

Ediacaran and Cambrian rocks on Scatarie Island and nearby Hay Island, Avalonian Mira terrane, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Scatarie Island and adjacent Hay Island, located 2 km east of the eastern tip of the Avalonian Mira terrane of southern Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, contain a succession of epiclastic and other sedimentary rocks of inferred Ediacaran to Cambrian age. The age assignment was based previously on lithological comparison with the Main-à-Dieu Group and overlying Bengal Road and MacCodrum formations of the Mira River Group. Detrital zircon grains from two sandstone samples from the Bengal Road Formation yielded typical Avalonian detrital zircon spectra with middle to late Neoproterozoic, Meso- to Paleoproterozoic (1300–2200 Ma) and Neoarchean ages. They indicate maximum depositional ages of 532.4 ± 4.2 Ma and 525.4 ± 2.4 Ma from essentially the same stratigraphic level, consistent with the interpretation that the rocks are Cambrian. The Bengal Road Formation also yielded scarce organic-walled microfossils including an acanthomorphic acritarch identified as *Polygonium* sp., also consistent with Cambrian age. The fine-grained siliciclastic succession on Hay Island, tentatively attributed to the MacCodrum Formation, yielded trace fossils, including *Teichichnus* isp. and *Gyrolithes scintillus*, that confirm Cambrian age. The Hay Island *Gyrolithes scintillus* expands the geographical distribution of this ichnospecies, previously known mainly from the Chapel Island Formation of Newfoundland, and represents a younger occurrence.

RÉSUMÉ

L'île Scatarie et l'île Hay voisine , situées à deux kilomètres à l'est de la pointe du terrane avalonien Mira dans le sud de l'île du Cap-Breton en Nouvelle-Écosse, abritent une succession de roches épicrostiques et d'autres roches sédimentaires remontant présumément à la période de l'Édiacarien au Cambrien. L'âge attribué était antérieurement basé sur une comparaison lithologique avec le groupe Main-à-Dieu et les formations sus-jacentes de Bengal Road et de MacCodrum du groupe de la rivière Mira. Des grains de zircon détritique provenant de deux échantillons de grès de la Formation de Bengal Road ont affiché des spectres de zircon détritique avaloniens typiques des périodes du Néoprotozoïque moyen à tardif, du Mésoprotozoïque au Paléoprotérozoïque (1300 à 2200 Ma) et du Néoarchéen. Ils signalent des âges de sédimentation maximaux de $532,4 \pm 4,2$ Ma et de $525,4 \pm 2,4$ Ma d'un niveau stratigraphique essentiellement identique, ce qui correspond à l'interprétation situant les roches au Cambrien. La Formation de Bengal Road a de plus révélé la présence de microfossiles palynomorphes, notamment un acritarche acanthomorphe identifié en tant que l'espèce *Polygonium*, ce qui correspond également à l'époque du Cambrien. La succession silicoclastique à grains fins sur l'île Hay, rattachée à la Formation de MacCodrum, a présenté des ichnofossiles, par exemple, l'ichnoespèce *Teichichnus* et le *Gyrolithes scintillus*, qui confirment l'âge du Cambrien. Le *Gyrolithes scintillus* de l'île Hay élargit la distribution géographique de cette ichnoespèce, antérieurement reconnue comme une espèce principalement présente dans la Formation de Chapel Island de Terre-Neuve, et il représente une occurrence plus récente.

[Traduit par la redaction]

INTRODUCTION

Scatarie Island is a Nova Scotia Wilderness Protected area (https://novascotia.ca/nse/protectedareas/wa_scatarie.asp) located in the Cabot Strait 2 km from the southeastern tip of Cape Breton Island (Fig. 1). The island has a long history as a fishing settlement, and archaeological research has provided evidence for 18th century fishing activity on the island; tales abound of life there in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. The area is also known for its long history of shipwrecks, most recently the Great Lakes freighter *M.V. Miner*, which ran aground when a towing cable broke in September 2011 and which was removed from the island in 2015 (<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150622003>).

Although designated a protected area because of its rare or unusual flora, the bedrock geology on Scatarie Island is also remarkable because it includes a rare occurrence of rocks that formed during a time interval that spans the boundary between the Ediacaran and Cambrian periods of geological time (Barr *et al.* 1992, 1996). Although much of the interior of the island consists of dense spruce and fir forest, barrens, and bogs and hence lacks outcrop, the Ediacaran–Cambrian rocks are well exposed along parts of the shoreline. The purpose of this paper is to present the first direct paleontological and U–Pb zircon evidence that rocks formed during the Ediacaran/Cambrian transition are exposed on the eastern part of Scatarie Island and adjacent Hay Island (Fig. 2).

REGIONAL BACKGROUND

Southeastern Cape Breton Island, geologically comprising the Mira terrane (Barr and Raeside 1989), is part of Avalonia in the northern Appalachian orogen (Fig. 1, inset). Like other parts of Avalonia, the Mira terrane is characterized by Neoproterozoic volcanic, sedimentary, and plutonic rocks, overlain by lower Paleozoic sedimentary rocks (Fig. 1). Weeks (1954) included all the Precambrian volcanic and sedimentary rocks in a single unit called the Fourchu Group; but based on mapping, petrological studies, and U–Pb zircon dating, Barr *et al.* (1992, 1996) subdivided the rocks into groups of three different ages, ca. 680 Ma, ca. 620 Ma, and ca. 575 Ma (Fig. 1). The name Fourchu Group was retained only for the ca. 575 Ma volcanic and minor sedimentary rocks in the coastal part of the terrane south of Louisbourg. The new name Main-à-Dieu Group was assigned to rocks west, north, and east of Louisbourg that were considered equivalent in age to and/or younger than the Fourchu Group on the basis of field relations, petrological characteristics, and a poorly constrained U–Pb zircon age of <560 Ma from a rhyolite sample (Bevier *et al.* 1993). Other group names were assigned to volcanic, volcaniclastic, and sedimentary rocks farther south and west in the terrane, based mainly on U–Pb zircon ages from volcanic rocks and associated plutons (Fig. 1). Subsequently, formation names were introduced for lithological units within each of these groups by Barr and White (2017a, b).

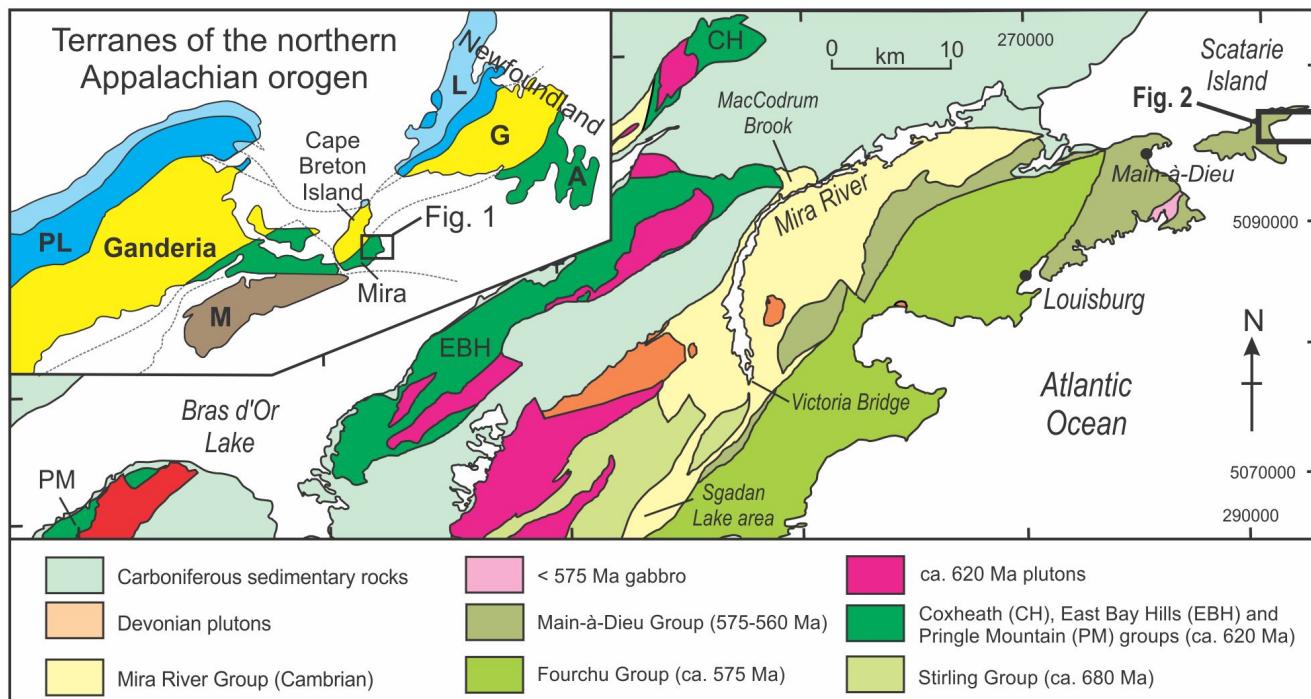


Figure 1. Simplified geological map of the northern part of the Mira terrane, southeastern Cape Breton Island, modified from Barr *et al.* (1996), showing the distribution of Neoproterozoic, Cambrian, and Carboniferous rocks and the location of Scatarie Island. Inset map shows the location of the Mira terrane and map area in the context of northern Appalachian terranes, modified from Hibbard *et al.* (2006). A = Avalonia, G = Ganderia, L = Laurentian margin, M = Meguma, PL = peri-Laurentian arcs.

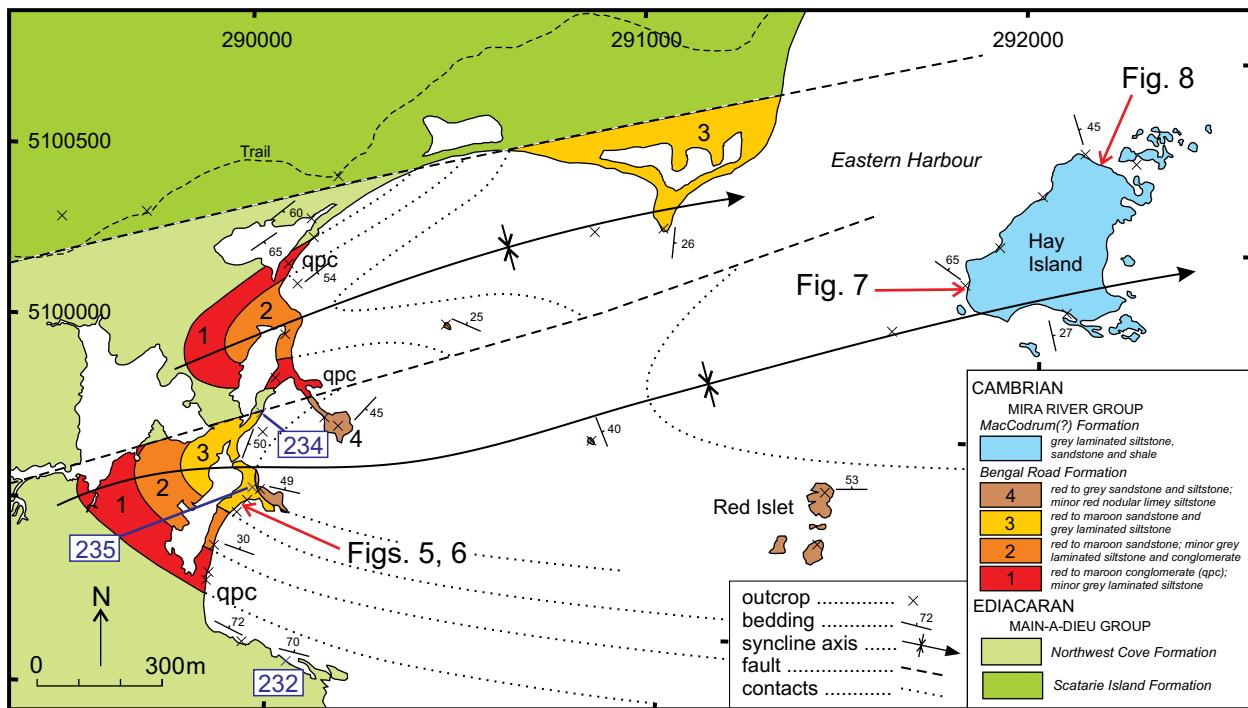


Figure 2. Geological map of the southeastern part of Scatarie Island and nearby Hay Island modified from Barr and White (2017a, b, c). Locations of dated samples SMB17-234 and 235 are shown in member 3 of the Bengal Road Formation, as well as sample SMB17-232 from the underlying Northwest Cove Formation which lacked zircon. Also shown are locations of photographed specimens in Figs. 6–8. Location for sample SMB17-232 = Grid Zone 21T (WGS84) 289998 5099504

The Cambrian sedimentary rocks that locally overlie the Neoproterozoic volcanic, sedimentary, and plutonic rocks form a broadly synclinal structure in the Mira River area, and Barr and White (2017a, b) referred to them collectively as the Mira River Group. Hutchinson (1952) and Weeks (1954) divided Cambrian sedimentary rocks into six formations: Morrison River, MacCodrum, Canoe Brook, Trout Brook, MacLean, and McNeil. Barr *et al.* (1992, 1996) retained these formation names except for Morrison River, which they replaced by the Bengal Road and Sgadan Lake formations because they considered the latter to be mappable units distinct from the red beds in the underlying Main-à-Dieu Group, all of which had been included previously in the Morrison River Formation (Weeks 1954).

As defined by Barr *et al.* (1992, 1996), the Bengal Road Formation is a dominantly red clastic sedimentary unit that overlies volcanic and sedimentary rocks of the Main-à-Dieu Group. Contacts are mainly faults or are unexposed, but an originally disconformable relationship is most likely. The Bengal Road Formation differs from sedimentary units of the underlying Main-à-Dieu Group in that the former contains abundant detrital muscovite and lacks volcanic and volcaniclastic rocks. It also contains a distinctive quartzite-quartz-pebble conglomerate unit at or near its base, and is interlayered with, and overlain by, red sandstone and siltstone, commonly with well-developed cross-bedding and graded bedding. Landing (1991) correlated this red bed unit of the Mira terrane with the late Ediacaran Rencontre For-

mation of Newfoundland; but Barr *et al.* (1992, 2003, 2012) and Reynolds *et al.* (2009) considered it to be Cambrian based mainly on the presence of detrital muscovite and on other lithological contrasts with underlying non-micaceous red beds. Maximum depositional ages of ca. 544 and 537 Ma were reported by Willner *et al.* (2013) based on U-Pb dating of detrital zircon from the Mira River area.

The overlying Sgadan Lake Formation is a distinctive white, rarely maroon, cross-bedded quartz arenite which is locally conglomeratic with abundant quartz pebbles. The Sgadan Lake Formation in its type area near Sgadan Lake was correlated with the Random Formation of Newfoundland by Landing (1991). Landing (1991) also recognized a separate unit of shale between the red bed and quartz arenite units that he correlated with the Chapel Island Formation, which in Newfoundland occurs between the Rencontre and Random formations. Barr *et al.* (1996) also noted the presence of shale and siltstone but did not consider those rocks to constitute a separate mappable unit and so included them in their Bengal Road Formation. Barr *et al.* (2012) reported a single concordant detrital zircon age of ca. 529 Ma from the Sgadan Lake Formation in its type area, although a single analysis cannot be considered to provide a reliable maximum depositional age.

Barr *et al.* (1992, 1996) also assigned white quartz arenite and conglomerate in MacCodrum Brook to their Sgadan Lake Formation, although Landing (1991) had placed those rocks in the Rencontre Formation. The Sgadan Lake Formation

in MacCodrum Brook is overlain by the type section of the MacCodrum Formation of Hutchinson (1952). It consists of grey and green siltstone and shale, with minor sandstone intervals. Carbonate nodules are present close to the base of the formation and also higher in the section. This section is the only good exposure of this unit, because many outcrops farther south in the Mira River area originally attributed to the MacCodrum Formation by Hutchinson (1952) were later shown to belong to younger units (Landing 1991; Barr *et al.* 1996). By comparison with Newfoundland, Landing (1991) equated the type section of the MacCodrum Formation with the Bonavista Group (Cambrian Stage 2–3) and suggested that an unconformity is present between it and the underlying quartz arenite. However, Barr *et al.* (1996) observed interlayered quartz arenite and shale in some locations and hence, like Hutchinson (1952), considered that the units are conformable. Later Landing (2004) revised his earlier correlation of the type section of the MacCodrum Formation with Newfoundland units because of the higher sandstone content than found in the Bonavista Group, and instead attributed it to the Chapel Island Formation. The details of rocks in the MacCodrum Brook section are further complicated by the fact that Willner *et al.* (2013) reported a maximum depositional age of 517 ± 3 Ma for the Sgadan Lake quartz arenite there, based on results from an eight-grain detrital zircon population. Results of work in progress to evaluate the implications of this young age and the details in the still-enigmatic MacCodrum Brook section will be reported in a subsequent paper.

The MacCodrum Formation is the oldest unit on Cape Breton Island that has yielded trace fossils (Landing 2004) and acritarchs (Palacios *et al.* 2015). Acritarchs from the type section on MacCodrum Brook include *Granomarginata* and *Asteridium* (Palacios *et al.* 2015). Acritarchs and trace fossils from the type section are consistent with attribution to the Fortunian or Cambrian Stage 2. The overlying Canoe Brook Formation consists of red-brown, carbonate-rich mudstone and siltstone, maroon siltstone containing grey-green reduction spots, and minor pink to red limestone. According to Landing (1991), the Canoe Brook Formation, as well as the upper part of the underlying MacCodrum Formation (as originally mapped by Hutchinson 1952), are equivalent to the Bonavista Group and Brigus Formation in Newfoundland based on lithological characteristics and skeletal fossils. The contact between the MacCodrum and Canoe Brook formations is nowhere exposed. Landing (1991) recovered skeletal fossils from the Canoe Brook Formation along the Louisbourg Highway, which he attributed to the *Camenella baltica* Zone of Cambrian Stage 3 (Geyer 2019). From the upper part of the formation, Landing (1991) reported the trace fossil *Teichichnus* and trilobite hash. Trilobites were also discovered by Hutchinson (1952), who reported the Cambrian Stage 3 *Callavia* Zone-trilobite *Strenuella strenua* from the Victoria Bridge area (Fig. 1) in rocks originally attributed to the MacCodrum Formation but now part of the Canoe Brook Formation (Barr *et al.* 1996).

The Trout Brook Formation (Hutchinson 1952), dom-

inantly dark-grey to rust-brown, well cleaved shale and siltstone, overlies the Canoe Brook Formation. Toward the stratigraphic top of the Trout Brook Formation, the shale becomes locally maroon, with thin, graded beds of fine-grained sandstone. The Trout Brook Formation contains Miaolingian trilobites (Hutchinson 1952) and acritarchs (Palacios *et al.* 2009). The MacLean Brook Formation (Hutchinson 1952) overlies the Trout Brook Formation, and consists of interbedded grey quartz sandstone, siltstone, and shale with minor light-grey quartz sandstone and maroon shale. It contains Miaolingian trilobites (Hutchinson 1952) and Miaolingian and Furongian acritarchs (Palacios *et al.* 2009). The MacLean Brook Formation appears to be conformable with the underlying shales of the Trout Brook Formation and is overlain by grey shale, siltstone, and limestone of the Furongian McNeil Formation (Hutchinson 1952).

GEOLOGY OF SCATARIE ISLAND AND HAY ISLAND

The geology of Scatarie Island was first described by Fletcher (1879), who provided a vivid description of the island and recognized various types of “felsites” from coastal sections. He also reported a conglomerate visible at low tide on eastern Scatarie Island that he thought to be of probable Carboniferous age, subsequently assigned to the Cambrian Bengal Road Formation (Barr *et al.* 1996, 2003, this paper). Weeks (1954) included all of Scatarie Island in his Fourchu Group, based on mapping by Hayes *et al.* (1938). However, Barr and White (1989) and Barr *et al.* (1996) re-assigned most of the Scatarie Island rocks to the Main-à-Dieu Group and also recognized for the first time the presence of probable Cambrian rocks overlying the Main-à-Dieu Group on the eastern part of the island (Fig. 2).

Barr *et al.* (1996) divided the Main-à-Dieu Group on Scatarie Island into map units based on rock type, and those units were assigned formation names by Barr and White (2017a, b, c). The inferred oldest unit on the island, the Scatarie Island Formation, forms the northeastern part of the island, in faulted contact to the south with the Northwest Cove Formation and Cambrian rocks of the Bengal Cove Formation (Fig. 2). The Northwest Cove Formation is the uppermost formation in a conformable stratigraphic succession that youngs consistently to the east across Scatarie Island (Barr *et al.* 1996; Barr and White 2017c). The formation consists mainly of amygdaloidal basaltic flows interlayered with red volcanogenic conglomerate, epiclastic sandstone, and tuff.

The overlying mainly red to maroon sedimentary rocks were assigned to the Cambrian Bengal Road Formation based on lithology (Barr *et al.* 1992, 1996). The distribution of rock types, structural orientations, and well-preserved younging directions indicate that the Bengal Road Formation occurs in a faulted synclinal structure (Fig. 2). At the time of a visit in August 1991, a gap of about 10 m separated the uppermost amygdaloidal basalt flow of the Northwest

Cove Formation from an outcrop of quartzite- and quartz-pebble conglomerate, characteristic of the base of the Bengal Road Formation elsewhere in the Mira terrane (Barr *et al.* 1992). The conglomerate is repeated in three outcrops in the well-exposed section, although during our most recent visit in 2017, the southernmost outcrops observed in 1991 were not exposed. The rocks are divided into four members. The quartzite- and quartz-pebble conglomerate (member 1) grades into red to maroon sandstone with minor interbedded grey laminated siltstone and conglomerate of member 2, and then into a unit of red to maroon sandstone and grey laminated siltstone which lacks conglomerate (member 3), overlain by red to grey sandstone and siltstone with minor red nodular limey siltstone (member 4). Younging direction is clear throughout this section, and the first three members are repeated north of an east-northeast-trending fault (Fig. 2). All four members contain abundant detrital muscovite, absent from the underlying Northwest Cove Formation and other formations of the Main-à-Dieu Group.

Some control from mainly submerged rocky shoals enables the synclinal structure to be traced offshore toward Hay Island, but red beds do not occur on the island. There, the rocks are grey laminated siltstone, sandstone, and shale that appear lithologically similar to the MacCodrum Formation in the Mira River area (Barr *et al.* 1992, 1996). However, based on some lithological similarities to the Trout Brook Formation, in their more recent compilation maps Barr and White (2017c) assigned the Hay Island rocks to the Trout Brook Formation. In either case, no evidence for the white quartz arenite of the Sgadan Lake Formation, or for other intervening formations, was observed, and if present, it is hidden under water.

U-PB GEOCHRONOLOGY

Sample descriptions and methods

Three samples (SMB17-232, 234, and 235) were collected for U-Pb dating of detrital zircon but only the latter two contained zircon grains. Sample SMB17-232 is red pebble conglomerate from the upper part of the Northwest Cove Formation (Fig. 2). The conglomerate overlies and underlies amygdaloidal basalt flows. It contains abundant plagioclase and epidote clasts and varied lithic fragments (including volcanic glass, basalt, dacite, and rhyolite) but minor quartz and no detrital muscovite or zircon.

In contrast, samples SMB17-234 and 235, both from the red to maroon sandstone and grey laminated siltstone of member 3, contain abundant detrital muscovite, as well as zircon. SMB17-234 is red arkosic sandstone with abundant angular quartz and less abundant plagioclase clasts. Lithic clasts include both volcanic and clastic sedimentary material. Sample SMB17-235 is greywacke, finer grained than sample 234 and with more abundant muscovite. Many of the muscovite fragments had been deformed and crenulated prior to deposition. They occur with quartz and feldspar

clasts in a muddy matrix that forms about 25% of the rock.

The samples were sent to Overburden Drilling Management (Ottawa, Ontario) for electro-pulse disaggregation and zircon separation. Zircon grains in samples SMB17-234 and 235 were then handpicked, mounted on an epoxy-covered thin section, polished to expose the centres of the zircon grains, and imaged using cold cathodoluminescence to identify internal zoning and inclusions. These images were used to select ablation points (30 µm diameter), avoiding any visible inclusions, cracks, or other imperfections. Grains were analyzed by laser ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) at the Department of Earth Sciences, University of New Brunswick (Appendix A: Table A1 and A2 — two runs for each sample are reported and all data from both runs are analyzed and discussed together). U and Pb isotopic compositions were measured using a Resonetics S-155-LR 193 nm Excimer laser ablation system connected to an Agilent 7700× quadrupole inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometer, following the procedure outlined by McFarlane and Luo (2012) and Archibald *et al.* (2013). Data reduction was done in-house using Iolite software (Paton *et al.* 2011) to process the laser output into data files, and further reduced for U-Pb geochronology using VizualAge (Petrus and Kamber 2012).

Corrections are applied as follows: for grains with <100 counts/s ^{204}Pb , data are uncorrected; for grains where the percentage error on the ^{204}Pb counts per second was <20%, we used a ^{204}Pb -based correction (Andersen 2002), and for grains where the percentage of radiogenic Pb (Pb^* in file) is less than 98.5% we used a ^{208}Pb -based correction (Petrus and Kamber 2012). Data were sorted by % concordance ($^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$ versus $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{235}\text{U}$ for grains <1000 Ma and $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$ versus $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$ for grains >1000 Ma), and by the % of radiogenic Pb in the grains as calculated using VizualAge (Appendix A: Tables A1 and A2). Concordia and weighted mean ages as well as probability distribution histograms were calculated using Isoplot version 4.15 (Ludwig 2012).

Probability distribution histograms are based on $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$ dates for grains <1000 Ma and $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$ dates for >1000 Ma and show all grains that are between 90 and 102% concordant. To determine the youngest age represented in each sample we used only clusters of more than 3 grains with ages that overlap within error and are 98–101% concordant. Using only near-concordant grains that overlap within error is a conservative approach, which serves to reduce the possibility of misrepresenting the maximum depositional age as too young by using single grains that may have experienced Pb loss (Dickinson and Gehrels 2010). Data for reference materials FC-1 and Plesovice are presented in Appendix A, Table A2, with standards for Run 1 and Run 2 shown separately.

Results

Sample SMB17-234 contains zircon grains with a wide range of sizes between 50–300 µm, and grains of all sizes

were analyzed. Some of the larger grains are subhedral and rectangular and some are rounded and anhedral; the smaller grains are mostly subhedral to anhedral and rounded. All analyzed grains had very weak fluorescence in CL but some of the larger grains showed faint oscillatory zoning. Of 132 grains analyzed, 80 are between 90 and 102% concordant (Appendix A: Table A1). The major peak in the cumulative probability distribution is around 520–530 Ma, with minor peaks at 1.5 Ga, 1.8 Ga and 2.0 Ga and a few grains at 3.0 Ga (Figs. 3a, b). The gaps in ages at around 1000 Ma and around 2500 Ma are typical of detrital zircon signatures in Avalonia, as is the scatter of ages between about 1300 and 2100 Ma (e.g., Barr *et al.* 2012). Among the Neoproterozoic to Cambrian grains, it is possible to calculate a concordia age for 12 grains in the youngest peak at 526.3 ± 2.2 Ma, but the mean square of weighted deviation (MSWD) is very high at 7.0 and has a correspondingly low probability of concordance at 0.008 (Fig. 3c). The weighted mean age for the same 12

grains is 525.4 ± 2.4 Ma with a much lower MSWD of 1.11 (Fig. 3d). In this case the weighted mean age at ~525 Ma is likely the most robust estimate of the maximum depositional age for this sample.

Zircon grains in sample SMB17-235 range in size from 50–200 μm and grains of all sizes were analyzed. Some of the larger grains are subhedral and acicular to rectangular whereas the smaller grains are mostly subhedral to anhedral and rounded. All of the grains had weak fluorescence in CL but some of the larger grains showed faint oscillatory zoning. Of 128 grains analyzed, 86 are between 90 and 102% concordant (Appendix A: Table A1). The major peak in the cumulative probability distribution is around 530 Ma, with minor peaks at 1.5 Ga, 1.8 Ga and 2.0 Ga and a few grains around 2.7 Ga and 3.4 Ga (Figs. 4a, b). Like sample SMB17-234, this sample also displays the gaps at ca. 1000 and 2500 Ma and a spread of ages between about 1300 and 2200 Ma, typical of Avalonia. For Neoproterozoic to Cambrian grains,

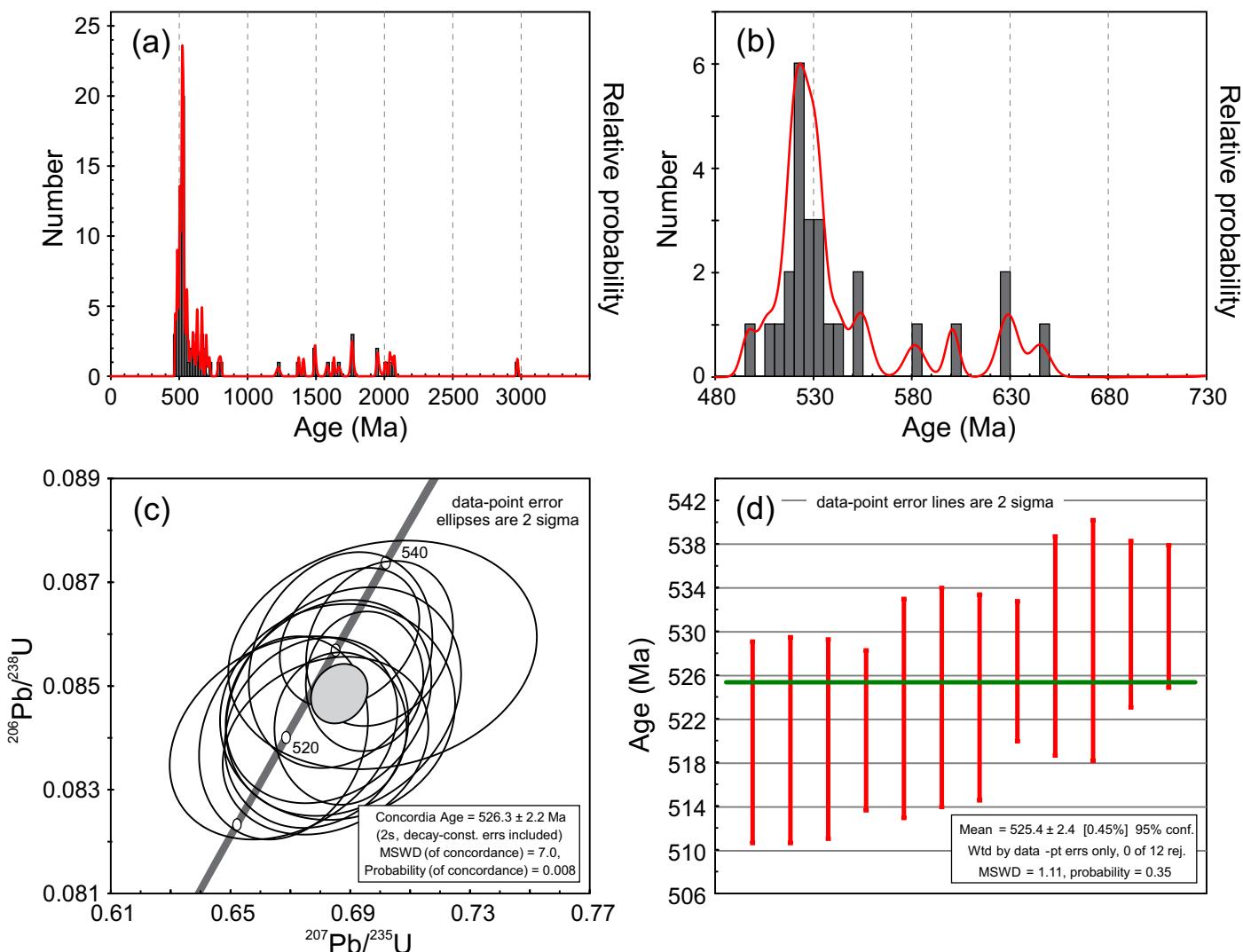


Figure 3. U–Pb zircon diagrams for sample SMB17-234 (data from Table A1). (a) Probability plot for all data between 90 and 102% concordant. (b) Expanded view of probability plot in (a) for ages less than 750 Ma. (c) Concordia diagram for youngest statistically valid age population. (d) Weighted mean diagram for the same 12 grains shown in (c).

three separate peaks occur on the cumulative probability distribution (Fig. 4b), but the calculated concordia age for the youngest group of 5 grains is 534.4 ± 3.9 Ma with a high MSWD of 4.5 and a low probability of concordance at 0.034. The weighted mean age of the same 5 grains is 532.4 ± 4.2 Ma with a much lower MSWD of 0.15 (Fig. 4d). In this case the weighted mean age is likely the most robust estimate of the maximum depositional age for this sample. The grains with ages scattered between 550 Ma and 780 Ma could all have sources within Avalonia (e.g., van Staal *et al.* 2020).

TRACE FOSSILS AND ORGANIC-WALLED MICROFOSSILS

Material and methods

Coastal sections on eastern Scatarie Island and on Hay

Island were examined for their fossil contents and documented by digital photography. More than 100 m of continuous outcrop of the Bengal Road Formation is accessible at low tide. As exposed in July 2017, the section commenced with about 30 m of laminated and thin-bedded, yellow- and brown-weathering grey siltstone and minor sandstone of member 2. Small-scale truncations and bedding rupture is commonly seen (Figs. 5a–c). The proportion of sandstone increases up-section into member 3 and include beds with large cubes of pyrite (Fig. 5d). Three samples of dark-grey silt-stone were collected for organic-walled microfossils from this section. Member 3 is overlain by red sandstone/siltstone of member 4 (Fig. 5e) which contains minor red nodular limey siltstone (Fig. 5f).

Outcrops tentatively attributed to the MacCodrum Formation were examined at three coastal sections on Hay Island, with a total of five samples collected for organic-walled microfossils (Fig. 2). Samples collected for organic-walled

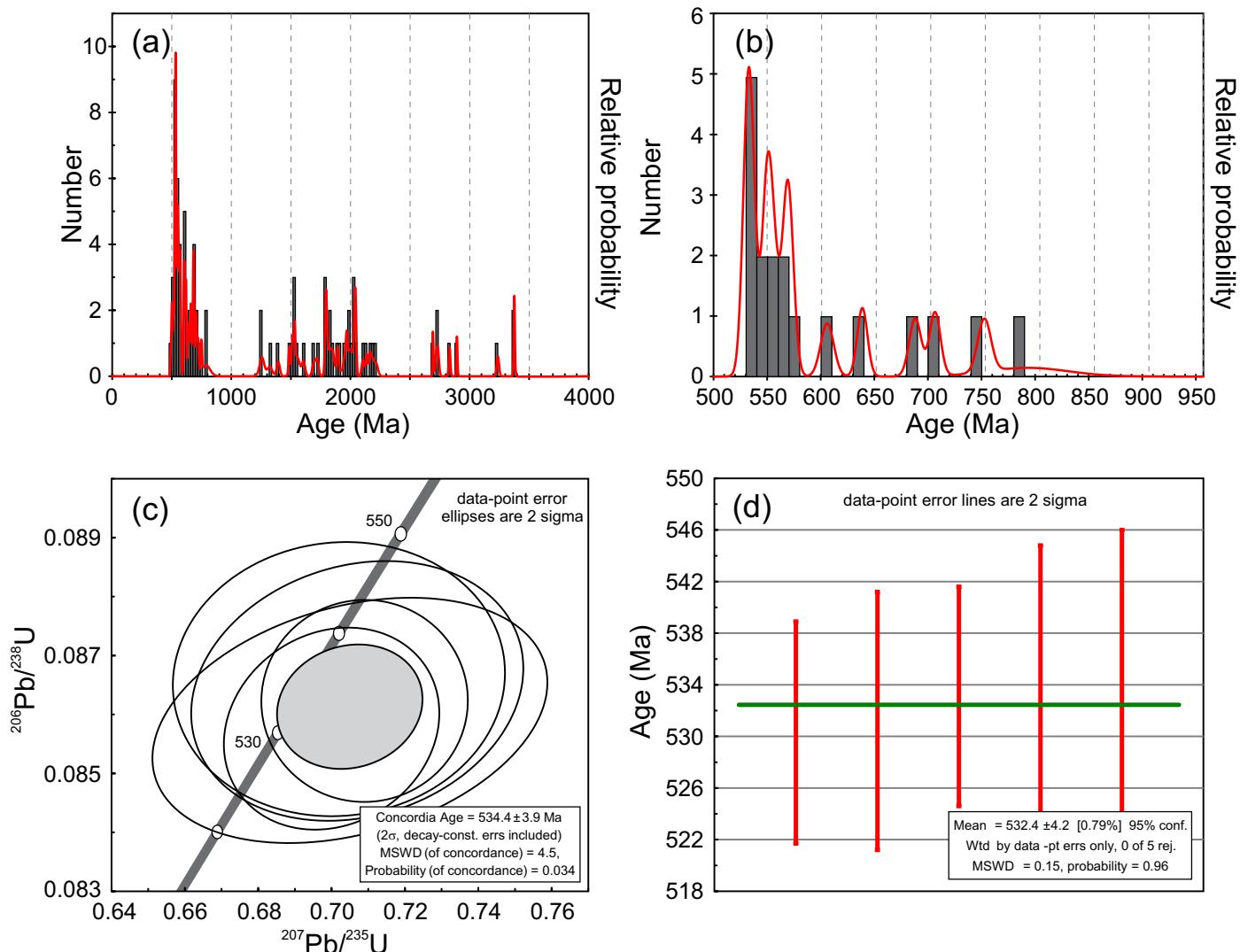


Figure 4. U–Pb zircon diagrams for sample SMB17-235 (data from Table A1). (a) Probability plot for all data between 90 and 102% concordant. (b) Expanded view of probability plot in (a) for ages less than 950 Ma. (c) Concordia diagram for youngest statistically valid age population. (d) Weighted mean diagram for the same 5 grains shown in (c).

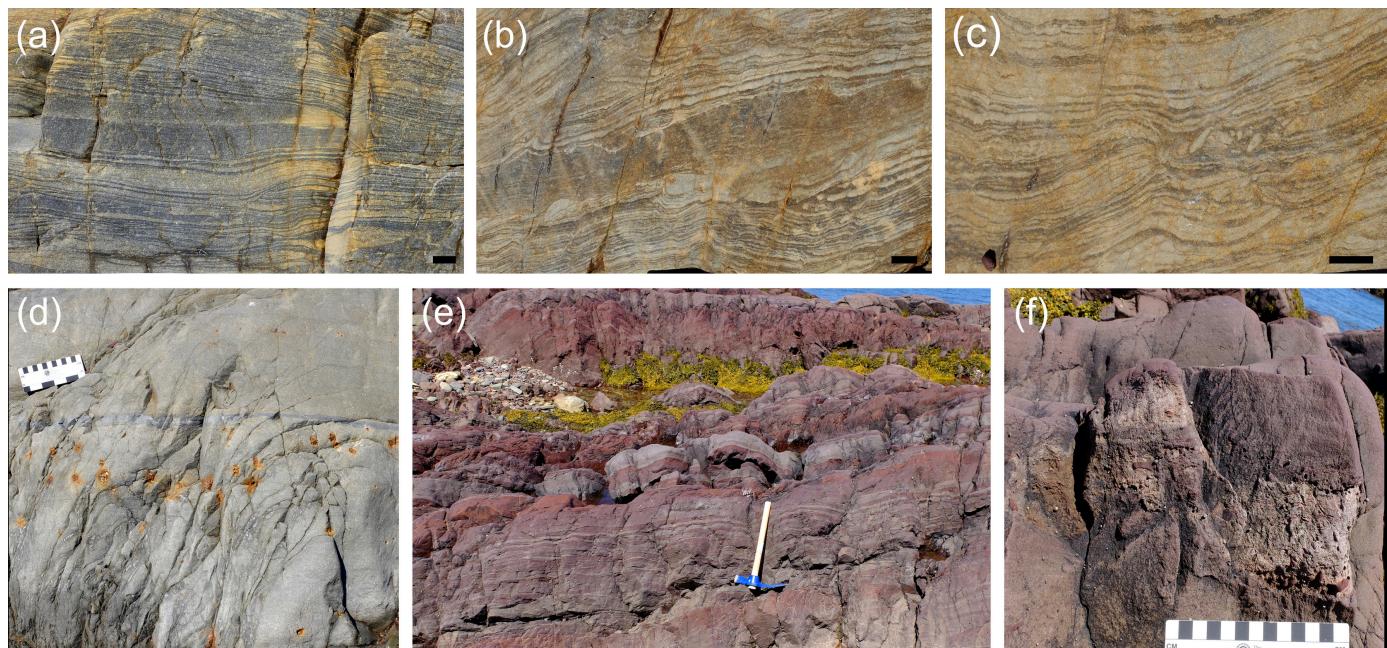


Figure 5. Field images of coastal exposures of the Bengal Road Formation on eastern Scatarie Island. Scale bars represent 10 mm. (a–c) Characteristic lamination and bedding in lower part of measured section of Bengal Road Formation (members 2 and 3). Samples SC17-5 and -6 were collected from fine-grained intervals in this type of rock. Deformed bedding give rise to trace fossil-like structures, particularly well seen in (c). (d) Fine-grained sandstone with large pyrite crystals. (e) Red sandstone and siltstone (member 4). (f) Red nodular limey siltstone (member 4).

microfossils were prepared and examined at Área de Paleontología, University of Extremadura, Badajoz, following palynological procedures outlined in Vidal (1988). See Appendix B for details on locations and samples. Palynological slides containing figured and representative material are stored with the collections in Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, Halifax (museum numbers added in the explanation of the figures).

Results: organic-walled microfossils

All samples from Hay Island had no or only small amounts of dispersed organic material and no identifiable organic-walled microfossils (see Appendix B). Two samples from the Bengal Road Formation yielded poorly preserved organic-walled microfossils (Fig. 6). This material includes probable cyanobacterial filamentous sheaths (Fig. 6a) and organic fragments of uncertain origin. A single poorly preserved acanthomorphic acritarch (Fig. 6b) is identified as *Polygonium* sp. This acritarch does not provide biostratigraphic information beyond that of a post-Ediacaran age. Sarjeant and Stanchiffe (1996) restricted *Polygonium* to the Cambrian to Devonian interval, but younger occurrences have been reported. These samples provide the first records of organic-walled microfossils from the Bengal Road Formation.

Results—trace fossils

No definitive trace fossils were observed in the Bengal Road Formation. Bedding-plane exposures are not well developed, which severely limits the possibility of observing any delicate bedding-plane parallel trace fossils. Angular or rod-shaped bodies seen in vertical and oblique section (Figs. 5b–c) have similarity to trace fossils but their interpretation

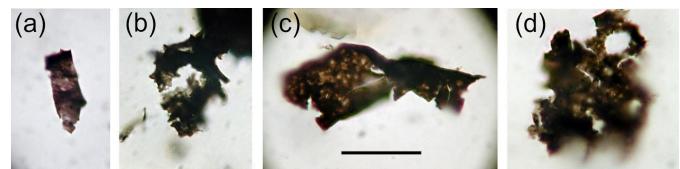


Figure 6. Organic-walled microfossils from Bengal Road Formation, Scatarie Island. Scale bar in c is equivalent to 20 µm for a–d. Sample number, the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History collection number, and England Finder coordinates (for position of microfossils on the palynological slide; <https://www.graticulesoptics.com/products/stage-micrometers-calibration-scales-grids/coordinate-graticules/s7-england-finder>) are provided. (a) Possible cyanobacterial filament, SC17-5, NSM020GF14.1, V-51-2. (b) *Polygonium* sp., SC17-6, NSM020GF14.2, J-43-1. (c) Organic-walled fragment, SC17-6, NSM020GF14.2, M-41-1. (d) Degraded organic-walled fragment, SC17-6, NSM020GF14.2, B-42-4.

is complicated by frequent small-scale (syndepositional?) disturbance, fracturing and rotation of laminae and beds. It is probable that structures such as those shown in Fig. 5c represent rotated pieces of primary sedimentary structures.

Trace fossils were observed on several coastal sections on Hay Island (Fig. 2). On the southern part of the island, outcrops of mainly grey-green and dark-grey siltstone contain examples of starved ripples of fine sandstone (Fig. 7b) and teichichnid trace fossils with clear evidence for spreite (Fig. 7a). The spreite show at least 5 lamellae, with downward-oriented convexity, which indicates a retrusive development of the spreite, although no causative burrow was clearly identified. These trace fossils are assigned to *Teichichnus* isp.

Trace fossils were observed on weathered outcrop of cleaved grey-green siltstone on the northern tip of the island, with the most notable being small, vertically oriented, spiral trace fossils (Figs. 8a–c). These spirals are developed within silty material and filled with fine sand related to thin sandstone event beds. The best exposed specimen (Fig. 8a) has two whorls (whorl height approximately 6 mm), a burrow diameter of 0.7 mm and a spiral radius of 1.6 mm. Another less well-exposed specimen with comparable dimensions shows three whorls of the spiral (Fig. 8b). Both in dimensions and spiral geometry this material is like *Gyrolithes scintillans* from the Chapel Island Formation, Burin Peninsula, Newfoundland, as described by Laing *et al.* (2018). Other trace fossils from the Hay Island outcrop consist of short plug-shaped cones (Fig. 8d). Similar trace fossils from the Chapel Island Formation in Newfoundland

have been identified as *Conichnus*, but both the material described here and that from Newfoundland could alternatively be the fill of the funnel-shaped top of an otherwise not preserved, short, vertical trace fossil. Additional nondescript trace fossils are also present (Fig. 8e). Trace fossils in this outcrop exhibit “floating” and “adhering” preservation, similar to that commonly seen in the Chapel Island Formation of Newfoundland (Droser *et al.* 2002), in which sand-filled burrows are floating in a finer-grained matrix (Fig. 8e) or secondarily adhered to a later sand bed. A loose sample along the same stretch of outcrop show *Teichichnus* isp. and more strongly developed sediment mixing (Fig. 8f). The slab is sedimentologically similar and is interpreted as a less weathered sample from the same interval of the succession.

DISCUSSION

Both the detrital zircon ages and fossils described here confirm a Cambrian age for the siliciclastic successions on eastern Scatarie Island and on Hay Island, a conclusion previously based on lithological correlation with the Bengal Road and MacCodrum formations, respectively, on Cape Breton Island (Barr *et al.* 1996). The maximum depositional ages of 532 and 526 Ma and the presence of the acritarch *Polygonium* sp. from the Bengal Road Formation on eastern Scatarie Island demonstrate that the upper part of this formation is definitely younger than the late Ediacaran Rencontre Formation in Newfoundland, with which the Bengal Road Formation was compared by Landing (1991, 1996). The new data reported here, combined with detrital zircon age constraints from Cape Breton Island (Barr *et al.* 2012; Willner *et al.* 2013), indicate that the Bengal Road Formation spans much of the Fortunian and Cambrian Stage 2. The age of the base of the formation is not known, nor is the duration of the inferred break in sedimentation between the Main-à-Dieu and Mira River groups. The stratigraphic position of the Bengal Road Formation could in part be equivalent to that of the Ratcliffe Brook Formation in New Brunswick, as previously suggested by Barr *et al.* (2012); if so, the base of the formation is intra-Fortunian.

The geological mapping information (Barr *et al.* 1992, 1996; this paper) indicates that the eastern coast of Scatarie Island and Hay Island are both part of the same east-plunging synclinorium (Fig. 2). Based on lithological characteristics Barr *et al.* (1996) attributed the Hay Island succession to the MacCodrum Formation, in which case the sandstone facies of the Sgadan Lake Formation either is not exposed above sea level or was never developed in this region. The trace fossils reported here provide ichnostratigraphic evidence for a post-Ediacaran age of the Hay Island succession, especially the presence of *Teichichnus*. The earliest *Teichichnus* appear in late Fortunian and Stage 2 rocks, and more generally spreite-burrows have been used as evidence for a post-Ediacaran age in the absence of other evidence (e.g., Bland and Goldring 1995; Jensen *et al.* 2016). *Teichichnus* is a common element in lower Cambrian strata of Avalonia

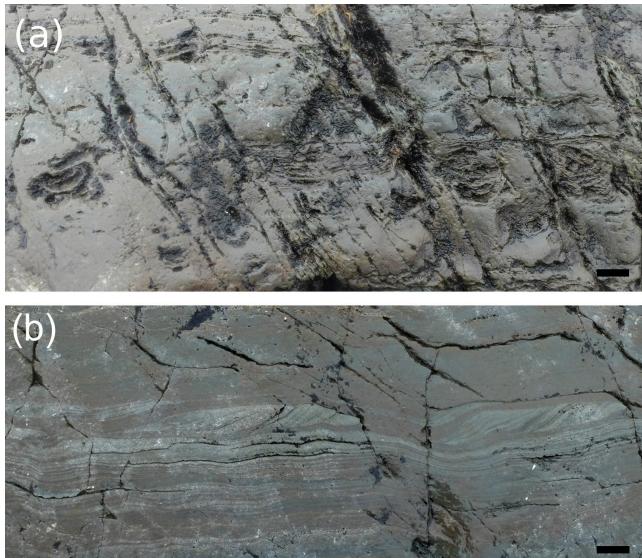


Figure 7. Field images of trace fossils and sedimentary structures in the MacCodrum? Formation, southern Hay Island. (a) Siltstone and fine-grained sandstone with transverse sections through *Teichichnus* spreite. Scale bar represents 10 mm. (b) Current ripple cross-lamination, scale bar represents 10 mm.

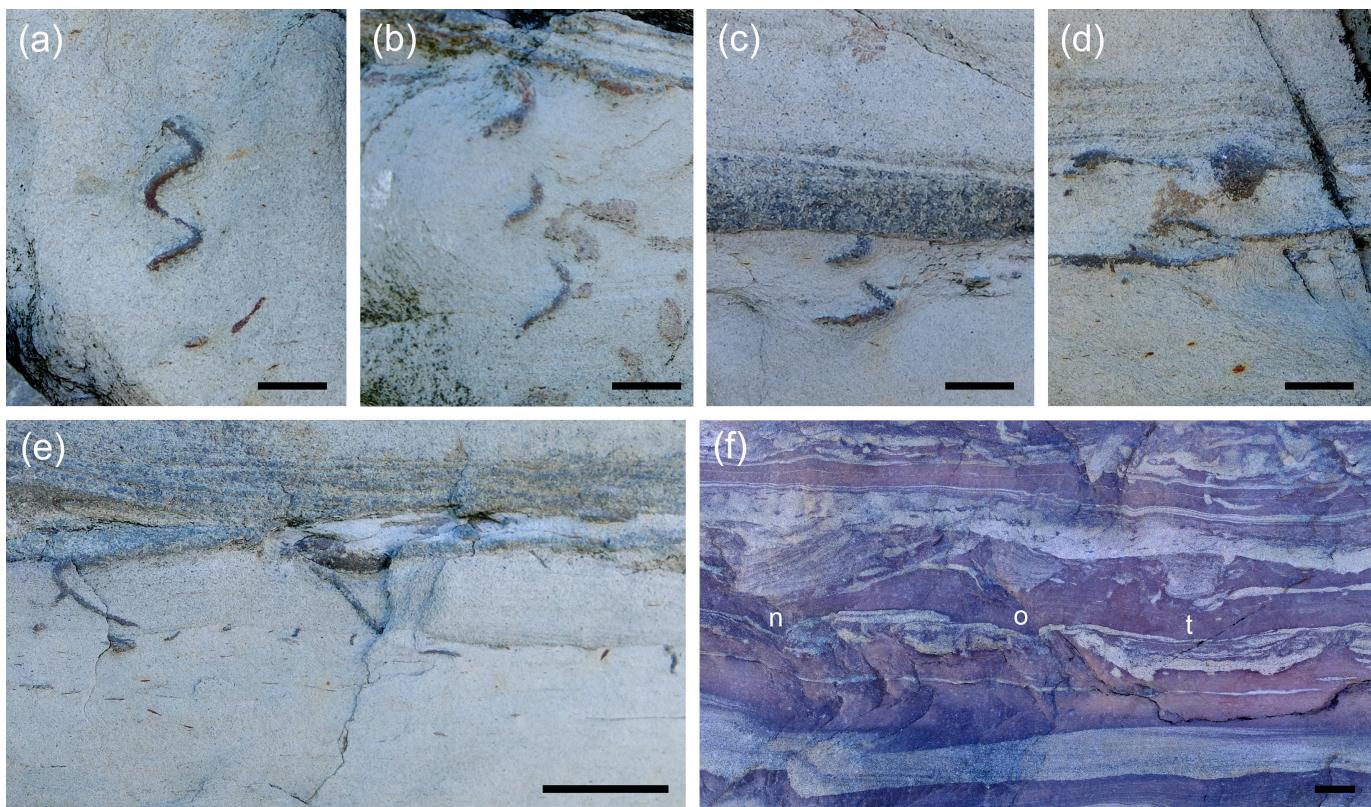


Figure 8. Field images of trace fossils from MacCodrum? Formation, northern Hay Island. (a–e) Images from vertical surfaces of cleaved siltstone. (a–c) Vertical spiral trace fossil *Gyrolithes scintillus*. Scale bars represent 5 mm. (d) Small plug-shaped sand-filled structure, which may be a *Conichnus* or a funnel-shaped top of a vertical tube. Scale bar represents 5 mm. (e) Several short trace fossils in “floating” preservation along a bedding plane marked by gentle change in grain size. A larger burrow is a possible *Gyrolithes*. Scale bar represents 5 mm. (f) Vertical view of alternation of sandstone and mudstone in loose block. Along mid-line three discrete *Teichichnus* are seen in, from right to left, transverse (t), oblique (o), and near-longitudinal (n) section. Scale bar represents 5 mm.

and Baltica (Loughlin and Hillier 2010). In the Chapel Island Formation *Teichichnus* occurs sparsely in member 2, more commonly so in members 3 and 4, where it is the dominant trace fossil (Landing *et al.* 1989; Droser *et al.* 2002; Gougeon *et al.* 2018). It is also prominent in the Bonavista Group, in which Landing *et al.* (1989) named a *Teichichnus* Interval. In the Mira River area *Teichichnus* is common in red mudstone of the Canoe Brook Formation (Landing 1991). The earliest *Gyrolithes* straddle the Ediacaran/Cambrian boundary in Newfoundland (Gehling *et al.* 2001; Laing *et al.* 2018), and northern Norway (Jensen *et al.* 2018). Laing *et al.* (2018) documented *Gyrolithes scintillus* from close to the basal Cambrian GSSP through 400 m of section of member 2 of the Chapel Island Formation. If the Hay Island succession overlies that on Scatarie Island, these *Gyrolithes scintillus* are younger than occurrences in Newfoundland.

Finally it is noted that the maximum depositional ages from zircon in the Bengal Road Formation on Scatarie Island are close to the age for the base of the Canoe Brook Formation on Cape Breton Island as inferred from fossils. This suggests that future work is needed to evaluate possible regional differences between the sedimentary successions

on Cape Breton and Scatarie islands. Furthermore, although attribution of the Hay Island succession to the MacCodrum Formation is tentatively maintained here, further studies are needed to confirm this assignment, and to evaluate the possibility that the Hay Island succession is younger than the MacCodrum Formation, and perhaps consistent with the assignment by Barr and White (2017c) to the Mialingian Trout Brook Formation.

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APPENDIX A: U–PB DATA TABLES

Table A1. Continued.

Corrections: 1 = threshold %²⁰⁴Pb no correction (100 cps); 2 = threshold %²⁰⁴Pb-based correction(20% error) ; 3 = threshold % for %²⁰⁸Pb-based correction (98.5%²⁰⁸Pb*).

Sample	⁹⁰ Zr cps	U (ppm)	Th (ppm)	²⁰⁴ Pb cps ¹	²⁰⁴ Pb cps	% ± ²⁰⁶ Pb/ ²⁰⁴ Pb cps	% ²⁰⁶ Pb/ ²⁰⁴ Pb cps	Isotopic ratios			Calculated ages														
								²⁰⁷ Pb/ ²³⁵ U	²⁰⁶ Pb/ ²³⁸ U	Corrections ± 2σ	²⁰⁷ Pb/ ²⁰⁶ Pb	²⁰⁷ Pb/ ²³⁵ U	²⁰⁷ Pb/ ²³⁸ U												
SMB17-235 - 72 ^a	1.98E+08	255.3	109.3	2.34	-5	11	-220.0	27690	99.30	1	FALSE	0.746	0.020	0.086	0.001	0.067	0.0624	0.0017	688	58	564	12	533	7	94.5
SMB17-235 - 73 ^a	2.26E+08	38.6	19.34	2.00	-5	10	-208.7	20420	98.81	1	FALSE	7.520	0.170	0.392	0.007	0.489	0.1390	0.0024	2215	30	2171	21	2133	33	96.3
SMB17-235 - 74 ^a	2.32E+08	456	95.7	4.76	8	10	125.0	38563	99.42	1	FALSE	12.681	0.130	0.499	0.006	0.668	0.1842	0.0009	2691	8	2656	10	2608	25	96.9
SMB17-235 - 76 ^a	2.19E+08	183.6	95.7	1.92	-6	14	-233.3	20310	99.24	1	FALSE	0.690	0.020	0.081	0.001	0.139	0.0617	0.0017	664	59	532	12	502	7	94.3
SMB17-235 - 77	2.35E+08	455.5	119.5	3.81	160	29	18.1	1138	96.97	-	3	4.530	0.130	0.286	0.004	0.481	0.1143	0.0025	1869	39	1738	22	1623	21	86.8
SMB17-235 - 78	2.50E+08	1195	110.6	10.80	229	36	15.7	1937	92.13	-	3	5.600	0.120	0.265	0.004	0.841	0.1533	0.0017	2383	19	1915	19	1513	19	63.5
SMB17-235 - 79 ^a	2.36E+08	946	13.9	68.06	21	16	76.2	6800	99.50	1	FALSE	0.971	0.013	0.107	0.001	0.858	0.0654	0.0007	786	21	689	7	658	7	95.5
SMB17-235 - 80	2.41E+08	426	83.2	5.12	60	19	31.7	2038	97.38	1	FALSE	3.053	0.061	0.214	0.004	0.823	0.1036	0.0011	1690	20	1420	15	1247	22	73.8
SMB17-235 - 81 ^a	2.02E+08	168.1	121.9	1.38	10	12	120.0	6970	98.91	1	FALSE	5.358	0.088	0.323	0.004	0.486	0.1197	0.0015	1952	22	1877	14	1802	20	92.3
SMB17-235 - 82 ^a	2.11E+08	90.7	62.95	1.44	28	13	46.4	1450	98.91	1	FALSE	5.838	0.100	0.340	0.005	0.558	0.1239	0.0016	2013	23	1950	15	1886	24	93.7
SMB17-235 - 83	2.40E+08	426	189	2.25	374	43	11.5	452	93.67	-	3	4.990	0.200	0.286	0.006	0.688	0.1260	0.0031	2043	43	1813	34	1621	28	79.3
SMB17-235 - 84	1.90E+08	586.2	465	1.26	462	48	10.4	435	93.93	-	3	4.200	0.150	0.263	0.005	0.598	0.1146	0.0031	1874	49	1671	30	1505	23	80.3
SMB17-235 - 85 ^a	2.27E+08	432.8	39.41	10.98	-9	13	-144.4	203100	99.69	1	FALSE	5.781	0.069	0.346	0.004	0.548	0.1207	0.0009	1967	13	1943	10	1914	19	97.3
SMB17-235 - 86	2.20E+08	312.7	264.9	1.18	104	22	21.2	1886	96.08	-	2	11.540	0.200	0.454	0.006	0.475	0.1832	0.0022	2682	20	2567	16	2412	28	89.9
SMB17-235 - 87 ^a	2.09E+08	535.4	13.56	39.48	15	17	113.3	4911	99.22	1	FALSE	0.923	0.019	0.101	0.001	0.792	0.0658	0.0012	800	38	663	10	619	7	93.3

NOTES: ^agrains between 90 and 102% concordant; ^bgrains used in weighted mean calculations for youngest clusters; ^cafter Hg correction; ^dradiogenic Pb; ^eerror correction. Abbreviations: cps = counts per second.

APPENDIX B

Location and sample information, organic-walled microfossils and trace fossils. Sample coordinates are in Grid Zone 21T (WGS84). Locations are indicated also on Figure 2 and shown in a stratigraphic column (Fig. B1).

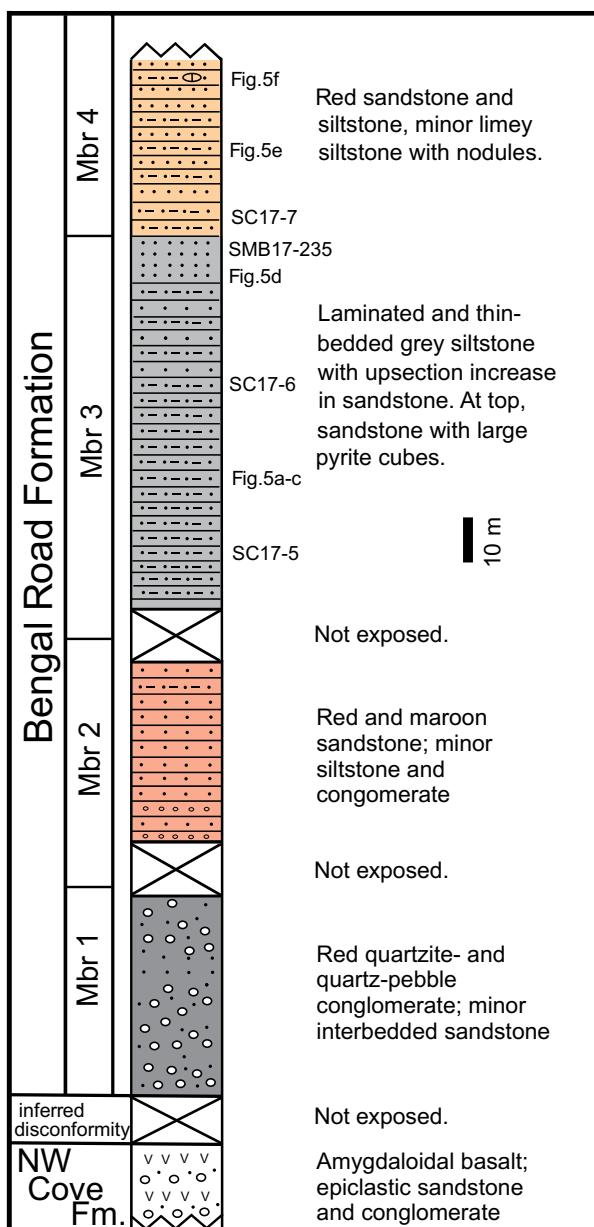


Figure B1. Stratigraphic interpretation of the southern limb of the southernmost syncline on the eastern shore of Scatarie Island (Fig. 2). Members 3 and 4 were logged in August 2017. Members 1 and 2 are schematic and based on notes made in 1991 when they were partially exposed. Abbreviation: NW Cove Fm = Northwest Cove Formation.

Scatarie Island, Bengal Road Fm. Coastal section of upper part of Bengal Road Formation

SC17-5. 0289970, 5099472. Abundant dispersed organic matter and very scarce organic-walled microfossils that are limited to fragments without recognizable forms, except for a small filament of possible cyanobacteria (Fig. 6a).

SC17-6. 0289994, 5099484. Small amount of dispersed organic matter and very scarce organic-walled microfossils without recognizable forms, except for an acritarch assigned to *Polygonium* sp. (Fig. 6b).

SC17-7. 0289995, 5099517. Small amount of dispersed organic matter. Possible black carbonaceous fragments without recognizable forms.

Hay Island, MacCodrum? Formation

1. Section on southern Hay Island at 0291878, 5099931. Teichichnid trace fossils (Fig. 7). Sample SC17-2, with small amount of dispersed organic matter, possible black carbonaceous fragments without recognizable morphologies. From same area at 0291885, 5099911, sample SC17-3, with small amount of dispersed organic matter, possible black carbonaceous fragments without recognizable morphologies. Among the maceration-resistant minerals are some idiomorphic zircon crystals. Also sample SC17-4, with no dispersed organic matter. Possible black carbonaceous fragments without recognizable shapes.

2. Section on northeastern Hay Island at 0292071, 5100170, cleaved dark grey siltstone with carbonate nodules. Sample SC17-8, with small amounts of organic matter. Possible black carbonaceous fragments without recognizable forms.

3. Section on northern Hay Island at 0292230, 5100309. *Gyrolithes*, *Teichichnus* and other trace fossils (Fig. 8). Sample SC17-9, with no dispersed organic material. Possible black carbon fragments without recognizable forms.