Some aromatic marker compounds have specific natural product precursors and can be used as signatures for sediments of a particular source, depositional environment or geological age:

TNR 5	1,2,5TMN/1,3,6TMN	
TNR 6	1,2,7TMN/1,3,7TMN	(Strachan et al, 1988)
1,7/X	1,7DMP/(1,3 + 3,9 + 2,10 + 3,10 DMP)	
Retene/9MP		
1MP/9MP		(Alexander et al, 1988)

2. Mono- and triaromatic steranes are analysed by GC/MS under the same analytical conditions as used for di- and tri-nuclear aromatics. However, isolation of this fraction is performed by MPLC. To achieve this, the saturate plus aromatic mixture is injected onto a Merck Si60 column. The separation is monitored with a refractive index detector for saturates and a UV absorbance detector for aromatics.

   As aromatic steranes are generally present in low abundances, especially in oils, samples are analysed in the SIM mode and 16 ions are recorded.

   The conversion of monoaromatic steranes to triaromatic steranes and the dimethylation of triaromatic steranes in sediments are considered to be maturity dependent (Mackenzie et al, 1981; Mackenzie, 1984). The triaromatic sterane maturity indicator should, however, not be applied to crude oils because migration effects appear to selectively deplete the triaromatic steranes.