

# 1 Duration and nature of the end-Cryogenian (Marinoan) glaciation

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## 10 **ABSTRACT**

11 The end-Cryogenian glaciation (Marinoan) was Earth's last global glaciation yet its duration  
12 and character remain uncertain. Here we report U-Pb zircon ages for two discrete ash beds within  
13 glacial marine deposits from widely separated localities of the Marinoan-equivalent Ghaub Formation  
14 in Namibia:  $639.29 \pm 0.26/0.31/0.75$  Ma and  $635.21 \pm 0.59/0.61/0.92$  Ma. These findings, for the  
15 first time, verify the key prediction of the Snowball Earth hypothesis for the Marinoan glaciation:  
16 longevity, with a duration of  $\geq 4.08 \pm 0.64$  Myr. They also show that glacial sedimentation,  
17 erosion, and at least intermittent open-water conditions occurred 4 million years prior to termination  
18 of the Marinoan glaciation and that the interval of non-glacial conditions between the two  
19 Cryogenian glaciations was 20 Myr or less.

## 20 **INTRODUCTION**

21 The Cryogenian Period (*c.* 720 – 635 Ma) was marked by the two most severe glaciations in  
22 Earth history (Hoffman et al., 1998; Fairchild and Kennedy, 2007), the older Sturtian and younger  
23 Marinoan, and their association with unique lithofacies of cap carbonates (Kennedy et al., 2001;  
24 Hoffman and Schrag, 2002; Hoffman et al., 2011), stable isotope fluctuations (carbon, oxygen,  
25 boron, calcium; Halverson et al., 2005; Kasemann et al., 2005; Bao et al., 2008) and banded iron  
26 formation are evidence for global-scale environmental changes with postulated links to ocean-

27 atmosphere oxygenation and biosphere evolution (Butterfield, 2009; Och and Sjiels-Zhou, 2012;  
28 Sperling et al., 2013). Creation of a unified theory explaining those phenomena, however, has been  
29 hampered by one key obstacle: a lack of temporal constraints. Recently, the Sturtian was shown to  
30 have spanned an astonishing 56 Myr, from about 716 Ma to 660 Ma (Bowring et al., 2007;  
31 Macdonald et al., 2010; Rooney et al., 2014; Rooney et al., 2015). In contrast, the duration of the  
32 Marinoan is unresolved: it terminated at *c.* 635 Ma (Hoffmann et al. 2004; Calver et al., 2004;  
33 Condon et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2008) but its initiation can only be stated as being younger than  
34 interglacial strata, which in Mongolia have been dated as *c.* 659 Ma (Rooney et al., 2014) and in  
35 China as *c.* 655 Ma (Zhang et al., 2008). Here we report new dates for the Marinoan-equivalent  
36 Ghaub Formation in Namibia that provide a basis for assessing the timing and nature of Earth's last  
37 global glaciation.

#### 38 **GEOLOGY: SAMPLES DW-1 AND NAV-00-2B**

39 The Nosib, Otavi and Mulden Groups comprise the Neoproterozoic sedimentary record of  
40 the Congo craton in northern Namibia (Fig. 1). The Otavi Group (and correlative rocks in the  
41 Swakop Group of the Outjo and Swakop Zones) is a 2-5 km thick carbonate platform-slope-basin  
42 succession formed in the tropics along the margin of the Congo Craton. It is punctuated by two  
43 Cryogenian glacial units (Hoffmann and Prave, 1996; Hofman and Halverson, 2008), the older  
44 Chuos and the younger Ghaub formations and their respective cap carbonates, the Rasthof and  
45 Keilberg formations. U-Pb zircon ages on igneous and volcanic units provide geochronological  
46 constraints (see Fig. 1) that bracket deposition of the glacial-bearing strata in the Otavi Group to  
47 between *c.* 756 Ma and 635 Ma.

48 One of the most informative exposures of the Ghaub Formation in northern Namibia is  
49 along Fransfontein Ridge (Fig. 1). There, the Ghaub rocks vary in thickness from 1 to 600 m and  
50 can be traced continuously for *c.* 70 km; they consist mostly of stratified and massive carbonate-  
51 clast-rich diamictite, minor intervals of rippled and cross-stratified dolomitic grainstone, marl and  
52 shale, and an upper unit, the 1 to 15 m thick Bethanis member (Hoffman and Halverson, 2008)

53 typified by cm- to dcm-thick stratified diamictite and grainstone-mudstone, all with abundant  
54 variably sized dropstones. Detailed studies (Hoffman and Halverson, 2008; Domack and Hoffmann,  
55 2011) of those lithofacies have interpreted them as a succession of moraine and glacimarine  
56 sediments deposited along the margin of a repeatedly advancing and back-stepping ice-grounding  
57 line (Domack and Hoffmann, 2011).

58         Along Fransfontein Ridge, the diamictite-dominated Ghaub Formation contains lenses,  
59 generally a few metres thick, consisting of graded grainstone and laminated to massive calcareous-  
60 dolomitic marl-shale with stringers of dropstones. At Duurwater (Fig. 2) one of these lenses about  
61 15 m below the base of the Keilberg cap dolostone contains a prominent ash bed, sampled as DW-1  
62 (Fig. 3). The DW-1 ash bed is 0.3 m thick, pale tan to pale yellow in colour, characterised by sharp  
63 upper and lower contacts, displays a slight fining-upward grading, contains rare disseminated quartz  
64 spar crystals and is overlain and underlain by IRD beds (Fig. 4A). These features indicate that this  
65 bed is an air-fall tuff contemporaneous with deposition of the glacimarine sediments, hence its age  
66 would also be the age of sedimentation for this part of the Ghaub Formation. Below the DW-1 ash  
67 bed is 10-15m of massive diamictite and then a more than 100-m-thick succession of carbonate  
68 rhythmite, breccia, laminated marl and shale with dispersed dropstones and isolated metre-scale and  
69 larger blocks derived from pre-Ghaub formation units. These lithofacies fill a steep-sided incision  
70 cut into the pre-Ghaub stratigraphy (Figs. 2, 3); in places along the Fransfontein outcrop belt as  
71 much as 300 m of strata have been cut out along this surface.

72         Sample NAV-00-2B comes from an ash bed in the basinal equivalent of the Ghaub  
73 Formation *c.* 30 m below the contact with the Keilberg cap dolostone at Navachab in central  
74 Namibia (Fig. 3). This occurrence was reported by Hoffman et al. (2004) and readers are referred to  
75 that paper for details.

## 76 **METHODS AND RESULTS**

77         All zircon dates in this study were obtained using established chemical abrasion (CA)  
78 isotope dilution thermal ionisation mass spectrometry (ID-TIMS) methods at the NERC Isotope

79 Geoscience Laboratory of the British Geological Survey (Noble et al., 2015; see Data Repository  
80 for details). U-Pb dates have been determined relative to the gravimetrically calibrated  
81 EARTHTIME mixed U/Pb tracers (Condon et al., 2015; McLean et al., 2015) and  $^{238}\text{U}$  and  $^{235}\text{U}$   
82 decay constants (Jaffey et al., 1971; Mattinson, 2010).

83 Sample DW-1 yielded a population of zircons with a consistent morphology (aspect ratio  $\sim 2$   
84 and long axis typically 200 to 300  $\mu\text{m}$ ) and colour. Ten zircons were dated by CA-ID-TIMS; U-Pb  
85 data for each analysis are concordant when the uncertainty in the  $^{238}\text{U}$  and  $^{235}\text{U}$  decay constants  
86 (Mattinson, 2010) are considered (Fig. 4B; Data Repository Table 1). All analyses yield a weighted-  
87 mean  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  date of  $639.1 \pm 1.7/1.8/5.0$  (n=10, MSWD=1.08). Of those, one analysis has  
88 dispersion beyond that expected due to analytical scatter (see Data Repository) and is an obvious  
89 outlier with a U-Pb date younger than the main population. Excepting this grain, the other nine  
90 analyses yield a weighted mean  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  date of  $639.29 \pm 0.26/0.31/0.75$  Ma (95% confidence  
91 interval, n=9, MSWD=2.6), which we interpret as the age of deposition.

92 Sample NAV-00-2B is an aliquot of the sample dated previously as  $635.5 \pm 1.2$  Ma  
93 (Hoffmann et al., 2004) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Re-analysis of this sample  
94 was done to capitalise on the use of CA for the effective elimination of Pb-loss (Mattinson, 2005)  
95 and the EARTHTIME tracer and its comprehensive gravimetric calibration and uncertainty model  
96 (Condon et al., 2015; McLean et al., 2015). The  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  date for NAV-00-2B derived in this  
97 study is  $635.21 \pm 0.59/0.61/0.92$  Ma (95% confidence interval, n=5, MSWD=3.4; Fig. 4B, Data  
98 Repository Table 2). This date is based upon a subset of the analyses (as explained in the Data  
99 Repository) and, even given improved analytical precision and accuracy, is indistinguishable from  
100 the date published in Hoffmann et al. (2004).

## 101 **DISCUSSION**

102 The  $639.29 \pm 0.26/0.31/0.75$  Ma age for the DW-1 ash bed at Duurwater and the revised age  
103 of  $635.21 \pm 0.59/0.61/0.92$  Ma for the NAV-00-2B ash bed at Navachab now, for the first time,  
104 confirm that the Marinoan glaciation was long-lived, lasting at least  $4.08 \pm 0.64$  Myr. This verifies

105 the key prediction of the Snowball Earth hypothesis for a long duration glaciation. The revised age  
106 for NAV-00-2B also refines and reconfirms that the timing of termination of the Marinoan  
107 glaciation was synchronous worldwide (*i.e.* within error of the age data), occurring between 635.21  
108  $\pm 0.59/0.61/0.92$  Ma and  $635.2 \pm 0.5$  Ma, the age of an ash bed in the lower part of the cap  
109 carbonate sequence in China (Condon et al., 2005); a conclusion reinforced by the U-Pb zircon age  
110 of  $636.41 \pm 0.45$  Ma for a volcanoclastic unit in the glacial-cap carbonate transition in Tasmania  
111 (Calver et al., 2004).

112 Since the debut of the Snowball Earth hypothesis, debate has ensued regarding the extent of  
113 land and sea ice during Cryogenian glaciations, the causes of repetitive patterns of inferred  
114 proximal-distal and advance-retreat deposits, and the overall timing and duration of glacial  
115 sedimentation (*e.g.* see discussion by Spence et al., 2016, and references therein). Further, the lack  
116 of well-defined age models has led to an array of climate state and sedimentation scenarios, ranging  
117 from surmising that the Marinoan rock record formed by glacial-interglacial-scale epochs (*e.g.*  
118 Allen and Etienne, 2008; LeHeron et al., 2011) to interpretations of the bulk of that record as  
119 having been deposited during a brief interval of time near to the end of the glacial state (*e.g.* Benn et  
120 al., 2015). Although these interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, assessing them  
121 remains speculative because of the lack of constraints for the absolute timing of sedimentation. Our  
122 new geochronological data provide a better temporal framework for understanding the Marinoan  
123 glaciation. For example, the *c.* 639 Ma DW-1 ash bed occurring above a *c.* 100-m-thick glacimarine  
124 succession shows that glacial erosion and sediment accumulation concurrent with at least  
125 intermittent open-water conditions in the tropics existed more than 4 million years before the  
126 ultimate meltback phase of the Marinoan ice sheets. This impacts on a range of issues regarding the  
127 Marinoan climate state: it provides constraints and corroboration of models that yield results  
128 consistent with such conditions, including predictions of plausible CO<sub>2</sub> levels permissive of  
129 enabling ice-line migration and associated sedimentation in the tropics, as documented for the  
130 Ghaub Formation (*e.g.* Domack and Hoffman, 2011), to considerations of low-latitude *refugia* and

131 the survival of eukaryotic organisms within the main phase of the Marinoan glaciation. Further,  
132 given our new age that provides a minimum duration for the Marinoan glaciation and the *c.* 660 Ma  
133 age for the end of the older Cryogenian glaciation (Sturtian), the intervening interglacial interval  
134 and associated biogeochemical and isotopic events represent a timespan of 20 Myr or less (Fig. 4C).  
135 Determining how and why this period of non-glacial conditions punctuated an otherwise apparently  
136 consistently and largely ice-covered Earth poses an intriguing research question.

137

## 138 **CONCLUSION**

139 The  $639.1 \pm 1.7/1.8/5.0$  Ma age obtained on an ash bed in glacial marine sediments of the  
140 Marinoan-equivalent Ghaub Formation in northern Namibia combined with a refined age of  $635.21$   
141  $\pm 0.59/0.61/0.92$  Ma for an ash bed in the basinal equivalent of the Ghaub Formation in central  
142 Namibia confirm that the Marinoan glaciation was long-lived, at least 4 Myr in duration, and that  
143 the preceding interval of non-glacial conditions was less than 20 Myr in duration. Our data also  
144 confirm that the sedimentary archive of the Marinoan glaciation records glacial erosion-  
145 sedimentation and at least intermittent open-water conditions as much as 4 million years prior to  
146 terminal meltback at *c.* 635 Ma.

147

## 148 **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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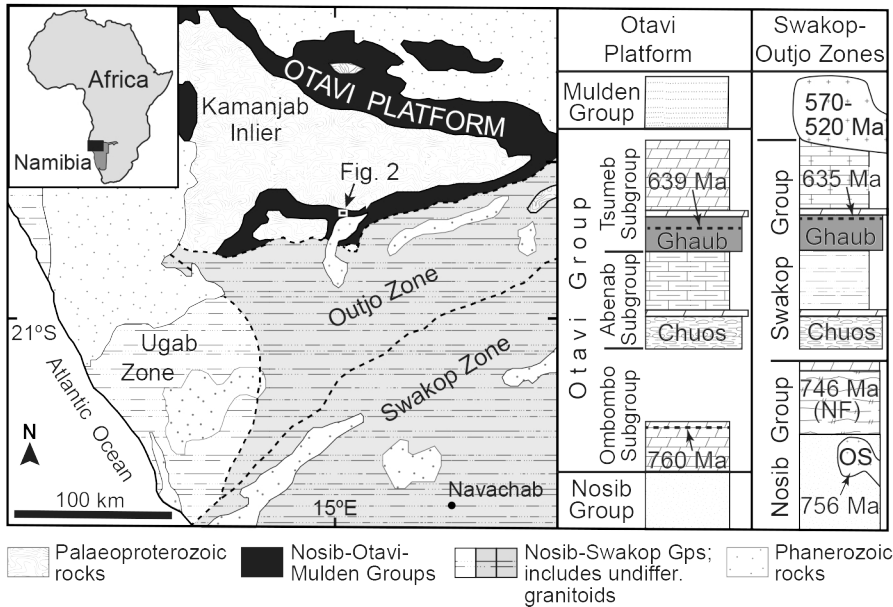
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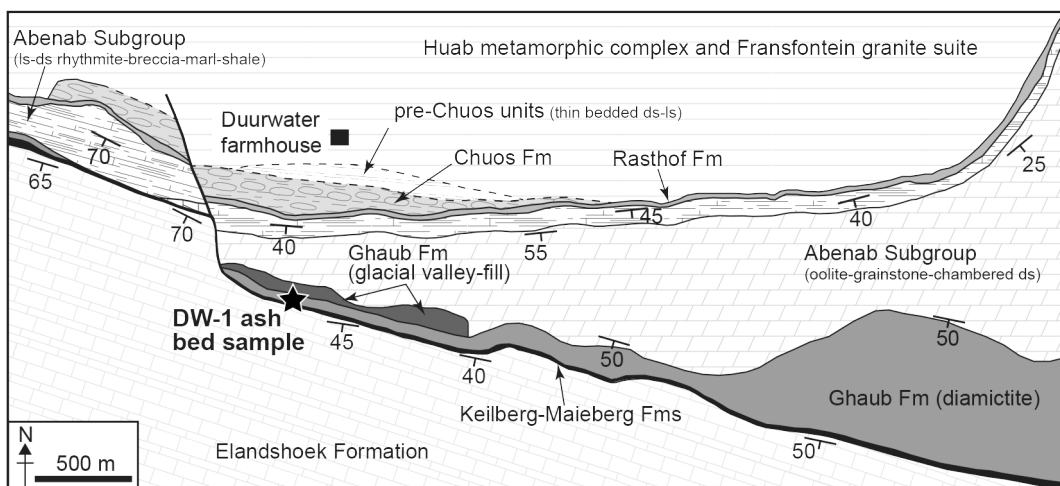
251 **Figure 1.** Generalised geologic framework of northern Namibia. Ages for the Naauwpoort  
 252 Formation (NF) and Oas Syenite (OS) are from Hoffman et al. (1996), for the Ombombo Subgroup  
 253 from Halverson et al. (2005), and for the Ghaub Formation from Hoffmann et al. (2004) and this  
 254 paper. See Miller (2008, and references therein) for the ages of the granites that post-date the  
 255 Swakop Group rocks.



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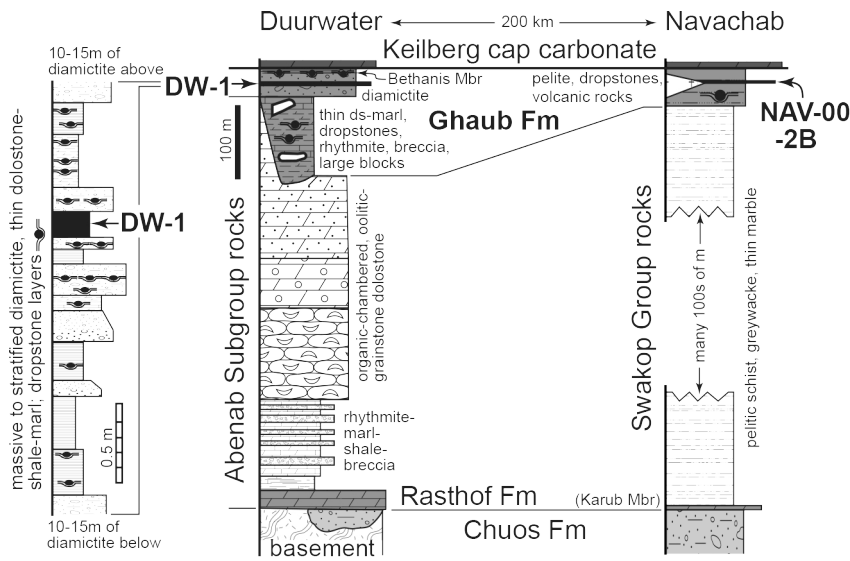
258 **Figure 2. A.** Fransfontein Ridge geology in the vicinity of sample DW-1. See Figure 1 for location.



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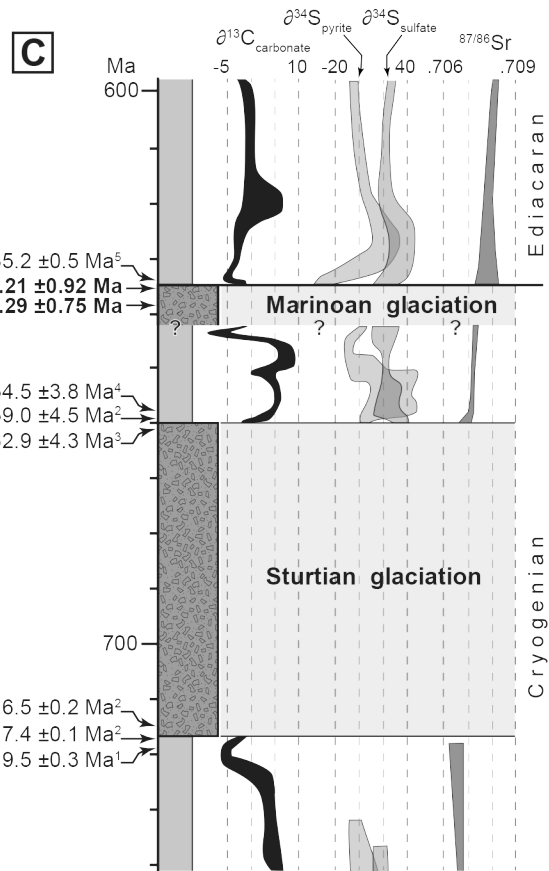
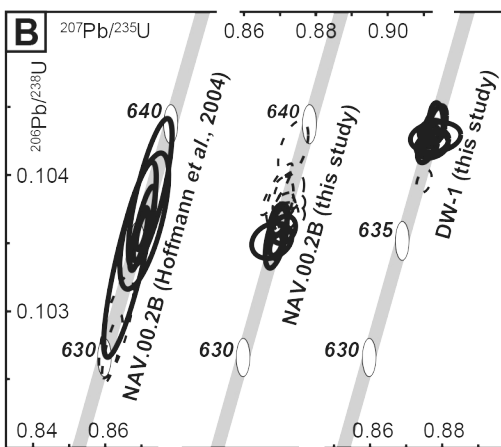
261 **Figure 3.** Simplified stratigraphy of the Duurwater and Navachab sections (for details of the  
 262 Navachab section see Hoffmann et al., 2004); left column is a detailed section showing the  
 263 stratigraphic position of the DW-1 ash bed within the diamictic interval of the Ghaub Formation.



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265

266 **Figure 4. A.** DW-1 ash bed between ice-rafted-debris beds, Duurwater section. **B.** U-Pb Concordia  
 267 plot of data for samples DW-1 and NAV-00-2B; solid ellipses represent analyses included in age  
 268 calculation, dashed ellipses are not included (see Data Repository for explanation). **C.**  
 269 Neoproterozoic timeline trends for key isotope proxy datasets: S isotopes after (from Och and  
 270 Shields-Zhou, 2012, and references therein); Sr and C isotopes after (Halverson et al., 2005) and  
 271 our own data. U-Pb age data from: 1–Cox et al. (2015), 2–Macdonald et al. (2010), 3–Zhou et al.  
 272 (2004), 4–Zhang et al. (2008), 5–Condon et al. (2005). Bold ages are reported herein.



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## Supplementary File: Duration and nature of the end-Cryogenian (Marinoan) glaciation

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### U-Pb geochronology

U-Pb dates were obtained by the chemical abrasion isotope dilution thermal ionisation mass spectrometry (CA-ID-TIMS) method on selected single zircon grains (Tables 1 and 2), extracted from an aliquot of Sample DW-1 and NAV-00-2B. Sample DW-1 is located at 15.14693E 20.20940S; Sample NAV-00-2B was reported in Hoffmann et al. (2004).

Zircon grains were isolated from the rock sample using standard magnetic and density separation techniques, annealed in a muffle furnace at 900°C for 60 hours in quartz beakers. Zircon crystals, selected for analyses based on external morphology, were transferred to 3 ml Teflon PFA beakers, washed in dilute HNO<sub>3</sub> and water, and loaded into 300 µl Teflon PFA microcapsules. Fifteen microcapsules were placed in a large-capacity Parr vessel, and the crystals partially dissolved in 120 µl of 29 M HF for 12 hours at 180°C. The contents of each microcapsule were returned to 3 ml Teflon PFA beakers, the HF removed and the residual grains immersed in 3.5 M HNO<sub>3</sub>, ultrasonically cleaned for an hour, and fluxed on a hotplate at 80°C for an hour. The HNO<sub>3</sub> was removed and the grains were rinsed twice in ultrapure H<sub>2</sub>O before being reloaded into the same 300 µl Teflon PFA microcapsules (rinsed and fluxed in 6 M HCl during crystal sonication and washing) and spiked with the EARTHTIME mixed <sup>233</sup>U-<sup>235</sup>U-<sup>205</sup>Pb-<sup>202</sup>Pb tracer solution (ET2535). These chemically abraded grains were dissolved in Parr vessels in 120 µl of 29 M HF with a trace of 3.5 M HNO<sub>3</sub> at 220°C for 60 hours, dried to fluorides, and then re-dissolved in 6 M HCl at 180°C overnight. U and Pb were separated from the zircon matrix using an HCl-based anion exchange chromatographic procedure<sup>1</sup> eluted together and dried with 2 µl of 0.05N H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>.

Pb and U were loaded on a single outgassed Re filament in 5 µl of a silica-gel/phosphoric acid mixture<sup>2</sup>, and U and Pb isotopic measurements made on a Thermo Triton multi-collector thermal ionisation mass spectrometer equipped with an ion-counting SEM detector. Pb isotopes were measured by peak-jumping all isotopes on the SEM detector for 100 to 150 cycles. Pb mass fractionation was externally corrected using a mass bias factor of  $0.14 \pm 0.03\%$ /a.m.u. determined

39 via measurements of  $^{202}\text{Pb}/^{205}\text{Pb}$  (ET2535)-spiked samples analysed during the same experimental  
40 period. Transitory isobaric interferences due to high-molecular weight organics, particularly on  
41  $^{204}\text{Pb}$  and  $^{207}\text{Pb}$ , disappeared within approximately 30 cycles, and ionisation efficiency averaged  $10^4$   
42 cps/pg of each Pb isotope. Linearity (to  $\geq 1.4 \times 10^6$  cps) and the associated deadtime correction of  
43 the SEM detector were monitored by repeated analyses of NBS982, and have been constant since  
44 installation in 2006. Uranium was analysed as  $\text{UO}_2^+$  ions in static Faraday mode on  $10^{12}$  ohm  
45 resistors for 150 to 200 cycles, and corrected for isobaric interference of  $^{233}\text{U}^{18}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}$  on  $^{235}\text{U}^{16}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}$   
46 with an  $^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O}$  of 0.00206. Ionisation efficiency averaged 20 mV/ng of each U isotope. U mass  
47 fractionation was corrected using the known  $^{233}\text{U}/^{235}\text{U}$  ratio of the ET2535 tracer solution.

48  
49 Data reduction was done using the open-source ET Redux system<sup>3,4</sup> using the algorithms of  
50 McLean et al.<sup>4</sup>, ET2535 tracer solution<sup>5,6</sup> and U decay constants recommended by Jaffey et al.<sup>7</sup>. A  
51 value of  $138.818 \pm 0.045$  was used for the  $^{238}\text{U}/^{235}\text{U}_{\text{zircon}}$  based upon the work of<sup>8</sup> whereas a value  
52 of 137.88 was used in the prior study<sup>20</sup> study.  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ratios and dates were corrected for initial  
53  $^{230}\text{Th}$  disequilibrium using a  $\text{Th}/\text{U}[\text{magma}] = 3 \pm 1$  resulting in an increase in the  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  dates of  
54  $\sim 0.09$  Myr (no Th correction was made for date presented in Hoffmann et al.<sup>9</sup>). All common Pb in  
55 analyses was attributed to laboratory blank and subtracted based on the measured laboratory Pb  
56 isotopic composition and associated uncertainty. U blanks were estimated at 0.1 pg, based upon  
57 replicate total procedural blanks.

58  
59 In this manuscript the date uncertainties reporting is as A/B/C and reflect the following sources: (A)  
60 analytical, (B) analytical + tracer solution and (C) analytical + tracer solution + decay constants.  
61 The A uncertainty is the internal error based on analytical uncertainties only, including counting  
62 statistics, subtraction of tracer solution, and blank and initial common Pb subtraction. It is given at  
63 the  $2\sigma$  confidence interval. This error should be considered when comparing our date with  
64  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  dates from other laboratories that used the same EARTHTIME tracer solution or a tracer  
65 solution that was cross-calibrated using related gravimetric reference materials. The B uncertainty  
66 includes uncertainty in the tracer calibration and should be used when comparing our dates with  
67 those derived from laboratories that did not use the same EARTHTIME tracer solution or a tracer  
68 solution that was cross-calibrated using reliable gravimetric reference material<sup>9,10</sup>. The C  
69 uncertainty includes A and B in addition to uncertainty in the  $^{238}\text{U}$  decay constant<sup>7</sup>. This uncertainty  
70 level should be used when comparing our dates with those derived from other decay schemes (e.g.  
71  $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ ,  $^{187}\text{Re}-^{187}\text{Os}$ ).

72

73 Ten zircon U-Pb dates were obtained and are presented in Supplementary Table 1 (and Figure 6A  
74 of the main paper). All dates are concordant and yield a weighted mean  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  date of  $639.1 \pm$   
75  $1.7/1.8/5.0$  Ma (MSWD = 0.38, n = 10). The U-Pb data for this same sample dataset is not so  
76 simple and does not form a coherent population and yield an MSWD that indicates excess scatter.  
77 One fraction (z16) is distinctly younger than the main cluster (see Fig. 6A main paper) and is  
78 considered to reflect residual Pb-loss. The remaining nine data points yield a weighted mean  
79  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  date of  $639.59 \pm 0.42$  Ma (internal uncertainties only 95% conf., MSWD = 6.4), but with  
80 an MSWD value that still indicates excess scatter. Evaluation of this dataset shows a strong  
81 clustering around 639.5 Ma and yield a weighted mean  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  date of  $639.29 \pm 0.26/0.31/0.75$   
82 Ma (95% conf. MSWD = 2.6). We consider this to be the best approximation of the zircon  
83 population within sample DW-1 that best represents the timing of eruption, and hence the age for  
84 the stratigraphic level at which DW-1 was sampled within the Ghaub Formation.

85  
86 Fifteen zircon U-Pb dates are presented in Table 1 and are presented graphically in Figure 6A of the  
87 main paper. A coherent set of  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  dates yield a weighted mean  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  date of  $634.8 \pm$   
88  $1.5/1.7/4.9$  Ma (MSWD = 0.96, n = 15). The U-Pb data for this same sample dataset is also not so  
89 simple and does not form a coherent population. One fraction (z12) is normally discordant with a  
90 younger U-Pb age indicating Pb-loss and is disregarded from further discussion. The remaining  
91 fractions have  $^{238}\text{U}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  dates that do not overlap and there is no correlation with  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  dates  
92 such that the data form a short linear array that plots across the concordia band (defined by the  $^{235}\text{U}$   
93 and  $^{238}\text{U}$  decay constants uncertainties<sup>7</sup>), with two values reversely discordant. Based upon  
94 analyses of chemically abraded zircon data we would expect closed system zircon to plot towards  
95 the lower limits of the concordia uncertainty band<sup>11,12</sup>. However, in this data set, analyses plot from  
96 this region towards and across the upper uncertainty bound (see Fig. 6A in the main paper). Based  
97 upon long-term reproducibility of U-Pb data from the NIGL ID-TIMS laboratory, and coherent U-  
98 Pb data obtained for a high proportion of samples analysed, we suggest this variation is real and not  
99 an artefact of mass spectrometry and that this reflects real U/Pb variation in the analysed sample  
100 (which has been annealed and leached). One option is that the older U-Pb dates reflecting analyses  
101 of pre-eruptive zircon, and the apparent lack of corresponding variation in the  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  dates is  
102 due to being obscured by their larger uncertainties. An alternative is that the analyses with older  
103  $^{238}\text{U}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  dates are from a single concordant age population and that these older dates reflect un-  
104 supported radiogenic Pb. Whilst this is unlikely to occur at a bulk level (i.e., single crystal) it is  
105 possible that in zircons with fine scale U zonation redistribution of radiogenic Pb occurs at the sub-  
106 micron level<sup>13,14</sup>, which is then enhanced by the thermal annealing and chemical leaching process<sup>15</sup>.  
107 This possibility requires further investigation.



108

109 Either of these scenarios for explaining the scatter in the NAV-00-2B U-Pb require an interpretive  
110 framework where the younger dates are considered to most closely reflect the age of the erupted  
111 zircons and inferentially the age of the ash layer. This in turn requires the subjective selection of a  
112 date from which to derive an interpreted age for the sample. In Figure 1 we show a number of  
113 viable interpretations for this sample, selecting different sub-populations from the cluster of  
114 youngest dates. Our preferred interpreted date is Interpretation B, a weighted mean  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  date  
115 based upon the youngest five dates:  $635.21 \pm 0.59/0.61/0.92$  Ma (95% conf. MSWD = 3.4). We  
116 consider this to be the best approximation of the zircon population within sample NAV-00-2B that  
117 best represents the timing of eruption, and hence the age for the stratigraphic level at which NAV-  
118 00-2B was sampled within the Ghaub Formation. Each of the other alternative interpreted ages  
119 (Fig. 1) overlap with each other and thus the choice of interpreted date has no significant impact.  
120 We consider that alternative interpretations based upon the older age (ca. 636.5 Ma) are much more  
121 difficult to justify as they require the cluster of concordant overlapping dates at ca. 635.5 Ma to be  
122 too young due to Pb-loss, which we consider highly unlikely.

123

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163 annealing and multi-step partial dissolution analysis for improved precision and accuracy of  
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166

167 Supplementary File Table 1. U-Pb analyses of Sample DW-1.

Table 1. U-Pb geochronology data for Sample DW-1

Dates (Ma)		Composition										
Fraction	206Pb/ 238U a	$\pm 2\sigma$ abs	207Pb/ 235U a	$\pm 2\sigma$ abs	207Pb/ 206Pb a	$\pm 2\sigma$ abs	Corr. coef.	% disc b	Th/ U c	Pb* (pg) d	Pbc (pg) e	Pb*/ Pbc f
Zircon												
z4	639.891333	0.593356873	Mean = 639.29±0.26 [0.041%] 95% conf. Wtd by data-pt errs only, 0 of 9 rej. MSWD = 2.6, probability = 0.008			3143716	5.254532308	0.46132761	-0.090246937	0.327013873	11.0945386	0.319776778
z11	639.9597341	0.61116763			0903181	4.419095959	0.444784829	0.176353311	0.333060166	38.57476318	1.064909851	36.22550112
z16	637.4957231	0.40515678			6570565	3.93213184	0.35297439	0.493451899	0.32174235	19.93618539	0.43812687	45.49180309
z17	639.0061232	0.305639676			3001121	5.005617457	0.249856013	-0.152972577	0.323888831	30.22943263	0.902513177	33.49472718
z21	638.8758748	0.47755232	638.4905503	1.058814803	637.1271885	4.310621783	0.454308748	-0.274464237	0.30921582	13.59503911	0.288702932	47.09006243
z22	639.6185865	0.385317862	639.3808723	1.567990007	638.5409702	6.992279451	0.18125451	-0.168762282	0.323881833	12.20140233	0.5066661	24.08174208
z24	639.3983143	0.357451224	639.2112335	0.995533127	638.5500308	4.275124401	0.324632524	-0.132845268	0.303400454	12.45031276	0.298627603	41.69176809
z25	639.0243525	0.437395766	639.3931888	1.951032642	640.6967066	8.618269804	0.231042999	0.26102117	0.317045465	13.53249896	0.744581906	18.17462772
z26	639.1746318	0.395637107	639.8462088	1.665327279	642.2188197	7.280926619	0.270989422	0.473914918	0.322849444	9.54954437	0.394464528	24.20887988
z27	639.3743996	0.51893497	639.9054507	3.063162745	641.7809117	13.09295819	0.163923419	0.374987858	0.322526696	18.45161327	1.643269672	11.22859585

a Isotopic dates calculated using the decay constants  $\lambda_{238} = 1.55125E-10$  and  $\lambda_{235} = 9.8485E-10$  (Jaffey et al. 1971).  
 b % discordance =  $100 \cdot (100 \cdot (206Pb/238U \text{ date}) / (207Pb/206Pb \text{ date}))$   
 c Th contents calculated from radiogenic 208Pb and the 230Th-corrected 206Pb/238U date of the sample, assuming concordance between the U-Pb and Th-Pb systems.  
 d Total mass of radiogenic Pb.  
 e Total mass of common Pb.  
 f Ratio of radiogenic Pb (including 208Pb) to common Pb.  
 g Measured ratio corrected for fractionation and spike contribution only.  
 h Measured ratios corrected for fractionation, tracer and blank.

168  
169 Supplementary File Table 2. U-Pb analyses of Sample NAV-00-2B.

Table 2. U-Pb geochronology data table for Sample NAV-00-2B

Dates (Ma)		Composition										
Fraction	206Pb/ 238U a	$\pm 2\sigma$ abs	207Pb/ 235U a	$\pm 2\sigma$ abs	207Pb/ 206Pb a	$\pm 2\sigma$ abs	Corr. coef.	% disc b	Th/ U c	Pb* (pg) d	Pbc (pg) e	Pb*/ Pbc f
Zircon												
#1	630.925841	1.427257764	632.3425419	1.500529293	639.5593176	4.16779408	0.795684556	1.443724817	0.98958822	25.95591637	0.244748012	306.0491409
z2	634.8152933	0.361089668			229458	3.268830557	0.442587284	0.111349646	0.781902518	32.11375832	0.488536297	65.73464149
z3	635.0074513	0.616782193			642267	11.02132127	0.224344287	-0.481550138	0.836137413	29.01789356	1.796549443	16.152015
z4	635.1102299	3.041523352			918621	5.189286138	0.552189166	-0.081685227	0.914774793	9.246059087	0.185963632	49.71971655
z5	635.4811482	0.480901223			423952	6.55450615	0.261349317	0.44830873	0.921515449	24.2462356	0.818413401	29.62190246
z6	635.9269141	0.537359089			7631766	4.551328296	0.3880762	-0.34141104	0.689124473	17.39778845	0.399523434	43.54635294
z7	636.0215646	0.491656154	636.4320058	1.569225339	637.8769387	6.814527199	0.304270314	0.290302723	0.793830482	20.44741294	0.770848267	26.52585963
z8	636.0837863	0.465091109	636.9009847	1.969787668	639.8016166	8.951018375	0.094388782	0.58109111	0.688131315	21.51517978	1.16393504	19.27203956
z9	636.4896941	0.34689026	636.6197383	1.05222859	637.0814001	4.612233493	0.268022026	0.092877607	0.89792076	25.57007839	0.56140369	45.54668745
z10	636.5327889	0.450326407	636.9122513	2.014466507	638.258844	8.926365678	0.281256821	0.270435457	1.00372592	29.83487454	1.432269794	20.83048505
z11	636.5415143	0.530421956	636.3381731	1.125291111	635.6160755	5.042806223	0.225758259	-0.145597139	0.99329687	14.90304587	0.20369322	73.28069793
z12	636.6413877	0.907141109	635.5496194	1.665459327	631.6691892	6.81032134	0.453192877	-0.78745967	0.68863899	8.542737957	0.259901246	32.86916894
z13	637.0590132	0.742630458	636.914865	1.878832927	636.4034476	7.940933599	0.375616243	-0.103011012	0.889628354	27.29746509	0.78392052	34.8225458
z14	637.1210942	0.904405834	635.060044	1.952228537	627.413444	6.212033955	0.893290154	-1.56159392	0.927082525	11.04128128	0.315825711	34.96004566
z15	638.9526717	0.97786515	637.5635782	1.842922873	632.6433353	7.314631558	0.134651381	-0.997297539	1.018274262	9.36347568	0.244435542	38.30652286

a Isotopic dates calculated using the decay constants  $\lambda_{238} = 1.55125E-10$  and  $\lambda_{235} = 9.8485E-10$  (Jaffey et al. 1971).  
 b % discordance =  $100 \cdot (100 \cdot (206Pb/238U \text{ date}) / (207Pb/206Pb \text{ date}))$   
 c Th contents calculated from radiogenic 208Pb and the 230Th-corrected 206Pb/238U date of the sample, assuming concordance between the U-Pb and Th-Pb systems.  
 d Total mass of radiogenic Pb.  
 e Total mass of common Pb.  
 f Ratio of radiogenic Pb (including 208Pb) to common Pb.  
 g Measured ratio corrected for fractionation and spike contribution only.  
 h Measured ratios corrected for fractionation, tracer and blank.

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172 Supplementary File Figure 1. U-Pb concordia diagram for zircon analyses of Sample NAV-00-2B.

