

The Maritimes Basin: Basin, Epieugeosyncline, Taphrogeosyncline, Horst-Graben, Wrench, Rift, Successor, Aulacogen, Pull-Apart, Transpression? -Basins, Subbasins? -Just a Problem of Semantics?

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Upper Paleozoic rocks in Atlantic Canada have been described and interpreted in a rapidly evolving series of sedimentological and tectonic models over the past 60 years. This has resulted, especially in the past 20 years, in the proliferation of a complex terminology of geological-geographical basin and subbasin names as well as genetic names based on sedimentological and tectonic-structural models. The confusion in terminology (particularly for nongenetic application) arises from several factors: (1) vague definition and intent, (2) subsequent minor to radical redefinition or adaptation, (3) conflicting interpretations of constituent features both spatially and genetically, (4) mixed terminology, (5) rapid evolution in tectonic models and (6) excessive generalization. Any solution to the problem involves the co-operative establishment of a coherent, adaptable and flexible system of nomenclature. The nomenclature could be organized into two independent systems based upon application

and with appropriate definitions and guidelines: (1) a nongenetic nomenclature (with geographic name priority) describing present-day features without genetic implications, to be used for general reference typically in a nongenetic sense; (2) a genetic nomenclature (independent of the above) applied to interpretive features based upon tectonic, structural, sedimentological and geophysical models. To eliminate mixing of genetic and nongenetic terms, features formally named in the two systems may not have the same geographic identifier. The name Maritimes Basin, as introduced by Roliff (1962), is proposed as a nongenetic general term applicable in the geographic sense to all Upper Paleozoic rocks in Atlantic Canada. Consideration and discussion by interested workers of outstanding problems in name corruption, definition and hierarchy, as well as options for possible solution will be important in reconciling the present situation.