



## U–Pb geochronology of Late Silurian (Wenlock to Pridoli) volcanic and sedimentary rocks, central Newfoundland Appalachians: Targeting the timing of transient extension as a prelude to Devonian orogenic gold mineralization

### Géochronologie U–Pb de roches volcaniques et sédimentaires du Silurien tardif (du Wenlock au Pridoli), Appalaches du centre de Terre-Neuve : ciblage du moment de l'extension transitoire survenue en guise de prélude à la minéralisation aurifère orogénique

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#### Résumé de l'article

Les suites ignées bimodales et les roches sédimentaires clastiques immatures connexes sont caractéristiques de nombreuses zones faillées d'échelle crustale à minéralisation aurifère orogénique à l'échelle planétaire. Dans l'orogénèse appalachienne du centre de Terre-Neuve, la ceinture du conglomérat du lac Rogerson et le bassin de Botwood sont des suites magmatiques contrôlées par des failles et des séquences de roches sédimentaires du Silurien tardif (du Wenlock au Pridoli), étroitement associées à une minéralisation aurifère orogénique; l'évolution spatio-temporelle de la déformation par failles et le magmatisme ainsi que la sédimentation connexe n'ont toutefois pas été tout à fait résolus. On a obtenu des résultats géochronologiques U–Pb sur zircon au moyen d'une approche intégrée employant l'ablation par laser et la spectrométrie de masse avec plasma à couplage inductif (LA-ICPMS), suivies d'une analyse par abrasion chimique, par dilution isotopique et par spectrométrie de masse à thermoionisation (CA-ID-TIMS) des mêmes échantillons détritiques. Selon cette approche, l'âge maximal de sédimentation de la séquence de conglomérat du lac Rogerson est de  $421,9 \pm 1,0$  Ma (Pridoli), ce qui confirme qu'elle est plus récente et qu'elle recouvre stratigraphiquement les roches ignées d'environ 422 à 420 Ma affleurant le long de la ceinture aurifère du centre de Terre-Neuve. Vers le milieu stratigraphique du bassin de Botwood dans le centre-nord de Terre-Neuve, une couche de tuffite interlitée de siltite granoclassée a produit un âge de sédimentation maximal de  $427,9 \pm 3,1$  Ma (Wenlock, Homérien). L'âge de mise en place d'un dôme de rhyolite à rubanement de coulée, autobréchifié, de la ceinture volcanique du lac Charles le long du nord-ouest du bassin de Botwood est de  $429,3 \pm 0,7$  Ma (Wenlock, Homérien). Les données de datation sur zircon par CA-ID-TIMS haute précision établissent un lien clair entre le magmatisme du Wenlock au Pridoli et la sédimentation partout dans le centre de Terre-Neuve. De plus, ces résultats chronologiques correspondent à un modèle structural présumant un avancement vers le sud-est (coordonnées actuelles) d'un système de failles d'extension transitoire en travers de l'orientation longitudinale de la sous-zone Exploits entre environ 429 et 418 Ma, avec une propagation le long de l'axe longitudinal vers le sud-ouest (ceinture du conglomérat du lac Rogerson) entre 422 et 418 Ma. La déformation par failles d'extension pourrait avoir contribué à la formation du bassin, à l'affaissement et à l'exhumation des roches préalables au Silurien tardif de la sous-zone Exploits. Le magmatisme apparenté à l'extension, transgressif au fil du temps, et la sédimentation clastique semblent marquer la transition entre les cycles orogénique, salinique et acadien le long de la ceinture aurifère du centre de Terre-Neuve. L'extension lithosphérique transitoire du Wenlock au Pridoli pourrait s'être avérée importante pour accroître la chaleur et la circulation des fluides dans la croûte en guise de prélude à l'épaississement de la croûte, à la concentration des fluides et à la minéralisation aurifère orogénique du Dévonien.

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# U–Pb geochronology of Late Silurian (Wenlock to Pridoli) volcanic and sedimentary rocks, central Newfoundland Appalachians: targeting the timing of transient extension as a prelude to Devonian orogenic gold mineralization

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## ABSTRACT

Bimodal igneous suites and associated immature clastic sedimentary rocks are characteristic of many orogenic gold-mineralized, crustal-scale fault zones globally. In the central Newfoundland Appalachian orogen, the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt and Botwood basin are Late Silurian (Wenlock to Pridoli), fault-controlled sedimentary rock sequences and magmatic suites closely associated with orogenic gold mineralization; however, the spatio-temporal evolution of faulting and associated sedimentation and magmatism are not fully resolved.

U–Pb zircon geochronological results were obtained by using an integrated approach employing LA-ICPMS (laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry) followed by CA-ID-TIMS (chemical abrasion-isotope dilution-thermal ionization mass spectrometry) on the same detrital samples. Using this approach, a maximum depositional age for sedimentary rocks of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence is  $421.9 \pm 1.0$  Ma (Pridoli), which confirms that they are younger than, and stratigraphically overlie, ca. 422–420 Ma igneous rocks exposed along the central Newfoundland gold belt. Towards the stratigraphic middle of the Botwood basin in north-central Newfoundland, a tuffite layer intercalated with graded siltstone produced a maximum depositional age of  $427.9 \pm 3.1$  Ma (Wenlock; Homerian). The age of emplacement of an autobrecciated, flow-banded rhyolite dome of the Charles Lake volcanic belt along the northwestern Botwood basin is  $429.3 \pm 0.7$  Ma (Wenlock; Homerian). The high-precision CA-ID-TIMS zircon data establish a clear link between Wenlock to Pridoli magmatism and sedimentation throughout central Newfoundland. Furthermore, these geochronological results are consistent with a structural model involving the southeastward (present-day coordinates) advancement of a transient extensional fault system across strike of the Exploits Subzone between ca. 429 and 418 Ma, with propagation along strike to the southwest (Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt) between ca. 422 and 418 Ma. Extensional faulting may have contributed to basin formation, subsidence, and exhumation of pre-Late Silurian rocks of the Exploits Subzone.

Time-transgressive, extension-related magmatism and clastic sedimentation appear to mark the transition between the Salinic and Acadian orogenic cycles along the central Newfoundland gold belt. Transient Wenlock to Pridoli lithospheric extension may have been important for increasing heat and fluid flow in the crust as a prelude to Devonian crustal thickening, fluid focussing, and orogenic gold mineralization.

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## RÉSUMÉ

Les suites ignées bimodales et les roches sédimentaires clastiques immatures connexes sont caractéristiques de nombreuses zones faillées d'échelle crustale à minéralisation aurifère orogénique à l'échelle planétaire. Dans l'orogène appalachienne du centre de Terre-Neuve, la ceinture du conglomérat du lac Rogerson et le bassin de Botwood sont des suites magmatiques contrôlées par des failles et des séquences de roches sédimentaires du Silurien tardif (du Wenlock au Pridoli), étroitement associées à une minéralisation aurifère orogénique; l'évolution spatio-temporelle de la déformation par failles et le magmatisme ainsi que la sédimentation connexe n'ont toutefois pas été tout à fait résolus.

On a obtenu des résultats géochronologiques U–Pb sur zircon au moyen d’une approche intégrée employant l’ablation par laser et la spectrométrie de masse avec plasma à couplage inductif (LA-ICPMS), suivies d’une analyse par abrasion chimique, par dilution isotopique et par spectrométrie de masse à thermoionisation (CA-ID-TIMS) des mêmes échantillons détritiques. Selon cette approche, l’âge maximal de sédimentation de la séquence de conglomérat du lac Rogerson est de  $421,9 \pm 1,0$  Ma (Pridoli), ce qui confirme qu’elle est plus récente et qu’elle recouvre stratigraphiquement les roches ignées d’environ 422 à 420 Ma affleurant le long de la ceinture aurifère du centre de Terre-Neuve. Vers le milieu stratigraphique du bassin de Botwood dans le centre-nord de Terre-Neuve, une couche de tuffite interlité de siltite granoclassée a produit un âge de sédimentation maximal de  $427,9 \pm 3,1$  Ma (Wenlock, Homérien). L’âge de mise en place d’un dôme de rhyolite à rubanement de coulée, autobréchifié, de la ceinture volcanique du lac Charles le long du nord-ouest du bassin de Botwood est de  $429,3 \pm 0,7$  Ma (Wenlock, Homérien). Les données de datation sur zircon par CA-ID-TIMS haute précision établissent un lien clair entre le magmatisme du Wenlock au Pridoli et la sédimentation partout dans le centre de Terre-Neuve. De plus, ces résultats chronologiques correspondent à un modèle structural présumant un avancement vers le sud-est (coordonnées actuelles) d’un système de failles d’extension transitoire en travers de l’orientation longitudinale de la sous-zone Exploits entre environ 429 et 418 Ma, avec une propagation le long de l’axe longitudinal vers le sud-ouest (ceinture du conglomérat du lac Rogerson) entre 422 et 418 Ma. La déformation par failles d’extension pourrait avoir contribué à la formation du bassin, à l’affaissement et à l’exhumation des roches préalables au Silurien tardif de la sous-zone Exploits.

Le magmatisme apparenté à l’extension, transgressif au fil du temps, et la sédimentation clastique semblent marquer la transition entre les cycles orogénique, salinique et acadien le long de la ceinture aurifère du centre de Terre-Neuve. L’extension lithosphérique transitoire du Wenlock au Pridoli pourrait s’être avérée importante pour accroître la chaleur et la circulation des fluides dans la croûte en guise de prélude à l’épaississement de la croûte, à la concentration des fluides et à la minéralisation aurifère orogénique du Dévonien.

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## INTRODUCTION

Fault-controlled magmatic suites and upper-crustal, immature clastic sedimentary rock sequences containing panels of polymict conglomerate are characteristic of many orogenic gold-mineralized fault systems globally (e.g., Hodgson 1993; Evans 1996; Poulsen *et al.* 2000; Bleeker 2002). Such rock sequences are not only key targets for gold exploration, but also provide records of fault zone dynamics that drive gold mineralization events (e.g., Bleeker 2012, 2015). Accordingly, constraining the setting, age, and process evolution of igneous and clastic sedimentary rocks associated with orogenic gold mineralization is essential for understanding the controls on mineralization.

In the central Newfoundland Appalachians, an approximately 400 km-long system of crustal-scale, north-east-southwest trending fault zones of the Exploits Subzone (Dunnage Zone) are delineated by post-Ordovician magmatic suites and immature clastic sedimentary rock sequences and closely associated orogenic gold mineralization (Figs. 1 and 2; Tuach *et al.* 1988; Tuach 1992; Evans 1996; Wardle 2005). The setting, timing, and associated faulting processes in this mineralized terrane are not fully understood because outcrop is sparse and gold-focussed exploration in areas of little outcrop has a relatively short history (~35 years, see Sandeman *et al.* this volume). The processes of polyphase fault reactivation that control orogenic gold mineralization, for example, are only beginning to be constrained (Figs. 1 and 2; Willner *et al.* 2018, 2022; Honsberger *et al.* 2022). Additionally, the occurrence of extension-related Silurian basins in central and western Newfoundland with strongly bimodal magmatic suites and clastic sedimentary rock sequences (Fig. 1; Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990;

Kusky and Kidd 1996; O’Brien 2003; Whalen *et al.* 2006) is in contrast to compressional deformational structures documented throughout the Dunnage Zone (e.g., Karlstrom *et al.* 1982; Valverde-Vaquero *et al.* 2006; van Staal and Barr 2012). Accordingly, some workers have interpreted these Silurian basin rocks to have formed during thrusting (e.g., Karlstrom *et al.* 1982; van Staal *et al.* 2014), whereas others considered such sequences to represent pull-apart basins related to protracted strike-slip motion (Kusky *et al.* 1987; Buchan and Hodych 1992; Kusky and Kidd 1996; O’Brien 2003). To resolve such discrepancies related to the Silurian tectonic evolution of central Newfoundland, stratigraphic, structural, geochemical, and geochronological data must be integrated. High-precision geochronological data are particularly useful in the Exploits Subzone because of rapid transitions (<5 million years) between deformational events and tectonic environments spanning the Salinic (Late Silurian) and Acadian (Early Devonian) orogenic cycles (e.g., van Staal *et al.* 2014).

In the present investigation, regional field observations, targeted geochronology sampling, and integrated LA-ICPMS and CA-ID-TIMS U–Pb zircon geochronological analyses of volcanic and sedimentary rocks establish the spatio-temporal dynamics of Wenlock to Pridoli extensional faulting in central Newfoundland, which may have been the operative process marking the transition between the Salinic and Acadian orogenic cycles. Silurian clastic sedimentary rocks in central Newfoundland were the subjects of a previous U–Pb LA-ICPMS geochronological study (Pollock *et al.* 2007) and, as well, one sample of these rocks was analyzed as part of a combined U–Pb–Hf isotopic study (Henderson *et al.* 2018). These previous investigations focussed on detrital zircon provenance but maximum depositional and



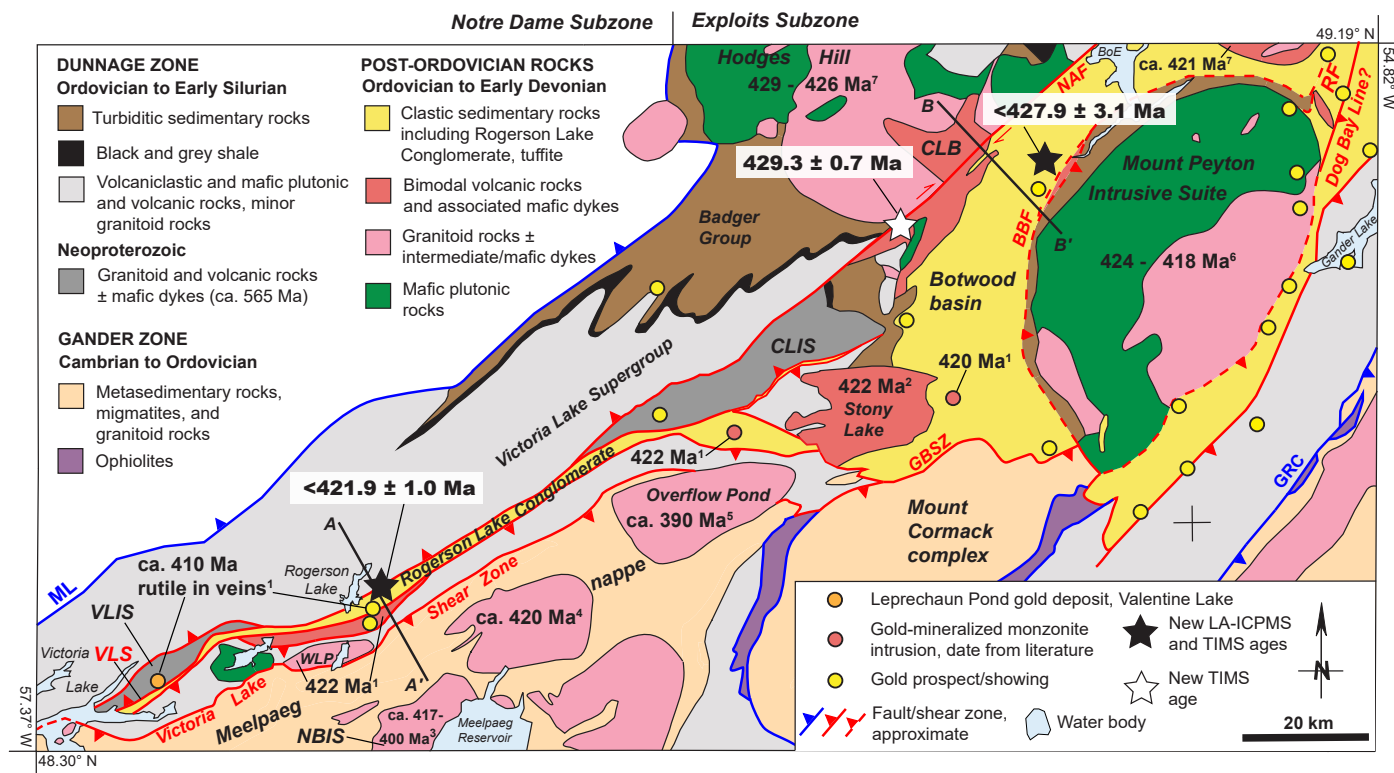


Figure 2. Simplified geologic map of the central Newfoundland orogenic gold belt (modified from Colman-Sadd et al. 1990; O'Brien 2003; Rogers and van Staal 2005; Rogers et al. 2005; van Staal et al. 2005). Red lines and text mark major Early Devonian fault/shear zones related to emplacement of orogenic gold-bearing veins (Honsberger et al. 2022). A local boundary between the Dunnage and Gander zones in this area has been referred to as Noel Paul's Line (Fig. 1; Williams et al. 1988), which is the same age as the regionally extensive Early Devonian Victoria Lake Shear Zone that overprints and imbricates the Dunnage-Gander boundary across central Newfoundland (Valverde-Vaquero and van Staal 2002). Accordingly, the Victoria Lake Shear Zone is coloured red, unlike in Figure 1, to demonstrate that it does not represent sensu stricto the original boundary between the Dunnage and Gander zones. Blue lines and text are fault zones that separate the tectonostratigraphic zones. Faults within the Victoria Lake Supergroup are not illustrated. Geochronology sample locations are marked by black (LA-ICPMS and TIMS) and white (TIMS) stars, with absolute ages indicated. References to ages from the literature are as follows: 1, Honsberger et al. (2022); 2, Dunning et al. (1990) and McNicoll et al. (2006); 3, Kerr (1997); 4, Valverde-Vaquero et al. (2006); 5, Dallmeyer et al. (1983); 6, Sandeman et al. (2017); 7, Dickson (2000), van Staal et al. (2014), and G. Dunning, personal communication 2021. Cross-section lines A-A' and B-B' are illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, respectively. Gold occurrences are from the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Industry, Energy and Technology's Mineral Occurrence Database. Abbreviations: BBF – Botwood Basin Fault Zone; BoE – Bay of Exploits; CLB – Charles Lake volcanic belt; CLIS – Crippleback Lake Intrusive Suite; GBSZ – Great Burnt Lake Shear Zone; GRC – Gander River Complex; ML – Mekwe'jit Line; NAF – Northern Arm Fault; NBIS – North Bay Intrusive Suite; RF – Reach Fault; VLIS – Valentine Lake Intrusive Suite; VLS – Valentine Lake Shear Zone; WLP – Wilding Lake pluton.

sensu stricto by the fault zones that separate the tectonostratigraphic zones. Instead, gold mineralization is hosted along younger fault/shear zones that overprint, reactivate, and crosscut older stratigraphy and tectonostratigraphic zone boundaries (Figs. 1 and 2; e.g., Honsberger et al. 2022). In the Exploits Subzone (Fig. 2), for example, gold mineralization occurs along a Devonian crustal-scale thrust fault system that imbricates Gander Zone basement of the Meelpaeg Subzone and Ordovician Exploits Subzone rocks (Kean and Jayasinghe 1980; Colman-Sadd et al. 1990; Honsberger et al. 2022). This fault system corresponds to the Acadian deformation front and includes the regionally

extensive, southeast-dipping Victoria Lake Shear Zone (Valverde-Vaquero et al. 2006), which correlates with Noel Paul's Line (Williams et al. 1988; Valverde-Vaquero and van Staal 2002), a local boundary in central Newfoundland that separates rocks of the Dunnage and Gander zones. Accordingly, a northwest-dipping Salinic suture zone representing the Dunnage-Gander boundary (e.g., van Staal et al. 2014) is not preserved in central Newfoundland because it was overprinted by Devonian thrusts during far-field compression associated with the Acadian orogenic cycle (e.g., Valverde-Vaquero et al. 2006). Northwest-dipping structures along the central Newfoundland gold belt are associated with

Devonian deformation and include the Valentine Lake Shear Zone, which hosts an approximately five-million-ounce orogenic gold deposit at Valentine Lake (Dunsworth and Walford 2018; Lincoln *et al.* 2018; Figs. 1 and 2).

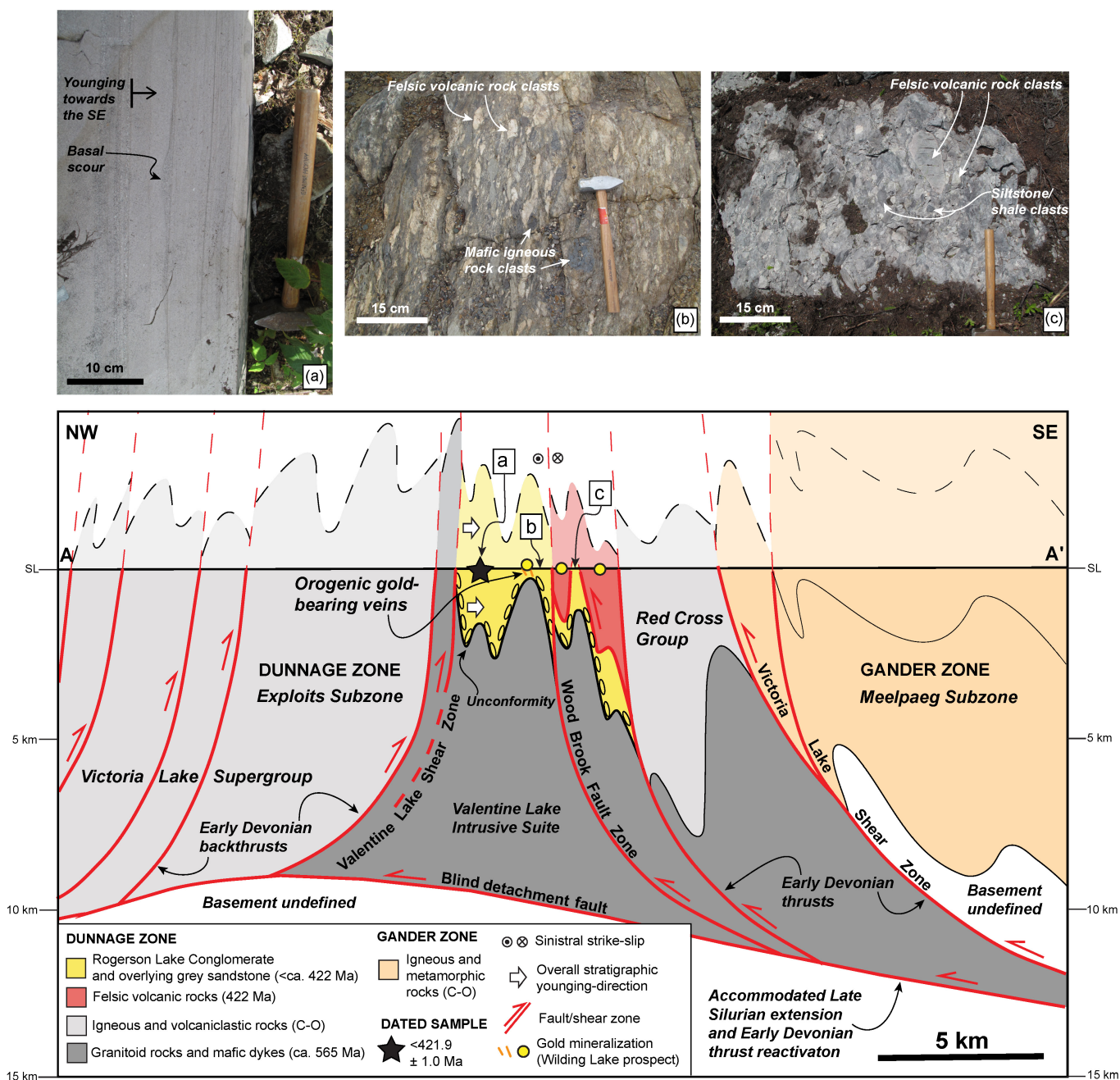
The pre-Silurian terranes of the Exploits Subzone (Fig. 2) consist of Neoproterozoic magmatic suites (ca. 565 Ma Valentine Lake and Crippleback Lake intrusive suites) and overlying Cambrian to Ordovician, volcano-sedimentary assemblages of the Penobscot and Popelogan-Victoria arc and backarc systems including the Victoria Lake Supergroup and correlatives (Kean and Evans 1988; Evans *et al.* 1990; O'Brien 2003; Rogers *et al.* 2006). Accretion of pre-Silurian rocks in the Exploits Subzone to composite Laurentia along the Laurentia-Gondwana suture zone or “Mekwe'jit Line” (see White and Waldron 2022; Sandeman *et al.* this volume) began in the Late Ordovician during the third and final phase of the Taconic orogenic cycle (Zagorevski *et al.* 2007; van Staal and Barr 2012). The subsequent initiation of subduction of the Tetagouche-Exploits backarc basin beneath composite Laurentia (Salinic orogenic cycle) was then accompanied by deposition of overlying Late Ordovician—Early Silurian black and grey shale and turbiditic forearc sequences of the Badger Group (Fig. 2; Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990; O'Brien 2003; van Staal and Barr 2012; Waldron *et al.* 2012). The terminal Salinic suture zone (ca. 435 Ma, van Staal *et al.* 2014) is interpreted to correspond to the Dog Bay Line in north-central Newfoundland (Figs. 1 and 2; Williams 1993; Williams *et al.* 1993; Pollock *et al.* 2007). However, detailed local and regional field-based observations indicate that the Dog Bay Line *sensu stricto* is a post-Salinic, southeast-dipping zone of strong deformation associated with the Acadian orogenic cycle (Dickson 2006; Dickson *et al.* 2007; Sandeman 2021). This implies that the precise trace of the northwest-dipping Salinic suture is not well defined in the field because it was overprinted by Devonian deformation along the southeast-dipping Dog Bay Line (i.e., Dog Bay fault, Sandeman 2021), which is the preferred interpretation herein.

In central Newfoundland, Wenlock to Pridoli bimodal igneous rocks and associated polymict conglomerate and arenitic sandstone of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence (Kean and Jayasinghe 1980) are juxtaposed against, and nonconformably overlie, Neoproterozoic tonalite, trondhjemite, and granodiorite basement ( $\pm$  mafic dykes) of the Valentine Lake and Crippleback Lake intrusive suites (Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990; van Staal *et al.* 2005; Figs. 2–4). The gold-mineralized Rogerson Lake Conglomerate is the diagnostic immature clastic sedimentary rock that delineates the structurally controlled central Newfoundland gold belt (Fig. 2; Evans 1996; Wardle 2005). This polymict conglomerate ( $\pm$  intercalated grey to pinkish sandstone) ranges from unmetamorphosed to lower greenschist facies and is purplish-grey to grey, poorly sorted and clast supported, and contains locally-sourced, deformed to undeformed, pebble to cobble-sized clasts of felsic and mafic igneous rocks, sandstone, siltstone, shale, and jasper, within a matrix of sand, silt, and clay (Kean and Jayasinghe 1980; Valverde-Vaquero

and van Staal 2002; Rogers *et al.* 2005; Pollock *et al.* 2007; Honsberger *et al.* 2019). The purplish-red jasper clasts are distinctive and suggestive of an Early Ordovician ironstone source similar to that now exposed on Bell Island offshore the Avalon Peninsula (Fig. 1; Todd *et al.* 2018). The Rogerson Lake Conglomerate is imbricated with ca. 422 Ma felsic volcanic and volcanoclastic rocks, granitoid and gabbro bodies, and is locally cut by lower greenschist facies mafic dykes (Honsberger *et al.* 2019, 2020). The Neoproterozoic to Late Silurian rocks in central Newfoundland are cut by orogenic gold-bearing quartz vein systems that define the main mineral resource of the central Newfoundland gold belt (Evans 1996; Honsberger *et al.* 2022).

Northeast along strike of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt, related clastic sedimentary rocks of the Botwood Group (Williams 1962) occur in the Botwood basin (Figs. 1 and 2; Kusky *et al.* 1987; O'Brien 2003). Sedimentary rocks of the Botwood Group include gold-mineralized, grey, green, and red sandstone and siltstone intercalated with felsic tuff (Wigwam Formation; O'Brien 1993; Colman-Sadd 1994; Williams *et al.* 1995; Dickson *et al.* 2000). Magmatic rocks associated with the Botwood Group include: the ca. 424–418 Ma bimodal Mount Peyton Intrusive Suite (Strong 1979; Blackwood 1982; Strong and Dupuy 1982; Dickson 1993; Sandeman *et al.* 2017); the ca. 422 Ma Laurenceton and Stony Lake volcanic rocks and equivalents (Williams 1972; Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990; Dunning *et al.* 1990; McNicoll *et al.* 2006; van Staal *et al.* 2014; Honsberger *et al.* 2022); the ca. 422 volcanic rocks and dykes of the composite Fogo Island Intrusive Suite (Elliot *et al.* 1991; Sandeman and Malpas 1995; Kerr 2013; Donaldson *et al.* 2015), and ca. 420 monzonite intrusions (Fig. 2; Honsberger *et al.* 2020). Carbonate-bearing and fossiliferous sandstone and siltstone sequences of the Indian Islands Group (Boyce and Dickson 2006; Dickson 2006; Dickson *et al.* 2007) comprise the rocks of the easternmost Botwood basin. Some workers interpret these sedimentary rocks to represent peri-Gondwanan detrital sediments deposited exclusively on the Ganderian side of the Salinic suture zone (Williams 1993; Williams *et al.* 1993; Currie 1995; Pollock *et al.* 2007), whereas others have questioned their lithologic distinction from similar but fossil-poor clastic sedimentary rocks of the adjacent Botwood Group (Dickson 2006; Dickson *et al.* 2007).

Northwest of the Botwood Group, the Hodges Hill Intrusive Suite, which represents a slightly older pulse of Late Silurian magmatism (ca. 429 to 426 Ma; Whalen *et al.* 1997, 2006; Dickson 1999, 2000; van Staal *et al.* 2014; G. Dunning, personal communication 2021), crosscuts the Mekwe'jit Line (Figs. 1 and 2; Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990). The Hodges Hill Intrusive Suite comprises granitic to gabbroic units that are cut by intermediate and mafic dykes and intrudes, in the east, contemporaneous bimodal volcanic rocks of the Charles Lake volcanic belt (Figs. 1 and 2; Dickson 1999, 2000). Slightly older, Late Silurian (ca. 429–426 Ma) magmatic and clastic sedimentary rocks of the Topsails Intrusive Suite and Springdale Group (Chandler *et al.* 1987; Whalen *et al.* 1997, 2006), respectively, occur farther northwest and are

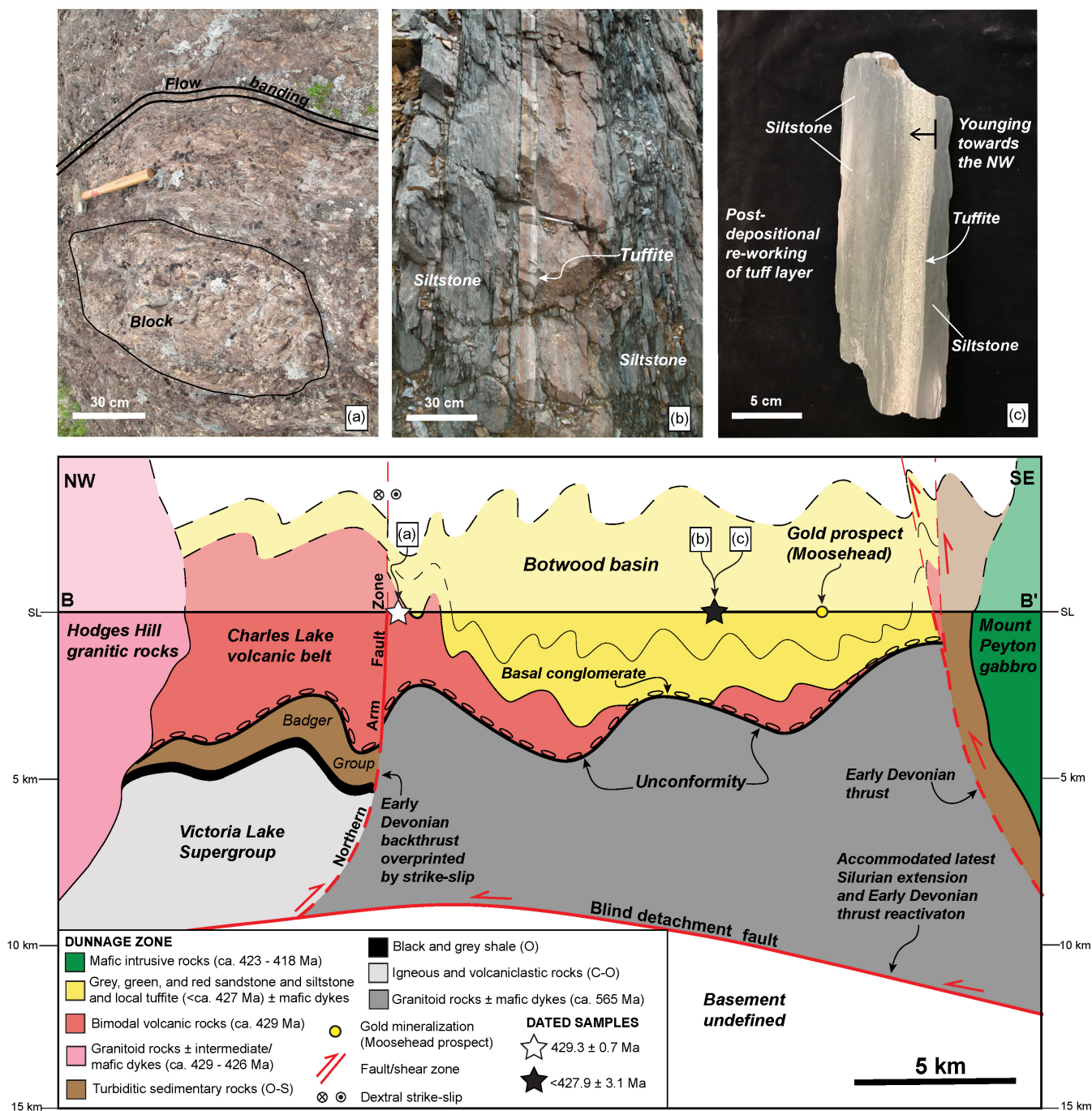


**Figure 3.** Cross-section interpretation along A-A' (see Fig. 2). The black star marks the location of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sandstone (BNB18-IHNL-072) that was sampled for LA-ICPMS and CA-ID-TIMS U–Pb detrital zircon geochronology. Gold mineralization (yellow circles and orange lines on section) represent the Wilding Lake prospect. Pictures are as follows: A) Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sandstone geochronology sample BNB18-IHNL-072; B) Strongly deformed and gold-mineralized Rogerson Lake Conglomerate; C) Relatively undeformed Rogerson Lake Conglomerate.

associated with Latest Silurian to Devonian gold mineralization along fault splays of the Baie Verte – Brompton Line (Fig. 1; Evans 2004). Southeast of the central Newfoundland gold belt, Cambrian to Ordovician metamorphic terranes of the Gander Zone are uplifted along Early Devonian, Acadian thrust faults and intruded by Early to Middle Devonian granitoid rocks (Fig. 2; Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990; Kerr 1997; Valverde-Vaquero *et al.* 2006).

## STRUCTURAL CONTEXT

The central Newfoundland gold belt is hosted within a cross-sectional triangle zone-like structural domain that is bounded by southeast- and northwest-dipping imbricated fault/shear zones and an inferred, relatively flat-lying, blind detachment fault at depth (Figs. 2–4; van der Velden *et al.* 2004; van Staal and Barr 2012; Honsberger *et al.* 2020, 2022;



**Figure 4.** Cross-section interpretation along B-B' (see Fig. 2). Geochronology sample locations are projected horizontally onto the line of section and are marked by black and white stars. The black star marks the location of the felsic tuffite sample (BNB19-IHNL-291) analyzed by both LA-ICPMS and CA-ID-TIMS U–Pb zircon geochronology, whereas the white star marks the location of the flow-banded rhyolite sample (BNB18-IHNL-092) analyzed only for CA-ID-TIMS U–Pb geochronology. Gold mineralization (yellow circle) represents the Moosehead prospect. Pictures are as follows: A) Flow-banded rhyolite geochronology sample BNB18-IHNL-092; B) Felsic tuffite outcrop sampled for geochronology; C) Felsic tuffite geochronology sample BNB19-IHNL-291.

Bleeker and Honsberger 2022). The southeast-dipping fault/shear zones include the Victoria Lake Shear Zone and Wood Brook Fault Zone (Valverde-Vaquero *et al.* 2006), whereas the northwest-dipping structures include the orogenic gold

-mineralized Valentine Lake Shear Zone (Figs. 2 and 3; Dunsworth and Walford 2018; Lincoln *et al.* 2018). These fault/shear zones were active from at least the Late Silurian to the Early Devonian as the Meelpaeg nappe (Ganderian



deformation front) advanced to the northwest as a result of far-field collision of Avalonia with composite Laurentia during the Acadian orogenic cycle (Valverde-Vaquero *et al.* 2006; van Staal and Barr 2012).

At Valentine Lake, the Valentine Lake Shear Zone cross-cuts, uplifts, and juxtaposes the Valentine Lake Intrusive Suite against the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate in the overall footwall of the Victoria Lake Shear Zone (Figs. 2 and 3; Honsberger *et al.* 2020). The Valentine Lake gold deposit is hosted within structurally controlled, fault-fill and extensional quartz vein systems that emanate from the Valentine Lake Shear Zone and crosscut the Valentine Lake Intrusive Suite (Lincoln *et al.* 2018). Approximately 30 km northeast of the Valentine Lake deposit, gold-mineralized quartz veins of the Wilding Lake gold prospect form offshoots of the Wood Brook Fault Zone and cut southeast-younging stratigraphy of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence (Fig. 3; Honsberger *et al.* 2019). The Valentine Lake Shear Zone structure extends farther to the northeast along the northwestern boundary of the Crippleback Lake Intrusive Suite before merging with the Northern Arm Fault (Figs. 1 and 2), a zone of protracted, oblique dextral strike-slip faulting that marks the northwestern margin of the Botwood basin (Kusky *et al.* 1987; Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990; O'Brien 2003).

The northeastern extension of the Victoria Lake Shear Zone system is the Great Burnt Lake Shear Zone, which uplifts Ganderian rocks of the Mount Cormack Complex and buries sandstone-siltstone sequences and monzonite intrusions of the southern Botwood basin (Fig. 2; Colman-Sadd 1980, 1985; Dec and Colman-Sadd 1990; Valverde-Vaquero *et al.* 2006; Honsberger *et al.* 2020, 2022). Farther northeast in the Botwood basin, the gold-mineralized Mount Peyton Intrusive Suite is bounded by southeast-dipping fault zones; a thrust fault system to the northwest, which we hereby name the “Botwood Basin Fault Zone”, and a thrust structure to the southeast that may correlate with the Dog Bay Line in north-central Newfoundland (Figs. 2 and 4; Dickson *et al.* 2000; O'Brien 2003). In the overall footwall of the “Botwood Basin Fault Zone”, orogenic gold mineralization of the Moosehead prospect is hosted within sandstones and siltstones ( $\pm$  mafic dykes) of the Wigwam Formation (Fig. 4; Froude 2021; Sandeman *et al.* this volume). A southeast-dipping fault zone bounds the southeastern-most contact of the Botwood Group, in contrast to the presumably northwest- to west-dipping fault trace of the Gander River Complex (Blackwood 1982; Miller 1988; O'Neill and Blackwood 1989), which delineates a peri-Ganderian, Cambro-Ordovician ophiolite tract that separates rocks of the Dunnage and Gander zones (Figs. 1–4; Colman-Sadd *et al.* 1990; van Staal and Barr 2012).

## U–PB GEOCHRONOLOGY SAMPLING

In order to constrain the spatio-temporal history of faulting, magmatism, and sedimentation along the central Newfoundland gold belt, sampling for geochronological

analysis was undertaken in the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt and Botwood basin (Figs. 1–4). In the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt, a sample of fresh, pink-grey, medium-grained, muscovitic sandstone containing local heavy mineral laminae and conformably overlying polymict conglomerate was processed for detrital zircon to be analyzed by LA-ICPMS and follow-up CA-ID-TIMS U–Pb dating methods. The same analytical approach was applied to a reworked felsic tuff (i.e., tuffite) intercalated with graded, muscovitic siltstone beds of the Wigwam Formation along the limb of a local anticline in the Botwood basin. The tuffite is a distinctive ~5 to 10 cm, yellowish-beige coloured layer in the field that contains medium-grained and angular epiclastic quartz and feldspar fragments (Fig. 4). An autobrecciated, flow-banded rhyolite dome of the Charles Lake volcanic belt adjacent to the Northern Arm Fault near Grand Falls, and along the northwestern margin of the Botwood basin, was sampled for direct CA-ID-TIMS dating of zircon to examine magmatic linkages with the felsic tuffite sample. UTM coordinates for geochronology samples are given in Supplementary data Tables S1 and S2 (see footnote 1).

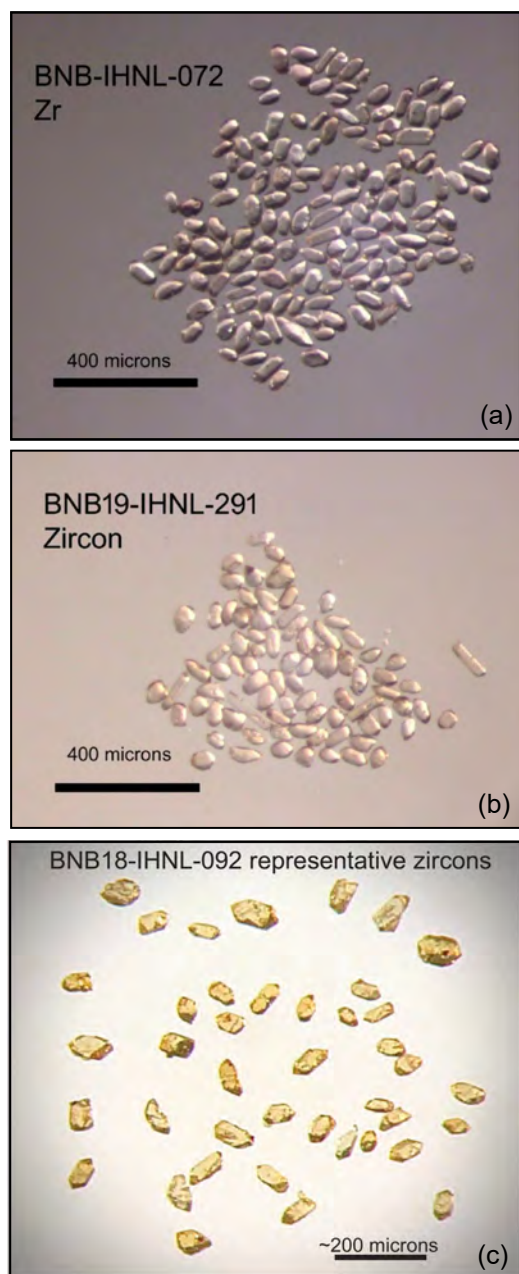
## ANALYTICAL METHODS

### Laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry

Following crushing and pulverization, initial separation of heavy minerals occurred on a Wilfley table, with subsequent paramagnetic and density separations performed, respectively, with a Frantz isodynamic separator and using methylene iodide. The freshest, least cracked zircon grains were hand picked under a binocular microscope with incident light (Fig. 5). Zircon grains from the sandstone sample (BNB18-IHNL-072) were annealed prior to analysis (Mattinson 2005), whereas zircon grains from the tuffite sample (BNB19-IHNL-291) were not pre-treated.

Grains were mounted on sticky tape and partially ablated using a 193 nm New Wave excimer laser and an Agilent 7900 inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer. Depending on the sample, the laser generally operated at 5 Hz and about 5 J/cm<sup>2</sup> fluence with typical beam diameter of 20–30 microns. Data were collected on <sup>88</sup>Sr (10 ms) <sup>206</sup>Pb (30 ms) <sup>207</sup>Pb (70 ms) <sup>232</sup>Th (10 ms) and <sup>238</sup>U (20 ms). Prior to analysis, spots were pre-ablated with a larger beam diameter for 2 s (10 pulses) to clean the surface. Following a 10 s period of baseline accumulation, the laser sampling beam was turned on and data were collected for 25 s before a washout period that preceded the next spot analysis. About 150 measurement cycles per sample were accumulated and resulting ablation pits are about 15 microns deep.

<sup>1</sup>Supplemental Data. Table S1 and S2. Please visit <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/ag/article/view/32815/1882528251> and <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/ag/article/view/32815/1882528252> to access the supplementary material



**Figure 5.** Images of representative zircon crystals analyzed for LA-ICPMS and CA-ID-TIMS U–Pb geochronology. (a) BNB18-IHNL-072, whole grains; (b) BNB19-IHNL-291, whole grains; (c) BNB18-IHNL-092, polished grains (CA-ID-TIMS only). Images were taken with a binocular microscope with incident light.

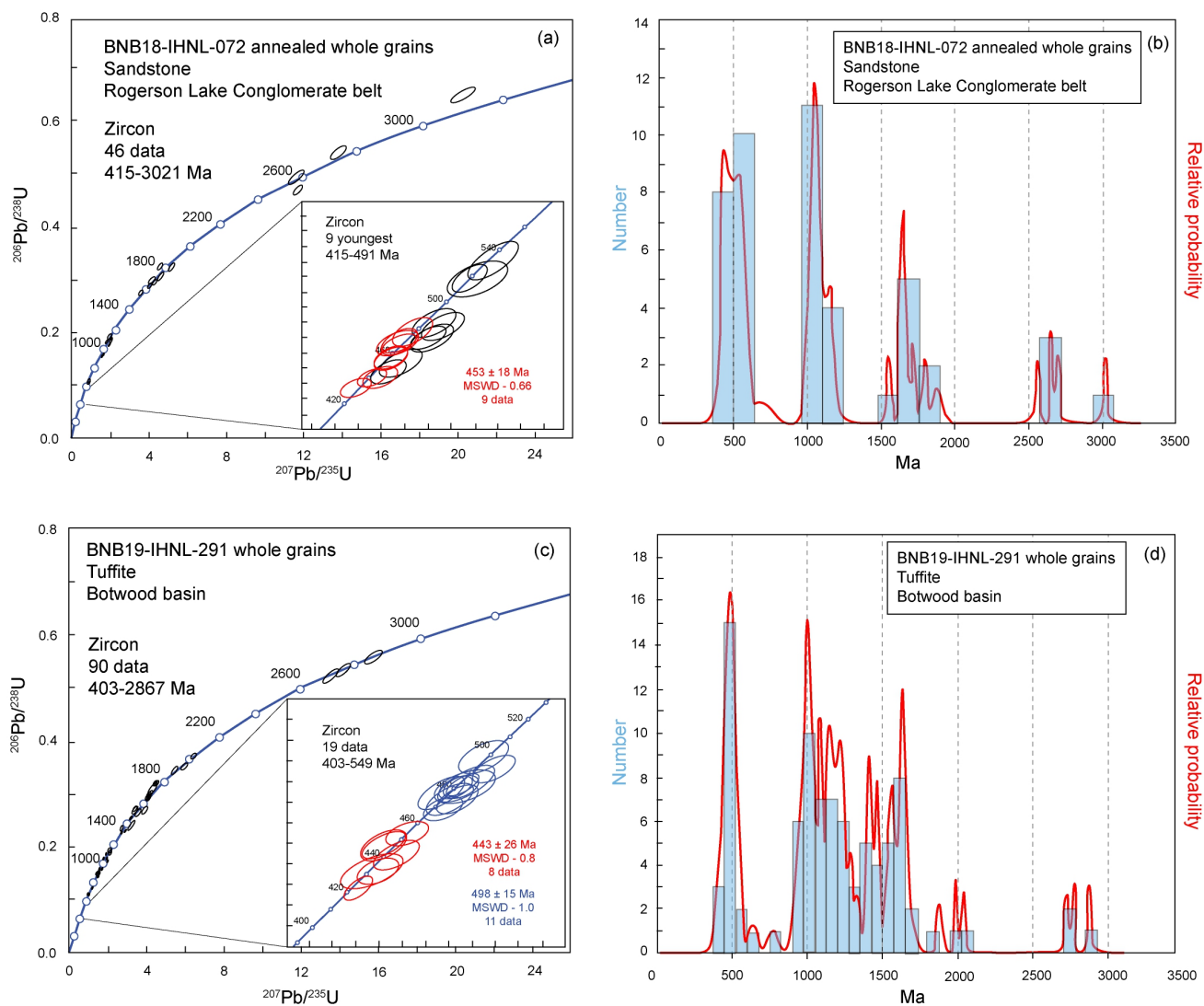
Data were edited and reduced using custom VBA software (UtilLAZ program) written by D. W. Davis, University of Toronto.  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ratios showed increasing fractionation throughout zircon runs caused by loss of refractory U with increasing penetration depth. No corrections were made for common Pb because the  $^{204}\text{Pb}$  peak is too small to be measured precisely. If present, common Pb would have the effect of pushing data to the right of the concordia curve along a shallow mixing line with the slope determined by the iso-

topic composition of the common Pb contaminant.  $^{88}\text{Sr}$  in zircon was monitored in order to detect intersection of the beam with zones of alteration or inclusions, and data showing high Sr or irregular time resolved profiles were either averaged over restricted Sr-free time windows or rejected. The Th/U ratio of zircon was calculated using the  $^{208}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ratio and the  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  age. This is more accurate than measuring the Th/U ratio directly because Th<sup>+</sup> yield is strongly biased by oxidation in the plasma and, as well, the Th/U ratio in the standard available to correct the bias is not constant. Low Th/U (<0.1) is characteristic of metamorphic and hydrothermal zircon, whereas most zircon crystallized from felsic melts has Th/U in the range 0.1–1.0.

Two zircon standards were analysed: one from a quartz diorite from the Marmion batholith in northwest Ontario (DD85-17), which is dated at  $3002 \pm 2$  Ma by ID-TIMS (Tomlinson *et al.* 2003); and one from a monzodiorite from the Pontiac province of Quebec (DD91-1) dated at  $2682 \pm 1$  Ma (Davis 2002). Sets of four sample measurements are bracketed by measurements of DD85-17. DD91-1 was used as a secondary standard. Differences between standards were time interpolated when correcting sample measurements. Average age errors noted in the text, and error ellipses in Figures 6 and 7, are expressed at  $2\sigma$  (twice the  $1\sigma$  errors in Supplementary data Table S1 (see footnote 1). Ages and errors were calculated and plotted using the Isoplot program of Ludwig (1998, 2003). MSWD (mean square of weighted deviations) are expected to be around 1 or slightly higher with correctly chosen analytical errors for  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ages if the age population is unimodal. Pb/U errors do not include possible biases from compositional differences between samples and standard, therefore scatter above and below concordia may be pronounced. Uranium decay constants are taken from Jaffey *et al.* (1971).

#### Chemical abrasion-isotope dilution-thermal ionization mass spectrometry

Prior to analyses, zircon crystals were thermally annealed and chemically etched ('chemically abraded'), which provides penetrative removal of alteration zones where Pb loss has occurred and generally improves concordance (Mattinson 2005). These zones correlate with high U zones that have suffered radiation damage prior to alteration. The pre-treatment involved placing zircon grains in a muffle furnace at  $\sim 900^\circ\text{C}$  for  $\sim 24$ –60 hours to repair radiation damage and anneal the crystal lattice, followed by a modified single-step partial dissolution procedure in  $\sim 0.10$  ml of  $\sim 50\%$  HF and 0.020 ml 7N  $\text{HNO}_3$  in Teflon dissolution vessels at  $200^\circ\text{C}$  for 3–8 hours. Zircon grains were rinsed with 8N  $\text{HNO}_3$  at room temperature prior to dissolution. A  $^{205}\text{Pb}$ - $^{233}$ - $^{235}\text{U}$  spike or  $^{202}$ - $^{205}\text{Pb}$ - $^{233}$ - $^{235}\text{U}$  spike (EARTHTIME community tracers) was added to the Teflon dissolution capsules during sample loading. The zircon grains were dissolved using  $\sim 0.10$  ml of concentrated HF acid and  $\sim 0.02$  ml of 7N  $\text{HNO}_3$  at  $200^\circ\text{C}$  for 3–5 days, then dried to a precipitate and re-dissolved in  $\sim 0.15$  ml of 3N HCl overnight



**Figure 6.** U–Pb LA-ICPMS geochronological results for zircon. (a) Concordia plot showing U–Pb LA-ICPMS isotopic data on annealed whole-grain zircon ( $N=46$ ) from Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sandstone sample BNB18-IHNL-072. The inset shows the youngest grains (red ellipses) that give a mean  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  age of  $453 \pm 18$  (MSWD=0.66,  $N=9$ ). Black ellipses represent data that are not included in the age estimates; (b) Relative probability density plot of  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ages on annealed whole-grain zircon from Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sandstone sample BNB18-IHNL-072; (c) Concordia plot showing all U–Pb LA-ICPMS isotopic data ( $N=90$ ) and, as well, data for the 19 youngest whole-grain zircons (inset) from felsic tuffite sample BNB19-IHNL-291. The red ellipses represent data for the younger population and give a mean  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  age of  $443 \pm 26$  (MSWD=0.8,  $N=6$ ). The blue ellipses represent data for the older population and give a mean  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  age of  $498 \pm 15$  (MSWD=1.0,  $N=14$ ). The black ellipses represent data that are not included in the age estimates; (d) Relative probability density plot of  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ages on whole-grain zircons from felsic tuffite BNB19-IHNL-291. Note: all error ellipses are  $2\sigma$ .

(Krogh 1973). U and Pb were isolated from zircon using 50  $\mu\text{l}$  anion exchange columns with HCl, dried to a small droplet in  $\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4$ , deposited onto outgassed rhenium filaments with silica gel (Gerstenberger and Haase 1997), and analyzed with a VG354 mass spectrometer at the University of Toronto (Jack Satterly Geochronology Laboratory) using a Daly detector in pulse counting mode. Corrections to the  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ages for initial  $^{203}\text{Th}$  disequilibrium in the zircon have been made assuming a Th/U ratio in the magma of 4.2. All common Pb was assigned to procedural Pb blank. Overall dead time of the

measuring system for Pb and U was 16 and 14 ns, respectively. The mass discrimination correction for the Daly detector is constant at 0.05% per atomic mass unit. Amplifier gains and Daly characteristics were monitored using the SRM 982 Pb standard. Thermal mass discrimination corrections are 0.10% per atomic mass unit. Decay constants are those of Jaffey *et al.* (1971). All age errors quoted in the text and table, and error ellipses in the concordia diagrams, are expressed at the 95% confidence interval. Plotting and age calculations used Isoplot 3.00 (Ludwig 2003).

## GEOCHRONOLOGICAL DATA

U–Pb LA-ICPMS isotopic data for zircon are given in Supplementary data Table S1 (see footnote 1) and geochronological results are plotted in Figure 6. In order to more closely constrain the precise time of deposition of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence and Botwood basin, the youngest, freshest zircon grains detected by LA-ICPMS in the sandstone (BNB18-IHNL-072) and tuffite (BNB19-IHNL-291) samples were removed from the sticky tape mounts and analyzed by CA-ID-TIMS (Supplementary data Table S2 - see footnote 1) (Fig. 7). The pre-screening of detrital zircon grains by LA-ICPMS helps minimize the number of analyses required by TIMS. The flow-banded rhyolite sample was analyzed by CA-ID-TIMS only (Fig. 7e).

### BNB18-IHNL-072: Sandstone, Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence

Abundant zircon crystals consist of mixed populations of fresh and rounded, clear to beige grains (Fig. 5a), with some larger, cracked grains displaying visible reddish alteration. Fifty-two annealed whole grains were analyzed, six of which were discarded due to alteration and discordance over 15% (Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1). The LA-ICPMS  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ages range from 415 to 3021 Ma (Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1) (Figs. 6a and b). The nine youngest grains have a mean  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  age of  $453 \pm 18$  Ma (MSWD=0.66, N=9) and a mean  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  age of  $455 \pm 12$  Ma (MSWD=16, N=9; Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1) (Fig. 6a). The LA-ICPMS U–Pb analyses show two additional age peaks of detrital grains at ca. 1100 and 1660 Ma, and scattered ages from 1886 to 3021 Ma (Figs. 6a and b).

Four of the youngest, least altered zircon grains dated by LA-ICPMS were removed from the sticky tape mount and individually chemically abraded. Grains numbered 43, 45, 48, and 51 yield concordant CA-ID-TIMS  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  dates of  $435.8 \pm 0.8$  Ma (grain 43),  $435.2 \pm 0.5$  Ma (grain 51),  $431.1 \pm 0.8$  Ma (grain 48), and  $421.9 \pm 1.0$  Ma (grain 45) (Supplementary data Table S2 - see footnote 1) (Figs. 7a and b). The youngest grain at  $421.9 \pm 1.0$  Ma provides a maximum age for the time of deposition of the sandstone sample.

### BNB19-IHNL-291: Felsic tuffite, Botwood basin

Zircon crystals consist of small rounded subhedral grains and euhedral laths yellow to clear in color (Fig. 5b). Grains are fresh with few inclusions and cracks. Of one-hundred and twelve whole-grain analyses, twenty-two were discarded due to alteration and discordance over 15% (Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1). The LA-ICPMS  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  dates range in age from 403 to 2867 Ma and show a complicated age profile with a significant detrital component (Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1) (Figs. 6c and d). The analyses peak at ca. 480 Ma and the majority of grains form a continuous age distribution

from 820 to 1695 Ma (Figs. 6c and d). The six oldest detrital zircon grains range from 1873 to 2867 Ma. The nineteen youngest grains show a bimodal age distribution (Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1) (Figs. 6c and d). Applying the Unmix Ages utility in Isoplot (Sambridge and Compston 1994), gives LA-ICPMS  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  age estimates of  $443 \pm 26$  Ma (30%) and  $498 \pm 15$  Ma (70%) under the assumption that there are just two age populations, whereas the  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ages of the nineteen youngest grains range from 422 to 498 Ma and correspond to Unmix ages of  $439 \pm 3$  Ma (37%) and  $480 \pm 2$  Ma (63%) (Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1) (Fig. 6c).

Four of the youngest, fresh zircon grains numbered 22, 46, 71, and 72 give concordant CA-ID-TIMS  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  dates of  $470.8 \pm 1.7$  Ma (grain 46),  $443.7 \pm 6.0$  Ma (grain 72),  $438.0 \pm 0.9$  Ma (grain 22), and  $427.9 \pm 3.1$  Ma (grain 71) (Supplementary data Table S2 - see footnote 1) (Figs. 7c and d). The youngest grain at  $427.9 \pm 3.1$  Ma provides a maximum age for the time of deposition of the felsic tuff, with minor physical reworking (and mixing) into tuffite soon thereafter.

### BNB18-IHNL-092: Rhyolite dome, Charles Lake volcanic belt

A range in concordant  $^{206}\text{Pb}-^{238}\text{U}$  dates from 458 Ma to 429 Ma was determined from ten CA-ID-TIMS zircon grain analyses (Supplementary data Table S2 - see footnote 1) (Fig. 7e). A single result is  $458.2 \pm 2.7$  Ma (Z1), data for three zircon analyses cluster at 438–437 Ma (Z2-4), three cluster at 434–433 Ma (Z5-7), and the youngest three data overlap with a weighted mean age of  $429.3 \pm 0.7$  Ma (Z8-10). This latter date is interpreted as a maximum age for emplacement of the rhyolite. It is apparent from the results that there was a significant xenocrystic and/or antecrystic zircon component acquired at the magma source or during emplacement.

## DISCUSSION

One of the biggest challenges to interpreting Silurian fault zone histories in central Newfoundland is that compression and strike-slip associated with Devonian to Carboniferous orogenesis overprint Silurian structures (e.g., van Staal and Barr 2012; Willner *et al.* 2018). Integrated LA-ICPMS and CA-ID-TIMS geochronology of sandstone of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence (BNB18-IHNL-072), felsic tuffite intercalated with graded siltstone of the Botwood basin (BNB19-IHNL-291), and a flow-banded rhyolite dome of the Charles Lake volcanic belt (BNB18-IHNL-092) provides new insights into the precise timing of Wenlock to Pridoli tectonics leading to Devonian orogenic gold mineralization in central Newfoundland. In order to place constraints on the time of deposition of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate and Botwood basin sequences, the youngest detrital zircon grains were identified first by LA-ICPMS and then subjected to high-precision CA-ID-TIMS dating. For such samples,

**Figure 7.** (next page) U–Pb CA-ID-TIMS geochronological results for youngest zircon grains, as well as images taken with a binocular microscope with incident light. (a) Images of the youngest and best preserved detrital zircon grains identified by LA-ICPMS and dated with follow-up CA-ID-TIMS for BNB18-IHNL-072; (b) U–Pb concordia diagram displaying the CA-ID-TIMS dates of the youngest detrital zircon grains from BNB18-IHNL-072 (youngest grain,  $421.9 \pm 1.0$  Ma); (c) Images of the youngest and best preserved detrital zircon grains identified by LA-ICPMS and dated by follow-up CA-ID-TIMS for BNB19-IHNL-291; (d) U–Pb concordia diagram displaying the CA-ID-TIMS dates of the youngest detrital zircon grains from BNB19-IHNL-291 (youngest grain,  $427.9 \pm 3.1$  Ma); (e) U–Pb concordia diagram displaying the CA-ID-TIMS date for zircon from the flow-banded rhyolite sample BNB18-IHNL-092 ( $429.29 \pm 0.7$  Ma). Note: all error ellipses are  $2\sigma$ .

the mean U–Pb ages determined by LA-ICPMS range from Late Cambrian to latest Ordovician and have large statistical errors (Supplementary data Table S1 - see footnote 1) (Fig. 6); therefore, they are not sufficient alone to resolve depositional ages.

LA-ICPMS detrital zircon age distributions for the sandstone and felsic tuffite are very similar (Fig. 6), suggesting that the felsic tuffite sample includes detrital zircon grains from the intercalated sedimentary (siltstone) fraction. Although analysis of provenance is limited by the relatively small numbers of individual LA-ICPMS zircon analyses, both the sandstone and tuffite-siltstone samples display Neoproterozoic to Cambrian peaks, compatible with detrital zircon grains sourced from the underlying Victoria Lake Supergroup and its Ganderian basement (Evans *et al.* 1990, Rogers *et al.* 2006). The ca. 1000 to 1300 Ma zircon grains in both samples correspond with typical Mesoproterozoic ages for metamorphic rocks of the eastern Laurentian margin in western Newfoundland and southern Labrador (e.g., Connelly and Heaman 1993; Tucker and Gower 1994; Gower and Krogh 2002; Heaman *et al.* 2002; Kuiper and Hepburn 2021). Furthermore, the 1600–1700 Ma grains overlap in age with the oldest dated rocks of the Long Range Inlier in western Newfoundland (ca. 1631 Ma, Heaman *et al.* op. cit.) and, as well, with Trans-Labrador and Pre-Labradorian orogenic events documented in Laurentian basement of southern Labrador (Gower and Krogh 2002). The ages of the few Archean zircon grains are similar to Meso- to Neoproterozoic rocks of Laurentia that occur in the Makkovik and Nain provinces of central and northern Labrador (e.g., James *et al.* 2002; Ketchum *et al.* 2002; Hinchey *et al.* 2020).

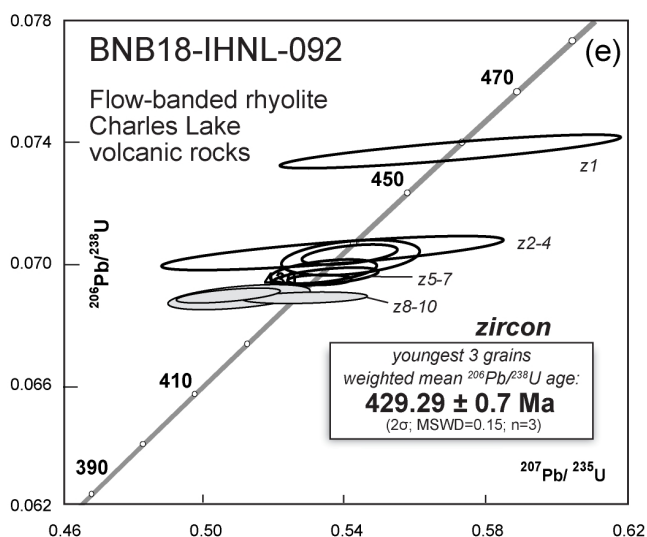
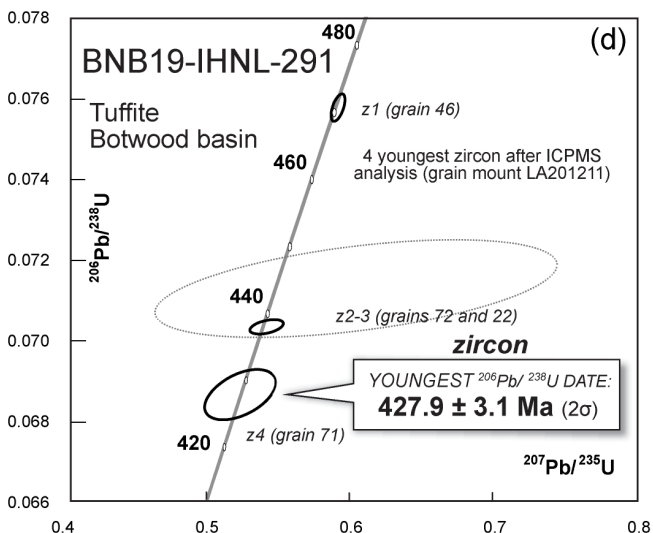
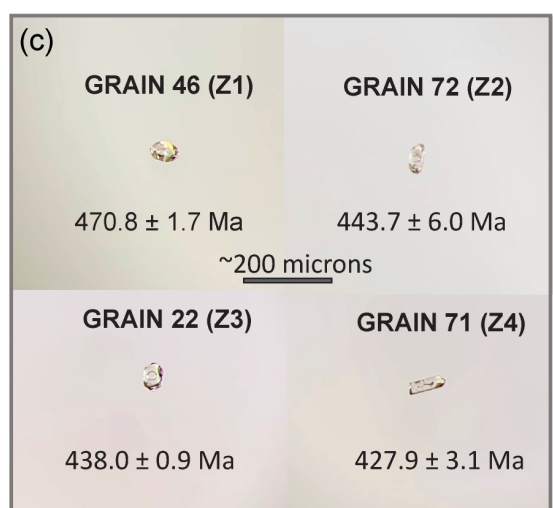
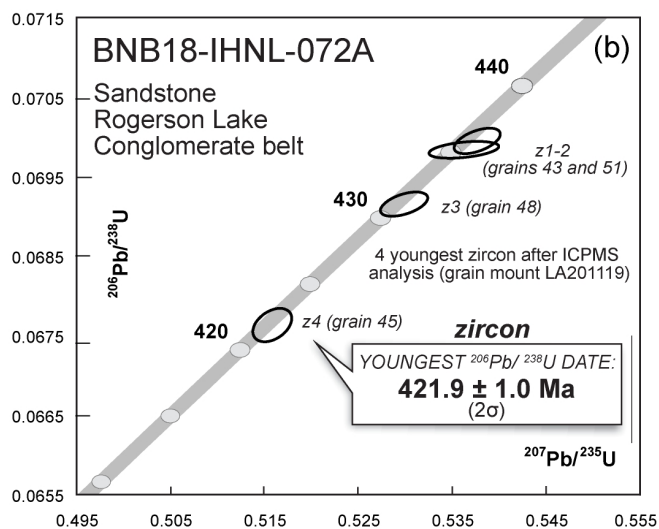
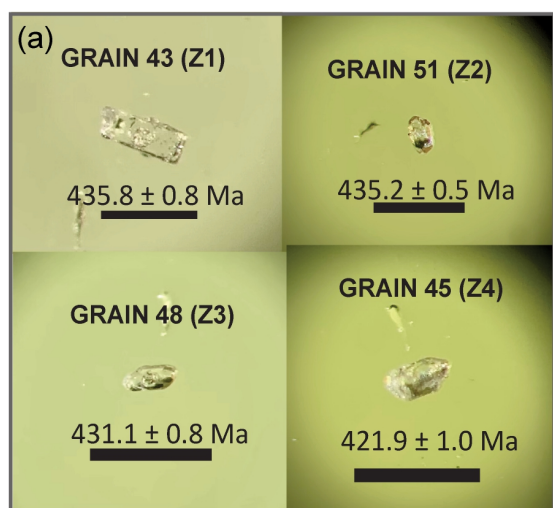
Overall, the U–Pb LA-ICPMS zircon age spectra corroborate the provenance study of Pollock *et al.* (2007) in that strong Paleoproterozoic and Mesoproterozoic Laurentian detrital zircon signatures are represented (e.g., Waldron *et al.* 2012; Fig. 6). However, the geochronological results herein for the sandstone and tuffite-siltstone samples also establish a Neoproterozoic to Cambrian detrital zircon source typical of the peri-Ganderian Valentine Lake and Crippleback Lake intrusive suites (ca. 565 Ma, Evans *et al.* 1990; Rogers *et al.* 2006; Fig. 6). A mixed Laurentian-Gondwanan provenance for rocks of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence and Botwood basin, combined with the occurrence of Wenlock to Pridoli zircon grains (Figs. 6 and 7), is consistent with local depositional sources.

U–Pb CA-ID-TIMS dating of four of the youngest, best preserved zircon grains from each of the Rogerson Lake

Conglomerate sandstone and Botwood basin tuffite-siltstone produced maximum  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  depositional ages of  $421.9 \pm 1.0$  Ma (Pridoli) and  $427.9 \pm 3.1$  Ma (Wenlock; Homerian), respectively (Supplementary data Table S2 - see footnote 1) (Fig. 7). The ages are considered maxima because it cannot be discounted that younger detrital and/or igneous zircon grains are present in portions of the rock units that were not processed for geochronology. Absolute minimum depositional age constraints for the basal Rogerson Lake Conglomerate are ca. 410 Ma (Honsberger *et al.* 2022) and ca. 390 Ma (Willner *et al.* 2018), which are, respectively, for rutile and white mica in quartz veins that crosscut the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate. U–Pb CA-ID-TIMS zircon geochronology produced an igneous crystallization age of  $429.29 \pm 0.70$  Ma (Wenlock; Homerian) for the auto-brecciated, flow-banded rhyolite dome of the Charles Lake volcanic belt along the western margin of the Botwood basin (Fig. 7e); therefore, these volcanic rocks appear to be genetically related to the felsic tuffite.

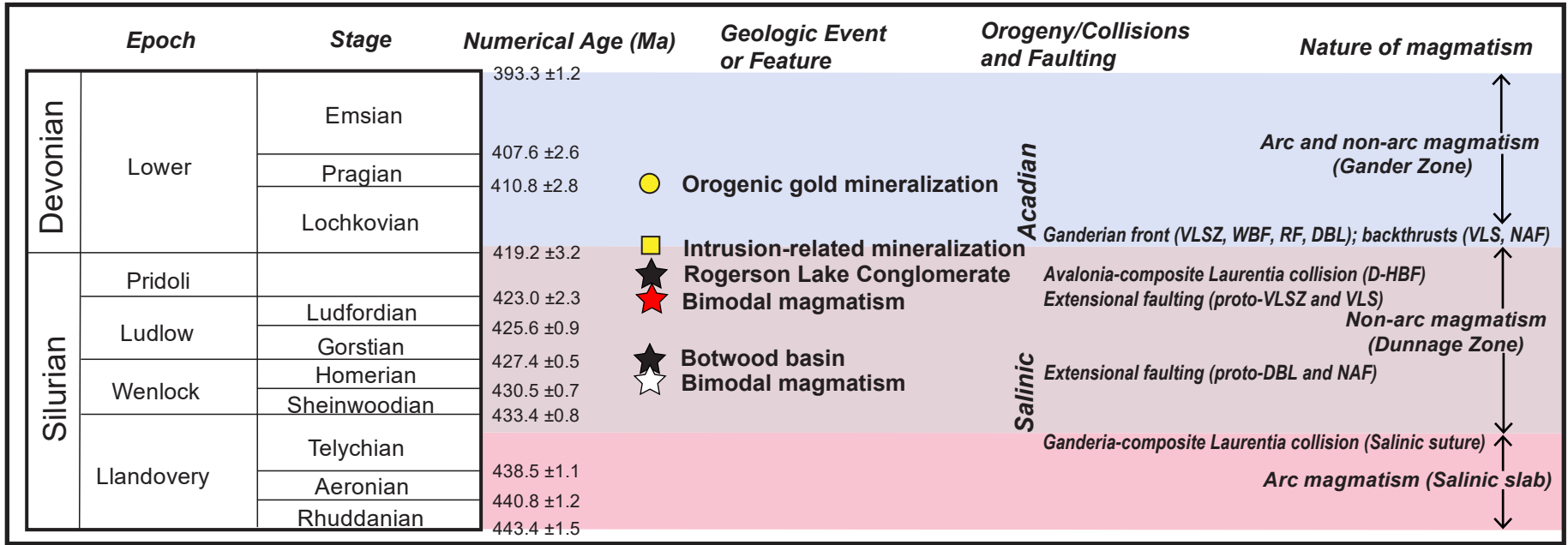
The maximum depositional ages for the rhyolite dome and tuffite are interpreted to represent the time of Homerian (ca. 430–427 Ma) volcanism and associated volcanogenic sedimentation in the western Botwood basin. In this interpretation, felsic volcanism was active between at least ca. 429 and 428 Ma, with deposition of felsic tuff and siltstone of the Wigwam Formation at ca. 428 Ma, accompanied by minor physical reworking of the tuffaceous material. The Pridoli maximum age for deposition of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sandstone suggests that sedimentation may have been initiated later along this belt than to the northwest and northeast in the Botwood basin. Furthermore, the maximum ca. 422 Ma detrital zircon age for the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sandstone sample confirms that ca. 422–420 Ma igneous rocks in central Newfoundland are included as clasts and grains within the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence, again, consistent with locally derived sediment sources. The new U–Pb CA-ID-TIMS zircon ages establish that Wenlock to Pridoli magmatism preceded sedimentation in both the Botwood basin and along the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt (Fig. 8).

The ca. 429 (rhyolite dome) age and ca. 428 Ma (tuffite) maximum age for felsic volcanism and volcanogenic sedimentation are consistent with available age determinations for the bimodal Hodges Hill Intrusive Suite (ca. 429–426 Ma, Dickson 2000; G. Dunning, personal communication 2021), thus, the rhyolite dome and other volcanic rocks of the Charles Lake belt are confirmed as contemporaneous



with Hodges Hill plutonism. The ca. 429 and 428 Ma dates also fall within the age range of the Topsails Intrusive Suite and Springdale Group in the Notre Dame Subzone (ca. 429–426 Ma, Chandler *et al.* 1987; Whalen *et al.* 1997, 2006). Further, the ca. 422 Ma youngest zircon date from the Rog-

erson Lake Conglomerate sandstone sample falls within the age range of the Mount Peyton Intrusive Suite (ca. 424–418 Ma, Sandeman *et al.* 2017), and is also similar to age constraints for some rocks of the composite Fogo Island Intrusive Suite (e.g., ca. 422 Ma, Elliot *et al.* 1991; Aydin 1995).



**Figure 8.** Silurian–Devonian geochronological summary of new U–Pb data (white and black stars) and previously published constraints on orogenesis and fault zone development in central Newfoundland (van Staal and Barr 2012; this study). Magmatic intervals are colour-coded as defined by Whalen *et al.* (2006) and van Staal *et al.* (2014). Additional age references are as follows: red star (Dunning *et al.* 1990; McNicoll *et al.* 2006; Sandeman *et al.* 2017; Honsberger *et al.* 2022); yellow square (Sandeman *et al.* 2017); and yellow circle (Honsberger *et al.* 2022). Time-scale from the International Commission on Stratigraphy (Cohen *et al.* 2013; updated 2021). Abbreviations: DBL – Dog Bay Line; D-HBF – Dover – Hermitage Bay Fault; NAF – Northern Arm Fault; RF – Reach Fault; VLS – Valentine Lake Shear Zone; VLSZ – Victoria Lake Shear Zone; WBF – Wood Brook Fault.

Additionally, the ca. 422 Ma date is consistent with ages reported for felsic volcanic rocks of the Laurenceton Formation (ca. 421 Ma, van Staal *et al.* 2014), as well as for felsic igneous rocks along the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt and within the southern Botwood basin (ca. 422–420 Ma, Honsberger *et al.* 2022; Figs. 1 and 2). In sum, the new geochronological data from this study, in combination with these previously published ages, indicate that volcanism and sedimentation along the western Botwood basin were active between ca. 429 and 428 Ma, whereas plutonism, volcanism, and sedimentation in the southeastern and eastern Botwood basin were active between ca. 424 and 418 Ma, with a strong pulse of felsic magmatism and associated sedimentation along the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt at ca. 422 Ma (Figs. 8 and 9; see Honsberger *et al.* 2022).

Transient lithospheric extension is inferred to have controlled the formation of bimodal magmatic suites and associated sedimentary rocks in the Botwood basin and Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt of central Newfoundland (Fig. 9). Lithospheric extension provides a mechanism to explain mixing and emplacement of mantle-derived mafic magmas with their felsic anatectic products, such as the Mount Peyton Intrusive Suite (Strong 1979; Strong and Dupuy 1982) and the Fogo Island Intrusive Suite (Aydin 1995; Sandeman and Malpas 1995). Furthermore, Wenlock to Pridoli magmatism and associated clastic sedimentation corresponds to a time-period between the largely compressive stress regimes associated with the Salinic and Acadian orogenic cycles in central Newfoundland (Fig. 8), when orogenic collapse and extension would have been expected (e.g., Barbarin 1999). The occurrence of mature sandstones and siltstones in the Botwood basin is consistent with longer-lived, more-evolved extension in north-central Newfoundland compared to along the structurally thinner Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt to the south and southwest. As such, extension, clastic sedimentation, and magmatism were time-transgressive both across- and along-strike of the Exploits Subzone, with resultant along-strike variations in the volume of sedimentary input (Fig. 9). Therefore, the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt is not correlative temporally with the stratigraphic base of the Botwood basin, even though the polymict conglomerate is a basal unit.

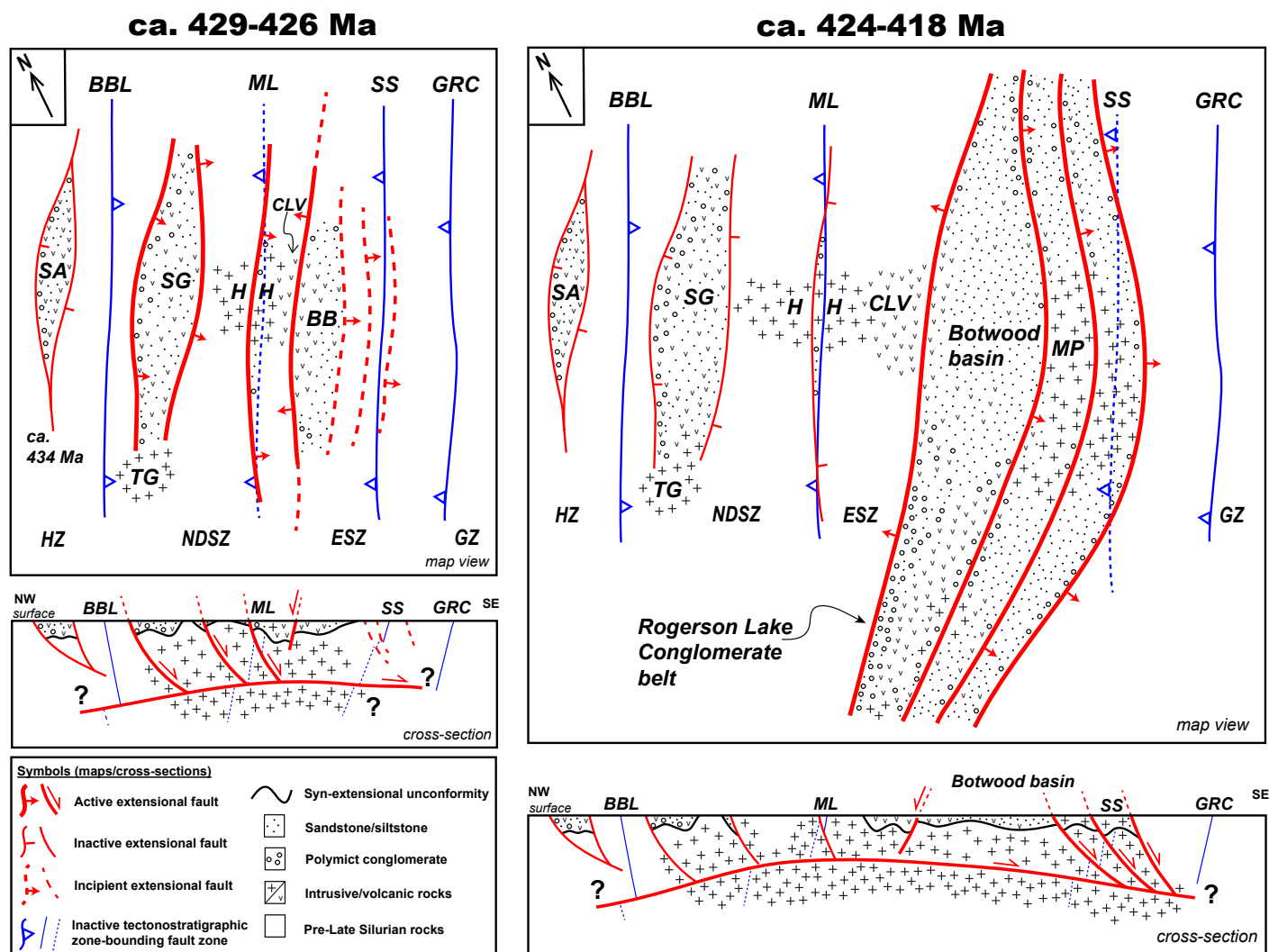
In our model, predominantly southeast-dipping (present-day coordinates) extensional fault systems were active along the western Botwood basin at ca. 429 Ma, and propagated southeastward (across-strike) and to the southwest and northeast (along-strike) between ca. 424 and 418 Ma (Fig. 9). The Wenlock to Pridoli spatio-temporal development of this extensional fault network is consistent with the findings of van Staal *et al.* (2014), who noted that Silurian magmatism gets progressively younger west-to-east across the Dunnage Zone. Such extensional fault systems may have formed during thinning associated with asthenospheric and lithospheric decompression melting and upwelling related to slab rollback and break-off, and potentially lithospheric delamination, following the terminal Salinic collision of Ganderia with composite Laurentia (Pitcher 1983, 1993;

Barbarin 1990, 1999; Whalen *et al.* 1997, 2006; van Staal and Barr 2012; van Staal *et al.* 2014; Whalen and Hildebrand 2019). In this context, listric normal faults facilitated exhumation of the middle and lower crust of the Exploits Subzone (Victoria Lake Supergroup and correlatives), and erosion and deposition of such rocks contributed to the formation of clastic sedimentary cover sequences of the Botwood basin and Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt (Fig. 9). Wenlock to Pridoli lithospheric thinning may have been an important primer for orogenic gold mineralization (e.g., Bleeker 2015) because it increased heat and fluid flow in the crust prior to Early Devonian compression, metamorphism, and magmatism.

Considering that latest Silurian extensional faulting in central Newfoundland overlaps in time with far-field collision of Avalonia and composite Laurentia (Fig. 8), extension may have involved some components of strike-slip and transtension (Dewey *et al.* 1998) because sinuous collisional boundaries would have produced oblique deformation zones (e.g., O'Brien *et al.* 1993; Dubé *et al.* 1996; O'Brien 2003; Hibbard *et al.* 2006; van Staal and Barr 2012). The relative influence of extension compared to transtension in central Newfoundland, however, remains ambiguous because of fault reactivation and deformational overprint. Thrust fault reactivation appears to have occurred throughout the Devonian to accommodate Acadian, intra-terrane, thick-skinned thrusting and shortening associated with the emplacement of structurally controlled, gold-bearing quartz veins (e.g., O'Brien *et al.* 1993; O'Brien 2003; van Staal and Barr 2012; Willner *et al.* 2018; Honsberger *et al.* 2022). Such Devonian thrust fault systems then may have been reactivated as later oblique, dextral strike-slip, transpressional deformation zones (e.g., Lafrance 1989; O'Brien *et al.* 1993; de Roo and van Staal 1994; O'Brien 2003), which we interpret to have produced the “lazy Z”-shape (Mann *et al.* 1983) of the Botwood basin and its southwesterly (Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt) and north-easterly extensions (Figs. 1 and 2). This interpretation is consistent with the occurrence of post-Silurian, dextral strike-slip faults (e.g., Northern Arm Fault-Reach Fault) along the margins of the Botwood basin, implying that a Wenlock to Pridoli extensional fault system in central Newfoundland may have been more linear than the present map pattern suggests (Fig. 9; cf. Kusky *et al.* 1987; Kusky and Kidd 1996). The occurrence of orogenic gold-mineralized, Wenlock to Pridoli igneous and sedimentary rocks in the overall footwall of the Victoria Lake Shear Zone (Figs. 1–4) indicates that thrust burial played an essential role in the preservation of syn-extensional rocks along the central Newfoundland gold belt, opposed to uplifting these rocks and exposing them to erosion (e.g., Bleeker 2015).

In the Chaleur Bay synclinorium of northern New Brunswick, latest Silurian, extension-related magmatic suites and clastic sedimentary rock sequences of the Dickie Cove Group are associated with orogenic gold-mineralized fault splays of the Early Devonian, or younger, Rocky Brook–Millstream Fault Zone (Tremblay and Dubé 1991; Tremblay





**Figure 9.** Structural synthesis illustrating the Late Silurian (Wenlock to Pridoli) evolution of transient extensional faults across the Dunnage Zone as a prelude to Devonian orogenic gold mineralization. Not drawn to scale. Extension in the western Botwood basin, and farther northwest in the Dunnage Zone, is inferred between ca. 429 and 426 Ma (left side), whereas extension in the southeastern and eastern Botwood basin and along the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt is inferred between ca. 424 and 418 Ma (right side). Cross-section interpretations are given below each map view. In this model, exhumation and erosion of pre-Late Silurian rocks (Victoria Lake Supergroup and correlatives) contributed to the formation of syn-extensional igneous and clastic sedimentary rocks along the central Newfoundland orogenic gold belt. Tectonostratigraphic zone-bounding fault zones are blue lines (dotted lines where approximate) and younger, cross-cutting extensional faults are red lines, which are interpreted to have been reactivated subsequently as thick-skinned thrusts in the Devonian. As per our interpretation of the Dog Bay Line, “Salinic suture” is used to denote the Dunnage-Gander accretionary boundary, which may not be traceable at the present erosional surface. Abbreviations: BB – Botwood basin; BBL – Baie Verte – Brompton Line; ESZ – Exploits Subzone; GRC – Gander River Complex; GZ – Gander Zone; HH/CLV – Hodges Hill Intrusive Suite and Charles Lake volcanic belt; HZ – Humber Zone; MP – Mount Peyton Intrusive Suite; ML – Mekwe’jit Line; NDSZ – Notre Dame Subzone; SA – Sops Arm Group; SG – Springdale Group; SS – Salinic suture; TG – Topsails Group/Intrusive Suite.

*et al.* 1993; Wilson 2007; Wilson *et al.* 2017; Dostal *et al.* 2020; Bustard *et al.* 2021). This fault zone appears to correlate with the Cape Ray–Victoria Lake–Valentine Lake fault corridor in southwestern and central Newfoundland, strongly suggesting that the orogenic gold system of central Newfoundland is continuous along-strike in the northern Appalachians.

## CONCLUSIONS

Late Silurian (Wenlock to Pridoli), extension-related, bimodal magmatic suites and clastic sedimentary rocks of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt and Botwood basin sequence delineate the central Newfoundland gold belt. Integrated LA-ICPMS and CA-ID-TIMS U–Pb zircon tech-

niques produced a maximum date for deposition of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence at  $421.9 \pm 1.0$  Ma (Pridoli); therefore, it is younger than, and stratigraphically overlies, ca. 422 Ma igneous rocks that occur along the gold belt. The same analytical approach applied to a tuffite layer toward the stratigraphic middle of the Wigwam Formation in the Botwood basin produced a maximum eruption age of  $427.9 \pm 3.1$  Ma (Wenlock; Homeric), which is interpreted to be contemporaneous and cogenetic with the Hodges Hill Intrusive Suite, the Charles Lake volcanic belt, and associated volcanogenic sedimentation in the western Botwood basin. Although provenance interpretations are limited by the relatively small numbers of individual zircon analyses, LA-ICPMS detrital zircon age distributions are consistent with a mixed Laurentian-Gondwanan provenance for sedimentary rocks of the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate sequence and Botwood basin. An autobrecciated, flow-banded rhyolite of the Charles Lake volcanic belt from the northwestern Botwood basin has a U–Pb zircon CA-ID-TIMS age of  $429.3 \pm 0.7$  Ma (Wenlock; Homeric), which we interpret as the eruptive age. Collectively, the new U–Pb zircon geochronological data confirm a clear spatio-temporal link between syn-extensional, Wenlock to Pridoli magmatism and sedimentation both along and across strike of the central Newfoundland gold belt (Figs. 8 and 9).

Wenlock to Pridoli magmatic and depositional ages are consistent with a structural model involving the overall southeastward (present day coordinates) propagation of a transient, time-transgressive, extensional fault system across the Exploits Subzone between ca. 429 and 418 Ma. Extensional faulting may have contributed to basin formation, subsidence, and exhumation of pre-Silurian rocks of the Exploits Subzone during that time-period. The earlier part of the history is marked by ca. 429–426 Ma syn-extensional magmatism (Hodges Hill Intrusive Suite and Charles Lake volcanic belt) and sedimentation along the northwestern margin of the Botwood basin and farther west in the Dunnage Zone (Topsails Intrusive Suite and Springdale Group). The later part is preserved as ca. 424–418 Ma syn-extensional magmatic suites and clastic sedimentary rocks along the Rogerson Lake Conglomerate belt and its extensions to the northeast along and within the Botwood basin (e.g., Mount Peyton Intrusive Suite and associated rocks). Transient lithospheric extension appears to mark the transition between the Salinic and Acadian orogenic cycles (e.g., Sandeman *et al.* this volume) and may have been important for increasing heat and fluid flow in the lithospheric mantle and crust leading to Devonian fault reactivation, crustal thickening, fluid focussing, and orogenic gold mineralization.

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