

Copper isotope fractionation during partial melting and melt percolation in the mantle

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Copper is a transitional, chalcophile, redox-sensitive element with two stable isotopes (⁶³Cu and ⁶⁵Cu). Copper isotopes have a potential to improve our knowledge of mantle dynamics^[1, 2]. However, whether Cu isotope fractionation takes place during partial melting and melt percolation in the mantle is not clearly constrained. Knowledge of this issue is important for applying Cu isotopes to high temperature igneous systems and to study mantle processes.

Here we report high-precision Cu isotope data for well-characterized peridotites of variable fertility from the Balmuccia and Baldissero bodies in the Ivrea-Verbano Zone (Northern Italy)^[3]. The samples have a history of melt depletion with subsequent melt infiltration.

$\delta^{65}\text{Cu}_{\text{NIST 976}}$ of the lherzolites and harzburgites ranges from -0.31 to 0.62‰, negatively correlates with Al₂O₃, Cu, S, Se, and Te, and positively with MgO. This suggests that partial melting and melt infiltration of the mantle can cause detectable Cu isotope variations. Dunites, formed by focused sulfur-undersaturated melt percolation with preferential dissolution of interstitial sulfides, display heavy isotopic compositions with $\delta^{65}\text{Cu}$ from 0.55 to 0.61‰. This suggests that Cu isotope fractionation during melt percolation is controlled by dissolution of interstitial sulfides with lighter Cu isotopic compositions relative to coexisting silicate phases.

Our results show that magmatic fractionation and melt-peridotite interaction in the mantle may play an important role in Cu isotope fractionation in mantle rocks.

[1] Liu et al. (2015, *EPSL*, 427: 95-103); [2] Savage et al. (2015, *GPL*, 1: 53-64); [3] Wang et al. (2013, *GCA*, 108: 21-44).