

# Geophysical Research Letters®



## RESEARCH LETTER

10.1029/2023GL107474

## Large Isotopic Shift in Volcanic Plume CO<sub>2</sub> Prior to a Basaltic Paroxysmal Explosion

Fiona D'Arcy<sup>1</sup> , Alessandro Aiuppa<sup>2</sup> , Fausto Grassa<sup>3</sup> , Andrea Luca Rizzo<sup>4,5</sup>, and John Stix<sup>1</sup> 

### Key Points:

- Rapid collection of volcanic plume CO<sub>2</sub> enabled by Uncrewed Aerial Systems
- A carbon isotopic anomaly was present two weeks prior to the Stromboli 2019 paroxysm
- High CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations, elevated CO<sub>2</sub>/S<sub>t</sub> and light δ<sup>13</sup>C-CO<sub>2</sub> may precede paroxysms on timescales of months to weeks

### Supporting Information:

Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article.

### Correspondence to:

F. D'Arcy,  
fiona.darcy@mail.mcgill.ca

### Citation:

D'Arcy, F., Aiuppa, A., Grassa, F., Rizzo, A. L., & Stix, J. (2024). Large isotopic shift in volcanic plume CO<sub>2</sub> prior to a basaltic paroxysmal explosion. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 51, e2023GL107474. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2023GL107474>

Received 28 NOV 2023

Accepted 11 JUL 2024

<sup>1</sup>Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada, <sup>2</sup>Dipartimento DiSTeM, Università degli Studi di Palermo, Palermo, Italy, <sup>3</sup>Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Sezione di Palermo, Palermo, Italy, <sup>4</sup>Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy, <sup>5</sup>Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Sezione di Milano, Milan, Italy

**Abstract** Carbon dioxide is a key gas to monitor at volcanoes because its concentration and isotopic signature can indicate changes to magma supply and degassing behavior prior to eruptions, yet carbon isotopic fluctuations at volcanic summits are not well constrained. Here we present δ<sup>13</sup>C results measured from plume samples collected at Stromboli volcano, Italy, by Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS). We found contrasting volcanic δ<sup>13</sup>C signatures in 2018 during quiescence (−0.36 ± 0.59‰) versus 10 days before the 3 July 2019 paroxysm (−5.01 ± 0.56‰). Prior to the eruption, an influx of CO<sub>2</sub>-rich magma began degassing at deep levels (~100 MPa) in an open-system fashion, causing strong isotopic fractionation and maintaining high CO<sub>2</sub>/S<sub>t</sub> ratios in the gas. This influx occurred between 10 days and several months prior to the event, meaning that isotopic changes in the gas could be detected weeks to months before unrest.

**Plain Language Summary** Volcanoes produce gases which change composition depending on how active the volcano is. One of these gases, carbon dioxide, is known to change in proportion to other gases before an eruption occurs, but little is known about how the isotopes of carbon change leading up to an eruption. Using drones to reach the gaseous plume of Stromboli volcano, Italy, we have captured carbon dioxide both during an inactive phase in 2018 and during the lead-up to a highly explosive eruption called a paroxysm in 2019. There is a stark difference in the carbon isotopes measured 10 days before the 3 July 2019 paroxysm as opposed to those measured in 2018. This is caused by the arrival of CO<sub>2</sub>-rich magma which progressively degassed, leading to lighter carbon isotopes in the residual magma over time. This process could have started anywhere from 10 days to several months before the paroxysm. This provides a warning signal which can be detected weeks to months before an active period begins.

## 1. Introduction

Volcanoes play a significant role in the global cycle of carbon (Burton et al., 2013; Mather, 2015; Werner et al., 2019). This is because carbon is the second major species dissolved in a magma, it is transferred from the lithosphere to the atmosphere during eruption, and more significantly, during quiescence between eruptions at open-vent volcanoes (Edmonds et al., 2022). Carbon isotopes provide information complementary to gas ratios and fluxes, as the isotopes can be used to constrain degassing pathways (Barry et al., 2014; Boudoire et al., 2018; Gerlach & Taylor, 1990), distinguish magma sources (Fischer et al., 2015; Paonita et al., 2012; Troll et al., 2012), and monitor magmatic inputs to hydrothermal systems (D'Arcy et al., 2022; Federico et al., 2008, 2023).

Sampling of volcanic plumes provides a safe and fast alternative to directly collecting volcanic gases from fumarolic vents into sample bottles. The plume can be sampled at varying distances from the source vent depending on the topography and wind conditions, but it is crucial to sample CO<sub>2</sub> as close to the source as possible for isotopic characterization. Sampling was first done by physically entering the plume and manually collecting samples (Chiodini et al., 2011) before evolving to plume traverses in ground vehicles (Rizzo et al., 2015), helicopters (Fischer & Lopez, 2016), and use of field laboratories (Malowany et al., 2017; Schipper et al., 2017). Such sampling has entered a new era with the onset of compact sensor arrays combined with lightweight pumps for targeted sampling of volcanic plumes by Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) (D'Arcy et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2020; Shingubara et al., 2021; Tsunogai et al., 2022).

Stromboli volcano is part of the Aeolian arc of volcanoes in Italy, which results from the subduction of the African plate below the European plate (e.g., Gasparini et al., 1982). It has a well-studied volcanic gas composition, with

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up to ~35 mol% CO<sub>2</sub> during passive degassing and up to 54 mol% CO<sub>2</sub> during syn-explosive degassing (Aiuppa & Bertagnini et al., 2010; Aiuppa & Burton et al., 2010; Burton et al., 2007; Pering et al., 2020). The plumbing system of the volcano comprises a deep magma storage zone at ~6–8 km, from which low-porphyrific (LP) materials are erupted. The magmas here are CO<sub>2</sub>-rich, reflected by gases at the surface with elevated CO<sub>2</sub>/S<sub>T</sub> exceeding values of 20. A second shallower storage zone <3 km deep produces highly porphyritic (HP) eruptive products, with associated gases depleted in CO<sub>2</sub> and having CO<sub>2</sub>/S<sub>T</sub> values less than 10–15 (Aiuppa & Bertagnini et al., 2010; Aiuppa & Burton et al., 2010; Aiuppa et al., 2021; Metrich et al., 2009). Prior to this study, carbon isotopes of CO<sub>2</sub> at the summit of Stromboli varied from –1.0 to –2.5‰ δ<sup>13</sup>C (Capasso et al., 2005; Di Martino et al., 2021; Federico et al., 2008; Finizola et al., 2003; Rizzo et al., 2009), yet plume samples from the summit have never been captured during and immediately prior to paroxysms.

In this work, we have refined a series of custom UAS gas sampling assemblies to collect CO<sub>2</sub> from Stromboli for isotopic analysis. We show distinct differences in δ<sup>13</sup>C of CO<sub>2</sub> between passive quiescent degassing versus immediately before a devastating explosive paroxysm. We relate these changes to transitions between closed-system and open-system degassing, that is, to whether the gas travels with or separates from the host melt, respectively. We demonstrate the potential utility of carbon isotopes to better understand these styles of degassing and their implications for eruption forecasting at open-vent volcanoes.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Sampling and Isotopic Analysis

We conducted 25 sampling flights in May 2018 and June 2019 at the summit of Stromboli. We used a series of UAS (Figures 1a and 1b) and Compact Aerial Receiver-initiated Gas-sampling Operations (CARGOs) which we developed over the course of this study, paired with ground-based plume samples, which are described in detail in Supporting Information S1 (Text S1 in Supporting Information S1). Each sampling flight collected two to ten 600 ml bags of plume gas, while individual ground-based samples of plume gas were collected with a pump and portable MultiGAS at the crater rim. Bags were closed with clamps upon landing the aircraft and immediately taken from the summit to the field lab at the end of the day for same-day δ<sup>13</sup>C analysis (Text S2–S6 in Supporting Information S1).

### 2.2. Estimates of the Isotopic Signature of Magmatic Carbon

Volcanic plumes are a mixture of atmosphere and volcanic gas, such that:

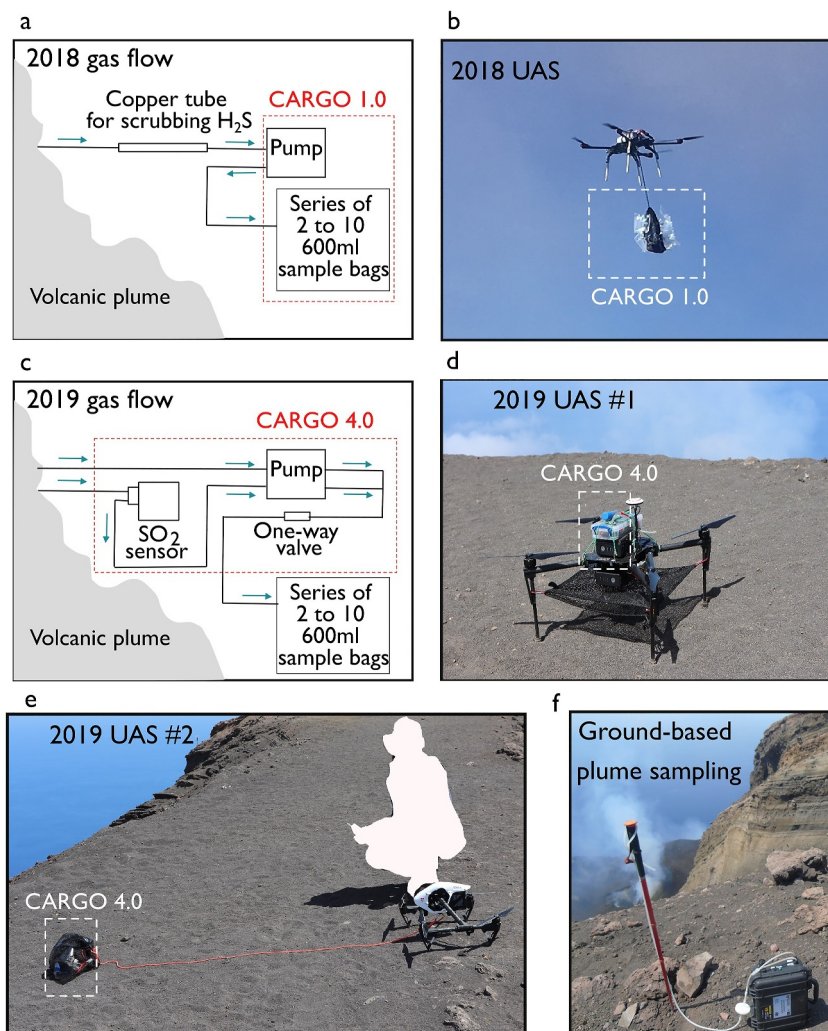
$$\delta^{13}C_p[\text{CO}_2]_p = f * \delta^{13}C_v[\text{CO}_2]_v + (1 - f) * \delta^{13}C_b[\text{CO}_2]_b \quad (1)$$

where *f* is the relative contribution from the volcanic source (Chiodini et al., 2011), and subscripts *p*, *b*, and *v* denote plume, background, and volcanic, respectively. To estimate the isotopic composition of the volcanic source of gas, isotopic results of plume samples must account for the presence of background air. A number of authors (Fischer & Lopez, 2016; Liu et al., 2020; Malowany et al., 2017; Rizzo et al., 2014, 2015; Shingubara et al., 2021; Tsunogai et al., 2022) have adopted the Keeling method (Keeling, 1958) to calculate the source δ<sup>13</sup>C of volcanic plumes. This method uses linear regression to fit the observations of plume δ<sup>13</sup>C against 1/CO<sub>2</sub> to a line of best fit, wherein one endmember is background air and the other is the volcanic source. A linearization of Equation 1 yields the equation of a line (Equation 2) wherein the *y*-axis intercept represents the theoretical composition of the volcanic source, δ<sup>13</sup>C (Malowany et al., 2017):

$$\delta^{13}C_p = \frac{1}{[\text{CO}_2]_p} [\text{CO}_2]_b [\delta^{13}C_b - \delta^{13}C_v] + \delta^{13}C_v \quad (2)$$

There is a simplified method adapted from Equation 1 which uses each discrete point sampled in a plume to estimate the δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>v</sub> which takes the weighted mean of the combined estimates (Schipper et al., 2017):

$$[\text{CO}_2]_v \cdot \delta^{13}C_v = [\text{CO}_2]_p \cdot \delta^{13}C_p - [\text{CO}_2]_b \cdot \delta^{13}C_b \quad (3)$$



**Figure 1.** Sampling set-up for 2019 and 2018 samples. Gas flow schematics of the 2018 (a) and 2019 (c) compact aerial receiver-initiated gas-sampling operations (CARGOs) along with the uncrewed aerial system (UAS) used to fly them in 2018 (b) and in 2019 (d, e). In (f), the general method used for ground-based sampling is pictured.

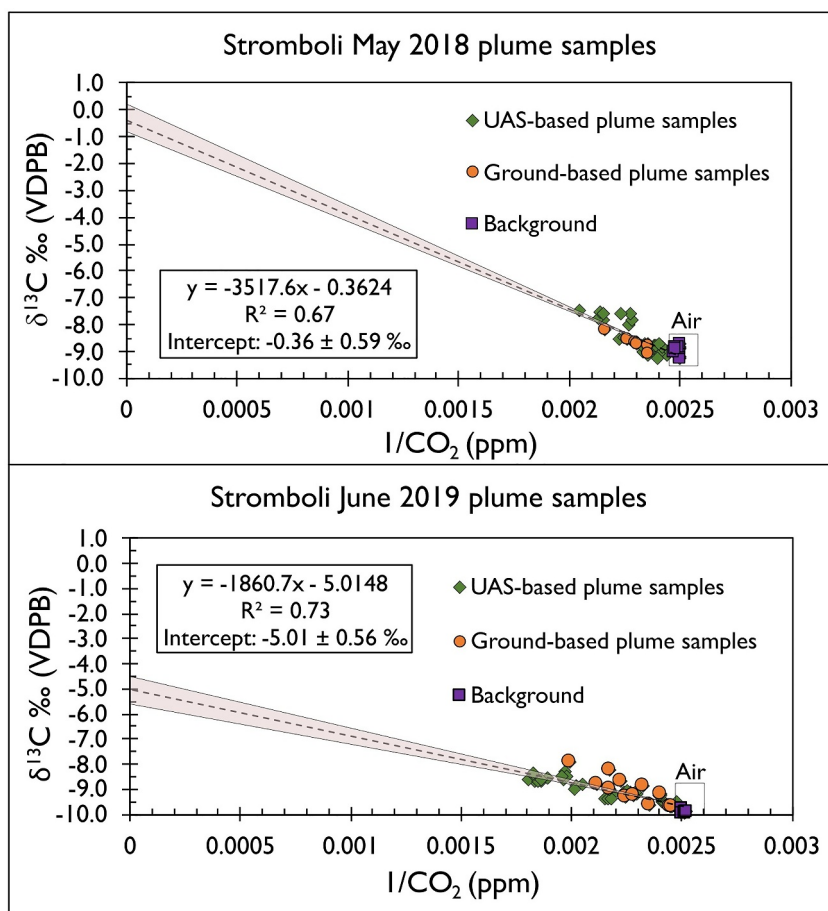
We applied both methods to calculate the volcanic source  $\delta^{13}\text{C}\text{-CO}_2$ .

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. First Aerial Samples of Volcanic $\text{CO}_2$ Capture an Isotopically Light Data Set

Average background from samples taken at the summit in 2018 was  $401 \pm 2$  ppm  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $-8.9 \pm 0.2\text{‰}$   $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  ( $n = 9$ ), and  $401 \pm 2$  ppm  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $-9.9 \pm 0.2\text{‰}$   $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  in 2019 ( $n = 4$ ). We discuss this background variation in Supporting Information S1 (Text S4 in Supporting Information S1). The concentration of  $\text{CO}_2$  collected within the volcanic plume, during 14 flights from 12–17 May 2018, ranged from 405 to 490 ppm and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  between  $-7.5$  and  $-9.2\text{‰}$  (Supporting Information Data set S1). We also collected 16 ground-based plume samples on the crater rim which varied from 410 to 463 ppm  $\text{CO}_2$  with  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of  $-7.6$  to  $-9.0\text{‰}$ . During 11 flights from 17–21 June 2019, we measured  $\text{CO}_2$  concentrations ranging from 403 to 555 ppm and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  between  $-8.3$  and  $-9.8\text{‰}$  (Data Set S1). We also collected 12 ground-based plume samples on the rim ranging from 408 to 501 ppm  $\text{CO}_2$  with  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$   $-7.8$  to  $-9.7\text{‰}$ .

Our volcanic plume concentrations are comparable to those collected by UAS at other volcanoes. Shingubara et al. (2021) achieved 531 ppm (maximum volcanic  $\text{CO}_2$  of 61 ppm), while Tsunogai et al. (2022) reached



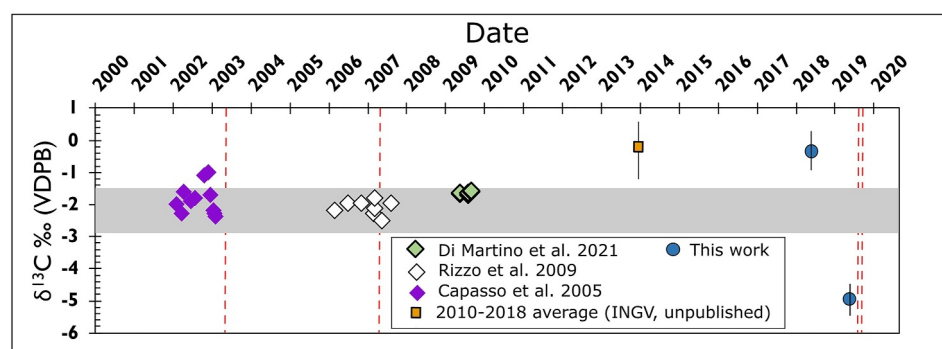
**Figure 2.**  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values against inverse  $\text{CO}_2$  concentrations of all plume samples during this study. UAS-based plume (green diamonds), ground-based plume (orange circles), and ground-based background (purple squares) samples are plotted and included in a linear regression analysis whose line of best fit (dashed line) is shown for 2018 (a) and 2019 (b). This line represents a mixing line between the volcanic source and background air which is extrapolated to the y-intercept in order to estimate the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{CO}_2}$  of the high concentration volcanic source.

514 ppm (maximum volcanic  $\text{CO}_2$  of 98 ppm) at Aso volcano in Japan. At Manam volcano in Papua New Guinea, plume samples from Liu et al. (2020) ranged from 421 to 494 ppm (maximum volcanic  $\text{CO}_2$  of 85 ppm). At Poás volcano, D'Arcy et al. (2022) reached up to 528 ppm or 120 ppm volcanic  $\text{CO}_2$ .

The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_v$  estimated from the Keeling method for May 2018 and June 2019 are  $-0.36 \pm 0.59\text{‰}$  ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $n = 50$ ) and  $-5.01 \pm 0.56\text{‰}$  ( $R^2 = 0.73$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $n = 51$ ), respectively. Errors are reported as the standard error of the regression multiplied by 1.96 to give  $\pm 2\sigma$  (Figure 2). The estimates for the weighted mean method for 2018 and 2019 using samples with volcanic  $\text{CO}_2$  concentration greater than 50 ppm are  $-0.78 \pm 1.34\text{‰}$  and  $-4.12 \pm 1.71\text{‰}$ , respectively (Data Set S2).

The volcanic source  $\delta^{13}\text{C}\text{-CO}_2$  composition we estimate for 2018 ( $-0.36 \pm 0.59\text{‰}$ ) is similar to albeit slightly heavier than the range of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{CO}_2}$  measured in summit fumaroles ( $-1.0\text{‰}$  to  $-2.5\text{‰}$ ) in previous years (Figure 3). The small difference between these past fumarole measurements (Capasso et al., 2005; Di Martino et al., 2021; Rizzo et al., 2009) and that of the plume we sampled in 2018 may be due to uncertainties in estimating  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ , vent-specific differences, fumarole versus dense volcanic plume differences, and/or daily variations. Even more striking, the volcanic source in 2019 ( $-5.01\text{‰} \pm 0.56\text{‰}$ ) is more than  $2\text{‰}$  lighter than the lowest  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values usually measured at Stromboli in fumaroles (Figure 3). The large difference between the 2018 and 2019 isotopic signatures in the carbon dioxide sampled at Stromboli is a key finding, as the 2019 samples were collected two weeks prior to the July 3rd paroxysm, which was an unusually intense and fatal volcanic explosion (Andronico et al., 2021; Giordano & De Astis, 2021; Ripepe et al., 2021).





**Figure 3.** Carbon isotopes plotted against time on the x-axis, showing how 2018 and 2019 results compare with previous studies. The gray band represents the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  range from fluid inclusions at Stromboli (Gennaro et al., 2017). The 2010–2018 average was calculated using a regression on passive gas samples taken at the summit during an 8-year period ( $n = 49$ ) with 4 blanks as background. Vertical red dashed lines represent paroxysms.

### 3.2. Carbon Isotopes Reveal Change in Degassing State Prior to Paroxysmal Activity

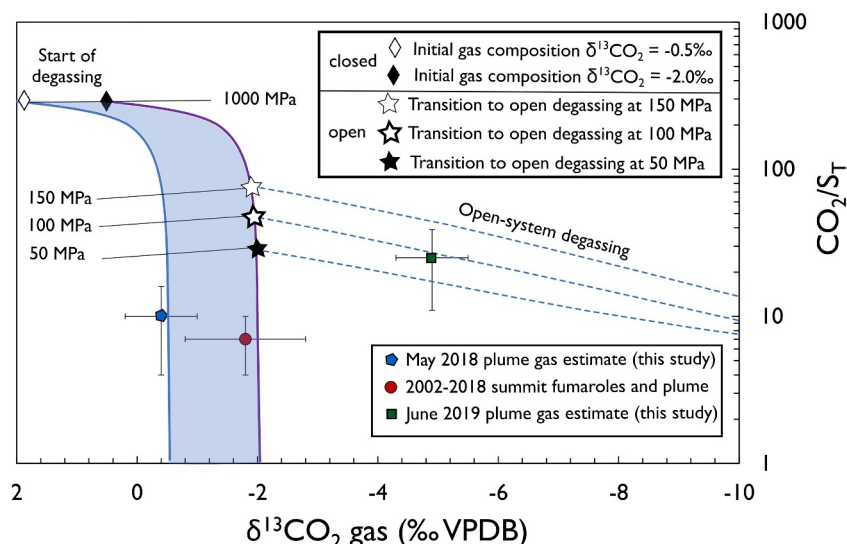
The significant divergence in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of the volcanic plume between 2018 ( $-0.36\text{‰}$ ) and 2019 ( $-5.01\text{‰}$ ) is unprecedented at Stromboli. Such a variation in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  has never been observed in any fumarolic or hydrothermal sample. We sampled the plume close to the vent during two fortuitous sampling windows: (a) during a quiescent period and (b) just 2 weeks before a highly energetic paroxysmal eruption. Our analytical procedures using two different instruments and employing two different statistical methods (Text S1–S6 in Supporting Information S1) demonstrate that these results represent true volcanic variations.

The well-studied magma source at Stromboli consists of a volatile-rich, deep-derived magma and a volatile-poor, shallow magma (Métrich et al., 2009). The most intuitive explanation for the nearly 5‰ difference in  $\delta^{13}\text{CO}_2$  is a new magmatic source with a distinct carbon isotopic composition supplying the 2019 eruption. However, the major and trace element geochemistry of the 2019 eruptive products (Andronico et al., 2021; Métrich et al., 2021; Petrone et al., 2022) is indistinguishable from that of pyroclastic materials erupted during other recent paroxysms on Stromboli in 2003 and 2007 (Métrich et al., 2005, 2009). This indicates that all these events (2003, 2007 and 2019) were charged by compositionally similar magma sourced from the same metasomatically altered mantle source (Peccerillo & Frezzotti, 2015). Furthermore, there is no evidence for a magma source in the region with  $\delta^{13}\text{CO}_2$  as light as our 2019 data ( $-5.01\text{‰}$ ). Studies from fumarolic emissions of volcanoes in the Aeolian arc range from  $-2.5$  to  $-1.0\text{‰}$  at Stromboli (Capasso et al., 2005; Federico et al., 2008; Rizzo et al., 2009) and  $-3.2$  to  $+0.7\text{‰}$  at Vulcano (Capasso et al., 1997; Venturi et al., 2017). Thus, there is no evidence for the existence of a light carbon component in the mantle, both at a local scale (Gennaro et al., 2017) and regionally.

Another plausible mechanism is isotopic fractionation during degassing of the volatile-rich deep-derived magma associated with past paroxysms at Stromboli (Métrich et al., 2009). During release of gases from magma, the heavier  $^{13}\text{C}$  isotope concentrates in the gas phase compared to the lighter  $^{12}\text{C}$  isotope. As magma degasses, the remaining carbon in the melt becomes lighter ( $^{13}\text{C}$ -depleted), as does the gas phase released at later stages of degassing (Holloway & Blank, 1994). This depletion can occur during closed-system degassing when the melt stays in contact with the gas, or to a much greater extent during open-system degassing (Rayleigh fractionation) conditions when the gas is removed from the melt (Brown et al., 1985; Rayleigh, 1896). Hence, magma degassing under open-system conditions can lower  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of the resulting gas to levels that could explain our 2019 gas data.

### 3.3. Dynamic Carbon Isotopes at Arc Volcanoes

On Stromboli, as in other open-vent volcanoes (Edmonds et al., 2022), both closed- and open-system degassing conditions can occur, and even coexist. During ordinary Strombolian activity (Harris & Ripepe, 2007; Rosi et al., 2013), both quiescent and explosive degassing occur, in which the former is caused by shallow gas release from convectively circulating magma in the upper conduits, effectively acting as closed-system degassing (Allard et al., 2008). Explosive bursting at the surface reflects rapid, separate ascent of deeply sourced gas bubbles undergoing open-system degassing (Burton et al., 2007). Important in this context is that high  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  ratios have typically been observed in the bulk plume (passive + explosive) before paroxysms (Aiuppa & Bertagnini



**Figure 4.** (a) Modeled degassing paths of magma at Stromboli, showing carbon isotopic ratios on the x-axis and carbon dioxide to sulfur gas ratios on the y-axis. The solid purple and blue lines are closed-system degassing starting from 1,000 MPa, while the dashed blue lines are open-system degassing starting from 150 to 50 MPa switchover depths from closed to open (star symbols). This corresponds to a starting  $f$  value of 0.7 at 1,000 MPa and  $f$  values of 0.03 to 0.006 at 50–150 MPa. Initial gas compositions are shown ranging from 2‰ (with a parental melt  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of  $-0.5\text{‰}$  (open diamond)) to  $0.5\text{‰}$  (with a parental melt  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of  $-2.0\text{‰}$  (solid diamond)). The green square represents June 2019  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ - $\text{CO}_2$  (this study) and  $\text{CO}_2/\text{S}$  (Aiuppa et al., 2021). The blue pentagon represents May 2018  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ - $\text{CO}_2$  (this study) and  $\text{CO}_2/\text{S}$  (Aiuppa et al., 2021). The red circle represents the average  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of 2002–2007 direct samples ( $n = 25$ ) of summit fumaroles (Capasso et al., 2005; Di Martino et al., 2021; Rizzo et al., 2009) and the source estimate based on linear regression of 2010–2018  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ - $\text{CO}_2$  of summit plume gases collected from the crater rim (INGV, unpublished). The  $\text{CO}_2/\text{S}$  for the red circle is an average based on Aiuppa et al. (2011) and Aiuppa and Giudice et al. (2017) for 2006–2012.

et al., 2010; Aiuppa & Burton et al., 2010; Aiuppa et al., 2021) and major explosions (Aiuppa et al., 2011). This indicates that open-system conditions prevail in such conditions, resulting in the release of deeply sourced gas that is not in equilibrium with resident shallow conduit magma.

Geochemical and geophysical evidence indicates that a deeply derived gas was being emitted in the months prior to the July 3rd paroxysm. First, increased  $\text{CO}_2$  concentrations and high  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  ratios were noted in the plume beginning 8 months prior (Aiuppa et al., 2021), indicative of a deeply sourced magma (>4 km) due to the low solubility and deeper exsolution level of  $\text{CO}_2$  as compared to  $\text{SO}_2$ . Second, elevated  $\text{CO}_2$  flux from summit soil began in October 2018, accelerating to July 2019 as higher volatile input was supplied (Inguaggiato et al., 2020). Third, modeling the degassing behavior as a combination of open- and closed-system conditions has been invoked to account for the bimodal  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  gas ratios observed prior to the July 3rd paroxysm (Aiuppa et al., 2021). Fourth, a seismic precursor to the July 3rd paroxysm was noted in very long period (VLP) waveforms starting at least 1 month before the eruption, thought to be caused by vigorous (deep-sourced?) gas jetting activity sustaining the Strombolian activity (Giudicepietro et al., 2020).

We now test and model if a switch from closed-system to open-system degassing conditions can explain the distinct  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  plume composition in 2018 and 2019 (Figure 4). Here, we use the model of Gerlach and Taylor (1990) to simulate carbon isotope fractionation during degassing in both closed-system and open-system conditions (Supporting Information S1). In order to estimate  $f$ , the fraction of residual carbon in the melt at each step of the degassing path (see Equations 5–7 in Supporting Information S1), we use the Chosetto model (Moretti et al., 2003; Moretti & Papale, 2004) to simulate degassing upon decompression of a Stromboli-like parental melt (same initial conditions as in Aiuppa & Bertagnini et al., 2010; Aiuppa & Burton et al., 2010; see Text S7 in Supporting Information S1). The model also outputs, at each degassing step (e.g., at each pressure of the modeled decompression path), the  $\text{CO}_2/\text{S}_{\text{tot}}$  ratios in the gas coexisting with the melt. These are plotted, along with the gas carbon isotope signature, in Figure 4.

Our results indicate that the plume 2018 results, as well as the 2010–2018 fumarole data, result from degassing under closed-system conditions up to 0.1 MPa (less than 1 km) of a parental magma with  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of  $-0.5$  to  $-2.0\text{‰}$  informed by melt inclusion studies (Gennaro et al., 2017) (Figure 4). This confirms that degassing of shallow convecting magma dominates the degassing budget during ordinary Strombolian activity (Aiuppa & Bertagnini et al., 2010; Aiuppa & Burton et al., 2010; Allard et al., 2008). In contrast, we see that the 2019 plume data diverge from the closed-system degassing lines due to their light ( $^{13}\text{C}$ -poor) carbon signature. Specifically, our June 2019 carbon isotopic results can be reproduced from a degassing path that switches from closed to open (Figure 4). We propose that closed-system degassing takes place as magma decompresses from 1,000 MPa ( $\sim 40$  km) to  $\sim 150$ – $50$  MPa (6–2 km depth). At this point, magma reaches a ponding zone (a geological or rheological discontinuity), at which point accumulating gas bubbles separate from melt (Aiuppa et al., 2021), and the system switches to open-system degassing. This “switchover depth” from closed to open-system degassing may be variable rather than constant, resulting in variable yet high  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  ( $\sim 20$ – $35$ ) observed before the July 3rd paroxysm. Vent-specific changes in  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  (6.8–25.4) were noted at Stromboli during small explosive events in 2018 and attributed to differences in gas-melt separation (Pering et al., 2020). A variable switchover depth could indicate multiple levels of magma storage and/or multiple foam layers accumulating at different depths within the magma plumbing system prior to a paroxysm (Aiuppa et al., 2021). In any case, we postulate that the gas separated from the magma at 2–6 km depth then rapidly ascends toward the surface, preserving its high  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  signature of  $25 \pm 14$  (Aiuppa et al., 2021) and furthermore a strongly depleted isotopic signature in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}\text{-CO}_2$  caused by fractional equilibrium degassing (open-system degassing). These are exactly the features we observe in the June 2019 plume (Figure 4).

Recent applications of carbon isotopes as monitoring tools at Stromboli assume that small increases in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}\text{-CO}_2$  would indicate unrest due to injection of a fresh,  $\text{CO}_2$ -rich magma (Federico et al., 2008, 2023). By contrast, our work shows that a decrease in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  may be indicative of gas accumulation and overpressure as a foam layer builds over time. In the same way that patterns of precursory  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  increases are being documented prior to basaltic eruptions across many arcs (Werner et al., 2019), now is the time to build a similar repository for precursory  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  changes for Stromboli and other volcanic systems.

At Stromboli in 2018, the observed low  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  and heavy  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  resulted from  $\text{CO}_2$  remaining in equilibrium with the magma until shallow levels, thereby efficiently lowering the gas ratios. In 2019, high  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  and light  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  were the result of the gas decoupling and separating from the deeper magma at pressures of  $\sim 100$  MPa ( $\sim 4$  km depth). By Rayleigh fractionation, the  $\text{CO}_2$  was depleted in  $^{13}\text{C}$ , while  $\text{CO}_2/\text{SO}_2$  remained high. The early onset of deep gas supply many months before the July 3rd event caused the system to pressurize, as seen in other volcanic systems host to paroxysmal activity such as Villarica (Aiuppa & Bitetto et al., 2017).

What is the “recipe” for forecasting large eruptive events at Stromboli? Based on previous work (Aiuppa et al., 2021) and ours, we propose that a combination of high  $\text{CO}_2$  concentrations (maximum volcanic  $\text{CO}_2 > 50$  ppm) and elevated  $\text{CO}_2/S_t$  (values  $> 20$ ) as measured by Multi-GAS at the summit, combined with anomalously light  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  (e.g., less than  $-2$  to  $-3\text{‰}$ ), may indicate a heightened probability of a paroxysm. The longer the timescale of anomalous  $\text{CO}_2$  characteristics, the greater the thickness of the foam layer(s) developing at depth (Aiuppa et al., 2021), hence the more powerful the eruption may be. Geophysical data may enhance this geochemical forecasting recipe, for example, anomalously elevated VLP seismicity on weekly to monthly timescales (Giudicepietro et al., 2020). An integrated geochemical-geophysical approach will improve our understanding of Stromboli and our ability to successfully forecast large eruptive events.

#### 4. Conclusions

Our principal conclusions are the following:

1. Robust measurements of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}\text{-CO}_2$  in volcanic plumes can be made with sampling by UAS in the plume and same-day isotopic analysis with portable spectrometers.
2. A large negative shift in plume  $\delta^{13}\text{C}\text{-CO}_2$  was observed at Stromboli from quiescent degassing in May 2018 ( $-0.36\text{‰} \pm 0.59\text{‰}$ ) to June 2019 ( $-5.01\text{‰} \pm 0.56\text{‰}$ ), just prior to a large paroxysmal eruption.
3. We interpret this isotopic shift as a change from closed-system degassing in 2018, typical of ordinary strombolian activity, to a situation in 2019 where closed-system degassing prevailed at deep levels and transitioned to open-system degassing at 50–150 MPa (2–6 km depth). This transition allowed bubbles to separate from the melt and rise rapidly to the surface.

4. Prior to large eruptions, we hypothesize that plume gas will have high CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations, anomalously light δ<sup>13</sup>C-CO<sub>2</sub>, and high CO<sub>2</sub>/S<sub>T</sub>.

We observed some potential daily variations in δ<sup>13</sup>C-CO<sub>2</sub> during our work (see Figure S9 in Supporting Information S1). Future work could examine more detailed temporal and spatial variability of δ<sup>13</sup>C-CO<sub>2</sub>, for example, timescales of days to weeks and sampling of individual vents.

### Data Availability Statement

The data used in the study are available for download in the Earthchem repository (D'Arcy et al., 2024). The Chosetto code used for the CO<sub>2</sub> modeling was downloaded from <https://github.com/charlesll/chosetto> and is freely available from Github (Moretti et al., 2003; Moretti & Papale, 2004).

### Acknowledgments

We thank Taryn Lopez, Emma Nicholson, and Tobias Fisher for their insightful and thought-provoking reviews. We also thank Christian Huber and Kyla Lesperance for their editorial handling and flexibility during the review process. We thank Alfredo Alan for technical advice on the wiring schematics of the gas-sampling devices. FD is grateful for funding from Vanier Canada. JS is supported by funding from an NSERC Discovery grant (RGPIN-2020-04197). AA and ALR acknowledge funding from the Italian Ministero Ricerca e Università (PRIN projects 2017LMNLAW and 2022HA8XCS). AA also acknowledges funding from the RETURN Extended Partnership funded by the European Union Next-GenerationEU (National Recovery and Resilience Plan—NRRP, Mission 4, Component 2, Investment 1.3—D.D. 1243 2/8/2022, PE0000005), and from Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia under research agreement “sviluppo del sistema unico (ingv—università) di monitoraggio vulcanico e rilevamento precoce dei maremoti e delle esplosioni parossistiche di “stromboli”.

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