

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

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Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

⏪

⏩

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Abstract

Rhythmic seismicity associated with spine extrusion is a well-documented phenomenon at a number of dome-forming volcanic systems. At Unzen volcano, Japan, a four year dome-forming eruption concluded with the emplacement of a spine from October 1994 to February 1995, offering a valuable opportunity to further investigate seismogenic processes at dome-forming volcanoes. Using continuous data recorded at a seismic station located close to the dome, this study explores trends in the seismic activity during the extrusion of the spine. We identify a total of 12 208 seismic events in the period between October 1994 and February 1995. Hourly event counts indicate cyclic activity with periods of ~ 40 to ~ 100 h, attributed to pulsatory ascent defined by strain localisation and faulting at the conduit margins. Waveform correlation revealed two strong clusters (a.k.a. multiplets, families) attributed to fracturing along the margins of the shallow, ascending plug. Further analysis indicates variable seismic velocities during spine extrusion, as well as migration of the cluster sources along the spine margins. Our interpretation of the results from seismic data analyses is supported by field and experimental observations, suggesting that the spine was extruded along an inclined conduit with brittle and ductile failure occurring along the margins. We infer that changes in stress conditions acting on the upper and lower spine margins led to deepening and shallowing of the faulting source, respectively. We demonstrate that the combination of geophysical, field and experimental evidence can help improve physical models of shallow conduit processes.

1 Introduction

Lava dome growth and collapse represent a major volcanic hazard globally (Sparks, 1997). The transition from effusive to explosive activity of a dome may be rapid and can generate destructive pyroclastic flows (Calder et al., 2002). This range of behaviour presents a significant challenge for forecasting and hazard mitigation; for example,

SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



In this study, we present a detailed characterisation of the seismicity associated with the extrusion of a spine during the late stage of the 1991–1995 dome-building eruption at Unzen volcano, Japan. We use the results from our methods, together with field and experimental constraints, to develop a conceptual model of the processes occurring during the magma ascent and spine extrusion.

1.1 Unzen eruption and spine extrusion

Following almost 200 years of dormancy at Unzen volcano, Japan, a new period of activity began with a swarm of Volcano-Tectonic earthquakes to the west of the volcano in November 1989 (Umakoshi et al., 2001). Eventually, eruptive activity at the surface began in November 1990, with the first months dominated by phreatic and phreatomagmatic activity as magma approached the surface (Nakada et al., 1999). In May 1991 exogenic dome growth began, with a brief phase of spine extrusion, followed by a series of 13 viscous, dacitic lava lobes (Nakada et al., 1999). Vulcanian explosions occurred during the initial dome eruption stages in June and August 1991, when the effusion rate was at its highest (Nakada et al., 1999). The growing lava dome was structurally unstable and experienced repeated partial collapses that generated pyroclastic density currents, forcing the evacuation of over 10 000 local residents. This activity continued until February 1995, by which point effusion had ceased and seismicity returned to background levels (Nakada et al., 1999; Umakoshi et al., 2008).

Protracted spine growth defined the last five months of the eruption, beginning in mid-October 1994 and growing at an average rate of 0.8 m per day in November (Nakada et al., 1999; Yamashina et al., 1999; Hornby et al., 2015). Extrusion proceeded obliquely, with the 20–30 m diameter spine inclined at an angle of 45° towards the east-south-east (Kohnno et al., 2008). The final dimensions of the spine were 150 m long, 30 m wide, and 60 m high (Nakada et al., 1999), with a record of ductile and brittle deformation preserved along the spine margins (Smith et al., 2001). The exposed shear zone bounding the upper margins of the inclined spine was up to 10 m thick and comprised of sheared dacite, cataclasite and breccias (Hornby et al., 2015), whereas the

underside has less pervasive damage and shows slickensides on the surface (Calder et al., 2015). Seismic activity during the spine extrusion was relatively low (Umakoshi et al., 2008) but periodic increases in event output were observed synchronous with tilt oscillation on the volcanic edifice (Yamashina et al., 1999).

2 Data and methods

2.1 Data source

The seismic data used for this investigation was collected by the Shimabara Earthquake and Volcano Observatory (SEVO¹; Shimizu et al., 1992). Three stations were installed < 1 km to where the dome would eventually emerge and all were equipped with a 1 Hz vertical component seismometer (see Fig. 3 in Umakoshi et al., 2008). Signals were telemetered to SEVO and recorded continuously with a sampling rate of 100 Hz. For the last five months of the eruption, the most complete dataset was recorded by station FG1. The station also lies close to the spine (~ 600 m) and was positioned in line with the direction of spine inclination. Here we analysed the complete high-resolution dataset from station FG1 for our investigation.

2.2 Automatic event detection

Single station detection was performed from 1 October 1994 to 28 February 1995 on vertical channel data using a conventional short-term average, long-term average (STA/LTA) algorithm (Allen, 1978). Using a single station improves the chronology of the progression of seismic events as it includes events not large enough to be detected at multiple stations. However, it is well known that the STA/LTA technique is prone to false alarms or missed events, depending on the choice of parameters. To help alleviate this

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SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



2.4 Waveform correlation

Assessment of waveform similarity is useful for investigating trends in earthquake activity within large datasets. Repeating waveforms are significant because they represent the product of earthquakes generated by the same source in the same location.

5 Small, impulsive earthquakes that accompanied spine extrusion at Mount St Helens from 2004 to 2008 were dubbed “drumbeats” due to their rhythmic occurrence (Iverson et al., 2006; Iverson, 2008). These waveforms were hypothesised to derive from “stick-slip” motion of the magma plug as it was forced upwards (Iverson et al., 2006; Iverson, 2008). The margins of this magma plug experienced strain localisation, and
10 the surface textures (deformation features) of the extruded spine can provide the key to sub-surface deformation that may help regulate magma ascent (Kennedy et al., 2009; Kendrick et al., 2012). Here we explore the role of repeating earthquakes as an indicator of the conditions along the margins of the spine at Unzen.

We use cross-correlation to measure the similarity of waveforms in the event catalogue constructed using the single-station detection method (Sect. 2.2). To calculate waveform cross-correlation, we extract a 5 s window of data beginning at the picked arrival time. All waveforms are filtered with a 0.5–20 Hz passband Butterworth filter to minimise background noise and increase the signal-to-noise ratio. Five seconds of data following the arrival is sufficient to include the largest amplitude section of most
20 waveforms while minimizing the effect of background noise. Changes in window length of a few seconds has a minor influence on the calculated correlation coefficient (not shown here). In the chosen period of analysis, each waveform is compared to every other waveform and the pair is designated a correlation value between 0 and 1; i.e. a value of similarity where 0 is completely different and 1 is identical. We identify clusters (repeating earthquakes, a.k.a. families, multiplets) using a hierarchical clustering method similar to that used by Buurman and West (2010). Based on visual inspection of the cluster tree, we choose a correlation threshold of 0.8 and a minimum number
25 of five events to define clusters. The value is equal to or higher than in comparable

SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

⏪

⏩

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



studies (e.g. Green and Neuberg, 2006; Buurman and West, 2010). Previously, waveform correlation has detected low-frequency clusters during swarms at Soufrière Hills volcano which were linked to a fixed shallow conduit source in the volcanic system (Green and Neuberg, 2006). Buurman and West (2010) found clusters of waveforms closely tied to explosions at Augustine volcano (USA) and proposed that the method has considerable potential as an automated real-time volcanic explosion monitoring tool.

2.5 Singular value decomposition

Since the original dataset is derived from only three seismic stations, it is not possible to accurately calculate locations, and thus, absolute magnitudes and earthquake energies. However, we can assess the relative magnitudes between events of a cluster because the entire cluster must derive from the same source (e.g., Green and Neuberg, 2006). To determine the relative earthquake amplitudes and relative time lags within the two largest clusters we apply a method based on standard matrix factorization; the singular value decomposition (SVD). The method was proposed by Rubinstein and Ellsworth (2010) and used on clusters located around Parkfield, Northern California. The method uses the entire waveform, which reduces the uncertainty in earthquake size and produces a measurement which is consistent from event to event within a cluster. The SVD can be used to describe a matrix \mathbf{M} (i.e. a group of horizontal vectors) in terms of two sets of basic vectors (input \mathbf{U} and output \mathbf{V}) and set of non-negative singular values Σ ascribed to the weight of the output-basis vector, as in the following relationship:

$$\mathbf{M} = \mathbf{U} \Sigma \mathbf{V}'. \quad (1)$$

\mathbf{U} is a matrix that maps the weight applied to each output-basis vector for each data vector. Each column \mathbf{U}_i of \mathbf{U} gives the relative amplitude of the associated output-basis vector (\mathbf{V}_i) for each data vector. When the input data consists of repeating events,

235 m over 24 h for repetitive low-frequency earthquakes at Soufrière Hills volcano. The correlation coefficient, R , is related to the variance of the travel-time perturbation, σ_τ , and to the frequency, $\bar{\omega}^2$, according to the following relationship (Snieder, 2003):

$$R = 1 - \frac{1}{2} \bar{\omega}^2 \sigma_\tau^2. \quad (2)$$

5 The frequency can be calculated from the seismogram data, $u(t)$:

$$\bar{\omega}^2 = \frac{\int_{t-T}^{t+T} \dot{u}^2(t') dt'}{\int_{t-T}^{t+T} u^2(t') dt'}, \quad (3)$$

where the integral is performed over a window of length $2T$ centred at time t . The relationship between the variance of the travel time-perturbation and inferred source migration depends on the source mechanism. Snieder and Vrijlandt (2005) have demonstrated this relationship for different types of source such as a explosive, point or fault plane. If displacement occurs, for instance, along the fault plane, the source dislocation, δ is given by:

$$\delta = \left[7 \left(\frac{2}{v_p^6} + \frac{3}{v_s^6} \right) / \left(\frac{6}{v_p^8} + \frac{7}{v_s^8} \right) \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \sigma_\tau, \quad (4)$$

where v_p and v_s are P and S wave velocities in the medium.

15 We applied Eq. (4) to 36 h waveform stacks from clusters identified by waveform correlation (Sect. 2.4), to maximise temporal resolution and reduce the computing power required. Waveform stacking also improves the signal-to-noise ratio and improves correlation. The correlation coefficient was calculated for different frequency bands (1–5, 1–10 Hz) and time windows (1–5, 7–11 s) between each waveform stack and the first stack, and converted to source displacement. The calculations were based on a P

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



3.2 Fast-Fourier Transform

MTM analysis was carried out on the complete record of hourly event counts from single-station detection analysis to provide a first-pass assessment of the cyclic character of the dataset (Fig. 2a). The Power Spectral Density estimate reveals two peaks that appear significant above the 99% noise confidence threshold: 40 and 24 h. However, analysis of the first and last four weeks of the dataset (Fig. 2b and c) reveals the cyclic components are not wholly persistent throughout the dataset. The 40 h cyclic component does not appear in the Power Spectral Density estimate for the last four weeks of the dataset (Fig. 2c). Although this cyclic instability brings into question the assumption of statistical stationarity (required by definition of MTM spectral analysis), STFT analysis only requires the time-series to remain stationary within each window (described in Sect. 2.3). We therefore used the STFT method to explore the temporal variability of the hourly event count in more detail.

Inspection of the spectrogram from the hourly event count (Fig. 1b) highlights the following key observations:

1. Mid-October to mid-November 1994 is dominated by a strong ~ 40 h cyclicity. This period does not appear again in any other part of the spectrogram.
2. From December to the end of January the cycle period “glides” from ~ 50 h to ~ 100 h.

3.3 Waveform correlation

For waveform correlation, we focused on events detected during the period of 1 October to 15 November 1994 to explore the emergence of the spine and its strong 40 h pulsatory extrusion (Fig. 3a). The key observations are:

1. The dataset was dominated by two clusters. The clusters, henceforth known as Cluster 1 and 2, are highlighted and their waveforms contain a strong low-frequency component (Fig. 3a–c).

SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



2. Waveform stacks for Cluster 1 and 2 show opposite arrival polarities.
3. The clustered events form only a small percentile (11 %) of all events in this period (Fig. 3d).
4. Cluster 1 (487 events) and 2 (181 events) are by far the largest of 29 clusters detected during this period; by comparison the third largest cluster has 32 events.
5. The occurrence of both clusters also shows strong cyclicity approximately corresponding to that seen in the STFT analysis of the hourly event counts (Sect. 3.2).

3.4 Cluster characteristics

For each cluster, the frequency index for each waveform (calculated for single-station detection filtering; Sect. 2.2) was plotted over time (Fig. 4a). There is a clear division in the frequency component of each cluster, with Cluster 2 containing waveforms with more low-frequency components. SVD of the waveforms in Cluster 1 and 2 show that during their lifetimes, the relative amplitudes (and by extension, relative moment) remain substantially unchanged (Fig. 4b). In contrast, relative time differences for each cluster show opposite trends (Fig. 4c). Cluster 1 has a positive trend, indicating that the events are arriving sooner relative to the mean cluster waveform; whereas for Cluster 2, a negative trend indicates that the events are arriving later relative to the mean waveform (Fig. 4c).

CWI was applied to the bandpass-filtered stacked waveforms from each cluster. Displacements calculated in the 1–5 s window of the waveforms, filtered at 1–5 Hz, are relatively stable during the early stages of both clusters (Fig. 5b and e). However, the last week of each cluster is defined by displacements of over 100 m. The displacements calculated after the 5–10 Hz filter show greater scattering but smaller displacements (Fig. 5c and f). The codas (5–9 s) in both bandpass filters do not reflect these changes, with relatively stable movement throughout each cluster's lifetime. This indicates little or no motion of the scatterers in the source-receiver path.

4 Discussion

4.1 Cyclic variations in seismicity

Single-station detection with a STA/LTA algorithm detected a total of 12 208 events between 1 October 1994 and 28 February 1995 at Unzen volcano (Fig. 1a). Our count is in good agreement with previous results published by Nakada et al. (1999) and Umakoshi et al. (2008). Furthermore, good visual correlation between the temporal pattern of earthquake rates and real-time seismic amplitude measurements reinforces our confidence in the results of the detection algorithm (Fig. S3). However, our rates are much higher than those of Yamashina et al. (1999), who used data recorded 5 km south-west of the vent and which likely did not detect many smaller events during the activity. A combination of MTM and STFT analysis on hourly event counts revealed a strong ~ 40 h cyclicity during the extrusion of a spine (Fig. 1b). We also see a “gliding” in the cycle period from ~ 40 h in mid-November up to ~ 100 h at the end of January 1995. The ~ 40 h periodicity is very similar to that previously described in seismicity and tilt data (Nakada et al., 1999; Yamashina et al., 1999). However, the ~ 100 h cycle at the end of January 1995 is longer than the ~ 60 h period described by Nakada et al. (1999).

Numerous studies of seismicity during dome-forming eruptions have described characteristic sequences of earthquakes that correlate with changes in surface activity (e.g. Chouet, 1996; Iverson et al., 2006; Neuberg et al., 2006; Buurman and West, 2010; Ketner and Power, 2013; Johnson et al., 2014). This has been modelled to reflect frictional processes along conduit walls as the ascending magma releases accumulated energy by faulting and/or pulsatory ascent (Denlinger and Hoblitt, 1999; Voight et al., 1999; Iverson et al., 2006; Neuberg et al., 2006; Iverson, 2008; Lensky et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2008; Kennedy et al., 2009; Kendrick et al., 2012, 2014b; Pallister et al., 2013; Scharff et al., 2014). Yamashina et al. (1999) proposed a cyclic upward movement of the spine due to periodic variations in pressure in the conduit and Umakoshi et al. (2011) invoked a similar model to explain a short period 1–2 h cycle during an

SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

**Cyclic fracturing
during spine
extrusion at Unzen
volcano, Japan**

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



earlier phase of the eruption in May 1991. Pressurization below a relatively impermeable plug has been commonly cited as the driving force for fracture propagation at the conduit margins (Voight et al., 1999; Johnson et al., 2008; Massol and Jaupart, 2009; Lyons et al., 2012). Various physical parameters may contribute to short-term cyclic-ity during dome-forming eruptions, including: wall-rock elasticity (Maeda, 2000; Costa et al., 2007, 2012), outgassing pulses (Voight et al., 1999; Waite et al., 2008; Massol and Jaupart, 2009; Collinson and Neuberg, 2012; Michaut et al., 2013), and magma failure and frictional slip (Lavallée et al., 2008; De Angelis and Henton, 2011; Lavallée et al., 2012b; Thomas and Neuberg, 2012; Chouet and Matoza, 2013; Kendrick et al., 2014a, b). Indeed, it is believed that it is frictional properties that control the final part of magma ascent (Kendrick et al., 2014b; Hornby et al., 2015; Lavallée et al., 2015), which is driven by buoyancy. In tectonic settings, variations in fault-normal stresses can produce wide-ranging fault products, such as gouge, cataclasite, pseudotachylite, and mylonite (Ben-Zion and Sammis, 2003). In volcanic settings, the challenge is in understanding the conditions which result in failure and particularly the influence of faulted rocks on slip behaviour (Kendrick et al., 2014b). Frictional sliding is velocity dependent and may be velocity strengthening, which promotes stable aseismic slip, or velocity weakening (i.e. likely to preduce earthquake instabilities; Dieterich, 1979). Comminution during slip produces fault gouge, which results in a reduction in friction with increasing slip velocity, as determined experimentally for ash gouge by Lavallée et al. (2014). Gouge may be fluidised by dilation during rupture and form cataclasites, which have been observed in volcanic settings (Tuffen and Dingwell, 2005; Cashman et al., 2008; Kennedy et al., 2009; Kendrick et al., 2012, 2014a; Gaunt et al., 2014; Plail et al., 2014). Given the extremely dynamic temperature and stress conditions in the shallow magma column, it is likely that slip could lead to the generation of pseudotachylite (e.g. Kendrick et al., 2012, 2014a, b); pseudotachylite generation greatly alters fault properties (Otsuki, 2003; Di Toro et al., 2006; Nielsen et al., 2010; Hornby et al., 2015; Lavallée et al., 2015). A recent study has shown that slip velocities as little as 0.1 m s^{-1} are sufficient to induce frictional melting (Kendrick et al., 2014a) – a thresh-

old regularly met during faulting in the seismic events related to the spine extrusion at Unzen volcano (Hornby et al., 2015). However, it is difficult to infer the importance of each mechanical contribution to the cyclicity detected above, as our description of these signal's trigger mechanisms remains incomplete. Here, using a combination of waveform correlation, SVD and CWI we have attempted to get a better understanding of this problem.

4.2 Repeating waveforms

Waveform correlation was carried out on the period around the extrusion of the spine instead of the entire period to focus on repetitive events related to its upward movement. 29 clusters were detected between 1 October and 15 November 1994 (Fig. 3b). The two largest clusters, which emerge coincidentally with the first observation of the spine (Yamashina et al., 1999), also feature a strong ~ 40 h periodicity similar to that detected in our FFT analysis (Sect. 3.2). The similar cluster waveforms (Fig. 3b and c) and the cyclic, non-destructive source character of the seismicity suggests a common process occurring within a similar setting. In addition, the opposing arrival polarities of each stacked cluster waveform (Fig. 3b and c) indicates opposite failure directions. Therefore, we propose that each cluster derives from brittle shear failure on opposite sides of the ascending magma plug at Unzen volcano.

It is the rheology of magma that helps drive this process; during ascent the rheology evolves as magma crystallises and vesiculates, becoming increasingly brittle. This behaviour, on short timescales in the upper conduit, provides exceptionally dynamic rheological conditions that favour strain localisation and failure (Lavallée et al., 2008); providing a hypothesised source for repeating volcanic earthquakes during the delicate interplay of magma across the glass transition (e.g., Neuberg et al., 2006). As magma undergoes a similar pressure temperature path through time, the conditions of failure would remain constant and failure would be achieved at a similar depth in the conduit, thereby generating seismicity from a recurring source. Field examination of eruptive products elsewhere have exposed the importance of multiple fault processes (Tuffen

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



of the magma through the upper surface of the spine as the failure point propagates ever deeper towards the base of the magma plug. These stress variations form a minor contribution to the variations in seismic velocity in the source region for Cluster 2, dominated by the decreasing normal stress due to the inclined spine.

5 Conclusions

We have characterised the seismicity of spine extrusion during the last stage of the 1991–1995 dome-forming eruption at Unzen volcano, Japan. Using a single-station detection approach, we identified 12 208 seismic events between October 1994 and February 1995. Fast-Fourier Transform analysis (Multitaper Method and Short-term Fourier Transform) revealed strong ~ 40 h cycles in hourly counts during the emergence of the spine. By the end of January 1995, the cycle “glided” to a ~ 100 h period. The cycles were linked to pulsatory extrusion of the spine, in-part governed by the frictional properties of the magma plug and driven by magma supply from below. Waveform correlation of the dataset revealed two strong cyclic clusters during the spine extrusion, interpreted as repeated fracturing events at the spine margins. A combination of singular value decomposition and coda wave interferometry revealed changes in seismic velocities in the Unzen edifice during the extrusion. Our conceptual model proposes that late-stage densification of the inclined magma spine resulted in increasing normal stresses on the lower margin, serving to close preferentially aligned fractures, and the opposite effect on the upper margin, where pervasive damage resulted from unloading from below as the spine slumped. This results in increasing and decreasing seismic velocities respectively, as well as a migration of the source regions along the conduit walls as failure criteria are met. This study highlights the application of single-station detection, statistical analysis, waveform correlation, singular value decomposition, and coda wave interferometry to deduce subtle variations during eruptions. We anticipate that the application of such mechanism-based interpretation of geophysi-

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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**Cyclic fracturing
during spine
extrusion at Unzen
volcano, Japan**

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Green, D. N. and Neuberg, J.: Waveform classification of volcanic low-frequency earthquake swarms and its implication at Soufrière Hills Volcano, Montserrat, *J. Volcanol. Geoth. Res.*, 153, 51–63, doi:10.1016/j.jvolgeores.2005.08.003, 2006. 2111, 2117, 2126

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Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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**Cyclic fracturing
during spine
extrusion at Unzen
volcano, Japan**

O. D. Lamb et al.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

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Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

⏪

⏩

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

**Table 1.** STA/LTA parameters used in single-station event detection.

Variable	Value	Description
L_{STA}	0.8 s	Length of short-term window
L_{LTA}	7 s	Length of long-term window
t_{on}	1.5	Trigger-on threshold
t_{off}	1	Trigger-off threshold

SED

7, 2109–2149, 2015

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

**Table 2.** Extreme metric values used for SSD noise removal. P2P refers to peak-to-peak amplitude.

Metric	Limits
Frequency Index	> 0.5
Root-mean square amplitude (RMSA)	< 50 counts
P2P/RMSA	> 20
Duration	< 2 s
Centre Frequency	< 1 Hz, > 50 Hz

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

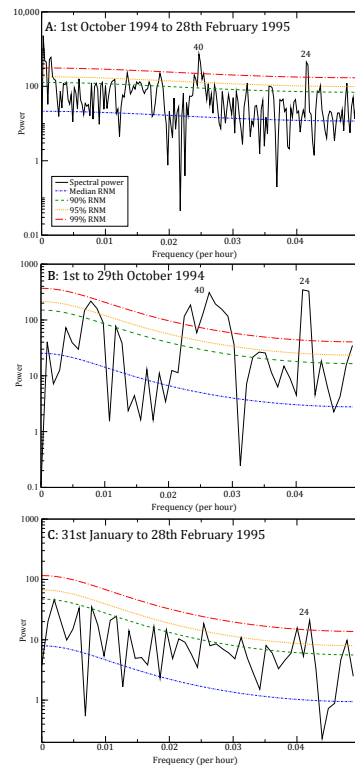


Figure 2. MTM spectra showing time-series Power Spectral Density of the daily event counts of **(a)** the whole hourly event count time-series, **(b)** the first four weeks, and **(c)** the last four weeks of the time-series. The Power Spectral Density is plotted against various confidence levels of the Red Noise Model. Peaks exceeding at least the 99 % confidence level are annotated with corresponding cycle period in hours.

[Title Page](#)
[Abstract](#)
[Introduction](#)
[Conclusions](#)
[References](#)
[Tables](#)
[Figures](#)
[◀](#)
[▶](#)
[◀](#)
[▶](#)
[Back](#)
[Close](#)
[Full Screen / Esc](#)
[Printer-friendly Version](#)
[Interactive Discussion](#)


Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

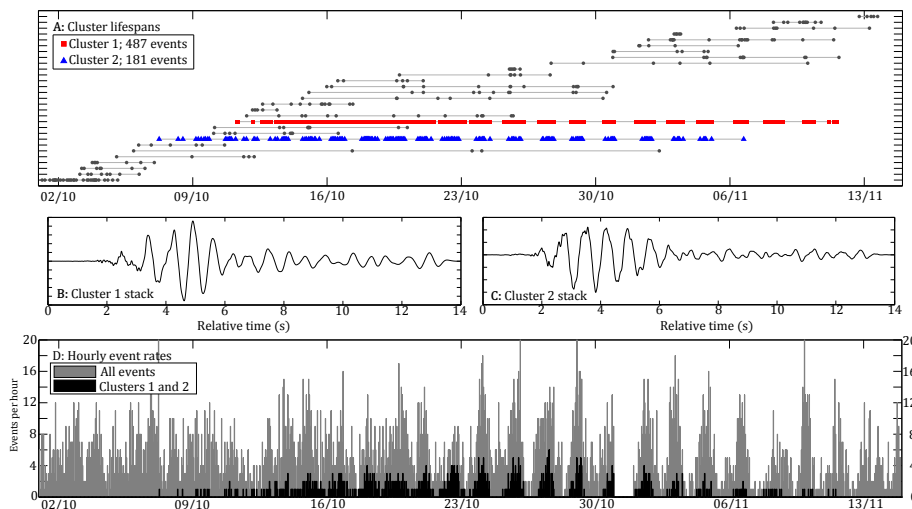


Figure 3. (a) Catalogue of cluster occurrence in our dataset from 1 October to 15 November 1994. Each plotted point represents an earthquake, and earthquakes on the same line are part of the same cluster. Only clusters with 5 or more events are shown. The two largest clusters, Clusters 1 and 2, are plotted with red squares and blue triangles respectively. (b) The stack of all waveforms in Cluster 1. (c) The stack of all waveforms in Cluster 2. (d) Hourly event rates for all events (grey) and events in Clusters 1 and 2 (black) during the period of 1 October to 15 November 1994.

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

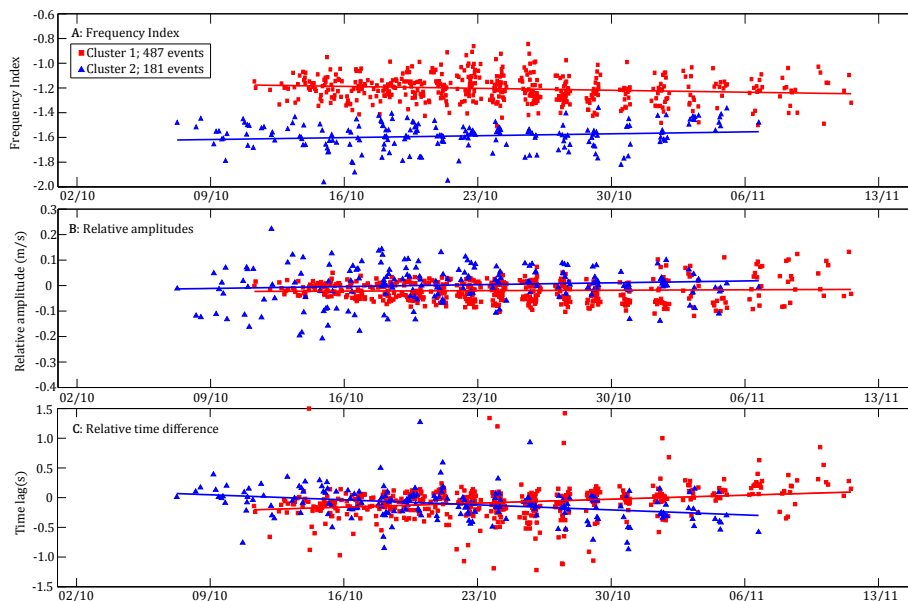


Figure 4. (a) The frequency index of earthquakes in Clusters 1 and 2. (b) Relative amplitudes of earthquakes in Clusters 1 and 2, as measured using singular value decomposition. (c) The relative time difference (i.e. time lag) of each earthquake in Clusters 1 and 2, as measured using cross-correlation against the first principal component. In each panel the linear best fit for each cluster are plotted.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[⏪](#)[⏩](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

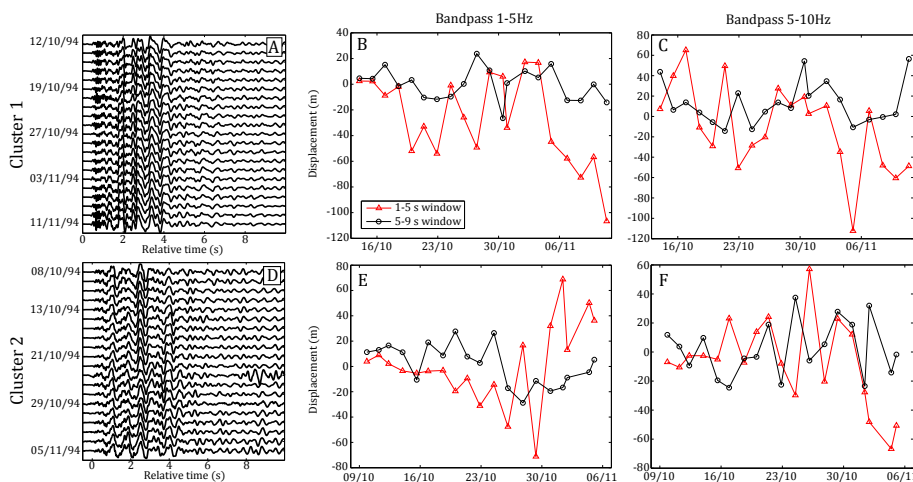


Figure 5. Stacked waveforms (left column) and source displacements between the first stack and all other stacks for data bandpassed between 1–5 Hz (middle column) and 5–10 Hz (right column). The top and bottom row are for Cluster 1 and 2 respectively.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



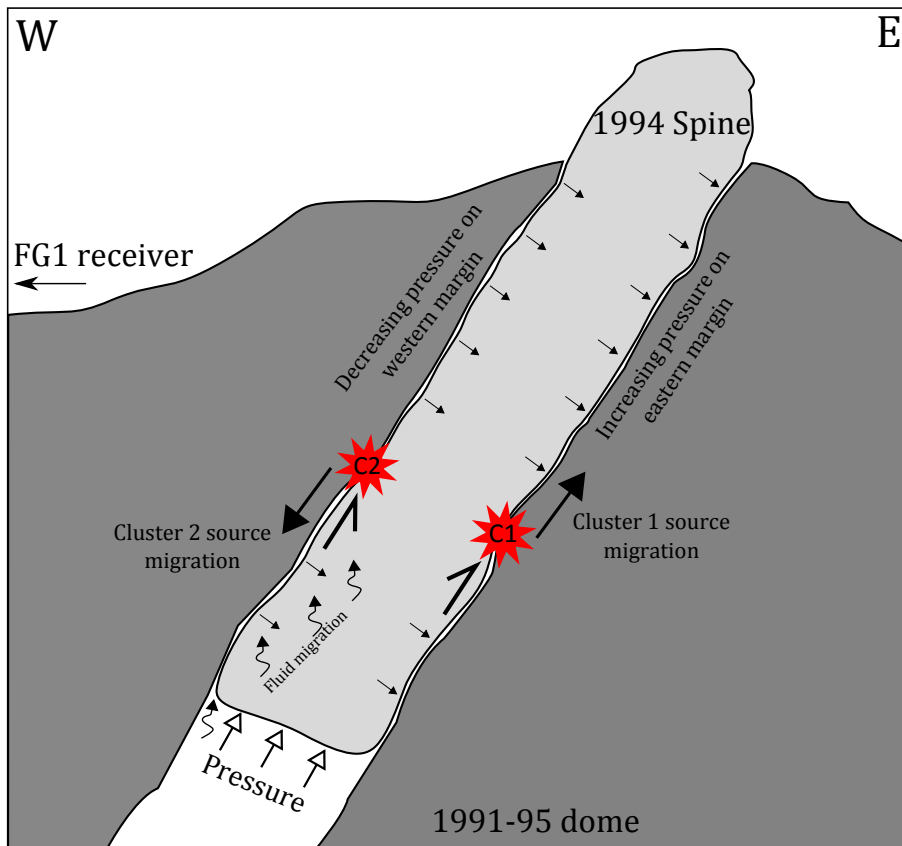


Figure 6. An E–W cross-section of the conceptual model for spine extrusion and cluster source locations at Unzen volcano in October/November 1994, looking North. See Sect. 4.4 for details.

Cyclic fracturing during spine extrusion at Unzen volcano, Japan

O. D. Lamb et al.

Title Page	
Abstract	Introduction
Conclusions	References
Tables	Figures
◀	▶
◀	▶
Back	Close
Full Screen / Esc	
Printer-friendly Version	
Interactive Discussion	

