

This version of this paper is non-peer-reviewed and under review in Nature Geoscience

This paper has been submitted for publication to Nature Geoscience on June 8 2020
A revised version of this paper has been submitted on December 15 2020 and is under review.

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1 **Birth of a large volcanic edifice through lithosphere-scale dyking offshore**
2 **Mayotte (Indian Ocean)**

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28 **Volcanic eruptions are foundational events that shape the Earth's surface and provide a**
29 **window into deep Earth processes. How the primary asthenospheric melts form, pond**
30 **and ascend through the lithosphere is, however, still poorly understood. We document**
31 **an on-going magmatic event offshore Mayotte Island (North Mozambique channel),**
32 **associated with large surface displacements, very low frequency earthquakes and**
33 **exceptionally deep (25-50 km) seismicity swarms. We present data from the May 2019**
34 **MAYOBS1 cruise, which reveal that this event gave birth to a 820m tall, ~ 5 km³ deep-**
35 **sea volcanic edifice. This is the largest active submarine eruption ever documented. The**
36 **data indicate that deep magma reservoirs were rapidly drained through dykes that**
37 **intruded the entire lithosphere and that pre-existing subvertical faults in the mantle**
38 **were reactivated beneath an ancient caldera structure.**

39

40

41 **The new volcanic edifice is located at the tip of a 50 km-long volcanic ridge on the**
42 **eastern insular slopes of Mayotte. The ridge is composed of many other recent edifices**
43 **and lava flows and is an extensional feature that opens inside a wide transtensional**
44 **boundary to transfer the strain between the East-African and Madagascar rifts. A hot**
45 **asthenosphere at the base of a thick damaged lithosphere could be at the origin of this**
46 **massive eruption.**

47

48 Since May 10 2018, Mayotte Island (Comoros archipelago, north Mozambique Channel
49 between Africa and Madagascar, *Figure 1a*) has experienced a major magmatic event off its
50 eastern coast. This event generated more than 11000 detectable earthquakes (up to Mw 5.9),
51 surface deformation rates of up to 200 mm/year and unusual very low frequency (VLF)
52 earthquakes^{1,2,3}. As of December 2020 (the time of writing), Mayotte is still deforming and
53 both VLF events and earthquakes with Mw up to 5 are still being recorded.

54 Prior to this event, no recent eruption or significant seismic activity was reported around
55 Mayotte. Only two earthquakes were detected within 100 km of the island by the global
56 network since 1972⁴ and the most recent volcanic exposure is a 4-6 kyr-old pumice layer
57 sampled in the lagoon surrounding the island⁵.

58 Recent geodynamic reconstructions suggest that the archipelago was built on ~150 Ma old
59 oceanic lithosphere accreted to accommodate the opening of the Western Somali Basin⁶. This
60 Comorian volcanism may result from partial melting of the base of this old oceanic
61 lithosphere in interaction with plume material^{7,8,9} possibly super plumes originating from
62 Africa^{10,11,12}. This volcanism may have been controlled by reactivation of the fractures zones¹³
63 or by diffuse zones of right-lateral shear deformation¹⁴. Subaerial volcanic activity on Mayotte

64 island began 11 My ago¹³. Well-preserved cones, tuff rings and maar craters in the
65 Northeastern part of the island (on Petite Terre and in and around Mamoudzou^{15,7} and further
66 offshore¹⁶ (*Figure 1b*) testify to relatively recent (probably Holocene⁷) subaerial explosive
67 volcanic activity. Gas emissions on Petite-Terre with a high percentage of carbon dioxide and
68 helium indicate magma degassing¹⁷.

69

70 **The discovery of the new volcanic edifice**

71 The French national research program “SISMAYOTTE” was launched in February 2019 to
72 determine the origin of the seismicity and deformation, to search for any seafloor volcanic
73 activity and to understand the scale, chronology and implications of the crisis. As part of this
74 program, we 1) set up seismic and Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) stations on
75 Mayotte and Grande Glorieuses Islands, 2) deployed Ocean Bottom Seismometers (OBS)
76 with attached Absolute Pressure Gauges (APG) around the seismic swarm area, and 3)
77 acquired high-resolution marine data (bathymetry, seafloor and water column backscatter,
78 sub-bottom, magnetic and gravity profiles), rock dredges and CTD (Conductivity-
79 Temperature-Depth)- Rosette during the MAYOBS1 cruise aboard the R/V Marion
80 Dufresne¹⁸.

81 A systematic 12 kHz multibeam echosounder survey east of Mayotte revealed a 820 m tall
82 new volcanic edifice (NVE) 50 km east of Mayotte (*Figure 1*). The NVE was detected by
83 comparing our data to those acquired during a 2014 survey by the French Naval Hydrographic
84 and Oceanographic Service (SHOM)¹⁹ (*Figure 2a*). The edifice sits on an area that, in the
85 2014 seafloor topography, was locally almost flat at around 3300 m below sea level (bsl).

86 **The Mayotte volcanic ridge**

87 The NVE has grown on the lower insular slope of Mayotte, near the end of a WNW-ESE
88 trending volcanic ridge (Mayotte ridge) emplaced on the submarine flank of Mayotte (*Figure*

89 1). The NVE and many other volcanic features along the ridge are highly reflective in seafloor
90 imagery (*Figure 1c and extended data Figures 1, 3*) indicating recent volcanic activity all
91 along the ridge. The ridge is 50 km long, extending from the most recent subaerial cones and
92 maar craters on Grande-Terre and Petite-Terre islands (MPT Volcanic zone) to the NVE
93 (*Figure 1b*). It is segmented into two main parts: an upper slope volcanic zone (western
94 segment) and a mid- to lower-slope zone (eastern segment). The eastern segment trends
95 N130°E and is made of many constructional features similar to mafic submarine eruption
96 features observed elsewhere ^{20,21,22}: cones up to 2 km-wide and 500 m-high, probably
97 monogenetic; high backscatter zones with smooth bathymetry, which could correspond to
98 recent lava flows; elongated ridges with steep slopes and varying orientations, which could
99 result from dykes in more sedimented areas (*Figure 1 and extended data Figure 2d,e*).

100 The western segment is made of volcanic features having more complex morphologies and
101 emplaced along different directions (*Figure 1b and extended data Figure 2b,c*). The main
102 features are: i) Two N40°E and N120°E trending sets of cones and lava flows, with high
103 backscatter, northeast and southeast of Petite-Terre, respectively. These sets converge to
104 prolong the onshore maar craters of Petite-Terre and may have emplaced along pre-existing
105 fractures or faults; ii) a horse-shoe shaped edifice (the Horseshoe) with a 3.5 km wide cone,
106 steep slopes and a large collapse-induced scar. East of the Horseshoe, several smaller cones
107 and volcanic features are aligned E-W, suggesting eruptive fissures. Large lava flows
108 characterized by high backscatter and rough bathymetry likely originate from this fissure
109 system. iii) a 4 km-wide circular structure (the Crown), whose rim is crowned by seven 1 km-
110 wide, 100-150m high volcanic cones. Their arrangement suggests typical post-caldera domes
111 ^{23,24}. West of the Crown, submarine canyons and slope failure scars all terminate at a N-S
112 trending slope break that may be controlled by faulting. The Crown appears to be located in a

113 larger 10 km wide flat depression, which is bounded by faults and fissures and could be the
114 remnant of an ancient caldera collapse.

115 **The new volcanic edifice and the eruptive plume**

116 The NVE is located at the eastern tip of the eastern segment of the Mayotte ridge (*Figures*
117 *1b*). In May 2019, its summit rose to 2580 m bsl. The highest and central part of the NVE
118 resembles a pyramid with steep and smooth slopes (*Figure 2a and extended data Figure 3*).

119 Radial ridges, up to 5 km long and 300 m thick, develop from the central part. The ridges
120 display hummocky morphology similar to that observed along mid-ocean volcanic ridges²⁵
121 and active seamounts²² and probably correspond to coalesced pillow lava mounds²¹. Beyond
122 and in-between the hummocky ridges, flat areas up to 100 m thick, with high backscatter,
123 could indicate channelized lava flows or sheet flows emplaced at high effusion rates^{26,27}. We
124 calculate the volume of material corresponding to the 2014- 2019 seafloor depth difference to
125 be at least $5.0 \pm 0.3 \text{ km}^3$. Popping fragments of very fresh basanitic pillow lavas (SiO₂ 47
126 wt%, Na₂O + K₂O 7.1 wt%, MgO 5.7 wt%²⁸) were dredged on the northeastern flank of the
127 NVE, near its summit (see *Figure 2a* for sample location and *supplementary material SI*).
128 The lavas, similar to other basanites sampled in northern Mayotte⁷ are aphyric with rare
129 microphenocrysts of olivine (Fo70) and Ti-magnetite.

130 A ~1900-m high, vertical acoustic plume, rising through the water column from the summit of
131 the NVE to ~800 m below the sea surface, was imaged several times during the cruise using
132 the ship-borne multibeam echosounder (*Figure 3*, supplementary movie 1). A vertical
133 CTD/rosette cast to 3137m depth above the northern flank of the NVE, 1000m away from the
134 acoustic plume, showed strong geochemical signatures. High volatile concentrations (H₂ =
135 550nM, CH₄ = 831 nM, CO₂= 34 μM), high turbidity and high total alkalinity values were
136 associated with temperature and pH anomalies (respectively 0.2°C and 1 pH unit)²⁹ and
137 *supplementary material*). Such chemical anomalies are characteristic of submarine eruptions

138 and may reflect magma degassing ³⁰, molten lava interaction with seawater ³¹ or fluid/water
139 discharge from subsurface storage zones in the crust or sedimentary cover ³². The height and
140 the strong backscatter signature of the acoustic plume suggest that a mixture of solid particles
141 (pyroclastic/hyaloclastic jet ³⁰) and/or differentiated fluid phases (droplets, hydrate-coated
142 bubbles or free gas ³³) are driven upward through the water column from the summit of the
143 NVE ³⁴. High turbidity measured, below 2500 m, on the northern flank of the NVE, likely
144 indicates the presence of these particles ^{35,36}. Both the multiple observations of this vertical
145 acoustic plume at the summit of the NVE and the high H₂ concentration 1 km away indicate
146 that the eruption was likely on-going in May 2019 ³¹.

147 In the upper slope zone, 30 km far from the volcano, two, ~1000-m high acoustic plumes
148 were detected in the water column, above the Horseshoe edifice (*Figure 1 and extended data*
149 *Figure 5, movie 2*) but no significant change in the seafloor morphology and reflectivity was
150 detected there.

151

152 **The seismicity and VLF events relocated by OBS data**

153 The combined land-OBS network of seismic stations (*supplement Figure S2.1*) detected
154 17000 events between February 25 and May 6, 2019. We manually relocated about 800 of the
155 largest earthquakes onboard (*see method and supplementary S2*). Ninety-four percent of the
156 earthquakes cluster in the upper slope volcanic zone (western segment of the Mayotte ridge),
157 40 km west of the NVE and 5 to 15 km east of Petite-Terre (swarm 1, *Figure 1*). Almost all of
158 the remaining events lie in a secondary swarm beneath the northwestern tip of the eastern
159 segment, 30 km from Petite-Terre and 20 km from the NVE (swarm 2, *Figure 1*). A few
160 events are also scattered along this segment. Despite a full search of the OBS-land catalog for
161 events beneath the NVE, we found none. The earthquakes are very deep, ranging from 25±5
162 to 50±5 km. All P-S arrival delays recorded by an OBS deployed for 48h above the main

163 swarm were greater than 3 seconds, indicating no events less than 20 km depth (*Figure 4,*
164 *extended data Figure 6b, method and supplementary material S2*). The combined land-OBS
165 network dataset do not show any evidence for seismicity migration, but it only represents a
166 two-month “snapshot” of the activity. To extend the observation time window, we carefully
167 relocated 139 earthquakes recorded by the land stations between the beginning of the crisis
168 (May 2018) and the first OBS deployment (February 2019). All the events were beneath the
169 volcanic ridge (*extended data figure 6a*). During the first weeks of the crisis, these events
170 were mainly located beneath the northwestern tip of eastern ridge segment between 30 and 50
171 km depth. In the last two weeks of June, a few events occurred between 30km-depth and the
172 surface, and closer to the NVE.

173 In addition to the high frequency seismicity, VLF events were recorded by the OBSs
174 wideband hydrophones. Their waveforms are similar to those of the globally detected
175 November 11 2018 event (exponentially decaying monochromatic signals of approximately
176 2000s duration, with dominant period of ~ 15 s and polarized Rayleigh waves), suggesting
177 repeated excitation of the same radiating source. We located 84 VLF events using waveform
178 cross-correlation (*see method and supplementary material S2*), all of them are most probably
179 above seismic swarm 1 (*Figures 4 and extended data Figure 6b*), at a mean depth of 22 ± 15
180 km.

181

182 **GNSS data and APG modeling**

183 The GNSS network includes nine stations on Mayotte Island and two far field stations at
184 Diego Suarez and Grande Glorieuse islands. The geometry is not optimal, preventing geodetic
185 inversions for complicated structures or media. We performed Bayesian inversions³⁷ of the
186 data using a point source in an elastic half-space with two distinct analytical formalisms: an
187 isotropic point source³⁸ and a point compound dislocation model (pCDM³⁹ *see method,*

188 *supplementary material S3, extended data Figure 7*). In both cases, the results indicate $\sim 5 \text{ km}^3$
189 deflation of a deep reservoir ($> 30 \text{ km}$). The simplest and most robust model indicates the
190 deflation of $\sim 40 \text{ km}$ deep isotropic source below the eastern segment of the Mayotte ridge.
191 An increase in absolute seafloor pressure measured by all APGs on the OBS frames,
192 interpreted as seafloor subsidence, is compatible with these models (*see method,*
193 *supplementary S3, extended data Figure 7d*).

194

195 **Magma reservoirs and chronology of the eruption**

196 Most of the seismicity and the GNSS sources models are deep and lie in the lithospheric
197 mantle beneath the Moho, which is estimated to be $\sim 17 \text{ km}$ deep beneath Mayotte ⁴⁰.
198 Seismicity this deep is rarely documented in a volcanic context, especially in the form of
199 dense swarms during eruptions. Mantle seismicity has been detected beneath Kilauea, Loihi ⁴¹⁻
200 ⁴³ and La Réunion ⁴⁴ volcanoes, where it has been interpreted as failure of the brittle
201 lithosphere induced by magma migration through long-lived tectonic structures or by the
202 islands' loading.

203 The distribution of the seismicity in the first weeks of the crisis suggests a dyke migration
204 from the mid-slope zone to the NVE, along the eastern segment of the Mayotte ridge. This is
205 supported by the migration of the Centroid Moment Tensor solutions depths (CMT project) of
206 the largest earthquakes towards the surface (*extended data Figures 6c and 8*) and agrees well
207 with ^{45,2}. The earthquakes show strike-slip focal mechanisms compatible with a least
208 compressive principal stress orthogonal to the eastern segment of the ridge (*extended data*
209 *Figure 8*). Similar stress trends have been observed during dyking events beneath the Izu
210 peninsula in Japan ^{46,47} and in Iceland ⁴⁸ but at much shallower depths, where they were
211 interpreted as seismic shear faulting caused by stress transfer to the surrounding vertical faults
212 in response to dyke opening and propagation ^{46,47,48,49}.

213 During the first six weeks of the crisis, the magma migrated 20 km laterally along the eastern
214 segment of the Mayotte ridge, then upward (*Figure 4 and extended data Figure 8*). The
215 building of the NVE may have begun in July 2018 once the dyke reached close to the surface
216 ^{2,1} allowing for high magma flow rates and rapid ensuing growth. On the basis of this
217 assumption, we estimate a minimum mean lava flow rate of $\sim 180\text{m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ between the start of
218 the eruption on the seafloor and our survey (~ 11 months). The local stress probably
219 decreased considerably once the magma path to the NVE was opened, as is observed during
220 many eruptions involving dyke propagation ⁵⁰, which would explain why no earthquakes were
221 detected beneath the NVE during the OBS deployment, which started in late February 2019.
222 After the dike reached the near surface, seismicity resumed beneath the mid- and upper-slope
223 volcanic zones (*Figure 4 and extended data Figures 6a,b and 8*) and its pattern appears to be
224 constant since September 2018 ². This stationary seismicity could be caused by stress
225 perturbation along pre-existing structures and/or fluid (gas, magma or water) motions. The
226 swarm 1 earthquakes cluster beneath a 10 km-wide circular area that coincides with the
227 ancient caldera structure inferred from our high-resolution bathymetry (*Figure 1c and*
228 *extended data Figure 6b and 8*). This seismicity could indicate activation of pre-existing
229 subvertical faults ⁵¹ above a deep (> 55 km) depleting reservoir (R1,4), as has been observed
230 during caldera collapse events ^{52,53,54} but these faults would be much deeper than at any caldera
231 structures documented elsewhere. Analog models for collapse of a caldera with a high-roof
232 aspect ratio (thickness/width $\gg 1$) indicate reverse fault motions during an initial downsag
233 stage ⁵⁵, in accord with the focal mechanism of the May 14, 2019 Mw4.9 swarm 1 region
234 earthquake (*Figure 4 and extended data Figure 8*) and ⁴⁵.
235 The VLF events, located above swarm1, may be generated by the resonance of a fluid-filled
236 (magma, gas or hydrothermal) shallower cavity or a fluid-filled crack, most probably at the
237 base of the crust. The characteristic frequency and duration of these events are very different

238 from VLF events typically observed in volcanic zones ^{56,57,58,59,60,61}. Simple up-scaling of fluid
239 resonance models ^{62,63} imply a size of several kilometres for this shallower reservoir (R3,
240 *Figure 4*). The excitation mechanism could be rapid slip and related strain on faults close to
241 the reservoir or episodic collapse of a piston at the base of this shallow reservoir ⁶⁴. The
242 acoustic plumes emanating from the overlying Horseshoe edifice may result from actively
243 degassing of this shallower reservoir.

244 Both the distribution of seismicity over time and the surface deformation models suggest the
245 drainage of an exceptionally deep reservoir by a dyke that propagated from the base of the
246 brittle lithosphere to the eastern portion of the Mayotte ridge, possibly intersecting another
247 vertical storage zone below seismic swarm 2 before reaching the surface (*R2, Figure 4 and*
248 *extended data Figure 9*). Within the uncertainties the GNSS isotropic model may reflect the
249 drainage of this reservoir R2 in the brittle lithosphere. The deeper reservoir R1 may have
250 slowly recharged from the asthenosphere before reaching tensile failure in May 2018 ⁶⁵.

251 **Magma roots and paths.**

252 The eastern segment of the Mayotte ridge, along which the dike propagated, has the same
253 orientation as many other volcanic features over a range of scales (quaternary dykes, volcanic
254 vent alignments, ridges and volcanic rift zones) in the northeastern part of Mayotte Island ¹⁵
255 and in and around the other Comoros islands ^{13,66,14} (*Figure 5 and extended data Figure 9*). The
256 left-lateral en-echelon arrangement of these features resembles that of extensional tectonic
257 structures in a context of oblique extension (i.e in segmented and diffuse strike-slip fault
258 systems ⁶⁷ or highly-oblique rifting ^{68, 69,70,71}). We infer that the Mayotte ridge results from the
259 interplay between volcanism and tectonics. The location and orientation of the volcanic
260 features may be in part controlled by the pre-existing Mesozoic fracture zones ⁶ but they
261 probably also emplace along new tectonic structures. These tectonic structures are extensional
262 (fissures or step-overs) and open as a result of volcano-tectonic interactions in a wide E-W

263 striking zone, to transfer the strain between the N-S striking offshore branches of the East
264 African rift ⁷² and the grabens of Madagascar (Aloatra and Ankai) ^{73,74}. In this context, high
265 strain rates ⁶⁹ or highly damaged zones may develop ⁷⁵ (*Figure 5a inset*) in between the main
266 en-echelon extensional structures. Such zones may constitute high-permeability zones where
267 large magmatic reservoirs can develop. The main Comoros volcanic islands may have grown
268 above such zones.

269 Between Mayotte and Madagascar, the lithosphere-asthenosphere boundary (LAB) is a sharp
270 limit between a high-velocity 150 Ma lithosphere and a low-velocity asthenosphere, at about
271 70 km depth ^{76,77}. The low-velocity asthenosphere is interpreted as hot material spreading
272 beneath the Mascarene basin and beyond ⁷⁸. Heating of the base of the oceanic
273 lithosphere damaged by extensional tectonic and loaded by Mayotte island ⁷⁹ may favour the
274 ponding and withdrawal of large volumes of buoyant melts. Pore pressure increase in these
275 zones may in turn favour failure of deep reservoirs and faults inside the brittle lithosphere

276 **The largest eruption ever documented in submarine domain**

277 The NVE extruded volume (as of May 2019) is 30 to 1000 times larger than that reported for
278 other deep-sea eruptions ^{21,26,27,80,81}. As is the case for many submarine eruptions, it is difficult
279 to evaluate the dense rock equivalent (DRE) volume ²⁰. Taking an upper bound of 50% for the
280 DRE factor ⁸², compatible with the 40% vesicularity of our sample ²⁸, the DRE erupted
281 volume could be as large as 2.5 km³, which is larger than the 1.2 to 1.5 km³ Havre silicic
282 eruption ^{83,84}, up to now considered to be the largest documented submarine eruption. It would
283 be 2.5 times larger than the Bardabunga eruption (Iceland's largest eruption of the last two
284 centuries) ^{50,85} and only 6 times less than Iceland's 1783-1784 Laki eruption, considered to be
285 one of the largest basaltic eruptions witnessed by humanity ⁸⁶. The volumes and flux of
286 emitted lava during the Mayotte magmatic event are comparable to those observed during
287 eruptions at Earth's largest hot spots (Hawaii, Iceland, ^{50,87} and one quarter of that emplaced

288 yearly over the entire mid-ocean ridge system (mean estimate from spreading rates over the
289 last 80 Ma ⁸⁸). It thus represents a considerable input in terms of CO₂ flux ⁸⁹.

290 Future scenarios could include a new caldera collapse, submarine eruptions on the upper
291 slope, or onshore eruptions. Large lava flows and cones on the upper slope and onshore
292 Mayotte indicate that this has occurred in the past. Since the discovery of the NVE, an
293 observatory has been established to monitor activity in real time (REVOSIMA ⁹⁰) and return
294 cruises are ongoing to follow the evolution of the eruption and edifices.

295

296 **Acknowledgements**

297 We thank captain A. Eyssautier and the officers and the crew of the R/V *Marion Dufresne*
298 (TAAF/IFREMER/LDA), GENAVIR's coordinator, M. Boudou D'hautefeuille, and the
299 shipboard operations engineers. We thank the captain and crew of the M/V *Ylang* (SGTM
300 company). We thank the French Ministries of Environment, Research and Overseas,
301 CNRS/INSU, IPGP, IFREMER, BRGM and the Prefect of Mayotte for funding and support.
302 We thank our colleagues F. Tronel, A. Roulle, E. Dectot, A. Colombain, C. Doubre, Daniel
303 Sauter, Antony Dofal and Antoine Villié for assistance in the field, previous data acquisition,
304 processing and model development. We thank Olivier Desprez de Gesincourt, L. Testut and
305 T. Tranchant for loan and data processing of the seafloor pressure sensors. We thank the
306 French National Marine Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service (SHOM) for providing us
307 with previous data from the area. We thank G. Barruol for discussions. This is IPGP
308 contribution number XXXX.

309

310 **Method Summary**

311 **Ship-borne Multibeam data** was acquired using a Kongsberg EM122 1°x1° during the 2014
312 ¹⁹ and 2019 ¹⁸ cruises. Both data sets were processed with the GLOBE software ⁹¹ to provide

313 30-m grid spaced digital terrain models and seafloor backscatter imagery and to calculate
314 depth differences, surface and volumes. The 3D acoustic water column data from the 2019
315 cruise were processed using SonarScope (@Ifremer) and GLOBE softwares ⁹¹. **Water**
316 **column measurements:** A CTD-Rosette Seabird 911+ CTD (Conductivity; Temperature;
317 Depth) equipped with an altimeter, an Aanderaa oxygen optode and a Seapoint Turbidity
318 Meter was mounted on a carousel with 16 Niskin sampling bottles (8L) to measure and
319 sample throughout the water column. Sub-sampling was performed for onboard analyses
320 (pH, alkalinity and total CO₂ by pH electrode and titrator) and for onshore analyses (CH₄
321 analysis by the purge and trap method and H₂ and CO₂ analysis by the Headspace method).
322 **Seismology:** 800 earthquakes identified from the onshore catalog were selected in
323 descending magnitude order and manually picked onboard. The seismic network used during
324 the two month deployment included OBSs, onshore local and regional stations (up to 500km
325 distance). The events were relocated with NonLinLoc ⁹² and an hybrid velocity model based
326 on trials with 6 different velocity models, achieving final location accuracies better than 5km.
327 Eighty-four very low frequency (VLF) earthquakes were detected between February 25 and
328 April 24, 2019, using an amplitude trigger on ocean bottom hydrophones recordings, filtered
329 between 0.05 and 0.10 Hz, followed by a selection of events with a clear peak frequency and
330 a final visual inspection. VLF earthquakes were located using spatial 3D back-projection of
331 station-pair cross-correlation functions ⁹³, assuming a constant surface-wave speed of 3.5
332 km/s. A well-constrained epicentral location was obtained for 81 events. **Geodesy:** We
333 inverted the surface deformation recorded by 6 permanent GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite
334 System) receivers installed in Mayotte, Grande Glorieuse and Madagascar. We used both an
335 isotropic model and a triple volumetric discontinuities (pCDM source) in a homogeneous
336 elastic half-space, isotropic material with Poisson's ratio of 0.25 to model the pressure source
337 in depth. Seafloor pressure data (30s sample interval) were pre-processed using harmonic

338 analysis to remove the tides and low-pass filtering to remove residual oscillations interpreted
339 as internal waves.

340 **Author contributions**

341 NF, SJ, WC, CD, IT, EJ, JMS, ALe, FP, RD, AG, CA, OF, PK, ALa, JPD, LG, JG, VG, PP,
342 ER participated on the MAYOBS1 cruise (NF, SJ and WC as PI), acquired and processed the
343 geophysical and seismological data. CSa, ALa and PB detected and located the VLF events.
344 AP was in charge of the GNSS installation in Glorieuse island and processed and modeled the
345 GNSS data with FB and RG. VB was in charge of the OBSs APGs and processed their data.
346 SB participated in the first OBS deployment on the Ylang vessel with WC and RD. DB, ALM
347 and JW were responsible for the installation of new seismological and GNSS stations in
348 Mayotte and of data acquisition onshore. JPD, VG, ER, CC performed the geochemical
349 analysis and interpretation of the water column data. CSc and AG processed the EM122
350 acoustic data. CD and AG performed the depth changes calculation. CSc provided the
351 interpretation of the water column acoustic data. PBa and YF furnished the rocks sample
352 descriptions and petrological analysis. NF, SJ, CD, PBa, YF, IT, FP, JW, EJ provided the
353 geological interpretation.. NF wrote the paper with the contribution of all other authors. JMS,
354 EJ, CSa, ALe, GL, CA, VB, AG, AP, FB, RG, ER, CC, CSc wrote the supplementary method
355 and method online.

356 **Data availability statement**

357 The authors declare that most of the data supporting the findings of this study are available
358 within the paper and its supplementary information files. GNSS data are available on the
359 website « <http://mayotte.gnss.fr> ». Ship-borne geophysical data from the MAYOBS1 cruise
360 can be obtained through the French national oceanographic data center SISMER
361 (<http://en.data.ifremer.fr/SISMER>) but restrictions apply to the availability of these data. The

362 compilations of older bathymetric and topographic data are available on the SHOM Website
363 (<http://www.shom.fr>)

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

Figure 1: The volcanic ridge offshore Mayotte. a) Westward view of Mayotte island and insular slope (vertical exaggeration 3) with MAYOBS1 cruise multibeam EM122 bathymetry (resolution: 30m¹⁸) superimposed on a previous bathymetry-topography compilation^{16,94}. The volcanic Mayotte ridge extends from the onshore Mamoudzou-Petite Terre volcanic zones to the new volcanic edifice (NVE). Green arrows and stars: location of acoustically-detected plumes above the Horseshoe, the NVE and the degassing area on Petite-Terre island. Left inset: geographic setting and surface horizontal displacements (with plate velocity removed) recorded by Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) stations in Mayotte, Grande Glorieuse and Madagascar (Diego Suarez). Black points: seismic stations (details and name in Supplementary material). Dashed grey lines: NNW-SSE to N-S striking Mesozoic fracture zones resulting from the Gondwana break-up⁶. b) MAYOBS1 multibeam bathymetry superimposed over slopes (dark zones: steep slopes) and geological interpretations. Volcanic structures are indicated in purple (mainly cones) and pink (lava flows and elongated features). In yellow: Upper slope's highly reflective patches (backscatter data). The NVE is indicated in red (central part with steep slopes) and orange (radial ridges and flat flows). Green stars: degassing areas detected acoustically (on the Horseshoe) and visually (on Petite-Terre)¹⁷. Red lines: fissures and faults, dashed lines for inferred faults. Area filled with small black dots: bathymetric depression. White boxes: location of Fig.2a and Extended data Fig. 3. Inset, as in b with Mayotte ridge segments underlined by red and purple colored patches, pink dots: seismicity recorded during the Ocean Bottom seismometer (OBS) deployment and relocated on board; yellow diamonds: location of the Very Low Frequency earthquakes c) MAYOBS1 multibeam backscatter map (white = higher reflectivity). Shallow bathymetry and topography are the same as in a). Pink dots and yellow diamonds as in b) inset. Black and white boxes: location of extended data Figure 3, respectively.

Figure 2: The new volcanic edifice (NVE) offshore Mayotte. a) 30 m resolution bathymetric maps from shipboard EM122 multibeam, illuminated from N290°E. Left panel: SHOM bathymetry collected in 2014¹⁹. Right panel: MAYOBS1 bathymetry collected in May 2019¹⁸. Red circle: position of dredge DR01. b) Depth changes between 2014 and 2019. The change in topography is estimated to be significant when larger than 10 m.

Figure 3: a) Southward 3D view of the NVE and the water column acoustic plume observed one hour before the Conductivity-Temperature-Depth (CTD) rosette on May 16th 2019 (White dot and blue patch) deployed, 1 km far from the summit the volcano (*see Extended data Figure 4*). Right inset: Processed polar echogram from one EM122 multibeam ping on May 16th (13:33 UT), horizontal and vertical-axes (both in meters) correspond respectively to the cross-track distance and the water depth. See also Acoustic plume movie 1.

Figure 4: Conceptual model of the submarine eruption offshore Mayotte eruption: Bathymetry as in Figure 1b, no vertical exaggeration. Red zones on the seafloor: N130°E volcano-tectonic ridges (Jumelles ridges) and segments including Mayotte ridge eastern segment. Dashed white lines: inferred ancient caldera with degassing zones above. In cross-section: red and reddish zones: magma storage zones (mush or magma chambers) and magma pathways involved in the 2018-2020 Mayotte volcanic crisis and seafloor eruption. Yellow layer: sediments. Dashed lines: subvertical faults beneath inferred caldera possibly reactivated by the deflation of a deep reservoir. White arrow: possible downsag at an initial stage of caldera collapse. Pink dots: 800 earthquakes between 25 February and May 6 2019 located using OBSs and land stations. Other dots: 139 earthquakes from before the OBS deployment, picked on land stations and relocated using a new model based on the OBS+land data: colored dots are from the first 6 weeks of the crisis and white dots from the remaining 8 months before the OBS deployment. Yellow diamonds: Very Low Frequency (VLF) earthquakes, constrained by the OBS+land network. Blue and red triangles: water and magma movements, respectively. Blue patch: Location, with 3 sigma uncertainties, of the most robust isotropic source deformation model. Moho depth from ⁴⁰. Lithosphere/asthenosphere boundary depth from ^{77,78}.

Figure 5: Regional volcano-tectonic setting of the submarine eruption offshore Mayotte.
a) Volcano-tectonic setting of the new volcanic edifice (NVE). Bathymetry compiled from MAYOBS1 cruise ¹⁸, PTOLEMEE Cruise ⁹⁵, and the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (<https://www.gebco.net>). Global topography from SRTM GL1

(<https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/shuttle-radar-topography-mission-srtm-g11-global-30m>).

Volcanic cones and ridges (purple) from ^{13,96,16,14} and this study. Dots and diamonds are earthquakes as in Figure 4 and Extended data Fig. 6 and 8. Beach balls: focal mechanisms for $M > 5$ earthquakes ⁹⁷. Dotted white arrow: dyking event along the $N130^\circ E$ trending eastern segment of the Mayotte volcanic ridge. Red ellipse: inferred main volcano-tectonic ridges (Mayotte, Jumelles...). Purple ellipses: highly damaged zones in between the en echelon ridges (see sandbox model in Inset). Thick black arrows: local extension direction. Inset: sandbox model from ⁷⁵ illustrating the possible arrangement of the main volcano-tectonic structures in Comoros (see also Extended data Figure 9). b) Geodynamic setting of the East African Rift systems. Bathymetry from GeoMapApp (www.geomapapp.org), main tectonic structures and extensional zones in Africa and Madagascar adapted from ^{98,73,74,99,100,101,72} and references therein. Purple patches: Quaternary volcanism in Madagascar from ⁷³. Red dots: $M > 2.5$ earthquakes ⁴ with focal mechanisms from the Global Centroid-Moment-Tensor Project ⁹⁷ for the $M > 5$ earthquakes. Arrows: GNSS horizontal motions ⁹⁸. Small purple ellipses in the Comoros as in a) with double dark red arrows: the volcanic ridge east of Mayotte and extension direction. Inset: Simplified tectonic map of the East African Rift system: Yellow highlights: most active rifts and grabens; Red ellipse: Transfer zone of the Comoros with direction of lateral motion.

Extended data. Figure 1: 3-D westward view of submarine volcanic features located east of Mayotte, 3x vertical exaggeration. Bathymetry from MAYOBS1 30-m resolution DTM and previous bathymetry-topography compilation ^{16,94} a) bathymetry (b) Backscatter seafloor reflectivity (white is highest reflectivity) from MAYOBS1 cruise.

Extended data. Figure 2: Volcanic features offshore Mayotte. a) 30-m resolution EM122 multibeam bathymetry (MAYOBS 1 cruise) superimposed on a previous bathymetry-topography compilation ^{16,94} with locations of Fig2.b,c,d indicated. b), c) Interpreted MAYOBS1 shipboard bathymetry and backscatter of the upper slope east of Mayotte (location in a). Cones, lava flows and canyons as in Figure 1b. Black dots: bathymetric depression. Dashed red lines: possible pre-existing caldera structure. d) Interpreted bathymetry of the lower slope east of Mayotte (localisation in a). e) zoom on d) showing monogenetic cones and lava flows

Extended data. Figure 3: New volcanic edifice. a) 2014 EM122 multibeam seafloor backscatter ¹⁹. b) 2019 reflectivity (MAYOBS 1 cruise) ¹⁸. c) Depth changes between the 2014 and 2019 surveys, superimposed on 2019 reflectivity. The white areas of the 2019 backscatter map exceeding the bathymetric difference map indicate the extent of new volcanic material.

Extended data. Figure 4: CTD (conductivity temperature-depth)-Rosette measurements. a) Nephelometry and b) temperature vertical profiles. c)-g) sample analyses from 8L @Niskin bottles. c)-e) Gas concentrations(CH₄, H₂, CO₂); .f) pH, g) total alkalinity and total CO₂.

Extended data. Figure 5: Acoustic plumes over the Horseshoe volcanic structure. a) Southward 3D view of the horseshoe morphology and two water column acoustic plumes observed on the western internal flank. b) Processed polar echogram from one EM122 multibeam ping of the data set displayed in (a) acquired on May 18th (0541 UT) horizontal and vertical-axes correspond respectively to the cross-track distance and the water depth, in meters) – see also Acoustic plume movie 2.

Extended data. Figure 6: Top: map views, bottom: cross-sections (A-A') projection along azimuth N115°E; (B-B') along azimuth N45°E. a) Earthquakes recorded by onshore seismological stations before the deployment of the Ocean bottom seismometers (OBS). Colored circles are events occurring in the first six weeks of the crisis, white circles are earthquakes in the intervening 8 months. b) Earthquakes recorded by the OBS+land stations between February 25 and May 6 2019 (pink dots). Yellow diamonds: location of the Very Low Frequency (VLF) events located in this study (see supplementary information). c) Focal mechanisms of the largest earthquakes from the Harvard CMT catalog (<https://www.globalcmt.org/>), with color scale as in a).

Extended data. Figure 7 - Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) data modelling and seafloor subsidence estimated from seafloor pressure variations. a) Map shows the locations of the stations used. Arrows with colors with names: GNSS velocity vectors (mm/yr) and station names. Coloured numbers: vertical deformation (mm/yr). Inset: yellow dots locate pressure sensors on ocean bottom seismometer stations (see Fig.S2.1 for names), red arrows: Mayotte GNSS velocity vectors (mm/yr), white arrows: far field GNSS velocity vectors. b) GNSS Time series with relative displacements recorded on the east (top), north (middle) and vertical (bottom) components of the stations between January 2018 and January 2020. c) Best fit-models with 1σ uncertainties of the GNSS data for one isotropic point source and a triple volumetric discontinuity pCDM source. d) Top panel: Pressure recorded by Seabird SBE37 gauges at the six ocean-bottom seismometer stations (Yellow dots inset Figure 7a and Fig. S2.1) de-tided and converted to vertical motion. Middle panel: vertical deformation estimated at each seafloor instrument location, using the best isotropic source model obtained from the GNSS data for the March 1st to May 1st 2019 period. Lower panel: residual signal after subtracting the model-predicted trend from the seafloor pressure variations. This residual probably contains instrumental drift (especially in the first 2 weeks of the deployment) but may also include some mis-modelled seafloor deformation. The residuals at stations MOSE and MONE (see location on Figure S2.1) exhibit slight negative and positive trends, respectively which could indicate that the volcanic source is located a bit further south than that modelled using the GNSS data, assuming that instrumental drift is not the dominant factor.

Extended data. Figure 8: Conceptual model for the Mayotte seismo-volcanic event. Circles and diamonds are events as in Extended data - Figure 6. Focal mechanisms of main earthquakes are from Harvard CMT catalog (<https://www.globalcmt.org/>⁹⁷) with the same color scale as the May 10 to June 30, 2018 events, Yellow circle and blue patch: Location, with 3 sigma uncertainties, of the most robust isotropic source deformation model. a) Map view: The redish ellipse: Mayotte ridge, dashed circular area: old caldera structure in the morphology b) Cross-section (projection along azimuth 115 degree). Symbols as in a). Red lines: magma migration (dykes). Red ellipses and circle: magma reservoirs or mushes. Pink arrow: possible downsag along caldera structures. Redish zone: Eastern segment of the Mayotte ridge.

Extended data. Figure 9: Regional volcano-tectonic setting of the submarine eruption offshore Mayotte. a) Volcano-tectonic setting of the new volcanic edifice (NVE). Bathymetry compiled from MAYOBS1 cruise¹⁸, PTOLEMEE cruise⁹⁵, and the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (<https://www.gebco.net>). Global topography from SRTM GL1 (<https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/shuttle-radar-topography-mission-srtm-gl1-global-30m>). Volcanic cones and ridges (purple) from^{13,96,16,14} and this study. Beach balls: focal mechanisms for M>5 earthquakes⁹⁷. Dotted white arrow: dyking event along the N130° E trending eastern segment of the volcanic ridge. Pink ellipse: inferred main volcano-tectonic ridges. Purple ellipses: highly damaged zones in between the en-echelon ridges (see sand box model Inset of Figure 5). Thick black arrows: local extension direction.

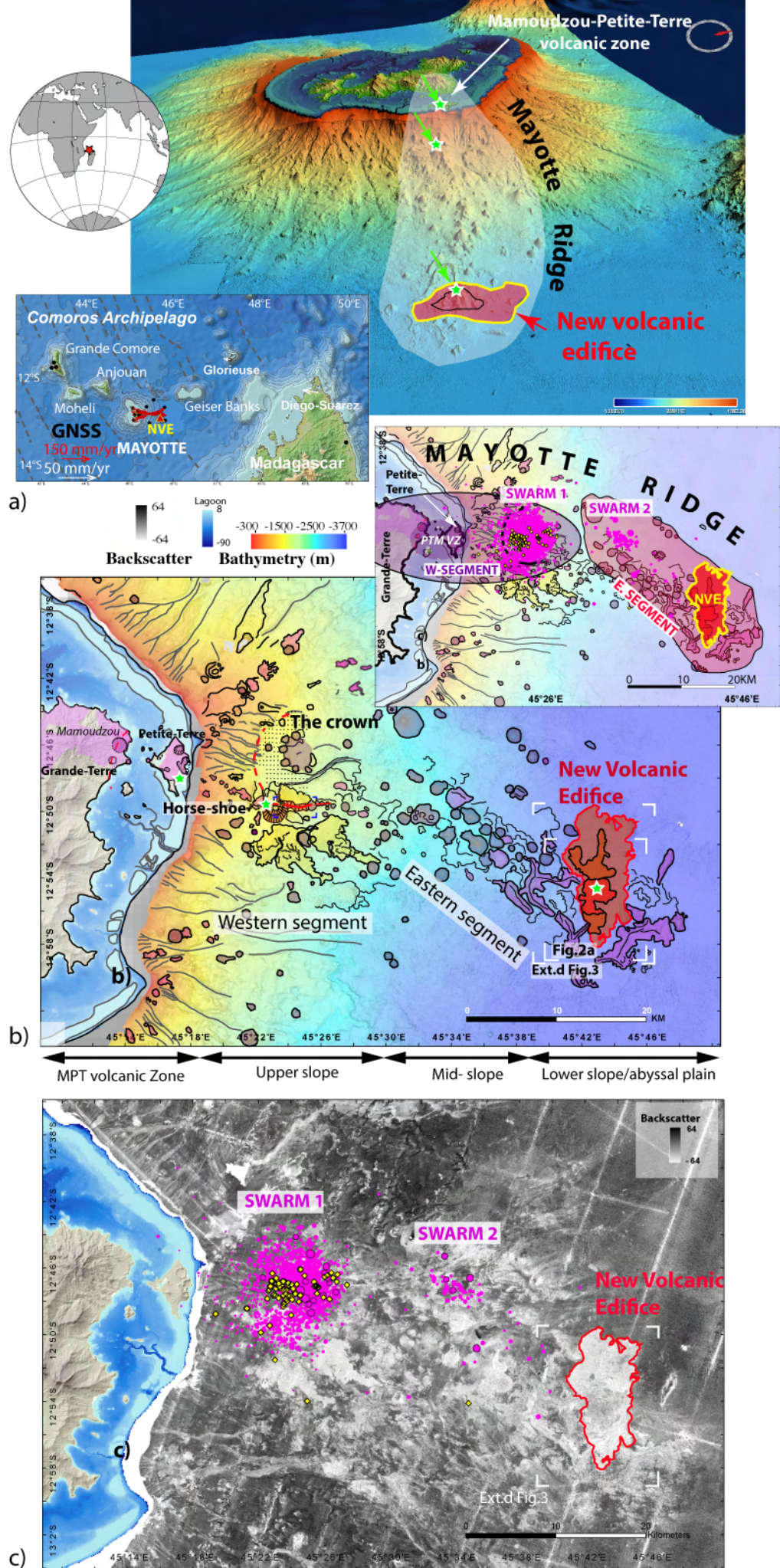
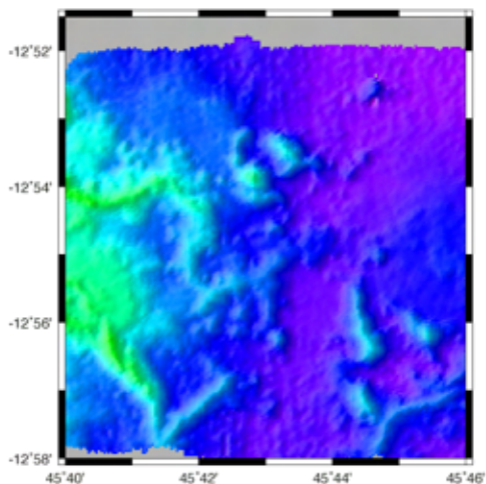
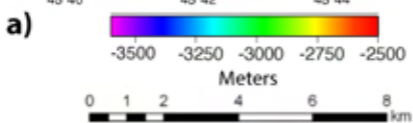
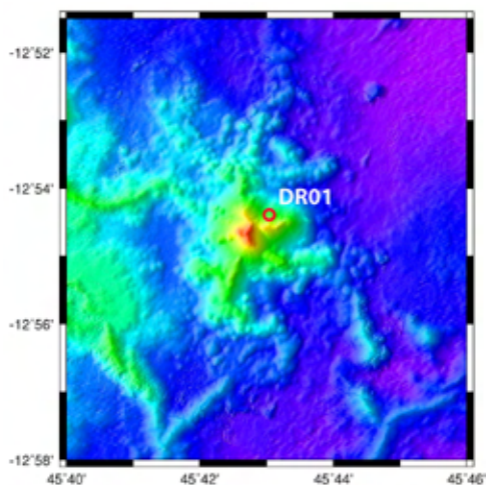


Figure 1

SHOM 2014



MAYOBS1 2019



Difference 2014-2019

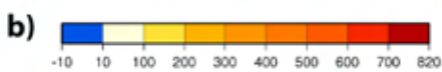
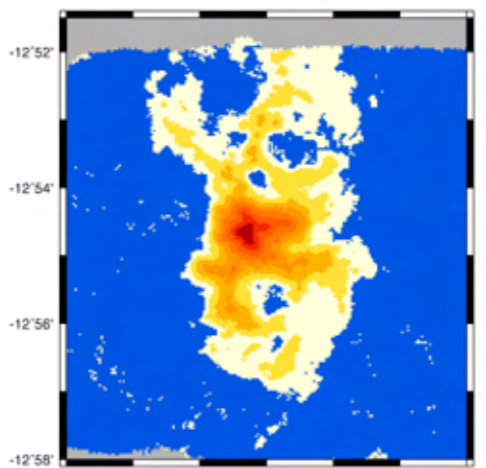
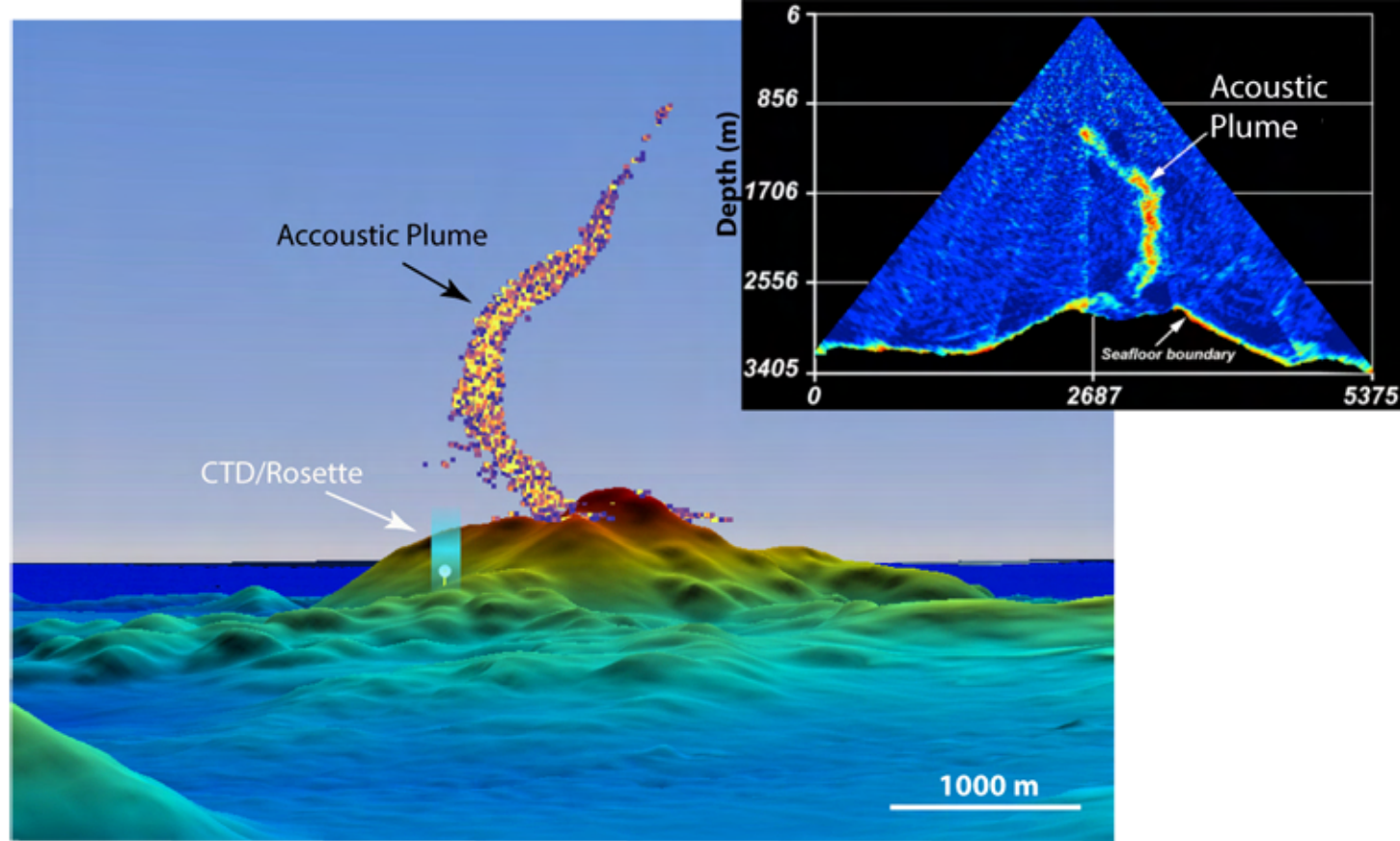
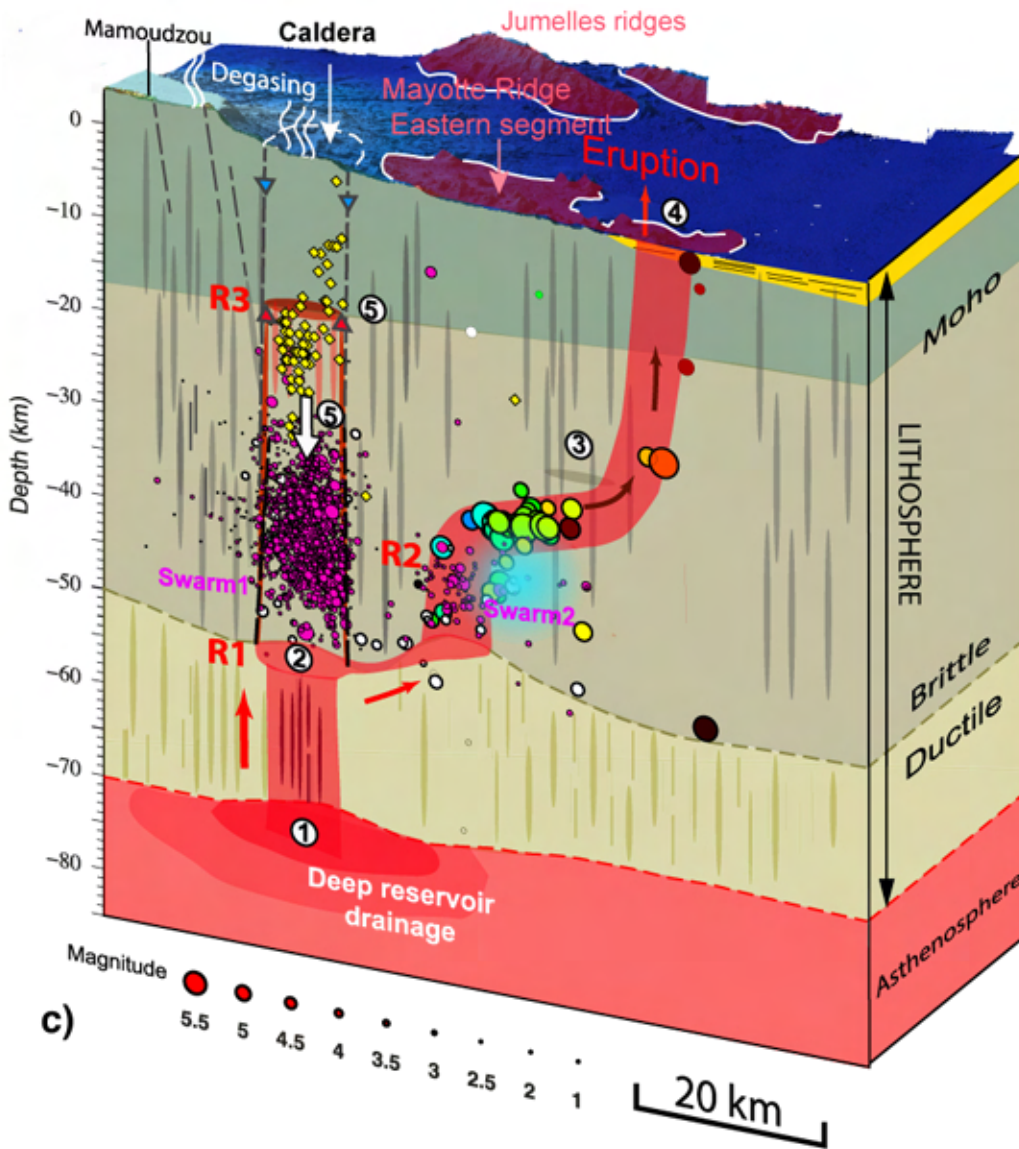


Figure 2



c)

Figure 3



Chronology

- ① Deep asthenospheric reservoir drainage (before May 10 2018)
- ② slow refilling of the deep reservoir (before May 10 2018)
- ③ Reservoir failure/Dyking (May-June 2018)
- ④ Start of the eruption (July 2018) lithospheric reservoirs drainage
- ⑤ Reactivation of faults beneath ancient caldera ? (Sept 2018) + Fluid movement (magma/water)?

Seismicity time scale

MAYOBS1 data
(26/02/19 - 6/05/2019)

● VT ◆ VLF

Before OBS deployment

○ 07/18-02/19

28/06/2018

21/06/2018

14/06/2018

07/06/2018

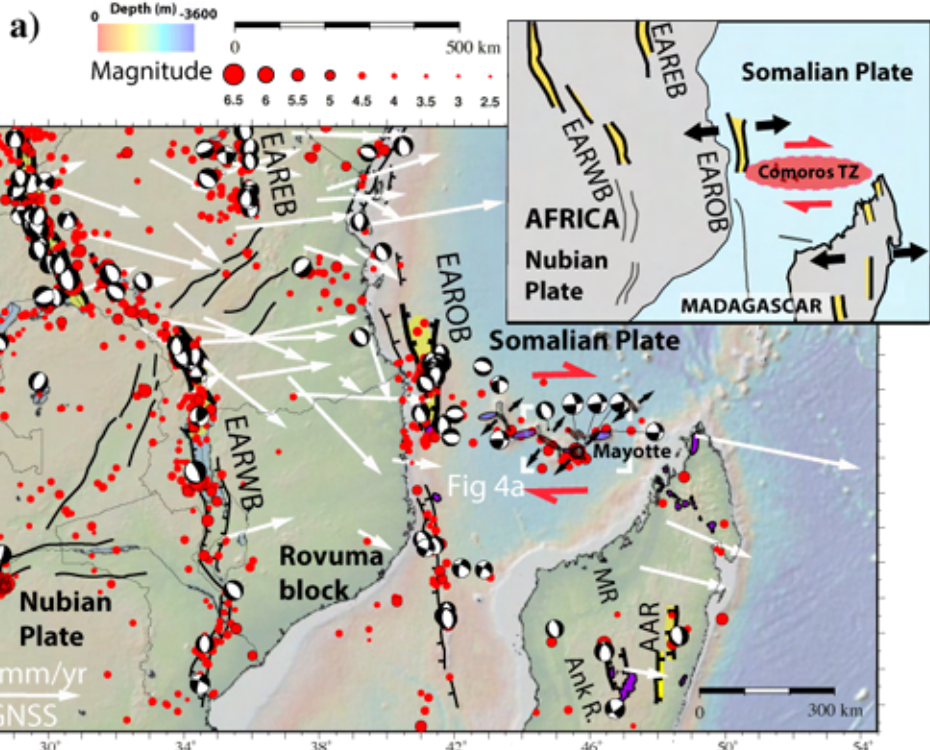
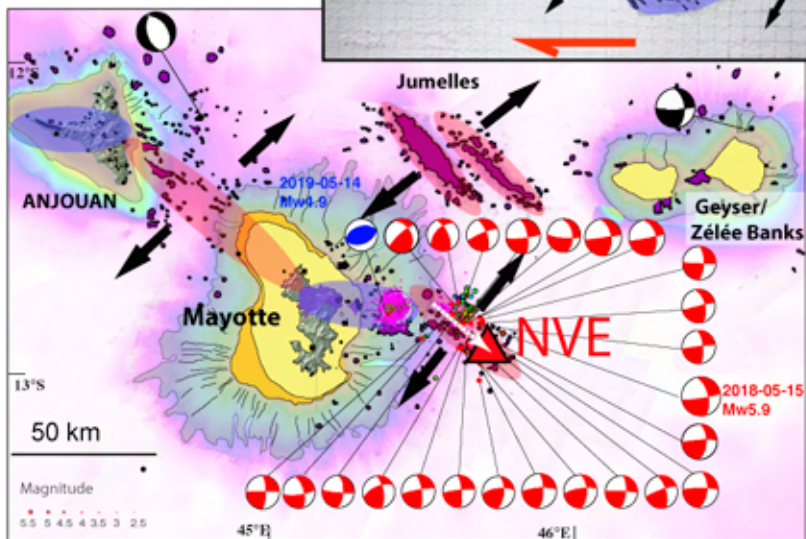
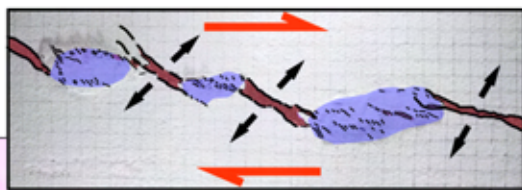
31/05/2018

24/05/2018

17/05/2018

10/05/2018

Figure 4



b)

Figure 5