

Geochemistry summary¹

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Introduction

A representative suite of the lithologies recovered at Site U1415 were analyzed during Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) Expedition 345 (see “Igneous petrology” and “Metamorphic petrology” in each hole chapter for characterization of the lithologic units). Chemical analyses were performed on 3 basaltic samples from Holes U1415J and U1415N; 45 gabbroic samples from Holes U1415E, U1415H–U1415J, and U1415P; and 5 samples of drilling-induced disaggregated gabbro from Holes U1415I and U1415J. Sample selection was based on discussion among representatives from all expertise groups within the shipboard scientific party. Inductively coupled plasma–atomic emission spectroscopy was used to determine major and trace element concentrations, and gas chromatography was used to measure H₂O, CO₂, and S concentrations. Geochemical data are reported in Table T1. These concentrations are reported on a volatile-free basis for major and trace elements.

The results of the chemical study are described in detail in “Inorganic geochemistry” in each hole chapter; the main results and petrogenetic outcomes are summarized below. Drilling-induced disaggregated gabbro samples were not included in this summary because they showed evidence of contamination by drilling materials (e.g., antirust coatings and components of the drill bit in Hole U1415I and drilling mud in Hole U1415J).

Basalt

Site U1415 basalt has a composition similar to the primitive mid-ocean-ridge basalt (MORB) previously sampled in the Hess Deep area at Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) Leg 147 Site 894 (Shipboard Scientific Party, 1993). In detail, Site U1415 basalt composition is reflective of its petrography, in particular for the sparsely to moderately phyrlic Hole U1415N basalt. Overall, Site U1415 basalt plots at the most depleted end of the East Pacific Rise (EPR) basalt field (e.g., Allan et al., 1996) with high Mg# (69; 100 × cationic Mg/[Mg + Fe] with all Fe as Fe²⁺) in Hole U1415J aphyric basalt, low TiO₂ (<1.2 wt%), and lithophile trace element contents (e.g., Y = 21–27 ppm).

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Gabbroic rock

During Expedition 345, 1 gabbro sample from Hole U1415E, 4 clinopyroxene oikocryst-bearing troctolite samples and gabbro samples from Holes U1415I and U1415J, 9 orthopyroxene-bearing olivine gabbro and olivine-bearing gabbro samples from Holes U1415H–U1415J and U1415P, 10 troctolite samples from Holes U1415J and U1415P, and 20 olivine gabbro and gabbro samples from Holes U1415J and U1415P were selected for chemical analyses (Table T1). Except for the gabbro in Hole U1415E, all samples are characterized by their significantly less evolved composition compared to gabbroic rock previously collected along the Northern Escarpment of the Hess Deep Rift (Gillis, Mével, Allan, et al., 1993; Pedersen et al., 1996; Natland and Dick, 1996; Hanna, 2004; Kirchner and Gillis, 2012). The rocks overlap in composition with the most primitive gabbro and troctolite sampled along the EPR (Pito Deep; Perk et al., 2007) (Figs. F1, F2; see also “Inorganic geochemistry” for each hole). The main chemical signatures of the different gabbroic rocks sampled at Site U1415 and of the alteration that affected the lithologic intervals are summarized below.

Hole U1415E gabbro

Hole U1415E gabbro has low Mg# (73) and low Cr (123 ppm) and Ni (67 ppm) concentrations and plots at the most primitive end of the field of gabbro and gabbroic rock previously sampled at Hess Deep. These compositions indicate that this sample crystallized within an evolved magmatic system, late in a MORB crystallization sequence.

Site U1415 primitive gabbro series

Olivine gabbro and gabbro

The olivine gabbro and gabbro sampled in Holes U1415J and U1415P have compositions typical of primitive gabbroic rocks (e.g., Cannat, Karson, Miller, et al., 1995; Godard et al., 2009; Perk et al., 2007). They have high Mg# (79–87) and Ca# (100 × cationic Ca/[Ca + Na]; 77–92), high Ni contents (130–570 ppm), and low TiO₂ (0.1–0.3 wt%) and incompatible lithophile element (e.g., Y < 11 ppm) contents. Six samples are distinguished by a significantly higher Cr content (1500–2550 ppm) compared to neighboring gabbro. These high concentrations may reflect the occurrence of a Cr-rich minor phase (e.g., Cr-spinel) in these samples (see “Igneous petrology” in the “Hole U1415P” chapter [Gillis et al., 2014]).

Clinopyroxene oikocryst-bearing troctolite and gabbro

Although they are very different texturally, clinopyroxene oikocryst-bearing troctolite and gabbro sampled in Holes U1415I and U1415J are similar in composition to Site U1415 olivine gabbro in that they have high Mg# (80–85) and Ca# (82–86), high Ni concentrations (150–330 ppm), and low TiO₂ (<0.2 wt%) and trace element (e.g., Y < 6 ppm) contents.

Orthopyroxene-bearing olivine gabbro and olivine-bearing gabbro

Orthopyroxene-bearing olivine gabbro has primitive compositions similar to neighboring gabbro and olivine gabbro in that it is characterized by high Mg# (79–87) and Ca# (73–92) and low TiO₂ (0.1–0.3 wt%) and trace element (e.g., Y < 6 ppm) contents. Gabbro has high Ni (150–460 ppm) and Cr (222–1000 ppm) contents typical of primitive oceanic gabbro (e.g., Fig. F1).

Troctolite

Troctolite overlaps in composition with gabbro but has on average a more primitive composition with high Mg# (81–89) and Ca# (79–98), high Ni (260–1500 ppm) and Cr (365–1100 ppm) contents, and low TiO₂ (<0.1 wt%) and incompatible lithophile element (e.g., Y < 3 ppm) contents. The most primitive troctolite sampled in Hole U1415P has a composition that overlaps the field of impregnated mantle peridotite from the Hess Deep Rift and elsewhere (Fig. F1). However, in contrast to the olivine-rich troctolite sampled at Atlantis Massif (IODP Expedition 304/305 Site U1309), these samples are low in Ni relative to their high Mg#, which suggests that they were formed by a dominantly cumulate process. Our data provide the first chemical characterization of these rock types in the Hess Deep area.

Alteration

Measured volatiles demonstrate a progressive degree of alteration within all studied samples. Gabbro has loss on ignition (LOI) values from 1.1 to 5.3 wt%, and troctolite has LOI values from 2.7 to 9.7 wt% (Table T1). The combined contents of H₂O (but not CO₂) are in good agreement with the LOI values. The dominant volatile component within Site U1415 plutonic rock is bound water or hydroxyl in secondary alteration phases. Positive correlations between H₂O, optically quantified olivine, and Ni, a trace element compatible in olivine, point toward serpentinization as the dominant alteration process affecting

the composition of the drilled troctolitic and gabbroic intervals. Apart from water addition, our data do not provide evidence of systematic elemental mobility caused by alteration. No parallels between CaO (prehnite) and/or Al₂O₃ (prehnite/chlorite) and H₂O were observed. Also, the studied samples have no substantial amounts of CO₂. Correlations between secondary sulfide minerals and the S abundances were not observed because of small-scale heterogeneities in the distribution of these minerals.

Comparison to previously sampled oceanic gabbro

The main geochemical characteristics of Site U1415 gabbroic rocks are consistent with formation as a cumulate sequence from a common parental MORB melt, with troctolite representing the most primitive end-member of this sequence. Site U1415 gabbroic rocks appear to constitute a suite of gabbroic rocks of which the gabbroite sampled in Hole U1415E represents the most evolved end-member. The rocks overlap in composition with the most primitive of slow- and fast-spread gabbroic rock sequences (Figs. F1, F2). These primitive geochemical signatures seem, however, to be contradictory with orthopyroxene (as much as 5%) in the primary mineral assemblage of the olivine gabbro sampled in Holes U1415I, U1415J, and U1415P. In MORB crystallization series, orthopyroxene is expected to crystallize from evolved melts. The presence of orthopyroxene in the primitive gabbroic sequence sampled at Site U1415 suggests that it was formed in a more complex magmatic system.

A single sample of primitive gabbroic rock containing high-Mg# orthopyroxene was sampled along the southern slope of the intrarift ridge in the Hess Deep area (Coogan et al., 2002). The Hess Deep sample was interpreted as indicating that a fraction of the melts that formed the lower crust interacted with the mantle during melt extraction and therefore was not undersaturated in orthopyroxene, as are typical MORB parental melts. High-Mg# depleted gabbroite has also been observed in Oman ophiolite (Boudier et al., 2000) and at Deep Sea Drilling Project Site 334 on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (Nonnotte et al., 2005), where they were interpreted as resulting from the contamination of MORB parental melts by water. Further studies will be carried out on shore to decipher the petrogenetic processes leading to the formation of the orthopyroxene-bearing primitive gabbro sampled during Expedition 345.

As noted above, Site U1415 gabbroic rocks have compositions similar to Pito Deep gabbro and trocto-

lite (Perk et al., 2007). High-Mg# plutonic rock from Pito Deep has been sampled between 300 and 700 m beneath the sheeted dike complex (Perk et al., 2007), including a single layered specimen. Site U1415 gabbroic rock is drilled from a deeper oceanic crustal section and display extensive modal layering and primitive geochemistry. In the last decades, countless studies of layered intrusions have cast light on a wide variety of layer-forming mechanisms that influence the cumulate geochemistry (e.g., Holness and Winpenny, 2009; Meyer et al., 2009). However, modal layering in MORB cumulates from fast-spreading ridges, as well as their actual composition, remains nearly unknown, and it is worthwhile to note that fast-spreading plutonic crust remains undersampled compared to slow-spreading crust, as illustrated in Figures F1 and F2.

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Figure F1. Ca# vs. Mg# plot of compositions of recovered gabbroic rock, Site U1415. Gabbro and gabbro with >2% orthopyroxene (Opx) is grouped as orthopyroxene-bearing gabbro. For comparison, a compilation of plutonic rock sampled along the East Pacific Rise (EPR) at Hess Deep (Hékinian et al., 1993; Gillis, Mével, Allan, et al., 1993; Miller et al., 1996; Natland and Dick, 2009; Pedersen et al., 1996; Hanna, 2004; Kirchner and Gillis, 2012), Pito Deep (Perk et al., 2007), and other locations (Saunders et al., 1982) is shown. The range of composition of gabbro drilled in slow-spreading oceanic crust in Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) Hole 735B at Southwest Indian Ridge (Dick, Natland, Miller, et al., 1999), during ODP Leg 153 (Cannat, Karson, Miller, et al., 1995), and at Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) Site U1309 on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (Expedition 304/305 Scientists, 2006; Godard et al., 2009) and (refractory and impregnated) abyssal peridotite (compilation of Bodinier and Godard, 2003) is also illustrated. Note that Hess Deep gabbro with a Mg# of ~72–79 has been recently analyzed (MacLeod et al., pers. comm., 2013) but was not added to the Hess Deep data set because the results are not yet published. Ol = olivine.

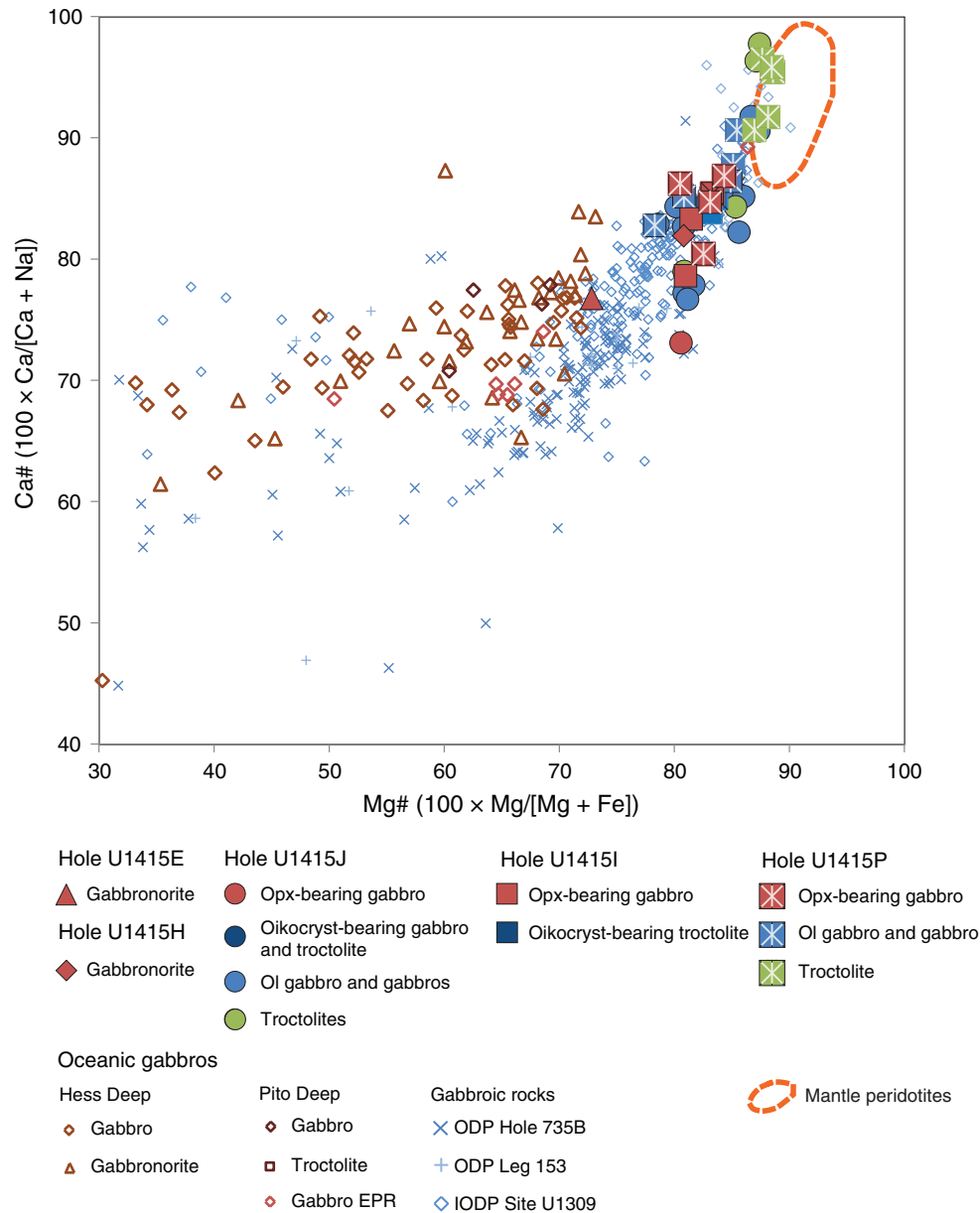


Figure F2. Ni vs. Mg# plot of compositions of recovered gabbroic rock, Site U1415. Gabbro with >2% orthopyroxene (Opx) is grouped as orthopyroxene-bearing gabbro. For comparison, a compilation of plutonic rock sampled along the East Pacific Rise (EPR) at Hess Deep (Hékinian et al., 1993; Gillis, Mével, Allan, et al., 1993; Miller et al., 1996; Natland and Dick, 2009; Pedersen et al., 1996; Hanna, 2004; Kirchner and Gillis, 2012), Pito Deep (Perk et al., 2007), and other locations (Saunders et al., 1982) is shown. The range of composition of gabbro drilled in slow-spreading oceanic crust in Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) Hole 735B at Southwest Indian Ridge (Dick, Natland, Miller, et al., 1999), during ODP Leg 153 (Cannat, Karson, Miller, et al., 1995), and at Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) Site U1309 on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (Expedition 304/305 Scientists, 2006; Godard et al., 2009) and (refractory and impregnated) abyssal peridotite (compilation of Bodinier and Godard, 2003) is also illustrated. Note that Hess Deep gabbro with a Mg# of ~72–79 has been recently analyzed (MacLeod et al., pers. comm., 2013) but was not added to the Hess Deep data set because the results are not yet published. Ol = olivine.

