Ninety million years of orogenesis, 250 million years of quiescence and further orogenesis with no change in PT: Significance for the role of deformation in porphyroblast growth

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In situ dating of monazite grains preserved as inclusions within foliations defining FIAs (foliation inflection/intersection axes preserved within porphyroblasts) contained within garnet, staurolite, andalusite and cordierite porphyroblasts provides a chronology of ages that matches the FIA succession for the Big Thompson region of the northern Colorado Rocky Mountains. FIA sets 1, 2 and 3 trending NE–SW, E–W and SE–NW were formed at 1760.5 ± 9.7 , 1719.7 ± 6.4 and 1674 ± 11 Ma, respectively. For three samples where garnet first grew during just one of each of these FIAs, the intersection of Ca, Mg, and Fe isopleths in their cores indicate that these rocks never got above 4 kbars throughout the Colorado Orogeny. Furthermore, they remained around approximately the same depth for ∼250 million years to the onset of the younger Berthoud Orogeny at 1415 ± 16 Ma when the pressure decreased slightly as porphyroblasts formed with inclusion trails preserving FIA set 4 trending NNE–SSW. No porphyroblast growth occurred during the intervening ∼250 million years of quiescence, even though the PT did not change over this period. This confirms microstructural evidence gathered over the past 25 years that crenulation deformation at the scale of a porphyroblast is required for reactions to re-initiate and enable further growth.

1. Introduction

In multiply deformed and metamorphosed rocks, foliations in the matrix, especially schistosity parallel to compositional layering, have generally undergone long and complex histories (e.g., Ham and Bel[l](#page-33-0) [2004](#page-33-0)). Different relics of this history can be left in strain shadows or portions where later deformation partitioning was less pervasive and if not decoded carefully will lead to erroneous or ambiguous results (e.g., Spiess and Bel[l](#page-34-0) [1996](#page-34-0)). Each new deformation tends to erase developing or earlier-formed structures through decrenulation

of developing crenulation cleavage and rotation of relics of earlier-formed foliations into parallelism with the compositional layering (e.g., Bell et al[.](#page-33-1) [2003](#page-33-1)). Deformation partitioning strongly affects such kinds of processes from regional (Cihan and Parson[s](#page-33-2) [2005](#page-33-2)) to porphyroblastic scales (Bell and Bruc[e](#page-33-3) [2007](#page-33-3)) and makes it difficult to correlate them from one region to another. It is primarily because a mixture of ages will always be present within matrix of such rocks and gets even worst if deformation partitioning was intense. The inclusion trails preserved within porphyroblasts are remnants of earlier matrix events. These are

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generally isolated from the matrix phases and act as robust candidates for studying deformation and metamorphic processes. Such quantitative research has greatly increased our understanding of complex inclusion trail relationships, which otherwise could not be interpreted or were misleading (e.g., Ham and Bel[l](#page-33-0) [2004\)](#page-33-0).

Accurate measurement of the foliation inflection/ intersection axes preserved within different porphyroblastic phases (FIAs) has made it possible to decode lengthy and complex histories of deformation and metamorphism in orogens around the world (e[.](#page-33-4)g., Bell *et al.* [2004](#page-33-4)). More than 10 years of research and data have already been published using this technique from tectonically complex regions around the world (e.g., Bell et al[.](#page-33-5) [1998,](#page-33-5) [2003,](#page-33-1) [2005](#page-33-6); Bell and Che[n](#page-33-7) [2002](#page-33-7); Ciha[n](#page-33-8) [2004](#page-33-8); Kim and Bel[l](#page-33-9) [2005](#page-33-9); Saya[b](#page-34-1) [2005](#page-34-1), [2006;](#page-34-2) Bell and Bruc[e](#page-33-3) [2007;](#page-33-3) Sanisla[v](#page-33-10) [2010;](#page-33-10) Sanislav and Sha[h](#page-34-3) [2010;](#page-34-3) Al[i](#page-32-0) [2010;](#page-32-0) Sanislav and Bel[l](#page-34-4) [2011](#page-34-4)).

The integration of detailed microstructural studies and FIA data with garnet isopleth thermobarometry/MnNCKFMASH pseudosection construction can provide complete pressure–temperature– time deformational trajectories of an area (e.g., Kim and Bel[l](#page-33-9) [2005;](#page-33-9) Cihan et al[.](#page-33-11) [2006](#page-33-11); Saya[b](#page-34-2) [2006;](#page-34-2) Al[i](#page-32-0) [2010](#page-32-0)). Such an approach significantly improves our understanding of large-scale orogenic processes. But the absolute timing of these events remains a fundamental tool for decoding and interpreting the tectonic evolution of the region. Geometrically and texturally controlled dating methods are critical for constraining the ages of deformed and metamorphosed sediments and their textures and foliations (e.g., Williams and Jercinovic [2002\)](#page-34-5). In pelites and psammites, monazite is commonly present at amphibolite facies (Dahl et al[.](#page-33-12) [2005\)](#page-33-12) and it has been dated in migmatites and granulites (e.g., Kelly et al[.](#page-33-13) [2006](#page-33-13)). It is considered as a typical mineral of choice for in situ geochronology in such rocks (Dahl et al[.](#page-33-12) [2005;](#page-33-12) Williams *et al[.](#page-34-6)* [2007\)](#page-34-6).

Absolute dating of monazite grains applying high precission electron microprobe U-Th-Pb techniques (EPMA) was used to correlate different metamorphic and deformational events (e.g., Montel et al. [1996](#page-33-14); Dahl et al. [2005\)](#page-33-12) because the bulk of the monazite grains analysed were smaller in size. Dating of monazite inclusions wit[h](#page-33-15)in different FIA sets (Bell and Welch [2002;](#page-33-15) Al[i](#page-32-0) [2010](#page-32-0); Sanisla[v](#page-33-10) [2010;](#page-33-10) Sanislav and Sha[h](#page-34-3) [2010](#page-34-3)) provides a robust tool for understanding and unravelling lengthy and complex orogenic histories. Integration of FIAs with this approach provides a strong basis for studying the complex pressure–temperature–time-deformation (PT–t-D) paths that rocks appear to have followed. This paper reports the results obtained from adapting

Figure 1. Regional map of the Colorado Frontal Range showing the Precambrian rocks and the location of the study area (box shows area of figure [2\)](#page-2-0). BCSZ: Buckhorn Creek shear zone, CB: Cheyenne belt, ISRSZ: Idaho Springs-Ralston shear zone, MMSZ: Moose Mountain shear zone, SGSZ: Skin Gulch shear zone (modified after Cavosie and Selverstone [2003](#page-33-16)).

this approach to the rocks collected in and around the Big Thompson region of Colorado (figures [1](#page-1-0) and [2\)](#page-2-0).

2. Regional geology and tectonics

The rocks exposed in the Big Thomson Canyon region, Colorado, USA, are mainly metasediments and granitoids (figure [2\)](#page-2-0). Condie and Marte[l](#page-33-17) [\(1983\)](#page-33-17) suggested that the metasediments represent mature sediments deposited in a forearc setting. Reed et al[.](#page-33-18) [\(1987](#page-33-18)) argued that they were possibly deposited in a back-arc setting between two ∼1.8 and 1.7 Ma magmatic arc systems. Recent detrital zircon ages suggest a maximum age of 1758+26 Ma for deposition of the Big Thompson sequence (Selverstone et al[.](#page-34-7) [2000](#page-34-7)). These sediments were repeatedly deformed, metamorphosed and intruded by various plutons (e.g., Braddock and Col[e](#page-33-19) [1979;](#page-33-19) Selverstone et al[.](#page-34-8) [1997;](#page-34-8) Sims et al[.](#page-34-9) [2003](#page-34-9)) during the Colorado (∼1700 Ma) and Berthoud (∼1400 Ma) orogenies (Twet[o](#page-34-10) [1987](#page-34-10); Nyman et al[.](#page-33-20) [1994;](#page-33-20) Karlstrom et al[.](#page-33-21) [1997\)](#page-33-21). The rocks show an increase in metamorphic grade towards the west and north and three stages of folding and cleavage development (Cavosie and Selverston[e](#page-33-16) [2003](#page-33-16)).

 $\binom{110}{1}$

LEGEND

Early to Middle

Proterozoic Early

Proterozoic

Permo-Triassic

Pegmatite

Knotted Mica

Quartzofeldspathic Mica Schist

Schist

105°22' 30"
40°25'30"

 $C101$

 $C₂3A$

 $C92A$

 $C_{.}96$

 $C96A,B$

 C_{84}

 $\mathcal{L}81$

 $\frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}$

 $C55A, B$

Proterozoic Early

 $\frac{\sqrt{64}}{2}$

 $\widehat{C65A}$

 $C85$

 $\frac{\text{C}83}{\text{C}}$

 C_{82}

 C_{60B}

 C 56 A

 1.3 Km

Axial Trace of

Anticline

 $\frac{\cos 2}{\cos 2}$

 $C₆₉$

 $C54C$

 C_{\bullet}^{70}

 $\frac{105^{\circ}14'30'}{40^{\circ}25'30'}$

Figure 2. Detailed geological map of the study area and the sample locations. White circles show the location of samples used for monazite dating (geological map modified after Cavosie and Selverstone [2003\)](#page-33-16).

Porphyroblastic

Trondhjemite of Thompson Canyon

Overturned Syncline

Biotite Schist

Axial Trace of

Sample locations

Syncline

The first deformation/metamorphism occurred before 1750 Ma and resulted in large-scale isoclinal folds (F1) and a regional axial cleavage S1. The second and third stages of folding (F2 and F3) occurred around 1750 Ma ago, when these rocks were intruded by the Boulder Creek granodiorite and related rocks. Only one period of metamorphism has been associated with these events (M1) during which garnet and staurolite grew. The second metamorphic event (M2), which was stronger than the first, resulted in the formation of up to sillimanite grade mineral assemblages (Sims et al[.](#page-34-9) [2003\)](#page-34-9), though metamorphic conditions were very heterogeneous throughout these episodes. A number of areas recorded an entire transition in metamorphic grade from the chlorite zone to the onset of migmatization during the Colorado orogeny (Braddock and Col[e](#page-33-19) [1979;](#page-33-19) Selverstone et al[.](#page-34-8) [1997\)](#page-34-8).

3. Methods

3.1 FIA measurements

Haywar[d](#page-33-22) [\(1990](#page-33-22)) and Bell et al[.](#page-33-23) [\(1995,](#page-33-23) [1998](#page-33-5)) described a technique for analysing the geometries of inclusion trails within porphyroblasts. It involves measurement of the FIA, which is achieved by cutting a minimum of eight vertically oriented thin sections around the compass from each rock sample to locate the switch in inclusion trail asymmetry (clockwise or anticlockwise) within the porphyroblasts (figure [3a](#page-3-0) and b). Where the FIA trends vary from the core to the rim of the porphyroblasts, a relative timing and thus an FIA succession can be established (Bell et al[.](#page-33-5) [1998](#page-33-5)). The accumulated error associated with determining the trend of the FIA in each rock is random, and is estimated to be ± 8 in both situations when one uses a COCLAR compass (see Bell et al[.](#page-33-5) [1998](#page-33-5)).

4. Results

4.1 FIA data

A total of 67 oriented samples were examined for the present research. 800 oriented thin sections were prepared and a total of 138 FIA and pseudo-FIA trends were determined (table [1,](#page-4-0) figure [2\)](#page-2-0). These measurements were achieved by cutting a minimum of eight vertically oriented thin sections around the compass from each rock sample (figure [3\)](#page-3-0) and then locating the switch in inclusion trail asymmetry (clockwise or anticlockwise) within the porphyroblasts (e[.](#page-33-5)g., Bell *et al.* [1998](#page-33-5)).

Figure 3. (**a**) Sketch illustrating the method developed by Bell et al[.](#page-33-23) [\(1995](#page-33-23), [1998](#page-33-5)) by which the trend of an FIA is measured. This technique uses the change in asymmetries of inclusion trails in a porphyroblast, when viewed in a consistent direction for successive striking vertical thin sections, to locate the FIA. The inclusion trail asymmetry changes between $0°$ and $40°$. Thin section orientation is marked as single barbed arrow. The eyeball and grey arrow indicates the direction in which the sections are viewed. (**b**) The 3-D sketch illustrates a succession of foliations, as they would be preserved within a vertical slice through a porphyroblast, which define a single FIA trend.

Garnet, staurolite, andalusite and cordierite porphyroblasts preserve earlier foliations as inclusion trails. These foliations are most commonly straight with curvature at their extremities (e.g., figure [4a](#page-6-0)). Porphyroblast inclusion trails are commonly truncated (e.g., figure [4a](#page-6-0)) by the matrix foliations but some are not (e.g., figure [4b](#page-6-0)). A relative timing and thus an FIA succession can be established from samples preserving an FIA trend that varies from core to the rim of the porphyroblast (e.g., Bell et al[.](#page-33-5) [1998\)](#page-33-5). All FIA measurements are plotted on rose diagram and are shown in figure $5(a)$ $5(a)$. A total of 64 and 53 FIAs were measured in garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts respectively (figure [5b](#page-7-0) and c).

Table 1. Samples collected in and around Big Thompson Canyon region of northern Front Range, Colorado (shown in figure [2\)](#page-2-0), the geological formations from which they were taken, their latitude and longitude values and the FIA trends measured in them.

				Garnet				Staurolite		Cordierite		Andalusite
Sample	Easting	Northing	FM	single ${\rm FIA}$	pFIA	Core	Rim	single ${\rm FIA}$	pFIA	single ${\rm FIA}$	pFIA	single ${\rm FIA}$
${\rm C}16$	$\mathbf N$			$15\,$								
C18A	${\rm N}$			$15\,$								
C18B	${\rm N}$			15	130							
C19A	${\rm N}$			15	135							
C35	477206	4484713	XKS	$55\,$				$25\,$				
$\operatorname{C37}$	477144	4484332	XBS	140				$30\,$				
C38	477712	4484329	XKS					$15\,$				
C39	477339	4483694	XKS	90				$20\,$				
C40	475828	4483433	XKS	$85\,$	$50\,$			$135\,$				
C41	476404	4483291	XKS					$30\,$				
C42	476752	4483561	XKS	$55\,$				$25\,$				
C43	475001	4483553	XKS	$50\,$				80				
$\rm C44$	474752	4484140	XKS	$80\,$				$15\,$	130			
C45	475338	4484548	XKS	$85\,$				140				
C47A	476418	4485315	XKS	140				$25\,$				
C48	475216	4485600	XKS					$135\,$				
$\rm C49$	474307	4486810	XKS					$90\,$		120		
$\rm C50$	473290	4486411	XKS					$135\,$		$25\,$		$25\,$
C51A	473670	4485437	XKS	$130\,$								
$\rm C51B$	473670	4485437	XKS	$55\,$						$125\,$		
$\rm C52$	474484	4485910	XQS			$50\,$	$85\,$			$25\,$		
C54C	476858	4474303	XQS	$25\,$				$25\,$				
$\rm C55A$	474470	4475194	XQS	$55\,$								
$\rm C55B$	474470	4475194	XQS	$40\,$				$15\,$				
${\rm C56A}$	475827	4474568	XQS	$45\,$				$125\,$				
C60B	475036	4475308	XQS					$85\,$				
${\rm C}64$	473360	4477763	XKS	85	40			$125\,$				
${\rm C65A}$	472961	4477978	XQS	$55\,$				$130\,$	$80\,$			
C66	473717	4479430	XQS	$50\,$				120	$40\,$			
$\rm C67$	473793	4480256	XQS			$85\,$	130					
${\rm C68A}$	$\!76612$	4477904	XKS					120				
C68B	476612	4477904	XKS	$90\,$	50							
$\rm C69$	477142	4476720	XQS			130	$25\,$					
C70	477433	4475714	XQS	85								
C75	470687	4480815	XBS					$85\,$	60			
C76	469767	4480350	XQS			85	135			25		125
$\operatorname{C77}$	469104	4480353	XQS								120	
$\rm C78A$	470822	4479966	XQS	45				25		115		
C78B	470822	4479966	XQS	$85\,$	50			$130\,$		130		
$\rm C80$	474017	4478095	XKS					85				
$\rm C81$	474505	4478748	XQS	145				15				
$\rm C82$	$\!75584$	4476971	XQS	$125\,$				$30\,$				
$\rm C83$	$\!75634$	4477975	XKS	$80\,$				135				
$\rm C84$	474792	4477824	XKS	$85\,$				$130\,$				
$\rm C85$	475463	4479506	XQS	$90\,$				$30\,$				
${\rm C}86$	476096	4479964	XQS	125	$50\,$							
$\rm C88$	476418	4481613	XQS	$55\,$				$25\,$				
C92A	472011	4477468	XKS	130								
$\rm C93A$	472642	4479207	XQS	$55\,$				$30\,$				
C96A	$\!75043$	4479775	XQS	85				$130\,$				
${\rm C96B}$	$\!75043$	4479775	XQS			55	135					

Table 1. (Continued)

Sample	Easting	Northing	FM	Garnet single FIA	pFIA	Core	Rim	Staurolite single FIA	pFIA	Cordierite single FIA	pFIA	Andalusite single FIA
C98A	473791	4482058	XBS					55		25		
C98A	473791	4482058	XBS	55				90		30		
C ₁₀₁	470677	4478975	XKS	15	85					30		
C107B	471172	4481971	XKS	50				30		30		
C ₁₀₈	470558	4478720	XKS	50				85		20		
C ₁₁₀	471694	4482963	XKS	25					120			20
C111	472000	4483403	XKS					25	55			
C117B	474053	4483669	XKS	55				80		35		
C ₁₂₁	475042	4482626	XQS	85								
C ₁₂₂	475531	4482644	XBS					130				
C126	475980	4483996	XKS	55				120				
C ₁₃₀	472840	4484427	XKS					50				25
C ₁₃₃	472811	4485927	XKS					85	55			
C134A	472679	4485070	XKS	60				90				
C135B	472295	4484694	XKS	55				80				130
C138B	469858	4485392	XKS					65				135

 $XQS =$ Quartzofeldspathic mica schist, $XKS =$ Knotted mica schist, $XBS =$ Porphyroblastic biotite schist, $N =$ No information available about the geographic coordinates.

The combined FIA trend data for garnet and staurolite is shown in figure $5(d)$ $5(d)$. The other porphyroblastic phases in which FIAs were measured were andalusite and cordierite, with seven measurements in the former and 14 in the latter. Their trends are given in table [1](#page-4-0) and are shown on a rose diagram in figure [5\(](#page-7-0)e and f). A few samples maintain differentiated crenulation cleavages that have been overgrown by the porphyroblasts where the asymmetry of the crenulated cleavage can be determined. The crenulated cleavages consist of quartz and ilmenite grains, while the differentiated crenulation cleavages predominantly contain ilmenite grains. The intersection between the crenulated and crenulation cleavages can be determined, when viewed in three dimensions, and is called a pseudo-FIA (pseudo-FIA). The actual FIA is formed during porphyroblast growth and these samples are defined by the curvature of the differentiated crenulation cleavage. All measured trends were plotted on a rose diagram as shown in figure [5.](#page-7-0)

4.2 Dating of FIA sets

To determine the age of the four FIA sets measured in the area, 30 samples were selected for monazite dating. Polished thin sections were made for use in the JEOL JXA-8300 Superprobe. Only 11 samples out of the 30 selected contained monazite grains large enough for precise age calculations. Detailed pre-dating maps were produced from each polished thin section to accurately locate monazite grain and their textural setting. The analytical procedure is outlined in table [2.](#page-8-0) The samples were analysed with a 1–2 micron meter diameter beam at 15 kv and 200 nA. The collimators were opened to a maximum (3 mm) and the PHA settings were optimized as well. In all these measurements, π rz matrix corrections were performed using standard Pb, U, Th, and Y concentrations in combination with the preset values for other elements (P 33.3, La 14.5, Ce 26, Pr 2.6, Nd 10.3, Sm 1.5, Gd 1.48, Dy 0.82, Si 0.25, Ca 0.55 wt.% oxides). Interference corrections of Th and Y on Pb $M\alpha$ and Th on U Mβ were executed as in Pyle *et al[.](#page-33-24)* (2002) . An internal standard monazite from Manangotry in Madagascar of 545 ± 2 Ma (Paquette *et al[.](#page-33-25)* [1984](#page-33-25)) was analysed three times before and after each analytical session. Chemical ages were calculated as described in Montel et al[.](#page-33-14) [\(1996\)](#page-33-14). Geologically significant age information can be derived by assuming low amounts of common Pb (e.g., Parrish [1990](#page-33-26); Gaidies et al. [2008\)](#page-33-27) and slow diffusion rates for Th, U and Pb in monazite (Cherniak et al[.](#page-33-28) [2004\)](#page-33-28). The samples were chosen based on FIA set and the grains were isolated and clustered according to their age, textural setting and whether any chemical zonation was present (Cihan et al[.](#page-33-11) [2006\)](#page-33-11). This would potentially reduce any error and make the age information reliable (Montel et al[.](#page-33-14) [1996;](#page-33-14) Pyle et al[.](#page-33-29) [2005](#page-33-29); Gaidies et al[.](#page-33-27) [2008](#page-33-27)). Dates and errors were determined by mean age with standard errors at 95% confidence level for a cluster of spots analysis within a single age domain or grain. Ages were

Figure 4. Representative photomicrographs and line diagrams of vertical thin sections of different samples illustrating variation in inclusion trail geometry, truncation and continuity with the matrix foliation. (**a**, **b**) Garnet porphyroblast preserves an oblique foliation that curves clockwise to sub-vertical (Si). (**c**, **d**) Garnet porphyroblast preserves a sub-horizontal foliation (Si) truncated and curved by a sub-vertical with an anti-clockwise asymmetry. (**e**, **f**) Staurolite porphyroblast preserves a sub-horizontal foliation (Si) that is truncated with that in the matrix and has an anti-clockwise curvature. (**g**, **h**) Staurolite porphyroblast with inclusion trails completely truncated by those within the matrix. A slightly anti-clockwise curvature was observed in the rim or from the porphyroblast into the matrix in these porphyroblasts. Sample numbers, strikes and way up of the vertical thin sections are shown in the upper left corner (thick single barbed arrow). PPL: plane polarized light; XPL: cross polarized light, Se: external foliation, Si: Internal foliation, St: staurolite, Bt: biotite, Grt: garnet (after Shah [2009\)](#page-34-11).

Figure 5. (**a**) Equal area rose plot of all FIA trends measured from garnet, staurolite, andalusite and cordierite. Four peaks occur at 25◦, 55◦, 85◦ and 135◦. (**b**) Garnet FIAs (**c**) staurolite FIAs, (**d**) garnet plus staurolite FIAs, (**e**) andalusite FIAs, and (**f**) cordierite FIAs.

then calculated for all the grain populations analyzed and plotted using software Isoplot (Ludwig [1998\)](#page-33-30). Three samples contained monazite grains big enough to extract valuable age information in garnet porphyroblasts. Six contained suitable monazite grains in staurolite porphyroblasts. Two contained suitable monazite grains in andalusite plus cordierite.

4.3 Dating of foliations within porphyroblasts

Unless otherwise stated, monazite inclusions lie with the foliation defining the FIA set for that

mineral phase. All rocks contain biotite, muscovite, plagioclase and quartz with accessory phases ilmenite and apatite. Quartz and apatite and rarely muscovite, biotite, chlorite inclusions are always present within both garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts. Monazite is always present within staurolite but not necessarily in garnet phases.

4.3.1 Sample C117

Garnet (FIA set 1) and staurolite (FIA set 2) inclusion trails are always truncated by the matrix

Element	X-ray	Crystal- spectrometer	Peak time (s)	Background time(s)	Standard
P	Ka	TAP	20	10	Ce phosphate
Рb	Ma	PETJ ^b	180	90	PbSiO3a ^a
La	La	LIFH	10	$\overline{5}$	La phospahte
U	Mb	PETJ	180	90	Uranium ^a
Th	Ma	PETJ	90	45	$ThO2^c$
Υ	La	TAP	60	30	Yttrium phosphate ^d
Сe	La	LIFH	10	5	Ce phosphate
Ca	Ka	PETJ	20	10	Wollastonite
Si	Ka	TAP	20	10	PbSiO ₃
Pr	Lb	LIFH	20	10	Pr phosphate
S	Ka	PETJ	30	15	BaSO4
Nd	Lb	LIFH	10	5	Nd phosphate
Sm	Lb	LIFH	40	20	Sm phospahte
Gd	Lb	LIFH	40	20	Gd phospahte
Dv	Lb	LIFH	40	20	DY phospate

Table 2. Analytical set-up for monazite analyses on the JEOL JXA-8200, Electron Probe Micro Analyzer (EPMA) at the Advanced Analytical Centre, JCU Townsville, Australia.

^aAstimex, ^bSealed Xe detectors, ^cTaylor, ^dPb-free synthetic from J. Pyle (Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute, USA).

Table 3. Summary of ages derived from monazites preserved within the porphyroblasts and the matrix phases of abovementioned samples (staurolite data from Sanislav and Shah [2010\)](#page-34-3).

	Porphyroblast						Matrix						
	Sample	Textural setting	Age and error	Total no. of spots	No. of monazites	Sample	Textural setting	Age and error	Total no. of spots	No. of monazites			
FIA 1	C117B	Grt M1	1756 ± 22	17	2	C75	Bt M1	1664 ± 38	7	1			
	C75	St M2	1765 ± 23	16	$\mathbf 1$	C75	Bt M2	1762 ± 35	$\overline{7}$	1			
	C84	Grt M3	1762 ± 21	24	1	C43	Mu M3	1724 ± 37	$\overline{7}$	1			
	C77	CrdM4	1760 ± 18	24	$\mathbf{1}$	C ₁₀₈	Mt^a M4	1675 ± 24	10	$\mathbf{1}$			
	C51B	Crd M5	$1762\,\pm\,32$	12	$\mathbf{1}$	C77	Bt M5	1677 ± 19	17	1			
						C51B	Mt M6	1685 ± 29	9	1			
FIA 2	C43	St M ₆	1724 ± 19	14	$\mathbf{1}$	C84	Mt^{a} M7	1729 ± 23	26	1			
	C65A	St M7, 8, 9	1717.6 ± 9.5	53	$\sqrt{3}$	C83	Mu M8	1723 ± 34	$\overline{7}$	1			
	C ₁₀₈	St M10, 11	1721 ± 14	37	$\overline{2}$	C ₁₁₀	Mu M9	1438 ± 30	$\overline{7}$	1			
	C77	Crd M12	1726 ± 18	22	$\mathbf{1}$	C65	Bt M10	1665 ± 23	10	1			
	C75	St M13	1712 ± 25	10	1	C65	Bt M11	1742 ± 29	$8\,$	1			
						C65	Mt^a M11	1668 ± 48	6	1			
FIA 3	C83	St M14	1681 ± 27	10	1								
	C51A	Grt M15	1666 ± 26	10	1	${}^{\rm a}$ Mt = Matrix							
	C77	And M16	1678 ± 17	20	1								
	C84	St M17	1683 ± 36	6	1								
	C65	St M18	1665 ± 24	10	1								
FIA 4	C51B	Crd M19	1414 ± 23	13	1								
	C77	Crd M20	1410 ± 26	10	$\mathbf 1$								
	C ₁₁₀	And M21	1432 ± 39	5	1								

foliation. Extra minor phases include zircon and xenotine. Two monazite inclusions within garnet have given a mean age spread of 1756 ± 22 Ma (see tables 3 and 4 ; figure 6).

4.3.2 Sample C84

Garnet and staurolite inclusion trails are always truncated by the matrix foliation. Extra accessory

1374 A A Shah and T H Bell

 $^{\rm a}$ Sample number, por
phyroblast and monazite. Sample number, porphyroblast and monazite.

 $A \land Shah$ and $T \not H$ Bell

Figure 6. (**a**) Back scatter image shows the garnet porphyroblast which preserves a single monazite grain lying parallel to the orientation of its foliation. A mean age of 1754 ± 29 Ma is calculated from a total of 10 spots analyzed. (**b**) Enlarged view of the monazite grain with black spots showing the location of each analysis. In (**c**) the weighted average age plot is shown, created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998](#page-33-30)) and in (**d**) the probability density plot is shown.

phases include magnetite, zircon, xenotine and monazite. A total of two monazite grains were dated from this sample. One within garnet with an age spread of 1762 ± 21 Ma (FIA set 1) and the other grain within staurolite (FIA set 3, Sanislav and Shah 2010) with an age spread of 1683 ± 36 Ma (see tables 3 and 4).

4.3.3 Sample C77

This sample contains andalusite and cordierite porphyroblasts, but no garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts, and the extra accessory phases of magnetite and xenotine. Inclusion trails in cordierite are continuous with the matrix foliation and preserve FIA set 4. Cordierite contains a pseudo-FIA belonging to set 3 and FIA set 4. Andalusite contains inclusion trails defining FIA set 3 that are truncated by foliations within both the matrix and the youngest foliation in cordierite. Inclusions in both porphyroblastic phases include staurolite and garnet although the latter is rare.

Three monazite grains enclosed within cordierite (2) and andalusite (1) porphyroblasts were dated. One monazite grain within a crenulated cleavage seam gives a pseudo-FIA set 3 age of $1678 \pm$ 17 Ma within cordierite. The andalusite porphyroblast preserves the same foliation as FIA 3. The 1760 ± 18 and 1726 ± 18 Ma ages were derived from their monazites (see tables [3](#page-8-1)[–6\)](#page-15-0).

4.3.4 Sample C110

Also contains andalusite and cordierite porphyroblasts. Extra accessory phases are dominated by magnetite, xenotine, zircon and baddeleyite. Andalusite preserves FIA set 4 and its inclusion trails are continuous with the matrix foliation. Inclusions within andalusite include staurolite and cordierite. A single monazite grain found in andalusite gave an age of 1432 ± 39 Ma (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [7\)](#page-18-0) for the foliation preserved as inclusion trails.

4.3.5 Sample C55A

This sample also contains cordierite plus minor xenotine. Garnet preserves inclusion trails defining FIA set 3 that are truncated by the foliation in cordierite and the matrix. Cordierite contains FIA set 4 trails that are continuous with those present within the matrix. Staurolite is also included in cordierite. A single monazite dated at 1666 ± 26 Ma from this sample is located within garnet (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [6\)](#page-15-0). No monazite grains were found in cordierite.

4.3.6 Sample C51B

This sample also contains cordierite porphyroblasts with inclusion trails defining FIA set 4 that are continuous with foliations preserved within the matrix. Staurolite and andalusite are also present as inclusions. Two grains of monazite dated at an average age of 1412 ± 17 Ma lie within the foliation preserved within the cordierite (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [7\)](#page-18-0). Another monazite was dated at $1762 \pm$ 32 Ma, within the same foliation (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [6\)](#page-15-0).

5. Dating of matrix foliations

The foliations within porphyroblasts are completely truncated by those within the matrix phases in all samples except C110. Consequently, monazite ages in the matrix cannot be used to date FIAs. They were dated to see what relics of the deformation history determined from the FIA succession were preserved in the matrix and whether there was any evidence for deformation occurring between the Colorado and Berthoud orogenies.

5.1 Sample C83 (FIA 2 in garnet and 3 in staurolite)

A single monazite grain parallel to the main matrix foliation (S_{e1}) of this sample has an age of 1723 \pm 34 Ma (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [5\)](#page-13-0). This sample preserves FIA set 2 within garnet and set 3 in staurolite porphyroblasts (figure [7\)](#page-20-0).

5.2 Sample C75 (FIA 1 and 2 in staurolite)

Three foliations in the matrix $(S_{ea} - S_{ec})$ are shown in figure [8.](#page-21-0) A 1664 ± 38 Ma age was derived from a monazite grain lying sub-parallel to S_{e2} (figure [9\)](#page-22-0). Another monazite grain that lay orthogonal to this

1380 A A Shah and T H Bell

 $^{\rm a}$ Sample number, porphyroblast and monazite. Sample number, porphyroblast and monazite.

Millions of years of orogenesis and quiescence and further orogenesis with no change in PT 1383

Table 7. (Continued)

foliation gave an age of 1762 ± 35 Ma (figure [9\)](#page-22-0). This sample preserves FIA sets 1 and 2 within staurolite porphyroblasts (figure [8\)](#page-21-0). The monazite grains are not zoned (figures [10](#page-23-0) and [11\)](#page-24-0).

> 5.3 Sample C84 (FIA 2 in garnet and 3 in staurolite)

The dominant foliation in the matrix (S_{e1}) contains a single monazite grain that lies sub-parallel to it that has an age of 1729 ± 23 1729 ± 23 Ma (see tables 3) and [5\)](#page-13-0).

5.4 Sample C65A (FIA 1 in garnet and 2 plus FIA 3 in staurolite)

Two monazite grains in the main matrix foliation (S_{ea}) have ages 1742 ± 29 Ma and 1665 ± 23 Ma (e.g., table [3;](#page-8-1) figures [12](#page-25-0) and [13\)](#page-26-0). Both lie subparallel to Sea. A monazite grain in staurolite is shown in figure [14\)](#page-27-0).

5.5 Sample C43 (FIA 1 in garnet and 2 in staurolite)

A single monazite grain parallel to the main matrix foliation (S_{e1}) has an age of 1724 \pm 37 Ma (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [5\)](#page-13-0). This sample preserves FIA sets 1 and 2 within garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts.

5.6 Sample C51B (FIA 3 in cordierite)

A single monazite grain lying orthogonal to the main matrix foliation (S_{e1}) in this sample has an age of 1685 ± 29 Ma (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [6\)](#page-15-0). This sample preserves FIA set 3 within cordierite porphyroblasts.

5.7 Sample C77 (FIA 3 in cordierite)

A single monazite grain lying in the youngest matrix foliation (S_{e3}) in this sample has an age of 1677 ± 19 Ma (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [6\)](#page-15-0). This sample preserves FIA set 3 within cordierite porphyroblasts.

5.8 Sample C108 (FIA 1 in garnet and 2 in staurolite)

A single monazite grain sub-parallel to the main matrix foliation (S_{e1}) has an age of 1675 \pm 24 Ma (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [6\)](#page-15-0). This sample preserves FIA sets 1 and 2 within garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts.

Figure 7. (**a**) Back scatter image shows the staurolite porphyroblast, which contains a single monazite grain lying parallel to t[h](#page-34-3)e orientation of the foliation. A mean age of 1681 ± 27 Ma is dated from a total of 10 spots analyzed (Sanislav and Shah [2010](#page-34-3)). (**b**) Enlarged view of the monazite grain with black spots showing the location of each analysis. In (**c**) the weighted average age plot is shown, created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998\)](#page-33-30) and (**d**) is showing the probability density plot.

5.9 Sample C110 (FIA 4 in andalusite)

A single monazite grain sub-parallel to the main matrix foliation (S_{e1}) has an age of 1438 ± 30 Ma (see tables [3](#page-8-1) and [7\)](#page-18-0). This sample preserves FIA set 4 within andalusite porphyroblasts.

6. Compositional mapping of monazite grains

Samples containing monazite were compositionally mapped for Th, Y, U, Pb and Ce using the JEOL JXA-8300 Superprobe. Most were devoid of any apparent chemical zoning (e.g., figures [10](#page-23-0) and [11\)](#page-24-0). One monazite in the matrix of sample C65A showed chemical zoning in both Th and Y (figure [13\)](#page-26-0). Dating of 1742 ± 29 and 1668 ± 48 Ma suggests that this was a product of FIAs 1 and 3 (see below). Sample C75 showed a single example of a monazite with slight zoning in Th preserved within a staurolite porphyroblast (figure [11\)](#page-24-0). A mean age of 1712 ± 25 Ma was analyzed from this grain.

7. Interpretation and discussion

7.1 The ages within porphyroblast containing FIAs

The monazite grains stored within foliations defining FIAs in garnet, staurolite (Sanislav and Sha[h](#page-34-3) [2010\)](#page-34-3), cordierite and andalusite have recorded ages over an extended period of metamorphism. For example garnet in sample C117, preserves the oldest deformation event recorded in the area at 1756 ± 22 Ma. The date obtained from this porphyroblast agrees with the other samples containing the same FIA sets. This is shown in sample C84, which records the same event in garnet at $1762 \pm$ 21 Ma and fits well with its FIA. The younger grain stored within staurolite is ellipsoidal and aligned parallel to the foliation defined by the inclusion trails and should give a representative age for FIA 3 (Sanislav and S[h](#page-34-3)ah [2010](#page-34-3)). The 1666 ± 26 Ma age in garnet (C51B) accords with the dates obtained from other samples bearing this FIA set (e.g., staurolite grains dated in Sanislav and Shah [2010](#page-34-3)). The two dates obtained from monazite grains preserved within pseudo-FIA in cordierite (set 3) and as

Figure 8. (**a**) Back scatter electron image shows a staurolite porphyroblast, which preserves a single euhedral monazite grain lying orthogonal to the orientation of the foliation. A mean age of 1765 ± 23 Ma is dated from a total of 16 spots analyzed (Sanislav and Sha[h](#page-34-3) [2010\)](#page-34-3). (**b**) Enlarged view of the monazite grain with black spots showing the location of each analysis. X-ray images of this monazite grain are shown in this figure. (**c**) Orientated photomicrograph displays the larger view of the staurolite dated. Two different foliations are preserved within staurolite porphyroblast. Monazite grain was contained within a crenulation cleavage. In this sample, staurolite contains a pseudo-FIA belonging to set 1 FIA plus FIA set 2. Thin section is vertical, the light is plane-polarized and single barbed arrow indicates way up and strike. (**d**) Line diagram, shows the detailed features preserved. In (**e**) weighted average age plot is shown which is created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998\)](#page-33-30) and in (**f**) the probability density plot is shown. Se: external foliation, Si: internal foliation, Grt: garnet, St: staurolite, and Bt: Biotite.

single FIA in andalusite (set 3) in the sample C77, accord with the dates obtained from other samples for this event (table [3\)](#page-8-1). The two earlier ages acquired from monazite grains within the main foliation of cordierite are relics of an older foliation that lies oblique to the main foliation defined by the

Figure 9. (**a**) Back scatter electron image shows two monazite grains preserved within matrix foliation of sample C75. (**b**) Enlarged view of a monazite grain with black spots showing the location of each analysis. This euhedral grain is preserved within the main matrix foliation and is located parallel to its orientation. A mean age of 1664 ± 38 Ma is dated from a total of seven spots analyzed. (**c**) Enlarged view of a monazite grain with black spots showing the location of each analysis. This grain is oriented orthogonal to the orientation of the main matrix foliation. A mean age of 1762 ± 35 Ma is dated from a total of seven spots analyzed. Thin section is vertical, single barbed arrow indicates way up and strike. In (**d** and **f**) weighted average age plots are shown, created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998](#page-33-30)) and in (**e** and **g**) the probability density plots are shown.

Figure 10. (**a**) Back scatter oriented electron image of a monazite grain preserved within the foliation of porphyroblast that contains the inclusion trails of FIA set 1 in sample (C75). The location of each analysis is shown by black spots. In (**b**) through (**f**), X-ray maps of Th, Y, Ce, Pb and U are shown. Chemical zoning in Th and Pb is crudely present.

inclusion trails. Their dates are compatible with the ages obtained from FIA sets 1 and 2, preserved within other samples. The date acquired from two monazites in cordierite (C51B) accords with the dates obtained from other samples for FIA set 4 (see table [3\)](#page-8-1). An older age within this sample from one monazite is consistent with an earlier foliation aligned to FIA set 1 and represents its relics. The age recorded in sample C110 is consistent with the youngest FIA set observed.

7.2 Combining the age data within FIA sets

Monazite grains are common within staurolite (Sanislav and Sha[h](#page-34-3) [2010\)](#page-34-3), cordierite and andalusite porphyroblasts but rare in garnet. Of the 11 samples investigated, five contained inclusion trails defining FIA set 1; six monazite grains were identified and 93 analyses completed defining an age of 1760.5 ± 9.7 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [15a](#page-28-0) and b). Five samples contained inclusion trails defining FIA set 2; eight monazite grains were identified and

136 analyses completed defining an age of 1719.7 \pm 6.4 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [15c](#page-28-0) and d). Five samples contained inclusion trails defining FIA set 3; five monazite grains were identified and 56 analyses completed defining an age of 1674 ± 11 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [15e](#page-28-0) and f). Three samples contained inclusion trails defining FIA set 4; three monazite grains were identified and 28 analyses completed defining an age of 1415 ± 16 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [15g](#page-28-0) and h). These ages $(1760.5 \pm 9.7, 1719.7 \pm 6.4, 1674 \pm 11)$ and 1415 ± 16 Ma), respectively, confirm the FIA 1, 2, 3, 4 succession established using core/rim criteria plus the previously recognized (Twet[o](#page-34-10) [1987](#page-34-10); Nyman et al[.](#page-33-20) [1994;](#page-33-20) Karlstrom et al[.](#page-33-21) [1997\)](#page-33-21) separation of orogenesis into two distinct periods 250 million years apart (Sha[h](#page-34-12) [2010\)](#page-34-12).

7.3 The significance of FIAs for determining monazite ages

Texturally controlled dating of monazite inclusions has recently been used by many petrologists Millions of years of orogenesis and quiescence and further orogenesis with no change in PT 1389

Figure 11. (**a**) Back scatter oriented electron image of a monazite grain preserved within the foliation of porphyroblast that contains the inclusion trails of FIA set 2, in sample (C75). The location of each analysis is shown by black spots. Single barbed arrow indicates way up and strike. In (**b**) through (**f**) X-ray maps of Ce, Pb, Th, U and Y are shown. Chemical zoning in Th is crudely present. A single mean age of 1712 ± 25 Ma is preserved within this monazite, which is coeval with the ages obtained from the other samples for the regional deformation that produced this FIA set. In (**g**) the weighted average age plot of eight spots is shown which is created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998\)](#page-33-30) and in (**h**) the probability density plot is shown.

around the world to date foliation ages (Williams et al[.](#page-34-13) [1999](#page-34-13); Shaw et al[.](#page-34-14) [2001](#page-34-14); Dahl et al[.](#page-33-12) [2005](#page-33-12)). A range of ages will always be present in the matrix due to the potential for the preservation of monazite grains within the strain shadows of successively grown porphyroblasts and this is exemplified by table [3.](#page-8-1) Depending on the timing of porphyroblast growth, a similar range can be preserved from the influence of younger events. The most critical phase in using an absolute microstructural dating method is to accurately identify monazite grains within a particular textural and structural setting. FIA provide such a setting and offer a robust opportunity to extract in situ information from individual monazite grains preserved within an independently determined relative timeframe.

The accord between FIA set and age recorded herein is remarkable (table [3\)](#page-8-1). Only one sample

Figure 12. (**a**) Shows a back scatter in which a monazite grain is preserved within a matrix foliation which is lying parallel to the orientation of the foliation. A mean age of 1665 ± 23 Ma is dated from a total of 10 spots analyzed. (b) Enlarged view of the monazite grain with black spots showing the location of each analysis. Single barbed arrow indicates way up and strike. In (**e**) the weighted average age plot of 18 spots is shown, created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998](#page-33-30)). (**f**) shows a probability density plot.

(C77) contains 'anomalous' older ages which can be attributed to the earlier events as just mentioned. The recognition of pseudo-FIAs and FIAs provided tight control over what FIA sets were preserved in each sample. Without this level of control on the distribution of FIAs, the ∼100 million year range in ages obtained (not including the far younger ∼1400 Ma ages) would have been attributed to noise. Instead it accords perfectly with the independently obtained succession of FIA sets!

7.4 The ages within matrix

The older monazite grain $(1762 \pm 35 \text{ Ma})$ in sample C75, accords with the dates acquired for FIA set 1 (table [3\)](#page-8-1). The younger matrix age obtained is coeval with dates acquired for FIA set 3 suggesting that the matrix was reused or reactivated

during the development of this FIA set. The single matrix age in sample (C84), accords with the date for FIA set 2 (table [3\)](#page-8-1) and is interpreted to represent a relic of an earlier-formed foliation. Similar ages were obtained within the sample C65A, which are consistent FIA sets 1 and 3 (table [3\)](#page-8-1) and are interpreted to represent relics of earlier-formed foliations preserved within the strain shadows of porphyroblast. In sample C43, the matrix age obtained $(1724 \pm 37 \text{ Ma})$ accords with the dates acquired for FIA set 2 (see table 3), which suggests reactivation of the matrix during these events. This monazite grain was parallel to the main matrix foliation (S_{e1}) . Another relic age $(1723 \pm 34 \text{ Ma})$ was acquired in the sample C83, and is consistent with FIA set 2 rather than for FIA set 3. This suggests that this grain was not deformed and recrystallized during the development of FIA 3 prior to staurolite growth. Some crystallographic orientations of grains relative to a developing strain field can make

Figure 13. (**a**) Back scatter oriented electron image of a monazite grain preserved within the matrix of the sample (C65A), which shows the location of each analysis. (**b**) through (**f**), shows the X-ray maps of Ce, Pb, Th, U and Y respectively. Age zoning in the chemical contents of Th and Y is present, which offer two different age domains. A mean age of $1742 \pm$ 29 Ma is preserved within high Th domains (polygonal area). The relatively low Th regions contain a mean age of 1668 ± 48 Ma. Thin section is vertical, single barbed arrow indicates way up and strike. (**g** and **i**) shows weighted average age plots, created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998\)](#page-33-30) and in (**h** and **j**) the probability density plot is shown.

Figure 14. (**a** and **b**) Photomicrograph and accompanying line diagram from sample C65A (cross polarized light) which preserves a crenulated and a crenulation cleavage within staurolite porphyroblast. Garnet also contains a foliation which is different from those contained within the staurolite. Thin section is vertical, the light is cross-polarized and the single barbed arrow indicates way up and strike. (**b**) Back scatter image shows the staurolite porphyroblast preserving a single euhedral monazite grain within a crenulated cleavage of the same thin section. A mean age of 1737 ± 36 Ma is dated from a total of nine spots analyzed (Sanislav and Sha[h](#page-34-3) [2010](#page-34-3)). (**c**) Enlarged view of the monazite. In (**e**) weighted average age plot of 18 spots is shown which is created by using Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998](#page-33-30)) and (**f**) shows the probability density plot.

a particular mineral phase very competent and hard to deform (e.g., Mancktelo[w](#page-33-31) [1981](#page-33-31)). This grain could reflect such a phenomenon. In samples C51B, C77 and C108, the acquired ages accord with the dates obtained for FIA set 3 suggesting these monazites grew at this time and were preserved through modification of the matrix by subsequent deformation events. A younger age was preserved within a monazite of sample C110, which is consistent with ages for FIA set 4. This was obtained in the foliations preserved within the andalusite porphyroblast, which are very similar to and continuous with the matrix.

7.5 Assessing the spread of the age data from matrix relative to that for the FIA succession

Monazite grains are common within the matrix and randomly distributed. They are generally preserved

Figure 15. Probability density and weighted average age plots (**a**–**h**) for all samples in which monazite grains were dated within matrix. These plots were created in Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998](#page-33-30)). Complete chemical data is shown in tables [4](#page-9-0)[–7.](#page-18-0)

within muscovite and biotite grains (e.g., figures [9](#page-22-0) and [12\)](#page-25-0). A total of nine samples out of 30 investigated contained monazite crystals in the matrix. Two samples each contain a monazite grain, from which a total of 14 analyses were completed defining an age of 1749 ± 23 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [16a](#page-29-0) and b). Four samples contained four monazite

grains from which 28 analyses were obtained defining an age of 1726 ± 17 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [16c](#page-29-0) and d). Six samples contained six monazite grains from which 59 analyses were completed defining an age of 1674 ± 11 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [16e](#page-29-0) and f). One sample contained a single monazite grain from which seven analyses were completed defining

Figure 16. Probability density and weighted average age plots (**a**–**h**) for all samples in which monazite grains were dated within porphyroblasts. These plots were created in Isoplot software (Ludwi[g](#page-33-30) [1998](#page-33-30)). Complete chemical data is shown in tables [4](#page-9-0)[–7.](#page-18-0)

Figure 17. (**a**, **c**, **e** and **f**) P-T pseudosections calculated in the MnNCKFMASH system based on the bulk XRF composition for the samples C117B, C83, C82 and C54C, respectively. It shows the mineral stability fields with dark toned areas representing higher variance value. The bulk composition is displayed on the upper left corner of the diagrams. (**b**, **d**, **f** and $h)$ Garnet core isopleths of $(X_{Mn}, X_{Ca} \text{ and } X_{Fe})$ in which the compositional contours corresponding to the real composition (microprobe) of garnet core along with their 2-sigma errors indicated as gray-toned think lines (Sha[h](#page-34-12) [2010\)](#page-34-12).

an age of 1438 ± 29 Ma (table [3;](#page-8-1) figure [16g](#page-29-0) and h). These ages accord to some degree with dates obtained from the porphyroblasts preserving FIA sets 1, 2, 3 and 4 and clearly reflect those events in spite of the fact that there is no real control on the significance.

7.6 The porphyroblast ages versus matrix ages

In all the samples that were dated foliations defined by inclusion trails in porphyroblasts are truncated by matrix foliations except in sample C110. Therefore, monazite ages in the matrix have no relevance to the dating of FIAs. In most samples, monazite grains in the matrix foliation gave the same or younger ages than those within the porphyroblasts. Ages range from 1749 ± 23 to 1674 ± 167 11 Ma (table [3\)](#page-8-1) with one sample preserving a monazite with an approximate FIA 1 age of 1762 Ma and another containing a relic from a foliation within the matrix that predated porphyroblast growth. The younger ages were always a product of reuse or reactivation of old foliations (e.g., Bell et al[.](#page-33-1) [2003](#page-33-1)) or the development of new ones. Consequently, only the ages obtained from monazite grains preserved within porphyroblasts where an FIA control on the significance of that age were used to time deformation and metamorphism (figure [15\)](#page-28-0). However, as mentioned above, it is apparent that most, if not all, of the ages associated with the succession of FIA development are preserved within the matrix. Yet an approach that involves dating monazite grains within the matrix can only ever provide an average age that does not distinguish when deformation commenced or when porphyroblast growth ceased.

7.7 Role of deformation and its significance for porphyroblast growth

Nucleation of any mineral phase requires that P–T and bulk composition should be appropriate for that phase to grow. However, deformation is also known to play a vital role in formation of different minerals, particularly porphyroblastic phases (e.g., Bel[l](#page-32-1) [1986;](#page-32-1) William[s](#page-34-15) [1994](#page-34-15); Cihan et al[.](#page-33-11) [2006](#page-33-11)) through its control on sites for the access of nutrients needed for nucleation and growth (Spiess and Bel[l](#page-34-0) [1996](#page-34-0)). The FIA controlled monazite dating described herein reveals ∼90 million years of continuous deformation/metamorphism followed by ∼250 million years of quiescence before orogenesis recommenced for ∼20 million years with little or no change in PT conditions (Sha[h](#page-34-12) [2010\)](#page-34-12). What kept this region at similar crustal levels during the 250 million years of quiescence?

The PT conditions and the bulk composition were clearly suitable for the growth of porphyroblasts during the ∼250 Ma between the development of FIAs 3 and 4. Yet no porphyroblastic phases grew during this time and there is no microstructural evidence for any foliations developing. The latter fact is confirmed by dating of monazite grains within the matrix. They reflect the FIA succession and provide no evidence for any deformation between at least 1665 and 1438 Ma. It is now well established that deformation and concurrent metamorphism form cleavage seams by dissolution as well as provide a large range of components essential for the nucleation and growth of porphyroblasts (Bell and Cuff [1989](#page-33-32); Spiess and Bell [1996](#page-34-0)). Deformation provides sites for nucleation and growth, and a means of overcoming the energy barrier for nucleation, in the form of the energy removal from, for example, crenulation hinges (Bel[l](#page-32-1) [1986\)](#page-32-1). The lack of porphyroblast growth for this extended ∼250 million year period can be attributed to the lack of crenulation development (Bell et al[.](#page-33-1) [2003](#page-33-1)). When deformation recommenced around ∼1415 Ma, porphyroblasts also began to grow again forming FIA set 4 inclusion trails within garnet, staurolite, andalusite and cordierite porphyroblasts strongly supporting the role of crenulation deformation in porphyroblast growth (e.g., Bel[l](#page-32-1) [1986;](#page-32-1) Cihan et al[.](#page-33-11) [2006](#page-33-11)).

7.8 Deformation and metamorphism

The three stages of folding and two stages of metamorphism reported previously from this region were determined from matrix foliation relationship. A much longer history of deformation and metamorphism is preserved by the porphyroblasts. The preservation of four FIA trends with changing directions of shortening from (NE–SW to E– W to SE–NW to NNE–SSW), which range in age from 1760.5 ± 9.7 to 1415 ± 16 Ma has considerable implications for tectonics of this region. The first regional folding episode initiated during FIA set 1 at 1760.5 ± 9.7 Ma and trended NE– SW and approximately coincides with the regional trend of the Cheyenne belt. This is regarded as the suture zone along which the rocks of Colorado and Wyoming province accreted about 1790–1650 Ma ago (Sims et al[.](#page-34-9) [2003\)](#page-34-9). Pressure and temperature at this time was about 540° – 550° C and 3.8 – 4.0 kbars, as proposed by the garnet isopleth geothermobarometry. Intersections of Ca, Mg, and Fe isopleths in garnet core, which preserved FIA set 1, indicate that these rocks never got above 4 kbars during the Colorado Orogeny (figure [17a](#page-30-0) and b).

During the formation of FIA set 2 (centred around 1719.7 ± 6.4 Ma), the pressure and temperature changed slightly to 3.40–3.65 kbar and

525◦–537◦C (figure [17c](#page-30-0) and d). F2 regional folds were formed during this stage. Foliation evidence from this period or orogeny is rarely preserved as crenulations in the matrix, due to the effects of rotation and reactivation in the many subsequent deformations. Trondhjemite dikes, which now have a sill like character, were emplaced at ∼1726 ± 15 Ma (Selverstone et al[.](#page-34-8) [1997](#page-34-8)). Intrusion forming W–E trending dikes could occur along the W–E trending vertical foliation that generated this FIA set during gravitational collapse stages of orogenesis when this vertical foliation would have created a plane of weakness that failed (e.g., Bell and Newman [2006](#page-33-33)). Subsequent reactivation of the compositional layering would have progressively rotated most of them into sub-parallelism with the bedding and disguised any crosscutting relics of the dikes along which they intruded.

FIA set 3 also developed during the Colorado Orogeny (figure [17e](#page-30-0) and f). The SE–NW trend of this FIA set was created by NE–SW shortening. Previously formed folds were refolded and a new F3, generation were created. The pressure– temperature conditions indicated by garnet isopleth conditions for this period were 3.3–3.6 kbar and 525◦–535◦C. More staurolite porphyroblasts also grew at this time. In particular, it marks the first appearance of andalusite and cordierite porphyroblasts. Some staurolite porphyroblasts containing FIA set 3 have been partially replaced by andalusite or cordierite suggesting a decrease in pressure accompanied their development. Absolute dating of monazite grains enclosed within the inclusions of these four porphyroblastic phases provide an age of 1674 ± 11 Ma for this period of FIA development which appears to end the Colorado Orogeny. These rocks remained undisturbed for about 250 Ma.

Monazite grains enclosed within the foliations of andalusite and cordierite porphyroblasts containing FIA set 4 give an age of 1420 ± 14 Ma for this period of orogenesis. The tight intersection of Ca, Mn and Fe isopleths in garnet cores indicates that the pressure conditions during this period of orogenesis were similar to those observed at the end of the Colorado Orogeny (figure [17g](#page-30-0) and h). Large-scale heating event associated with granite emplacement and some deformation at this time is regionally known as the Berthoud Orogeny (Sims et al[.](#page-34-9) [2003\)](#page-34-9). FIA set 4 trends NNE–SSW and resulted from NNW–SSE directed shortening. Garnet, staurolite, cordierite and andalusite also grew during this period of orogenesis. Slightly higher temperatures were recorded during this period of orogenesis than previously. Some andalusite and cordierite were formed by replacing staurolite porphyroblasts but most grew as completely new grains. After this period of orogenesis, these rocks were retrogressed, presumably during exhumation. This is revealed by pseudomorphs after staurolite, garnet, cordierite and andalusite (Sha[h](#page-34-12) [2010](#page-34-12)).

7.9 Regional tectonic implications of Colorado and Berthoud Orogenies

The metasediments exposed in and around the Big Thompson region of Colorado represent mature sediments deposited in a fore-arc (Condie and Martel [1983\)](#page-33-17) or back-arc setting (Reed *et al[.](#page-33-18)* [1987\)](#page-33-18). Detrital zircon ages suggest a maximum age of 1758 ± 26 Ma for deposition of the Big Thompson sequence (Selverstone et al[.](#page-34-7) [2000](#page-34-7)). Previous researchers (e.g., Selverstone et al. [1997](#page-34-8); Chamberlain [1998;](#page-33-34) Shaw et al. [2001](#page-34-14); Williams et al. [1999](#page-34-13)) suggested protracted metamorphism and deformation associated with the ∼1700 Ma orogeny and local effects due to the ∼1400 Ma orogeny. The evidence presented here for deformation and metamorphism around 1758.8 ± 9 Ma suggests orogenesis commenced around the time of sedimentation. This correlates with the beginning of contractional deformation along the Cheyenne belt, during which time the Colorado province was accreted onto the Archean Wyoming province (Chamberlai[n](#page-33-34) [1998\)](#page-33-34). Orogenesis was essentially continuous for about ∼100 Ma and then ceased. FIA data reveal that deformation during 1420 ± 14 Ma Berthoud Orogeny was pervasive, with well-preserved foliations that are continuous with the matrix foliation. However, not a single monazite grain of Berthoud age was found within garnet or staurolite porphyroblasts that could be associated with this event. They were found only in andalusite and cordierite suggesting a slight change in T, P conditions from those forming staurolite was required for further growth of this phase.

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