

Dynamic evolution of flow structures and viscosity during basaltic magma emplacement and crystallization in an upper-crustal sill

LeeAnn Srogi^{1,1}, Arianna Soldati², Tim Lutz¹, Nikolas Watson¹, and Meagen Pollock³

¹West Chester University of Pennsylvania

²North Carolina State University

³College of Wooster

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Abstract

An upper-crustal intrusive network in the 201.5 Ma, rift-related Central Atlantic Magmatic Province is exposed in the western Newark basin (PA, USA). Alpha-MELTS modeling was used to track magma evolution starting with initial pyroxene crystallization at depth (1000-500 MPa); plagioclase crystallized during ascent in the upper crust. For magma emplaced at 5-6 km depth (170 MPa), six MELTS models were generated to bracket different composition, H₂O (1-3 wt.%), and crystallinity (28-49 vol.%). Corresponding magma viscosities evolved from 3 to 1624 Pa-sec (predicted using Giordano et. al 2008; Moitra and Gonnermann 2014). Detailed crystal mush structures in a diabase sill are revealed in a dimension stone quarry. Ubiquitous asymmetric modal layers a few mm thick comprising plag-rich layers (PRL, 75% modal plag) overlying more pyx-rich layers outline the tops of hundreds of dm-m scale flow lobes in the quarry. Tabular plag in PRL show shape-preferred orientations, tiling, and pressure shadows around larger pyx that resemble analog experiments on particle slurries and indicate flow with limited mechanical compaction. During magma emplacement, recursive interactions of propagation, sorting, and crystallization self-organized as flow lobes with plag entrained and aligned along lobe tops. Our calculations show plag separation can reduce bimodal suspension viscosity; a positive feedback likely enhanced by shear thinning and crystal alignments. EDS analyses and X-ray maps show that plag has oscillatory-zoned cores (An₈₂₋₆₇) with patchy-zoned mantles (An₆₇) filled in by An₆₆₋₆₃. In PRL, plag are cemented together by An₆₂₋₅₅; Na-rich rims occur next to qtz-Kspar pockets. By the end of cementation, PRL liquid volume was significantly reduced to 11-18% compared with 28-45% in overall magma based on MELTS models for An₆₂₋₅₅ plag. Diabase suspension viscosity increased to >6000 Pa-sec; PRL viscosity cannot be modeled by equations based on random packing. PRL with aligned interlocking crystals were more rigid and less permeable than surrounding diabase. Upward flow of magma after modal layer development was channelized into pipes truncated and deflected by PRL. Thus, lateral flow during emplacement developed sub-vertical heterogeneities that exemplify complex mush rheology over m-scale distances.

Dynamic evolution of flow structures and viscosity during basaltic magma emplacement and crystallization in an upper-crustal sill

1. Introduction
Click HERE for a brief audio summary of the entire poster.
0:00 / 2:44
Summary: Magma reservoirs are thought to be evenly crystalline for most of their lifetimes.

2. Crystal mush and flow macro- and micro-structures
Summary: In the decimeter-scale quarry near the base of the 36 Patons sill (SPC), hundreds of millimeter-scale plagioclase- and pyroxene-rich modal layers (PFL, PGL) occur along types of discontinuities in water-saturated flow lobes. Micro-scale textures resemble those in gabbro crystallites of partial magmatic intrusion (Carson and Marsh, 2012). Micro-scale evidence that internal flow was the primary process, and more important than composition evolution, shows parallel orientation of plagioclase (PFL) in PFL, parallel to internal layer margins. Many of PFL, GL, and PGL are

3. Crystallization stages mineral compositions and textures
Summary: Key changes in mineral compositions are linked to stages of magmatic system evolution in real, in-situ and upper crust. Resulting textures occur and relatively early; layered crystal growth in the 36 Patons sill developed after basaltic eruption. Changes in crystal compositions from Fe-enriched to Fe-depleted occur in an upward Crystallization front in PFL formation.
Figure 3.1: Plagioclase composition and zoning patterns in a crystalline throughout sill after basaltic eruption and pressure stages of an early crystallization. Figures in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 show data in Sections 3.3, use consistent color scheme found on stages related to PLAG zoning.

4. P-T estimates, alpha-MELTS modeling, and crystallinity
Summary: Results of thermodynamic calculations (Pati et al., 2008; Hesse and Petráň, 2017) are consistent with crystallization at late or early levels, as suggested for related rhyolites (e.g., Hesse et al., 2019). CFX (thermodynamic model to middle stage) and at ca. 100 MPa. All remaining minerals crystallized in upper crust at 200-30 MPa. Application of MELTS modeling (Chatterjee and Stock, 1999; Anand et al., 2008; 2010; Goffin et al., 2012) finds average Jacksonian basalt with 0.5 wt% H₂O fits observed PLAG and ALG compositions and Temperature (but not CFX), and evidence for the survival of crystal and liquid loss from the SPFL, probably resulting from magma transport.
Fig. 3.1: Pressure-Temperature calculation results for CFX, ALG, and CFX, ALG.

5. Viscosity modeling and evolving mush rheology
Summary: Viscosity models were calculated for Liquid (Goulet et al., 2008) and crystal suspension (Mason and Dostal, 2014) by stages of mush crystallization. These flow behavior was likely during formation of modal layers with aligned PLAG and GL would have reduced viscosity, but this cannot be modeled with these equations. Vol % crystals, maximum maximum values for viscosity peak after PLAG modal crystallization stage; viscosity cannot be calculated for concentration and later stages. However, a single viscosity rheology after PFL.

6. Conclusions
Summary: The present magma system, showing for crystallization in a sill-like, basaltic reservoir in middle and upper crust (Figure 3.5). Three major findings are summarized below Figure 3.1.

LeeAnn Sroggi¹, Arianna Soldati², Tim Lutz¹, Nikolas Watson¹, and Meagen Pollock³

¹Dept. Earth-Space Sciences, West Chester Univ.; ²Dept. Marine-Earth-Atmospheric Sciences, North Carolina State Univ.; ³Dept. Geology, College of Wooster



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1. INTRODUCTION

Click [HERE](#) for a brief audio summary of the entire poster.

Summary: Magma reservoirs are thought to be mostly crystalline for most of their lifetimes. Sub-volcanic intrusions are logical places to study crystal mushes, but plutonic rocks are overprinted and incomplete records that need to be interpreted within the context of an entire magmatic system. We find an appropriate upper-crustal magma system comprising a sill-dike network from basalt down to a sill intruded at 5.5-6 km (Section 1). The network is part of the 201.5 Ma Central Atlantic Magmatic Province (CAMP), a global-scale magmatic event associated with rifting of Pangaea.

This poster focuses on solidified basaltic crystal mush (*diabase* = *dolerite* = *gabbro*) in an upper-crustal sill and associated sub-volcanic plumbing system. A general history of the magmatic system, and evolution of mush composition and rheology during crystallization, are developed using field evidence (Sections 2 and 5), mineral compositions and petrography (Section 3), P-T estimates and thermodynamic modeling (Section 4), and crystallinity estimates and viscosity modeling (Sections 4-5).

Figure 1-1: Maps and information about the Central Atlantic Magmatic Province in Eastern North America and the study area in the Newark basin.

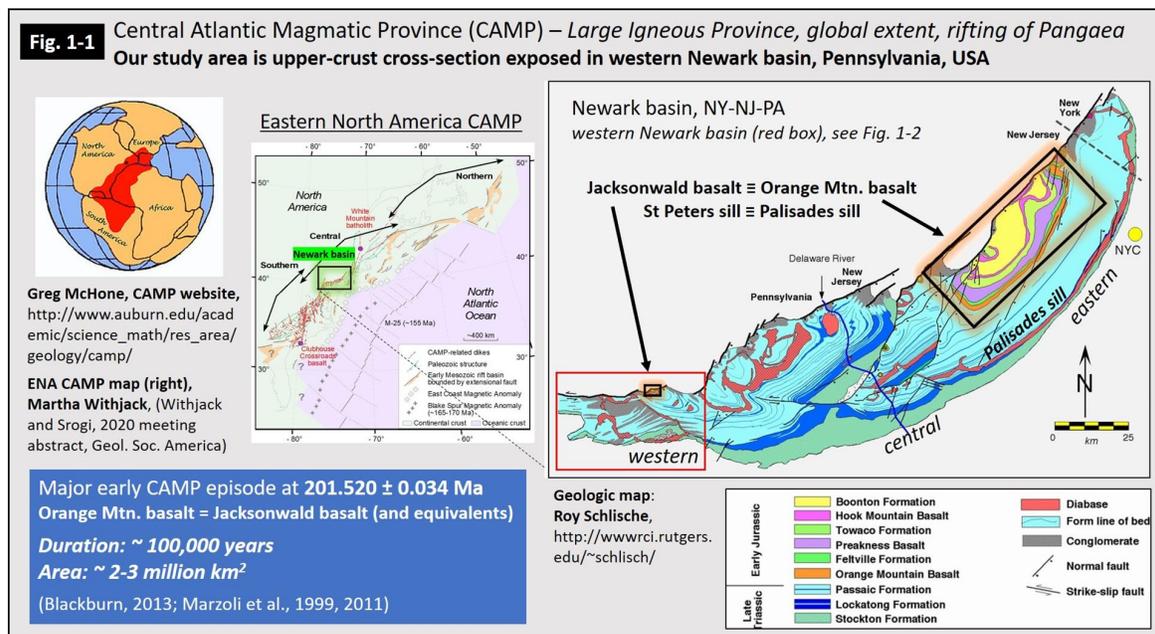
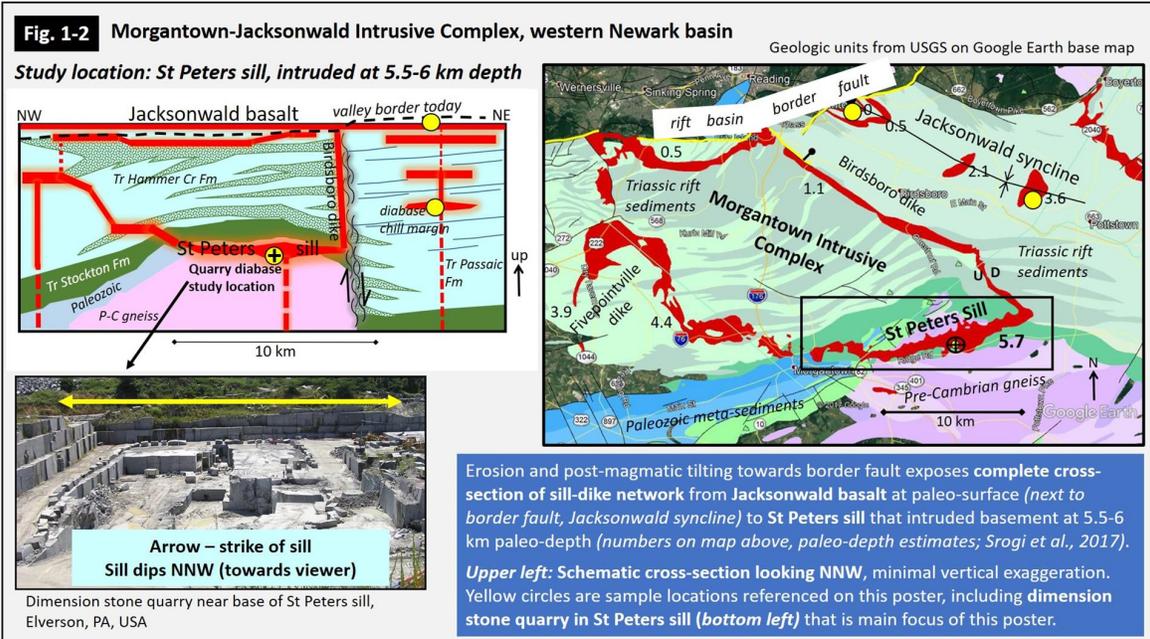


Figure 1-2: Maps and cross-sections showing the entire upper-crust sill-dike network exposed in the western Newark basin, and the St Peters sill comprising the crystal mush that is the focus of this poster.



2. CRYSTAL MUSH AND FLOW: MACRO- AND MICRO-STRUCTURES

Summary: In the dimension stone quarry near the base of the St Peters sill (SPS), hundreds of millimeter-scale plagioclase- and pyroxene-rich modal layers (PRL, PXL) occur along tops of decimeter- to meter-scale flow lobes. Macro-structures resemble wax-in-gelatin simulations of pulsed magmatic intrusion (Currier and Marsh, 2015). Microstructural evidence that lateral flow was the primary process and more important than compaction includes: shape-preferred orientations of plagioclase (PLAG) in PRL parallel to inclined layer margins; tiling of PLAG grains; wrapping and pressure shadows of PLAG around larger pyroxene (PX) grains within PRL. Microstructures resemble spindle viscometer experiments using bimodal analog particle slurries (Cimarelli et al., 2011).

Figure 2-1: Location and information about dimension stone quarry near base of SPS. The quarry measures roughly 60m x 50m, with a total of about 20m vertical exposure.

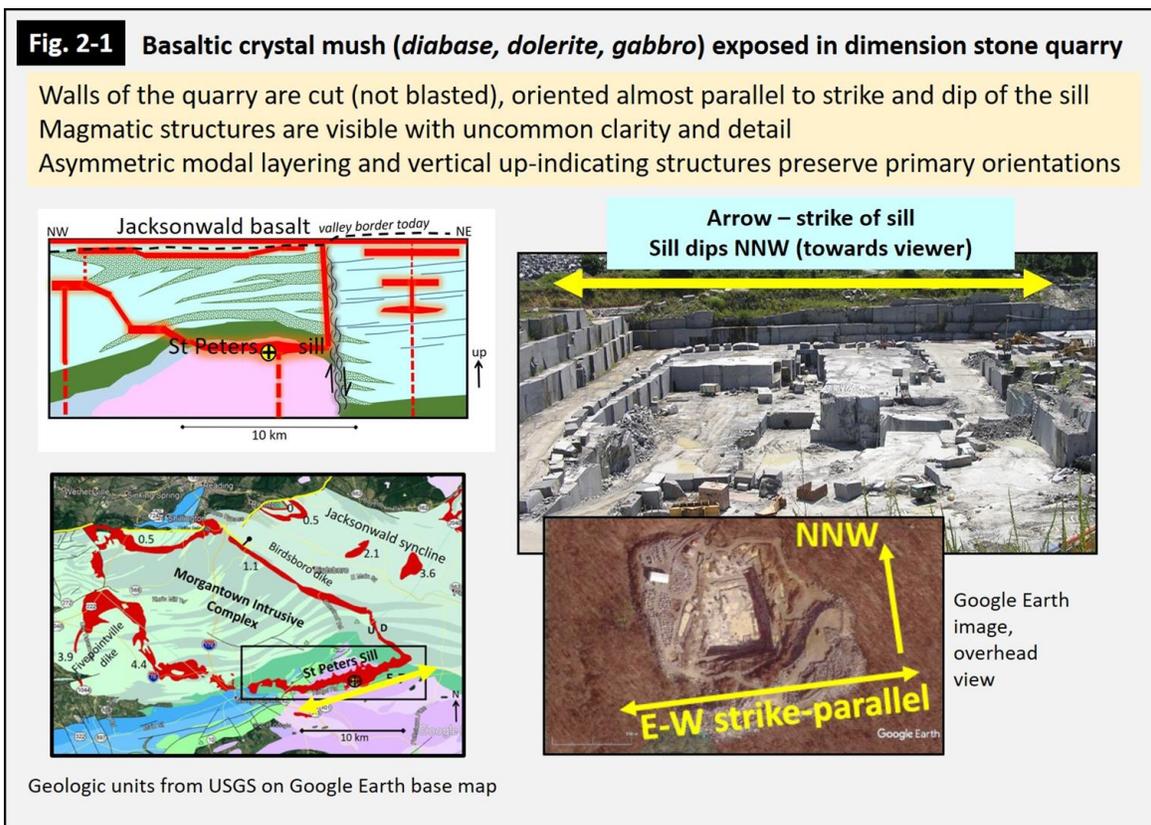


Figure 2-2: Macro-structures - plagioclase-rich layers (PRL) and flow lobes - in diabase crystal mush in the SPS dimension stone quarry, viewed on wall cut parallel to strike of sill, normal to dip of PRL.

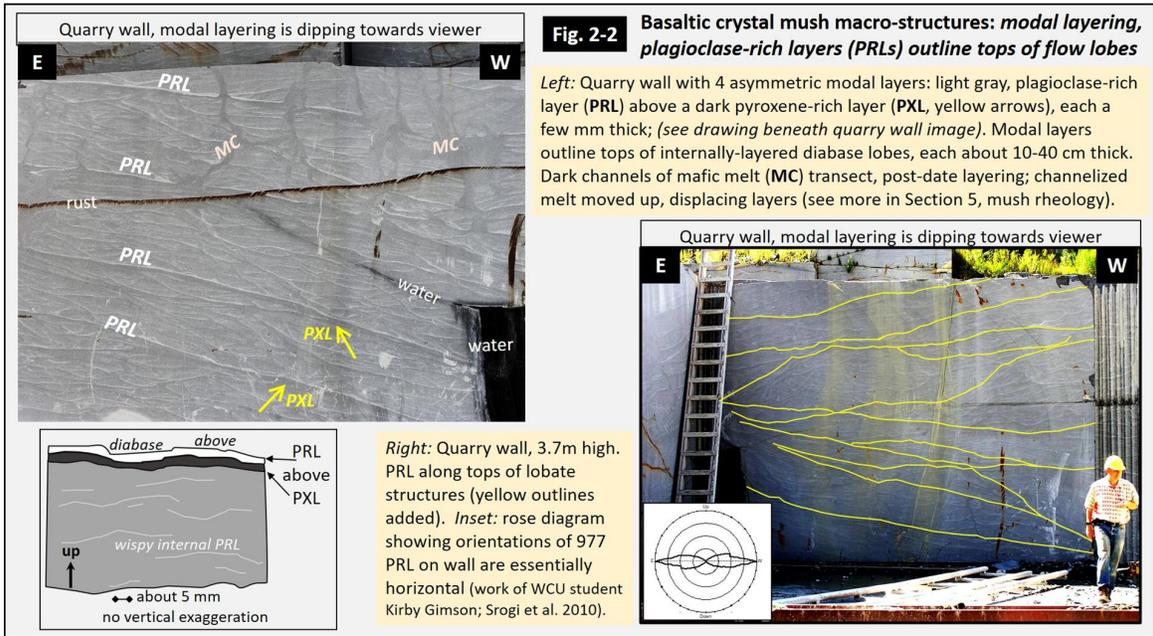


Figure 2-3: Flow lobes viewed on wall cut normal to sill strike and parallel to PRL dip; and on block surface cut at shallow angle (about 20°) to PRL dip. Latter section shows overlapping lobes similar to wax-in-gelatin models of pulsed magmatic flow (Currier and Marsh, 2015). This link may take you to the wax model videos; note especially Videos 3 and 5: Link to videos of wax models, Currier and Marsh (2015) (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvolgeores.2015.07.009>)

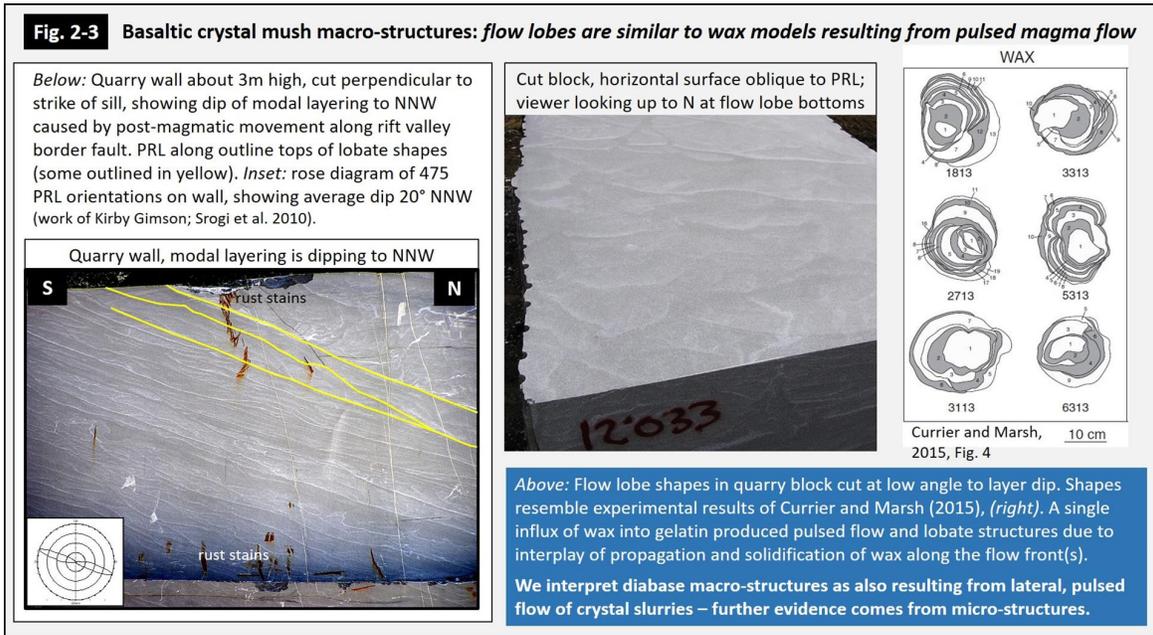
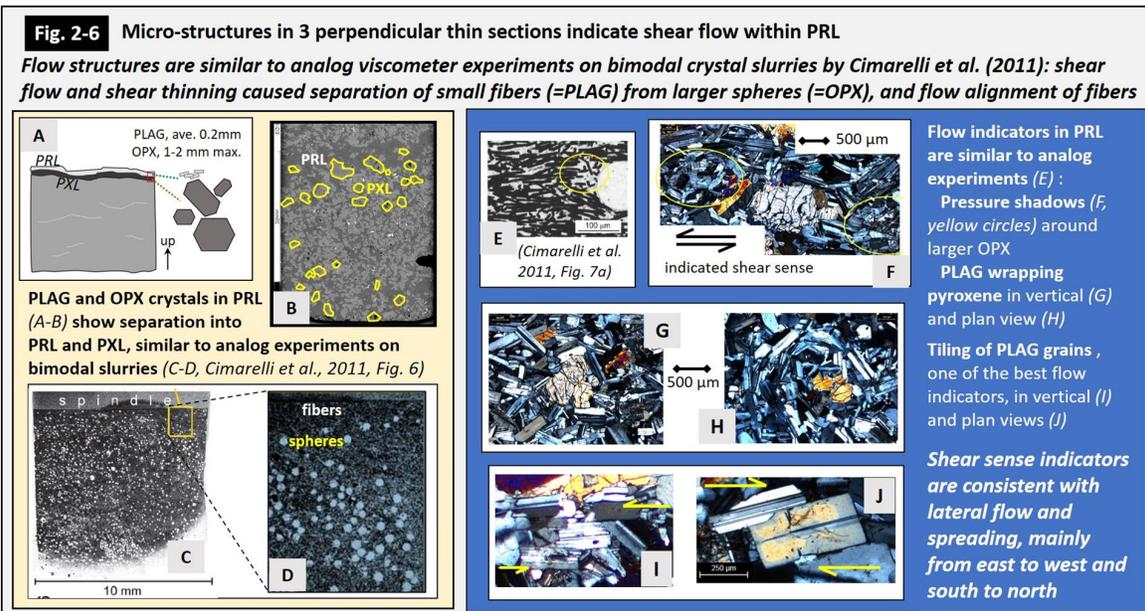


Figure 2-4: Orientation of thin section for viewing and measuring micro-structures in the PRL.



3. CRYSTALLIZATION STAGES: MINERAL COMPOSITIONS AND TEXTURES

Summary: Key changes in mineral composition are linked to stages of magmatic system evolution in mid-to-deep and upper crust. Basalt eruption occurred relatively early; layered crystal mush in the St Peters sill developed after basalt eruption. Change in augite compositions from Fe-enrichment trend to an unusual Ca-enrichment trend is linked to PRL formation.

Figure 3-1: Plagioclase composition and zoning patterns are consistent throughout sill-dike-basalt network and preserve stages of mush crystallization. Figures in Sections 3-4, and data tables in Sections 3-5, use consistent color scheme based on stages related to PLAG zoning.

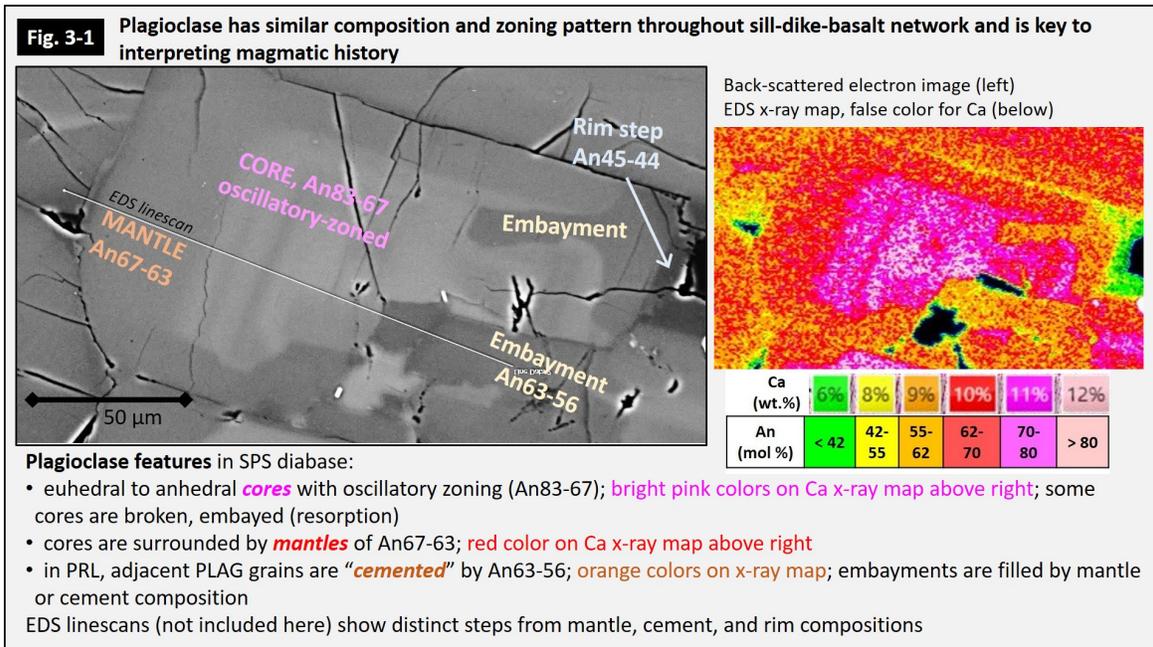


Figure 3-2: Pyroxene compositions: phenocryst cores are consistent throughout sill-dike-basalt network; 2 trends are identified for augite (AUG).

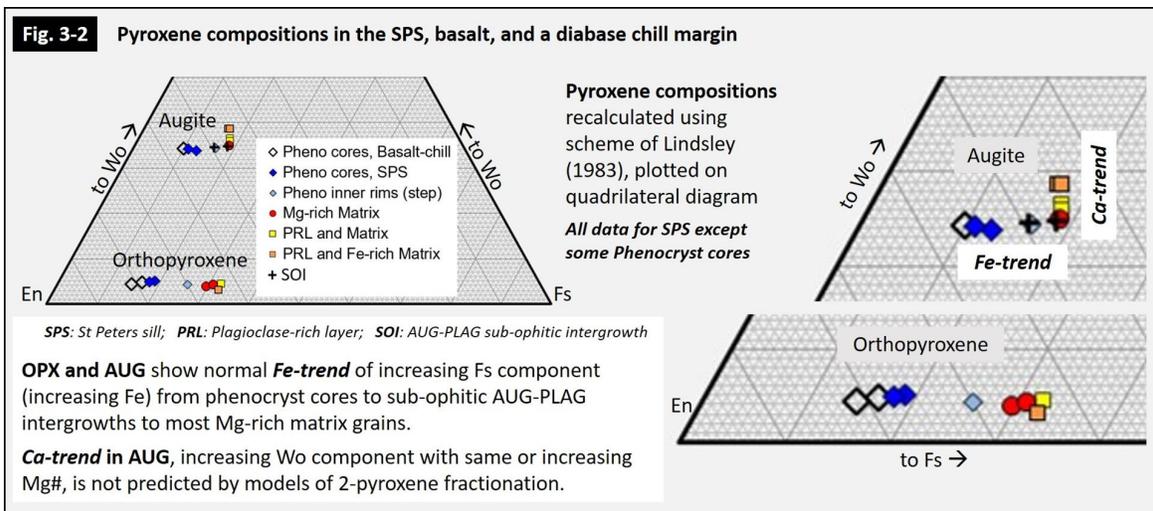


Figure 3-3: Similar early-formed crystal cargo in Jacksonwald basalt and St Peters sill demonstrates volcanic-plutonic link and relative timing of eruption(s) in history of this magma system.

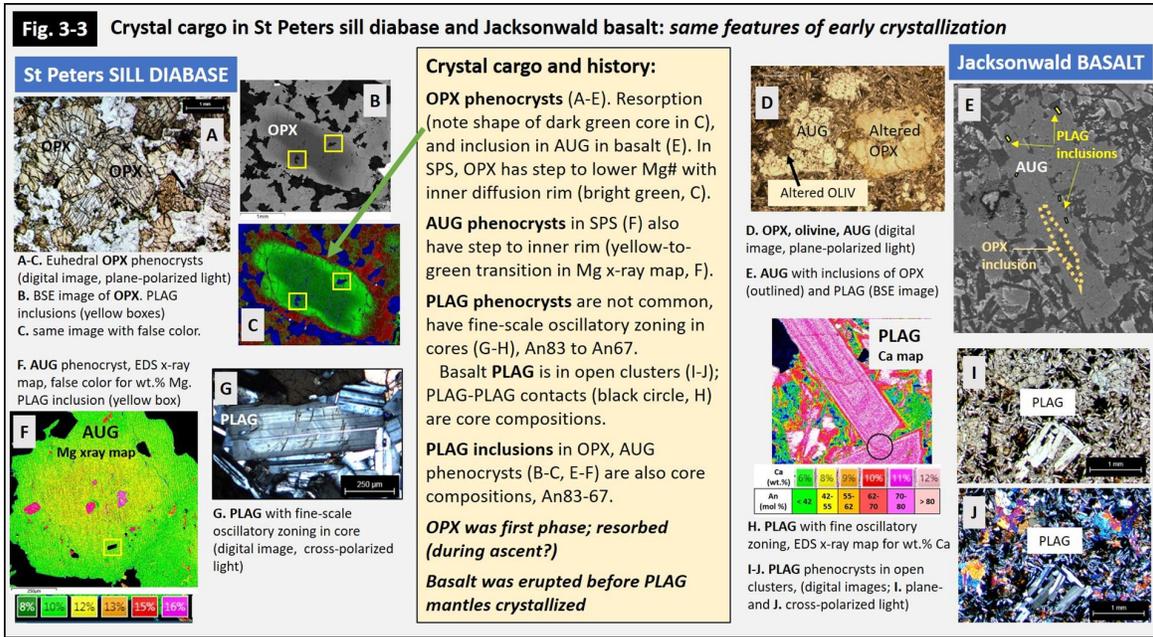


Figure 3-4: During and after eruption(s) came an active interval of multiple resorption and recharge events. Crystallization resumed with growth of plagioclase mantles and augite following the Fe-enrichment trend.

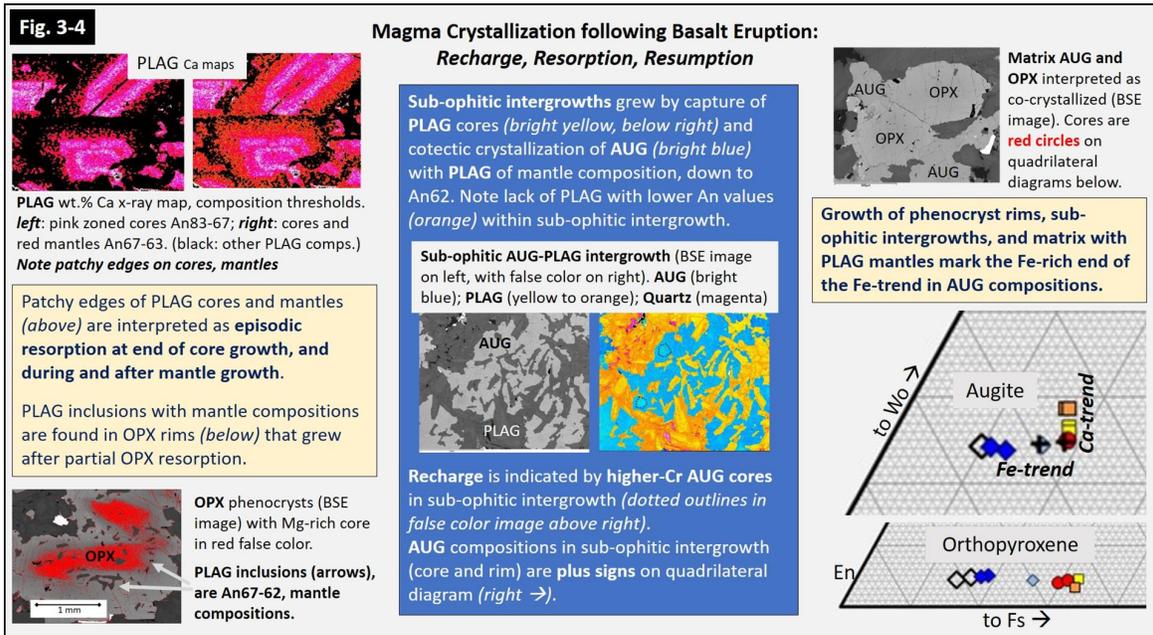


Figure 3-5: Ca x-ray maps with composition thresholds show the progressive growth of plagioclase in 4 areas of a plagioclase-rich layer (PRL). Timing of PLAG alignment and PRL formation is identified: after PLAG mantles and before cementation of the PRL.

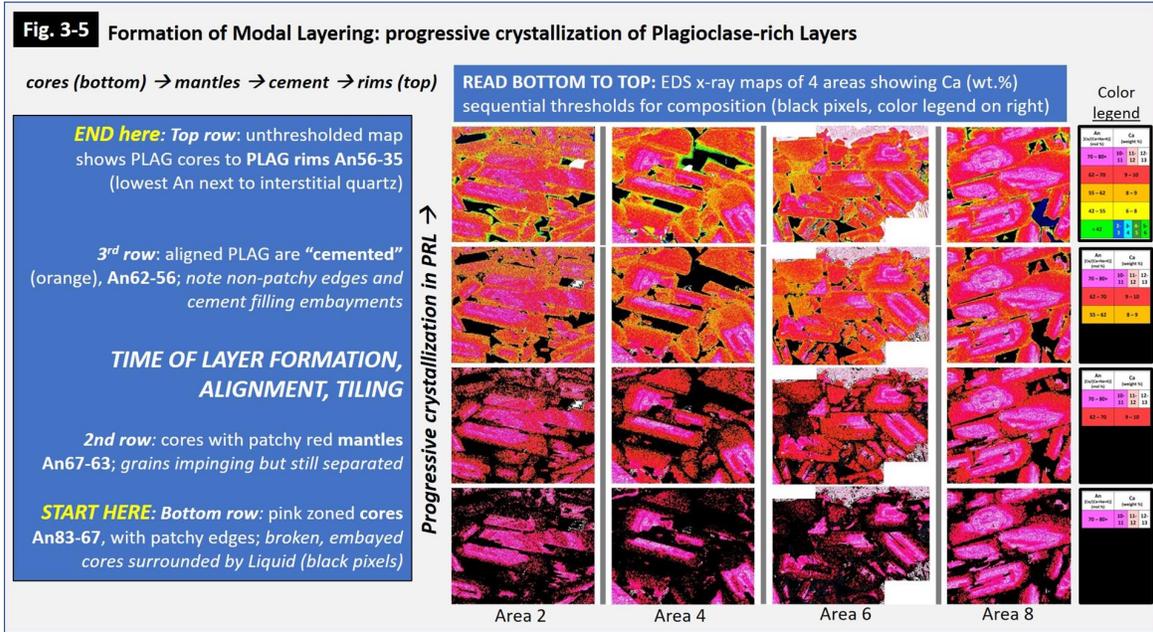
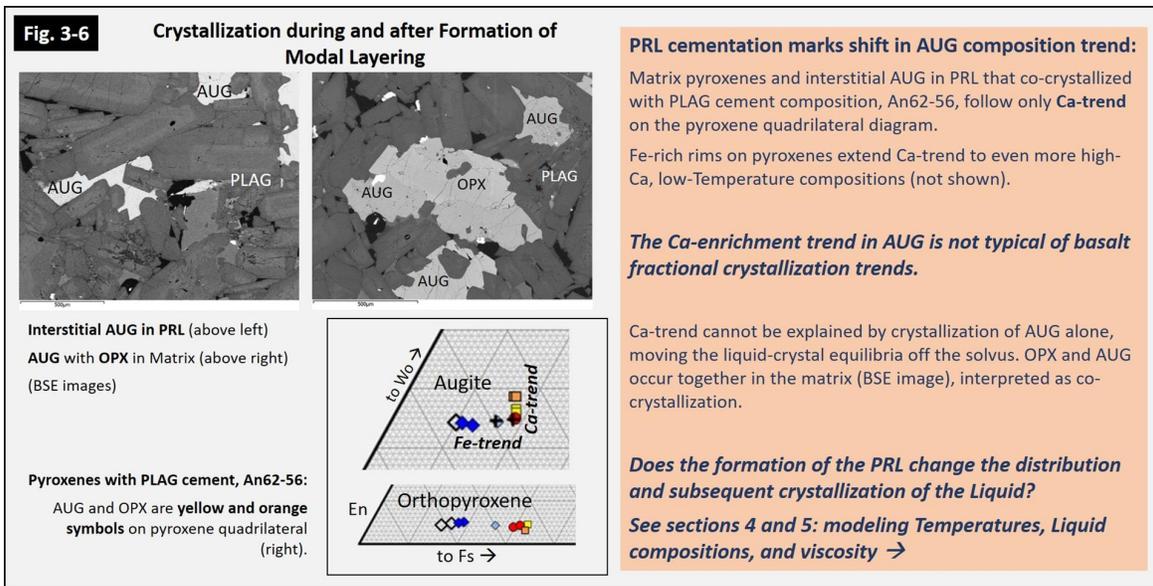


Figure 3-6: Augite associated with the PLAG cement composition and later minerals follow the Ca-enrichment trend. Formation of the PRL seems to mark a shift in crystal-Liquid equilibria.



4. P-T ESTIMATES, ALPHA-MELTS MODELING, AND CRYSTALLINITY

Summary: Results of thermobarometry calculations (Putirka, 2008; Neave and Putirka, 2017) are consistent with crystallization at two crustal levels, as suggested for related rift magmatism (e.g., Heinonen et al., 2019). OPX phenocrysts formed in middle-deep crust at ca. 500 MPa. All remaining minerals crystallized in upper crust at 200-10 MPa. Application of MELTS modeling (Ghiorso and Sack, 1995; Asimow and Ghiorso, 1998; Gualda et al., 2012) finds average Jacksonwald basalt with 0.5 wt.% H₂O fits diabase PLAG and AUG compositions and Temperatures (but not OPX), and evidence for an interval of crystal and liquid loss from the SPS, probably resulting from magma transport.

Fig. 4-1: Pressure-Temperature calculation results for OPX-Liquid, AUG-Liquid, and OPX-AUG.

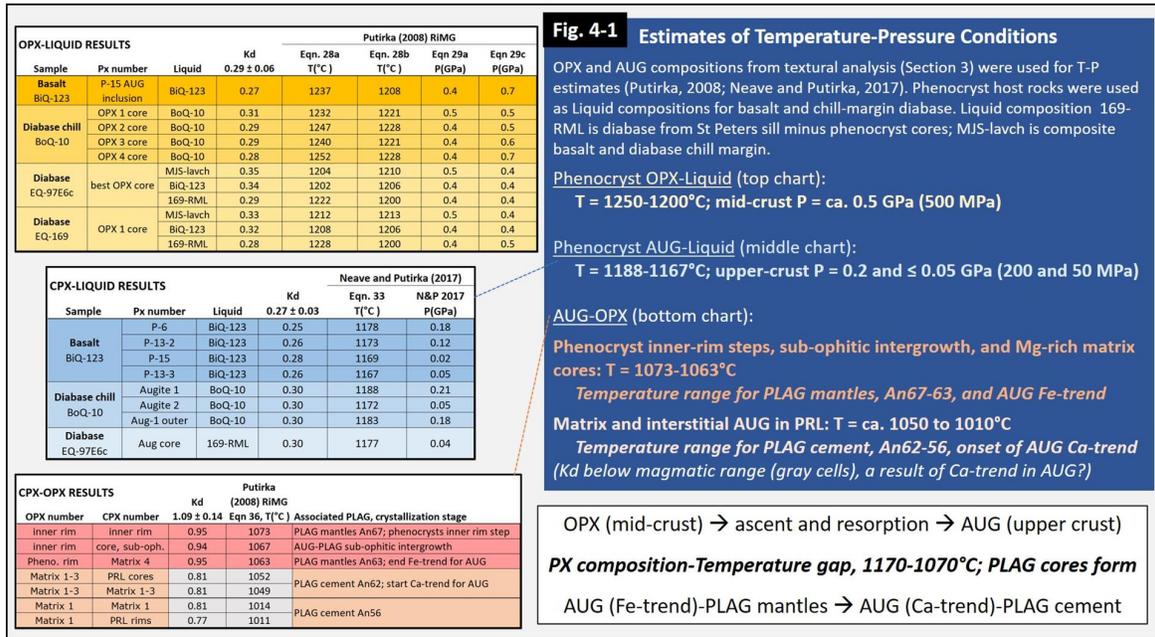


Figure 4-2: A total of 35 alpha-MELTS models (Ghiorso and Sack, 1995; Asimow and Ghiorso, 1998; Gualda et al., 2012) were run: average Jacksonwald basalt Liquid AB3 with 0.5 wt.% H₂O fits the diabase PLAG and AUG compositions and Temperatures (but not OPX).

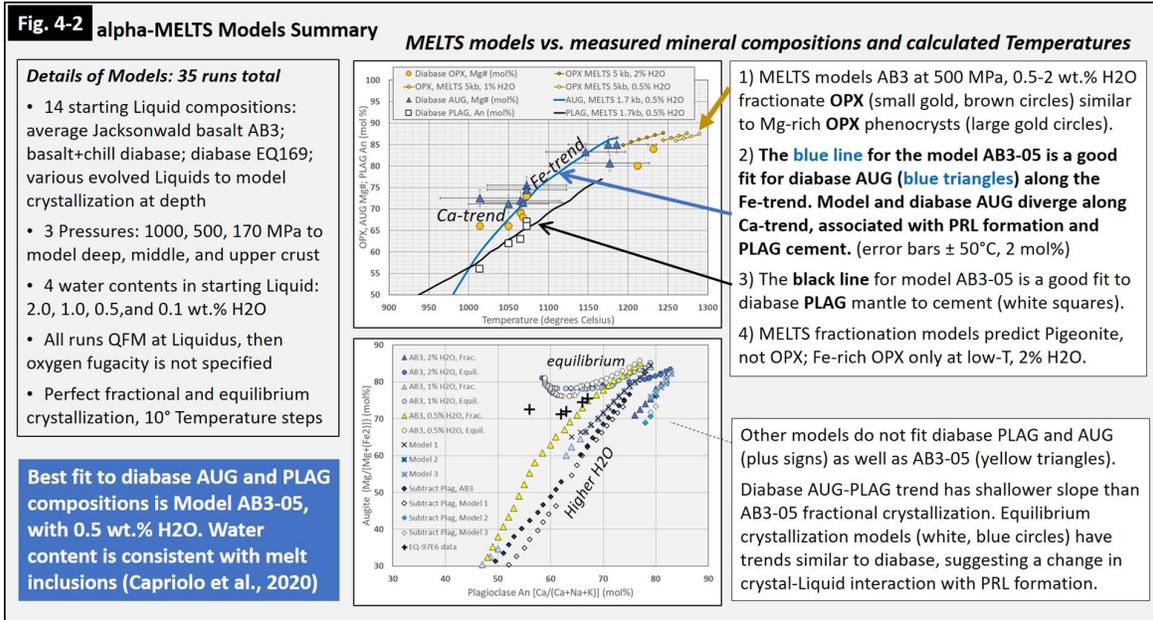


Figure 4-3: MELTS model AB3 predicts 30-35 vol.% pyroxenes crystallized in the interval between pyroxene cores and matrix (Temp. = 1170-1070°C). However, diabase contains only 5-8 vol.% pyroxenes with these compositions. Magma transport and eruption during this interval would explain "missing" pyroxenes and be consistent with textural evidence from PLAG cores which were forming at that time.

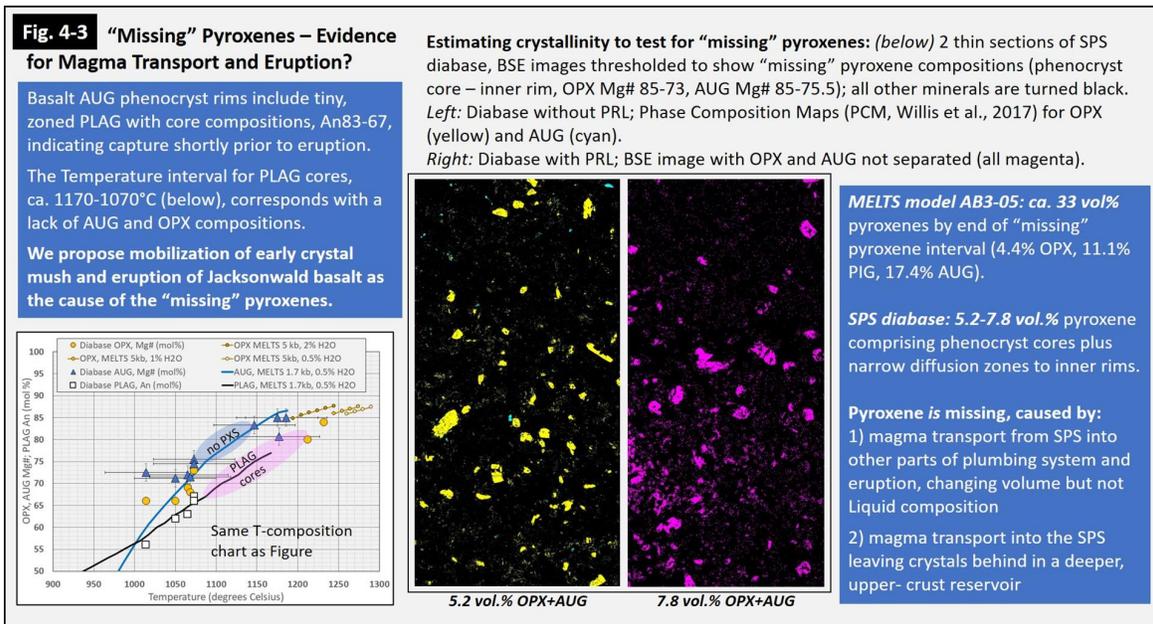


Figure 4-4: Estimates of volume % crystals in diabase and PRL from sample images and MELTS models.

Fig. 4-4 Crystallinity must be estimated before using a viscosity model for crystal suspensions

Stages of crystallization identified from composition-texture analysis, P-T estimates, MELTS models.

Jacksonwald basalt AB3 used as initial Liquid composition and as starting Liquid in all MELTS models shown here.

Vol.% crystals estimated from MELTS uses model output: Liquid composition, fractionated mineral mass and density.

Vol.% crystals estimated from diabase samples and PRL based on thresholding BSE images in ImageJ for mineral compositions corresponding with stages in crystallization history.

- Best estimates come from the diabase Phase Composition Maps, which are BSE images calibrated by EDS analyses and processed to generate separate images for PLAG, OPX, and AUG (Willis et al., 2017). Diabase PCM does not include a PLAG-rich layer (PRL).
- Vol.% crystals in diabase with PRL and the entire PLAG-rich layer (across the thin section) estimated by thresholding BSE image of all minerals using PCM images and thresholds as a guide.
- Vol.% crystals in the 4 areas of the PRL (see Figure 3-5) estimated by thresholding Ca x-ray maps for PLAG composition.

Crystallinity (volume % crystals) for MELTS models, Diabase samples, PRLs																		
Stage in crystallization history	MELTS AB3 1.0 wt.% H2O			MELTS AB3 0.5 wt.% H2O			Diabase PCM no PRL			Diabase BSE with PRL			PRL entire PLAG+PXS			PRL 4 areas PLAG only		
	PXS	PLAG	Total	PXS	PLAG	Total	PXS	PLAG	Total	PXS	PLAG	Total	PXS	PLAG	Total	PXS	PLAG	Total
Liquidus, 500 MPa	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0												
after OPX crystals, 500 MPa	4.0	0	4.0	4.3	0	4.3	4.9	0	4.9	4.9	0	4.9	no PRL at these stages			no PRL at these stages		
ascent, resorption, 170 MPa	4.0	0	4.0	4.0	0	4.0	2.5	0	2.5	2.5	0	2.5						
erupted basalt, AUG Mg83.5	22.6	4.0	26.6	22.2	8.8	31.0												
after PLAG cores, An83-67	MELTS model not good fit			32.9	18.61	51.5	5.2	18.4	23.6	7.8	19.6	27.3						
after PLAG mantles, An67-63				37.0	26.7	63.7	12.7	29.6	42.4	20.4	31.3	51.8	11.6	46.8	58.4	0.0	63.9	63.9
after PLAG cement, An63-56				39.2	31.1	70.3	36.9	39.7	76.6	39.0	44.3	83.3	20.2	67.6	87.8	0.0	86.9	86.9

5. VISCOSITY MODELING AND EVOLVING MUSH RHEOLOGY

Summary: Viscosity models were calculated for Liquid (Giordano et al., 2008) and crystal suspensions (Moitra and Gonnermann, 2014) for stages of mush crystallization. Shear thinning behavior was likely during formation of modal layers with aligned PLAG and would have reduced viscosity, but this cannot be modeled with these equations. Vol.% crystals exceeds maximum values for random packing after PLAG mantle crystallization stage; viscosity cannot be calculated for cementation and later stages.

However, insight into mush rheology after PRL formation and cementation comes from macro-structures in the diabase quarry. Increased viscosity and rigidity of crystal mush changed intrusive style of younger magma inputs from lateral sheet flow to channelized vertical flow.

Figure 5-1: Calculated viscosity and consistency results for Liquid and crystal suspensions, respectively.

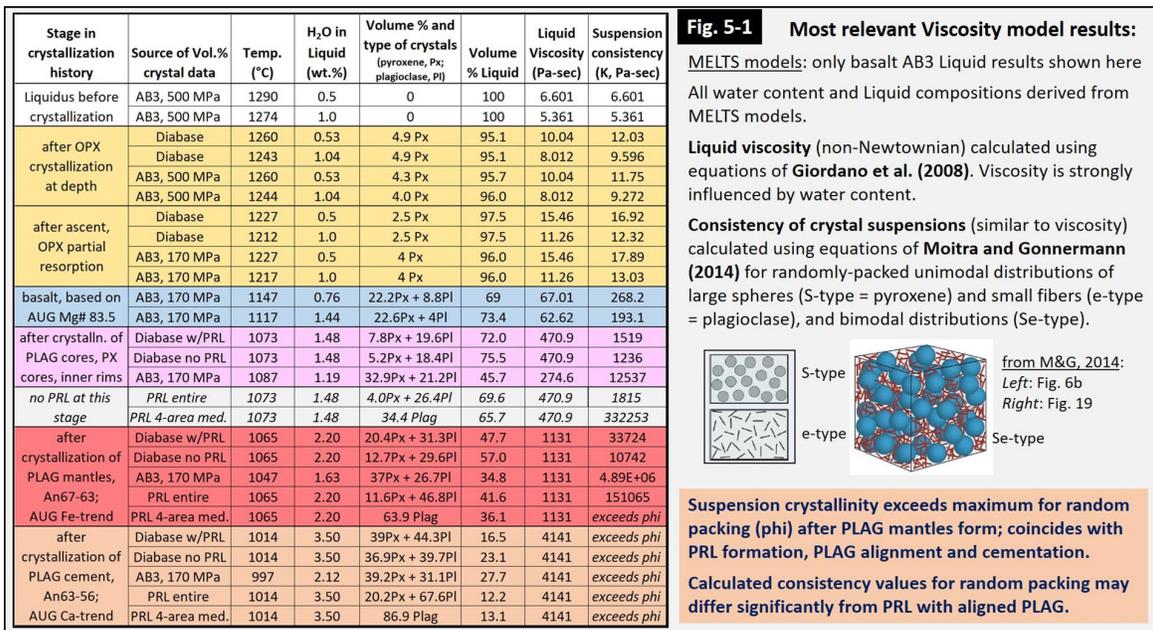


Figure 5-2: Chart showing how calculated viscosity (or consistency) increases as Temperature decreases in basaltic Liquid (no crystals) and magma with crystals up to PLAG mantle crystallization stage.

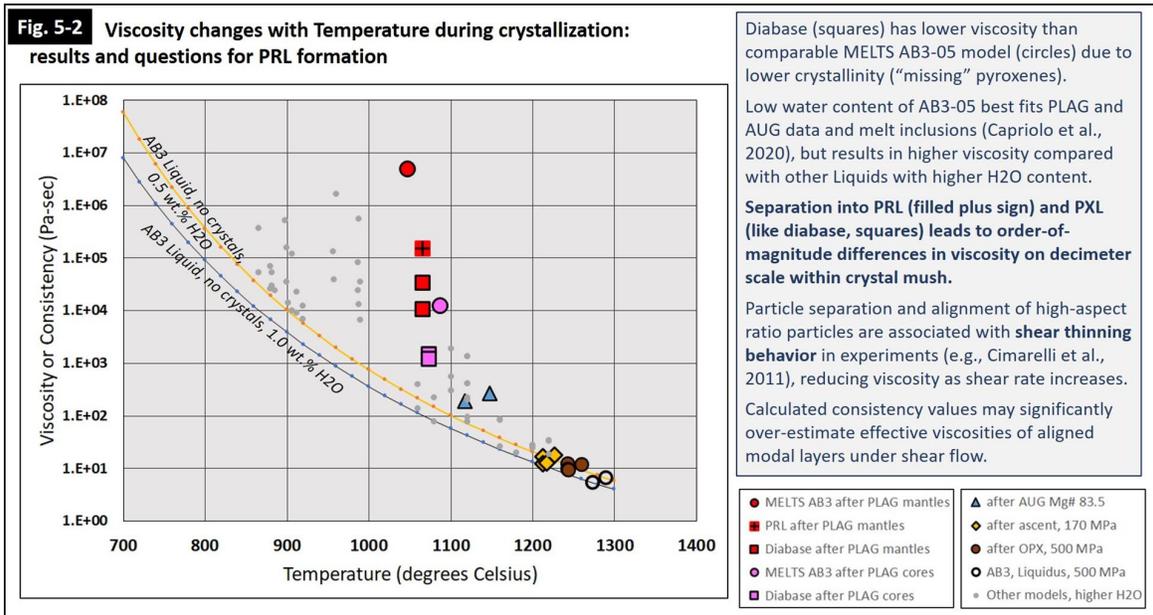


Figure 5-3: Macro-structures in the diabase quarry provide evidence for the general rheology of the mush after PRL formation. Initial stages: lateral sheet flow of later basaltic inputs into non-rigid but coherent layered mush.

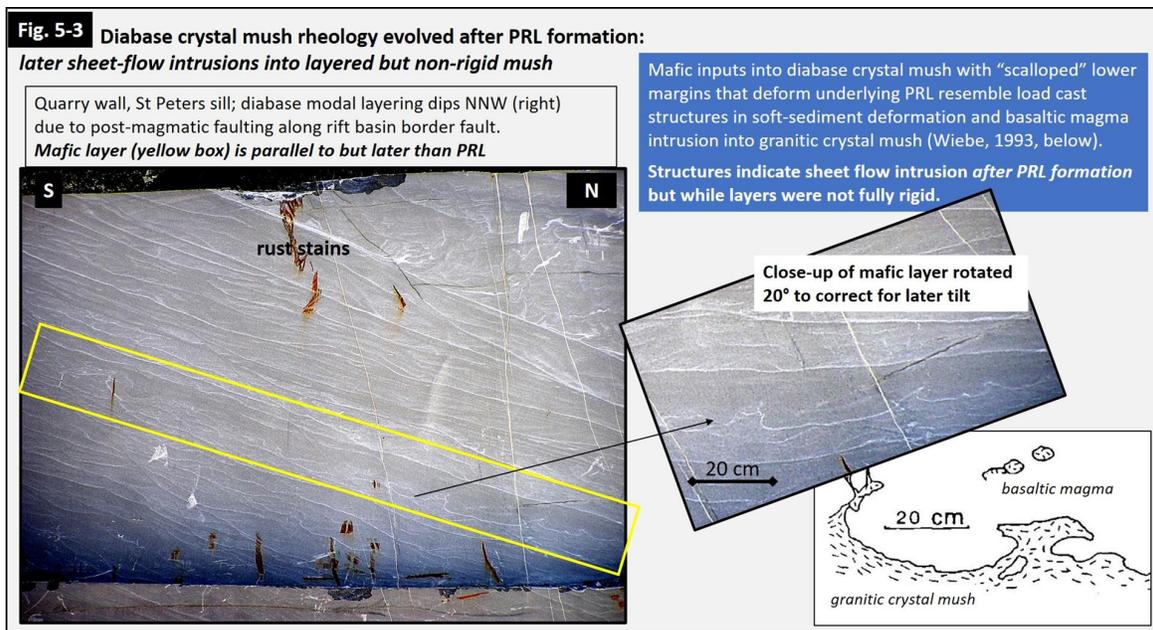


Figure 5-4: Later basaltic sheet cross-cuts more rigid layers and produces drag folds of the PRL in underlying crystal mush.

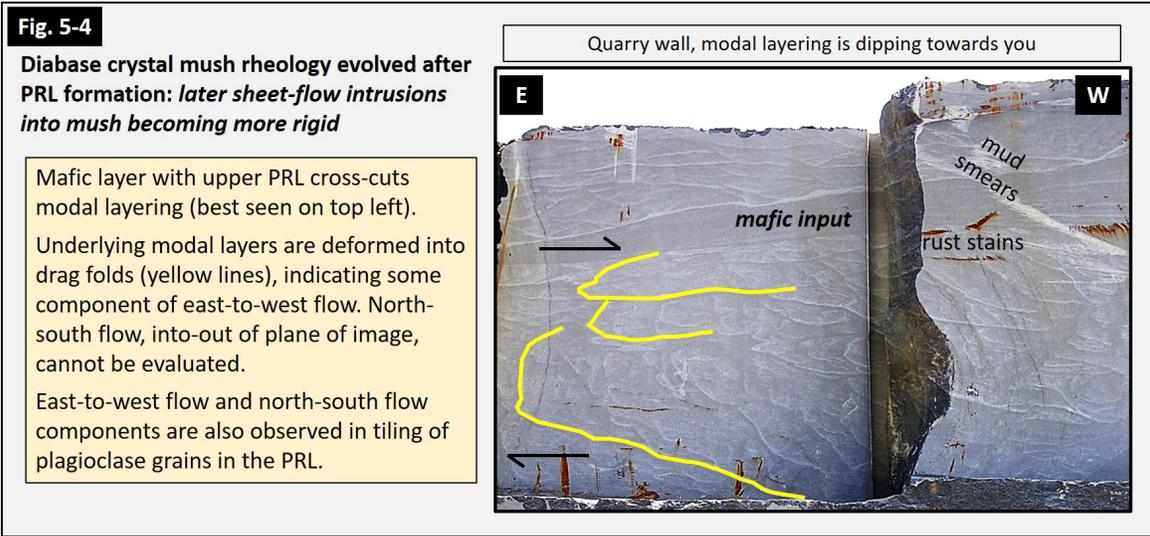
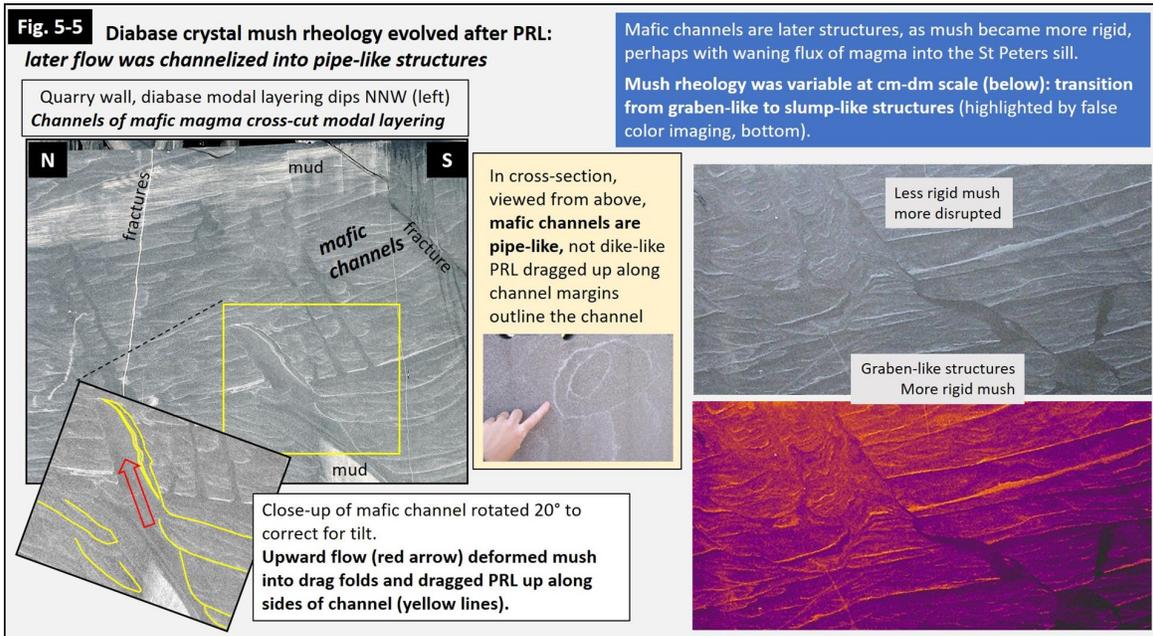
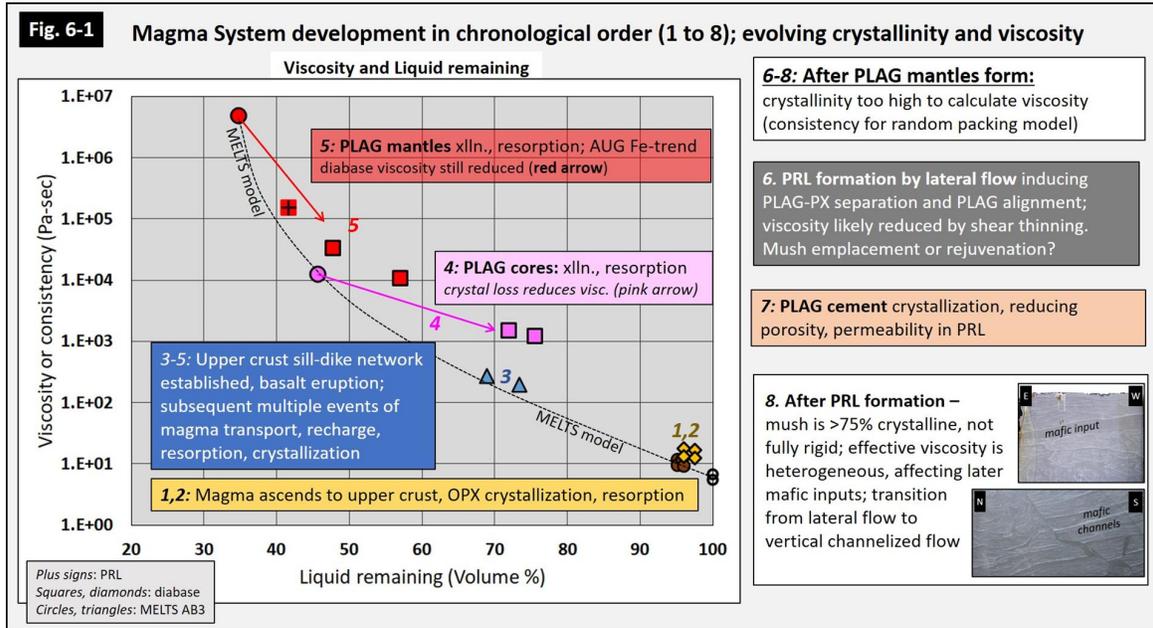


Figure 5-5: Channelized, vertical flow of late-stage basaltic inputs into diabase crystal mush with heterogeneous viscosity and rigidity. Is channelization a sign of decreasing magma flux? Did the mush rheology change the flow regime and prevent later basaltic inputs from rejuvenating the mush and leading to eruption?



6. CONCLUSIONS

Summary: We propose a magma system chronology for crystallization in a sill-dike-basalt network in middle and upper crust (Figure 6-1). Three major findings are summarized below Figure 6-1.



1) Recharge displaced mush and led to eruption of basalt with crystal cargo relatively early in system history, when crystallinity was 25-35% and viscosity 200-250 Pa-sec. Eruption did not require rejuvenation or mobilization of highly-crystalline mush.

2) Lateral magma flow during later emplacement or rejuvenation of mush in the St Peters sill led to self-organization of flow lobes with modal layering which likely reduced effective viscosity by shear thinning.

3) As the heterogeneous rheology of layered, high-viscosity mush evolved, the behavior of younger magma inputs into the St Peters sill changed from lateral flow to vertical channelized flow; this may have prevented mush rejuvenation and eruption in the last stages of the system history.

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