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## Abstract

In the Honalilar area (Denizli Basin, Turkey), the occurrence of banded Ca-carbonate veins and travertine deposits, represented by a dismantled fissure ridge-type depositional system, are the evidence of a Middle-Late Pleistocene exhumed, shallow, hydrothermal system. Their occurrence offers the best opportunity to: (i) reconstruct the fluid paths from the underground to the palaeo-surface, and (ii) analyse the role of fault zones in controlling the permeability and fluids circulation. Permeability developed in overstepping regional scale normal faults, with a slight left-lateral oblique-slip component. At the surface, faults favored the localization and development of a fissure ridge-type travertine deposit. At depth, the root of the hydrothermal system consists of W-E oriented fractures filled of up to 6.5 m thick Ca-carbonate veins, developed in a high dilatation zone. It corresponds to the step-over determined by the oblique-slip kinematics of the NW-striking main faults. The high dilatation step-over zone contrasted the progressive sealing induced by the concomitant Ca-carbonate deposition within the fractures, thus favoring permeability maintenance and fluids circulation for at least 200 ka. This evidence adds key inputs for predicting permeable volumes during geothermal exploration in areas affected by extensional tectonics. The main NW-oriented faults remained active even after the hydrothermal fluid flow, causing the dismantlement and progressive exhumation of the upper part of the hydro-thermal system.

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# Step-over fault zones controlling geothermal fluid-flow and travertine formation (Denizli Basin, Turkey)

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## Abstract

In the Honalilar area (Denizli Basin, Turkey), the occurrence of banded Ca-carbonate veins and travertine deposits, represented by a dismantled fissure ridge-type depositional system, are the evidence of a Middle-Late Pleistocene exhumed, shallow, hydrothermal system. Their occurrence offers the best opportunity to: (i) reconstruct the fluid paths from the underground to the palaeo-surface, and (ii) analyse the role of fault zones in controlling the permeability and fluids circulation. Permeability developed in overstepping regional scale normal faults, with a slight left-lateral oblique-slip component. At the surface, faults favored the localization and development of a fissure ridge-type travertine deposit. At depth, the root of the hydrothermal system consists of W-E oriented fractures filled of up to 6.5 m thick Ca-carbonate veins, developed in a high dilatation zone. It corresponds to the step-over determined by the oblique-slip kinematics of the NW-striking main faults. The high dilatation step-over zone hindered the progressive sealing induced by the concomitant Ca-carbonate deposition within the fractures, thus favoring permeability maintenance and fluids circulation for at least 200 ka. This evidence adds key inputs for predicting permeable volumes during geothermal exploration in areas affected by extensional tectonics. The main NW-oriented faults remained active even after the hydrothermal fluid flow, causing the dismantlement and progressive exhumation of the upper part of the hydrothermal system.

## Key words

Geothermal systems, extensional tectonics, relay zones, banded Ca-carbonate veins, travertine, western Anatolia

## 1. Introduction

In scarcely permeable rock volumes, migration of geothermal fluids is strictly controlled by fault damage zones (Caine et al., 1996; Barbier, 2002; Rowland and Sibson, 2004; Zucchi, 2020) where fracture-array (Caine et al., 1996; Cox et al., 2001; Liotta et al., 2018) is consequence of fault kinematics (Sibson, 2000; Kim et al., 2003; Brogi, 2011a). Laboratory experiments, numerical simulations and fieldwork analyses demonstrated that the permeability of the fault damaged rocks is enhanced by orders of magnitude with respect to the host rock (i.e. protolith, in: Bruhn et al., 1990; Sibson, 1996; Evans et al., 1997; Caine and Forster, 1999; Jourde et al., 2002). Nevertheless, permeability of fault zones is not homogeneously distributed (Stober and Bucher, 2007; Zucchi et al., 2017) and, in addition, it changes through time during fault evolution (Sibson, 1987; Cox, 1999; Rowland and Sibson, 2004; Uysal et al., 2009; Bense et al., 2013) with modifications in the fault zone

61  
62 architecture (Fyfe, 1987; Hancock et al., 1999; Polak et al., 2003; Uysal et al., 2009; Alt-Epping et al., 2013).  
63 Moreover, if saline fluids are permeating fractures, mineralization can develop (Bons et al., 2012) providing  
64 reduction of permeability. This latter effect is contrasted by new tectonic pulses, reopening previously sealed  
65 fractures (Curewitz and Karson, 1997; Uysal et al. 2007; Liotta et al., 2010). Consequently, permeability of a  
66 fault zone is extremely variable through time, and difficult to be predicted.

67 Permeability is considerably enhanced if two (or more) fault segments are interacting, as it is the case of  
68 the linkage zones and faults intersection areas (Curewitz and Carson, 1997; Brogi, 2004; Camanni et al.,  
69 2019; Liotta and Brogi, 2020). Interaction of fault segments generate multiple, commonly overlapping, minor  
70 structures, increasing the fracture density in limited rock volumes, where consequently, permeability is  
71 enhanced, from depth to surface (Curewitz and Carson, 1997; Hancock et al., 1999; Brogi et al., 2016a;  
72 Olvera-García et al., 2020). In this framework, step-over zones (or relay ramps) in normal fault settings are  
73 considered as among the most favorable structural conditions (Fossen and Rotevatn, 2016) to host  
74 geothermal fluid flow (James et al., 2011). For this reason, fault zones are considered of strategic interest for  
75 geothermal exploration. Furthermore, the knowledge of faults geometry, their timing and kinematics, as  
76 well as the understanding of the relationships between geological structures and fluid flow, are crucial for  
77 reducing the mining risk and for a responsible use of the geothermal resources. However, since exploration  
78 targets are at depth, information obtained by the study of exhumed geothermal systems represents the key  
79 to investigate the process linking permeability and fracture development.

80 Areas with travertine deposits (Ford and Pedley, 1996; Pentecost, 2005) offer the best opportunity to analyse  
81 how the deformation associated to a fault zone impacts on fluid circulation, favoring geothermal fluid  
82 migration from the deep reservoir up to the surface. Travertine (sensu Capezzuoli et al., 2014) is a terrestrial  
83 carbonate, formed from thermal springs discharging mainly  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  saline fluids deriving from the  
84 interaction between fluids and deep, highly fractured, carbonate bodies (Brogi et al., 2016a and references  
85 therein). Basically, travertine deposits are considered indicators of tectonic activity (Hancock et al., 1999)  
86 and their analyses can contribute to define geometry, age and kinematics of the structures to which  
87 travertine deposits are associated (Altunel and Hancock, 1993a, 1993b; Çakır, 1999; Martinez-Diaz and  
88 Hernandez-Enrile, 2001; Brogi, 2004; Mesci et al., 2008; Brogi and Capezzuoli, 2009; Temiz and Eikenberg,  
89 2011). Travertine are also suitable for accurate dating analyses through  $^{14}\text{C}$  and  $^{230}\text{Th}/^{238}\text{U}$  methods  
90 (Martinez-Diaz and Hernandez-Enrile, 2001, Altunel and Karabacak, 2005; Piper et al., 2007; Mesci et al.,  
91 2008; Temiz and Eikenberg, 2011; Nishikawa et al., 2012), thus permitting to date faults activity (cf. Muir-  
92 Wood, 1993; Çakır, 1999; Altunel and Karabacak, 2005; Uysal et al., 2007; Brogi et al., 2010; 2017; 2020).

93 When exhumation determined the exposition of the root of an hydrothermal system, the effects of the  
94 interplay between fractures and fluids circulation are measurable by studying the evolution of banded Ca-  
95 carbonate veins (banded travertine, in: Altunel and Hancock, 1993a, 1993b), representing the main  
96 mineralization in the fractures defining the fault zone. Chemical-physical variations of fluids properties  
97 (e.g., pressure, temperature and/or pH) trigger the filling fractures Ca-carbonate deposition (Uysal et al.,  
98 2009). Renewed tectonic activity can (re-)open the veins, therefore restoring the fluids circulation from  
99 which the growth of banded veins restart (crack-and-seal mechanism, Sibson, 1977, Ramsay, 1980). It follows  
100 that analysing banded Ca-carbonate veins in exhumed geothermal systems provides important inputs for  
101 understanding how fluids circulate within fault zones.

102 In this paper we describe the geometry of a well-exposed, Middle-Late Pleistocene exhumed geothermal  
103 system, from its palaeo-surface down to 100 m, i.e. from the dismantled travertine deposits to their feeding  
104 conduits, represented by banded Ca-carbonate veins.

105 This exhumed system is located in the northeastern part of the Denizli Basin (western Anatolia, Fig. 1) and  
106 consists of a “christmas tree-like” carbonate volume (about 25000 m<sup>2</sup> in plain view and 100 m in section),  
107 concentrated in a system of permeable damage fault zones where geothermal fluids were channeled. The  
108 peculiarity of this system is that fluid circulation was controlled by fractures of which width is up to 6.5 m,  
109 as determined by repeated crack-and-seal events. At the same time, these veins developed in a confined  
110 area where normal faults of regional relevance overlapped. Fluids reaching the surface formed a fissure  
111 ridge-type travertine deposit, progressively deformed during faulting, hence confirming the syn-tectonic  
112 travertine deposition.

121  
122 We interpret the study area as a step-over zone between fault segments, developed in an extensional setting.  
123 Our results describe how such a zone represents a favorable volume to channel geothermal fluids toward  
124 the surface, giving inputs for geothermal exploration.  
125

## 126 2. Geological outline

127 After the Alpine collisional stage, western Anatolia has been **affecting** by extensional tectonics since  
128 Neogene (Şengör & Yılmaz 1981). Extensional tectonics resulted in early-middle Miocene low-angle normal  
129 faults, **determining** core complex structures and supra-detachment basins, ~~and subsequent~~ late Miocene-  
130 Present faults, ~~cross-cutting~~ all the previous structures and ~~defining an intricate~~ play of transfer and normal  
131 faults (Alçiçek et al., 2013) and related tectonic depressions, where continental sedimentation took place  
132 (e.g., Şengör and Yılmaz, 1981; Bozkurt, 2003; ten Veen et al., 2009; Alçiçek et al., 2013).

133 The Denizli Basin (Fig.1) is 50 km wide and 70 km long and is delimited by NW- and SE-trending faults,  
134 developing since late Miocene and ~~accommodating about~~ 1300 m of continental sediments, ~~at least~~ (Şimşek,  
135 1984; Sun, 1990; Konak and Şenel, 2002; **Konak, 2002**; Koçyiğit, 2005; Kaymakçı, 2006; Alçiçek et al., 2007).

136 The pre-Neogene bedrock consists of: (i) pre-Oligocene metamorphic rocks belonging to the Menderes  
137 Massif, and (ii) phyllite, metacarbonate and ophiolite-bearing carbonate-terrigenous succession of the  
138 Lycian Nappes. The Menderes Massif is the structurally deepest outcropping unit; it is formed by HP-LT  
139 marble, quartzite and garnet-bearing micaschist hosting Palaeozoic-Cenozoic granitoids (Pamir and  
140 Erentöz, 1974; Şengör and Yılmaz, 1981; Okay, 1989; Sun, 1990; Bozkurt, 2001; ten Veen et al., 2009; van  
141 Hinsbergen, 2010; van Hinsbergen and Schmid, 2012). This unit is tectonically overlain by the Lycian Nappes  
142 (Collins and Robertson, 1997), through a regional extensional detachment as described in the surroundings  
143 areas (Okay, 1989; Sun, 1990; Gündoğan et al., 2008; ten Veen et al. 2009, van Hinsbergen et al. 2010).

144 Extension ~~is~~ accompanied by magmatism and ~~hydrothermalism~~, as ~~it is testified~~ by the diffuse  
145 hydrothermal mineralization and travertine deposits characterising western Anatolia (Ozkul et al., 2013;  
146 Brogi et al., 2016b).

147 The Neogene and Quaternary Denizli Basin succession, referred to as the Denizli Group, is subdivided into  
148 four lithostratigraphic units and consists of alluvial-fan, fluvial, and lacustrine deposits (Şimşek, 1984). From  
149 early Miocene, the Denizli Basin was controlled by the fault system ~~located to~~ its SW ~~part whereas, from~~  
150 early Quaternary, ~~such a Basin~~ enlarged due to the activation of the NE fault system referred to as the  
151 Pamukkale, Akköy and Tripolis fault segments (Altunel and Hancock, 1993a,b; Altunel, 1994; Hancock et al.,  
152 1999; Alçiçek et al., 2007; Brogi et al., 2014a). These ~~latter~~ controlled the location of the major travertine/tufa  
153 deposits (Ozkul et al., 2013; Capezzuoli et al., 2018; Alçiçek et al., 2019), presently characterising this sector  
154 of the Basin (Fig. 1).

155 The Gölemezli travertine (Çakır, 1999) was described as an isolated deposit consisting of two fissure ridges  
156 (around 100 m long) developed in a relay ramp connecting two fault segments named as the Tripolis and  
157 Akköy faults (Fig. 2). The volume of travertine deposit, about ~35 m thick over an area of <1 km<sup>2</sup>, is estimated  
158 to be ~0.035 km<sup>3</sup> (Sun, 1990; Alçiçek et al., 2018). The deposit ~~result~~ dominantly ~~formed by~~ multigenerational  
159 and multicoloured Ca-carbonate veins (Özkul et al., 2013; Capezzuoli et al., 2018). These developed along  
160 vertical/subvertical fault zones and extensional fissures affecting both the metamorphic substrate and the  
161 overlying bedded travertine. The age of the Ca-carbonate veins is ~~encompassed~~ between 504.232 ±72.608  
162 and 310.677 ± 5.764 ka (Capezzuoli et al., 2018).

### 163 2.1 The Pamukkale fault system

164 The northeastern shoulder of the Denizli Basin is ~~delimited~~ by NW-striking, SW-dipping, normal faults  
165 affecting the Neogene-Quaternary continental sediments (Fig. 2), juxtaposing these sediments ~~to~~ the  
166 Palaeozoic and Mesozoic metamorphic units (Menderes Units and Lycian Nappe) (Şaroğlu et al., 1987,  
167 1992; Çakır, 1999; Hancock et al., 1999; Koçyiğit, 2005; Kaymakçı, 2006; Alcicek et al., 2007). This normal  
168 fault system cuts, and is crosscut, by almost orthogonal faults (NE-striking) interpreted as transfer faults  
169 active during extensional tectonics (Kaymakçı, 2006; Brogi et al. 2014; 2016b; Alcicek et al., 2018).

170 Activity of such a fault system is ~~encompassed~~ between early Miocene and Holocene, on the basis of the  
171 age of the sediments involved in the deformation and on the relationships between faulting and travertine  
172 deposition (Altunel and Karabacak, 2005; Brogi et al., 2016b; Capezzuoli et al., 2018). Present deformation is  
173

181 indicated by: i) the location of ~~the~~ historical and recent earthquakes (Utku, 2009; Irmak, 2013); ii) the  
182 alignments of active geothermal manifestations; ~~iii~~ the on-going deposition of travertine (Lebatard et al.,  
183 2014; Boulbes et al., 2014).

184 Kinematic data on the NW-striking fault segments indicate a main normal dip-slip component during  
185 Quaternary (Altunel and Hancock, 1993a; Çakir, 1999). This is also supported by the offset of the Roman  
186 artefacts along the fault segment ~~passing~~ through Hierapolis archaeological site (Altunel and Hancock,  
187 1996; Piccardi, 2007). Nevertheless, a left-lateral strike- to oblique-slip kinematics characterises the older  
188 fault activity as indicated by Altunel and Hancock (1993a) and Çakir (1999).

189 A different kinematics characterises the NE-striking faults, on which right- and left-lateral oblique-slip  
190 movements ~~superimposed~~ the older normal ~~ones~~ (Kaymakci, 2006; Brogi et al., 2014; Brogi et al., 2016b; Van  
191 Noten et al., 2013).

192 However, both the NW- and NE-striking fault systems; played a fundamental role for the overall  
193 hydrothermal circulation and fluid upwelling (Alçiçek et al., 2013). Thermal springs (up to 57 °C, Bülbül,  
194 2000; Bülbül et al., 2005; Alçiçek et al., 2016) and travertine deposits (Altunel and Hancock, 1993a, b, c;  
195 Altunel, 1994) are aligned along the main fault segments, thus indicating a close relation between these  
196 structures and fluid pathways. Furthermore, the hydrothermal circulation is mainly concentrated in those  
197 areas near ~~by~~ the intersection between the NE- and NW- ~~trending~~ faults, where the rock volumes are ~~deeply~~  
198 ~~damaged~~.

199 In this context, the syn-tectonic fissure ridge-type travertine deposits (Bargar, 1978) are developing along  
200 the traces of both NE- and NW-trending structures belonging to the Pamukkale system. As examples, the  
201 NW-trending Çukurbag and Kamara fissure ridges have been described in details by several authors (De  
202 Filippis et al., 2012 with references therein; Brogi et al., 2014, Brogi et al. 2016b), being key morpho-tectonic  
203 features and showing clear syn-tectonic hydrothermal fluid flow with the related travertine deposition  
204 (Altunel and Hancock, 1993a, 1996; Altunel, 1994; Hancock et al., 1999). The hydrothermal circulation along  
205 fault zones ~~is however occurring~~ since Pleistocene, as testified by the mineralised, partly exhumed, damaged  
206 rock volumes associated ~~to~~ NE- and NW- ~~trending~~ fault zones. Mineralization consists of centimeter to meter  
207 thick syn-tectonic banded Ca-carbonate veins with minor content of Fe-hydroxides. These Middle  
208 Pleistocene to Holocene veins (Altunel and Karabacak, 2005; Özkul et al., 2013, De Filippis et al., 2012; Brogi  
209 et al., 2016b) crosscut the metamorphic rocks of the Menderes Massif and the Neogene sedimentary layers.  
210 The Ca-carbonate veins include cm-to-dm thick fragments of the host rocks, although altered by  
211 hydrothermal circulation and cemented by calcite. In particular, up to meters-sized Ca-carbonate veins can  
212 occasionally develop parallel to bedding and/or schistosity surfaces. Independently of their attitude and  
213 thickness, Ca-carbonate veins are always filled ~~of~~ banded onyx-like fibrous calcite/aragonite crystals, with  
214 symmetric, mm-thick laminae of different colors (reddish, yellowish, whitish and grey- greenish) formed  
215 during repeated crack-and-seal episodes (Uysal et al., 2007).

### 220 3. Data analysis

221 Field mapping and structural analyses were carried out along a tract of the northeastern margin of the  
222 Denizli Basin, in the Honalilar area, in the ~~surrounding~~ of the travertine exposure and within the quarry,  
223 where travertine deposits and Ca-carbonate veins were exploited (Figs 2 and 3). The morphological scarp  
224 and quarry location permitted us to collect data from the paleo-surface, now at top-hill, to ~~the deep~~  
225 part of the hydrothermal system, now at the base of the scarp, for a total exposed height of about 100 m. Outcrop  
226 conditions were optimal in the quarry (where the saw-cuts exposed about 100 m of travertine and feeder  
227 conduits). ~~Differently~~, due to alteration and vegetation only ~~spotted~~ outcrops were visible at the base of the  
228 hill, along its flanks, and at ~~top-hill~~ (Fig. 3).

229 In the following, for sake of clarity, the presentation of data is separated in two different sections addressed  
230 to the description of the fault system and its impact on the travertine and Ca-carbonate veins deposition.

#### 233 3.1 The faults system in the Honalilar area

234 The Honalilar area is located along the Pamukkale fault system, ~~delimiting~~ the Denizli Basin to the NE (Fig.  
235 2). In this area the faults ~~lose their lateral continuity~~ to form a step ~~just~~ centered in the area where travertine  
236 deposits and associated banded Ca-carbonate veins are located (Fig. 3).

241  
242 The slip surfaces of the major faults are not exposed, although ~~forming~~ well pronounced morphological  
243 slope (Fig. 3). These faults juxtapose the metamorphic rocks (marble, quartzite and micaschist) of the  
244 Menderes Unit with the Neogene terrigenous and carbonate successions filling the Denizli Basin (fault  
245 segment 3, in: Figs 2 and 3). Nevertheless, minor faults (including fault segment 2 in: Figs 2 and 3) and  
246 fractures are exposed in the footwall damage zone of the main faults (Fig. 4). The bulk of the minor faults  
247 is characterized by vertical offsets of few meters and by core zones ranging from 0.5 to 10 cm. Their damage  
248 zones can reach up to 10 m. These faults exhibit kinematic indicators, consisting of slickenlines with steps  
249 (Fig. 5) or, in some cases, calcite/quartz fiber-steps and chatter marks.

250 Kinematic data have been collected in 16 structural stations distributed along the main fault segments and  
251 in the step-over zone (Fig. 6), nearby the quarry area.

252 Outside the step-over zone, the two interacting NW-SE striking fault zones (eastern and western fault zones,  
253 Fig. 7 and 8) are instead characterised by a slight left-lateral oblique-slip kinematics, with pitches ranging  
254 from 65° to 84° with an average pitch of about 75°. It implies a 0.26 average ratio between the ~~vertical and~~  
255 ~~horizontal off-set~~ components (Fig. 9a). ~~The horizontal component gave rise to the high dilation component~~  
256 ~~within the step-over zone (Fig. 9b-c) and favored the the normal kinematics of the faults (Fig. 8),~~ which was  
257 also induced by the ~~vertical component of the~~ fault segments 1 and 3.

### 260 261 3.2 The ~~epigean and hypogean~~ travertine depositional system

262 This is described in two parts: the first is about the ~~epigean (upper)~~ part, characterized by bedded travertine  
263 deposits (i.e., Ca-carbonate deposition occurred at the ground-air boundary), also described in Capezzuoli  
264 et al. (2018); the second part ~~is addressed to describe the hypogean~~ part (the upper root of the hydrothermal  
265 system), defined by the feeder conduits, now highlighted by banded Ca-carbonate veins grown within the  
266 damage zones of the main faults, and in lateral pre-existing discontinuities.

#### 267 268 The ~~epigean~~ part

269 Travertine deposits, up to 15 m thick, are formed by bedded/laminated ~~continental~~ limestone. These  
270 deposits were dissected by normal faults and are now exposed (i) at the top of the hill (ca. 520 m a.s.l.) in  
271 the footwall of the faults system, (ii) on the fault hanging wall, overlying unconformably Neogene sediments  
272 and (iii) on the slope, in the fault zone (Figs 3 and 6).

273 At the top of the hill, a partly dismantled travertine fissure ridge-type deposit, up to 50 m long, ~~NW-SE~~  
274 ~~trending~~, has been reconstructed. Such a morpho-structural element overlies a matrix-supported polygenic  
275 breccia, directly resting on the metamorphic units (Fig. 10a-b), locally containing rounded cobbles and  
276 pebbles that progressively passed to microbial carbonate laminites and abiotic crystalline crusts (Fig. 10c-  
277 e). The microbial laminites, typical of low-energy environment, consist of subparallel sets, up to 20 cm thick,  
278 of porous crust made up of spongy bindstone mats with peloidal fabric. Many pores show an elongated  
279 oblong shape, which can be ascribed to gas-escaped bubbles entrapped, or bound, by microbial mats. Blocky  
280 sparite cement is locally present with equant crystals sized 150–300 µm. Microbial laminae in places encrust  
281 the components of the basal breccia, although, in some cases such laminae ~~are~~ alternated with (or pass  
282 laterally to) crystalline crusts. The crystalline crusts, generated by laminar flux along medium to steep slopes  
283 are made up of 1–10 cm thick, linear to curvilinear, calcite laminae formed of rows of densely crowded  
284 feather-like/ dendritic crystals (Fig. 10).

285 These beds, made up of crystalline crusts and microbial laminites, are tens of centimeters thick in average,  
286 and show variable primary dipping attitudes (from almost vertical to sub-horizontal), although, on the  
287 whole, dipping away from the NW-SE oriented axial zone.

288 NW-SE striking sub-vertical banded calcite veins, up to 90 cm thick (Fig. 10c), crosscut the bedded travertine  
289 in the slopes of the fissure ridge. The fissure ridge occurrence, as well as its orientation (Fig. 6), indicate  
290 the distribution of structurally controlled palaeo-thermal springs from which the travertine deposit ~~took place~~.  
291 ~~Such~~ fissure ridge represents the proximal part of this depositional system, while its distal part is partially  
292 exposed in the slope and hanging wall of the fault system. In these sectors, travertine is strongly deformed  
293 by E-W striking faults and cut by numerous cm- to dm-thick, NW-SE and E-W oriented banded calcite  
294 veins. Travertine consists of sub-horizontal or gently inclined (5°-10°) cm-to-m thick beds of microbialite

301  
302 (laminite and lime-mudstone/peloidal micrite facies). Meter-thick layers of well-bedded crystalline crusts  
303 show lateral correlation with microbial lithofacies. Lime mudstone occurs in planar to wavy layers up to 4  
304 m thick (on average 20–30 cm), of a grey, dense homogeneous micritic/ microsparitic, ~~sometimes~~ slightly  
305 argillaceous carbonate made up of unfossiliferous, clotted/peloidal and/or structureless micrite (Fig. 10d-e).  
306 The layers locally alternate with, or laterally pass to, crystalline crusts and microbialites. Such facies  
307 association ~~deposited~~ in low-energy flat/wetland settings (palustrine, distal pools), corresponding to the  
308 bottom of slope terraces and/or shallow lakes.  
309

310 The ~~hypogean~~ part

311 This is visible, in vertical sections, from the palaeosurface down to about 100 m due to the ~~saw-cuts~~ of the  
312 quarry. It consists of a network of onyx-like crystalline veins (banded Ca-carbonate veins) ~~crossing~~  
313 the metamorphic rocks and isolating cm- to m-thick volumes of brecciated ~~hosting~~ rocks (Fig. 11). These veins  
314 ~~coincide~~ with the feeder conduits that channeled the hydrothermal fluids up to the surface, where travertine  
315 deposited (Fig. 10). The Ca-carbonate veins veins are concentrated in an area of about 400 x 600 m (quarry  
316 area) and are only ~~occasionally~~ present outside. In the quarried area, veins are thicker (up to 6 m, Fig. 12a-  
317 c), and closely spaced: up to 8 veins per 10 m (Fig. 12d). Their concentration and overall size rapidly decreases  
318 from the quarry area ~~toward the surroundings~~, while veins pinch out west- and eastwards in a short distance  
319 (Fig. 6).  
320

321 The Ca-carbonate veins are W-E ~~trending~~ and steeply dipping toward S - SW (Fig. 12e). In some places these  
322 are locally sheared with a normal movement, as affected by faulting during and after their development  
323 (Fig. 12f). The veins texture is characterized by mm-to-cm thick, parallel and/or subparallel vertical bands  
324 of different colors: white, light-transparent and more rarely brownish bands (Fig. 13a).  
325

326 The contact between veins and host rock is sharp; ~~occasionally~~, centimeter-scale breccia fragments of Ca-  
327 carbonate veins veins are embedded in the same vein (intraclastic breccia), thus suggesting continuous  
328 deformation through time (Fig. 13a). Furthermore, the same microcrystalline coat locally encrusts/cements  
329 the clasts of small lenses (up to 1.50 m) of extraclastic breccia derived from the metamorphic (Menderes  
330 Massif) and Neogene substrate (Fig. 13b): this indicates an enlargement of the deformation volume and the  
331 syn-tectonic development of calcite veins that, in some cases, show internal cross-cutting relationships  
332 (from sinuous to orthogonal; Fig. 13c), suggesting repeated crack-and-seal events.

333 Vein crystals grew normal to the wall-rock toward the central part of fractures, thus forming symmetrical,  
334 isopachous or, less frequently, botryoidal mm-to-cm thick crusts (Fig. 13b). Banded veins are commonly  
335 completely sealed, although discontinuous voids rimmed by festoons can locally be observed in the central  
336 part of the vein, where their suture occurs.

337 Scan lines have been measured in order to reconstruct veins distribution and their geometrical setting in  
338 the whole quarry (Fig. 3). Scan lines, ~~settled~~ orthogonally to the veins, were subdivided in several segments  
339 to be adapted to the morphological setting and to the quarry cuts. By this, a total of 135 m was measured  
340 in detail (Fig. 12). The location of the scan lines does not correspond with their progressive numbering  
341 which, instead, followed the temporal criterion of acquisition.  
342

343 Describing the scan lines starting from north (Fig. 12), scan line 1 is characterised by WNW-ESE ~~trending~~  
344 cm- to dm-size banded veins, for about 15 m from its beginning. These veins are syntaxial and subvertical,  
345 crossing micaschist and quartzite of the Menderes Massif (Fig. 14a-b), and correspond to fault zones (Fig.  
346 14a). From 40 to 58 m, the metamorphic rocks are cataclastic, displaying a quartzite and micaschist  
347 brecciated texture, with clasts cemented by yellowish carbonate and crossed by cm-size calcite veins (Fig.  
348 14c-d). This cataclastic level is part of the damaged volume of the fault segment 1 ~~delimiting~~  
349 zone (Fig. 3 and 12), of which slip surface is covered by the debris as indicated in Fig. 12a.

350 ~~Differently~~, the next scan line (scan line 10) begins with a 70 cm thick W-E ~~trending~~ banded vein, followed  
351 by a 6 m thick breccia, made up of quartzite clasts, cemented by a yellowish calcite, ~~mostly~~ (Fig. 15a-b). This  
352 breccia is locally crossed by W-E ~~trending~~, sub-vertical banded veins (Fig. 15c). At the end of the scan line,  
353 for at least 1.5 m, a thick banded vein occurs. This ~~latter has its extension in~~ the next scan line (scan line 9),  
354 passing through an at least 10 m thick, W-E ~~trending~~, sub-vertical vein, locally embedding lenses of up to  
355 40 cm thick tectonic breccia (Fig. 12).  
356  
357  
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361  
362 Scan line 8 displays a 6 m thick lithon of quartzite and micaschist. Such a lithon maintained almost intact  
363 its primary fabrics, although brecciated volumes characterise portions at the contact with the banded veins.  
364 A ~~c.~~ 80 cm thick vein ~~trends~~ W-E and steeply dips southwards. It passes to a 2.6 m thick breccia delimiting  
365 a cataclasite volume of metamorphic rock, embedded within the vein, ~~of which width is~~ 6 m, up to the end  
366 of scan line 8. The extension of such a vein is displayed in scan lines 7 and 6, where it ~~comprehends~~ 4 main  
367 lenses of a tectonic breccia cemented by yellowish carbonate and made up of quartzite and micaschist  
368 elements.

369  
370 Scan line 2 begins with a micaschist lithon preserving its primary fabrics. It is followed by 1 m thick tectonic  
371 breccia and a very continuous banded Ca-carbonate veins, detected for other 6 ~~met~~ers. Such a vein  
372 characterises completely the scan line 3 (only 3 m long). Here, a 50 cm tectonic breccia lens is also  
373 recognized.

374 Scan line 5 starts with about 10 m thick breccia, made up of quartzite, locally cemented by yellowish calcite  
375 and crossed by a 40 cm thick Ca-carbonate veins vein. It follows about 3.5 m thick lithon, made up of  
376 quartzite and micaschist with their primary fabrics, although brecciated for about 3 m where a ~~c.~~ 80 cm  
377 thick banded vein affects the lithon.

378 In some cases, banded veins are crossed by slip surfaces with clear kinematic indicators. These faults dissect  
379 the veins producing localized cataclasite ~~levels~~. Kinematic indicators consist of mechanical striations and  
380 calcite fiber-steps, thus suggesting a fluid assisted faulting process (Fig. 16a-b). In other cases, the vein  
381 formation is accompanied by development of cm- to dm-thick extensional jogs (Fig. ~~16d~~). Banded Ca-  
382 carbonate veins veins and faults have a common W-E orientation (Fig. 12e-f).

383 Outside the quarry yard, outcrops are discontinuous and it was no longer possible to take measurements  
384 by scan lines. Nevertheless, a fault zone injected by cm- to m-thick banded calcite veins juxtapose<sup>u</sup> the  
385 travertine deposits ~~to~~ the metamorphic rocks. ~~Travertine results~~ strongly fractured, and each fracture is  
386 filled by banded Ca-carbonate veins. In some cases, banded veins form a network with mainly sub-vertical  
387 and sub-horizontal veins, ~~these~~ latter following the travertine beds.

388 The kinematic indicators collected in the step-over zone indicate W-E striking faults with a dominant  
389 normal component (Figs 8 and 12) and, in part, dissecting the W-E oriented banded veins. These ~~latter~~  
390 ~~developed~~ within the fault zones, therefore suggesting a continuous faulting activity assisted by  
391 hydrothermal fluids-circulation during earlier stages.

392 The different kinematics between faults hosting the banded veins in the quarry area and the  
393 eastern/western faults (i.e. fault segments 1 and 2, Fig. 7) is framed in the step-over zone setting as discussed  
394 in the next paragraph.  
395

#### 396 397 4. Discussion

398 The Honalilar area was ~~firstly~~ investigated by Çakir (1999) who considered the banded Ca-carbonate veins  
399 as travertine deposits associated ~~to~~ faults. At the top of the hill, this author documented two fissure ridges  
400 (about 100 m long) and slope-facies travertine deposits. In the same area, we recognised only one fissure  
401 ridge, partly dismantled (Fig. 10c), and a parallel banded Ca-carbonate vein cutting the travertine deposit  
402 (Fig. 6), which probably corresponds to the second fissure ridge reported by Çakir (1999). Contrarily, Özkul  
403 et al. (2013) described multicolored Ca-carbonate veins crossing the metamorphic substratum and bedded  
404 travertine deposits. According to Özkul et al. (2013), travertine deposits are exposed at the top of the hill  
405 and in the southern part of the quarry, where travertine deposits were offset by NW-SE and W-E striking  
406 faults (Fig. 6).

407 ~~Although~~ the broad exposures ~~favoured~~ by the quarry cuts, the transition and relationships between the  
408 banded Ca-carbonate veins and the bedded travertine is not visible (i.e., how the carbonate deposition  
409 changed from depth to ground-air boundary). Nevertheless, their link is clear as also documented by  
410 Capezzuoli et al. (2018). We therefore assume that the described Ca-carbonate veins developed within  
411 fractures that channeled fluids to the surface, where the related fault-controlled travertine deposits (i.e.  
412 fissure ridges) were located. These ~~latter~~ are today eroded and dismantled due to erosion and progressive  
413 faulting.

414 ~~Noteworthy~~, banded Ca-carbonate veins and travertine deposits occur only in a restricted area of about 400  
415 x 600 m, delimited by two main NW-SE striking ~~fault~~ segments, ~~SW dipping~~ (Fig. 6) ~~and forming~~ a fault

421 step-over zone (Peacock and Sanderson, 1991, 1994; Childs et al., 1995). This ~~accounts~~ for a close relationship  
422 between ~~such deformational~~ zone and circulation of Ca-enriched geothermal fluids.  
423 The main faults defining the step-over zone are characterised by a dominant normal component (Figs 7 and  
424 8). Nevertheless, the banded veins show a different orientation with respect to the fault segments ~~delimiting~~  
425 the step-over zone: ~~they form angles ranging from 34° to 52°~~ (Fig. 6). On the other hand, overstepping zones  
426 are characterised by fault/fracture segments with a geometrical pattern resulting from the local stress  
427 (Sibson 1985, 1996), where tensile and shear failure independently and locally developed to link fault  
428 segments with different orientation and kinematics (Childs et al., 1995; Camanni et al., 2019). The unusual  
429 thickness of the banded Ca-carbonate veins (Fig. 11) accounts for an important dilatational component  
430 affecting the step-over rock-volume. This feature, coupled with their angular relation with the main faults,  
431 accounts for a strike-slip component of the faults parallel to the basin, accommodated by the step-over zone  
432 (i.e. releasing step over zone, in: Kim et al., 2004 and references therein). It implies two left-lateral strike-slip  
433 faults bounding the area, as ~~it was already~~ hypothesised by Çakir (1999) for the study area. Nevertheless,  
434 our kinematic data indicate a different scenario: the main faults show a dominant normal ~~kinematics~~  
435 with a very minor left-lateral component (Fig. 7). This kinematic setting ~~account~~ for a relay zone linking normal  
436 faults instead of strike-slip faults. In this view, the fault length - relay width ratio is fitting with several step-  
437 over zones in extensional settings, as documented around the world (Fig. 17).  
438 In addition, according to Mayolle et al. (2019) and Childs et al. (2019), fractures linking normal fault  
439 segments are not purely dilatational in extensional settings, as it is the case of the Honaliar area. This  
440 apparent incongruence could be explained by analysing the configuration of the step-over zone that is not  
441 deriving from adjacent parallel and en-echelon fault segments, as described for most cases by several  
442 authors (Larsen, 1988; Peacock and Sanderson, 1991, 1994; Childs et al., 1995; Cartwright et al., 1996; Crider  
443 and Pollard, 1998; Brogi, 2011; Peacock, 2002; Fossen and Rotevatn, 2016; Nixon et al., 2018). In our case, the  
444 overlapping faults (fault segments 1 and 3, Figs 3 and 7) diverge just ~~in correspondence of~~ the overlapping  
445 zone: in fact, the south-eastern fault segment (fault segment 1, named Pamukkale Fault by Çakir, 1999)  
446 abruptly changes its strike, passing from N130° to about N160° (Fig. 7). This configuration excludes a pure  
447 strike-slip dilatation step-over zone linking fault segments with an en-echelon configuration and accounts  
448 for a step-over zone linking two diverging faults segments, with a dominant normal component (itches  
449 ranging from 65° to 80°, 75° on average). This setting ~~guaranties~~ dilatation and consequent high permeability.  
450 This ~~adds new inputs~~ for predicting targets during geothermal exploration in extensional settings. Fluid  
451 paths are, in fact, controlled by the orientation of the intermediate stress axis (Sibson 2000): closer to the  
452 vertical, easier to channel deep fluids, increasing the hydraulic conductivity. It derives that at least ~~an~~  
453 ~~oblique kinematics is~~ crucial to easily channel geothermal fluids from depth to the surface. At the same  
454 time, the high dilatation within the step over zone ~~contrasts~~ the sealing process deriving ~~by~~ the progressive  
455 Ca-carbonate deposition from the geothermal fluids, related to the CO<sub>2</sub> degassing (Mancini et al., 2019). At  
456 the surface, the effect of the CO<sub>2</sub> degassing from structurally controlled thermal springs consists of sinter  
457 deposits: travertine (i.e. carbonate sinter deposit) is the most widespread deposit forming nearby thermal  
458 springs, if the hydrothermal fluids have suited salinity (Pentecost, 1995). If this is the case, geothermal fluids  
459 are characterised by high sealing capacity when CO<sub>2</sub> degassing occurs. This process ~~contrasts~~ permeability  
460 in the bedrock, inhibiting fluids circulation although new fractures, induced by faulting, can reopen the  
461 existing conduits enhancing again fluids flow (Curewitz and Karson, 1997), during fault-valve behavior (cf.  
462 Sibson, 1981; Shelly et al. 2015; Ruhl et al., 2016). It follows that faulting and fluids flow are contemporaneous  
463 to travertine deposition and the Ca-carbonate mineralization within the fault zone becomes indicative of  
464 the age of the tectonic activity (Hancock et al. 1999) and hydrothermal circulation (Fouke et al., 2000; Simsek  
465 et al., 2000). In this case, we can refer the age of faults and the geothermal circulation to the time interval  
466 between about 504 and 310 ka (Capezzuoli et al. 2018) at least. In this view, during Middle Pleistocene, the  
467 step-over zone ~~developed~~ together with hydrothermal fluids flow, lasting for about 200 ka. It implies that  
468 the present hydrothermal circulation occurring in the Pamukkale area (Alçiçek et al., 2019 with refereces  
469 therein) could be controlled by ~~same~~ structural configurations, migrated through time toward the  
470 depocenter of the Denizli Basin, where ~~active faults occur~~.

481  
482 All these circumstances make the Honalilar exhumed hydrothermal system a site that offers the best  
483 conditions for ~~getting inputs to understand~~ the present geothermal circulation in the Denizli Basin and all  
484 areas around the world, ~~showing~~ similar geological settings.

## 486 5. Conclusions

487 Combining data from ~~the mineralization occurred in the~~ fossil, exhumed hydrothermal system with  
488 structural and kinematic settings, we reconstructed the structural control ~~on the~~ about 200 ka long-living  
489 geothermal system, controlled by interacting faults in the extensional setting ~~characterizing~~ western  
490 Anatolia. Hydrothermal fluids rose up from a deep reservoir to ~~surface~~, through the damage ~~fault zones~~  
491 developed in the step-over linking regional normal faults.

492 The structural and kinematic setting highlights a step-over zone, derived by the interaction of aligned faults,  
493 with dominant normal ~~component~~ and slight left-lateral movement (Fig. 18a). The ~~master faults~~  
494 ~~configuration~~, coupled with their reconstructed kinematics, favored dilatational volumes within the step-  
495 over zone, where mode I and mode II fractures developed in response to the orientation of the regional and  
496 local stress field (Fig. 18b). Within the step ~~over~~ zone, the developing fractures and normal faults, steeply  
497 dipping toward south, formed in a high dilatation environment offering the best opportunity to generate  
498 permeability and circulation of large volumes of geothermal fluids. The crack-and-seal mechanism  
499 controlled fluids ~~circulation~~ within the fault zones and favored the formation of a widespread network of  
500 Ca-carbonate banded calcite veins, up to 6.5m thick, as ~~result~~ of the competition between extension and  
501 ~~sealing~~ process (Fig. 18c). At the surface, the Ca-carbonate banded veins should correspond to fissure ridge-  
502 type travertine deposits with a geometric configuration as illustrated in Fig. 19. It derives that Ca-carbonate  
503 banded veins and travertine deposits are primary features to be analysed for reconstructing the tectonic  
504 control on the geothermal fluids ~~flow in the~~ upper crustal levels. This result adds key inputs for predicting  
505 permeable volumes during geothermal exploration in areas affected by extensional tectonics.

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## 999 Figure Captions

1000  
1001 Fig. 1 - Geological sketch-map of the Denizli Basin (modified after Sun, 1990 and Alçiçek et al., 2007) and  
1002 location of the study area.  
1003

1004 Fig. 2 - Geological map of the north-eastern margin of the Denizli Basin, where the Honalilar area (study  
1005 area) is indicated.  
1006

1007 Fig. 3 - a) Panoramic view of the Honalilar quarry with the main faults highlighted; b) Google Earth  
1008 photograph showing the Honalilar quarry and the surroundings hills; the location of the scan lines  
1009 measured and described in the text and illustrated in the Figure 12 is also indicated.  
1010

1011 Fig. 4 - Panoramic view of the fault zone to the south of the quarry juxtaposing the Neogene sediments to  
1012 the metamorphic units, where the hydrothermal altered footwall damage zone is highlighted.  
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1015 Fig. 5 - a) The fault scarp in the southern prolongation of the eastern fault delimiting the step-over zone  
1016 (see the text for more explanation). Panoramic view of the fault zone; c-d) particular of the damage  
1017 volumes related to the fault zone.  
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1023 Fig. 6 - Tectonic sketch-map of the study area showing the main structures associated with the step over  
1024 zone. Main faults, travertine deposits, banded Ca-carbonate veins and the station of the structural  
1025 analyses are also indicated. b) Geological map of the same area.

1027 Fig. 7 - Cartoon showing the main structures, the banded Ca-carbonate veins and the stereographic  
1028 diagrams (lower hemisphere, ~~equiareal~~ projections) indicating fault and striae for each station of  
1029 structural analysis.

1031 Fig. 8 - Fault plane solutions diagrams with fault-trends and striae, reconstructed from the inversion of  
1032 kinematic data collected on fault-slip surfaces and divided per structural domains of the step-over zone.

1034 Fig. 9 - a) The faults delimiting the step-over zone have ~~an~~ oblique-slip left-lateral kinematics (average pitch  
1035 75°), implying a ratio = 0.26 between the horizontal and vertical offset. b) Fault plane solution for the  
1036 average strike, ~~deep~~ and pitch values calculated for the fault segments 1 and 3; furthermore, the angular  
1037 relation between the average fault and the associated theoretical T-fracture (mode I fracture) is shown.  
1038 c) Relationships between the main fault and vein ~~trends~~ in the study area coupled with the direction of  
1039 the theoretical T-fractures as calculated in (b).

1041 Fig. 10 - Photographs illustrating the travertine deposits at the top of the quarry area: a) bedded travertine  
1042 forming the eastern flank of the travertine fissure ridge reported in the Fig. 6; b) ~~particular of the~~  
1043 contact of the travertine deposit on the pre-Neogene metamorphic substratum. The basal part of the succession  
1044 is characterised by a breccia cemented by carbonate; c) detail of the banded calcite vein filling the  
1045 internal part of the fissure ridge; d) detail of planar-to-wavy layers of lime mudstone; e) example of well-  
1046 bedded, cm-thick layers of clotted/peloidal microbial mats.

1047 Fig- 11 - Photographs illustrating the banded Ca-carbonate veins exposed in the quarry and developed  
1048 within W-E fault zones of the step-over zone.

1049 Fig. 12 - a) Scan lines measured in the quarry; their location is shown in the Fig. 3; b) diagram illustrating  
1050 the vein width variation along the scan line: the maximum value of 6 m has been measured; c) diagram  
1051 illustrating the number of veins each 10 m along the scan line; d) diagram illustrating the number of  
1052 veins with the indicated width; e) Stereographic (lower hemisphere, Schmidt diagram) and rose diagrams  
1053 of the measured veins along the scan line; f) Fault and striae of the faults affecting the banded Ca-  
1054 carbonate veins; g) location of the single scan lines with respect to the vein exposed in the quarry.

1055 Fig. 13 - a) Photograph illustrating the fabric of the banded Ca-carbonate veins, ~~often~~ characterised by  
1056 centimeter-scale breccia fragments of the calcite veins; b) Detail of the sharp contact separating the  
1057 banded vein and host (metamorphic) rocks; c) crosscutting relationships of different generation of  
1058 banded Ca-carbonate veins.

1059 Fig. 14 - a) Photograph showing a banded Ca-carbonate vein developed within a fault zone affecting  
1060 micaschist in the footwall of the eastern fault delimiting the step-over zone; b) detail of a minor vein  
1061 highlighting the symmetry of the bands; c-d) details of the hydrofractured metamorphic rocks nearby  
1062 the fault zones.

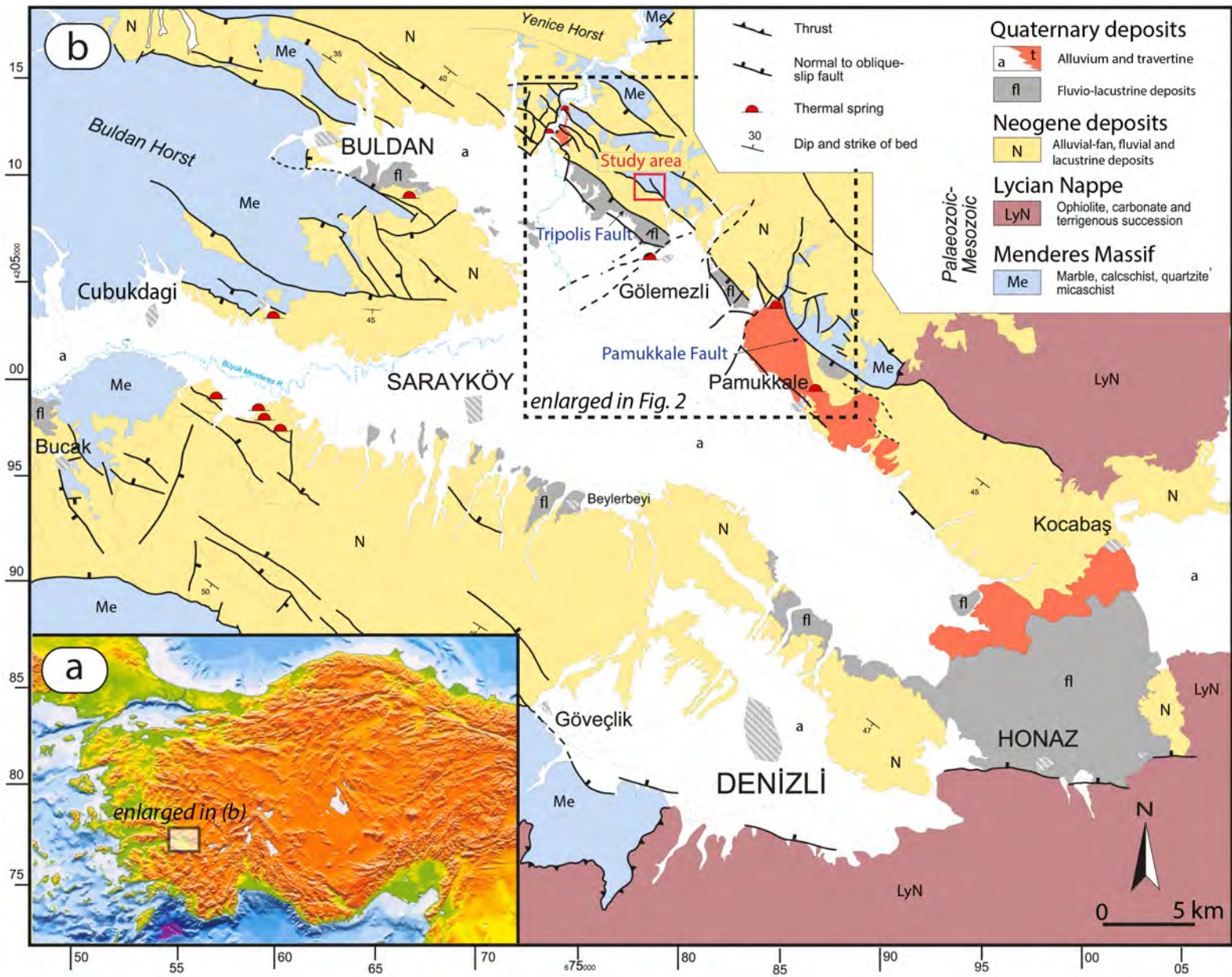
1063 Fig. 15 - a-b) Photograph illustrating cataclasites associated to W-E faults within the step over zone and  
1064 cemented by yellowish carbonate; c) Photograph illustrating a cataclasite ~~level~~ formed at the contact  
1065 with the banded Ca-carbonate vein.

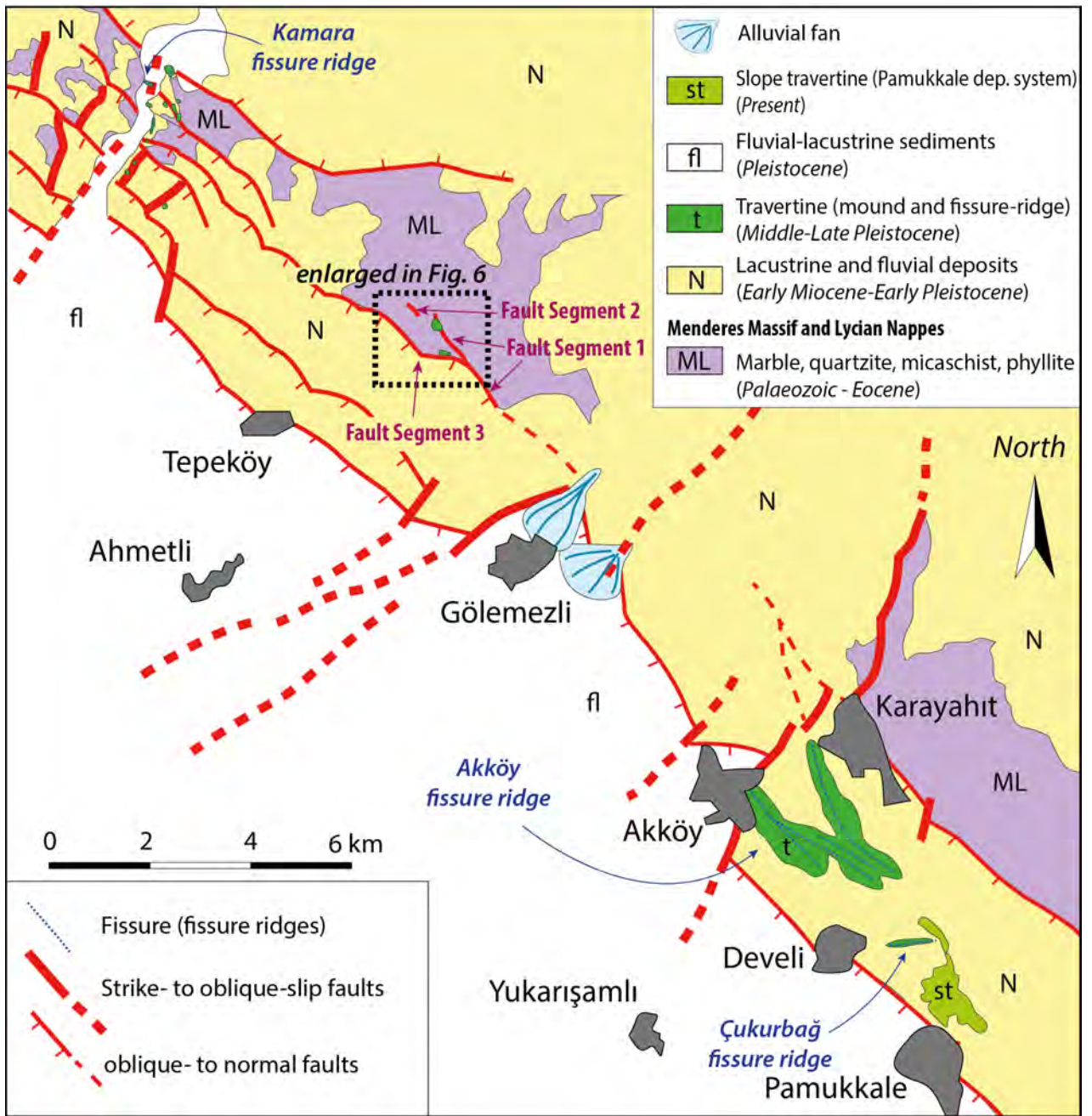
1081  
1082 Fig. 16 - a-b) Photographs of the kinematic indicators (calcite fiber steps) characterising slip surfaces  
1083 affecting the banded Ca-carbonate veins; c) example of dm-scale shear band localised within a banded  
1084 Ca-carbonate vein and developed parallel to the banding.  
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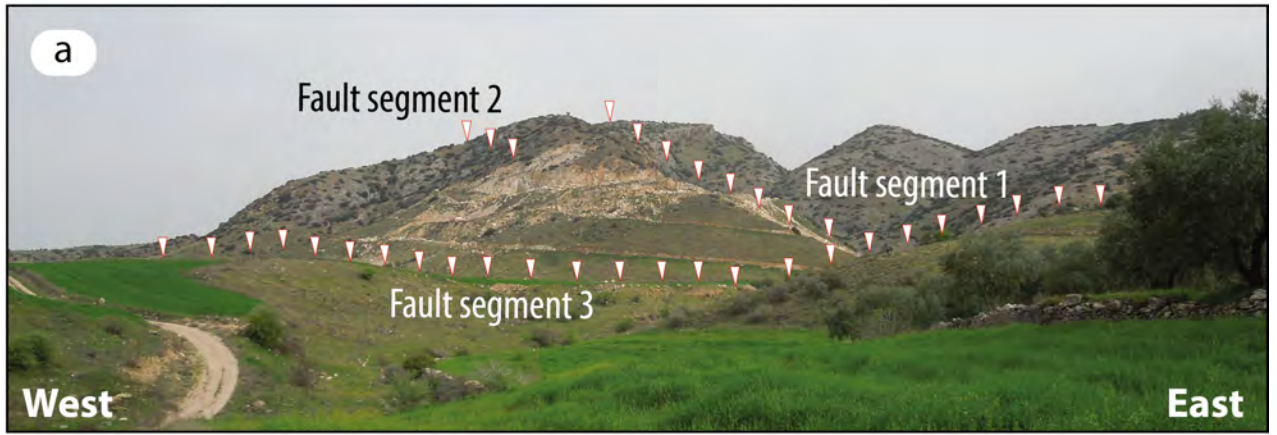
1086 Fig. 17 - Diagram of the relationship between relay-width and relay-length in step-over zones; data from  
1087 the study area is compared with a broad dataset reported in Fossen and Rotevatn (2016).  
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1089 Fig. 18 – Conceptual geometrical model of the study area, where the main veins and faults developed within  
1090 the step-over zone are considered structures formed within a highly dilatational volume.  
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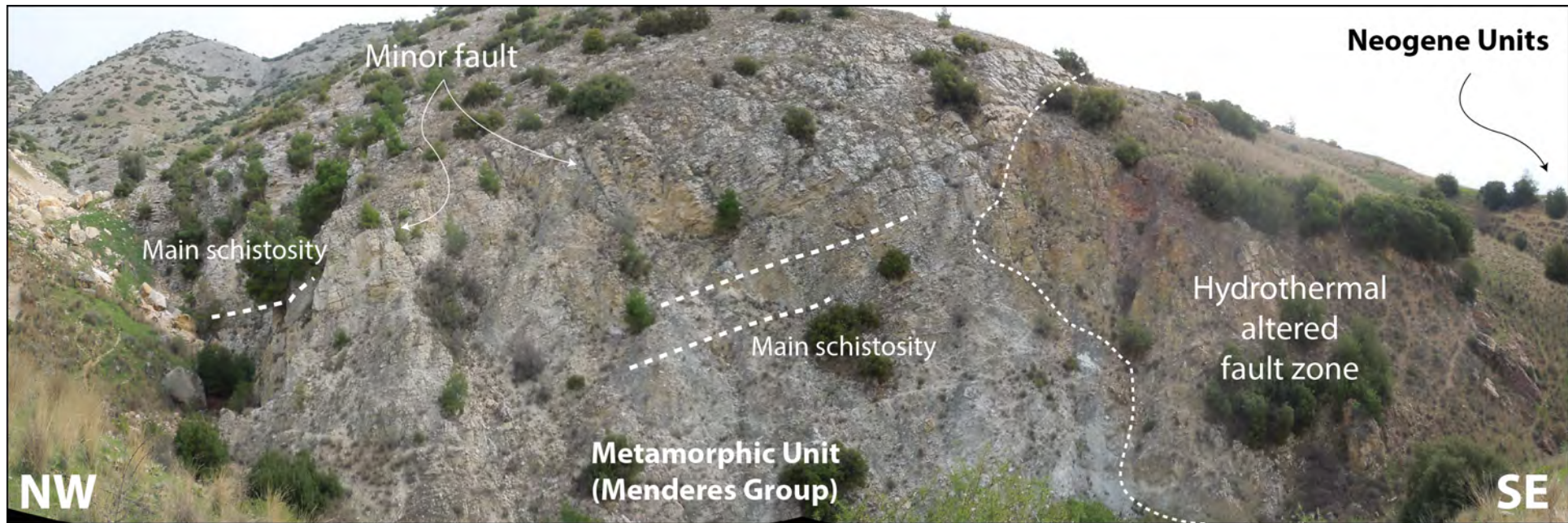
1092 Fig. 19 - Cartoon showing the orientation of the fissure ridge-type travertine deposits developing in a  
1093 releasing step-over zone bridging faults characterised by a dominant normal kinematics with a slight  
1094 oblique-slip component (in this case the ratio between ~~horizontal and vertical~~ components has been  
1095 calculated at 0.26).  
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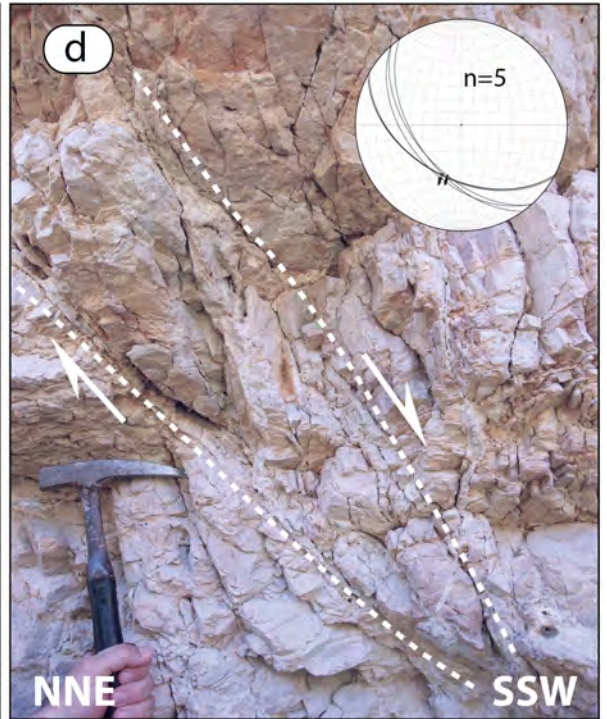
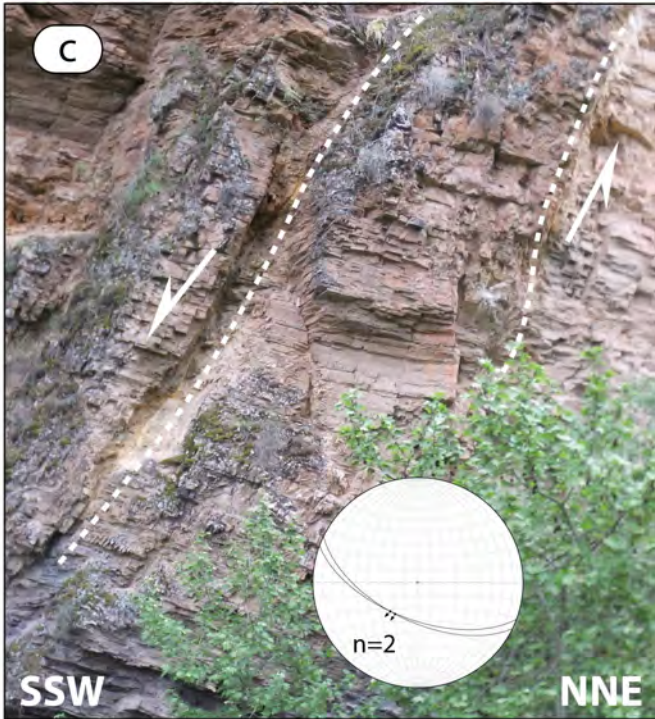
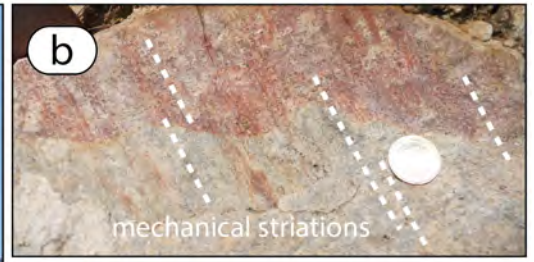
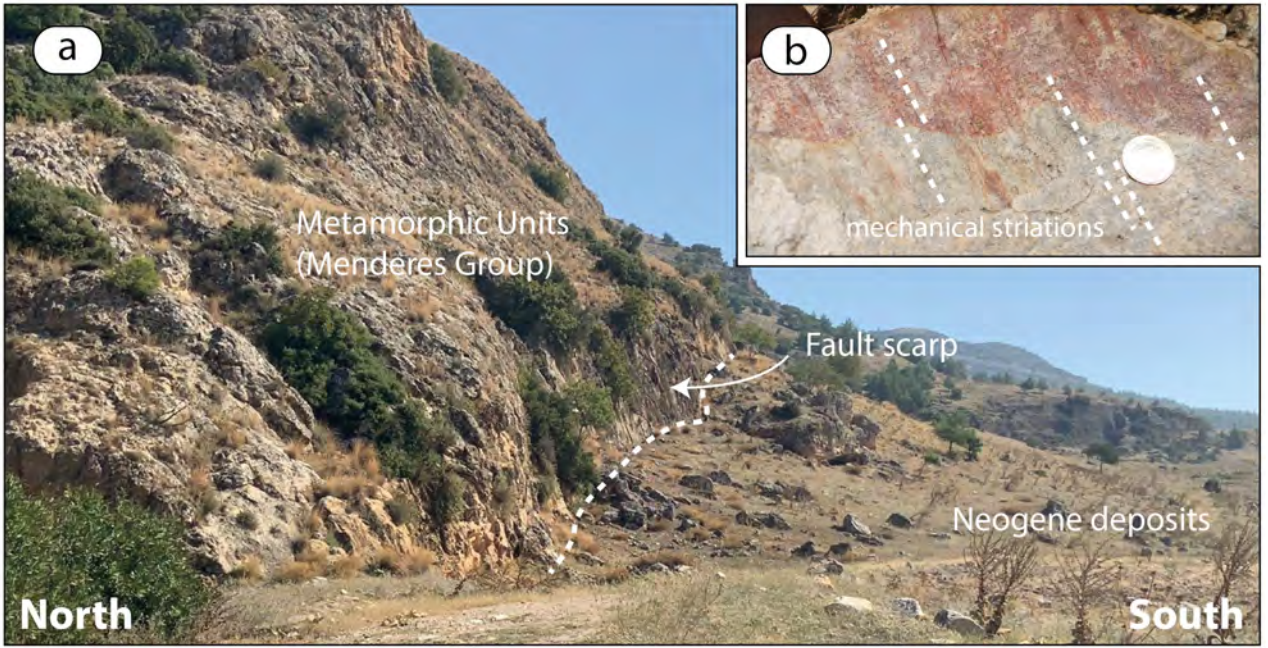


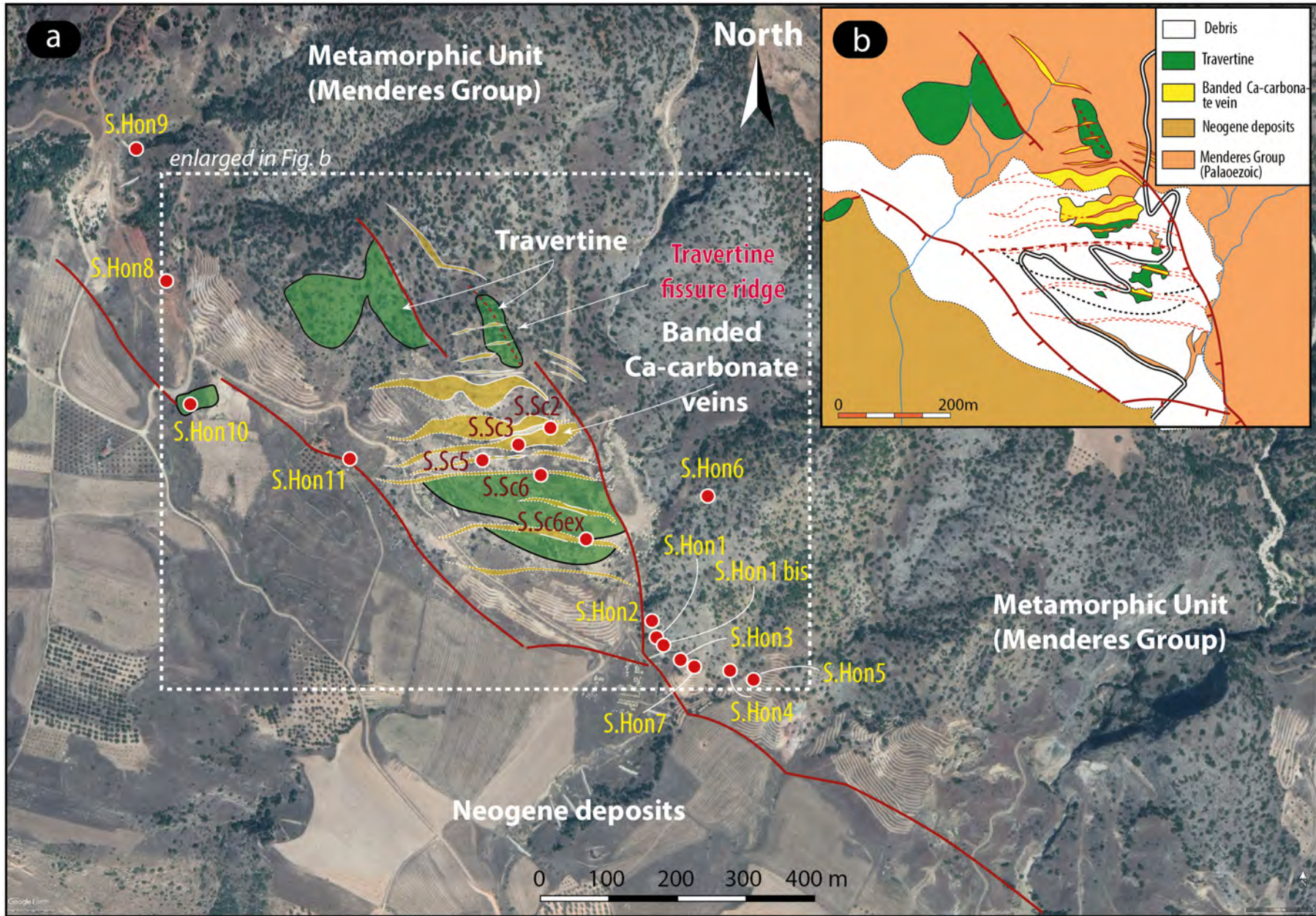


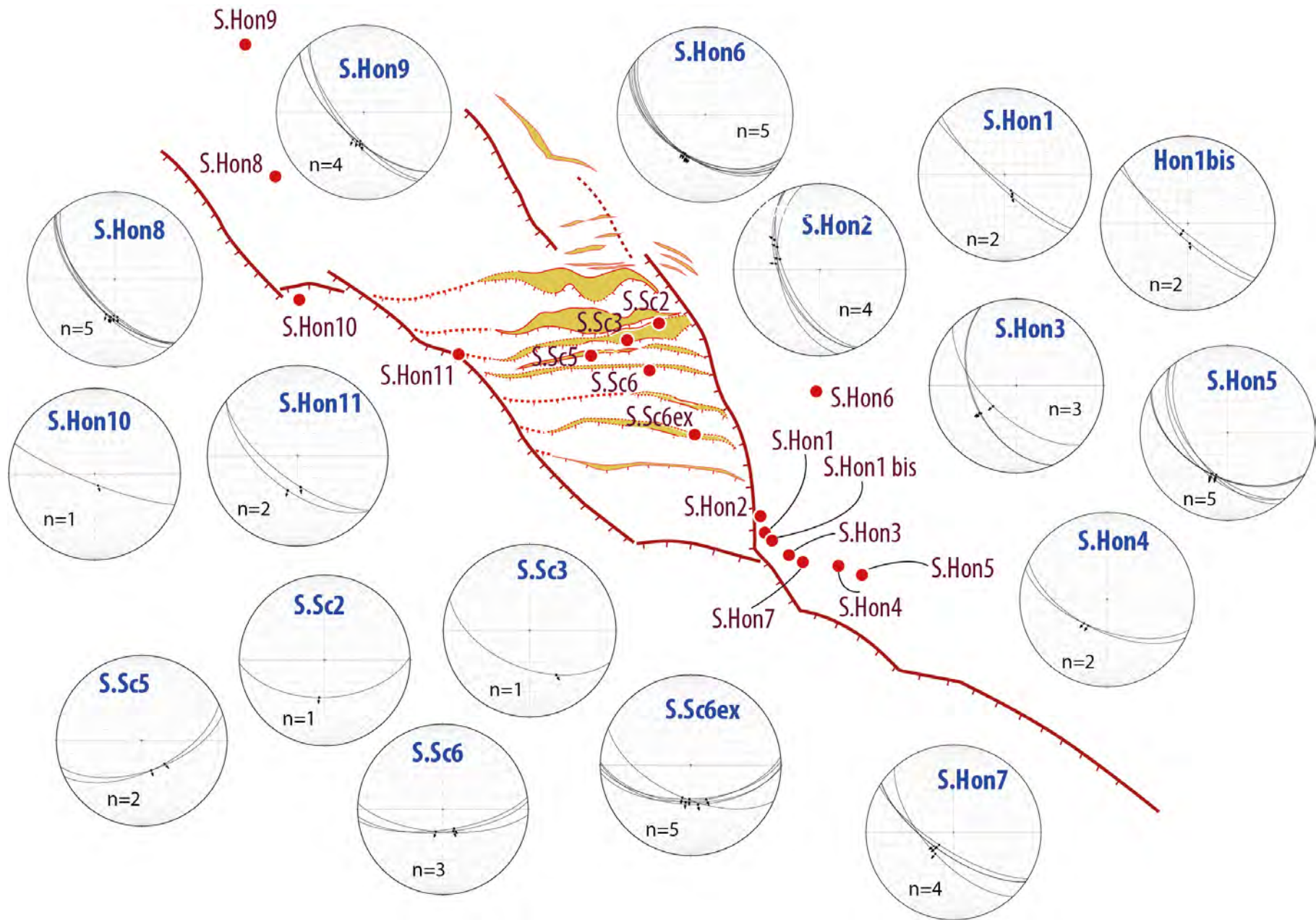


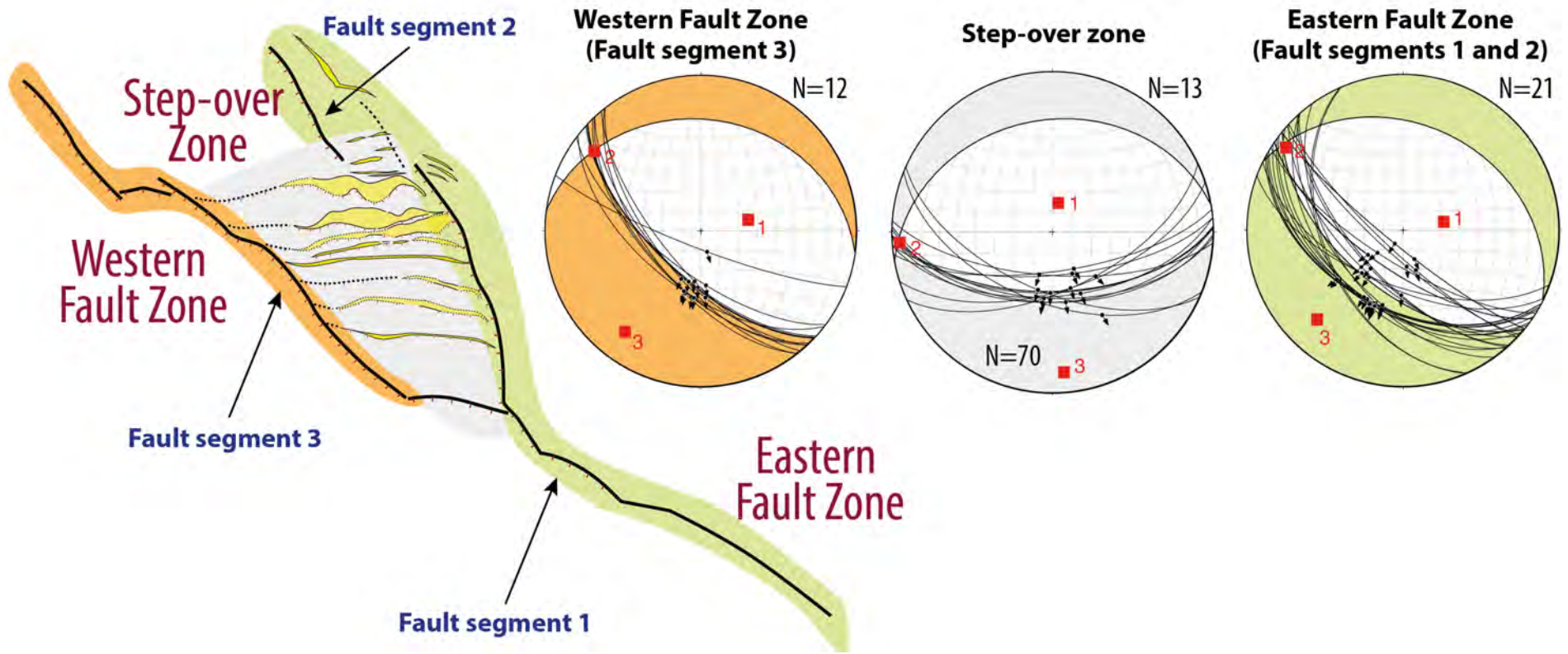


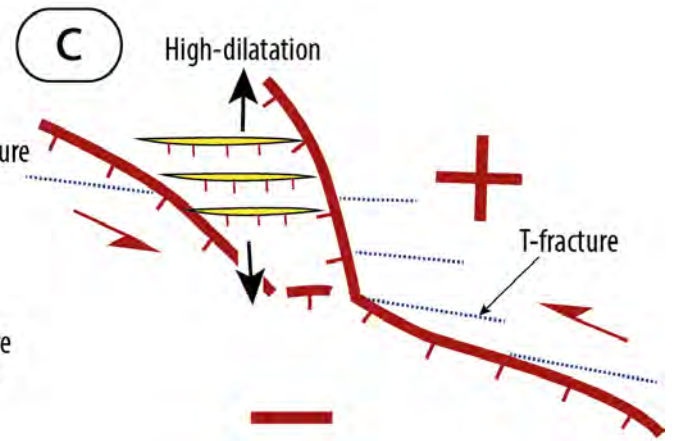
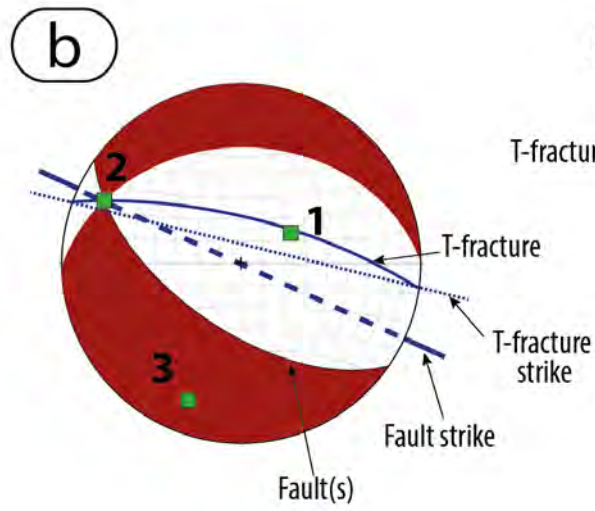
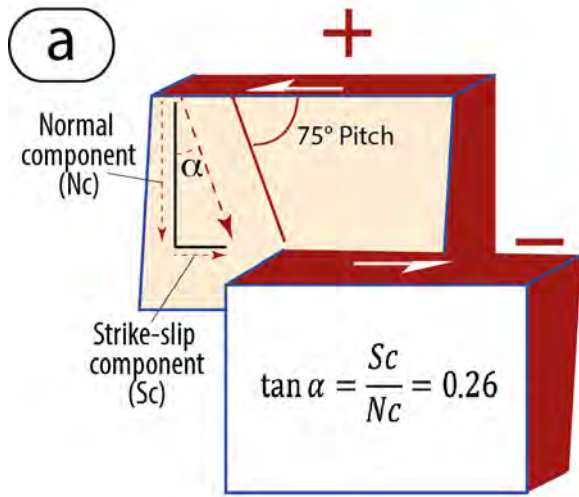


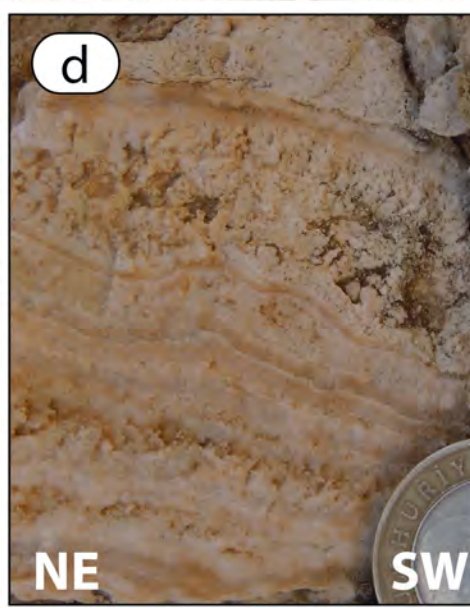
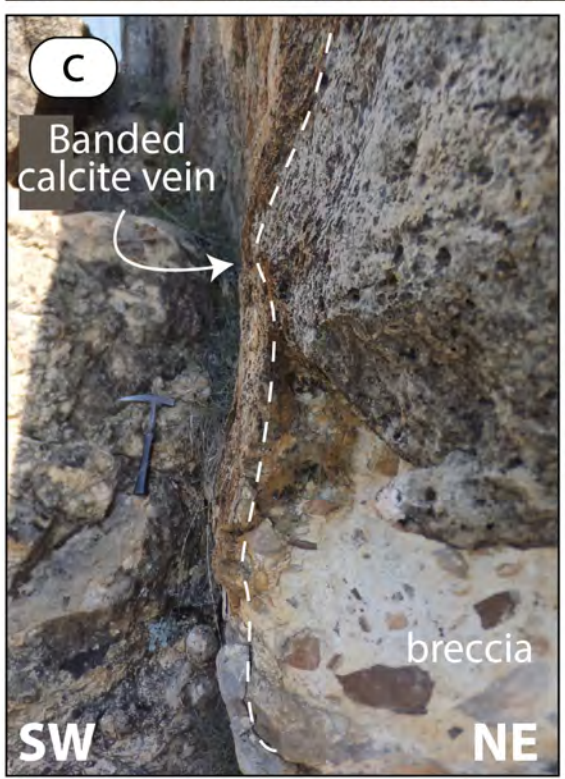


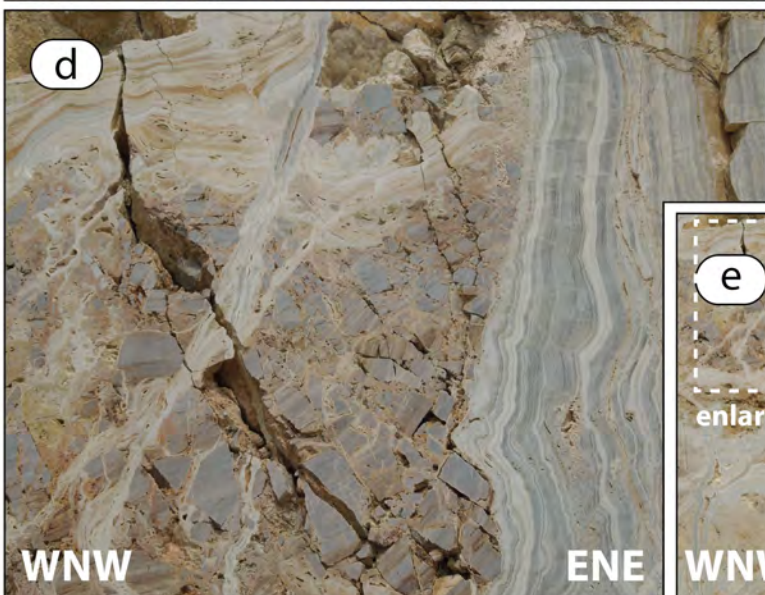
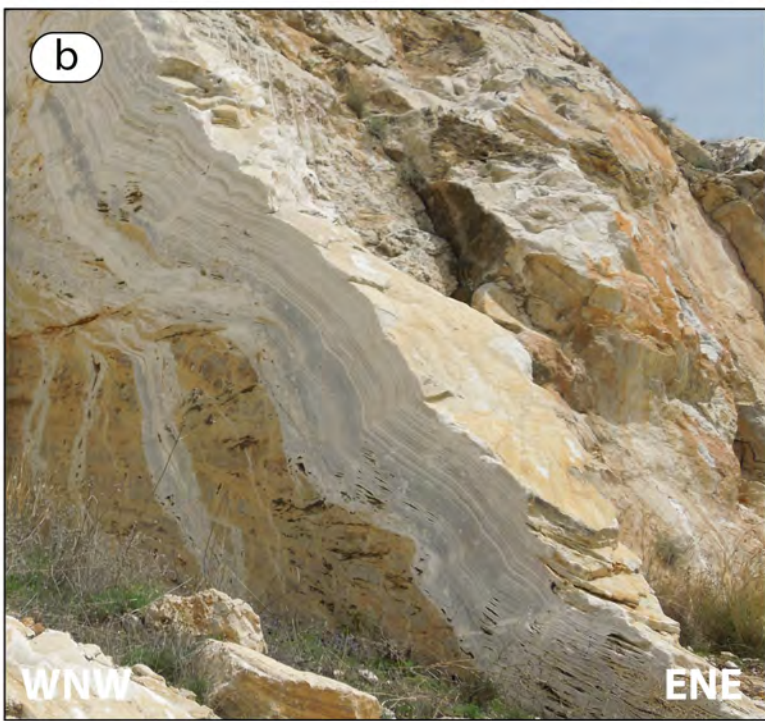
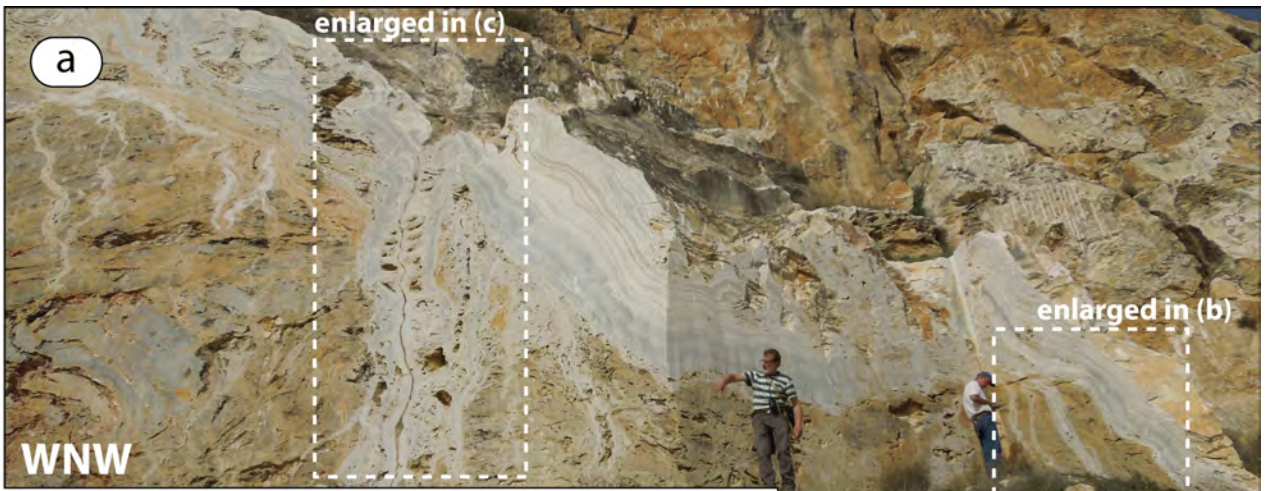




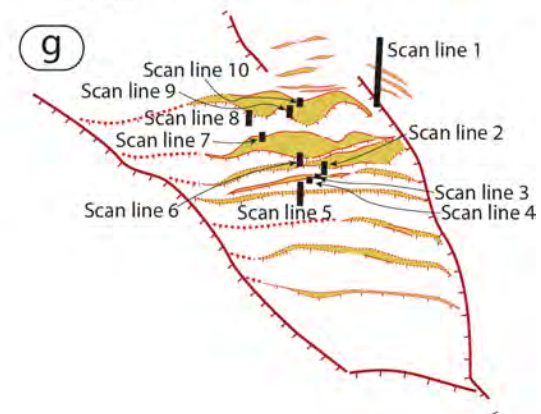
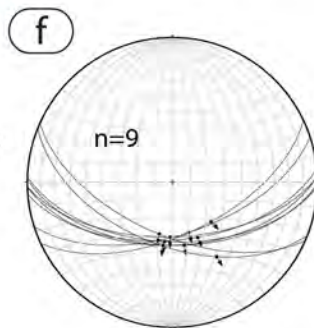
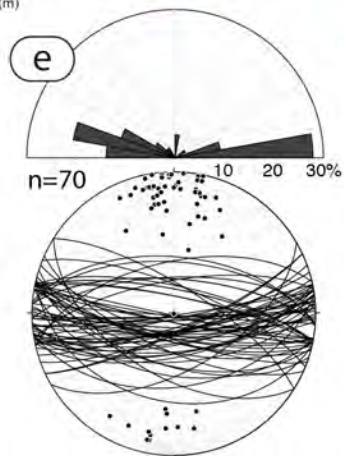
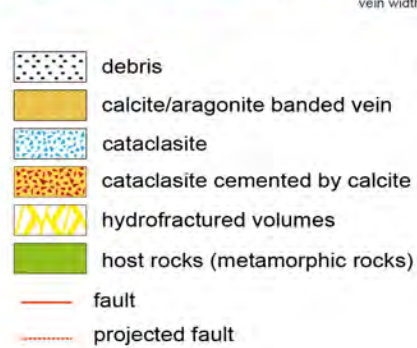
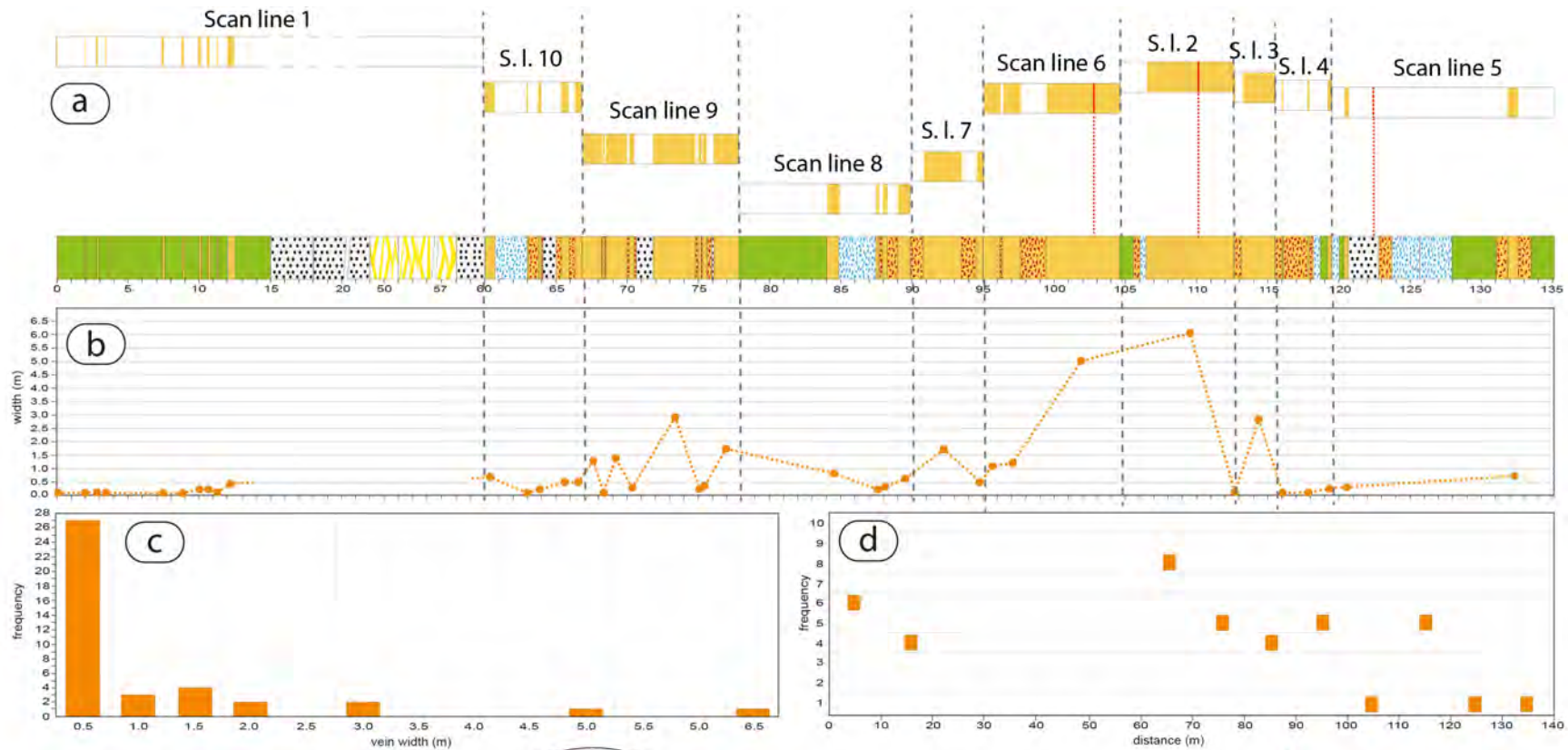


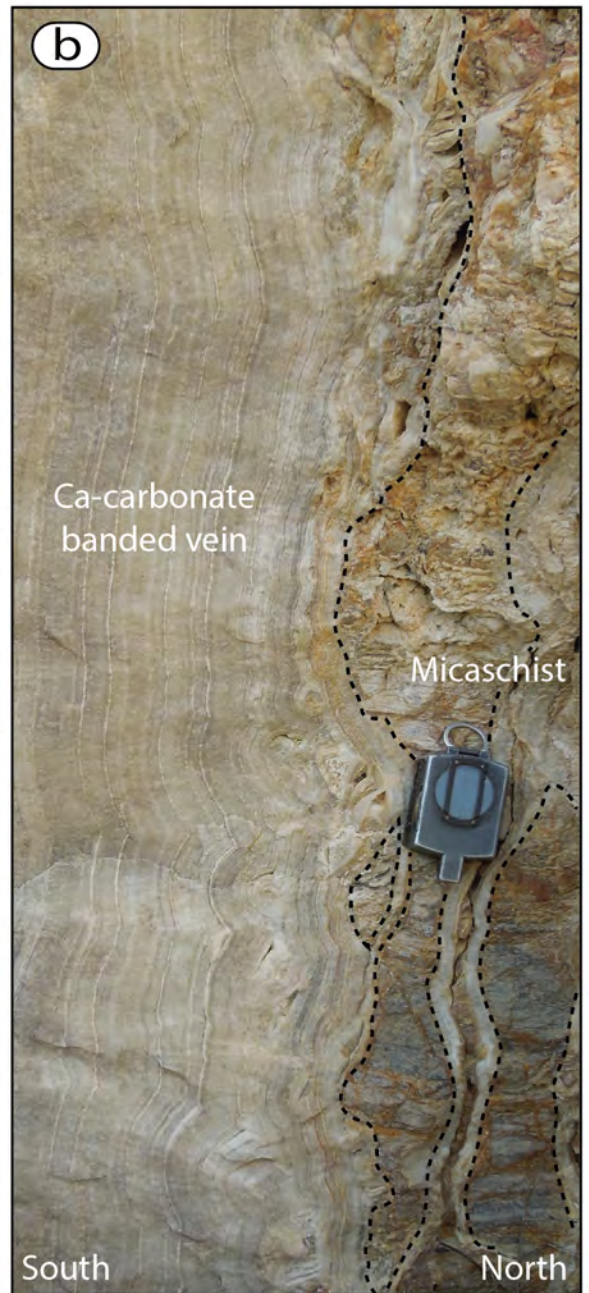


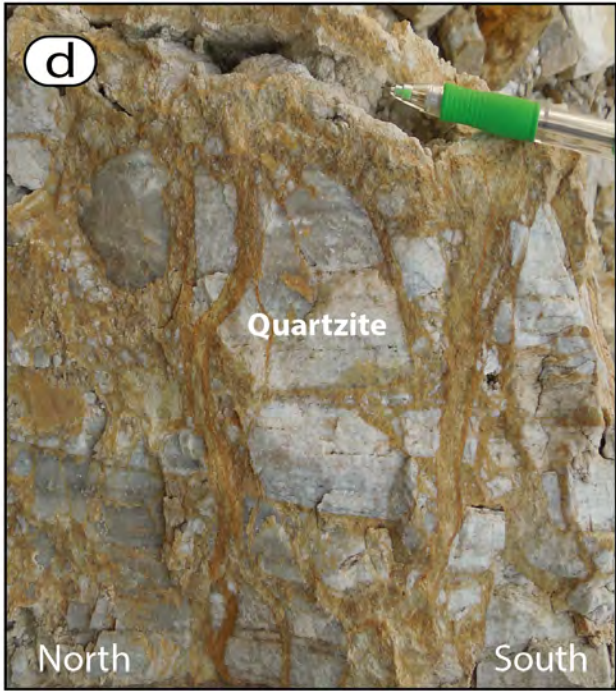
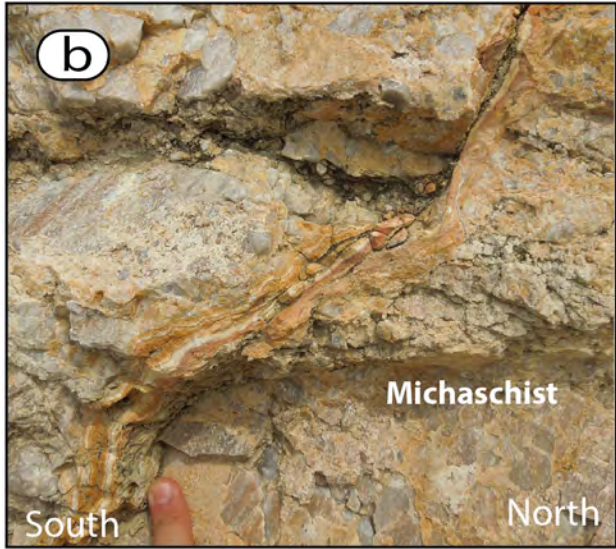






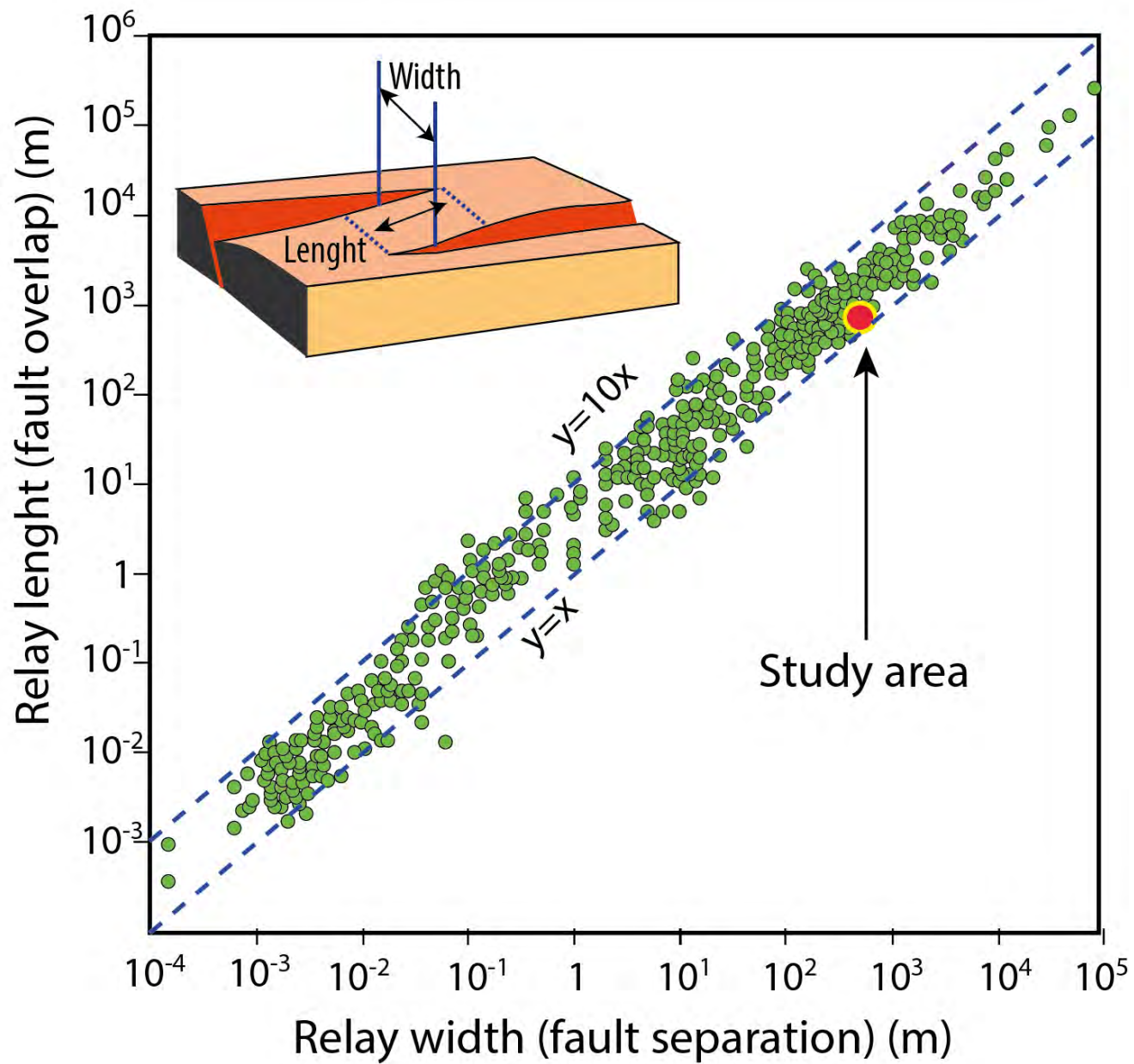


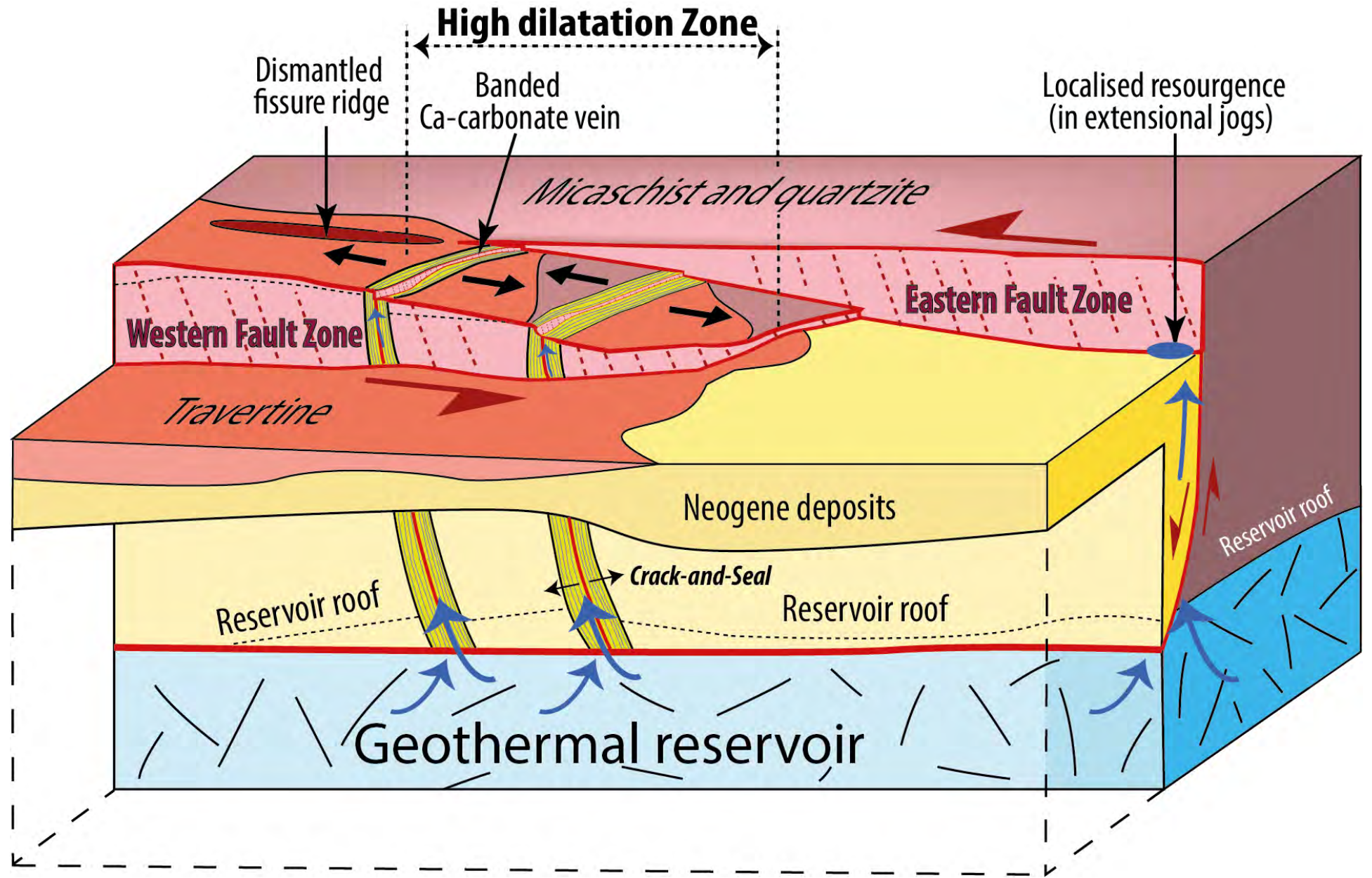












Fissure ridge-type  
travertine deposit

