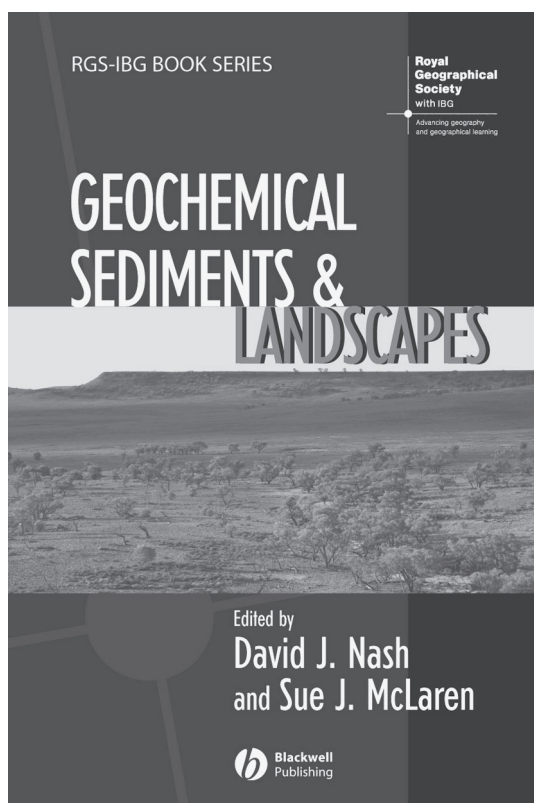


## Book reviews

Geochemical sediments & landscapes, edited by David J. Nash & Sue J. McLaren, 2007. Blackwell Publishing (now: Wiley-Blackwell), 2007. Hardback, 465 pages. Price USD 89.50, GBP 60.00. ISBN 9781405125192.



This volume provides an excellent, up to date overview of continental chemical deposits ranging from duricrusts to deposits generated in more active depositional settings. It is organized in fourteen chapters (all of them are interesting) focusing on most types of continental chemical sediments. All chapters are well organized, which proves good directives from the side of the editors. The various chapters have been written by internationally recognised experts who integrated their current research within a wider view provided by many study cases from all over the world.

Each chapter describes the main characteristics of the sedimentary bodies: morphology,

petrography, chemical and mineralogical composition. Mechanisms of formation, relation with the landscape and palaeo-environments as well as directions for future research are also addressed in most of the chapters. Special emphasis is placed on the geomorphological settings in which all these deposits occur. The list of references is very complete and makes much information accessible to the reader. In addition, the book contains a useful list of figures and tables. The size of the book is handsome and the printing is of good quality, particularly regarding the line drawings and tables. The quality of the photos is, however, not so high and some pictures would be much more informative and valuable if they were printed in full colour.

The book begins and ends with two general and short chapters on geochemical sediments and their landscapes, which provides a good introduction and a synthetic overview of the book, its contents, and the significance (and most important remaining questions) regarding continental chemical sediments, and future research. Chapter 13, on analytical techniques for investigating this kind of sediments, is another of the chapters used to study this and other types of sediment, and is therefore of great use for a variety of readers, teachers and undergraduates.

Chapters 2–4 provide an up to date overview of duricrusts; these three chapters are extensive and include detailed and thorough analyses of duricrusts. It is the first time that the various types of duricrusts are treated together; these chapters thus provide information about such crusts formed in strongly different geomorphological and climatic settings. Chapters 5–12

analyse deposits formed in different geological settings, ranging from aeolian to spring to karst to lakes to deserts, amongst many more. Most of the analysed deposits are continental, but it is difficult to see the logic behind the organisation of these chapters, because there are many differences between these deposits. This is perhaps the most important shortcoming of the book: in some cases the chapters refer to environments and in other chapters to specific features (such as rock varnish). There can be no doubt as regards the interest of all these chapters, but I would have appreciated a general overview or a more clear classification, including also some aspects of diagenesis.

This volume forms a substantial contribution to understanding earth-surface processes. It is a book that was waited for by anyone interested in geomorphology, weathering, soils and continental palaeo-environments. It is a key text for undergraduates, graduates and researchers because it provides both a wide and detailed view of these sediments and their settings. It is certainly indispensable for libraries of any earth-science department, for both teaching and research purposes.

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