A MODEL FOR THE EMPLACEMENT OF THE
SERRA DA FREITA GRANITE IN THE
GEOTECTONIC CONTEXT OF THE CENTRAL
IBERIAN ZONE

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Reavy, R. J. (1988).—A model for the emplacement of the Serra da Freita granite in the
geotectonic context of the Central Iberian Zone. Trabajos de Geologia, Univ. de
Oviedo, 17, 133-138. ISSN 0474-9588.

El granito de Serra da Freita, en la parte central del norte de Portugal, se encuentra
dentro de una importante zona de cizalla sinistral que forma parte del sistema de ci-
zalla de Coimbra-Córdoba. La cartografía detallada permite establecer las estructuras
asociadas al desarrollo de la zona de cizalla así como la forma del plutón. Se propone
un modelo de emplazamiento que relaciona la geometría del plutón con la situación
tectónica en que tenía lugar la intrusión. Este estudio se sitúa en un contexto más gen-
eral con referencia a estudios similares en áreas próximas.

Palabras clave: Granito, Zonas de cizalla.

[Traducido por la revista]

The Serra da Freita granite in north central Portugal lies within a major sinistral shear
zone, part of the Coimbra-Cordoba shear system. Comprehensive mapping enables
structures associated with shear zone development to be recognized and the overall
shape of the pluton to be established. An emplacement model is proposed which com-
bines ideas about pluton geometry with the structural setting into which it was intrud-
ed. The study is placed in a more regional context with reference to similar work in an
adjacent area.

Key words: Granite, Shear zone.

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pool, Liverpool L69 3BX, U. K. Manuscrito recibido el 2 de junio de 1987; revisado el 26
de agosto de 1987.

Structural analysis combined with petrogra-
phical and geochemical studies of granites can help to characterize plutonic style. This work
shows that correlations of such styles is pos-
sible over large areas within one terrane (the
Central Iberian Zone). Such an approach may
lead to the tectonomagmatic characterization of
terranes.

REGIONAL SETTING

The Iberian Arc and the Armorican Massif
constitute the Ibero-Armorican Arc, inter-
preted in terms of continent-continent colli-
sion in the Upper Palaeozoic (Matte and Ri-
heiro, 1975). Two major shear zones delimit
this arc (Fig. 1a), the dextral South Armorican
(Berthe et al., 1979) and the sinistral Coimbra-
Cordoba (Burg et al., 1981). Iberia, lying bet-
ween these shear zones, is divided into sev-
eral tectonic zones (Julivert et al., 1972),
(Fig. 1b).

Workers in the Central Iberian Zone have
reported very similar structural styles in sev-
eral areas (Iglesias and Choukroune, 1980;
Castro, 1985). These are characterized by (i)
a clear correspondence between deformation in
granitoids and the D2 peak, and (ii) the devel-
LOCAL GEOLOGY

The Serra da Freita is a well exposed plateau approximately 1,000 m above sea level in north central Portugal, situated 5 km south of Arouca. The country rocks are the Precambrian/Cambrian Beira Schists which crop out over much of northern Portugal; the Serra da Freita pluton is one of a voluminous suite of hyperaluminous leucogranites which are generally regarded as coeval with the main phase of the Hercynian orogeny. The pluton lies in the linear Porto-Viseu metamorphic belt characterized by the presence of a high temperature, low pressure paragenesis of biotite, andalusite, staurolite, and sillimanite and a general lack of amphibole and kyanite (Fig. 2). The regional geology is described by Pereira et al. (1980).

Fig. 1.—a) The Ibero-Armorican Arc showing the positions of the Coimbra-Cordoba and the South Armorican shear zones within this system. b) The structural zonation of Iberia showing the Coimbra-Cordoba shear zone.

Fig. 2.—The location of the Serra da Freita granite within the Serra da Freita shear zone along the axial region of the Porto-Viseu metamorphic belt.
Deformation

Detailed structural analysis shows the relationships between folding, cleavage, shear zone development and plutonism. The distinction of separate "deformation events" (i.e. D1, D2 ...etc.) within this area tends to be misleading as too rigorous adherence to such a scheme conceals the essential fact that one is dealing with a continuum of deformation, in this case associated with the protracted development of a shear zone.

Early Structures

The first structures recognized are gently SE-plunging upright, or slightly overturned folds (F1), with an associated axial planar slaty cleavage (S1), (Figs. 3 & 4). Their influence on the form of the granite body will be discussed subsequently.

Shear Zone Structures

Structures formed during the main period of sinistral transcurrent movement are present throughout the area. However, a boundary can be traced along the regional strike south of which strain greatly intensifies (Fig. 4), the Serra da Freita pluton lies within this zone of high shear strain.

Low strain field.—The structures developed at low strain are confined to the northernmost region of the Serra da Freita (Fig. 4). Here F2 folds are moderately to steeply inclined with a penetrative axial planar schistosity (S2), (Fig. 5).

High strain field.—The Serra da Freita granite is intruded into the high strain belt which extends across strike for approximately 6 Km (Fig. 4). S2 in the schists is approximately vertical, with only minor changes in strike over many kilometres caused by intensification and steepening of the fabric within the NW-SE Serra da Freita shear zone (Fig. 6). S2 in the southern limb of the granite is a primary magmatic foliation defined by the preferred orientation of phyllosilicates and feldspars. An associated stretching lineation plunges gently to the north-west and implies transcurrent motion with a component of transpression. Evidence from tension gashes, boudinage and porphyroblast rotation imply a sinistral direction of translation in the shear zone. F1 and F2 geometry are similar to those described from the Extremadura region (Castro, 1986, page 641, Figure 13), although in the latter case the sense of shear and S2 vergence is dextral.

Fig. 3.—F1 fold style.

Fig. 5.—F2 fold style formed at low shear strain.

Fig. 4.—Geological sketch map of the Serra da Freita showing the relationship between the granite and its envelope with the main structures discussed in the text.
Development of ductile shear bands — C-S fabric. — Progressive deformation is marked by the appearance of ductile shear bands which increasingly affect the earlier S2 foliation. These structures occur in a 3 km wide belt which involves the northern limb of the granite and the schists beyond it (Fig. 4). The C surfaces are small-scale, parallel ductile shear bands recognized in the field as an extensional crenulation cleavage, S2a. These shear bands are generally anticlockwise to the main S2 fabric and show a sinistral sense of displacement (Fig. 7). Its effects become less marked to the south; however, a southern limit to its development cannot be precisely defined. During this phase of the evolution of the shear zone, sinistral transcurrent movement continued, but in a more restricted zone adjacent to the northern contact of the granite.

Late Structures

Tight folds recorded in the schists to the north and south of the granite have axial planar crenulation cleavages (S3) which clearly overprint S2. On the northern side of the granite, S3 dips steeply NE and F3 shows dextral vergence; south of the granite, S3 is inclined to the NW (Fig. 8) and the sense of F3 vergence is sinistral. These structures are interpreted as a conjugate set of crenulations produced by late brittle deformation.

THE STRUCTURE AND EMPLACEMENT OF THE SERRA DA FREITA GRANITE

Pluton Structure

The intrusion shows an apparent symmetry about a strike-parallel axis which divides it into a northern and southern limb shown diagrammatically in Fig. 4. Along this axial zone, the granite overlies the Beira Schists, and in places the contact is almost horizontal, closely following the contour. The northern limb of the granite comprises a steeply inclined sheet which becomes less steeply inclined southwards into the more diffuse southern limb, the granite of which shows complex sinuous contacts with the schists beneath it. A model involving a root zone in the north with flattening towards the south explains the regularity of shape of the northern limb, while the lobate nature of the southern limb and its apophyses can be explained as a cross-section through the base of an undulating but essentially flat-lying sheet. Gently inclined contacts between the granite and the schists beneath demonstrate that an interpretation in which the southern half of the granite consists of sub-vertical apophyses rooted downwards is not feasible. The cross-section shown on Carta Geologica de Portugal, 1:50,000, Folha 13-D depicts the belt of schists west of Albergaria das Cabras as country rock in a roof pendant situation, the Serra da Freita pluton is shown...
Emplacement of the Serra da Freita granite

The granite is inferred to have been intruded into a regime of nearly upright gently plunging F1 folds which may have strongly influenced its overall geometry—namely, the axis about which the pluton shows apparent symmetry is a possible major F1 hinge zone. Emplacement of an inclined sheet took place along an active transpressive shear zone and gravity combined with F1 geometry produced a folded but essentially flat sheet over much of the granite. The main magmatic fabric (S2) present in the southern limb was produced by deformation of a viscous crystal mush during emplacement. As crystallization proceeded, further shortening across the shear zone intensified the fabric and accentuated folding in the flat sheet. The present form of the granite body (Fig. 8) was therefore achieved by a combination of intrusion into folded strata and by shortening and deformation of the consolidating magmatic body. Prolonged shearing responsible for the C-S fabric in the northern limb steepened this part of the intrusion and produced the steep belt toward the end of the shear zone history.

REGIONAL CORRELATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper presents a model for the relationships between tectonism and plutonism in one part of the Central Iberian Zone. Although the overall sense of shear is dextral, Castro (1985) notes that in Extremadura, F1 folds have vertical axial planes and that the second phase of deformation consists of shear zones and thrust faults associated with granitic plutonism. It is of particular interest that the Santa-Cruz pluton in Extremadura shows similar geometry to that of the Serra da Freita granite: a steeply inclined granite sheet where deformation is concentrated which is continuous with a less deformed part of the pluton where contacts between the granite and the envelope tend to be gently inclined (Castro, 1986, page 641, Figure 12). In the light of recent discussions about the kinematics of Hercynian deformation in the Central Iberian Zone (Martínez-Catalán & Díez-Balda, 1987) this work hopefully makes a contribution towards regional interpretation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my thanks to Donny Hutton for guidance during fieldwork, and to Tony Harris and Colin Grant for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript. This work was carried out at the University of St. Andrews whilst in receipt of a postgraduate studentship from the Department of Education for N. Ireland.

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