

Tracing volatiles in Earth's mantle using He-C-N isotopes in garnet-bearing diamondites

JAMES CROSBY¹, SAMI MIKHAIL^{1,2}, FIN STUART³, FEARGUS ABERNETHY⁴

¹School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, The University of St Andrews, UK

²St Andrews Centre for Exoplanet Science, The University of St. Andrews, UK

³Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre, UK

⁴School of Physical Sciences, The Open University, UK

The origin of diamond-forming carbon in the Earth is unclear [1-3]; sources include subducted organic sediment and primordial mantle carbon. For example, some diamonds contain eclogitic silicate + sulfide inclusions and have depleted $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (-10 to -30‰), enriched $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ (+3 to +35‰) values, consistent with subducted crustal material [2-3]. However, some diamonds show mantle-like $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ (<-5‰) and depleted $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values (-10 to -30‰) which have been cited as evidence of enstatite chondrite-like primordial C-N sources [1]. The helium isotope composition of mantle rocks are powerful tracers of Earth's volatile history because primordial ^3He is not recycled back into the mantle. However, there are few He isotope studies of diamond fluids. The $^3\text{He}/^4\text{He}$ of garnet-bearing diamondites from the Orapa mine (Botswana) range from 0.1 to 3 R_a [4-5], consistent with a recycled origin. However, our recent work has identified a suite of diamondites with $^3\text{He}/^4\text{He} = 0.06$ to 8.2 R_a which correlates negatively with $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, suggesting that the subduction-related C is associated with mantle $^3\text{He}/^4\text{He}$ ratios.

To unravel this complexity we are combining He, C and N isotope analyses in polycrystalline diamond from garnet-bearing diamondites from the Orapa mine. These data will also be used to assess the extent to which carbon and nitrogen isotopes are decoupled during diamond-formation [3].

[1] Cartigny et al (2014), Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences 42, 699–732

[2] Stachel & Harris, (2008), Ore Geology Reviews 34, 5–32.

[3] Mikhail et al, (2014), Chemical Geology 366, 14–23

[4] Burgess, et al., (1998), Chemical Geology 146, 205-217

[5] Gautheron et al., (2005), Chemical Geology 217, 97-112