



**GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA
OPEN FILE 6016**

**Geochemical Database of Proterozoic Intraplate Mafic
Magmatism in Canada**

Background Notes

R.E. Ernst and K.L. Buchan

**With samples from L.B. Aspler, W.R.A. Baragar, M.T. Corkery, A. Davidson,
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INTRODUCTION

A Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet file is presented with new geochemical data for 923 samples from approximately 70 different Proterozoic, mainly mafic, magmatic events, as well as three of Phanerozoic age. The age distribution of these events is illustrated in Figure 1. Their geographic distribution is displayed by double clicking on the kml file (providing that internet access is available to Google Earth®). Most of the events are interpreted to belong to an intraplate setting. All samples are from sites located in Canada, with the exception of 43 from southwest Greenland and 12 from the northern United States. In addition, for quality control, 26 duplicate measurements and 18 measurements of an internal CANMET standard (TDB-1) were interspersed in the sample stream. All samples were analyzed for the same elements at the same laboratories, resulting in a homogeneous dataset. Specifically, major elements, trace elements (including REEs), and volatiles (including high precision S) were analyzed at the Geological Survey of Canada Laboratories (Analytical Chemistry Services), Pt and Pd were analyzed at Acme Analytical Laboratories Ltd., and a selected subgroup of 75 samples were analyzed for Au, Pt, Pd, Rh, Ru and Ir at Geoscience Laboratories (Geo Labs).

APPLICATIONS OF THE DATABASE

This geochemical database will be of potential value to many types of users. It provides a geochemical ‘fingerprint’ for about 70 mafic magmatic events, which can be used as a reference tool to correlate undated magmatic units with specific events. Trace elements are particularly valuable in such correlations. A preliminary version of the database was employed by Ernst et al. (2006) and Buchan et al. (2007) for this purpose. In addition, the database can be helpful in evaluating platinum group element (PGE) potential. For example, a preliminary version of the database was used by Ernst and Hulbert (2003) to identify magmatic events with PGE potential. Finally, the Ni, Cu and high precision S values, along with the rest of the compositional data, can potentially be useful in assessing Ni and Cu potential.

SAMPLE SOURCES AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The researcher(s) who provided each sample is identified in the database. Background information, such as unit name, sample source, unit type, swarm trend, dyke trend, age, references, location (within unit), thickness of unit, comments, location (latitude, longitude), was also provided by the researcher or derived from publications.

Unit names in the spreadsheet file correspond for the most part to those in various summaries on mafic-ultramafic magmatism in Canada (e.g. Buchan and Ernst, 2004; Ernst and Buchan 2001, 2004), but in a few cases have been updated to correspond to more recent usage. References that are included in the spreadsheet provide an overview of specific magmatic units and (or) describe geochemical studies of specific units, commonly using earlier geochemical analyses of the same samples that have been reanalyzed in the present study.

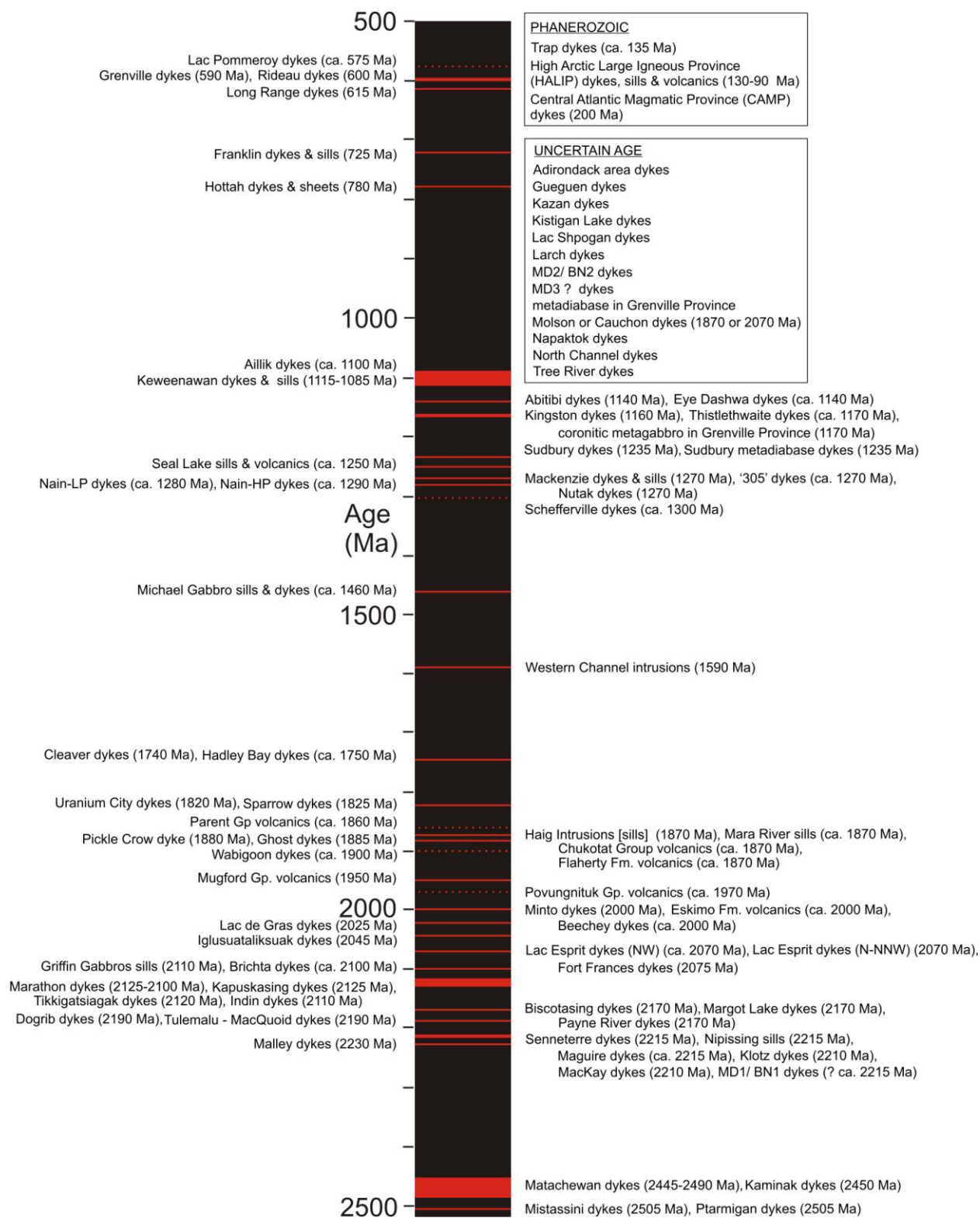


Figure 1: Age distribution of magmatic events whose geochemistry is reported in this study.

SAMPLE LOCATIONS

Latitude - longitude locations are provided for each sample, typically quoted to three decimal places of a degree. However, the actual accuracy could be somewhat less in some cases because: 1) many of the sample collections pre-date the routine use of modern Global Positioning System (GPS) measurements, and were obtained from field maps and air photos of variable scale and accuracy, and 2) the geoid datum for some sample collections has not been verified, yielding an uncertainty up to ~200 m.

GEOCHEMICAL METHODOLOGY

Samples were provided as hand samples, coarse crush, or powders. Hand samples and coarse crush were powdered at the Geological Survey of Canada using a ceramic ring mill. Most previously powdered samples were also prepared in a ceramic ring mill. However, an aluminum ring mill was used for some Matachewan dyke samples, and a tungsten carbide mill for some Abitibi dyke samples. Given the analytical techniques used in this study, there is no contamination effect on the major and trace element analyses.

Geochemical analyses for major and trace elements were performed at the Geological Survey of Canada Laboratories (Analytical chemistry services) (http://gsc.nrcan.gc.ca/labs/chem_e.php). Major elements were determined by fused disk wavelength dispersive X-ray Fluorescence (XRF), and trace elements by Inductively Coupled Plasma - Emission Spectrometry (ICPES) and Inductively Coupled Plasma - Mass Spectrometry (ICPMS). Ferrous iron is determined using the Wilson Method (titrimetric), and ferric iron is calculated from the difference with Fe total (from XRF). H₂O (total), CO₂ (total) and S (total) are determined using combustion followed by infra-red spectrometry. High precision F, Cl and S are determined by the pyrohydrolysis method followed by ion chromatography (IC). Loss on ignition is determined by gravimetry at 900° C. Detection limits are provided in the spreadsheet file.

Pt and Pd were determined at Acme Analytical Laboratories Ltd. (www.acmelab.com). The method was lead collection fire-assay fusion for total sample decomposition, followed by digestion of the Ag dore bead and ICP-MS analysis. Detection limits are provided in the spreadsheet file. Note that the Au detection limit may vary due to natural contamination in commercial flux and sample size. Rh values are qualitative to semi-quantitative depending on the nature of the samples.

In addition, 75 samples were sent to Geoscience Laboratories (Geo Labs; http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/mines/ogs/labs/default_e.asp) for precious metal determination by nickel sulphide fire-assay (NiS FA) with an ICP-MS finish. This is considered the foremost method for the determination of Au and the PGEs in geological samples. The sample is fused with a mixture of Ni and S to produce a nickel sulphide button. Dissolution of the button is followed by co-precipitation with Te that produces a concentrate containing all six precious metals that is dissolved in aqua regia prior to analysis. Data were obtained for Au, Pt, Pd, Rh, Ru and Ir. Detection limits are provided in the spreadsheet file.

Each batch of samples that were submitted for analysis included material from CANMET standard TDB1 as a 'blind' internal check. TDB1 is a certified geochemical standard of Mackenzie diabase from Tremblay Lake, Saskatchewan

(<http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms-smm/tect-tech/ccrmp/cer-cer/tdb-1-eng.pdf>). These internal standard analyses are included in the spreadsheet file. They exhibit excellent reproducibility, and match the 'best values' quoted on the above website, and therefore confirm the high quality of the entire dataset.

Unavailable data (e.g. where the titrimetric analysis for FeO wt% was not done) are indicated by -999. Analyses below the detection limit for that element are indicated by the negative of the detection limit.

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