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Hybrid compactive faults formed during burial in micritic limestone (Montpellier area, France)

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8

9 ABSTRACT: Detailed fieldwork, analyses including SEM and EBSD investigations, and dynamic inversion method are used to describe and propose a conceptual model for the formation 10 of compactive faults related to burial in micritic lacustrine-palustrine limestones (Eocene, 11 Pyrenean foreland basin, South of France). These faults are characterized by sinuous shape, no 12 calcite precipitation and no macroscopic fault core evidencing their development in poorly 13 consolidated sediments. The fault pattern is composed of two sub-synchronous systems of 14 conjugate meter-scale faults (a normal-sense system and a strike-slip system), each one with high 15 dihedral angle (130°) and sometimes showing continuity between faults of both sets. Their 16 pervasive distribution, angle relative to the maximum principal stress direction, incipient shear-17 offset, porosity reduction, their crystallographic preferred orientation, and the "ridge and groove" 18 morphology of their slickenside, all argue for a hybrid compactive and shear deformation process 19 20 combining disaggregation, comminution, and pressure-solution-recrystallization processes. A 21 conceptual model using estimated stress path and theoretical yield envelope is proposed to explain their formation along the end cap part during early burial and compaction of the 22

limestone beds. The slope to the South associated to the syn-sedimentary basin flexure isproposed to trigger their specific pattern.

25

Key-words: compactive faults, shear localization, pressure-solution, crystallographic preferred
orientation, micritic limestone

28

29 1. Introduction

In micritic carbonate rocks, it is generally considered that fault initiate by a combination of 30 various deformation structures such as veins, shearing planes, and/or compactive pressure-31 solution seams (Peacock and Sanderson, 1995; Willemse et al., 1997; Mazzoli and Di Bucci, 32 2003; Crider and Peacock, 2004; Micarelli and Benedicto, 2008; Delle Piane et al., 2017 and 33 references therein). Faults mainly grow by propagation and segment linkage (Kelly et al., 1998; 34 Ferrill and Morris, 2003; Soliva and Benedicto, 2004; Agosta et al., 2012; Roche et al., 2012; 35 Ferrill et al., 2017; Mayolle et al., 2019 among others). Because fine-grained carbonates are 36 37 generally of low-porosity, fracturing and brecciation are dominant in fault zones, expressing dilation and shear behaviour (Micarelli et al., 2006; Bussolotto et al., 2015; Balsamo et al., 2016). 38 39 This deformation can progressively evolve into cataclastic processes within the main deformation area called the "fault core" (Billi, 2005; Hausegger et al., 2010; Schröckenfuchs et al., 2015; 40 Ferraro et al., 2018). It can be accompanied by other various processes generally related to 41 42 seismic events, i.e. clast-cortex grains, calcite crystallographic preferred orientation (CPO), or fluidized layers (Delle Piane et al., 2017; Demurtas et al., 2019). In such model, compactional 43 processes are generally restricted to specific areas, such as fault dip changes (Ferrill et al., 2020) 44

or fault tips (Rispoli, 1981; Petit and Mattauer, 1995; Agosta et al., 2010). Compaction by
pervasive pressure-solution can also occur within the cataclastic zone, showing scaly foliation
(Bullock et al., 2014; Clemenzi et al., 2014). However, fault initiation by compaction processes
(mainly pressure-solution pressure-solution but also disaggregation and cataclasis) remains
unclear, especially in micritic carbonates (Billi, 2003; Graham et al., 2003; Agosta and Aydin,
2006).

Conversely, fault initiation by shear and compaction failures is well known in porous and 51 granular rocks such as sandstones (Antonellini and Aydin, 1994; Ballas et al., 2014; Fossen et al., 52 2018), grainstones (Tondi et al., 2006; Cilona et al., 2012; Antonellini et al., 2014; Rotevatn et 53 al., 2016) or chalks (Wennberg et al., 2013; Kaminskaite et al., 2019). In such lithologies, faults 54 55 initiate by deformation bands showing different micro-mechanisms (Fisher and Knipe, 2001; Aydin, 2006; Fossen et al., 2007) and various ratios of shear to compaction; i.e. pure compaction 56 bands (Mollema and Antonellini, 1996; Agosta et al., 2010; Rotevatn et al., 2016), shear-57 enhanced compaction bands (Eichhubl et al., 2010; Ballas et al., 2013; Fossen et al., 2015), 58 compactive-shear bands (Saillet and Wibberley, 2013), and shear bands (Rotevatn et al., 2008). 59 Cataclastic processes are dominant and the related grain crushing induces pore collapse and 60 61 porosity reduction (Antonellini and Aydin, 1995; Fossen and Bale, 2007; Ballas et al., 2015) leading to material hardening and shear localization (Aydin and Johnson, 1978; Schultz and 62 Fossen, 2002; Shipton and Cowie, 2003; Philit et al., 2018). Other micro-mechanisms; such as 63 disaggregation (grain rotation, torsion or displacement), or pressure-solution-recrystallization; are 64 described in deformation bands and faults (Cilona et al., 2012; Ballas et al., 2013; Philit et al., 65 2015; Tavani et al., 2018a; Kaminskaite et al., 2019 among others). However, these processes 66 remain difficult to integrate in mechanical model such as the one developed for cataclastic 67

structures (Saillet and Wibberley, 2010; Soliva et al., 2013, 2016; Robert et al., 2018; Fossen et
al., 2018) because of the lack of combined descriptive-mechanical approach on such deformation
features.

Mechanical concepts suggest a potential formation of compactive-shear structures under 71 72 progressive burial, i.e. out of regional tectonic influence (Soliva et al., 2013). However, only few natural examples propose compactive shear localization under gravitational loading (Guiraud and 73 74 Séguret, 1987; Wennberg et al., 2013), whereas almost all described compactive-shear structures 75 are related to tectonic stresses. During progressive burial, compaction follows general porosity reduction curves (Ehrenberg and Nadeau, 2005) but can also localize bed parallel structures, such 76 as compaction bands (Aydin and Ahmadov, 2009; Rustichelli et al., 2012) or stylolites (Laronne 77 78 Ben-Itzhak et al., 2014). The part of these localization structures within the whole compaction of sediment remains unclear. A better understanding of compactive-shear structures initiation 79 appears necessary, especially within fine-grained materials and under burial "gravitational" 80 loading. 81

In such context, we investigate a network of meter-scale compactive-shear structures exposed within micritic continental limestone in the Aumelas - Hérault basin in the South of France (Montpellier area). Detailed fieldwork, natural light, SEM and EBSD (scanning electron microscopy, electron backscatter diffraction) microstructural investigations, and kinematic inversion method have been used to describe the fault systems and discuss the mechanisms and triggers. Theoretical mechanical models are used to discuss the origin of such structures.

88 2. Methods

89 2.1. Field observations and measurements

90 Sedimentological log of the main studied section was done to identify the relationship between 91 the occurrence of fault and bed characteristics. Beds are analyzed following the Dunham 92 classification (*M*: Mudstone, *W*: Wackstone, *P*: Packestone, *G*: Grainstone, *B*: Boundstone + *C* to 93 identify clays). Evidences of subaerial alterations (desiccation, karstification, brecciation) 94 observed on bed surfaces and the beds affected by fault sets (i.e. the location of fault networks in 95 the sedimentary succession) are also reported.

The geometry of the fault network is analyzed from stereographic data collected using compass and digit tablet (FieldMOVE software). These data are reported on stereoplots and histograms of dip and rake, i.e. the angle between the slickenline and the strike direction of individual fault planes. The data are presented after restoring the bedding to horizontal.

100

101 2.2. *Microstructure and rock properties*

Nine polished thin-sections were cut from blocks sampled below fault slickensides previously 102 impregnated by epoxy resin. These thin-sections were cut in the dip-slip direction of faults (6 103 thin-sections) or the strike direction of faults (3 thin-sections) to analyze fault micro-mechanisms 104 and kinematic criteria (evidence and sense of shear). They were analyzed by backscattered 105 106 electron imagery using a FEI Quanta 200 environmental scanning-electron microscope (SEM). Mosaics of SEM backscattered electron images, with a gray-scale intensity range from 0 to 255, 107 were obtained and used to observe deformation features and to estimate the porosity of the 108 deformed zones and the host rocks (2D porosity obtained from black areas on SEM images). 109 Several SEM images were also acquired on 3D blocks to observe grains and slickensides micro-110 morphology. Analyses with optical microscope in natural or cross-polarized light, and 111 cathodoluminescence mode were also used to identify potentially different cement phases. 112

Electron BackScatter Diffraction (EBSD) analyses were done in the host rocks and along the 113 fault zones, including steps and fault core. This analysis edits a map of the particles form their 114 crystallographic assemblage and allows analyzing their size, shape and crystallographic 115 116 orientation. Data were collected with the scanning electron microscope CamScan Crystal Probe X500FE and were processed using AZtecHKL software (Oxford Instruments). The acquisition 117 was done with a 0.3-0.4 µm step size at a working distance of 25 mm. Grains were reconstructed 118 from orientation data and their boundaries were defined as having a misorientation angle between 119 neighboring pixels of > 5° . The grain slope (i.e. the angle of the grain longer axis with respect to 120 vertical) was measured on grains showing surface area larger than 5 µm in order to avoid artefact 121 122 due to the image resolution. These data are represented on rose diagram. Crystallographic orientations are represented on stereographic diagram (equal area, lower hemisphere) and the 123 multiple of the uniform distribution (m.u.d. value) is used to estimate the crystallographic 124 preferred orientation of grains (CPO). Calcite twinning is automatically mapped using the 125 126 AZtecHKL software.

127

128 2.3. Fault slip and stress analysis

The state of stress during fault slip is obtained by inversion of the fault and slickenline data (Angelier, 1984) with the FSA software that was developed to analyse various aspects of the relationship between fault slips and stresses (Tajima and Célérier, 1989; Burg et al., 2005; Célérier, 2020). The inversion seeks the stress tensor that best align shear stress with observed slickenlines (Wallace, 1951; Bott, 1959) and uses the random search proposed by Etchecopar et al. (1981). This method allows to invert either the whole dataset in the case of monophase data or only a fraction of the dataset in the case of polyphase data. It yields the principal stress 136 orientations s_1 , s_2 , s_3 , and stress tensor aspect ratio $r_0 = (\sigma_1 - \sigma_2) / (\sigma_1 - \sigma_3)$, where $\sigma_1 \ge \sigma_2 \ge \sigma_3$ are the principal stress magnitudes corresponding to the orientations s_1 , s_2 , s_3 . We use the quality 137 criterion proposed by Heuberger et al. (2010) to distinguish robust solutions from statistical 138 artifacts. It is based on a comparison between the total number of data (N_{total}) , the number of data 139 with a rake misfit lower than 15° (N_{exp15}), and the number of data (NO_{exp15}) that could be obtained 140 141 below the same misfit by inverting a random dataset of the same size N_{total} . The result of this comparison is summarized by an integer quality index, InvQual, which varies from -1 for barely 142 acceptable solutions to 2 for robust estimates. 143

144

145 **3. Geological Setting**

146 *3.1. Regional tectonic framework*

The Aumelas - Hérault basin is located 20 km to the west of Montpellier city in the South of 147 France (Fig. 1a). This basin form a part of the continental foreland basin developed at the front of 148 the Montpellier thrust (also called North Pyrenean Frontal Thrust) (Arthaud & Séguret 1981). 149 150 This thrust is related to the Pyrenean orogeny occurring in this area during two main shortening 151 events, during Early Paleocene and Late Eocene. A relatively quiescent phase of tectonic activity occurred during Lower Eocene (Debrand-Passard et al., 1984) when carbonate lacustrine-152 palustrine sequence were deposits (Bonnet et al., 1971). However, the accommodation of a 300-153 500 m thick sedimentary sequence showing locally growth strata (synsedimentary folding) in 154 lacustrine deposits, indicates that some moderate tectonic activity remained during this period. 155

The studied outcrops are located along the A750 highway, at the "La Taillade" site (Lat.
43°37'36N; Long. 3°35'54"E, Fig. 1a). This area is located in front of the WNW-ESE St Bauzille

Thrust (reactivated Mesozoic normal-fault) and close to the change from NE-SW to EW trend of 158 the main Montpellier Thrust. Lacustrine-palustrine limestones were mainly folded and faulted 159 160 during Late Eocene second shortening phase of the Pyrenean orogeny (Fig. 1b). These strata are 161 now tilted 15-30° to the S and SW (up to 65° in the central part of the section, Fig. 2a), according to their location in the fore-bulge of the Pyrenean thrusts and to the tilting of the NE-trending 162 Hérault half-graben during Oligocene rifting (Maerten & Seranne 1995). We note that the 163 maximum burial reached by the studied section is difficult to evaluate due to an uplift (>100 m) 164 165 and erosion during late Miocene (Séranne et al., 2002). However, we consider a maximum burial 166 in an order of magnitude of 100 m since Oligocene sediments are not deposited above the study site (only formed in half-grabens) and the studied limestone section corresponds to the upper part 167 of the Eocene sequence. 168

169

170 *3.2. Host rock characteristics*

The main outcrop lies at the top of the 300 m thick "Lutetian" limestones strata related to a 171 172 lacustrine-palustrine system (Hartenberger et al., 1969) (Fig. 2). The studied section is limestone 173 dominated and shows a succession of mostly 25-50 cm thick, stacked, tabular carbonate beds (Figs. 2 b, c). The beds are mainly composed of a massive white mudstone including whole or 174 fragments of fossils of continental gastropods (limnea and planorbis) and ostracods bioclasts. We 175 note the presence of a 7 m thick wackestone to packstone interval (particle sizes well above 30 176 microns meters and often rather millimeters to centimeters). In some places, the mudstone beds 177 are intercalated with few centimeters thick brownish silty marls (Fig. 2d). Such silty marls can 178 179 also reached 1 m thick at the base of the studied section. The top of the section ends with a 3 m

thick marly interval including sandy-carbonate beds. The complete sedimentary succession does 180 not display any particular depositional architecture nor sedimentary structures. The main study 181 section is located down West of the 3 km long exposure along the highway, where the carbonate 182 183 beds only dip of 25-35° which permits to make measurements (Fig. 2a). A second section is located to the East, at the close vicinity of the Montpellier thrust and the Oligocene La Boissière 184 normal fault (Fig. 2a). This second outcrop of "Lutetian" limestone strata is separated by map-185 186 scale strike-slip sinistral faults and cannot be precisely correlated to the whole outcrop as no 187 benchmark beds is observed from both sections.

In thin section, the matrix of mudstones is composed of an unclear micrite sometimes including 188 initially mud-size crushed bioclastic debris and peloids. The SEM image from 3D samples show 189 190 micritic euhedral crystals of calcite less than 5 µm in size and few crystals of dolomite (less than 5%) (Fig. 3a). The present-day porosity of the studied mudstones, measured in laboratory on 11 191 mini cores using the triple weighting method, ranges from 4.4% to 22.3%. These mudstones are 192 193 therefore qualified as fine-grained and porous carbonate rocks. The dark and homogeneous images from cathodoluminescence microscopy analysis reveal no difference between calcite 194 grains and interstitial cements. We note that the imbricated contacts between calcite particles are 195 observed at microscale disseminated in the material (Fig. 3b). The bed surfaces are affected by 196 pedogenic modifications (i.e. desiccation cracks, micro-karstification, brecciation, iron oxide 197 198 deposits...) related to shallow palustrine environments (wetlands), and therefore to common exposition to drying conditions and evaporative/groundwater recharge phases (Freytet and 199 Plaziat, 1982; Alonso-Zarza and Wright, 2010). The mudstone beds of the second (eastern) 200 outcrop show less evidences of emersion and contain several brecciated beds with higher quartz 201 grains fraction. These specificities suggest a formation of this sedimentary section in a lacustrine 202

domain rather than palustrine environment, or at least a deeper water "lake" setting that records
less the evaporative phases compared to the wetland environment of carbonate section of the
western outcrop.

206

207 **4. Description of faults**

Different fault sets are observed along the study outcrop. We focus on meter-scale faults showing specific slickensides (see description section 4.2.) whereas Late Pyrenean or Oligocene fault networks (i.e. faults of several meters to tens meters length, cutting across the whole observable limestone section, with a brecciated fault core, a damage zone with mode I joint systems and calcite fiber along their surface) are not considered in the present study. Studied faults are organized in two different sets: a set of dip-slip normal faults at low-angle with respect to bedding, and a set of strike-slip faults at high-angle to bedding.

215

216 *4.1. Location of faults within the limestone succession*

217 Faults are heterogeneously distributed in the limestone succession. They affect almost all beds within the first 30 m and the last third of the mudstone sequence from 82 to 88 m (Fig. 4). They 218 are mainly absent from 55 m to 75 m, especially in the wackestone-packstone interval. These 219 220 faults are also observed restricted to specific mudstone beds that are intercalated within beds unaffected by faults from 30 to 55 m and from 75 to 82 m. The faults are only observed in 221 222 limestone beds thicker than 20 cm (mainly absent in thinner ones). They can be observed 223 whatever the secondary alteration occurring in affected limestone beds during syn-sedimentary subaerial exposure (desiccation, oxidation...) (Fig. 4). However, we note that faults are more 224

abundant in limestone beds showing few secondary alteration (for example the 2 m to 17 m
section) whereas they are mainly absent in highly altered limestone beds (for example the 55 m to
75 m section).

- 228
- 229 4.2. Specificity of fault slickensides

The studied faults differ from other fault systems affecting the limestone sections in the area by 230 their morphology and slickenside characteristics (Fig. 5). At the first order, these faults are 231 232 characterized by the lack of a macroscopic fault core (i.e. fault rock visible at the naked eyes) and the lack of calcite or iron oxide precipitation along their slickensides (Fig. 5a). The slickensides 233 show grooves as frequent as ridges along the fault planes. These grooves and ridges features are 234 of several centimeters length and show U-shape with flat bottom (or flat top) and larger wave 235 length than amplitude (Figs. 5b, c). These grooves are observed at two imbricated scales of 236 width: 1 cm and 100s µm (Figs. 5b, e). The ridges of one wall of the fault plane perfectly fit into 237 the grooves of the other wall, i.e. no fracture porosity or cementation is observed along the fault 238 surface. These grooves show no specific asperity at the lower tip whereas two different 239 morphologies are observed at the upper tip of the groove: (1) V "crescentic" markings and (2) 240 step markings formed by sharp mm to cm-high plane, at high angle to the slickenside (following 241 the classification of Doblas, 1998) (Figs. 5b, c, d and f). These step markings are irregular planes 242 of centimeter to several centimeters length (Fig. 5d). They are uncommonly related to joint below 243 244 the fault plane but are more generally observed without associated deformation structures. No stylolitic teeth are observed on these step markings. 245

246

247 4.3. Normal fault system

The low-angle to bedding faults are generally composed of meter-scale length structures (Fig. 248 6a). These faults are mainly restricted within single carbonate beds, and rarely affecting 2 or 3 249 beds. They show a sigmoidal shape (or flat S-shape) in cross-section with a maximum dip in the 250 251 central part of the beds, progressively decreasing at the top and base of the beds (listric to bed interface) (Figs. 6b, c). Laterally, they form curved and irregular bended surfaces and show 252 connections with surrounding faults. The steps at the upper tip of the grooves along the 253 254 slickensides suggest a normal-sense kinematic (Petit & Laville 1987) (Fig. 5), but no offset markers or tip folding are observable. These faults form a conjugate system with opposite dip. 255 After restoration to horizontal, stereographic plots reveal East-West oriented conjugate fault 256 257 system, with mainly North-South slickenlines (grooves) (Fig. 7a). Each dipping set is crosscutting the other with a dominant observation of South-dipping set cutting the North-dipping 258 one (Figs. 6d, e). These crosscutting zones uncommonly show millimeter-scale normal-sense 259 shear-displacement but no measurable offset is more generally detected along these faults. 260 Moreover, numerous abutting contacts are observed between both sets (Fig. 6d, e). Few NW or 261 SW-striking slickenlines are also measured. The dip of the faults, measured systematically in the 262 central part of beds, is on average $25^{\circ} \pm 7^{\circ}$, suggesting a high dihedral angle of about 130° 263 between conjugate fault sets (Fig. 7b). The rake data show purely dip-slip motion (Fig. 7c). 264

265

266 *4.4. Strike-slip fault system*

The high-angle to bedding faults show large grooves and ridges similarly to low-angle normal
faults (Figs. 8a, b). These faults generally cross-cut several limestone layers (2 to 5 beds). They

show numerous centimeter-scale dilational jogs between meter-scale planar fault segments (Fig. 269 8c). These dilational jogs observed along the fault revealed a shear-displacement of about 1 cm 270 (Fig. 8d). These faults form then a strike-slip system with a dextral set of strike ranging of strike 271 272 ranging from N°20E to N°50E and a sinistral set striking from N°150E to N°180E (Fig. 9a). The strike-slip faults form a conjugate system with a general dihedral angle between 120° and 140° 273 (similarly to the normal-sense set). These faults are almost vertical after restoration of bedding to 274 horizontal, on average $79^{\circ} \pm 9^{\circ}$, and show mostly horizontal slickenlines (grooves) with a plunge 275 of $11^{\circ} \pm 13^{\circ}$ on average (both North or South) (Fig. 9b) and a rake around the 0° and the 180° 276 277 values (i.e. horizontal) (Fig. 9c).

The strike-slip fault systems generally cross-cut the normal-sense fault system (Fig. 8a), but, a 278 279 same surface is sometimes observed as laterally evolving from strike-slip to dip-slip slickensides, 280 with a progressive decrease of dip and showing parallel grooves of similar trend (Figs. 10a, b). We note that both dip-slip and strike-slip systems are commonly observed together (Fig. 10d). 281 However, a bed-by-bed analysis of fault system within the first 47 beds of the limestone 282 succession reveals 6 beds where only dip-slip normal faults are observed and 3 beds with only 283 strike-slip faults (Fig. 10c). The fault spacing of only few tens centimeters revealed a pervasive 284 285 distribution of both sets in bed affected by faulting (Fig. 10d). We note that several examples of strike-slip slickensides are observed along the plane of late strike-slip brittle faults (i.e. faults of 286 tens meters length, with a brecciated fault core and calcite fiber along the fault mirror). 287

288

289 4.5. Microstructure of faults

The microstructure of the limestone in the wall along the fault plane changes from areas where 290 the grain framework is similar to the host rock (grain size, shape, composition, porosity) into 291 zones where the microporosity is significantly reduced close to the main fault surface (Fig. 11). 292 293 The thickness of this low-porosity zone is variable and can reach in the best-case 0.3 mm below the fault plane. These compacted zones are preferentially observed at fault plane irregularities, 294 i.e. where small dip changes occurs and forms compressive jogs along the slickenside (Figs. 11a, 295 c, d). This specific location of compaction is consistent with the kinematics of the faults deduced 296 297 form field observations. Smooth pressure-solution seams are observed particularly in these zones 298 as sinuous cleavages following grain contacts (Figs. 11c, d). These cleavages are parallel or slightly oblique to the faults and are sometimes open (probably related to thin-section 299 preparation). Concerning step markings located at the upper tip of the groove, these areas show 300 no evidence of compaction. The presence of dilation joint is sometimes observed (Fig. 11e), but 301 several examples show no deformation feature below the step. A sharp plane penetrating the 302 303 material is often observed in the continuity of the fault plane and could be interpreted as P plane 304 structure (Fig. 11e). No significant grain orientation is observed in the host material (Fig. 12a). However, compacted areas show a preferential orientation of grains parallel to the fault plane 305 (Figs. 12b, c). 306

A low-porosity and compacted zone of few tens of micrometers is observed above the main fault plane (Fig. 11b). In this zone, the particles appear smaller than the ones of host material (Fig. 13a). We note that only few grains with microcracks and no hertzian contacts were identified in these structures. This zone is bordered by the main fault slickenside. Several tens µm long planes are also observed within the comminuted zone (Fig. 11b). This comminution is accompanied by a crystallographic preferred orientation (CPO) of grains as revealed by the dominant reddish color

of grains within the compacted fault zone (EBSD acquisition showing colors depending on the 313 crystallographic organization of each grains) (Fig. 13a). This CPO shows a maximum m.u.d. 314 value of 4.85 whereas this value nether exceeds 1.70 in the host rock (Fig. 13b). This CPO is 315 316 observed in the c-axis of calcite grains and is oriented about 70° to the fault plane. We note that twining process is revealed by µm-thick bands showing a different color than the grain they 317 affect (Fig. 14a). These twins are only observed within the compacted area of the fault core or the 318 compactive jogs (Figs. 14b, c) whereas no twins are observed on step marking at the upper tip of 319 grooves (Fig. 14d). This specific location of calcite twins is consistent with the normal-sense 320 kinematic proposed for the fault system at low-angle dip relative to the bedding. 321

322

323 *4.6. Fault slip and stress analysis*

Strike directions of faults are clustered East-West and rakes have 3 modes: a major mode that is 324 pure normal (rake around -90, Fig. 7c) and two minor modes, around pure sinistral (left lateral) 325 and pure dextral (right lateral) (rake around 0 and 180, Fig. 9c). Inverting the restored dataset and 326 327 taking into account all of the 264 data yields a solution with only three outliers with a rake misfit larger than 160°. This can be due either to discordant movements or to erroneous slip sense 328 determination. It was thus decided to invert for 99% of the data to disable any influence of the 329 outliers on the result. The resulting solution is at the transition between extensional and wrench 330 331 regime with s_3 horizontal and about N°10E (Fig. 15a). In this solution, s_1 is vertical and show a very close value with s_2 suggested by the $r_0 = 0.0$. This solution also yields a low average angular 332 error (<10°, computed on 99% of the data), a large number of faults with rake misfit below 15° 333 $(N_{exp15} = 216)$, and the highest value InvQual = 2 (Fig. 15b). The normal faults are at high angle 334

335 ($\geq 60^{\circ}$) with \mathbf{s}_1 because of their low (15-30°) dip with respect to bedding. The strike-slip faults 336 are also at high angle with \mathbf{s}_2 , which plays the same role as \mathbf{s}_1 when $r_0 = 0.0$. As a consequence 337 both types of fault data are located on the right hand side of Mohr's circle (Fig. 15c). The quality 338 of the solution supports the fact that all faults are dynamically consistent.

339

340 5. Multi-beds normal faults

Several multi-beds normal faults (i.e. non-stratabound faults) are observed at the second studied
site, eastward of the main study outcrop (Fig. 2a). Because of the specificity of these structures
and their absence in the main 2.5 km long outcrop, we decided to describe them separately.

344 Slickensides of the multi-beds normal-faults show closely similar morphology than the bedrestricted faults, i.e. grooves and ridges, marking steps, no calcite precipitation, and curved planes 345 (Fig. 16a). The specificity of such slickensides is the presence of visible indentations at lower tip 346 of grooves interpreted as slickolites (i.e. sheared pressure-solution zone, Arthaud and Mattauer, 347 1969) (Fig. 16b). The height of these faults is at least 10 m and their horizontal length is about 348 349 several tens of meters. They are mainly trending EW and dip exclusively to the South (Fig. 16c). Their average dip is $23^{\circ} \pm 7^{\circ}$ (after bedding restored to horizontal). The fault throw can reach few 350 centimeters (Fig. 16d, see the evidence of footwall bed marks on the fault slickenside). We note 351 evidences of reactivation in reverse-sense motion on one of these faults, i.e. fine and regular 352 striation oblique to the main normal slickenlines, consistently with a reactivation during late 353 Eocene Pyrenean shortening. No multi-bed normal fault dipping to the North was observed at this 354 site. Brittle-like (late) strike-slip structures are observed with brecciated fault core, calcite fiber 355

along the fault plane, and mode I fracture damage zone (joints), but no strike-slip slickensideswere clearly identified.

358

359 **6. Discussion**

360 *6.1. Model of fault formation*

361 The low intergranular porosity zones having wavy cleavage observed close to the fault planes 362 (Fig. 11), the comminution, CPO and twinning observed in the fault core, as well as the high dihedral angle between conjugate faults (130° to the shortening axis) reveals that the deformation 363 364 mechanism is hybrid between compaction and shear, and not controlled by a standard Coulomb type frictional strength law. These characteristics expressing failure on the right hand side of the 365 Mohr's circle (Fig. 15c) are consistent with shear-enhanced compaction and pore collapse modes 366 367 observed in porous granular material having yield envelope with elliptical end cap (Wong and Baud, 2012; Cilona et al., 2014) (Fig. 17a). Indeed, studied limestones are composed of micritic 368 grains of calcite with relatively high interstitial porosity (up to 22%; we note that these faults are 369 very rarely or never observed in wackestone or packstone carbonate beds). They probably 370 371 behaved similarly to other porous and fine granular carbonates such as chalk (Risnes, 2001; Risnes et al., 2005) or marine limestones (Vajdova et al. 2004; Wong & Baud 2012 and 372 references therein). The size of such yield envelopes is mainly controlled by the porosity and the 373 grain size of the host material (if grain fragmentation is involved) as well as particle cementation 374 (e.g. Estrada and Taboada 2013; Soliva et al. 2013). This mechanical model implies that the 375 faults were formed along the cap under low ratios between applied shear and normal stress (Fig. 376 377 17a).

The stress state leading to fault formation can be obtained under a progressive increase of burial 378 with a high coefficient of Earth pressure at rest (K_0 the ratio of vertical to horizontal stresses in 379 oedometric conditions, i.e. no horizontal remote stress). This ratio ranges from 0.5 to 1 in very 380 381 fine-grained materials (Goulty 2003; Mitchell & Soga 2005) but is not constrained for continental unlithified micritic carbonate muds to your knowledge. The occurrence of both sub-synchronous 382 normal-sense and strike-slip systems suggests that vertical (σ_v) and horizontal (σH_{EW}) stresses are 383 very close. This fault pattern and the occurrence of faults in an unconsolidated material argue for 384 a high K_0 context since no evidence of EW regional (tectonic) contraction is observed in this area. 385 We here consider a range of K_0 from 0.7 to 0.9 to estimate stress paths leading to faults formation 386 (Fig. 17a). All these observations and mechanical considerations allow considering these faults as 387 formed by burial driven compaction during the increase of burial depth. The presence of faults 388 389 within the top of the sequence suggests that structures can form under a burial of only few tens 390 meters depth (Fig. 4). Their curved and irregular geometry is consistent with subsurface conditions of formation in poorly lithified rocks (Guiraud and Séguret, 1987). We note that faults 391 are generally observed in the limestone succession showing less evidences of subaerial exposure 392 (karstification, desiccation...) (Fig. 4). Subaerial exposure, by its impact on the host material 393 rheology, would probably prevent the formation of such faults. 394

However, it is not common to localize shear plane in such mechanical context favourable to compaction banding with more or less shear component (Schultz and Siddharthan, 2005; Baud et al., 2006; Soliva et al., 2013). In these cited examples, the compaction and the pore collapse mainly occurred by cataclasis, leading to pervasive network of compactive cataclastic bands (Solum et al., 2010; Saillet and Wibberley, 2010; Ballas et al., 2015; Soliva et al., 2016; Cavailhes and Rotevatn, 2018; Robert et al., 2018) and uncommonly conduct to shear plane

localization following the strain hardening model of Aydin and Johnson (1978) (e.g. Rotevatn et 401 al., 2008; Tueckmantel et al., 2010). The fault mechanism described in the present study differs 402 from this model of localization as a combination of processes is involved, i.e. grain rotation, 403 404 pressure-solution, comminution, and a dynamic recrystallization as revealed by the crystallographic preferred orientation (CPO) of grains (Smith et al., 2013; Delle Piane et al., 405 2017). By this way, it is interesting to compare the characteristics of these planes to the 406 slickensides described in C-S structures in crystalline rocks at the deep brittle-ductile transition 407 408 (Berthé et al., 1979; Lin et al., 2007). In such contexts, slickensides share similar characteristics 409 than the presently studied structures: grooves and ridges morphology without noticeable downslip ends, and slickenlines (grooves) of several centimeters length for a fault of cm-scale shear-410 displacement (e.g. Means, 1987). To explain this strain localization in a ductile context, a plastic 411 behaviour of material which is not related to a frictional sliding process is proposed by Lin and 412 Williams (1992). As expressed by Will and Wilson (1989) from analog laboratory experiments: 413 414 "the excess length and the nesting between footwall and hanging wall ridges and grooves is therefore a product of this plastic deformation". 415

We propose that quite similar hybrid and evolving processes occurred under sub-surface 416 417 conditions in response of plastic processes followed by shear localization and an early blocking of the fault movement. The fault initiation starts by disaggregation and grain comminution within 418 10s µm thick zones (Fig. 17b, stage 1). The process triggering the grain comminution remains 419 unclear. No evidence of significant cataclasis was observed even if this process cannot be totally 420 excluded. However, the grain comminution is accompanied by a dynamic recrystallization of 421 calcite as revealed by the CPO within the comminuted zone. The potential hardening induced by 422 the grain comminution (Schultz and Siddharthan, 2005; Wibberley et al., 2007) evolves 423

contemporaneously with a softening behaviour induced by the dynamic recrystallization (Smith 424 et al., 2013), which conducts to shear localization. This shear localization seems initiated by 425 segments of hundreds µm to several mm long, and is developed within or, more frequently, along 426 the comminuted-recrystallized zone (Fig. 17b, stage 2). We note that grain rotation and pressure-427 solution evidences are generally observed within compressive jogs and are not observed all along 428 429 the fault plane. This specific location suggests that these processes acts as secondary mechanisms related to the fault plane heterogeneities and then mainly occurred after the fault localization (Fig. 430 17b, stage 3). However, these processes reveal a compactive behaviour during the last stage of 431 the fault evolution which certainly triggers an early blocking of the fault movement as expressed 432 by the very low shear displacement measured along the fault slickensides. 433

The formation of two sub-synchronous conjugate systems rather than radial or random patterns is 434 quite unexpected considering that this mechanism of faulting is triggered by compaction and 435 436 burial context. This particularity in the fault pattern can be explained by a decrease of the NS (σ_3) stress induced by the syn-burial tilting of sedimentary layers since they are located in the extrados 437 of a very smooth antiform associated with the flexure of the foreland basin (foreland bulge, Fig. 438 17c) (e.g. Ferrill et al., 2021). In this particular setting, a conjugate system of E-W oriented 439 normal-sense faults formed consistently with the polarization of horizontal stresses (NS s_3), 440 441 impeding more random pattern formation. The strike-slip faults generally crosscut the low-angle normal faults whereas their connection may be a local reactivation of the normal system. The 442 strike-slip system could then initiate slightly later, consistently with a close value of σ_1 and σ_2 443 (Morris and Ferrill, 2009), and could be linked to local stress release induced by the formation of 444 the normal-sense system. More precisely, the softening occurring during the shear plane 445 localization of normal-sense faults could be enough to imply simultaneously the permutation 446

between a vertical s_1 to a horizontal and East-West s_1 (local stress perturbation due to fault slip), especially if we considered a high K_0 value. We underline that the similarity between dihedral angles for both the strike-slip and normal fault sets (130°), suggests that the material had the same behaviour during normal faulting and strike-slip faulting, and also that no significant vertical compaction occurred after fault formation (i.e. vertical compaction would have only increased the dihedral angle between normal faults). This observation suggests that the material reaches its maximum mechanical compaction during the development of the studied faults.

454 The occurrence of fault sets within specific beds or beds section of the limestone succession (Fig. 4) suggests that additional factors affect the fault formation. Low-porosity and/or early 455 cementation as well as the rock texture (distribution of grain size and nature of grains) in beds 456 may certainly impede the initiation of such hybrid compactive faults, similarly to the well-known 457 conditioning parameters described for deformation bands occurrence in porous sandstones 458 (Fossen et al., 2018a and references therein). Moreover, external larger-scale factors such the 459 sedimentation rate controlling the overloading stress or the tectonic features (tilting and slope, 460 regional stresses) can also periodically create favourable or unfavourable conditions for fault 461 initiation. 462

463

464 6.2. The specific case of multi-beds faults

The specificity of multi-beds faults remains elusive. Most of their characteristics argue for a similar mechanical context of formation by compaction processes, under the influence of a NS trending s_3 . These multi-beds faults cannot be considered as the evolution of bed-restricted ones as their slickensides show any evidences of segment connection and cut across several limestone

beds without marked plan bending. We propose that these multi-beds faults formed in an area of 469 higher sedimentation rate consistently with the lack of significant emersion and the presence of 470 several sedimentary breccias (debris flow from the thrust relief). This higher sedimentation rate 471 472 coupled with less marked mechanical stratigraphy (fewer differences between rheology of limestone beds compared to more fluctuating palustrine environment) is proposed to explain the 473 occurrence of such large-scale slickensides. The apparent absence of the conjugate set is also 474 interpreted to be linked with a larger influence of the slope during fault formation. We note that 475 476 these faults are not significantly reactivated during late Eocene Pyrenean shortening despite of 477 their EW orientation and their location in front of the main thrust system. This suggests that these faults, from their deformation mechanisms, morphology, and diagenetic origin, are not suitable to 478 479 form preferential plane of weakness.

480

481 *6.3. Comparison with other fault systems*

Other fault systems share several geometrical attributes with the fault system described in the 482 483 present study. For example, distributed patterns of compactive faults have already been described 484 as cataclastic shear-enhanced compaction bands in porous sandstones (Eichhubl et al., 2010; Ballas et al., 2013; Fossen et al., 2015) and porous limestones (Rustichelli et al., 2012; Rotevatn 485 et al., 2016; Kaminskaite et al., 2019), or as deformation bands with particles reorientation-486 torsion in clayey materials (Ujiie et al., 2004; Milliken and Reed, 2010). Furthermore, meter-487 scale shear structures showing both cataclasis and pressure-solution were described in porous 488 limestones (Tondi et al., 2006; Rotevatn et al., 2016; Tavani et al., 2018b), chalk (Kaminskaite et 489 490 al., 2019) or undetermined carbonate (Marshak et al., 1982). These examples and the fault system

described in the present study complete the range of localized deformation structures observed
along end cap yield envelop of porous materials (Fossen et al., 2018b; Ferrill et al., 2021).
However, these cited examples of pervasive compactional structures differ from our fault system
as there are mainly deformation bands without localization of slickensides and they are mainly
related to regional contractional stress fields.

Compaction of sediment during burial conditions is mainly diffuse across the entire material 496 (Ehrenberg and Nadeau, 2005). The compaction can also take place in discontinuity such as bed-497 parallel pressure-solution seams (Toussaint et al., 2018; Meng et al., 2021) or compaction bands 498 (Tondi et al., 2006; Aydin and Ahmadov, 2009). However, the participation of shear 499 discontinuities in the sediment compaction remains mainly not considered although polygonal 500 fault patterns observed worldwide in offshore sediments (Cartwright et al., 2003; Gay et al., 501 2004; Cartwright, 2011; Gay, 2017) are discussed to be triggered during sediment burial and 502 diagenesis. In chalks, Hibsch et al., (2003) described polygonal faulting where shearing is 503 associated with decrease of porosity by pressure solution and cementation. Conversely, 504 Wennberg et al., (2013) described cataclastic compaction bands triggered by vertical loading 505 during burial (no information of the fault pattern). In our study, faults appear to be a hybrid 506 507 system between these two previously cited examples as cataclasis, pressure-solution and dynamic recrystallization is observed. 508

We note that the polygonal faults described by Tewksbury et al. (2014) show calcite mineralization along the fault plane which implies a dominant dilatant behaviour. The meterscale compactive normal faults described by Guiraud and Séguret, (1987) in clayey sediments are also related to water-escape structures during sediment compaction (their low-angle to bedding and their slickenside morphology are quite similar to our study faults). These examples reveal that different micro-mechanisms can occur within the shear discontinuities initiated during sediment compaction. These structures participate to sediment compaction by compactive mechanisms within the shear structures (cataclasis, pressure-solution) or by dilatant behaviour which permits fluid expulsion and diffuse compaction of the host material.

518

519 **7. Conclusion**

520 Compactive faults showing hybrid micromechanisms of deformation are described in micritic porous limestones from the South of France. These faults are organized in distributed patterns of 521 meter-scale structures and form two sub-synchronous conjugate sets: a set composed of low-522 523 angle normal faults and a set composed of subvertical strike-slip faults. Their curve plane, incipient shear offset, high angle relative to s_1 , and porosity reduction argues for a dominant 524 compaction behaviour during faulting. Comminution, dynamic recrystallization (revealed by the 525 crystallographic preferred orientation from EBSD acquisitions), pressure-solution and grain 526 rotation are observed in these structures initiated during early sediment burial and basin flexure. 527 These faults complete the range of compactive structures formed along the end cap yield envelop 528 of porous materials. This example underlines the complexity of deformation processes occurring 529 under compaction and early burial context, especially in such poorly consolidated carbonate 530 material. 531

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541

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Fig. 1. (a) Schematic geological map of the study area modified from the 1/1 000 000 geological
map of France. (b) SSW- NE Structural cross-section within the Aumelas - La Boissière basin
using field cartographic measurements and the St Bauzille Well data. La Taillade is the study site.

906 Fig. 2. (a) Aerial pictures (GoogleEarth) showing the location of the studied outcrop along the A750 highway. The reported geological map is modified form the 1/50 000 maps of Montpellier 907 (Bonnet et al., 1971) and Lodève (Alabouvette et al., 1982). Main bed dip values are reported for 908 909 the three main parts of the outcrop. The main studied section is located westward. A second studied outcrop is located eastward but is potentially disconnected form the other studied 910 exposures by map-scale sinistral faults. (b) Field view of the main studied limestone-dominated 911 912 section. (c) Details of the studied outcrop showing mudstone beds. (d) Example of brownish silty marl deposits intercalated in mudstone beds. 913

Fig. 3. Host rock microstructure observed from SEM images. (a) 3D mudstone sample showing
micritic euhedral crystals of calcite less than 5 µm in size. (b) Image from thin-section showing
imbricated contact between calcite particles.

Fig. 4. Sedimentological log of the main studied section showing location of studied faults along
the succession. Evidence of pedogenetic alterations (desiccation, karstification, brecciation)
observed on bed surfaces are also reported. Beds are draw following the Dunham classification
(*M*: Mudstone, *W*: Wackstone, *P*: Packestone, *G*: Grainstone, *B*: Boundstone + *C* to identify
clays). Studied fault symbol represents indifferently both normal-sense and strike-slip fault sets.

Fig. 5. Slickenside morphology. (a) example of slickenside from a normal-sense fault. (b), (c), and (d) Detailed observations of grooves and ridges morphology and tips. (e) SEM image showing slickenlines morphology at the microscale. (f) SEM image showing the 3D morphology of a step marking on a slickenside. Thick arrows show the sense of displacement of the absent wall.

927 Fig. 6. Normal fault system. (a) Limestone layers containing constrained normal-sense faults. (b)
928 and (c) S-Shape of faults. (d) and (e) Cross-section of limestone beds showing the conjugate
929 system of faults. White arrows show the fault kinematic. *S0* is the bedding (base of the succession
930 at the bottom of the photography).

Fig. 7. Stereographic analysis of normal-sense fault set. (a) Stereograms showing projection of
fault planes and slickenlines. (b) Histogram of fault dip. (c) Histogram of fault rake. (Restored
data)

Fig. 8. Strike-slip fault system. (a) and (b) Examples of dextral and sinistral fault slickensides, respectively. (c) Bed surface showing the conjugate sets of strike-slip faults. (d) Detailed view of dilation jogs showing the fault kinematic and the centimeter-scale shear-displacement. White arrows show the fault kinematic.

Fig. 9. Stereographic analysis of strike-slip fault set. (a) Stereograms showing projection of fault
planes and slickenlines (grooves). (b) Histogram of fault dip. (c) Histogram of fault rake.
(Restored data)

Fig. 10. Interaction between both conjugate fault sets. (a) and (b) Continuity between normalsense and strike-slip faults. (c) Schematic bloc diagram showing faults organization. (d)
Photograph showing the pervasive distribution of both normal-sense and strike-slip fault systems.
White and red arrows show the fault kinematic. *S0* is the bedding (base of the succession at the
bottom of the photography). See the evidence of shear offset of the NNW-SSE trending sinistral
fault fig. 10a.

Fig. 11. Microstructure of faults. (a) Mosaic of SEM images showing the rock microstructure below the fault slickensides and photograph of the block sample (see the orientation and dip of the fault). (b) Focus on the compacted zone above the main fault plane. (c) Example of the compressive jog showing compaction and evidences of enhanced pressure-solution. (d) Other example of the compacted zone below the fault plane. (e) Example of fault step marking at the upper tip of groove. This example illustrates the presence of dilation joint and the lack of compaction.

Fig. 12. Grain framework reconstruction maps form EBSD acquisition and rose diagram of grain
slope (angle from the image top) in (a) the host rock, (b) and (c) the compressive jogs along the
fault plane. The color of grain indicates the angle of their crystallographic preferred orientation
with the different calcite crystallographic axis (0001: c-axis; 0110 and 1010: a-axes).

Fig. 13. Crystallographic preferred orientation (CPO) in the fault zone, EBSD acquisitions. (a)
Grain framework reconstruction maps from EBSD acquisition showing deformation zone above

960 the main fault surface. (b) Calcite orientation data for grains of the fault zone (within dashed line
961 in (a)). (0001: c-axis; 0110, 1010 and 1120: a-axes).

Fig. 14. (a) EBSD acquisitions showing example of calcite twinning within the fault core. Maps of calcite twins detected at the fault core (**b**), a compressive jog (**c**), and a step marking (**d**). The calcite twins are draw by red lines. High concentration of calcite twins is observed in the fault core and along the compressive jog whereas no twins are observed in the host rocke and at marking dilatant step.

Fig. 15. Stress state during fault formation. (a) Stereogram projection showing state of stress 967 determination by inversion method. (r_0 : stress tensor aspect ratio; s_1 , s_2 , s_3 , principal stress 968 orientations). (b) Table showing stress inversion parameters. (c) Reduced Mohr circle. The faults 969 are color coded as a function of their angular misfit range: 0-5° blue, 5-15° magenta, 15-30° 970 green, 30-180° grey. The procedure is detailed in Appendix 1 of Burg et al. (1995). Ntotal: Total 971 number of fault slip data. *Pinv*: Proportion of slip data used in the inversion. $\Delta \lambda_{\alpha v}$: Average 972 angular misfit of the rake; this average is computed on the Pinv lowest misfits only (Etchecopar 973 et al., 1981). N_{exp15} : Number of fault slip data with rake misfit < 15°. NO_{exp15} : Number of fault slip 974 data with rake misfit < 15° that could be obtained from a random sample. *InvQual*: Quality index 975 976 as in Heuberger et al. (2010).

Fig. 16. Multi-beds normal faults. (a) Exposure of such fault. (b) Detail of slickenside
morphology showing slickolites (teeth evidencing pressure-solution at the down-slip ends of
grooves). (c) Stereographic data showing faults organization (bedding restored to horizontal). (d)
Example of such faults with their estimated shear-displacement. White arrows show the fault
kinematic. *S0* is the bedding. *ds* is the apparent shear displacement.

Fig. 17. Conceptual model of faults formation. (**a**) Differential Stress (Q) – Mean Effective Stress (P) space diagram showing location of faults formation using yield envelops of porous carbonates (Risnes *et al.* 2005) and estimated stress path (*Ko* : coefficient of Earth Pressure at Rest; blue lines: estimated stress paths). (**b**) The successive stages of faults formation: comminuted zone with dynamic recrystallization (stage 1), shear localization (stage 2), and early blocking of fault movement by grain rotation and pressure-solution processes (stage 3). (**c**) 3D schematic bloc diagram showing the location of fault in the basin and the influence of the slope.

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