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# Fold axis-parallel rotation within the Laramide Derby Dome Fold, Wind River Basin, Wyoming, USA

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## Abstract

Derby Dome, a doubly plunging anticline ( $7 \times 3$  km) on the eastern flank of the Wind River Range, Wyoming, trends NW–SE in response to the regional NE–SW directed shortening of the Cretaceous–Eocene Laramide orogeny. Mesozoic sediments are exposed around the fold hinge above an east-dipping thrust fault that offsets Archean crystalline rocks at depth. Stress and strain ellipsoidal data were determined through the measurement of mechanically twinned calcite in limestones (Triassic Alcova through J–K Morrison Formation rocks; 13 samples), calcite cements (5 samples), and synfolding calcite veins (16 samples) around the northern half of the fold. On the outer limbs of the fold the maximum shortening strain axis ( $-3.5\%$ ,  $15\%$  NEVs) in the limestones and cements is sub-horizontal, layer-parallel and normal (NE–SW) to the fold hinge reflecting regional Sevier–Laramide shortening. This regional layer-parallel strain fabric is rotated into a fold axis-parallel orientation (NW–SE) near the fold hinge indicating that significant rotations occurred during folding. Synfolding calcite veins, of varying orientations, also preserve a local sub-horizontal, hinge-parallel shortening strain ( $-4.0\%$ ,  $17\%$  NEVs), suggesting that the regional Laramide stress and strain field was locally rotated into parallelism with the fold during shortening and displacement on the underlying thrust fault. In both the country rock, cement and vein data sets, the strain overprint noise (NEVs) increases toward the fold hinge. Inferred differential stress magnitudes are also higher for the vein calcite than for the country rock limestones or cements, and there is no interpretable pattern around the fold (avg. = 560 bars, range of 240–2000 bars). Fracture measurements ( $n = 74$ ) in different lithologies have different orientations on each side of the adjacent Dallas Dome Fold suggesting layer-parallel rotation during folding, or active fracturing occurred uniquely on each fold limb.

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## 1. Introduction

Mesozoic–early Cenozoic deformation of the western margin of North America is characterized by the formation of the Idaho–Wyoming fold-and-thrust belt (Armstrong and Oriol, 1965; Wiltschko and Dorr, 1983), the proximal Green River foreland basin (Dorr et al., 1977; Jordan, 1981), and the distal foreland basins and Laramide crystalline uplifts (Gries, 1983; Oldow et al., 1989). The older, thin-skinned Sevier portion of the deformation occurred near the margin with thrust translation directed eastward, whereas the younger, basement-involved Laramide uplifts and basins localized within continental North America reflect crustal shortening generally directed to the ENE related to docking

and dextral translation of accreted terranes (see Gries, 1983; Bird, 1988) and probable reactivation of older basement faults (Marshak and Paulsen, 1996; Marshak et al., 2000). The Sevier shortening is preserved as a regional, E–W layer-parallel shortening (LPS) calcite strain fabric and is present as far east ( $>2000$  km) as Minnesota in the Cretaceous Greenhorn Limestone (van der Pluijm et al., 1997). The LPS fabric in the autochthonous foreland is useful in understanding deformational rotations and translations in younger structures, specifically Laramide uplifts (Craddock, 1992; Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1999) where synorogenic calcite veins are present.

Derby Dome is a Laramide fold structure, cored by an east-dipping thrust on the eastern flank of the crystalline Wind River Range (Berg, 1962; Smithson et al., 1978; Steidtmann et al., 1983), and is part of a series of doubly-plunging en

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échelon anticlines that are cored by basement (NW–SE; Keefer, 1970; Willis and Groshong, 1993). Mesozoic sediments exposed around the fold include the Alcova and Twin Creek Limestones, and calcite-cemented Nugget sandstone. These and numerous calcite veins allow for good sample coverage. Our goals were to: (1) analyze the rotation of the pre-folding Sevier LPS calcite strain fabric as Derby Dome folded and was breached by a thrust fault as the fold hinge overtightened (e.g. fault-propagation fold; Suppe, 1983); and (2) to observe the incremental stress-strain field preserved by twinned calcite in syn-folding veins. Our study of folding strains differs from previous fabric work on large-scale folds (e.g. Carter and Friedman, 1965) and outcrop-scale folds (e.g. Spang and Groshong, 1981; Hudleston and Tabor, 1988) in that we have pre-folding limestone and syn-folding calcite vein fabric data to interpret for a thick-skinned structure. This research is similar to that of Kilsdonk and Wiltschko (1988) for the thin-skinned Pine Mountain ramp-anticline limestones and synorogenic calcite veins.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Calcite twinning

Calcite twins mechanically at low differential stresses (~10 MPa; see Lacombe and Laurent, 1996; Ferrill, 1998), and is largely independent of temperature and normal stress magnitudes in the uppermost crust. Twinning is possible along three glide planes and calcite strain-hardens once twinned; further twinning is possible in a crystal along either of the remaining two  $\{0112\}$  planes at higher stress levels, provided that stress is oriented  $>45^\circ$  from the initial stress orientation (Teufel, 1980). The application of twinned calcite to structural and tectonic problems has been primarily restricted to studies of limestones (e.g. Groshong, 1975; Engelder, 1979; Spang and Groshong, 1981; Wiltschko et al., 1985; Craddock et al., 1993), calcite veins (e.g. Kilsdonk and Wiltschko, 1988), or, more rarely, marbles (e.g. Craddock et al., 1991). Craddock and Pearson (1994) and Craddock et al. (1997) have studied twinning strains in secondary calcite of basalts from DSDP Hole 433C and the Proterozoic Keweenaw rift, respectively. Rowe and Rutter (1990) and Burkhard (1993) have recently reviewed the variety of methods applied to utilizing twinned calcite in a host of geologic environments.

Paleostress (paleopiezometry of Engelder (1993)) responsible for twinning can be calculated in terms of their compressional (or tensile) orientation (Turner, 1953) and magnitude (Jamison and Spang, 1976; Rowe and Rutter, 1990). Strain ellipsoid axis orientations are computed using the calcite strain gage (Groshong, 1972, 1974) and are quite accurate for strains ranging from 1 to 17% (Groshong et al., 1984) although strain magnitudes vary greatly depending on lithology, grain size, porosity, etc., and are a function of twin thickness. Thin twins (~0.5 microns) are dominant in

our sample suite, which is characteristic of calcite deformed below 200 °C (Ferrill, 1991, 1998). The calcite strain gage technique also computes positive and negative expected values (PEV and NEV, respectively) for all the twins in a given thin section. A NEV for a twinned grain indicates that this grain was unfavorably oriented relative to the stress field that caused the majority of the grains in a given thin section to twin. A high percentage of negative expected values ( $>40\%$ ) indicates that a second, non-coaxial twinning event occurred and these two twinning strains (PEV and NEV groups, respectively) can be analyzed separately (Teufel, 1980).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Regional patterns of Western North America

Calcite strain results from limestones in the Idaho–Wyoming thrust belt preserve a layer-parallel, thrust transport-parallel twinning fabric that has been used to interpret dextral transpression associated with the progressive shortening and rotation within this thrust belt (Craddock, 1992) when compared with the same layer-parallel, E–W shortening fabric preserved in the autochthonous foreland as far east as Minnesota (Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1999). Synorogenic calcite veins across the thrust belt record high differential stresses and strain magnitudes (900 bars, –6%, respectively) in a variety of orientations, which reflect local complexities of piggyback thrusting rotations (Budai and Wiltschko, 1987; Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1988; see also Allmendinger, 1982; Kraig and Wiltschko, 1987; Apotria, 1990, 1995).

### 3.2. Laramide uplifts and basins

Forty-four calcite strain analyses from Paleozoic limestones and veins from the Beartooth, Wind River, Owl Creek, Bighorn and Black Hills Ranges (Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1999) compliment earlier, localized studies in the Bighorn Mountains (Hennings, 1986a,b; Carson, 1988), in the Teton-Gros Ventre Range (Craddock et al., 1988), and in the Wind River Range and Wind River Basin (Willis and Groshong, 1993). Calcite strain analyses from limestones in the Laramide uplifts preserve a regionally consistent ~ENE–WSW LPS fabric despite, in some cases, uplift and thrust transport from north to south (e.g. Owl Creek Range; Varga, 1993). Strain analyses from the folds flanking the Wind River Range (Willis and Groshong, 1993; 10 samples), including Derby Dome, record an E–W LPS fabric with some curious rotations (see below). Strain analyses of synorogenic calcite veins from a variety of Laramide uplifts record sub-horizontal, N–S shortening (Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1999).

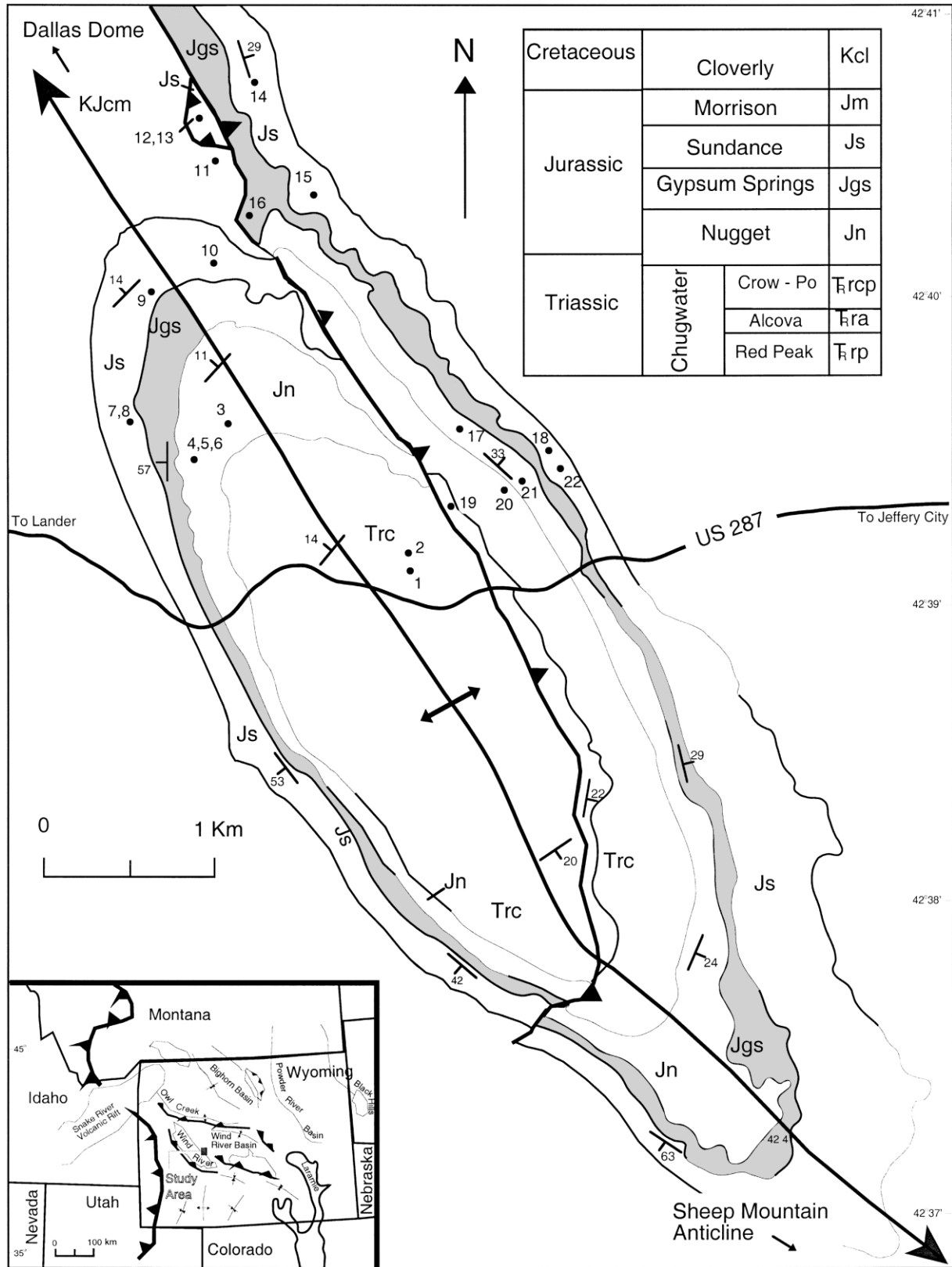


Fig. 1. Local and regional geologic map and stratigraphic column for the Derby Dome area. Triassic Chugwater (Trc) units are not sub-divided on the map. Sample locations are numbered (see Table 1).

Table 1  
Details of calcite twin analysis for Derby Dome

	Sample	$e_1$ (%)	$e_1$ (tr and pl)	NEVs (%)	Diff. stress (bars)	Rock unit	
Veins	2	−1.900	14, 74	27.8	385	Alcova Limestone	
	3	−6.450	249, 36	14.3	244	Nugget Sandstone	
	6	−4.460	57, 4	13.6	244	Nugget Sandstone	
	7a	−3.330	336, 19	16.7	526	Sundance Limestone	
	7b	−2.430	135, 41	12.5	667	Sundance Limestone	
	8	−3.800	225, 3	28.5	667	Sundance Limestone	
	9	−7.400	111, 3	28.6	455	Sundance Limestone	
	10	−1.770	146, 5	11.5	670	Sundance Limestone	
	13	−2.800	281, 80	9.1	385	Sundance Limestone	
	16	−6.020	180, 35	7.1	263	Gypsum Springs LS	
	18	−1.100	46, 75.9	0.0	1000	Sundance Limestone	
	19	−1.260	117, 17	27.7	2000	Alcova Limestone	
	20	−8.210	342, 0.2	5.9	556	CP concretion	
	21	−8.835	186, 6	40.0	345	Nugget Sandstone	
	22	−3.630	68, 9	25.0	286	Nugget Sandstone	
	Average		−4.612		16.8	590	
	Country Rock	1	−2.690	180, 21	0.0	470	Alcova Limestone
		2	−3.220	17, 0.7	31.8	385	Alcova Limestone
		3	−2.360	5, 21	23.5	333	Nugget Sandstone
		4	−1.460	197, 66	21.1	455	Nugget Sandstone
		7	−3.700	163, 14	33.3	625	Sundance Limestone
		8	−2.340	174, 12	6.7	455	Sundance Limestone
9		−4.330	41, 20	0.0	351	Sundance Limestone	
10		−3.140	113, 25.6	16.7	520	Sundance Limestone	
14		−4.770	167, 42	11.8	333	Sundance Limestone	
15		−1.670	353, 0	5.0	357	Sundance Limestone	
18		−5.590	168, 8	11.8	667	Sundance Limestone	
19		−6.370	171, 5	25.0	588	Alcova Limestone	
22		−3.900	87, 5	20.0	576	Sundance Limestone	
Average			−3.339		15.9	470	
Cement	5	−1.490	283, 56	25.0	270	Nugget Sandstone	
	11	−2.150	1, 6	0.0	333	Morrison Limestone	
	12	−1.710	357, 11.8	18.2	294	Sundance Limestone	
	17	−6.304	158, 8	33.3	256	Nugget Sandstone	
	21	−3.353	3, 15	6.3	270	Nugget Sandstone	
Average		−3.001		16.6	285		

### 3.3. Derby Dome and the Wind River Basin

With the backdrop of the regional E–W Sevier LPS fabric, the younger sub-horizontal N–S Laramide vein fabric, and the twinning results of Willis and Groshong (1993) along the eastern flank of the Wind River Range, we expected some complexities to the strain history of Derby Dome. We were also aware that this would be the first basement-cored (thick-skinned) fold studied in such detail although Derby Dome is fairly small, and the sedimentary cover on the crystalline corners of other basement uplifts have been studied (e.g. Hennings, 1986a,b; Carson, 1988; Craddock et al., 1988; see also review by Brown, 1993).

Derby Dome (4 × 10 km) is one of five en échelon periclinal, west-verging structures on the northeast flank of the Wind River Range uplift (Ptasynski, 1957) also described by Keefer (1970) (Fig. 1). Domes of this northwest-trending series are cored and locally breached by an east-dipping thrust fault (a continuation of the Sweetwater Arch thrust to the east) that offsets Archean

basement rocks and is synthetic to the Wind River thrust to the west. At the northern end of the folds, the Eocene Wind River Fm. (49 Ma) is offset by this fault and overlain by the Wiggins Fm. (49–45 Ma) of the Absaroka Range bracketing its age of motion, which is complimentary to the fission track and sedimentological uplift ages of Steidtmann et al. (1983) and Cerveny and Steidtmann (1993). Triassic–Cretaceous sediments are exposed around Derby Dome, and the northern half of the fold is accessible without land issues. Thirty-four strain analyses were generated from 22 samples collected from the core (Alcova Limestone) to the highest portion of the eastern limb (Morrison Fm.) on both sides of the thrust that cuts the fold hinge (Fig. 1; Table 1).

### 3.4. Country rock and cements

Calcite strains in limestone samples (Fig. 2) east and west of Derby Dome preserve a LPS fabric (the bedding planes and compression axis and  $e_1$  shortening axis intersect  $\pm 20^\circ$ ) oriented  $\sim$ E–W (Craddock and van der Pluijm,

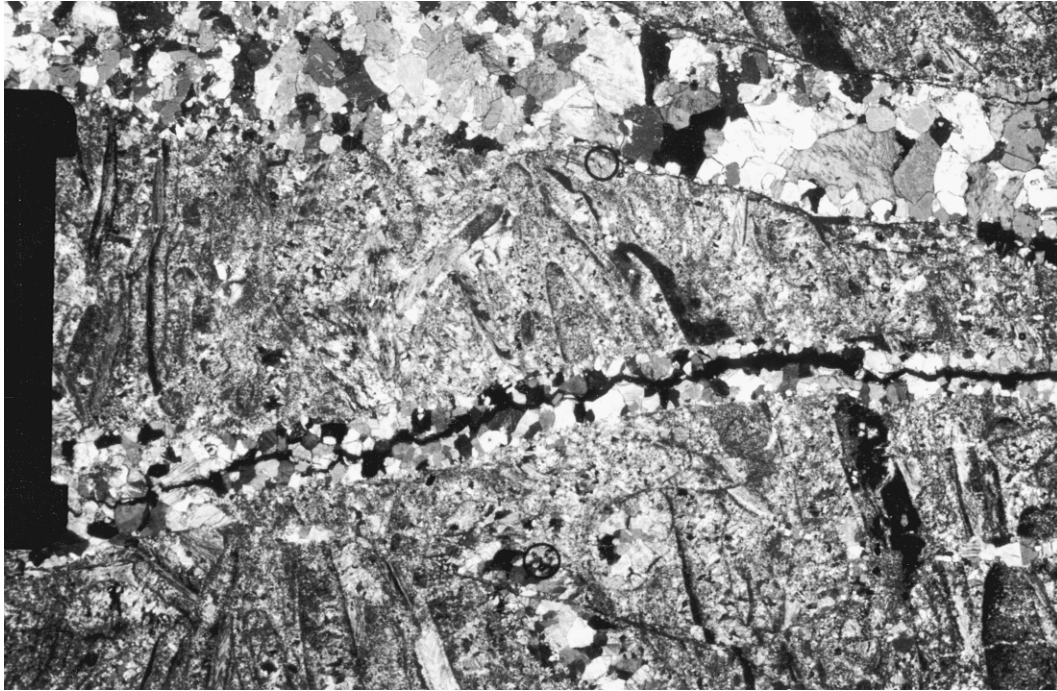


Fig. 2. Photomicrograph of the Sundance Fm. limestone and cross-cutting calcite vein. Scale bar = 2 mm.

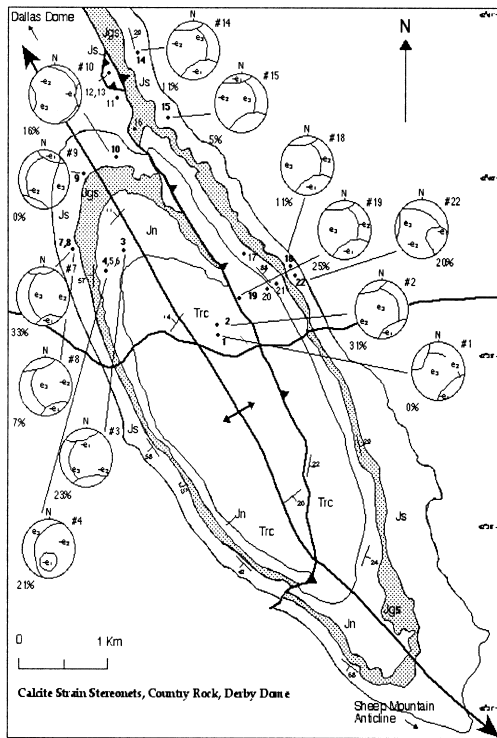


Fig. 3. Lower hemisphere plots of calcite strain gage data for country rock limestones. Great circles are bedding orientations, contoured areas are Turner (1953) compression axes. Axes of the strain ellipsoid are  $e_1$  (maximum shortening [negative]),  $e_2$  (intermediate axis), and  $e_3$  (extension axis [positive]). Negative expected values for each sample are plotted outside each stereonet. See Table 1.

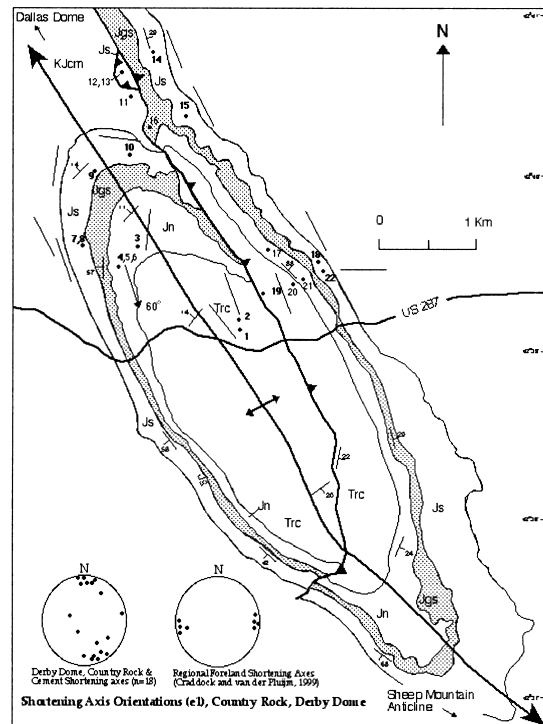


Fig. 4. Map view plot of  $e_1$  shortening strain axes for country rock samples, based on Fig. 3. Steep plunges (sample 4) are indicated by an arrow and the plunge in degrees. Inset stereonets are of the country rock and cement shortening axes (left) and the regional twinning shortening strain pattern in the foreland. See Table 1.

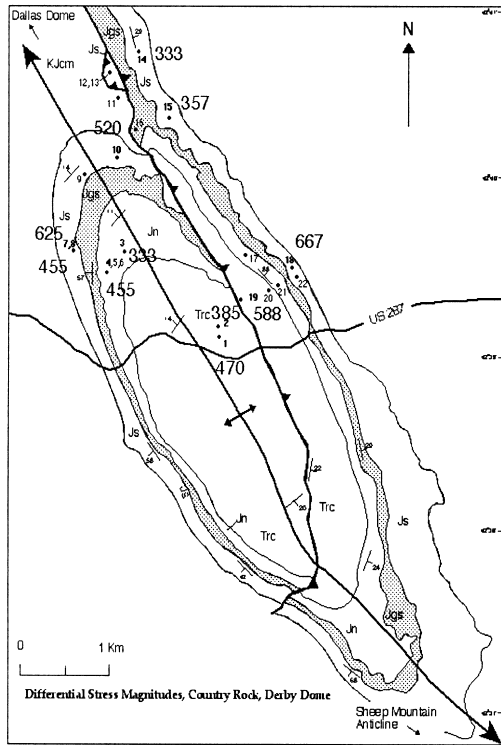


Fig. 5. Differential stress magnitudes (bars; see Table 1) for the country rock suite.

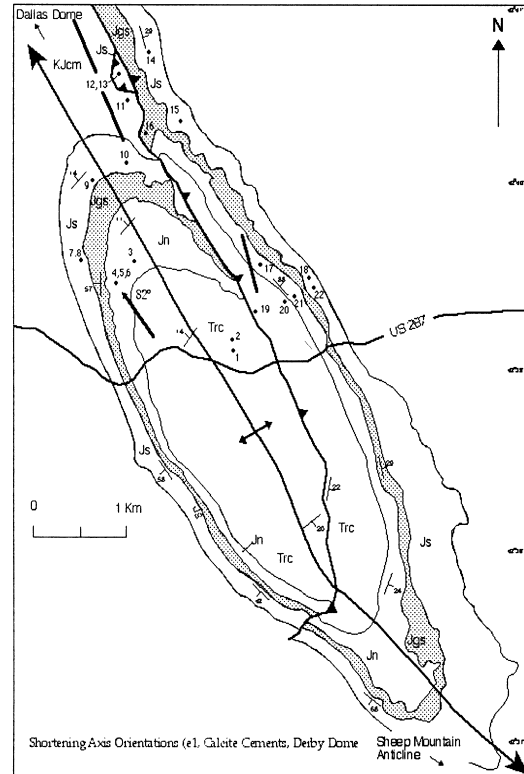


Fig. 7. Map view plot of  $e_1$  shortening strain axes for calcite cement samples, based on Fig. 6.

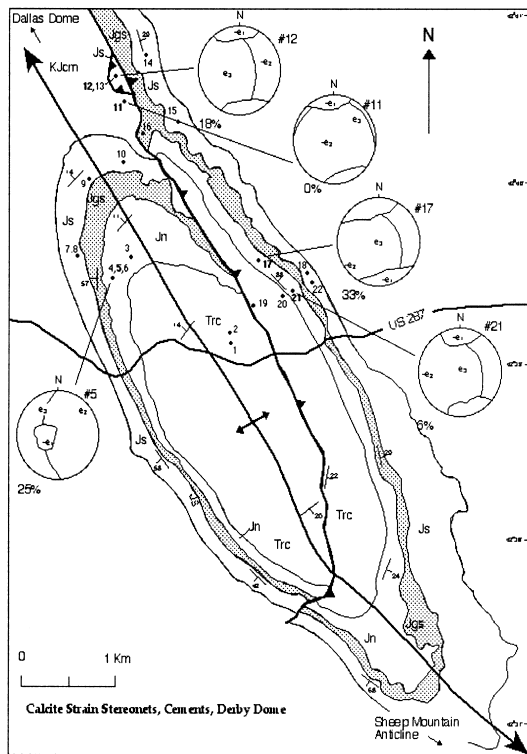


Fig. 6. Lower hemisphere plots of calcite strain gage data for calcite cements. Great circles are bedding orientations, contoured areas are Turner (1953) compression axes. Axes of the strain ellipsoid are  $e_1$  (maximum shortening [negative]),  $e_2$  (intermediate axis), and  $e_3$  (extension axis [positive]). Negative expected values for each sample are plotted outside each stereonet. See Table 1.

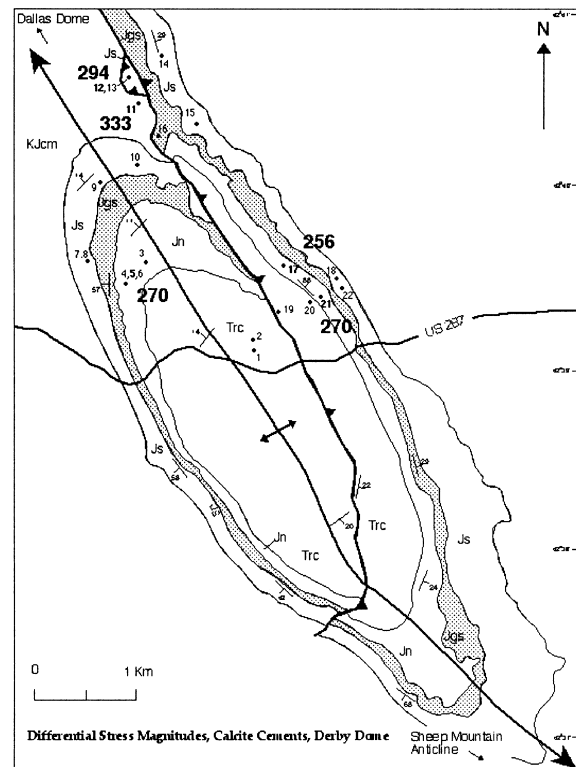


Fig. 8. Differential stress magnitudes (bars; see Table 1) for the calcite cement suite.

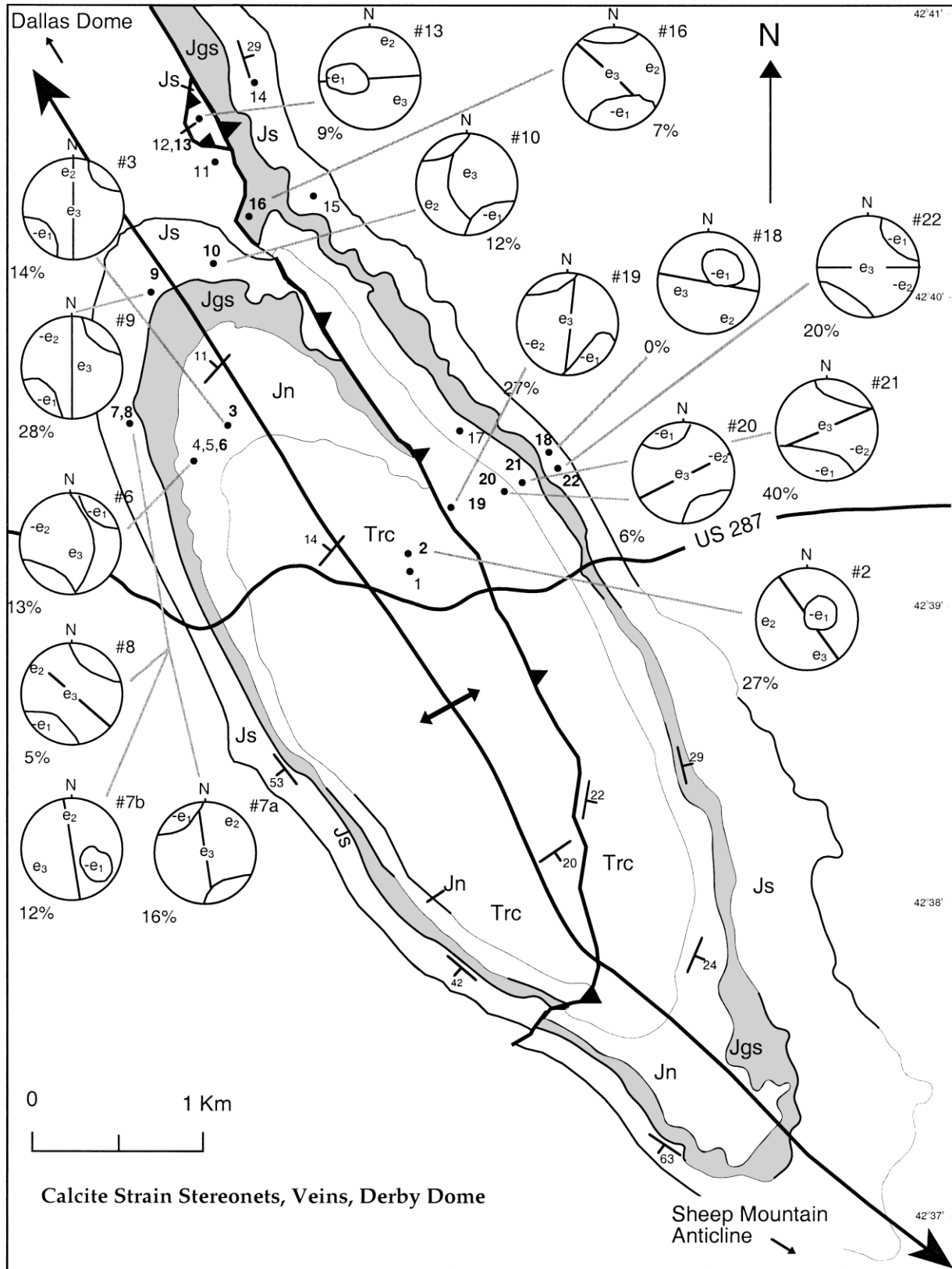


Fig. 9. Lower hemisphere plots of calcite strain gage data for calcite veins. Great circles are vein orientations, contoured areas are Turner (1953) compression axes. Axes of the strain ellipsoid are  $e_1$  (maximum shortening [negative]),  $e_2$  (intermediate axis), and  $e_3$  (extension axis [positive]). Negative expected values for each sample are plotted outside each stereonet. See Table 1. Inset (lower left) stereonet plots of shortening axes and vein field orientations (poles to planes;  $n = 15$ ). See Section 4.

1999; Table 1, numbers 18, 19, 37–41), which rotates from being hinge-normal to being hinge-parallel as one approaches the fold axis (Figs. 3 and 4). The shortening strain values average  $-3.3\%$  and the inferred differential stresses (Jamison and Spang, 1976) averages 470 bars (Fig. 5). Country rock and cements strains are identical (Figs. 6–8), and are very different from the cross-cutting veins, so we consider them coeval. In both the country rock, cement and vein data sets, the strain overprint noise (NEVs) increases toward the fold hinge but is not large (avg. =  $16\%$ ), and in all data sets the twins are thin twins.

### 3.5. Veins

Sparry synfolding calcite veins (16 strain analyses,  $-4.6\%$ ,  $17\%$  NEVs; Figs. 2 and 9–11; Table 1), of varying orientations, preserve two interpretable fabric groups: (1) those that can be interpreted as sub-horizontal, vein-parallel shortening (12 results; where the compression axis contours and  $e_1$  shortening axis intersect the plane of the vein), and (2) non-vein-parallel shortening (the compression axis contours and shortening axis,  $e_1$ , do not intersect the plane of the vein). The vein-parallel shortening group contains a mix of sub-horizontal, hinge-parallel shortening strains (samples 7a, 10, 16, 20) and sub-horizontal, hinge-normal shortening strains (samples 2, 3, 6, 9, 13, 21, 22). The non vein-parallel grouping includes four samples (7b, 8, 18, 20), all with different vein orientations where the shortening axis ( $e_1$ ) is at a high angle to the vein. Inferred differential stress magnitudes (Jamison and Spang, 1976) are also higher for

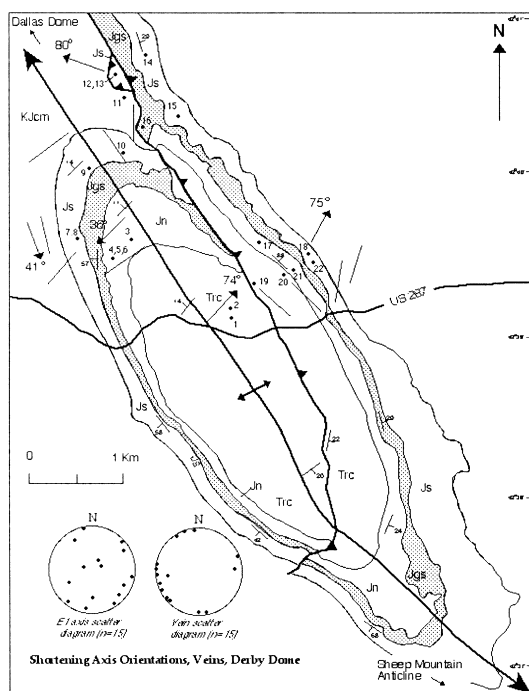


Fig. 10. Map view plot of  $e_1$  shortening strain axes for vein samples, based on Fig. 9. Steep plunges (samples 2, 7b, 13, 18) are indicated by an arrow and the plunge in degrees.

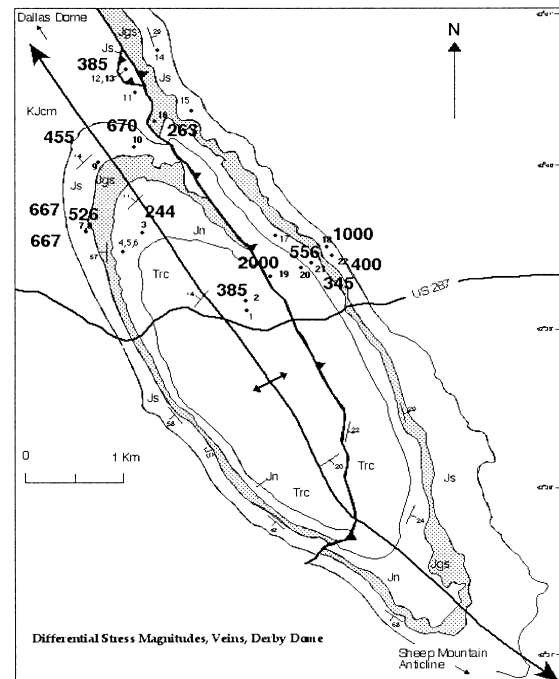


Fig. 11. Differential stress magnitudes (bars; see Table 1) for the vein sample suite.

the vein calcite than for the country rock limestones or cements, but there is not a clear pattern around the fold (avg. = 560 bars, range of 240–2000 bars; Fig. 11).

### 3.6. Joint and fracture analysis

Dallas Dome is the northern unfaulted equivalent to Derby Dome. The Triassic Red Creek-Nugget section is exposed in the core of the dome making fracture measurement ideal ( $n = 74$ ; Fig. 12). All the fractures are sub-vertical and we find different populations in the same unit on opposite sides of the dome except in the Alcova Limestone. The west limb is dominated by a vertical fracture set that is parallel to the regional transport direction (Mode I; fold axis-normal) although there are other sub-vertical populations. The east limb is dominated by a fold axis-parallel vertical fractures.

## 4. Discussion

Numerous studies of folding dynamics have utilized the presence of intergranular deformation lamellae in quartz and/or calcite to understand fold genesis, whether within regional (Carter and Friedman, 1965; Friedman and Stearns, 1971; Burger and Hamill, 1976; Schmid et al., 1981; Hennings, 1986a,b; Fisher and Anastasio, 1994) or outcrop-scale structures (Scott et al., 1965; Chapple and Spang, 1974; Spang, 1974; Groshong, 1975; Mitra, 1978; Oertel, 1980; Spang et al., 1980, 1981; Spang and Groshong, 1981; Hudleston and Holst, 1984; Onasch, 1984; Narahara and



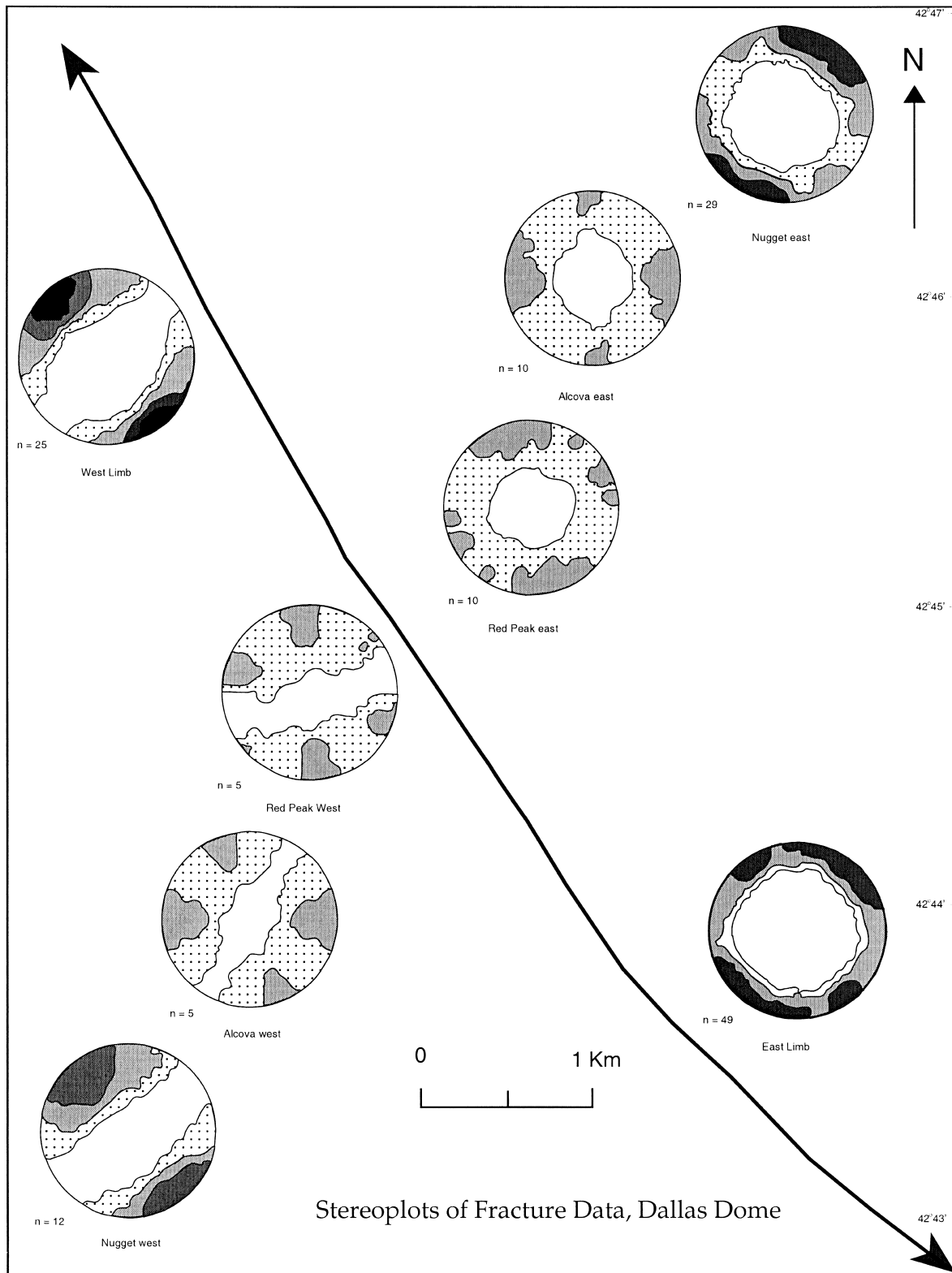


Fig. 12. Lower hemisphere stereonets of rank 1 fracture data (pole to planes) from around Dallas Dome, just north of Derby Dome. Stratigraphic units are the Red Peak, Alcovia and Nugget, from bottom to top. Contour intervals are 2, 3 and 5% per 1% area.

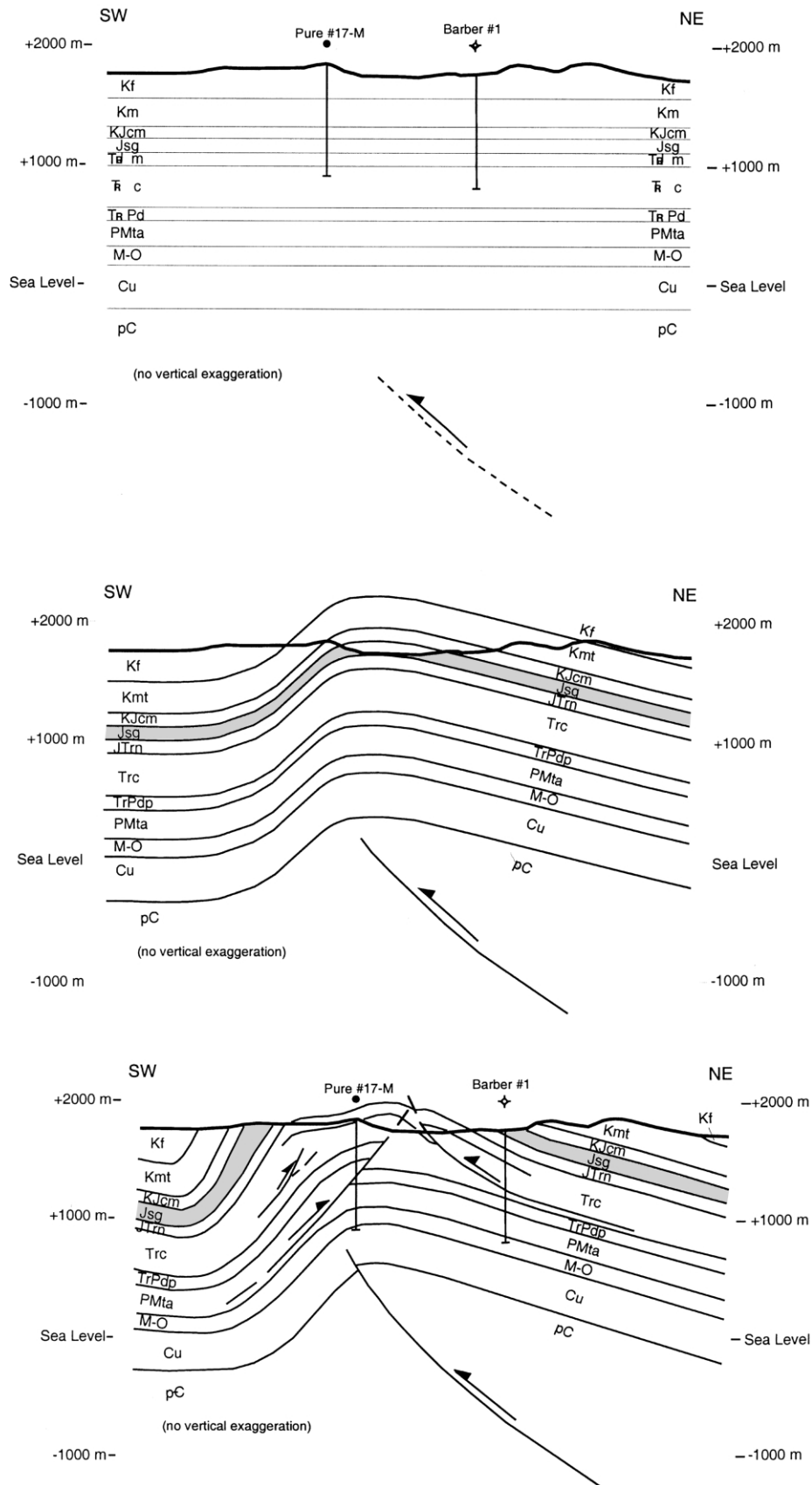


Fig. 13. Map view chronology (A–D) of the geologic development of Derby Dome, tracking the pre-folding  $e_1$  LPS fabric (thin lines) and syn-folding vein (thick lines) fabrics, the fold axis, the NE-dipping Wind River thrust.

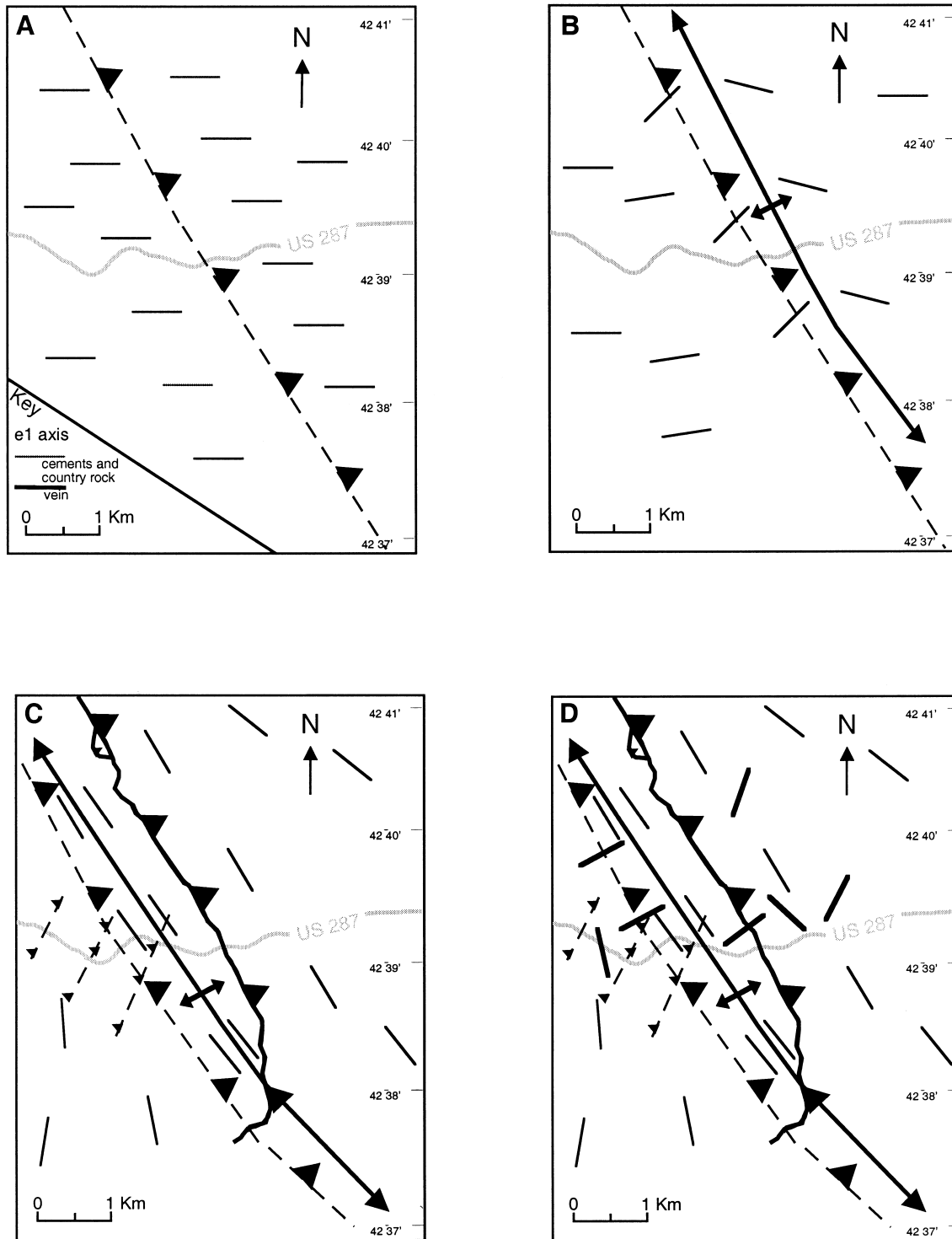


Fig. 14. Cross-sectional chronology (top is oldest, bottom is youngest) of the development of Derby Dome (Fig. 13) based on the subsurface work of Keefer (1970) and Willis and Groshong (1993).

Wiltshko, 1986; Hudleston and Tabor, 1988). The dominant fabric preserved is a pre-folding, layer-parallel shortening strain within the plane of fault transport (plane strain) with little or no syn-folding strain overprint (e.g. Spang and Groshong, 1981). Derby Dome is a thick-skinned

Laramide structure formed in the foreland where the pre-folding LPS strain fabric can be used as a passive strain marker during fold development. Orogenic LPS fabrics are known to occur at great distances into the craton of a continent (Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1989; van der

Pluijm et al., 1997) and different orogenic regions preserve unique LPS fabrics across North America (Craddock et al., 1993) or within the individual thrust sheets of an orogenic belt (Craddock, 1992). The twinned calcite in the country rock of Derby Dome preserves this early (Sevier), E–W layer-parallel fabric strain and does not record any twinning strain overprint (low NEVs) as these sediments were folded into the dome structure (Fig. 4, inset). As the LPS fabric was rotated from an E–W orientation into parallelism with the Derby fold axis (N30°W), the synorogenic calcite veins preserve a very complex stress-strain field that is not plane strain and is very chaotic (Fig. 9, inset; see also Hennings et al., 2000).

The pre- and syn-folding stress-strain fields recorded by twinned calcite document rotation of the pre-folding LPS fabric into parallelism with the fold axis with no folding strain overprint despite a complex, non-plane strain deformational history during folding as recorded by the calcite veins (Figs. 13 and 14). Layer-parallel slip, fracturing (Fig. 12), and oblique motions of the NE-dipping Wind River thrust and various minor back-thrusts (Fig. 14) accommodated the folding curvature and asymmetry. Our results are consistent with those of Willis and Groshong (1993) (24 calcite strain analyses from four folds, 13 limestones and 11 calcite cemented sandstones, low NEVs) who found a NE–SW LPS fabric within the cylindrical portions of the folds, and a similar LPS fabric oriented parallel to the fold axes (NW–SE) for the plunging portions of folds. Calcite strain analyses from the adjacent eastern flank (dip-slope) of the Wind River Range preserve two LPS fabrics, one oriented parallel to the range (NW–SE; Willis and Groshong, 1993) and/or one oriented parallel to the regional Sevier fabric (SW–NE; Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1999).

## 5. Conclusions

The Sevier LPS fabric present in these sediments before Derby Dome was folded has been rotated from an ~E–W orientation into parallelism (NW–SE; ~120° counter-clockwise rotation) with the Derby fold axis. The rotation of this fabric on both sides of the fold axis suggests that oblique motion was important along the various thrusts and back-thrusts (Fig. 14) that truncated the dome. An oblique component (i.e. non-plane strain) of layer-parallel slip must also have been important in the genesis of this fold structure. Syn-folding calcite veins are twinned and record a complex, non-plane strain series of stress-strain field orientations (Fig. 9, inset stereonets) unlike the in-transport stress-strain field of the frontal thin-skinned Pine Mountain thrust (Kilsdonk and Wiltchko, 1988), and not everywhere in accordance with the regional E–W Sevier or younger ~N–S Laramide vein fabric (Craddock, 1992; Craddock and van der Pluijm, 1999).

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