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1 **Apulian crust: top to bottom**

2

3 Alessandro Amato, Irene Bianchi, Nicola Piana Agostinetti

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5

6 **Abstract**

7 We investigate the crustal seismic structure of the Adria plate using teleseismic
8 receiver functions (RF) recorded at 12 broadband seismic stations in the Apulia
9 region. Detailed models of the Apulian crust, e.g. the structure of the Apulian Multi-
10 layer Platform (AMP), are crucial for assessing the presence of potential décollements
11 at different depth levels that may play a role in the evolution of the Apenninic orogen.
12 We reconstruct S-wave velocity profiles applying a trans-dimensional Monte Carlo
13 method for the inversion of RF data. Using this method, the resolution at the different
14 depth level is completely dictated by the data and we avoid introducing artifacts in the
15 crustal structure. We focus our study on three different key-elements: the Moho depth,
16 the lower crust S-velocity, and the fine-structure of the AMP. We find a well defined
17 and relatively flat Moho discontinuity below the region at 28-32 km depth, possibly
18 indicating that the original Moho is still preserved in the area. The lower crust appears
19 as a generally low velocity layer (average $V_s=3.7$ km/s in the 15-26 km depth
20 interval), likely suggestive of a felsic composition, with no significant velocity
21 discontinuities except for its upper and lower boundaries where we find layering.
22 Finally, for the shallow structure, the comparison of RF results with deep well
23 stratigraphic and sonic log data allowed us to constrain the structure of the AMP and
24 the presence of underlying Permo-Triassic (P-T) sediments. We find that the AMP
25 structure displays small-scale heterogeneities in the region, with a thickness of the
26 carbonates layers varying between 4 and 12 km, and is underlain by a thin,
27 discontinuous layer of P-T terrigenous sediments, that are lacking in some areas. This
28 fact may be due to the roughness in the original topography of the continental margins
29 or to heterogeneities in its shallow structure due to the rifting process.

30

31 **Keywords:** crustal structure, receiver functions, Moho, Adria, Apulia, foreland, Apennines,
32 crust

33

34 **1. Introduction**

35

36 The Adria microplate is a key element in the present-day evolution of the
37 Mediterranean region, belonging to the Alpine-Himalayan macro-orogenic process
38 (Figure 1). Such global-scale phenomenon is widely supposed to follow the closure of
39 the Thetys ocean. The final stage of the closure of an ocean should be characterized
40 by the interplay between the subduction of oceanic fragments and the
41 collision/delamination of its continental margins. While the oceanic fragments are
42 thought to sink in the upper mantle, due to their negative buoyancy, the fate of the
43 continental lithosphere is controversial. The deformation of the continental margins
44 leads to its disruption, possibly focused along inherited weak-zones, so that slices of
45 different origin and lithologies are piled up to form the crustal wedge, i.e. the actual
46 mountain chains. It is straightforward that the knowledge of the structure of the
47 involved continental margins is fundamental to model the present-day deformation
48 across the orogens. The Adria microplate represents one of the continental paleo-
49 margins, now fragmented across the Mediterranean region. Unraveling Adria's fine
50 structure and its lateral variations is, thus, a crucial issue to understand what happens
51 when it is subducted/delaminated below the Apennines and the Dinarides.

52

53 Many regions of Adria, particularly the foredeeps surrounding it, have been
54 extensively investigated for oil and gas extraction (Mostardini and Merlini, 1987;
55 Nicolai and Gambini, 2007) with seismic lines and deep wells. However, only the
56 upper 7 km (often less) are well known from drillings. Many of these deep wells
57 reached the top of the so-called Apulian Multi-layer Platform (AMP), a thick shallow-
58 water carbonate sequence that developed on the rifted margin in Meso-Cenozoic
59 times. Only rarely boreholes have reached the bottom of the AMP, penetrating Permo-
60 Triassic continental clastic deposits (Patacca et al. 2008; Improta et al., 2000). The top
61 of the AMP below the Apennines and the Adriatic region has been mapped by Nicolai
62 and Gambini (2007). Mariotti and Doglioni (2000) have reconstructed the geometry
63 of the Adria top showing that it dips gently below the belt, with different angles along
64 the foredeep. However, all this information about the Adria structure and geometry
65 did not answer to the question of which part of the AMP has been involved in the
66 tectonic evolution of the belt (Patella et al., 2005; Patacca et al., 2008; Speranza and
67 Chiappini, 2000; Scrocca et al., 2005; Steckler et al., 2008; Chiarabba et al., 2014).
68 Moreover, it is not clear whether the documented lateral heterogeneities of the
69 sedimentary cover (Puglia-1, Gargano-1 and Foresta Umbra well-log for the AMP,

70 Improta et al., 2000; Patacca et al., 2008) could reflect lateral variations in the deep
71 structure. In this situation, uncertainties in the Adria structure lead to very different
72 modeling scenarios for the involvement of the Adria microplate in the orogenic
73 process.

74

75 Aim of this study is to reconstruct the Adria crustal structure computing S-velocity
76 profiles retrieved from receiver functions (RF) inversions, in the Apulia foreland
77 region, where the Adria microplate is widely exposed in the Murge and Salento
78 (Figure 1). RF are a widely used tool to investigate the crustal S-wave velocity
79 structure through the analysis of P-to-s converted waves contained in the P-coda of
80 teleseismic events. In this area, the continental margin has not been already affected
81 by significant deformation (i.e. subduction/delamination), and therefore we can
82 retrieve its original seismic structure. Studying the undeformed continental margin
83 allows us to catch both the general features of the Adria Microplate and the small-
84 scale heterogeneities, inherited from geodynamic processes that occurred before the
85 closure of the Thetys ocean. In this study, RF are computed from teleseismic data
86 recorded at 12 permanent and temporary seismic stations, with recording period
87 spanning more than 2 years for each station. We focus our analysis on three main
88 issues, namely, the Moho depth, the lower crust structure, and the shallow AMP
89 thickness throughout the study region.

90

91 **1.1 Geological/Geophysical background**

92

93 Besides the wide portion submerged below the Adriatic Sea, the Adria microplate
94 includes the Po Plain and Apulia and corresponds to a reduced foreland–foredeep area
95 nearly consumed by the complex orogenic processes occurring along its borders
96 (Patacca and Scandone, 1989; Doglioni et al., 1994; Di Stefano et al., 2009; Piccardi
97 et al., 2011, and references therein). Both the offshore sector and the outcropping area
98 of Adria belong to a foreland basin formed on a lithospheric plate that is flexured
99 between the Apennines, the Alps and the Dinarides-Hellenides chains (Moretti and
100 Royden, 1988; Patacca and Scandone, 1989; Royden et al., 1987; Mariotti and
101 Doglioni, 2000; Billi and Salvini, 2003). This foreland basin is covered by
102 sedimentary successions that accumulated on the continental margins of Adria since

103 the early Mesozoic (Channell et al., 1979; D'Argenio and Horvath, 1984; Anderson
104 and Jackson, 1987).

105

106 Although there are still different views about its role in the long history of Eurasia-
107 Nubia plate convergence, it is generally accepted that Adria played an important role
108 in the frame of the subduction/collision process of the region, acting as a sort of
109 African promontory (Argand, 1924). Its position, separated from the main Nubia
110 (African) plate by the Ionian sea (a remnant of the Neo-Tethys ocean), would suggest
111 that it is an individual microplate (McKenzie, 1970). However, paleomagnetic data
112 indicate that its long-term motion has been consistent with that of Nubia (Channell,
113 1996), thus suggesting a substantial continuity across the Ionian sea until recent times.
114 Using GPS data, D'Agostino et al. (2008) suggest that current Adria motion is
115 separate from that of Africa, and propose that active deformation in the central
116 Adriatic is mainly due to the relative motion between Adria s.s. to the north and the
117 Apulia sector to the south. According to this interpretation, the Apulia sector is
118 coherent with the Ionian Sea and the Hyblean block (D'Agostino et al., 2008).

119

120 In southern peninsular Italy, Apulia represents the foreland for the southern Apenninic
121 fold-and-thrust belt, below which it dips at low angle (Mariotti and Doglioni, 2000).
122 The AMP is a NW-SE oriented first order paleogeographic unit, consisting of several
123 km thick Upper Triassic-Upper Cretaceous carbonate platform that evolved into a
124 carbonate ramp during the Tertiary. It is approximately 650 km long and at least 175
125 km wide and played a relevant role in the Apenninic formation (Doglioni et al, 1994;
126 Di Stefano et al., 2009). It extends from the Central Adriatic down to the Patras Gulf
127 where it outcrops in the Ionian Islands. Its western margin is hidden beneath the
128 Southern Apennines thrust units and has not yet been penetrated by any wells (Nicolai
129 and Gambini, 2007).

130

131 The deepest part of the Adria crust is much less known, due to the absence of well
132 data below 7 km depth, and the paucity of deep seismic lines. The only deep seismic
133 lines reaching the Adriatic lower crust and Moho are the CROP profiles (Scrocca et
134 al., 2003; Finetti and Del Ben, 2005; Patacca et al., 2008). The Adriatic Sea is
135 underlain by continental crust typically 25–36 km thick, with a maximum of 35–40
136 km beneath the southern Adriatic basin (e.g., Nicolich, 1981; Dèzes and Ziegler,

137 2002, Finetti and Del Ben, 2005; Di Stefano et al., 2011; Spada et al., 2013).
138 Lithospheric thicknesses are typically small along the Apulia sector, about 60-90 km,
139 probably related to lithosphere erosion from corner-flow at the Ionian slab edge
140 (Miller and Piana Agostinetti, 2011).

141

142 Teleseismic receiver functions were recently used to retrieve Moho depth along the
143 Adriatic side both beneath Italy (Piana Agostinetti and Amato, 2009, and references
144 therein) and Croatia (Stipcevic et al., 2011). As expected in an undeformed margin,
145 the results showed an almost flat Moho, with a depth ranging from about 30 to 35 km,
146 with few anomalous values as high as of 40-45 km (Levin et al., 2003). RF have also
147 been used to reconstruct the whole crustal structure of the Adria microplate in some
148 regions (Levin et al., 2003; Steckler et al., 2008; Piana Agostinetti and Malinverno,
149 2010; Piana Agostinetti et al., 2011; Di Bona et al., 2011). Retrieved 1D S-velocity
150 profiles depict a fairly horizontally layered crust for the Adria microplate, whose
151 structure becomes more complex structure toward the mountain chain, following the
152 progressive involvement in the orogenic process.

153

154 According to different authors, the Adria microplate is dissected by crustal or
155 lithospheric discontinuities that played an important role in the geologic evolution of
156 the Apennines (Di Bucci et al., 2006; D'Agostino et al., 2008; Del Gaudio et al.,
157 2007; Piccardi et al., 2011 and references therein). Such discontinuities define local
158 heterogeneities in the crustal structure of the microplate. More recently, Latorre et al.
159 (2010) have mapped the subsurface structure of the Apulian plate in the foredeep
160 region showing the presence of inherited strike-slip tectonics, consistent with other
161 geologic and seismological studies (Billi et al., 2007). Offshore high-resolution
162 seismic lines have shown that the most recent (Quaternary) deformation is driven by
163 pre-existing (Early Mesozoic?) structures (Ridente and Trincardi, 2006). The rifting
164 process which leads to opening of an ocean produces a highly heterogeneous margin,
165 with a sequence of deep- and shallow- basins, related to stretching of the crustal
166 blocks involved in the process (e.g. Keen and Beamont, 1990). This would
167 determine variable sedimentation rates which in turn should lead to heterogeneities in
168 the sedimentary cover along the margin (Bosellini, 2004). Small-scale heterogeneities
169 in the AMP have been observed in the Gargano area from borehole litho-
170 stratigraphies. Comparing the well-log of Gargano-1 and Foresta Umbra boreholes,

171 located 20 km apart, a difference in thickness of about 1.3 km is found for one of the
172 main units of the AMP, i.e. the Dolomia principale formation (Patacca et al., 2008).
173 Older sedimentary cover, i.e. the Triassic Burano formation, displays a less striking
174 variability, being 2.2 km thick at Gargano-1 and more than 2.7 km thick at Foresta
175 Umbra (where the Burano formation has not been drilled to the bottom part).

176

177

178 **2.1 Data analysis**

179

180 We use teleseismic data recorded by permanent stations of the National Seismic
181 Network (Amato and Mele, 2009), and by a few temporary stations installed within
182 the CatScan project (Steckler et al., 2008). The stations are all located in Apulia, right
183 on top of the Meso-Cenozoic carbonatic succession of the Apulian Platform. After
184 visual inspection, we selected good teleseismic events according to their high signal-
185 to-noise ratio; events originated from epicentral distances (Δ) of 30° – 100° and with
186 magnitude $M_b > 5.5$ have been recorded at twelve stations (see map in Figure 2)
187 belonging to the Italian National Network of INGV (9), and (2) to the temporal
188 experiment CATSCAN (Steckler et al., 2008). One of the stations (MATE) belongs to
189 the Geofon network. From a total of two thousands recorded events at the 12 stations,
190 we selected a final dataset of about 1200 3-component records, with a minimum of 23
191 and a maximum of 231 records for single station (see Table 1). Both permanent and
192 temporary stations are equipped with broad-band seismometers. In general, seismic
193 data sets at the temporary stations are of lower quality with respect to those of the
194 permanent stations. This is due to both a shorter recording time that does not allow a
195 full backazimuthal coverage of the teleseismic traces, and a lower signal-to-noise ratio
196 caused by a less accurate installation of the station.

197

198 RF data sets are obtained by deconvolution of the vertical from the horizontal
199 recordings into the radial, transverse, and vertical coordinate system, where the radial
200 (R) is computed along the great circle path between the epicenter and the station,
201 positive away from the source, and the transverse (T) direction is calculated 90°
202 clockwise from R. The deconvolution is performed in the frequency domain
203 (Langston, 1979; Ammon, 1991), following the approach proposed by Di Bona
204 (1998). We apply a Gaussian filter ($\alpha = 4$) to limit the frequency band below about 2

205 Hz (Langston, 1979). The depth-resolution obtained using such cut-off frequency of 2
206 Hz is approximately 1 km. Due to this limit in the vertical resolution, we cannot
207 expect to resolve completely the finer lithological details of the AMP layering.
208 However, the thickness of the main components of the platform (e.g. the Burano fm.)
209 exceeds 1 km and such layers can be resolved using our RF data-set. At the same
210 time, the limit on the vertical resolution does not allow us to reconstruct a 1D S-
211 velocity profile which contains the same level of details as in a 1D P-velocity profile
212 obtained from the interpretation of sonic-log data (e.g. PUGLIA-1). In this case, we
213 can only discuss mean values of seismic velocities in the main layers of the AMP,
214 losing some of the details contained in the P-velocity profile. High frequency RF data-
215 set are needed to improve the resolving power of this methodology (Leahy et al,
216 2012).

217

218 A representative RF back-azimuthal sweep is displayed in Figure 2a for station
219 AMUR. The RF have been binned to increase the S/N ratio. Bins shown in Figure 2a
220 are obtained by stacking RF for events occurring in the same area. Bins are 20° wide
221 in back azimuth (baz) and 40° wide in Δ , and are computed every 10° in baz, i.e., with
222 a 50% overlapping. In Figure 2a, we plot bins computed for an average $\Delta = 90^\circ$ (or Δ
223 $= 70^\circ$, if $\Delta = 90^\circ$ is missing).

224

225 For all the stations analyzed in this study (see AMUR for an example, Figure 2a), we
226 find that the transverse components do not show large energy. This is likely due to the
227 relatively flat structure of this stable region that has not undergone relevant
228 deformations in the Meso-Cenozoic, at least. For this reason, in the next sections we
229 discuss only the results of the radial components. We stack the radial receiver
230 functions (RRF) coming from all back-azimuthal directions (Figure 3b) to obtain one
231 stacked RRF that contains information about the isotropic structure underneath the
232 recording station. The standard deviation of the stacked RRF has been calculated by
233 bootstrapping the RRFs ensemble 100 times.

234

235

236 **2.2 Inversion Method**

237

238 In this study we adopt the method developed by Piana Agostinetti and Malinverno
239 (2010), in order to catch the obvious non-uniqueness characteristic of the RRF inverse
240 problem (as seen in Ammon et al., 1990), where single model solutions usually fail.
241 The assumption of horizontal layering, intrinsic in the inversion code, is justified by
242 the simple geologic structure of the undisturbed Apulian plate. The stacked RRF time
243 series is the observed data to solve the inverse problem and gaining inferences about
244 the subsurface seismic structures, together with their estimated standard deviation. A
245 reversible jump Markov chain Monte Carlo (RJCMCMC) technique is used to sample
246 the V_s parameter space and to retrieve the posterior probability density of the shear
247 velocity beneath a seismic station. The RJCMCMC technique does allow to impose
248 very loose a priori information, such that both the S velocity and the number of
249 seismic discontinuities at depth are considered as unknowns.

250

251 Prior information about the seismic velocity structure was set as follows. The a priori
252 probability distributions of the S velocity and V_p/V_s are considered Gaussian. For
253 these normal distributions, mean and standard deviation (σ) values are kept constant
254 for V_p/V_s (1.75 and 0.05, respectively), whereas they vary with depth for the V_s to
255 account for large- S velocity variations expected in the shallow crust, where very
256 different lithologies are present (e.g., clay-sandy sediments and carbonates). The
257 number of interfaces is an unknown itself and can vary between 1 and 30. The
258 maximum number of interfaces is given by the resolution of the RF data set. The
259 maximum depth of the interfaces is given by the length of the portion of RF used in
260 the inversion, 0–30 s, and it is fixed to 60 km in this study. The fit between observed
261 and synthetic RF is computed using a classical χ^2 function. Between two interfaces,
262 both V_s and V_p/V_s is constant. After a burn-in phase of about 25,000 models, which
263 are discarded, the RJCMCMC method was used to sample about 175,000 models, from
264 which we computed the a posteriori probability distributions (see Piana Agostinetti
265 and Malinverno, 2010 for details). We ran 95 parallel RJCMCMC computations on a
266 linux cluster and obtained an ensemble of about 16×10^6 models. The total CPU time
267 was about 10 hours for each station. The RJCMCMC search yields two main results for
268 each seismic station: the posteriori probability distribution (PPD) of the S velocity at
269 depth, and the frequency distribution of seismic interfaces at depth sampled during the
270 chain. The PPD of the seismic interfaces at depth broadly indicates how many

271 isotropic layers are composing the seismic structure beneath each station together with
272 their most probable depths (Figure 2b, panel b).

273 An example of the technique application is described in Figure 2b for the stacked
274 RRF obtained at station AMUR. The “a posteriori” probability distribution of the S
275 velocity at depth can be used to compute a mean V/s model and to give a measure of
276 the associated uncertainties (Figure 2b, panel a). The stacked RRF is compared with
277 the synthetic RRF in Figure 2b, panel c.

278

279

280

281 **3. Results**

282

283 As a result of the inversion, we can look at the velocity profiles derived from the
284 inversion procedure described above with the interfaces distribution in depth, as
285 shown in the example of Figure 2, for station AMUR. The fit between observed and
286 modeled data (upper panel on the right) provides a qualitative estimate of the
287 goodness of the inversion, whereas the dispersion associated with the S velocity
288 values (left panel) tells us how well each value is constrained along depth. The
289 probability density of the interfaces at depth (central panel) roughly indicates the most
290 probable depth-ranges for a seismic discontinuity. As shown in Figure 2 for station
291 AMUR, the fit between observed and modeled data is very good, thanks to the simple
292 1D structure of the region and to the good teleseismic data available. The interface
293 distribution (Figure 2b) shows that the strongest velocity contrasts below Apulia are
294 those relative to the shallower structure ($<10\text{km}$), and to the Moho discontinuity, at
295 around 30 km depth. This is a feature that we will see in all the stations analyzed in
296 this study, although the variations encountered suggest that lateral heterogeneities do
297 exist.

298

299 The results for all the stations are summarized in Figure 3. All the stations share some
300 common features, with some differences witnessing an inhomogeneous structure
301 throughout the Apulian platform. The most evident variations occur in the shallow
302 structure (2-10 km) for most of the stations and are suggestive of a complex evolution
303 of the platform. For all the stations, Figure 3 shows the V_s profile (left), the interface
304 distribution profile (right), and the comparison between synthetic and observed

305 Receiver Functions (bottom). The fit between observed and modeled RF's is generally
306 very good (Figure 3, lower panels), suggesting that the structure beneath Apulia is
307 well reproduced by a horizontal layer suite, at least at the first order. We describe here
308 the results grouping the stations by area, from north to south:

309

310 *Gargano region*: the two stations in the Gargano promontory (SGRT and MSAG,
311 figure 3a to f) show a similar structure for the upper 10 km, where both have a strong
312 velocity increase at shallow depth (from 0 to 3 km), reaching V_s values of about 4.0
313 km/s, then two main interfaces between 5 and 10 km depth occur. Between these two
314 interfaces, the S-velocity decreases to about 3.5 km/s at MSAG and about 3.8 km/s at
315 SGRT. The lower velocity is confined in a layer about 2-3 km thick at MSAG, while
316 it slowly increases to mid-crustal velocity in SGRT without any well-defined low-
317 velocity layer. The mid-lower crust is less constrained and shows some difference
318 between the two stations, with SGRT having more interfaces than MSAG. Both
319 stations show a clear, coherent velocity increase between about 26 and 34 km depth,
320 picked around 30, corresponding to the crust-mantle boundary, as will be discussed
321 later. The velocity values along depth have the best resolution at the Moho depth and
322 in the shallowest part of the model. For MSAG, also the region around 10 km depth
323 seems to be well constrained. For both stations, the depth range 10-25 km appears to
324 have the largest uncertainties.

325

326 *Northern Murge region*: stations MRVN, CRBB and, more to the south, AMUR,
327 show similar distribution of interfaces and velocity profiles (figure 3a, panels g to l,
328 and 3b, panels a to c). As before, a strong increase is observed in the top 2-3 km, then
329 S velocities lay between 3.5 and 4.0 km/s in the upper 6 to 8 km, then a velocity
330 inversion right below (V_s as low as 3.3 km/s) occurs. It is worth noting that the
331 portion of upper crust reaching the highest S-velocity value increases its thickness
332 from MRVN to CRBB to AMUR, from 2.5km to 6km thick (depth 2-8km). On the
333 contrary, the low-velocity layer at its base retains almost the same thickness (4km) in
334 all three stations. In the mid-lower crust (12-25 km) there are few interfaces detected,
335 and V_s is around 3.7 km/s (more constant for AMUR and CRBB, slightly higher for
336 MRVN), then a sharp increase around 28-32 km, at the Moho. The two adjacent
337 stations of MRVN and CRBB show a minor hint of velocity discontinuities at 18-20
338 km depth, below which V_s decreases.

339

340

341 *Southern Murge region:* station NOCI is located in the middle of the Murge highland
342 whereas MATE and ILCA are located closer to the foredeep (fig. 1). The velocity
343 profiles for the three stations (fig. 3b) are not so similar as in the previous case, with
344 slight differences in the shallow structure: The high velocity layer in the upper crust
345 seems to thicken from MATE (2-8km) to ILCA (2-10km) and NOCI (2-11km), with
346 ILCA showing a low velocity layer in between (Figure 3b). Below, all stations show a
347 low velocity layer as thick as 6-8km at the two western stations, thinning to 4km at
348 NOCI in the highland. The deepest part of the crust is relatively similar among the
349 three stations, with more similarities between MATE and NOCI that have a clear
350 gradient indicating the Moho between 27 and 32 km depth. ILCA shows a gentler
351 gradient in the lower crust, but still with a Moho interface at 30 km depth. It must be
352 said that ILCA was a temporary station and data are less and of lower quality,
353 therefore its results appear to be less constrained: from the comparison between
354 observed and synthetic data, we see a more complex RF waveform between 4 and 7
355 seconds that we could not model adequately. The uncertainty in the velocity results
356 along depth are small in the top 10 km for MATE and NOCI (larger for ILCA), higher
357 (± 0.5 km/s) in the mid-lower crust, and again very good at the crust-mantle boundary
358 and below.

359

360 *Salento:* three stations are located in Salento, the southernmost tip of Apulia (SRRN,
361 SCTE and NARD) and another one (MESG) is located about 30 km to the north.
362 MESG and NARD have a similar shallow velocity structure, with a strong velocity
363 increase near the surface (0-2 km depth) and a decrease at around 4 km depth. MESG,
364 located close to the eastern margin of the present-day emerged platform, has on
365 average lower Vs values in the whole crust (around 3.5 km/s) compared to the
366 southern stations (Figure 3c). Going deeper, the S velocity remains constant down to
367 15 km, and it decreases in correspondence of a clear interface below NARD (at 17 km
368 depth), which is less evident at MESG. For both stations the velocity starts to increase
369 again at 26-27 km to reach values of 4.3 km/s at 30-32 km depth. For stations SRRN
370 and SCTE there is no velocity inversion in the shallowest part: below the increase
371 between 0 and 3-4 km depth, there is a constant velocity layer with apparently no
372 interface down to 10-12 km, then a gentle velocity decrease in the whole mid-lower

373 crust, and the Moho-related positive gradient, between 27km and 34km
374 approximately. Station SCTE also shows a stronger velocity decrease in the lower
375 crust. SRRN was another temporary station of the CatScan experiment, and therefore
376 the data may not be good enough to catch some of the features. The results are very
377 good in terms of associated uncertainties for the three southern stations (NARD,
378 SRRN, SCTE) at almost all depths, excepting the mid-crust at SCTE (Figure 3c).
379 MESH shows higher dispersion at all depths except the Moho level and below.

380

381

382 *3.1 Comparison with borehole data*

383

384 In order to test whether RF data are suited for constraining the thickness and
385 characteristics of the shallow layers throughout the study region, we first compare the
386 RF results at station MRVN (Minervino Murge) with the co-located 7.1 km deep well
387 log of Puglia-1 (Figures 1, 4). In the same Figure 4 we also compare station SGRT
388 results with the stratigraphy of the Gargano-1 and Foresta Umbra deep wells, located
389 nearby. In the latter case, however, the comparison is not so good as for MRVN and
390 Puglia-1 well, due to both the larger distance between SGRT and the deep wells
391 (around 20km), and the more complex structure of the Gargano area with respect to
392 the Apulian Murge highland.

393

394 Sonic and stratigraphic logs from Puglia-1 (T.D. 7070 m) and Gargano-1 (T.D. 4853
395 m) wells have been interpreted by Improta et al. (2000) in order to constrain the
396 structural meaning of two deep seismic discontinuities detected by seismic refraction
397 data at about 6 and 11 km depth. Puglia-1 and Gargano-1 are the only two deep wells
398 of Southern Italy that have crossed the whole Apulia Carbonate Platform, penetrating
399 the sedimentary Paleozoic sediments below the AMP. The 5.9 km-depth borehole in
400 the same Gargano region, Foresta Umbra, did not reach the PT formation (Patacca et
401 al. 2008). The bottom of the Apulia carbonate platform (CP) is relatively well
402 constrained from seismic lines: according to Nicolai and Gambini (2007) the base of
403 the AMP is marked by a typical seismic facies at 2.5-3.0 s (twt) below its top, in
404 agreement with well data, and corresponding to 6-9 km, approximately. A critical
405 issue in the interpretation of the Apulia structure is related to what underlies the CP,
406 likely the Paleozoic crystalline basement (Patacca et al., 2008). This unit is not

407 accessible in many deep wells, and seismic data (commercial Near Vertical Reflection
408 NVR seismic lines, CROP deep crustal reflection profiles, wide-angle DSS profiles)
409 depict the base of the sedimentary cover but cannot constrain the structure and
410 thickness of the underlying basement (Improta, 2000).

411
412 The Puglia-1 well penetrates: (1) Early-Cretaceous wackestone-packstone, (2)
413 Cretaceous–Liassic limestones, dolomitic limestones and dolostones from about 1000
414 m to 3535 m, with P velocities in the range 6.0–6.2 km/s below 1km depth; (3)
415 dolomites of uncertain age (scarce or no recovery of cuttings) from 3535 to 5000 m,
416 characterized by higher velocities; (4) Triassic dolomites and anhydrites of the Burano
417 formation from 5000 to 6112 m, both with velocities in the range 6.4–6.7km/s; and
418 finally (5) Lower Triassic–Permian siliciclastic deposits referable to the Verrucano
419 formation from 6112 to the final depth (7070 m) (Figure 4), showing a considerable
420 velocity decrease down to 5.0–5.5 km/s (Improta et al., 2000). The comparison with
421 our RF results is surprisingly good, keeping in mind the 1km resolution of our results:
422 we detect a strong increase in S velocity in the upper 1-2 km, then from 2 to 5 km
423 depth the Vs computed by RF is around 3.2-3.7 km/s (in agreement with Vp of 6.0-
424 6.7 km/s measured in the well). Our RF data are consistent with a layered structure of
425 the Apulian Platform, with a main interface at around 3 km depth, that corresponds
426 with the passage from Cretaceous-Jurassic limestones to dolostones at greater depth,
427 as found in Puglia-1 well. The uncertainty on Vs values in these layers are quite small,
428 around 0.25 km/s. Going deeper, our posterior mean model predicts a velocity
429 decrease between 5 and 6 km depth, in good agreement with what found in Puglia-1.
430 The depth range of such decrease in the posterior mean model is slightly biased by the
431 presence of a bimodal posterior probability distribution on the Vs parameter at such
432 depth (Figure 4a, panel (g)). This fact is due to the intrinsic trade-off between depth
433 and S-velocity in the RF. Higher frequency RF should be used to reduce the
434 resolution to less than 1 km.

435
436 The seismo-stratigraphic succession described for Puglia-1 is confirmed by Gargano 1
437 well (Figure 5), located 90 km north of the former (Figure 1) in a region characterized
438 by higher elevation and strong strike-slip tectonics. According to Improta et al. (2000)
439 the only relevant difference between the two wells is the thickening of the high
440 velocity Burano evaporites from 1.1 to 2.0 km. Also note that in the Gargano region

441 there are two deep wells (Gargano-1 and Foresta Umbra-1) located close to each
442 other, but with a remarkable difference in the thickness and structure of the Triassic
443 anhydrites (the Burano Formation). This could be an indication of inhomogeneous
444 crustal setting at the time of the marine deposition, possibly due to the proximity of a
445 ramp of the platform, and/or of subsequent tectonic activity in the region. Figure 4
446 also shows that the total thickness of the AMP is lower in Gargano-1 than in Puglia-1.
447

448 From these observations, we define four criteria that are used to interpret the posterior
449 mean S-velocity profile of each station, starting from the free-surface and going to
450 almost 15km depth. First, (1) the shallowest layer is composed of (possibly
451 intraclastic) wackstone/packstone, where lower S-velocity, with respect to the deeper
452 layer, can be induced by higher-porosity/smaller-grain-size or (more likely) different
453 cementation (Brigaud et al., 2010). Moreover, the stations deployed in the Bradanic
454 foredeep (i.e. ILCA and MATE) have Quaternary deposits near the surface. (2) The
455 second layer represents the Lower-Jurassic limestone of the AMP, where the S-
456 velocity increases with respect to the first layer, but does not reach the Burano fm S-
457 velocity ($V_s > 3.8 \text{ km/s}$, Trippetta et al., 2010). (3) The third high S-velocity layer
458 indicates the presence of the Burano fm, which includes both evaporites and dolomies
459 ($V_s > 3.8 \text{ km/s}$). Finally, (4) the silico-clastic layer is considered, if below the Burano
460 fm. a low S-velocity layer is found with respect to the Middle crust (i.e. if the S-
461 velocity decreases with respect to both the Burano fm and the Middle crust). This
462 criteria is considered only if the depth of the bottom of the S-velocity layer does not
463 exceed 12 km (i.e. the Silicio-clastic layer can not reach more than 12km depth). It is
464 worth noticing that, while these criteria can provide a very useful first-order guidance
465 to the interpretation of the S-velocity profile in the study area, the association between
466 S-velocity and lithology is not unique. Geological/geophysical information is needed
467 to discriminate between different plausible lithologies sharing similar S-velocity, and
468 different lithological stratigraphy cannot be excluded using solely the analysis of a
469 Receiver Function data-set. The criteria delineated above are used to associate the S-
470 velocity profiles to the lithological units in Figure 5.

471

472

473

474 **Interpretation and discussion**

475

476 In this section, we discuss the results of the RF inversion and interpret them in terms
477 of lithological discontinuities and rock properties. As we have seen in the previous
478 section, there are several common features among all the stations, that are, from top to
479 bottom: a) the upper 10-12 km of the crust, characterized by strong layering and
480 velocity jumps, with one relevant velocity inversion that is found at almost all the
481 stations; b) the middle and lower crust (15 to 30 km depth) with few velocity
482 discontinuities, and, in some cases, a low-velocity zone in the 20-25 depth range; c)
483 the velocity discontinuity at around 30 km depth, corresponding to the crust-mantle
484 boundary, i.e., the Moho.

485

486 *The shallow structure.*

487 We know from outcrops and deep wells that the shallow crustal structure of Apulia is
488 characterized by Meso-Cenozoic (M-C) platform deposits, mostly composed by
489 limestones, dolostones and evaporites, underlain by Permo-Triassic (P-T) clastic
490 continental rocks. This sedimentary suite lies above a Hercynian basement, drilled in
491 at least one deep well in northern Adriatic (Assunta-1, near Venice), and constituted
492 by metamorphic and probably intrusive rocks. This basement has been reconstructed
493 by seismic profiles in various spots of the Adriatic plate, mostly offshore. Some deep
494 wells drilled in the Apulian offshore (Amanda-1, bottom depth 7.3 km) and onshore
495 (Puglia-1, bottom 7.1 km), did not cross the metamorphic basement but stopped in the
496 overlying P-T sediments, that mark the onset of the rifting phase of the Neo-Tethys.

497

498 The sedimentary succession deposited in M-C times displays some relevant velocity
499 jumps, as shown by the Puglia-1, the Gargano-1 and the Foresta Umbra deep wells
500 (Improta et al., 2000; Patacca et al., 2008), and by our RF results (Figure 4). Here we
501 discuss (a) the thickness of the AMP, (b) the presence and nature of one or more
502 layers in the AMP, and (c) the presence and thickness of the P-T sediments at the base
503 of the AMP; d) the presence of the metamorphic basement.

504

505 In general, we find significant variations in the top part of the velocity profiles (Figure
506 4), attributed to the AMP structure, including M-C carbonates and P-T sediments. For
507 P-T sediments, this can be related to the continental deposition, i.e., no deposition
508 and/or high rate of erosion on structural highs. For M-C deposits, the variations can be

509 interpreted in terms of faster/slower deposition/subsidence/erosion rate of the
510 platform, and can be hints for tectonic discontinuities dissecting the platform.

511

512 Looking at the AMP distribution throughout the whole Apulia region (Figure 5), we
513 find a general increase of the M-C platform sediments thickness moving from North
514 to South. In this figure we have interpreted the velocity profiles, attributing the along-
515 depth layering to the geologic units, as explained in the previous section. The
516 northernmost stations, including Gargano and northern Murge, show an AMP
517 thickness of 4-6km, in agreement with the deep wells stratigraphy, as discussed
518 before. Moving to central Apulia (stations AMUR, MATE, ILCA, NOCI) the high Vs
519 layers of the AMP are as thick as 8-10km, whereas the southernmost stations SRRN
520 and SCTE show even larger thickness (11 km). In between, both MESG and NARD
521 have a different velocity profile in the upper crust, with a velocity reduction below 5
522 km that suggests a thinner AMP in this region, and the presence of P-T sediments just
523 below it. This variation can be interpreted in terms of a dissected Apulian platform
524 beneath Murge and Salento, in correspondence with the lowered topography of the
525 region in between (Figure 1). An alternative explanation for station MESG, located
526 close to the Adriatic coast, is suggested by a long commercial seismic line (n. D82-
527 59-55, Improta, personal communication) running for 150km along the Apulian coast,
528 a few km offshore. This line shows a clear thickening of the AMP from NW to SE,
529 from 2.4s TWT to 3.4s TWT (corresponding approximately to a 2-3km thickening).
530 This is in agreement with the general thickening that we observe from RF velocity
531 profiles. Moreover, since the D82-59-55 line runs in a region of lateral ramp of the
532 platform, we can argue that the central part of the AMP is likely even thicker, in
533 agreement with our results. The same line, as well as other commercial and scientific
534 seismic lines shot in the area, also show the presence of normal faults dissecting the
535 continuity of the Apulian platform. These faults, interpreted as inherited faults from
536 the Mesozoic rifting phase, can explain the different thickness of the AMP found in
537 our RF data. According to Nicolai and Gambini (2007), a major plate rearrangement
538 in Middle-Upper Cretaceous times converted part of the Tethyan realm from an
539 extensional to a compressional regime. Since the Middle Cretaceous, large parts of
540 these platforms were partly exposed and extensively karstified, and during the Upper
541 Cretaceous a few intra-platform basins have developed in the Apulian Platform area
542 (Nicolai and Gambini, 2007). This could explain the difference that we find in stations

543 not so far from each other, particularly in terms of velocities at the same depth level,
544 in the AMP. For instance, station ILCA (figure 4) shows a double layering of the top
545 10-12 km, with two velocity reversals at 2km and 10km depth. This could be due to a
546 heterogeneous platform suite, with alternance of high velocity limestones/dolostones
547 and low velocity ramp or basinal units. Not far from ILCA, MATE (figure 2) shows a
548 similar structure, with a slightly thinner platform (8km) and a less pronounced (but
549 still visible) velocity decrease at around 4-5 km depth. An alternative explanation for
550 the low velocity in the AMP structure at ILCA, not far from the Apenninic foredeep,
551 is the presence of faults and fractures that developed during the flexural subsidence of
552 Adria while approaching the foredeep.

553

554 Below the stack of AMP high Vs layers, we find a velocity inversion beneath most of
555 the stations, that we interpret as the P-T clastic sediments following the results of
556 Puglia-1 well (Improta et al., 2000). The sonic log available for the well shows a clear
557 Vp decrease as high as -2 km/s at 6km depth, in correspondence of the base of the M-
558 C platform deposits (figure 5). This low velocity layer is well evident from RF results
559 in most of the northern stations, such as MSAG (6-8km), MRVN (6-9km), CRBB (7-
560 10km), a little bit deeper in central Apulia, as at AMUR (8-12km), NOCI (11-14km),
561 MATE (8-14km). However, the low velocity region is more uncertain in the south
562 (SRRN, SCTE, NARD) where the thicker AMP layers (12km) overlie a more
563 homogeneous low velocity region ($V_s=3.7-3.8$ km/s) down to lower crustal depths.
564 We hypothesize that in southernmost Apulia the AMP developed directly above the
565 Hercynian metamorphic/crystalline basement.

566 According to our results, we can constrain the thickness of the Permo-Triassic clastic
567 sediments to as much as 3-4 km, with the exception of MATE that shows greater
568 thickness. This finding is in agreement with what hypothesized by Patella et al. (2005)
569 and Finetti and Del Ben (2005), based on magnetotelluric analyses and seismic
570 profiles, respectively, and disagree with the hypothesis of a thicker formation of
571 continental sediments postulated by Patacca et al. (2008). In particular, Patella et al.
572 (2005) image a thin (1 to 3-4 km) conductive layer of clastic sediments separating the
573 AMP from the high resistivity crystalline basement. It seems that the conductive layer
574 is thinner moving southeastward (the profile in Patella et al., 2008, runs north of
575 Puglia-1 well). Combining this evidence with our results of no such clastic sequence
576 in southeastern Apulia (Figures 4 and 6), we may hypothesize that the rifting process

577 dissecting Africa from Apulia and forming the Neo-Tethyan basin has progressed
578 asynchronously. In some areas, such as the Salento area in SE Apulia, the absence of
579 the P-T clastic sequence may indicate an uplift episode or an old erosional event.

580

581 *The middle-lower crust.*

582 To investigate what happens at greater depth, we plot in Figure 6 all the Vs profiles
583 from the sea level to the bottom of the model, dividing the stations in the four
584 geographical groups described above. As noted before, there is a general good
585 agreement among most of the stations, with some differences also at intermediate
586 crustal depth. In our RF inversion, the main characteristics of the Vs profiles in the
587 middle crust are: (1) a velocity increase for most of the stations at 10-15 km depth
588 (below the P-T sediments, where present), (2) an almost constant Vs between 15 and
589 22 km depth, and (3) a decrease in Vs below 22-25 km for some stations. Then the Vs
590 increases more or less gradually down to 30 km, in correspondence of the crust-
591 mantle boundary. A gradational change to mantle velocity should suggest a layered
592 lower crust, however, the trade-off between Vs and depth does not allow to
593 completely resolve sharp boundaries using this RF inversion technique (Piana
594 Agostinetti and Malinverno, 2010). The interface with the velocity increase below
595 10km is visible only at some of the stations, particularly those in northern and central
596 Apulia (figure 6). Based on seismic reflection profiles (Scrocca et al., 2003; Finetti,
597 2005) and MT data (Patella et al., 2005) we interpret this interface as the top of the
598 Paleozoic crystalline basement. The lateral variations along the region, even more
599 evident in the seismic reflection data, could be due to different characteristics of the
600 mid-crustal layering.

601

602 Going deeper in the middle-lower crust, some of the stations show the presence of
603 velocity discontinuities around 20 km, but with large variations (Figure 3), as in
604 NARD, MRVN, and to some extent SGRT, CRBB, SCTE. These discontinuities are
605 always marked by a velocity decrease below that depth, suggesting a low velocity
606 lower crust (Vs as low as 3.7-3.8km/s). The low velocity lower crust is particularly
607 evident in the Gargano area below 24km (Figure 6, left panel). Other stations where
608 this 20-km-depth discontinuity is not visible show more diffuse layering just above
609 the Moho (25-30 km depth range, e.g. MSAG, AMUR, MESG). In any case, there are

610 hints of a layered lower crust below 20 and 30 km depth, with Vs increasing from less
611 than 4.0 km/s to 4.3km/s.

612

613 The thickness and composition of the middle and lower crust in the Adriatic region is
614 still largely unknown. Commercial seismic lines do not reach depth larger than 10 km
615 or, if they do, they have not enough resolution to constrain the deep layers. Some data
616 come from the CROP profiles, deep crustal seismic lines performed for scientific
617 research. Some of the offshore lines allow us to define some constraints for the deep
618 structure. Finetti and Del Ben (2005) suggest a thickness of the “UC” (upper crust
619 without sediments) of about 4 s TWT (about 12km) in the offshore south of Salento,
620 and 2.5-3 s TWT (about 8-10km) for the lower crust. According to these authors, both
621 north of Gargano and south of Salento, the whole crustal stack is dissected by strike-
622 slip and normal faults that determines variations on thickness of the crustal layers. In
623 addition, both Finetti and Del Ben (2005) and Patella et al. (2005) propose the
624 presence of large reflective magmatic bodies at mid-crustal depth in the Apulian plate.

625

626 Data from deep seismic reflection lines onshore (CROP04 and CROP 11, Patacca et
627 al., 2008) cannot constrain well the structure of the mid-lower crust, because data
628 quality is low at these depths except in some limited spots. However, they reveal a
629 thick band of dominantly sub-horizontal reflectors interpreted as lower crustal
630 layering. In particular, Patacca et al. (2008) find two main layers in the lower crust,
631 the shallowest of which (between 9.7s and 10.7s TWT, corresponding roughly to 25-
632 30km below the belt) has a strongly layered seismic fabric, and below (but still above
633 the Moho), scattered sets of parallel reflectors with variable amplitude and frequency.
634 The two lower crustal layers might correspond in our RF Vs model to the peaks in the
635 probability density plots of discontinuities that we described above. The lower layers
636 of Patacca et al. (2008) would correspond to our “layered” zone between 20 and 28km
637 depth, where we find no well-defined Vs discontinuities and generally low Vs.

638 The lower crust is believed to consist of metamorphic rocks in the granulite facies;
639 however, the composition of the deep crust remains the largest uncertainty while
640 determining the crust's overall composition. This is due to the large compositional
641 differences between granulites terrains observed at the surface (mainly of felsic
642 composition) and the lower crustal xenoliths (in which mafic rocks dominate) (Rudnik
643 and Fountain 1995). The retrieved average velocities of the lowermost (15-26 km

644 depth) layers of our velocity models are more typical of felsic composition of the
645 lower crust (Rudnik and Fountain 1995, Wedepohl, 1995). Often the seismic structure
646 of the lower crust appears highly reflective due to the presence of subhorizontal
647 layering, either spread in the entire lower crust or confined to its upper and lower
648 boundaries (see Mooney and Brocher (1987) for a review). This latter case appears to
649 be more consistent with our results for the Apulia crust. The origin of reflections
650 includes acoustic impedance contrasts due to solidified igneous intrusions, molten or
651 partially molten bodies, fine-scale lithologic layering of metamorphic rocks, or
652 localized ductile shear zones (Mooney and Meissner, 1992). Anyway, the absence of
653 layering that we encounter in the study area does not imply the absence of
654 compositional (or structural) variability, since many rock types have similar acoustic
655 impedance, or the presence of small-scale heterogeneities that may cause destructive
656 interference.

657

658 The presence of a low S-velocity zone within the lower crust, together with
659 substantial layering at the same depth level, might be related to the fluid-filled layer
660 found in the middle lower crust north of the Apulian region (Chiarabba et al., 2014a).
661 The presence of such layer could indicate the occurrence of a change in the crustal
662 rheology which promotes the post-subduction delamination of the continental
663 lithosphere. Delamination of the continental lower crust has been observed, after
664 subduction episodes, along the central Mediterranean region (Piana Agostinetti et al.,
665 2011; Chiarabba et al. 2014b). Such process involves the former passive continental
666 margin, when the oceanic plate has been completely subducted, and evolves from the
667 negative buoyancy of the continental lithosphere with respect to the underlying upper
668 mantle. Thus, a weak zone within the continental middle-lower crust would guide the
669 sinking of the continental lithospheric mantle (Gogus and Pysklywec, 2008).

670

671

672

673 *The Moho.*

674 As described in the previous sections (Figures 3 and 5) all the seismic stations show a
675 clear velocity jump around 30 km depth. In the velocity-depth profiles, this jump
676 appears like a relatively gradual transition: S velocity increases from ~25 to 30-32 km
677 depth, with values ranging from ~3.5 km/s to 4.2-4.4 km/s. This result is in good

678 agreement with previous estimates (Table 1), in particular with the results from the H-
679 k stacking method (Zhu and Kanamori, 2000) used in Piana Agostinetti and Amato
680 (2009) (Figure 1). There is also a good agreement of our results with the Moho depth
681 estimates based on CROP and other seismic sections summarized by Finetti (2005).
682 For the Apulia region, Finetti (2005) finds a Moho depth around 30 km or less in the
683 Gargano, and a gradual thickening to 34 km southeastward. Di Stefano et al. (2011)
684 also find a similar smooth trend in southeastern Italy. However, we note that the
685 Moho estimates in these studies are obtained from interpolation of off-shore seismic
686 profiles, some smooth constraints from gravity modeling and the published RF
687 estimates, which were not many in the past years.

688

689 In order to obtain our best estimate for the crust-mantle boundary, we extracted the
690 Moho depth from the maximum of the histograms of the layer distribution from the Rj
691 inversion. We computed the mean and the standard deviation of the Moho depth from
692 the histograms in the 20-40 km depth range (Figure 7). Moho depth ranges from 28 to
693 32 km, with uncertainties of ± 2 km. According to our results, the Apulian Moho is
694 rather flat and tends to thicken gently in the southeastern region (Salento) where we
695 find values around 32km. Also beneath Gargano we find values slightly larger than
696 the average, i.e., 31km. As described above, most of the stations exhibit a strong
697 layering just above the Moho, with increasing velocities.

698

699 The regular geometry of the Apulian Moho is very peculiar for peninsular Italy. A flat
700 Moho is found only in two regions (Piana Agostinetti and Amato, 2009; Di Stefano et
701 al., 2011, and references therein), namely the Apulian foreland and the Tyrrhenian
702 back-arc region. This is consistent with the geological setting of Apulia and its
703 stability as a foreland area in the last tens of millions years. Due to the vicinity of the
704 Ionian oceanic basin and the transitional character of passive margins, we could
705 expect to see the rifting phase imprinted in the present Moho structure (i.e.
706 undulations in the Moho topography). This is not the case, and we speculate that it
707 might be a Moho newly formed after the rifting phase that dissected the Paleozoic
708 Hercynian structure, possibly accompanied with magmatic underplating (Eaton,
709 2006).

710

711

712 **Conclusions**

713

714 In this paper, we reconstruct the 1D S-wave velocity profiles of the Adria microplate
715 using data from 12 broadband seismic stations deployed along the Apulian sector of
716 the microplate. Overall, our results are in agreement with previously published Moho
717 depth maps and locally with litho-stratigraphy from deep well drilled in the area.
718 Through the comparison with two deep wells located near our seismic stations, we
719 have verified that our RF results have enough resolution to constrain the crustal
720 structure of the region. We identify three main findings in our results: the fine
721 structure of the Apulian Multi-layer Platform, the lower crust seismic structure, and
722 the Moho depth estimates.

723

- 724 1. The structure of the AMP displays small-scale heterogeneities in the region,
725 with a thickness of the carbonates layers that varies between 4 and 12 km, and
726 the absence of the Permo-Triassic sediments at some locations, suggesting the
727 direct emplacement of the carbonate sedimentation on the Hercynian
728 basement.
- 729 2. A “fine layered” structure seems to characterize the lower crust, especially in
730 the depth range directly above the crust-mantle boundary. The S-wave velocity
731 in the lower crust generally displays low value, possibly indicating a change in
732 crustal rheology and the depth level where post-subduction continental
733 delamination might develop.
- 734 3. Our Moho depth estimates are well constrained by the data and are in general
735 agreement with previous studies, offering more details in some areas. We find
736 very consistent values oscillating between 28 and 32 km depth throughout the
737 region. The hypothesized crustal thickening from NW to SE is not confirmed
738 by our data. Even if the two southernmost stations have the largest values
739 (32km), also the two stations in the Gargano area have similar values (31km).

740

741

742

743

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745

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999 **Figure captions**

1000

1001 **Figure 1.** Location of seismic stations used in this study. Symbols' colours are
 1002 indicative of previously published Moho depth estimates (from Piana Agostinetti and
 1003 Amato, 2009), grey for stations not previously analyzed. White-filled circles show the
 1004 position of the deep wells cited in the study. Background colours schematize simply
 1005 the geology of Apulia; yellow for foredeep and Quaternary sediments, and green for
 1006 carbonate units. Inset: map of the Italian region showing the Adria plate surrounded
 1007 by the Apennines, Alps and Dinarides, and outcropping in the Apulia region. The box
 1008 around Apulia includes the study area.

1009

1010

1011 **Figure 2.** (a) A representative RF back-azimuthal sweep for station AMUR. The RF
 1012 have been binned to increase the S/N ratio, see text for details. The green area around
 1013 each bin represents the standard deviation computed in the binning procedure. (b) An
 1014 example of the inversion technique for station AMUR. Left panel: posterior
 1015 probability distribution (PPD) for S -velocity at depth, posterior mean value for V_s (red
 1016 line) and $2\text{-}\sigma$ confidence interval (dashed black lines). Central panel: PPD of the
 1017 interface distribution at depth. Top right: the observed RRF compared with the mean
 1018 synthetic RRF, showing an excellent match of the data. Bottom right: PPD of the
 1019 number of seismic interfaces beneath the station: it broadly indicates how many
 1020 isotropic layers compose the seismic structure beneath the station.

1021

1022 **Figure 3.** Results of the RF inversion at the twelve seismic stations analyzed in this
 1023 study, from north to south. As in Figure 2b, for each station, the bottom panel shows
 1024 the match between stacked observed radial RF and synthetic model; the top-left panel
 1025 displays the posterior probability distribution of V_s at depth, with the mean value (red
 1026 line) and $2\text{-}\sigma$ confidence interval (dashed lines); the top-right panel shows the
 1027 distribution of V_s discontinuities at depth as computed by the inversion.

1028

1029 **Figure 4.** Comparison between velocity profile and interface distribution from RF and
 1030 deep well logs: (above) station MRVN and Puglia-1 well (stratigraphy and sonic log),
 1031 and (below) station SGRT and deep wells Gargano-1 and Foresta Umbra
 1032 (stratigraphy). For station MRVN, it is interesting to note that, at the bottom of the
 1033 high V_s region (between 5 and 6 km depth), the results of the RF inversion show a
 1034 higher V_s standard deviation, related to a highly bimodal distribution of the V_s at such
 1035 depth level. This feature marks the bottom of the AMP, in agreement with the clear
 1036 negative jump detected in the well sonic log at the base of the AMP Meso-Cenozoic
 1037 marine sediments.

1038

1039 **Figure 5.** The structure of the Apulian platform for the 12 stations as obtained from
 1040 the interpretation of our RF results. The colors are proportional to the computed V_s ,
 1041 according to the scale at the bottom. The lithological symbols are hypothesized on the

1042 basis of the velocity profiles (see Section 3.1). When the results have too large
 1043 uncertainties, no lithology symbol is used (e.g., ILCA).

1044

1045 **Figure 6.** Comparison of the 12 Vs profiles grouped by region (see text). From left to
 1046 right: Gargano, Murge North, Murge South, Salento. There are striking similarities for
 1047 almost all the stations, with some difference for a few of them, explained in the text.

1048

1049 **Figure 7.** Histograms of the Vs discontinuity distributions in the lower crust – upper
 1050 mantle depth range for all the 12 stations, as obtained by the RF inversion. The red
 1051 line is the best-matching gaussian curve that fits the distribution, and the value used
 1052 for the Moho depth is the mean of such gaussian curve (see Table 1 for details).

1053

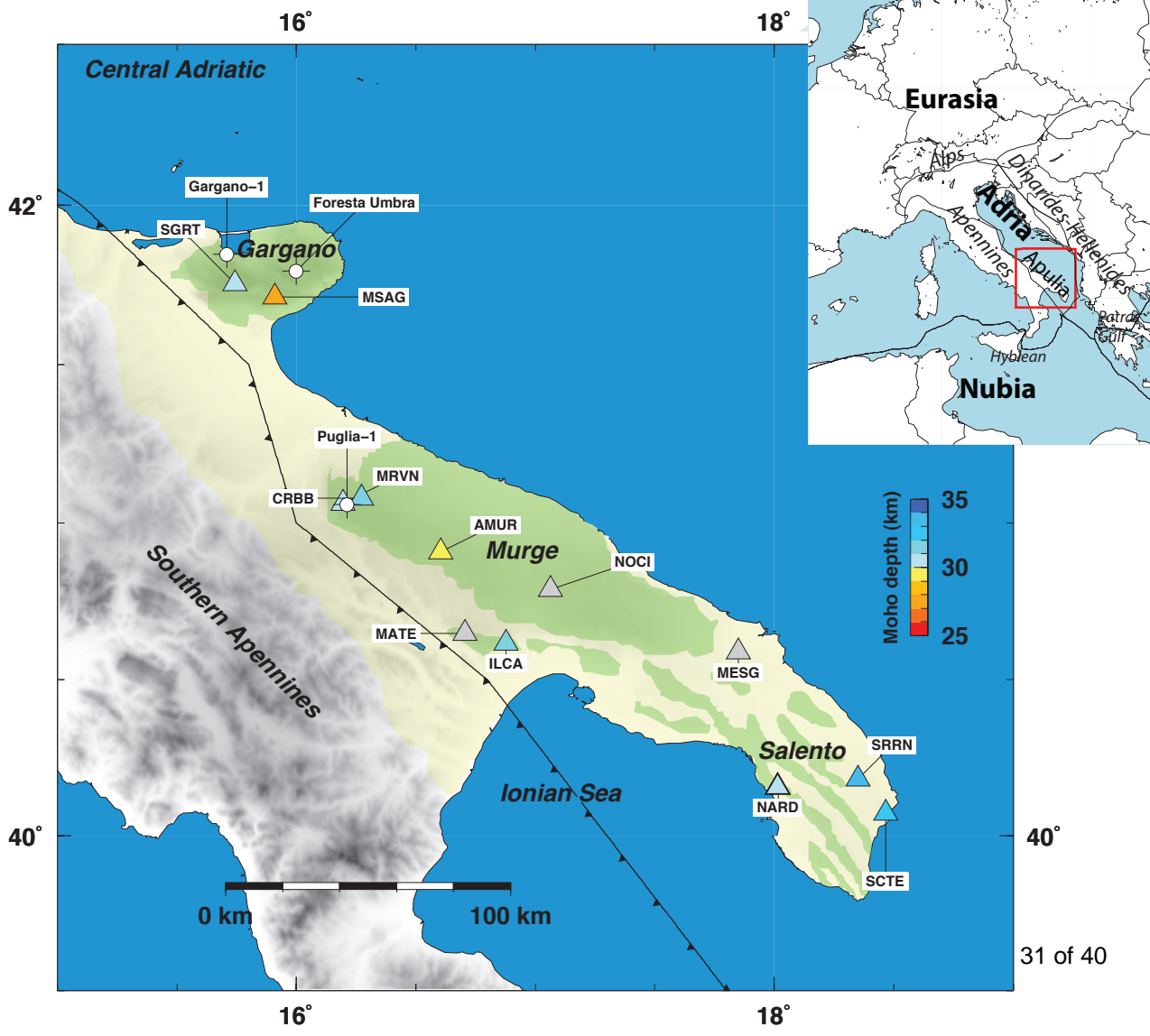
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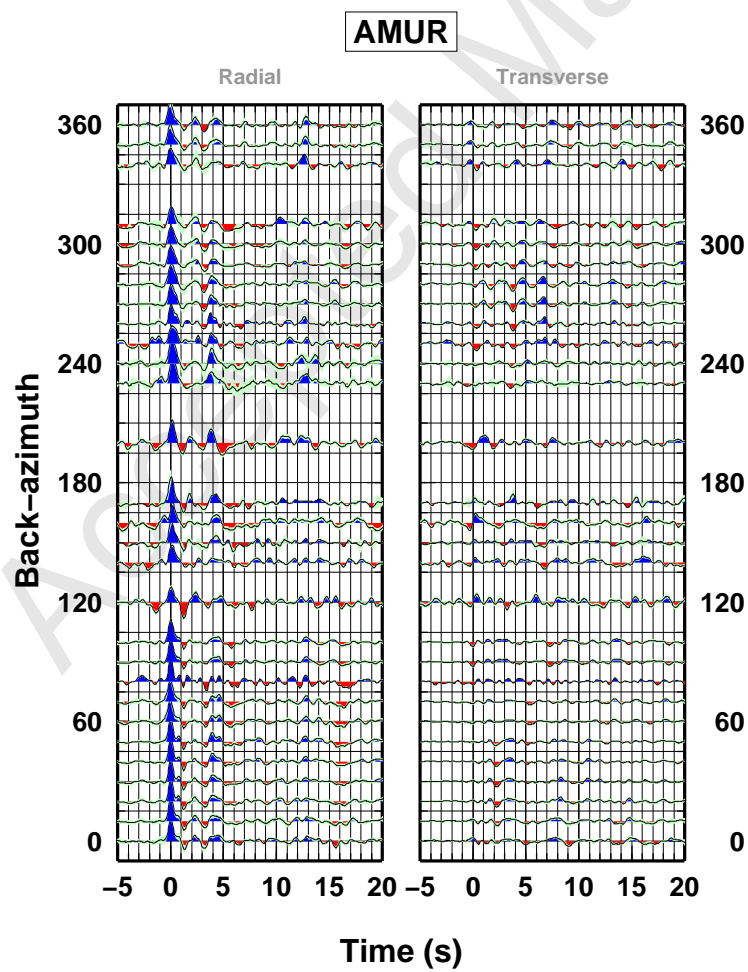
1055 **Table 1.** Moho depth estimates. From: (A) this study; (B) Piana Agostinetti and
 1056 Amato (2009); (C) Miller and Piana Agostinetti (2011); (D) Spada et al. (2013). For
 1057 (C), error on Moho depth estimates are as large as 10 km, due to the low-frequency
 1058 content of S-waves (Miller and Piana Agostinetti, 2012). NRF indicates the number of
 1059 high S/N ratio RF selected for each station.

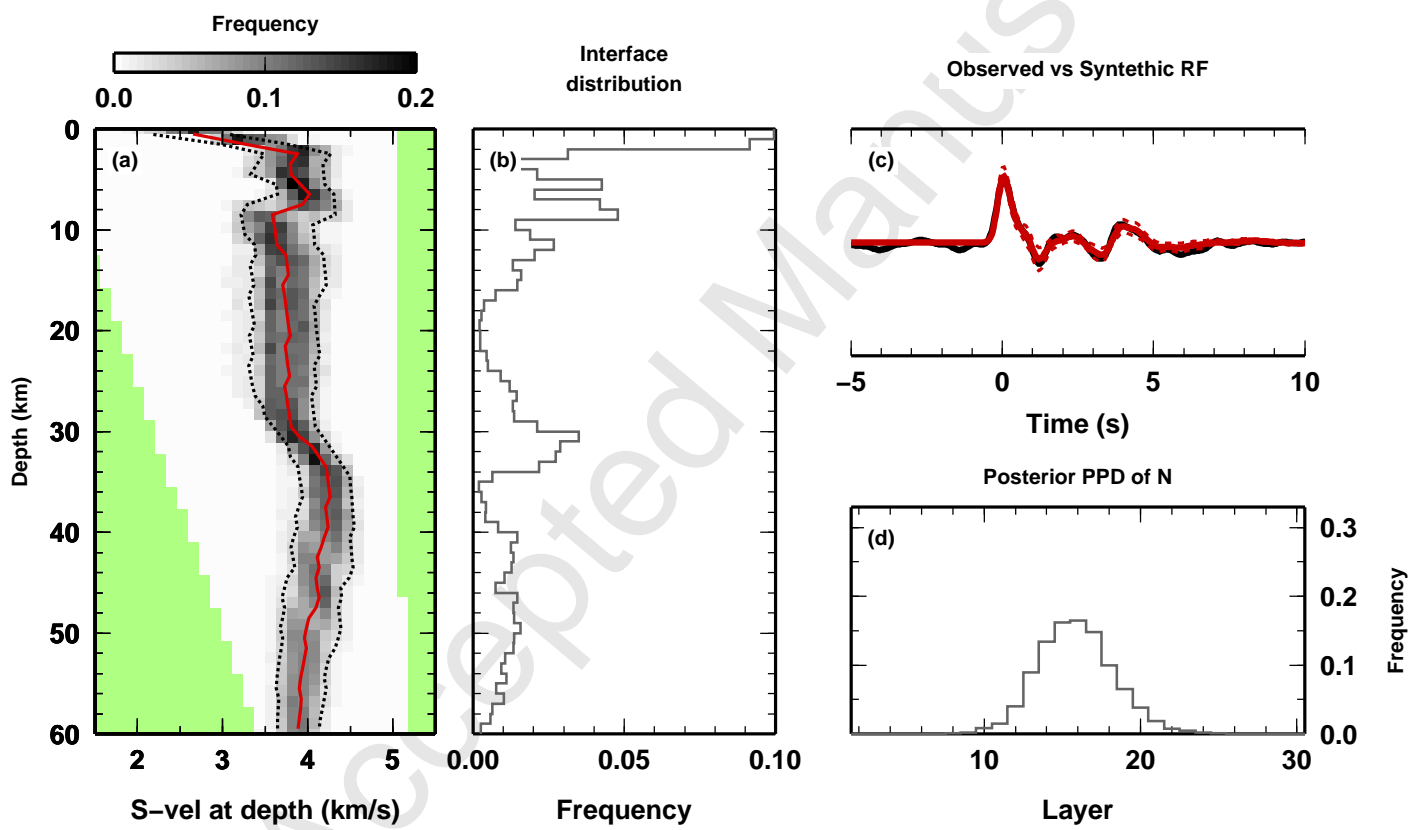
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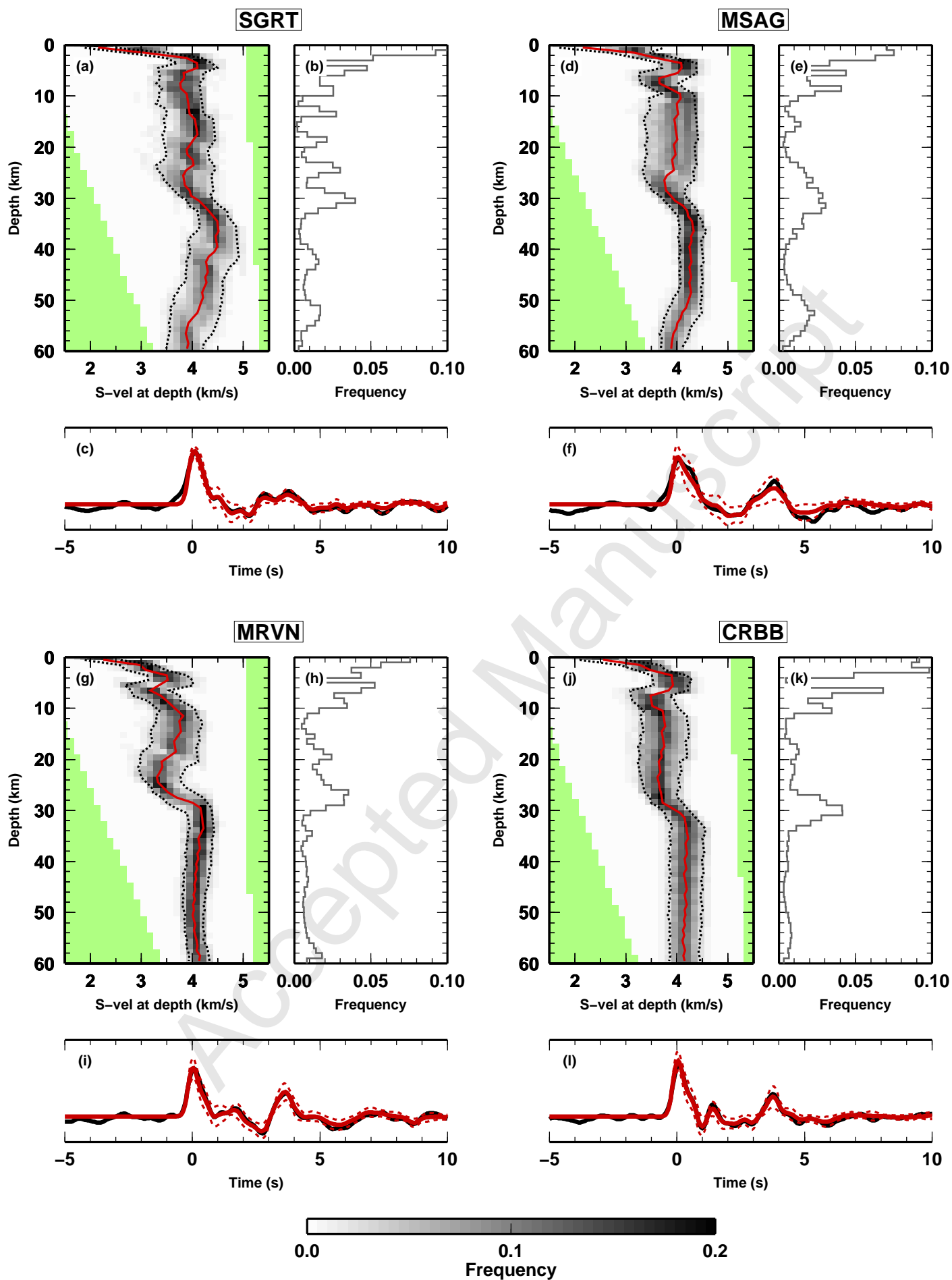
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)					
	NRF	Depth (km)	σ (km)	Depth (km)	σ (km)	Depth (km)	Depth (km)	σ (km)
AMUR	153	30	3	29	1	29	37	6
CRBB	45	30	3	31	2	-	32	3
ILCA	42	30	4	31	4	-	28	6
MATE	79	29	4	-	-	-	-	-
MESG	39	27	3	-	-	-	-	-
MRVN	231	26	3	30	4	26	27	6
MSAG	184	31	4	27	2	24	30	3
NARD	25	29	3	30	2	-	28	10
NOCI	137	30	4	-	-	28	-	-
SCTE	101	30	4	32	5	26	30	3
SGRT	146	30	4	30	2	22	30	10
SRRN	23	31	3	33	3	-	-	-

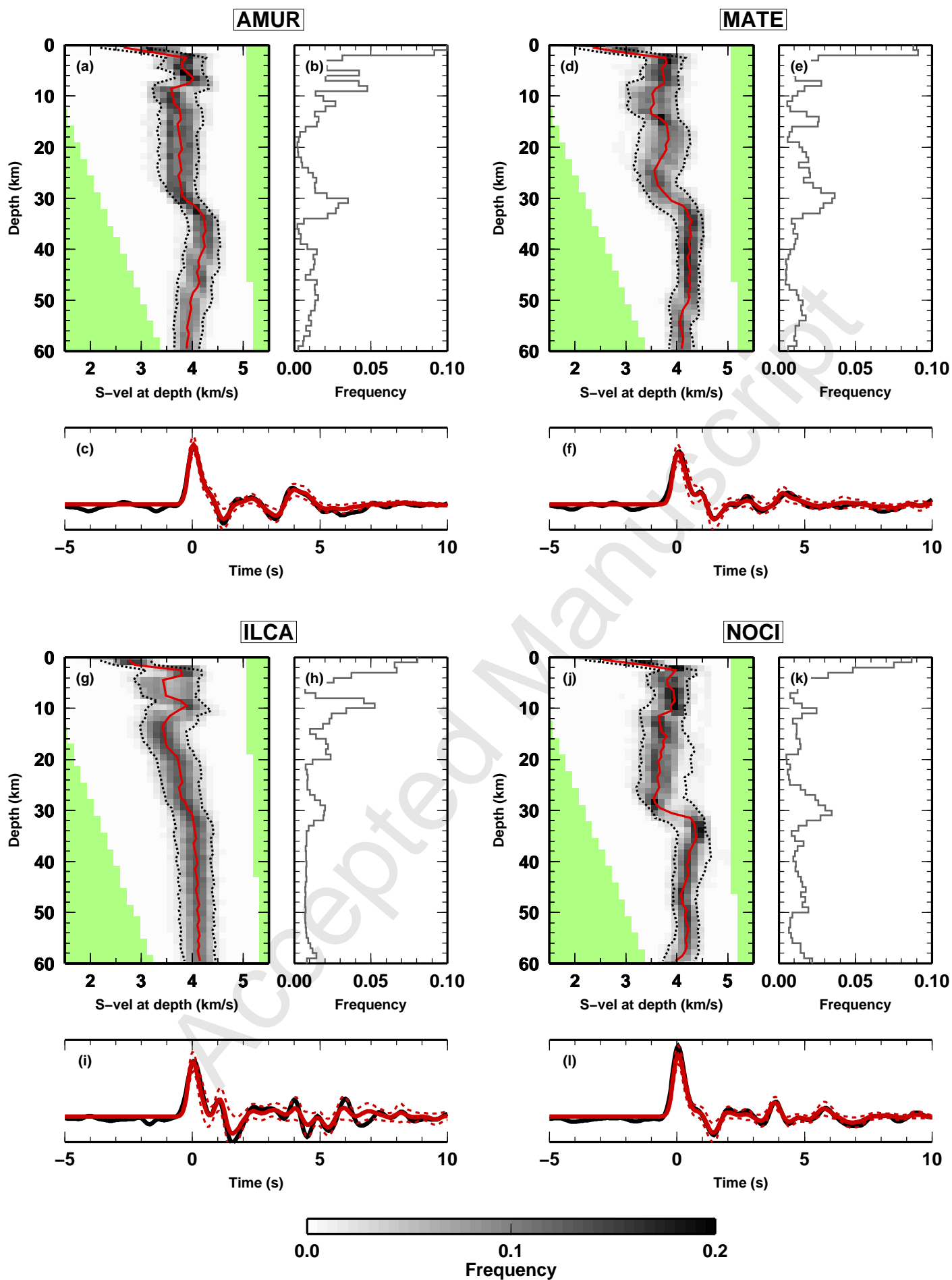
1061

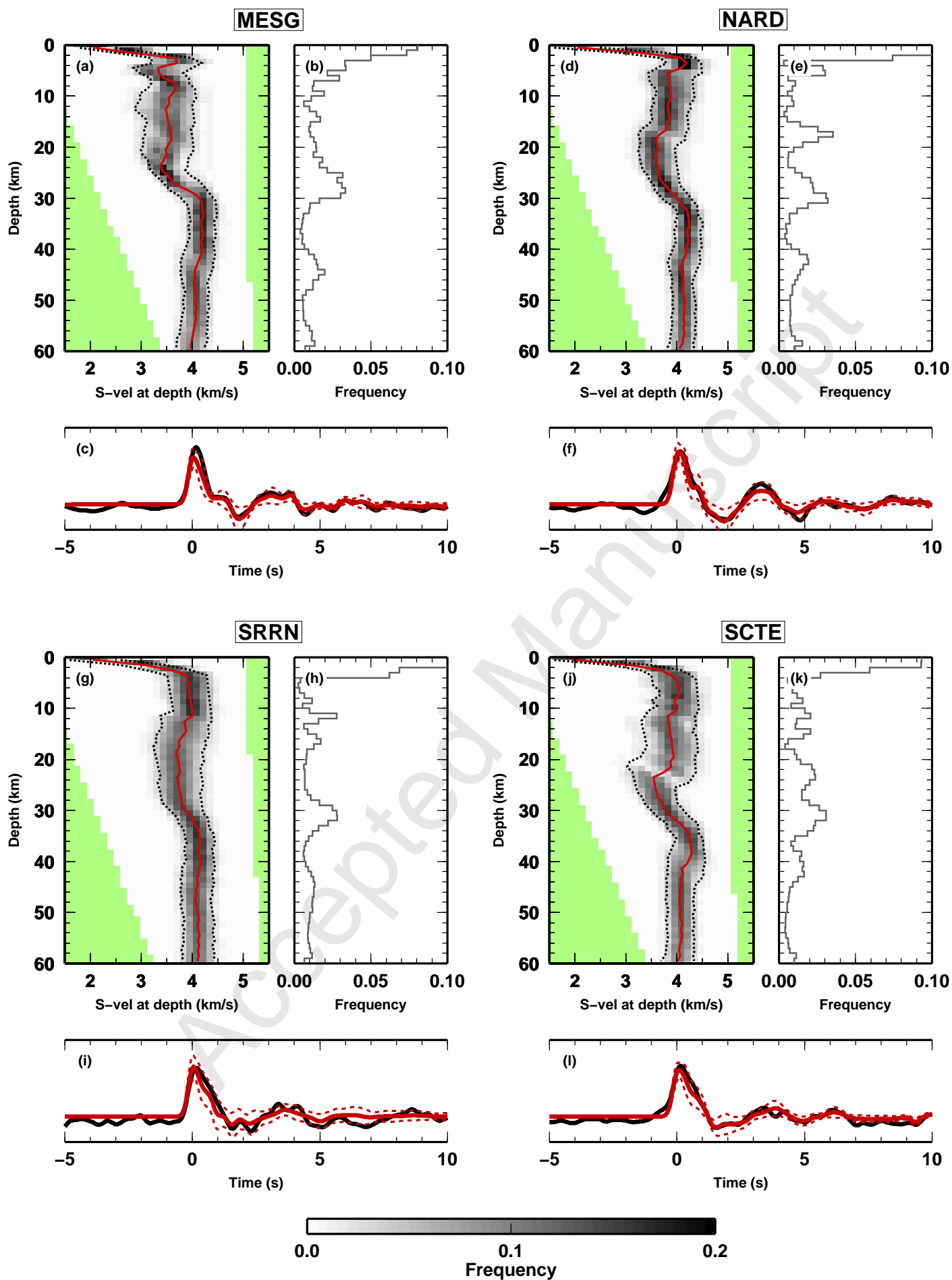


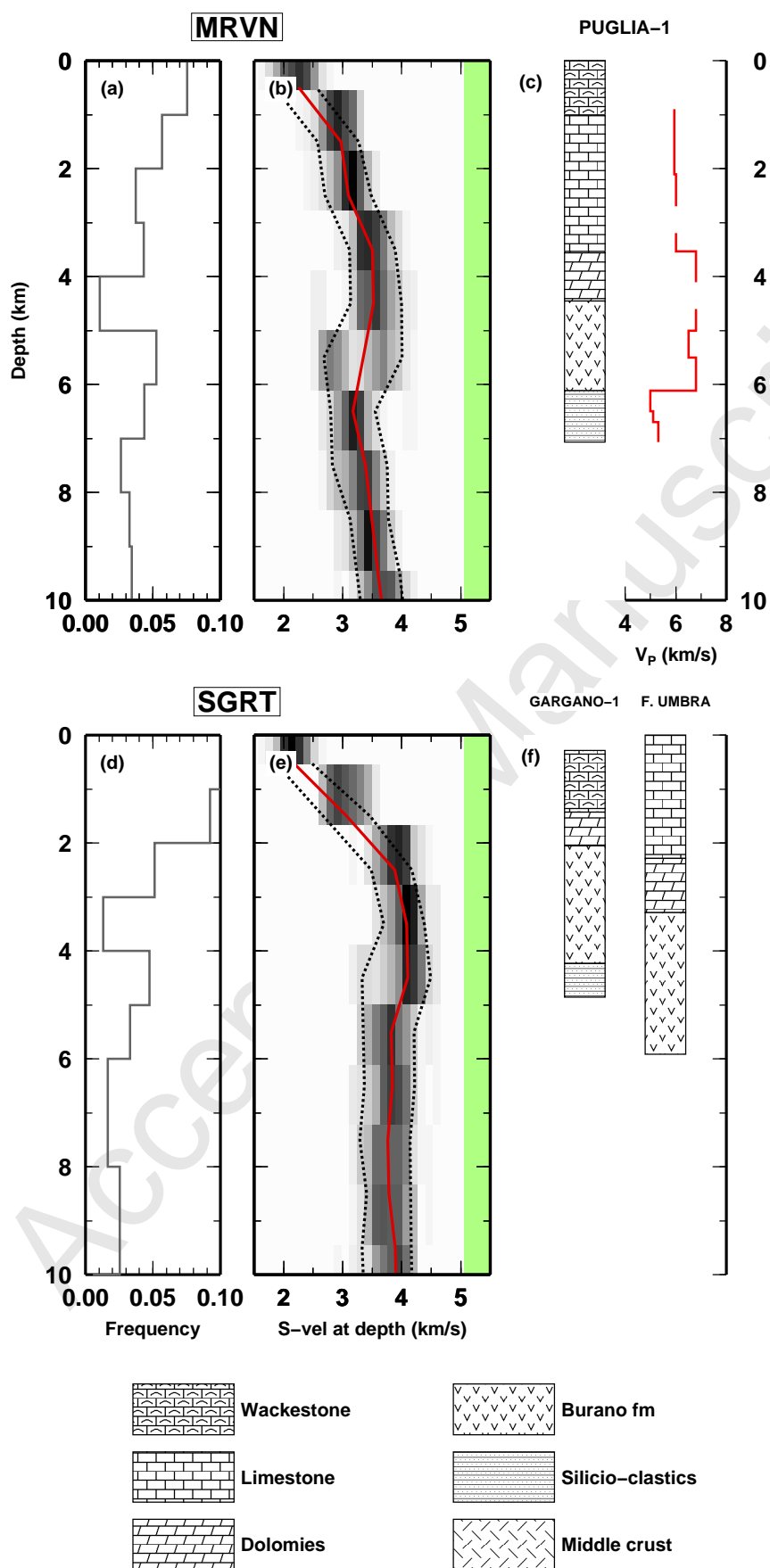


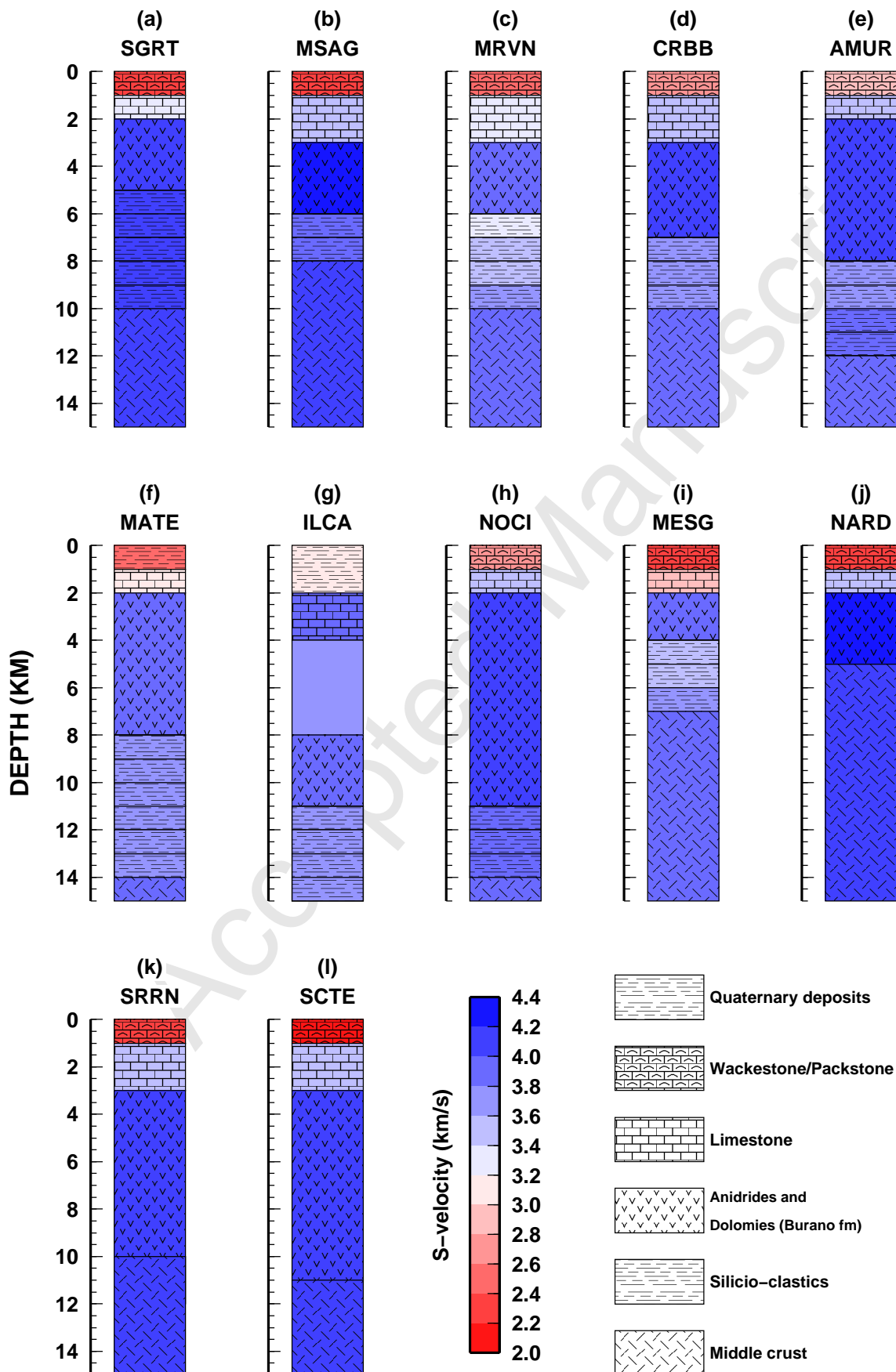












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