpreted as an inverted (back-arc) rift basin or as a subduction accretion complex (Genç and Yılmaz, 1995; Okay and Göncüoğlu, 2004; Pickett and Robertson, 2004).

The Sakarya and İstanbul zones share a post-Triassic volcano-sedimentary cover. In the western and central Pontides lower Jurassic continental to shallow marine clastic rocks, intercalated with ammonitico-rosso levels are exposed (Altner et al., 1991). The eastern part of the Sakarya Zone (i.e. the eastern Pontides) however, has a different lower to middle Jurassic stratigraphy, consisting of volcanics and volcano-sedimentary units (Yılmaz and Kandemir, 2006; Yılmaz et al., 2003), interpreted as related to a volcanic arc (Şen, 2007). The Mudurnu Formation that can be traced from the western to the eastern Pontides comprises turbidites and magmatic rocks of roughly

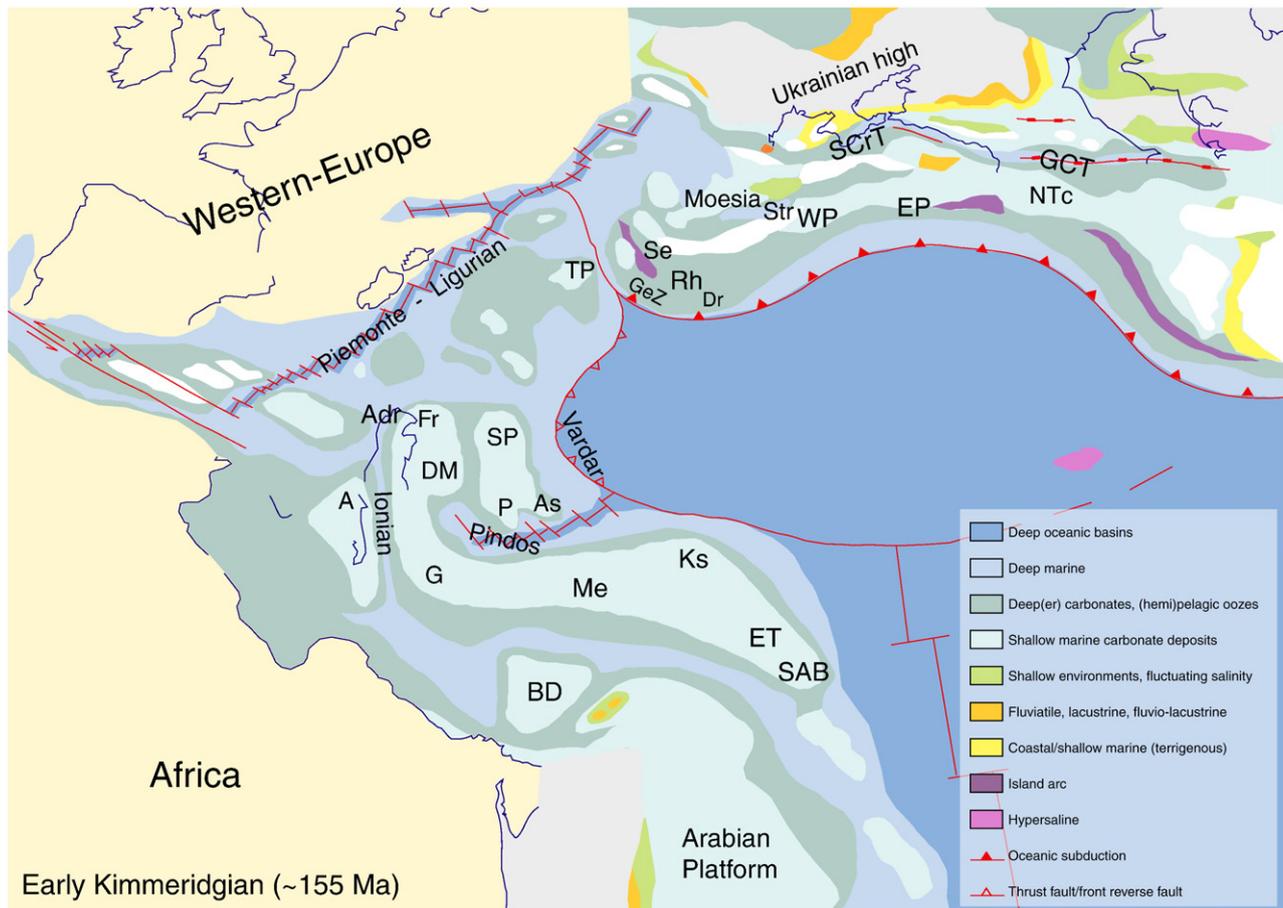


Fig. 2. Early Kimmeridgian (~155 Ma) paleogeographic reconstruction based on Dercourt et al. (2000). A = Apulia; Adr = Adria; As = Asteroussia; BD = Bey Dağları; DM = Dalmatia; Dr = Drama; EP = eastern Pontides; ET = eastern Taurides; Fr = Friuli; G = Gavrovo; GCT = Greater Caucasus Through; GeZ = Getic Zone; Ks = Kırşehir Massif; Me = Menderes Massif; NTC = Northern Transcaucasus; P = Parnassos; Rh = Rhodopes; SAB = South Armenian Block, SCrT = South Crimean Through; Se = Severin; SP = Serbo-Pelagonian; Str = Strandja; TP = Tisza Plate; WP = western Pontides. White areas are areas without data.

middle Jurassic age (~Bajocian to Bathonian) (Altın et al., 1991) and is interpreted as an equivalent of the eastern Pontides middle Jurassic volcanics and volcanoclastics by Genç and Tüysüz (2010). The tectonic setting wherein the magmatic rocks of the Mudurnu Formation is under debate (Dokuz et al., 2006; Şen, 2007; Şengör and Yılmaz, 1981). The most recent study of Genç and Tüysüz (2010) proposes that the magmatic rocks were emplaced in an extensional basin situated on an active or just inactive subduction zone. Middle Jurassic (Callovian) to lower Cretaceous platform carbonates (Inalı Formation) cover the entire Pontides (Görür, 1997; 2010; Tüysüz, 1999).

The İstanbul zone was once separated from the Sakarya Zone by the so-called *Intra-Pontide ocean* (Okay et al., 1994; Robertson and Ustaömer, 2004; Şengör and Yılmaz, 1981). The timing of the opening and closure of the Intra-Pontide ocean, however, remains controversial. Interpretations are based on the presence of metamorphosed sediments that are assumed to have been deposited in a Triassic rift, and on the presence of ophiolitic units. The opening of the ocean was proposed to range from Triassic to early Jurassic times, and the closure may have started in Aptian–Albian times, coeval with the incipient rifting of the western Black Sea basin (Hippolyte et al., 2010; Okay et al., 1994; Robertson and Ustaömer, 2004; Şengör and Yılmaz, 1981). Based on ophiolite emplacement, the full closure of the Intra-Pontide suture is proposed to have occurred in late Cretaceous (Turonian) times (Robertson and Ustaömer, 2004). However, the ophiolitic units have also been interpreted as being part of the ophiolites that were formed in a single Mesozoic northern Neo-Tethys ocean. Emplacement of those ‘so-called’ Intra-Pontide ophiolites

results from left-lateral strike slip according to Elmas and Yiğitbaş (2001). They argue that the similar post-middle Jurassic sedimentary cover of the Sakarya and İstanbul Zones evidences the juxtaposition of the two zones before the late Jurassic.

The eastern and western Black Sea basins are generally regarded as back-arc basins that opened resulting from Neo-Tethys subduction below the Pontides. The timing of the opening of the eastern Black Sea basin is not well constrained as a result of poor stratigraphic exposure, and estimates vary from early Cretaceous (Kriachtchevskaia et al., 2010; Nikishin et al., 2003) to early Cenozoic (Robinson et al., 1995, 1996) and Eocene (Vincent et al., 2005). The western Black Sea basin opened in early Cretaceous times (Barremian–Albian) (Görür, 1997; Robinson et al., 1996; Tüysüz, 1999), and the interpretation of the Black Sea as a back-arc basin (Okay et al., 1994) would suggest northward subduction below the Pontides in this time span.

Since 90 Ma ophiolites were generated south of the Pontides, which were eventually emplaced onto continental crust of the Anatolide–Tauride and South Armenian blocks, which collided with the Pontides in Paleocene to Eocene times (Kaymakci et al., 2009; Şengör and Yılmaz, 1981; Sosson et al., *In press*). Prior to 90 Ma, the only post-Triassic accretion below the Pontides that can be attributed to northward subduction occurred in the so-called Kargı Massif in the center of the Pontides, where HP–LT metamorphic rocks with ages of 105 Ma and younger are found (Okay et al., 2006).

To the northeast of the eastern Pontides, the prominent *Greater Caucasus* fold-and-thrust belt is located (Fig. 1). The Greater Caucasus, of which Crimea is the western prolongation, has basement formed by the

Scythian Platform, i.e. the thinned margin of the East European Platform (Nikishin et al., 1996; Saintot et al., 2006b). The volcano-sedimentary cover of the Greater Caucasus is of Permian and younger age. Importantly, the Sinemurian/Pliensbachian to Aalenian are rift related series, that include MORB-resembling tholeiitic basalts of Aalenian age (~173 Ma, that may be comparable to the rift-related sequences in the eastern Pontides (Lordkipanidze et al., 1989; Okay and Şahintürk, 1997). Banks and Robinson (1997) envisaged that this area was occupied by en-echelon sets of rhomb-shaped rift basins, situated at the southern Eurasian margin. The Bajocian is characterized by calc-alkaline lavas, comparable to those in the Transcaucasus area (Fig. 1) (Adamia et al., 1981). The Greater Caucasus middle Jurassic volcanics have a subduction-related signature. However, it has been proposed that the volcanics

resulted from back-arc spreading in the vicinity of a subduction zone south of the Transcaucasus terrane in the Lesser Caucasus, or that the volcanic arc encompassed the Greater Caucasus in Bajocian times, due to a shallowing of the subducting slab, causing arc-volcanism ~200 km from the trench (McCann et al., 2010; Saintot et al., 2006a).

2.2. Plate tectonic history

There is some consensus as to the subduction zone configuration in the circum-Black Sea region prior to and following the Jurassic. In the late Triassic, the Anatolide–Tauride–South Armenian block (Fig. 1) – a continental terrane of African origin – rifted from the African margin, leading to the formation of intervening oceanic basins (Fig. 2) (Şengör

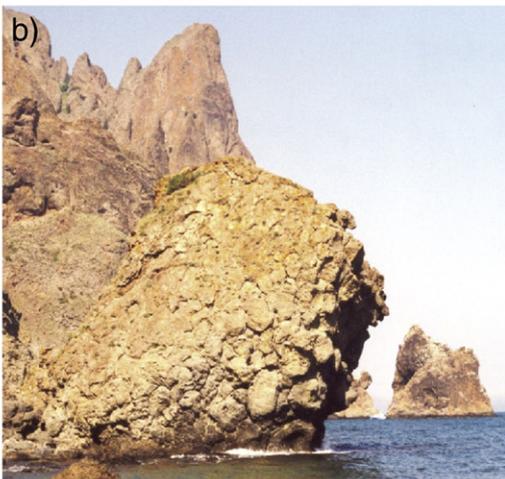
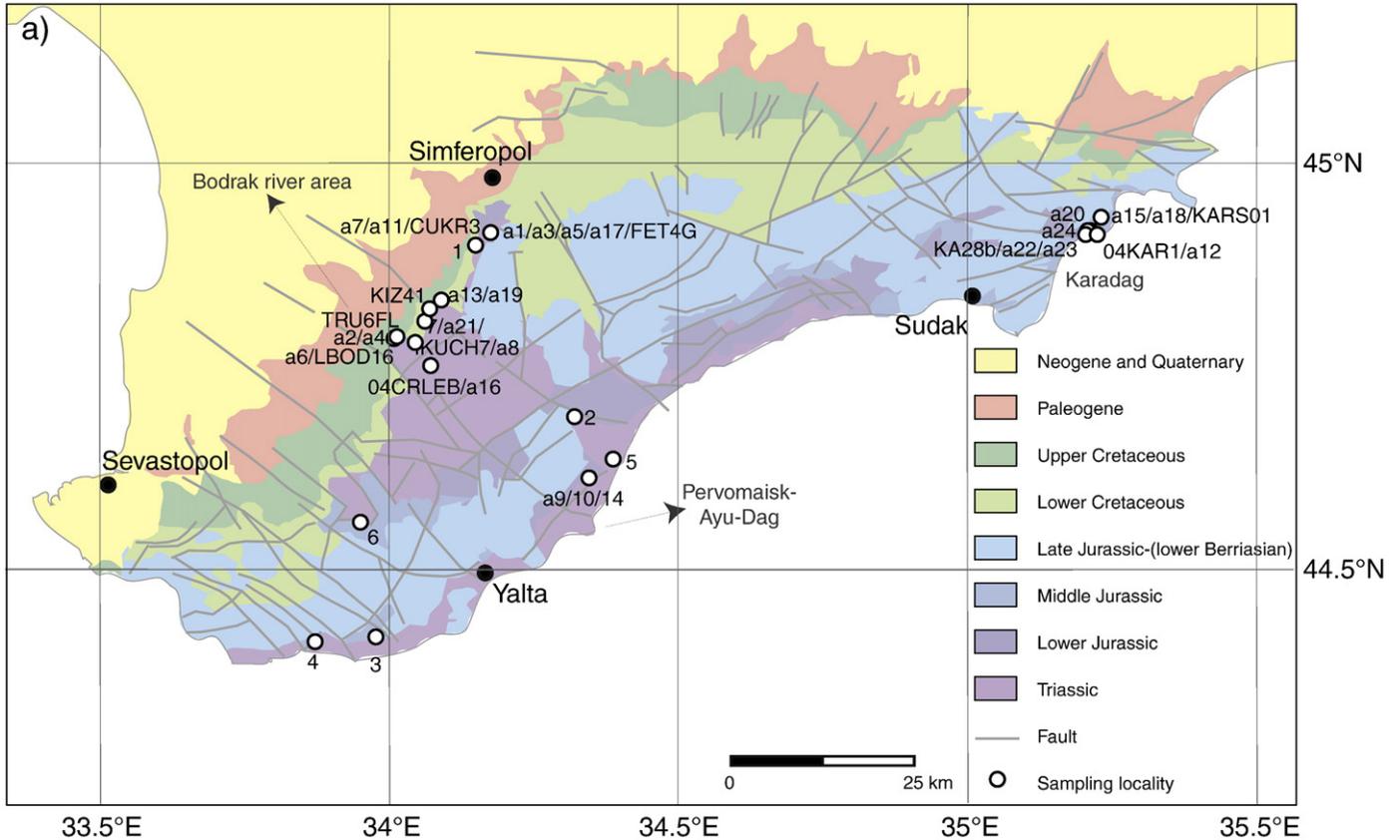


Fig. 3. a) Geological map of Crimea, based on Derenyuk et al. (1984) and Panek et al. (2009), with our sampling locations indicated. b) Tilted pillow basalts from Karadag (top to the left; sample 04KAR1). c) Verticalized columnar lava flow from Karadag (top to the left).

and Yilmaz, 1981). This movement had roughly a south to north sense. Apparent polar wander paths display little net S–N convergence between Africa and Eurasia until 120 Ma (Besse and Courtillot, 2002; Torsvik et al., 2008), and the rifting away of terranes away from the northern African margin must therefore have been accommodated by consumption of the Neo-Tethyan oceanic lithosphere by subduction along the southern Eurasian margin. The Triassic Karakaya complex, either interpreted as an inverted (back-arc) rift basin or as a former subduction zone (Genç and Yilmaz, 1995; Okay and Göncüoğlu, 2004; Pickett and Robertson, 2004), probably represents this subduction zone. This is further supported by the presence of Triassic blueschists (Bozkurt et al., 1997; Okay et al., 2002).

In Cretaceous times, there is evidence for northward subduction of Neo-Tethyan oceanic crust south of the Pontides, from ophiolitic fragments with metamorphic soles of 90 Ma and younger ages that are present within, as well as south of the east–west trending İzmir–Ankara–Erzincan suture zone (Çelik et al., 2006; Moix et al., 2008; Yalıniz et al., 2000). A widespread record of a late Cretaceous and younger volcanic arc record is located in the Pontides (Hippolyte et al., 2010; Okay et al., 2001b; Rice et al., 2006). An indication for pre-90 Ma Cretaceous subduction below the Pontides comes from cooling ages of subduction–accretion material in the Kargı window (Fig. 1) in the central Pontides, suggesting northward subduction below the Pontides from at least as early as ~105 Ma ago (Okay et al., 2006).

Very different views, however, exist on the subduction zone configuration of the modern Black Sea region in the Jurassic. For example, Dercourt et al. (1993, 2000) and more recently Barrier and Vrielynck (2008) place the Pontides at the southern continental margin of Eurasia in Jurassic times until the Cretaceous initiation of opening of the Black Sea. Alternative reconstructions by Stampfli and Borel (2002), Robertson et al. (2004) and Moix et al. (2008) separate the Pontides in Triassic to middle Jurassic times from the continental Eurasian margin by the small oceanic Küre basin. Supposedly, this ocean closed during southward subduction in late Triassic–middle Jurassic times (Stampfli and Kozur, 2006).

2.3. Geology of Crimea

Overall, the Crimean mountains have a northward-tilted structure, exposing in the south a complete Triassic to Tertiary sedimentary sequence. Boreholes indicate that Crimea is underlain by Paleozoic and/or older Eurasian basement (Gerasimov, 1994; Kruglov and Tsytko, 1988; Letavin, 1980; Mazarovich and Mileev, 1989; Milanovsky, 1991; Muratov, 1969). Its basement is likely part of the Scythian platform, which is the thinned margin of the East European Platform (EEP) (Gorbachev and Bogdanova, 1993; Saintot et al., 2006b; Stephenson et al., 2004). Although the overlying post-Paleozoic stratigraphy, which is locally intruded by minor (sub-) volcanic series, has been intensely studied, a number of controversies still exist.

The base of the entire stratigraphic sequence is made up by the Tauric group that is Triassic to lower Jurassic in age. The Tauric group is a sequence of highly deformed shales with intercalations of silicolites and coarser turbiditic material in the upper part, generally interpreted as an accretionary prism scraped off during the subsequent stages of subduction (Khain, 1984; Koronovsky and Mileev, 1974; Muratov et al., 1984). The Tauric group contains Paleozoic to Triassic olistoliths, mostly carbonates (Popadyuk and Smirnov, 1996), interpreted as material driven from the overriding plate during subduction. The turbiditic interval, dominated by sandstones in the upper part of the Tauric group, has been assigned middle Jurassic ages (Bajocian to Bathonian, possibly Callovian) (Lalomov, 2007; Muratov et al., 1984). The upper part changes to a large variety of clastic lithologies, such as coal or ooidic sandstones, mostly proximal littoral or continental. Northwards these lithologies grade to massive conglomerates (Lalomov, 2007), which indicates a syn-kinematic deposition coeval with the final stages of a regressive basin fill.

Several levels in this middle Jurassic sequence contain massive influx of volcanoclastic material, which indicates the onset of magmatic activity.

The Triassic to middle Jurassic sequences are intruded by magmatic bodies that were previously dated as Bajocian, based on cross-cutting relationships and faunal evidence (Latyshev and Panov, 2008; Spiridonov et al., 1990a,b; Sysolin and Pravikova, 2008).

The middle Jurassic (Bajocian) magmatism comprises volcanic complexes (with hypabyssal intrusive and extrusive bodies) and isolated igneous rocks in the Bodrak and Pervomaisk-Ayu-Dag areas in the western and central Crimean mountains, as well as the Karadag volcanic complex in eastern Crimean mountains (Fig. 3a). The Karadag complex consists of a volcano-sedimentary succession that was dated as Bajocian–Callovian on the basis of Bajocian fauna that intercalate with the lower volcanic sequence, and Bathonian to lower Callovian fauna that are present within the overlying sedimentary sequence (Voznesensky et al., 1998). Page et al. (1998), Latyshev and Panov (2008) and Sysolin and Pravikova (2008) suggest a tholeiitic island-arc setting for the production of these volcanics, based on geochemical analysis. Ages however, have not been confirmed by isotopic dating.

Table 1

Mineralogy of the samples selected for $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ dating, determined from microscope inspection.

KARS01	Nuee ardente (rhyolite)	Vitroclastic; white/green color; >25% pumiceous; fresh plagioclase, low amount however
04CRLEB	Andesite	Large fraction fresh hornblende; fresh biotite (large fraction, but less common than amphibole); porphyritic texture with interstitial calcite; pseudomorph glass?; pseudomorph augite; fresh plagioclase (common)
KA28b	Trachyte	Fresh plagioclase phenocrysts; porphyritic and microlithic texture; some plagioclase contains calcite
04KAR1	Pillow lava (basaltic) andesite	Porphyritic and finely microlithic texture with Vesicles in the glass; augite (slightly pleochroic); very fresh plagioclase; vesicles probably filled with clay
IKUCH7	(Trachy-)andesite	Chlorite probably pseudomorph in glass; plagioclase is interfingered with a matrix of chlorite (pseudomorph); alkali-feldspar grains present (one twin); probably phenocrysts of plagioclase; perhaps interstitial quartz; no ferromagnesium silicate
LBOD16	Basalt	Very fresh plagioclase; a lot of calcite in matrix, in patches; porphyritic and microlithic texture; some augite present; maybe some olivine present
FET4G	Andesitic lava with columnar joints	Porphyritic and microlithic texture; calcite is Replacing the plagioclase; feldspar not very fresh, but twins are visible; phenocrysts of plagioclase; plagioclase microliths; microcrystalline quartz present in vesicles
CUKR3	Alkali-syenite-monzonite	Some fresh amphibole present; K-feldspar is more or less fresh; plagioclase; ironoxides; interstitial quartz; completely crystalline; probably an intrusion, because minerals had time to grow over each other; no glass.
KIZ41	Andesitic lava	Phenocrysts of brown amphibole (hornblende) with black rims formed by iron oxides; biotite; few phenocrysts of zoned plagioclase; porphyritic and microlithic texture; matrix (~90%) is Essentially made of feldspar microcrystals, iron oxides and calcite.
TRU6FL	Andesitic lava	Almost completely crystalline rock, consists of 80% feldspar (orthose and plagioclase, sometimes zoned); remaining 20% twinned augites and iron oxides; porphyritic and microlithic texture

Renewed subsidence is recorded at the beginning of the late Jurassic by the deposition of nodular limestones and distal clastics, which cover massive conglomerates (Muratov et al., 1984; Robinson and Kerusov, 1997). The direct transition is often obscured, but in several places proximal sandy limestones precede the nodular limestones over an

unconformity (Lalomov, 2007). Zonenshain et al. (1990) proposed that the pebbles of the conglomerates were derived from the Pontides. More recently, it was argued that the conglomerates were probably sourced from within the basin itself (Hein, 2005). A general regressive pattern is subsequently observed by the deposition of upper Kimmeridgian to

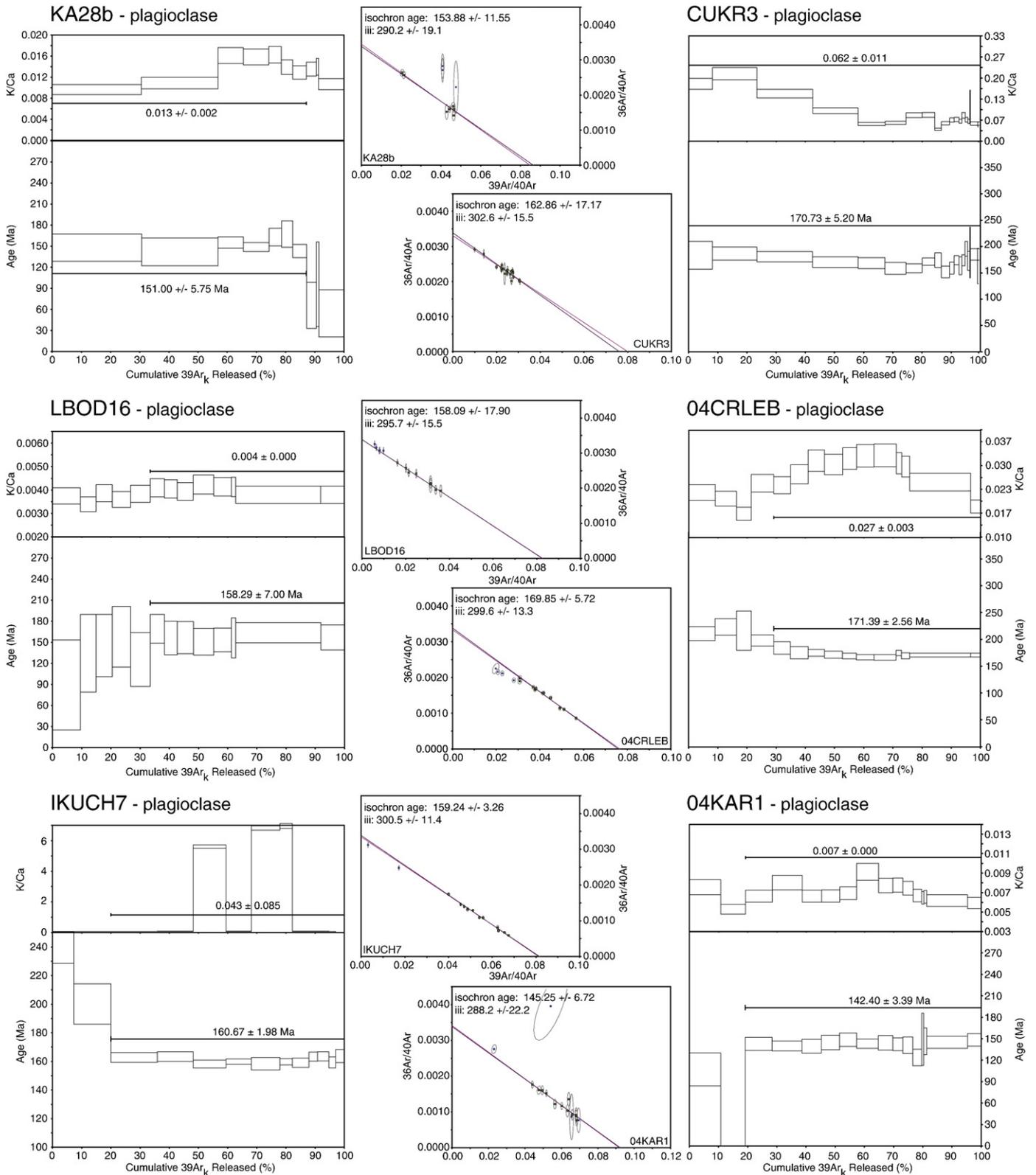


Fig. 4. Figure showing the incremental heating $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ spectra of 11 samples. The width of the bars/steps represents the 2σ analytical error. Weighted mean plateau ages are displayed. For all samples, also the K/Ca and inverse isochron diagrams, with their ages and inverse isochron intercept (iii) are shown.

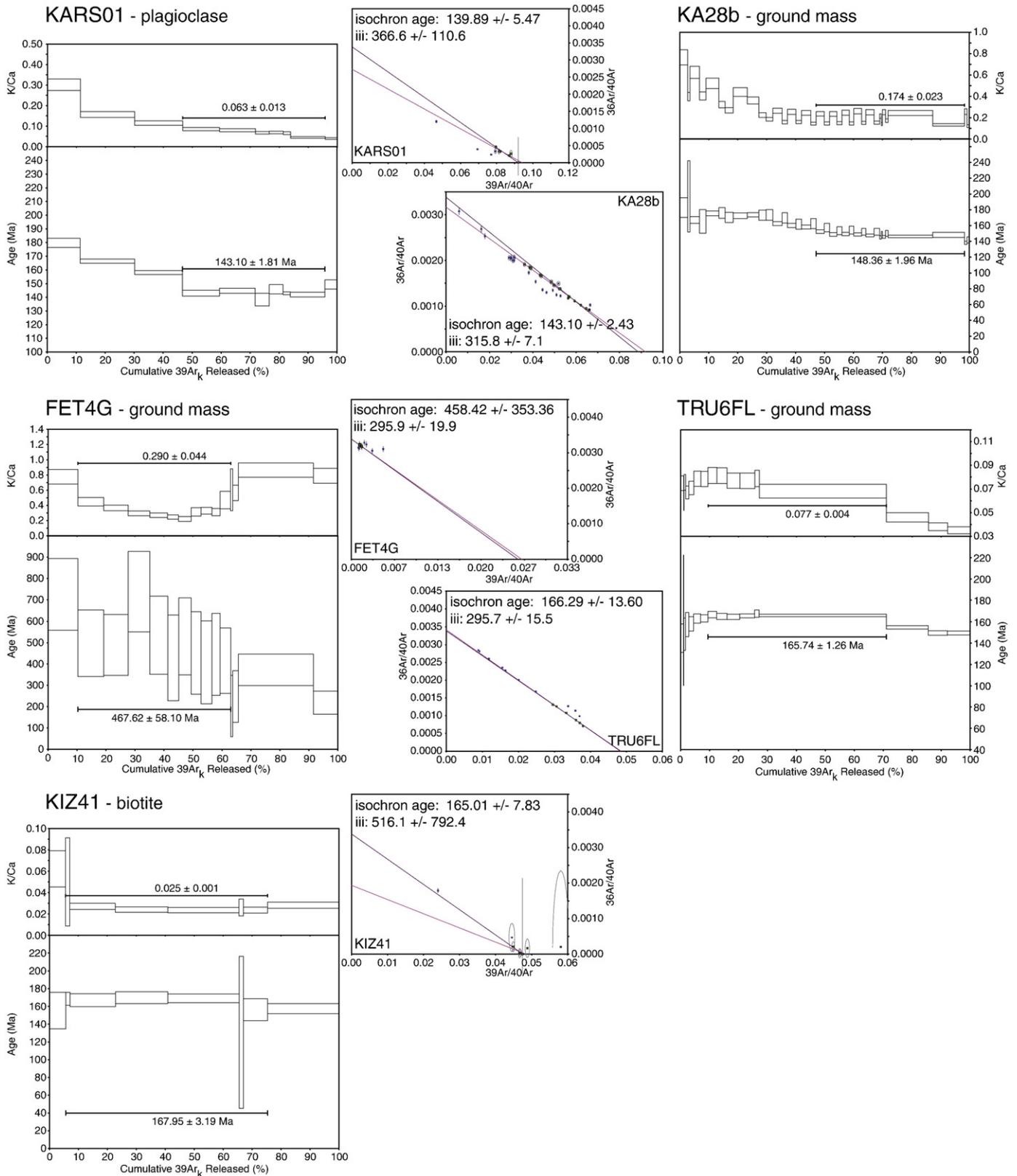


Fig. 4 (continued).

lower Berriasian massive reefal limestones that commonly grade laterally into carbonatic lithologies, such as slope or inner lagoon deposits (Arkad'ev et al., 2006; Arkad'ev and Rogov, 2006; Baraboshkin, 2003; Krajewski and Olszewska, 2006; Muratov et al., 1984; Robinson

et al., 1996). The upper Jurassic to lowermost Cretaceous (lower Berriasian) is folded and thrust southwards, forming the present-day nappe structure of the Crimean mountains (Mileyev et al., 1995; Nikishin et al., 1998; Popadyuk and Smirnov, 1991).

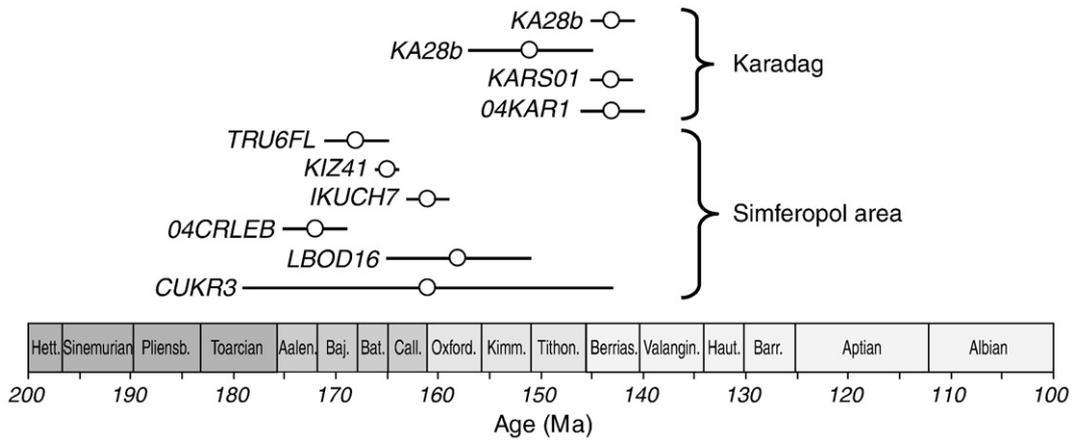


Fig. 5. Figure showing the $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ ages. There are clearly two age groups that are also geographically spread over two areas: the Karadag volcanic edifice and the Bodrak/Simferopol area. Hett. = Hettangian; Pliensb. = Pliensbachian; Aalen. = Aalenian; Baj. = Bajocian; Bat. = Bathonian; Call. = Callovian; Oxford. = Oxordian; Kimm. = Kimmeridgian; Tithon. = Tithonian; Berrias. = Berriasian; Valangin. = Valanginian; Haut. = Hauterivian; Barr. = Barremian.

This sequence is unconformably overlain by Neocomian marls and marly limestones, Aptian to Albanian grey pelagic clays (Popadyuk and Smirnov, 1991), upper Cretaceous carbonates and chalk, Paleocene calcarenites and Eocene nummulitic limestones (Fisher et al., 2005; Nikishin et al., 2008; Popadyuk and Smirnov, 1996). This entire Cretaceous to Eocene sequence is coeval with the main rifting stages of the Black Sea (Okay et al., 1994; Zonenshain and Le Pichon, 1986) and is well exposed on the northern flank of the Crimean mountains as a result of post-Eocene northward tilting ($\sim 5^\circ$). At the beginning of the Oligocene a thick succession of black paper shales with a high organic content was deposited, which is widely known as the Maikop facies (Finetti et al., 1988; Hudson et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 1996; Stolyarov and Ivleva, 2006). The overlying clastic carbonatic Miocene sequence is mostly distributed on the northern flank of the Crimean monocline.

3. Analyses and results

3.1. Sampling

We collected volcanic samples in the Bodrak/Simferopol area and from the Karadag volcanic edifice for isotopic dating and geochemical analysis (Fig. 3a). The samples were collected from intrusive rocks (plutonic bodies, hypabyssal sills and feeder dykes) and extrusive rocks (typically pillow lavas, rhyolitic nuées ardentes and columnar lava flows; Fig. 3b and c). Thirty-one samples were collected for XRF major and trace element analysis, and ten samples were selected for $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ dating (Table 1).

3.2. $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ dating

The ten freshest samples from the Crimean peninsula were selected for $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ dating after microscope inspection (Figs. 4 and 5, Tables 1 and 2). Groundmass, plagioclase and biotite were separated using standard mineral separation techniques. All samples were first crushed and sieved. Plagioclase and biotite crystals (either 125–250 μm or 200–250 μm fractions, see Table 2) were separated using heavy liquid separation and a Frantz magnet separator, followed by mineral picking under the microscope. For groundmass (samples KA28b and FET4G) the 250–500 μm fraction was selected for analysis. For the groundmass of sample KA28b we performed heavy liquid separations using two separate density ranges: $2.70 > \rho > 2.66 \text{ g/cm}^3$ and $\rho < 2.66 \text{ g/cm}^3$. For sample FET4G we used the density fraction of $2.90 > \rho > 2.70 \text{ g/cm}^3$. All separated fractions were leached with 1 N HNO_3 for one hour in an ultrasonic bath to clean samples before final re-picking by hand.

From all samples ~ 18 –30 mg of material was wrapped in aluminum foil and loaded in a 15 mm ID quartz vial. Only for samples KARS01 and

KA28b (both groundmass samples) 6 mg and 3 mg of material was loaded respectively, due to low amounts of material available. Between each set of 5 samples and at top and bottom positions, the in-house Drachenfels sanidine standard ($25.26 \pm 0.03 \text{ Ma}$, modified from Wijbrans et al. (1995)) was used as neutron fluence monitor. The loaded quartz vial was irradiated for 18 h in the Cd-lined RODEO P3 position of the High Flux Reactor in Petten, the Netherlands. $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ incremental heating experiments were carried out at the VU University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Standards were fused using a Synrad 48-5 50 W CO_2 laser. Samples were spread out evenly in a sample tray with 6 mm diameter holes and incrementally heated with a Raylase scan head as a beam delivery and diffuser system. In total, we performed 13 incremental heating experiments, on either plagioclase (8), groundmass (4) or biotite (1). For two samples both plagioclase and groundmass was separated (KA28b and FET4G) to validate the obtained ages.

After purification the gas was analysed with a Mass Analyzer Products LTD 215-50 noble gas mass spectrometer. Beam intensities were measured in a peak-jumping mode in 0.5 mass intervals over the mass range of 40–35.5 on a Balzers 217 secondary electron multiplier. After every four steps system blanks were measured. Mass discrimination was monitored by frequent analysis of aliquots of air. By interpolating between the individually measured standard using a second-order polynomial fitting the irradiation parameter J was determined for each unknown sample.

Ages were calculated using the in-house developed ArArCalc software (Koppers, 2002). All $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ ages were calculated using Steiger and Jäger (1977) decay constants. Uncertainties are reported at the 2σ level and include the analytical error and error in irradiation parameter (J). Correction factors for neutron interference reactions are $2.7 \pm 0.03 \times 10^{-4}$ for $(^{36}\text{Ar}/^{37}\text{Ar})_{\text{Ca}}$, $6.99 \pm 0.13 \times 10^{-4}$ for $(^{39}\text{Ar}/^{37}\text{Ar})_{\text{Ca}}$ and $1.83 \pm 0.2 \times 10^{-2}$ for $(^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar})_{\text{K}}$.

The results of the $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ analyses are summarized in Table 2 and Figs. 4 and 5. Full analytical data are given in the Supplementary Data. All steps yielding less than 2% $^{39}\text{Ar}_{\text{K}}$ were excluded in incremental heating spectra, but are included in the full analytical data tables (Tables 1 and 2). To define a reliable plateau age; i) at least three successive incremental heating steps should be included for calculation of a plateau age. ii) The steps that are used to calculate the plateau ages should represent more than 50% of the total $^{39}\text{Ar}_{\text{K}}$ released (e.g. Fleck et al., 1977). The mean squared weighted deviation (MSWD) over the plateau steps is a measure for plateau homogeneity, and should ideally range between 1.0 and 2.5, this was however not always the case (Table 2). We also checked for a relatively constant K/Ca ratio in the successive included incremental heating steps. The $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{36}\text{Ar}$ ratio was monitored to assess excess argon in the system (i.e. within 2σ error of 295.5). If no

Table 2
 Summary of $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ results. MSWD: mean square weighted deviates, N: number of steps included (excluded) in the plateau age, $^{39}\text{Ar}/\text{Ar}_k$ (%): percentage of $^{39}\text{Ar}_k$ released by plateau steps, $^{40}\text{Ar}_r$: radiogenic amount of $^{40}\text{Ar}_r$. Errors are given at 95% confidence level. Ages were calculated using the in-house developed ArArCalc software (Koppers, 2002). All $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ ages were calculated using Steiger and Jäger (1977) decay constants at the 2 level and include the analytical error and error in irradiation parameter (J). Correction factors for neutron interference reactions are $2.7 \pm 0.03 \times 10^{-4}$ for $(^{39}\text{Ar}/^{37}\text{Ar})_{\text{Ca}}$, $6.99 \pm 0.13 \times 10^{-4}$ for $(^{39}\text{Ar}/^{37}\text{Ar})_{\text{K}}$ and $1.83 \pm 0.2 \times 10^{-2}$ for $(^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar})_{\text{K}}$. Strikethrough plateau ages indicate error plateaus.

Irradiation	sample ID	Lab ID	Mineral	Fraction (mm)	J (+/−0.4%)	Plateau age (Ma)	MSWD	N	$^{39}\text{Ar}/\text{Ar}_k$ (%) in plateau	$^{40}\text{Ar}_r$ (%)	K/Ca	Total fusion age (Ma)	Inverse isochron age (Ma)	Inverse isochron intercept
VU65-B2	FET4G	07MX363	plagioclase	200–250	0.0075000	No plateau	–	–	–	–	–	4134.9 ± 9.7	–	–
VU65-B3	KA28b	07MX364	plagioclase	200–250	0.0075540	151.0 ± 5.8	2.00	7 (5)	81.34	45.07	0.013 ± 0.002	201.3 ± 57.6	153.8 ± 11.6	290.2 ± 19.1
VU65-B4	CUKR3	07MX365	plagioclase	125–250	0.0075580	170.7 ± 5.2	3.53	19 (1)	99.96	31.73	0.062 ± 0.011	174.3 ± 4.4	162.9 ± 17.2	302.6 ± 15.5
VU65-B5	LBOD16	07MX366	plagioclase	200–250	0.0075630	158.3 ± 7.0	0.39	13 (5)	66.53	32.50	0.004/0.000	148.5 ± 9.6	158.1 ± 17.9	295.7 ± 15.5
VU65-B6	04CRLEB	07MX368	plagioclase	200–250	0.0075670	171.3 ± 2.6	1.53	15 (4)	70.85	55.33	0.027 ± 0.003	184.1 ± 3.5	169.9 ± 5.7	299.6 ± 13.3
VU65-B8	IKUCH7	07MX369	plagioclase	125–250	0.0075760	160.4 ± 2.0	2.42	21 (3)	81.41	64.28	0.039 ± 0.045	176.8 ± 6.4	159.2 ± 3.3	300.5 ± 11.4
VU65-B9	04KAR1	07MX370	plagioclase	200–250	0.0075800	143.2 ± 2.9	0.45	16 (4)	70.56	68.38	0.007 ± 0.000	112.3 ± 3.3	145.3 ± 6.7	288.2 ± 22.2
VU65-B10	KARS01	07MX371	plagioclase	125–250	0.0075840	143.1 ± 1.8	2.49	10 (4)	49.18	92.25	0.063 ± 0.013	154.4 ± 1.7	139.9 ± 5.5	366.6 ± 110.6
VU65-B11	KA28b	07MX373	ground mass	250–500	0.0075880	152.0 ± 2.5	2.00	20 (13)	24.43	49.68	0.150 ± 0.007	162.8 ± 3.1	140.4 ± 7.9	319.4 ± 15.8
VU65-B12	KA28b	07MX374	ground mass	250–500	0.0075930	148.5 ± 1.8	0.59	19 (15)	16.91	66.37	0.248 ± 0.012	161.0 ± 2.3	142.8 ± 10.0	319.1 ± 40.7
Comb.	KA28b	Comb.	ground mass	250–500	–	148.4 ± 2.0	4.55	39 (23)	50.15	59.72	0.174 ± 0.023	161.3 ± 2.1	143.1 ± 2.4	313.8 ± 7.1
VU65-B14	FET4G	07MX375	ground mass	250–500	0.0076010	467.6 ± 58.1	0.29	15 (6)	45.24	5.32	0.290 ± 0.044	473.7 ± 42.2	458.4 ± 353.4	295.9 ± 19.9
VU52-B8	KIZ41	05MY313	biotite	250–500	0.0046470	168.0 ± 3.2	1.03	10 (4)	68.22	96.82	0.025 ± 0.001	162.5 ± 3.7	165.0 ± 7.8	516.1 ± 792.4
VU52-B4	TRU6FL	05MY027	ground mass	250–500	0.0046620	165.7 ± 1.3	0.54	17 (11)	61.59	70.34	0.077 ± 0.004	161.1 ± 1.2	166.3 ± 3.0	292.8 ± 13.6

plateau age could be calculated or the sample suffered from excess argon, an isochron age was determined. This was the case for samples CUKR3 and IKUCH7. For sample KARS01 we decided to use the plateau age, despite the somewhat high MSWD value (2.49), because of the poor determination of the inverse isochron intercept (Table 2). The isotopic ages from the groundmass of both KA28b samples with different densities yielded comparable plateau ages (151 ± 3 Ma and 149 ± 2 Ma) that are likely to be high estimates of the true emplacement age because of a high initial $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{36}\text{Ar}$ ratio of 315.8 ± 6.9 that indicates the presence of excess ^{40}Ar . The data were combined in a single isochron age of 143 ± 2 Ma that we feel dates the emplacement event more reliably. From the remaining eleven processed samples, eight plateau ages and a single isochron age were calculated. The two fractions of groundmass of sample FET4G did not yield geologically meaningful results.

3.3. Geochemistry

Major and trace elements were determined from 31 samples by XRF measurements on fused glass beads and pressed powder pellets at the VU University Amsterdam. International standards are used for calibration and in-house samples run as internal monitors. Results are displayed in Table 3. Loss on ignition (LOI) where determined at 1000°C to provide an indication of the degree of low temperature alteration. The LOI vary from 1.1 to 20.1%. The major element compositions of samples with LOI's higher than 6% (samples 3, 4, a6 and a16) are not considered further.

From the TAS classification diagram (Irvine and Baragar, 1971; Le Maître et al., 1989) (Fig. 6) a subalkaline to tholeiitic trend can be observed in the samples, that range in composition from basaltic andesites to dacites (older age group) and dacites to rhyolites (the two yellow triangles; younger age group, Karadag). The most mafic rock (a1) contains 8.6 wt.% MgO and is a trachybasalt. The subalkaline to tholeiitic trend in the samples rules out the possibility that volcanism was related to early stages of rifting in, for example, a back arc environment, which would have produced alkaline volcanism. Moderately compatible trace element contents (REE, Sr, Zr etc.) have abundances comparable to E-MORB; i.e. in the range of 5–10 times that of primitive mantle (Sun and McDonough, 1989). In contrast, the large ion lithophile element (LILE, e.g. Rb, Ba and K) record significant variations but with most concentrations significantly higher than the E-MORB and the most mafic samples with >30 times primitive mantle. This general enrichment in LILE contrasts with that of the high field strength elements (HFSE, e.g. Nb), which is close to primitive mantle values in the more mafic samples and always below E-MORB concentrations. The low Nb concentration compared to the LILE and LREE is a characteristic of subduction-related volcanism. In a Ce/Nb versus Zr diagram (Fig. 7a), the elevated Ce/Nb ratios of the entire suite compared to values between 1.8 and 3 for MORB and E-MORB. However, there is no clear trace element difference between the older and younger age groups of volcanics.

The similarity in the trace element geochemistry between the two volcanic suites is emphasized in Fig. 7b. The entire sample suites show a general coherent differentiation trend in a Zr/Y versus Zr diagram (Fig. 7b). The Ce/Y ratio in Fig. 7c is used as a proxy for REE fractionation. The relatively large range in Ce/Y indicates that either the entire suite has undergone variable fractionation involving some minor phases or that there have been different degrees of partial melting in the source. We rule out the possibility of greater fractional crystallization being the dominant process because of coherence of diagrams showing Zr/Y, Ce/Nb or Ce/Y versus Zr. Therefore, it is more likely that the LREE/HREE fractionation is caused by partial melting processes in the mantle, possibly resulting from variations in heat or water in the source or variable amounts of decompression.

4. Discussion

4.1. Nature and age of Crimean volcanism

Our $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ ages define two age groups: an older age group (middle-late Jurassic ages, ~172–158 Ma) and a younger age group (late Jurassic–early Cretaceous, ~151–142) (Fig. 5). The older group comes from the Bodrak/Simferopol area, whereas the younger group comes from the Karadag volcanic edifice on the southeastern shore of the island.

Magmatic rocks from both age groups belong to similar magmatic complexes. The magmatics of the older group (Simferopol area) are present as plutonic bodies, sills and feeder dykes within the pre-upper Jurassic sedimentary units and as lava flows. Magmatic rocks from the younger group (Karadag) are present within an isolated volcanic complex, and have not been seen to interfinger with the Triassic–Jurassic stratigraphy. From the major and trace element analysis, however, we cannot make a clear distinction between the younger and older age groups (Figs. 6 and 7). Therefore, we conclude that volcanics of both age groups result from the same geological processes. The geochemistry is in line with a setting above a subduction zone, and the results lead us to suggest that the sampled magmatic rocks are relics of a volcanic arc.

The middle Jurassic ages for the Crimean volcanics in the Bodrak area are in agreement with proposed ages from earlier studies (Spiridonov et al., 1990a,b). The latest Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous ages (151–142 Ma) obtained for the Karadag volcanics, however, are in conflict with ages obtained from biostratigraphic dating. Further, no remnants of volcanics or ashes have been found intercalating with time-equivalent, uppermost Jurassic platform carbonates.

Muratov (1960) and Voznesensky et al. (1998) reported that the lower part of the Karadag volcanic sequence yields Bajocian (~176.6–167.7 Ma) fauna, and that the volcanic complex is overlain by Bathonian to lower Callovian clays (~167.7–161.2 Ma) (Ogg, 2004), which casts doubt on the latest Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous ages. Alternatively, if the ages of the sediments based on biostratigraphy are correct, the contact between the overlying Jurassic rocks and the Karadag volcanic complex must be a thrust. This is possible given the tectonized nature of the Karadag complex: the sequence is heavily folded and faulted (Fig. 3b and c) (Voznesensky et al., 1998). The upper Jurassic platform carbonates are much less deformed than the Karadag volcanic complex. Possibly, the deformation of the Karadag complex is related to its location of Karadag at the Black Sea coast.

Assuming that our obtained ages are correct, the fact that no remnants of latest Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous volcanism can be traced in the upper Jurassic platform carbonates may have three possible explanations: it could imply that either a) the upper Jurassic carbonates or b) the Karadag volcanic complex have an allochthonous origin or that c) the volcanics erupted in intra-Berriasian times, the Berriasian on Crimea being marked by an unconformity.

The first of these possibilities, an allochthonous origin of the carbonate platform – emplaced during the Berriasian – has been proposed by Milejev et al. (1996). This seems very unlikely, however, because it would imply that exactly the time-interval that is covered by the carbonate platform is missing in the entire Crimean stratigraphy, except for the Kimmeridgian conglomerates (see *Geology of Crimea* section). Furthermore, Milejev et al. (1996) propose a displacement of the carbonate platform of only 15–20 km, which would still not explain the absence of volcanics in the carbonate platform. If the carbonate platform would have been transported further than the distance proposed by Milejev et al. (1996), the most likely origin of an allochthonous carbonate platform would be from the Turkish Pontides. In the Turkish Pontides however, the carbonate platform covers also the Callovian interval (Altiner et al., 1991; Rojay and Altiner, 1998), in contrast to Crimea. It would therefore be unlikely that the entire carbonate platform, except for the Callovian part, would have been transported from the Pontides.

The second possibility is an allochthonous origin of the Karadag aged volcanic complex, but this only transfers the problem of the presence of uppermost Jurassic to lowermost Cretaceous volcanics to other areas, because in the Greater Caucasus and the Pontides there are also no remnants of volcanism present in carbonates of this age.

The third option, the eruption of the volcanics in the middle Berriasian, instead of the latest Jurassic–earliest Cretaceous, is in agreement with our obtained ages (Fig. 5). This time interval is marked by uplift and erosion on Crimea (Milejev et al., 1995; Nikishin et al., 2001), followed by conglomerate deposition in the late Berriasian. Volcanic activity would then occur during emersion and erosion of the carbonate platform. The third option would be a mechanism to reconcile the ages of the volcanics with the regional biostratigraphic constraints, although we cannot ignore the large difference between the stratigraphic and isotopic ages and the fact that no volcanic relics can be found in the Berriasian stratigraphy.

The conflict between the biostratigraphic and isotopic ages needs to be resolved by further investigations of the Karadag volcanic complex. Re-analysis of the biostratigraphy may shed conclusive light on this matter. The good agreement between the isotopic and biostratigraphic age groups in the Simferopol area (older age group), leads us to conclude that in the middle Jurassic Crimea was placed in an overriding plate of a subduction zone that lies to the south of Crimea, because there is no evidence for a suture north of the peninsula.

In the early Cretaceous, Crimea was covered with rift-related sediments. The rift sediments are likely associated with the opening of the Black Sea basins, as a result of back-arc spreading. Crimea was thus in an overriding plate position in the Jurassic (as earlier proposed by Zonenshain and Le Pichon (1986)), as well as during the early Cretaceous and younger development of the Black Sea.

4.2. Implications for the Jurassic circum-Black Sea paleosubduction zone configuration

The $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ isotopic dating of Crimean volcanics reveals an age range of ~172–142 Ma and our geochemical analyses suggest that volcanism is subduction-related. The latest Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous isotopic ages however, are in conflict with the biostratigraphy. Therefore, we conclude that middle Jurassic subduction took place below Crimea (Fig. 8a). If the latest Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous ages can be confirmed by future studies, we can conclude that subduction continued until the earliest Cretaceous and that the distance between Crimea and the subduction zone was more or less constant in the entire time span, as there is no major change from tholeiitic basalts to more evolved andesitic-rhyolites.

The presence of a volcanic arc places Crimea on the overriding plate of a subduction zone. Given the fact that Crimea overlies Scythian basement of the East European Platform (Saintot et al., 2007; Stephenson et al., 2004), subduction must have been directed northward (Fig. 8a). This contradicts reconstructions of Stampfli and Borel (2002) who prefer a southward Jurassic subduction zone between Crimea and the Pontides, with a polarity of subduction below the Pontides. For the southward subduction of the Küre ocean below the Pontides, as envisaged by Moix et al. (2008), we can now conclude that it must have been closed by 170 Ma, for since that time we can demonstrate northward subduction.

Northward subduction below Crimea from middle Jurassic to early Cretaceous times thus implies the presence of a northward directed subduction zone south of Crimea. There are two possible options for the location of an approximately east–west trending trench: 1) between Crimea, and the İstanbul and Sakarya zones and 2) south of the Pontides. Because the eastern Pontides also have a volcanic arc record in the middle Jurassic (Şen, 2007), the trench should be positioned south of the eastern Pontides, as well as south of the Greater Caucasus and Lesser Caucasus, because of the subduction-related middle Jurassic volcanics in those areas. A recent study by Genç and Tüysüz (2010) shows evidence

Table 3
Geochemical data (major and trace elements) from whole rock analyses of 31 samples.

Sample	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	a1	a2	a3	a4	a5	a6	a7	a8
Original sample code	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	FET4H	TRU6FL	FET4	TRU6DY	FET4G	LBOD16	CUKR3	IKUCH7
Sampling latitude (°)	44.900	44.689	44.416	44.410	44.636	44.558	44.806	44.915	44.786	44.915	44.786	44.915	44.785	44.900	44.780
Sampling longitude (°)	34.141	34.322	99.978	33.873	34.389	33.952	34.045	34.176	33.994	34.176	33.994	34.176	33.992	34.142	34.029
Rock type	andesite	basaltic andesite	basalt	basalt	rhyolite	basaltic andesite	andesite	andesitic basalt	andesitic basalt	grano-diorite	basalt	andesite	basalt	alkali-syenite-monzonite	(trachy-) andesite
<i>Major elements</i>															
SiO ₂ (%)	59.09	52.48	33.34	46.97	71.88	52.95	57.02	50.79	53.55	59.43	51.00	56.78	48.90	56.54	57.01
TiO ₂ (%)	1.25	0.76	0.65	0.71	0.14	0.74	0.71	1.13	0.70	1.40	0.79	1.58	0.63	1.21	0.68
Al ₂ O ₃ (%)	14.78	18.08	13.76	15.71	14.19	16.15	17.71	16.33	18.90	13.91	21.32	14.38	15.48	15.31	18.60
Fe ₂ O ₃ (%)	9.99	9.53	9.02	9.03	3.39	10.25	8.33	10.93	9.61	10.54	8.63	12.02	8.81	10.93	8.44
MnO (%)	0.14	0.16	0.24	0.20	0.12	0.16	0.12	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.12	0.14	0.34	0.14	0.19
MgO (%)	4.23	5.72	2.18	5.10	0.17	10.23	3.33	8.60	4.69	3.38	3.20	2.81	4.56	5.36	2.61
CaO (%)	4.87	8.22	38.07	17.23	1.95	5.00	7.33	6.61	8.22	3.70	8.01	5.45	17.95	3.75	7.07
Na ₂ O (%)	5.48	3.98	0.75	2.87	5.22	4.58	3.48	4.57	3.17	5.67	4.81	6.11	1.56	5.47	3.74
K ₂ O (%)	0.35	0.54	0.01	0.28	1.22	0.12	0.62	0.61	0.57	0.10	1.22	0.18	0.36	0.45	1.00
P ₂ O ₅ (%)	0.10	0.09	0.15	0.10	0.05	0.11	0.10	0.16	0.07	0.13	0.09	0.16	0.07	0.11	0.26
BaO (%)	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.09	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.04
MgO + CaO (%)	9.10	13.94	40.25	22.33	2.12	15.23	10.66	15.21	12.91	7.08	11.21	8.26	22.51	9.11	9.68
sum (%)	100.28	99.59	98.18	98.29	98.35	100.32	98.75	99.97	99.67	98.41	99.19	99.60	98.67	99.28	99.63
LOI (%)	3.42	4.06	20.07	13.16	2.36	4.90	2.11	4.49	1.40	4.70	3.96	5.49	10.14	2.68	2.35
<i>Trace elements</i>															
V ppm	324	262	282	260	6	258	198	329	303	323	288	348	283	315	80
Cr ppm	12	41	27	429	7	353	6	168	13	9	8	3	648	23	6
Co ppm	34	36	24	36		43	20	41	25	42	23	32	48	32	13
Ba ppm	41	135	21	800	190	173	141	504	115		149	2	156	38	311
Sc ppm	28	31	47	39	7	29	22	32	29	31	27	32	41	29	15
Ga ppm	15	16	27	15	16	15	18	15	17	13	18	14	15	13	15
Zn ppm	67	75	63	78	76	102	78	71	81	79	67	83	75	75	72
Cu ppm	12	20	48	57	1	63	11	116	35	42	51	16	91	37	3
Ni ppm	10	18	20	119	4	107	5	46	7	13	9	5	195	16	4
Mo ppm					1	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2
Nb ppm	1.6		1.0		2.6		1.2	2.5	1.1	1.5		1.6	1.2	1.6	3.3
Y ppm	28	17	15	12	35	16	24	18	20	34	18	40	15	28	21
Zr ppm	85	47	43	40	152	46	64	52	44	92	45	104	35	82	88
Sr ppm	121	240	74	445	109	276	188	451	255	45	488	85	210	137	357
Rb ppm	4.1	14.8		6.3	35.7	3.2	11.7	19.5	9.3	2.8	24.7	6.5	7.5	5.8	35.9
Th ppm		1.2	2.4	1.6	4.5	2.0	1.3						1.1		2.2
Pb ppm				1.1	7.7	2.5	1.8	1.3	3.3	2.2	5.2		4.4	1.1	3.6
La ppm		3.9	9.7	6.4	15.9	6.0	6.2	9.3	2.7	3.4	5.8	3.8	4.7	1.1	11.3
Ce ppm	12.4	14.2	21.1	6.7	44.0	11.3	18.7	17.4	10.8	14.6	12.9	11.6	4.4	11.0	32.1
Pr ppm	2.8	3.0	3.4	2.1	5.5	2.8	3.3	3.4	2.5	3.3	3.1	3.2	1.8	2.6	5.4
Nd ppm	10.2	9.8	13.8	5.0	21.0	9.3	12.1	11.1	9.7	12.1	10.3	9.2	6.8	8.2	17.9
Sm ppm	2.8	2.7	2.5	1.6	4.1	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.3	3.3	2.7	3.3	2.2	2.7	3.7

for subduction below the Sakarya Zone (western and central Pontides) in the middle Jurassic, therefore ruling out the possibility of the presence of a subduction zone between the Sakarya terrane and Crimea (Fig. 1). This option is also less favored, because the eastern Pontides were positioned in an overriding plate position. The configuration would then require a transform fault between the western and eastern Pontides, which seems to be precluded by the apparent continuity of the basement terranes from the western to the eastern Pontides.

It thus seems most likely that the Pontides as a whole were positioned in an overriding plate position in the Jurassic. An important implication of this inference, however, is that the volcanic arc in the western and central Pontide segment, as well as Crimea, is located ~500 km to the north of the subduction zone, when correcting for ~100–150 km of extension related to the opening of the Black Sea (Cloetingh et al., 2003; Shillington et al., 2008; Starostenko et al., 2004). Comparable estimates would be reached for the Transcaucasus and Caucasus segment. Although this distance is large, given general trench–arc distances on the order of 100–200 km, it is not exceptional. Arc–trench distances of 400 km (e.g. South American Andes) or even 600 km (Aleutian trench) (Gutscher et al., 2000) are generally attributed to flat-slab subduction (Brocher et al., 1994; Gutscher et al., 2000; van Hunen et al., 2002).

A fairly continuous trench south of the Pontides to at least as far east as the Caucasus region thus seems the most likely configuration in the middle Jurassic, and possibly until the earliest Cretaceous (Fig. 8a). In early Cretaceous times, this subduction zone likely started to retreat, with the Black Sea basin opening as back-arc basin (Fig. 8b).

5. Conclusion

This study shows that the sampled Crimean volcanics – previously assumed to be middle Jurassic in age – yield middle Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous ⁴⁰Ar/³⁹Ar ages (~172–142 Ma, i.e. ~Bajocian to Berriasian) (Fig. 8a). The late Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous ages come from a single volcanic complex and are in conflict with the biostratigraphy, which requires further research. Our new geochemical data suggest that the volcanics were formed in a subduction setting on the overriding plate, indicating a period of northward subduction below the Eurasian margin. The trench–arc distance derived from samples of all ages appears more or less constant, as there is no significant change from tholeiitic basalts to more evolved andesitic–rhyolites. After the Jurassic period characterized by arc-volcanism, the area is subject to (back-arc) rifting, with the opening the Black Sea basins (Fig. 8b) since the early Cretaceous. We

a9	a10	a11	a12	a13	a14	a15	a16	a17	a18	a19	a20	a21	a22	a23	a24
NCHA21	MCHA21	04CRPET	04KAR1	PAR2	OCHA21	KARSD	04CRLEB	FET4B	KARS2	04CRPAR	04KAR2	KIZ41	KA28b	KA28b	04KAR3
44.613	44.613	44.900	44.913	44.833	44.613	44.934	44.752	44.915	44.934	44.833	44.918	44.806	44.913	44.913	44.918
34.346	34.346	34.142	35.225	34.073	34.346	35.232	34.055	34.176	35.232	34.073	35.213	34.045	35.205	35.205	35.209
rhyolite	rhyolite	andesite	(basaltic) andesite	trachyte	rhyolite	rhyolite (nuée ardente)	andesite	andesitic basalt	rhyolite (nuée ardente)	andesite	rhyolite	andesite	trachyte	trachyte	rhyolite
70.45	68.12	57.16	58.05	64.98	68.90	76.12	46.32	54.87	75.13	65.98	69.06	58.95	70.20	66.37	69.17
0.30	0.29	1.01	0.88	0.36	0.30	0.09	1.24	1.09	0.09	0.36	0.85	0.81	0.69	0.65	0.68
15.56	14.97	16.51	17.75	16.91	15.84	11.62	16.98	16.02	12.23	17.21	13.27	17.76	14.46	16.29	15.19
5.15	4.97	9.70	7.30	4.35	5.20	0.84	10.93	10.45	0.82	4.38	5.63	7.54	3.54	4.35	3.05
0.14	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.04	0.19	0.19	0.07	0.14	0.26	0.08	0.11	0.17	0.12
0.45	0.41	4.97	2.92	1.57	0.47	0.36	9.85	7.64	0.37	1.48	0.86	2.74	0.37	0.78	0.38
3.31	3.64	4.44	9.06	4.13	3.13	1.52	12.76	2.89	1.27	4.34	1.40	5.60	4.04	5.66	2.01
4.77	4.40	4.90	2.74	5.01	3.89	3.61	1.64	6.47	2.87	4.58	7.23	3.65	3.79	3.63	7.54
1.30	1.20	0.65	0.31	1.09	1.13	1.92	0.49	0.12	3.91	1.65	0.20	1.52	1.51	1.75	1.30
0.10	0.10	0.11	0.23	0.12	0.11	0.02	0.29	0.10	0.01	0.12	0.32	0.15	0.23	0.22	0.25
0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.02	0.08	0.05	0.03
3.76	4.05	9.41	11.98	5.70	3.60	1.88	22.61	10.53	1.64	5.82	2.26	8.34	4.41	6.44	2.39
101.53	98.25	99.61	99.40	98.69	99.11	96.17	100.73	99.84	96.81	100.28	99.08	98.81	99.01	99.91	99.72
3.50	4.16	4.20	2.11	2.82	4.29	5.79	7.13	2.82	4.76	2.98	1.25	1.35	0.56	1.12	1.19
15	16	298	296	59	17	4	353	292	3	56	150	123	71	105	44
4	4	29	6	1	4		583	43		2	9	37	3	9	2
5	4	26	19	9	5	1	51	40	2	8	10	13	7	6	6
188	205	113	114	277	200	370	287	49	367	429	16	179	699	434	219
15	16	27	27	10	15	2	38	34	2	10	21	23	16	18	14
17	17	19	17	15	19	9	17	16	9	15	9	18	14	16	8
89	78	82	78	68	82	34	81	68	44	64	111	86	68	63	88
2	1	31	68	3	1	1	58	33		2	6	11	5	8	2
5	6	15	8	4	5	5	196	25	5	5	5	16	5	5	5
3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.3	3.3	2.2	1.7	1.6	3.2	2.1	3.4	1.1	2.1	1.7	3.7	3.0	3.5	3.1	3.4
37	36	27	26	19	35	19	21	29	14	18	32	25	29	29	39
137	136	79	72	84	135	74	62	74	74	84	116	89	101	113	116
196	125	63	275	184	184	231	357	155	147	176	18	214	206	239	33
36.8	33.9	2.8	4.0	22.8	27.6	40.4	18.7	1.6	60.8	23.1	2.1	24.2	25.1	33.9	15.4
3.9	4.2		2.5	1.5	4.2	7.1	1.3		7.1	2.0	5.3	2.0	3.3	4.3	4.2
6.6	5.9	2.9	5.6	5.3	4.7	8.8	1.6	0.7	7.5	5.3	14.8	6.6	5.6	7.8	8.8
13.9	13.7	7.8	14.6	9.5	12.9	17.7	12.4	2.4	15.0	11.7	17.2	9.2	15.3	18.6	14.3
38.9	35.6	16.5	35.4	24.9	37.9	34.2	24.4	9.3	27.2	23.8	49.7	22.2	35.8	43.7	38.0
5.7	5.1	3.5	4.8	3.5	5.4	4.2	3.7	2.5	3.3	4.0	6.1	4.1	4.9	5.9	5.4
20.7	17.5	10.3	17.2	13.0	20.3	13.5	14.9	10.0	10.6	13.5	26.1	12.6	14.8	20.8	19.4
3.7	3.1	2.9	3.4	2.1	3.5	2.0	4.0	2.7	1.3	2.4	4.5	2.8	2.8	3.8	3.7

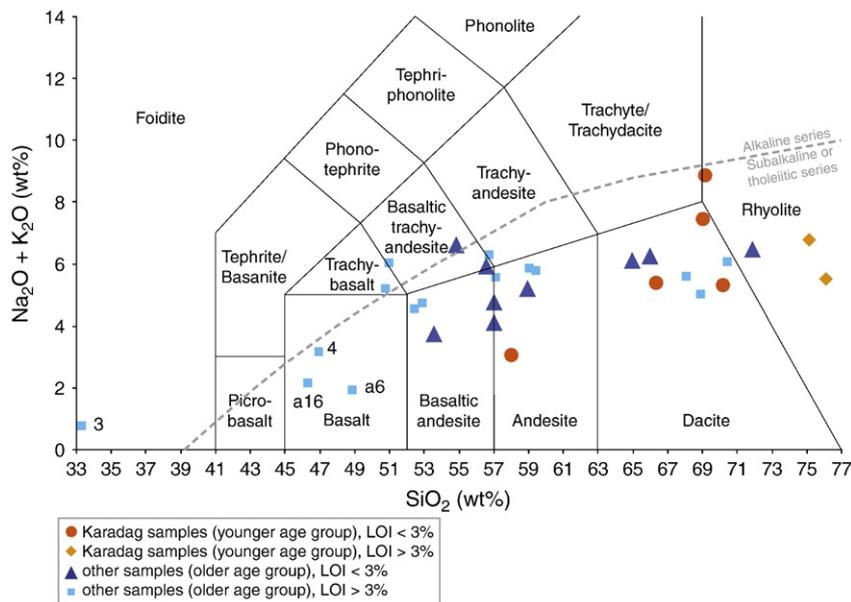


Fig. 6. Plot of magmatic rocks (subdivided in four series, as indicated in the figure) in TAS classification diagram that displays $(\text{Na}_2\text{O} + \text{K}_2\text{O})$ versus SiO_2 (Le Maître et al., 1989). Area above (below) the dotted line indicates the alkaline (subalkaline or tholeiitic) field after Irvine and Baragar (1971).

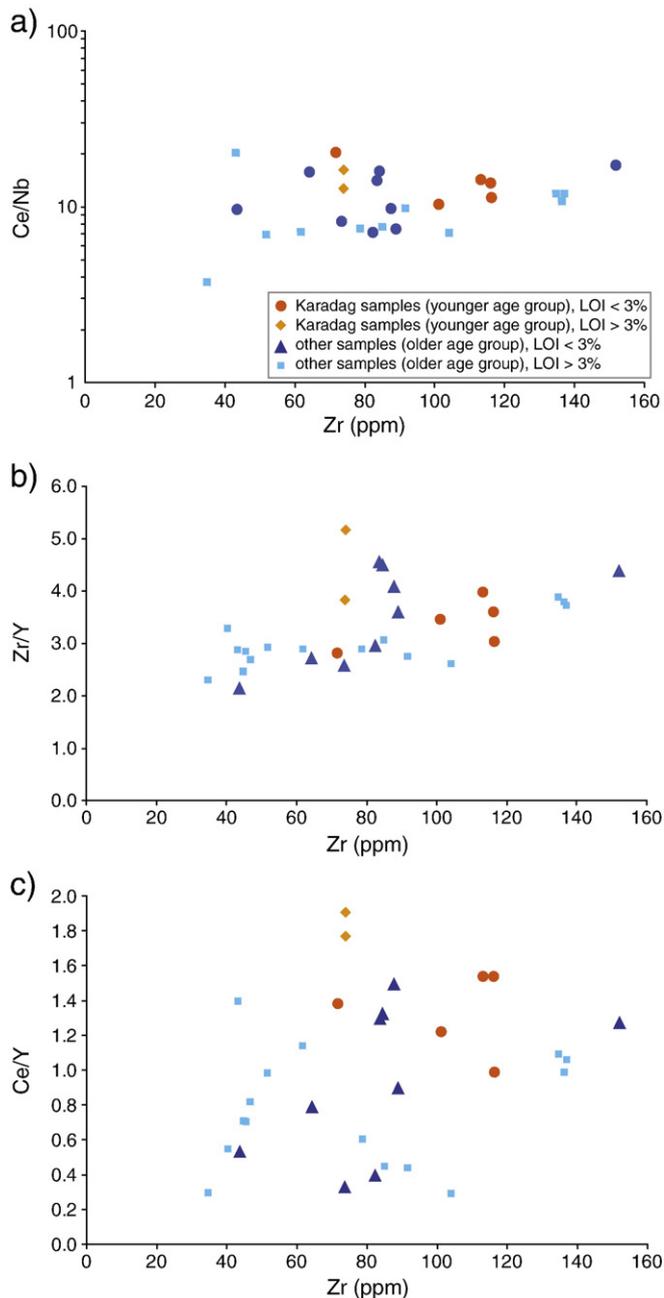


Fig. 7. a) Ce/Nb ratio versus Zr diagram of all data. The high Ce/Nb ratio is an indication for subduction related volcanism. b) Zr/Y ratio versus Zr diagram of all data. The high Zr/Y ratio is an indication for subduction related volcanism. c) Ce/Y ratio versus Zr diagram of all data. Note that the samples of the younger age group have on average a higher Ce/Y ratio, indicating so a greater LREE/HREE fractionation.

propose that the subduction trench was located south of the Turkish Sakarya Zone and the Caucasus, as suggested by middle Jurassic arc-volcanics in those regions, placing them in the overriding plate. This would require flat-slab subduction, because the distance from Crimea to the trench, prior to Black Sea opening, is estimated at ~500 km.

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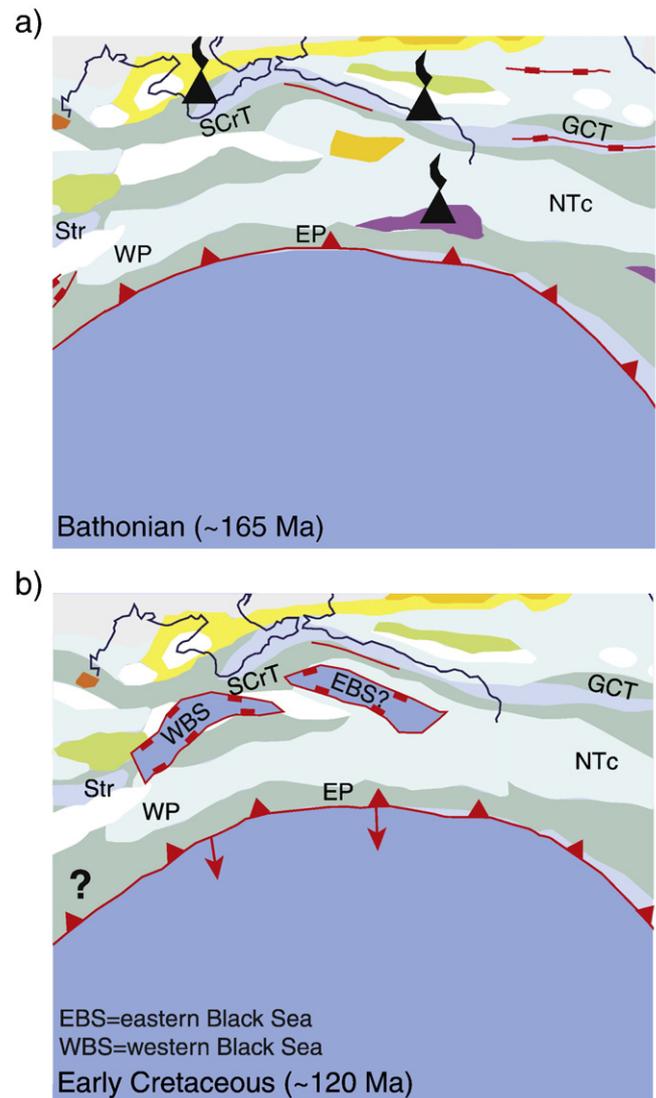


Fig. 8. Proposed paleo-subduction zone configuration for the circum-Black Sea region in a) the middle Jurassic (~165 Ma) and b) the early Cretaceous (~120 Ma). Abbreviations as for Fig. 2.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.lithos.2010.07.017.

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