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## ► To cite this version:

Francesco Zuccarello, Federica Schiavi, Marco Viccaro. The eruption run-up at Mt. Etna volcano: Constraining magma decompression rates and their relationships with the final eruptive energy. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, In press, 597, pp.117821. 10.1016/j.epsl.2022.117821 . hal-03792780

**HAL Id: hal-03792780**

**<https://uca.hal.science/hal-03792780v1>**

Submitted on 30 Sep 2022

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1 **The eruption run-up at Mt. Etna volcano: constraining magma decompression rates and their**  
2 **relationships with the final eruptive energy**

3

4 Francesco Zuccarello<sup>1,2</sup>, Federica Schiavi<sup>3</sup>, Marco Viccaro<sup>1,2</sup>

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6 <sup>1</sup> *Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia – Sezione di Catania, Osservatorio Etneo, Piazza Roma 2, I-95125,*  
7 *Catania, Italy*

8 <sup>2</sup> *Università degli Studi di Catania, Dipartimento di Scienze Biologiche Geologiche e Ambientali, Corso Italia 57, I-*  
9 *95129, Catania, Italy*

10 <sup>3</sup> *Université Clermont-Auvergne, CNRS, IRD, OPGC, Laboratoire Magmas et Volcans, F-63000, Clermont-Ferrand,*  
11 *France*

12

13 Correspondence M. Viccaro, Università degli Studi di Catania, Dipartimento di Scienze Biologiche Geologiche e  
14 Ambientali, Corso Italia 57, I-95129, Catania, Italy. Email: [m.viccaro@unict.it](mailto:m.viccaro@unict.it)

15

16 **Abstract**

17 Although explosivity is linked with high decompression rates induced by magma ascent, the  
18 quantitative relationships between decompression rate and eruption energy have yet to be properly  
19 assessed, especially for open-conduit basaltic volcanoes, where ordinary weak activity can rapidly  
20 evolve into more intense eruptions. Here, we selected three eruptions of different explosivity from  
21 Mt. Etna's recent activity to study the relationships between the observed explosive intensities and  
22 decompression rates determined through diffusion chronometry, which is based on modeling volatile  
23 diffusion along olivine-hosted melt embayments. The approach used in this study has provided  
24 important indications on differences in the timescales of decompression-driven degassing for magmas  
25 emitted with markedly distinct eruptive dynamics, starting from similar physical and chemical  
26 conditions of the magmas involved in the three eruptions. The intense paroxysmal activity at Voragine  
27 Crater on December 3, 2015, was fostered by high decompression rate (~0.36-0.74 MPa/s), slightly  
28 higher than in the less energetic paroxysm that occurred on February 19, 2013, at New South-East  
29 Crater (NSEC) (~0.14-0.29 MPa/s). Decompression rates of magmas emitted during lava fountaining  
30 are one order of magnitude greater than values obtained for the mild flank eruption that occurred in  
31 December 2018 (~0.045-0.094 MPa/s). Our results indicate that degassing kinetics controlled the  
32 intensity of activity at Mt. Etna, thus suggesting that the explosivity does not depend exclusively on

33 the degree of overpressurization of the shallowest reservoir due to injection of gas from the deepest  
34 levels of the plumbing system.

35

36 **Keywords:** Mt. Etna; decompression rate; melt embayment; diffusion modeling; explosivity.

37

## 38 **1. Introduction**

39 The relatively low viscosity of magmas erupted at basaltic volcanoes generally promotes  
40 effusive or weak explosive activity (i.e., Hawaiian and Strombolian). However, basaltic volcanoes  
41 can also show more explosive behavior, occasionally Plinian/Subplinian style (Williams, 1983;  
42 Walker, 1984; Coltelli et al., 2000, Pérez et al., 2009; Lloyd et al., 2014). Highly explosive eruptions  
43 represent the major source of hazard at basaltic volcanoes, but the dynamics of magmatic processes  
44 and triggering mechanisms of these unusual eruptive phenomena are still poorly understood.  
45 Furthermore, the unexpected character of these events makes it difficult to correctly interpret  
46 precursory signals available from monitoring systems, especially at open-system volcanoes  
47 characterized by almost persistent activity, where the origin of such signals may be controversial.

48 Several studies attempted to decipher the processes and factors leading to increased energy  
49 during explosive basaltic eruptions (Houghton et al., 2004; Allard et al., 2005; Lloyd et al., 2014;  
50 Moretti et al., 2018; Arzilli et al., 2019; La Spina et al., 2021). These studies focused on the role of  
51 conduit processes, degassing dynamics, volatile flushing, groundmass crystallization and magma  
52 ascent rates. In particular, the decompression rate induced by syn-eruptive magma ascent is believed  
53 to be crucial in controlling the explosive intensity of an eruption with respect to other factors (e.g.,  
54 melt viscosity, crystallinity, conduit geometry). Syn-eruptive ascent not only determines the  
55 exsolution of volatiles induced by pressure drop, resulting in increased magma buoyancy, but also  
56 controls the style of magma degassing (i.e. equilibrium vs. disequilibrium degassing) and the kinetics  
57 of bubble nucleation, growth and coalescence, in turn determining the volatile overpressure (Mangan  
58 and Cashman, 1996; Mourtada-Bonnefoi and Laporte, 2004; Gonnermann and Manga, 2007;  
59 Rutherford, 2008). Inertial fragmentation or fluid-dynamic breakup of low-viscosity melts are  
60 induced by rapid expansion of bubbles at high decompression rate (Mangan and Cashman, 1996; La  
61 Spina et al., 2021). Kinetics of syn-eruptive degassing also has a significant effect on the rheological  
62 properties of the magma, which depend mainly on crystallinity (which may increase due to ascent-  
63 driven crystallization of the groundmass), the presence of bubbles not escaping from the melt,  
64 temperature variations, and the increase in melt polymerization due to volatile exsolution. Such  
65 parameters strongly control the viscosity of the magma, potentially producing an increase of several

66 orders of magnitude during syn-eruptive ascent and leading therefore to explosive eruptions (Moitra  
67 et al., 2018; Arzilli et al., 2019).

68 Accurate estimation of magma decompression rates is therefore a priority for modern  
69 volcanology. A few estimates are available for both effusive and explosive eruptions involving  
70 magmas of different compositions and viscosities mainly at arc volcanoes, where several methods  
71 based on both geophysical and petrological approaches have been developed (e.g., seismicity,  
72 groundmass crystallization, reaction rims in hydrous crystals; Scandone and Malone, 1985;  
73 Rutherford and Hill, 1993; Geschwind and Rutherford, 1995). Geochronometers based on fast-  
74 diffusing elements in melt and crystals represent a promising technique for estimating decompression  
75 rates caused by syn-eruptive magma ascent rates (Lloyd et al., 2014, 2016; Giuffrida et al., 2018;  
76 Barth et al., 2019; Viccaro et al., 2021; Myers et al., 2021). In this regard, volatile diffusion along  
77 melt pockets partially enclosed within host crystals, called melt embayments or melt tubes  
78 (Humphreys et al., 2008; Lloyd et al., 2014), takes into account elements directly impacted by ascent-  
79 driven degassing dynamics, offering the opportunity to investigate timescales relevant to the syn-  
80 eruptive degassing process (from seconds to hours). This approach measures compositional gradients  
81 of volatile elements ( $H_2O$ ,  $CO_2$ , and S) that are produced by diffusion from the inner part of the  
82 embayment to the outer melt in response to decompression-induced degassing; these gradients can be  
83 numerically modeled in order to retrieve timescales of diffusion.

84 This technique has been applied to arc volcanoes involving basaltic and silica-rich magmas (Liu  
85 et al., 2007; Humphreys et al., 2008; Lloyd et al., 2014; Moussallam et al., 2019; Myers et al., 2021),  
86 as well as to some historical eruptions at Kilauea volcano (Ferguson et al., 2016). However, although  
87 the hypothesis that intense explosive eruptions are correlated with rapid decompression rates finds  
88 general consensus in the scientific community, a true quantification of such relationship has yet to be  
89 properly addressed. To date, there is a need to investigate more cases of open-system, persistently  
90 active basaltic volcanoes, where ordinary Strombolian or effusive activity can suddenly turn into  
91 unusual and unexpected, highly explosive eruptions.

92 This study aims to quantify differences in decompression rates related to variable degrees of  
93 explosivity of basaltic eruptions by modeling volatile diffusion along melt embayments, taking Mt.  
94 Etna, one of the world's most active and best-monitored open-conduit volcanoes, as a case study. The  
95 recent activity of Mt. Etna is characterized by a wide spectrum of eruptive styles, from effusive up to  
96 violent ash-dominated lava fountains occurring during paroxysmal eruptions (Aiuppa et al., 2007;  
97 Cannata et al., 2018; Viccaro et al., 2019; Borzì et al., 2020; Giuffrida et al., 2021), as well as  
98 Subplinian and Plinian events occurred in historical times (Coltelli et al., 2000). Some recent episodes  
99 from the post-2011 activity were selected for this study mainly for the possibility of integrating

100 petrological data with those coming from geophysical signals acquired by monitoring networks  
101 installed on the volcano. The selected eruptions in order of increasing explosive behavior are: 1) the  
102 flank eruption of December 24-27, 2018 (DEC 2018 hereinafter), which affected the upper eastern  
103 side of the volcanic edifice and was accompanied by intense seismic activity (Borzì et al., 2020),  
104 produced an 8-km-high (a.s.l.) eruptive column in the proximal area (Corradini et al., 2020), with a  
105 Mass Eruption Rate (MER) of  $0.90 \times 10^5$  kg/s (inferred using the calculation of Mastin et al., 2009);  
106 2) the lava fountaining episode occurred at the New South East Crater (NSEC) on February 19, 2013  
107 (NSEC 2018 hereinafter), which is part of the intense 2011-2013 paroxysmal activity (Giuffrida and  
108 Viccaro, 2017) and produced a 6-12 km-high (a.s.l.) eruptive plume (Calvari et al., 2018), with MER  
109 of  $1.72 \times 10^5$  kg/s (Freret-Lorgeril et al., 2018); 3) the paroxysmal eruption occurred at Voragine Crater  
110 (VOR) on December 3, 2015 (VOR 2015 hereinafter), which represents the most violent eruptive  
111 event at Mt. Etna over the last 20 years (Cannata et al., 2018), producing a 15-km-high (a.s.l.) eruptive  
112 column (Calvari et al., 2018) with MER of  $1.45 \times 10^6$  kg/s.

113 The choice of a single volcano and episodes from the same eruptive cycle offers the advantage  
114 of reducing the number of variables affecting our modeling, with a fixed plumbing system geometry  
115 at depth and comparable physical and chemical conditions of the erupted magmas (e.g., composition,  
116 temperature, pressure, viscosity and – at least in part – volatile contents). This strategy allows us to  
117 better understand and quantify the relationships between decompression rate and eruptive styles.

118

## 119 **2. Methods**

120 Air-quenched tephra samples were collected in distal areas from the point of emission during  
121 the eruptions and represent the peak in the explosive activity. Samples were sieved with mesh smaller  
122 than 1 cm in order to remove clasts possibly affected by post-eruptive water loss (Lloyd et al., 2013).  
123 The fraction between 2 mm and 1 cm was crushed and picked, whereas the fraction smaller than 2  
124 mm was sieved without crushing. Olivine crystals of 0.35 – 1.00 mm in length were hand-picked  
125 from the clasts under a binocular microscope, mounted individually using the Crystalbond 509  
126 mounting adhesive, and polished with silicon carbide papers (P1200 and P2400) and diamond pastes  
127 (6  $\mu$ m, 3  $\mu$ m, 1  $\mu$ m and  $\frac{1}{4}$   $\mu$ m) until melt embayments were exposed. Then, olivine crystals were  
128 removed from Crystalbond 509 and cleaned in acetone before Raman spectroscopy analyses. Finally,  
129 they were individually embedded in epoxy resin for electron microprobe analysis (EMPA).

130 A Renishaw inVia confocal Raman micro-spectrometer (Laboratoire Magmas et Volcans,  
131 University of Clermont-Auvergne, France) was used for measuring H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations along melt  
132 embayments. The micro-spectrometer is equipped with a  $532.1 \pm 0.3$  nm diode laser (200 mW output  
133 power), a Peltier-cooled CCD detector of 1024×256 pixels, and a Leica DM 2500 M optical

134 microscope with a motorized XYZ stage. The laser beam of about 5 mW power was focused at 2  $\mu\text{m}$   
135 under the sample surface using a 100 $\times$  objective in high confocality setting (slit aperture of 20  $\mu\text{m}$ ).  
136 The spectra were recorded from  $\sim 100$  to  $1350\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (i.e., the spectral region of the alumino-silicate  
137 network vibrations) with acquisition time of 120 seconds and from  $\sim 2900$  to  $3800\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (i.e., the  
138 spectral region of the O-H vibrations) for 240 seconds using the WiRE<sup>TM</sup> 4.2 software. Basaltic  
139 glasses with different water contents (0 to 2.28 wt.%; Schiavi et al., 2018, and references therein)  
140 were used for water quantification using the external calibration procedure (Schiavi et al., 2018) and  
141 were analyzed several times during each analytical session in order to correct for the influence of the  
142 delivered energy on the band intensities (see Supplementary material for the calibration line).  
143 Analytical precision measured on reference glasses was better than 5% relative. The estimated  
144 accuracy is about 15% relative. Profile compositions of H<sub>2</sub>O were measured along the central part of  
145 the embayments, from the inner toward the mouth of the melt tubes, with a spacing between each  
146 spot on the order of 5-8  $\mu\text{m}$ .

147 Major elements, S and Cl in embayments were measured at the Dipartimento di Scienze della  
148 Terra, University of Milan, using a JEOL JXA 8200 Superprobe equipped with five wavelength  
149 dispersive spectrometers (WDS), one energy dispersive spectrometer (EDS) and one  
150 cathodoluminescence detector. The radius of Rowland circle is 140 mm for spectrometers 1, 2 and 3,  
151 bearing LDE1, LDE2, LDEB, TAP, PET, and LiF crystals and 100 mm for spectrometers 4 and 5,  
152 bearing a PETH and a LIFH crystals. Analytical conditions of 5  $\mu\text{m}$  beam at 15 kV accelerating  
153 voltage and  $\sim 5$  nA beam current were used. Analytical precision for all measured elements is on the  
154 order of 5%.

155 A Tescan Vega-LMU scanning electron microscope was also used for collecting major  
156 elements in olivine at the Dipartimento di Scienze Biologiche, Geologiche e Ambientali of the  
157 University of Catania (Italy). The microscope is equipped with an EDAX Neptune XM4-60 EDS  
158 micro-analyzer using an EDS coupled with an EDAX WDS LEXS (low energy WDS) calibrated for  
159 light elements. Operating conditions were set at 20 kV accelerating voltage and  $\sim 2$  nA beam current.  
160 Repeated analyses on SPI 02753-AB Serial KF certified standards (Fo-rich olivine) during the  
161 analytical runs provided precision for all measured elements of 3-5%. Accuracy is on the order of  
162 5%.

163

### 164 **3. Results**

165 Juvenile fragments (sideromelane and tachylite), crystals and lithics constitute the components  
166 of the analyzed pyroclasts (Fig. 1a). Juvenile fragments are abundant in the lava fountaining episodes  
167 (66 and 90 vol% respectively for NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015; Fig. 1b-d), whereas the highest

168 percentage of lithics (~50 vol%; Fig. 1e) was observed in DEC 2018 tephra. Crystals consist mainly  
169 of plagioclase and represent <5 vol%.

170 Three types of external morphologies were recognized in the juvenile fragments: spongy,  
171 fluidal, and blocky (cf. Pompilio et al., 2017). Both spongy and fluidal morphologies are present in  
172 sideromelane clasts of the NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 eruptions, although spongy morphology is  
173 prevalent in VOR 2015 products. These types of clasts show irregular shapes and contain a large  
174 number of small spherical or elliptical coalesced vesicles (Fig. 1b). Fluidal morphology mainly  
175 characterizes sideromelane clasts of the NSEC 2013 and DEC 2018 products. Interconnected tubular  
176 vesicles are common and are responsible for the elongated shape of these clasts (Fig. 1c). The  
177 groundmass of both spongy and fluidal clasts is characterized by low crystallinity. Blocky  
178 morphologies are mainly observed in tachylite clasts, which are affected by randomly oriented cracks  
179 and have low vesicularity (Fig. 1d). Blocky clasts are generally more crystalline compared to spongy  
180 and fluidal clasts; microlites of plagioclase are predominant in blocky clasts.

181 Fifteen olivine crystals hosting melt-embayments were selected for this study: 5 from NSEC  
182 2013 products, 6 from VOR 2015 products and 4 from DEC 2018 products. Olivines occur as  
183 subhedral crystals, with rounded edges in the rim portion where the analyzed embayments are located  
184 (Fig. 2). Visible portions of surrounding glasses show variable proportions of microcrysts and  
185 vesicles: NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 glasses are more vesiculated and less crystallized than DEC  
186 2018 glasses, and plagioclase microcrysts observed in VOR 2015 glasses are chiefly acicular or  
187 swallow-tailed (Fig. 1f-h). The examined melt-embayments are mostly tubular-shaped (Fig. 2a-c),  
188 but few samples display a more irregular shape (Fig. 2d). A vesicle on the open side of the tube  
189 evidences the occurrence of a bubble, which is a key condition to constrain the boundary condition  
190 at end of the melt tube in diffusion models. The size of the embayments ranges between 49 and 144  
191  $\mu\text{m}$ , with longer embayments more common in NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 products than in DEC  
192 2018.

193 The embayments are hosted in olivine crystals with core compositions ranging from  $\text{Fo}_{74}$  to  
194  $\text{Fo}_{84}$ , whereas the olivine rims show a narrower range from  $\text{Fo}_{74}$  to  $\text{Fo}_{79}$ , with a higher average  
195 forsterite content for VOR 2015 samples, indicating the existence of compositional zoning (i.e.,  
196 normal and reverse) from the core of the crystals to the rim. Post-entrapment crystallization (PEC)  
197 effects on major elements compositions are not considered, since volatiles in embayments are the  
198 main objects of interest in this study. Glasses in the studied embayments for the three eruptive  
199 episodes display similar major element compositions, which are also rather uniform throughout the  
200 embayments (Fig. 3; Table S1), whereas matrix glasses outside the host olivine show slightly more  
201 evolved compositions (Table S1).

202 Water concentration profiles measured using Raman spectroscopy show that the concentrations  
203 progressively decrease toward the opening of the embayment (Fig. 4a-c; Table S2). The embayment  
204 interior of the NSEC 2013 samples shows water concentrations in the range of 0.9-1.3 wt.%. Higher  
205 contents in the range of 1.1-1.7 wt.% characterize the VOR 2015 embayments, except for one sample  
206 with a lower concentration (~0.9 wt.%; Fig. 4b). Markedly lower concentrations (0.3-0.7 wt.%) were  
207 measured in the DEC 2018 embayments. For each eruptive episode, the highest H<sub>2</sub>O contents were  
208 found in the longest embayments, indicating that diffusive volatile loss affected the shorter ones more  
209 extensively. The three eruptive episodes selected for this study differ in the shape of water gradients.  
210 The VOR 2015 embayments show slightly decreasing concentrations from the innermost portions  
211 toward the opening, while a steep gradient is observed in the last 30-40 μm before the bubble, where  
212 H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations drop to ~0.2-0.5 wt.%. Less steep gradients are observed in the NSEC 2013  
213 embayments starting from 50-70 μm from the opening. The DEC 2018 embayments also display  
214 gentle gradients, reaching contents of 0.1-0.3 wt.% at the mouth.

215 Sulfur measurements in the interior of the embayments show that VOR 2015 samples are  
216 characterized by slightly higher concentrations, on the order of 718-1300 ppm, than the NSEC 2013  
217 products, with concentrations of 809-1150 ppm, except for one sample characterized by a very low S  
218 content (~153-260 ppm) (Fig. 4d-f; Table S1). Compared to NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 samples, the  
219 DEC 2018 products have slightly lower S concentrations ranging from 660 to 885 ppm. Although the  
220 concentrations generally decrease toward the open side of the embayments, clear gradient profiles  
221 cannot be recognized in some of the analyzed samples.

222 No gradients are observed for Cl in the studied embayments (Fig. 4g-i; Table S1). NSEC 2013  
223 and VOR 2015 display similar concentrations ranging from 906 to 1721 ppm, with an average value  
224 of 1400 ppm. The interior of the embayments from the DEC 2018 eruption is characterized by higher  
225 Cl concentrations, which range between 2030 and 2137 ppm.

226 No CO<sub>2</sub> data are available for the selected embayments from the recent activity at Mt. Etna.  
227 Therefore, the modeling is applied considering only the diffusion of H<sub>2</sub>O and S.

228

## 229 **4. Discussion**

### 230 *4.1 Definition of the initial and boundary conditions for the diffusion modeling*

231 Open melt tubes are generally considered to be under continuous exchange with the external  
232 melt. However, slight differences in their compositions indicate that equilibrium between the  
233 embayments and the external melt was not completely attained. The equilibrium between the host  
234 olivines and the melt-embayments and surrounding melt was evaluated by plotting Mg# of melts  
235 versus Fo measured at the rim of the host crystals (Fig. 5); the equilibrium Fo calculated using either



236 the  $K_d^{\text{Mg-Fe}}_{\text{Ol-liq}} = 0.30$  (Roeder and Emslie, 1970) or the  $K_d$  predicted (0.27-0.28) using the model by  
237 Toplis (2005) are shown. The compositions of the embayment melts plot outside the equilibrium  
238 field, having lower Mg# than that predicted to be in equilibrium with Fo<sub>74-79</sub>. Similarly, the  
239 composition of DEC 2018 matrix glasses is in disequilibrium with the Fo at the olivine rim. By  
240 contrast, the Mg# values of the matrix glasses in NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 samples are in  
241 equilibrium with the Fo values measured at the olivine rims. This evidence suggests that  
242 crystallization of the host olivine at the interface with the NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 embayments  
243 may have induced some modifications in melt compositions before the final ascent, as highlighted by  
244 a slight decrease in MgO in the inner part of the embayment of few samples. The low diffusivities of  
245 major elements prevent the restoration of equilibrium between the embayments and the external melt,  
246 producing thus the observed differences.

247 Thermodynamic modeling performed using rhyolite-MELTS software (Gualda et al., 2012)  
248 tracks the evolution of melt composition in melt inclusions from the same eruptive episodes  
249 (Zuccarello et al., 2021). The modeling indicates that the equilibrium between the observed Fo  
250 compositions at olivine rims and the surrounding melts occurs at 18-24 MPa, 43-77 MPa and 59-116  
251 MPa for DEC 2018, NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 samples, respectively. One way to test the accuracy  
252 of these constraints is to determine the saturation pressures of volatiles following the approach  
253 described in Lloyd et al. (2014). Specifically, S diffusivity is lower than H<sub>2</sub>O diffusivity (Zhang et  
254 al., 2007), potentially preserving its initial concentrations in the embayments interior during syn-  
255 eruptive degassing in timescales of 10 to 20 minutes, as demonstrated by Lloyd et al. (2014). This is  
256 not expected during pre-eruptive degassing, which takes place several hours or days before the  
257 eruption, allowing to restore the equilibrium with the external melt. The developing of a combined  
258 H<sub>2</sub>O-CO<sub>2</sub>-S degassing modeling, derived from melt inclusion compositions (Fig. 6; Zuccarello et al.,  
259 2021), allowed us to constrain both initial volatile concentrations and initial pressures for the diffusion  
260 modeling, by considering H<sub>2</sub>O as the intermediate component between the H<sub>2</sub>O-S and H<sub>2</sub>O-CO<sub>2</sub>  
261 degassing models. Assuming that the concentration of S measured in the interior of the embayment  
262 is representative of its original content before ascent, the associated H<sub>2</sub>O value derived from the H<sub>2</sub>O-  
263 S degassing path (Fig. 6a) can be adopted as the initial concentration for diffusion modeling (Lloyd  
264 et al., 2014). Then, the H<sub>2</sub>O value inferred from the H<sub>2</sub>O-S model is used to constrain the saturation  
265 pressure on the H<sub>2</sub>O-CO<sub>2</sub> degassing path, which is modeled as a closed system with an initial fraction  
266 of gas already exsolved of 0.03 (Zuccarello et al., 2021), as defined using VolatileCalc (Newman and  
267 Lowenstern, 2002). This saturation pressure is therefore assumed as initial for the diffusion modeling.  
268 Sulfur degassing can be modeled through mass balance calculations as suggested by Spilliaert et al.  
269 (2006), who provide the calculation of bulk partition coefficients ( $D$ ) of S as a function of

270 decompression and melt evolution. The closed-system degassing for S (Fig. 6a) is simulated at each  
271 step of degassing by using the batch fraction equation with initial H<sub>2</sub>O = 3.37 wt.% at 300 MPa,  
272 according to the H<sub>2</sub>O-CO<sub>2</sub> degassing path (Fig. 6b; Zuccarello et al., 2021). Initial exsolution of S  
273 occurs at lower pressure (Spilliaert et al., 2006), and the closed-system degassing has been modeled  
274 starting from the highest S concentration measured in melt inclusions, 3065 ppm, at a pressure of 180  
275 MPa, which is derived from H<sub>2</sub>O-CO<sub>2</sub> modeling at a corresponding H<sub>2</sub>O content of 2.9 wt.% (details  
276 are reported in the Supplementary material). Estimated initial S exsolution pressure and vapor/melt  
277 bulk partition coefficient *D* (which increases progressively from 1 to 60) are consistent with values  
278 defined for past eruptions at Mt. Etna (Spilliaert et al., 2006).

279 Saturation pressures derived through S degassing model are 80-96 MPa, 62-95 MPa and 95-  
280 108 MPa for DEC 2018, NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015, respectively. These values are rather consistent  
281 with those inferred from thermodynamic equilibrium between external glasses and olivine rims for  
282 NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 and significantly greater for DEC 2018, similar to those estimated for  
283 NSEC 2013. We assume that DEC 2018 samples were in equilibrium with the surrounding melt  
284 before the final ascent, and that syn-eruptive matrix crystallization may have led to subsequent  
285 disequilibrium with greater effects on DEC 2018 (Fig. 5) than NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 products,  
286 according with petrographic observations. Therefore, we choose to use as initial pressures those  
287 estimated from the volatile degassing model approach. The conversion of the inferred starting  
288 pressures to depths is performed by considering an average lithostatic density of 2700 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, resulting  
289 in 0.2 km a.s.l. – 0.9 km b.s.l. and 0.9–1.2 km b.s.l. respectively for the NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015  
290 eruptions. These depths are consistent with the sources estimated by strainmeters data, which  
291 recorded strain changes of the summit area during lava fountaining episodes caused by sources  
292 located at 0 and 1.5 km b.s.l., respectively, for the paroxysmal series occurred at NSEC during the  
293 2011-2013 activity (Bonaccorso et al., 2013) and for the paroxysmal activity at VOR on 3-5  
294 December 2015 (Bonaccorso and Calvari, 2017). Analogously to what was observed for the 2011-  
295 2013 activity at NSEC, even the source feeding the intrusion of DEC 2018 eruption was located at a  
296 depth of 0 km b.s.l. (Aloisi et al., 2020), in agreement with the constraints derived from the degassing  
297 model. The associated initial H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations for NSEC 2013, VOR 2015 and DEC 2018  
298 embayments are constrained respectively in the range of 1.88–2.25 wt.%, 2.28–2.41 wt.% and 2.11–  
299 2.29 wt.%.

300 Diffusion coefficient is a critical parameter that strongly influences the modeling. Estimation  
301 of diffusion coefficient is based on the Arrhenius law and is chiefly a function of temperature,  
302 pressure, and melt compositions. For magmas of mafic to intermediate composition, pressure has a

303 minor influence on H<sub>2</sub>O diffusivity and can be neglected. Thus, H<sub>2</sub>O diffusivity is estimated following  
304 the equation defined experimentally by Zhang et al. (2007):

$$D_{H_2O} = C_{H_2O} \exp\left(-8.56 - \frac{19110}{T}\right) \quad [1]$$

305 where  $C_{H_2O}$  is the concentration of water in wt.%,  $D_{H_2O}$  the water diffusion coefficient in m<sup>2</sup>/s and  $T$   
306 the temperature in K. This equation was developed for basaltic melts, but the influence of variations  
307 in melt compositions on  $D_{H_2O}$  is not considered. The effect of melt compositions on  $D_{H_2O}$  can be  
308 parametrized as a function of the NBO/T ratio (Lloyd et al., 2014). The embayments investigated in  
309 this study display uniform major element compositions, so an average value of NBO/T can be  
310 considered for the H<sub>2</sub>O diffusivity correction. We used the method described in Prata et al. (2019) in  
311 assigning cations to the role of T and for the calculation of NBO/T, providing an average value of  
312 NBO/T  $\sim 0.53 \pm 0.04$  for the melt compositions of the studied embayments, which can be broadly  
313 assumed to be intermediate between basalts and more evolved terms such as andesites and trachytes.  
314 The parametrization (Fig. 7) was performed by defining two distinct linear relationships between  
315 NBO/T and  $\text{Log}D_{H_2O}$  calculated using as end members a basaltic composition (NBO/T = 0.82; Zhang  
316 et al., 2007) and either andesitic (NBO/T = 0.26; Behrens et al., 2004) or trachytic compositions  
317 (NBO/T = 0.16; Freda et al. (2003)). The two parametrizations were performed at  $T = 1080$  °C and  
318 H<sub>2</sub>O = 2.41 wt.%, being respectively the temperature used to run the diffusion modeling (see below)  
319 and the highest H<sub>2</sub>O value used as initial concentration. Although different from Etnean melt  
320 compositions, the andesitic and trachytic terms are the most similar among those available in the  
321 literature that are useful for the parametrization. The resulting  $D_{H_2O}$  for NBO/T = 0.53 ( $\pm 0.04$ ) is  
322 lower than the diffusivity calculated through the equation [1] by a factor of 0.25 ( $\pm 0.04$ ) and 0.52  
323 ( $\pm 0.04$ ) in the case of basalt-andesite and basalt-trachyte parametrization, respectively. The same  
324 parametrization at lower H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations provided the same value of the correction factor. Two  
325 distinct diffusion models have been therefore performed for each embayment, considering the  
326 correction of  $D_{H_2O}$  parametrized as a function of either the andesitic or trachytic end-member, i.e.  
327 multiplying the equation [1] by 0.25 and 0.52 respectively.

328 Diffusivity of S is dependent not only on temperature and composition, but also on oxygen  
329 fugacity, which affects the speciation of sulfur in the melt. Indeed, changing from oxidizing to  
330 reducing conditions results in an increase of about 2.5 orders of magnitude in diffusivity (Zhang et  
331 al., 2007). Such a dependence makes it difficult to develop a general equation to define S diffusivity.  
332 However, based on experiments on Etna and Stromboli melts,  $D_S$  was defined for basaltic liquids at  
333 conditions of  $\sim 3$  log units below the quartz-fayalite-magnetite (QFM) buffer, taking into account the  
334 dependence on H<sub>2</sub>O concentration (Zhang et al., 2007 and references therein):

$$D_S = \exp\left(-8.21 - \frac{27692 - 651.6C_{H_2O}}{T}\right) \quad [2]$$

335 Although experiments conditions are more reduced compared to that inferred for Etnean magma  
 336 (QFM; Zuccarello et al., 2021), the equation [2] was used for calculating S diffusivity for Mt. Etna  
 337 melts in absence of other experiments on more oxidized systems.

338 A one-dimensional diffusion has been used for modeling the concentration profiles. Initial  
 339 volatile concentrations are assumed to be homogeneous throughout the embayments and during  
 340 diffusion mass exchange is allowed only from the interior of the embayment to the bubble growing  
 341 at its mouth. The concentration at the interface between the melt and the bubble at the embayment  
 342 outlet varies as the volatile content in the surrounding melt changes, according to the pressure-  
 343 dependent degassing model. In contrast, zero-flux is assumed in the interior of the embayment  
 344 adjacent to the host olivine crystal, and no exchange with (or growth of) the host olivine is assumed.  
 345 Measured H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations in the matrix glasses surrounding the host crystals are 0.13-0.35 wt.%  
 346 and have been used to constrain the final concentrations. The corresponding pressures of 1-2 MPa  
 347 have been used as final conditions for diffusion simulations, assuming instantaneous magma cooling.  
 348 The diffusion coefficient has been estimated at isothermal conditions during the ascent with a  
 349 temperature of 1080 °C (±10 °C). This corresponds to the average value constrained by  
 350 thermodynamic simulations for melts of similar compositions to those measured in the embayments  
 351 (Zuccarello et al., 2021), which is also consistent with the temperature of Mt. Etna lavas measured at  
 352 the vent (Calvari et al., 1994). Thus, decompression rate ( $dP/dt$ ) is the only free parameter allowed to  
 353 change in the diffusion model, with the goal of identifying the value of decompression rate that  
 354 minimizes the misfit with the measured H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations in the embayment. During  
 355 decompression, the volatile concentration at the embayment outlet changes as a function of the  
 356 solubility and the pressure calculated at each step of the simulation. Therefore, variations in  $dP/dt$   
 357 affect the shape of the modeled gradients for same initial conditions. Simulations have been  
 358 performed through a script code in Python language by changing progressively  $dP/dt$  within a defined  
 359 range. Since gradients and diffusivity are better characterized for H<sub>2</sub>O than for S, the best fit is  
 360 determined by minimizing the  $\chi^2$  for H<sub>2</sub>O modeling as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(C_i - y_i)^2}{\sigma_i^2} \quad [3]$$

361 where  $C_i$  is the measured H<sub>2</sub>O concentration at  $i$  position in the compositional profile,  $y_i$  is the  
 362 modeled concentration and  $\sigma_i$  is the uncertainty associated to the measured concentration (estimated  
 363 at 8% relative by Raman spectroscopy). Major sources of error are represented by uncertainties in  
 364 estimated  $T$ , correction factors for the calculation of  $D_{H_2O}$ , and initial H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations constrained

365 by the degassing model. A Monte Carlo approach has been employed in order to evaluate the  
 366 uncertainty for each modeling by running one thousand up to ten thousand simulations, where these  
 367 parameters have been randomly set within the estimated uncertainties assuming a normal distribution  
 368 around the constrained central value ( $2\sigma_T = \pm 10$  °C,  $2\sigma_{\text{corr. factor}} = \pm 0.04$ ,  $2\sigma_{H_2O_i} = \pm 0.25$  wt.%). The  
 369 accuracy associated to the equation [1] determined by Zhang et al. (2007) has not been included in  
 370 the error evaluation since it would systematically affect each decompression rate estimation of the  
 371 same factor ( $\sim 3.5$ - $4$  in terms of MPa/s). The approach described above estimates a constant  
 372 decompression rate for each compositional profile modeled in the embayments, assuming that  
 373 decompression is only driven by magma ascent through the conduit. The conversion to  
 374 decompression rate is justified by the presence of the bubble at the embayment mouth, presumably  
 375 throughout the magma ascent, given that heterogeneous bubble nucleation requires very low  
 376 supersaturation pressures (Shea, 2017). In natural systems, it is reasonable that the decompression  
 377 rate from the reservoir to the surface is not constant due to the steep, nonlinear pressure gradients  
 378 linked with magma vesiculation and fragmentation (Myers et al., 2021), so the estimates provided by  
 379 diffusion modeling can be considered as integrated average values recorded by each embayment  
 380 investigated in this study. For each modeling, the associated timescale  $t$  is calculated as:

$$t = \frac{P_i - P_f}{dP/dt} \quad [4]$$

381 where  $P_i$  and  $P_f$  are the initial and final pressures and  $dP/dt$  is the corresponding decompression rate.  
 382 The conversion into ascent velocity is calculated as:

$$v = \frac{1}{t} \left( \frac{P_i - P_f}{\rho g} \right) \quad [5]$$

383 where  $\rho$  is the average lithostatic density and  $g$  is the gravitational acceleration ( $9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$ ).

#### 384 385 *4.2 Relationships between magma decompression rates and explosivity*

386 Microanalyses along olivine-hosted melt embayments highlight  $H_2O$  concentration gradients in  
 387 all the analyzed samples. Many samples display irregular concentration gradients for S, so that only  
 388 those suitable for diffusion modeling were selected. The results of the volatile diffusion modeling are  
 389 concordant with the expected increase in decompression rates as the explosivity of eruptions  
 390 increases, where the highest decompression rates have been calculated for the VOR 2015 eruption  
 391 (Fig. 8; Table 1). Modeling performed by using the correction factor of 0.25 yielded decompression  
 392 rates of 0.28-0.44 MPa/s for VOR 2015 eruption (average  $\sim 0.36 \pm 0.09$  MPa/s), 0.09-0.20 MPa/s for  
 393 NSEC 2013 eruption ( $\sim 0.14 \pm 0.10$  MPa/s) and 0.016-0.071 MPa/s for DEC 2018 eruption ( $\sim 0.045$   
 394  $\pm 0.024$  MPa/s). Two outliers are represented by the samples NSEC\_EMB3 and VOR\_EMB2, with  
 395 decompression rates of  $0.35 \pm 0.06$  MPa/s and  $0.039 \pm 0.008$  MPa/s respectively. Considering the

396 correction factor of 0.52, we obtained decompression rates of 0.55-0.92 MPa/s for VOR 2015  
397 eruption ( $\sim 0.76 \pm 0.18$  MPa/s), 0.18-0.41 MPa/s for NSEC 2013 eruption ( $\sim 0.29 \pm 0.10$  MPa/s) and  
398 0.035-0.150 MPa/s for DEC 2018 eruption ( $\sim 0.094 \pm 0.051$  MPa/s), where the same outliers from  
399 NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 produced respectively  $0.72 \pm 0.10$  MPa/s and  $0.080 \pm 0.010$  MPa/s.  
400 Excluding the outliers, the associated total ascent times range from 1.7 to 6.9 minutes for VOR 2015,  
401 from 3.8 to 13.8 minutes for NSEC 2013 and from 9.8 to 83.3 minutes for DEC 2018 eruption. The  
402 deviation of the NSEC 2013 outlier from other embayments of the same sample can be attributed to  
403 a greater effect of bubble expansion at the mouth of a small embayment in producing an apparently  
404 higher decompression rate. The longer time estimated for one sample of VOR 2015 eruption (20-40  
405 minutes) could be related to a portion of magma ascending at a lower rate during the increase in  
406 Strombolian activity before the paroxysmal phase, and then being incorporated into the main flow.  
407 Such inference is consistent with the timing of the infrasonic early warning detected 30 minutes  
408 before the onset of the paroxysmal phase during the VOR 2015 episode (Ripepe et al., 2018).  
409 Alternatively, this olivine crystal could have been incorporated in the slowly ascending portion of the  
410 multiphase flow in contact with the wall of the conduit, where greater cooling and crystallization may  
411 lead to increased viscosity (Taddeucci et al., 2004). Estimated  $\chi^2$  values (Table 1) suggest good fits  
412 for the H<sub>2</sub>O modeling (Fig. 9), considering the significance level at 5% and the degree of freedom  
413 (DF) calculated as:  $DF = N_D - 1$ , where  $N_D$  is the number of data points of the modeled embayment.  
414 A few samples are characterized by relatively high  $\chi^2$ , possibly due to variation in decompression rate  
415 that affects natural samples (e.g., the VOR 2015 outlier) or because of slightly irregular H<sub>2</sub>O gradients  
416 in samples with either a narrow tube neck or a wider mouth opening at the end of the tube, which,  
417 coupled with the effect of bubble expansion, can lead to an over-steepening of the H<sub>2</sub>O profile  
418 predicted by one-dimensional numerical approaches. Therefore, diffusivity is strongly dependent on  
419 the embayment shape (deGraffenried and Shea, 2020) and more reliable results from one dimensional  
420 diffusion are obtained for tubular-shaped embayments. Concerning S profiles, too high  $\chi^2$  values  
421 resulted from modeling S diffusion at the same decompression rates estimated for H<sub>2</sub>O diffusion, so  
422 they cannot be used to determine the goodness of fitting ( $\chi^2 > 1000$ ).

423 The results obtained by modeling volatile diffusion in the embayments are overall consistent  
424 with the rates previously estimated for eruptions of comparable explosivity (e.g., Lloyd et al., 2014;  
425 Ferguson et al., 2016; Giuffrida et al., 2018). Ascent velocities estimated in this study for the intense  
426 NSEC 2013 and VOR 2015 eruptions at Mt. Etna are within the range obtained by Li diffusion  
427 modeling on plagioclase for some lava fountaining episodes from the 2011-2013 paroxysmal series  
428 at NSEC (4 – 64 m/s; Giuffrida et al., 2018). In addition, volatile diffusion modeling in embayments  
429 from the highly explosive 1974 eruption at Volcan de Fuego (Lloyd et al., 2014) and from the

430 Keanakakoi Layer 6 (Kilauea; c. 1650 CE; Ferguson et al., 2016) provided decompression rates of  
431 0.32 – 0.47 MPa/s and ~ 0.45 MPa/s, respectively, which are comparable with those obtained for the  
432 lava fountaining of VOR 2015 eruption (0.36 – 0.79 MPa/s). Finally, the maximum timescales of  
433 magma ascent calculated for the DEC 2018 eruption (up to 83 minutes) are consistent with the  
434 beginning of the seismic sequence which affected the flank of the volcanic edifice a couple of hours  
435 before the opening of the fracture (Alparone et al., 2020).

436 Concerning the lava fountain episodes, the slightly deeper overpressurization of the source  
437 feeding the lava fountain during the VOR 2015 eruption may constitute the driving force behind the  
438 higher decompression rates estimated for this eruption compared with the NSEC 2013 lava  
439 fountaining. On the other hand, the higher MER of VOR 2015 compared with NSEC 2013 ( $1.45 \times 10^6$   
440 kg/s and  $1.72 \times 10^5$  kg/s, respectively; Freret-Lorgeril et al., 2018) can be related to a larger conduit  
441 radius of the VOR than the NSEC, whose respective values of 3.4 m and 1.6 m were calculated by  
442 taking into account the conservation of mass, expressed as  $Q = \rho u A$ , where  $Q$  is the MER (kg/s),  $\rho$  is  
443 the density of the multiphase fluid composed of liquid and gas,  $u$  is the ascent velocity (m/s), and  $A$   
444 is the cross-sectional conduit area (m<sup>2</sup>). A larger conduit size should allow more efficient syn-eruptive  
445 outgassing, in turn leading to an increase in MER and decompression rate.

446

## 447 **5. Concluding remarks and implications**

448 Selected eruptive episodes from the recent, post-2011 activity at Mt. Etna characterized by  
449 different explosivity allowed us to get insights into kinetics of magma ascent, evaluating how  
450 differences in magma decompression rates influence the energy of eruptions at an open-conduit  
451 basaltic volcano. Results from volatile diffusion modeling have demonstrated that the degree of  
452 explosivity of eruptions fed by magmas with similar initial physical and chemical conditions is  
453 positively correlated with decompression rates. In this regard, the magma erupted during the DEC  
454 2018 event produced low-energy explosive activity compared to the two lava fountaining episodes,  
455 because of lower magma decompression rates (~ 0.045-0.094 MPa/s) than those estimated for the  
456 powerful VOR 2015 (~ 0.36-0.76 MPa/s) and NSEC 2013 (~ 0.14-0.29 MPa/s) eruptions. These  
457 results are consistent with the more dehydrated features observed in the melt inclusions found in DEC  
458 2018 products, where depleted H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations were attributed to melt re-equilibration by  
459 diffusive water loss (Zuccarello et al., 2021). Significant dehydration can affect magmas under open-  
460 system degassing conditions during storage at pressures <200 MPa, where CO<sub>2</sub> flushing leads to  
461 simulate a closed-system degassing path. Here, we have shown that the final degree of dehydration  
462 is strongly dependent on the kinetics of syn-eruptive ascent to the surface. Indeed, high magma  
463 decompression rate enables part of the initial H<sub>2</sub>O cargo (up to 4.0 wt.% in these products) to be

464 retained, which coupled with changes in the rheological properties of the magma leads to an increase  
465 in gas overpressure. On the contrary, low magma decompression rates favor the escape of volatiles  
466 from the melt, inducing therefore more extensive water depletion in melt inclusions by diffusive loss.

467 Previous studies highlighted a prominent role of gas flushing from the deepest levels of the  
468 plumbing system as a major factor controlling explosive dynamics (Allard et al., 2005; Aiuppa et al.,  
469 2007; Moretti et al., 2018). In this regard, the collapsing foam model (Vergnolle and Jaupart, 1986)  
470 has been so far considered more appropriate for explaining the explosive activity at Mt. Etna.  
471 However, results obtained from volatile diffusion modeling also highlight an important contribution  
472 of syn-eruptive degassing and its kinetics in determining the degree of magma fragmentation (i.e.,  
473 rise speed model; Parfitt and Wilson, 1995). This inference is also supported by the nature of erupted  
474 tephra, testified by the presence of highly vesiculated and microlite-poor sideromelane emitted during  
475 paroxysmal episodes. As inferred from the investigation of textural characteristics of tephra emitted  
476 during other explosive eruptions in the last decades (e.g., the 2000 AD paroxysmal series at the South  
477 East Crater; Polacci et al., 2006), a combination of both degassing models can therefore explain the  
478 dynamics of explosive eruptions at Mt. Etna, where fast syn-eruptive degassing has major effects  
479 during the peak of lava fountaining, enabling a more efficient magma fragmentation. This study also  
480 emphasizes how the ability of Mount Etna volcano in transferring magmas throughout the upper part  
481 of the plumbing system can change over rather limited timespans, even when the same basic and  
482 volatile-rich magmas are involved. The chance to degas the original high volatile load more or less  
483 efficiently, which is indeed related to variable decompression rates experienced during the final  
484 ascent, can have therefore significant influence on the ensuing eruptive behavior, with dramatic  
485 repercussions in terms of hazard associated.

486

## 487 **Acknowledgements**

488 Francesco Zuccarello acknowledges the PhD fellowship and two PhD research grants from the  
489 University of Catania. This work was also supported by the funding program PIACERI 2020-22 of  
490 the University of Catania, project PAROSSISMA, code 22722132140 (Principal Investigator M.  
491 Viccaro). The Authors are also thankful to Andrea Risplendente for his technical support during the  
492 EMP data acquisition at the University of Milan and to Alessandro Aiuppa and Sumit Chakraborty  
493 for their comments during the manuscript preparation. The editorial handling of Chiara Maria Petrone  
494 has been greatly appreciated, together with the helpful suggestions provided by Madeleine  
495 Humphreys, Tom Shea and other three anonymous reviewers.

496

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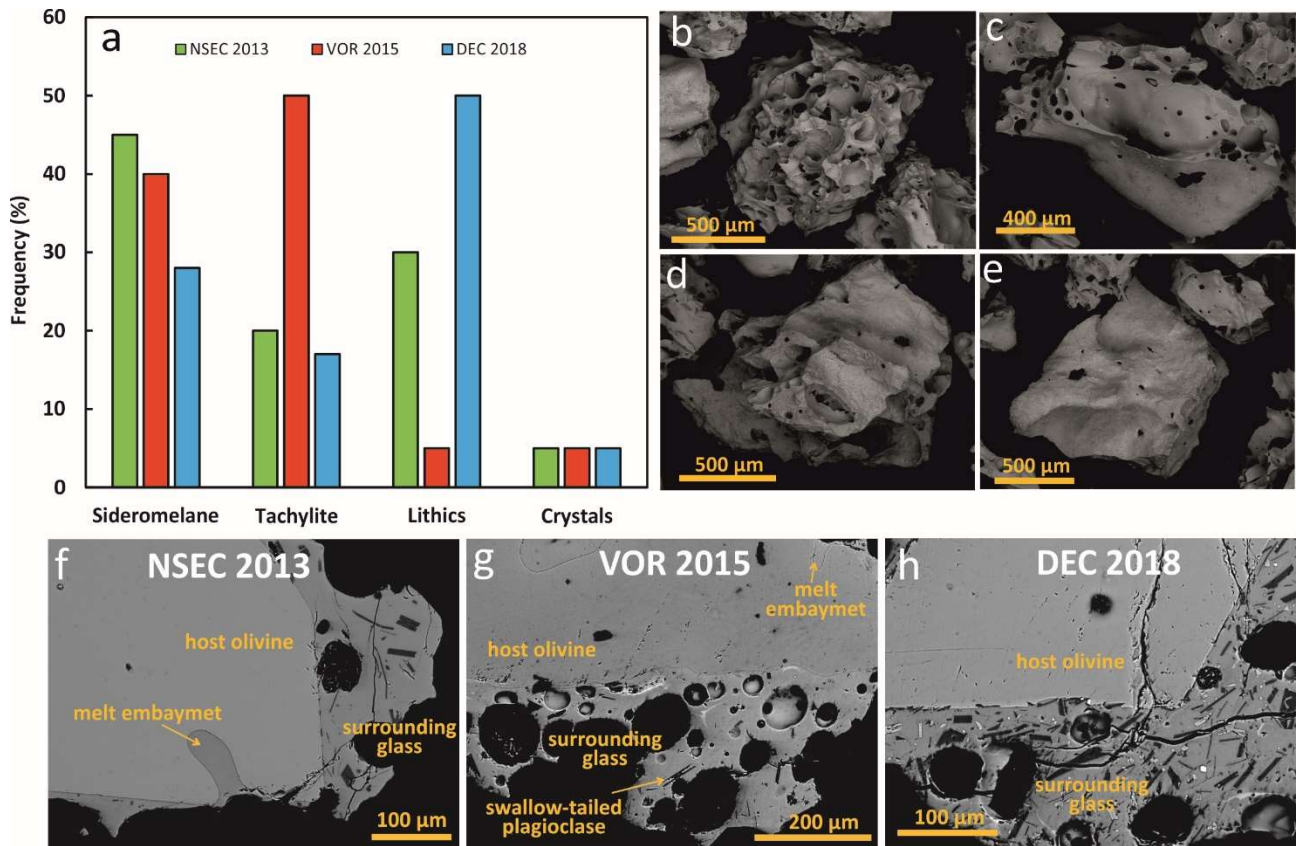
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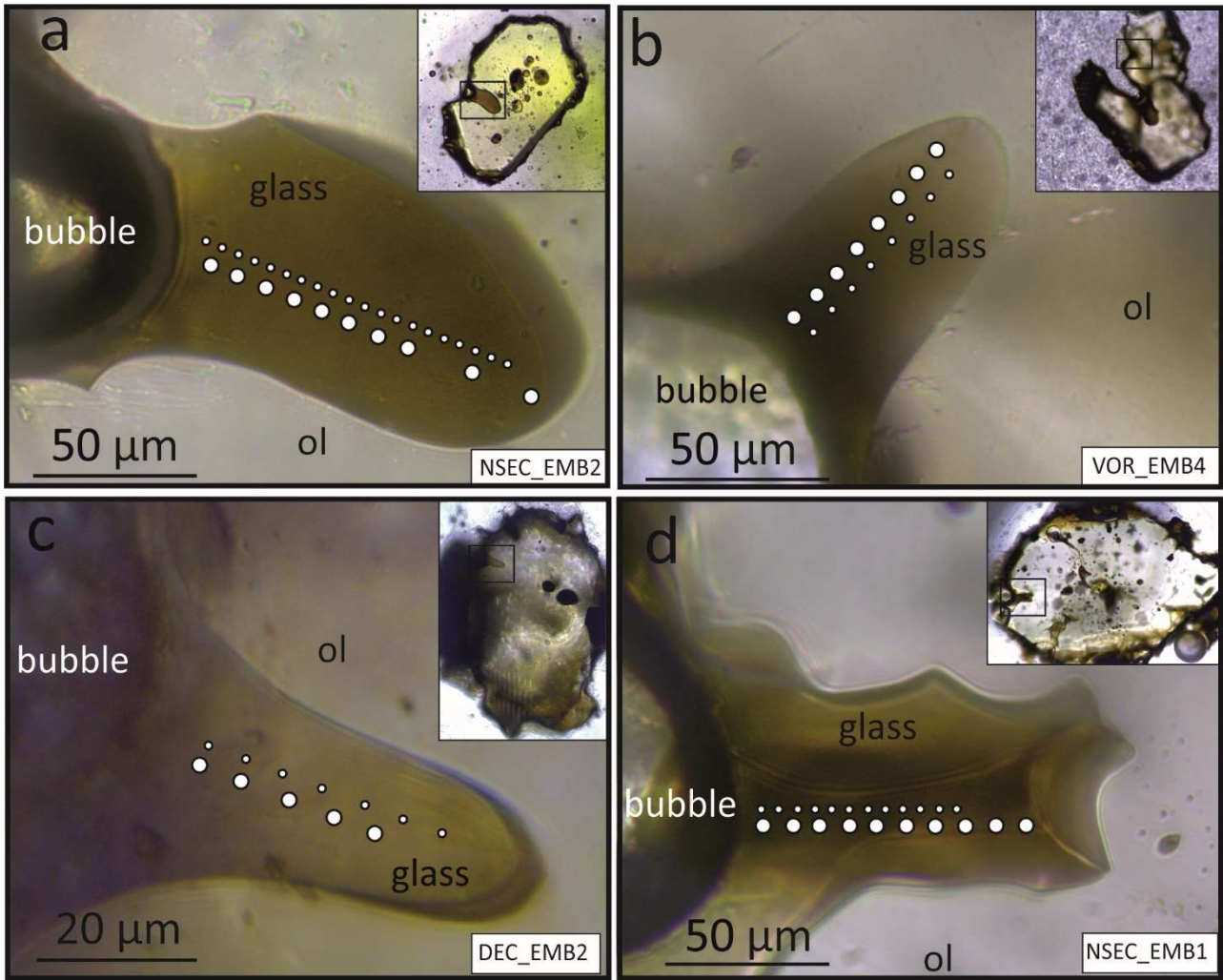
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691 **Figure 1.** (a) Histograms showing the percentages of clasts found in tephra emitted during the  
 692 selected eruptive episodes from the post-2011 activity, and BSE images showing: (b) sideromelane  
 693 clast with spongy morphology; (c) sideromelane clast with fluidal morphology; (d) tachylite clast  
 694 with blocky morphology; (e) lithic clast; (f) host-olivine and surrounding glass from NSEC 2013  
 695 samples; (g) host olivine and surrounding glass from VOR 2015 samples; (h) host-olivine and  
 696 surrounding glass from DEC 2018 samples.



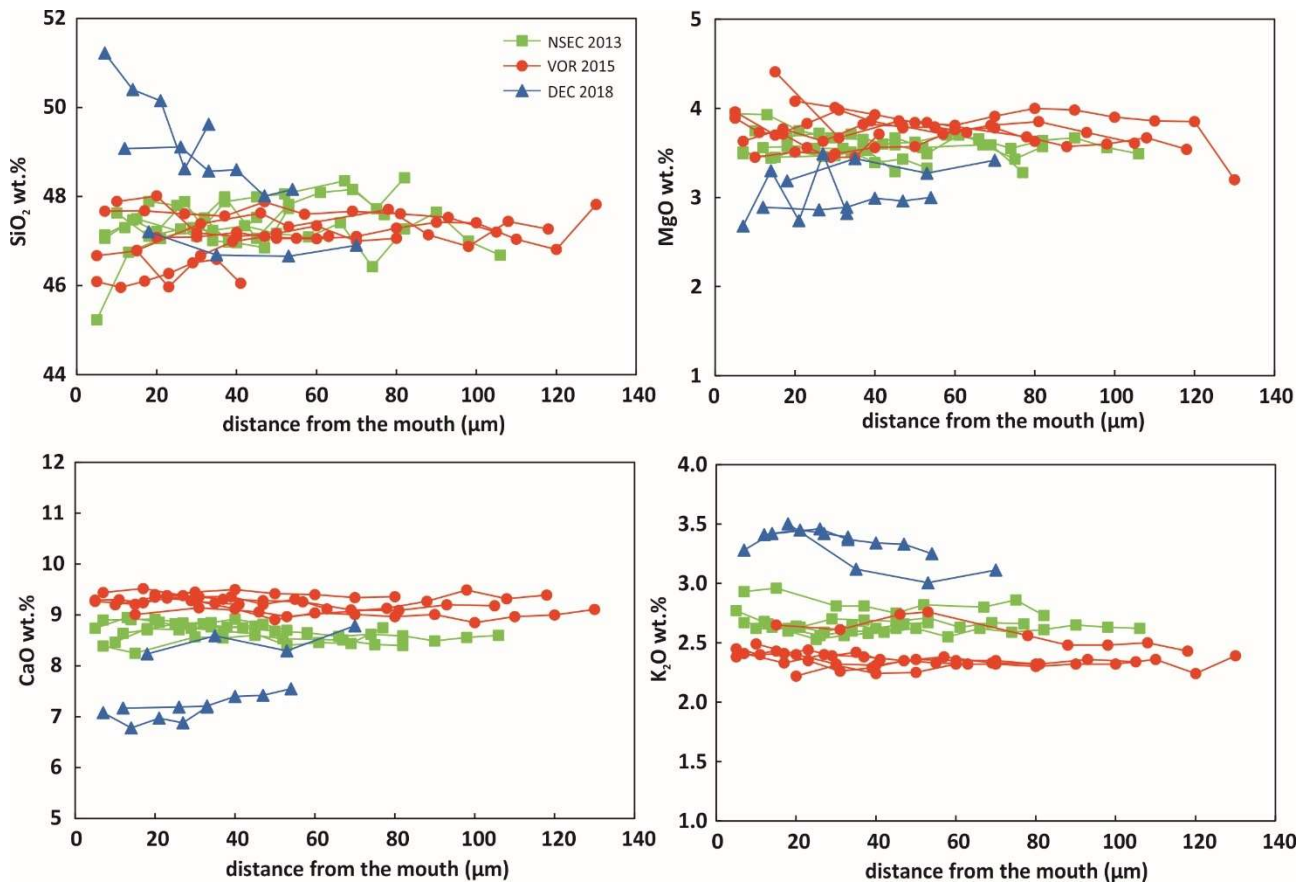
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700 **Figure 2.** Images taken under optical microscope of representative melt-embayments analyzed using  
 701 Raman spectroscopy (small white spots) and EMP (great white spots). Most of samples are tubular-  
 702 shaped (a-c), few samples show more irregular shape (d). Inserts show the whole olivine crystals  
 703 hosting melt embayments.

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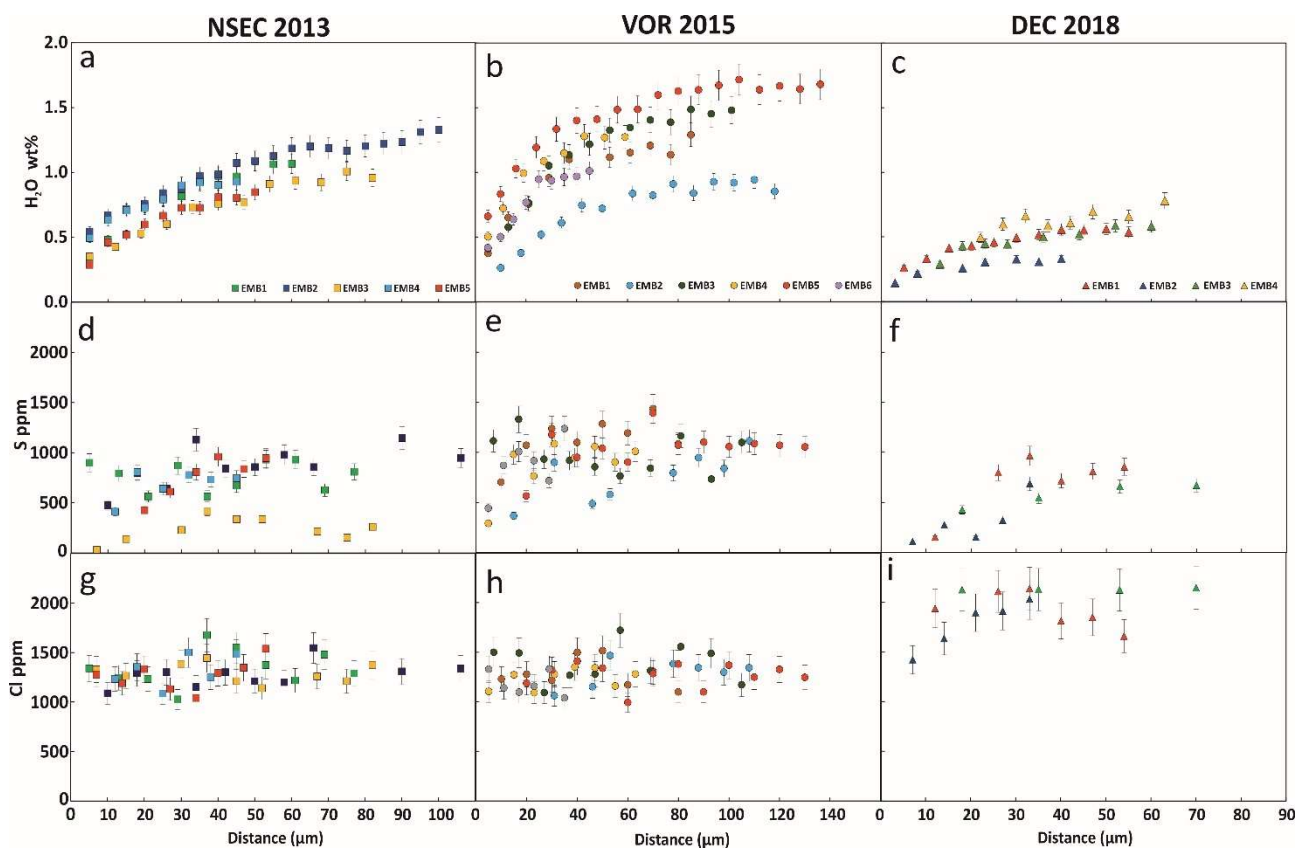


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707 **Figure 3.** Selected major elements variations in melt-embayments found in products of the post-2011  
 708 activity at Mt. Etna as a function of the distance from the mouth of the embayment.

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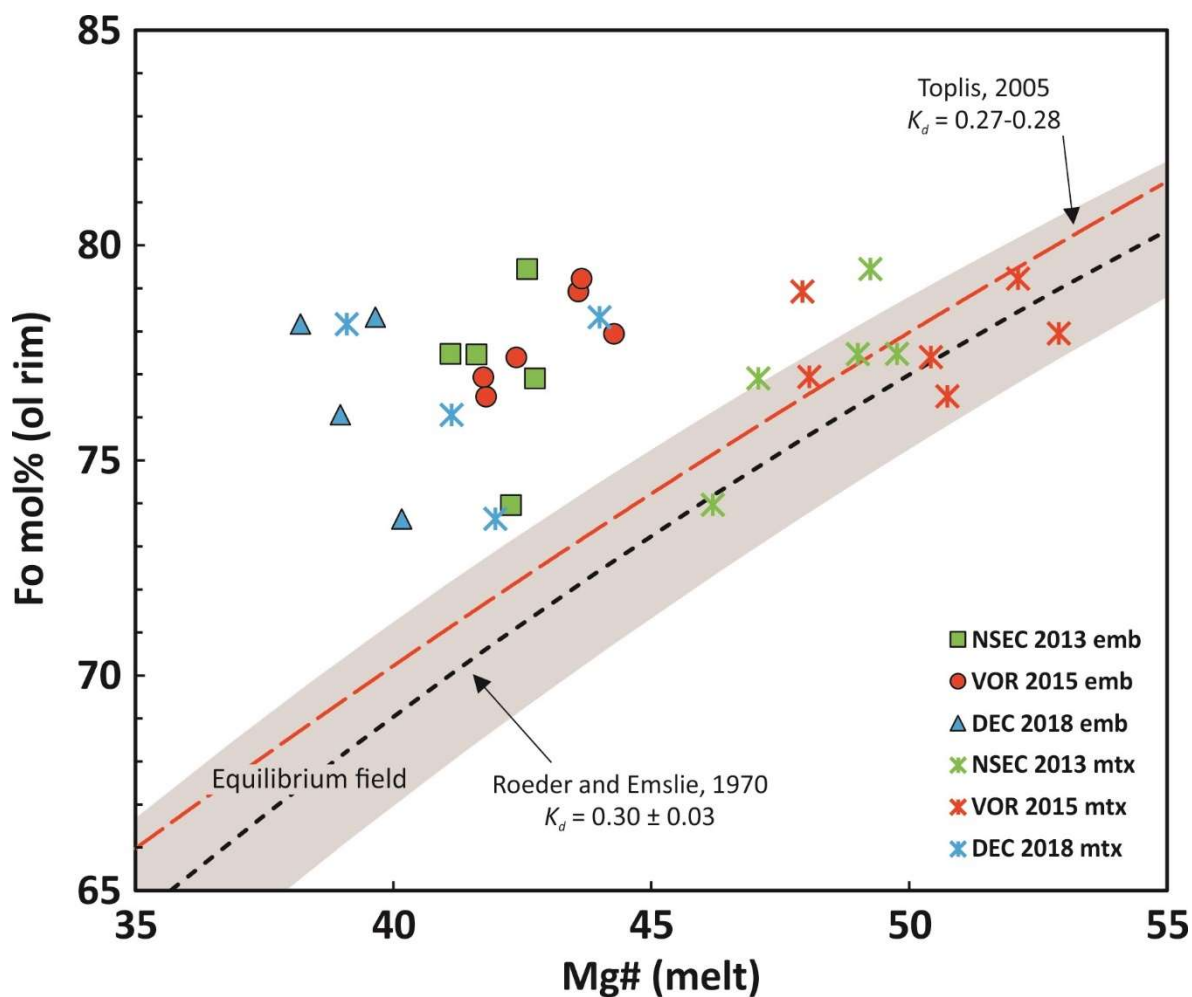


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712 **Figure 4.** Compositional profiles for H<sub>2</sub>O (a-c), S (d-f) and Cl (g-i) measured along each embayment  
 713 of NSEC 2013 (a, d, g), VOR 2015 (b, e, h) and DEC 2018 (c, f, i) eruptions. S and Cl compositions  
 714 in DEC2018\_emb4 sample were collected by analyzing two spots in the embayment interior (see  
 715 Table S2).

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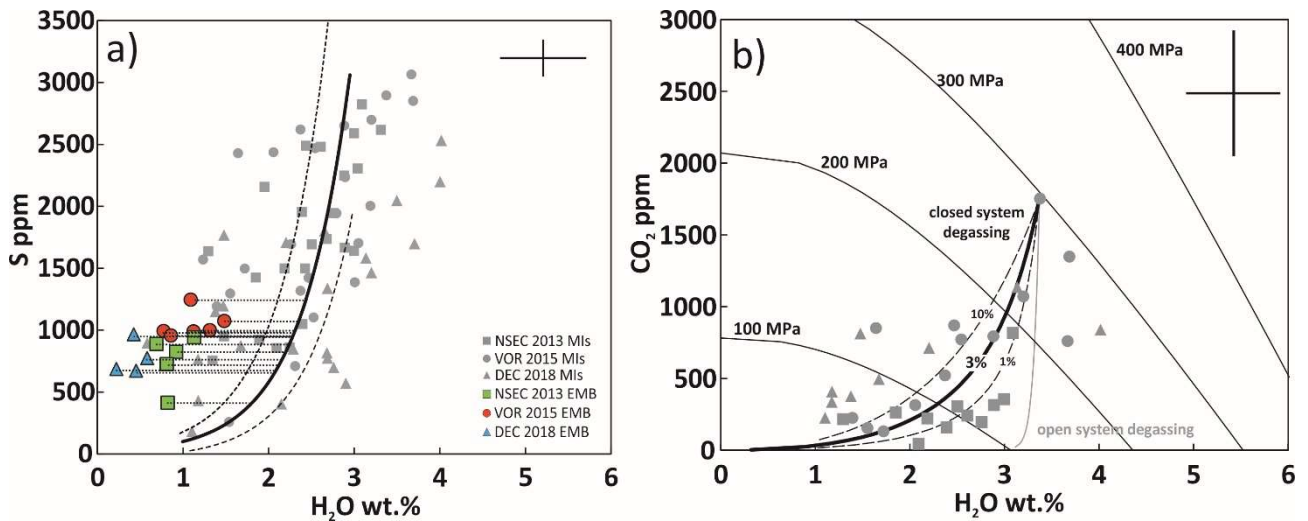


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719 **Figure 5.** Diagrams showing the measured Fo mol% at the rim of host-olivine crystals vs. Mg#  
 720 estimated in external melt (stars) and melt embayments for NSEC 2013 (green squares), VOR 2015  
 721 (red circles) and DEC 2018 (blue triangles). The equilibrium field (gray area) is calculated by using  
 722 the  $K_D^{ol(Mg/Fe)/melt(Mg/Fe)} = 0.30 \pm 0.03$  (the dashed black line represents the central value) by Roeder  
 723 and Emslie (1970), similar to  $K_D$  values predicted using the model by Toplis (2005) (dashed red line).

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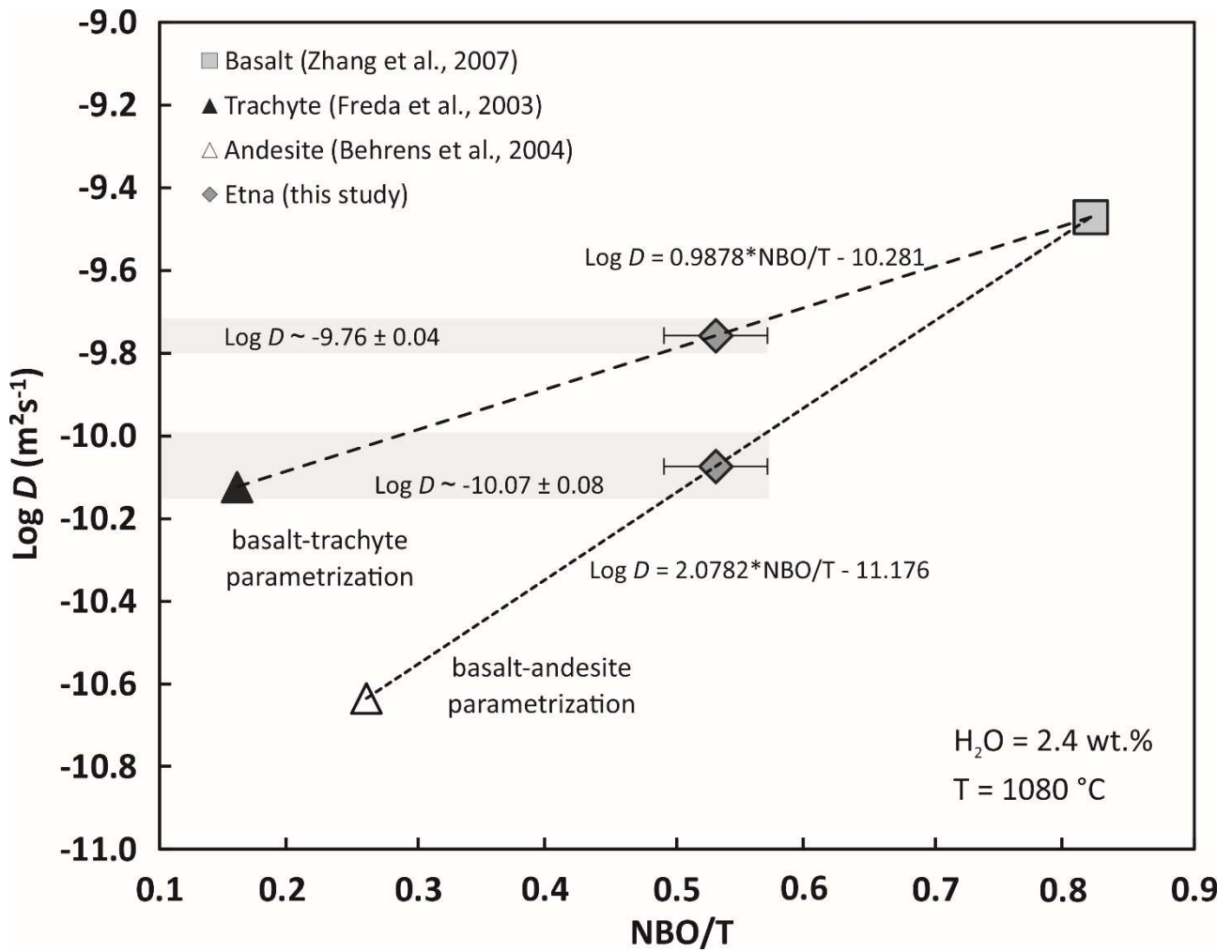


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727 **Figure 6.** (a) Diagram reporting the average values of H<sub>2</sub>O-S compositions in the interior of the  
 728 embayments and the degassing model for the H<sub>2</sub>O-S system on MIs from the same eruptive episodes  
 729 (restored compositions for volatile loss; data from Zuccarello et al., 2021). Sulfur degassing has been  
 730 modeled by using the mass balance approach described in Spilliaert et al. (2006) (See supplementary  
 731 data for details). The thick black line is the best fit model, which is obtained starting from pressure  
 732 of 180 MPa, S = 3065 ppm and H<sub>2</sub>O = 2.9 wt.%, at melt fraction  $f = 85\%$  and initial gas phase  $\alpha_0 =$   
 733 3%. Initial H<sub>2</sub>O concentrations before diffusive loss during ascent can be inferred from S degassing,  
 734 as well as the corresponding initial pressures are derived from the H<sub>2</sub>O-CO<sub>2</sub> system. The dashed lines  
 735 represent the  $\pm 1\sigma$  of S degassing model, while the thin dotted lines indicate the potential initial H<sub>2</sub>O  
 736 contents for each embayment (green squares: NSEC 2013; red circles: VOR 2015; blue triangles:  
 737 DEC 2018). (b) H<sub>2</sub>O-CO<sub>2</sub> closed degassing model on MIs from the same eruptive episodes  
 738 (Zuccarello et al., 2021). The thick black line is the intermediate path (with initial gas phase = 3%)  
 739 used for constraining initial pressures in the diffusion modeling for each embayment.

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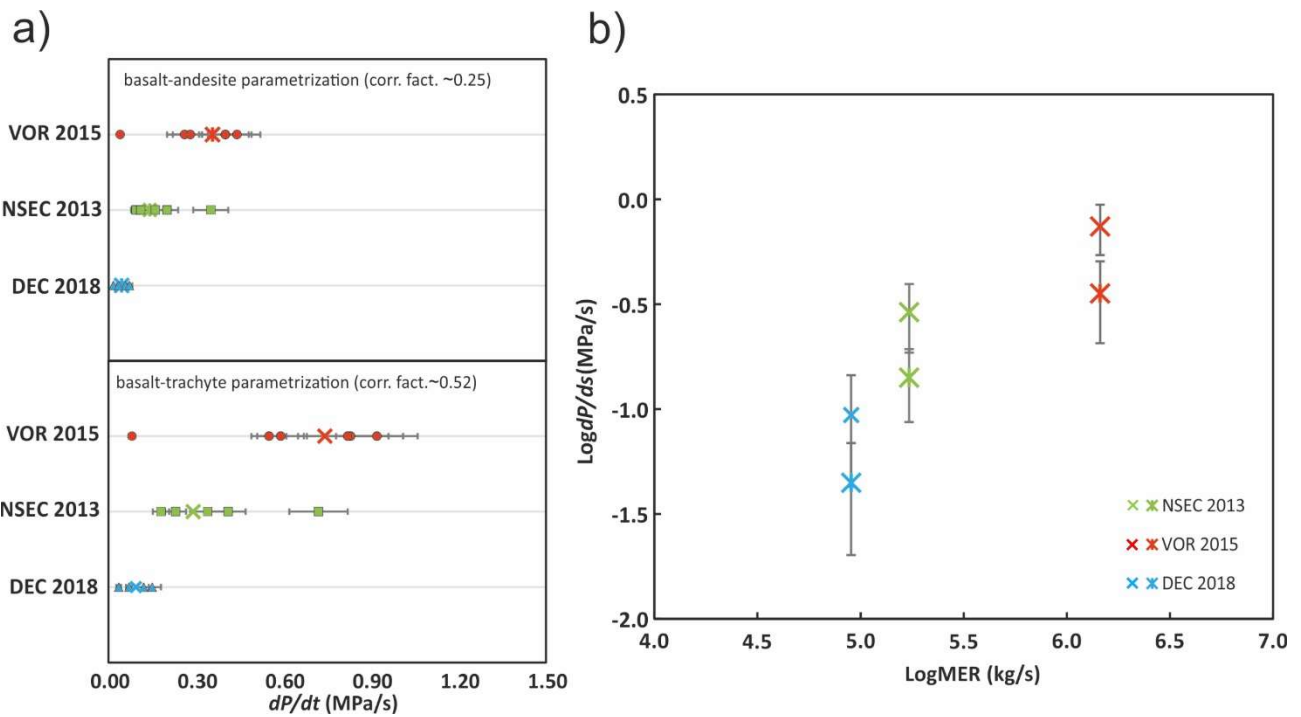


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743 **Figure 7.** Parametrization on  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  diffusivity ( $\text{m}^2/\text{s}$ ) for Mt. Etna K-trachybasalt compositions, using  
 744 a basalt from Zhang et al. (2007) and two different end members: an andesite from Behrens et al.  
 745 (2004) and a trachyte from Freda et al. (2003). Two distinct linear relationships are defined at  $\text{H}_2\text{O} =$   
 746  $2.3 \text{ wt.}\%$  and  $T = 1080 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  between estimated  $\text{Log } D$  and NBO/T values.

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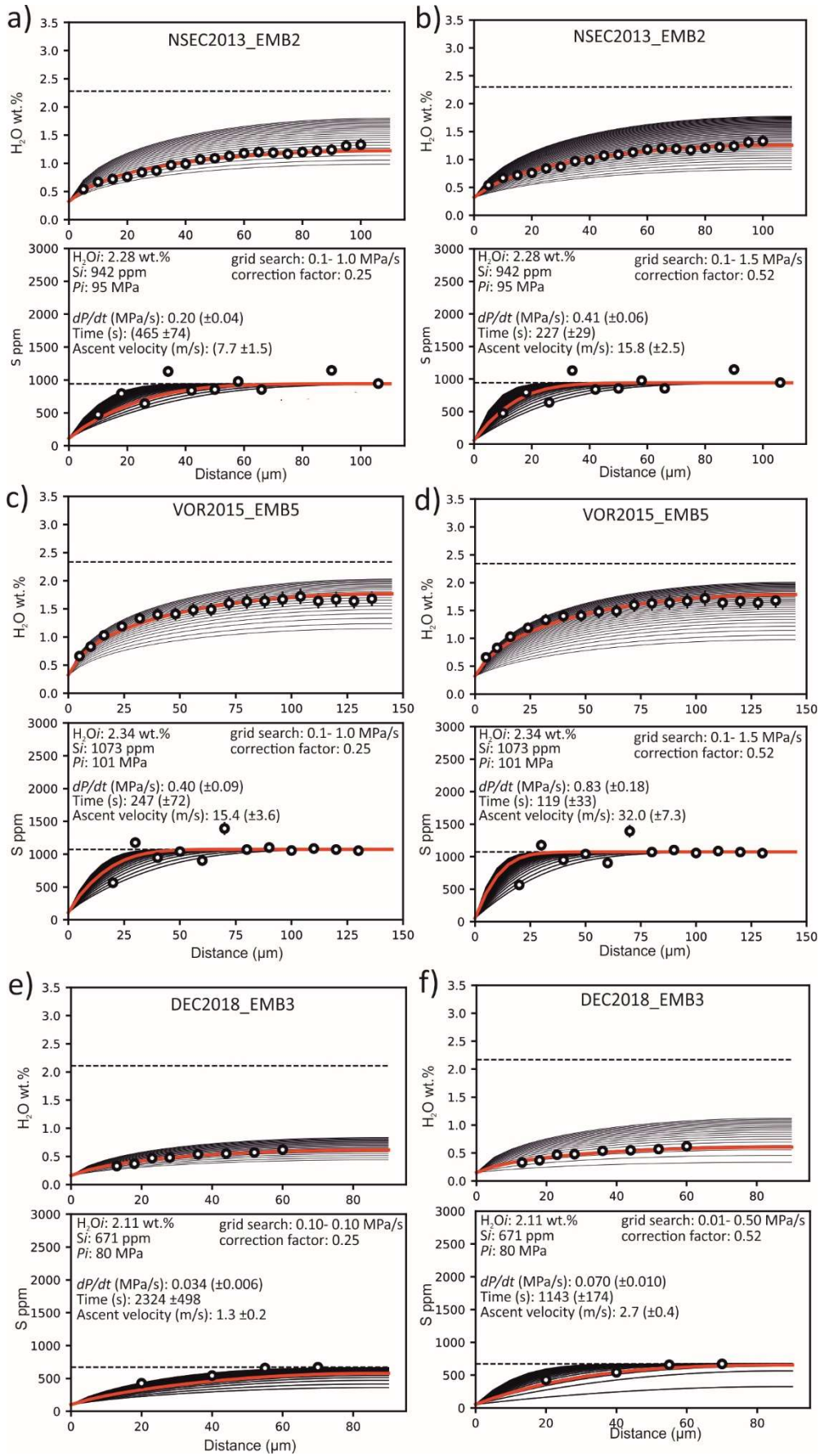
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750 **Figure 8.** a) Results of decompression rates estimated using the two distinct basalt-andesite and  
 751 basalt-trachyte parametrizations. Symbols are as shown in Figure 6; stars are averaged decompression  
 752 rates calculated for the basalt-andesite, while crosses are averaged decompression rates calculated for  
 753 the basalt-trachyte (outliers are not taken into account in the estimation of averaged values); b) MER  
 754 vs.  $dP/dt$ , expressed as logarithm, showing the relationship between explosivity and decompression  
 755 rate (symbols as in panel a).

756

757



760 **Figure 9.** Representative results from volatile diffusion modeling along melt-embayments found in  
761 the selected post-2011 eruptions, using the basalt-andesite (a,c,d) and basalt-trachyte (b,d,f)  
762 parametrizations for  $D_{H_2O}$  correction. Red line represents the best fit model corresponding to the  
763 estimated  $dP/dt$  by  $\chi^2$  minimization, starting from fixed initial  $P_i$ ,  $S_i$  and  $H_2O_i$  (black dashed line) at  
764 constant  $T_i = 1080$  °C; thin black lines represent individual simulations for different  $dP/dt$  values  
765 defined in the search grid used to minimize  $\chi^2$  at the same fixed conditions.  
766



767 **Table 1.** Results from volatile diffusion modeling on melt embayments of NSEC 2013, VOR 2015  
768 and DEC 2018 eruptions at Mt. Etna.

	H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>i</sub> (wt.%)	S <sub>i</sub> (ppm)*	P <sub>i</sub> (MPa)	P <sub>f</sub> (MPa)	dP/dt (MPa/s ±2σ) k <sub>l</sub> = 0.25**	v (m/s ±2σ) k <sub>l</sub> = 0.25	dP/dt (MPa/s ±2σ) k <sub>2</sub> = 0.52	v (m/s ±2σ) k <sub>2</sub> = 0.52	t (min)	χ <sup>2</sup> (k <sub>1</sub> / k <sub>2</sub> )
NSEC_emb1	2.21	825	89	1	0.16 (±0.03)	6.2 (±1.1)	0.34 (±0.06)	13.1 (±2.4)	4.3-9.2	21.4 / 13.1
NSEC_emb2	2.28	942	95	2	0.20 (±0.04)	7.7 (±1.5)	0.41 (±0.06)	15.8 (±2.5)	3.8-7.8	4.2 / 4.2
NSEC_emb3	1.88	412	62	1	0.094 (±0.018)	3.5 (±0.6)	0.18 (±0.03)	6.9 (±1.2)	5.6-11.3	10.0 / 10.0
NSEC_emb4	2.15	724	83	2	0.35 (±0.06)	13.5 (±2.4)	0.72 (±0.10)	27.7 (±4.1)	1.9-3.9	1.6 / 1.6
NSEC_emb5	2.25	888	92	1	0.11 (±0.02)	4.2 (±1.0)	0.23 (±0.036)	8.8 (±1.5)	6.6-13.8	9.3 / 9.3
Average***					0.14 (±0.10)	7.9 (±4.0)	0.29 (±0.10)	11.2 (±4.0)	4.4-9.2	
VOR_emb1	2.41	1245	108	1	0.26 (±0.06)	10.0 (±2.4)	0.55 (±0.06)	22.0 (±3.3)	3.1-6.9	14.3 / 14.2
VOR_emb2	2.30	992	97	1	0.039 (±0.008)	1.5 (±0.3)	0.08 (±0.01)	3.1 (±0.4)	19.8-41.0	54.9 / 55.0
VOR_emb3	2.31	999	98	1	0.28 (±0.06)	10.8 (±2.4)	0.59 (±0.08)	23.2 (±3.8)	2.7-5.8	22.9 / 22.6
VOR_emb4	2.30	989	97	2	0.44 (±0.08)	16.9 (±3.2)	0.92 (±0.14)	35.4 (±5.7)	1.7-3.6	5.4 / 5.5
VOR_emb5	2.34	1073	101	2	0.40 (±0.09)	15.4 (±3.6)	0.83 (±0.18)	32.0 (±7.3)	2.0-4.1	8.4 / 8.5
VOR_emb6	2.28	956	95	1	0.40 (±0.08)	15.4 (±3.2)	0.82 (±0.14)	31.5 (±5.7)	1.9-3.9	14.7 / 14.6
Average****					0.36 (±0.08)	13.7 (±3.1)	0.74 (±0.16)	28.8 (±5.9)	2.3-4.9	
DEC_emb1	2.29	965	96	1	0.057 (±0.012)	2.2 (±0.5)	0.12 (±0.018)	4.7 (±0.8)	13.1-27.8	1.9 / 1.9
DEC_emb2	2.12	686	81	1	0.016 (±0.002)	0.6 (±0.1)	0.035 (±0.008)	1.3 (±0.3)	38.6-83.3	4.0 / 4.0
DEC_emb3	2.11	671	80	1	0.034 (±0.006)	1.3 (±0.2)	0.07 (±0.01)	2.7 (±0.4)	19.1-38.7	4.3 / 4.3
DEC_emb4	2.18	773	86	1	0.071 (±0.010)	2.7 (±0.4)	0.15 (±0.03)	5.6 (±1.0)	9.8-20.0	5.4 / 5.4
Average					0.045 (±0.024)	1.7 (±0.9)	0.094 (±0.051)	3.6 (±1.9)	20.1-42.4	

769

770 \* S initial concentrations are average values considering the first 1-4 spots measured in the embayments  
771 interior.

772 \*\* k<sub>l</sub>, k<sub>2</sub> are correction factors linked respectively to the basalt-andesite and basalt-trachyte parametrizations.

773 \*\*\* Sample NSEC 2013\_emb3 is not considered in the calculation of average values.

774 \*\*\*\* Sample VOR2015\_emb2 is not considered in the calculation of average values.

775