

中国南海北部底流对深水沉积体系的影响及其油气地质意义

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摘要:底流是深海沉积体系形成演化的重要沉积动力之一,对深水油气与天然气水合物储层的形成、展布及物性特征具有重要控制作用。系统开展了南海北部二维和三维地震数据、钻井及测井资料综合沉积地质研究。研究结果表明:①南海北部陆缘深水底流作用活跃且类型多样。②中新世以来底流沉积广泛分布,受海盆构造格局演化与局部地形影响,底流沉积具有显著的时-空差异性分布,其中东北陆缘底流最为强劲。③底流在南海北部早中新世的大型线性侵蚀沟槽、中中新世以来的中央峡谷与迁移峡谷群以及上新世以来的树枝型峡谷体系等关键沉积地貌的形成中扮演了关键角色。④南海北部海底峡谷、水道等重力流沉积地貌的形成演化,对陆坡地貌具有重要改造作用,进而控制了重力流输运路径以及浊积砂体的形成与分布。⑤强底流地区不仅发育砂质底流沉积,还对重力流沉积进行了改造,所形成的底流改造砂是重要的深水油气与天然气水合物储层。⑥底流沉积研究在南海北部深水沉积区具有重要意义,应加强南海北部古海洋与构造沉降之间关系、复杂地形条件下底流沉积过程以及底流-浊流交互作用机制研究。

关键词:浊积砂;底流改造砂;底流沉积过程;底流-浊流交互作用;深水沉积;深水油气;中国南海北部

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Impact of bottom currents in the northern South China Sea on deep-water depositional systems and their petroleum geological implications

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Abstract: Bottom currents are identified as a significant driving force in the formation and evolution of deep-water depositional systems, playing an important role in governing the formation, distribution, and physical properties of deep-water hydrocarbon and natural gas hydrate (NGH) reservoirs. In this study, we conduct a comprehensive analysis of the sedimentary geology in the northern South China Sea using 2D and 3D seismic data, as well as drilling and log data. The results indicate that the northern continental margin of the South China Sea exhibits active and diverse effects of deep-water bottom currents. Bottom-current deposits formed since the Miocene are extensively distributed along this margin. Influenced by the tectonic framework evolution of marine basins and local topography, these deposits show significant spatiotemporal differences in their distribution, with the strongest bottom currents identified along the northeastern continental margin. Bottom currents have played a key role in the formation of critical sedimentary landforms in the northern South China Sea, including large-scale linear erosional troughs formed during the Early Miocene, the Central Canyon and migration canyon group that have developed since the Middle Miocene, and the dendritic canyon systems formed since the Pliocene. The formation and evolution of gravity-flow depositional landforms, such as submarine canyons and channels, in the northern South China Sea, have significantly modified the continental slope morphology, thereby controlling the gravity-flow transport pathways and the formation and distribution of turbidite sand bodies. Areas with strong bottom currents exhibit sandy bottom-current deposits. Furthermore, bottom currents in these areas modify gravity-flow deposits, with resulting bottom-current reworked sandstones serving as significant deep-water hydrocarbon and NGH reservoirs. Investigating bottom-current deposits holds great significance for understanding the deep-water

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sedimentary area in the northern South China Sea, and more research efforts should be directed toward the relationships between paleo-oceanic conditions and tectonic subsidence in the northern South China Sea, as well as the bottom-current depositional processes under complex topographic conditions and the mechanisms underlying interactions between bottom and turbidity currents.

Key words: turbidite sandstone, bottom-current reworked sandstone, bottom-current depositional process, interaction between bottom and turbidity currents, deep-water deposition, deep-water hydrocarbon, northern South China Sea

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深海环境具有复杂多样的沉积动力,其中突发性的重力流作用与长期持续存在的底流作用对深海沉积地貌与沉积物时-空展布的影响尤为显著。底流泛指海水内部的所有海洋动力作用,深海环境中发育多种不同尺度的底流类型,如大尺度的温盐环流和深水潮汐,中尺度涡旋,以及中-小尺度的海底风暴和内波/内潮等作用^[1]。这些底流作用可以对深水沉积物进行有效的搬运与沉积,相关沉积体构成了全球大陆边缘的重要组成部分^[2-3]。在大尺度温盐环流为主的底流作用下,通常在区域上形成大范围展布的漂积体-环槽沉积体系,其形态与沉积特征的演化受控于温盐环流强度和方向的时-空变化;受地形影响,部分海域受到中-高频发生的中-小尺度底流作用,形成沉积物波、线性侵蚀槽等次级地貌^[2,4]。因此,随着古海洋水动力条件的时-空变化,底流沉积样式也丰富多样,使得大陆边缘沉积体系的地貌形态、沉积物输运路径以及沉积单元的岩性、物性表现出显著的非均质性,进而影响深水油气与天然气水合物储层的空间分布与物性质量。例如,底流沉积物波波谷可以作为浊流搬运沉积的主要通道,影响深水浊积砂的空间分布^[5];底流也可以对浊流及其沉积进行改造,形成可作为优质深水油气和天然气水合物储层的底流改造砂^[6-9]。该论点已得到全球深水油气勘探结果的证实,如莫桑比克陆缘的底流改造砂储层总厚度可以达到72 m,平均孔隙度约16.9%^[6];巴西陆缘钻遇的底流改造砂体总厚度约94 m,孔隙度超过35.0%^[10]。此外,在构造与气候作用的影响下,底流水动力(包括方向与强度)会发生变化,对应的底流沉积物物性也会在时-空上有所差异,其中垂向上物性显著变化的界面不仅可作为天然气输运与聚集的有利层系^[11-12],也可以形成沉积物抗剪强度薄弱层,孕育海底滑坡,进而影响深水资源开发工程的安全实施^[13-14]。

近年来的钻探结果显示,中国南海北部陆缘深水

陆坡裂后期沉积体系(如珠江口盆地的早中新世深海扇、琼东南盆地的中央水道和低位扇以及台西南盆地的海底峡谷侧翼)中蕴藏有丰富的常规油气、天然气水合物以及浅层气资源,目前已发现了6个大、中型气田和3个大型天然气水合物矿藏^[12,15-16]。当前南海北部油气勘探开发相关的研究主要集中在重力流沉积过程及沉积体系方面,尚未对底流沉积体系予以足够重视。事实上,当前研究表明,南海北部陆缘具有广泛分布的底流沉积^[17-19],构成南海北部陆缘的重要组成部分,同时影响南海北部重力流沉积的时-空展布以及重力流沉积物物性,进而影响深水储层的发育规律^[20-22]。由此可见,底流沉积体系研究在南海北部深水油气勘探开发过程中具有举足轻重的意义,但目前有关南海北部底流沉积体系及其资源效应的研究仍较为欠缺。因此,本文通过梳理南海北部底流作用对深水沉积过程及其演化的影响方式,探讨其与深水砂质储层时-空分布及其物性特征之间的成因联系,为未来南海北部油气和天然气水合物勘探开发提供科学依据。

1 区域地质背景

南海是西太平洋地区规模最大的边缘海盆地,其面积约为 $350 \times 10^4 \text{ km}^2$,最大水深超过5 000 m。南海海盆地处欧亚板块、太平洋板块和印度-澳大利亚板块的交汇区,新生代以来先后经历了陆内裂陷(约65.0~33.0 Ma)、海底扩张(33.0~15.5 Ma)以及扩张后热沉降(15.5 Ma至今)等构造演化阶段^[28](图2)。裂陷阶段,南海北部陆缘自东向西发育有台西南盆地、珠江口盆地、琼东南盆地、北部湾盆地以及莺歌海盆地(图1a)。中新世以来,受强烈的构造热沉降作用影响,台西南盆地、珠江口盆地和琼东南盆地等由南向北逐步进入深水陆坡沉积环境^[29]。随着南海海底扩张的停止,南海板块开始沿马尼拉海沟向菲律宾板块之下俯冲,沿俯

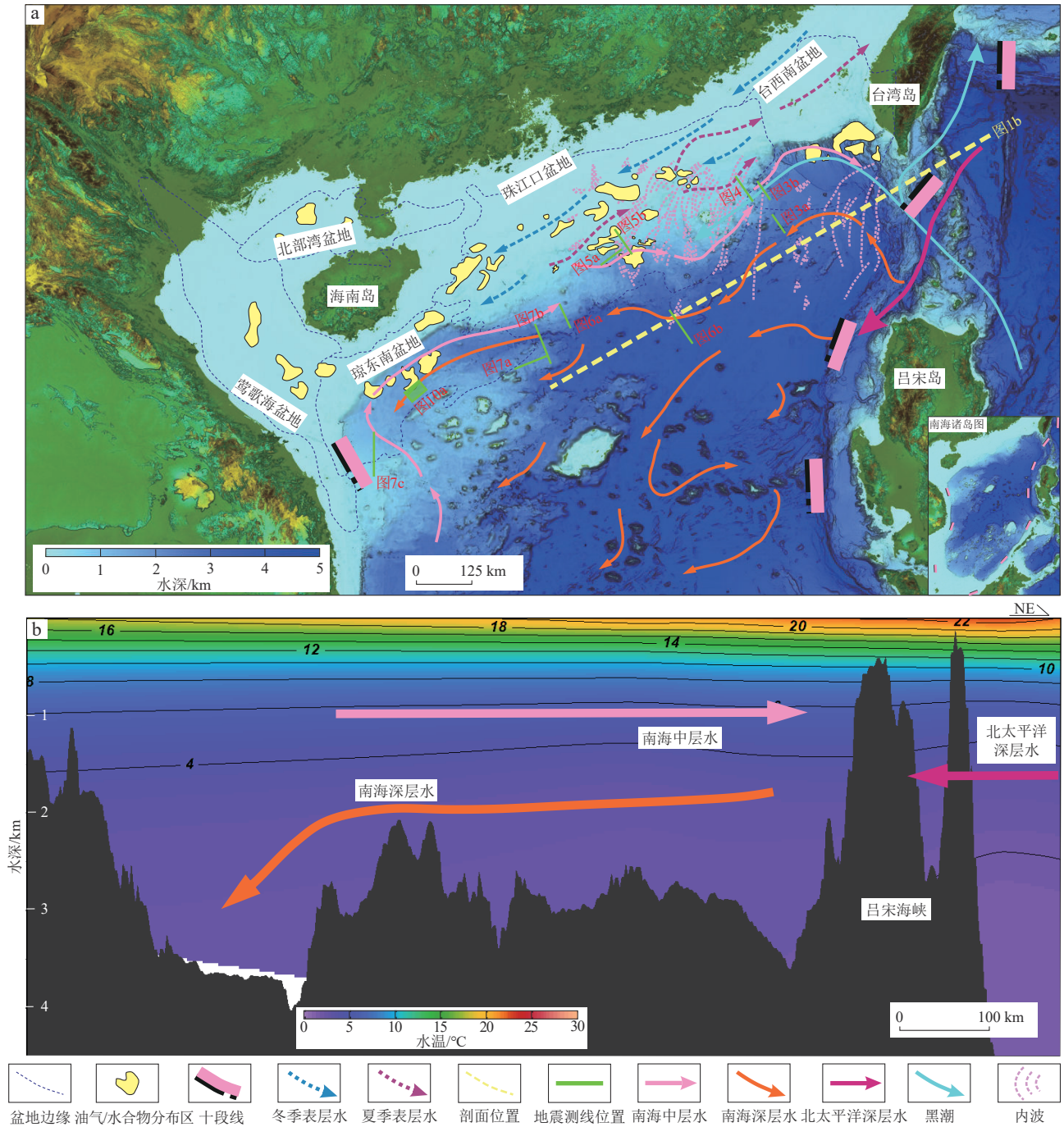


图1 南海北部地质背景与中-深层水团分布模式

Fig. 1 Geological setting and the distribution patterns of medium-to-deep water masses in the northern South China Sea

a. 南海北部地质背景图,显示南海北部盆地构造单元划分,图中黄色封闭区域为现已探明的深水油气与天然气水合物主要分布区(据文献[23-25]修改),箭头指示南海环流背景(据文献[26]修改),洋红色虚线示意南海东北部内波的传播(据文献[27]修改),绿色线段指示本文主要地震测线位置;b. 南海中-深层水团分布模式图,剖面位置见图1a

冲带形成一系列火山岛弧。同时,吕宋岛弧不断向西北方向运动,并在约6.5 Ma时欧亚大陆发生碰撞作用,引发了台湾造山运动,南海与太平洋连接的唯一深水通道(即吕宋海峡)也自此开始强烈隆升与闭合,海峡宽度不断变窄,水深逐渐减小,南海也随之进入半封闭海盆演化阶段。这一构造事件使得吕宋海峡对西太

平洋深层水入侵南海造成阻碍,对南海环流产生重要影响。至约1.0 Ma,吕宋海峡处的海槛隆升至现今水深(约2 400 m),标志着南海现代环流样式的基本建立^[30]。纵观南海扩张以来(约33.0 Ma)的构造气候演化历史,随着构造作用与海洋动力的变化,深水沉积动力条件不断演变(图2),南海北部深水陆坡-深海平原

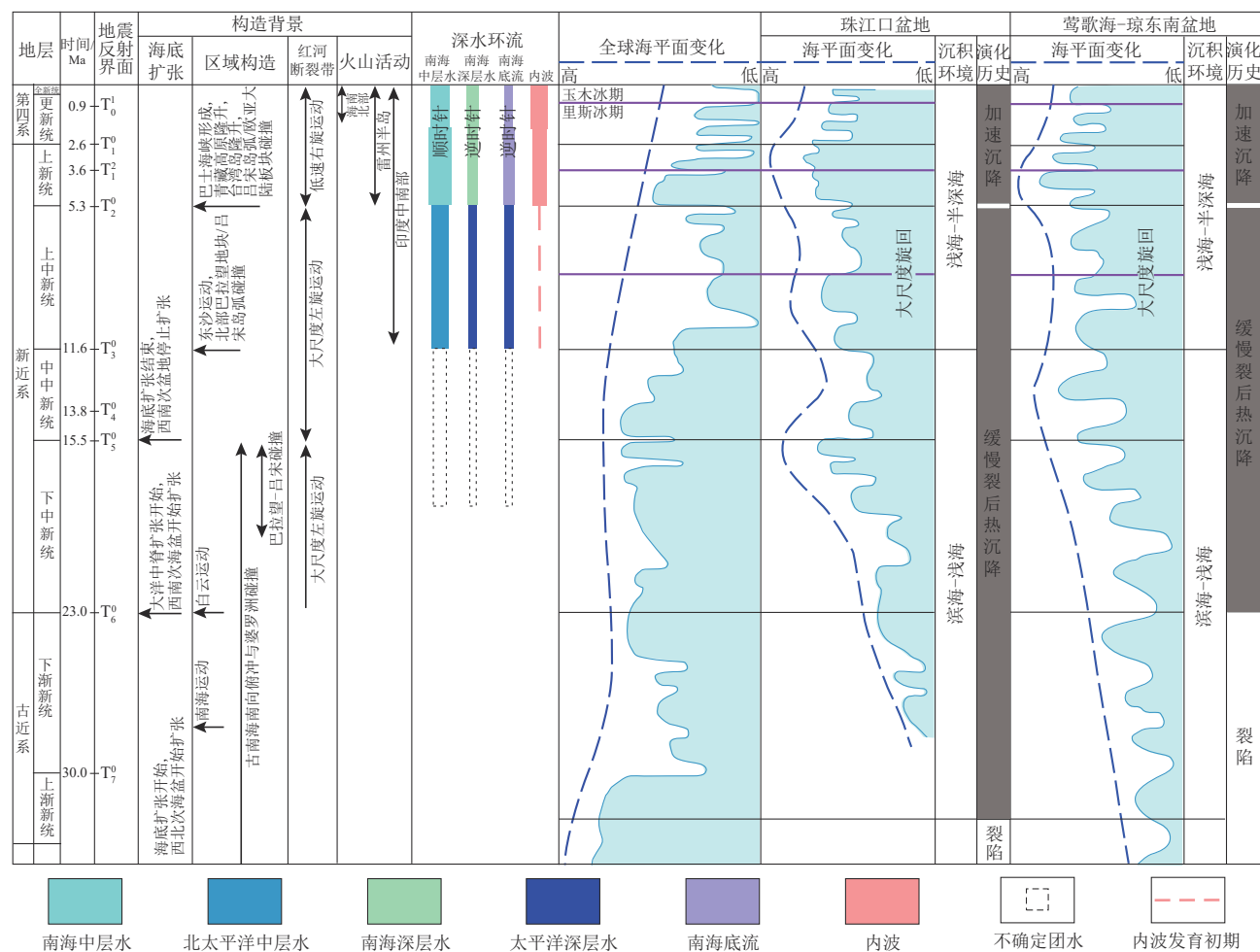


图2 南海北部陆坡地层综合柱状图(据文献[17-19]修改)

Fig. 2 Composite stratigraphic column of the continental slope in the northern South China Sea (modified after references [17-19])

发育了一系列不同类型的沉积体系,既有重力流成因的海底峡谷、水道、滑坡和海底扇,也发育有漂积体-环槽体系和沉积物波等底流沉积体系^[31]。

2 海洋动力学背景

受控于半封闭海盆结构,南海环流主要表现为层状分布的“三明治”结构,自下而上包括深层环流(水深>1 500 m)、中层环流(水深350~1 500 m)以及表层环流(水深<350 m)^[32]。南海深层水密度明显小于北太平洋深层水密度,这一密度差促使北太平洋深层水通过吕宋海峡入侵南海,形成北太平洋深层水溢流(overflow),进而驱动南海深层环流呈气旋式环流结构^[33]。南海深层水环流在西向运动的过程中,通过与海底陡峭地形之间相互作用发生强烈上涌,对反气旋式的中层环流进行补给,最终返回太平洋^[32]。南海表层环流结构则主要受季风影响,冬季主要表现为气旋式环流,夏季则以反气旋式环流为主^[34]。深层环流中水深超过

2 400 m的部分,也被称为西边界流^[35]。在季风和南海复杂地形的影响下,南海还发育有内波、内潮、深海潮汐、中尺度涡、罗斯贝波等其他不同尺度的海洋动力作用,有助于强化南海水团之间混合作用,维持南海与西太平洋之间水体进行交换,使南海内部海洋动力过程十分活跃,局部地区水动力表现出间歇性的强化^[36]。

内波/潮作为南海北部中-深层水团强混和最主要的驱动力之一,其形成主要通过2种方式:①正压潮与吕宋海峡处剧烈变形的地形之间发生相互作用,产生西向传播的内波和内潮,主要集中在表层环流和中层环流上部(即水深700 m以上),能量较强,最大振幅可达240 m,波长最大可达6 km,主要影响区位于南海东北部,向西逐渐减弱^[37]。②由正压潮与南海内部局部地形之间发生相互作用所产生,影响水深范围大、区域分布广,但其能量较前者弱^[27]。同时,南海环流表现出多涡结构特征,其中的中尺度涡在维持和调控中-深层海洋环流的过程中扮演重要角色^[38]。中尺度涡既可以在海表面生成,也可源自深层^[39]。源自海表的

中尺度涡可以在垂向方向延伸数千米,在陡峭地形区触发水团间的强混合,增强深水底流流速,进而影响深水沉积过程^[40]。此外,不同海洋动力过程的相互作用也会影响南海环流结构。例如,中尺度涡运动过程能够影响内潮的传播与演变,从而影响深海水体之间的混合作用^[41]。因此,不同类型、不同尺度的底流共同对深海沉积过程产生影响,进而控制深海沉积地貌与沉积物的时-空展布规律^[42]。

3 南海北部底流沉积展布与演化特征

3.1 深水底流沉积类型及其沉积特征

受控于底流强度的差异变化,深水底流沉积单元表现出不同特征,主要分为沉积型、侵蚀型以及沉积-侵蚀混合型3种类型,它们在空间上相互伴生,共同构

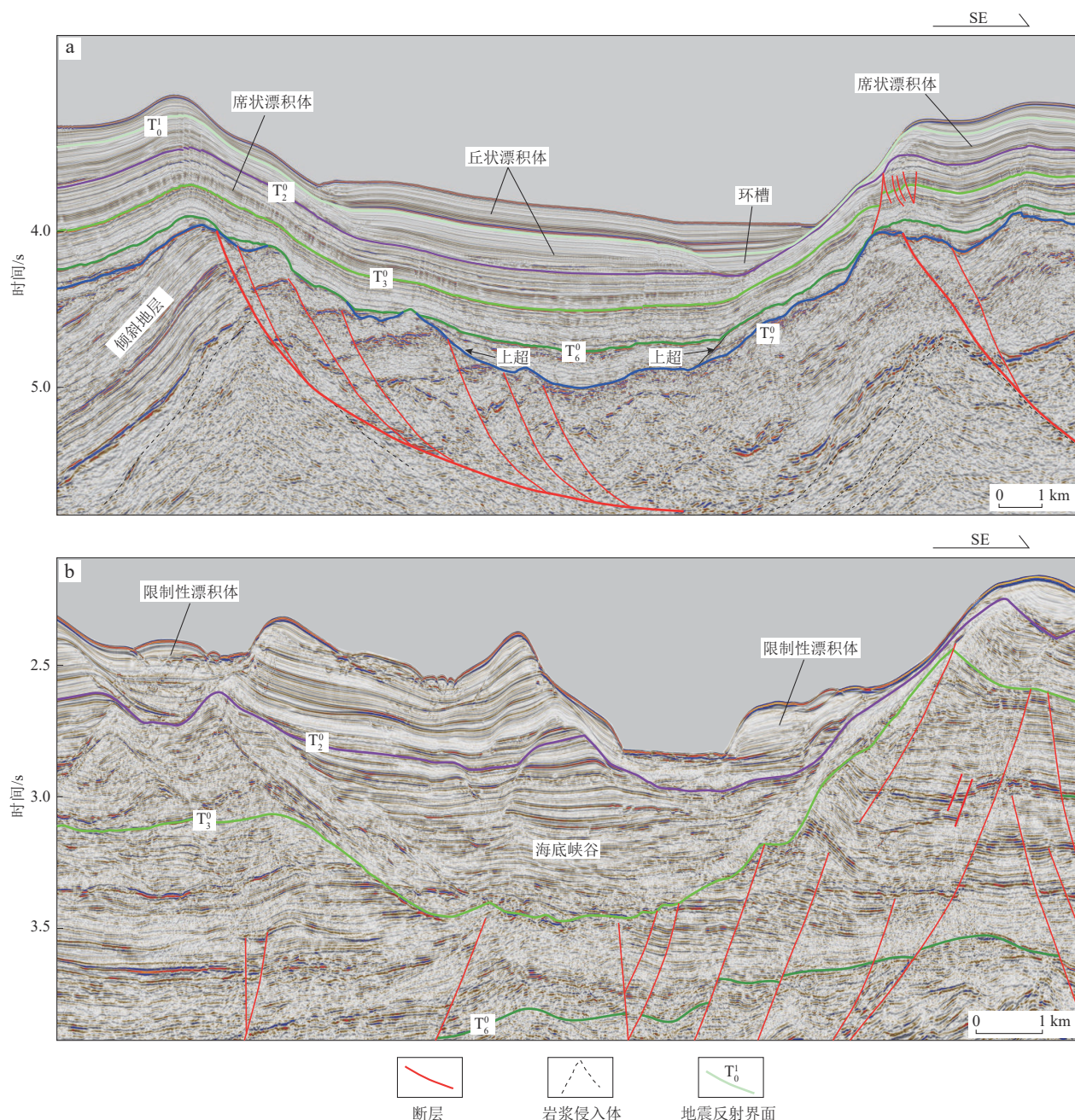


图3 南海东北缘深水海山区底流沉积(a)和东沙海底峡谷伴生限制性漂积体沉积(b)典型地震剖面

Fig. 3 Typical seismic sections showing bottom-current deposits in the deep-water seamount area (a) and associated, restricted drift deposits in the Dongsha submarine canyon (b) along the northeastern margin of the South China Sea

(a图据文献[49]修改;b图据文献[54]修改。剖面位置见图1a。)

成深水底流沉积体系^[1]。典型的沉积型单元为底流漂积体(contourite drift),其多表现为丘形地貌,沉积厚度在横向上具有显著变化,随着其所处地貌背景的不同(如斜坡地带、断层陡崖、峡谷和水道等),通常表现出伸长状、断层控制型和局限型等不同样式,沉积规模可表现出较大差异,从数百千米到数百米均有所发育^[43]。在底流强度较弱、地形平缓的开阔地带(如深海平原),则以席状漂积体为主,沉积厚度在横向上仅表现出低幅度起伏^[43]。此外,局部地区底流与地形的相互作用可以形成大型底流成因的沉积物波,其波长可超过10 km^[44]。侵蚀型底流沉积单元主要为环槽(moat),通常与丘状漂积体相伴生,多发育于斜坡地带或者海山、海脊周缘,延伸方向与斜坡、漂积体走向一致,其宽度可以达到数千米,具有较大的宽/深比^[45]。在底流较为强劲的地区,可发育规模相对较小的线性侵蚀冲沟(furrows),其规模较环槽小,宽度多小于100 m,但在同一区域上可同时出现多条冲沟^[46]。沉积-侵蚀混合型沉积单元主要为底流阶地(contourite terrace),其形成受到沉积与侵蚀的双重作用,二者间互发生;底流阶地表现出低缓的坡度,发育在不同类型水团的垂向界面附近^[47]。由于该界面处易于产生内波和内潮过程,产生间歇性的强水动力,使底流阶地上通常伴生有沉积物波、沙丘等底床形态^[48]。南海北部底流作用类型丰富,地形复杂,使得底流动力在空间上具有显著变化,因此发育有沉积型、侵蚀型以及沉积-侵蚀混合型等不同类型的底流沉积单元。前人已利用地质与地球物理资料对不同地区的底流沉积特征进行了识别^[18-19,49-51],本文将在前人研究基础上展开进一步系统梳理,阐明南海北部底流沉积展布与演化特征。

3.2 南海东北陆缘底流沉积展布与演化特征

南海东北部海域直面吕宋海峡,海底地形地貌复杂,海底火山林立,受到多种不同尺度海洋动力的共同影响,除大尺度的温盐环流外,还发育深水潮汐、涡旋和内波/潮等不同尺度底流作用(图1),使该海域的底流沉积过程复杂,形成的沉积地貌类型及特征丰富多样^[29,32,42,36,52]。其中,漂积体-环槽沉积体系极为发育,空间上广泛分布,覆盖水深范围较大,沉积特征随地貌背景的变化而不同,可见伸长形-丘形漂积体、席状漂积体以及限制性漂积体等多种类型^[49,53-55](图4)。中尺度涡和内波等中-小尺度的动力作用下可以形成侵蚀沟槽、凹槽和沉积物波等底流沉积地貌^[42,56],同时对海底峡谷、水道以及漂积体-环槽体系具有改造作用^[54-55]。

由于不同水深层段内的水团类型及对应水动力存在差异,各水深层段内主要的底流沉积类型也因此而有所不同。南海东北缘上陆坡地区内波作用极为发育,这些内波可对海底造成强烈侵蚀,使其中的细粒组分再次悬浮,形成雾状层随环流继续搬运,而残留的相对粗粒组分则形成大面积分布的沉积物波^[39,45,56-57,55](图5)。数值模拟结果显示,中层水环流的水动力强度小于深层水环流^[18],因此东沙海域中层水所在水深范围内主要发育黏附性漂积体,而深层水环流范围内的丘状漂积体与环槽相对更为普遍^[49](图3)。黏附型漂积体向陆一侧发育沉积速率较低的低缓底流阶地,阶地上可见条带状的沉积物波以及侵蚀地貌,阶地前缘(水团过渡范围内)具有相对较高的沉积速率,对应地形坡度变陡,从而易于发生频繁的滑塌事件,重力流侵蚀作用活跃,最终可能演化为峡谷、水道,形成沉积物向深海地区输运的重要通道^[18,51]。台湾峡谷体系末端浊流在深层水环流的影响下,二者可以发生相互作用,形成沉积物波以及底流改造砂^[58-59]。

目前研究表明,南海东北陆缘的底流沉积自中新世(约15.5 Ma)以来就已开始发育,但早期底流沉积作用相对较弱,主要表现为席状漂积体沉积。该地区底流沉积的显著发育始于晚中新世末期(T_2^0 ,约6.5~5.5 Ma),出现明显的丘状漂积体和环槽(图3a),表明晚中新世末期以来,底流作用发生强化^[49,60-61]。在中更新世(约0.9 Ma)气候转型的影响下,南海东北部的沉积物供给大幅增加,底流沉积速率显著加快^[49]。南海东北部上陆坡受到内波、内潮和中尺度涡等不同尺度海洋动力作用的强烈侵蚀,沉积厚度较薄,缺失中层水环流演化历史的沉积记录。根据东沙陆坡树枝型峡谷体系的形成演化过程,Wang等^[45]指出该地区强烈的内波作用可能始于上新世,与吕宋海峡的构造隆升与变窄过程密切相关。

3.3 南海北缘底流沉积展布与演化特征

南海北缘珠江口盆地所发育的沿陆坡走向迁移的峡谷体系,是该区域中层水环流范围内最典型的底流相关沉积地貌,引起国内外学者极大的兴趣^[5,13,16,20,62-63]。该峡谷体系自中新世以来开始发育,晚中新世迁移特征最为显著,上新世以来峡谷的迁移特征明显减弱^[64](图5a)。针对该迁移峡谷体系的形成机制,目前存在不同假说。Gong等^[20]假定迁移峡谷发育时期的中层水环流模式与现今环流模式相似,具有相同的流向,其在流经这些峡谷体系时,主要在峡谷背流一翼沉积,从而迫使峡谷向底流流向下游方向

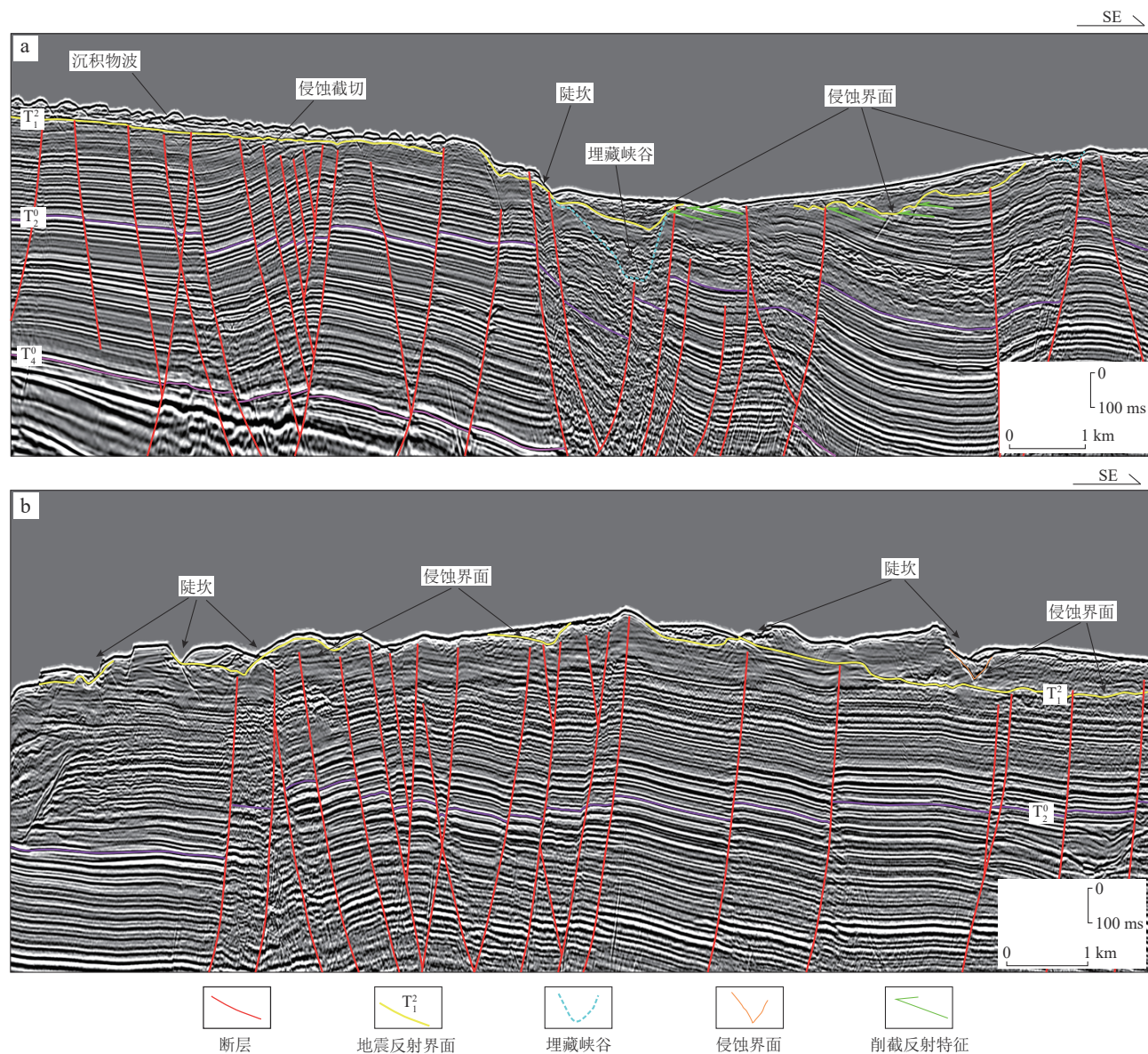


图4 南海东北缘上陆坡强底流作用的侵蚀地貌(a)及沉积物波(b)典型地震剖面

Fig. 4 Typical seismic sections showing erosional landforms (a) and sediment waves (b) subjected to effects of strong bottom currents on the upper continental slope along the northeastern margin of the South China Sea

(据文献[55]修改。剖面位置见图1a。)

迁移^[20]。与该模式不同的是,其他陆缘由底流-浊流交互作用所形成的水道迁移方向与底流流向相反^[63,65],二者的差异可能是由于峡谷和水道的地貌规模不同,对应的底流-浊流交互作用模式也有所差异。但值得注意的是,南海现代环流模式的建立与吕宋海峡的形成与演化密切相关^[49,66],现今海盆的半封闭格局是在晚中新世晚期以来才开始逐步形成的,与之前的海盆格局明显不同,目前尚无明确证据表明晚中新世期间的中层水环流方向与现今环流方向一致。Wang等^[5]基于该地区底流沉积背景和峡谷等间距特征的综合分析,提出这些迁移峡谷极有可能建立在底

流成因的沉积物波波谷基础之上,重力流沿着沉积物波波谷侵蚀,最终演化为随底流沉积物波迁移的峡谷群^[5]。深海沉积物波既可以顺流迁移,也可逆流迁移,且沉积物波间距近乎相等^[44],因此无论底流流向为何种情况,该假说均可解释峡谷的横向迁移以及等间距发育。第四纪以来,珠江口盆地发育多期陆架边缘三角洲,由于沉积物供给和海洋动力作用的横向变化,迁移峡谷群的规模在横向上表现出差异性,其中东部峡谷规模相对较小,峡谷头部与陆架边缘之间距离较大,坡度较缓,水深范围在300~800 m,三角洲前缘主要表现为底流阶地和黏附型漂积体,其主要为中环流所

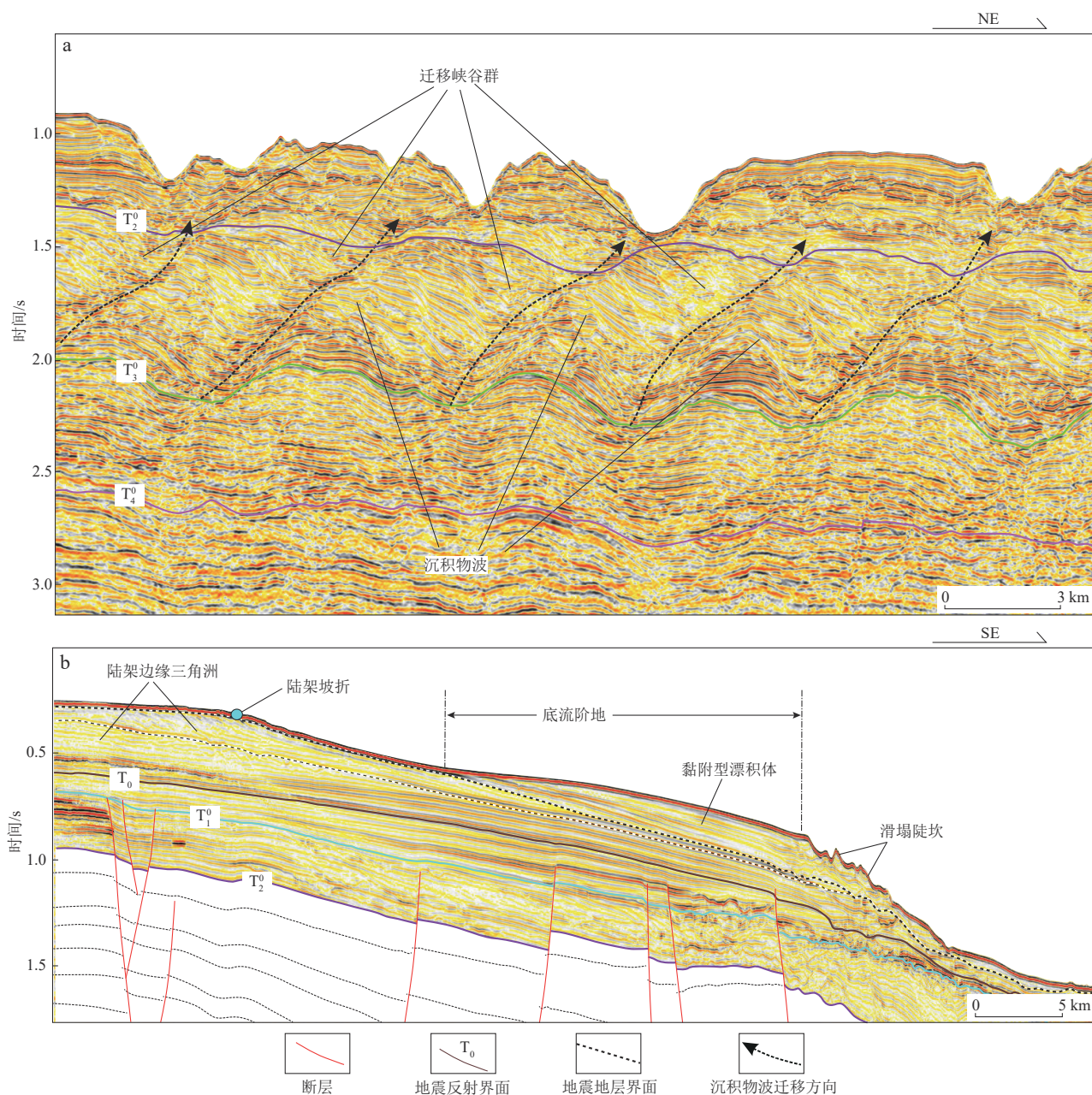


图5 南海北缘陆坡迁移峡谷群(a)和陆架边缘三角洲前缘黏附型漂积体及底流阶地(b)典型地震剖面

Fig. 5 Typical seismic sections showing the migration canyon group on the continental slope (a) and the adhesion drifts and contourite terraces in front of shelf-margin deltas (b) along the northern margin of the South China Sea

(a图据文献[5]修改;b图据文献[67]修改。剖面位置见图1a。)

携带的沉积物堆积而成^[67](图3b)。

与南海东北部相似,珠江口盆地西部中层水以及中-深层水过渡区间范围内,也是以底流阶地-黏附型漂积体沉积体系为主;而深层水环流范围内可见类型多样的底流沉积体,其在空间上的差异分布主要受控于底流强度随地形的变化,故在海山周缘可见丘状漂积体-环槽体系,斜坡地带可见大型沉积物波,而在深海平原地区则以席状漂积体为主^[18](图3a)。

地震地层学与古海洋学研究结果均表明,珠江口盆

地的底流沉积也是自上新世以来开始显著发育^[21]。晚中新世期间(11.6~5.3 Ma),珠江峡谷重力流极为发育,使得珠江峡谷末端的深海平原主要表现为深海扇及浊积水道沉积,底流沉积特征并不显著;上新世以来峡谷末端可见席状漂积体沉积,内部偶见低幅丘状漂积体和环槽^[19,31](图6b)。值得注意的是,珠江口盆地南部识别出了一套发育于早中新世晚期(约18.5 Ma)的底流侵蚀沟槽,其延伸方向与陆坡走向近于平行,表明南海环流自早中新世以来已建立,且在局部地区受地形影响,

表现出较为强劲的水动力,对海底地形造成侵蚀^[17]。虽然这些沟槽目前处于深层水环流范围内,但是在早中新世,珠江口盆地尚未经快速热沉降,其对应水深相对较小,可能仍处于中层水环流范围内^[17]。

3.4 南海西北缘底流沉积展布与演化特征

与南海东北部和北部开阔陆坡不同,南海西北缘琼东南盆地深水区的中央凹陷南北分别由西沙隆起带和陆坡所限定,整体表现为狭长的海槽形态(图1)。晚中新世,西沙海槽再次发生沉降活动,使海槽地形的限制性进一步增强,两侧坡度变陡,产生更为频繁的滑塌重力流对海槽进行侵蚀,特别是沉积物供给较为充足的北部陆缘更易于滑塌,中央峡谷地貌开始建立并得到进一步发展^[69](图1)。中央峡谷两翼滑塌所产生

的重力流最终均汇入中央峡谷内,使峡谷轴部主要表现为重力流沉积,底流沉积特征并不显著(图7a)。但是,晚中新世以来底流作用极有可能与中央凹陷地带频繁发生的浊流之间发生相互作用,从而影响中央峡谷中浊积水道的分布、迁移以及斜坡扇的展布^[69]。同时,峡谷南部的海脊/海山之间凹陷、西沙隆起斜坡带的深层水环流范围内,可见到底流漂积体、环槽以及沉积物波^[70](图7b)。

与珠江口盆地的陆坡迁移峡谷相似,琼东南盆地北部陆架边缘-上陆坡地区也发现了沿陆坡向东迁移的晚中新世峡谷群,其横向迁移主要是受控于南海暖流(处于表层水环流下部至中层水环流上部)与峡谷中浊流之间的相互作用^[71]。这些峡谷群表明琼东南地区的中层水环流作用在晚中新世也较为强劲。此外,

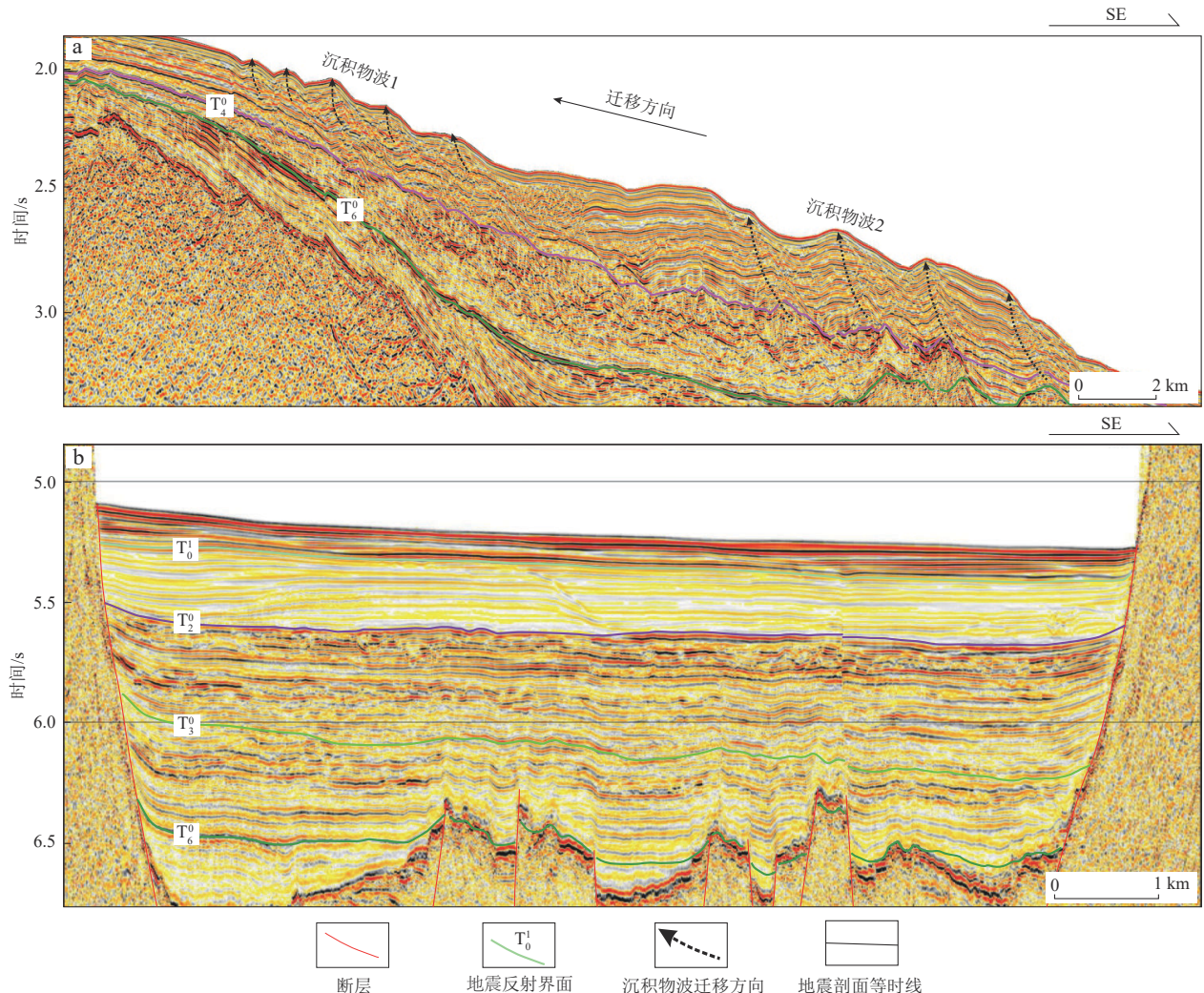


图6 南海北部大型沉积物波(a)和东部次海盆北部(b)典型地震剖面

Fig. 6 Typical seismic sections showing large sediment waves in the northern part (a) and sequence stratigraphy in the northern Eastern Subbasin in the southern part (b) of the South China Sea
(a图据文献[21]修改;b图据文献[68]修改。剖面位置见图1a。)

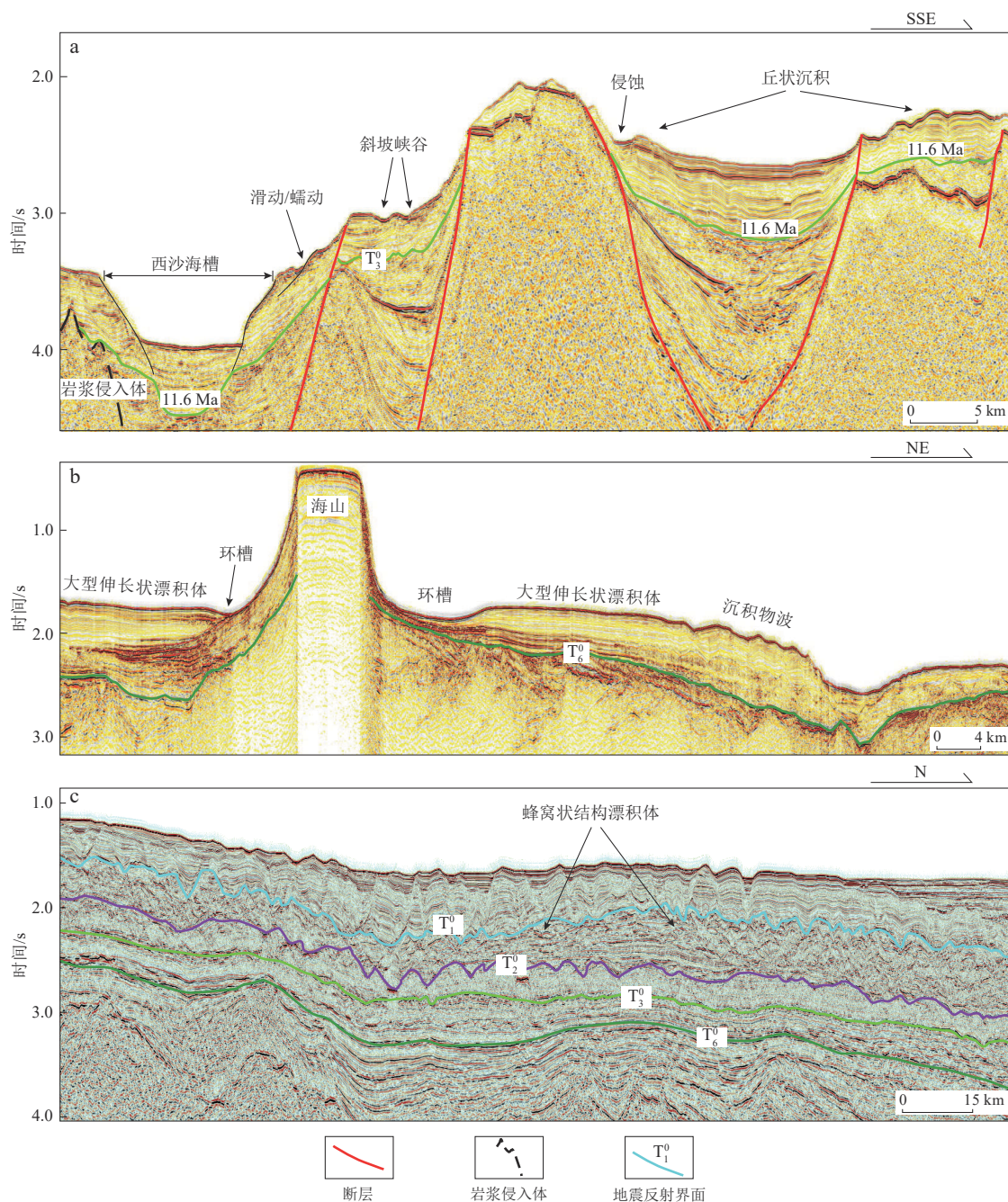


图7 南海西北缘中央峡谷及其南翼底流沉积(a)、中央峡谷南部底流沉积(b)和蜂窝状结构漂积体(c)典型地震剖面

Fig. 7 Typical seismic sections showing the Central Canyon and bottom-current deposits on its southern flank (a), the characteristics of bottom-current deposits in the southern Central Canyon (b), and drifts with a honeycomb structure in the southwestern Qiongdongnan Basin (c) along the northwestern margin of the South China Sea

(a图据文献[70]修改;b图据文献[21]修改;c图据文献[72]修改。剖面位置见图1a)

在琼东南盆地西南部缘深层水环流作用下发育有蜂窝状结构的漂积体(图7c),该类型漂积体被认为是由不稳定底流作用所形成,其发生主要是通过南海西北缘海山、海脊等复杂地貌与底流之间的相互作用所致。这些漂积体自晚中新世开始发育,一致持续至第四纪,其中在上新世的发育尤为突出,表明复杂地形区的不稳定底流可以长期存在^[72]。

4 底流作用对南海北部沉积演化的影响机制

4.1 南海北部底流演化历史

南海北部陆缘的底流沉积特征分析结果表明,底

流沉积作用覆盖整个南海北部陆坡,受地形等外部因素影响,表现出不同的沉积样式。空间上,南海北部陆缘的底流沉积作用自东向西逐渐减弱,东部丘状漂积体和环槽更为发育,分布更为广泛;西部仅在局部海山区发育不稳定、间歇性增强的底流作用。从演化历史来看,这些底流沉积过程最早可追溯至早中新世,至晚中新世开始大范围发育,并在新世得到进一步增强,构成南海北部深水沉积体系的重要组成部分(图2)。大洋钻探结果显示,南海环流在晚中新世发生了重大转变,深水通风条件减弱,深层水团开始表现出不同于西太平洋水团的物理海洋特征,且在10.0~9.0 Ma发生了一次明显的溶解事件^[73]。这一转变过程在很大程度上与南海海盆的构造演化与逐渐闭合过程有关,特别是吕宋海峡海槛处底流-地形相互作用增强,可以激发更多的中尺度涡旋以及内波作用,进而增强南海内部环流作用^[40-41];同时南海环流也受到区域上东亚板块构造演化(如印尼水道的构造闭合^[74-75])以及全球气候变化影响^[27,30,66,73];在此之前,南海环流受南极深层水和太平洋深层水混合水团的影响更大^[76-78]。由此推断,南海北部晚中新世以来底流沉积的广泛发育可能主要受控于区域构造与气候的重要变革。同时,随着构造作用和全球气候在不同时间尺度上的变化,南海北部底流作用也随之发生多期次的增强与减弱事件,从而驱动南海北部底流沉积样式及沉积物类型在垂向上不断变化^[30,73]。例如,晚中新世末期(约6.5 Ma)南海深层水环流增强^[49];中更新世(约1.0 Ma)以来,南海环流的现代模式基本建立,南海深层水与太平洋深层水之间通风减弱^[73],中、深层水环流进一步减弱^[19,30];末次盛冰期以来,随着海平面的上升,南海深层水环流的水动力强度有所减弱^[79-82]。总体上来看,当前有关南海北部底流沉积演化的研究多聚焦于与少数重大构造、气候事件的联系,但对于其在更高时间分辨率尺度上的认识,目前仍比较有限,有待进一步深化。

4.2 南海北部底流对沉积地貌特征及其展布的控制

底流对深水沉积体系的影响,宏观上主要体现在对深水沉积地貌格局及特征的塑造方面^[83-85],其不仅可以形成特有的底流沉积地貌形态,如漂积体、环槽、沉积物波和阶地等^[1],还能够影响及改造其他成因沉积地貌,如“迫使”重力流成因的浊积水道或海底峡谷发生侧向迁移^[5,63],促使树枝型峡谷体系中分支峡谷的形成与演化^[55]。

南海北部不同环流在垂向上的过渡层段,发育了多套底流阶地,如珠江陆架边缘三角洲前缘的底流阶地

处于表层水与中层水环流过渡层段(水深400~800 m)(图5b)、东沙陆坡和一统陆坡的底流阶地处于中层水与深层水环流过渡层段(水深约1 250 m)^[18]。这些底流阶地的发育表明不同水团过渡界面处具有相对较强的水动力,抑制沉积物堆积,同时也产生悬浮雾状层。这些雾状层在随中层水环流向北东向搬运的过程中,受科氏力影响而向海盆方向偏转并发生堆积,形成低幅度起伏的黏附型漂积体,其向海一侧坡度相对较陡,易于发生滑塌重力流,进而促使陆坡峡谷水道的溯源侵蚀^[51,67](图5b)。底流流速与地形的限定性程度和坡度陡缓之间存在密切联系,其中局限性地形及陡坡背景下底流更为强劲,易于形成侵蚀地貌^[83]。虽然南海北部陆缘属于非火山型大陆边缘,但裂后期火山活动异常频繁,造成海底火山遍布,地形崎岖,影响底流沉积过程及其产物^[86]。海山等地形凸起周缘底流流速加大,侵蚀作用增强,故在海山周缘发育环槽、线性侵蚀沟槽等侵蚀地貌(图3a,图7b)。对于南海北部陆缘上陆坡地区,其不仅受到中层水环流影响,上新世以来还受到内波作用强烈影响,形成侵蚀陡坎和沉积物波等地貌类型,主要集中在南海东北缘上陆坡地区^[55](图4)。

南海北部底流除了直接形成底流沉积地貌外,还为峡谷和水道等其他地貌形成奠定基础,且在局部地区对其他类型地貌进行改造。例如,神狐海域峡谷群是建立在中-晚中新世底流成因沉积物波波谷地貌之上,波谷可有效捕获来自上陆坡浊流并得到进一步侵蚀加深,逐渐向峡谷演化;这些峡谷随着沉积物波的迁移而沿着陆坡走向不断迁移,表现出与沉积物波一致的等间距特征,并在峡谷末端发育与峡谷同步迁移的斜坡扇^[5](图5a,b)。此外,东沙陆坡树枝型峡谷体系中各分支峡谷的形成与扩展主要是因为受到该地区内波浅化所产生的侵蚀作用影响^[55];琼东南盆地北礁凹陷上新统水道体系在底流作用下表现出不对称的沉积特征,水道左侧(顺底流流向视角)发育片状溢堤沉积,而右侧则发育扇状溢堤沉积^[87]。由此可见,底流作用是南海北部陆缘复杂地貌发育的关键要素之一。

4.3 南海北部底流对砂质沉积物时-空展布及其物性的控制

底流沉积地貌通常具有较大规模,能够影响深海重力流的输运路径以及相应沉积物的空间展布^[1]。例如,在大型底流沉积物波的影响下,神狐海域峡谷群沿陆坡走向横向迁移,使峡谷轴部重力流沉积物以及峡谷末端浊积扇表现出迁移叠置样式^[5](图5a,图8)。底流除了控制沉积物的搬运路径及沉积区域,还可以影

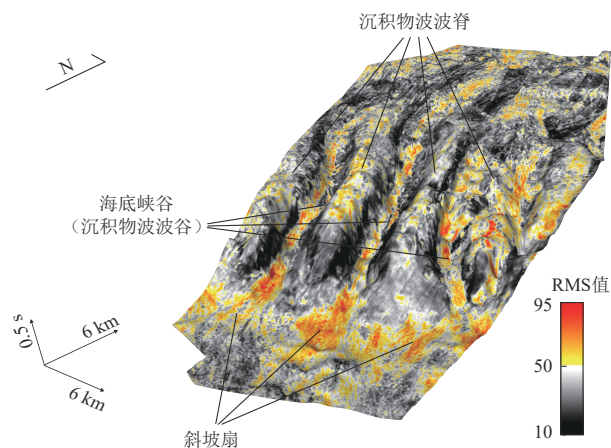


图8 南海北部陆缘晚中新世神狐峡谷群均方根振幅(RMS)沿层切片(据文献[5]修改)

Fig. 8 Stratal slicing of root-mean-square (RMS) attributes of the Late Miocene Shenhu canyon group along the northern continental margin of the South China Sea (modified after reference [5]) (显示建立在沉积物波波谷基础上的迁移峡谷群及其末端的斜坡扇。)

响沉积物岩性及其孔隙度、渗透率等物性特征。一方面,强底流作用下可以直接形成砂质底流沉积,如珠江峡谷上游段可见厚层(厚度 $>1\text{ m}$)、低泥质含量的砂质底流沉积^[22](图9a,b);另一方面,底流还可与重力流沉积物之间发生交互作用,影响重力流沉积展布及物性^[63,65,88]。重力流-底流交互作用主要表现为2种方式:①底流对浊流上部低密度层段进行侧向搬离,造成浊流下部高密度段继续沿原路径搬运并形成相对粗粒的浊积层段。②底流可以对已经沉积的浊积层段进行改造,将其中的细粒沉积物组分带走,留下粗粒组分,表现出双向递变层理(图9c),形成物性相对较好的储集层。珠江峡谷、台西南峡谷体系中均发育有底流改造浊积砂,其主要是由粗粒的陆源碎屑砂和生物碎屑砂构成,其中的泥质杂基含量较少^[19,22,51,58](图9)。在底流的改造作用下,浊积体会沿底流方向发生侧向搬运和延展,呈现出伸长状平面展布特征,其长轴方向与陆坡等深线一致,例如琼东南盆地梅山组一段浊积扇被认为是受到的底流的改造作用^[89-90]。此外,强底流作用下形成的砂质沉积,也可以作为后期深水富砂浊流发生的物质基础。例如,自晚上新世以来,东沙上陆坡地区内波和内潮作用强烈,使得该区域发育有大面积的沉积物波^[55],其主要是由粗粒沉积物所构成^[56],这些粗粒沉积物在强烈的底流作用下可能会向深海地区进一步搬运并沉积;末次冰期以来,珠江峡谷上游段以及神狐峡谷群头部的生物碎屑砂,也是在强底流作用下所形成^[22,80]。总体上来看,南海北部部分海域底流作用较强,具备发育砂质底流沉积与底流改造浊积

砂的地质与水文动力条件。

5 油气地质意义及未来展望

全球深水油气勘探实践表明,砂质底流沉积和底流改造浊积砂通常表现出较好的物性,如在巴西东部陆缘^[91]和东非莫桑比克陆缘^[6]等地区均有所发现,因此底流相关的砂质储层已逐渐成为当前全球深水油气勘探的重要目标之一。国际上著名的底流研究小组“The Drifters”先后组织了两轮(2017—2022年,2023—2026年)有关底流沉积与底流-重力流交互沉积过程的研究课题,关注了Total, BP和ExxonMobil等各大石油公司的兴趣和资助。对于中国南海北部陆缘,当前钻探已证实该地区发育有一系列以深海扇和浊积水道储层为主的天然气田,例如珠江口盆地白云凹陷荔湾3-1气田珠江组^[92]、琼东南盆地乐东-陵水17-2气田黄流组^[93]和陵水36-1浅层气田^[94]等,所对应储层的主体均由重力流沉积构成。但值得注意的是,局部地区在地形影响下,可受到强劲底流作用,使这些浊积砂在底流改造下形成物性较好的底流改造砂,这一推论也可得到当前钻探结果的有力支持(图10)^[93-101]。例如,白云凹陷珠江组深水储层以长石岩屑砂岩和岩屑长石砂岩为主,分选较好,杂基含量较低,一般小于3%,孔隙度介于20%~30%,平均渗透率为 $860.75 \times 10^{-3} \mu\text{m}^2$ ^[95],不同于泥质杂基含量较高的典型浊积储层。该地区在早中新世一中中新世具有较强的底流作用^[17],其可以对白云凹陷珠江组储层进行强烈的筛析改造,将浊流沉积中的细粒组分搬离而留下结构成熟度较好的砂质沉积,进而形成物性较好的砂质储层。陵水17-2气田所钻遇的深水重力流沉积储层中可见交错层理等牵引流沉积构造,表明底流改造作用的存在^[93]。同时,南海北部陆缘上新世-第四纪浅层沉积中也发育有广泛分布的天然气水合物资源,其有利的储层也是以深水浊积砂为主^[12](图10)。由于上新世以来南海北部底流作用显著增强^[19,49,98],这些天然气水合物储层的时-空展布及储层物性势必也会受到底流作用影响,使该地区砂质天然气水合物储层沉积物具有较好的分选磨圆特征以及较高的孔隙度和渗透率^[97](图10)。

综上所述,南海北部中新世以来的油气与天然气水合物储层发育处于底流活跃的背景之下,其物性与时-空展布不可避免地受到底流影响,这一认识在当前南海北部的勘探过程中不断得到证据支撑^[89,93,99-101]。然而,当前南海北部深水油气储层勘探研究多是聚焦于重力流沉积过程,而对底流沉积过程以及底流-浊

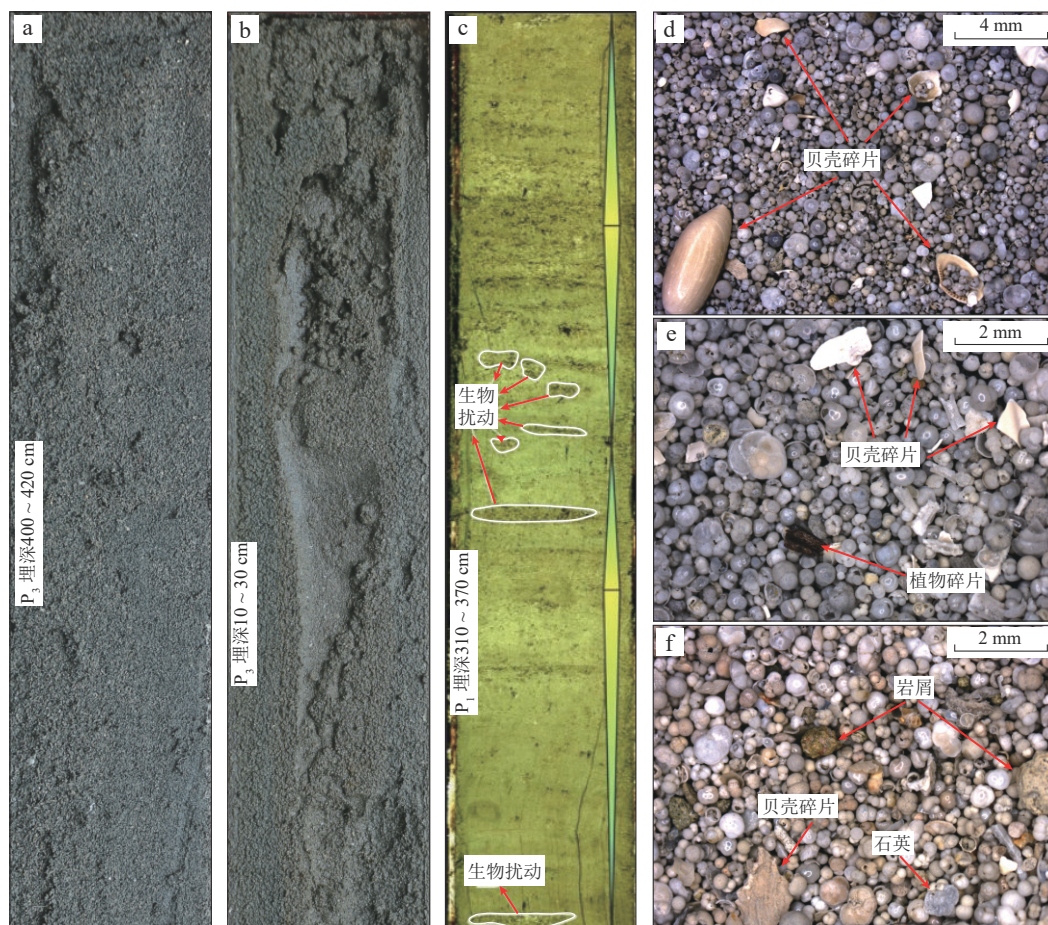


图9 珠江峡谷上游段底流相关成因的砂质沉积典型重力柱岩心照片(a—c)与显微照片(d—f)

Fig. 9 Typical core photos (a—c) and micrographs (d—f) of sandy sediments associated with bottom current processes in the upper reaches of the Pearl River Canyon

a, b. 砂质等深流沉积, 表现为块状构造, 主要由生物碎屑中砂构成, a 图样品来自重力柱 P_3 (埋深 400 ~ 420 cm), b 图样品来自重力柱 P_3 (埋深 10 ~ 30 cm); c. 底流改造浊积砂, 可见双向递变层理, 具有丰富的生物扰动构造, 样品来自重力柱 P_1 , 埋深 310 ~ 370 cm; d—f. 砂质等深流沉积的显微照片特征, 可见分选较差的有孔虫、贝壳碎片以及石英和岩屑碎屑颗粒, d 图样品来自重力柱 P_1 (埋深 240 ~ 242 cm), e 图样品来自重力柱 P_2 (埋深 200 ~ 202 cm), f 图样品来自重力柱 P_3 (埋深 100 ~ 102 cm)

(图中重力柱位置见文献[22, 80].)

流交互作用过程的研究总体上仍较为薄弱, 亟待展开进一步研究, 研究成果对于南海北部油气和天然气水合物资源的勘探目标的拓展具有积极意义。综合对当前南海北部底流沉积相关研究成果的梳理与思考, 笔者认为未来可以进一步加强以下几方面研究:

1) 深化古海洋与南海构造演化的耦合研究, 重建南海底流水动力演化历史。南海自晚渐新世扩张以来, 经历了多期构造热沉降作用, 特别是晚中新世以来, 不同区域先后发生快速沉降, 造成南海北部水深剧烈增大^[28, 102-105]。随着水深变化, 同一位置的水团类型及其水动力条件也会随沉降演化而发生改变。因此, 南海北部现今中-深层水团及环流的影响区域可能与早期存在显著差异, 无法直接利用现代环流模式来阐释地质历史时期沉积过程, 需要结合钻探资料以及高分辨率地震地貌

学对南海北部古海洋水动力过程展开进一步厘定。

2) 阐释复杂地形条件下的底流沉积过程。南海北部陆缘地形复杂, 发育海山、海脊、海底峡谷和水道等多类型地貌单元, 其会造成该地区底流类型及水动力强度在空间上表现出强烈变化, 进而影响底流沉积过程以及其对应的沉积地貌和沉积物特征。然而, 当前的相关研究多基于地质与地球物理资料的定性分析, 以及宏观尺度上的数值模拟研究, 尚不明确不同地形条件下的底流沉积动力过程及其对砂质沉积物时空展布及其沉积特征的影响机制, 制约着深水储层空间展布规律的深入理解与有效预测。

3) 底流与浊流交互作用机制研究。虽然底流沉积可以单独作用形成砂质沉积物, 但是对于规模性的底流成因砂体发育而言, 需要底流能够长距离、长时期搬

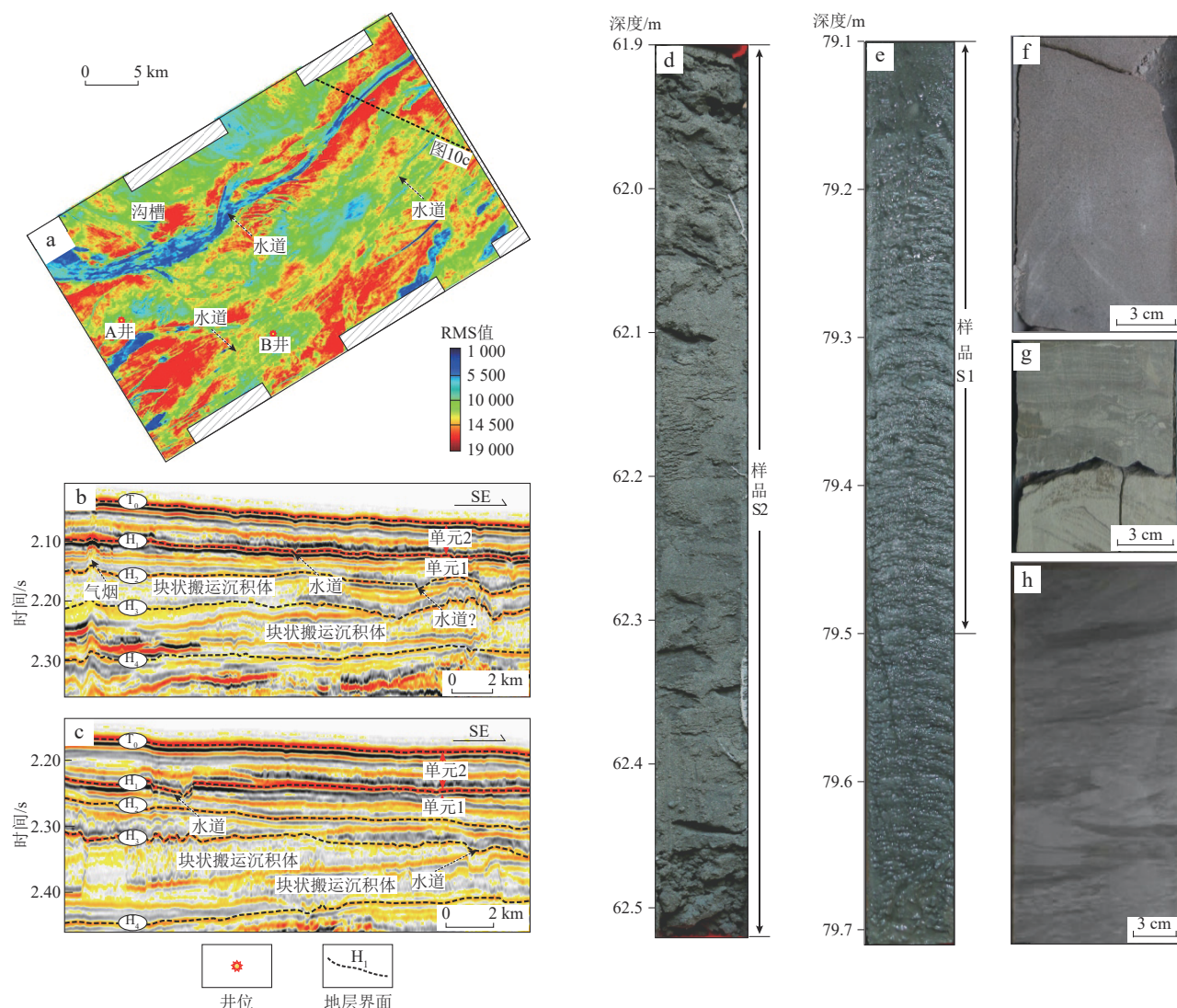


图10 南海北部底流成因砂质储集体分布特征及岩心证据

Fig. 10 Distribution of sandy reservoirs associated with bottom current processes in the northern South China Sea as evidenced by core photos a. 琼东南盆地中央峡谷内积水道-天然堤沉积体系的均方根振幅(RMS)平面图, 强振幅显示该沉积体系中的富砂质沉积特征; b, c. 中央峡谷内积水道-天然堤沉积体系典型地震剖面, 剖面位置见图1a; d. A井, 样品S2为灰绿色细砂, 沉积物分选性与磨圆度较好; e. B井, 样品S1为分选性好、磨圆度好的灰色中砂, 以石英和长石为主, 含有孔虫和云母; f. 埋深3 078.11 m, 深度自下而上逆级配—正级配层序, 解释为深水浊积砂岩, 岩心照片; g. 埋深3 058.10 m, S形波状层理的粉砂岩, 为深水底流沉积, 岩心照片; h. 埋深3 198.00~3 198.25 m, 具有脉状层理和波状层理的粉-细砂岩, 岩心照片 (图10a—c据文献[97]修改; 图10f, g据文献[96]修改; 图10h据文献[100]修改。)

运砂质沉积物, 条件较为苛刻, 使得多数陆缘的砂质底流沉积分布相对有限, 难以形成规模性的砂质底流沉积储层。相比之下, 重力流发育的深水区具有相对充足的砂质沉积物来源, 为深水大型油气及天然气水合物储层的形成奠定物质基础。当该类地区也发育底流作用时, 重力流-底流交互作用将在深水储层形成过程中扮演重要角色, 特别是对于平面上大面积展布的粉砂、细砂层沉积体的影响。南海北部陆坡广泛分布的海底峡谷及水道可以通过重力流将砂质沉积物输入深水地区, 加之该地区底流活跃(图1), 因此对重力流-底流交互作用的深入理解对于该地区油气与天然气水合物

勘探至关重要。但是, 目前有关南海北部底流-重力流交互作用的研究多是基于地震地貌学的定性研究, 综合钻测井资料、物理与数值模拟分析的机制研究仍然不足, 制约着当前对南海北部深水储层时-空展布及储层物性的深入理解与准确预测, 亟需展开进一步研究。

6 结 论

1) 南海北部陆坡自中新世以来, 底流沉积作用广泛分布, 不仅形成漂积体-环槽体系、沉积物波、底流阶地等多种底流沉积地貌, 还影响了南海北部海底峡

谷、水道等重力流沉积地貌的形成演化,对陆坡地貌具有重要塑造作用,进而控制重力流输运路径以及浊积砂体展布。同时,强底流地区可以形成砂质底流沉积,并且通过底流-重力流交互作用而形成底流改造浊积砂。这些与底流相关的砂体可以作为南海北部油气和天然气水合物勘探的潜在目标储层。

2) 南海北部底流作用自中新世以来开始发育,受控于海盆构造演化与全球气候变化,底流水动力经历了多期的增强与减弱演化。其中,晚中新世末期吕宋海峡的关闭过程,造成了南海北部底流作用的显著强化,进而影响上新世与第四纪沉积特征。因此,对于浅层油气与天然气水合物勘探,需要对底流相关沉积作用予以高度重视。

3) 相较于重力流沉积砂质储层,重力流-底流交互作用成因的砂质储层物性有显著改善,且在空间上具有一定规模,它们是南海北部未来油气与天然气水合物勘探的重要目标。但是,当前研究程度较低,未来还需要进一步深化南海古海洋与构造演化之间关系研究,加强复杂地形条件下底流沉积过程以及底流-浊流交互作用机制研究,明确底流作用影响下的深水砂质储层的展布规律。

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