

3D NUMERICAL MODELS FOR ALONG-AXIS VARIATIONS IN DIKING AT  
MID-OCEAN RIDGES

by

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science

Major: Geophysics

The University of Memphis

May, 2015

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### ***Dedication***

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Xia Tian. I wouldn't have a chance to experience this wonderful world without her giving birth to me. She rears me up by herself with her great love, optimism and peseverence. Without her guidance and support, I will not become who I am.

I also want to dedicate this thesis toward my major thesis advisor: Dr. Eunseo Choi. His mentorship defines what a great advisor is like. Without his guidance, neither this theis nor my fast personal-development during these two years is possible. He has kindled a flame that illuminates the way for my future career as a geodynamic modeler.

### ***Acknowledgements***

There is no proper words for me to express my deep gratitude toward my thesis advisor Dr. Eunseo Choi. He has changed my life in a very positive way. From him, I have learned what a great researcher and educator should be like. It is because of his unfailing care and understanding that have given me the courage to persevere, to carry on during the darkest days as an international student far away from home. It is his vivid and interesting lessons that have inspired me so much that I want to devote my career into geodynamic modeling. It is his numerous inspiration and encouragement that has motivated me to work super hard (enjoy at the same time) on the fascinating research questions. It is his altruistic share that has provided me with great chances to learn from great researchers, references, and to attend meetings. It is his patience to guide me through my endless silly questions that has nourished and cultivated my capabilities of being an independent researcher. Blessings from Eunseo, my role model, are countless. I will keep them in mind and try my best to relay the torch.

To the other two committee members, Dr. Christine Powell and Dr. Jer-ming Chiu, for their guidance and advice during many committee meetings. For their interesting courses.

To Center for Earthquake Research and Information and University of Memphis, thank a lot for providing me this great chance to study here with full tuition and graduate research assistanship. It is this kind support that has made my two year studies at this great institution possible. To all the faculties taught me courses and staff Josephine provided me a very pleasant, tidy and clean place for doing research and studying.

To students, Yangyang Naeem Sabber

To Center for Writing and Communication staff: Bill Schraufnagel To Tianhe2 super computer center, thank a lot for the support from National Supercomputer Center in Guangzhou. For about 200k Sus.

To Dr. Jie Liu and Dr. Ke Zhang, for kindly sharing their computing resources on Tianhe2.

To Dr. Gu Cheng,

To Shengfang Chen and Lijie Lyu

Finally, I want to thank my families, grandfather, grandgrandfather(ling zhong qian rang wo hao hao xue xi), grandma, mum.

“In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer.”

—Albert Camus

“People have no higher calling than to strive for the greater good of humankind and society and that the future of humanity can be assured only when there is a balance between scientific development and the enrichment of the human spirit.”

—Kazuo Inamori

“不失其所者久，死而不亡者寿。”

—《道德经》

### *Abstract*

Tian, Xiaochuan. M.S. The University of Memphis. May 2015 Master of Science.  
3D Numerical Models for Along-axis Variations in Diking at Mid-Ocean Ridges. Major  
Professor: Eunseo Choi.

Bathymetry of ocean floors reveals a great variety of morphologies at Mid-ocean Ridges (MORs). Previous studies showed that the morphologies at slow spreading MORs are mainly controlled by the ratio between rates of magma supply and plate extension. 2D models for the across-ridge cross-sections have been successful in explaining many of the observed morphological features such as abyssal hills and oceanic core complexes. However, the magma supply varies along the ridge and the interaction between the tectonic plates and magmatism at MORs are inevitably 3D processes. We propose to investigate the consequences of the along-axis variability in diking in terms of faulting pattern and the associated structures. This work will include implementation of an algorithm of parameterizing repeated diking in a 3D parallel geodynamic modeling code.

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# 1 Introduction

Around 70% area of the Earth's crust is the oceanic crust. New oceanic crust is constantly forming at the mid-ocean ridges (MORs), the longest mountain chains on the Earth. Seismic and volcanic activities are frequently happening along the MORs due to constantly seafloor spreading and magma upwelling. The interactions between the tectonics and magmatism along the MORs is considered to be the major contributing factor to the variation of the seafloor topography.

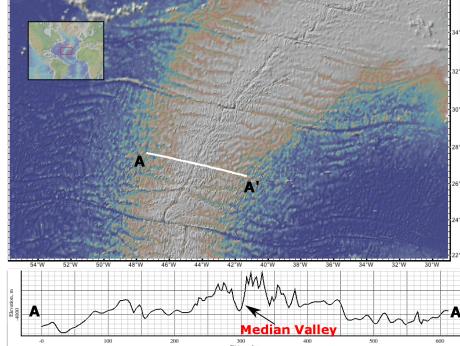
According to numerous high-resolution multi-beam bathymetry surveys, various characteristics of the topography along and across MORs are identified. How to explain the formation mechanisms of the observations has been an active research area. Two major questions have stimulated people's interests. First, what causes the distinct differences in axial topography between slow (median valley) and fast spreading ridges (axial high)? Second, for slow spreading ridges, why does topography from the center to tip of the ridge vary from high frequency symmetric abyssal hills to asymmetric long wavelength oceanic core complexes (OCCs)?

Geodynamic modeling along with a variety of geological, geophysical observation and lab experiment constraints have been used to study how does the interaction system between tectonics and magmatism at the MORs work under geological time scale.

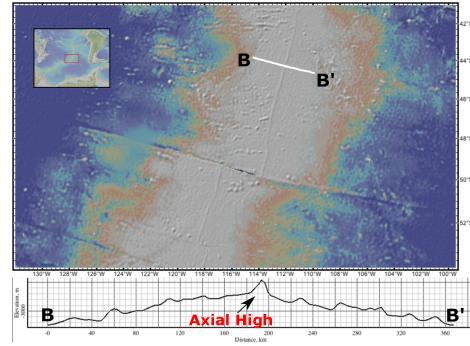
## 1.1 Review of Literature

According to [Fowler, 2004], variations in mid-ocean ridge morphologies are mainly controlled by four factors: magma supply, tectonic strain, hydrothermal circulation and spreading rate.  
*XT:Clarify the relationship between the four factors and try to cite the original work for each of them. (in Fowler2004, they didn't mention the ref for these four factors, page417 Chapter9.4.1)* Among them, the spreading rate is the most important. Slow-to-intermediate spreading ridges (half spreading rate less than 4 cm/yr) produce median

valleys that are typically 10~20 km wide and 1~2 km deep (e.g., Mid-Atlantic Ridges, Figure 1(a)). Fast-spreading ridges (half spreading rate greater than 5 cm/yr) have axial highs that are 10~20 km wide, 0.3~0.5 km high (e.g., East Pacific Rise, Figure 1(b)).



(a) Slow spreading Mid-Atlantic Ridge



(b) Fast spreading East Pacific Rise

Figure 1: Profiles of bathymetry across MORs.

Slow spreading ridges exhibit along-axis variations as well in terms of the width and depth of median valleys, crustal thickness and the off-axis morphology. Figure 2 shows that the topographic profile nearer to the center of the ridge segment (A-A') is rather symmetric and has higher frequency. The maximum relief is about 1 km. In contrast, the near-tip profile (B-B') is asymmetric and has much lower frequency and a greater relief ( $\sim 3$  km). The bathymetry and crustal thickness along the ridge valley also varies. From [Chen and Lin, 1999], the maximum along-axis variation in crustal thickness  $\Delta H_c$  is linearly increasing with segment length L, and the relationship is  $\Delta H_c(L) = 0.0206L$  (Figure 3).

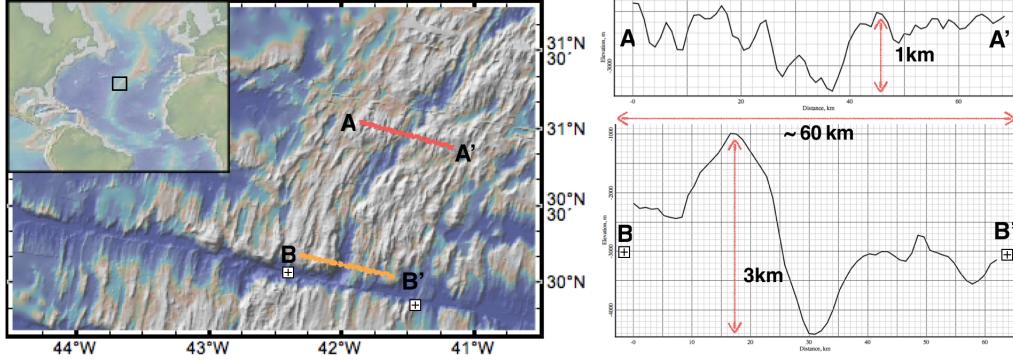


Figure 2: Two bathymetry cross-sections of Mid-Atlantic Ridge (MAR) with 10 times vertical exaggeration. A-A' is closer to the ridge segment center while B-B' is at the tip of the segment near the Atlantis Transform fault.

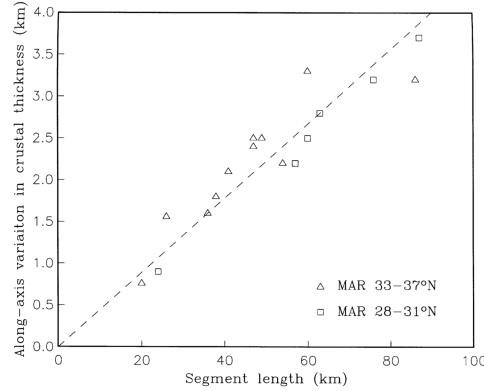


Figure 3: Relationship between the maximum crustal thickness variations ( $\Delta H_c$ ) along a ridge segment and the segment length (L). The dashed line is the best-fit linear regression of the combined data. [Chen and Lin, 1999]

Magma supply at MORs is mostly a passive process when no hot plume is present [Fowler, 2004]. Hot mantle rises up to fill the vacated room being created by plate separation and decompression leads to partial melting of the hot mantle. The melt upwells due to both pressure difference and buoyancy from lateral density difference. When the melt solidifies near the surface, it forms new crust. This diking process releases extensional stresses resulting from far-field forces (e.g. slab pull) that drive seafloor spreading.

The passive nature of magma supply results in the major difference between fast and slow spreading ridges in the amount of magma supply. At the fast spreading ridges, magma supply is always sufficient for accommodating plate separation by filling the space by

dikes. However, the amount of magma supplied in the form of dikes is not as much at the slow spreading ridges and the oceanic lithosphere experiences internal deformations (i.e. tectonics process like normal faulting) when the accumulated extensional stress exceeds the strength of the crust.

Buck et al. [2005] attributed the contrasting faulting patterns and ocean floor morphology of fast- and slow-spreading ridges to the difference in the amount of plate extension accommodated by diking. They defined the ratio between the rates of diking and plate separation as  $M = V_{dx}/2V_x$ , where  $V_{dx}$  is the extensional velocity of a widening dike and  $V_x$  is the half spreading rate of the MOR. According to this definition,  $M = 1$  represents the case where magma supply is sufficient to release all the tensional stresses from plate separation.  $M = 0$  corresponds to the case of no magma supply, in which diking does not account for any of the plate motion and therefore plates kinematics requires plates to go through internal deformations. As shown in Figure 4, an axial high forms at a fast spreading ridge ( $M = 1$ ) due to buoyancy from lateral density difference across ridge axis but a median valley forms at a slow-spreading ridge ( $M = 0.5$ ) due to near-axis normal faulting, which is in turn caused by the stretching of oceanic lithosphere.

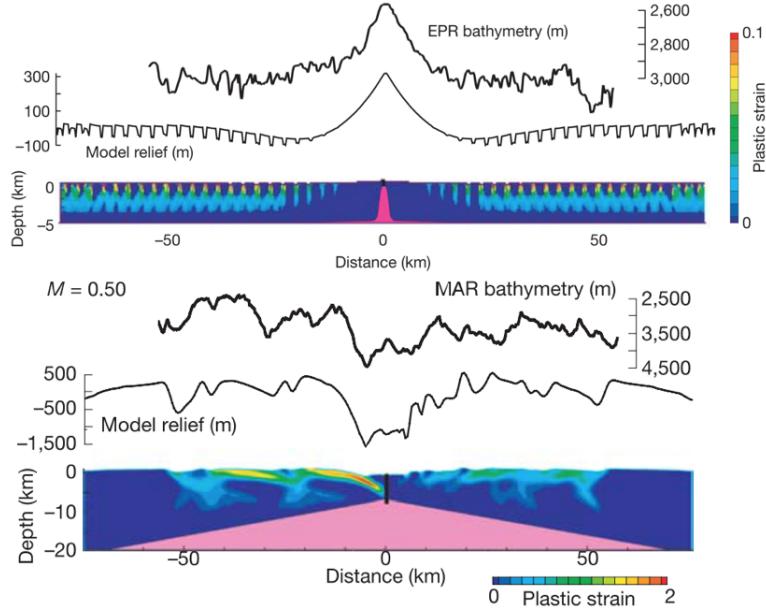


Figure 4: Upper one: modeling result for fast spreading agrees well with the observation of East Pacific Rise. Lower one: modeling result for slow spreading ridges agrees well with the bathymetry of Mid Atlantic Ridge. [Buck et al., 2005]

Tucholke et al. [2008] expand the investigation on the role of  $M$  in the mid-ocean ridge mechanics. They focus on the faulting behaviors of slow spreading ridges and find that the OCCs are most likely to form when  $M$  varies from 0.3 to 0.5. As shown in Figure 5, when  $M = 0.7$ , repeated diking pushes faults forming at the spreading center away from axis. Since the thickness of the brittle layer increases away from the ridge axis, frictional and bending energy for maintaining the fault also increases. When it exceeds the energy for breaking a new near-axis fault, the old fault will be replaced by the new one. When  $M = 0.3 \sim 0.5$ , the normal fault remains active for a long time and rotates to a very low angle normal fault (detachment fault), exhuming the lower crust and mantle materials to the seafloor. When  $M$  is less than 0.3, most of the tension is accommodated by intra-plate deformations rather than by diking and as a result, faulting pattern is more complicated and unsteady.

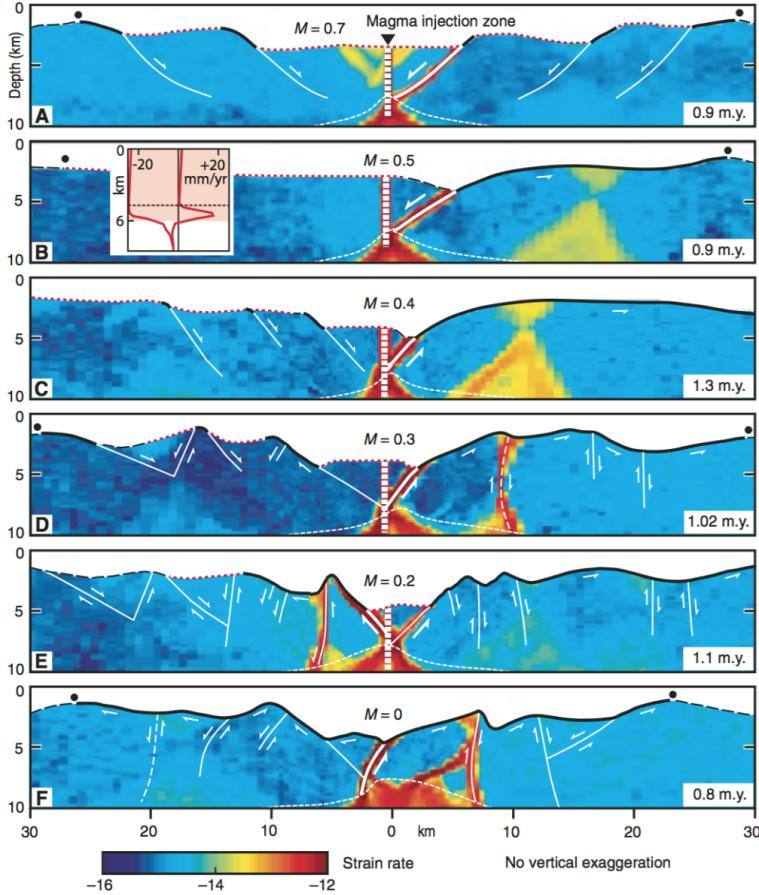


Figure 5: A~F: Faulting behaviors for different values of  $M$ . Geologic interpretation is superimposed on modeled distribution of strain rate. Dots show breakaways of initial faults. Dashed seafloor is original model seafloor, red dotted seafloor is formed dominantly by magmatic accretion, and solid bold is fault surface. Note that the detachment faults in B and C are not interrupted by secondary faults. [Tucholke et al., 2008]

## 1.2 Statement of Research Purpose

The  $M$ -factor formulation used in these previous 2D models successfully explained major features found in across-ridge profiles of seafloor bathymetry. However, 2D models have limitations in studying the along ridge-axis interactions, especially when important variables are not constant along the ridge axis. Magma supply at fast spreading ridges seems always sufficient for accommodating plate motions with little variation along the ridge axis. The relatively uniform topography along fast spreading ridges is considered to be consistent with the uniform abundance of the magma supply. However, along the slow spreading ridges, bathymetry, gravity anomaly and results from reflection and refraction seismology show strong correlation with variation in crustal thickness [Ryan et al., 2009, Chen and Lin, 1999, Lin et al., 1990, Tolstoy et al., 1993]. Because oceanic crust

is mainly formed by upwelled magma at the ridge, variation in the thickness of the crust implies variation in magma supply. At slow spreading ridges, the degree of cooling by hydrothermal circulation, thermal structures and even local spreading rate [Baines et al., 2008] also varies both along and across the ridge axis and they appear interrelated. Thus, for slow-to-intermediate spreading ridges, the interactions between tectonics and magmatism at MORs are inevitably 3D processes and 3D numerical models are desirable for better understanding factors controlling both across- and along-ridge topography variations.

The purpose of this thesis is to study how the along-ridge variation in M will make a contribution to the observed various topography assuming that M is the first order control over the topography evolution of MORs. In order to do so, we extend the M-factor formulation originally developed for 2D models to 3D by implementing it into a 3D numerical modeling code SNAC (StGermaiN Analysis of Continua) [Choi et al., 2008]. By systematically exploring the behaviors of the 3D models and comparing them with observations, we will be able to better understand how the mid-ocean ridge magmatism and tectonic deformations interact.

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Method of approach

The numerical modeling code, SNAC, is an explicit Lagrangian finite element code that solves the force and energy ~~XT: find out which one is energy balance equation~~ balance equations for elasto-visco-plastic materials. Figure 6 shows major parts of the SNAC's algorithm.

For each time step of 0.5 yr, strain and strain rates are updated based on the initial or previous velocity fields under the constraints from boundary conditions. A constitutive model returns updated stresses corresponding to these deformation measures. Internal forces are then calculated from the updated stresses, which is plugged into the momentum balance equation together with the body force term. Then, the damped ~~XT: better understand the damped force~~ net force divided by inertial mass yields acceleration at a node point, which is time-integrated to velocity and displacement.

A 3D domain is discretized into hexahedral elements, each of which is in turn divided into two sets of tetrahedra. This symmetric discretization prevents faulting from favoring a specific direction or “mesh grains”.

Rheology for the oceanic lithosphere is assumed to be elasto-visco-plastic (EVP). When viscosity is high at low temperature, the rheology essentially becomes the Mohr-Coulomb plasticity with strain softening and thus can create shear bands that behave like faults. Strain softening is realized by cohesion decreasing with increasing amount of permanent (i.e., plastic) strain. I assume this relationship is linear for simplicity such that it is sufficient for a full description of strain weakening to define initial and final values of cohesion and a critical plastic strain at which cohesion becomes the final value. I define the rate of strain weakening as the cohesion difference divided by the critical plastic strain and use it as one of the model parameters. When temperature is high and viscosity is low, the rheology becomes the Maxwell viscoelasticity and can model creeping flow.

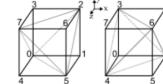
This property of the EVP model makes it possible to set up a structure with a brittle lithosphere and a ductile asthenosphere through a proper temperature distribution. Rheological parameters are taken from previous studies that use a similar rheology [e.g., [Buck et al., 2005](#); [Tucholke et al., 2008](#)] or from lab experiments [e.g., [Kirby and Kronenberg, 1987](#)].

For 3D diking processss, the expanding strain  $\Delta\varepsilon_{xx}$  results from diking at the ridge leads to extra-stresses  $\Delta\sigma_{xx}$ ,  $\Delta\sigma_{yy}$  and  $\Delta\sigma_{zz}$  in all three directions based on the linear elastic constitutive equations  $\sigma_{ij} = \lambda\varepsilon_{kk}\delta_{ij} + 2\mu\varepsilon_{ij}$ .

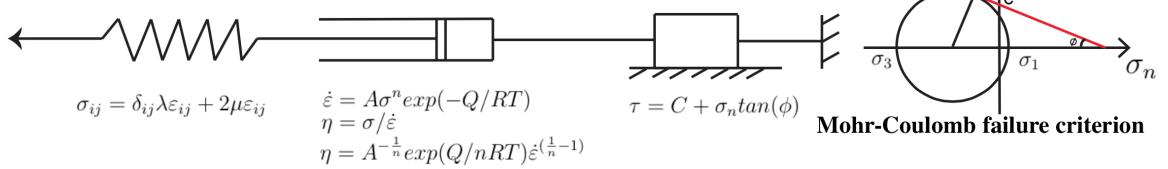
**SNAC:** a 3D, MPI parallelized, updated Lagrangian explicit finite difference code for modeling long-term tectonic evolution of the Earth's elasto-visco-plastic crust and mantle. (Choi et al., 2008)

**Momentum Balance Equation:**  $\frac{\partial\sigma_{ij}}{\partial x_j} + \rho g_i = \rho \frac{Dv_i}{Dt}$

**Spatial Decritization:** A 3D domain is discretized into hexahedral elements, each of which is filled with two sets of 5 tetrahedra.



**Elasto-Visco-Plastic (EVP) Rheology:**



**Diking M Formulation:**  $M = Vdx / 2Vx$  (Vdx is the dike accretion strain(dike widening) $\Delta\varepsilon_{xx}$  in each time step dt)

Stresses introduced by a dike accretion strain(dike widening) $\Delta\varepsilon_{xx}$  in each time step dt:

$$\Delta\sigma_{xx} = (\lambda + 2\mu)\Delta\varepsilon_{xx} \quad \Delta\sigma_{yy} = \lambda\Delta\varepsilon_{xx} \quad \Delta\sigma_{zz} = \lambda\Delta\varepsilon_{xx}$$

Figure 6: Essential components of the numerical method.

## 2.2 Model Setup

The 3D models has a geometry of  $(60 \text{ km} \times 20 \text{ km} \times 20 \text{ km})$  in  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  axes respectively with a resolution of  $\Delta x = 1 \text{ km}$  ( $\Delta x$  is the size of each hexahedron element). For comparison with the previous 2D models [e.g., [Buck et al., 2005](#); [Tucholke et al., 2008](#)], I also run pseudo-2D models and they have a geometry of  $(60 \text{ km} \times 20 \text{ km} \times 1 \text{ km})$  in  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  axes respectively with a resolution of  $\Delta x = 0.5 \text{ km}$ . As shown in Figure 7, the initial temperature field linearly increases from  $0^\circ\text{C}$  at the top surface to  $240^\circ\text{C}$  at the depth of 6 km, reflecting enhanced cooling due to hydrothermal circulation. Below 6 km, the

temperature profile follows the semi-infinite half-space cooling model of moving plates [e.g., Turcotte and Schubert, 2002]. Two sides perpendicular to the  $z$  coordinate axis are free-slip. The top surface has vertical tractions from water columns, of which heights are locally determined as  $(4000 - h(x, z))$  m, where  $h(x, z)$  is the topography at a location,  $(x, z)$ . The bottom surface is supported by the Winkler foundation. Temperature is fixed at 0 °C on the top surface and at 1300 °C on the bottom surface. We adopt the power-law rheology of dry diabase [e.g., Kirby and Kronenberg, 1987, Buck et al., 2005].

For detail model parameters, please refer to Table 1.

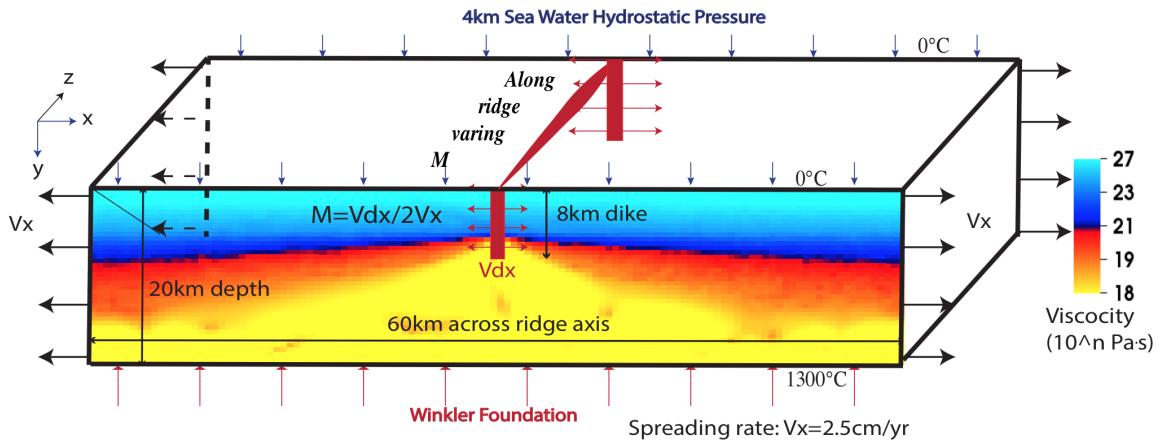


Figure 7: Model setup

## 2.3 Parameters to control

Before running 3D models, I have run hundreds of pseudo-2D models for initial setup and benchmarking with previous studies [e.g., Buck et al., 2005, Tucholke et al., 2008]. Preliminary pseudo-2D results show that the model behavior in faulting pattern is sensitive to the rate of strain weakening. Two cases of strain weakening are tested in the 3D models. In one case (denoted as Type 1 weakening), cohesion linearly decreases from 44 MPa (denoted as  $C_i$ ) to 4 MPa ( $C_e$ ) for plastic strain accumulating from 0 ( $\varepsilon_{p_i}^1$ ) to 0.1 ( $\varepsilon_{p_e}^1$ ). It has a characteristic fault slip of 150 m for pseudo-2D models and 300 m for 3D models. The other case (Type 2 weakening) assumes cohesion linearly decreasing from

44 MPa ( $C_i$ ) to 4 MPa ( $C_e$ ) for plastic strain accumulating from 0 ( $\varepsilon_{p_i}^2$ ) to 0.33 ( $\varepsilon_{p_e}^2$ ). In this case, the characteristic fault slip for pseudo-2D models is 500 m and for 3D models is 1 km. The characteristic fault slip is defined as  $\Delta X_c = 3\Delta x \varepsilon_{p_e}$  where  $3\Delta x$  represents the thickness of the shear bands which is usually 2 to 4 times  $\Delta x$  (size of a hexahedron element) [Lavier et al., 2000]. When  $\Delta X_c$  amount of slip takes place at the fault interface, the cohesion of the material at the faulting interface decreases to  $C_e$ . In this way, under the same amount of  $\Delta X_c$ , models with different resolution should produce the same faulting patterns.

Meanwhile, although how to estimate the M values from observations is a subject of on-going research, we do have constraints from a large dataset of bathymetry, gravity and seismic surveys as well as geological drilling. Generally, at slow spreading ridges, magma supplies mostly at the center of the ridge segment and decreases towards the tip of the segment [Tolstoy et al., 1993, Chen and Lin, 1999, Carbotte et al., 2015]. There is also evidence for shorter wavelength of 10 to 20 km discrete focus of magma accretion along the ridge axis [Lin et al., 1990]. Based on these constraints, I start considering a few scenarios of variations in M along the ridge axis. They are three M ranges (i.e. 0.2~0.8 (M28), 0.5~0.7 (M57) and 0.5~0.8 (M58)) with three simple functional forms of M variations (i.e. linear, sinusoidal and square root).

The numerical cost of a 3D model is non-trivial. For 2 Myr of model time, each model usually runs on 192 cores for about 48 hours (i.e., around  $10^4$  core-hours). Under this constraint of computational cost, I control only the following three parameters while fixing all the others: 1) three types of functional forms (i.e. linear, sinusoidal and square root); 2) three ranges of M variation along the ridge axis (0.5~0.7 (M57); 0.5~0.8 (M58); 0.2~0.8 (M28)) and 3) two types of weakening rate (Type 1 and Type 2).

Till now,  $11 + 1$  3D models are run (11 models with M varying along the ridge-axis and 1 model with constant M = 0.8. The complete list of 3D models is given in Table 2.

Table 1: Summary of 3D Model Parameters

Number	Variable	Description	Value	Units
1	$W_{dike}$	Dike width	2	km
2	$D_{dike}$	Dike depth	8	km
3	$H$	Crustal thickness at dike	6	km
4	$dT/dy$	Crustal thermal gradient	40	K/km
5	$T_1$	Temperature at lower boundary of crust	240	°C
6	$g$	Gravity acceleration	10	m/s <sup>2</sup>
7	$demf$	Dimensionless force damping factor	0.8	N/A
8	$dt$	Time step	1.5768e+07	second
9	$topokappa$	Parameter for topography smoothing	0	N/A
10	$shadowDepth$	Ghost elements for parallel computing	2	N/A
11	$meshI$	Mesh number in X direction	60	N/A
12	$meshJ$	Mesh number in Y direction	20	N/A
13	$meshK$	Mesh number in Z direction	20	N/A
14	$L_I$	Length in X direction	20	km
15	$L_J$	Length in Y direction	20	km
16	$L_K$	Length in Z direction	20	km
17	$\rho$	Density	3000	kg/m <sup>3</sup>
18	$\lambda$	Lamé's constant	30	Gpa
19	$\mu$	Shear modulus	30	Gpa
20	$refvisc$	Reference viscosity	0.125e-17	Pa <sup>-n</sup> /s
21	$activationE$	Activation Energy	276.0e+3	kJ/mol
22	$vis_{min}$	viscosity minimum cutoff	1.0e+18	Pa * s
23	$vis_{max}$	viscosity maximum cutoff	1.0e+27	Pa * s
24	$srexponent$	Power of power law in viscosity	3.05	N/A
25	$\varepsilon_{p_i}^1$	initial plastic strain for piecewise Type 1 weakening	0	N/A
26	$\varepsilon_{p_i}^2$	initial plastic strain for piecewise Type 2 weakening	0	N/A
27	$\varepsilon_{p_e}^1$	end plastic strain for piecewise Type 1 weakening	0.1	N/A
28	$\varepsilon_{p_e}^2$	end plastic strain for piecewise Type 2 weakening	0.33	N/A
29	$C_i$	initial Cohesion for piecewise weakening	44	Mpa
30	$C_e$	end Cohesion for piecewise weakening	4	Mpa
31	$\phi$	Friction angle	30	°
32	$remesh_{timestep}$	Remesh when timestep reach its value	400000	N/A
33	$remesh_{length}$	Remesh when the global minimum of the ratio of the volume of a tetrahedron to one of its surface area	0.6	N/A
34	$topTemp$	Surface temperature	0	°C
35	$bottomTemp$	Bottom temperature	1300	°C
36	$V_x$	Half spreading rate	7.9e-10	m/s

Table 2: List of 3D numerical experiments.

Model	M range	Functional Form	Type of weakening	For short
1	M28	Linear	Type 1	M28LinT1
2	M28	Sinusoidal	Type 1	M28SinT1
3	M28	Square Root	Type 1	M28SqrtT1
4	M57	Linear	Type 1	M57LinT1
5	M57	Sinusoidal	Type 1	M57SinT1
6	M57	Sinusoidal	Type 2	M57SinT2
7	M57	Square Root	Type 2	M57SqrtT2
8	M58	Sinusoidal	Type 1	M58SinT1
9	M58	Sinusoidal	Type 2	M58SinT2
10	M58	Square Root	Type 1	M58SqrtT1
11	M58	Square Root	Type 2	M58SqrtT2
12	M88	Constant	Type 2	M88ConT2

### 3 Results

In this “Results” chapter, I first walk through the reference model (M28LinT1) and compare it with a constant M model (M88ConT2). Then, I describe in detail the major characteristics of the models. Finally, I compare the models in terms of 1) two types of the weakening rates; 2) three types of the ranges of M variation and 3) three types of the functional forms of M variation.

#### 3.1 Reference model M28LinT1

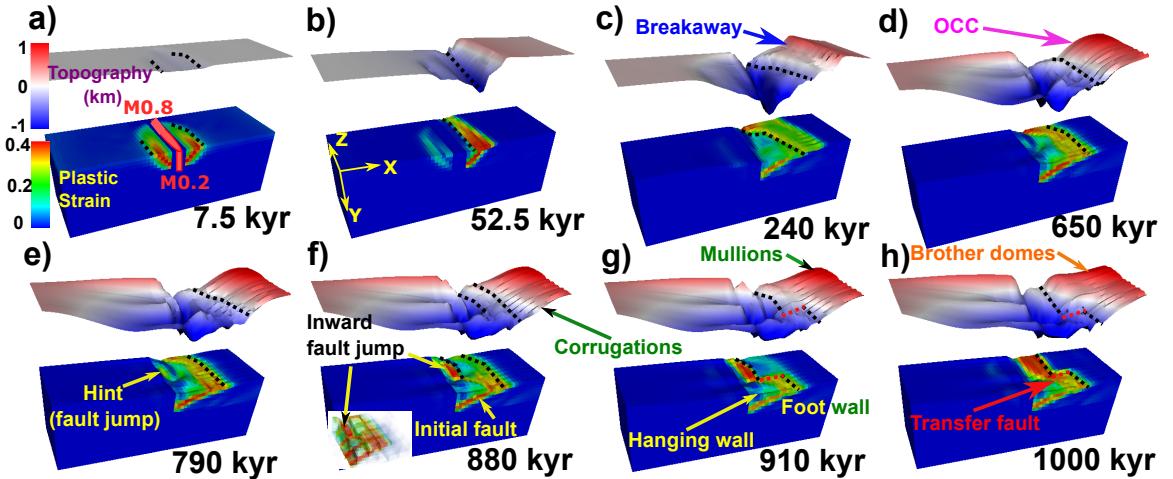


Figure 8: Evolution of plastic strain and surface topography of the reference model M28LinT1 (Table 2). Each snapshot shows plastic strain plotted on the model domain and the five times exaggerated topography. Initial seafloor is marked as a reference of 0 km of the topography. The bold dash lines (black) are the terminations of the detachment faults. The bold dash lines (red) in g and h are the transfer faults that connect the terminations along the ridge. The inset in f plots plastic strain with opacity linearly proportional to its value.

I consider the model with M varies linearly from 0.2 to 0.8 along the ridge axis with type 1 weakening rate (M28LinT1) as our reference model. The major characteristics of the model are indicated in the Figure 8. They are breakaway (Figure 8.c); oceanic core complex (OCC) (Figure 8.d); terminations of the detachment faults where the active faulting interfaces reache the seafloor (Figure 8.e); new high angle normal faults forming near

the ridge axis, termed as “inward fault jump”; corrugations (Figure 8.f) and mullion structures (Figure 8.g); and the side-by-side “brother domes” (Figure 8.h).

As shown in Figure 8, the model creates a median valley that widens and deepens with increasing plate extension (Figure 8.a.b.c). The rate of its widening and deepening at a specific location along the ridge is inversely proportional to the M value (i.e. rate of local magma supply).

For the first 7.5 kyr (Figure 8.a), normal faults (represented by localized plastic strain) begin to form near the ridge axis. Because stresses due to plate motions accumulate faster at the lower M side than at the higher M side, faults initiate at the lower M side first and then propagate to the higher M side.

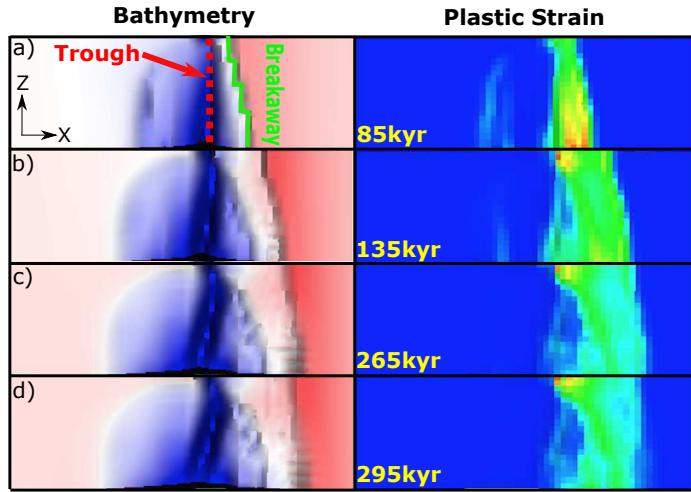


Figure 9: Bird’s-eye view of the evolution of breakaway (marked by green bold line) and depressed narrow zone along the ridge axis (“trough”) (red dash line in (a)) for model M28LinT1 (Table 2). This figure share the same color scales with Figure 8.

By 52.5 kyr (Figure 8.b), the normal fault on the right hand side of the ridge axis continues to evolve while the one on the left becomes inactive. The choice of which fault to develop seems to be made due to a small numerical perturbation between the two faults seen in Figure 8.a although the model setup is symmetrical across the ridge axis. The timing difference of initiation of faulting along the ridge axis creates an offset in the  $x$ -axis direction between the breakaways along the ridge that the breakaway at the lower M side

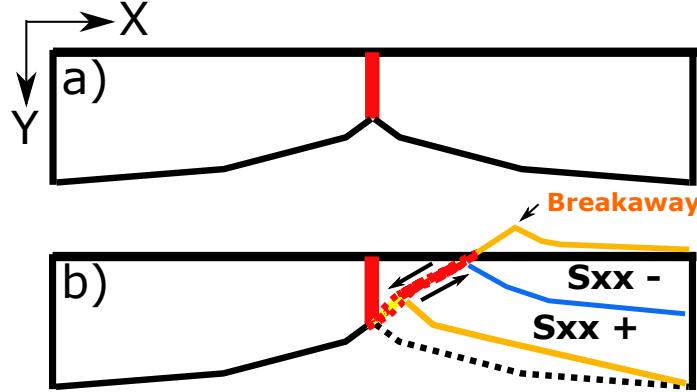


Figure 10: Bending stress illustration. The blue line is the neutral plane where  $\sigma_{xx} = 0$ . Above the neutral plane is compression ( $\sigma_{xx} < 0$ ) and beneath it is tension ( $\sigma_{xx} > 0$ ).

extends further than that of the higher M side (Figure 9). The offset is maintained because the extending velocity of the breakaways to move away from the ridge axis is controlled by the far field extension rate,  $V_x$ . The plastic strain also shows similar along ridge offset in  $x$ -axis direction. However, the along ridge offset in  $x$ -direction of the tips of the extending plastic strain reduces at  $\sim 295$  kyr (Figure 9.d) because once the detachment fault at the lower M side bends to its lowest dip angle, the termination of the detachment fault stops extending and the healing effect implemented in the model reduces quickly the plastic strain of the inactive fault interface that has been exhumed to the seafloor. While at the higher M side, the termination keeps extending and reduces the initial offset generated by the asynchronous initiation of faulting. In addition, as the fault slips, crust at the footwall bends in a clockwise rotation as illustrated by Figure 10.

By 240 kyr (Figure 8.c), the median valley further deepens and widens. The detachment fault keeps slipping and as it bends, the termination at the lower M side ( $M < 0.3$ ) extends  $\sim 15$  km away from the ridge axis with the dip angle decreases to  $\sim 30^\circ$  at the root of the fault and to  $\sim 0^\circ$  at the exposed fault interface. However, for the detachment at the higher M side (especially for  $M > 0.7$ ), the dip angle remains high and the termination of the detachment is closer to the ridge axis. The maximum relief between the breakaway and the depressed narrow zone (trough) inside the median valley becomes larger than 1 km. In addition,  $\sim 1$  km wavelength corrugations begin to show up between the break-

away and termination at the lower M side ( $M < 0.3$ ). The wavelength of the corrugations is relatively more regular than the mullion structures (Figure 8.g) because they share different formation mechanism as will be described in the following sections. The trough evolves from a straight line parallel to the ridge axis (Figure 9.a) to a line oblique to the ridge axis and the obliquity increases with extension (Figure 9.b,c,d).

By 650 kyr (Figure 8.d), the median valley becomes wider and deeper. The detachment fault reaches its lowest dip angle and its termination stops extending. The break-away already moved out of the model domain. The fault slip is already larger than the thickness of the crust and the upper mantle materials are exhumed to the surface. The previous fault interface bends over and dips away from the ridge axis, producing a cylindrical OCC. A hint of the inward fault jump shows up at the higher M side ( $0.5 < M < 0.65$ ).

By 790 kyr (Figure 8.e), the hint of the inward fault jump evolves and propagates toward the higher M side ( $M > 0.5$ ). However, the initial detachment fault is still active and takes up most of the extension. The distance between the termination of the detachment fault and the ridge axis varies along the ridge that the termination at the lower M side is further away from the ridge axis.

By 880 kyr (Figure 8.f), at the higher M side ( $M > 0.5$ ), the hint of the inward fault jump evolves to a high angle normal fault that cut through the higher M side ( $M > 0.5$ ) and coexists with the initial detachment fault (shown in the inset).

By 910 kyr (Figure 8.g), the inward fault jump takes up all the extension at the higher M side ( $M > 0.5$ ) and substitutes the initial detachment fault. At the higher M side, previous hanging wall becomes footwall and moves with the spreading plate to the positive  $x$ -axis direction, however, at the lower M side, due to the limited magma supply, the hanging wall follows the conjugate plate and moves toward the negative  $x$ -axis direction (Figure 11). This opposite directions of velocities result in a dextral shear stress  $\sigma_{xz}$  region at the lower M side ( $M < 0.5$ )  $\sim 45^\circ$  oblique to the ridge axis (Figure 12) and the shear stress zone produces a new trough inside the median valley that aligns with it. Combined

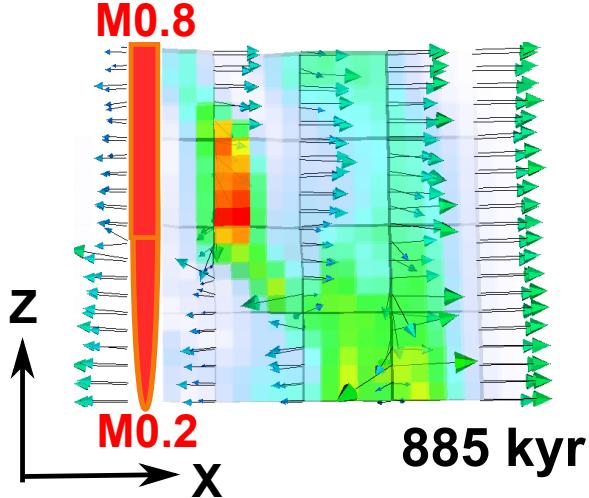


Figure 11: Bird's-eye view of velocity field with plastic strain plotted with opacity linearly proportional to its value. (color scale the same as Figure 8.a))

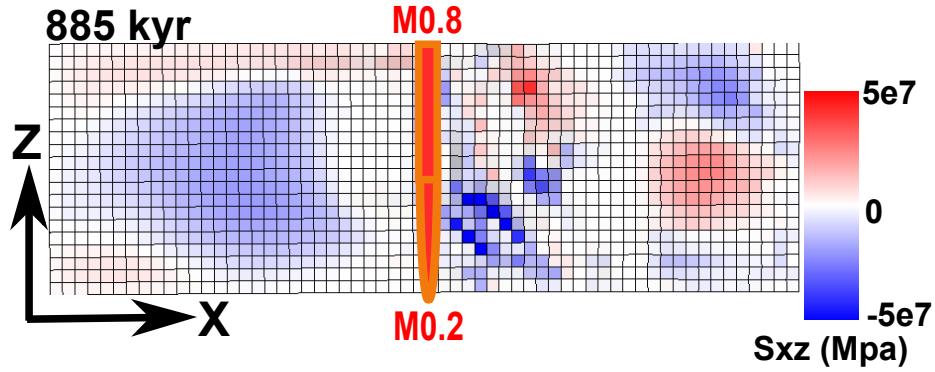


Figure 12: Bird's-eye view of  $\sigma_{xz}$ .

with the previous trough, an “X” shape topography low is created in the model.

### 3.1.1 Constant M along the ridge axis (M88ConT2 Table 2)

As a comparison to the varying M models, a constant M model is run.

As shown in Figure 13, model M88ConT2 produces a  $\sim 20$  km wide and  $1\sim 2$  km deep median valley. It is similar to the generally observation of the Mid-Atlantic Ridges. The width and depth of the median valley is almost constant along the ridge as contrast to the varying M models. The variations of the location of the breakaway and termination along the ridge that mentioned in the reference model (M28LinT1) are not produced. Because the magma supply is constant along the ridge with  $M = 0.8$ , there is no along ridge

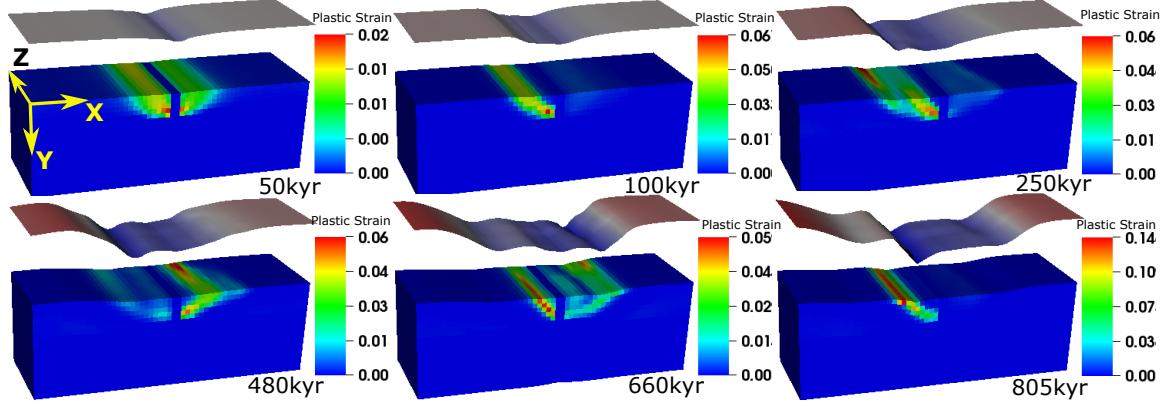


Figure 13: Evolution of plastic strain and surface topography of the model: M88ConT2 (Table 2).

axis variation in the rate of tensional stress accumulation. Thus, the normal faults along the ridge initiate at the same time and the slipping rate of the fault is also constant along the ridge axis. The synchronized fault initiation results in no offset between breakaways and the constant slipping rate produces no along ridge axis variation in the position of the termination. In addition, neither corrugations nor mullion structures are generated. Normal faults alternate on each side of the ridge axis with a period of  $\sim 300$  kyr due to the mechanism mentioned in the “Introduction” section for the 2D models of  $M > 0.5$ . This fault alternation produces the symmetrical high frequency abyssal hills. For 3D models, why and how fault alternates on each side of the ridge axis is slightly different than the previous 2D studies. It will be further described in the following section.

### 3.2 Main characteristics of the models

Six main characteristics of the models are described in this section. They are “location of the termination”, “geometry of the trough”, “inward fault jump”, “fault alternation”, “cut-back” and “corrugations and mullion structures”.

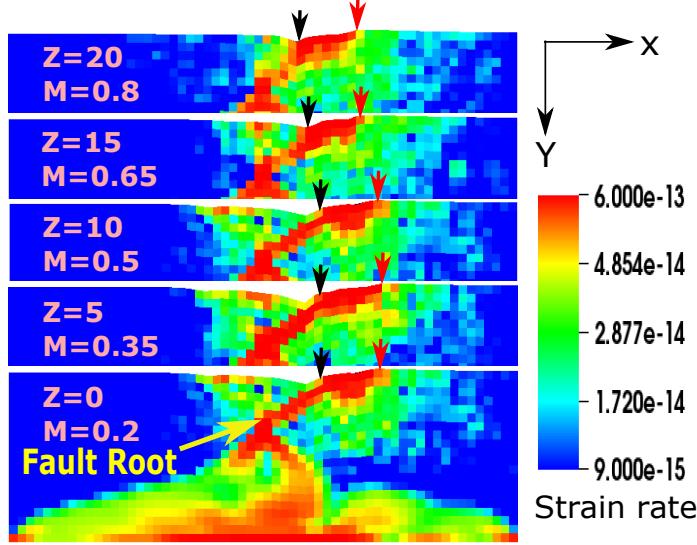


Figure 14: Five slices of strain rate along the ridge for the model M28LinT1 (Table 2) at 107.5 kyr. Terminations and breakaways along the ridge are marked by the black and red arrows respectively.

### 3.2.1 Location of termination

The location of the termination (bold dash line (black) in Figure 8) of the detachment fault where footwall begins to be exhumed to the seafloor varies along the ridge. As shown in Figure 14, the highest strain rate regions (red) can be interpreted as the active detachment fault interfaces. Compared to the two slices with  $M > 0.5$ , the distances between terminations and the ridge axis is larger and the dip angles of the detachment faults is smaller at the lower  $M$  side ( $M \leq 0.5$ ). For ridge region with  $M > 0.5$ , fault root is pushed away from the ridge axis due to excessive diking and the termination is closer to the ridge axis due to later initiation of the fault and thus the dip angle is higher because the distance between the termination and the fault root is smaller. For ridge region with  $M \leq 0.5$ , the distances and the dip angles are similar. Because although the rate of fault slip is higher for lower  $M$ , the rotation rate of the detachment fault interface is determined by how fast the termination extends away from the fault root. Since the extending rate of the termination has a maximum value that is restricted by the far field extension rate  $V_x$  and the detachment fault roots at the same place at the intersection between the cen-

ter dike and the brittle-ductile transition (BDT), the bending rate of the detachment fault is similar among the three slices of  $M \leq 0.5$ . One thing needs to be noted is that the trough at the higher M side correspond to the terminations but detached from the terminations at the low M side ( $M < 0.5$ ) as shown in Figure 14.

### 3.2.2 Geometry of the trough

The depressed narrow region inside the median valley is termed as “trough”. It evolves from a straight line parallel to the ridge-axis (Figure 9.a) to a line oblique to the ridge-axis (Figure 9.b,c,d) for model M28LinT1. Initially, the trough corresponds to the termination of the detachment fault. Due to the coupling along the ridge axis, fault propagates from front to back in almost a straight line parallel to the ridge axis. However, as the detachment fault bends at the lower M side, the trough is detached from the termination and due to lower magma supply, the trough at the lower M side is pulled to the conjugate plate to the negative  $x$ -axis direction. While the trough at the higher M side ( $M > 0.5$ ) are pushed away from the ridge axis by the excessive diking. However, since the trough cannot bypass the termination, the trough at  $M = 0.8$  is restricted at the termination. Together it generates the curved trough (Figure 9.b,d).

### 3.2.3 Inward fault jump

The inward fault jump is another common characteristic of the models. As shown in Figure 8, at the region with  $M > 0.5$ , the existing normal fault is pushed away from the ridge-axis due to excessive diking (Figure 8.c,d). As it moves away from the ridge axis, the frictional energy for the fault, the bending energy for the foot wall as well as the gravity that resists the exhumation of the foot wall increase [Lavier et al., 2000, Olive et al., 2014]. The initial detachment fault remains active until the negative works reach an upper limit that breaking a new fault near the ridge axis needs less work than to maintain the initial one, the initial detachment fault at the higher M side is substituted by the inward jump-

ing fault. This inward jumping behavior of the normal fault is termed as “inward fault jump”. As the fault evolves, it connects to the initial detachment at the lower M side ( $M < 0.5$ ) and generates a curved termination along the ridge. Compared to fault alternation, it forms at the same side of the ridge axis and its length is consistent with the region along the ridge axis where  $M > 0.5$  rather than cut through the whole MOR segment.

### 3.2.4 Fault alternation

As shown in M88ConT2 (Figure 13), the normal fault first evolves on the left hand side of the ridge axis and produces an abyssal hill parallel to the ridge axis. By 480 kyr, another normal fault evolves on the other side of the ridge axis and takes the place of the first one. This behavior of alternatively normal faulting on each side of the ridge axis is termed as “fault alternation”. Among the 12 models (Table 2), only three models produces fault alternation. They are M88ConT2, M58SinT2 and M58SqrtT2. Fault alternates only when weakening rate is low (type 2 weakening) and the average integration of M along the ridge is larger than 0.65. Analysis on when and why fault alternates is given in “Discussion” section.

### 3.2.5 Cut-back

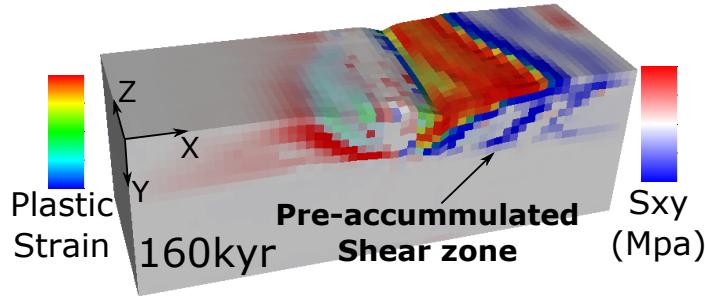


Figure 15: M28SqrtT1 (Table 2). Square root functional form model at 160kyr. Pre-accumulated shear zone increase the shear force and cut the weak detachment front tip

Cut-back is another common feature observed in the models. It happens most fre-

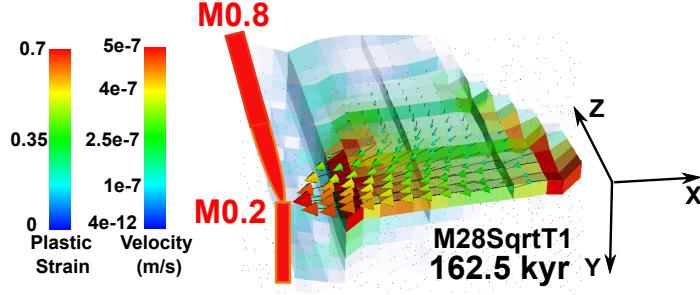


Figure 16: Velocity field of M28SqrtT1 at 162.5 kyr. Magnitudes of the velocity are shown by the colors of the arrow heads. Plastic strain is plotted with opacity linearly to its value.

quently in the square root models. When the tip of the weak fault interface extends with the plate extension and is intersected by a pre-existing shear stress  $\sigma_{xy}$  (Figure 15), the extra shear stress cuts the tip of the weak fault interface and leads to the decoupling between the spreading plate and the upper layer of the hanging wall of the detachment fault. Under the gravity, the decoupled upper layer of the hanging wall then recedes backward to the ridge axis with a very fast velocity following the topography slope similar to the mass wasting (Figure 16).

Four factors together trigger the cut-back. The unbending of the bent footwall; the pre-existing shear stress that add extra cutting force to the weak tip; the shear stress that aligns to the detachment fault interface; the along ridge shear due to  $M$  variation.

As shown in Figure 10, due to bending of the crust at the footwall side, below the blue neutral plane,  $\sigma_{xx} > 0$ , meaning tensional stress increases as fault slips. The resulting force tends to unbend the bent crust and drag down the connecting surface (the future decoupled hanging wall).

In the Figure 17, the hanging wall recedes backward to the ridge axis with a high velocity (Figure 17.b,e (velocity)) accompanied with a sudden topography drop (Figure 17.b) compared to c); d) compared to e) (in the second row)). The cut back also produces a continuous high angle fault scarp with a relief of  $\sim 1$  km aligns to the initial breakaway and extends for about 20 km in length (Figure 17.e (second row: topography)).

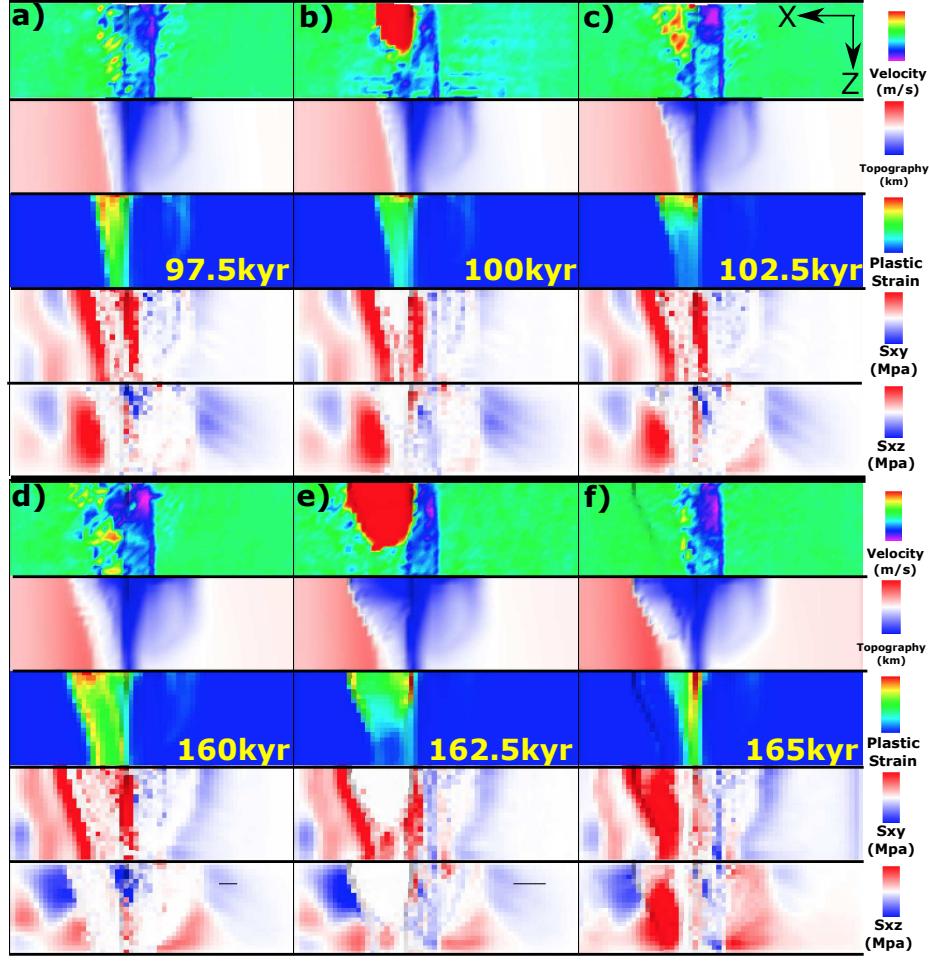


Figure 17: M28SqrtT1 (Table 2). Cut back behaviors in square root functional form model with different time.

Its distance to the central dike varies along the ridge axis.

During the cut back process, the tensional stress due to bending is released at the lower M side ( $0.2 < M < 0.57$ ) in the left tip of the bent crust (Figure 18.a compared to b), however, at the higher M side, the tensional bending stress keeps increasing due to the far field extension (Figure 18.c compared to d). This behavior assists in the decouple between lower and higher M side hanging walls.

Once the cut back happens at 162.5kyr, the  $\sigma_{xy}$ ,  $\sigma_{xz}$  and  $\sigma_{xx}$  are released (Figure 17.e (fourth and fifth row:  $\sigma_{xy}$  and  $\sigma_{xz}$ )). After the cut back, the termination of the detachment fault recedes backwards for about 7 kilometer towards the ridge axis (Figure 17.f (third row: plastic strain)). This behavior helps maintain a high angle normal fault. In addition,

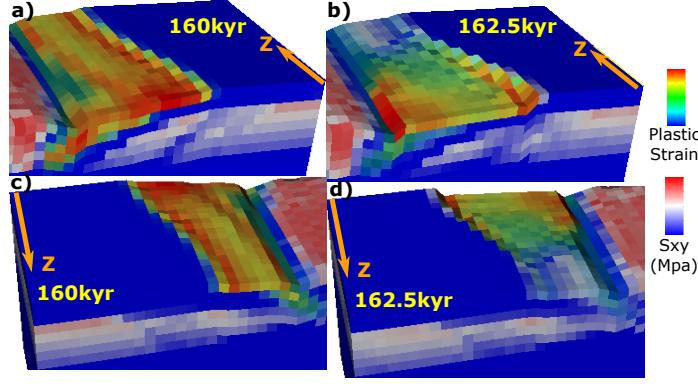


Figure 18: M28SqrtT1 (Table 2). Bending stress drop in the crust close to dike due to cut back behavior.

$\sigma_{xy}$  and  $\sigma_{xz}$  soon fill in the area between cut back created fault scarp and the new termination (Figure 17.f (fourth and fifth row:  $\sigma_{xy}$  and  $\sigma_{xz}$ ) because  $\sigma_{xy}$  always accumulates immediately beneath the normal fault interface and the red  $\sigma_{xz}$  left to the new termination is due to the along ridge-axis variation in the rate of fault slip (low M side larger).

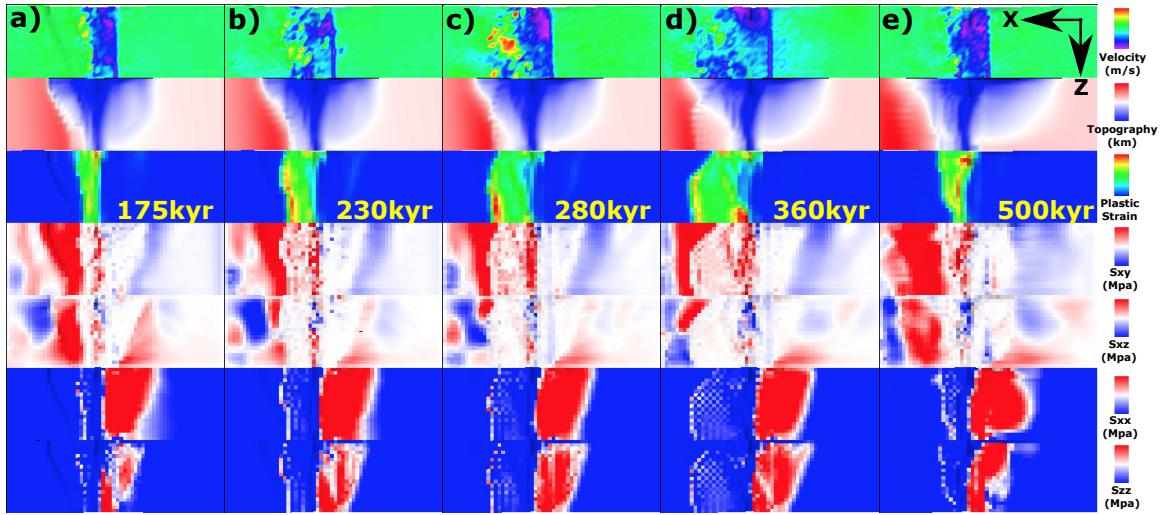


Figure 19: M28SqrtT1 (Table 2). New fault front chase after initial abandoned breakaway.

There is one phenomenon very interesting and counter-intuitive that worth describing here. After the cut back, and termination retreat, the termination front at the higher M side extends faster and further than the lower M side (Figure 19). This is partly related to the unbending decouple phenomenon we described earlier that the tensional stress are released at the lower M side but continues to accumulates at the higher M side during the cut

back unbending. Since the tensional stress is released at the lower M side, it needs time to accumulate to where it was and then starts from there to drag the new near ridge axis fault away from the ridge axis. While at the higher M side the increasing tensional stress directly leads to a fast extending fault front. Thus creates the behavior. *XT: One question is, how to explain that the fault front is moving much faster than the initial abandoned breakaway? New fault front soon reach the old breakaway.* This phenomenon is responsible for the corrugations observed. It create an “X” shape “scan” that first “scan” the topography with faster low M side (Figure 17.d and e) and then with faster high M side (Figure 19.c and d). This results in curved terminations with hundred-to-thousand meters wavelengths that directly create parallel to spreading direction mullion structures.

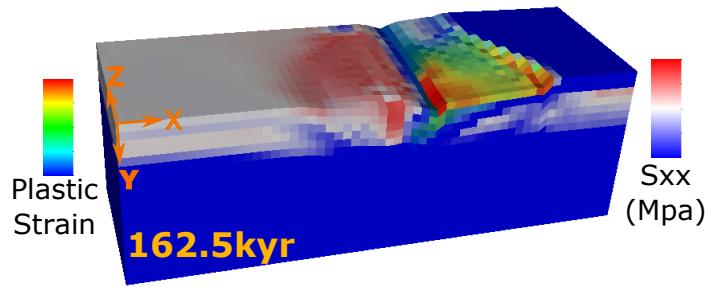


Figure 20: M28SqrtT1 (Table 2). Higher  $\sigma_{xx}$  in the median valley of conjugate plate at low M side.

In addition, the higher  $\sigma_{xx}$  in the median valley of conjugate plate at low M side (Figure 20) is due to the brittle crust is thinnest at the median valley, thus when same amount of force propagates from far field extension to the center median valley, the stress will increases.

### 3.2.6 Corrugations

#### Corrugations due to anastomosing

#### Corrugations due to asynchronous normal faulting

### 3.3 Effects of the functional forms of M variation

As shown in the ~~EC:~~tables [which table? Specify.], ~~EC:~~the models with ~~EC:~~M28 [Before starting to use this notation, define and explain it first!] with type 1 weakening is ~~EC:~~the only M range that has three functional forms data points available [This sentence gives an impression that you didn't want to use these three but had no choice but to. This is not the case, I believe. Probably you'd want to point out that one of these three is the reference model that has been fully described earlier. So, we are in a better position to compare it with similar models with different functional forms. In fact, I think this introductory sentence can be thrown out.]

~~EC:~~There are two phenomena that show distinct differences with respect to different functional forms. By comparing M28LinT1 with M28SinT1 and M28sqrtT1, I identified two main characteristics in the different behaviors of these models due to different functional forms of M variation. One is the geometry and timing of the secondary fault. The other is the “Cut back” behavior. ~~EC:~~mostly observed in the square root model. [No need to spill the beans.]

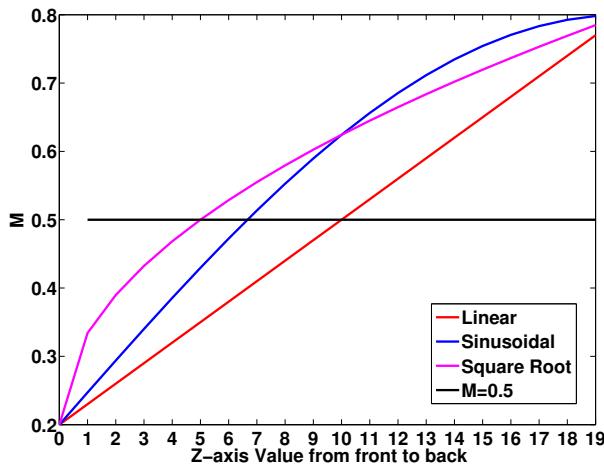


Figure 21: Three functional forms of M variation comparison. They begin to exceed the  $M = 0.5$  black line at  $Z=10, 7, 5$  for linear, sinusoidal and square root respectively.

**Second Fault** For the linear functional form, the second fault <sup>XT</sup>: [add a definition of secondary fault in the begining, here add a link of figure about primary and sec fault, enlarge the second fault and add label in the figure and use it here ] at the high M side has started accommodating most of the extension at around 900 kyr and the initial detachment becomes inactive <sup>XT</sup>: [(Figure 22)]refer to Figure 8.f is better. It nucleates from the ridge center where  $M = 0.5$  and then propagates to the  $M = 0.8$  end.

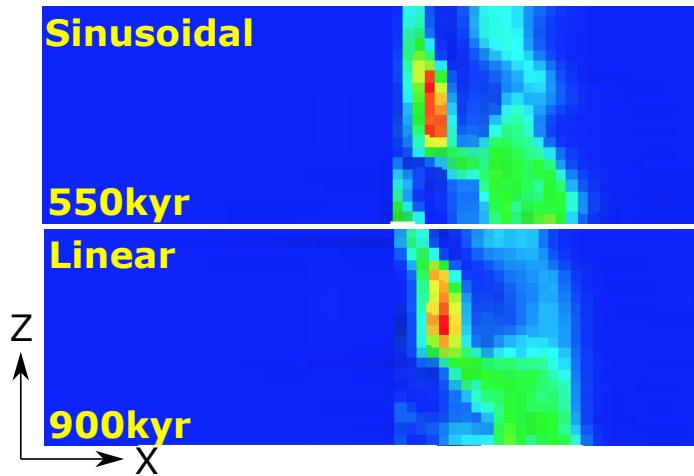


Figure 22: M28LinT1 versus M28SinT1 (Table 2). Secondary fault length comparison between linear and sinusoidal. Around 13 elements in length for sinusoidal compared to 11 elements for linear.

For the sinusoidal form, the second fault begins to form at a much earlier time around 550 kyr (Figure 22). The sinusoidal form consistently has higher M values than the linear form (Fig. 10), implying a greater amount of magma supply. The first forming fault moves away from the ridge axis faster and locks earlier in the case of the sinusoidal form. As a result, the second fault appears earlier than in the case of the linear M variation. In addition, the sinusoidal form produces the second fault with a greater along-strike dimension than the linear form because this length is proportional to the length of the  $M \geq 0.5$  portion of the ridge (Figure 21). For square root, there is no secondary fault forming because the “cut back” behavior releases the tensional stress in the hanging wall.

**Cut-back** <sup>XT</sup>: [Define a cut-back and think about a different name.] The cut-back char-

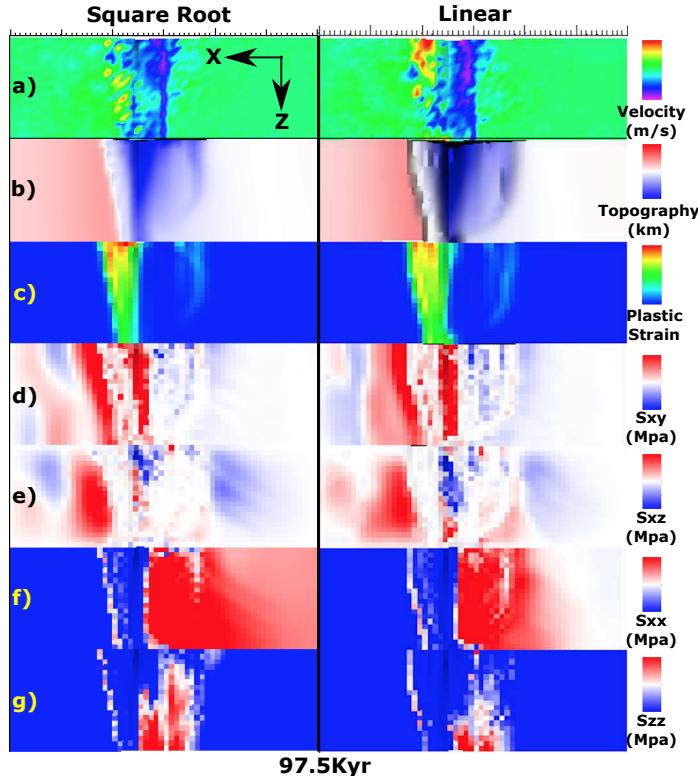


Figure 23: M28LinT1 versus M28SqrtT1 (Table 2) at 97 kyr. View from top of the model.

acterizes but are not limited to the models with the square root form of M variation. <sup>XT:</sup> [exclusively about the square root models?] As shown in Figure 23, Figure 24 and Figure 17 <sup>XT:</sup> [Bring up Fig. 26 here and include only the cut-back panel.], between 97.5 kyr and 100 kyr, there are cut-backs in the square root model M28SqrtT1 at the low M side where hanging walls with surface area of  $\sim 60 \text{ km}^2$  and  $\sim 120 \text{ km}^2$  (the red block) suddenly rebound backwards towards the ridge axis as seen in 100 kyr and 160 kyr (Figure 24.a and Figure 17.d,e,f), along with sudden topography drop (Figure 17.d,e 2nd row),  $\sigma_{xy}$  and  $\sigma_{xz}$  released, termination falls back (Figure 17.f 3rd row).

### 3.4 Effects of the weakening rate

According to our available twelve 3D models, we have three pairs of models that both have type 1 and type 2 <sup>XT</sup>: [might want to add a ref to the section defining these.] weakening while the range of M and functional form are maintained to be the same. They are

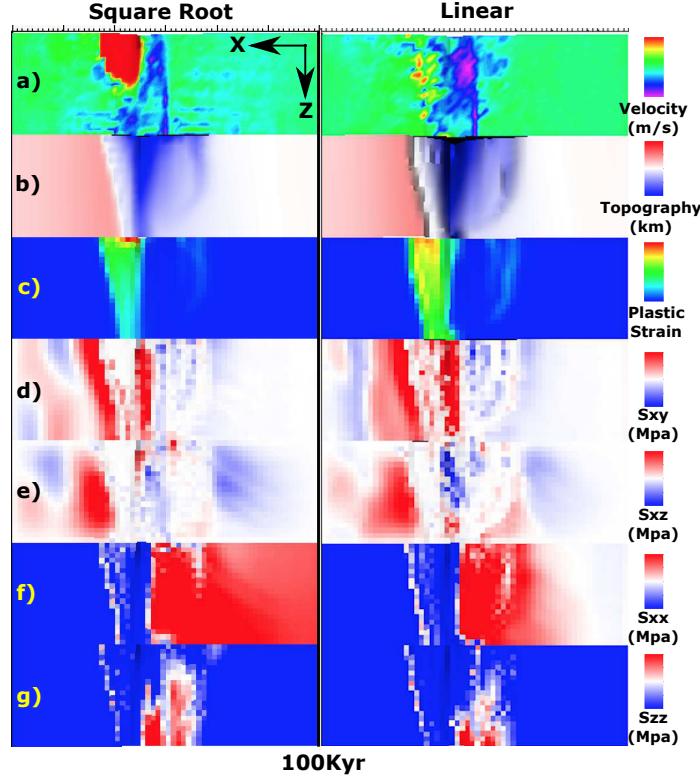


Figure 24: M28LinT1 versus M28SqrtT1 (Table 2) at 100 kyr. View from top of the model.

M57SinT1/T2, M58SinT1/T2 and M58SqrtT1/T2.

**M57SinT1 versus M57SinT2** Initially, both models develop normal faults on both sides of the ridge axis<sup>XT: [no hyphen in “ridge axis”.]</sup> at the low M side. In the model with the faster weakening rate (M57SinT1), faults propagate toward the high M side and cut through the whole crust by 25 kyr but this process completes later at 50 kyr in the model with the slower weakening rate (M57SinT2). At around 310 kyr, the second fault appears at the high M side<sup>XT: [instead of z=5, use a M value.]</sup> of M57SinT2 while where  $M \leq 5$  [some M value], the initial fault remains active (Figure 25.a) and b)). However, when the weakening is fast (M57SinT1), cut-back happens at around 260 kyr and help to maintain a high angle fault with closer to ridge axis termination. The initial fault remains, no secondary fault forming (Figure 25.a) and b)). In addition, the width of median valley at low M side is wider for M57SinT2 than M57SinT1 (Figure 25.a) and b) versus c) and

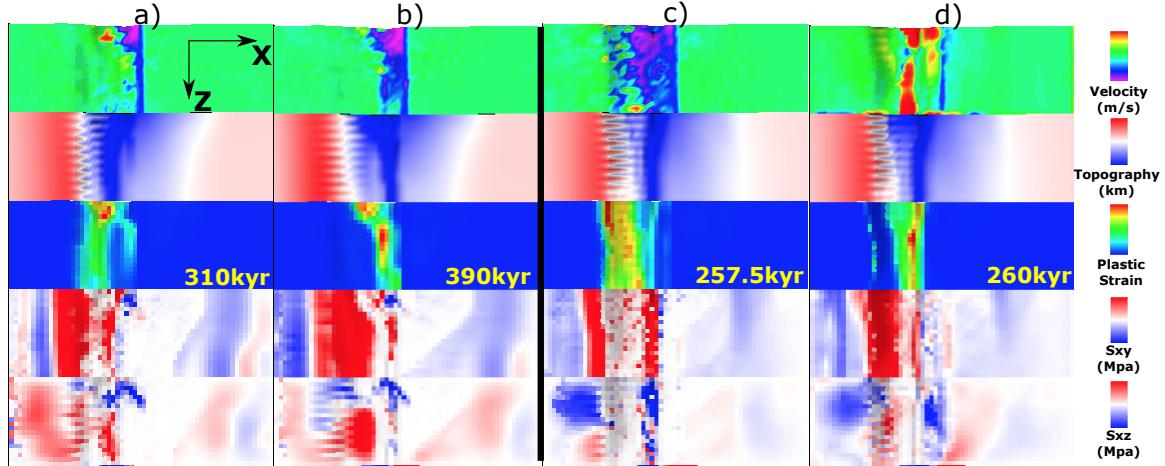


Figure 25: M57SinT2 versus M57SinT1 (Table 2). a) and b) are for M57SinT2, c) and d) are for M57SinT1.

d)) due to slower weakening (type 2) allows a more distributed tensional stress  $\sigma_{xx}$  rather than fast weakening that once a fault is established, larger amount of tensional stress  $\sigma_{xx}$  will be released at the fault.

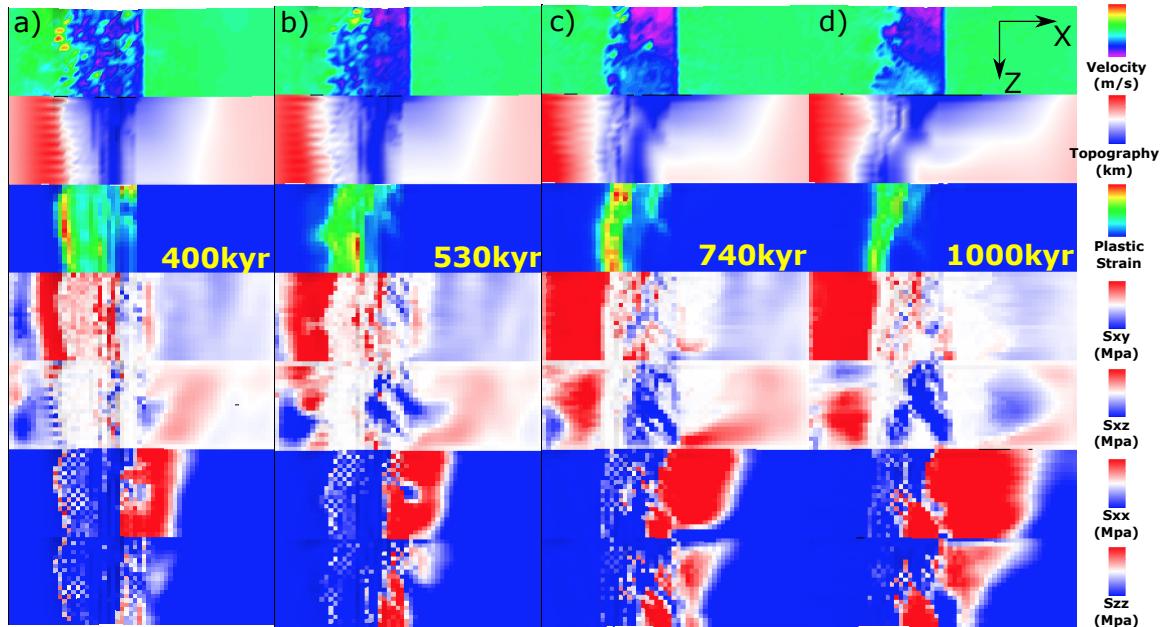


Figure 26: M57SinT1 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

**M57SinT1** For M57SinT1, as shown in Figure 26, at 400 kyr (Figure 26.a), there is an antithetic fault forming at the low M side accommodating part of the extension, which re-

sults in a curved termination at the far frontier. As it evolve (530 kyr (Figure 26.b)), the termination at the low M side further recedes backward while the termination at the center ( $Z = 11 \sim 13$ ) extends further. This curved termination leads to a curved topography (white curve in the second row). As the fault evolves and bends further away from the axis, at the time of 740 kyr, another antithetic fault forming again at the low M side (Figure 26.c). It doesn't take the place of initial fault and disappear soon, however, it again releases tensional stress and results in that the termination at far front recedes backward. At 1000 kyr (Figure 26.d), an Atlantiss Massif shape OCC is produced (low M side (lower magma supply) has a wider dome and high M side (higher magma supply) has a narrower dome) due to the along ridge axis termination evolution. Corrugations with wavelength varying from hundreds to kilometers are also created.

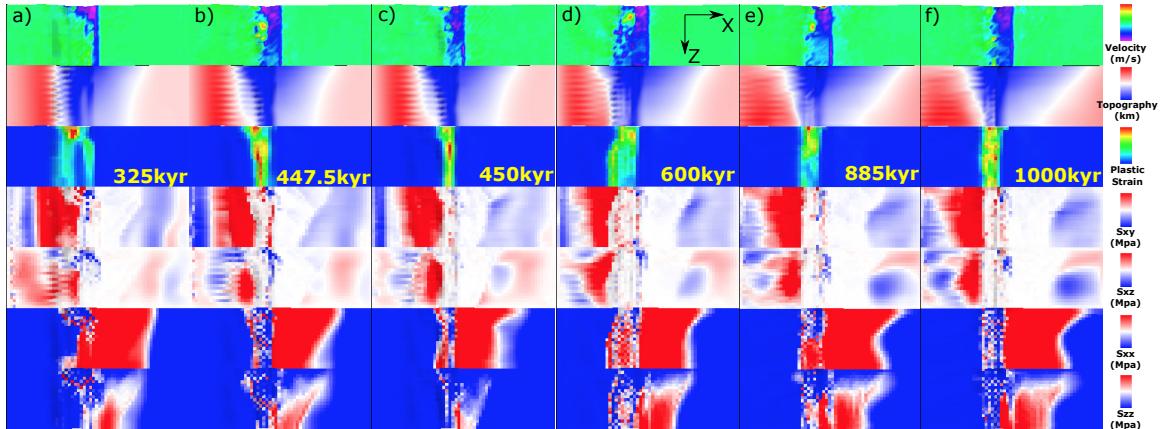


Figure 27: M57SinT2 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

**M57SinT2** For M57SinT2, as shown in Figure 27, instead of maintaining one fault all the time for M57SinT1, it creates secondary fault at high M side with different mechanism several times. A secondary fault is created at 325 kyr (Figure 27.a), when a new near axis normal fault take the place of the initial one at high M side. Between 447.5 kyr (Figure 27.b) and 450 kyr (Figure 27.c), termination falls back, and as it evolve, termination at the high M side extends further at 600 kyr (Figure 27.d). At 885 kyr (Figure 27.e), a secondary fault propagates from low Z to high Z and terminates the further extended fault at

high Z and maintain a near ridge axis termination.

### 3.4.1 M58SinT1 versus M58SinT2

A major difference between M58SinT1 and M58SinT2 is that M58SinT1 keep faulting at one side of the ridge axis while M58SinT2's fault alternates.

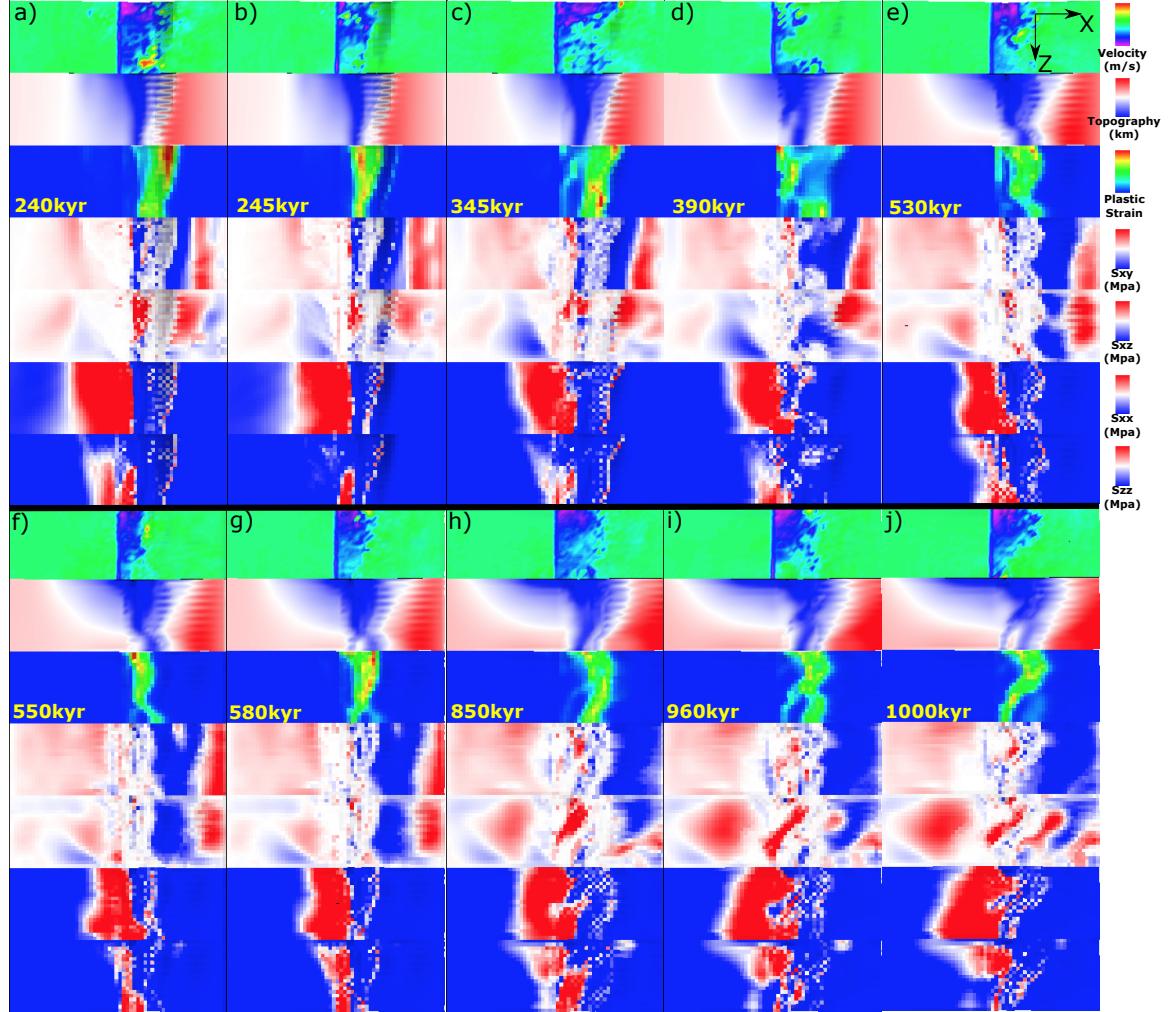


Figure 28: M58SinT1 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

**M58SinT1** As shown in Figure 28, in 1Myr, the fault keeps on the right hand side of the ridge axis. It evolves dynamically. Between 240 kyr (Figure 28.a) and 245 kyr (Figure 28.b), there is a cut back. At 345 kyr (Figure 28.c), at low Z side, there are two offset antithetic faults ( $Z=1 \sim 2$  and  $Z=5 \sim 9$ ) in the hanging wall begin to evolve and

soon connect to each other forming anastomosing fault zone. At 390 kyr (Figure 28.d), the new near axis anastomosing fault zone replace the old further away from ridge axis detachment. There is dextral  $\sigma_{xz}$  forming on the right hand side of the new anastomosing fault zone ((Figure 28.d), row 5) due to the offset between the new near axis fault at low Z side and extended further fault at high Z side and leads to the development of a  $\sim 45^\circ$  shear zone connection between the new near axis fault zone at low Z side and the further away from axis original detachment at high Z side. It also creates a curved termination which will lead to a curved topography (boundary between blue and white) seen at 530 kyr (Figure 28.e). Note that this curved termination can be a mechanism for producing large wavelength (several kilometers) undulating corrugations. Between 530 kyr (Figure 28.e) and 550 kyr (Figure 28.f), there is another cut back happens. Terminations fall backwards to near ridge axis position. At 580 kyr (Figure 28.g), at the high Z side, a new near ridge-axis high angle normal fault begin to initiate under the assistance of rotational force from low Z side due to along ridge axis coupling. This produces a large rider block with several kilometers in its length scale. Previous “S” curved termination now evolves to a half circle curve and it soon affects the curve of topography as seen at 850 kyr (Figure 28.h). Due to along ridge axis variation in diking, a large sinistral shear zone (red region  $\sim 40^\circ$  oblique to ridge axis seen in 5th row of 960 kyr (Figure 28.i)) keep developing and cut the circle curved fault zone at 850 kyr (Figure 28.h) into a new fault zone with higher curvature as seen in 1000 kyr (Figure 28.j).

**M58SinT2** As shown in Figure 29, the fault initiates on the left hand side of the ridge axis (Figure 29.a). Low Z side extends further than high Z side. It takes around 100 kyr to form into a localized fault plane due to slower rate of weakening. At 215 kyr (Figure 29.b), another fault on the conjugate plate begin to evolve and replaces the initial one. As seen from (Figure 29.b), corrugations are created at low Z side. At 330 kyr, a third fault forming at the left hand side of the ridge axis. Between 490 kyr (Figure 29.d) and

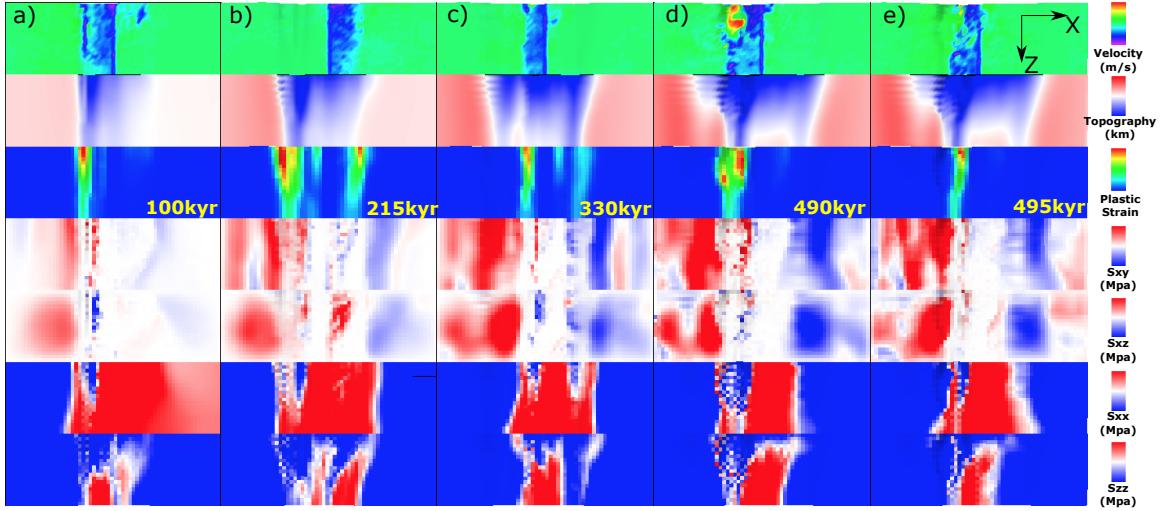


Figure 29: M58SinT2 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

495 kyr (Figure 29.e), there is a cut back.

### 3.4.2 M58SqrtT1 versus M58SqrtT2

The major difference between M58SqrtT1 and M58SqrtT2 is also whether the normal fault alternates or not.

**M58SqrtT1** As shown in Figure 30, initially, there is a 5 element offset between breakaways along the ridge axis due to along ridge axis variation in diking (Figure 30.a). At 370 kyr (Figure 30.b), there is a vertical tensile failure at  $Z= 1 \sim 2$ . Two parallel dextral (blue) shear regions are seen (5th row). The low Z shear zone assists in the shear failure observed at 400 kyr (Figure 30.c), and it develops into near ridge axis normal fault ( $Z=4 \sim 12$ ) and propagates to high Z side which eventually cuts through and reaches  $Z= 20$  and replaces the initial extended fault at high Z side at 460 kyr (Figure 30.d). The vertical tensile failure zone at  $Z= 1 \sim 3$  (Figure 30.d 3rd row) begin to evolve and assists in the initiation of a new near ridge axis high angle normal fault which connect with the fault at the high Z side (Figure 30.e) at 590 kyr. At 660 kyr (Figure 30.f 3rd row), there is a hint of high angle normal faulting at  $Z= 1 \sim 3$  of conjugate plate. But it doesn't develop. At 730 kyr (Figure 30.g 5th row), a dextral (blue) shear zone at the low Z side help

to create the faulting pattern seen at 780 kyr (Figure 30.h 3rd row), a concave termination with a wavelength of 10 kilometers and it has the potential to create a large wavelength corrugation. Meanwhile, at the low Z side, near the ridge axis, there is an antithetic fault forming at the hanging wall of the detachment and it later propagates to high Z side (Figure 30.i). From 820 kyr to 880 kyr, the antithetic fault evolves to near ridge axis normal fault and connects with the detachment at the high Z side (Figure 30.j). In addition, a tensile failure shows its hint at the low Z side ( $Z = 1 \sim 5$ ) of the conjugate plate.

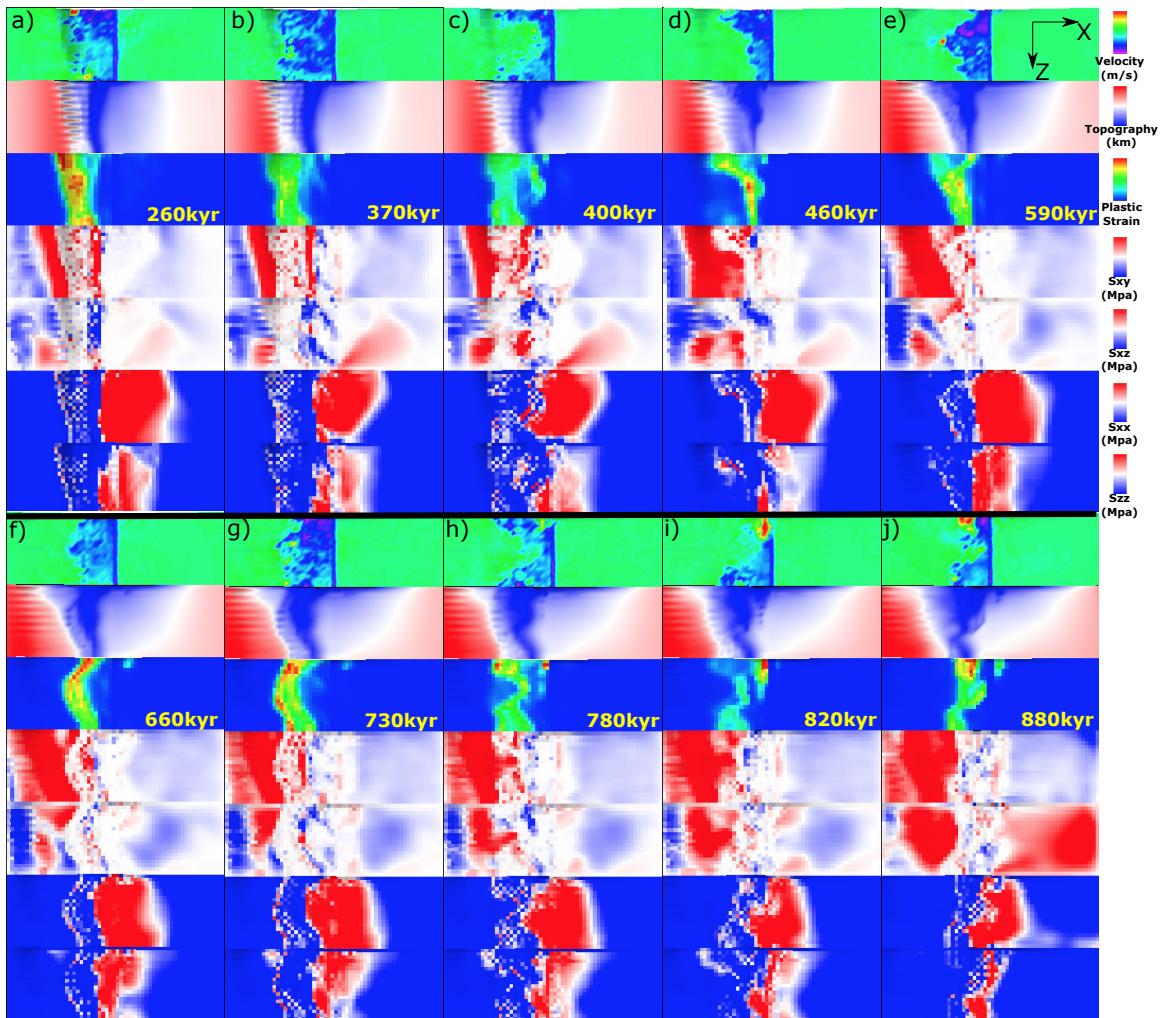


Figure 30: M58SqrtT1 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

**M58SqrtT2** As shown in Figure 31, at 195 kyr (Figure 31.a), due to transtensional stress at low Z side ( $Z = 1 \sim 6$ ), several corrugations begin to evolve. At conjugate

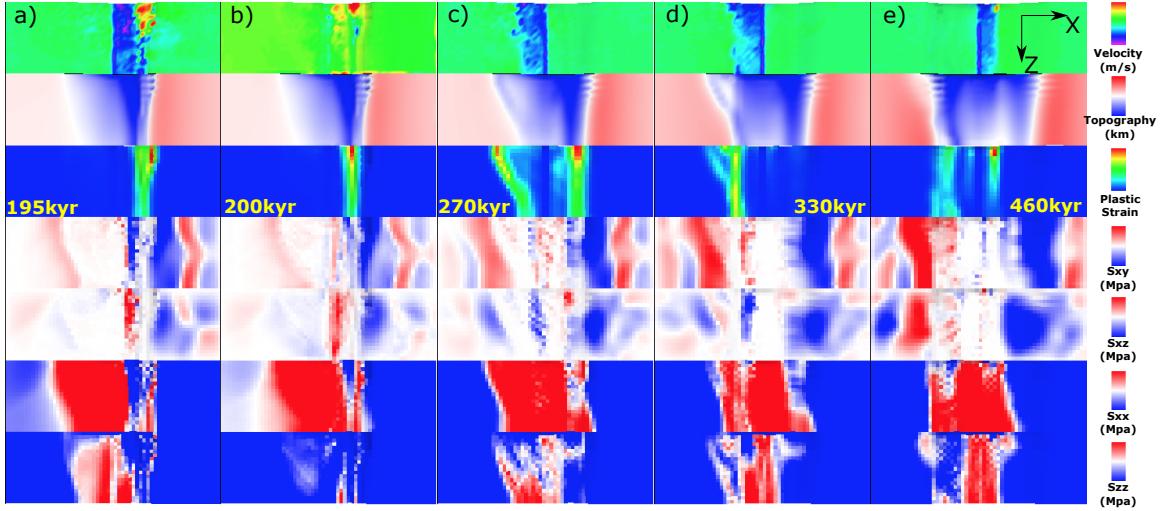


Figure 31: M58SqrtT2 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

plate, dipping toward axis shear zone  $\sigma_{xy}$  (red at 4th row) show its curve and keeps accumulating.  $\sigma_{xx}$  is also accummulating on the conjugate plate. Between 195 kyr (Figure 31.a) and 200 kyr (Figure 31.b), there is a cut back. At 270 kyr (Figure 31.c), immediately above and following the curved shape shear  $\sigma_{xy}$  zone on the left hand side of the ridge axis, a new fault begin to evolve and replace the initial fault on the right. At 330 kyr (Figure 31.d), at the low Z side, a new near axis high angle normal fault take the place of initial further away from ridge axis fault partly due to rotational force from along ridge coupling. At 460 kyr (Figure 31.e), another normal fault begin to evolve on the right hand side of the ridge axis.

### 3.5 Effects of the range of M variation

So far, we have three ranges for M variations along the ridge axis (M28, M57 and M58) with same segment length of 20km. Among the 12 available models, two M58 models and the constant  $M= 0.8$  model with type 2 weakening produce fault alternation while others do not. Generally, M57 and M58 models create a median valley much narrower and shallower than that of M28 models.  $\frac{dM}{dz}$  is larger for M28 than M58 and M57.

### 3.5.1 M28SinT1 versus M57SinT1 versus M58SinT1

**M57SinT1 versus M58SinT1** For description of M57SinT1 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Section 3 and Figure 26. For description of M58SinT1 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Section 3.4.1 and Figure 28. Comparing M57SinT1 and M58SinT1, the major difference is that the faulting pattern evolution for M58SinT1 is much more dynamic with a higher frequency of secondary faults, cut back and offseted fault segments connection. For M58SinT1, the new secondary near ridge axis normal or antithetic faults usually replace the existed one. However, for M57SinT1, diking is not strong enough to create big enough stress perturbation along the ridge axis for secondary or antithetic faults to take the place of the original one. At the low Z side, near ridge axis antithetic fault only helps to accommodate tensional stress which help maintain a high angle normal fault with near to ridge axis termination while the termination at the high Z side gradually move off axis. This creates a OCC with larger dome at lower magma supply side than that of higher magma supply side which is opposite to the shape of OCC created by M58SinT1.

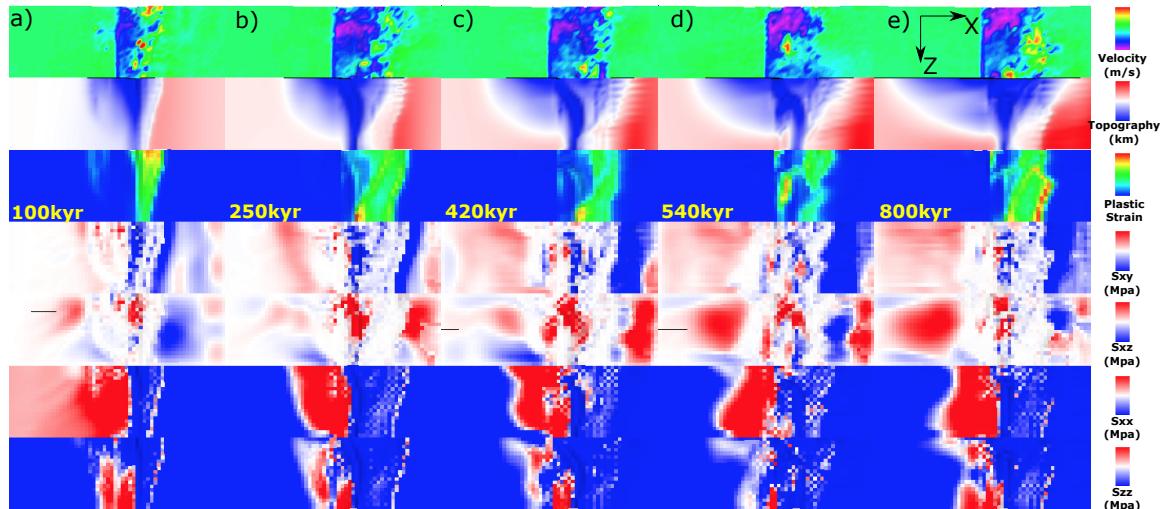


Figure 32: M28SinT1 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

**M28SinT1** As shown in Figure 32, faulting evolution is much less dynamic than that of M58SinT1. Faulting keeps on the right hand side of the ridge axis. Only one secondary fault is formed at around 540 kyr (Figure 32.d). Initially, at 100 kyr (Figure 32.a), at the low Z side, the normal shear zone at conjugate plate takes up part of the extension and leave a dent in the topography. But it doesn't last long. The initial breakaway of the detachment extends further away from ridge axis with four elements in along ridge axis offset at 250 kyr (Figure 32.b). At 420 kyr, at the high Z side, a hint of new near ridge axis high angle normal fault begin to show up. It develop into a secondary fault at 540 kyr (Figure 32.d) and propagates toward high Z side. This results in a sinistral shear zone (red region in 5th row). At the low Z side ( $Z = 1 \sim 3$ ), a tensile failure can be seen and it take up part of the extension at the low Z side which results in the recede of termination at the low Z side as seen at 800 kyr (Figure 32.e) while the termination at higher Z side extends further away from the ridge axis.

### 3.5.2 M57SinT2 versus M58SinT2

For description of M57SinT2 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Section 3 and Figure 27. For description of M58SinT1 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Section 3.4.1 and Figure 29. A major difference is that M57SinT2 does not create alternating normal faults on each side of the ridge axis while M58SinT2 does. *XT: Why this seemingly small change could lead to such a to the first order difference in model behaviors?*

### 3.5.3 M28LinT1 versus M57LinT1

For description of M28LinT1 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Section 3.1.

**M57LinT1** As shown in Figure 33, between 160 kyr (Figure 33.a) and 162.5 kyr (Figure 33.b), there is a cut back. The corrugation is very severe and have a discrete distri-

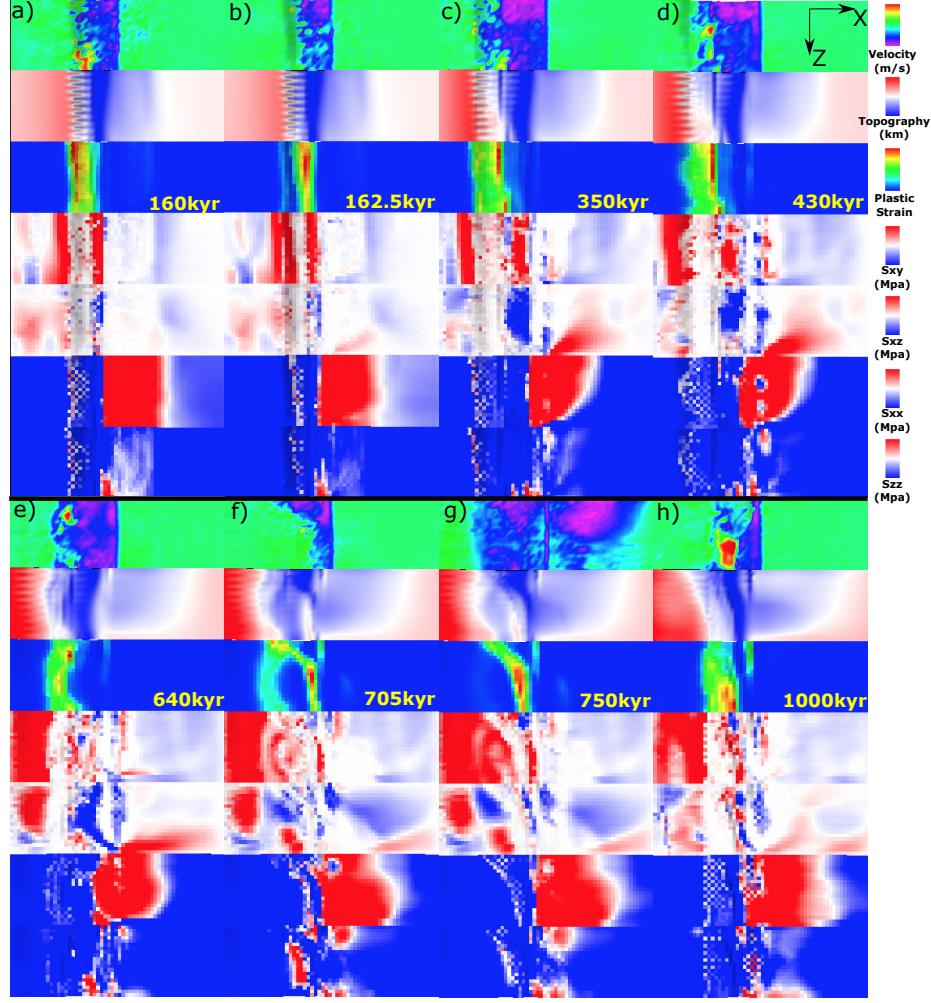


Figure 33: M57LinT1 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

bution with one element width as its wavelength. The frontier of breakaway also shows discrete distribution of  $\sigma_{xx}$  and  $\sigma_{zz}$  alternating between tension and compression which might be the reason for the undulating topography. At 350 kyr (Figure 33.c 3rd row), the two offsetted red line indicates tensile failure at the termination and the shorter one at the high Z side helps maintain a near ridge axis high angle normal fault. At 430 kyr (Figure 33.d), the presence of vertical tensile failure near the ridge axis at the low Z side is responsible for the recede of the front of the plastic strain at  $Z = 1 \sim 3$ . While at  $Z=5 \sim 10$ , the breakaway keeps extending further away from the ridge axis. This curved front results in a curved topography as seen in 640 kyr (Figure 33.e) and is also responsible for the large dextral shear (blue) zone (5th row). At 705 kyr (Figure 33.f), a new near ridge axis

secondary fault begin to evolve and replace the original one at high Z side with a length of  $\sim$  15 kilometers. The secondary fault also connect with the further away from ridge axis original fault at low Z side. The topography at 1000 kyr (Figure 33.h) is a result of the curved and later connected fault. The frontier of the plastic strain at high Z side soon catch up with that at the low Z side due to the presence of a tensile failure zone at the low Z side that has taken up part of the extension.

### 3.5.4 M28SqrtT1 versus M58SqrtT1

For description of M28SqrtT1 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Paragraph 4 and Figure 19.

For description of M58SqrtT1 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Paragraph 3.4.2 and Figure 30.

### 3.5.5 M57SqrtT2 versus M58SqrtT2

For description of M58SqrtT2 evolution with respect to time, please refer to Paragraph 3.4.2 and Figure 31.

The major difference between M57SqrtT2 and M58SqrtT2 is that M57SqrtT2 keeps faulting at the same side of the ridge axis while M58SqrtT2 alternates.

**M57SqrtT2** For M57SqrtT2, there are totally six small scale cut back happen at 282.5 kyr, 290 kyr, 365 kyr, 452.5 kyr, 482.5 kyr and 540 kyr respectively (the model stops at 540 kyr). As shown in Figure 34, the fault keeps on the left hand side of the ridge axis. At 200 kyr (Figure 34.b), a new near ridge axis high angle normal fault begin to evolve and take the place of the initial one. As the fault evolve, a transient stage of discontinuous abyssal hill is produced at the low Z side as seen at 225 kyr (Figure 34.c). The fault propagate toward high Z side and cut through the plate at  $\sim$ 245 kyr (Figure 34.d) when sawtooth shape topography at the low Z side (2nd row) is created by sawtooth shape  $\sigma_{xx}$

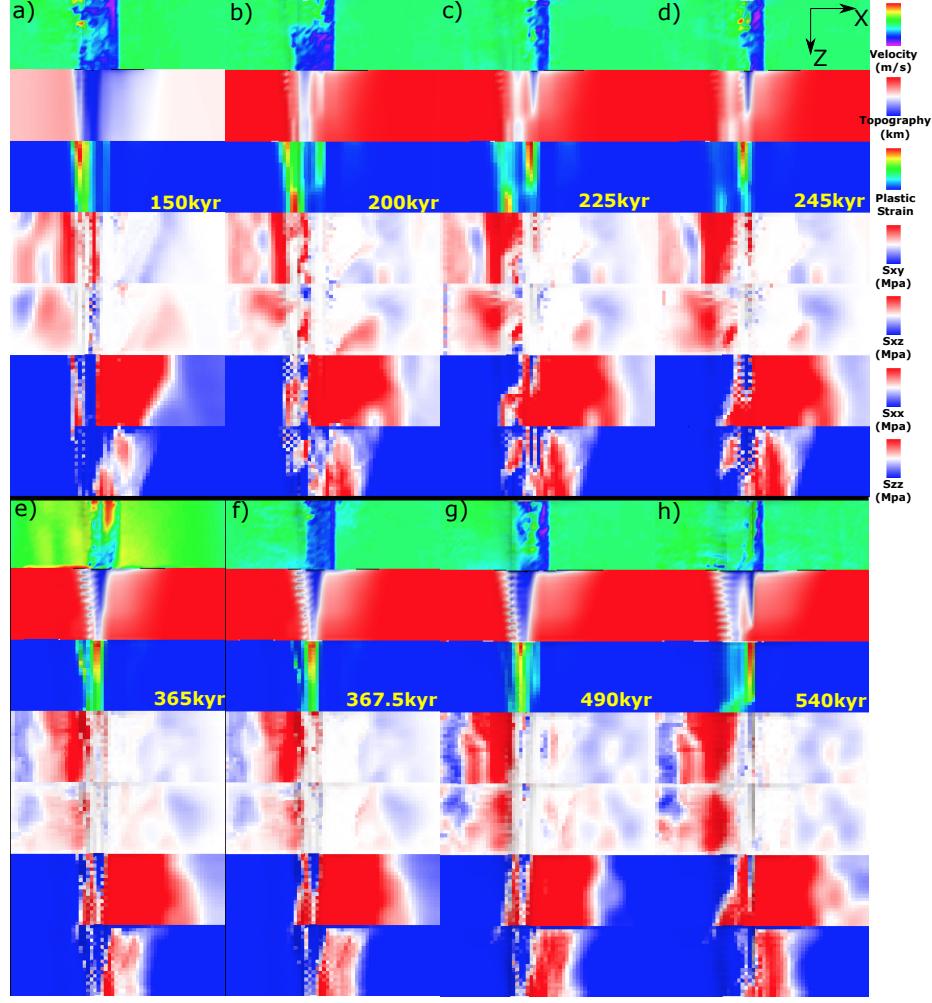


Figure 34: M57SqrtT2 (Table 2) faulting and stress evolution with respect to time.

(6th row) and  $\sigma_{zz}$  (7th row). Between 365 kyr (Figure 34.e) and 367.5 kyr (Figure 34.f), there is a cut back. At 490 kyr (Figure 34.g), there is new near ridge axis antithetic fault on the hanging wall which terminates the old fault and develops into a vertical near ridge axis tensile failure as seen at 540 kyr (Figure 34.h).

### 3.6 Summary of Results

There are several behaviors that are controlled by the model parameters. Generally, only M58 models with type 2 weakening produce alternating faults on both side of the ridge axis. All the models show corrugations. As for faulting patterns in terms of evolution fre-

quency, usually Square root is more dynamic than Sinusoidal than Linear, M58 is more dynamic than M57 than M28.

Following tables are a summary of the model behaviors with respect to different setup parameters.

Table 3: Model behaviors in short.

A	Alternating Fault	C	Corrugation	SL	Shear Topography Low
NA	Not Alternating	SF	Secondary Fault on one side	CB	Cut Back
DD	Double Dome	AM	Atlantis Massif Shape		

Based on the 11 models with M variation, we observed eight first-order behaviors as shown in Table 3.

Table 4: Linear functional form.

M range Type \ Type	M28	M57	M58
Type one	NA; C; SL; SF <sub>1500kyr</sub> ; DD	NA; C; SF <sub>1380kyr</sub> ; CB <sub>330kyr</sub> ; AM(opposite z)	
Type two			

Table 5: Sinusoidal functional form.

M range Type \ Type	M28	M57	M58
Type one	NA; C; SL; SF <sub>995kyr</sub>	NA; C; SL; SF <sub>760kyr;1320kyr</sub> ; CB <sub>520kyr</sub> ; AM	NA; C; SL; CB <sub>510kyr</sub> ; SF <sub>760kyr;1140kyr;1990kyr</sub>
Type two		NA; C; SL; SF <sub>680kyr</sub> ; CB <sub>905kyr</sub>	A <sub>450kyr;600kyr</sub> ; C(only at low M); CB <sub>990kyr</sub>

Table 6: Square root functional form.

M range Type \	M28	M57	M58
Type one	NA; C; SL; $CB_{205kyr;330kyr;1025kyr}$		NA; $C_{1770kyr}$ (due to shear with dif wave length); $SF_{860kyr}$ (high M); $SF_{1190kyr}$ (low M)(Dog Bone); $SF_{1690kyr}$
Type two		NA; C; $SF_{435kyr;1060kyr};$ $CB_{585kyr}; CB_{735kyr};$ $CB_{910kyr}; CB_{970kyr}$	$A_{550kyr;920kyr}; C;$ $CB_{400kyr}$

## 4 Discussion

Generally, all models forms a median valley that deepens and widens toward the lower M side (Figure 8) except the reference model with constant  $M = 0.8$  (Figure 13). The topography observed in our models, to the first order, is controlled by the spatial and temporal distributions of faulting and to the second order, results from elastically deformation (e.g. The gradual deepening and widening of the median valley; The bending of the crust at the footwall side of the detachment fault results in a domal shape of the fault interface as a mechanism for producing the dome shape of OCCs).

The pattern of the deformation (faulting and elastic deformation) is controlled by the evolving stress in the crust in terms of its distribution and magnitude. The stress evolution is a result of the interaction processes between tectonics and magmatism. Due to constant seafloor spreading, tensional stress orthogonal to the ridge-axis in the crust keeps accumulating. At the same time, along ridge-axis varying diking partially accommodates the stress from far field extension and perturbs the homogeneity state of stress distribution along the ridge-axis. Accumulated stress will be largely released when the tensile or shear failures establish.

Since the model behavior is very complicated. We will focus on the effects being brought by the along ridge-axis variation in diking. Thus, it is worth considering a thought experiment with two end members: One, the along ridge-axis coupling is rigid, so that even along ridge axis variation in  $M$  exist, once a fault determined to develop, it will cut through the whole model domain along the ridge-axis(Z-axis) simultaneously. The other end member is that there is totally no coupling along the ridge-axis. So that each slice of crossection profile across the ridge behave separately without being influenced by its neighbour to a extreme that the model behavior is just a combination of 20 pseudo-2D models piled up along ridge-axis with their own  $M$ . (IMPORTANT: this suggests the importance and urgency for making clear conclusion and results description for previous pseudo-2D models results. However, one difficulty here is that the characteristic fault off-

set  $\Delta X_c$  is different between 2D and 3D models.)

## 4.1 Discussion on Reference models

## 4.2 Fault Alteration

### 4.2.1 Trade-off between bending and weakening

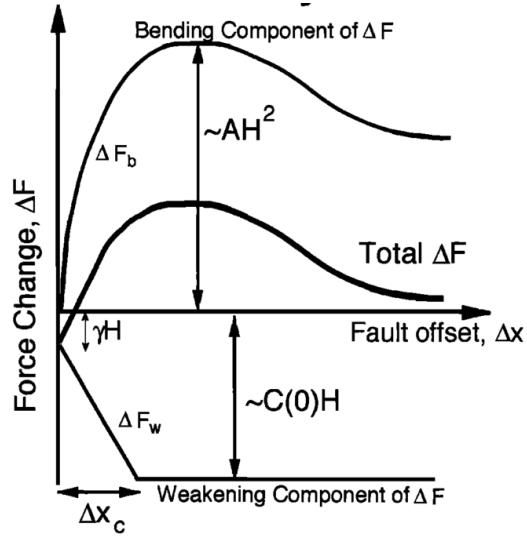


Figure 35: Trade-off between change in bending force  $\Delta F_b$  and weakening in the fault interface  $\Delta F_w$ .  $H$  is the thickness of the brittle crust and  $\gamma$  is the size of initial weak perturbation and  $A$  defines the maximum bending force change. (For more details, please refer to [Lavier et al., 2000])

Before we move on to each of the pairs, the framework studied by [Lavier et al., 2000] needs to be mentioned here for better understanding the model behaviors observed in our model results. There is a trade-off between change in bending force  $\Delta F_b$  as a function of fault offset  $\Delta X$  and force change  $\Delta F_w$  as a function of  $\Delta X$  due to strain weakening. As described in [Lavier et al., 2000], higher characteristic fault offset ( $\Delta X_c$ ) or slower strain weakening results in multiple faults rather than only one fault lasting. Whether conjugate fault and even multiple faults can be produced depends on the local stress condition. The strength weakening of the existed fault combines with how much bending force resists the fault to keep offsetting play a major role in determining the stress state at the other ar-

eas. As the sea-floor keeps spreading and  $\Delta X$  increasing, the change in bending force  $\Delta F_b$  increases and the strength at the fault interface decreases due to weakening  $\Delta F_w$  (Figure 35). If the net force change  $\Delta F = \Delta F_b + \Delta F_w$  is positive, it means that it is getting harder and harder to maintain the existing fault and stress will begin to accumulate at the other areas which eventually break another fault.  $\Delta F_b$  initially increases fast with respect to  $\Delta X$  and then when the breakaway bends over, it reaches its peak value and begins to decrease a little and maintains at a constant value. If the strain weakening is fast enough that the net effect force  $\Delta F$  is always negative, then most of the stress will be released by the existing fault and thus no conjugate or multiple faults will be created.

Our model results verify this analysis that only Type two weakening (slower weakening with higher  $\Delta X_c$ ) can produce an alternating normal fault on the conjugate plate.

Based on the previous experience in pseudo-2D models and [Lavier et al., 2000], when  $M > 0.5$ , the frequency of normal faulting alternation is higher for higher characteristic fault offset ( $\Delta X_c$ ) of Type two weakening compared to Type one weakening. However, for the reference model two, M88ConT2 (Table 2), interesting enough, when comparing pseudo-2D and 3D models with Type two weakening under case of  $M = 0.8$ , even though the 3D Model has a larger  $\Delta X_c$  of 1km than that of pseudo-2D model of 0.5km, the 3D model M88ConT2 has a lower frequency of faulting alternation. Since  $M$  is constant 0.8 along the ridge-axis, the effect of along ridge coupling that resists alternation need not be considered. One possibility is that the resisting bending force increase in a higher rate than linear with respect to increasing the length of the ridge segment ( $Z_{max}$  km).

#### 4.2.2 Alternating on conjugate plate

The fault alternation behavior observed in pseudo-2D models in cases  $M > 0.5$  is much more complicated in 3D models. The results show that only Type two weakening with M58 will result in an alternating faulting pattern. *<sup>XT</sup>:integrate the area of  $M > 0.5$  with*

respect to Z to see if there is any quantatative analysis available.

#### 4.2.3 Secondary near-axis normal fault

The secondary near axis high angle normal fault is another common observation of the models. As shown in Figure 8, at the ridge axis with  $M > 0.5$  (i.e.  $Z > 10$ ), the existing normal fault will be pushed away from the ridge-axis due to excessive diking, as its mechanism has been mentioned in the introduction chapter, another new near axis normal fault is created at around 650kyr. As it evolves, the initial detachment fault becomes inactive (the transparent view of plastic strain shown in the right corner inset of time 880kyr). This secondary fault creates another dome and its composition is more likely to be volcanic rather than ultramafic, however, as it evolves, if it can last long, lower crust and upper mantle material can be exhumed to the surface. The composition of the domes observed at Kane magamullions is similar to this mechanism that ultramafic Babel dome is on the West and crustal inside-corner high on the East.

#### 4.2.4 Effect of along ridge-axis coupling

The along ridge-axis coupling allowed the normal fault at the high M side ( $M > 0.5$ ) to last for a long time and become a detachment that can produce an OCC. This behavior is different from previous 2D studies that only  $M=0.3 \sim 0.5$  can make OCCs and it also provides an alternative explanation for reconciling the gap between 2D model and observation described in [Olive et al., 2010]. Instead of magma injecting below brittle ductile transition, even injecting in the crust, due to along ridge coupling, model can still create OCC for high magma supply. Find the observation evidence for high M OCC from refs of Olive2010. As mentioned in the abstract of Olive2010, ref4-11 show a spectrum of magma supply.

## 4.3 Corrugations

There are two contributing factors, for one, trans-extenstional stresses are created due to offset of the breakaway as well as the variation in fault displacements along the ridge axis; for the other, the variation of the positions of the terminations of the detachment faults along the ridge-axis creates anastomosing faults that is mentioned in [Smith et al., 2014]. This anastomosing faulting behavior is largely responsible for corrugations in our models.

The stress at the tips of the breakaways is generally tensional in both parallel and orthogonal directions to the ridge-axis. (Figure 23.f,g)

### 4.3.1 Wavelength of corrugations

## 4.4 Influence of healing

## 4.5 Comparing model results with nature observation

### 4.5.1 Cut back at 13°N Mid-Atlantic Ridge (M28SqrtT1)

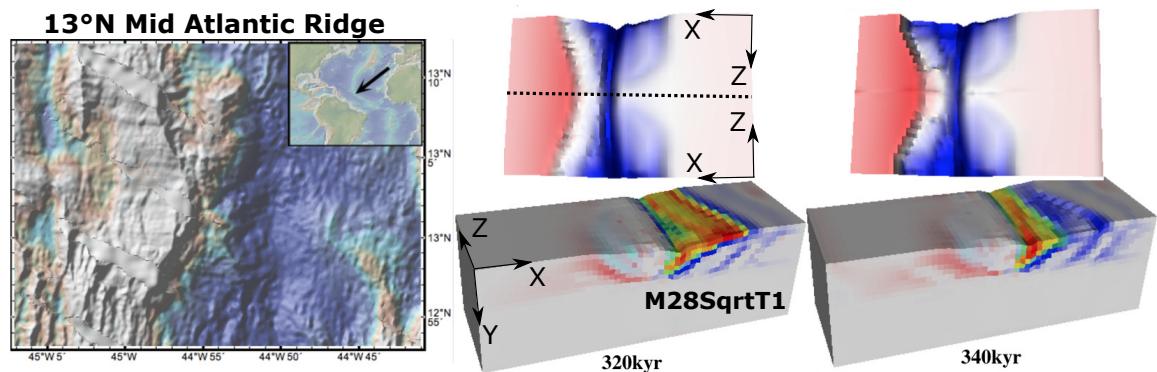


Figure 36: Comparing nature observation at 13°N Mid-Atlantic Ridge to the Cut back behavior of model M28SqrtT1. The model topography is a mirror symetric flip according to the dash line, it reveals the case of  $M$  varies in a square root functional form from 0.2 to 0.8 to 0.2. For discussion on cut back formation mechanism, please refer to Section ???. The bathymetry is from GeoMapApp [Ryan et al., 2009].

The cut back behavior in M28SqrtT1 model creates a fault scarp of  $\sim 1\text{km}$  in relief,

40km in length along the Z axis. Note that the fault scarp corresponds to initial formed breakaway. The topography at 13°N Mid-Atlantic Ridge also has a fault scarp with very similar geometry with ~1km in relief. Due to the variation in diking along the ridge-axis, a sandglass shape of median valley is also produced in the model where the narrowest center corresponds to the region with high magma supply ( $M=0.8$ ). This sandglass shape is also frequently observed in the nature along the Mid-Atlantic Ridges.

#### 4.5.2 Double dome at 23°N Mid-Atlantic Ridge (Kane Megamullions) (Several models)

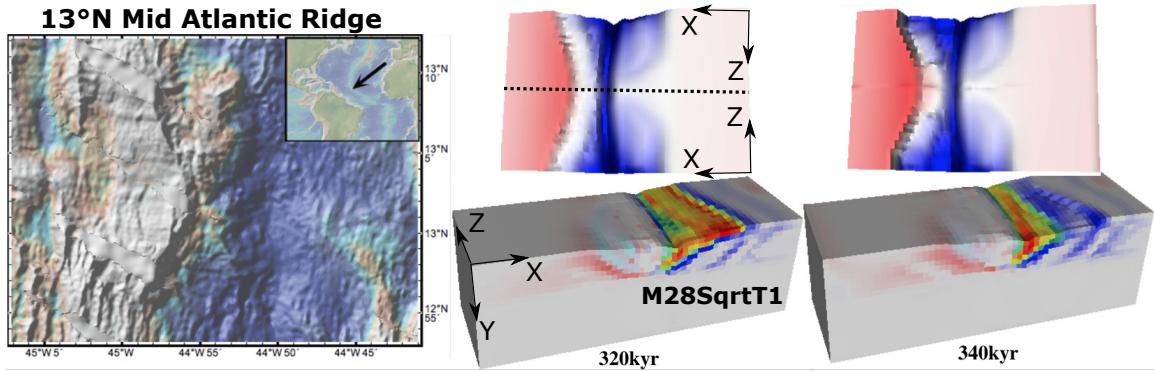


Figure 37: Comparing nature observation at 13°N Mid-Atlantic Ridge to the Cut back behavior of model M28SqrtT1. The model topography is a mirror symmetric flip according to the dash line, it reveals the case of  $M$  varies in a square root functional form from 0.2 to 0.8 to 0.2. For discussion on cut back formation mechanism, please refer to Section ??.

#### **4.5.3 Atlantis Massif Shape at 30°N Mid-Atlantic Ridge ()**

#### **4.5.4 Shear low**

#### **4.5.5 Corrugations**

### **4.6 Model Limitation**

#### **4.6.1 Fixed thermal structure effects and justification**

Thermal conduction rate for  $\kappa = 6\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  material is  $1.8\text{e}5 \text{ km/Myr}$ , four magnitude faster compared to spreading rate of  $2.5\text{km/Myr}$ .

### **4.7 Recommendation for Future Research**

## **5 Conclusions**

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