

GEOLOGY AND $^{40}\text{AR}/^{39}\text{AR}$ GEOCHRONOLOGY OF THE COASTAL COMPLEX
NEAR TROUT RIVER AND LARK HARBOUR,
WESTERN NEWFOUNDLAND

by

Bruce D. Idleman

A Dissertation

Submitted to the State University of New York at Albany

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

College of Science and Mathematics

Department of Geological Sciences

1990

State University of New York at Albany
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS


The dissertation submitted by

Bruce D. Idleman

under the title

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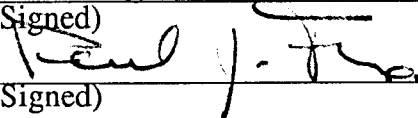
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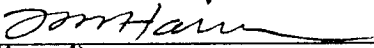
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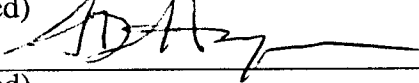
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W.D. Means

(Signed)

Nov. 7, 1990

(Date)



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Nov. 7, 1990

(Date)

Recommendation accepted by the Dean of Graduate Studies for the Graduate Academic
Council.

(Signed)

(Date)

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Abstract

The Coastal Complex is an assemblage of variably deformed and metamorphosed ophiolitic rocks exposed along the western side of the Bay of Islands ophiolite in western Newfoundland. The complex consists of several isolated massifs that lie above and in thrust contact with sedimentary rocks of the Humber Arm Supergroup. Mapping of the massifs south of Trout River and northwest of Lark Harbour has shown them to be tightly folded on a regional scale. The folds are upright, north to northeast trending, and doubly plunging over distances of several kilometers. They affect both the basal thrust and the overlying ophiolitic rocks. The oldest rocks in the two massifs are gabbros and peridotites, some of which contain an early penetrative foliation and an associated stretching lineation (D_1) formed under upper amphibolite to granulite-facies metamorphic conditions. They are intruded by large tabular bodies of trondhjemite that postdate the D_1 fabrics in the mafic and ultramafic rocks. Final cooling of the plutonic terrain below about 500°C occurred by 490 Ma, as revealed by $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ ages obtained from magmatic hornblende. The plutonic rocks are cut in places by gently dipping ductile shear zones (D_2) several hundred meters wide and 5 kilometers or more in preserved length. The shear zone rocks are mafic and rare ultramafic mylonites formed under greenschist to upper amphibolite-facies metamorphic conditions. They are constrained by $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ dating of metamorphic hornblende to have formed between 460 and 475 Ma, synchronous with the obduction of the western Newfoundland ophiolites. Numerous dikes and other hypabyssal intrusive bodies of diabase and microgabbro were emplaced into the complex during this event. Some of these bodies were strongly affected by the D_2 deformation, while others are undeformed and crosscut the shear zone fabrics. The complex is capped by a bimodal suite of volcanic rocks, which nonconformably overlie the plutonic and metamorphic units and postdate the development of the D_2 shear zones. Field relationships and geochronological data from the two field areas suggest that the Coastal Complex represents an imbricate stack of ophiolitic thrust slices assembled along the leading edge of the Bay of Islands ophiolite during its obduction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was first introduced to the geology of western Newfoundland by my advisor, Dr. W.S.F. Kidd, who encouraged me to undertake this project. Bill's guidance, support, and friendly cajoling helped to assure its successful completion. The $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ study described in Chapter VII was supervised by Dr. T.M. Harrison. He generously offered the use his laboratory for this phase of the project and provided valuable guidance in interpreting the age data.

I was assisted in the field by Dick Moody, Katrina Jensen, and Pat Considine, who tolerated poor weather, rough seas, black flies, and other hardships with a minimum of complaint. Their cheerful companionship was greatly appreciated.

The residents of Trout River and Lark Harbour extended traditional Newfoundland hospitality and assistance to me on many occasions during the course of the field work. I am particularly indebted to the families of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Parsons and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Hann for their generosity and concern for my well-being.

Viking Helicopters, Ltd. of Deer Lake provided safe and reliable transportation during the establishment of a temporary base camp in a remote part of the Trout River field area. Their services are highly recommended to anyone wishing to visit portions of the Bay of Islands region not accessible by foot or boat.

I thank Parks Canada and the staff of Gros Morne National Park for permission to conduct part of my investigation on Park lands.

My understanding of the Earth and its workings has been enhanced by stimulating discussions with many other friends and colleagues, particularly Bill Bosworth, Jack Casey, Steve DeLong, John Dewey, Greg Dunning, Jeff Fox, Greg Harper, Jeff Karson, Ed Landing, Win Means, Akiho Miyashiro, George Putman, Eric Rosencrantz, Dave Rowley, and Celal Sengor.

I thank the faculty, graduate students, and staff of the Department of Geological Sciences for helping to make my tenure at SUNYA as enjoyable as it was. I am especially grateful to my wife Katrina and daughter Lauren, who stood by an often negligent husband and father during the writing of this dissertation. Its completion would not have been possible without their encouragement, companionship, and understanding.

This project was supported by National Science Foundation grant EAR 8016540. The Department of Geological Sciences at SUNYA provided vehicles for several seasons of field work.

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