

# The 5 April 2024 Mw 4.8 Tewksbury, New Jersey aftershock sequence resolved with machine-learning-enhanced detection methods

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The Ramapo Seismic Zone (RSZ) in the Northeastern United States hosts frequent but poorly understood intraplate earthquakes, potentially posing a significant hazard to the nearby New York metropolitan area. The 5 April 2024,  $M_w$  4.8, Tewksbury, New Jersey earthquake, provides a rare opportunity to study the RSZ seismicity. We applied machine-learning-enhanced backprojection, matched-filtering, correlation-timing and double-difference methods to continuous waveforms recorded at local and regional stations to detect and locate about 2,000 aftershocks ( $M_w > 0.0$ ) within the 74 days following the mainshock. They reveal a single,  $51^\circ$  east-southeast dipping fault plane possibly abutting the Ramapo fault at depth to the north. Aftershock locations are consistent with a shallow ( $\sim 4$ km) mainshock hypocenter with rupture propagating downward and terminating at a depth of about 6km. A relatively high Gutenberg-Richter  $b$ -value ( $b \approx 1.19$ ) and a low aftershock spatial fall-off rate ( $\gamma \approx 1.8$ ) suggest that the Tewksbury sequence activated a rough, immature fault.

1           **The 5 April 2024  $M_w$ 4.8 Tewksbury, New Jersey**  
2                           **aftershock sequence resolved with**  
3                           **machine-learning-enhanced detection methods**

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7           **Key Points:**

- 8           • We detected and located 2,027 aftershocks over 74 days using machine-learning-  
9           enhanced techniques and double-difference methods.
- 10          • A  $51.0 \pm 2.0^\circ$  east-southeast dipping fault was activated by the seismic sequence,  
11          next to the Ramapo fault and possibly interacting with it.
- 12          • The Gutenberg-Richter  $b$ -value,  $b = 1.19$ , and the aftershock spatial character-  
13          istics suggest the immaturity and complexity of the fault.

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**Abstract**

The Ramapo Seismic Zone (RSZ) in the Northeastern United States hosts frequent but poorly understood intraplate earthquakes, potentially posing a significant hazard to the nearby New York metropolitan area. The 5 April 2024,  $M_w$ 4.8, Tewksbury, New Jersey earthquake, provides a rare opportunity to study the RSZ seismicity. We applied machine-learning-enhanced backprojection, matched-filtering, correlation-timing and double-difference methods to continuous waveforms recorded at local and regional stations to detect and locate about 2,000 aftershocks ( $M_w > 0.0$ ) within the 74 days following the mainshock. They reveal a single,  $51^\circ$  east-southeast dipping fault plane possibly abutting the Ramapo fault at depth to the north. Aftershock locations are consistent with a shallow ( $\sim 4$  km) mainshock hypocenter with rupture propagating downward and terminating at a depth of about 6 km. A relatively high Gutenberg-Richter  $b$ -value ( $b \approx 1.19$ ) and a low aftershock spatial fall-off rate ( $\gamma \approx 1.8$ ) suggest that the Tewksbury sequence activated a rough, immature fault.

**Plain Language Summary**

Northeastern America has been shaken by intermediate-size earthquakes (magnitudes approximately 5) several times in the last century, and a repeat of the 1755 Cape Ann, Massachusetts event (magnitude estimated to be about 6), or of the 2011 magnitude 5.8 ( $M_w$ ) Mineral, Virginia earthquake, has disastrous potential for typical urban infrastructure in this region. On Friday, April 5, 2024, at 10:23am local time, a magnitude 4.8 ( $M_w$ ), oblique thrust earthquake struck near Tewksbury, New Jersey. It was the first earthquake that strong to occur within 65 km (40 miles) of New York City since 1884. In this study, we analyzed 74 days of seismic data recorded by a local network of 26 seismometers that were rapidly deployed by several institutions following the  $M_w$ 4.8 earthquake. Our results show that the Tewksbury earthquake and most of the over 2,000 aftershocks occurred on a small, well-defined fault located in the Ramapo seismic zone,

40 about 5 km away from the main surface strand of the Ramapo fault. The aftershock sta-  
41 tistical properties suggest the sequence activated a young, immature fault.

## 42 **1 Introduction**

43 The Ramapo seismic zone (RSZ) hosts frequent, weak intraplate seismicity (earth-  
44 quake magnitudes smaller than 3) in the Northeastern United States (US). Most of these  
45 earthquakes are caused by thrust faulting indicating northeast-southwest compression  
46 and occur near, rather than on, the Ramapo fault itself, which is misoriented for slip within  
47 the contemporary stress field (Page et al., 1968; Sykes et al., 2008). Thus, these earth-  
48 quakes result from the failure of more favorably oriented faults within the RSZ, but the  
49 forces driving them are still poorly understood. On 5 April 2024, at 10h23 local time (14h23  
50 Coordinated Universal Time, UTC), a magnitude ( $M_w$ ) 4.8 earthquake struck in the RSZ  
51 near the town of Tewksbury in New Jersey, US, about 65 km (40 miles) from New York  
52 City. The intermediate-size, oblique thrust event (Han et al., 2024, see Figure 1) marked  
53 the beginning of a several-month-long period of elevated seismic activity. The largest  
54 aftershock ( $M_w$ 3.7) occurred 7.5 hours later and a single foreshock ( $m_b$ 2.2) was reported  
55 on 14 March 2024 by the US Geological Survey (USGS). The closest operational seis-  
56 mic station, LD.PAL, located on the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO) cam-  
57 pus, was about 80 km away from the mainshock epicenter, making it difficult to mon-  
58 itor in detail the early development of the earthquake sequence. Several institutions –  
59 LDEO, USGS, Texas Seismological Network (TexNet), and Yale and Rutgers Univer-  
60 sities (Boyd et al., 2024) – deployed a total of 26 temporary stations over the course of  
61 a few days to weeks, recording the seismic sequence in increasingly greater detail.

62 The Ramapo seismic zone, like the rest of Eastern US, is located in a stable con-  
63 tinental region (SCR), that is, a region away from active plate boundaries where geode-  
64 tically observed strain rates are below noise levels (Craig & Calais, 2014), raising the ques-  
65 tion as to what drives seismicity (Armbruster & Seeber, 1987; Seeber et al., 2002; Calais

66 et al., 2016). Despite the absence of significant tectonic forcing, large earthquakes do oc-  
67 cur in SCRs, like the 2017  $M_w$ 6.5 Botswana event (Gardonio et al., 2018) or the 1811-  
68 1812 New Madrid sequence of four  $M_w$ 7.0 to 7.5 earthquakes (Johnston & Schweig, 1996).  
69 It has been shown that exceedingly small stress perturbations ( $\sim 1$  kPa) can affect the  
70 rates of seismicity (Heki, 2003; Frank et al., 2016; Craig et al., 2017; Beaucé et al., 2023).  
71 Thus, possible drivers of seismicity in SCRs include different types of environmental forc-  
72 ing such as seasonal hydrological (Bollinger et al., 2007; Craig et al., 2017; Johnson et  
73 al., 2017) and snow (Heki, 2003) loading, the solid Earth tides (Delorey et al., 2017; Beaucé  
74 et al., 2023) and, particularly in the Northeastern US, stresses caused by glacial isostatic  
75 adjustment (Wu & Johnston, 2000). Moreover, anthropogenic activity like mining can  
76 cause minor stress perturbations in the shallow crust and may contribute to causing seis-  
77 micity (Pomeroy et al., 1976; Seeber et al., 1998).

78 The scarcity of intermediate-size earthquakes and sparse station coverage typically  
79 prevent the detailed study of these events and the unambiguous identification of the causative  
80 faults (Kafka et al., 1985). The 2024 Tewksbury earthquake sequence, and the data it  
81 generated, offer a unique opportunity to image active tectonic structures within the RSZ  
82 with unprecedented resolution. We analyzed the continuous waveforms from both per-  
83 manent and temporary stations with machine-learning and waveform-correlation based  
84 earthquake detection techniques (Beaucé et al., 2024) to build a catalog of 2,027 after-  
85 shocks over 10 weeks of local monitoring. The new catalog sheds light on seismogene-  
86 sis in the RSZ and on the possible interplay between young secondary faults and the an-  
87 cient main strand of the Ramapo fault, and the potential hazard these faults pose to the  
88 nearby New York metropolitan region.

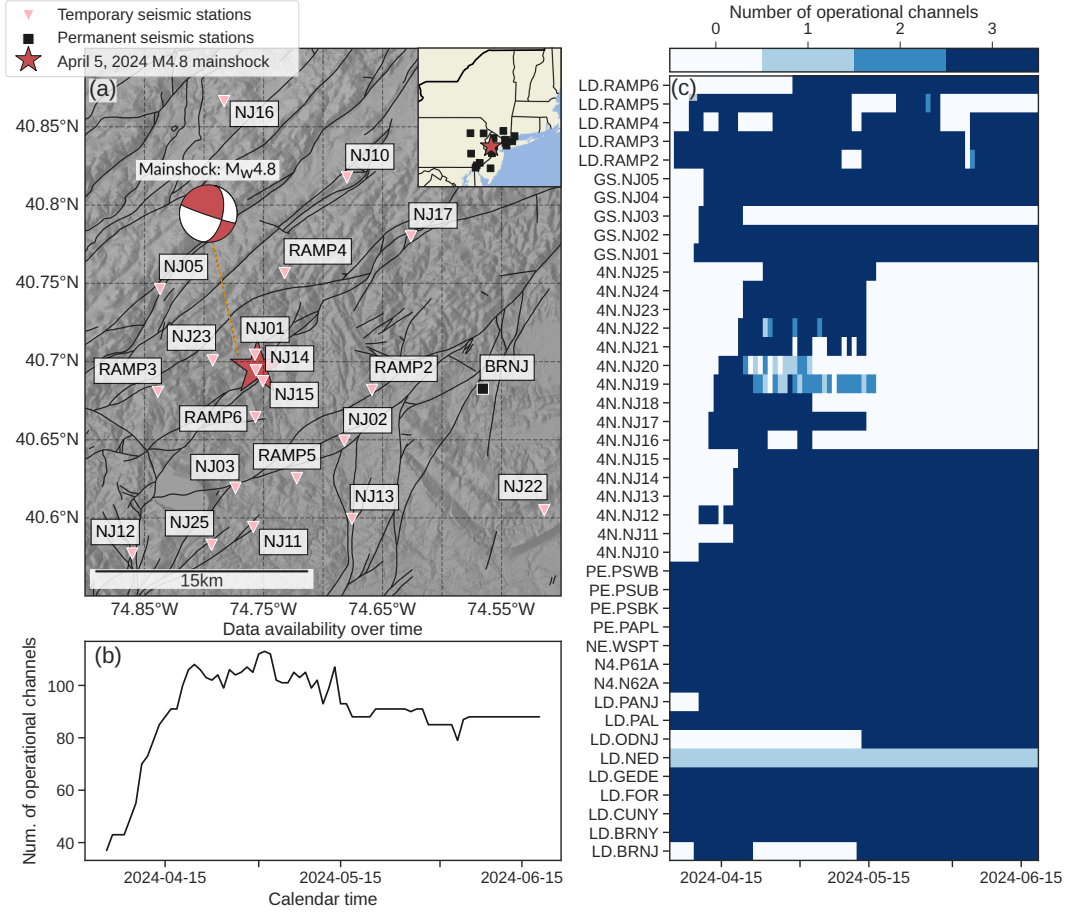
## 89 **2 Data**

90 We analyzed the seismic data recorded by 42 stations between 2024-04-05 and 2024-  
91 06-18. These stations include 16 instruments from the permanent, regional networks LD,

92 PE, N4 and NE and 26 instruments from temporary, local networks (LD, GS and 4N)  
93 deployed by several institutions in the days that followed the mainshock (see Section 7).  
94 Unfortunately, the permanent station closest to the mainshock and largest aftershock,  
95 LD.BRNJ, was not operating on the day they occurred, but was repaired 4 days later,  
96 together with other nearby stations (LD.PANJ, LD.ODNY). Figure 1 shows the loca-  
97 tions of the seismic stations as well as their data availability over time. The permanent  
98 stations sample at 100 Hz while the temporary stations include broadband stations sam-  
99 pling at 100 Hz (GS and one 4N deployed by TexNet) and short-period stations sampling  
100 at 250 Hz (4N deployed by TexNet) and 500 Hz (LD.RAMPX deployed by LDEO and  
101 4N deployed by Rutgers and Yale universities). We bandpass filtered the data between  
102 2 Hz and 20 Hz for earthquake detection and between 2 Hz and 48 Hz for phase picking  
103 (see Text S1.1). The data were resampled at 100 Hz.

### 104 **3 Methodology**

105 We processed the continuous seismic data with the automated earthquake detec-  
106 tion and location workflow BackProjection and Matched-Filtering (BPMF, Beaucé et al.,  
107 2024). The workflow is organized in two stages where, first, an initial earthquake cat-  
108 alog is built using a machine-learning-(ML)-enhanced (PhaseNet, Zhu & Beroza, 2019)  
109 backprojection technique and, then, using the initially detected earthquakes as templates  
110 for a matched-filter search to detect mostly smaller events missed during the first stage.  
111 Earthquake locations were determined using the first P- and S-wave arrivals picked by  
112 PhaseNet and the location software NLLoc (Lomax et al., 2009). We optimized the equal  
113 differential time likelihood function in NLLoc to mitigate the presence of outliers in the  
114 automatic picks. P- and S-wave travel time tables were computed by solving the Eikonal  
115 equation (White et al., 2020) in a 1D layered crustal model for the region (Yang & Ag-  
116 garwal, 1981). For more details on BPMF see also Beaucé et al. (2019, 2022, 2024).



**Figure 1.** (a) Map of the seismic stations used in this study and mainshock focal mechanism (from Han et al., 2024, strike:  $13 \pm 0.9^\circ$ , dip:  $45 \pm 4.0^\circ$ , rake:  $172 \pm 1.3^\circ$ ). The regional, permanent networks LD, PE, N4 and NE were supplemented by the local, temporary networks LD.RAMPX, GS and 4N (see Section 7). (b) Total number of operational seismic channels over time. (c) Number of operational channels per seismic station over time. Data availability may have improved since the time of the study.

117 The catalog of earthquakes, with quarry blasts removed (see Text S1.2), is then re-  
 118 located using the double-difference method HypoDD (Waldhauser & Ellsworth, 2000; Wald-  
 119 hauser, 2001) together with the PhaseNet picks and precise phase delay times between  
 120 nearby events ( $< 5$  km) computed by cross-correlating seismograms at common stations  
 121 (Schaff et al., 2004). The time-domain cross-correlation measurements were performed  
 122 on filtered seismograms (1-15 Hz) with 0.45 s and 1.0 s long windows for P- and S-phases,  
 123 respectively (see also Waldhauser & Schaff, 2008). More details on HypoDD parameters  
 124 are given in Text S1.3.

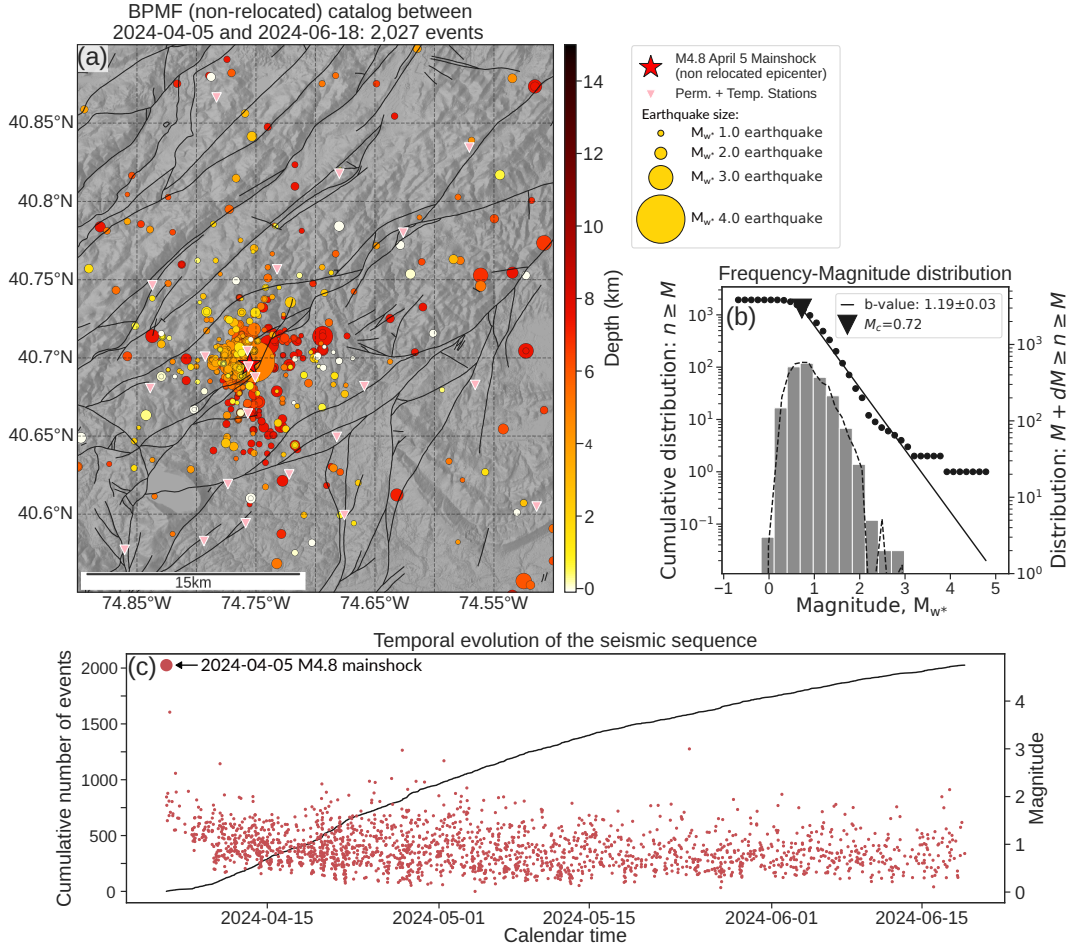
125 Earthquake moment magnitudes  $M_w$  were estimated by fitting the Boatwright model  
 126 (Boatwright, 1978) to the S-wave displacement spectrum computed using the multi-band-  
 127 pass filtering approach described in Al-Ismail et al. (2023). We corrected for the anelas-  
 128 tic attenuation of seismic waves using the frequency-dependent quality factor  $Q = 750f^{0.24}$ ,  
 129 which is an average value for the attenuation of shear waves in the Northeastern US (J. Shi  
 130 et al., 1996, 1997). More details on displacement spectrum computation and modeling  
 131 are given in Text S2.1. Signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) limitations prevented us from fitting  
 132 the Boatwright model to the S-wave displacement spectrum for most of the smaller events.  
 133 For those, we computed an approximate moment magnitude,  $M_{w^*}$ , using the highest SNR  
 134 frequency bands of the spectrum (see Text S2.3). We validated our approximate moment  
 135 magnitudes against full moment magnitudes and the USGS magnitudes (see Figure S3).  
 136 We modeled the magnitude distribution with the Gutenberg-Richter law (Gutenberg &  
 137 Richter, 1941) and computed the maximum likelihood estimate of the  $b$ -value (Aki, 1965)  
 138 as well as its error following Y. Shi and Bolt (1982). To compute the  $b$ -value, we esti-  
 139 mated the magnitude of completeness  $M_c$  using the maximum curvature technique (Wiemer  
 140 & Katsumata, 1999). We then added 0.2 to  $M_c$  to further prevent errors in  $M_c$  from prop-  
 141 agating into the  $b$ -value estimate.

## 142 4 Results

143 Using BPF (Beaucé et al., 2024), we detected and located 2,027 earthquakes over  
 144 the 74 days in the study area (Figure 2a). Of the 2,027 events, 838 were detected and  
 145 located in the initial ML-enhanced backprojection stage using the 6 seismic stations clos-  
 146 est to each test source of the grid, with a median epicentral error of 0.46 km. Using these  
 147 events as templates in a matched-filter search over the 10 seismic stations that have the  
 148 highest SNR for each template, we found an additional 1,189 events. In comparison, the  
 149 USGS reported 195 earthquakes over the same time period (see Section 7). Event mag-  
 150 nitudes range from  $M_{w^*} 0.0-4.8$ , with a magnitude of completeness  $M_c = 0.72$  and a  $b$ -  
 151 value of  $b = 1.19 \pm 0.03$  (Figure 2b). At this stage, most events detected with matched-



152 filtering were too small for phase picking and could not be located independently from  
 153 their template (1,025 out of 2,027 events). For these events, the correlation delay times  
 154 constrained their relative location during double-difference analysis of the entire cata-  
 155 log.



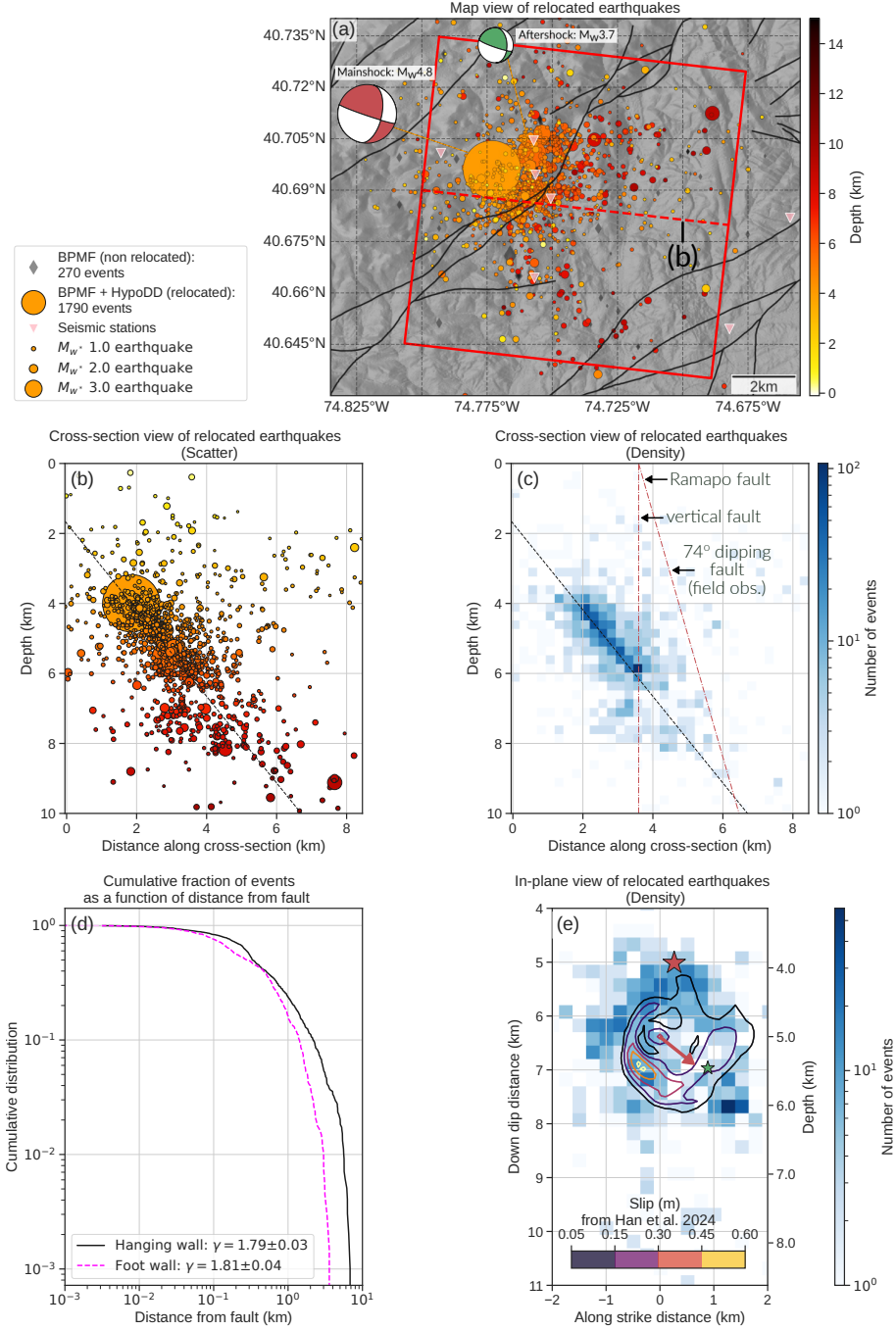
**Figure 2.** (a) Map view of the 2,027 earthquakes detected and located with BPMF. (b) Distribution of earthquake magnitudes with cumulative count (left axis) and count (right axis). (c) Cumulative number of detected earthquakes and earthquake magnitudes as a function of time.

156 In the days following the mainshock, the detection rate increased due to the de-  
 157 ployment of local stations (Figure 1) that were able to record smaller events (Figure 2c).  
 158 The highly temporally variable network makes it difficult to interpret the detection rate  
 159 in terms of seismicity rate. Nonetheless, the seismic activity seems to decay more slowly  
 160 compared to the canonical Omori-like aftershock rate decay,  $n(t) \sim t^{-p}$ , with  $p \approx 1$

161 ( $\bar{\text{O}}\text{mori}$ , 1894; Utsu et al., 1995). Focusing on earthquakes with magnitudes well above  
162 the 74-day  $M_c$  using cut-off minimum magnitudes ranging from 1.25 to 2.00 yields es-  
163 timates of  $p$  ranging from 0.25 to 0.80 (see Figure S4).

164 The average horizontal and vertical location 1-sigma uncertainties for the NLLoc  
165 locations are 1.1 km and 0.49 km, respectively, and root-mean-square (RMS) travel-time  
166 residual of 0.08 s. These uncertainties are mostly due to errors in the phase picks and  
167 the velocity model used for locating the events. Relocation of the initial catalog using  
168 double-differences, which minimizes both sources of errors (Waldhauser & Ellsworth, 2000),  
169 results in a high-resolution catalog of 1,738 events (see Figure 3) with median, bootstrap  
170 derived, relative location uncertainties of 22 m in horizontal and 17 m in vertical direc-  
171 tions. A total of 4,464,441 P- and 4,067,925 S-wave cross-correlation delay times with  
172 correlation coefficients 0.7 or higher were used in the inversion. We fitted a fault plane  
173 to the  $M_{w^*} > 1.75$  earthquake hypocenters near the mainshock and found a  $\text{N}6.4 \pm 4.4^\circ$   
174 trending plane, dipping  $51.0 \pm 2.0^\circ$  to the ESE. Aftershocks are distributed around the  
175 fault but most occur on the fault plane itself (Figure 3b, c).

176 We analyzed the spatial distribution of the aftershocks by measuring the power-  
177 law fall-off rate of event density as a function of distance from the fault (Powers & Jor-  
178 dan, 2010; T. Goebel et al., 2014; Perrin et al., 2021). We divided the data into hang-  
179 ing wall and foot wall seismicity and estimated the fall-off rate using the maximum like-  
180 lihood estimate (Clauzet et al., 2009; T. Goebel et al., 2014, see Figure 3d and Text S4).  
181 Estimates were made using data at distances larger than 0.2 km, which represents the  
182 width of the deformation zone associated with the main fault (Powers & Jordan, 2010;  
183 Perrin et al., 2021). This minimum cut-off distance was chosen based on the stability  
184 of the estimates around it (see Figure S5). Because of the lack of events further than 10 km  
185 from the fault, mainly due to the finite width of the seismogenic zone, the power-law be-  
186 havior cannot be observed beyond 10 km and this upper truncation induces concavity



**Figure 3.** (a) Map of double-difference relocated earthquakes. Depth is color-coded and symbol size scales with magnitude. Beachballs show the mainshock and the  $M_w$ 3.7 aftershock focal mechanisms (Han et al., 2024). (b) Along-dip cross-section. The black dashed line shows the best fitting plane for  $M_w > 1.75$  earthquake hypocenters near the mainshock. (c) Same as (b) but with event density. The red dashed lines show the depth continuation of the Ramapo fault using vertical and  $74^\circ$  (Kolawole et al., under review) dips. (d) Cumulative fraction of events located further than a given distance from the fault. The power-law fall-off rate,  $\gamma$ , is given by the maximum likelihood estimate for distances above 0.2 km. (e) Density of hypocenters orthonogally projected onto the fault plane, measured in  $250\text{ m} \times 250\text{ m}$  cells using hypocenters less than 500 m away from the plane. Slip contours are from Han et al. (2024). The red star shows the mainshock hypocenter (rupture initiation) and the green star shows the  $M_w$ 3.7 aftershock hypocenter.

187 at the tip of the cumulative distribution (Burroughs & Tebbens, 2001, see Figure 3d).  
 188 Our estimates yield similar fall-off rates  $\gamma = 1.80 \pm 0.05$  for the hanging and foot walls.

## 189 5 Discussion

### 190 5.1 Aftershock Distribution and Fault Structure

191 Aftershock locations image a previously unmapped east-southeast dipping fault ad-  
 192 jacent to the Ramapo fault (Figure 3). Its up-dip continuation reaches the surface near  
 193 the town of Mountainville, New Jersey, and is hereafter named the Mountainville fault  
 194 (Kolawole et al., under review). The mainshock hypocenter was relocated at 4.0 km depth  
 195 (Figure 3), deeper than reported by the USGS (2.6 km). The hypocenter represents the  
 196 nucleation location as derived from the phase arrival onset. The aftershock distribution  
 197 (Figure 3e) suggests that the mainshock broke a relatively small fault area of  $A_m \approx 2 \text{ km}^2$   
 198 between 4 km and 6 km depth, supporting a downward propagating rupture consistent  
 199 with results from waveform modeling (Han et al., 2024). The largest aftershock,  $M_w 3.7$ ,  
 200 was relocated at 5.5 km depth in an area of low aftershock productivity (Figure 3e). Main  
 201 slip area, depth range and fault orientation ( $N6.4 \pm 4.4^\circ$  trending plane, dipping  $51.0 \pm 2.0^\circ$   
 202 to the ESE) derived in this study from aftershock locations agree well with those inferred  
 203 from waveform modeling (Han et al., 2024, see Figure 1) and with the orientation of paleo-  
 204 slip surfaces observed in outcrops near Mountainville (Kolawole et al., under review).

205 Han et al. (2024) approximated their rupture area as a  $r=1.1$  km-radius circular  
 206 crack and estimated a static stress drop of  $\Delta\sigma \approx 6.6$  MPa ( $\Delta\sigma = (7/16)M_0/r^3$ , Es-  
 207 helby, 1957). However, the aftershock data cannot rule out smaller slip areas, implying  
 208 that stress drop could be larger. For example, for  $r_m = \sqrt{A_m/\pi} \approx 800$  m, stress drop  
 209 is  $\Delta\sigma \approx 17$  MPa. Moreover, assuming a corner frequency  $0.50 \text{ Hz} < f_c < 1.0 \text{ Hz}$ , based  
 210 upon the observations in Han et al. (2024, their Figure 2c), using their parameters (S-  
 211 wave speed  $V_s=3400$  m/s and rupture speed  $V_r=1870$  m/s), we calculate a wide range  
 212 of stress drops  $\Delta\sigma = 13\text{-}104$  MPa using the Madariaga model ( $r = kV_r/(2\pi f_c)$ ,  $k =$

213 1.47, Madariaga, 1976) and  $\Delta\sigma = 2.3\text{-}18$  MPa using the Brune model ( $k = 2.62$ , Brune,  
214 1970). Thus, uncertainties in mainshock stress drop estimates are large and our obser-  
215 vations do not reject the hypothesis of a high stress drop ( $\Delta\sigma > 20$  MPa) as is typically  
216 observed in the Northeastern US (Viegas et al., 2010).

217 A particularly active area on the fault plane is down dip and at the northern end  
218 of the active fault, where the slip model shows that rupture arrested (Figure 3e). This  
219 cluster persists throughout the observation period and locates near the possible inter-  
220 section with the Ramapo fault (see the red dashed lines in Figure 3c). We therefore in-  
221 terpret the clustered activity as the result of stress concentrations due to a structural  
222 heterogeneity acting as a barrier to rupture propagation. We attribute this barrier to  
223 a northeast trending strand of the Ramapo fault, which, within the resolution capabil-  
224 ity of the catalog, does not seem to host any earthquakes.

225 A  $b$ -value of  $b = 1.19 \pm 0.03$  (Figure 2b) is significantly larger than 1.0, the global  
226  $b$ -value measured with moment magnitudes. Such a high  $b$ -value is at odds with the typ-  
227 ically large Northeastern US stress drops (Viegas et al., 2010) and the compressional stress  
228 regime acting in the Ramapo seismic zone, compression being usually associated with  
229 high differential stresses and low  $b$ -values (Scholz, 2015; Zaccagnino et al., 2022). Struc-  
230 tural properties such as high fault roughness or highly fractured medium could be the  
231 cause for the high  $b$ -value (Mogi, 1962, 1967; T. H. Goebel et al., 2017). Moreover, the  
232 earthquake spatial fall-off rate,  $\gamma \approx 1.8$  (Figure 3d), relates to fault roughness and off-  
233 fault damage production (Dieterich & Smith, 2010; T. Goebel et al., 2014). Values lower  
234 than 2 indicate high roughness (T. Goebel et al., 2014), which is characteristic of imma-  
235 ture faults (Perrin et al., 2021). Based on these observations, the Mountainville fault is  
236 likely a young, rough and immature fault with low cumulative slip (Perrin et al., 2021),  
237 which is also supported by independent observations of poorly coalesced internal struc-  
238 ture of slip surfaces in outcrops of the fault zone (Kolawole et al., under review).

## 5.2 Implications for Seismic Hazard and Local Tectonics

Despite the relatively small effect of the Tewksbury earthquake on society and nearby infrastructure (Boyd et al., 2024), implications for seismic hazard are significant. Although the mainshock broke a relatively small fault area ( $A_m \approx 2 \text{ km}^2$ ), the aftershock sequence activated a significantly larger area (Figure 3d and Figure S4d). The aftershock footprint shows that either a single surface or closely spaced surfaces covering  $A_{\text{upper}} \approx 50 \text{ km}^2$  can be activated seismically. Because earthquakes can be complex, multi-fault ruptures (Hamling et al., 2017; Pananont et al., 2017), we speculate that an earthquake of magnitude  $M_w$  5.4 to 6.2 for an average stress drop between 1.0 MPa and 20 MPa (Kanamori & Anderson, 1975) is possible, posing a serious risk to the greater New York City metropolitan region. Moreover, one concern is whether intermediate-size earthquakes occurring so close to the misoriented Ramapo fault could trigger significant slip along it, either as a separate event or as part of a complex, multi-fault sequence (Pananont et al., 2017). Thus, if earthquakes within the RSZ mostly nucleate on relatively short, immature faults that are favorably oriented in the contemporary stress field, it is unclear what long-term effects such ruptures have on an old, mature Ramapo fault. Regardless, even a magnitude 5 or 6 on a secondary fault will have significant impact on the greater New York metro region.

Historical seismicity shows that earthquakes of size  $M_w > 5$  occur about once every 100 years in Northeastern America (Sykes et al., 2008). The universality of the Gutenberg-Richter law suggests that  $M_w > 6$  earthquakes may occur about once every 1000 years. Examples from other stable continental regions – the 2017  $M_w$  6.5 Botswana earthquake (Kolawole et al., 2017; Gardonio et al., 2018) and the 1811-1818  $M_w$  7.0-7.5 New Madrid earthquake sequence (Johnston & Schweig, 1996) – also suggests that the Gutenberg-Richter law does not cut off at lower magnitudes in stable regions than near active continental plate boundaries like in California. It is therefore critical to better understand

265 the processes that drive seismicity along the RSZ and in the rest of the Northeastern US  
266 in order to improve our long-term forecast of seismic hazard in this region.

267 In stable continental regions, where there seems to be no ongoing tectonic defor-  
268 mation above current geodetic measurement noise levels, transient external stress per-  
269 turbations may play a major role in driving seismicity (Calais et al., 2016). The shal-  
270 low depth of the mainshock hypocenter, 4.0 km (Figure 3), suggests that the triggering  
271 forces were acting from the surface. Hydrological loading, either from direct stress changes  
272 caused by variations in the mass of proximal water bodies or indirectly through infiltra-  
273 tion of rainwater and increased pore-fluid pressure (Bollinger et al., 2007; Craig et al.,  
274 2017; Tarantino et al., 2024), may be among the main drivers of SCR seismicity (Calais  
275 et al., 2016; Craig et al., 2017; Daniels & Peng, 2023). A more assertive statement about  
276 the triggering forces would require the statistical treatment of an ensemble of earthquakes  
277 in the Northeastern US and the modeling of potential triggers (Bollinger et al., 2007).

## 278 **6 Concluding Remarks**

279 Results from our analysis of the 2024 Tewksbury, NJ, earthquake and its aftershocks  
280 emphasize the importance of properly assessing seismic hazard in stable continental re-  
281 gions, especially near metropolitan regions, and, therefore, the necessity to monitor seis-  
282 mic activity. With more than 183,000 entries in the USGS's "Did you feel it" survey,  
283 the April 2024 Tewksbury earthquake is the most widely reported event in its history.  
284 To improve our generic understanding of seismic hazard in low deformation rate regions  
285 (*e.g.*, the maximum earthquake size), it is now important to revisit SCR waveform archives  
286 from around the world with modern techniques, such as those used here, in order to mit-  
287 igate the observational limitations associated with these intrinsically low levels of seis-  
288 micity. The future of seismicity monitoring in stable continental regions should not only  
289 rely on technological developments but must also be accompanied by appropriate invest-  
290 ments in instrumentation.

## 7 Open Research Section

All the seismic data used in this study are available on IRIS at <http://service.iris.edu/fdsnws/dataselect/1/> (last accessed in November 2024). These data were recorded by the seismic networks LD (Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO), Columbia University, 1970, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7914/sn/ld>), GS (Albuquerque Seismological Laboratory (ASL)/USGS, 1980, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7914/sn/gs>), 4N (Alexandros Savvaidis, 2024, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7914/5ftj-a296>), PE (Penn State University, 2004, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7914/sn/pe>) and NE (Albuquerque Seismological Laboratory (ASL)/USGS, 1994, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7914/sn/ne>). The earthquake catalog was built with the detection and location software BPMF (Beaucé et al., 2024; Beaucé, 2025, v2.0.0-beta2, last accessed in February 2025). The most recent version of BPMF is available at [https://github.com/ebeauce/Seismic\\_BPMF](https://github.com/ebeauce/Seismic_BPMF). The relocated catalog was built with HypoDD (Waldhauser, 2001, v2.1-beta, last accessed in July 2024). The most recent version of HypoDD is available at <https://github.com/fwaldhauser/HypoDD>. The earthquake catalog is available from the Zenodo repository (Beaucé, 2024, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14058325>). The USGS catalog can be browsed and downloaded at <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/map/> (last accessed November 2024).

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