

The Sierra Madre Oriental Orocline. Paleomagnetism of The Nazas System in North-Central México

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ABSTRACT

Curved mountain belts are spectacular natural features, which contain crucial 3D information about the tectonic evolution of orogenic systems. The Mesozoic units exposed at the Cordilleran Mexican Fold and Thrust belt in NE Mexico show a striking curvature that has not been explained nor included in the existent tectonic models of the region. We have investigated with paleomagnetism and rock magnetism the kinematic history of that curvature, which is observed in the rocks of the Jurassic Nazas igneous province and its overlying red beds. Our results show a complex history of remagnetizations that occurred during the Late Jurassic and Cretaceous, as well as clockwise and counterclockwise vertical axis rotations of up to 50° respectively in each limb of

30 the curvature. Although our data cannot provide precise timing for such rotations yet, our results
31 confirm that the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt underwent post-Late Jurassic orocline bending or
32 buckling in NE Mexico.

33 **KEYWORDS**

34 Sierra Madre Oriental Orocline; Paleomagnetism; Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt;
35 Remagnetization; Nazas Igneous Province.

36

37 **1 Introduction**

38 Orogenic belts are the most visible product of plate tectonics in the continents. Whereas their cross-
39 section views are the most valuable source of information to understand orogenesis in 2D, their
40 lateral variations are the best opportunity to understand their tectonic evolution and the curvature's
41 kinematics in 3D (Gutiérrez-Alonso et al., 2008; Pastor-Galán, 2022). The kinematic
42 classifications of orogenic curvatures (Johnston et al., 2013; Pastor-Galán et al., 2017; Sussman &
43 Weil, 2004) distinguish (a) Primary arcs, which are those orogens whose curvature pre-dates the
44 orogenic building (e.g., Jura mountains: Hindle & Burkhard, 1999); and (b) Oroclines (Carey,
45 1955) that are the orogenic curvatures product of vertical axis rotations. Oroclines can be classed
46 as progressive oroclines: that is portions of orogens that were curved during the main deformation
47 pulse, such as the Talesh (Rezaeian et al., 2020); and secondary oroclines, where the portion of an
48 orogen was bent or buckled after the main deformation phase (e.g., the New England Oroclines,
49 Li et al., 2012). The mechanisms that form oroclines may involve from the uppermost portion of
50 the crust at the level where thrust faults develop (Marshak, 1988, 2004), to the whole lithosphere
51 (Gutiérrez-Alonso et al., 2004; Pastor-Galán et al., 2012; Bagheri and Gol, 2020). Although many
52 structural techniques can inform about the kinematics of curved orogens (Hindle & Burkhard,
53 1999; Kollmeier et al., 2000; Li et al., 2012; Pastor-Galán et al., 2011, 2014, 2017; Shaanan et al.,
54 2014; Shaw et al., 2012; Weil & Yonkee, 2009; Yonkee & Weil, 2010; Bagheri and Gol, 2020),
55 paleomagnetism is the best tool to do it, as the geomagnetic field is independent of the orogenic
56 deformation (Abrajevitch et al., 2005; Eldredge et al., 1985; Pastor-Galán et al., 2015, 2018, 2020;
57 Weil et al., 2001, 2010, 2013).

58 The American Cordillera runs along the Pacific coast of the Americas and includes several
59 mountain belts (e.g., the Rockies, Sierra Madre Oriental and the Andes), extensive plateaus
60 (Colorado, Atacama), primary curvatures (Colombian Eastern Cordillera: Jiménez et al., 2014);
61 and oroclines (e.g., Alaska, Johnston, 2001; Panama, Montes et al., 2012; Bolivia, Eichelberger &
62 McQuarrie, 2015; Patagonia, Maffione et al., 2010). The Sierra Madre Oriental is the northeastern
63 portion of the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt and shows a ~110 degrees curvature convex to the
64 NE (Figure 1). The trend of this curvature is marked by outcrops of the Jurassic Nazas system
65 (Nazas Igneous Province and associated sedimentary rock formations). This curvature has been
66 interpreted as a primary arc representing the shape of the subduction zone during the Jurassic
67 (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2021; Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2014; Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2008;
68 Dickinson & Lawton, 2001; Godínez-Urban et al., 2011; Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014; Martini
69 & Ortega-Gutiérrez, 2018; Molina-Garza et al., 2020; Stern & Dickinson, 2010) or as the result of
70 large-scale transcurrent faults that fragmented and displaced the Nazas system (Anderson et al.,
71 2005; Anderson & Schmidt, 1983; Jones et al., 1995; Molina-Garza & Iriondo, 2005; Silver &
72 Anderson, 1974). Lack of data precludes testing these or any other hypotheses since the map view
73 kinematics of the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt are woefully unknown. In this work, we analyze
74 new paleomagnetic data from the Jurassic Nazas System along this curvature. Our results show
75 counterclockwise and clockwise rotations that allow us to propose the existence of the Sierra
76 Madre Oriental Orocline (Figure 1).

77 2 Geological Setting

78 The tectonic history of México during the past 250 million years is coupled with the eastward
79 subduction of the Kula-Farallon (Paleo-Pacific) plates under the North American plate (Fitz-Díaz
80 et al., 2018 and references therein). The interaction of continental and oceanic plates along the
81 Pacific coast formed a ~ 5000 km long arc where voluminous calc-alkaline- to alkaline magmatism
82 occurred. The arc extended from northwestern Canada (DeCelles et al., 2009) to southern México
83 (Campa-Uranga et al., 2004; Godínez-Urban et al., 2011) and included the Nazas igneous province
84 (a.k.a. Mesozoic arc of Western North America or the Nazas Rift Province; Barboza-Gudiño et al.,
85 2008; Busby & Centeno-García, 2022). This magmatic subprovince was active from the beginning
86 of the Jurassic (~200 Ma) to the Callovian (~165 Ma) (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2008; Bartolini et
87 al., 2003; Busby & Centeno-García, 2022; Grajales-Nishimura et al., 1992; Jones et al., 1995;
88 Parolari et al., 2022). From Late Triassic to Earliest Cretaceous, the effects of the breakup of
89 Pangea combined with extension related to the roll-back of the paleo-pacific plates in western

90 Pangea formed a series of continental and marine basins (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2021; Busby,
91 2023; Martini & Ortega-Gutiérrez, 2018; Pindell & Kennan, 2001), such as the broad Mesozoic
92 Basin of Central México (Figure 1). In the northeastern portion of that basin, sedimentation began
93 with the accumulation of eroded materials derived from the Nazas Igneous Province. The
94 continued extensional setting during the Oxfordian (~160 Ma) triggered a large marine
95 transgression responsible for the accumulation of a ~ 5 km thick marine sedimentary succession
96 (hereafter “sedimentary cover”; Bartolini et al., 1999; Goldhammer, 1999; Gray & Lawton, 2011;
97 Hernández-Romano et al., 1997; Ocampo-Díaz et al., 2016). In the studied area (Figure 2), there
98 is evidence of ~165 Ma plutonism. The laccolithic emplacement of the Caopas pluton (Anderson
99 et al., 1991; Guerra-Roel, 2019; López-Infanzón, 1986; Ramírez-Peña, 2017) transferred vertical
100 and horizontal stresses that locally deformed the overlying rocks. Afterwards, due to the accretion
101 of the Guerrero terrain during the Early Cretaceous (Busby, 2023; Centeno-García et al., 2008;
102 Martini et al., 2013; Ortega-Flores et al., 2020) the sedimentary rocks of the Mesozoic Basin of
103 Central Mexico were incorporated into the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt. The Mexican Fold and
104 Thrust Belt style of deformation is dominated by folds and thrusts that developed over a regional
105 decollement (i.e., thin-skinned) where the sedimentary cover was transported in a northeast
106 direction with fold wavelengths that increase from West to East (Eguiluz et al., 2000; Fitz-Díaz
107 et al., 2018 and references therein). The age of regional folding in the hinterland of the Mexican
108 Fold and Thrust Belt, syntectonic plutonism (Teyra and Peñuelo plutons Ramírez-Peña & Chávez-
109 Cabello, 2017) and synorogenic clastic sedimentation (Concepción del Oro Formation; Ocampo-
110 Díaz et al., 2016) has been bracketed between 90 and 65 My (Fitz-Díaz et al., 2018; Ramírez-Peña
111 & Chávez-Cabello, 2017). The Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt contains several recesses (e.g.,
112 Torreón and Potosí) and salient that portray obstacle tectonics with the forland highs (Monterrey,
113 Figure 2; e.g., Chávez-Cabello et al., 2004; Nemkin et al., 2019; Padilla y Sánchez, 1985; Zachary,
114 2012). In localized areas along the trace of the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt late high angle
115 reverse faults cut the older folds and thrusts and expose Jurassic volcanic strata and, in some cases,
116 Paleozoic basement (Chávez-Cabello et al., 2005; Fitz-Díaz et al., 2018; Guerra Roel, 2019; Mauel
117 et al., 2011; Ramírez-Peña et al., 2019; Ramírez-Peña & Chávez-Cabello, 2017; Zhou et al., 2006).

118 2.1 The Nazas Igneous Province

119 The volcanic rocks of the Nazas Igneous Province (i.e., the Nazas Formation in México) crop out
120 scattered in a winding band that crosses north-central México, and turns from a NW trend to a SE
121 direction (Figure 1). The band is sub-parallel to the general trend of the Mexican Fold and Thrust
122 Belt (Figure 2) The type locality of the Nazas Formation is in Cerritos Colorados near Villa Juárez,

123 Durango (Figure 2a; Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014; Pantoja-Alor, 1972). Isotopic ages of these
124 rocks suggest a diachronic evolution of volcanism, with the oldest rocks (190 Ma) in the South
125 (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2008; Jones et al., 1995; Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014; López-Infanzón,
126 1986) and the youngest (160 Ma) in the northern part of the band (González-León et al., 2021;
127 Mauel et al., 2011).

128 The Nazas Formation is a volcanic succession of lava flows, ignimbrites and volcanic breccias of
129 andesitic to rhyolitic compositions interbedded with siliciclastic sediments (Barboza-Gudiño et al.,
130 2021; Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014; Pantoja-Alor, 1972 and references therein). Its thickness is
131 variable and ranges from 250 m to 1000 m (Clemons & McLeroy, 1965; Pantoja-Alor, 1972).
132 Some hypabyssal and intrusive bodies with the same chemical composition and age have been
133 attributed to the Nazas Igneous Province. These bodies are peraluminous and are interpreted as an
134 arc setting (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2021; Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2008; Bartolini et al., 2003;
135 González-León et al., 2021; Mauel et al., 2011) or a rift environment as partial melting products
136 of the Panafrican crust (Busby, 2023; Busby & Centeno-García, 2022; Martini & Ortega-Gutiérrez,
137 2018; Parolari et al., 2022). Bartolini et al. (2003) summarized all the reported ages of the Nazas
138 Formation. Lawton & Molina Garza, (2014) published an updated list that included some
139 correlated volcanic units in the United States and included zircon U-Pb ages of 180-178 Ma for
140 the Lower member and 170-169 Ma for the Upper member. The youngest recorded ages (U-Pb in
141 zircon) in México attributable to the Nazas Igneous Province yielded 158.1 ± 1 Ma and come from
142 intrusive bodies exposed in Sonora (González-León et al., 2021).

143 2.2 Red Beds

144 In some localities, the top of the Nazas Formation is overlaid by a Jurassic pre-Oxfordian
145 sedimentary succession of red sandstone, siltstone, conglomerate, breccia, and volcaniclastic
146 reddish beds that have a direct contribution from the igneous province. These materials were
147 deposited in continental to marine transitional environments. They are commonly addressed as
148 Jurassic red beds and have been defined as La Joya and La Boca Formations (Barboza-Gudiño et
149 al., 2008, 2010; Fastovsky et al., 2005; Imlay et al., 1948; Mixon et al., 1959; Rubio Cisneros et
150 al., 2011b).

151 The La Boca Formation has two informal members. The lower member consists of lapilli tuffs,
152 lava flows, volcanic breccias, and ignimbrites interbedded in equal proportion with volcaniclastics
153 and detritus derived primarily from coeval volcanic rocks that represent deposits from the Nazas
154 Igneous Province (Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011). The volcanic component in the La Boca

155 Formation gradually decreases towards the top of the stratigraphic unit. The lower and upper
156 members are separated by an angular unconformity that ranges from a few degrees to 70°, an angle
157 that increases in the vicinity of intrusions (Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011). The upper informal
158 member of this formation is mostly red siliciclastic strata. These rocks fine upwards in a
159 conglomerate, sandstone, and siltstone succession lacking fossil material (Fastovsky et al., 2005).
160 La Boca Formation is overlain by La Joya Formation a siliciclastic unit with a basal fining upward
161 conglomerate to reddish siltstone and mudstone. It was deposited in continental to a marginal
162 marine environment with subordinate freshwater limestone and is overlain by the upper Jurassic-
163 Paleogene sedimentary cover that starts with the Oxfordian Minas Viejas evaporites (Padilla y
164 Sánchez, 1985; Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011; Salvador, 1987). The reported maximum
165 depositional age for the La Boca Formation is 184 -183 Ma for the lower member and 167 Ma for
166 the upper member (Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011). As for the La Joya formation its age has
167 been inferred by stratigraphical correlation, however, Barboza-Gudiño et al. (2012) reported zircon
168 ages as young as 166.2 ± 1.9 Ma at the top of this unit in Real de Catorce and Rubio-Cisneros &
169 Lawton, (2011) reported a U-Pb zircon age of 163.6 ± 2.6 at its base in Huizachal Valley. Barboza-
170 Gudiño et al., (2021) presented a complete summary of the stratigraphy and lithological
171 correlations of all the known localities of the Nazas Igneous Province in Mexico.

172 During the last recorded episode of horizontal crustal shortening of the Mexican Fold and Thrust
173 Belt (Upper Cretaceous-Eocene), these Jurassic units were exhumed in some parts of the trust belt
174 (Figure 2b; Fitz-Díaz et al., 2018; Gutiérrez-Navarro et al., 2021; Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014;
175 Ramírez-Peña et al., 2019; Ramírez-Peña & Chávez-Cabello, 2017).

176 3 Sampling Strategy

177 We collected a total of 620 core samples of 2.5 cm diameter with a gas-powered drill and oriented
178 them with a Pomeroy orienting fixture and a Brunton Pocket Transit compass. 355 cores come
179 from the Nazas Formation and the remainder 265 from the red bed formations that overlay it. In
180 some localities, we collected oriented blocks and later drilled them in the laboratory. The Nazas
181 Formation samples were collected in three separate localities representing different trends of the
182 Nazas Igneous Province (Figure. 2a): (1) Villa Juárez locality in the state of Durango, located 20
183 km west of the city of Torreon, Coahuila; (2) The San Julián Uplift locality, in the northern part
184 of the state of Zacatecas; and (3) Charcas which is located 7 km west of the city of the same name
185 in the state of San Luis Potosí. The sedimentary rocks were collected from the La Joya and La
186 Boca Formations: (1) Real de Catorce located in the Sierra de Catorce also in the state of San Luis

187 Potosí; and (2) in the Huizachal Valley, 18 km SE of the city of Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas
188 (Figure 2b).

189 3.1 Villa Juárez, Durango (25.501°N, -103.621° E)

190 The local age of the volcanic rocks in this locality is 200-178 Ma for the lower member and 170-
191 169 Ma Upper member (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2021; Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014). We
192 collected between 2 and 3 oriented blocks in each of the 17 sites (labeled NA01-NA17) from 4
193 individual andesitic lava flows. We obtained a total of 85 cores from the oriented blocks. Lava
194 flows are interbedded with volcano-sedimentary rocks in the Villa Juárez anticline, which has an
195 axial trend and plunge of ~315°/18°. The sampled limbs do not show noticeable evidence of
196 penetrative deformation. Although the precise age of the folding is unknown, the structure is
197 attributed to thin-skinned deformation coupled with the buttressing effect of the Coahuila block,
198 an adjacent basement high. Sediments accumulated in the basin were thrusted over the southern
199 margin of the block during the Late Cretaceous (Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014).

200 3.2 San Julián Uplift (24.837°N, -102.174° E)

201 The San Julian Uplift is a basement block that contains the largest outcrop of the Nazas Formation
202 in México. The block was exhumed during Eocene-Oligocene thick-skinned tectonic event
203 (Guerra-Roel, 2019; Ramírez-Peña, 2017; Ramírez-Peña et al., 2019; Ramírez-Peña & Chávez-
204 Cabello, 2017). The thick-skinned faults cut in high angles the pre-existing Cretaceous thin-
205 skinned structures, which formed during the early stages of development of the Mexican-Fold and
206 Thrust Belt. The NE limit of the San Julián Uplift is the Las Norias fault zone, a high-angle reverse
207 fault that disrupted and refolded the overlying anticlines tilting them towards the NE (Guerra-Roel,
208 2019, Ramírez-Peña 2017).

209 In this locality, the Nazas Igneous Province system is represented by volcanosedimentary, volcanic,
210 and sub-volcanic rocks of the Nazas Formation, and the Caopas intrusive body (Gómez-Torres,
211 2022; López-Infanzón, 1986; Ramírez-Peña, 2017; Rogers et al., 1963). The volcanic rocks of the
212 Nazas formation upper member are primarily composed of andesitic and dacitic lava flows,
213 volcanic domes, and associated volcanic breccias. The Nazas Formation lower member is locally
214 constituted of metasedimentary material, tuff, ash, breccia, and andesitic lava flows. These rocks
215 show foliation and low metamorphic grade of greenschist facies with chlorite as the main
216 metamorphic mineral. The zircon U-Pb age for the Nazas Formation in this locality is 174 ± 2 Ma
217 (Ramírez-Peña, 2017). The Caopas intrusive corresponds to a Middle Jurassic plutonic body of

218 intermediate composition emplaced in the Nazas Formation. This body shows a porphyritic texture
219 and, in some of its upper parts, evidence of dynamic metamorphism (porphyroblasts and mineral
220 lineation). The Caopas intrusive yielded a U-Pb in zircons age of 165 ± 3 Ma (Ramírez-Peña,
221 2017).

222 From this locality, we collected a total of 256 samples in three separate areas: Mina San Miguel
223 (coded MSM), Nazas North (ALI, NRN), and the Caopas intrusive body (MIC, MIR, MIRN;
224 supplementary table ST2). The samples corresponding to the Mina San Miguel were collected in
225 an anticline at the eastern border of the San Julián Uplift; and the Nazas N sites came from the
226 northern part of the block. All the samples belonging to the MSM area and sites Mic1, Mic2, and
227 Mic3 of the Caopas intrusive were drilled in situ (10-15 samples per site). The rest of the sites of
228 the Caopas area (Mic4 – Mic7) were collected as oriented blocks (one per site). From each block,
229 we obtained four cores in the laboratory. The poor outcrop exposure of the lava flow succession
230 in the MSM and Nazas N areas, together with their thickness (20-30 m), weathering conditions,
231 and compositional and textural similarities among flows made the task of identifying individual
232 lava flows a challenge.

233 The Nazas Formation in the MSM area shows folds with trend/plunge of $142^\circ/10^\circ$ that is oblique
234 to the main East-West trend of the structures in the transversal sector of the Mexican Fold and
235 Thrust Belt (see Parras thrust in Figure 2). A second series of younger folds with N- to NE-trends
236 was recognized by Ramírez-Peña (2017) and Guerra Roel (2019). This structural trend is absent
237 in rocks of the Nazas Formation, but it is characteristic of the eastern borderline structures of the
238 San Julián Uplift.

239 3.3 Charcas, San Luis Potosí (23.131°N , -101.188°E)

240 The Nazas Formation in Charcas is composed by lava flows and pyroclastic rocks of andesitic
241 composition, interbedded with volcaniclastic material and volcanic breccias. These rocks were
242 dated (U-Pb in zircon) in 179 ± 1 Ma (Zavala-Monsiváis et al., 2012). Jurassic red beds overlie
243 unconformably the Nazas Formation. The structure and exhumation mechanism has not been
244 studied in detail in this locality, and it is only described as an anticlinorium. However, it is noted
245 that the structure is in the same crustal block as the Real de Catorce locality (see 3.4).

246 In this locality we collected samples along the San Antonio River covering about 80 m of the
247 exposed stratigraphic succession of the Nazas Formation. The outcrop is composed by a stack of
248 lava flows, and volcanic breccia of andesitic composition interbedded with thin ignimbrites and

249 ash-fall tuffs. 60 cores were collected in 10 sites of the Nazas Formation labeled **CHA-1 to CHA-**
250 **10** that cover four different andesitic lava flows, interbedded tuff, and epiclastic deposits. Each
251 sampled site corresponds to distinct units no thicker than 2 m, with the exception of sites CHA-1
252 and CHA-2 that were collected from a single epiclastic deposit.

253 3.4 Real de Catorce (23.621°N , $-100.855^{\circ}\text{ E}$)

254 In this locality, the older rocks crop out in the core of an antiformal stack (Gutiérrez-Navarro et
255 al., 2021). The antiformal stack structure formed between 91-52 Ma, based on an $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ age
256 obtained from neogenic illite collected from a shear zone (Gutiérrez-Navarro et al., 2021). The
257 cooling ages of ~ 50 Ma (U-Pb-He in zircon) from a dacitic pluton emplaced in the Nazas
258 Formation have been interpreted as the exhumation age due to deep high-angle reverse faults
259 (thick-skinned event), which delimit the Real de Catorce block. The Nazas Formation
260 unconformably rests atop Triassic clastic rocks of the Potosí fan (Centeno-García et al., 2005;
261 Silva-Romo et al., 2000) and yielded U-Pb age of 174.7 ± 1.3 Ma in zircon. (Barboza-Gudiño et al.,
262 2012). The La Joya Formation lies unconformably over the Nazas Formation. In this locality, The
263 La Joya Formation is composed of a 200 m thick sedimentary succession of continental (bottom)
264 to marginal marine (top) conglomerates, sandstones, and shale in a grain-decreasing order from
265 bottom to top. This Formation shows signs of deformation features that suggests that it acted as a
266 decollement, which was developed in the Late Cretaceous during the thin-skinned deformation
267 event (Gutiérrez-Navarro et al., 2021). The La Joya Formation's maximum depositional U-Pb age,
268 inferred from detrital zircons is 166.2 ± 1.9 Ma (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2012).

269 We sampled 103 cores in the Real de Catorce area in a coarsening upward 60 m thick succession
270 of sandstones. The samples were collected on the fine-grain portion of the outcrop and distributed
271 in 16 sites labeled **RC11 - RC26**. Each core accounts for a single bed.

272 3.5 Huizachal Valley (23.588°N - 99.222° E)

273 The locality contains outcrops of the Nazas Formation in the core of a structural dome overlain by
274 the Jurassic red beds of the La Boca and La Joya Formations (Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011).
275 The top of the Nazas Formation is interbedded with the clastics of the lower member of La Boca
276 Formation and they are separated by an angular unconformity. This lower member consists of
277 lapilli tuffs, lava flows, volcanic breccias, ignimbrites and rhyolites interbedded with
278 volcanics with detritus derived primarily from volcanic rocks of the Nazas igneous province.

279 The volcanic component in the La Boca Formation gradually decreases towards the top of the
280 stratigraphic unit (Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011). The La Boca Formation has been divided
281 into two informal members separated by an angular unconformity that ranges from few degrees to
282 70° (Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011). The upper member consists of a finning upwards red beds
283 succession that includes conglomerate, sandstone, and siltstone beds with scant fossils (Fastovsky
284 et al., 2005). La Boca Formation is overlain by La Joya Formation. Both formations were deposited
285 in continental to marginal marine environments (Rubio Cisneros et al., 2011a; Salvador, 1987).
286 Detrital zircon analysis in this locality places the maximum deposition age of the La Boca
287 Formation at \sim 190 Ma (Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011), as for the La Joya Formation maximum
288 depositional age, inferred from detrital zircons is \sim 166 Ma (Venegas-Rodríguez et al., 2009). We
289 drilled 105 samples from La Joya and La Boca Formations in this locality. The sampled formations
290 crop out at the core of an anticline along the valley. Seven sites, with a total of 45 samples, labeled
291 **HUI42 – HUI48** correspond to La Boca Formation, which consists of fine to coarse red sandstones.
292 Samples were collected in the middle portion of the upper member, closer to the anticline axis. 62
293 cores distributed in nine sites labeled **HUI28 – HUI40** were collected from the La Joya Formation
294 on the northwestern limb of the anticline, in an outcrop that lays along a secondary dirt road
295 approximately 1 km SW from the previously sampled La Boca Formation. Each site sampled
296 comprises a single stratum of about two meters thick.

297 4. Methods and Results

298 4.1 Isothermal Remanent Magnetization (IRM) and Hysteresis Loops

299 4.1.1 Villa Juárez

300 Isothermal Remanent Magnetization (IRM) curves were obtained at the Paleomagnetism and
301 Magnetism Laboratory at the Centro de Geociencias of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de
302 México. The procedure was carried out using an in-house built impulse magnetizer which is
303 capable of generating fields up to 5 T. The acquired magnetization was measured in a JR6 spinner
304 magnetometer from AGICO. Eleven samples belonging to eight sites in the Villa Juárez locality
305 were selected for IRM acquisition curves (NA01, NA02, NA05, and NA10 of andesitic and tuff
306 composition along with volcano-sedimentary samples labeled NA04, NA06, NA07, NA08). In this
307 process, we induced an IRM in a progressively increasing field (20 – 2900 mT) and afterward, we

308 applied a back-field demagnetization in a progressive order (10 – 700 mT) following the method
309 described by Kruiver et al. (2001)

310 IRM curves were unmixed using the MAX Unmix web application (Maxbauer et al., 2016) to
311 determine the main magnetic minerals contributing to the cumulative IRM. The Gradient
312 Acquisition Plots (Figures 4a and 4b) show two components in the coercivity spectra. One with a
313 mid-saturation value $\log B_{1/2}$ between 2.85 and 3 (Figure 3b), and a second one between 1.7 and
314 2. Most of the results show a gradual increment towards the 1 T and higher and the samples do not
315 reach saturation at 3 T. From the analyses, we infer two mineral phases with distinct coercivities,
316 a “soft phase” that we identified as magnetite with H_{cr} that varies between 50 – 100 mT and a
317 “hard phase” with values between 700 and 1000 mT, possibly hematite. The main contribution to
318 the coercivity spectra is given by the $\log B_{1/2} > 100$ mT and < 1000 mT, which is usually accredited
319 to phases of hematite and is present in both volcanic and volcano-sedimentary rocks of this locality.
320 The remaining IRM unmixing graphs are available in Supplementary file SF1.

321 4.1.2 San Julián

322 IRM and hysteresis loops were obtained in a Micromag model 2900 with two Tesla magnets,
323 Princeton Measurements Corporation, noise level 2×10^{-9} Am² in the Paleomagnetism and
324 Magnetism Laboratory at the Centro de Geociencias of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de
325 México. Curves were measured on representative specimens of the sampled localities. These tests
326 were made at room temperature and a field of 1 T was applied in 10 mT increments. The results
327 show noisy curves and are similar for most of the samples. The minerals that hold the NRM for
328 the volcanic samples reach saturation in the range below 400 mT suggesting that their remanence
329 is controlled by ferrimagnetic phases (probably Ti-magnetite; Gubbins & Herrero-Bervera, 2007;
330 Supplementary file SF2).

331 At the same time, we also measured hysteresis loops at room temperature on a Micromag model
332 2900 with two Tesla magnets, Princeton Measurements Corporation, noise level 2×10^{-9} Am². In
333 total we measured 26 representative samples. Samples mass ranged from 40 to 50 mg and were
334 measured using a P1 phenolic probe. The maximum applied field was 1 T in increments of 20 mT
335 on an average time of 600 ms. The coarse grain texture of the Caopas intrusive along with the
336 scarcity of magnetic mineralogy resulted in noisy results (dia-/para- magnetic) for the intrusive
337 rock samples. Although the curves did not reach saturation at 1 T, interpretable results both show

338 hysteresis loops that resemble those of superparamagnetic magnetite (grain size <10 nm; Dunlop
339 & Özdemir, 1997) with a possible minor content of a hard phase (likely hematite: Figure 3f). The
340 NRN sites of the sampled andesites from Nazas North area (Figure 3e) also shows a hysteresis
341 loop with a high coercivity phase that does not saturate at 1 T, we also interpret this phase as
342 hematite (Gubbins & Herrero-Bervera, 2007).

343 4.2 Thermomagnetic curves

344 4.2.1 Villa Juárez

345 We performed the thermomagnetic curves for this locality in the Ivar Giæver Geomagnetic
346 Laboratory (University of Oslo) on a Kappabridge AGICO MFK1-FA equipped with a CS-4
347 furnace and processed with Cureval8 (AGICO) (Chadima & Hrouda, 2009) and were corrected for
348 stability values and density. We measured the magnetic susceptibility in runs from 0° to 700 °C in
349 an Ar atmosphere in nine selected pulverized samples. Irreversible curves are evident due to
350 mineralogical alterations during heating, in most of the curves a drop in susceptibility is noticed
351 around the Curie temperature for low Ti-magnetite (~580 °C), and in some cases a less evident
352 drop around the Néel temperature (~700 °C) for hematite (Figure 2c and supplementary file SF5).

353 4.2.2 San Julián

354 We performed one thermomagnetic analysis per site in the San Julián locality in an in-house built
355 horizontal translation type Curie balance with a sensitivity of approximately 5×10^{-9} Am² in the
356 Paleomagnetism and Rock Magnetism Laboratory of the Centro de Geociencias, Universidad
357 Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM, Querétaro). Due to the small amounts of magnetic
358 material in some of the samples, the tests were carried out on concentrates previously separated
359 using hand magnets. Between 300 to 400 mg of ground, sample was used for each experiment.
360 The Curie balance was programmed to continuously heat the sample to 700 °C and gradually cool
361 to room temperature at heating and cooling rates of approximately 10 °C min⁻¹.

362 Curves for all the volcanic samples progressively demagnetized when heating, some samples
363 showed sharp drops in magnetization in temperatures between 600 and 700 °C indicative of
364 hematite (O'Reilly, 1984). In other samples (e.g., MSM7), magnetization started to decrease
365 around the 500 °C (supplementary file SF4b), which may indicate the coexistence of magnetite
366 and hematite (Dunlop & Özdemir, 1997). Some curves showed a subtle presence of sulfides

367 suggested by a small magnetization increase between 400 and 500 °C (e.g., De Boer & Dekkers,
368 1998). On all the volcanic samples we could only see a major phase with mineralogical alteration
369 during heating, commonly hematite to maghemite due to temperature increment (Dunlop &
370 Özdemir, 1997), and in some cases paramagnetic curves (Gubbins & Herrero-Bervera, 2007).
371 Samples from the Caopas intrusive show analogous behavior as the volcanic samples
372 (Supplementary file SF4a).

373 4.3 Anisotropy of Magnetic Susceptibility (AMS)

374 Anisotropy of magnetic susceptibility (AMS) is a sensitive technique that has several applications.
375 We applied this methodology as a proxy for describing deformation in weakly deformed rocks
376 (e.g., Parés, 2015; Weil & Yonkee, 2009). Graphically we represent AMS as an ellipsoid whose
377 principal axes are $k_{\max} > k_{\text{int}} > k_{\min}$ (e.g., Parés, 2015 and references therein). The shape of the
378 AMS ellipsoid depends on different features such as the orientation of mineral grains,
379 compositional layering, the crystallographic orientation of individual minerals, distribution, and
380 size of microfractures, and the grain shape and size (e.g., Butler, 1992; Tarling & Hrouda, 1993).
381 The analyses were carried out in a Kappabridge model KLY-3 in the Paleomagnetism and Rock
382 Magnetism Laboratory of the Centro de Geociencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
383 (UNAM) in Juriquilla Querétaro, México. We present the AMS ellipsoid in terms of equal area
384 projection (Figure 4) and shape parameter graphs both Flinn, (1962) and Jelinek, (1981) diagrams
385 available in Supplementary file SF6.

386 4.3.1 San Julián

387 AMS results for this locality show uniform mean anisotropies close to the mean ($K_m \approx 592.7 \times$
388 10^{-9}) for both the Caopas and MSM areas. The anisotropy value (P) is low for the MSM area (<
389 1.02). In contrast, the Caopas intrusive shows slightly higher and more variable values (1.032-
390 1.343). The results for both areas show pseudo-isotropic geometries and no apparent penetrative
391 deformation. The MSM locality, K_{\min} axes are parallel to the poles of the lava-flow bedding
392 describing an antiformal structure (Figure 4a). After unfolding, the K_{\min} axes group on the vertical,
393 following the bedding data, suggesting a pre-folding vertical fabric (Figure 4a). The Caopas
394 intrusive and the MSM areas show low anisotropy values that are archetypal pseudo-isotropic
395 geometries. The Caopas intrusive locality shows a good grouping of the K_{\min} axis on the vertical
396 which is representative of an internally undeformed intrusive body that only recorded the effects

397 of magmatic flow and gravity (Figure 4d). At the same time, the general direction of the magnetic
398 lineation (K_{max}) corresponds to the direction of the mineral lineation (NE-SW) observed on the
399 field (Guerra- Roel, 2019).

400 4.3.2 Villa Juárez

401 The mean anisotropy value (K_m) varies per site from 1.95×10^{-5} to 1.59×10^{-4} with mean values
402 of 7.36×10^{-5} . And most of the samples show oblate shapes with low degree of anisotropy ($P =$
403 1.026). The results of the AMS ellipsoid show widespread distribution and poor grouping (Figure
404 4b). This behavior could represent an undeformed volcanic rock, which is consistent with field
405 observations.

406 4.3.3 Charcas

407 The magnetic susceptibility (K_m) in the analyzed samples from the Charcas locality, varies from
408 120.9×10^{-6} to 335.3×10^{-6} with a mean value of 207.8×10^{-6} and a $P = 1.24$. Samples from
409 sites CHA1, CHA2, CHA4, CHA9, and CHA10 show oblate geometries. Sites CHA3, CHA5, and
410 CHA8 show both prolate and oblate, and CHA6 and CHA7 only show prolate geometries
411 (Supplementary file SF6). K_{min} axes are parallel to the poles of the bedding except for sites CHA2,
412 CHA3, and CHA6. AMS in Charcas seems to respond, at least partially, to loading (Figure 4c).

413 4.4 Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) and polarized light Microscopy

414 We analyzed the samples using a Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) model TM-1000 Hitachi
415 equipped with energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS: Oxford). This procedure was done in
416 the Laboratory of Crustal Fluids in the Centro de Geociencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma
417 de México (CEGEO UNAM, Querétaro).

418 4.4.1 Villa Juárez

419 The SEM images were complemented with EDS scans that showed percentages of the elements
420 present in the minerals (Supplementary file SF7). The images for this locality show the presence
421 of Ti-Magnetite set in a non-conductive granular matrix (Figure 5a). Additionally, lamellar
422 hematite crystals were observed in this locality (Figure 5b, see also supplementary file SF7).

423 4.4.2 San Julián

424 The results show the presence of anhedral magnetite crystals surrounded by hematite weathering
425 rims. Hematite is also present as a secondary mineral that filled the fractures and, to a lesser extent,
426 along the crystal cleavages of amphibole phenocrysts. These two magnetic mineral phases are the
427 most prominent in the samples from this locality (Figures 5c and 5d, see also supplementary file
428 SF7).

429 4.5 Paleomagnetism

430 We progressively demagnetized the samples using thermal (TH) and alternating fields (AF)
431 demagnetization procedures. The paleomagnetic directions were analyzed with
432 Paleomagnetism.org software (Koymans et al., 2016, 2020), which uses principal component
433 analysis to define magnetic components (Kirschvink, 1980) and Fisher (1953) statistics to calculate
434 averages and errors in directions and virtual geomagnetic poles (VGP). Only directions with five
435 or more demagnetization steps in line and maximum angular deviation (MAD) < 15° (McElhinny
436 & McFadden, 1999) were considered as valid directions. We applied a 45° cut-off in each site to
437 discard outlying points. We also used the McFadden & McElhinny (1988) method of combining
438 great circles and best-fitted set point directions for samples where components were difficult to
439 isolate (Figure 6). Two localities allow for a fold test (MSM and Real de Catorce localities: Figure
440 7).

441 Additionally, the reliability of each data set was tested with Deenen et al. (2011) criteria, that in
442 general terms evaluates the scatter of VGP. This criterion denotes that the ellipticity of the VGP
443 scatter is the effect of paleosecular variation (PSV) and that a proper VGP distribution tends to be
444 circular. Nonetheless, unaccounted structural corrections, inclination shallowing, and/or vertical
445 axis rotations may add additional scatter (ellipticity) to the associated distribution. Finally, to test
446 the reliability of data from unique lava flows, we have compared the differences between the
447 average of site means within a locality against the average of all individual directions (Figure 7).
448 Summary of locality means is shown in Table 1.

449 Most of the samples from all localities show a low temperature/low coercivity component (<
450 200 °C and < 16 mT.) that roughly fits with the Geo-axial dipole (GAD) expected for NE México
451 during the Holocene. We interpret this component as a viscous remanent magnetization. (e.g.,
452 Figure 6a) (Supplementary file SF8).

453 4.5.1 Villa Juárez (Nazas Formation)

454 The samples of this locality were demagnetized and measured in the shielded room of the Ivar
455 Giæver Geomagnetic Laboratory in Norway. We demagnetized the samples in progressive
456 variable steps using thermal and alternating fields demagnetization using a furnace model
457 MMTD8oA for TH and an alternating fields demagnetizer model LDA-3A. After initial pilot tests,
458 we determined that AF demagnetization was ineffective due to the presence of a high coercivity
459 mineral (hematite). The NRM was measured in a superconducting rock magnetometer WSGI
460 model 755 (2G Enterprises). The Zijderveld diagrams (Zijderveld, 1967) show a single component
461 that progressively demagnetizes to the origin (Figure 6d). The ChRM components were isolated
462 at high temperatures (~450 – 700 °C). At the site level, the direction means show high precision
463 parameters in all samples but three ($k > 45$), whereas 5 out of 10 sites with $n > 3$ samples show k
464 > 100, which we consider spot readings of the geomagnetic field. However, site averages do not
465 concentrate ($k < 2$, without a cut-off and $k = 13$ after discarding more than half of site averages).
466 Some site directions may represent reversed chronos, however, data is too scarce to confirm. For
467 this reason, we were not able to obtain a mean dec/inc of this locality (results are available in
468 Supplementary Table ST1).

469 4.5.2 San Julián Uplift (MSM, Caopas, and Nazas North)

470 We analyzed the samples from this locality in the paleomagnetism and rock magnetism laboratory
471 in the Centro de Geociencias, UNAM Querétaro. The remanent magnetization was measured using
472 an AGICO JR-6 spinner magnetometer. Thermal (TH) and Alternating Field (AF).
473 Demagnetization was performed in a magnetically shielded room using a shielded furnace with a
474 heating capacity up to 640 °C in increasing steps of 50 °C up to 500 °C. From 500 °C to 640 °C
475 was finished 20 °C increments. After pilot tests, we determined that AF demagnetization was
476 ineffective due to the presence of a high coercivity mineral (hematite).

477 Upon demagnetization, we identified a Characteristic Remanent Magnetization (ChRM) with a
478 downward inclination and westerly direction, isolated between 500°-580 °C and 40-60 mT. We
479 named this component W (for west). This component was present in 12 sites of the MSM locality
480 (Figure 6a), 15 sites of the Caopas intrusive (Figure 6b), and 7 sites of the Nazas N (Figure 6e) in
481 a total of 129 samples (for site mean parameters see Supplementary Table ST2). The W component
482 in the MSM area shows a mean dec/inc of 285°/ 21° (geographic coordinates) downward and
483 single polarity with a k of 10 and $K = 17.4$. The VGP projection is well rounded and the A95 value
484 is in between the maximum and minimum of the Deenen (2011) envelope, suggesting that the

485 observed distribution scatter can be explained only as a function of the PSV. The dispersion (k) at
486 the site level ranges between 20-50 with only MSM5 and MSM3 over 200 and MSM10 with the
487 lowest (13) (Table 1). The fold test (Tauxe & Watson, 1994) shows a maximum between 1 and
488 31% unfolding (Figure 7a). This negative fold test reveals that the W component in MSM is the
489 product of a post-folding remagnetization. The average of means and overall average show akin
490 results (Figure 7a).

491 The W component in the Caopas intrusive shows progressive demagnetization and high
492 unblocking temperatures between 400 and 560 °C (Figure 6b), and an average dec/inc 271°/ 17°
493 in geographic coordinates (Figure 7c) with a precision parameter $k= 10$. The VGPs plotted for this
494 area have a K of 13.40 and an A95 of 5.66 in between the A95min and A95max envelope (Table
495 1). The VGP plot reveals an elliptical shape, elongated W-E (Figure 7c). Despite being within
496 Deenen's limits, we think that the elliptical shape indicates an external cause of additional scatter
497 apart from PSV. We suspect an unaccounted structural or magnetic acquisition problem. Thus, we
498 used this result with caution.

499 The last group of samples in the San Julián Uplift "Nazas North" behaves similarly but with larger
500 dispersion for the W component. This locality lies on the northern part of the San Julián Uplift and
501 they lack reliable structural correction due to poor exposure in the area. The mean dec/inc of the
502 W component is 261°/26° and has a dispersion parameter $k = 8.3$. With almost 20° of Δinclination
503 and 11° Δdeclination (Table 1). The directions in this area seem to follow a great circle and it
504 shows an elongated W-E VGP projection (Figure 7e). Its A95 of 11.21 is larger than Deenen's
505 A95max, indicating additional sources of scatter not attributable to PSV. Although we cannot
506 precisely identify the additional source of scatter, we think that it might be due to unidentified
507 structural problems or magnetic acquisition. "Nazas North" area did not provide a dataset with
508 enough quality to quantify vertical axis rotations or latitudinal motion. However, its average
509 declination and inclination are analogous to MSM and Caopas intrusive areas reinforcing their
510 meaning.

511 4.5.3 Charcas (Nazas Formation)

512 We performed part of the paleomagnetic analyses of this locality in the Paleomagnetism and Rock
513 magnetism Laboratory of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Geociencias
514 (UNAM, Querétaro) with an AGICO JR-6 spinner magnetometer. The rest of them were processed

515 in the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD, Geoscience Department Paleomagnetism and Rock
516 Magnetics Lab) with the use of a cryogenic magnetometer 2G Enterprises. All demagnetization
517 process was performed with AF. The components isolated by this procedure show a straight
518 demagnetization line to the origin (Figure 6c) with low MAD (<5), only on sites CHA1, CHA9,
519 and CHA10 (17 samples). Samples from sites CHA3, 4, 5, and 6 (22 samples) show little
520 demagnetization, due to the presence of hematite, but all of them tend to the origin with analogous
521 directions to CHA9 and CHA10. The component was isolated between 35 and 90 mT. CHA3 to
522 CHA10 group well with a dec/inc = 22°/-05° and k = 53; K = 76; and A95 = 2.58 (Table 1).
523 Samples from CHA1 and CHA2 are different and discardable by any statistical cut-off criterion
524 (Figure 7f). The dispersion parameter before and after tectonic correction is k > 50 and K > 70 in
525 both specimen and site mean averages (Supplementary table ST3). This data suggests that sites
526 CHA3-CHA10 represent a single spot-reading of the geomagnetic field, either because all sample
527 layers represent a single cooling unit or because they were quickly remagnetized later.

528 4.5.4 Real de Catorce (Red beds “La Joya Formation”)

529 The samples were measured in the laboratories of the UNAM Querétaro and at UT Dallas, Texas.
530 These samples were thermally demagnetized in progressive steps from 100 °C up to 670 °C.
531 Samples show a single ChRM component showing a gradual demagnetization to the origin (Figure
532 6f). Overall results group around two sets of directions: one with dec/inc = 358° /40° and k = 45,
533 which is similar to the Holocene GAD for México; and a second one with reverse polarity dec/inc
534 = 166° / 42° and k = 41. These two directions do not share a bootstrapped common true mean
535 direction (Tauxe, 2010). However, they are not far from it, being the reversed component slightly
536 rotated counterclockwise (< 10°) (Figure 7b). The data of this locality allowed for a fold test
537 (Tauxe & Watson, 1994) (Figure 7b). The fold test is negative with a maximum grouping between
538 -15% to -5% unfolding. The VGPs projection shows a rounded shape (Figure 7b). By flipping the
539 reversed directions, we obtain a mean dec/inc of 346°/42° with a k value of 41 (see Table 1, for
540 site means see also supplementary table ST4).

541 4.5.5 Huizachal Valley (Red beds “La Joya and La Boca Fm”)

542 The samples of the Huizachal locality were analyzed in the laboratories of the UNAM, Juriquilla,
543 Querétaro and at UT Dallas, Texas. We demagnetized all samples thermally following progressive
544 heating steps from 100 °C up to 670 °C (Figure 6g). We identified a component isolated in the

545 temperature range between 450 °C and 650 °C combining 57 directions with 33 great circles
546 (McFadden & McElhinny, 1988). This component has a mean dec/inc of 160°/-26° upwards with
547 a k = 14, K = 22, and A95 = 3.5 (Table 1 for site means see also supplementary table ST5). The
548 VGPs projection shows a roughly circular shape with a slight ellipticity W-E possibly indicating
549 tectonic-induced scatter (Figure 7d).

550 5 Discussion

551 The curvature of the Sierra Madre Oriental that the Nazas System draws in North Central México
552 has been mostly overlooked. The Nazas Igneous Province outcrop pattern has been interpreted as
553 the result of: (1) Large scale left lateral faulting during the Late Jurassic (Anderson et al., 2005;
554 Anderson & Schmidt, 1983; Jones et al., 1995; Molina-Garza & Iriondo, 2005; Silver & Anderson,
555 1974), or (2) The direct result of a curved segment in the subduction zone, thus representing a
556 primary arc in the kinematic classification for curved orogens (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2014;
557 Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2008; Dickinson & Lawton, 2001; Godínez-Urban et al., 2011; Lawton &
558 Molina Garza, 2014; Martini & Ortega-Gutiérrez, 2018; Molina-Garza et al., 2020; Stern &
559 Dickinson, 2010). In our investigation of the studied area, we have found a tangled history of
560 remagnetizations and vertical axis rotations, which are the result of a complex tectonic history that
561 involved orocline bending or buckling.

562 5.1 Magnetization processes and timing: a complex puzzle

563 Our sample collection came from the Nazas system in NE México as defined by different authors
564 (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2004; Busby & Centeno-García, 2022; Lawton & Molina Garza, 2014;
565 Parolari et al., 2022; Rubio-Cisneros & Lawton, 2011; Zavala-Monsiváis et al., 2012). All
566 available data from these outcrops suggest that they share the same tectonic history and define an
567 ~110° curvature (Fitz-Diaz 2018). The Mesozoic and Cenozoic geological history of NE México
568 is complex and includes a wide range of tectonic processes: such as subduction, transtension,
569 terrain accretion, folding and thrusting, and extension; all of them capable of producing
570 remagnetizations and vertical axis rotations.

571 We think that the Villa Juárez locality is the only one from our collection whose magnetization is
572 primary. Each site from this locality corresponds to a single lava flow. Lava flows cool quickly
573 and record snapshots of the magnetic field. Therefore, many lava flows representing enough time

574 are needed to average out PSV (Deenen et al., 2011; Gerritsen et al., 2022). Most of our sites from
575 the Villa Juárez locality show high concentration parameters (k) that are consistent with spot-
576 readings of the geomagnetic field (Deenen et al., 2011; Gerritsen et al., 2022; Figure 7g and
577 Supplementary table ST1). Although some remagnetization processes can produce high
578 concentration parameters (e.g., Pastor-Galán et al., 2021) they usually remagnetize all lava flows
579 from a rather small sampling area like Villa Juárez. In this locality, the average declination and
580 inclination obtained from each lava flow differ noticeably (Figure 7g), and site averages fail to
581 group around VGPs that resemble the GAD's PSV despite the strong consistency within each lava
582 flow. We think that this particular result is the consequence of a primary magnetization acquired
583 during the 195-180 Ma lapse, a time when the magnetic field was quite unstable and reversed and
584 excused frequently (e.g., Ogg, 2020). Unfortunately, our sampling did not include a large enough
585 number of lava flows to average such a highly variable PSV. The dataset, therefore, does not meet
586 the current reliability criteria (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2022; Meert et al., 2020). In this locality, we
587 have identified magnetite and hematite as the magnetic carriers (Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c). SEM
588 images (Figure 5a and 5b) show a texture of well-formed euhedral to subheral crystals of magnetite
589 and hematite with no apparent neo-forming minerals, signs of alteration, weathering, nor apparent
590 penetrative deformation, which supports the primary magnetization origin for Villa de Juárez
591 locality. We, therefore, interpret an Early Jurassic (195 ± 7 My) magnetization corresponding with
592 lava cooling (Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2021).

593 The samples collected at three areas of the San Julián Uplift locality (Mina San Miguel, Caopas,
594 and Nazas North) contain the same two main magnetic carriers (hematite + magnetite), both
595 documented in rock magnetic analyses (Figures 3d, 3e, and 3f) and in SEM studies (Figures 5c
596 and 5d). However, in the MSM area hematite is associated with a secondary texture (newforming)
597 as it appears to fill crystallographic cleavages and secondary cracks in other minerals (Figure 5d).
598 This mineralogical ensemble together with a negative fold test (Figure 7a) indicate that NRM, at
599 least for the MSM area, is the product of a post-folding remagnetization. The similarity between
600 the obtained directions in the three areas in geographic coordinates and the lack of observed
601 reversals recorded in them support the idea that the areas of Caopas and Nazas N were also
602 (re)magnetized at the same time as the MSM area. All three areas of the San Julián Uplift locality
603 show shallow inclinations (Figure 8) that fit the expected inclination for the Late Jurassic following
604 Torsvik et al., (2012) Global APWP (GAPWaP) adapted for NE México (Koymans et al., 2016;
605 Koymans et al., 2020).

606 Previous studies have interpreted the MSM anticline as a drape fold formed together with the
607 reverse fault that exhumed the San Julián Uplift during the Eocene (Guerra Roel, 2019; Patiño-
608 Mendez, 2022; Ramírez-Peña & Chávez-Cabello, 2017). However, the inferred age of folding
609 (Eocene) and the post-folding magnetization but with shallow inclinations consistent with a
610 Jurassic origin observed in this locality are incompatible (Figure 8). One option that explains the
611 results could be a quick post-Eocene remagnetization of the studied samples that yielded a biased
612 shallow inclination as a consequence of insufficient PSV averaging. However, this hypothesis is
613 weak since the VGP circular shape and k parameters are both compatible with a correct averaging
614 of the PSV. We think that our data supports a Late Jurassic remagnetization, and that the
615 emplacement of igneous rocks is the best candidate to blame for this remagnetization event. So far,
616 the only Jurassic deformation event described in the studied localities was caused by the
617 emplacement of the plutonic intrusions ~165 Ma, such as the Caopas laccolith. This broadly spaced
618 magmatism includes the emplacement of several intrusions at the Huizachal Valley (Fastovsky et
619 al., 2005; García-Obregón, 2008; Rubio Cisneros, 2012; Rubio Cisneros et al., 2011c), which are
620 blamed for originating the angular unconformities of 10° to 70° between the upper and lower
621 members of La Boca and the one at the contact between La Boca and La Joya formations exposed
622 in the vicinities of intrusions in the Huizachal Valley. We think that the intrusion of the Caopas
623 laccolith might be large enough to generate at least part of the local antiformal structure in the San
624 Julian Uplift. Subsequent cooling of the Caopas laccolith and post-emplacement fluid circulation
625 would be the cause for the remagnetization.

626 We found eight sites (CHA3 to CHA10) in the Charcas locality that show a large directional
627 consistency with a $k = 52$ at specimen level and $k = 87$ when considering the average of the site
628 means. Such results indicate that either CHA3 to CHA10 sites correspond with a single cooling
629 unit or that all sites were quickly remagnetized at the same time (Figure 6c and 7f Supplementary
630 table ST3). CHA-1 and CHA-2 sites yielded very different directions (Figure 7f). Their differences
631 might be explained either by an extreme PSV event during acquisition (either primarily or during
632 a remagnetization) or by two or three different magnetization events. Unfortunately, our dataset is
633 not large enough to support any of these or an alternative hypothesis.

634 The rocks sampled at the Huizachal and the Real de Catorce localities show distinctive red color
635 that suggests the presence of pigmentary hematite at first glance. Therefore, we foresaw hematite
636 as a magnetic carrier. Samples from both localities showed a high-temperature component, which
637 was unblocked from 600 °C to the Néel temperature of hematite (700 °C). Samples from the Real

638 de Catorce locality did not pass the fold test, implying that their magnetization was acquired after
639 folding (Figure 7b). Folding in the area has been dated (Ar-Ar in illite) in the age range between
640 90 and 70 Ma (Gutiérrez-Navarro et al., 2021). In contrast to San Julián Uplift locality, the
641 inclinations are steeper in Real de Catorce and fit with those expected for Cretaceous and younger
642 rocks (< 140 Ma; Figure 8). The occurrence of double polarity in them indicates that the samples
643 did not remagnetize, or at least not completely, during the Cretaceous superchron that ended ~83
644 Ma (Ogg, 2020). Hypothesizing a precise age of remagnetization is challenging, but considering
645 the folding age and the documented double polarity, we think that the probable causes are: (1) the
646 initial thrusting of the Mexican Orogen, which in this area started during the Cenomanian
647 (Gutiérrez-Navarro et al., 2021); and (2) the thin-skinned deformation event that lasted until the
648 Late Cretaceous-Early Eocene (Gutiérrez-Navarro et al., 2021). We cannot rule out, however, a
649 later (e.g., Eocene-Oligocene) remagnetization.

650 The fold test of the Huizachal locality (Supplementary files SF9) is inconclusive, and we do not
651 have another field test to ascertain a relative timing for the magnetization. Nonetheless, we found
652 no reversals registered in the samples from this locality, which spans over 18 million years of the
653 Jurassic (184 – 166 Ma). We think that a secondary magnetization for the locality can better
654 explain our results, as the geomagnetic field during that lapse in the Jurassic was extremely
655 variable (Ogg, 2020). However, the inclinations (Figure 8), fit with a Late Jurassic remagnetization,
656 no younger than 140 Ma, as they did in the San Julian Uplift locality.

657 5.2. Significance of vertical axis rotations curvature of the Sierra Madre Oriental in North Central
658 México

659 Our results from the San Julián Uplift and Charcas locality show significant vertical axis rotations
660 with respect to the expected declinations following the GAPWaP of Torsvik et al. (2012; Figure
661 9). The data of the San Julián uplift locality (MSM 285°/20°, Caopas 271°/17°, and Nazas N
662 272°/21°) shows > 59° of counterclockwise rotation regardless of the time of the remagnetization
663 (Figures 8 and 9). In contrast, the Charcas data (020°/01°) show a potential clockwise rotation of
664 up to ~30°. The data from Charcas seems to be a single spot-reading evidenced by its high k and
665 K values. Therefore, we cannot use it to quantify vertical axis rotations. However, the deviation
666 from the GAPWaP is large enough to, at least, suspect that there may be a significant clockwise
667 rotation. The mean direction obtained (346°/42°) in the Real de Catorce locality, does not differ
668 from the expected declination for anytime younger than 160 Ma (Figures 8 and 9).

669 To our knowledge, the main tectonic events that may explain the observed rotations in NE México
670 are: (1) The Late Jurassic-Early Cretaceous extensional-transtensional (right lateral) event
671 responsible for the opening of the Gulf of México and the translation of the Yucatan block (Martini
672 & Ortega-Gutiérrez, 2018; Pindell & Kennan, 2001) and/or the Nazas back-arc extension (Busby,
673 2023; Barboza-Gudiño et al., 2021; Dickinson and Lawton, 2001); (2) the Early to Late Cretaceous
674 closure of the Mesozoic Basin of Central México during the Guerrero Superterrane accretion
675 (Centeno-García et al., 2008; Martini et al., 2016; Ortega-Flores et al., 2020) and the subsequent
676 formation of the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt (Fitz-Díaz et al., 2018 and references therein); (3)
677 the Eocene thick-skinned deformation event (Chávez-Cabello et al., 2005; Guerra-Roel, 2019;
678 Gutiérrez-Navarro et al., 2021; Mauel et al., 2011; Patiño-Mendez, 2022; Ramírez-Peña et al.,
679 2019; Ramírez-Peña & Chávez-Cabello, 2017) and (4) the Basin and Range extension event
680 (Henry and Aranda-Gómez, 1992; Aranda-Gómez & McDowell, 1998; Del Pilar-Martínez et al.,
681 2020; Nieto-Samaniego et al., 1999)

682 The vertical axis rotations documented in the studied localities seem to correlate with the changes
683 in the trend of the regional structures in each locality (Figure 9) suggesting that the inferred
684 curvature (Figure 9) is an orocline *sensu* Johnston et al. (2013) and Pastor-Galán et al. (2017). The
685 Nazas system in NE Mexico represents the base of the stratigraphic successions exposed at the
686 Sierra Madre Oriental in addition, the curvature and the trend of the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt
687 in NE México are roughly parallel, a fact that suggests a genetic relationship between them (Figure
688 2). For these reasons, we term the structure the Sierra Madre Oriental Orocline. Preliminarily, we
689 hypothesize two scenarios for the formation of Sierra Madre Oriental Orocline:

690 (1) The observed rotations of the Nazas system could have started during the late stages of the
691 opening of the Mesozoic Basin of Central México and were amplified during the development of
692 the Mexican orogen (c.f., Fitz-Díaz et al., 2018). In this case, the curvature of the Nazas system
693 would be a secondary orocline. Whether this feature is of crustal or lithospheric scale is yet to be
694 determined. The curvature drawn by the Late sedimentary cover (the Late Jurassic-Cretaceous
695 rocks resting atop the rocks of the Nazas system; Figure 2) could be either: (a) a primary feature
696 that mimics the original shape of the sedimentary basin, a case similar to the Jura mountains (e.g.,
697 Hindle & Burkhard, 1999); or (b) a progressive orocline formed due to the tightening of the
698 preexisting curvature during the development of the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt (Fitz-Díaz et
699 al., 2018), akin to the Sevier belt in the U.S.A. (e.g., Yonkee & Weil, 2015).

700 (2) The curvature of the Nazas System in NE México is the result of thin-skinned tectonics
701 developed during Late Cretaceous-Paleogene differential shortening. This phenomenon
702 progressively tightened the curvature and caused opposite rotations on each end of the thrust sheets,
703 which simultaneously affected both the Nazas System and the younger sedimentary cover exposed
704 at the Sierra Madre Oriental.

705 The existence of an orocline bending or buckling event of such magnitude is an intriguing event
706 that can modify the way the tectonic history of Northeastern Mexico has been interpreted. However,
707 we realize that data is still scarce, incomplete, and scattered. We urge for more and better
708 paleomagnetic and structural data to solve this new and exciting challenge.

709 6. Conclusions

710

- 711 · We have documented a Late Jurassic, widespread, remagnetization event that affected the
712 Nazas System (i.e., the Nazas Formation and overlying red bed formations) in NE
713 Mexico. The 165 Ma plutonism is the best candidate to trigger that event. We have also
714 found another remagnetization event that we dated as young as 75 Ma.
- 715 · Rocks of the Nazas System underwent significant vertical axis rotations, which are
716 congruent with the orientations of regional structures exposed in Mexican Fold and
717 Thrust Belt in Northeastern Mexico.
- 718 · The recognized rotations in the Nazas system suggest orocline bending or buckling and
719 not a primary curvature.
- 720 · We propose the Sierra Madre Oriental Orocline, which is a ~110° curved mountain belt
721 that spans from Durango to San Luis Potosí states in Northeastern Mexico, for a distance
722 of at least 450 km.

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737 Data Availability

738 Raw and interpreted Paleomagnetic data will be uploaded and available in open access servers
739 that respect the FAIR principles such as paleomagnetism.org, MagIC and/or Zenodo when the
740 article is accepted for publication. Data will also be available at reviewer’s request if needed.

741 Captions

742 Figure 1. Distribution of the Nazas outcrops in México and the alleged trend of the Sierra Madre
743 Oriental Orocline. Dashed lines in the upper part of the map show the inferred orogen continuity
744 in northern Mexico and southern USA. The Mesozoic Basin of Central México is represented as
745 the Mexican Fold and Thrust Belt (modified from Fitz-Díaz et al., 2018).

746 Figure 2. (a) Synthetic geological map and regional distribution of the localities sampled in
747 northeastern México. (b) General trend of the inferred curvature of the Sierra Madre Oriental
748 Orocline. Note the presence of the Monterrey salient and the Potosí and Torreón recesses, and the
749 distribution and localization of the Nazas Formation and associated Red beds outcrops. Acronyms:
750 **Cd. V**= Ciudad Victoria; **CHA**= Charcas; **GM**= Gulf of México; **HV**= Huizachal Valley; **Mat**=
751 Matehuala; **Mty**= Monterrey; **PO**= Pacific Ocean; **RC**= Real de Catorce; **SJU**= San Julián Uplift;
752 **Tor**= Torreón; **SMO**: Sierra Madre Oriental; **VJ**= Villa Juárez) (Modified from open-source
753 vector data from INEGI, 2023; and SGM, 2023)

754 Figure 3. Rock magnetic properties graphs of representative samples. (a) and (b) Gradient
755 Acquisition plots of IRM acquisition curves of the Villa Juárez locality using MAX UnMix

(Maxbauer et al., 2016). Grey dots and the yellow curve represent the smoothed IRM data and modeled coercivity distribution, respectively. Shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals associated with each component. These plots show mid saturation ($B_{1/2}$) of 1.7 for (a) and 2.85 for (b), magnetite, and hematite phases, respectively. (c) Magnetic susceptibility (Kt) vs. temperature (°C) curve for the Villa Juárez locality showing Hematite. (d) Total magnetization vs. temperature (°C) for the Caopas intrusive showing hematite and magnetite unblocking temperatures. Red and blue lines represent heating and cooling, respectively. The hysteresis loops were executed in magnetic field increments of 20 mT on an average time of 600 ms and are corrected for paramagnetic-diamagnetic influence. The Nazas North loop (e) shows a high coercivity shape (probably hematite), and the Mina San Miguel Locality shows a thin waist loop that we interpret as magnetite (f).

Figure 4. AMS results represented in an equal area projection for the analyzed sites in the (a) Mina San Miguel, (b) Villa Juárez, (c) Charcas show results of the volcanic rocks of the Nazas Formation, and (d) Caopas intrusive. Larger symbols represent site mean values. Light blue lines represent bedding. Shape parameter T vs Mean magnetic susceptibility K_m , and shape parameter T vs Anisotropy parameter P graphs, show low degree of anisotropy (Supplementary file SF6).

Figure 5. Scanning Electron photomicrographs of representative samples of the Nazas Formation in the localities of Villa Juárez and Mina San Miguel. Photomicrographs of samples collected at the Villa Juárez locality (a and b) show Fe oxides with compositions and texture of primary magnetite, Ti-magnetite, and hematite; the MSM locality Photomicrographs from Mina San Miguel samples show primary magnetite with alteration rims of hematite and hematite that grew in the fractures of an amphibole crystal.

Figure 6. Representative directions of the Nazas Formation are expressed in Zijderveld (1967) diagrams, and fitted great circles. (a) Mina de San Miguel locality, (b) Caopas Intrusive, (c) Charcas, (d) Villa Juárez, (e) Nazas North, and from the Red Beds localities. (f) Real de Catorce, and (g) Huizachal in Geographic Coordinate system. **AF** = Alternating Fields, **TH** = Thermal Demagnetization. **PCA** = Principal Component.

Figure 7. Equal area projections of the direction vectors of all the localities, their overall mean, site average and site average means. Bootstrapped fold test of the Mina de San Miguel and Real de Catorce localities. The projections show behavior of paleomagnetic directions during unfolding from 0% (geographic) to 100% (Tectonic). (a) Mina San Miguel locality with Foldtest. (b) Real de Catorce **Geo** = geographic; **Tec** = Tectonic; **VGP** = Virtual Geomagnetic Poles (locality mean parameters see Table 1)

Figure 8. Observed declinations and inclinations from sampled localities and Global Apparent Wander Path of the study area for North America (Torsvik et al., 2012) calculated with Paleomagnetism.org (Koymans et al., 2016, 2020). All localities are represented in geographic

792 coordinates except Charcas. Acronyms: **CHA-GEO** = Charcas in Geographic Coordinates; **CHA-**
793 **TC**= Charcas in Tectonic Coordinates; **HUI** = Huizachal Valley; **RC** = Real de Catorce; **SJU** =
794 San Julián Uplift.

795 Figure 9. Vertical axis rotations and structural trend of the area (**SJU** = San Julián Uplift; **HUI** =
796 Huizachal Valley; **RC** = Real de Catorce; **CHA**= Charcas). The yellow fields represent the
797 expected declinations from 200 Ma to present day (Torsvik et al., 2012). Direction means
798 (observed declinations) within the expected direction range (yellow) are considered not rotated.
799 Δ Dec: Calculated error for direction mean.

800

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