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## Highlights

#### Tensile deformation and failure of AlSi10Mg random cellular metamaterials

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- The mechanisms of ductile fracture were revisited using random porous metamaterials
- Structural disorder was found to delay long-wavelength localization
- Void-sheeting was observed with increasing pore aspect ratio
- McClintock's model underestimated void growth data within the failure band

# Tensile deformation and failure of AlSi10Mg random cellular metamaterials

L. Salvi<sup>a,1</sup>, B. Smaniotto<sup>b</sup>, F. Hild<sup>b</sup>, M.G. Tarantino<sup>b,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Mechanics, Politecnico di Milano, 20127, Milan, Italy <sup>b</sup>Université Paris-Saclay, CentraleSupélec, ENS Paris-Saclay, CNRS LMPS - Laboratoire de Mécanique Paris-Saclay, 91190 Gif-sur-Yvette, France

#### Abstract

Cellular metamaterials are an emerging class of porous materials, in which the topology of the solid is *precisely-engineered* to achieve attractive combinations of properties. This work specifically examines the tensile response of a novel type of cellular metamaterials, in which pores of arbitrary elliptical shape are randomly-dispersed into an aluminum alloy matrix. Their porous mesostructure is generated numerically via a random sequential absorption algorithm, and is fabricated by laser powder bed fusion from AlSi10Mg powders. The results – obtained by means of digital image correlation combined with X-Ray tomography - highlight the advantages offered by a random cellular topology. These are notably a low sensitivity to geometric imperfections (which result inevitably from manufacturing), coupled with the ability to delay long-wavelength strain localization (which is in turn responsible for failure). Structural disorder also leads to highly heterogeneous deformation patterns, which result from the interaction between geometric pores and promote void growth and coalescence during plastic straining. The presence of manufacturing defects, moreover, exacerbates void interaction and in turn promotes early plastic flow localization. Interestingly, experiments reveal that this class of porous solids effectively display features of the ductile fracture of metals, albeit at the mesoscale. For example, *void-sheeting* is observed with increasing pore aspect ratio and is accompanied by large geometric distortions of the voids upon coalescence. Measured data for the pore strains are, moreover, highly scattered and show a departure from McClintock's model predictions for the voids within the fracture band. Collectively, this study highlights the potential offered by random porous metamaterials, which can be harnessed to revisit the

<sup>\*</sup>Corresponding author.

Email address: gabriella.tarantino@universite-paris-saclay.fr (M.G. Tarantino)

complex mechanisms of ductile fracture at the mesoscale.

#### Keywords:

Ductile fracture, strain localization, void growth and coalescence, cellular metamaterials, digital image correlation (DIC), laser-powder bed fusion (LPBF).

#### 1 1. Introduction

Metallic cellular materials are a class of lightweight materials consisting of a solid metal 2 matrix and air. They contain pores of arbitrary geometry, whose content can be varied to achieve solid relative densities typically between 80% and 0.1%. They can be classified into open- and closed-cell solids depending on the connectivity of the pores [1]. The former ones are 5 called *metal sponges* and contain pores that are interconnected; the latter ones are designated as *metallic foams* and consist of non-percolating voids, which are separated from each other 7 by portions of solid matrix. In general, open-cell metal sponges are fabricated by investment 8 casting, by replication processing and by sintering; closed-cell metallic foams are instead 9 produced by foaming techniques [1]. In recent years, the rapid progress in manufacturing 10 technologies has enabled the fabrication of metallic cellular structures with intricate, yet 11 precisely-controlled, pore features. Architectured materials made of metals, commonly referred 12 to as metallic *metamaterials*, have been the subject of intensive research as they exhibit 13 properties that compare favorably with those of cellular metals produced by conventional 14 manufacturing processes [2, 3]. Metallic lattices fabricated by additive manufacturing are a 15 notable example [3, 4]. 16

Metallic metamaterials offer attractive combinations of properties, as they combine opti-17 mized architectures with unique features of metals. The latter ones comprise a large range 18 of physical and chemical properties (e.g., strength, ductility, electrical/thermal conductivity) 19 coupled with additional attributes that include recyclability and environmental durability. 20 Currently, metallic metamaterials are among the most attractive lightweight materials for 21 applications in energy and electronics [5], in transport and defense [6] as well as in biomedical 22 engineering and medicine [7]. Examples of their use include energy-absorbing structures [8], 23 biomedical implants and scaffolds [7], heat-exchangers [9] and electrodes [10] among oth-24 ers [3, 11]. To reveal their potential in many engineering applications, a fine understanding 25 of their mechanical behavior is, often, instrumental. 26

The mechanical properties of architectured materials were examined by Fleck et al. [2], 27 and results relevant to metallic metamaterials are summarized in [11, 3]. The subject now 28 comprises a vast body of theoretical and experimental work that investigates their elastic 29 (e.g., [12, 13, 14]), elastoplastic (e.g. [12, 15, 16, 17, 14, 13, 18, 19]), fracture (e.g., [20, 30 21, 22, 23, 24, 25]) and fatigue properties (e.g. [26, 27]). Collectively, these studies show 31 that the mechanical performance of metallic metamaterials mainly depends upon the internal 32 mesostructure. Important topological features comprise the pore connectivity (e.g., open or 33 closed) [12], the cell geometry [16] and the void arrangement (e.g., periodic or disordered) [14]. 34 To date, the mechanical properties of metallic metamaterials have been mostly studied under 35 compression; their tensile deformation and failure have been comparatively less examined. 36 The reason for this discrepancy is two-fold. First, they have a high potential as structures 37 that absorb mechanical energy, for which compressive properties are of primary importance. 38 Second, in tension, more than in compression, internal damage is exacerbated leading to 39 a lower macroscopic ductility. At present, experimental studies on the tensile properties 40 of metallic metamaterials are (very) few and remain mostly limited to unit-cell based lat-41 tices [14, 28, 24, 22, 17]. Examples include structures fabricated by laser powder bed fusion 42 (LPBF) using steel [24, 17], aluminum- [22] and titanium- [14] alloy powders, as well as low-43 carbon steel honeycombs fabricated by water-jetting [28]. Collectively, these investigations 44 show that metallic metamaterials have low tensile ductility. Data for this property are highly 45 scattered [24], and display magnitudes that are by far lower than their compressive counter-46 parts [25, 14]. For instance, titanium-based gyroid lattices produced by LPBF typically break 47 at strains less than 10% in tension and greater than 40% in compression [14]. Similar trends 48 are also observed for the flow stress and for the ultimate strength [14, 25]. 49

The knockdown in tensile properties results from internal damage accumulation. The 50 latter in turn has multiple origins. One is associated with the presence of defects (such as, 51 e.g., microporosity [29] and geometric imperfections [13]), which result inevitably from man-52 ufacturing and cause severe strain concentrations that eventually initiate the damage process. 53 Another one is the cellular topology, which dictates the deformation mechanisms [16] and 54 consequently affects the rate of damage accumulation. To date, the role of manufacturing 55 defects and topology on the failure mechanisms of metallic metamaterials produced by ad-56 divide the divide the divided and the divided 57

combined effect on tensile failure has been scarcely documented [18]. This is the goal of the present study.

In the following, the tensile response of metallic metamaterials produced by LPBF is 60 studied experimentally. Specifically, the metamaterials of this study contain cylindrical voids 61 randomly-dispersed into an aluminum matrix. Voids have arbitrary elliptical geometry and 62 are algorithmically generated prior to fabrication. Using digital image correlation (DIC) com-63 bined with X-Ray computed tomography, the tensile deformation mechanisms of this class of 64 cellular solids are quantified at the mesoscale, and are shown to combine features of the duc-65 tile fracture of metals with the defect sensitivity of additively-manufactured cellular materials. 66 The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, the experimental methods comprising the 67 random porous design, manufacturing and testing are described. The results are presented 68 in Section 3, and give the effective tensile properties alongside the mesoscale deformation 69 fields. The experimental findings are rationalized in Section 4, where the emphasis is put 70 on elucidating the mechanisms of void growth and interaction during plastic straining. Data 71 for the average pore growth rate are compared with the well-known McClintock's microme-72 chanical model [30], and highlight the role of the random porous topology, combined with 73 manufacturing defects, on strain localization. 74

#### 75 2. Experiments

This section describes the experimental methods used throughout the study. It begins with the description of the random porous design (Section 2.1) and LPBF manufacturing (Section 2.2). The testing protocol is presented in Section 2.3, while the basics principles of Finite-Element (FE) based DIC (used to measure the kinematic fields during tensile deformation) are recalled in Section 2.4.

#### 81 2.1. Porous design

Metallic cellular architectures with randomly-dispersed cylindrical pores were designed, fabricated and tested. Their porous structure was generated numerically, prior to fabrication, using a random sequential adsorption (RSA) algorithm [31, 32, 33]. This procedure works by placing (randomly, sequentially and irreversibly) non-overlapping particles in a cell of arbitrary geometry and dimensions (e.g., 2D or 3D); it stops when the target particle content

is reached. Particles can have arbitrary ellipsoidal shape, size and orientation and can be made 87 from any constituent phase (e.g., solid or air), thereby enabling for the design of countless 88 composite architectures [31, 32, 33, 34, 35]. In the present work, the RSA algorithm was used 89 to generate 2D porous geometries with voided particles. More specifically, two types of porous 90 architectures were designed for this study, namely, one consisting of elliptical pores (Figure 91 1(a), the other one of circular voids (Figure 1(b)). Both architectures had 20% nominal 92 porosity and contained 200 equisized voids. In particular, the elliptical pores had identical 93 orientation and constant aspect ratio w = 0.3 (this parameter designates the ratio of the pore 94 major to the minor axes). 95

Geometric models of the tested specimens were then created using the 2D RSA-generated 96 porous cells. To build the corresponding 3D models, the open-source software *Gmsh* was 97 used, and the meshes were then extruded out-of-plane prior to fabrication [33, 34]. Two 98 geometries were generated in this study, namely, cubic and dogbone. The first ones had 99 dimensions  $12.5 \times 12.5 \times 12.5$  mm<sup>3</sup> and were employed to examine the topological features 100 of the *as-manufactured* cellular architectures by metallographic analyses. The latter ones 101 were designed for mechanical testing. Specifically, dogbone samples had a nominal length of 102 110 mm and gauge section of  $13.5 \times 4 \text{ mm}^2$  (Figure 1(c)). Their porous gauge area comprised 103 two identical porous cells (with dimensions  $13.5 \times 12.5 \text{ mm}^2$ ), whereas the homogeneous heads 104 were 25 mm-wide. Each specimen therefore contained 400 pores (i.e. 200 per cell) that were 105 oriented, in the case of the elliptical pores (Figure 1(a)), with their major axis parallel to the 106 sample longitudinal axis. 107

The choice of the adopted porous design, comprising two nominally identical porous cells, 108 was made for a two-fold purpose. The first one was to assess the repeatability of the fabrication 109 process and, notably, of the manufacturing defects within the same specimen. The second one 110 was to probe the differences in the deformation behavior between the two porous cells. The 111 latter ones are likely to contain a different distribution/amount of manufacturing defects, as 112 shown by earlier work, e.g., for AlSi10Mg lattice structures produced by LPBF [19]. Last, in 113 the present design (Figure 1(c)), the pores between the two cells were separated by a small, 114 yet noticeable, matrix ligament. The latter extended through the whole specimen thickness 115 and resulted from the cell patterning. As shown in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, this region of the 116 specimens often contained internal defects (in the form of irregular cavities), which resulted 117

<sup>118</sup> from the fabrication process and promoted strain concentrations.

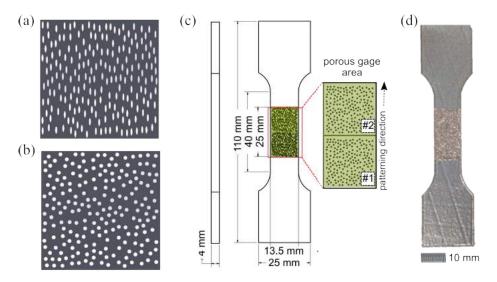


Figure 1: (a,b) Random porous architectures explored in this study. They are generated by means a numerical algorithm, and contain random distributions of equisized (a) elliptical and (b) circular pores at 20% volume fraction. The elliptical pores have identical orientation and constant aspect ratio w = 0.3. (c) Geometry of the tensile dogbone specimen comprising two identical porous cells. (d) Optical front-view of the *as-manufactured* tensile specimen.

A total of four specimen geometries were fabricated for this study using different porous realizations; their main characteristics are reported in Table 1. A short-hand designation is used in the form M20-wY to distinguish each sample, where M denotes the specimen geometry (C for cubic and D for dogbone), 20 the nominal porosity and Y the pore aspect ratio w. In all specimens, pores had micrometric size with nominal (i.e., *as-designed*) average diameter of 500  $\mu$ m (Table 1). This parameter corresponds to the average value between the pore major and minor axes, which have both identical values for specimens containing circular voids.

Table 1: Porous specimen specifications				
Designation	No of pores	Average pore size	Pore aspect ratio	
D20-w1	400	$450~\mu{\rm m}$	1	
D20-w03	400	$500~\mu{ m m}$	0.3	
C20-w1	200	$450~\mu{\rm m}$	1	
C20-w03	200	$500~\mu{ m m}$	0.3	

#### 126 2.2. Manufacturing

The porous specimens were manufactured by LPBF (Figure 1(d)) using a SLM HL 125 127 machine (SLM Solutions GmbH, Germany). It was equipped with a 500-W Yb:YAG laser, 128 whose wavelength and spot diameter were 1070 nm and 70  $\mu$ m, respectively. A commercial 129 AlSi10Mg powder (TEKNA Advanced Materials Inc, Sherbrook, Canada) was employed for 130 fabrication. It was produced by plasma spherodization and contained, in addition to Al, 131  $\sim 10 \text{ wt\%}$  of Si and  $\sim 0.25 \text{ wt\%}$  of Mg. The specifications of its particle size distribution were 132 provided by the manufacturer and are  $D10 = 20 \ \mu m$  and  $D90 = 63 \ \mu m$ . The fabrication was 133 performed under argon atmosphere, and the oxygen content was maintained below 1000 ppm 134 during the entire process. Printing was carried out using an incremental scanning strategy, 135 with 67° rotation between two consecutive layers, and a constant powder layer thickness of 136  $30 \ \mu m$ . Since the specimens contained through-thickness cylindrical pores, their building 137 direction was parallel to the longitudinal axis of the pores. Moreover, each sample was pro-138 duced using two contour passes followed by a hatch (i.e., volume). The selected manufacturing 139 parameters are reported in Table 2. 140

Table 2: LPBF-process parameters used in this study				
	Laser power	Scan speed	Hatch distance	Beam offset <sup>†</sup>
Volume	$300 \mathrm{W}$	400  mm/s	$170~\mu{\rm m}$	
Contour	$300 \mathrm{W}$	$1000~\rm{mm/s}$	$100~\mu{\rm m}$	$170~\mu{\rm m}$

 $^{\dagger}$  it designates the distance between the nominal contour of the part and the center of the laser beam

#### 141 2.3. Mechanical tests

The porous dogbone specimens D20-w1 and D20-w03 (Table 1) were tested in tension. Prior to the experiments, they were subjected to a standard T6-like heat treatment in order to homogenize the microstructure [36]. It consisted in a solution annealing at 520°C for 1 h followed, in successive order, by water quenching at room temperature, and by artificial aging at 160°C for 6 h. Temperature and interval time recommendations provided in Ref. [36] were adopted. Several studies have shown that the T6-like heat treatment promotes microstructure recrystallization [36, 37], and in turn improves the alloy ductility and fatigue strength [38].

The experiments were conducted under a displacement control mode at a nominal strain 149 rate of  $\dot{\epsilon} \leq 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$  until sample failure. The experimental setup used in this study is shown 150 in Figure 2. It comprised (i) a uniaxial testing machine equipped with a  $100\pm0.01$  kN load cell; 151 (ii) two optical cameras and (iii) an external unit for image acquisition. The two cameras were 152 placed on either side of the specimen to track the deformation of the outer porous surfaces. 153 In the following, they are designated as Cameras F and R (where F stands for front and R154 for rear, Figure 2). The first one employed a telecentric lens with a resolution  $\simeq 25 \ \mu m/px$ ; 155 the latter one was equipped with a standard lens with a resolution of  $\simeq 50 \ \mu m/px$ . 156

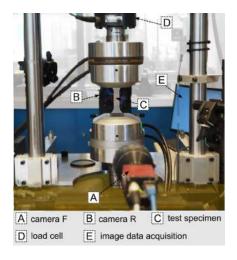


Figure 2: Tensile testing apparatus used in this study. It comprises a uniaxial testing machine equipped with a 100-KN load cell (D) and two optical cameras (A, B) placed on either side of the specimen surface (C). Images from both cameras were collected by means of an external data acquisition system (E) and were used to measure the local deformation fields of the specimen surfaces.

After tensile testing, specimens D20-w1 and D20-w03 were scanned using of a X-Ray tomograph (North Star Imaging X50+). A total of 900 radiographs per scan was collected while rotating the sample between 0 and 360°. An average of 10 images were taken at each rotation step. The X-ray tube was operated at an acceleration voltage of 150 kV using a tungsten transmission target with a 100  $\mu$ A current. The resolution was  $\simeq 18 \ \mu$ m/voxel. A filtered-back projection algorithm was employed to reconstruct 3D images from the series of acquired radiographs. No filtering was applied.

#### <sup>164</sup> 2.4. Strain measurements by Finite Element-based DIC

Strain was quantified on two opposite surfaces of each dogbone specimen via DIC. Notably, the Green-Lagrange strain fields were computed from the displacement fields, obtained from each correlation process using a Finite Element discretization (Appendix 7). In what follows, the DIC method used throughout the study are briefly recalled.

#### 169 2.4.1. Digital Image Correlation

The present section summarizes the basic principles of FE-based DIC. The correlation technique was used herein to measure displacement fields  $\mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x})$  extracted from images acquired during the two tests. This operation is possible thanks to the application of gray level conservation

$$f(\mathbf{x}) = g(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x})) \tag{1}$$

between two images g and f, corresponding respectively to the deformed and reference configurations. The correlation procedure aims at minimizing the gray level residuals  $\varphi(\mathbf{x})$  over the chosen Region Of Interest (ROI) with respect to the nodal displacements gathered in the column vector  $\{\mathbf{u}\}$ 

$$\varphi(\mathbf{x}) = f(\mathbf{x}) - g(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x}, \{\mathbf{u}\})).$$
(2)

<sup>178</sup> Thus, the aim of the DIC code is to iteratively minimize the sum of squared differences

$$\Phi_c^2 = \sum_{ROI} \varphi_c^2(\mathbf{x}) \tag{3}$$

with respect to the unknown degrees of freedom  $\{\mathbf{u}\}$  of the parameterized displacement fields. Since a FE approach was adopted, the displacement field is written as

$$\mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x}) = \sum_{n} u_n \boldsymbol{\psi}_n(\mathbf{x}),\tag{4}$$

where  $u_n$  denote the unknown nodal displacements, and  $\psi_n$  the corresponding shape functions. It is worth noting that the actual pore positions were recovered through backtracking (see Appendix 7).

In global approaches, the continuity of displacements is assumed *a priori*, which corresponds to a first regularization. To speed-up convergence to the solution, the displacement field can be further regularized by means of a penalty term that acts as a low-pass filter [39]. Regularization may apply on total or incremental displacements. The method adopted in the current work considered incremental regularization [40], from one step of the correlation analyses to the next, which constitutes a milder approach adapted for plasticity. The penalization is based on the equilibrium gap [41], which states that for force-free nodes the corresponding nodal force should cancel out

$$\Phi_m^2(\{\partial \mathbf{u}\}) = \{\partial \mathbf{u}\}^\top [\mathbf{K}]^\top [\mathbf{K}] \{\partial \mathbf{u}\},\tag{5}$$

where  $\{\partial \mathbf{u}\}$  is the column vector gathering all nodal displacement increments between image n and n + 1, [**K**] the rectangular stiffness matrix associated with the force-free nodes. The total cost function then becomes

$$\Phi_t^2 = \Phi_c^2 + \omega \Phi_m^2, \tag{6}$$

where the weight  $\omega$  is selected by the user, and is proportional to a (regularization) length  $\ell_{reg}$  raised to the power 4 [39]. In the present work, the DIC technique was implemented within Matlab and C++ kernels developed at our laboratory [42].

#### 198 2.4.2. Regularization length and uncertainty

When starting any DIC analysis, the ROI is to be defined, meshed, and a regularization 199 length must be selected in order to reduce uncertainties and help the convergence of the 200 correlation algorithm. A value that does not filter out too many useful details is to be chosen. 201 When performing the analyses, the uncertainty estimate was used to evaluate the accuracy 202 of the measurements. In order to evaluate the measurement uncertainties, prior to starting 203 the experiments *per se*, about 100 pictures were acquired for the unloaded specimen. In the 204 present case, only the standard strain uncertainties are reported. They were assessed for each 205 camera of each tested specimen. Table 3 shows that for the selected regularization lengths, 206 the standard strain uncertainties were all less than  $3 \cdot 10^{-4}$ . 207

	$\ell_{reg}$	$\operatorname{Std}(E_{yy})$	l	$\ell_{reg}$	$\operatorname{Std}(E_{yy})$	l
	Camera F	Camera F	Camera F	Camera R	Camera R	Camera R
D20-w1	30 px	$3.1\cdot 10^{-4}$	3.6 px	40 px	$1.9\cdot 10^{-4}$	3.2 px
D20-w03	$30 \mathrm{px}$	$1.2\cdot 10^{-4}$	$3.7 \mathrm{px}$	40 px	$2.9\cdot 10^{-4}$	4.0 px

Table 3: Uncertainty quantification of longitudinal strain  $(E_{yy})$  fields. In addition to the standard uncertainties, the regularization lengths  $(\ell_{reg})$  and mean element sizes  $(\ell)$  are reported for each considered case

A regularization length of 30 px was adopted for Camera F acquisitions, which was char-208 acterized by a lower acquisition noise level; whereas a value of 40 px was adopted for Camera 209 R. Beyond random factors such as the applied speckle pattern and stroke fluctuations (the 210 hydraulic testing machine was on and the feedback loop was active), the uncertainty was also 211 impacted by the camera, element size and regularization length. In this particular case, higher 212 values of uncertainty around the porous region were due to smaller element sizes needed to 213 describe the pore geometry. Despite these various sources, the standard uncertainty levels 214 remained rather small in comparison to the strain levels that developed in the four analyses. 215 As reported in Table 3, the element sizes  $\ell$  adopted for the porous specimens studied via 216 DIC was of the order of 3-4 px. This very fine discretization was needed in order to capture 217 local strain distributions around pores and required the use of mechanical regularization. 218

#### 219 3. Results

This section reports the major experimental results of this study and includes both mi-220 crostructural observations (Section 3.1) and data measured during mechanical tests (Sec-221 tions 3.2 to 3.4). The macroscopic tensile response of the AlSi10Mg random cellular meta-222 materials is presented in Section 3.2, while the fracture surfaces are examined in Section 3.3. 223 The latter also reports a thorough investigation, carried out by means of X-ray computed to-224 mography, of the matrix internal defects resulting from LPBF manufacturing. The mesoscale 225 strain patterns measured by FE-based DIC, using meshes consistent with the pore topology, 226 are displayed in Section 3.4. 227

#### 228 3.1. LPBF-manufactured cellular topologies

Optical microscopy was used to examine the topological features of the as-fabricated cubic porous samples C20-w1 and C20-w03 (Table 1). Micrographs are presented in Figure 3 and are contrasted with the corresponding geometrical models.

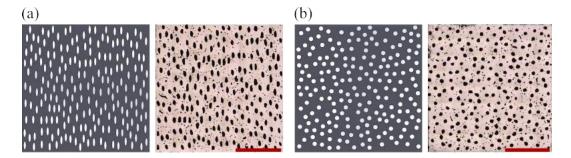


Figure 3: Optical micrographs of the AlSi10Mg cubic porous samples (a) C20-w03 and (b) C20-w1 containing respectively a random packing of elliptical and circular pores. The porous specimen specifications are given in Table 1. For both porous architectures, experimental micrographs are contrasted with the corresponding geometrical model. Scale bar: 3 mm.

For both porous architectures, the presence of manufacturing defects, such as matrix in-232 ternal porosity and geometric imperfections, was observed. Internal matrix porosity occurred 233 in the form of small and irregular voids within the matrix. Topological defects were instead 234 distinguished by morphological mismatches between the as-designed and the as-manufactured 235 pore geometry. Notably, the printed pores were found to have non-uniform ellipticity, lower 236 roundness and more irregular size than their nominal (*defect-free*) counterparts. For example, 237 Figure 3(a,b) reveals that geometric voids were smaller near the cell edges and had a more 238 polyhedral shape, when they are closely-spaced. 239

#### 240 3.2. Stress-strain response

The tensile response of AlSi10Mg dogbone samples D20-w03 and D20-w1 is reported in Figure 4. For both pore geometries, data for the macroscopic engineering stress are plotted against the longitudinal strain  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$ . This last quantity is computed by means of FE-based DIC (Section 2.4) and corresponds, unless specified otherwise, to the average axial strain measured over the entire porous gauge area (Figure 1(c)). In the interest of comparison, measurements from both cameras are reported using different line styles. Collectively, data in

Figure 4 show similar trends. In particular, three distinct stages of deformation corresponding 247 to (i) initial elasticity, (ii) strain hardening up to the peak stress and (iii) final strain softening, 248 are discerned from the stress-strain curves. For both porous architectures, the macroscopic 249 tensile curve exhibits a departure from linearity at a strain level of about 0.1% (this value is 250 denoted by the dotted line  $\boxed{a}$  in Figures 4(a,b)). Upon yielding, the response strain-hardens 251 and the tensile flow stress increases continuously up to the peak load. The measured flow stress 252 is notably higher for specimens D20-w03 (containing elliptical voids), and reaches its maximum 253 value at a strain between 0.6 and 0.7% for both specimen geometries (Figures 4(a,b)). Beyond 254 the peak stress, the tensile response of both samples is characterized by the occurrence of 255 repeated stress drops; strain softening continues until final fracture of the sample. Overall, 256 the results are also fairly reproducible. For each specimen geometry, the difference between 257 the average strain measured by the two cameras remains very small until the attainment of 258 the peak stress, and only increases slightly (past this point) as a result of damage softening. 259 The highest strain difference is of the order of  $\approx 0.3\%$ , and is measured for specimen D20-w03 260 (as seen by comparing, e.g., curves in Figures 4(a,b) past 1% strain denoted with the dotted 261 line  $\boxed{e}$ ). 262

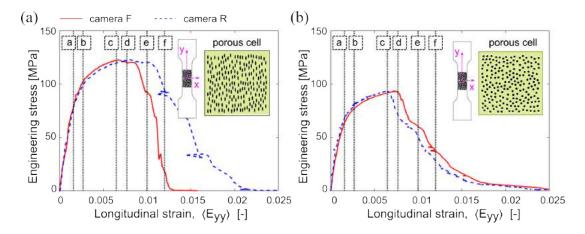


Figure 4: Experimental tensile stress-strain curves for the AlSi10Mg porous samples (a) D20-w03 and (b) D20-w1. The specimens specifications are given in Table 1, whereas their porous cell is shown in the inset of each figure. For both samples, the macroscopic stress is plotted against the average longitudinal strain  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$  computed over the entire porous gauge area by means of FE-based DIC. Strain measurements from images collected by the two cameras are denoted with different line colors. Note that Camera F of sample D20-w03 could capture only one porous cell.

#### 263 3.3. Post-mortem X-Ray Tomography

Tomographic sections from reconstructed volumes of the dogbone samples, scanned after 264 mechanical testing, are presented in Figures 5(a,b). In the interest of comparison, images 265 corresponding to the outer and mid sections are reported for each porous geometry. As 266 seen, the fracture surfaces of the two mesoporous specimens display distinct characteristics. 267 In sample D20-w1 containing circular pores (Figure 5(a)), fracture occurred in the lower 268 porous cell and exhibited a band-like crack path. The latter was inclined with respect to 269 the loading axis and traversed a large number of voids across the specimen's width. By 270 contrast, the fracture path displayed by sample D20-w03 with unidirectional elliptical voids 271 (Figure 5(b)) was more irregular, and involved an extended region of the specimen comprised 272 between the two porous cells. Failure, moreover, encompassed only a few voids (Figure 5(b)). 273 Collectively, the observed fracture features are reproducible across the scanned volumes and 274 no significant differences can be discerned among the three tomographic sections, for each 275 specimen geometry. 276

Tomography also reveals the presence of matrix internal defects, such as small pores and 277 irregular cavities. To examine their morphological characteristics, a representative portion 278 of the matrix volume within sample D20-w03 was analyzed using the Avizo software. This 279 is highlighted in Figure 5(b) and consisted of 794 x 214 x 236 voxels<sup>3</sup> for a total volume of 280  $\sim 164.25 mm^3$ . Results of the tomographic reconstructions are presented in Figures 5(c.d). 281 whereby the Al-allov matrix is shown with full transparency. To improve the presentation, 282 geometrical pores are depicted with blue color. Tomographic images show two populations of 283 matrix defects, whose total volume fraction was  $\approx 2.4\%$ . This last quantity was computed with 284 respect to the total volume of the region highlighted in Figure 5(b), using the Avizo software. 285 Matrix defects can be discriminated on account of their morphology, and are represented 286 with red and yellow colors (Figures 5(c,d)). The first ones have smaller sizes and display a 287 bubble-like shape. The second ones have larger and more irregular shape (see, e.g., defects 288 denoted as #1 and #2). 289

The findings of Figures 5(c,d) corroborate the metallographic observations reported in Figures 3(a,b) (for different realizations of the same random topologies), and also indicate that defects shown here result from LPBF. Notably, their distribution and morphology depend on the adopted laser strategy. Figure 5(c) illustrates this point. It shows that bubble-like defects formed in the matrix ligament surrounding the geometric pores, and lied along the laser *contour* trajectories.

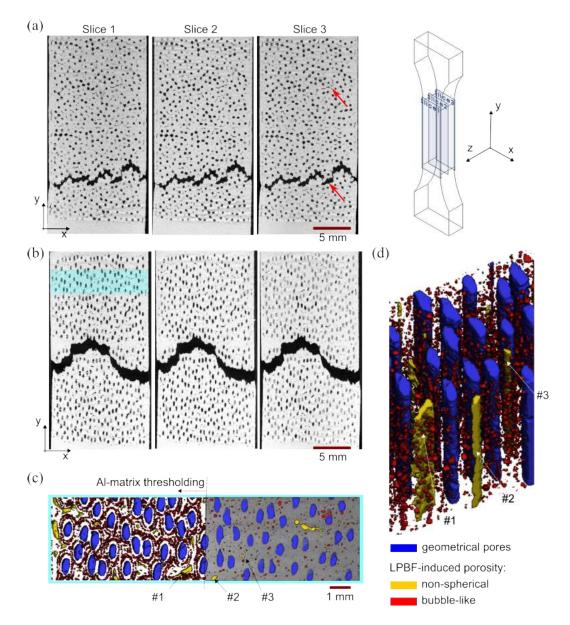


Figure 5: Tomographic sections of the reconstructed internal volume of specimens (a) D20-w1 and (b) D20-w03. They were scanned after mechanical testing. Representative examples of large matrix defects occurring at identical locations within the specimen are indicated with red arrows in sub-figure (a). (c) Front and (d) isometric view of a selected portion of the reconstructed volume for specimen D20-w03, highlighted with light-blue color in sub-figure (b) and showing the presence of process-induced porosity within the matrix. To improve the presentation, the Al-alloy matrix is shown with full transparency using the Avizo software.

Figure 5(d), instead, reveals that irregular defects (depicted with yellow color) extended 296 consistently throughout the sample thickness, which in turn corresponds to the part build-297 ing direction. This observation is consistent with the tomographic section reconstructions 298 reported in Figures 5(a,b). The latter ones also show that defects of this type occurred at 299 about the same location within the specimen, irrespective of its cellular topology. An exam-300 ple is shown in Figure 5(a)-Slice 3 and is highlighted with red arrows. Figures 5(c,d) also 301 indicate that bubble-like defects are present in the largest amount within the matrix of the 302 analyzed sub-volume. To quantify their morphological characteristics, measurements of the 303 volume and shape factor (sphericity) were obtained, for each reconstructed pore defect, using 304 built-in Avizo functions. Their statistical distribution is reported in Figure 6. Figure 6(a) dis-305 plays the volume distribution computed from data obtained via the *Volume3D* function, and 306 shows that most of the bubble-like defects did not exceed  $10^{-5}$  mm<sup>3</sup> in volume. Pores whose 307 volume is greater than  $10^{-3}$  mm<sup>3</sup> are rare (see the inset in Figure 6(a)). The distribution in 308 Figure 6(b) also indicates that most of the bubble-like pores are characterized by a sphericity 309 factor close to unity. This last quantity was obtained via the ShapeVA3D function (where 310 ShapeVA3D =  $A^3/(36\pi V^2)$  was computed, for each pore, from its volume V and area A), and 311 has a value equal to unity when the pore is a perfect sphere. Representative examples of the 312 3D pore shapes associated with an increasing value of the sphericity factor, in parts built by 313 LPBF, are given in Figure 9 in Ref. [43]. Collectively, the data of Figure 6(b) corroborate the 314 observations in Figures 5(c,d) showing that bubble-like defects were mainly of spherical shape. 315 To quantify their size, the pore equivalent diameter  $D_{eq}$  was computed for all defects with 316 sphericity varying between 0.8 and 1.2 from the reconstructed volume (where the latter was 317 assumed to be spherical). Measurements of mean equivalent diameter, at distinct sphericity 318 intervals, are reported together with their standard deviations in the inset of Figure 6(b), and 319 display values ranging from 40 µm to 80 µm. 320

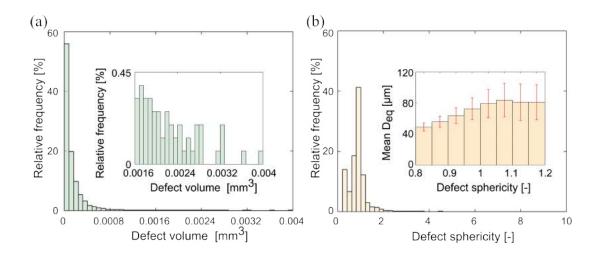


Figure 6: (a) Volume and (b) sphericity distributions of the bubble-like defects within the sub-volume highlighted with light blue color in Figure 5(b). The geometrical characteristics were extracted from the tomographic volume reconstructions using Avizo software. To improve the presentation, the relative frequency of the pore defects with volume larger than  $1.6 \cdot 10^{-3}$  is shown in the inset of sub-figure (a) using a magnified scale. Likewise, data for the mean equivalent diameter  $D_{eq}$  are reported, together with their standard deviations, in the inset of (b) for all defects with a sphericity varying between 0.8 and 1.2. For each pore,  $D_{eq}$  was computed from its reconstructed spherical volume.

#### 321 3.4. Mesoscale strain maps

The local strain fields could be computed by means of FE-based DIC (Section 2.4). For both porous specimens D20-w03 and D20-w1, the axial strain fields are presented in Figures 7 and 8, respectively. The mesoscale strain maps were computed from images collected by the two cameras and are reported for discrete instants of the deformation history. They were selected from the measured stress-strain curves, and correspond to the macroscopic strain levels  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$  denoted with dotted lines in Figures 4(a,b). Results show that:

• upon departure from elasticity, strains have inhomogeneous distribution (Figures 7(a) and 8(a)). When  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle \approx 0.15\%$ , areas of increased strain levels are observed across the porous surface of both tested specimens, and are uniformly distributed within the gauge area;

• upon strain hardening, distinct strain concentration bands start appearing in both porous specimens (Figures 7(b) and 8(b)). They have short lengths, encompassing groups of few closely-spaced pores, and widths larger than one pore-diameter. Interestingly, the short bands occur at different locations in both specimens and display a symmetric pattern in sample D20-w1 containing circular voids (Figure 8(b));

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near the peak stress, the existing short bands continue to accumulate strains and new ones form with further plastic flow (Figures 7(c,d) and 8(c,d). The interactions between pores become evident and occur, in most cases, within short bands inclined with respect to the loading axis in both tested specimens;

• upon strain softening, a change in the deformation patterns is observed for both porous specimens. Some of the short bands become inactive and the whole deformation concentrates around the fractured zone (Figures 7(e,f) and 8(e,f). Consistent agreement is found between the strain patterns of Figures 7(f) and 8(f)) and the fracture paths displayed in Figures 5(a,b).

The results from the two cameras are also similar, thereby indicating that the deformation 346 was pretty uniform along the sample thickness. This was expected given the specimen geom-347 etry, which has extruded porous sections along the building direction. The slight difference 348 between the strain maps, measured with the two cameras, may be rationalized by considera-349 tion of their different optical resolution. The latter was higher for camera F equipped with a 350 telecentric lens (Section 2), and allowed the deformation features to be more finely captured. 351 Examples are given in Figures 8(a) and 7(b), whereby zones of strain concentration around 352 large matrix defects could be measured with camera F images and benchmarked against to-353 mographic scans for Slice 1 in Figures 5(a) and 5(b), respectively. Interestingly, the strain 354 maps also show that the strains concentrate in regions of the matrix ligament between the 355 two porous cells (Figures 8(c) and 7(c) obtained with camera F), where irregular pore defects 356 resulted from the LPBF contour strategy (Figure 5(a)). This finding is consistent with the 357 results of earlier work on AlSi10Mg lattice structures produced by LPBF [19], where large 358 irregural pores were observed in the matrix region connecting the elemental struts. Figure 8 359 also proves that, even though the two porous cells were nominally identical, the corresponding 360 strain patterns became different very early on with increasing macroscopic strain. It is be-361 lieved that such differences were due to the manufacturing defects present within the matrix 362 of the two cells, Figure 5(a). 363

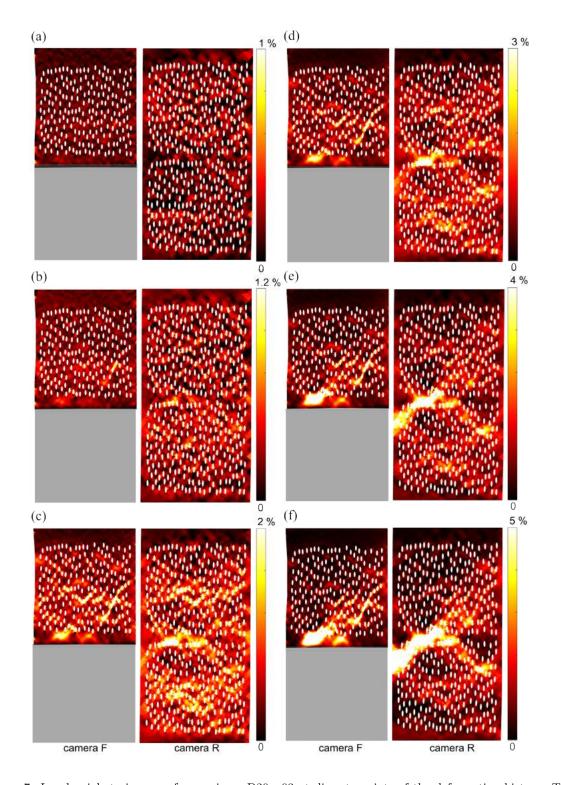


Figure 7: Local axial strain maps for specimen D20-w03 at discrete points of the deformation history. The macroscopic longitudinal strain  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$  is equal to (a) 0.16%, (b) 0.27%, (c) 0.65%, (d) 0.77%, (e) 1% and (f) 1.2%. These levels are depicted with dotted lines in Figure 4(a). The strain fields were computed by means of FE-based DIC using images collected simultaneously by both cameras. Note that since Camera F of sample D20-w03 could capture only one porous cell, the corresponding strain map is reported for the upper cell.

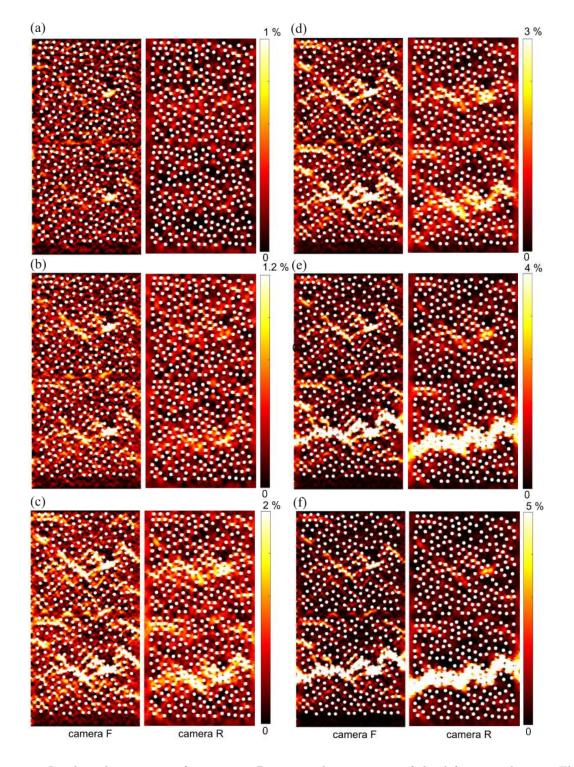


Figure 8: Local axial strain maps for specimen D20-w1 at discrete points of the deformation history. The macroscopic longitudinal strain  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$  is equal to (a) 0.16%, (b) 0.27%, (c) 0.65%, (d) 0.77%, (e) 1% and (f) 1.2%. These levels are depicted with dotted lines in Figure 4(b). The strain fields were computed by means of FE-based DIC using images collected simultaneously by both cameras.

#### 364 4. Discussion

The main findings of this work are discussed hereafter. First, the effective tensile properties of the AlSi10Mg random cellular metamaterials are summarized in Section 4.1, and are rationalized on account of the cellular topology combined with the presence of manufacturing defects (Section 4.2). The mechanisms of internal damage accumulation are then examined in Section 4.3, and are quantified using DIC data for the pore true strains. Measurements of the average growth rate are also compared with predictions of the McClintock's micromechanical model (Section 4.4), and the main implications for models of ductile fracture are discussed.

#### 372 4.1. Tensile properties

The random cellular architectures of this work have low elongations to failure despite the 373 inherent ductility of the alloy they are made from (Figure 4). Their tensile properties could 374 be computed from data in Figure 4 and are summarized in Table 4. In data presented herein, 375 the Young's modulus along the longitudinal direction, i.e. E, was measured through linear-376 regression of the elastic segment of the tensile stress-strain curve, and is reported together 377 with the  $\mathbb{R}^2$  coefficient. The yield stress  $\sigma_{0.1\%}$  was computed at 0.1% offset strain, whereas 378 the ultimate tensile strength  $\sigma_{UTS}$  corresponds to the peak stress in the tensile response. 379 The elongation at the maximum load is denoted as  $\epsilon_{UTS}$ . For each specimen tested, data 380 for  $E, \sigma_{0.1\%}$  and  $\epsilon_{UTS}$  were computed using strain measurements from each camera, and are 381 reported together with their average value. Measurements of  $\sigma_{UTS}$  are, instead, independent 382 of the camera sensor. In the interest of comparison, the tensile properties of the AlSi10Mg 383 matrix are also given in Table 4. They were measured in a separate set of experiments on 384 heat-treated bulk samples (produced and tested as described in Section 2), and are consistent 385 with data from literature [44, 36, 38]. 386

<sup>387</sup> Collectively, the results in Table 4 show that the two cellular architectures have similar <sup>388</sup> elastic stiffness but distinct plastic properties. For both porous specimens, the values of the <sup>389</sup> Young's modulus E differ by less than 8% and are slightly higher for sample D20-w03 consist-<sup>390</sup> ing of elliptical voids. The yield stress  $\sigma_{0.1\%}$  and ultimate tensile strength  $\sigma_{UTS}$ , instead, have <sup>391</sup> magnitudes that are up to 40% lower for specimen D20-w1 containing circular pores. Since <sup>392</sup> both samples have equal relative density and contain likely the same amount of internal ma-<sup>393</sup> trix porosity, the measurements in Table 4 indicate that the pore shape exerts no significant

		E [GPa]	$\sigma_{y0.1\%}$ [MPa]	$\sigma_{UTS}$ [MPa]	$\epsilon_{UTS}$ [%]
D20-w1	Camera F	$38~(R^2 = 0.988)$	78.6		0.73
	Camera R	$39.7 \ (R^2 = 0.92)$	82.8		0.65
	average	$38.8\pm0.8$	$80.7\pm2.1$	93.3	$0.69\pm0.06$
D20-w03	Camera F	$40.2 \ (R^2 = 0.97)$	112.9		0.61
	Camera R	43 $(R^2 = 0.964)$	112		0.72
	average	$41.6\pm1.4$	$112.4\pm0.4$	122.8	$0.67\pm0.07$
AlSi10Mg matrix	Camera F	72.6 $(R^2 = 0.991)$	122.6		14.8
	Camera R	65.9 $(R^2 = 0.883)$	128.6		15.2
	average	$69.2\pm4.7$	$125.6\pm10$	204.6	$15 \pm 0.5$

Table 4: Tensile properties of the AlSi10Mg random cellular architectures of this study and corresponding values measured for the bulk alloy matrix in the same metallurgical state.

influence during elastic deformation. This agrees well with what reported for other random 394 media, containing either solid [45] or voided particles [46]. Conversely, the effect of the void 395 shape becomes more important upon plastic straining in agreement with prior work [47]. In 396 particular, the observed tendency for the tensile strength to decrease as the aspect ratio w397 increases (compare values of  $\sigma_{UTS}$  for samples D20-w1 and D20-w03 in Table 4) is consistent 398 with trends observed in porous metals produced by unidirectional solidification [48]. These 399 materials have similar cellular topologies and display values of  $\sigma_{UTS}$  that scale as  $\rho^{1+2w}$ , where 400  $\rho$  is the relative density (see Equation (14) in Ref. [48]). 401

Equally important, data in Table 4 indicate that the measured  $\epsilon_{UTS}$  are of the order 402 of  $\sim$  0.7% and thus have levels which are one order of magnitude lower than for the bulk 403 alloy. These observations are consistent with what reported for most conventional Al-based 404 foams loaded in tension [49, 50, 51, 52], which typically fractured at strains below a few 405 percents. Prior work also shows that data for the tensile ductility of metallic random foams 406 are highly scattered (see, e.g., Figure 1 of Ref. [53]) and reflect a maximized influence of 407 internal damage accumulation on tensile deformation. For example, San Marchi et al. [51] 408 investigated the tensile response of replicated pure Al and Al-12Si foams at equal relative 409 density, and found that failure strains never exceeded a few percents even for foams made 410 from a very ductile metal (i.e., pure Al). Moreover, measured elongations-to-failure were up to 411

seven times lower for the Al-12Si foam containing brittle Si phases. Collectively, the findings
of this study highlighted the role of internal damage on the low tensile ductility exhibited
by metallic cellular materials and were also corroborated by several numerical studies by
Mangipudi et al. [54, 55].

The cellular materials produced for this study were made of peak-aged AlSi10Mg allow 416 and thus contained nearly 10% of Si, typically in the form of globular particles with sizes 417 of a few µm [36, 44, 37]. In bulk form, the alloy exhibits a highly ductile behavior that 418 results from the nucleation and coalescence of microscopic voids (see Refs. [37, 36] and data 419 in Table 4), and is distinguished by the presence of equiaxed dimples observed across the 420 fractured surface. Prior work reported that the average size of the dimples depended on 421 the solution treatment temperature, and reached 5 µm when the alloy was peak-aged above 422 500°C [37]. Similar features were observed across the fracture surfaces of the broken sample 423 D20-w03 (Figures 9(a,b)), which showed the presence of equiaxed dimples within the matrix 424 (Figure 9(c)). The SEM fractography also revealed that the dimples had a size of a few 425 micrometers (in agreement with earlier work [37]), and were one order of magnitude smaller 426 than the spherical pore defects produced during LPBF fabrication (Figure 6(b)). The latter 427 ones (highlighted with dashed yellow circles in Figure 9(b)) exhibited morphological features 428 that are in quantitative agreement with the tomographic observations reported in Section 3.3. 429 Figure 9(a,b) also shows the presence of unmolten AlSi10Mg powder within the geometric 430 pores. This last observation is common in parts produced by LPBF, and in turn explains why 431 identical pores have different X-Ray attenuation across the thickness of the reconstructed 432 specimen volume (Figures 5(a,b)). 433

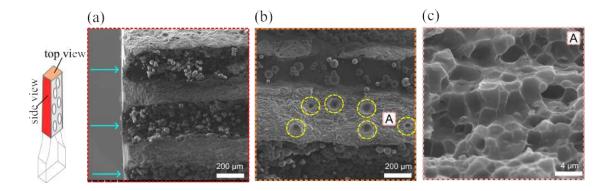


Figure 9: SEM micrographs of the fractured surfaces of sample D20-w03 containing elliptical pores. (a) Side and (b) top views, whereby the through-thickness geometric pores and the matrix internal defects are indicated with cyan arrows and dashed yellow circles in sub-figures (a) and (b), respectively. (c) Close-up view of the matrix region, denoted by  $\overline{A}$  in sub-figure (b), revealing the presence of equiaxed dimples with size of a few micrometers.

The presence of dimples in the matrix ligament between geometric pores (Figure 9(c)) also confirms that brittle fracture of the Si phase was not the dominant cause of internal damage accumulation in the present cellular metamaterials. Another reason for their reduced ductility must exist. This observation points to a geometric cause such as the cellular topology combined with the presence of manufacturing defects. The latter ones resulted from the LPBF process (Figures 3 and 5), and are known to exacerbate the mechanisms by which damage accumulates during plastic deformation [56, 57, 19, 18, 29].

#### 441 4.2. LPBF-induced defects

The random cellular architectures of this work contained a non-negligible number of man-442 ufacturing defects, which occurred either as geometric imperfections or as matrix internal 443 porosity (Figures 3,5). Their classification is given in Section 3.1 together with the descrip-444 tion of their morphological characteristics. Both types of defects are known to result from 445 the laser scanning strategy and may have a detrimental effect on the mechanical proper-446 ties [56, 57, 19, 18, 29, 34]. Topological defects were not quantified in this study but were 447 examined in Ref. [34], for similar porous structures fabricated using a large set of processing 448 parameters and different metallic powders. Internal matrix porosity was instead analyzed 449 using X-Ray tomography and was found to be of two types (i.e. pore- or crack-like, see 450 Figure 5). Pores and cracks are commonly observed within the matrix of parts fabricated 451

by LPBF [29, 44], and factors governing their formation are well understood also for struc-452 tures made of AlSi10Mg powders [44, 58]. Specifically, near-spherical pores result either from 453 trapped gas bubbles, during solidification of the base metal, or from the keyhole phenomenon 454 (which is in turn caused by the instability of the melting pool). Crack-like defects, also called 455 *lack-of-fusion* defects, are due either to a low energy density or to a poor overlap of the melt 456 pools. In the present study, the incomplete overlap between adjacent contour and hatch tracks 457 is likely the origin of the lack-of-fusion defects. This hypothesis is corroborated by several 458 observations. First, defects of this type (depicted with yellow color in Figure 5(c)) typically 459 appear within regions of the matrix where pores are largely spaced, which are constructed 460 with both contour and hatch tracks. Second, they occur at about the same location across 461 identical porous cells (Figures 5(a,b)), which were built using the same scanning strategy. Un-462 like lack-of-fusion defects that are often through-thickness, rounded pores are much smaller 463 in size (Figure 6) and have a specific spatial distribution that corresponds to the laser con-464 tour trajectory (Figure 5(c)). These observations are consistent with what was reported for 465 Ti6Al4V lattices produced by electron beam melting [57], and can be rationalized on account 466 of the viscous forces trapping gas bubbles within the laser contour trajectory. 467

The influence of manufacturing defects on the elastic properties was not investigated in 468 this study. It was examined in Ref. [34] for similar AlSi10Mg architectures, using image-based 469 FE simulations combined with experiments. This work rather elucidated the role of manu-470 facturing defects on the damage process. Notably, it was found that strain first concentrated 471 around large matrix pores (see e.g. Figure 8(a)-Camera F for sample D20-w1), in agreement 472 with earlier studies on both periodic lattices [29, 19, 59, 57] and random foams [60] produced 473 by LPBF. By contrast, the pore geometric imperfections were found to exert no noticeable 474 influence on damage initiation. For example, similar deformation features were measured 475 across the two porous cells of sample D20-w1 (Figures 8(a)-(c)), despite the variations in 476 pore ellipticity and/or size between both cells (with identical nominal geometry). This find-477 ing is consistent with what reported for other random porous media [33], and is of great 478 practical importance. Notably, it indicates that structural disorder effectively mitigates the 479 sensitivity to geometric imperfections. Reference [61] illustrates that point, highlighting the 480 advantage offered by disordered metamaterials over periodic lattices. In unit-cell based struc-481 tures, the imperfection sensitivity is instead exacerbated and causes for the sudden formation 482

of shear/collapse bands that eventually lead to failure [62, 33, 63]. This deformation mechanism is well documented for a large number of periodic lattices, including metallic structures
fabricated by LPBF [57, 13, 19, 59, 18, 56, 64].

#### 486 4.3. Mechanisms of tensile failure

The materials produced for this study contained two populations of micrometric voids, 487 i.e., geometric and process-induced pores (Figure 5(d)). The first ones have larger cylindrical 488 shapes and were designed, with the RSA algorithm, to achieve a 20% porosity. The second 489 ones have smaller irregular geometry and do not exceed a few percent in volume (Section 3.3). 490 Both types of pores are embedded within the aluminum matrix and are likely to promote the 491 development of strained bands during tensile loading. It is well-known that in porous plas-492 tic solids, strains concentrate between large primary voids, and that small secondary voids 493 (in the matrix material) accelerate the localization process [65]. This result was shown by 494 the pioneering analyses of Needleman [66] and Tvergaard [67] using an idealized material 495 model containing a square array of circular cylindrical voids, and agrees with the results 496 presented in this study. The latter ones reveal that regions of intense deformation occurred 497 between geometric pores and were heterogeneously distributed across the porous surface (Fig-498 ures 7(a-d) and 8(a-d)). Only in the final stage of the fracture process, strains predominantly 499 concentrated around the failure zone (Figures 7(e) and 8(e)). This deformation behavior is 500 commonly observed in random porous media [54, 49, 33, 68] and is rationalized on the account 501 of the geometric disorder, which caused a diffuse straining activity and prevented the sudden 502 formation of a failure band. 503

To examine how the deformation accumulated in the present materials, the incremen-504 tal strain maps for the two tested specimens are displayed in Figure 10. They measure 505 the changes of local longitudinal strains in discrete macro-strain intervals  $\Delta \langle E_{uu} \rangle$ , and were 506 computed for each cellular topology from the DIC-based displacement measurements corre-507 sponding to Figures 7 and 8. Figure 10 shows that the mechanisms of strain accumulation 508 in both specimens were similar until departure from elasticity (Figure 10(a)), but differed re-509 markably with increasing plastic straining (Figures 10(b-f)). Two main differences are noted 510 and are rationalized as follows. First, there is a tendency for more diffuse strain activity with 511 decreasing pore aspect ratio. This trend is particularly evident at the beginning of the plastic 512

stage (Figures 10(b-d)), and is explained by the pore morphology. Prior FE studies showed 513 that elliptical pores, with major axes aligned with the loading direction, lead to lower strain 514 concentrations than their circular counterparts, and in turn delay the damage process [69, 70]. 515 The data in Figure 4 corroborate these findings, reporting a higher rate of strain hardening in 516 sample D20-w03 (with elliptical voids). The second difference is observed after the attainment 517 of the peak stress. With increasing pore aspect ratio, the strains concentrated in a single band 518 traversing groups of closely-spaced pores across the specimen's width (Figure 10(e,f)). This 519 observation is consistent with prior analyses for similar random porous geometries [71, 72, 73], 520 and is likely the consequence of the *cooperative* interaction between pores (both geometric and 521 process-induced). Prior works show that if voids are spatially close or favorably oriented (with 522 respect to the loading axis), plastic flow localizes into a band. This mechanism was first re-523 ported by Ohno and Hutchinson [74] and by Needleman and Tyeergard [75], who examined 524 respectively the effect of a non-uniform void distribution and of pore orientation on strain 525 localization. The subject now comprises a large body of work, which is relevant to ductile 526 fracture of metals [65]. 527

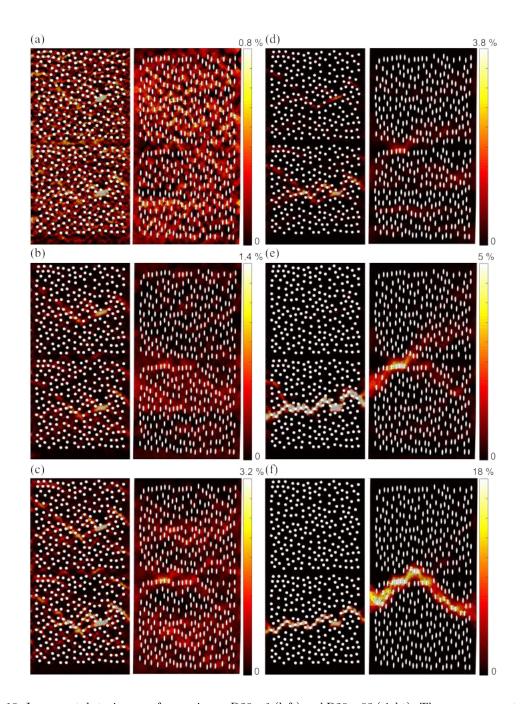


Figure 10: Incremental strain maps for specimens D20-w1 (left) and D20-w03 (right). They were computed from the displacement increments calculated via DIC from images collected by Cameras R and F, for specimen D20-w03 and D20-w1 respectively. Each reported map corresponds to a distinct macroscopic axial strain interval  $\Delta \langle E_{yy} \rangle$ , i.e., (a) 0% - 0.16%, (b) 0.16% - 0.27%, (c) 0.27% - 0.65%, (d) 0.65% - 0.77%, (e) 0.77% - 1%, (f) 1% - 1.2%. These strain levels are depicted with dotted lines in Figure 4 for each porous specimen.

<sup>528</sup> The incremental strain maps (Figure 10) have important implications for the failure pro-

cess, as damage will likely initiate in regions of highly concentrated strains. Two distinct 529 failure mechanisms are inferred from Figure 10 depending on the pore geometry. They are 530 summarized as follows, and show several common features with the mechanisms of ductile 531 fracture [65]. For sample D20-w03 with elliptical voids, failure was triggered by internal dam-532 age accumulation and resulted from the progressive propagation of a microcrack forming upon 533 the first void coalescence. A distinct failure band only appeared at the very end of the fracture 534 process (Figure 10(f) for sample D20-w03). Void coalescence occurred by internal necking of 535 the matrix ligament between the pores, as suggested by the presence of dimples across the 536 fractured surface of sample D20-w03 (Figure 9(c)). The presence of scattered strained sites 537 (Figures 10(b-e)) also indicates that damage was diffuse over the porous surface, and likely 538 competed with strain hardening. Figure 4(a-Camera R) corroborates these findings, showing a 539 region of stress fluctuations around the peak load. Similar results were reported by Mangipudi 540 and Onck for random foams under tension [54]. In the case of sample D20-w1 with circular 541 voids, failure was instead triggered by plastic instability. The latter was distinguished by the 542 formation of a localized strain band (Figures 10(d-e) for sample D20-w1), and was accompa-543 nied by elastic unloading in the outer material regions [76]. The DIC measurements provided 544 this evidence, but are not shown here for the sake of brevity. Fracture was likely produced by 545 void coalescence inside the band. Post-mortem tomographic images (Figure 5(a)) support this 546 observation showing a *jaqqed* crack path linking groups of pores oriented at  $\approx 45^{\circ}$  with respect 547 to the macroscopic principal stress axis. Coalescence was induced by a shearing process. This 548 type of void coalescence mechanism, known as *void sheeting*, has been observed experimen-549 tally first by Cox and Low [77] and by several other authors since then [78, 79, 80, 81]. It is 550 known to be favored by the presence of secondary voids and is accompanied with large pore 551 shape changes [65]. Tomographic observations (Figure 5) corroborate these findings, showing 552 evidence of large pore distortions upon coalescence (Figure 5(a)) as well as the presence of 553 smaller process-induced voids (Figure 5(c,d)). 554

#### 555 4.4. Comparison with McClintock's micromechanical model

Plastic deformation is known to affect the rate at which pores grow in tension [65]. In this study, the measured strain fields were highly heterogeneous (Figures 7 and 8), and exhibited distinct accumulation mechanisms with varying pore geometry (Figure 10). It is therefore

reasonable to expect that the rate of void growth varied within the same specimen, and also 559 between the two cellular topologies. Figure 11, which confirms this statement, reports for 560 all geometric voids within each specimen, the pore true strain at discrete instants of the 561 deformation history. This quantity is defined as the variation of the pore area over time (i.e., 562  $\ln(A/A_0)$ , where A and A<sub>0</sub> denote respectively the current and initial pore areas), and was 563 computed, for each pore, from its major and minor axes. The actual pore geometry was in turn 564 quantified after interpolation (via a conic function) of the nodal pore coordinates, measured via 565 FE-based DIC using meshes consistent with the porous architecture (Section 2.4). Figure 11 566 highlights two major trends. First, it shows that void deformation was highly heterogeneous 567 in both specimens and was higher for pores within areas of intense strain (Figures 11(a-d)). 568 This last observation could be made by comparing pairwise Figures 11(a-d) with Figures 10(a-d)569 d) for specimen D20-w1 with circular voids, and was in turn expected as pores grow aided 570 by plasticity [66, 82, 65]. Second, Figure 11 reveals that, upon macroscopic instability, void 571 deformation was entirely localized inside the shear band (see Figures 11(e-f) for sample D20-572 w1 with circular pores). Pores in this band were no longer, even approximately, circular 573 (Figures 11(e-f)) as a result of void sheeting [78, 79, 80, 81]. 574

To quantify the rate of void growth during tensile straining, the change of the pore 575 mean radius,  $\ln(R_m/R_{m0})$ , with the applied macroscopic deformation,  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$ , is shown in 576 Figures 12(a,b) for all geometric pores in each tensile sample. This geometric parameter was 577 chosen for convenience as its initial value (i.e.,  $R_{m0}$ ) was similar for both cellular topologies 578 (Table 1). For the sake of comparison, measurements corresponding to different geometric 579 pores across each specimen are reported using different line colors. Collectively, the data in 580 Figures 12(a,b) reflect the trends observed in Figure 11, indicating highly heterogeneous void 581 growth across each specimen. Moreover, they show that the rate of void growth increased 582 significantly upon the attainment of the maximum stress, for the pores in the fracture path. 583 The latter ones are indicated in the inset figure for each cellular topology, and were found to 584 grow significantly faster than all other pores in the specimen (Figures 12(a,b)). In particular, 585 a higher void growth rate was measured in specimen D20-w1 with circular pores. Similar 586 results were reported by Dubensky and Koss [71] and were rationalized on account of the 587 cooperative interaction of the pores within the shear band, which eventually coalesce by a 588 *void-sheeting* mechanism. 589

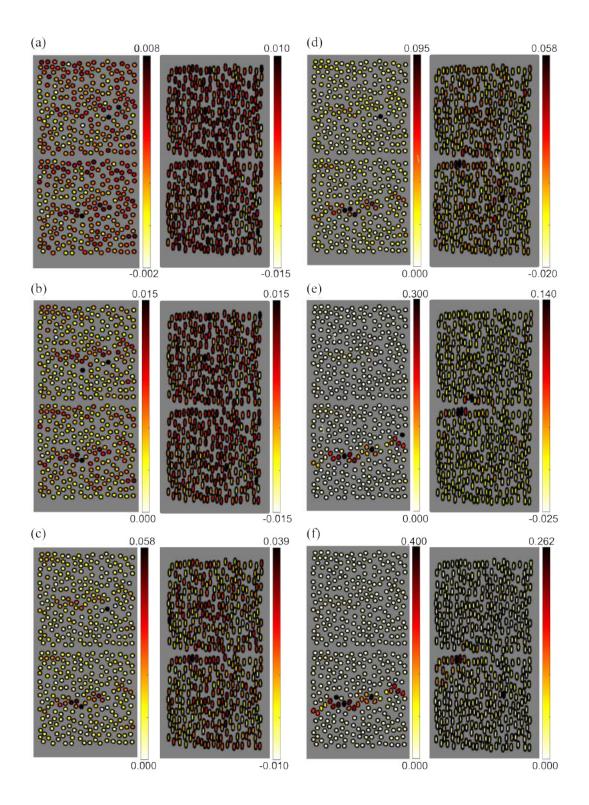


Figure 11: True pore strain maps (as determined from the pore area, i.e.  $\ln(A/A_0)$ ) for specimens (left) D20-w1 and (right) D20-w03 at discrete points of the deformation history. Data for specimens D20-w1 and D20-w03 were computed from Camera F and Camera R, respectively. The macroscopic longitudinal strain  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$  was equal to: (a) 0.16%, (b) 0.27%, (c) 0.65%, (d) 0.77%, (e) 1% and (f) 1.2%. These levels are depicted with dotted lines in Figure 4 for each porous specimen. 31

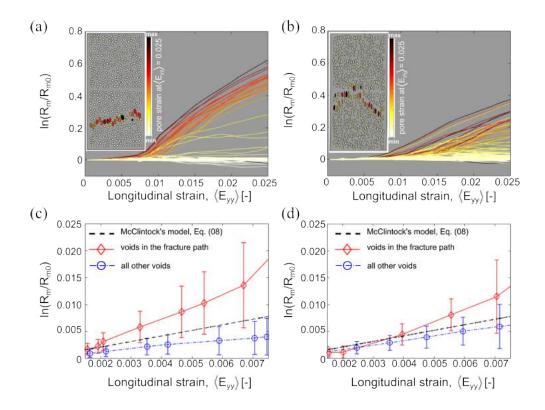


Figure 12: (a)-(b) Growth of the mean pore radius  $\ln(R_m/R_{m0})$  as a function of the macroscopic strain  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle$  in specimens (a) D20-w1 and (b) D20-w03. Data for specimens D20-w1 and D20-w03 were computed from Camera F and Camera R, respectively. Different line colors indicate different pores across each specimen. The latter ones are shown in their deformed state in the inset of each figure at  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle = 2.5\%$ . (c)-(d) Comparison between the McClintock's model predictions (Equation 8) and the experimental data for specimens (c) D20-w1 and (d) D20-w03. For each cellular topology, the average value of the mean pore radius growth is reported for two sets of pores (i.e., for the pores inside and outside the fracture band). Error bars represent the measurements standard deviation.

The effect of void interaction is not taken into account by the well-known McClintock void growth model [30]. The latter was formulated by solving the generalized plane-strain deformation problem of an isolated cylindrical hole in an infinite plastic medium. McClintock postulates that the pore mean radius (i.e.,  $\ln(R_m/R_{m0})$ ) increases with increasing equivalent applied strain (i.e.,  $\bar{\epsilon}$ ) and is given by (see Equation (23) in Ref. [30])

$$\ln\left(\frac{R_m}{R_{m0}}\right) = \frac{\sqrt{3}\bar{\epsilon}}{2\left(1-n\right)}\sinh\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}\left(1-n\right)}{2}\frac{\sigma_a+\sigma_b}{\bar{\sigma}}\right) + \frac{\epsilon_a+\epsilon_b}{2},\tag{7}$$

where n and  $\bar{\sigma}$  denote the strain-hardening coefficient and the equivalent macroscopic stress, respectively. The applied stresses  $\sigma_a$  and  $\sigma_b$  are those in the major and minor pore axes (principal) directions, and  $\epsilon_a$  and  $\epsilon_b$  the corresponding strains. For an elliptical hole deformed in tension under plane strain conditions (i.e.,  $\epsilon_a = -\epsilon_b$  and the out-of-plane normal stress is  $\sigma_z = (\sigma_a + \sigma_b)/2$  [30]), Equation (7) becomes

$$\ln\left(\frac{R_m}{R_{m0}}\right) = \frac{\langle E_{yy}\rangle}{(1-n)}\sinh\left(1-n\right).$$
(8)

The comparison between the predictions of McClintock's model (Equation (8) with n =600 0.5, where the latter is given in Ref. [49] for an Al-matrix) and the experimental data is 601 displayed in Figures 12(c,d) for applied macroscopic deformations up to  $\langle E_{yy} \rangle = 0.75\%$  (i.e. 602 c.a. up to  $\approx \epsilon_{UTS}$ , see Table 3.2). To make the comparison easier, the average value of the 603 mean radius growth  $\ln(R_m/R_{m0})$  is reported for each cellular topology. This quantity was 604 computed from the measurements reported in Figures 12(a,b) for two sets of pores (i.e., for 605 the voids inside and outside the fracture path, see insets of Figures 12(a,b)). For each set 606 of experimental data, the standard deviations at discrete values of the applied axial strain 607 are also reported. Figure 12(c,d) first shows that the growth of the mean pore radius was 608 proportional to the applied macroscopic strain, and was lower for the holes outside the fracture 609 band (compare the blue and red lines across Figure 12(c,d)). These findings are consistent 610 with the results of prior studies [83, 84, 71], and agree well with McClintock's analysis [30]. For 611 this set of pores, the comparison between the predictions of Equation (8) and the experimental 612 data is particularly satisfactory for specimen D20-w03 with elliptical holes (compare black and 613 blue lines in Figure 12(d), thereby confirming that void interactions were small outside the 614 failure band. Conversely, McClintock's model underestimated the measured data for the void 615 growth inside the fracture path (see black and red lines in Figure 12(c,d)). This discrepancy 616 is due to the model assumptions (neglecting void interaction [77]) and is more pronounced 617 for specimen D20-w1 with circular voids. For the latter, void interactions occurred since the 618 very early stages of deformation (Figure 8) and concentrated predominantly within the shear 619 band (Figure 11). 620

The presence of a large irregular defect within the failure band of specimen D20-w1 (highlighted with a red line in Figure 5(a)) likely exacerbated the effects of void interaction, promoting early plastic flow localization. This observation is consistent with prior studies on the effect of void cluster [74, 82, 85], and is likely the cause of the higher discrepancy with McClintocks' model predictions (Figure 12(c)). Tomographic reconstructions in Figure 5(a) also corroborate this statement, providing experimental evidence of the interaction between geometric voids and matrix defects. Notably, they showed that the crack-tip of the defect, highlighted with a red line in Figure 5(a)-bottom cell, coalesced with its closest geometric pores along the direction of the tensile axis.

Closing this section, it is also worth emphasizing some of the main limitations of microme-630 chanical models based on periodic arrays of voids. Since the seminal works of Needleman [66] 631 and Tveergard [67], unit cell models have been successful in rationalizing salient features 632 of ductile fracture processes [86]). While models of this type will likely remain very use-633 ful tools for investigation purposes, they fail to capture most of the findings produced in this 634 study. The latter ones notably included the effects of non-uniform pore distributions on strain 635 heterogeneities and localization (Figures 7, 8 and 10). This point was raised by several au-636 thors [87, 76] and, in turn, opens up novel perspectives for this class of random metamaterials, 637 which may prove attractive *porous systems* for the study of ductile fracture at the mesoscale. 638

#### 639 5. Conclusion

This work investigated experimentally the tensile response of metallic cellular metamaterials that contained randomly-dispersed cylindrical pores at  $\approx 20\%$  in vol. fraction. Their porous architecture was generated numerically via a random sequential absorption algorithm, and was fabricated by LPBF from AlSi10Mg powders.

Using FE-based DIC (where the pore meshes were consistent with the cellular topology), the mesoscale deformation mechanisms were quantified for this class of disordered porous materials. Notably, it was shown that they are distinguished by non-uniform strain distributions and are triggered by the interaction between geometric pores. The latter was, in turn, promoted by the presence of smaller pores and lack-of-fusion defects within the AlSi10Mg matrix, as revealed by X-Ray tomography. Defects of this type resulted from the manufacturing process and are typically observed in parts produced by LPBF.

Equally important, the results of this study showed that the mechanisms of strain concentration varied with the pore geometry and exhibited several common features with the ductile failure mechanisms of metals, albeit at the mesoscale. For example, with increasing pore aspect ratio, fracture occurred by *void-sheet* coalescence and resulted from macroscopic plastic instability. Conversely, more elongated elliptical voids caused diffuse strained areas and delayed the fracture process. Moreover, strain localization affected the void growth rate. It was shown that the pores in the failure band grew much faster than all other pores and that McClintock's model could not predict the experimental data for the average void growth rate in the fracture band.

The results of this study have important implications for micromechanical models used to study void growth and coalescence, and in turn open up novel perspectives for this class of random porous metamaterials as convenient model systems for the study of ductile fracture of metallic alloys.

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# 674 7. Appendix

The backtracking procedure was instrumental to ensure that the DIC meshes were consis-675 tent with the actual pore distribution. In this section, the backtracking technique, allowing 676 the pores to be correctly positioned on the adapted mesh for the two porous specimens is de-677 tailed. The technique uses a correlation algorithm that instead of correlating two consecutive 678 images, as in classical DIC, registers a real and an ideal image [40]. A coarse auxiliary mesh 679 was used to measure the displacement field enabling for the best possible match. To evaluate 680 the quality of the converged solution, the gray level residuals (Section 2.4.1) were analyzed. 681 Grayish zones correspond to good correlation, whereas black and white zones highlight areas 682

with manufacturing defects. For instance, the white zones are associated with lack-of-fusion defects that are present in the real volume section but not in the nominal image.

#### 685 From mask to mesh

This first approach was applied to images acquired by Camera F. In that case, the ideal 686 image consisted in an indexed mask numerically reconstructed starting from the nominal 687 parameters of the porous matrix (i.e., pore positions, orientation and dimensions). A fine 688 triangular mesh was then created on the material indexed zone of the image via the open-689 source software Gmsh [88]. In Figure 13(a), an example is shown for the mesh of specimen 690 D20-w03 for Camera F. The numerical mask was correlated to the real image (first frame 691 captured during testing) through a correlation algorithm thanks to a coarse auxiliary mesh 692 (Figure 13(b)). The coarse mesh assesses the displacement field the ideal mesh should undergo 693 to adapt to the real image. Thanks to an interpolation between the coarse and refined meshes, 694 it is possible to move back each node of the model-based mesh. In Figure 13(b), the coarse 695 mesh is depicted in orange. The correlation residuals after backtracking prove that the pores 696 were properly repositioned (Figure 13(c)). 697



Figure 13: (a) Gmsh generated mesh to be backtracked and superimposed onto the nominal mask. (b) Reference image of Camera F for specimen D20-w03 with the coarse backtracking mesh depicted in orange. (c) Gray level residual map to backtrack the mesh of specimen D20-w03 and Camera F showing that the backtracking procedure was successful.

## 698 From mesh to mask

This technique was applied to the images acquired by Camera R. Its lower resolution did not allow the numerically generated pores to be correlated to those present in the real ro1 image. The correlation was made possible by the curved edges, still visible in Camera R

images, thanks to the lower zoom factor. In the absence of a numerical file containing all 702 positions of pores and edge lines, the numerical mask was built starting from the mesh of 703 the dogbone sample. A 2D .stp file of the full dogbone specimen (not only the porous part) 704 was available. A triangular fine mesh, displayed in Figure 14(a), was directly obtained on 705 the solid part by using the Abaqus interface [89]. The meshed specimen was then manually 706 prepositioned on the reference image and then backtracked. In that case, the indexed mask 707 was built starting from the Abaqus mesh, then imported in the DIC code, and the node to 708 pixel projector was used to determine which pixels belonged to the mesh. Once the mask in 709 Figure 14(b) was obtained, it was correlated with the reference image thanks to the coarse 710 auxiliary mesh represented in Figure 14(c). The displacement field obtained on the coarse 711 mesh was interpolated on the deformed mesh, thus obtaining the backtracked mesh shown in 712 Figure 15(b). 713

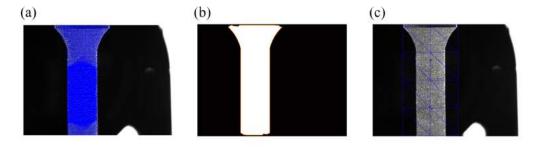


Figure 14: (a) Prepositioned mesh generated on the dogbone CAD model laid over the reference image. (b) Reconstructed mask, and (c) auxiliary (blue) mesh in the reference image

The backtracked meshes for the two porous specimens and both cameras are shown in Figure 15. They were utilized to report DIC analyses at the mescoscale level.

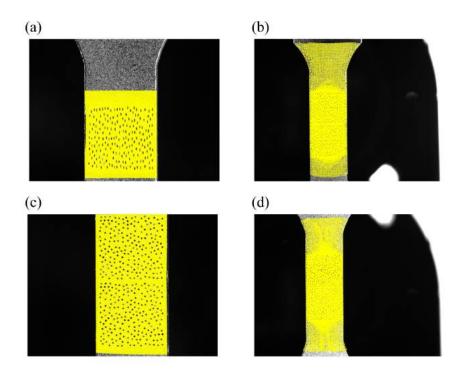


Figure 15: Backtracked meshes of sample D20-w03 for Cameras (a) F and (b) R acquisitions, and specimen D20-w1 for Cameras (c) F and (d) R acquisitions, respectively

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