INTRACUTANEOUS THRUST WEDGE AND TRIANGLE ZONE ON THE NORTHWESTERN FLANK OF THE ANDES OF MERIDA. VENEZUELA

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The Andes of Merida, an intracontinental range with an orientation NE-SW separates the Neogenic basins of Barinas to the SE, and Maracaibo to the NW. The Las Virtudes thrust fault, parallel to the range and a verging NW, over this flank constitutes the major structural feature. The arrow of that thrust fault is very likely multikilometric. It separates two units of different nature, morphologie and history. The structuring of the Andes of Merida at their Northwestern flank took place during the neogene age in three events. The first, very likely of the Miocene age characterized by the formation of the intracutaneous thrust wedge verging NW with the lower and upper flat within the basement. This implies lands of the Precambric, Paleozoic, Cretaceous and Eocene age.At the begining of this thick overlapping a duplex is formed. It is made of two backthrusting units, the whole forms the andean units. The second event, the latest and more contemporaneous of the last deposits of the Betijoque Formation(Pliocene) is characterized by a change of upper flat that is then located on the La Luna formation. The andean units overlap with foreland progressing over the La Luna formation. Then the backthrusts appear one after another in the foreland. The whole forms a triangle zone. The third event(Plio-Pleistocene) is characterized by the breaking of the andean crout which materialize itself by the Las Virtudes fault.