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Multidisciplinary characterisation of sedimentary processes in a recent maar lake (Lake Pavin, French Massif Central) and implication for natural hazards

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Abstract. Sedimentation processes occurring in the most recent maar lake (Lake Pavin) of the French Massif Central (Lake Pavin) are documented for the first time based on high resolution seismic reflection and multibeam bathymetry surveys and by piston coring and radiocarbon dating on a sedimentary depocentre developed on a narrow sub aquatic plateau. This new study confirms the mid Holocene age of maar lake Pavin formation at 691 yrs cal BP and highlights a wide range of gravity reworking phenomena affecting the basin. In particular, a slump deposit dated between AD 640 remoulded both mid-Holocene lacustrine sediments, terrestrial debris and some volcanic material from the northern crater inner wall. Between AD 1200 and AD 1300, a large slide scar mapped at 50 m depth also affected the southern edge of the sub aquatic plateau, suggesting that these gas-rich biogenic sediments (laminated diatomite) are probably stable. Although several triggering mechanisms can be proposed for prehistoric sub-aquatic mass wasting deposits in Lake Pavin, we argue that such large remobilisation of gas-rich sediments may affect the stability in deep waters of meromictic maar lakes. This study highlights the need to further document mass wasting processes in maar lakes and their impacts on the generation of waves, favouring the development of dangerous (and potentially deadly) limnic eruptions.

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