Development of central volcanoes and rift axial volcanism in the Manda-Hararo rift segment, Afar, Ethiopia

Charlotte Vye¹, Bruce Napier², Kay Smith¹, Sarah Medynski³ and Tim Wright⁴

¹ British Geological Survey, Edinburgh, UK
² British Geological Survey, Nottingham, UK
³ CNRS-CRPG, Nancy, France
⁴ University of Leeds, UK
Regional context

Map extract from Barberi, Giglia, Marinelli, Santacroce, Tazieff and Varet, Geological map of the Danakil Depression

BGS working in collaboration with ARC
Mapping central volcanic complexes, extensive plains-style basaltic lavas, fault networks, fissures and pyroclastic deposits.
Spatial temporal distribution of volcanic products and rift history.
Mapping in the Afar Depression, Ethiopia to identify **individual eruptive episodes** and understand character, extent, timing and causes of past volcanism.

Combining with petrologic, seismic, MT and geochron research to investigate plumbing system beneath Afar in this active rift.

Integrating the scientific objectives with communication of hazards and risk.

**Afar Rift, Ethiopia**

Hill-shaded DEM from SPOT5 (supplied by S.Hautot)
Mapping and modelling development

- Principal use of LIDAR and Spot5 DEMs (also ASTER and SRTM)
- Combination with Spot5, pansharpened ASTER, pca and dc stretched ASTER imagery to enhance the band signatures
- Provides best combination of textural analysis and compositional variance between units

[Map with two images, one in grayscale and the other in color, showing the 5km scale]
3-D visualisation

- Combined in Geovisionary™ to provide a full stereoscopic 3-D environment in which to simulate field investigation.
- Essential for establishing relationships between geological units.

- Provides a remote mapping methodology to combine datasets and link to Arc GIS.
- Opportunity to easily identify fault throw and subtle conjugate fault sets.
- Capability to stack and manipulate multiple high-resolution datasets e.g. RS imagery.
Dabbahu (M-H) Rift fly-through
Identify proximal deposits, lava flow direction, and calderas, to reconstruct the volcanic architecture in afar.
• Linear basaltic fissure vents dominate the topographic rift axis whilst point source basaltic vents are located up to 7 km away from the rift axis. Off axis central volcanic complexes host the products of young eruptions that are up to 12 km from the centre.
**Mid-rift explosive volcanism**

- Mid-rift caldera thought previously to be a magma drain-back feature / collapse ~830 m diameter.
- No evidence for ignimbrites, silicic tephras etc found during fieldwork.
- Gabbroic lithics up to 80cm diameter found within 100m of the vent lip.
- = explosive basaltic eruption due to interaction with groundwater / brines / hydrothermal systems.
Distribution of vents

- Spread of eruption sites, vent character, and young volcanic ages (<10 ka) dispersed throughout the segment. Similar to models of slow-spreading magmatic mid-ocean ridge (MOR) segments, in contrast to repetitive eruptions from central fissure vents in fast-spreading MORs.

From Maclennan, 2010, Nature Geoscience
Conclusions

- Detailed mapping at the scale of individual eruption units achieved through the use of 3D visualisation and remote sensing data with field validation.
- Spread of eruption sites throughout the segment is similar to models of slow-spreading magmatic mid-ocean ridge (MOR) segments, in contrast to repetitive eruptions from central fissure vents in fast-spreading MORs.
- Linear basaltic fissure vents dominate the topographic rift axis whilst point source basaltic vents are located up to 7 km away from the rift axis.
- Off axis central volcanic complexes host the products of young eruptions that are up to 12 km from the centre, supports oblique angle dyke injection to the WNW towards Badi volcano.
- Explosive basaltic eruptions have occurred in the past in this segment, the age and extent of impact of these events are currently unknown.
- Future work for hazard specific work will be conducted in collaboration with the Geological Survey of Ethiopia and colleagues within the IGSSA and Earth Science Dept at AAU.

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