UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE
FACULTY OF SCIENCES
Department of Earth Sciences

Measuring and MOdelling of VOLCano eruption dynamics — MeMoVolc

EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

MeMoVolc workshop on the "Dynamics of volcanic explosive eruptions"

University of Geneva, Switzerland, January 29-31, 2014

Consensual Document

This consensual document has resulted from the contribution
of all workshop participants (Appendix 1)

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Citation: Costanza Bonadonna; Raffaello Cioni; Antonio Costa; Tim Druitt; Jeremy Phillips; Laura Pioli (2014), "MeMoVolc workshop on the "Dynamics of volcanic explosive eruptions", Consensual Document," https://vhub.org/resources/3561

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Contents

1. Introduction

Eruptive style is a function of magma composition, magma volatile content and crystallinity, exsolution and degassing processes, magma feeding and discharge rates, conduit geometry, magma reservoir pressure and the presence of external water. Key processes and parameters that characterize explosive eruptions are only partially understood, generating confusion in the way that we classify and categorize eruptions, especially in the cases of small-moderate-scale eruptions. Conversely, the classification of eruptive activity is generally based on a small, selected set of parameters, directly observed during eruptions or measured from their deposits, that only partially represent the natural complexity of the activity. For example, many small-moderate eruptions are commonly classified as violent Strombolian, Vulcanian or subplinian (often based only on plume height or product dispersal) although they are related to very different eruption dynamics. The lack of understanding of the characteristic signatures of these kinds of eruptions, and the processes involved, also leads to new attempts of describing explosive eruptions that vary from volcano to volcano, e.g. the delineation of lava/fire fountaining activity at Etna with respect to that in Hawaii, the distinction between major and paroxysmal eruptions at Stromboli, or between different types of Vulcanian activity at volcanoes dominated by silicic lava domes with respect to volcanoes characterised by more mafic magmas and ash emissions. This is all symptomatic of our limited current understanding of explosive volcanism, with obvious implications for the assessment of associated hazards. Of concern is that limitations in our ability to categorize and classify eruptions may hinder our progress in physical volcanology and hazard science.

Early studies of physical volcanology, and proposals of classification schemes, were mainly based on visual observations of eruptive phenomena at specific volcanoes, and eventually evolved to take into account deposit quantification. In fact, tephra fallout is traditionally the main type of deposit investigated in order to provide insight into the eruptive dynamics. However, by considering only the dispersal of tephra, and not, for example, their internal stratigraphy, the complex and unsteady source dynamics typical of small-moderate explosive eruptions cannot be fully captured *post facto* from the deposits. Many eruptions show hybrid features, starting with one eruptive style but terminating with another, resulting in a complex stratigraphic record that is difficult to classify. Yet, other eruptions have characteristics that are gradational between the defined eruptive styles, such as Strombolian and Vulcanian, reflecting transitions in physical phenomena that is as yet imperfectly understood and quantified. Some eruptions would be better described based on the analysis of all volcanic products (e.g. volume ratio between erupted lava and tephra, or volume ratio between fallout and pyroclastic density currents deposits), and especially of the products related to those phases of the eruption marking a shift in the eruptive style.

Progress in physical volcanology, and increased capability in monitoring, measuring and modelling of explosive eruptions, has highlighted how the description of eruptive behaviour should be based on a combination of deposit features, including deposit thinning, deposit grainsize, textural features, componentry, density and porosity of products (and their variation through time), together with geophysical and visual observations of the eruption itself (e.g. volcanic tremor, acoustic measurements). The development of a comprehensive understanding of the parameters driving explosive volcanism covering the whole range from weak to powerful explosions represents one of the main challenges faced by the volcanological community. Present classifications are in fact mainly based on the characteristics of tephra dispersal, or on direct observations, while relatively little attention is paid to the dynamics and time-related variability of different eruptions.

A comprehensive approach to the description of explosive volcanic eruptions can only result from the combined efforts of many scientists working in various sub-disciplines. A multidisciplinary group of the international volcanological community gathered at the University of Geneva on 29-31 January 2014 under the sponsorship of the *MeMoVolc* Research Networking Programme of the European Science Foundation and the Earth and Environmental Section of the University of Geneva in order to: i) fill the gap between recent advances in geophysical, modelling and field strategies and current classification schemes; ii) discuss whether there is still a need for eruption classification; iii) investigate how the contributions from different sub-disciplines can be combined. Specific objectives were to: i) review new advances in our mechanistic understanding of a broad range of eruptive styles; ii) identify the critical parameters that drive and characterize explosive volcanism of different types; iii) determine the main processes that control the temporal evolution of eruptions, and the frequently observed changes in eruptive style; iv) suggest a roadmap for producing a rational and comprehensive classification scheme. This consensual document attempts to summarize the outcome of two and a half days of talks, posters, break-out sessions, and plenary discussions (see Appendix I for List of Participants and the workshop website for Program details: http://www.unige.ch/hazards/MeMoVolc-Workshop.html).

2. Main general classification schemes used to characterize volcanic eruptions

We can distinguish between "general" (those not based on specific volcanoes) and "local" classification schemes (those that mainly consider local eruptive features). General schemes are needed to make global scale comparisons, to understand better the general trends of explosive volcanoes, and to identify better the key processes that distinguish eruptive styles. Local classifications can better capture local trends and specific eruptive patterns and, therefore, are crucial to local hazard assessments. Here we summarize the main general classification schemes used in literature and identify the associated shortcomings.

The first general classification schemes of volcanic eruptions identified "type volcanoes", made associations with specific eruptive aspects, were mostly qualitative, and were biased towards the more frequent small to moderate eruptions (Table 1). They were eventually replaced by schemes based on processes and quantitative descriptions, with special focus on the characterization of tephra deposits (e.g. Walker 1973, 1980; Self and Sparks 1978; Wright et al. 1980). Five parameters were introduced for the estimation of the scale of explosive eruptions (e.g. Walker 1973): i) magnitude (volume of erupted material typically converted to Dense Rock Equivalent, DRE); ii) intensity (volume of ejecta per unit time); iii) dispersive power (related to the total area of dispersal and, therefore, to plume height); iv) violence (related to kinetic energy); v) destructive potential (related to the extent of devastation). Eruptive styles (Table 1) were determined based on two parameters: F, fragmentation index (indicator of the explosiveness of the eruption) and D, area of pyroclastic dispersal (indicator of the column height). In particular, F is the area enclosed by an isopach contour representing 1% of the maximum thickness (0.01 T_{max}) and D is the percent of tephra <1mm, measured along an axis of dispersal where the isopach is 10% of T_{max} (0.1 T_{max}). Eventually the styles representing violent Strombolian, ash emissions, Vesuvian and the silicic equivalent of surtseyan were discarded and new terms such as phreatoplinian and ultraplinian were introduced (Walker 1980; Self and Sparks 1978; Cas and Wright 1988). However, the term of violent Strombolian has remained in the literature and has been preferred by Valentine and Gregg (2008) to the new term introduced by Francis et al. (1990) (i.e. microplinian) mostly because of its widespread use and because it does not suggest the injection above the tropopause such as the Plinian term.

This new approach to eruption classification was pioneering by linking volcanic eruptions and pyroclastic deposits, and it allowed for significant progress in physical volcanology based on the identification and analysis of common features of eruptions having similar characteristics. However, shortcomings included: i) the difficulty in determining F and D, ii) time-consuming sieve analysis, iii) the definition of fragmentation index, which is not only controlled by magma fragmentation but also by premature fallout of fine ash due to aggregation processes; iii) the inability to coherently represent Hawaiian eruptions (e.g. Andronico et al. 2008; Houghton and Gonnermann 2008); iv) the difficulty of classifying deposits with poor preservation potential; v) the inability to account for volcanic products other than tephra (e.g. Pioli et al. 2009); vi) the difficulty of discriminating the wide range of mid-intensity eruptions (small-moderate eruptions of Bonadonna and Costa (2013)); vii) the univocal association between hydromagmatism and ash-dominated eruptions and viii) the absence of hybrid and multi-style eruptions.

	Macdonald (1972)	Walker (1973, 1980)	Williams & McBirney (1979)	Newhall & Self (1982)	Pyle (1989)	Francis (1990*, 1993)	Valentine & Gregg (2008)	Bonadonna & Costa (2013)
Lava lake						✓		
Basaltic flood	✓							
Hawaiian	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Strombolian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Violent Strombolian	✓	✓					✓	Small-Moderate
Microplinian						✓ Violent Stromb.		
Strombolian paroxysm	✓							
Vulcanian	✓	✓ Vesuvian	✓	✓		✓		
Peléean	✓ variety of Vulcanian		✓			✓		
subplinian		✓			✓	✓ Vesuvian		✓
Plinian	✓ variety of Vulcanian	✓	✓ Krakatoan	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ultraplinian		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Rhyolitic flood	✓							
Ash emission		✓ conduit clearing						
Ultravulcanian	✓ no magma							
Gas eruption	✓ no magma							
Fumarolic	✓ no magma							
Phreatic			✓ steam blast	✓				
Surtseyan		✓			✓	✓		
Phreato-magmatic			✓ including Surtseyan					
PhreatoPlinian		✓				✓		
Shallow submarine eruptions	✓							
Subglacial						✓		

Table 1. Categories used to classify explosive volcanic eruptions as reported in main "general" classification schemes (the most used categories are highlighted in grey).
Mcdonald (1972) is adjusted from Mercalli (1907), Lacroix (1908) and Sapper (1927); Williams and McBirney (1979) is a simplification of Mercalli (1907), Sonder (1937), Rittmann (1962), Gèze (1964) and Walker (1973); Francis (1990*) indicates Francis et al. (1990)

Williams and McBirney (1979) suggested that a rigid classification of eruptions is impossible, mainly because eruptive style and products might change significantly during a same event, but that it is important to facilitate comparison. They also thought that most of the existing classification schemes at the time were too complex to be used, and tried to define existing terms better to simplify the schemes (e.g. Table 1). Pyle (1989) and Bonadonna and Costa (2013) introduced new schemes that remained based on the characterization of tephra deposits, but that were easier to apply and mostly concerned small-moderate, subplinian, Plinian and ultraplinian eruptions (Table 1). In fact, small-moderate eruptions and eruptions characterized by magma/water interaction were recognized as impossible to distinguish only based on the parameters considered (i.e. plume height, Mass Eruption Rate - MER, deposit thinning and grain-size decrease). These new classification schemes still neglected volcanic products other than tephra, as well as hybrid and multi-style eruptions. General shortcomings of all process-based classification schemes described above include: i) the difficulty of representing all eruptions on one single diagram (in particular effusive together with explosive events, and large explosive eruptions together with small-moderate explosive eruptions) and ii) incomplete accounting for all volcanic behaviours and products (i.e. schemes are based on tephra deposits and typically neglect important other products, such as pyroclastic density currents - PDCs, lava flows, gas).

Newhall and Self (1982) introduced a classification strategy by assigning a certain erupted volume and plume height range to the most common eruptive styles: the Volcanic Explosivity Index, VEI. This is a logarithmic scale that ranges from “non-explosive” Hawaiian eruptions (VEI 0; volume <10,000 m^3; plume height <100m) to “very large” ultraplinian eruptions (VEI 5-8; volume >1 km^3; plume height>25 km). Such a scale is widely used in global databases (e.g. GVP, http://www.volcano.si.edu; Siebert et al. 2010) and hazard/risk assessments. Main shortcomings of this approach include: i) the implicit assumption of a link between magnitude and plume height, and, therefore, intensity; ii) a gap between modern eruptions that are typically defined by plume height, versus ancient eruptions that are typically defined by erupted volume; iii) impossibility of classifying effusive (lava) eruptions, which by default are assigned a VEI of 0 or 1; iv) ambiguity in the definition of VEI 0 that covers at least six orders of magnitude of eruptive volume (e.g. Houghton et al. 2013); v) ambiguity in the definition of erupted volume that in the global databases sometimes include PDCs (as per the original definition of VEI) and sometimes only tephra deposits; vi) the difficulty of characterizing long-lasting eruptions associated with multiple phases of variable style and intensity; vii) the difficulty of estimating the tephra volume above the eruptive vent during small-moderate eruptions, usually not considered in the definition of the total mass erupted as tephra. (In this type of eruption, the contribution of the cone may be several times higher than that of the tephra fallout, thus altering the classification of the event in terms of total emitted magma).

Regardless of their shortcomings, some categories have been used by many classification schemes, while others have been abandoned in more recent works (Table 1). It is clear how classification schemes have been simplified with time, trying also to avoid nomenclature based on specific volcanoes (as already suggested by Rittmann 1944). Plinian is clearly universally accepted, as it is used in all classification schemes proposed, demonstrating the easier classification of relatively large eruptions. Hawaiian, Strombolian, Vulcanian, subplinian and ultraplinian have also been used by most authors, even though their definition can be of complex and ambiguous application. As an example, lava fountains frequently observed in recent years at Etna and typically characterised by the formation of eruption columns > 2 km above the cone, mostly fit in the violent Strombolian to subplinian field of Walker (1973) more than the Hawaiian to normal Strombolian spectrum. Finally, even though ultraplinian was used by many authors, we consider this category as a special case because it was based on only one eruption (i.e. Taupo 1800a; Walker 1980) and recent evidence shows that the apparent large footprint of this bed is an artifact of a previously unrecognized shift in the wind field during a fairly complex eruption, rather than extreme eruptive vigor. In fact, if the associated deposit is subdivided into subunits, the Taupo eruption can be better classified as Plinian (Houghton et al. 2014). However, in accord with the Bonadonna and Costa (2013) classification, the upper limit of ultraplinian eruptions can be defined on the basis of MER based on the conditions for column collapse (i.e. greater than ~10^9 kg s^{-1}; e.g. Koyaguchi et al. 2010).

3. Critical processes and parameters that drive and characterize explosive volcanism of different types

A list of processes and parameters that drive and characterize explosive volcanism of different types was compiled (Table 2). All these processes are significant in controlling and defining eruption dynamics, and many of them are considered when studying the products of explosive eruptions. Despite this, a systematic and complete study of these parameters and of their interrelationships is presently lacking.

Initial conditions	
1.	Magma reservoir size, shape and overpressure and evolution with time
2.	Magma properties (e.g., composition, temperature, phenocryst content, dissolved volatiles, exsolved gas) and their evolution with time
3.	Magma mixing and mingling
Conduit magma dynamics	
4.	Conduit width, length, shape, pressure and their evolution with time
5.	Magma supply rate and relationships with magma reservoir dynamics
6.	Magma decompression rate
7.	Magma crystal content and crystallization kinetics
8.	Magma outgassing (through the conduit walls or at the vent)
9.	Porosity and permeability and their evolution with time
10.	Dynamic changes in magma rheology (e.g., shearing, degassing, crystallization, viscous heating)
11.	Fragmentation level, mechanisms and efficiency
12.	Plug formation (shallow viscosity and pressure gradients)
Eruptive processes and parameters	
13.	Crater/vent geometry and its evolution with time
14.	Pressure, velocity, gas content, temperature and density of erupted mixture at vent
15.	Mass eruption rate
16.	Total grain size distribution
17.	Equilibrium or non-equilibrium between particles and gas (controls generation of shocks, thermal structure and time scale)
18.	Plume height, temperature, density and collapse conditions
19.	Partitioning of mass into plume, pyroclastic density currents and lava flows
External factors	
20.	Atmospheric conditions (e.g., wind direction and speed, air entrainment, humidity, temperature, density)
21.	Magma/water-ice interaction
22.	Crustal stress/earthquakes
23.	Thermo-mechanical interaction with country rock (including country rock entrainment and conduit wall collapse)
24.	Caldera collapse timing, mechanism and extent

Table 2. Main processes and parameters characterizing volcanic explosive eruptions

4. Research priorities

Based on Table 2, we have identified a number of key phenomena whose processes and parameters require more investigation and research. These include:

Conduit processes and dynamics

Processes and parameters that require a better understanding and characterization include: multiphase magma rheology (non-linearity on different spatial and temporal scales), gas exsolution and vesiculation processes (kinetics, disequilibrium, and the interaction between different volatile phases), fragmentation dynamics and its relationship to pyroclast size distribution and shape, vent and conduit geometry complexity and their changes during eruption, magma-water interaction processes, magma interaction with country rock, and the effects of crustal and local stresses on conduit dynamics (e.g. Costa et al. 2009; 2011).

Abrupt transitions in eruption regime

Specific parameters causing abrupt transitions (e.g, major changes in magma composition and rheology; degassing behaviour, groundmass crystallization, dramatic changes in conduit/vent geometry) should be investigated and better defined - for example, through perturbation analysis – with the aim of identifying dimensionless scaling relationships that could characterize controls on instability.

Unsteadiness

Many eruptions are characterized by unsteadiness, involving fluctuations of eruption intensity on a wide range of length scales and time scales (sub-second to hours or days). For example, the scale of unsteadiness (periodicity and amplitude of fluctuations) increases when passing from Plinian (quasi-steady), through subplinian (oscillating, sustained, short-lived column), to violent Strombolian (lava fountain-fed, discontinuous, pulsating column) to Vulcanian (discrete explosions separated by pauses). Unsteadiness should be quantified with continuous measurements of mass eruption rate at the highest possible resolution, or with indirect measurements of tephra bedding and grain-size variations (in particular for post-eruption analysis).
Open questions that require a better understanding include:

- How to define unsteadiness (e.g. cyclic vs. irregular pulsating activity; steady, quasi-steady or highly unsteady);
- How to quantify unsteadiness (e.g., could we quantify unsteadiness using measurements of plume height, geophysical observations and/or gas emissions? How can unsteadiness be characterized in a deposit?);
- How to distinguish between source-generated unsteadiness related to eruptive fluctuation at the vent and apparent unsteadiness generated for example by wind shift effects (e.g., Houghton et al. 2014);
- What are the causes of unsteadiness (e.g., ascent rate too low to sustain gas supply; ascent rate too low to keep pace with discharge; transition from open to closed system degassing; magma-water interaction; syn-eruptive changes in magma rheology or magma permeability able to modulate magma discharge; interaction with country rock; interaction with the atmosphere; unsteady sedimentation processes due to local instabilities);
- What are the relevant time scales for unsteadiness. Which timescales can be measured and quantified? Can the characteristic timescale of conduit processes be defined and compared with the characteristic time of plume ascent?

Eruption energy and energy balance

The possibility of defining eruptive styles in terms of energy balance (partitioning between thermal, kinetics, fragmentation energy) and energy flux (rather than total energy) has been identified as a potential alternative to classifications based on erupted mass and plume height but requires further investigations (e.g. Yokoyama 1956; 1957a,b; Hedervari 1963; Garces 2013). It is impractical at the moment to derive energy from past deposits.

5. Objectives of eruption classification

The objectives of modern eruption classifications include: i) scientific understanding (i.e. to simplify a complex system by identifying leading-order processes, and to aid comparison between different eruptions or volcanoes), ii) hazard and risk assessment and iii) science and hazard communication (i.e. communication with the scientific community, the public and civil defence institutions). In all cases, eruptions can be described differently whether they are observed in real time or they are characterized based on their deposits. Hazard communication should be a simple phenomenological description based on the simplification of scientific understanding. An ideal approach would be to have classifications systems based on fairly easily and rapidly measured parameters, so that the system could be applied even in near-real time during an ongoing event. The relevant parameters that can be observed, measured and derived might be related to the scale of eruptions and are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

Eruption onset and duration	observed
Plume height	measured/derived from geophysical monitoring and remote sensing.
Mass Eruption Rate (MER)	derived from either plume height (depending on observed atmospheric conditions) and/or from geophysical monitoring and remote sensing. MER of lava flows could be directly measured.
Erupted volume/mass	mostly tephra mass derived from MER and duration; pyroclastic density currents and lava masses derived from remote sensing
Exit velocity	derived from geophysical monitoring and video recording
Energy (seismic, thermal, potential/ kinetic), energy flux and ratios between the different types of energy	measured/derived from geophysical monitoring and remote sensing
Unsteadiness (number/frequency of pulses)	observed/derived from geophysical monitoring and video recording
Relevant atmospheric parameters (e.g., wind, humidity)	measured/derived
Sedimentation rate	measured
Gas flux and composition	measured

Table 3. Relevant parameters to be described in real-time analysis (observation/monitoring based)

Erupted volume/mass of different volcanic products	derived (from deposits)
Plume height	derived (from tephra deposits)
Mass Eruption Rate (MER)	derived (mostly from plume height)
Duration	derived (from MER and mass)
Exit velocity	derived (from proximal ballistic)
Total grain-size distribution	derived (from deposits)
Thickness and maximum clast size distribution	measured
Deposit density	measured
Componentry	measured
Shape, texture and density of juvenile clasts	observed/measured
Unsteadiness	derived (from bedding/grading)
Wind direction and speed	derived (from tephra deposits)
Magma composition/crystallinity	measured

Table 4. Relevant parameters to be described in post-eruption analysis (deposit based)

6. A roadmap for a more comprehensive approach to eruption classification

Shortcomings of current systems of classification, in particular associated with the small-moderate eruptions and the diversity of phenomena that can occur within the same event, can be addressed by making these systems adaptable to multiple levels of detail and multi-parameter space, particularly including unsteadiness and duration. In fact, volcanic eruptions may be better described based on a qualitative classification with numerical information (i.e. an eruption descriptor plus numerical information) following an "event-tree" approach. From the identification and analysis of common features of this kind of categorization we may find a way to classify rationally a spectrum of eruption styles on the basis of the minimum number of descriptors. Critical parameters include: deposit geometry, dispersal, plume height, eruption duration, mass associated with each phenomenon, grain-size, presence of unsteadiness, type of juvenile material, abundance of wall rock.

In particular, in real time, classification should be based on observations of phenomena, while, for post-eruption descriptions, classification should be based on the quantification of volcanic products (e.g. presence of tephra deposits/PDC deposits/lava, maximum clast size, thickness distribution, layering/bedding of deposit) and deposit-derived parameters (e.g. plume height, volume, total grainsize distribution). In both cases, phases need to be described based on an event-tree approach and need to describe all primary processes occurring with most detail possible (e.g. plume/no plume, lava flow/no lava flow, PDCs/no PDCs).

7. Examples of descriptions and classifications of volcanic eruptions

Given the problems with current eruption classification schemes, the workshop participants emphasised the importance of continuing the practice of providing clear, objective descriptions of eruption phenomena and products, thereby avoiding the issue of pigeonholing. When available, parameters indicated in Tables 3 and 4 should be provided as a priority. The strategy used to derive these parameters and the classification scheme used (if the eruption was classified) should also be indicated. We give some examples below. For two eruptions (Montserrat, 17th September 1996; Etna, 12th January 2011) we provide both types of descriptions (real time and post-eruption). When possible, real-time and post-eruption description should be integrated as they provide different information.

Gas Piston event at Pu'u 'O'o, Hawaii (23rd February 2002) – REAL-TIME DESCRIPTION
Basaltic lava flow from vent at foot of Pu'u 'O'o south wall begins at 19:59. Extends 100 m east by 20:15 (5 m wide proximally). A bulk volume flow rate of 0.26 $m^3 s^{-1}$ for the lava flow was derived based on an emplacement duration of 16 minutes, which can be converted into a MER value of 414 ± 219 kg s^{-1} using the vesicle corrected density of Harris et al. (1998) (i.e. 1590 ± 840 kg m^{-3}). Continuous spattering at vent was observed throughout emplacement. Spattering transits to bubble bursts at 20:41. Bursts increase in frequency to more than 1 per second by 20:45. At 20:45 bubble bursting and lava emission terminated by onset of gas jet with loud roar to 25(?) m. Waning gas jet until 20:15. Vertical blue gas jet with few diffuse, small (cm-sized) incandescent particles. Spatter-bubble-jet cycle recommences; next jet at 21:16. It was classified as gas piston event type "c" according to Marchetti and Harris (2008). Gas flux was not measured.

Montserrat, West Indies (17th September 1996) – REAL-TIME DESCRIPTION
A major phase of lava dome collapse began at 11:30 am on the 17 September 1996, continued for 9 hours and waned after 8:30 pm. The explosive eruption began at 11:42 pm and had finished by 00:30 am. Seismic energy on the RSAM record peaked at about midnight and then declined exponentially. A vertical plume was intercepted by a commercial jet at 11.3 km, which is associated with a Dense Rock Equivalent (DRE) discharge rate of magma of 1300 $m^3 s^{-1}$ (based on Sparks et al. 1997). Assuming a constant discharge rate over the whole 48-minute duration, a DRE volume of about 3.7 x 10^6 m^3 was obtained. From weather satellite images (Satellite Analysis Branch of NOAA/NESDIS) plume transport was both to the west and to the east by regional trade and antitrade winds with a maximum wind at tropopause of 17 m s^{-1}. Pumice and lithic lapilli fell widely across southern Montserrat. Classified as small-moderate based on plume height and MER according to Bonadonna and Costa (2013).

***Montserrat, West Indies (17th September 1996)* – POST-ERUPTION DESCRIPTION**

On 17 September 1996 the Soufriere Hills Volcano started a period of dome collapse involving about 12 x 10^6 m^3 (DRE) of andesitic lava. A peak plume height of 14-15 km was derived based on the largest pumice clasts (from the model of Carey and Sparks 1986). The height estimate indicates a DRE discharge rate of magma of 4300 m^3 s^{-1} (based on Sparks et al. 1997). Wind speed averaged over plume rise was about 6-8 m s^{-1}. An approximate DRE volume of andesitic tephra of about 3.2 x 10^6 m^3 was derived assuming a peak discharge rate of 4300 m^3 s^{-1} and an exponential decay of discharge rate with a decay constant of 12 ± 3 minutes. Magma water content was of 2.5-5%. Ejecta consists of moderate (density = 1160 kg m^{-3}) to poorly (density = 1300 to 2000 kg m^{-3}) vesicular juveniles, dense non-vesicular glassy clasts (density = 2600 kg m^{-3}), breccias cut by tuffisite veins and hydrothermally altered lithics (mean density = 2480 kg m^{-3}). A maximum launch velocity of 180 m s^{-1} is estimated for 1.2 m diameter dense blocks ejected to 2.1 km distance using projectile models (Fagents and Wilson, 1993; Bower and Woods, 1996). Based on plume height and magma discharge rate, the explosive eruption can be classified as small-moderate to subplinian based on plume height and MER according to Bonadonna and Costa (2013).

More details in Robertson et al. (1998)

Etna, Italy (12th January 2011) – REAL-TIME DESCRIPTION

The eruption began with intermittent bubble explosions with increasing frequency and intensity from the evening of 11th January to 21:40 GMT of 12th January and intermittent fountains from 21:40 to 21:50 GMT (first phase). From 21:50 to 23:15 GMT a transition to sustained fountains was observed with a peak magma jet height of 800 m and tephra plume height 9 km (second –paroxysmal- phase); a lava flow was also observed in the evening of 12th January. Small intermittent bubble explosions were again observed from 23:15 to 23:30 GMT and low-intensity effusive activity and irregular low-frequency bubble explosions were observed up to 04:15 GMT (third phase).

***Etna, Italy (12th January 2011 – paroxysmal phase)* – POST-ERUPTION DESCRIPTION**

Sustained potassic trachybasaltic fountains occurred between 21:50 to 23:15 GMT on 12th January 2011 that were associated with a peak magma jet height of 800 m, a tephra plume height 9 km and the emplacement of a lava flow. A mass of erupted tephra of 1.5±0.2 x 10^8 kg was derived averaging values obtained from the method of Pyle (1989), Fierstein and Nathenson (1992), Bonadonna and Houghton (2005) and Bonadonna and Costa (2012) and a MER: 2.5 x 10^4 kg s^{-1} was obtained dividing the erupted mass by the duration of the paroxysmal phase. A unimodal total grain-size distribution with a median value of -1.4 ϕ was derived applying the Voronoi Tessellation of Bonadonna and Houghton (2005). Winds were blowing with almost constant direction from the NNE and intensity of 8, 8, 44 and 49 m s^{-1} at 3, 5, 7 and 9 km a.s.l. (http://weather.uwyo.edu/). It was classified as violent Strombolian based on Walker (1973) and small-moderate based on plume height and MER according to Bonadonna and Costa (2013).

More details in Behncke et al. (2014)

***Vesuvius, Italy (Plinian phase of the AD 79 Pompeii eruption)* – POST-ERUPTION DESCRIPTION**

The fallout deposit associated with the AD 79 Pompeii eruption consists of two main units, compositionally zoned and south-easterly dispersed, intercalated with PDC deposits in proximal areas. Deposit density for both units is: 490 kg m^{-3} in proximal area (<20km, Mdphi<-2) and 1020 in distal area (>20km, Mdphi>-1). A polymodal cumulative total grain-size distribution was derived based on the integration of isomass maps of individual size categories and on the method of crystal concentration of Walker (1980). Mode values of individual grain-size populations are -2.8, -0.8 and 5 ϕ, respectively.

White pumice fallout: simple, massive, reversely graded, bearing accidental lithic fragments (mainly limestone and marbles) from the volcano basement, and cognate lithics (mainly lava) (wt% lithics averaged over the whole deposit=10.3). Magma composition= K-phonolite; 10-15 vol% phenocrysts; peak plume height= 26 km (based on the method of Carey and Sparks 1986); MER=8x10^7 kg s^{-1} (derived from plume height applying the model of Sparks 1986); tephra volume=1.1 km^3 (applying the method of Fierstein and Nathenson 1992); wind direction= N145; wind speed=28 m s^{-1} (based on the method of Carey and Sparks 1986); maximum measured thickness= 120 cm at 10 km from vent. Classified as Plinian based on the diagram of Walker (1973).

Grey pumice fallout: simple stratified pumice-rich deposit with four ash-bearing, plane to cross laminated, PDC beds interlayered (wt% lithics averaged over the whole deposit=11.8). Magma composition= K-tephritic phonolite; 16-20%vol phenocrysts; peak plume height= 32 km (based on the method of Carey and Sparks 1986); MER=1.5x10^8 kg s^{-1} (derived from plume height applying the model of Sparks (1986)), tephra volume=1.8 km^3 (applying the method of Fierstein and Nathenson 1992); wind direction= N145; wind speed=31 m s^{-1} (based on the method of Carey and Sparks 1986); max measured thickness= 160 cm at 10 km from vent. Classified as Plinian based on the diagram of Walker (1973).

More details in Carey and Sigurdsson (1987) and Cioni et al. (1992; 1995; 1999)

8. Concluding remarks and open questions

This workshop served to assess the main advantages and shortcomings of existing eruption classification schemes and to identify open questions and research priorities that could help improve our understanding of volcanic explosive eruptions. In particular:

1) We identified the main parameters and processes characterizing volcanic eruptions that include initial conditions, conduit related magma dynamics, eruptive processes and parameters, external factors (see Table 2).
2) We reviewed most existing "general" classification schemes (i.e., those that are not based on specific volcanoes) in order to identify major shortcomings and most widely used terminology. We found that all existing classification schemes fail to collate all volcanic eruptions in one simple diagrammatic form, and do not account for all volcanic behaviours and products. In addition, we identified that eruption categories used by most schemes include: Hawaiian, Strombolian, Vulcanian, subplinian, Plinian and ultraplinian.
3) Classification schemes need to be objective focused and driven (e.g. scientific understanding, hazard/risk assessment, communication with public, civil defence institutions and scientific community) and simple enough to promote transfer of knowledge and scientific exchange.
4) Classification should be based on clearly defined observables, and aimed at identifying the main processes. We found that most existing classification schemes are based on processes (e.g. Walker 1973, 1980; Pyle 1989; Bonadonna and Costa 2013) but the parameters do not capture all volcanic phenomena and are too broad to distinguish between transient versus sustained eruptions or steady versus unsteady behaviours.
5) Classification schemes should be comprehensive and encompass a variety of eruptive styles and volcanic products, including for example, lava flows, PDCs, gas emissions and cinder cone or caldera formation.
6) Currently we do not have a system that can be used for all eruptions. It might be possible in the future to have a more comprehensive classification scheme, but it is more likely that it will be associated with a different way of measuring eruptions (e.g. energy balance) instead of evolving from existing schemes.
7) None of the existing schemes consider the distinction between steady and unsteady processes. We identified that unsteadiness is, in fact, a key factor for describing volcanic eruptions, but also concluded that we do not yet have effective means of classifying unsteadiness itself. Future eruption classification schemes should incorporate the concept of unsteadiness.

8) Open questions, processes and parameters that need to be addressed and better characterised in order to develop more comprehensive classification schemes and to progress in our understanding of volcanic eruptions include: abrupt transitions in eruption regime, conduit processes and dynamics, unsteadiness, eruption energy, and energy balance.

Finally, we note the advice of Williams and McBirney (1979) who recognised that, even though some specific nomenclature to classify volcanic eruptions is poorly defined, it has become too firmly entrenched in volcanological literature to abandon. The best improvements are to define old terms more clearly, and introduce new ones only when necessary. As a result, we envisage that a future classification scheme will retain some existing terms, but will need to better define them based on the parameters we identify for the classification of eruptions in real time and for post-eruption classification (Tables 3 and 4). Based on the frequency of use (Table 1), we expect terms such as Hawaiian, Strombolian, Vulcanian, subplinian, Plinian and ultraplinian to be part of future classification, but we suggest that they are combined with a phenomenological description, such as that reported in section 7, which provides key parameters including: i) plume height, duration, MER, erupted mass/volume, energy, exit velocity, gas flux and composition, atmospheric conditions and unsteadiness *for real-time classification* and ii) plume height, erupted mass/volume of different volcanic products, MER, duration, exit velocity, total grain-size distribution, thickness and maximum clast size distribution, deposit density, componentry, shape of juvenile clasts, unsteadiness, magma composition/crystallinity and wind direction and speed *for post-eruption classification*. In addition, information to identify magma/water interaction and quantify componentry should be provided together with the key parameters listed above. We also conclude that a few additional eruption categories might need to be added as cannot be described by the five most commonly used categories identified in Table 1, e.g. non-explosive, phreatic, continuous ash emissions /ash venting.

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