

## Detrital zircon analysis of metasedimentary rocks of the Staré Město Belt, Sudetes: implications for the provenance and evolution of the eastern margin of the Saxothuringian terrane, NE Bohemian Massif

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The Staré Město Belt (SMB) in the Central Sudetes forms a Variscan tectonic boundary zone that is located between the Saxothuringian and Brunovistulian terranes of the Bohemian Massif. The three thrust-bounded upper, middle and lower lithotectonic units of the SMB are composed of metasedimentary and Late Cambrian metavolcanic rocks. A new LA-ICP-MS zircon geochronology supported by zircon typology studies of the mica schists of the upper unit and the migmatitic paragneisses of the middle unit provides new insights into the provenance and evolution of the SMB. Our new data were obtained from metasedimentary rocks and compared to the previously published zircon ages of the SMB metavolcanic rocks. The results indicate that the metasedimentary and bimodal metavolcanic rocks in the separate lithotectonic units of the SMB originally formed Late Cambrian volcano-sedimentary successions. The source areas of the sedimentary basins studied were dominated by Neoproterozoic and Paleoproterozoic crystalline rocks that were presumably located near the West African Craton of Gondwana. A comparison of the detrital age spectra obtained with those previously published from the region indicates a strong association of the entire SMB with the Saxothuringian terrane of the Bohemian Massif. During partial melting of the metasedimentary rocks of the middle unit of the SMB, Cambrian and older zircon grains were affected by solid-state transformations that caused partial resetting of the U-Pb dates, changes in internal zircon textures and reductions in Th/U ratios.

Key words: detrital zircon age spectra, provenance, Variscan terranes, Staré Město Belt, Bohemian Massif.

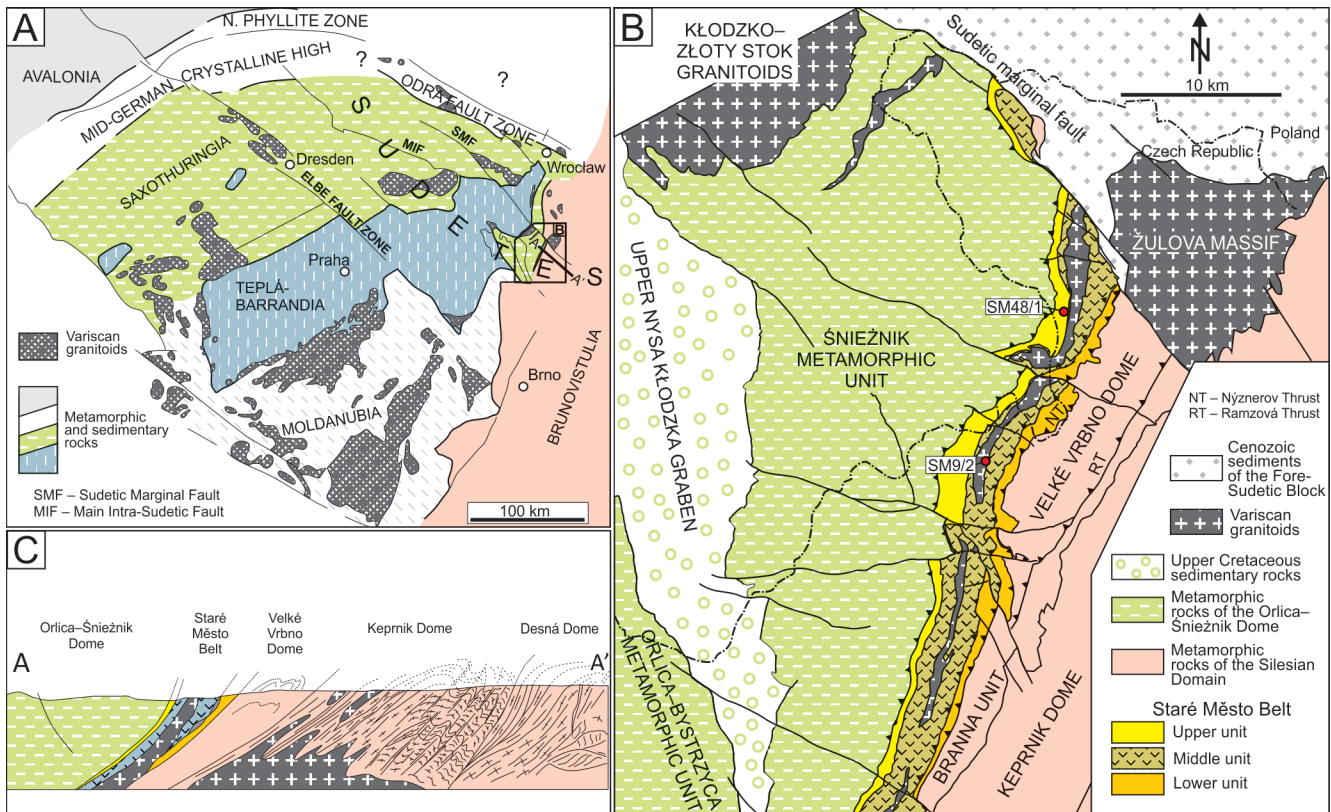
### INTRODUCTION

The Sudetes, NW Bohemian Massif is a collage geological structure that consists of separate tectonostratigraphic units correlated with the major tectonic zones (microplates) of the Bohemian Massif that were juxtaposed during Variscan times (Cyerman et al., 1997; Franke and Żelaźniewicz 2000; Aleksandrowski and Mazur, 2002; Mazur et al., 2006; Fig. 1A). An important component of these units comprises the metavolcanic-sedimentary rocks that are remnants of pre-Variscan volcano-sedimentary successions. Such a rock association also occurs in the Staré Město Belt (SMB) in the Central Sudetes (Fig. 1B), which forms a tectonic boundary zone between the Saxothuringian and Brunovistulian terranes. The SMB is char-

acterized by a predominance of metavolcanic rocks (e.g., Skácel, 1977; Štípská et al., 2001; Don et al., 2003) that represent a metamorphosed ophiolite sequence (e.g., Poubová and Sokol, 1992). The SMB metabasites originated in an ensialic rift setting (Floyd et al., 1996, 2000) that developed in the Cambro-Ordovician (Kröner et al., 2000; Fig. 1B).

Zircon geochronology studies suggest some differences in the provenance of the units that are present on both sides of the SMB. The source areas for the detrital materials for the metavolcanic-sedimentary successions are thought to lie within the Saxothuringian terrane, including those of the Orlica-Śnieżnik Dome, and are generally linked to the West African Craton of northern Gondwana (e.g., Linneman et al., 2004; Jastrzębski et al., 2010; Mazur et al., 2012; Oberc-Dziedzic et al., 2018; Szczepański et al., 2020). The Velké Vrbno Dome of the Brunovistulian terrane has been recently postulated to represent the Amazonian margin of Gondwana (Jastrzębski et al., 2021), but besides Gondwanan origin, a Baltican derivation is also suggested (Collett et al., 2021). The detrital zircon age spectra of the SMB are limited to those obtained from Brusek quartzites from the eastern part of the belt, which suggests the

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**Fig. 1A** – tectonic map of the Bohemian Massif (modified from [Oberc-Dziedzic et al., 2015](#)); **B** – position of the Staré Město Belt and the location of the samples studied on a geological sketch of the Central Sudetes (modified after [Don et al., 2003](#)); **C** – schematic cross-section through the Central Sudetes (modified from [Schulmann and Gayer, 2000](#))

Saxothuringian affinity of these rocks ([Jastrzębski et al., 2015](#)). The SMB is, however, an internally complex fold-and-thrust belt, in which separate lithotectonic sheets contain large-scale tectonic boundaries ([Don et al., 2003](#); [Opletal and Pecina, 2004](#); [Fig. 1B, C](#)) which are suggestive of significant-scale juxtaposition within the SMB. Thus, the issue of whether the whole SMB, and its central, mainly metavolcanic part representing the presumed rift, in particular, was connected closer to the Saxothuringian or Brunovistulian terrane at the time of formation of the protoliths of the SMB metamorphic rocks requires more provenance data.

In this study, we provide new detrital zircon U-Pb data supported by zircon morphological analysis of metasedimentary rocks that represent two different lithotectonic portions of the SMB. The detrital zircon age spectra of these rocks have not previously been studied. The zircon data obtained from mica schist samples of the SMB upper unit and migmatitic paragneisses of the SMB middle unit have been compared with those obtained earlier in neighboring domains of the Saxothuringian and Brunovistulian terranes. The results provide necessary evidence for the provenance and significance of the Staré Město Belt within the Variscan structure of the Sudetes.

## GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS ZIRCON GEOCHRONOLOGY

The Staré Město Belt is a 50 km-long and 2.5 to 4.5 km-wide, narrow tectonic zone with an SSW–NNE alignment and

mainly has a moderate-angle westerly dip ([Fig. 1](#)). The SMB separates the Orlica–Śnieżnik Dome in the west from the Velké Vrbno Dome and Branná Belt in the east ([Don et al., 2003](#)). In this area, a major geological boundary dividing two domains with distinct geological characteristics was postulated nearly 100 years ago (e.g., [Cloos, 1922](#); [Bederke, 1929](#)), and its exact position and significance have been discussed extensively since that time (e.g., [Oberc, 1968](#); [Cymerman, 1993](#); [Schulmann and Gayer, 2000](#); [Opletal and Pecina, 2004](#); [Jastrzębski et al., 2015](#)). In the modern tectonic subdivision of the Bohemian Massif, the Orlica–Śnieżnik Dome is usually considered to be part of the Saxothuringian terrane (e.g., [Franke and Želažniewicz, 2000](#); [Chopin et al., 2012](#); [Aguilar et al., 2020](#)), although it is sometimes considered to be part of the Moldanubian terrane ([Matte et al., 1990](#); [Cymerman et al., 1997](#)). The Velké Vrbno Dome and Branná Belt belong to the Silesian domain, which is the northwestern part of the Brunovistulian (Brunia) microplate (e.g., [Schulmann and Gayer, 2000](#); [Štípská et al., 2006](#); [Jastrzębski et al., 2015](#); [Oberc-Dziedzic et al., 2021](#); [Collett et al., 2021](#); [Fig. 1A](#)).

Geological mapping studies (e.g., [Skácel, 1977](#); [Gawlikowska and Opletal, 1997](#); [Don et al., 2003](#)) indicate that the upper and lower parts of the SMB are dominated by metasedimentary rocks, while the middle part is mainly composed of metavolcanic rocks ([Fig. 1C](#)). These narrow lithotectonic units are separated by west-dipping thrusts (e.g., [Poubová and Sokol, 1992](#); [Gawlikowska and Opletal, 1997](#); [Don et al., 2003](#); [Opletal and Pecina, 2004](#)) and are defined as the upper, middle and lower units of the SMB, respectively ([Jastrzębski, 2012](#)).

The upper 1–3 km wide lithotectonic unit, which is equivalent to the “Hraničná series” (Skácel, 1977, 1989), contains mostly metasedimentary rocks, such as mica schists interlayered with felsic and mafic metavolcanic rocks, graphite schists, marbles and quartzites (e.g., Skácel, 1977; Don et al., 2003; Fig. 1). The protolith ages of the felsic metavolcanic rocks from the upper unit have yielded a Pb–Pb zircon evaporation age of ~522 Ma (Kröner et al., 2000) and SHRIMP concordia age of ~493 Ma (Jastrzębski et al., 2015).

The metavolcanic rocks of the SMB are concentrated in up to 4 km-thick sections of the middle part of the belt. In this part of the SMB, the dominant rocks are amphibolites and quartzo-feldspathic rocks (Don et al. 2003). Paragneisses, metagabbros and boudins derived from serpentinized spinel peridotite are less common (Poubová and Sokol, 1992; Štípská et al., 2001). In most cases, the mafic and felsic metavolcanic rocks form sequences called bimodal associations. The geochemistry of the metabasites derived from those leptyno-amphibolite sequences indicates their MORB-like (Floyd et al., 1996, 2000) or island arc affinity (Poubová and Sokol, 1992). Floyd et al. (1996, 2000) considered that all chemical variations suggesting a subduction-related origin of these rocks are the result of crustal contamination of more primitive magmas that developed in an ensialic rift setting. The dating results for zircons from the metatonalites, metagabbros and metavolcanic rocks of the leptyno-amphibolite complex yield identical vapor digestion upper intercept ages, Pb–Pb evaporation mean ages and SHRIMP mean ages that range between ~505 and 503 Ma (Kröner et al., 2000). In this part of the SMB, which is defined as the SMB middle unit (Jastrzębski, 2012), smaller elongated bodies of migmatitic paragneiss also occur (Don et al., 2003). Dating of two detrital zircons from the granulite-facies paragneisses from the middle unit yielded SHRIMP ages of ~551 and ~609 Ma (Kröner et al., 2000). The examination of two other zircons from this rock provided Pb–Pb evaporation ages of ~664 and ~682 Ma (Kröner et al., 2000). Multifaceted zircon grains from the same sample yielded 504–509 Ma ages (U–Pb SHRIMP mean age and upper intercept age were derived by vapor digestion), which were interpreted as reflecting the timing of high-grade metamorphic conditions in this part of the SMB (Kröner et al., 2000).

The SMB lower unit, which has a thickness of ~800 m, is lithologically more similar to the upper unit because of the predominance of metasedimentary rocks over metavolcanic rocks. This unit is mainly composed of mica schists termed the Skorošice mica schist by Don et al. (2003) and also contains cataclased gneisses, amphibolites, marbles, quartzites, and graphite schists (Don et al., 2003). A felsic metavolcanic rock in the lower unit yielded a protolith age of ~498 Ma (U–Pb SHRIMP zircon dating, Jastrzębski et al., 2015). A SHRIMP detrital zircon study on the Brusek quartzites at the bottom of the SMB lower unit indicates the presence of two Neoproterozoic–Early Cambrian (672 to 531 Ma) and Paleoproterozoic (2.19–1.96 Ga and 2.47 Ga) age clusters that are suggestive of a Saxothuringian provenance (Jastrzębski et al., 2015).

The Lower Paleozoic rocks of the SMB were metamorphosed under amphibolite- to granulite-facies conditions (e.g., Parry et al., 1997; Štípská et al., 2001; Bartz, 2004; Lexa et al., 2005), either during the Cambro-Ordovician and/or Devonian–Carboniferous (see Lexa et al., 2005; Jastrzębski et al., 2013). The main structural architecture of the SMB was established during Viséan time (340–344 Ma), when the metamorphic rocks were intruded by syntectonic tonalite–granodiorite sheet intrusions (e.g., Wierzchołowski, 1966; Parry et al., 1997; Štípská et al., 2004; Jastrzębski et al., 2018).

## METHODS

The zircons from the SM48/1 mica schist and SM9/2 paragneiss were separated using standard techniques, including crushing, magnetic separation and handpicking under a binocular microscope. Despite the metasedimentary origin of the rocks studied, the typological classification of Pupin (1980) was applied to the zircon grains from both samples studied. Secondary electron images (SEM) of representative morphological subtypes of zircon grains were obtained using a Jeol JSM-IT500LA scanning electron microscope at the Electron Microscopy Laboratory of the Institute of Geological Sciences, University of Wrocław, Poland.

The zircon grains were mounted in epoxy resin, polished and imaged with cathodoluminescence (CL) before the isotopic analysis. A Thermo Scientific Element 2 sector field ICP–MS coupled to a 193 nm ArF excimer laser (Teledyne Cetac Analyte Excite laser) at the Institute of Geology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic, was used to determine the zircon Pb/U and Pb isotope ratios. Details of the analytical techniques are provided in Appendix (Table S1). In the results presented below, zircon ages younger than 1 Ga are  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ages and U–Pb ages older than 1 Ga are  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ages. In this study, the discordances were calculated as  $[1 - \{(Age^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}) / (Age^{207}\text{Pb}/^{235}\text{U})\}] \times 100$  for zircons younger than 1.0 Ga and as  $[1 - \{(Age^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}) / (Age^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb})\}] \times 100$  for zircons older than 1.0 Ga. A 10% discordance filter was used to visualize and compare the detrital age spectra.

## DESCRIPTION OF ROCK AND ZIRCON SAMPLES

### MICA SCHIST SM48/1

Mica schist sample SM48/1 was collected from an exposure exhibiting the characteristic lithology of the SMB upper unit, located ~600 m south-east of the Špičák Mt. (the Złote/Rychlebské Mts., 50°17'36"N, 17°1'23"E). In the lower part of the exposure studied, massive felsic metavolcanic rocks are in contact with garnet mica schists, and the latter are intercalated with a few to several centimeters of planar bodies of more massive finer-grained felsic metavolcanic rocks (Fig. 2A). The mica schists are several metres thick and disappear in favour of calcite marbles that are located in the upper part of the exposure. Sample SM48/1, which was collected from the central part of the exposure, consists of well-foliated, medium-grained mica schists. The schistosity is defined by a preferred orientation of muscovite and biotite flakes, and discontinuous, up to 1.2 mm-thick, quartz laminae. Sample SM48/1 also contains anhedral plagioclase and garnet porphyroblasts (up to 2 mm in diameter). Garnet and plagioclase grains contain inclusions of biotite, muscovite and quartz, all usually oriented obliquely to the main schistosity.

Most of the zircon grains studied in this sample are euhedral and subhedral (60%), whereas 40% are well or very well rounded (according to the nomenclature of Gärtner et al., 2013; Fig. 3A). They vary in length from ~90 to 220  $\mu\text{m}$ . In contrast to sample SM9/2, sample SM48/1 contains more short prismatic crystals (67%), while those with elongations greater than 2.0 comprise the minority (43%). In transmitted light, the zircon grains are mostly transparent, colourless or orange (Fig. 4). Well-developed pyramids {101} are distinctive for this sample and dominate over {211}, while most of the grains have better developed {110} than {100} prisms (Fig. 3A). The most characteristic subtypes for these rocks are G1 and P1 (Fig. 3A).

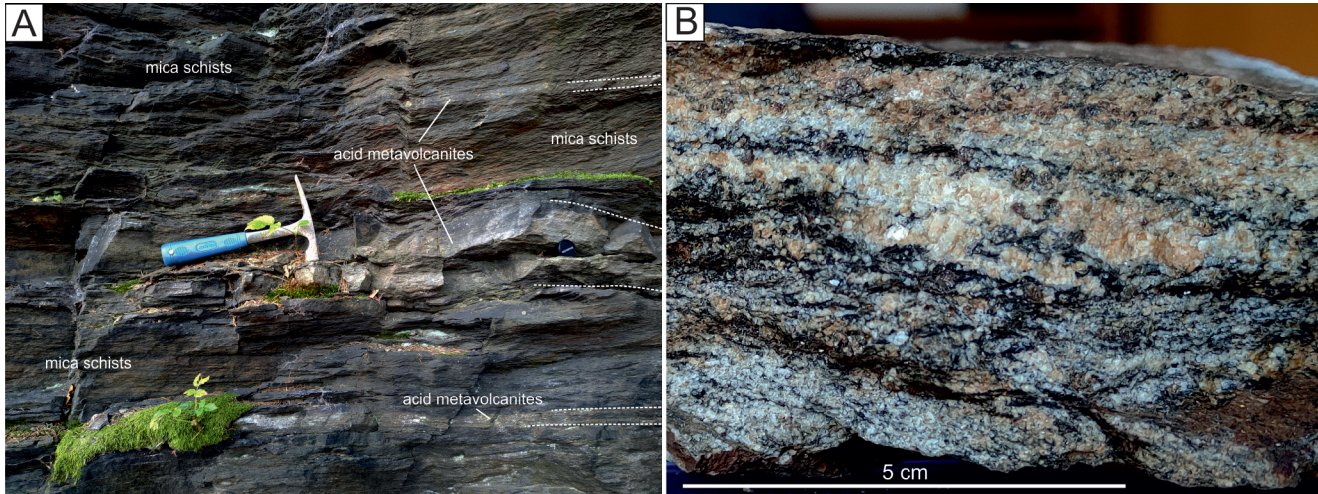


Fig. 2A – field photograph of mica schists (sample SM48/1) with intercalations of felsic metavolcanic rocks of the SMB upper unit; B – migmatized paragneiss of the SMB middle unit (sample SM9/2) with medium-grained leucocratic segregations

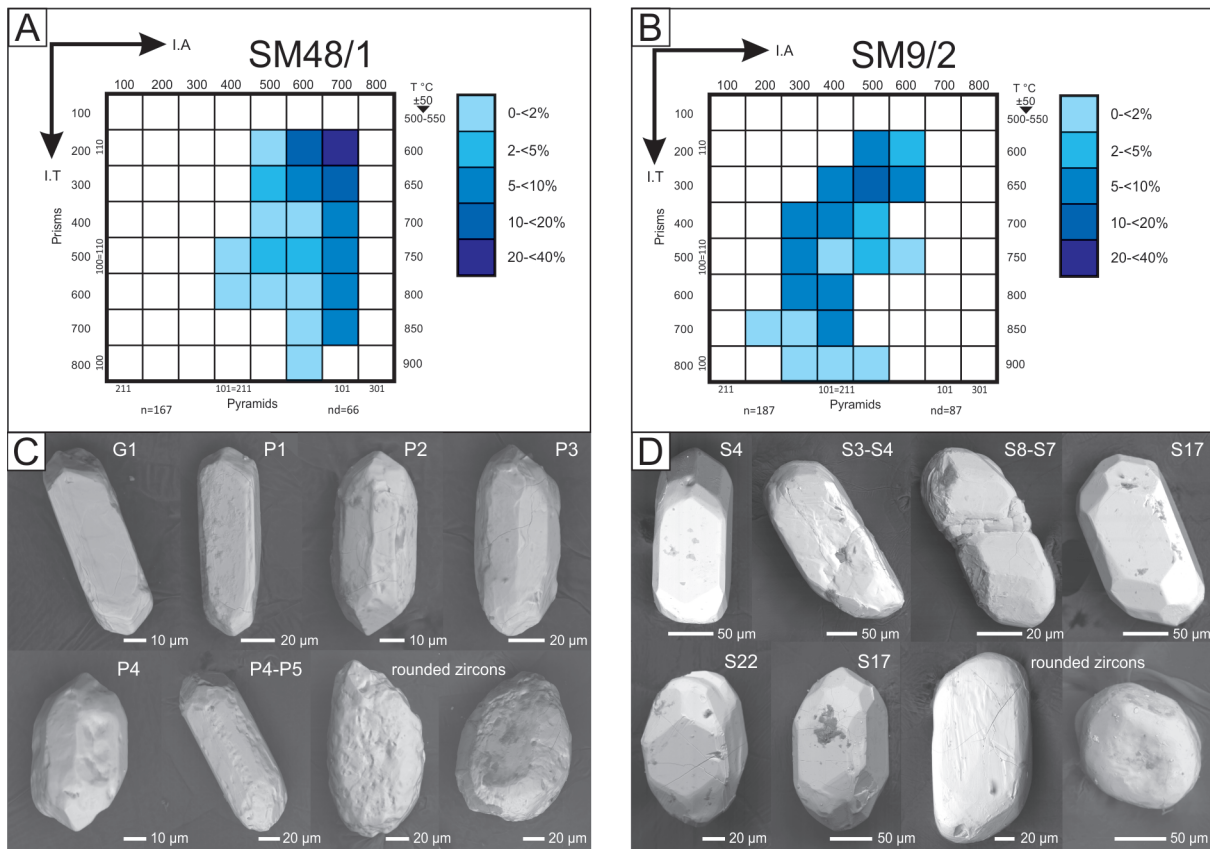


Fig. 3. Typological diagrams of zircon morphologies (according to Pupin, 1980) and secondary electron images (SEM) of representative zircon crystals

A – zircon populations of the SM48/1 mica schist: n – number of zircon crystals studied, nd – number of unclassified zircon crystals; B – zircon populations of the SM9/2 migmatitic paragneiss; C – SEM images of zircons from the mica schist (SM48/1); D – SEM images of zircons from the migmatitic paragneiss (SM9/2)

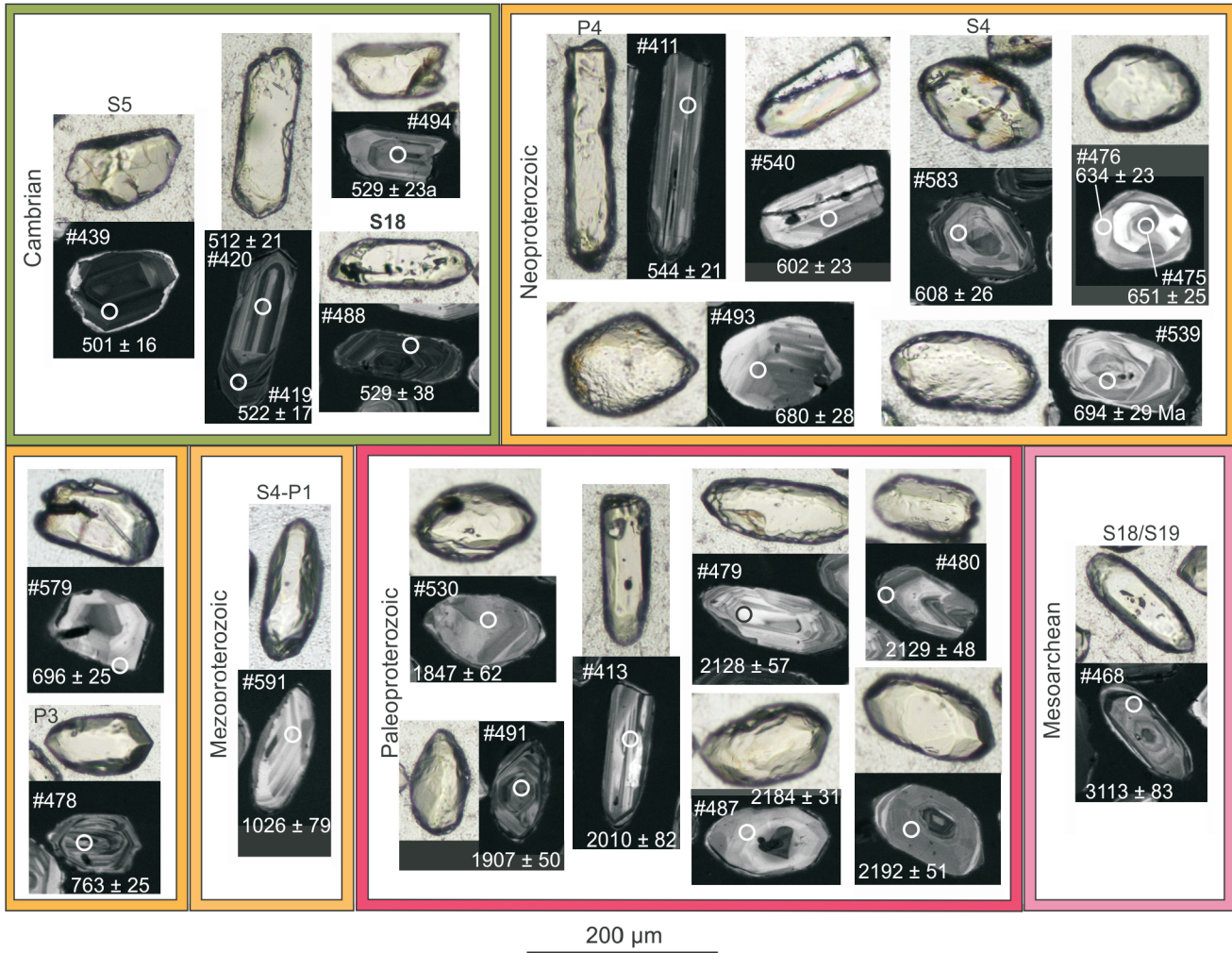


Fig. 4. Optical (upper or left) and cathodoluminescence images of zircons with ages (Ma) of representative crystals from sample SM48/1 (the upper unit)

#### MIGMATITIC PARAGNEISS SM9/2

Sample SM9/2 represents a high-grade paragneiss that is characteristic of the middle unit of the SMB. It was collected from an exposure located 1.5 km west of Stolec Mt. (Śnieżnik Massif) (50°12'37"N 16°57'19"E). In the exposure studied, migmatitic paragneisses predominate, with only one 15–20 cm-thick intercalation of felsic metavolcanic rock visible in its upper part. The migmatitic paragneiss SM9/2 is a weakly foliated rock that mainly consists of biotite, quartz, garnet, plagioclase and sillimanite that form a dark-coloured groundmass, and quartz and feldspars that concentrate in light-coloured migmatitic segregations. The dark-coloured groundmass is mostly fine-grained, although garnet grains form anhedral irregular blasts up to 2 mm in diameter, and plagioclase and quartz form occasional grains that are ~1 mm in diameter. Quartzo-feldspathic segregations (>1 cm-thick) are generally parallel to the main metamorphic foliation that is better developed in the darker, mica-rich groundmass. Quartzo-feldspathic segregations are coarser-grained, contain tabular, randomly oriented plagioclase grains that are 1 to 4 mm in diameter, interstitial quartz, anhedral garnet (2 mm in diameter) and subordinate biotite and chlorite. (Fig. 2B).

The zircons extracted from sample SM9/2 are well and very well rounded in 47% of the grains. Despite the mainly detrital or

igin of this rock, the other crystals (53%) are less rounded and include euhedral or subhedral grains that were suitable for Pupin's (1980) classification. The grains are 80–250 µm in size, and their elongations (e.g., length/width aspect ratios) are mostly 2 to 3, with a few percent falling below and above these values. The morphological analysis shows a predominance of {110} prisms and well-developed {211} pyramids (Fig. 3B). In transmitted light, the crystals are transparent, mainly colourless or yellowish, and a small percentage of them contain inclusions (11%; Fig. 5). The predominant morphological subtypes are S4 and L4 (Fig. 3B).

#### NEW U-Pb ZIRCON DATA

The results of the LA-ICP-MS zircon dating of samples SM48/1 and SM9/2 are provided in the Appendix (Table S2) in the online supplement and are shown in Figure 6.

#### MICA SCHIST SM48/1

In sample SM48/1, U-Pb isotopic data were obtained from 138 analytical spots. A total of 125 analyses in 122 zircon crystals yielded concordant ages (Appendix, Table S2 and Fig. 6A). The oldest zircons or zircon cores (n = 3) are Archean in age

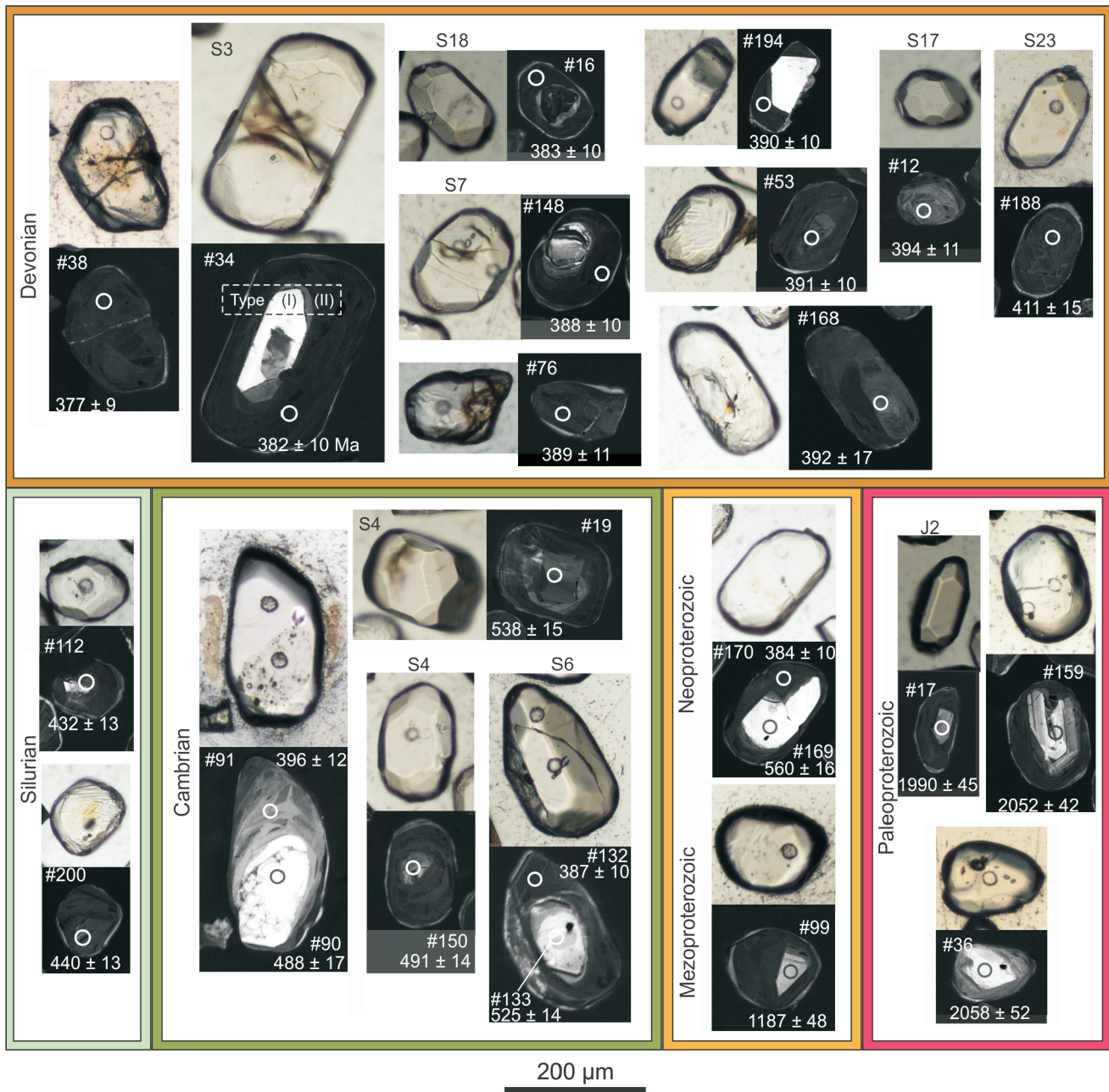
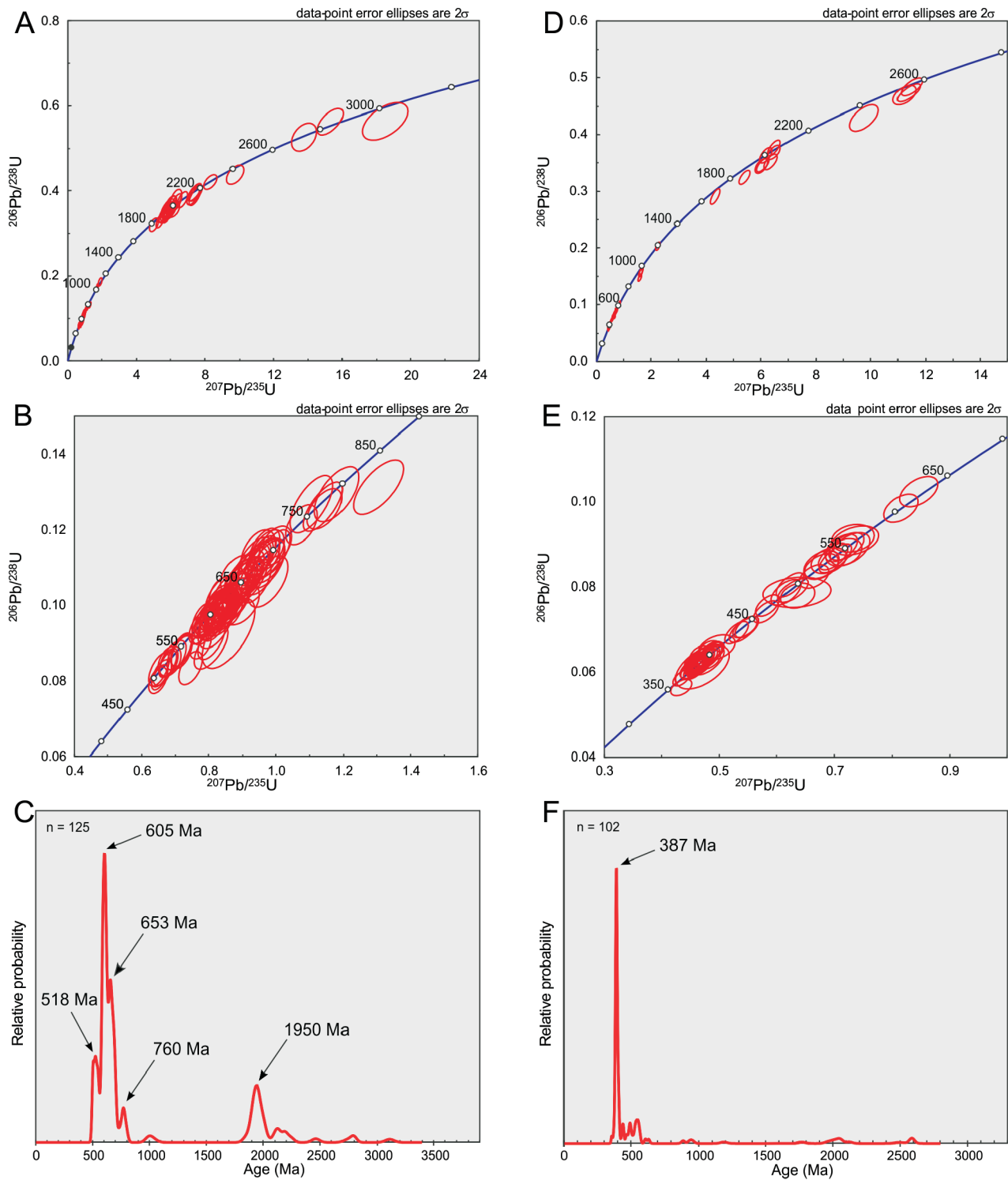


Fig 5. Optical (upper or left) and cathodoluminescence images of zircons with ages (Ma) of representative crystals from sample SM9/2 (the middle unit)

and yield ages of  $\sim 3.1$  to  $\sim 2.7$  Ga. One of these exhibits oscillatory zoning (#468, Fig. 4), and a second zircon exhibits a sector zoning pattern (#431 Appendix, Table S2). The third Archean age was obtained from a dark in CL, rounded core, which is mantled by a Neoproterozoic rim (#452, #453 Appendix, Table S2). Their Th/U ratios range from 1.02 to 1.49 (Fig. 7). The second most numerous population in this sample ( $n = 26$ ) belongs to a Paleoproterozoic age cluster (2.46 to 1.85 Ga, Th/U = 0.39–0.65). Oscillatory zoning is the most common zircon texture in this group; however, sector zoning and zircons with inherited cores are also noticeable (Fig. 4). The transition between the Neoproterozoic and Mesoproterozoic is represented by two zircons that yielded ages of 1.03 and 0.99 Ga with Th/U ratios of 2.99 and 1.77, respectively (Fig. 7).

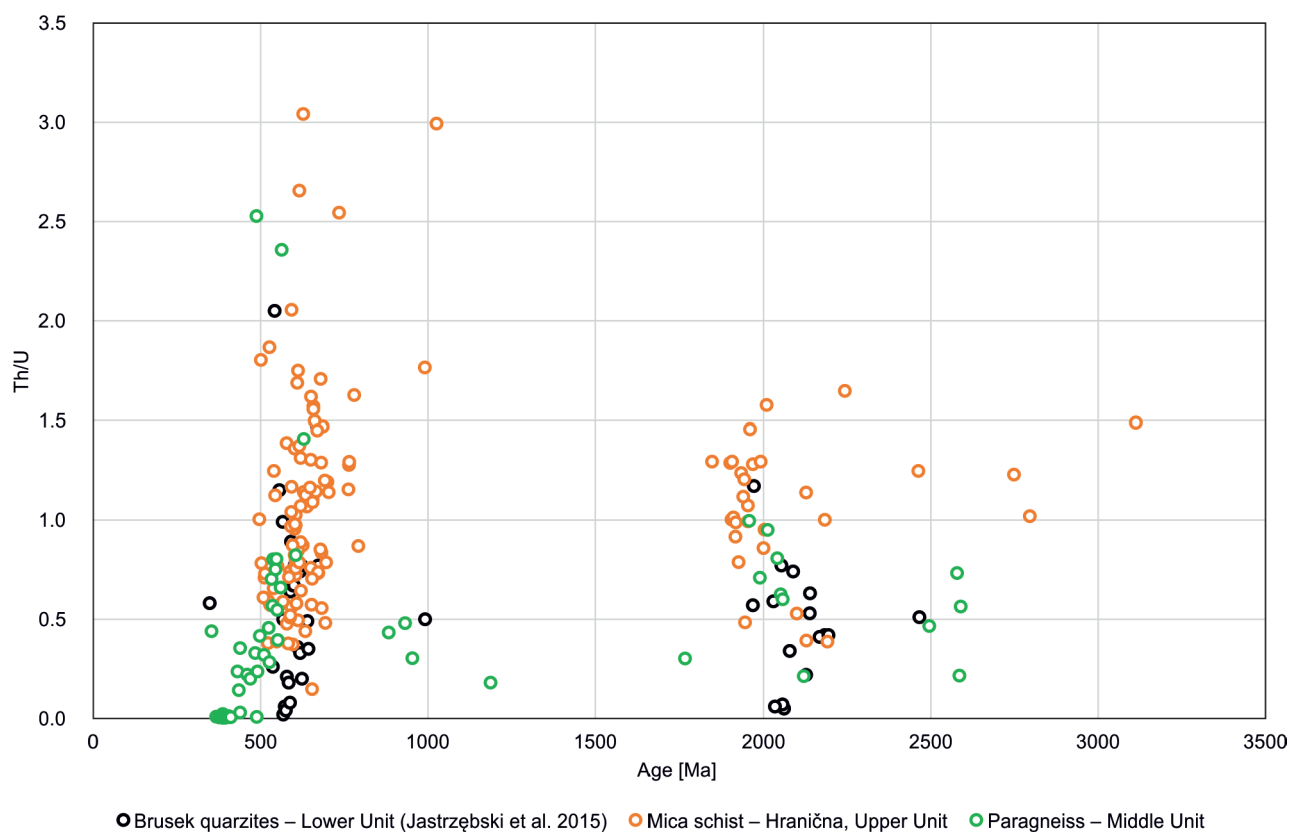
The largest zircon population is Neoproterozoic to Late Cambrian ranging between  $\sim 792$  and 497 Ma (Fig. 6B). The

main mode of this population is at  $\sim 605$  Ma, while two other smaller maxima at  $\sim 653$  Ma and 518 Ma are also evident (Fig. 6C). The zircons of this age are characterized by sector- or oscillatory-zoned textures and occasionally contain cores displaying different CL-induced luminescence (Fig. 4). Within this zircon population, the zircon cores yield ages that are often comparable to those obtained from their rims (Appendix, Table S2 and Fig. 4). The Th/U ratios for the zircons of this group range between 0.15 and 3.04; however, for most of the crystals, they are moderate and range between 0.37 and 2.06 (Fig. 7). A correlation between the roundness of the crystals and their ages can be observed. While the Cambrian grains have more elongated, euhedral forms, the older crystals are mostly subhedral or rounded (Appendix, Table S2 and Fig. 4).



**Fig. 6. U-Pb plots showing the zircon dating results**

Only concordant or nearly concordant ( 10% discordant) analyses are shown; **A** – Wetherill diagram of zircon data from the upper unit sample – mica schist SM48/1; **B** – Wetherill diagram in the Neoproterozoic–Early Paleozoic range (sample SM48/1); **C** – probability density plot (sample SM48/1); **D** – Wetherill diagram of zircon data from the middle unit sample – mica schist SM9/2; **E** – Wetherill diagram in the Neoproterozoic–Early Paleozoic range (sample SM9/2); **F** – probability density plot (sample SM9/2)



**Fig. 7. U-Pb ages vs. Th/U ratios for zircons from the metasedimentary rocks of the upper and middle units (this study) and the lower unit (Jastrzębski et al., 2015)**

#### MIGMATITIC PARAGNEISS SM9/2

In sample SM9/2, 136 analyses in 87 zircon crystals were made. A total of 102 analyses were concordant within  $\pm 10\%$  (Appendix, Table S2 and Fig. 6D). Based on the internal textures revealed by cathodoluminescence, two general types of zircon domain were distinguished. Type I zircon domains are cores that are either homogeneous or oscillatory zoned. Type II zircons or zircon domains predominate and form either whole zircon grains or zircon mantles that exhibit very low CL luminescence, which are surrounded by additional bright and very thin margins, while the latter are too narrow for isotopic analysis (Fig. 5). The mantles representing type II in individual cases can occasionally be thin and barely visible, but in most cases, they compose more than one-third of the area of the observed sections of the zircon grains.

In the more luminescent/oscillatory zoned grains or zircon cores (type I), four Neoproterozoic ages were obtained (2.50–2.59 Ga; Th/U = 0.22–0.73). Within the Proterozoic range ( $n = 20$ ), seven zircon ages range from 2.12 to 1.96 Ga, one is 1.77 Ga, another is 1.18 Ga (Mesoproterozoic) and three ages are close to the Mesoproterozoic-Neoproterozoic transition, i.e., a range between 954 and 883 Ma (Fig. 6B). The rest ( $n = 8$ ) of the oldest, type I zircon domains are Neoproterozoic and yield ~629–545 Ma ages. The Th/U ratios are within the range from 0.14 to 1.41 (Fig. 7); however, one crystal has a higher value of 2.36 (zircon #49, Appendix, Table S2 and Fig. 7). The youngest of the more luminescent zircon domains are late Cambrian in age (zircon #90, Fig. 5).

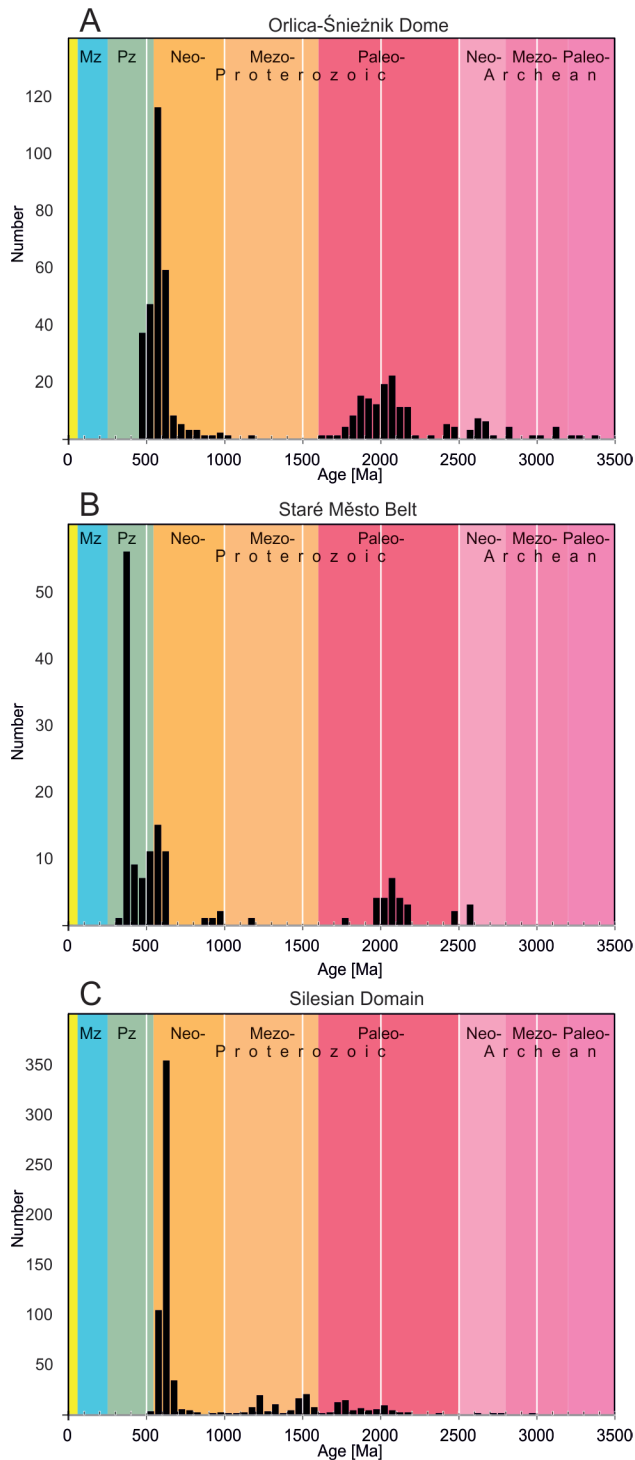
The type II zircon domains yield concordant Cambrian to Early Carboniferous ages (Figs. 5 and 6E). They are characterized by stable and low Th/U ratios that range between 0.20 and 0.33 for the Ordovician zircon ages and between 0.14 and 0.35

for the Silurian zircon ages (Appendix, Table S2, Figs. 5 and 7). The majority of the concordant ages that were obtained from the type II zircons in this sample are Devonian in age ( $n = 60$ ) with a peak ~387 Ma (Fig. 6F). They have the lowest observed Th/U ratios (0.01–0.02; Fig. 7).

## DISCUSSION

This study provides new zircon data from metasedimentary rocks that may help to unravel the age relationship between the protoliths of the metasedimentary and metavolcanic rocks of the SMB, with the latter dated as Cambrian to earliest Ordovician (Kröner et al., 2000; Jastrzębski et al., 2015). A primary observation of this work is that the metasedimentary rocks that represent the upper and middle lithotectonic units of the belt contain some important differences in their zircon age spectra (Fig. 7). The zircon age spectra obtained from sample SM48/1 (the upper unit, “Hranična” mica schists) are dominated by Neoproterozoic and Paleoproterozoic age clusters, which are comparable to those obtained from the Brusek quartzites from the lower unit of the SMB (Jastrzębski et al., 2015; Fig. 7). Nevertheless, the Brusek quartzites contain very rounded zircon grains, which contrast with the results of the morphological zircon study of the upper unit sample, SM48/1, which revealed various shapes, including euhedral zircons (Fig. 3A, C). This suggests less prolonged sedimentary transport of the detrital material contained in the sample from the upper unit. The other main difference is that the sample from the upper unit contains Late Cambrian zircon ages that are absent from the Brusek quartzites. The zircon grains of this age are generally more euhedral than the other, Neoproterozoic and older grains (Fig. 4





**Fig. 8. Comparison of detrital age spectra of the units in the Central Sudetes**

**A** – detrital zircon age spectra of the metasedimentary rocks of the Orlica–Śnieżnik Dome compiled from [Jastrzębski et al. \(2010\)](#), [Mazur et al. \(2012, 2015\)](#) and [Szczepański et al. \(2020\)](#); **B** – detrital zircon age spectra of the Staré Město Belt ([Jastrzębski et al., 2015](#), this study); **C** – detrital zircon age spectra of the Velké Vrbno, Keprník and Desná domes ([Jastrzębski et al., 2021](#)); in the histograms, analyses with <10% discordance are shown; Pz – Paleozoic, Mz – Mesozoic

and [Appendix, Table S2](#)), so they can be interpreted either as detrital grains that underwent very short sedimentary transport or grains that were directly supplied by concurrent volcanic activity. Our field observations and geological mapping results indicate that the felsic metavolcanic rocks formed recurrent and variously thick (from 1 cm to ~200 m thick) intercalations within the metapelites of the SMB upper unit ([Fig. 2A](#); e.g., [Don et al., 2003](#)). Such an arrangement consisting of alternating thin metavolcanic and metapelitic rocks may be difficult to interpret in terms of the Variscan tectonism and juxtaposition of volcanic and pelitic rocks. A primary mutual relationship and the same protolith age of the felsic metavolcanic rocks and metapelites as a part of the same volcano-sedimentary sequence are more probable. The protolith ages of the accompanying felsic metavolcanic rocks are Early Cambrian ([Kroner et al., 2000](#)) or Late Cambrian ([Jastrzębski et al., 2015](#)). In this interpretation, the Late Cambrian zircons are best interpreted as a volcanic admixture to the mainly pelitic volcano-sedimentary succession of the SMB upper unit.

On the other hand, the migmatitic paragneiss, SM9/2, in the middle unit contains a large number of Ordovician to Early Carboniferous zircon ages, which fall along the concordia line ([Fig. 6E](#)) and are absent from the age spectra of sample SM48/1. A scatter of zircon ages along the concordia line was obtained in this region in high-grade eclogites and granulites of the Orlica–Śnieżnik Dome and was interpreted as age resetting due to the Variscan overprint ([Bröcker et al., 2010](#); [Walczak et al., 2017](#)). In sample SM9/2, these zircon ages were obtained from type II zircons. A weak correlation between the Th/U ratios and apparent ages among the type II zircons indicates that the Th/U ratios are lower in younger grains ([Fig. 7](#)). Solid-state recrystallization under high-grade metamorphic conditions can produce both the observed correlations of the apparent ages and Th/U ratios and result in U-Pb dates that are younger than the crystallization ages (see [Hoskin and Black, 2000](#)). It is thus suggested that the type II zircon domains in sample SM9/2 are the result of metamorphic transformation of Cambrian and older zircon grains rather than new zircon growth. The isotopic composition and texture of the pre-existing zircons were presumably disturbed by diffusion reaction processes under high-grade conditions. This interpretation is in line with earlier studies of the behaviour of zircon in partial melting conditions that were conducted in the southern part of the Bohemian Massif ([Siebel et al., 2012](#)) and in the central part of the massif ([Žák et al., 2017](#)). It is still possible that the zircon rims, especially the very thin brighter cathodoluminescence zones at their margins that are commonly observed in this sample, and the well-developed prisms visible in transmitted light, can reflect new zircon growth ([Fig. 5](#)). The zircon typological analysis of this sample indicates large numbers of euhedral grains that show a predominance of well-developed {211} pyramids and {110} prisms with the majority of morphotypes being type S4, which can refer to the development of very thin zircon rims. The greatest number of zircon morphotypes that belong to types S4, S3 or S2 ([Figs. 3B and 5](#)) may be an indicator of migmatization according to [Pupin \(1980\)](#). A significant number of discordant ages in sample SM9/2 compared to that observed for sample SM48/1 ([Appendix, Table S2](#)) suggests a partial Pb-loss in SM9/2 zircons and advocates for disturbance of zircon structure in the high-grade middle unit.

The accompanying Late Cambrian amphibolites of the middle unit underwent temperature conditions that exceeded 700°C ([Bartz, 2004](#); [Lexa et al., 2005](#)). Our data obtained from the low-luminescence domains of sample SM9/2 (type II zir-

cons) might suggest that the metamorphic transformations of the zircon structure climaxed at ~387 Ma. This age maximum is older than the garnet and monazite ages of the SMB, the latter showing that the metamorphism in the belt took place from ~368 to 335 Ma (Jastrzębski et al., 2013). Nevertheless, our new data might support the Early Variscan (Devonian) metamorphism along the western margin of the Brunovistulia that was recently documented by Sorger et al. (2020) in Lower Austria. In conclusion, the youngest zircon ages of this sample do not refer to the depositional age or maximum depositional age of the metasedimentary rocks of the middle unit but to Early Variscan metamorphic transformations. The youngest ages that were obtained from the type I zircon domains are Cambrian in age, which do not contradict the interpretation that the paragneisses of the middle unit are part of a volcano-sedimentary sequence in which Late Cambrian metaigneous rocks dominated.

The new age data obtained from the zircons that were not affected by metamorphic transformations also contribute to the questions regarding the provenances and terrane affiliations of the separate lithotectonic units of the SMB. The detrital zircon age spectra from the upper unit of the SMB refer to those of the Orlica-Śnieżnik Dome (see Jastrzębski et al., 2010; Mazur et al., 2012, 2015; and Szczepański et al., 2020; Fig. 8), and the other spectra are known to be from the Saxothuringian terrane (e.g., Linnemann et al., 2004; Oberc-Dziedzic et al., 2018 for review). Fewer pre-Variscan age data were obtained from the middle unit paragneisses; nevertheless, when excluding the age data from the type II zircons, the predominance of Neoproterozoic and Paleoproterozoic zircon ages and the presence of Cambrian zircon ages are also evident. The source area for the sedimentary basin of the SMB middle unit is thus unlikely to be the adjacent Velké Vrbno Dome (the Brunovistulian microplate), the zircon age spectra of which lack Cambrian ages and contain a significant population of 1.7–1.2 Ga zircon ages (Jastrzębski et al., 2021; Fig. 8). The zircon age pattern obtained is thus more comparable to that obtained for the metasedimentary rocks of the Orlica-Śnieżnik Dome (Fig. 8), and consequently, the source areas of the sedimentary basins of both the upper, middle and lower units of the belt can likely be linked to the West African Craton, which was once located in northern Gondwana, from which the Saxothuringian terrane was derived (e.g., Linnemann et al., 2004; Stephan et al., 2018). The African provenance of the eastern margin of the Saxothuringian terrane (Jastrzębski et al., 2015; this study) and the presumed Amazonian provenance of

the Sudetic portions of the Brunovistulian terrane (Jastrzębski et al., 2021) may support the notion of an ocean separating the two terranes before their Variscan amalgamation (e.g., Finger and Steyrer, 1995). Our data indicate that all the three subunits of the SMB are best correlated with the Saxothuringian terrane, that the Variscan metamorphic evolution of the SMB started in the Devonian, and that the main Variscan suture in this region is located along the eastern margin of the SMB.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The new detrital zircon age spectra of the metasedimentary rocks of the upper and middle units of the Staré Město Belt, when compared to previously published zircon age data from the metavolcanic rocks of the belt, suggest that metasedimentary and bimodal metavolcanic rocks originally formed Late Cambrian volcano-sedimentary successions. In the upper unit of the SMB, pelitic sedimentation dominated over felsic volcanic effusion, while in the middle unit, the succession was dominated by bimodal volcanic rocks.

2. The source areas of the sedimentary basins studied were dominated by Neoproterozoic and Paleoproterozoic crystalline rocks that were presumably located near the West African Craton of Gondwana. The present and previously published data consequently suggest that the entire SMB is a part of the Saxothuringian terrane and its eastern termination formed in the Sudetes.

3. A partial melting event under high-grade metamorphic conditions during Variscan consolidation, characteristic of the middle unit of the SMB, was responsible for a solid-state transformation of Cambrian and older zircon grains in the Devonian. It produced partial resetting of the U-Pb dates, changes in internal zircon textures and reductions in Th/U ratios.

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## APPENDIX

## LA-ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb analytical data and results of zircon dating of samples SM48/1 and SM8/2

**Table S1**  
**LA-ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb analytical data**  
 (reporting template according to [Horstwood et al., 2016](#))

Laboratory and sample preparation	
Laboratory name	Institute of Geology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic
Sample type/mineral	zircon
Sample preparation	Conventional mineral separation, 1 inch resin mount
Imaging	CL, JEOL JXA-8530F Field Emission EPMA, Institute of Petrology and Structural Geology, Charles University in Prague
Laser ablation system	
Make, model and type	Teledyne Cetac Analyte Excite laser
Ablation cell and volume	built-in 2-volume cell HelEx II, 100 x 100 mm
Laser wavelength (nm)	193 nm
Pulse width (ns)	<4 ns
Fluence (J cm <sup>-2</sup> )	3.5 J cm <sup>-2</sup>
Repetition rate (Hz)	5 Hz
Ablation duration (s)	35 s
Spot diameter (mm)	25 mm
Sampling mode/pattern	Static spot ablation
Carrier gas	100% He + little addition N <sub>2</sub> in the cell, Ar make-up gas combined using a Y-piece along the sample transport line to the torch. All gases and aerosole are mixed in the in-house glass signal homogenizer (design of Tunheng and Hirata, 2004) right before entering torch
Cell carrier gas flow (l min <sup>-1</sup> )	0.91 l min <sup>-1</sup>
N <sub>2</sub> flow (ml min <sup>-1</sup> )	4.9 ml min <sup>-1</sup>
Ar make-up gas flow (l min <sup>-1</sup> )	0.68 l min <sup>-1</sup>
ICP-MS instrument	
Make, model and type	Thermo Scientific double-focusing magnetic sector field Element 2 HR-ICP-MS
Sample introduction	Dry ablation aerosol
RF power (W)	1200 W
Detection system	discrete dynode, dual mode secondary electron multiplier (SEM); analysis possible in 3 modes (cps-analog-both)
Masses measured (mode)	204 (cps), 206 (both), 207 (cps), 208 (cps), 232 (both), 235 (cps), 238 (both)
Integration time per peak/dwell times (ms)	204 (10 ms), 206 (15 ms), 207 (30 ms), 208 (10 ms), 232 (10 ms), 235 (20 ms), 238 (10 ms)
Total integration time per output data point (s)	~0.12 s (time resolution of the data)
Data processing	
Initial calculation	The accuracy of 238 mass measured in "both" mode is dependent on the correctly determined ACF (Analog Correction Factor) In order to correct for this variability, the data are pre-processed using a Python routine for decoding the Thermo Element ICPMS dat files ( <a href="#">Hartman et al., 2017</a> ) and an in-house Excel macro. As a result, the intensities of 238 are left unchanged if measured in a counting mode and recalculated from <sup>235</sup> U intensities (using the natural <sup>138</sup> U/ <sup>135</sup> U of 137.818) in all cases the <sup>238</sup> U was acquired in analog mode, thus eliminating the non-linearity between pulse counting and analog detecting modes.
Gas blank	15 s on-peak zero subtracted
Calibration strategy	Plešovice used as primary reference material, 91500 and GJ1 used as secondaries/validation
Reference material information, reference age	Plešovice ( <a href="#">Sláma et al., 2008</a> ), 337 Ma (Concordia age)  91500 ( <a href="#">Wiedenbeck et al., 1995</a> ), 1065 Ma (Concordia age)  GJ1 ( <a href="#">Jackson et al., 2004</a> ), 609 Ma (206Pb/207Pb age)
Data processing package used/correction for LIEF	lolite v3.5 software ( <a href="#">Paton et al., 2010</a> ) with the VizualAge utility ( <a href="#">Petrus and Kamber, 2012</a> ) used for data normalisation, uncertainty propagation and export  blank intensities and instrumental bias interpolated using an automatic spline function; down-hole inter-element fractionation (LIEF) corrected using an exponential function  LIEF correction assumes reference material and samples behave identically  Isoplot v4_16 ( <a href="#">Ludwig, 2008</a> ) used for pooled age uncertainty propagation, age calculation and plotting
Common-Pb correction, composition and uncertainty	No common-Pb correction applied to the data
Uncertainty level and propagation	Ages are quoted at 2s absolute, propagation is by quadratic addition  Reproducibility and age uncertainty of reference material are propagated where appropriate following the recommendation of <a href="#">Horstwood et al. (2016)</a>
Quality control/validation	91500 – Concordia age = 1057 ± 9 Ma (2s, MSWD = 0.9, n = 58)  GJ-1 – Concordia age = 604 ± 5 (2s, MSWD = 1.2, n = 58)  Systematic uncertainty for propagation is 2% (2s)
Other information	20 s wait time between ablations
References	Hartman, J., Franks, R., Gehrels, G., Hourigan, J., Wenig, P., 2017. Decoding data files from a Thermo Element™ ICP Mass Spectrometer. Manual available online at <a href="https://github.com/jhh67/extractdat.git">https://github.com/jhh67/extractdat.git</a> Horstwood, M.S.A., Košler, J., Gehrels, G., Jackson, S.E., McLean, N.M., Paton, C., Pearson, N.J., Sircombe, K., Sylvester, P., Vermeesch, P., Bowring, J.F., Condon, D.J. and Schoene, B., 2016. Community-Derived Standards for LA-ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb Geochronology – Uncertainty Propagation, Age Interpretation and Data Reporting. <i>Geostand. Geanal. Res.</i> , <b>40</b> : 311–332.

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26	#171	288	132	574	0.230	130000	3.481	0.130	0.187	0.006	0.1344	0.0033	0.83717	1510	28	1101	34	2143	42	48.6
27	#89	31	12	571	0.022	-620000	3.560	0.210	0.182	0.009	0.1365	0.0038	0.9572	1479	50	1071	48	2164	50	50.5
28	#88	303	186	367	0.507	-270000	3.392	0.110	0.173	0.005	0.1426	0.0037	0.6986	1498	26	1026	30	2253	43	54.5
29	#109	339	107	325	0.329	20000	8.160	0.320	0.357	0.012	0.1650	0.0047	0.74104	2242	35	1963	57	2498	48	21.4
30	#79	746	210	734	0.286	-2900000	9.230	0.290	0.396	0.012	0.1691	0.0043	0.68793	2357	28	2154	59	2541	44	15.2
31	#7	398	150	597	0.251	-2000000	6.760	0.200	0.286	0.009	0.1704	0.0041	0.72127	2076	26	1617	43	2556	39	36.7
32	#152	536	131	529	0.247	-1360000	8.030	0.280	0.331	0.011	0.1745	0.0042	0.82496	2224	30	1837	52	2598	40	29.3
33	#136	133	41	273	0.151	-140000	9.530	0.320	0.392	0.014	0.1763	0.0046	0.76378	2384	31	2126	62	2610	43	18.5
34	#69	1510	386	538	0.717	20000	9.790	0.280	0.395	0.011	0.1813	0.0042	0.6946	2408	26	2141	52	2653	38	19.3