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Relative chronology of deep circulations within the fractured basement of the Upper Rhine Graben

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► To cite this version:

Chrystel Dezayes, Catherine Lerouge, Claire Ramboz, Guillaume Wille. Relative chronology of deep circulations within the fractured basement of the Upper Rhine Graben. European Geothermal Congress, EGC 2013, Jun 2013, Pise, Italy. 10 p. hal-00788988

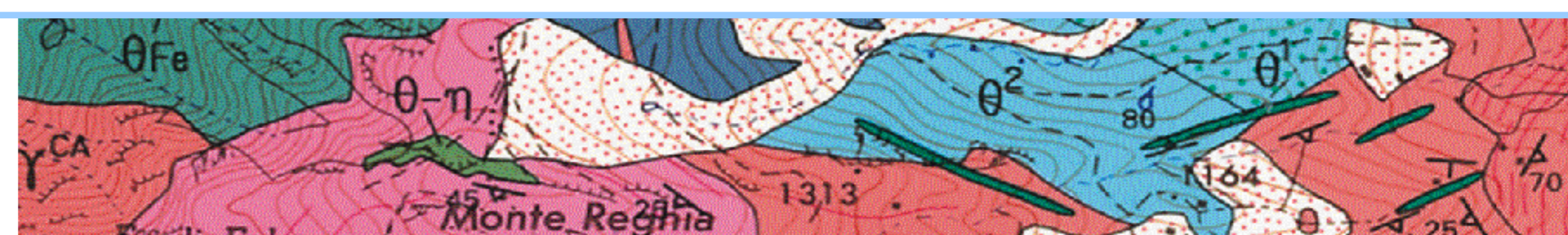
HAL Id: hal-00788988

<https://brgm.hal.science/hal-00788988>

Submitted on 15 Feb 2013

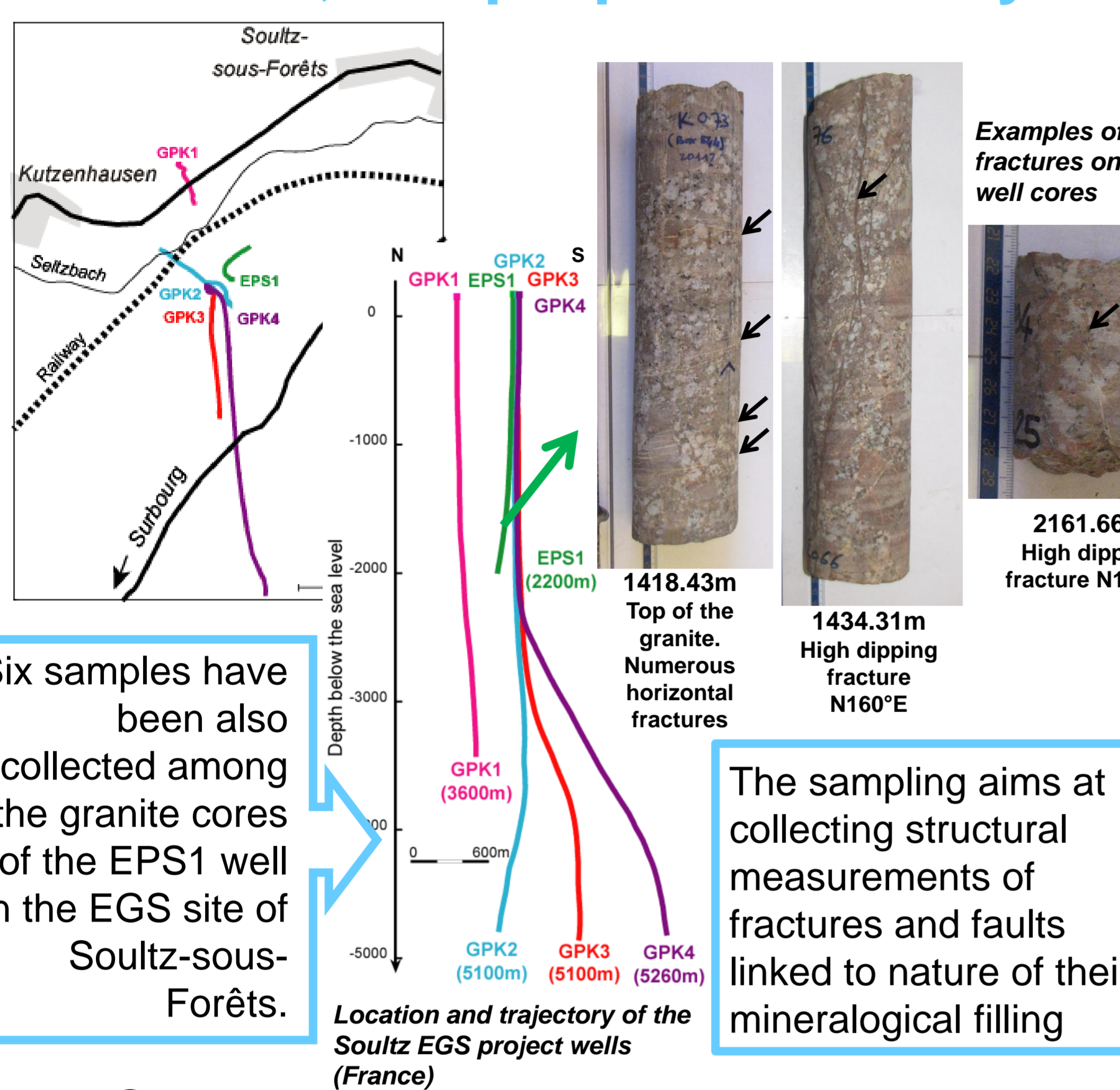
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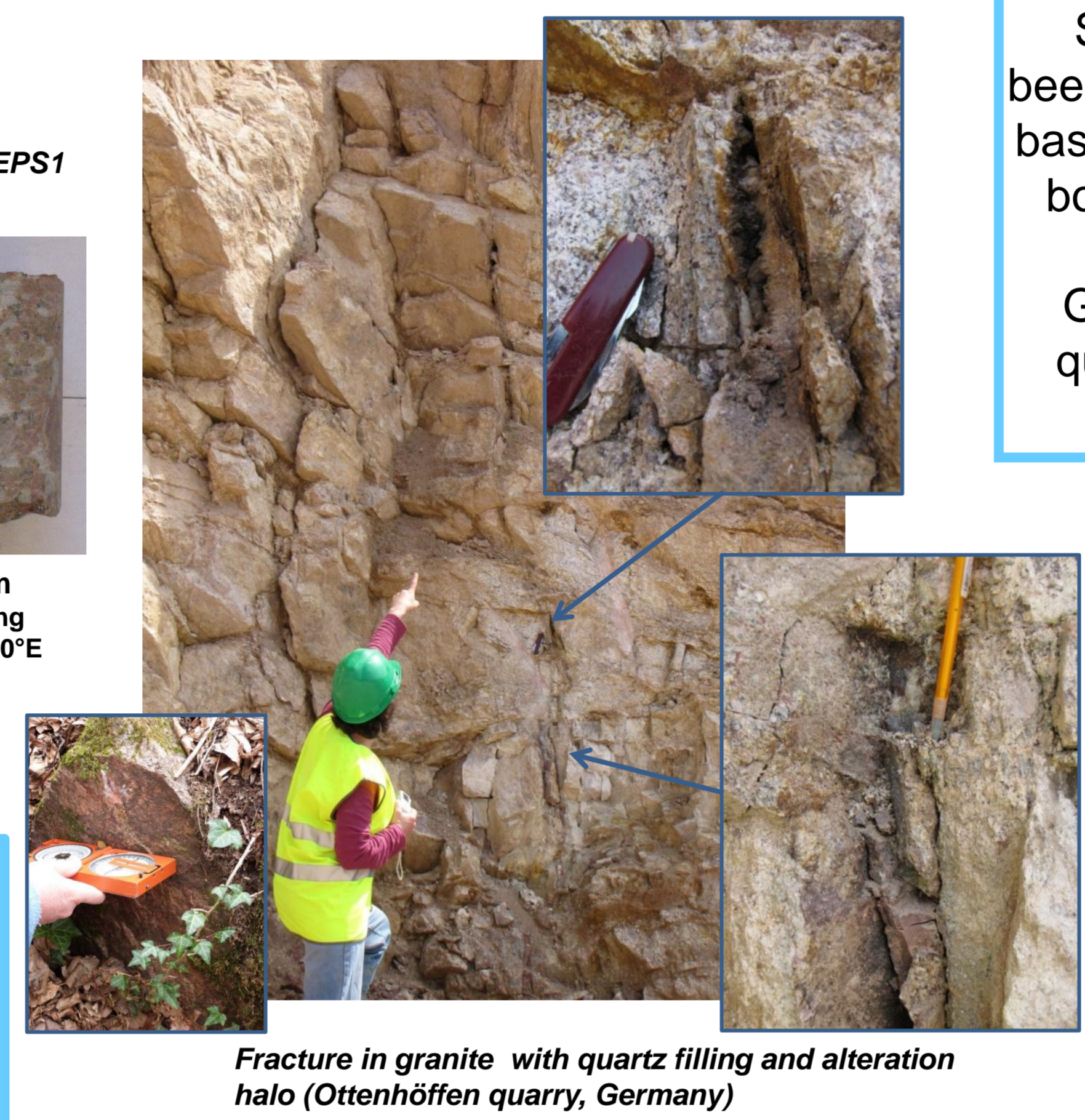
Relative chronology of deep circulations within the fractured basement of the Upper Rhine Graben

In the Upper Rhine Graben, geothermal projects are strongly under development, especially for the exploitation of fluid within the top of the basement. In order to better understand the hydraulic behaviour of the fractured crystalline basement for the development of geothermal reservoir, we propose to study the nature of palæo-circulations.



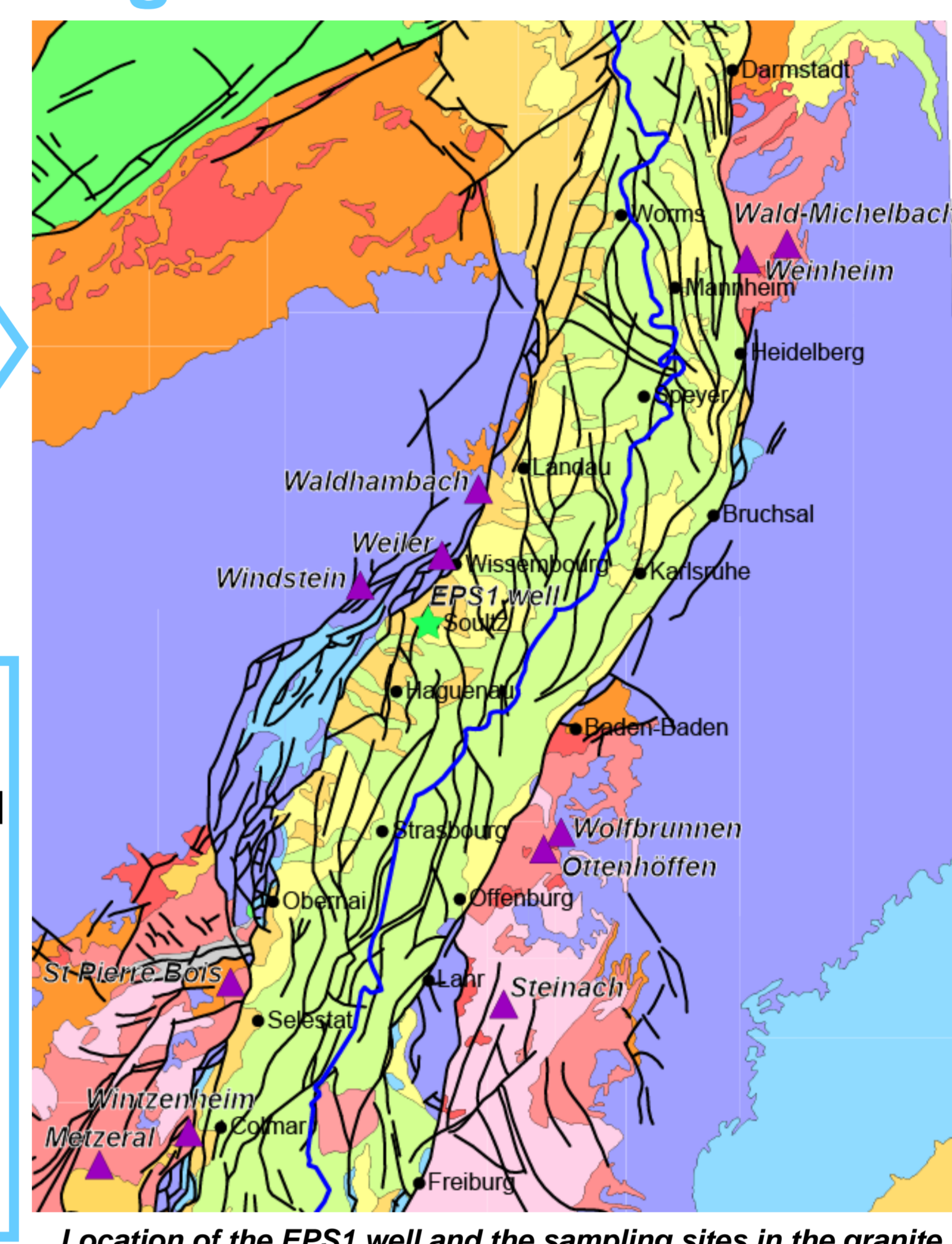
Six samples have been also collected among the granite cores of the EPS1 well on the EGS site of Soultz-sous-Forêts.

The sampling aims at collecting structural measurements of fractures and faults linked to nature of their mineralogical filling

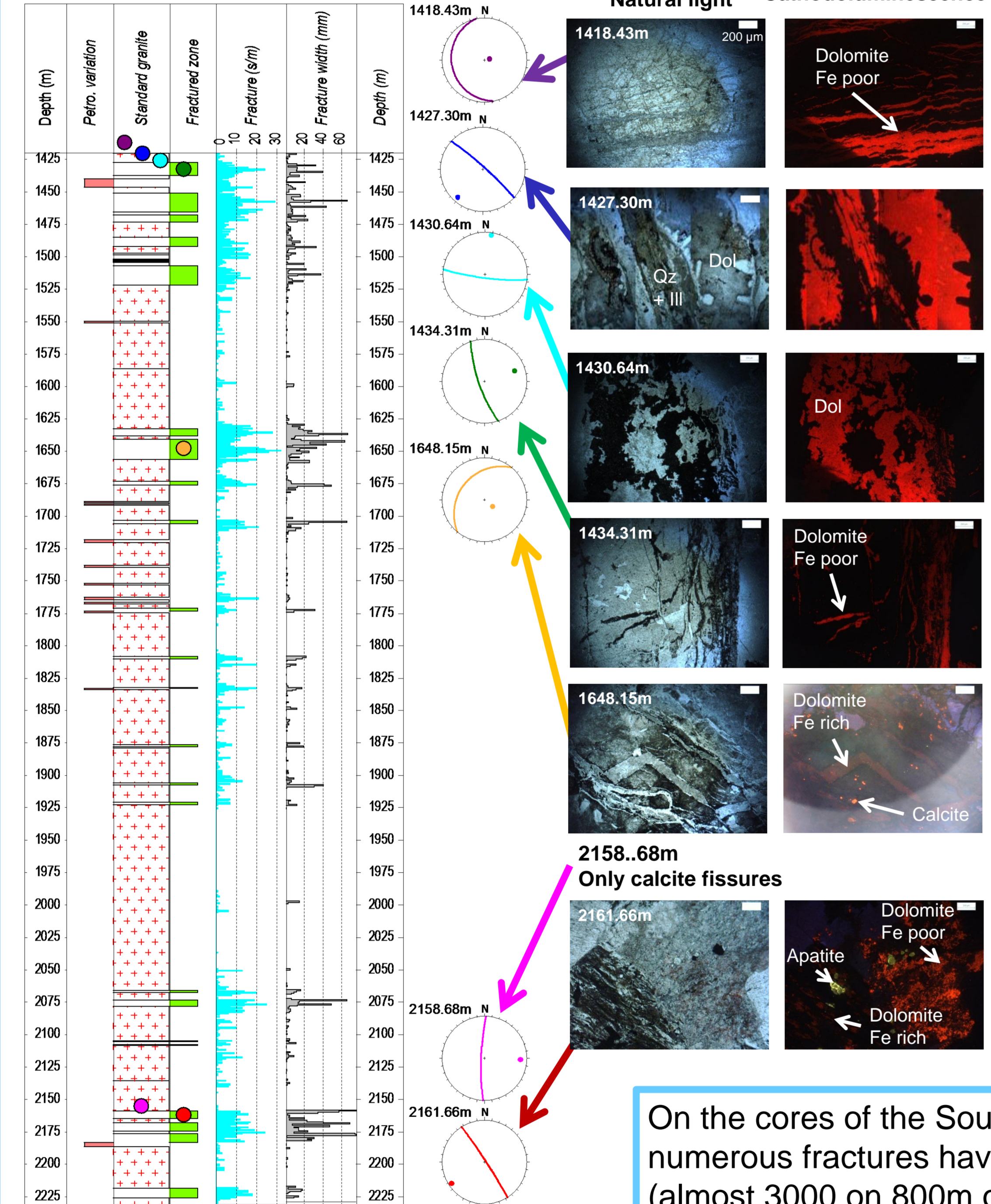


Several outcrops have been visited in the granite basement along the main border faults at the both side of the graben. Generally, the sites are quarries, abandoned or with activities.

On these outcrops, we have measured planes of fracture and fault, described the associated filling and the fracture network relationship. Samples have been collected to detail mineralogy and micro-textures.



EPS1 well



EPS1 well
NE-SW, NW-SE fractures:
1) shear/cataclasis with sericite mass/granite clasts cemented by illite and microquartz
2) dominant dolomite
3) minor ankerite
E-W fractures:
1) dominant dolomite
2) minor ankerite
N-S fractures: Calcite

Windstein
NW-SE fractures:
1) quartz vein,
2) cataclasis
N-S fractures:
ill + μ Qtz

Saint Pierre Bois
E-W fractures:
cataclasis

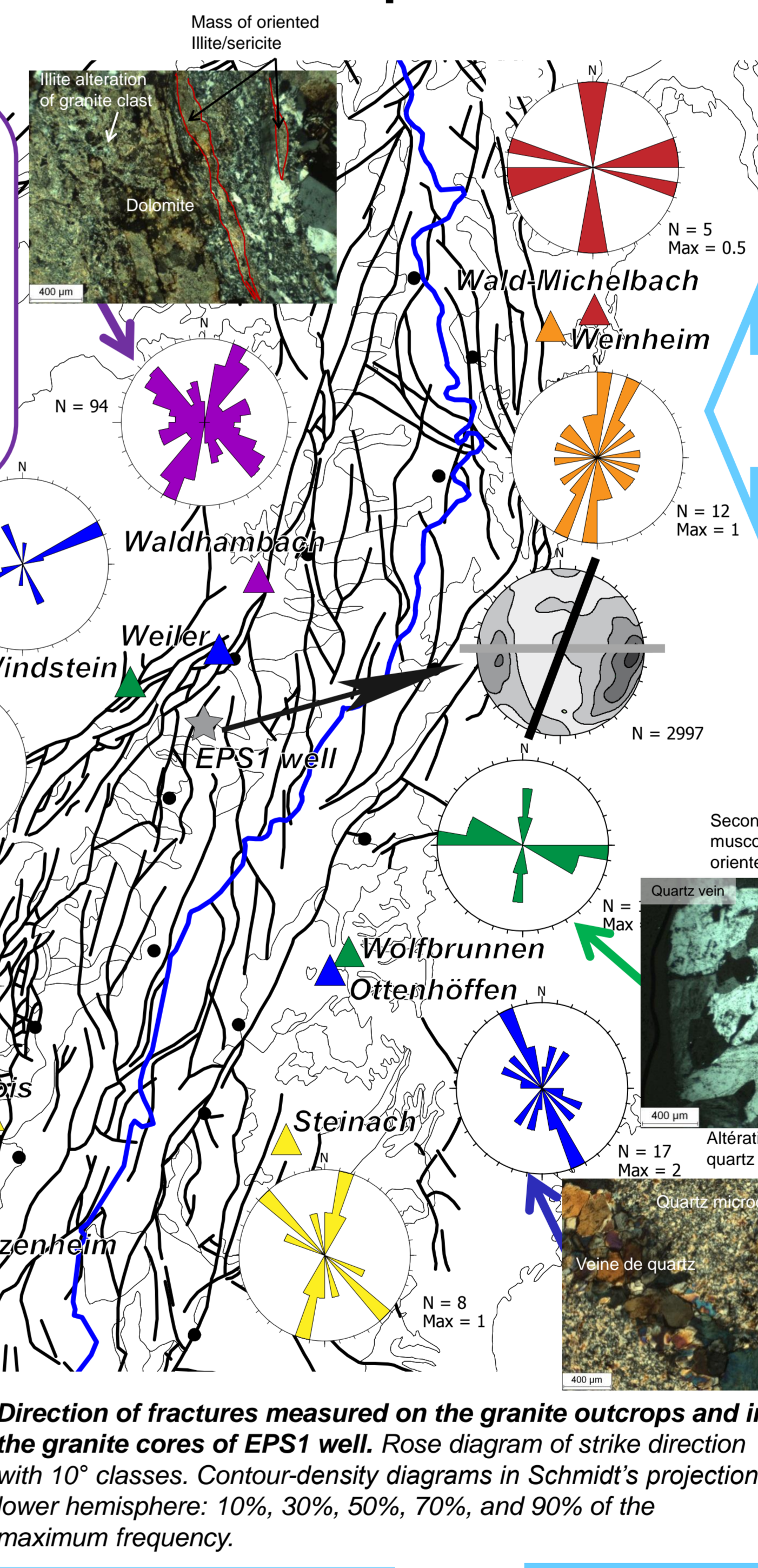
Wintzenheim
NE-SW fractures:
1) Qtz infilling,
2) cataclasis

Metzeral
N170°E fractures:
radial illite

Micro-textures observed under microscope

Waldhambach
NW-SE fractures:
1) shear/cataclasis with sericite mass/granite clasts, 2) quartz filling, 3) Fe-bearing carbonates, 4) dolomite/ankerite, 5) barite

Granite outcrops



The global orientation of the fracture measured on the field in the granite basement on the shoulders shows different sets:

- NW-SE associated to N20°E and E-W in the southern part and at Windstein and Waldhambach
- E-W at Saint-Pierre-Bois and Wolfbrunnen
- N-S associated with E-W direction set in the Odenwald

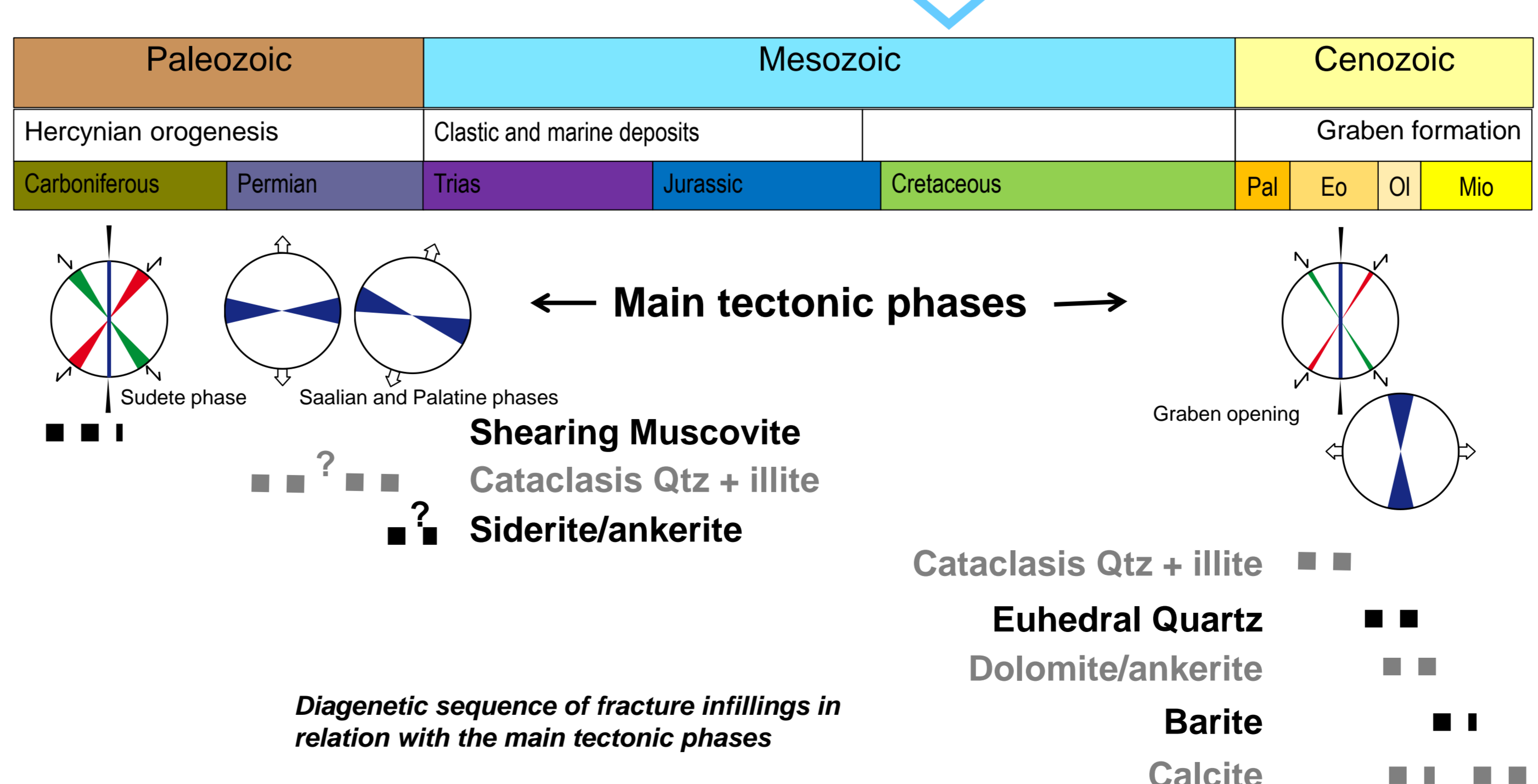
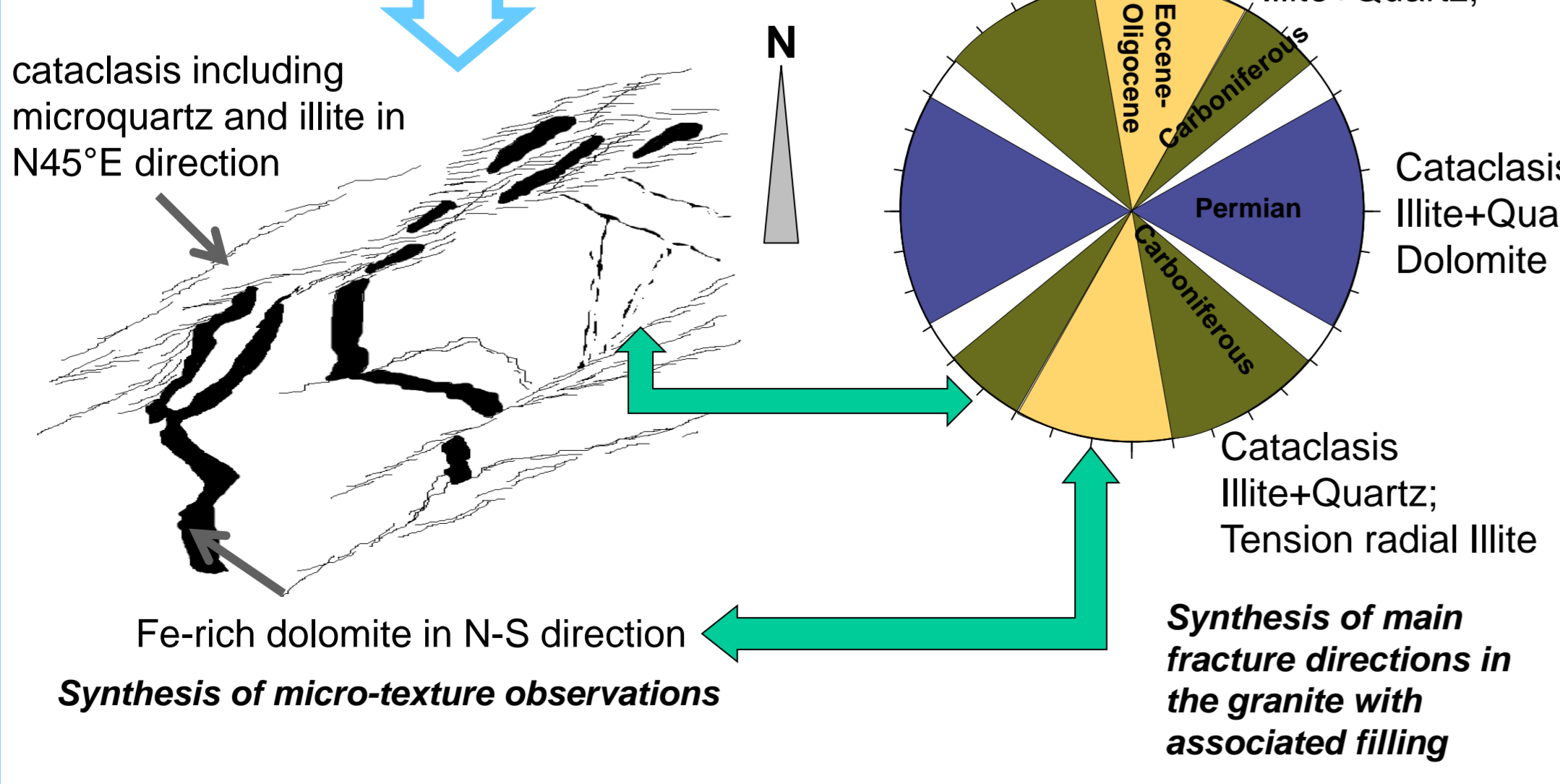
Wolfbrunnen
E-W fractures:
1) cataclasis,
2) quartz filling
N-S fractures:
cataclasis

Ottenhöfen
NW-SE, E-W fractures:
1) cataclasis,
2) microquartz filling
N-S fractures:
1) cataclasis,
2) quartz/silica coating

On the cores of the Soultz well EPS1, numerous fractures have been observed (almost 3000 on 800m of borehole cores). Because of the long geological history of the granite, most of fractures are reactivated at different tectonic phases.

The analyses of the palæocirculation in the granite basement show several stages of fracturing following by several pulses of fluid circulation.

The determination of fracture infillings shows that some types of filling may be linked to the main identified fracture set directions



Conclusions
The reactivation of old Hercynian structures in relation with the Tertiary tectonic history of the graben formation develops the fluid/basement interaction in deep temperature conditions. In the contrary, the N-S large structures favor recent circulation system and rather constitute a recharge drain.

Perspectives
This work constitutes the first step to understanding the palæo-circulations within the granite basement of the Rhine Graben. These textural and mineralogical data need to be completed by microthermometric, isotopic and geochronological investigations. Those give information of the fluid circulation within the fracture network to help exploration and development of future geothermal operation.

Auteurs

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