



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Chemical Geology

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/chemgeo

Research paper

Volatile abundances and oxygen isotopes in basaltic to dacitic lavas on mid-ocean ridges: The role of assimilation at spreading centers

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 November 2010

Received in revised form 25 May 2011

Accepted 26 May 2011

Available online xxxx

Editor: L. Reisberg

Keywords:

Assimilation

Chlorine

Dacite

Mid-ocean ridge

Oxygen isotopes

Volatiles

ABSTRACT

Most geochemical variability in MOR basalts is consistent with low- to moderate-pressure fractional crystallization of various mantle-derived parental melts. However, our geochemical data from MOR high-silica glasses, including new volatile and oxygen isotope data, suggest that assimilation of altered crustal material plays a significant role in the petrogenesis of dacites and may be important in the formation of basaltic lavas at MOR in general. MOR high-silica andesites and dacites from diverse areas show remarkably similar major element trends, incompatible trace element enrichments, and isotopic signatures suggesting similar processes control their chemistry. In particular, very high Cl and elevated H₂O concentrations and relatively light oxygen isotope ratios (~5.8‰ vs. expected values of ~6.8‰) in fresh dacite glasses can be explained by contamination of magmas from a component of ocean crust altered by hydrothermal fluids. Crystallization of silicate phases and Fe-oxides causes an increase in δ¹⁸O in residual magma, but assimilation of material initially altered at high temperatures results in lower δ¹⁸O values. The observed geochemical signatures can be explained by extreme fractional crystallization of a MOR basalt parent combined with partial melting and assimilation (AFC) of amphibole-bearing altered oceanic crust. The MOR dacitic lavas do not appear to be simply the extrusive equivalent of oceanic plagiogranites. The combination of partial melting and assimilation produces a distinct geochemical signature that includes higher incompatible trace element abundances and distinct trace element ratios relative to those observed in plagiogranites.

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1. Introduction

Crustal assimilation has been proposed in the petrogenesis of some mid-ocean ridge (MOR) magmas (e.g., O'Hara, 1977; Michael and Schilling, 1989; Michael and Cornell, 1998), but for several reasons it is largely ignored as a primary igneous process in ridge settings. First, contamination is commonly overlooked because most geochemical variations in MOR lavas can be readily explained by fractional crystallization, variations in mantle melting parameters, or differences in mantle source compositions. Second, the low volumes of melt assimilated compared to the more voluminous mid-ocean ridge basalt (MORB) magma makes assimilation difficult to identify in the erupted lavas. Third, the magma and wall rock may have similar major and trace element compositions, resulting in melts that are geochemically

difficult to discriminate from typical MORB lavas. However, variable degrees of hydrothermal alteration of basaltic crust can produce significant changes in fluid mobile elements and ratios of low-mass isotopes in oceanic rocks depending on the water/rock ratios (e.g., Alt and Teagle, 2000). Therefore, components that are particularly sensitive to seawater interaction, such as Cl, U, H₂O, and oxygen isotopes, can be used to determine the extent to which crustal assimilation is involved in MOR magmatism.

Contamination of MOR magmas by seawater-altered rocks was first proposed based on excess Cl in MORB glasses (Michael and Schilling, 1989; Michael and Cornell, 1998). The elevated Cl concentrations compared to elements of similar incompatibility (K, Nb, Ti) in fresh MORB glass cannot be explained by post-eruption alteration or fractional crystallization and are instead attributed to assimilation of a seawater-derived component such as saline brines or altered ocean crust (Michael and Schilling, 1989; Michael and Cornell, 1998). Subsequently, Cl over-enrichment has been identified in many submarine settings, including MOR (Perfit et al., 1999; Coogan et al., 2003; le Roux et al., 2006; Wanless et al., 2010), back-arc basins (Kent et al., 2002; Sun et al., 2007) and ocean islands (e.g. Kent et al., 1999).

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Despite the clear evidence of assimilation in these lavas, many models for the magmatic plumbing system at MORs continue to ignore this process.

An alternate approach to identifying crustal contamination on MORs is through oxygen isotope ratios. Low oxygen isotope ratios relative to mantle values are observed in many lavas from Icelandic volcanoes (e.g. Gautason and Muehlenbach, 1998). Lower-than-mantle values have also been observed in olivine phenocrysts and in Hawaiian glasses and are attributed to assimilation of altered Pacific crust (Eiler et al., 1996; Garcia et al., 1998). Decreases in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ relative to primary mantle-like values are attributed to contamination by crustal rocks altered at temperatures >200–250 °C, which have lower values due to the temperature-dependent fractionation of oxygen isotopes between seawater and mineral phases in ocean crust during high-temperature hydrothermal alteration (Muehlenbach and Clayton, 1972; Alt et al., 1996). Subsequent assimilation of altered crust in contact with MOR melt should lower the oxygen isotope ratios of the resulting magma. If the mass of assimilant relative to the parent magma is low it may be difficult to detect a decrease in the oxygen isotope ratios. However, oxygen isotopes may be substantially modified in magmas that have experienced more significant degrees of assimilation.

Here, we examine H_2O , CO_2 and S concentrations and oxygen isotope ratios from a suite of lavas collected at the 9°N overlapping spreading center (OSC) on the East Pacific Rise (EPR) to further evaluate their petrogenesis, with specific emphasis on the role of crustal assimilation, and to test the more general hypothesis that assimilation is a common process in MOR magmatic systems. This suite of lavas displays a nearly continuous range of compositions from basalts to dacites, including one of the most evolved lava compositions sampled on a MOR (67.46 wt.% SiO_2). Major and trace element data and Cl concentrations indicate that assimilation of altered ocean crust is a critical process for the formation of MOR dacites (Wanless et al., 2010); a process that should also be reflected in the H_2O and CO_2 concentrations and oxygen isotope ratios. H_2O , CO_2 and S concentrations are used to provide information on degassing of high-silica magmas during extensive fractional crystallization and eruption on the seafloor. We use Cl/ K_2O and Ce/ H_2O ratios to constrain the composition of the assimilant, which may be altered ocean crust, saline brines and/or seawater.

2. Background

2.1. Geologic setting

The 9°N OSC (Fig. 1) is located between the Clipperton and Siquieros transform faults on the EPR. It is a second order ridge discontinuity consisting of limbs that overlap by ~27 km and offset the ridge axis ~8 km from east to west (Sempere and Macdonald, 1986). The OSC has been migrating southward at a rate of approximately 42 km/Myr such that the eastern limb propagates into older crust and the western limb recedes or dies (Macdonald and Fox, 1983; Carbotte and Macdonald, 1992).

The 9°N OSC is one of the most extensively studied OSCs on the MOR system. It has been the focus of several geophysical studies (Detrick et al., 1987; Harding et al., 1993; Kent et al., 1993, 2000; Bazin et al., 2001; Dunn et al., 2001; Tong et al., 2002), which have produced the first 3D multi-channel seismic survey of a mid-ocean ridge (Kent et al., 2000) and a 3D seismic refraction study (Dunn et al., 2001). These studies reveal shallow melt lenses beneath both limbs of the OSC and in the interlimb region north of the overlap basin (Kent et al., 2000). The western, receding limb melt lens is narrow and shows no significant variation in depth along axis (Kent et al., 2000), while the melt lens beneath the eastern, propagating limb shows variations in both width and depth. Beneath the southern portion of the east limb the melt lens is narrower and deeper than the rest of the eastern ridge axis, plunging ~500 m southward over ~6 km (Kent et al., 2000). North of the overlap basin, the melt lens is anomalously wide (>4 km

and is not centered directly over the ridge axis, instead extending from the axis ~4 km to the west (Kent et al., 2000; Tong et al., 2002). Although the depth of the lens varies along axis, according to interpretation of seismic data, the top of the melt lens appears to track the base of the sheeted dikes, at approximately 1.5–2 km beneath the seafloor (Kent et al., 2000; Tong et al., 2002).

The first lava sampling in this region occurred during the CHEPR dredging and wax coring cruise that recovered several high-silica lavas, along with basalts and FeTi basalts (Langmuir et al., 1986). More recently, the 9°N OSC was the focus of the MEDUSA2007 research cruise (AT15-17), which completed detailed mapping using the DSL-120A side-scan system (White et al., 2009), and the WHOI TowCam (Fornari, 2003) and extensive sampling using the ROV Jason2, (Wanless et al., 2010). Results of this cruise revealed that the region has erupted a range of rock types from basalts to dacites, but that high-silica lavas are confined to the eastern propagating limb of the OSC (Wanless et al., 2010). More evolved compositions on MOR are often associated with ridge propagation, where magmas are in contact with older volcanic crust (e.g., Christie and Sinton, 1981). The andesites and dacites were primarily collected north of 9°06' N either on-axis or on the flanks of the axial graben (Fig. 1). They erupted above the eastern edge of the seismically imaged wide melt lens. Several andesites/dacites were collected along a linear pillow mound that hosted the only active hydrothermal venting observed at the OSC. Lavas erupted at the OSC are dominantly ferrobasalts in contrast to the more MgO-rich MORB lavas that dominate the 9°15' N to 10°N section of the EPR (Batiza and Niu, 1992; Perfit et al., 1994; Smith et al., 2001; Goss et al., 2010).

2.2. Evidence of assimilation on MOR

Fractional crystallization is likely the primary process involved in basalt differentiation on MORs, however, there is geochemical, observational, and experimental evidence of assimilation occurring in these settings. As noted above, elevated Cl concentrations in some MORB cannot be a consequence of fractional crystallization alone and are instead explained by assimilation (Michael and Schilling, 1989; le Roux et al., 2006). Experimental studies suggest that low-degree partial melting of the upper ocean crust is possible and may account for the ubiquitous presence of plagiogranite veins throughout the ocean crust (Koepke et al., 2007). This is supported by observations of the transition zone between the gabbro (frozen melt lens) and sheeted dike complex in ophiolites, which show evidence of partial melting of wall rock (e.g. Coogan, 2003).

Assimilation is also an important process in the petrogenesis of dacites on MOR. Previous geochemical studies of dacites erupted at the 9°N OSC have used major and trace element concentrations in conjunction with petrologic modeling to show that extensive fractional crystallization (up to 95%) alone cannot explain the major and trace element concentrations of the dacitic lavas (Wanless et al., 2010). Instead, compositions of high-silica lavas (including elevated chlorine concentrations) suggest that incorporation of a seawater-altered component (i.e., altered oceanic crust, seawater, and/or brines) is important in their petrogenesis. Thus it can be concluded that the petrogenesis of MOR dacites requires melting and assimilation of altered crustal material into a fractionally crystallizing magma chamber (i.e., an assimilation and fractional crystallization process; AFC).

2.3. Composition of potential assimilants

Possible sources of assimilants include seawater modified by hydrothermal circulation, saline brines stored within the crust, and/or altered crustal material (gabbros or sheeted dikes). Saline brines form from high temperature phase separation of seawater during hydrothermal circulation (e.g., Berndt and Seyfried, 1990) and may be trapped along grain boundaries or in pore spaces within the ocean

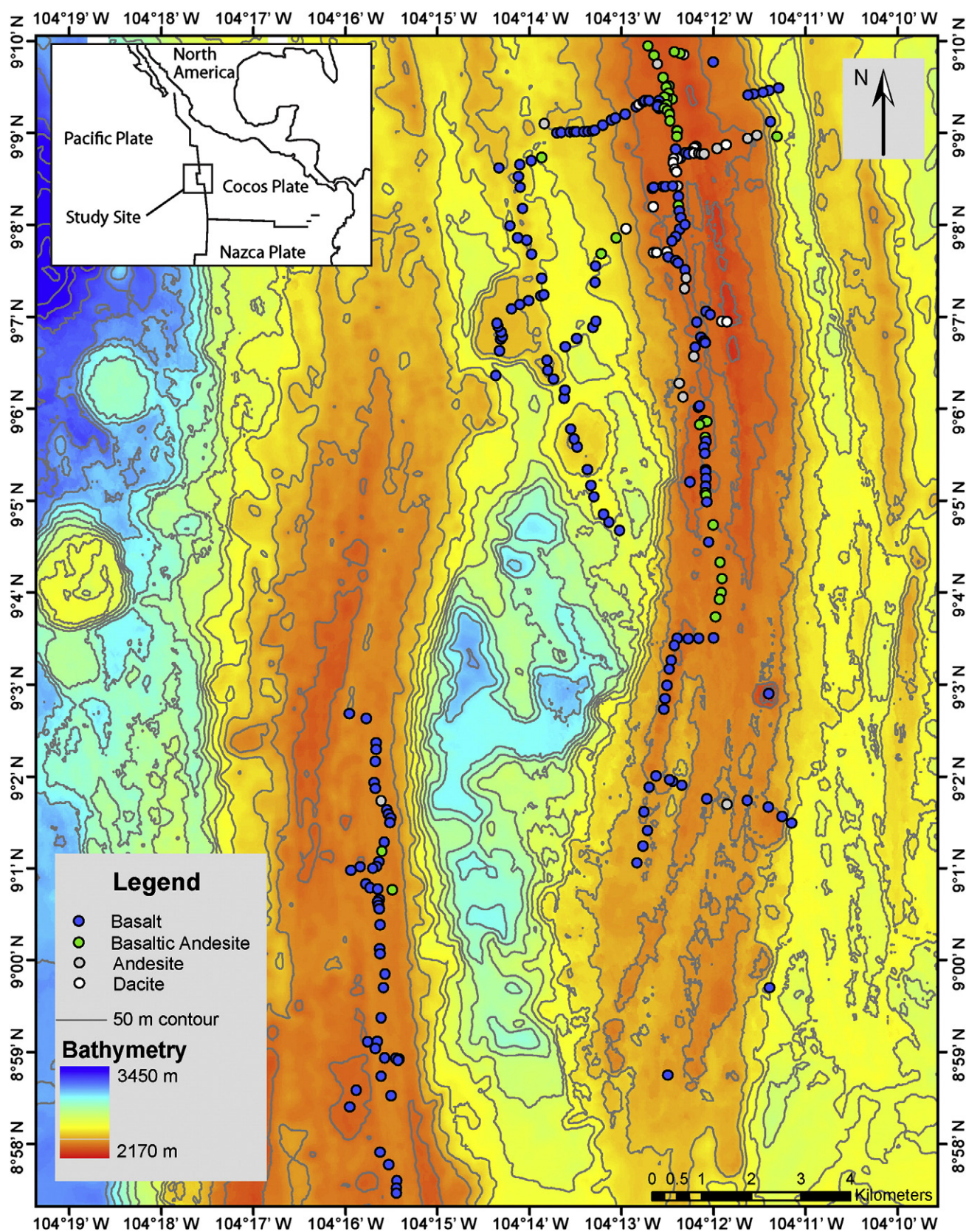


Fig. 1. Bathymetric map of the 9°N overlapping spreading center. Circles represent sample locations, with lighter colors representing lower MgO concentrations. The high-silica lavas are primarily confined to the eastern propagating limb, north of -9°06' N. Bathymetric map modified from Wanless et al., 2010.

crust (Michael and Schilling, 1989). They are thought to be a relatively common component of the upper ocean crust, though the composition and location within the crust remains largely unconstrained. Due to the limited stability of saline brines, it has been difficult to ascertain their exact compositions. However, they have relatively high concentrations of H₂O, NaCl, Sr, Ca, and K₂O (Berndt and Seyfried, 1990; Von Damm et al., 1997) compared to MORB. The percent of NaCl in the brine may be highly variable, but up to 50% (30 wt.% Cl) has been estimated by measurements of fluid inclusions (Kelley and Delaney, 1987). Therefore, assimilation of brine material should increase Cl, Na₂O, and K₂O concentrations of the melt, although the exact mechanism of assimilation is not understood.

The bulk composition and mineralogy of altered crustal material may vary, depending on the temperature and pressure of alteration and the fluid/rock ratios (Alt et al., 1986). Constraints on the depth of assimilation come from studies of volatile concentrations in glasses (Michael and Cornell, 1998; le Roux et al., 2006) and textural observations in ophiolites (e.g. Gillis and Coogan, 2002), and are consistent with melting at the top of the shallow melt lens. The depth of the melt lens, however, may vary due to migration within crust over time and, therefore, the melt may interact with the upper gabbros and/or lower sheeted dikes (Gillis, 2008). If alteration is caused by circulation of hydrothermal fluids, it is likely that this is largely restricted by permeability to the base of the sheeted dikes and uppermost gabbros of Layer 3. This is also consistent with observations from drill cores from lower sheeted dikes and upper gabbros that have experienced low- to medium-grade metamorphism (up to greenschist or amphibolite facies; Alt et al., 1986; Coogan et al., 2003). Although hydrothermal circulation has little effect on the major element chemistry, the lower sheeted dikes and upper gabbros commonly show lower K₂O, Na₂O and δ¹⁸O values, variable CO₂, higher H₂O and Cl concentrations (e.g. Alt et al., 1996) and slight S depletion (e.g. Alt et al., 1989) compared to the extrusive volcanic layer.

3. Analytical methods and results

3.1. Major and trace elements

During the MEDUSA2007 research cruise, 275 glassy samples were collected from the 9°N OSC. Methods, standards and results from all major and trace element analyses are discussed in detail in Wanless et al. (2010) and are only briefly mentioned here. Glasses are fresh and primarily aphyric. Individual chips from each sample were handpicked to avoid any microphenocrysts and alteration. Major elements were analyzed on a JEOL 8900 Electron Microprobe at the USGS in Denver, Colorado. Each sample was analyzed 8 to 10 times and averages of these are reported here and in Wanless et al. (2010). The microprobe was calibrated using the USGS mineral standards and several in-house standards (JdF-D2, Reynolds, 1995; 2392-9, Smith et al., 2001; and USGS dacitic glass GSC) were used for secondary normalizations to account for instrumental drift (see Smith et al., 2001 for details). High-precision Cl, S and K₂O concentrations were determined using 200-second peak/100-second background counting times. The chlorine standard used was St 7820 Sodalite. Samples were analyzed for trace element concentrations on an Element2 Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer (ICP-MS) at the University of Florida (see Goss et al., 2010 for more analytical details). Concentration data and ratios used in this paper are listed in Table 1.

To simplify the discussion, we use the general terms “basalt and basaltic” to include basalts, ferrobasalts and FeTi basalts (<52 wt.% SiO₂). The intermediate lavas include both basaltic andesites and andesites, with SiO₂ concentrations that range from 52 to 57 wt.% and 57 to 62 wt.%, respectively. Dacites have >62 wt.% SiO₂. Cl concentrations range from 0.01 to 0.07 wt.% in the basalts and are systematically higher in the basaltic andesites (0.01 to 0.31 wt.%), andesites (0.20 to

0.42 wt.%) and dacites (0.23 to 0.70; Fig. 2). K₂O concentrations range from 0.13 to 1.37 wt.% and increase with increasing SiO₂ content. K₂O ranges from 0.13 to 0.21 wt.% in basalts, from 0.26 to 0.60 wt.% in basaltic andesites, from 0.63 to 0.83 wt.% in andesites and from 0.89 to 1.37 wt.% in dacites (Fig. 2). Although K₂O concentrations can be relatively high, all samples discussed here can be considered incompatible element depleted “normal” MORB (N-MORB) or their differentiates. Cl/K₂O ratios exhibit a marked increase from 0.04 to 0.60 with increased differentiation (Figs. 3 and 4). S concentrations range from 1898 to 345 ppm, with the highest concentrations observed in FeTi basalts and the lowest in the dacites (Fig. 5).

3.2. Volatile elements

A representative subset of 20 samples (covering the range of rock types) from the 9°N OSC was selected for volatile analyses (Table 1). Several glass chips were handpicked from each sample, avoiding alteration and microphenocrysts. Samples were analyzed for H₂O and CO₂ concentrations by Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy at the University of Oregon (Johnson et al., 2009). Water concentrations were calculated either using the fundamental OH stretching vibration at 3570 cm⁻¹ or from the average of the two molecular water peaks (1630 cm⁻¹ and 5200 cm⁻¹) and the 4500 cm⁻¹ OH⁻ peak. An absorption coefficient of 63 L/mol cm was used for the 3570 cm⁻¹ peak (Dixon et al., 1995a,b), and absorption coefficients for the near-IR peaks were calculated based on major element concentrations following methods in Mandeville et al. (2002). CO₂ concentrations were measured using the carbonate peaks at 1515 and 1430 cm⁻¹, using background subtraction procedures described in Johnson et al. (2009) and absorption coefficients calculated from Dixon and Pan (1995). The detection limit for CO₂ dissolved as carbonate is ~25 ppm. Dacite spectra were checked for molecular CO₂ (2350 cm⁻¹). In most cases, the concentrations were below the minimum detection limit of 2–5 ppm. In a few samples with excellent background characteristics, molecular CO₂ at the 1–2 ppm level was measured.

Volatile concentrations are highly variable but are generally consistent with major element trends (Table 1). H₂O concentrations range from 0.23 to 0.39 wt.% in basaltic glasses and from 0.24 to 1.56 in basaltic andesite samples (Fig. 2). Andesites have H₂O concentrations from 0.99 to 1.50 wt.% and dacites from 1.53 to 2.35 wt.%. CO₂ concentrations in basaltic glasses range from 131 to 256 ppm (Fig. 2). Two of the basaltic andesites had measurable CO₂ concentrations (232 and 184 ppm), but all others had CO₂ concentrations below the detection limit. Andesite and dacite CO₂ concentrations are also below the detection limit. H₂O/Ce ratios, which involve elements with similar magmatic incompatibility, generally increase with increasing silica (Fig. 3), with maximum values of 188 in basalts, 235 in basaltic andesites, 258 in andesites and 288 in dacites. H₂O/K₂O ratios vary from 0.095 to 2.59, with the highest ratios observed in the basaltic andesites (Fig. 4).

3.3. Oxygen isotope analyses and results

Oxygen isotope ratios (δ¹⁸O, per mil notation) of 26 fresh, microphenocryst-free glass chips, covering the range of rock types (Table 1), were determined at the CO₂-laser-fluorination laboratory at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, following methods described in Valley et al. (1995) and Spicuzza et al. (1998). Aliquots of 2.4–3.2 mg were treated with BrF₅ overnight, and then individually heated with a CO₂ laser in the presence of BrF₅. Measurements were standardized with 4–5 analyses of UWG-2 garnet standard per day (δ¹⁸O = 5.8‰; Valley et al., 1995), and are reported in standard δ-notation relative to Standard Mean Ocean Water (SMOW). Reproducibility of the standard during each session was better than ±0.15‰ (2SD).

Table 1
Oxygen isotope, major and volatile element composition of lavas from the 9°N OSC.

Sample ^a	Depth (m)	SiO ₂	TiO ₂	Al ₂ O ₃	FeO	MnO	MgO	CaO	Na ₂ O	K ₂ O	P ₂ O ₅	Cl	S ^b	Tot H ₂ O ^d	CO ₂ ^{b,d}	δ ¹⁸ O	Ce ^b	Zr ^b	U ^b	La ^b	Cl/K ₂ O	H ₂ O/K ₂ O	H ₂ O/Ce	U/La
<i>Basalts</i>																								
264-04	2743	50.54	1.84	13.66	11.53	0.21	6.97	11.06	2.98	0.15	0.18	0.01	1477				15.5	142	0.09	5.0	0.09			0.018
264-08	2595	50.45	2.70	12.86	14.07	0.26	5.69	9.51	3.33	0.21	0.28	0.07	1898	0.39	231	5.79	20.5	180	0.13	6.8	0.35	1.82	188	0.019
265-17	2744	50.68	2.09	13.45	12.61	0.23	6.48	10.75	3.14	0.13	0.20	0.00	1607											
265-18	2701	50.75	1.82	14.01	11.31	0.21	7.21	11.26	2.97	0.12	0.18	0.01	1337	0.24	232		13.4	122	0.07	4.3	0.08	1.98	181	0.016
265-19	2724	50.62	1.83	14.02	11.23	0.21	7.19	11.24	2.93	0.12	0.18	0.01	1431											
265-20	2700	50.68	1.85	13.92	11.31	0.22	7.21	11.34	2.95	0.13	0.18	0.01	1319											
265-43	2587	50.12	1.92	13.86	11.57	0.21	6.83	11.13	2.81	0.13	0.19	0.01	1489	0.25	224		14.2	126	0.08	4.5	0.10	1.87	175	0.017
265-82	2529	50.77	1.95	13.81	11.70	0.22	6.93	11.21	2.69	0.14	0.19	0.01		0.24	256	5.51	13.0	123	0.08	4.1	0.07	1.74	185	0.019
265-88	2600	50.85	2.02	13.88	11.99	0.22	6.71	11.06	2.85	0.15	0.21	0.02		0.26	131	5.71	15.0	133	0.08	4.9	0.13	1.72	173	0.017
266-51	2592	50.55	1.94	13.85	11.59	0.21	7.33	10.97	2.86	0.13	0.19	0.01		0.23	218		13.3	144	0.08	4.2	0.09	1.82	172	0.019
265-104	2597	51.25	1.90	13.79	11.65	0.22	6.90	10.59	3.00	0.16	0.22	0.05		0.31	219		16.9	164	0.11	5.4	0.29	1.91	183	0.020
<i>Basaltic andesites</i>																								
264-10	2585	55.00	1.62	13.34	10.23	0.19	5.27	8.76	3.56	0.43	0.21	0.12	1182								0.28			
265-48	2587	53.85	2.36	13.06	13.33	0.24	4.44	8.36	3.57	0.35	0.26	0.05	1682								0.14			
265-49	2573	52.81	1.78	14.00	11.09	0.21	5.98	10.03	3.23	0.27	0.20	0.04	1274								0.16			
265-50	2569	54.15	2.14	13.41	12.19	0.22	4.54	8.45	3.59	0.40	0.28	0.09	1316				80.0		0.84	28.0	0.21			0.030
265-106	2583	53.33	1.94	13.26	12.35	0.24	5.11	8.71	3.67	0.32	0.39	0.19		0.65	184	5.77	33.9	339	0.24	10.9	0.59	2.02	191	0.022
265-103	2598	56.50	2.01	12.33	13.74	0.26	2.74	6.45	3.77	0.52	0.65	0.30		1.24	b.d.l	5.73	60.4	671	0.36	19.6	0.58	2.38	205	0.018
265-91	2567	56.83	2.10	12.31	14.23	0.28	2.09	6.24	3.45	0.60	0.78	0.31		1.56	b.d.l	5.31	66.1	724	0.39	21.4	0.52	2.59	235	0.018
265-125	2598	55.59	1.66	13.63	10.73	0.19	4.89	8.30	3.64	0.41	0.20					5.92	32.7		0.28	11.1	0.04			0.025
<i>Andesites</i>																								
265-90	2565	58.08	1.91	12.43	13.69	0.27	1.74	5.76	3.51	0.66	0.74	0.34		0.99	b.d.l		73.2	680	0.46	23.7	0.51	1.50	136	0.020
265-100	2591	58.09	1.76	12.64	12.68	0.24	1.89	5.51	3.82	0.63	0.54					5.56	72.7		0.45	23.7				0.019
266-54	2547	59.65	1.72	13.22	11.25	0.21	2.28	5.60	3.91	0.75	0.43	0.42		1.50	b.d.l	5.83	67.9	668	0.59	23.0	0.56	2.01	221	0.026
264-14	2580	61.75	1.30	13.46	8.71	0.17	2.47	5.54	3.94	0.83	0.22					6.06	57.0		0.51	19.4				0.026
265-69	2574	61.02	1.72	13.62	9.97	0.18	1.91	5.38	3.89	0.80	0.27	0.20		1.44	b.d.l		55.8	605	0.46	17.1	0.25	1.80	258	0.027
<i>Dacites^c</i>																								
265-63	2591	64.43	1.29	13.26	8.22	0.15	1.29	4.21	3.71	0.99	0.21					5.57	68.1		0.59	23.5				0.025
265-64	2586	64.04	1.28	13.12	8.27	0.16	1.60	4.45	3.46	0.97	0.20	0.24		1.73	b.d.l	6.19	76.5	842	0.65	26.3	0.25	1.79	226	0.025
265-65	2576	63.79	1.26	13.25	8.14	0.15	1.34	4.21	3.84	0.97	0.22					5.86	67.5		0.59	23.3				0.025
265-66	2578	62.81	1.43	13.13	9.05	0.18	1.99	4.98	3.86	0.89	0.24	0.23		1.81	b.d.l	5.84	84.2	945	0.71	28.9	0.26	2.04	215	0.025
265-42	2586	66.92	0.94	13.09	8.04	0.17	0.86	3.49	0.83	1.17	0.21	0.51	427			5.87	82.9		0.91	29.0	0.44			0.031
265-67	2581	64.10	1.34	13.33	8.49	0.16	1.49	4.41	3.93	0.95	0.23					5.92	68.0		0.64	23.4				0.027
265-70	2567	66.26	0.87	13.20	7.17	0.14	0.80	3.23	4.08	1.33	0.19	0.70		2.35	b.d.l	6.08	88.1	934	1	30.9	0.53	1.76	266	0.034
265-83	2589	67.46	0.76	13.27	6.68	0.13	0.67	2.98	3.88	1.37	0.16	0.67		1.53	b.d.l	5.94	87.2	922	1.05	30.7	0.49	1.12	176	0.034
265-84	2601	64.39	1.13	13.17	8.18	0.15	1.23	3.92	3.41	1.19	0.22					5.73	77.8		0.82	27.3				0.030
265-85	2603	65.01	1.06	13.13	7.99	0.16	1.18	3.78	3.67	1.22	0.20	0.64		1.90	b.d.l	5.95	82.5	872	1	29.1	0.52	1.55	230	0.032
265-94	2528	65.22	0.97	13.04	7.90	0.14	1.13	3.54	4.29	1.14	0.23					5.90	83.9		0.84	29.1				0.029
265-95	2528	67.46	0.77	13.10	6.47	0.12	0.94	3.01	4.43	1.21	0.15					6.07	83.6		0.86	29.2				0.030
266-53	2550	64.28	1.06	13.31	8.06	0.14	1.12	3.73	4.16	1.09	0.25	0.66		1.74	b.d.l	5.38	82.2	856	0.86	28.5	0.60	1.60	211	0.030
266-57	2585	62.47	1.30	13.16	9.20	0.16	1.59	4.37	4.11	0.98	0.29	0.51		2.08	b.d.l	5.65	72.4	789	0.80	25.1	0.52	2.13	288	0.032
264-09	2571	65.97	0.90	13.19	7.02	0.13	1.05	3.47	4.32	1.20	0.21	0.58	345			5.73	83.9		1	29.0	0.48			0.034
<i>In-house standard</i>																								
2392-9		49.7	1.31	15.31	9.09	0.16	8.2	12.14	2.8	0.1	0.12	0.01	1337	0.15	165	5.48	8.9	80.6	0.05	2.8	0.10	1.50	169	0.018

Accuracy for these techniques is estimated to be ±10% for total H₂O and ±20% for CO₂ (Dixon and Clague, 2001).

^a Major elements by electron microprobe and reported in wt.%.

^b CO₂, S, Ce, Zr, U, and La concentrations reported in ppm.

^c Dacite major and trace element concentrations from Wanless et al., 2010.

^d Based on replicate analyses, precision (2s) for total H₂O is <16% (relative) and <11% for CO₂.

The δ¹⁸O values range from 5.3 to 6.2‰ in the OSC lavas with an average of 5.79‰ (Fig. 6). The basalts and basaltic andesites have similar oxygen isotope ratios, from 5.51 to 5.79‰ and 5.31 to 5.92‰ respectively. The andesites and dacites have variable δ¹⁸O (5.38 to 6.19‰), with a mean of 5.86‰.

4. Discussion

4.1. CO₂ and H₂O degassing

Both CO₂ and/or H₂O can undergo variable amounts of degassing during ascent from the magma chamber to eruption on the seafloor. Observations and experimental solubility data indicate that CO₂ degases more readily than H₂O in basaltic melts. Nonetheless, many MORB glasses are supersaturated with CO₂ at their submarine

eruption depths (e.g., Dixon et al., 1988) indicating that the magma ascent rate is sufficiently rapid, the CO₂ diffusion rate is sufficiently slow, and the magmas quench rapidly upon eruption, which can inhibit CO₂ equilibration with the seafloor pressures. Therefore, in submarine settings, supersaturated CO₂ concentrations are often equated with the minimum depth of storage of the melt prior to eruption (e.g., Dixon et al., 1988). The depth of last equilibration of vapor-saturated melts can be calculated using the H₂O and CO₂ solubility model of Dixon et al. (1995a,b), which is calibrated on experimental results at pressures and temperatures similar to MOR magmatic conditions. Vapor saturation pressures for the OSC basaltic and evolved samples were calculated using the VolatileCalc program (Newman and Lowenstern, 2002), which utilizes experimental results and formulations of Dixon et al. (1995a,b). This program is calibrated for both high-silica and basaltic compositions and requires an input of

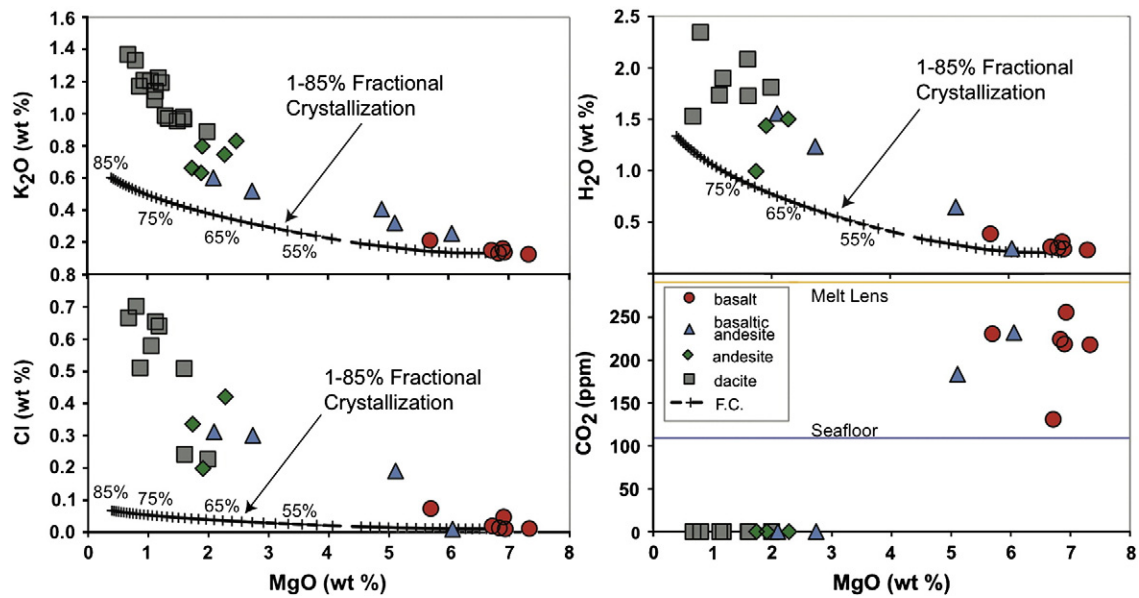


Fig. 2. K_2O (wt.%), H_2O (wt.%), Cl (wt.%), and CO_2 (ppm) versus MgO (wt.%) for glasses from the 9°N OSC. Black crosses indicate the calculated fractional crystallization trend using MELTS (Ghiorso and Sack, 1995). All dacitic lavas and several basaltic andesites lie above the calculated trend, indicating other processes are involved in their petrogenesis. K_2O and Cl diagrams modified from Wanless et al., 2010.

silica content (62 and 49 wt.% SiO_2 , respectively) and temperature of the magma (900 and 1200 °C, respectively). Pressure estimates calculated using VolatileCalc are typically within $\pm 10\%$ of values

calculated using other solubility models (Newman and Lowenstern, 2002).

H_2O and CO_2 concentrations in the OSC lavas indicate a range of equilibration pressures with a maximum of ~ 550 bar (Fig. 7). Most of the basaltic lavas are supersaturated with CO_2 at their eruption depths, but they have equilibration pressures shallower than the top of the imaged melt lens (~ 1.5 km or 670 bar; Kent et al., 2000), suggesting some degassing occurred during ascent and eruption on the seafloor. The vapor saturation calculations are similar to those of previous studies of basalts on MOR, which show equilibration within or above the top of the imaged melt lens (e.g., le Roux et al., 2006). This is consistent with relatively high ascent rates of basaltic magmas at the OSC and limited degassing of CO_2 and H_2O .

In addition to completely degassing any initial CO_2 that they may have contained, more H_2O -rich magmas, like the OSC andesites and dacites, may degas some H_2O during ascent to the seafloor (Fig. 7). The high-silica lavas have equilibrium pressures, based on H_2O , that range from that of the seafloor (~ 250 bar) to ~ 500 bar, similar to the pressure calculated for basalts but somewhat lower than expected for the top of the melt lens. If we assume that the andesites and dacites formed in the melt lens, at pressures consistent with the base of the sheeted dikes (Wanless et al., 2010), then this range of H_2O concentrations suggests variable amounts of degassing during ascent and eruption on the seafloor. Degassing is consistent with the modest vesicularity of the high-silica lavas and correlates with lower H_2O/Ce ratios (Fig. 3).

H_2O is enriched in the crust during hydrothermal circulation (e.g. Alt et al., 1996) due to formation of secondary hydrous minerals, therefore elevated H_2O concentrations in fresh lavas may be an important signature of assimilation of altered crust. However, lower H_2O/Ce ratios (Fig. 3) and low CO_2 contents in the high-silica glasses suggest that magma degassing is an important process during storage, ascent and/or eruption. Therefore, using H_2O concentrations as a geochemical indicator of assimilation may be complicated by variable degrees of magma degassing prior to solidification on the seafloor.

4.2. Evidence for assimilation from trace elements

Liquid lines of descent (LLDs) calculations at $fO_2 = QFM$ and $P = 1$ kbar (Wanless et al., 2010) suggest that fractional crystallization

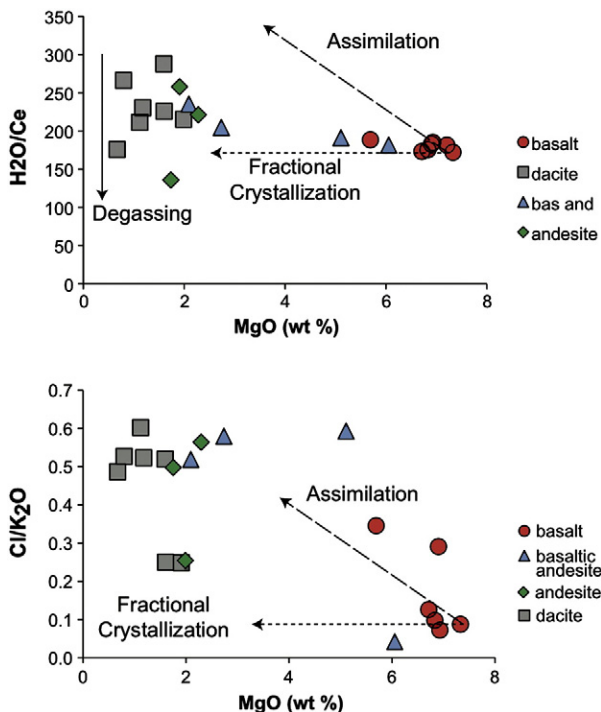


Fig. 3. H_2O/Ce and Cl/K_2O ratios versus MgO (wt.%) for glasses from the 9°N OSC. Generalized trends for assimilation and fractional crystallization are shown as straight dashed lines, although assimilation is likely to result in curved trends. In general, the andesites, dacites and most of the basaltic andesites have higher incompatible element ratios than the basaltic lavas, suggesting that they cannot result from fractional crystallization alone. Instead, they are consistent with assimilation of altered basalt. Low H_2O/Ce ratios are the result of variable degrees of H_2O degassing. The andesites/dacites with lower Cl/K_2O ratios (~ 0.24) were all collected from the same linear pillow mound that hosted the only observed active hydrothermal vent.

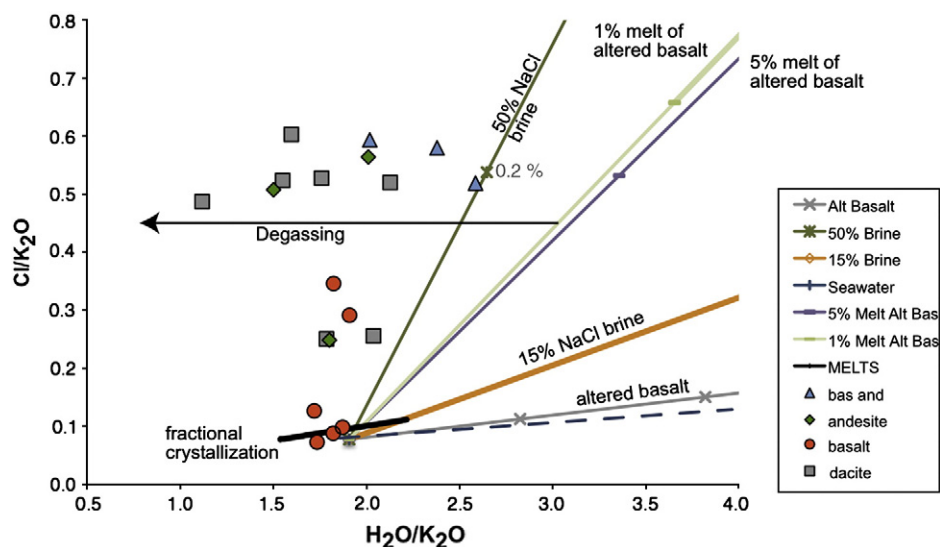


Fig. 4. Cl/K₂O versus H₂O/K₂O for glasses from the 9°N OSC. Lines representing mixing of 6 possible assimilants with an OSC basalt are shown. Mixing end-members include 1 and 5% partial melts of an altered basalt, an altered basalt, a 50% and 15% NaCl brine, and seawater (see text for references). Tick marks on the mixing lines denote the percent of each end-member from 1 to 100% by increments of 10. If less than 10% mixing is required, then no tick marks are shown. A 0.2 wt.% tick mark is shown for comparison in the case of 50% NaCl brine. See text for mixing end-member concentrations. A combination of partial melting of an altered basalt and <0.2 wt.% of a 50% NaCl brine with a basaltic end-member can explain the formation of high-silica lavas on the OSC, if H₂O has undergone variable amounts of degassing.

alone cannot account for the high Cl, K₂O, and H₂O concentrations observed in the MOR dacites, andesites or basaltic andesites (Fig. 2). H₂O concentrations in the dacites are as much as two times greater and Cl concentrations are more than ten times greater than model predictions (Fig. 2). H₂O/Ce ratios, which should not change over a wide range of anhydrous fractional crystallization, are generally higher in dacites and extend to values ~1.5 times higher than those of

the basalts, whereas basaltic andesites and andesites show a range of ratios (Fig. 3). Cl/K₂O values, which increase during hydrothermal alteration but remain relatively constant during fractional crystallization, are as much as seven times higher in the dacites than values measured in the least evolved basalts (Fig. 3). Interestingly, the andesites and dacites with lower Cl concentrations and Cl/K₂O < 0.3 were all recovered from a small pillow mound on-axis near the only active hydrothermal vent observed at the OSC, which suggests that the compositions of the assimilant may vary locally within the region.

Altered crust is enriched in chlorine during hydrothermal circulation of seawater (Michael and Schilling, 1989) due to the incorporation of Cl into nominally hydrous minerals. Altered sheeted dikes can have a wide range of chlorine composition (49 to 647 ppm and a mean of 350 ppm) but these are generally higher than typical MORB concentrations (Sparks, 1995). The high Cl concentrations in the dacites are similar to model abundances produced by 1–15% partial melting of altered basaltic crust (Wanless et al., 2010). Although both H₂O and Cl exhibit over-enrichments compared to calculated fractional crystallization trends (Fig. 2), the Cl over-enrichment is much greater than that of H₂O. Cl degassing is insignificant during most submarine eruptions, due to the elevated pressures at the seafloor, (~250 bar) (Unni and Schilling, 1978; Webster et al., 1999). Therefore, the difference between these enrichment factors may be caused by variable amounts of H₂O degassing, as discussed above or alternatively, the assimilant may have much higher Cl/H₂O compared to the uncontaminated magma, resulting in more enriched Cl concentrations.

le Roux et al. (2006) used Cl/Nb ratios to assess the role of assimilation in MORB magmas because Cl and Nb have similar partition coefficients in basaltic systems and during seawater alteration these elements become decoupled, Cl being enriched in the altered material and Nb being immobile. Unfortunately, an added complication to using this approach is that advanced fractional crystallization in the OSC lavas results in precipitation of Fe–Ti oxides in which Nb is a compatible element. Consequently, the Cl/Nb ratio changes and cannot be used as an alteration discriminant when high-silica lavas are involved. Here, we use Cl/K₂O (Fig. 3) because these elements also have broadly similar incompatibilities over a wide range of crystallization (e.g., Kent et al., 1999), and this ratio has been used in several studies to identify crustal contamination (e.g., Michael and Cornell, 1998; Kent et al., 1999). The siliceous lavas at the OSC

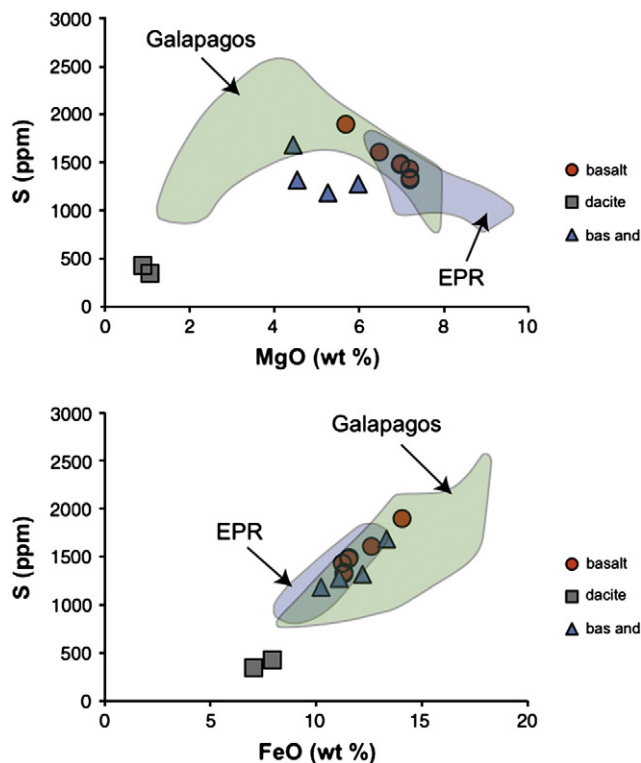


Fig. 5. S versus MgO and FeO for glasses from the 9°N OSC. MOR dacite glasses have low S contents, suggesting the formation of sulfides or degassing has occurred. Fields for lavas erupted at the Galapagos Spreading Center (Perfit et al., 1983) and EPR (le Roux et al., 2006) are also shown.

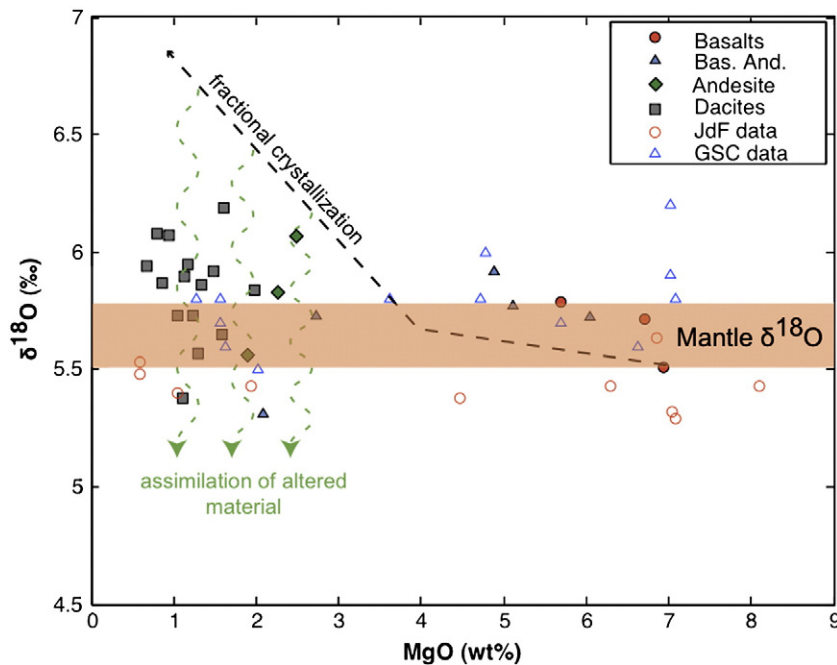


Fig. 6. $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ versus MgO for glasses from the 9°N OSC. The MOR dacites, andesites and several basaltic andesites lie below calculated fractional crystallization trends (black dashed line). The lower $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values are consistent with assimilation of altered oceanic crust, which has lower $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values due to high-temperature hydrothermal circulation. $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values for lavas from the Juan de Fuca ridge and Galapagos Spreading Center are shown for comparison.

have Cl/K₂O ratios three to seven times greater than the values observed in spatially related basalts (Fig. 3) and significantly higher than maximum mantle values (0.065) suggested by Michael and Cornell (1998). The elevated Cl abundances and incompatible element ratios in the evolved lavas therefore suggest they have been contaminated by crustal material and are consistent with assimilation of altered crust coupled with fractional crystallization (AFC) (Wanless et al., 2010). AFC processes will also produce an increase in incompatible trace element concentrations, particularly in elements enriched during seawater alteration, such as U (Wanless et al., 2010). This is evident in variations in U/La ratios, which are not affected by fractional crystallization but will increase due to assimilation of altered basalt (Fig. 8). These observations clearly indicate the operation of assimilation in the formation of basaltic andesites, andesites and dacites on MOR.

4.3. Evidence for assimilation from oxygen isotopes

Fractional crystallization of Fe–Ti oxides leads to an increase in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values of evolving magmas (Taylor, 1968) because these phases, and to a lesser extent Fe–Mg silicates, preferentially incorporate ^{16}O relative to ^{18}O (Taylor, 1968; Anderson et al., 1971; Muehlenbach and Byerly, 1982). During crystallization of MORB magma there is a slight increase in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ as the magma crystallizes ferromagnesian silicates, followed by a more rapid increase when Fe–Ti oxides precipitate (Matsuhisa et al., 1973). Thus, advanced fractional crystallization should result in an increase of $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values by 0.5–1.5‰ in dacitic lavas (Bindeman, 2008, e.g., Muehlenbach and Byerly, 1982).

Using modal mineral proportions calculated from MELTS (Ghiorso and Sack, 1995) and oxygen isotope fractionation factors from Bindeman (2008), we calculated the change in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ during fractional

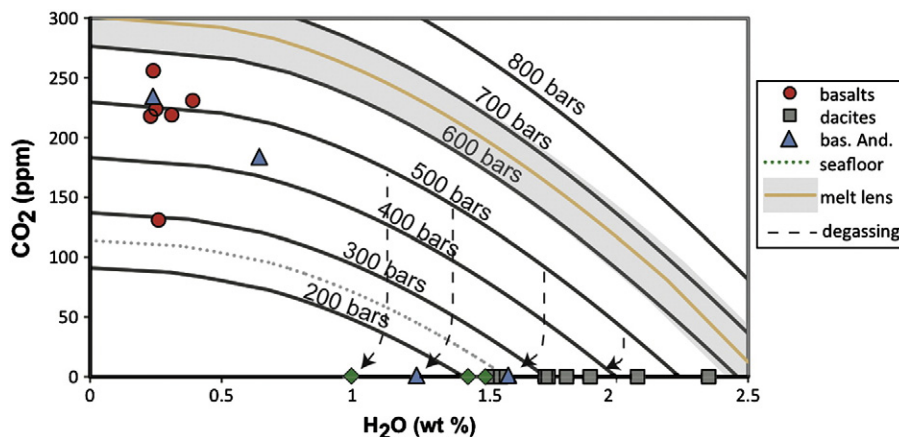


Fig. 7. H₂O versus CO₂ for 9°N OSC glasses. Superimposed on this diagram are CO₂–H₂O vapor saturation curves for 200 to 800 bar based on models by Dixon et al. (1995a, b). Black dashed lines show a general magma degassing trends during ascent. The gray band represents an approximate depth of the top of the imaged melt lens (Kent et al., 2000). The pressure at the seafloor is shown as a dotted line. Most of the basalts are in equilibrium with pressures shallower than the top of the imaged melt lens (~670 bar). The dacites, andesites, and two basaltic andesites have completely degassed CO₂ and may have also lost H₂O prior to or during eruption. H₂O and CO₂ concentrations in one basaltic andesite lie between the high-silica lavas and the basaltic lavas.

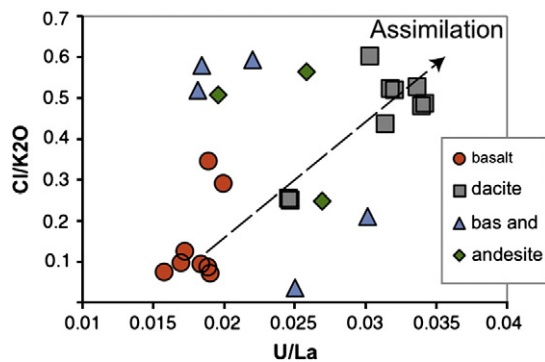


Fig. 8. Cl/K₂O versus U/La. Elevated Cl/K₂O values of the high-silica lavas can be explained by assimilation of altered crustal material that is enriched in Cl, and U compared to K₂O and La during seawater alteration. Several OSC basaltic lavas have elevated Cl/K₂O values, suggesting assimilation may also be important in their petrogenesis. U and La data from Wanless et al., 2010.

crystallization of a MORB parental magma (Fig. 6). If the MOR dacites had formed through fractional crystallization, the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ should be $\sim 6.8\%$, but the measured ratios are $\sim 1\%$ lower (dacite average = 5.84%), supporting the conclusion that the dacites could not exclusively form by fractional crystallization. Low values ($\delta^{18}\text{O} = 3.9\text{--}6.2\%$) have also been observed in dacites erupted at the Galapagos Spreading Center (Perfit et al., 1999).

The temperature-dependent fractionation of oxygen isotopes between seawater ($\delta^{18}\text{O} = 0$) and primary magmatic minerals (e.g., $\delta^{18}\text{O} \sim 5.2\text{--}6.1\%$ for olivine, clinopyroxene, and plagioclase) causes a bulk decrease in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ of ocean crust during high-temperature hydrothermal alteration, but increases the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ during low-temperature alteration ($< 200\text{--}250\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$; Alt et al., 1996; Muehlenbach and Clayton, 1972). In the latter case, the fluid evolves to lower $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values in a closed system due to mass balance. This effect, together with the increase in temperature with depth, is obvious in profiles of oxygen isotope ratios in exposed sections of fast-spreading ocean crust (Hess Deep; Agrinier et al., 1995; Gillis et al., 2001) and drill holes (e.g., ODP Site 504; Alt et al., 1996). $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values are higher than unaltered MORB compositions ($\sim 5.6 \pm 0.2\%$; Eiler, 2001) in the upper volcanic section of the crust but decrease to lower than mantle values in the lower sheeted dikes and gabbros (for profiles see Alt and Teagle, 2000).

The $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ of the sheeted dike and gabbro layers is quite variable but the sheeted dikes at Hess Deep have an average value of 5.1% (Gillis et al., 2001) and are as low as 2.9% (Agrinier et al., 1995), significantly different than mantle values of 5.6% (e.g., Alt et al., 1986; Eiler, 2001). Bulk melting of surrounding wall rock will result in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values similar to the altered whole rock values, however, partial melts in equilibrium with the altered basalts will have oxygen isotope ratios generally less than mantle-equilibrated values, but higher (by $\sim 1\%$; e.g., Muehlenbach and Byerly, 1982) than the altered basalt itself. Assimilation of these partial melts into fractionating magma will produce melts with oxygen isotope ratios between those of altered basalt and that expected from fractional crystallization alone. The $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value of the MOR andesites and dacites range from 5.38 to 6.19% , which is much more variable than the spatially related basalts and lower than values predicted by fractional crystallization (Fig. 6).

Taylor (1968) suggested that to a first approximation, the effect of assimilation on oxygen isotope ratios can be determined using mass balance equations. Using results from Energy Constrained-Assimilation and Fractional Crystallization (EC-AFC) petrologic modeling calculations (Bohrson and Spera, 2001), which, unlike traditional AFC models, includes energy conservation in the formulation, the ratio of fractionating magma to partially melted assimilant (M_f/M_a) in the dacites is $\sim 2.5:1$ to $3.5:1$ (Wanless et al., 2010). Using this range of

ratios and assuming the evolved magma has a $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ of 6.8% (largely due to fractionation of Fe–Mg silicates and iron oxides) and an assimilant with a $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ of 3.4% to 5.6% (from partial melting of an altered basalt with a $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ of 2.9% to 5.1%), the oxygen isotope ratio of the resultant magma would range from 5.8% to 6.5% . This range includes the average ratios observed in the dacites and is less than predicted solely as a consequence of crystal fractionation. Varying the ratio of the fractionated magma to assimilant (M_f/M_a of $2:1$ to $4:1$) or the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value of the assimilant (from 2.9% to 6%) can produce a range of compositions in the resulting magma (Fig. 9). To produce the lowest values observed at the OSC the assimilant must have a $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value of less than 4% or the M_f/M_a must be lowered. Assuming the assimilated altered crust has the lowest $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value observed at Hess Deep of 2.9% (Agrinier et al., 1995) the range of $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values produced by AFC is 5.6% to 5.9% , assuming M_f/M_a values from 2.5 to $3.5:1$. If instead, the M_f/M_a ratio is lowered to $2:1$, then $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values of 5.4% can be produced. Therefore, either increasing the amount of assimilant relative to fractionating magma or lowering the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value of the assimilant can produce the range of $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values observed in dacites at the OSC.

4.4. Potential sources of assimilant

Despite growing evidence of crustal contamination on MORs, the nature of the assimilant and depth of the process remain poorly constrained, although some potential candidates can be eliminated if several geochemical parameters are considered. As mentioned above, Cl/K₂O and H₂O/K₂O ratios provide a means to discriminate between sources of contamination on MOR because of the variable concentrations of these elements in possible assimilants (Kent et al., 1999). Potential contaminants on MOR include:

- 1) Altered basaltic crust: Cl = 0.35 wt.% (Sparks, 1995); H₂O = 1.3 wt.% (Agrinier et al., 1995); K₂O = 0.08 wt.% (Stewart et al., 2002);
- 2) Seawater: Cl = 1.935 wt.%, H₂O = 97.5 wt.%, K₂O = 0.04 wt.%; (Kent et al., 1999);
- 3) Saline brines of variable compositions, for example: 15% NaCl brine (Cl = 9.9 wt.%, H₂O = 85 wt.%, K₂O = 0.25 wt.%); and 50% NaCl brine (Cl = 30.3 wt.%, H₂O = 50 wt.%, K₂O = 0.25 wt.%; Kent et al., 1999 and references therein for brine compositions);
- 4) Low-degree partial melts of altered ocean crust that have a range of compositions with relatively low MgO, and high Cl, H₂O and K₂O (Wanless et al., 2010).

Bulk mixing of altered basaltic crust or seawater with OSC basalt cannot produce the observed compositions of the MOR dacites (Fig. 4). Mixing of saline brines or partial melts of altered crust can explain the elevated Cl/K₂O ratios observed in the dacites, but is not consistent with the observed low H₂O/K₂O ratios of the dacites, (Fig. 4), although the latter is likely influenced by H₂O degassing. While discrimination between these two possible assimilants (brines versus crust) is difficult, only assimilation of altered ocean crust is consistent with major and trace element concentrations and petrologic modeling of MOR dacites (Wanless et al., 2010). Additionally, although le Roux et al. (2006) suggested that EPR MORB magmas were contaminated with brine at depths below the lava/dike (seismic layer 2A/2B) boundary and above the axial melt lens (~ 1400 m below seafloor) there is no consensus on the depth of brine formation or loci of storage at active ridges and therefore it is uncertain if saline brines are actually present within the zone of assimilation. Low Cl fluids may exist within the altered ocean crust but are not considered here because the high-Cl concentrations of the dacites makes this source of contamination unrealistic. Therefore, partially melted altered crust is the most likely source of contamination observed in the high-silica magmas and the low H₂O/K₂O ratios in the dacites results from degassing.

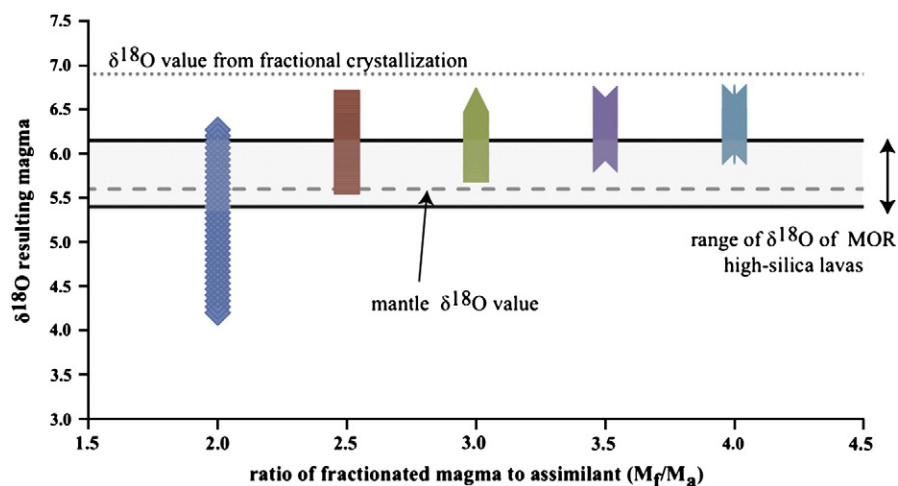


Fig. 9. Diagram showing the range of oxygen isotope compositions that can be produced from varying the ratio of fractionated magma to assimilated material (M_f/M_a) in AFC calculations. The $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value of the resulting magma was calculated for ratios of 2:1, 2.5:1, 3:1, 3.5:1, and 4:1 using assimilants with a range of $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values similar to those observed in altered sheeted dikes (2.9–6‰). M_f/M_a values from 2 to 4 can produce $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values similar to MOR dacites but lower values of M_f/M_a (2–2.5) are required to explain the lowest $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ observed at the OSC. Small dotted line shows the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value of magmas produced from fractional crystallization alone. Dashed line shows the mantle $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value.

4.5. Sulfur in MOR dacites

Sulfur concentrations in the dacites are low (345 to 427 ppm) compared to those of basalts and basaltic andesites (Fig. 5), which is consistent with the relatively low S levels observed in high-silica lavas erupted at other ridges (Perfit et al., 1983). Possible explanations for the low S concentrations include fractional crystallization, formation of immiscible sulfide (Fe–S–O) liquid, magma mixing, assimilation, degassing, or some combination of the above. Sulfur concentrations increase in MORB magmas during fractional crystallization as FeO increases until the melt becomes saturated with respect to Fe-oxides, after which S contents decrease dramatically along with FeO (Mathez, 1976; Wallace and Carmichael, 1992). The decrease in S observed in the OSC andesites and dacites, which correlates with the decrease in FeO, likely results from the low S solubility caused by decreasing FeO contents and decreasing temperature of the melt (Wallace and Carmichael, 1992). These factors lead to separation of a sulfide phase (Perfit et al., 1999). Nearly all MORB glasses are saturated with immiscible Fe–S–O liquid (Wallace and Carmichael, 1992). In the range from basalt to FeTi basalt, S does not increase nearly as much as would be expected if it were a highly incompatible element, implying that S content is being moderated by a sulfide phase. Lower S contents in andesites from the Galapagos Spreading Center are thought to result from the formation and fractionation of these immiscible monosulfide liquids (Perfit et al., 1999). Bulk assimilation may also contribute to lower S concentrations in the resulting melt, as altered sheeted dikes have lower S concentrations than typical MORB magmas (e.g. Alt et al., 1989), but low degree partial melts of the altered dikes have variable S contents depending on the degree of melting and the S concentration of the assimilant. Finally, degassing may cause a decrease in S in the melt phase during transport to and eruption on the seafloor (e.g., Perfit et al., 1983, 1999). Therefore, while assimilation of altered material may produce lower S concentrations, sulfur is not a useful discriminator of assimilation due to the numerous processes that affect its concentrations.

4.6. Formation of oceanic plagiogranites

Plagiogranites are volumetrically small but ubiquitous siliceous components of the ocean crust and have been observed as veins and small intrusions in ophiolites (e.g. Pedersen and Malpas, 1984), in deep drill cores from the ocean crust (e.g. Casey, 1997; Dick et al., 2000), and as xenoliths in Icelandic lavas (Sigurdsson, 1977). There

are also many examples of evolved plutonic rocks from slower spreading centers (e.g. Mid-Atlantic Ridge; Aumento, 1969, Southwest Indian Ridge; Dick et al., 2000). The origin of these veins and intrusions remains unclear but two main, non-exclusive hypotheses are: 1) partial melting of gabbroic crust (e.g. Koepke et al., 2004, 2007) and 2) extreme crystal fractionation of tholeiitic magmas (Beccaluva et al., 1999; Coleman and Donato, 1979; Niu et al., 2002).

The composition of oceanic plagiogranites varies considerably (Koepke et al., 2007), making a direct petrologic comparison with the MOR dacites difficult. However, trace element concentrations in the MOR dacites (Wanless et al., 2010) and the most evolved plagiogranite ($\text{SiO}_2 = 63 \text{ wt.}\%$) vein from the mid-Atlantic Ridge (Godard et al., 2009) are quite distinct, suggesting that the MOR dacites are not simply the extrusive equivalents of plagiogranite veins. For example, trace element enrichments observed in the MOR dacites (e.g. 1050 ppm Zr; 17 ppm Nb; 160 ppm Y) are much greater than those of the plagiogranite veins (e.g. 328 ppm Zr; 9.7 ppm Nb; 142 ppm Y). Also, although plagiogranite veins have positive Zr and Hf anomalies, they lack the negative Nb and Ta and elevated U and Th concentrations observed in MOR dacite glasses (Wanless et al., 2010). These variations in trace element patterns likely reflect differences in processes involved in the formation of these high-silica rocks. MOR dacites require both extensive fractional crystallization and assimilation of altered crustal material, while some plagiogranite veins may simply be the result of partial melting of unaltered ocean crust.

Zircons from plagiogranite veins can also have variable oxygen isotope ratios. Uniform mantle-like $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values of zircons collected from plagiogranite veins in the gabbroic crust at the mid-Atlantic and southwest Indian ridges ($-5.2 \pm 0.5\%$) require no seawater contamination in the evolved melt at these depths (Grimes et al., 2011), but lower $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values in plagiogranite veins from the Oman ophiolite (average of $4.6 \pm 0.6\%$) are thought to represent remelting of ocean crust that had been altered with respect to oxygen isotopes at high temperatures (Grimes et al., 2010). These studies suggest that high-silica lavas can form in a variety of different MOR settings and may have a range of compositions but that crustal melting is an important process in their petrogenesis.

5. Conclusions

Oxygen isotope values and volatile concentrations suggest the MOR dacites form by a combination of assimilation and fractional crystallization. Fast ascent rates for basaltic magmas from the 9°N OSC

are required because the erupted lavas are supersaturated with CO₂. In contrast, high-silica lavas have completely degassed any initial CO₂, and variably degassed H₂O prior to eruption and have relatively low H₂O/K₂O ratios. These characteristics may result from slower ascent rates and/or lower effusion rates of high-silica magmas, and are consistent with the presence of large elongate vesicles and large extrusive pillow forms.

Volatile concentrations and δ¹⁸O in 9°N OSC lavas suggest crustal assimilation was a common process during their petrogenesis. Although evidence of assimilation in the 9°N OSC basalts is limited, more extreme signatures of assimilation are observed in high-silica andesites and dacites. This is consistent with previous petrogenetic models based on major and trace element studies (Wanless et al., 2010) that show chemical variations cannot be explained by fractional crystallization alone. Even though some volatile degassing is likely to have occurred during eruption of the high-silica lavas, H₂O concentrations are up to two times higher in dacitic lavas compared to those expected based on calculated fractional crystallization trends, whereas Cl has excesses of seven to ten times predicted values. δ¹⁸O values are on average ~1‰ lower than ratios expected from fractional crystallization of ferromagnesian silicates and Fe–Ti oxide phases, consistent with assimilation of an additional component or components. The range in δ¹⁸O values can be explained by assimilation of oceanic crust altered to various degrees or by changing the ratio of the mass of fractionated magma to the mass of an assimilant with relatively low δ¹⁸O values.

Our chemical and isotopic data are most consistent with the partially melted, hydrothermally-altered oceanic crust as the source of the contamination. However, the involvement of small volumes of saline brines, produced during two-phase separation of high-temperature hydrothermal fluids, cannot be discounted. Vapor saturation pressures calculated from H₂O–CO₂ data suggest that assimilation most likely occurs above the top of the seismically-imaged melt lens, which at the 9°N OSC, corresponds approximately to the base of the sheeted dikes.

Acknowledgments

We thank the captain, officers and crew of the R/V Atlantis for all their help during cruise AT15-17, the MEDUSA2007 Science party (including S. White, K. Von Damm, D. Fornari, A. Soule, S. Carmichael, K. Sims, A. Zaino, A. Fundis, J. Mason, J. O'Brien, C. Waters, F. Mansfield, K. Neely, J. Laliberte, E. Goehring, and L. Preston) for their diligence in collecting data and samples for this study. We thank the Jason II shipboard and shore-based operations group for their assistance in collecting these data and HMR for processing all DSL-120 sidescan and bathymetry collected during this cruise. Special thanks to J. W. Valley and the Stable Isotopes Lab at the University of Wisconsin–Madison for oxygen isotope analyses and thoughtful discussion throughout the preparation of this manuscript. Thanks to G. Kamenov and the UF Center for Isotope Geoscience for laboratory assistance. This manuscript benefited greatly from thoughtful and detailed reviews by Peter Michael and an anonymous reviewer. This research was supported by the National Science Foundation (grants OCE-0527075 to MRP, OCE-0526120 to EMK, EAR-0509639, 0838058 to JWV for laser fluorination) and the Department of Energy (grant 93ER14389 to JWV).

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