## **Dynamic Topography**

and the Western Interior Seaway







FIG. 7 Stratigraphic cross-section of Cretaceous rocks from central Utah to northeastern Colorado. Thicknesses are based on well and outcrop control. Vertical exaggeration approximately ×151. The Castlegate Sandstone has been interpreted as a product of "antitectonic" sedimentation (Yoshida et al., 1996). Colors were utilized in the paleogeographic maps. Abbreviations: Ksx, Sixmile Canyon Formation; Kfv, Funk Valley Formation; Kav, Allen Valley Formation; Ksp, Sanpete Formation; Kr, Rollins Sandstone Member; Kcz, Cozzette Sandstone Member; Kco, Corcoran Sandstone Member. (From Molenaar and Rice (1988).)



Explain what the colors are (greens are areas accumulating coals, bricks are carbonates). One initial question is, why a seaway? Classically, this was thought to largely be high stand of ocean





Seems like an orderly progradation of terrestrial facies out into the seaway...but look at sediment accumulation...





We need something to pull crust down at least in some areas. What exactly can do this-what is "dynamic subsidence"

## Viscous fluids

In a Newtonian fluid, if horizontal velocity is u and vertical is v, then the shear stress in the fluid is related to the gradient in velocity:

$$\tau_{zx} = \eta \frac{du}{dz}$$

Applying continuity (conservation of fluid) and assuming equilibrium, can be shown that the dynamic pressure P is related to variations in fluid velocity u and v (horizontal and vertical):

$$\frac{\partial P}{\partial x} = \eta \left( \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z^2} \right)$$
$$\frac{\partial P}{\partial z} = \rho g + \eta \left( \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial z^2} \right)$$



Math from Turcotte and Schubert section 6.11. Torque is force x distance, so torque from tip of asthenospheric counterflow is constant downslab



OK, shows pressure on top ("arc corner") gets very negative [as this happens, presumably load on base of lithosphere above also become very negative--i.e., pulls down]--bottom side not so strong.



Combining pressure from last slide with weight of slab and then calculating as a torque gives us this--the idea that there is a point where dip is unstable. However, this analysis ignores any deformation within the slab. Although this analysis is basis for Bird's inferences about subsidence, it is not the model preferred by most other mantle-flow modelers.



Similarly, we can estimate the force on the upper plate. Math from Turcotte and Schubert section 6.11. So subsidence should vary inversely to distance from the subduction zone. A major complication is that variations in rheology will allow for this to vary a lot.



Prediction from this model is that if we remove post mid-K seds, things return to flat. Is this true? (certainly not in NE NM, maybe in some places to north).





This explicitly tested in Bogolub & Jones as well as Levandowski et al.



Note panel in upper right has oldest time at right. Suggesting western CP has jumped up as dynamic topo ended...





Painter and Carrapa profiles EW in Wyoming pre-81 Ma; think dynamic effects then later. Pang and Nummedal inferred dynamic subsidence starting c 84 Ma and large by 79 Ma; could also be change in flexural rigidity?



More detailed sections help delineate major areas of subsidence. Pre-82 Ma foredeep, after that major migration east (not clear why Wyoming wasn't included more—other work carries these subsidence areas northward). Colored lines are shorelines.



Working with more detailed sections allows for calculation of subsidence rates. Note vertical scale is linear in depth (thickness) while age scale varies wildly. [I'm having real problems reconciling this plot with the tectonic subsidence plots; 145 m/Ma over 1.7 Ma should be maybe 250m subsidence, but over 600 m of section—is it really compacting that fast?]



Location of the hingeline between the foredeep and the forebulge during the Campanian-Paleocene. The arcuate trend of the hingeline indicates the locus of greatest flexural load in the orogen—at the center of the arc. Abbreviations: C, M, P, Campanian, Maastrichtian, Paleocene; e, E, Early; l, L, Late. The location of maximum loading shifted progressively northward during the Late Cretaceous-Paleocene (Catuneanu et al., 1999, 2000).



Lower right figure shows reciprocal stratigraphy with biozones and presence of airfall ashes from Alberta.



Left is map of hinges inferred by reciprocal strat, right is suggested forebulge position from Liu et al. EC=Early Campanian c. 80 Ma, MC c. 77 Ma, IC c. 73 Ma, EEM = early Early Maastrichtian, c. 71-72 Ma, LEM late Early Maas. c. 70 Ma, LM c. 67-68 Ma, EP = early Paleocene c. 63 Ma

## Laramide Analogs

the present the key to the past?





So what of this analog? Style of deformation is similar, but is that reflective of driving force or simply the way that kind of crust shortens?





What of pre-shortening sedimentation? In Pampeanas, most sections only a few 10s of meters; up to maybe 300m in some wells. There is a ~10km deep foredeep to the west...



Rockies has kilometers of section. Also has undeformed Colorado Plateau between foreland and thin-skinned deformation--larger than entire Pampean orogen!





## **Laramide Models**

what are we looking to recreate?

Bird, P., 1984, Laramide crustal thickening event in the Rocky Mountain foreland and Great Plains: *Tectonics*, v. 3, no. 7, p. 741-758, doi: 10.1029/TC003i007p00741.

What was the main criterion Bird focused on as representing the essence of the Laramide orogeny?

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I'd say it was an increase in crustal thickness
- sediments
- intrusion
- shortening
- crustal flow
- shear of lower crust

- **sediments -** only averages to 200m thickness
- intrusion
- shortening
- crustal flow
- shear of lower crust

- **sediments** only averages to 200m thickness
- intrusion small volume and no thermal anomaly
- shortening
- crustal flow
- shear of lower crust



Others had higher estimates of shortening than Bird; 25% in Wyoming would thicken 35 km crust to about 44 km. Still shy of Bird's targets...

- **sediments -** only averages to 200m thickness
- intrusion small volume and no thermal anomaly
- **shortening-**only 13% and not in Great Plains
- crustal flow-can't move crust far enough
- shear of lower crust

(Not considered: phase changes at the Moho)



Although flat slab originally from volcanic variations, basic physics, goes back to Dickinson & Snyder (1978) and esp. Bird (1984, 1988).





Also seems to wipe out Nevadaplano...and destroys California





So just how fatal should this be? Is it a trivial modification of Bird's model? Or does this create a bigger problem? Is the focus on crustal thickness misplaced? Could it be younger and sourced in the mantle?



Schmandt map doesn't show obvious Rockies thickening...





but Shen map does seem to show it.



Maybe Moho isn't as important as structure of the crust—note crustal thickness not well correlated with contribution to topography from lower crust. Solid black line is smoothed topography.



Mid-lower crust has large density variations absent at greater depths in mantle except in the RGR/southern Rockies...so \*Plains\* don't seem to have deeper support. Light gray contours show contribution to elevation...



## Flat slabs elsewhere

rather than look for Laramide ranges elsewhere, what about flat slabs elsewhere?









As an aside, the Skinner et al. 2013 paper argues that due to asymmetry in spreading in Pacific, Inca Plateau is 600 km farther east than shown here



**Top:** Fig. 4. Length of the flat slab segment at model time t = 14.4 Ma for several values of the transition temperature Ttr and average upper mantle viscosity  $\eta^-$  UM. Solid lines represent situations with a plateau, dashed lines without. Only the Ttr = 600 and 700  $\circ$  C cal- culations with intermediate mantle strength, and the Ttr = 800  $\circ$  C with the weakest mantle show the observed characteristics at Peru, i.e. flat subduction with a plateau, and steep without.

**Bottom** Fig. 5. Relative importance of the overriding plate motion and plateau subduction for modified versions of models A-C at model time t = 15 Ma. Lengths of the flat slab are for models with a 'twice-as-thick' plateau (solid lines) and without a plateau (dashed lines) for several overriding plate motion adjustments (with respect to the default overriding plate motion of 3cm per year at Peru). Flat slab length differences Lfs are measured with respect to the lengths obtained in model A-C.



Fig. 6. Compilations of model calculations without an oceanic plateau. Several important model parameters are varied around the values from Peru model A. Most important parameters are the average upper mantle viscosity  $\eta^-$ UM, age of the slab, and overriding plate velocity vov, while eclogitisation kinetics (varied through variation in Ttr), slab yield stress  $\tau y$  and size of the weak mantle wedge seem to be of minor importance.





Fig. 3. Location of Pacific–Farallon/Nazca conjugate features relative to a given flat slab. We have placed points along Pacific plate bathymetric highs, and created conjugate features using standard plate reconstruction techniques and the rotation model of Müller et al. (2008). A plot for each flat slab shows the proximity of a reconstructed point on the bathymetric anomaly to that flat slab, plotted as a function of time. The thickness of the line scales with the crustal volume in a 100 km 200 km box around the Pacific plate conjugate point. The grey box represents the spatial and temporal extent of the flat slab from Ramos and Folguera (2009). We expect impactors to pass through this target zone if the buoyancy hypothesis is the cause of the flat slab. The map shows the location of the flat slabs along the South American margin (Ramos and Folguera, 2009). The black triangles are the point from which our distances are calculated. See Supplementary Table 3 for information about the conjugate points.



"Old Farallon" is basically ~1300km depth shown as pre-Laramide Farallon plate in this image (it is Mescalara in later papers , which is Jurassic). Black dots in Liu image are "tracers" in their mante flow model tracking the Shatsky conjugate [but there is some circularity here]













For Laramide, are there timing problems anyways? (Recall some of the subsidence stuff we looked at)

## **Other ideas**

are we just not imaginative enough?









So we have some contradictions. Also note Colorado Plateau, extent of arc shutdown. UNclear if schists record true flat slab







So maybe there is time-transgression? This is using cooling ages...and uncertainties are kind of high. Is this really reflecting deformation or just erosion (tilting of Plateau?)

NAVDAT ages are mostly south or far north; many of these are K-Ar or Ar-Ar ages, so wouldn't want to go very far with that. Note that these ages are older than intrusives to west...



Recall this...they estimates flexural strength



Is there a material change to the lithosphere from shallow subduction?

S C SC CE

Attempts to measure flexural rigidity at different times—often in different places at different times. Argues that the change from Cenomanian to Campanian is due to a change in lithospheric strength. Clearly points 6 & 7—with huge error bars—are crucial to this—eastern Green River Basin and Wind River Basin.

## **Plateau subduction**

attractive possibility in some other ways?












Keep in mind timing problems...



Keep in mind timing problems...



SCB = Southern California Batholith (Mojave and pieces on west of SAF)

