The Lithospheric Structure across the NW Moroccan Margin. Evidences for Large-Scale Tectonic Inversion

M. Fernàndez¹, I. Jiménez-Munt¹, J. Vergés¹, H. Zeyen², J. Fullea¹, and D. Garcia-Castellanos¹
¹ Group of Dynamics of the Lithosphere (GDL), Institute of Earth Sciences “Jaume Almera”, CSIC, Lluis Solé i Sabarís s/n, 08028 Barcelona, Spain
² UMR 8148 IDES, Université Paris-Sud – CNRS; Département des Sciences de la Terre, Bât. 504, 91405 Orsay Cedex, France

We have modelled the lithospheric structure across the NW Moroccan margin using an integrated methodology that combines elevation, heat flow, gravity, geoid and seismic data. The modelled profile is 1400 km long and extends NW-SE from the Iberian Abyssal Plane to the Sahara Platform, crossing the Gorringe Bank, the west Iberian-Africa plate boundary, the Moroccan continental margin, and the Atlas Mountains. Offshore, the profile coincides with the IAM-4 seismic reflection survey and with the wide-angle and reflection survey SISMAR Profile-4. Onshore, no seismic data are available and the profile follows previous modelled lithospheric profiles. The most outstanding result is a prominent lithospheric thickening beneath the Moroccan continental margin with thickness values of around 200-220 km. This thickening, which appeared much more moderate in previous models, is the result of applying the crustal and density structure proposed from SISMAR survey. Another prominent feature is the reported existence of a high velocity lower crust beneath the margin, as imaged from SISMAR survey. We analyze the possible extent and origin of this high velocity lower crustal body and discuss the nature of the lithospheric thickening beneath the Moroccan continental margin, which seems to affect also the Riff and the central-western Betics.