

The composition of noble gas and CO₂ in the European subcontinental lithospheric mantle

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The investigation of mantle-derived products coming from Sub Continental Lithospheric Mantle (SCLM) is crucial for understanding its geochemical features and evolution, the mantle-crust interaction, the volatiles composition. In this respect, a significant contribution comes from the study of noble gases and CO₂ trapped as fluid inclusions (FI) hosted in ultramafic xenoliths, coupled with the petrography and chemistry of the minerals.

Here, we report a reappraisal of the knowledge recently developed on the European SCLM, based on the study of distinct suites of mantle xenoliths representative of the mantle beneath Lower Silesia (19-21 Ma; SW Poland), Persani Mts. (0.6-1.2 Ma; Eastern Transylvanian Basin, Romania), Eifel (0.01-0.5 Ma) and Siebengebirge (6-30 Ma; Germany).

The chemistry of He-Ne-Ar-N₂-CO₂ reveals that: i) FI are CO₂-dominated; ii) there is a systematic disproportion of volatiles between olivine and pyroxene, which probably reflects crystallographic features and/or the distinct crystallization history of the minerals during mantle melting and metasomatism.

The mantle portions below Lower Silesia and Siebengebirge were variably depleted by partial melting, with the overprinting in Lower Silesia of at least one metasomatic event by carbonated hydrous silicate melt related to Cenozoic volcanism. This process resulted in the entrapment of CO₂-rich inclusions, whose carbon isotopic composition has a MORB-like signature. Instead, the SCLM beneath Eifel reflect multiple metasomatism/refertilisation events by CO₂-rich melts that took place between ~6 and ~0.5 Ma. However, the isotopic composition of CO₂ indicates evidences of a crustal carbon recycled by old subducted altered oceanic crust. Differently, the mantle beneath Persani Mts. was strongly refertilized by a calc-alkaline subduction-related melt, which reflects the geodynamics of this portion of the European mantle.

The $^3\text{He}/^4\text{He}$ ratio varies in the range 5.5–6.9 R_a , indicating a widespread recycling of crustal material related to fossil subduction(s) and confirms the complex geodynamics that characterized the European SCLM.