

Dear authors,

Thanks for your kind reply and effort to improve the quality of your manuscript. Some issues are now clearly solved with the incorporation in the manuscript of precise information. Now every reader can get a clear idea of the meaning and regional scope of your Cambro-Ordovician lithostratigraphic compilation (Figure 2). Well, we have taken a step forward.

However, I still find Figure 1A inaccurate and misleading. I have carefully read the new publication included, Alvaro et al. 2020, hoping that it would shed some light on the new interpretation that the authors make of the variscan zones. Unfortunately there is no data to support that, for example, the Schistose Domain (GTMZ) should be considered part of the allochthonous, or the imaginative classification of the CIZ, WALZ or CIZ as "autochthonous - parautochthonous" category.

I am sure that I am not the most prepared reader, but I strive to understand these surprising shifts in the interpretation of geological evidence presented in recent decades, such as the authors' proposal to consider the Ile-de-Groix, Essarts or Bois-de-Céné units as part of the Variscan autochthon, to name a few issues.

The problem here is not the Pre-Variscan interpretation of the variscan zones, but the Variscan one which is used in Fig.1A (autochthon, parautochthon, allochthon).

Some replies to your doubts:

*1. Why should we include those Variscan zones that are neither described nor considered in our paper? I guess you refer to the non-periGondwanan South Portuguese Zone or terrane which was far from the southwestern*

My request was literally:

[...] the need to include the variscan zones (all of them) either in "autochthon" or the "allochthon-parautochthon".

The sentence means: to *include* (put in as part of a group) all the variscan zones depicted in Fig. 1A. Not to include all the Variscan zones! If the SPZ was not mentioned in the original figure and text, there is no need to include it in this version, unless the authors consider it of interest to complete the interpretative framework.

*2. We have adapted the figure caption of Figure 1A as follows: "Pre-Variscan reconstruction of the Variscan tectonostratigraphic units bearing Cambro-Ordovician exposures REPORTED IN THIS WORK, from the south-western European margin of Gondwana; based on Pouclet et al. (2017) and Álvaro et al. (2020)."*

As explained before, the new publication (Alvaro et al 2020, GSL) uses a figure/classification with similar errors to the present manuscript, without clearly explaining the criteria applied in the new interpretations, not of Pre-Variscan

context, but of the classification of the Variscan zones into autochthon, parautochthon or allochthon. So, unfortunately is not a solution of the issues presented in my previous review.

As stated in previous reviews, In order to correct the Fig 1A, please follow your own work like the Fig 1 of Casas, J.M., Murphy, J.B. 2018. *Unfolding the arc: the use of pre-orogenic constraints to assess the evolution of the Variscan belt in Western Europe. Tectonophysics 736, 47–61*, where variscan zones' grouping criteria into parautochthon, autochthon and allochthon categories, are clearly defined and show scientific consistency.

In order to solve those issues and make this manuscript suitable for publication in SE:

a)- The authors have to complete the required changes in Figure 1A and make sure to include all the variscan zones either in the "autochthon" or in the "allochthon-parautochthon" categories. I suggest following one of the co-authors reconstruction and criteria (Fig. 1 Casas & Murphy, 2018) or, e.g. Martínez Catalán et al (2019), see references in my previous letter. (in my previous reviews there are more details)

b)- Please remove a small line emerging from Cabo Ortegal complex in Fig. 1A.

c)- If the SPZ is not used in your discussion please remove it from Fig.1A. Alternatively, if you consider it provides a better picture of the context, classify (= colour it) according to the same criteria than explained in a).

I am therefore returning the manuscript with a request of minor revision.

Sincerely,

Juan Gómez Barreiro