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THE ROCHECHOUART 2017-CORES RESCALED: MAJOR FEATURES. P. Lambert¹, C. Alwmark, D. Baratoux, S. Bouley, A. Brack, P. Bruneton, E. Buchner, P. Claeys, M.R. Dence, A. Courtin Nomade, I. Duhamel Achin, J.P. Floch, B.M. French, C. Fudge, J. Gattacceca, R.L. Gibson, S. Goderis, R.A.F. Grieve, N. Hauser, K.V. Hodges, F. Hörz, M. Humayun, F. Jourdan, S.P. Kelley, T. Kenkmann, D.A. Kring, F. Langenhorst, J.P. Lebreton, M.R. Lee, P. Lindgren, J. Lofi, J.P. Lorand, B. Luais, V. Masaitis, A. Meunier, C.B. Moore, J. Örmö, G.R. Osinski, S. Petit, P.A. Pezard, M. Poelchau, J. Pohl, Y. Quesnel, C. Ramboz, H. Reeves, U.W. Reimold, P. Rochette, H.M. Sapers, M. Schmieder, P.H. Schultz, S.P. Schwenzer, T. Sharp, C.S. Shoemaker, S.L. Simpson, D. Stöffler, E. Sturkell, H. Trumel, E. Walton, F. Westall, A. Wittmann and K. Wünnemann. ¹CIRIR-Center for International Research and Restitution on Impacts and on Rochechouart-87600 Rochechouart-France, lambertbdx@gmail.com

Introduction: Eighteen core holes distributed along two 10-12 km traverses (N-S and NE-SW) across the central breccia deposit of the Rochechouart impact structure (France) were drilled at 8 sites in the “Reserve Naturelle Nationale de l’Astroblème de Rochechouart-Chassenon” [1]. We present and discuss the rescaled and correlated core/borehole wall observations after the CNRS (Geosciences Montpellier) acquired oriented optical images of the deepest holes using an OBI manufactured by ALT / Mount Sopris.

Results: The main lithological units and details on the various facies, structural-textural features, thickness, depths relative to surface and absolute elevations are given in Table 1 and Fig. 1, both provided full-scale at <https://ciriredu.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/lpsc-50-lambert-al.pdf>. The final rescaled cumulative depth drilled is 544 m (6% deeper than initially reported [1]). The comparison between the borehole wall images and the cores confirms that 1 m of yellow, massive, clast-poor impact melt rock is missing at -12 m in SC11, and 20 cm of clay are missing at -14 m in SC18. The remaining 542.8 m were recovered and are available for studies.

As expected [2], the holes intercept both crater fill materials and/or underlying rocks. The clast size is small (10 cm or less) in the upper part of the cores in the crater fill. Clast size increases and breccia clast population decreases in variety with depth. At least at SC2 and SC7, probably at SC11 and possibly at SC16 and SC18, the bottom of the crater fill deposit is quasi monomict and dominated by large meter/multimeter brecciated blocks of the underlying target. When they are intercalated with thin layers of polymict breccia and/or impact melt rock (SC2/U3-SC11/U2-SC16/U2-3-SC18/U1), it is not clear if these monomict units and breccia blocks belong to the bottom of the crater fill or to the top of the parautochthonous target. This results in an uncertainty of 117.2 m for the cumulative thickness estimate for the crater fill as given in Table 1 (260.2-377.5 m). The elevation of the crater floor is the same over the whole drilled area (ca. 200 m). It is slightly lower at the northernmost hole (SC2-152 m) and slightly higher at the southernmost hole (SC16-258 m), in agreement with a 1% inclination towards the north of the entire impact structure already noted by [3]. No sedimentary rocks are observed in the cores. With the exception of graphite, found as loose

“chewing gum”-like deformed clasts and as clasts of graphitic gneiss, all the target lithologies represented in the drillings have previously been reported from surface exposures [3]. They are characteristic of the granitic-gneissic metamorphic rocks of the western edge of the Variscan Massif Central.

HOLE	REF.	DEPTH (m)	SITES	LOCATION	Latitude	Longitude	CRATER FILL		UNDERLYING TARGET
							Thickness (m)	Lithology	
SC1	4.5	4.5	No.1: Chassenon	46°52'38.87"N	0°46'10.38"E	39.8	4.5	Vertical impact-clastic dyke	Monomict breccia (Dinorix)
SC2	121.7	121.4					48.2	Melt-rich, graded suevite with impact-clastic intercalations	
SC3	3.2	3.2					26	Brecciated gneiss blocks directly placed at the bottom of the crater fill	
SC4	10.5	10.5					7	Melt-poor suevite	
SC5	3.2	3.2	No.2: Champagner	46°59'58.20"N	0°46'15.04"E	3.2	3.2	Gneiss blocks in monomict breccia	Gneiss and microgabbro dyke
SC6	3.2	3.2					3.2	Monomict breccia (gneiss)	
SC7	60.9	64.6	No.3: Vallette	46°48'45.01"N	0°46'3.24"E	48.2	16	Impact melt rock including vesicular clasts	Not reached by the drilling
SC8	1.5	1.5					1.5	Suevite very clast-rich impact melt rock	
SC9	1.5	1.5					1.5	Impact melt rock including vesicular clasts	
SC10	1	1					1	Red, clast-rich impact melt rock	
SC11	61.6	66.5	No.4: Puy Chiraud (Videix)	46°47'30.10"N	0°44'55.01"E	27	16	Red, clast-rich impact melt rock	Gneiss severely deformed, pervaded by melt veins and intercalated by impact breccia dikes
SC12	1	1					27	Gneiss dominated clast-rich impact melt rock, with some microgabbro and blocks	
SC13	1	1					7.6	Thompson Hill breccia	
SC14	60.8	65.1					1	Red, clast-rich impact melt rock	
SC15	1	1	No.5: Rochechouart (castle)	46°49'11.79"N	0°46'4.10"E	1	1	Red, clast-rich impact melt rock	Gneiss severely deformed (cataclastic, monomict breccia, dikes) intercalated by polymict breccia and by impact melt veins
SC16	60.5	65.4					1	Altered polymict breccia (some melt clasts)	
SC17	60.2	65	No.6: Montourne	46°49'32.34"N	0°46'30.01"E	23	25	Massive yellow impact melt rock	Gneiss severely deformed pervaded by melt veins and cut by melt-rich breccia dikes
SC18	62.4	67.1					29	Red, clast-rich impact melt rock	
SC19	1	1					10.6	Gneiss dominated clast-rich impact melt rock bearing melt-rich matrix and blocks	
SC20	1	1					10.6	Impact melt rock with a 2m thick massive yellow melt at 12m	
SC21	1	1	No.7: Recoudet	46°48'15.98"N	0°46'35.15"E	21.3	21.3	Red, vesicular, impact melt rock with a 2m thick massive yellow melt at 12m	Breccia dikes (melt-bearing polymict breccia (suevite))
SC22	1	1					2.5	Red, vesicular, impact melt rock with a 2m thick massive yellow melt at 12m	
SC23	1	1					18.5	Red, vesicular, impact melt rock with a 2m thick massive yellow melt at 12m	
SC24	1	1					17	Brecciated gneiss blocks directly placed at the bottom of the crater fill	
SC25	1	1	No.8: Champagnac	46°51'20.81"N	0°46'32.10"E	17	17	Brecciated gneiss blocks directly placed at the bottom of the crater fill	Monomict breccia (Dinorix)
SC26	1	1					30	Gneiss, fractured locally brecciated	
SC27	1	1					30	Gneiss, fractured locally brecciated	
SC28	1	1					30	Gneiss, fractured locally brecciated	
TOTAL	516.8	544.0					377.5	MAXIMUM	382.0
							117.2	UNCERTAINTY	117.2
							260.3	MINIMUM	166.7

Table 1. The Rochechouart 2017-drillings (full size online)

The cores obtained at the center of the structure (SC7, 11 and 17) and the southernmost one (SC16) all start with a red, clast-rich, seemingly horizontal impact melt layer that covers various melt-bearing breccias (Table 1, Fig.1). The northernmost drilling (SC2) did not intercept an impact melt layer but instead an 88 m thick melt-clast bearing breccia, with two distinct units according to texture and melt-clast content. The upper melt-rich unit (SC2/U1) is 40 m thick and displays a series of layers with distinct and sharp variation in granulometry and matrix content, contrasting with the underlying unsorted/ungraded melt-poor suevite unit (SC2/U2-Fig. 1). SC2/U1 also features impactoclastite dykes, some of which are separating the coarse/matrix-poor and fine/matrix-rich intervals in this suevite package (Fig.1) (for more details see the study by [4] dedicated to the upper 66 m of SC2).

Discussion/Conclusions: The widespread “Chassenon polymict lithic breccia” seen on the geological map [5] corresponds to the 48 m thick SC2/U2 unit. This unit is now recognized as a melt-poor suevite. The same possibly applies to the historical “Rochechouart breccia” formation at the foot of the castle, and possibly to part or all breccias mapped as

polymict lithic breccias throughout the structure. In Rochechouart, this unit occupies the same position as U2 at SC2 and is underlain by a unit very similar to SC2/U3 (SC14/U2). Our field observation shows some intriguing arrays of vesicles and melt coated clasts in a newly cleared outcrop about 100 m from the SC14 location. This, together with the thick layers of impact melt rock encountered in the drilling (Table 1), leads to the conclusion that the amount of melt preserved in the current remains of the Rochechouart crater fill is higher than previously thought ([3] and refs therein). The sharp variations of textures in SC2/U1 suggest reworking of the top of the crater fill, probably by high-energy water flows, which is also supported by [4]. This raises the question of the nature and origin of the water, either a shallow sea covering the area, and/or a transient resurge overflowing the crater rim due to an impact-generated tsunami in the nearby sea [2-3]. If water did cover the target at the time of impact, it was shallow and there was not a significant rock-forming sedimentary cover as confirmed by the strictly crystalline target composition of the lithic clasts observed in the cores.

Despite of the limited abundance of graphite bearing material in the drillings, it opens the potential for searching and discovering impact diamonds associated

with the Rochechouart impact. Graphite bearing rocks are not reported in the central breccia deposit zone but do outcrop 25 km west of Rochechouart as part of the lower gneiss unit of the Hercynian orogeny. The drillings confirm that the central breccia deposit is filling a flat-floored central depression and confirm the lack of central peak [3]. This, combined with the crystalline character of the target (possibly under a thin water layer), could indicate that Rochechouart is a deeply eroded peak ring crater whose now eroded peak ring formed beyond the 12 km diameter central deposit zone. Located even further away from the center and standing higher in elevation (100 m or more), the annular depression would now be entirely eroded.

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Fig.1-Rochechouart drillings 2017-Schematic logs (full size and details online)

