ESRF	Experiment title: Influence of the sulphur speciation in silicate glasses and glass inclusions on bubble nucleation in magmas and volcanic degassing processes	Experiment number: ME-397
Beamline:	Date of experiment:	Date of
ID 21	from: 01/05/02 to: 06/05/02	report:
		29/08/02
Shifts:	Local contact(s):	Received
12	Jean Susini	at ESRF:

Names and affiliations of applicants (* indicates experimentalists):

Nicole Métrich, Laboratoire Pierre Süe, CEA/CNRS, CE-Saclay,91191 Gif sur Yvette France **Jean Susini,** ESRF

Laurence Galoisy and Georges Calas – Laboratoire de Minéralogie et Cristallographie de Paris-4, Place Jussieu 75252 Paris France

We have recently proposed, on the basis of μ XANES-spectra performed on ID21 beam line, that sulphur is mainly transported as sulphite (S^{IV}) and sulphate (S^{VI}) by H₂O-mantle-derived melts before being released as SO₂ and/or H₂S in volcanic emissions [1,2]. The model involves sulphite (S^{IV}) as the intermediate species yielding to highly efficient partitioning of sulphur between the silicate melts (magmas) and the volcanic gas phase at the origin of excess SO₂ release at subduction zone volcanoes.

We have carried out new experiments on melt inclusions well preserved in olivine grains in the particular case of the July-August 2001eruption of Mt Etna (Italy). This volcano is well known to produce H₂O and S-rich magmas [3] and a large SO₂ flux during permanent degassing [4] in a complex tectonic setting implying the possible contribution of slab-derived fluids as recently discussed in Nature [5]. A selection of glass inclusions and glass fragments was also studied to detail to sulphur speciation as sulphide (S^{II-}) in samples from active volcanic zones (Iceland, Mid-Atlantic Ridge and one lateral strombolian cone (P. Vincendo) of Piton de la Fournaise volcano in Reunion island).

About 15 samples were examined and we have acquired at least 5 spectra per sample and some images at 2482eV. In order to improve the data set on reference compounds, we have got new XANES spectra on sulphides (PbS, NiS, FeS₂), sulphates in various matrices (all together BaSO₄, scapolite containing 2.3 wt%S and a sulphate-bearing silicate glass with 970ppmS), sodium sulphite (Na₂SO₃) and sodium thiosulphate (Na₂S₂O₃) for which

we confirmed that sulphur in dissolved as S^I and S⁵⁺ according to [6]. Because of instabilities of the beam source and almost permanent photon flux decrease, it has been time consuming to get our series of XANES spectra. It also excluded working on extensively degassed glasses with good statistics.

The energy scans at the sulphur K-edge were obtained using a fixed-exit Silicon (111) monochromator providing an energy resolution of 0.3 eV. The synchrotron X-ray source was demagnified down to a micro-probe $(0.5x0.5 \,\mu\text{m})$ by using Fresnel zone plate lenses [7]. The fluorescence signal was collected using a single-element energy-dispersive high purity Ge detector and the experiments done under secondary vacuum in order to minimise the air absorption.

Two main results arise from these experiments. It seems that sulphite (S^{IV}) and sulphate (S^{VI}) are dominant in the glass inclusions representative of the most primitive melts that refilled the 2001 activity of Mt Etna (Figure). These melts are water-rich (3.2 wt% H_2O) and not saturated with respect to any S-condensed phase (either sulphide or anhydrite) that implies that sulphur dissolved in the melts is controlled by the vapour phase. It is worth noting that Etna magmas display high total iron content compared with Stromboli H_2O -rich primary melts [2] with 10 wt% vs 6.5 wt% FeO_{total}, respectively.

Indeed, sulphite is one of the key species in the transfer of sulfur in H_2O -rich-magmas. Only, XANES spectroscopy unambiguously evidences its occurrence. As a preliminary conclusion, we also suggest that water may have a predominant effect on the redox state and speciation of sulphur.

During magma ascent and H_2O and CO_2 release, the immiscible sulphide globule appears and the speciation of the remaining sulphur in melts shifts towards sulphide (S^{II-}). The μ XANES spectra of these glass inclusions are closely similar to some of the μ XANES spectra acquired in H_2O -poor magmas from diverse environments from Mid-Altlantic Ridge to Iceland (Figure).

We also provide a first and complete series of $\mu XANES$ spectra of sulphur in natural volcanic glasses from reduced samples (mainly S^{II-}) for which spectra significantly differ from those of crystallised FeS or FeS₂ phases to the most oxidised terms representative of primary H₂O-rich magmas.

References

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