Apatite fission-track analysis of the tectonic effects of the Arabia-Eurasia collision

I. Albino (1), W. Cavazza (1), M. Zattin (2), A.I. Okay (3), S. Adamia (4), and N. Sadradze (5)

(1) Department of Biological, Geological and Environmental Sciences, University of Bologna, Italy (irene.albino3@unibo.it), (2) Department of Geosciences, University of Padua, Italy (massimiliano.zattin@unipd.it), (3) Istanbul Technical University, Eurasia Institute of Earth Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey (okay@itu.edu.tr), (4) Institute of Geophysics, Tbilisi, Georgia (sh_adamia@hotmail.com), (5) Geological Institute, Tbilisi, Georgia (nino.sadradze@gmail.com)

The Oligo-Miocene collision between Arabia and Eurasia led to the development of (i) the Bitlis-Zagros orogenic belt, (ii) the North and East Anatolian fault systems, (iii) the structural inversion of the Caucasian basins, and (iv) widespread deformation in the Turkish-Armenian-Iranian plateau. Despite the importance of the event, the exact age of the collision is poorly constrained. The integration of new apatite fission-track (AFT) data from the eastern Pontides, the Lesser Caucasus (Adjara-Trialeti zone), and the eastern part of the Anatolian plateau with preexisting data from the Bitlis suture has provided insights on the syn-and post-collisional evolution not only of eastern Anatolia but also of the entire Eastern Mediterranean area.

The AFT samples have a wide spatial distribution and include different types of rocks: Paleogene sandstones and magmatic rocks with Cretaceous-to-Eocene intrusion ages. Despite the disparate lithologies and large distance, apatite fission-track ages from the easternmost Pontides, the Georgian Lesser Caucasus, the eastern Anatolian Plateau, and the Bitlis collision zone show a distinct geographic pattern. Exhumation along the Black Sea coast occurred in the Middle Miocene, mirroring the age of collision between the Eurasian and Arabian plates along the 2,400-km long Bitlis-Zagros suture zone some 200 km to the south. Exhumation in the Anatolian Plateau occurred in the Paleogene (with a cluster of ages in the Middle-Late Eocene), coevally with the development of the Izmir-Ankara-Erzincan suture. Successive development of the Anatolian Plateau did not exhume a new partial annealing zone and thus is not recorded by the apatite fission tracks.