POST-HYDRATION COMPACTION OF RYUGU FROM MATRIX PETROFABRICS. M. R. Lee¹, L. Daly¹,²,³, P. A. Bland¹, W. Smith⁵, S. McFadzean⁵, P.-E. Martin⁴, P.A.J. Bagot⁴, D. Fougerouse⁴, D.W. Saxey⁴, S. Reddy⁴, W.D.A. Rickard⁴, T. Noguchi⁷,⁸, H. Yurimoto⁹, T. Nakamura¹⁰, H. Yabuta¹¹, H. Naraoka¹², R. Okazaki¹², K. Sakamoto⁶, S. Tachibana¹³, S., Watanabe¹⁴, Y. Tsuda¹⁵, and the Min-Pet Fine Sub-team. ¹School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK. (martin.lee@glasgow.ac.uk) ²Australian Centre for Microscopy and Microanalysis, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia, ³Department of Materials, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK. ⁴Space Science and Technology Centre, School of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Curtin University, Perth, WA, Australia. ⁵Materials and Condensed Matter Physics, School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK. ⁶Geoscience Atom Probe Facility, John de Laeter Centre, Curtin University, Perth, WA, Australia. ⁷Division of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Kyoto University; Kitashirakawaioike-cho, Sakyoku, Kyoto 606-8502, Japan. ⁸Faculty of Arts and Science, Kyushu University; 744 Motooka, Nishi-ku, Fukuoka 819-0395, Japan. ⁹Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Hokkaido University; Kita-10 Nishi-8, Kita-ku, Sapporo 060-0810, Japan. ¹⁰Department of Earth Science, Graduate School of Science, Tohoku University; 6-3 Aoba, Aramaki, Aoba-ku, Sendai 980-8578, Japan. ¹¹Earth and Planetary Systems Science Program, Hiroshima University; 1-3-1 Kagamiyama, Higashi-Hiroshima City, Hiroshima, 739-8526, Japan. ¹²Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Kyushu University; 744 Motooka, Nishi-ku, Fukuoka 819-0395, Japan. ¹³Tokyo Organization for Planetary and Space Science, University of Tokyo; 7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan. ¹⁴Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Nagoya University; Furo-cho, Chikusa-ku, Nagoya 464–8601, Japan. ¹⁵Institute of Space and Astronautical Science, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency; 3-1-1 Yoshinodai, Chuo-ku, Sagamihara, Kanagawa 252-5210, Japan.

Introduction: Grains that have been collected from the regolith of the C-type asteroid 162173 Ryugu by the Hayabusa2 spacecraft provide a unique opportunity to understand the accretion and subsequent alteration of the Solar System’s most primitive bodies. Preliminary analysis of the returned samples shows that they are most similar to CI carbonaceous chondrites [1], and so will have undergone extensive parent body aqueous alteration. They may also contain evidence for shock heating and mechanical deformation by impacts, and space weathering (i.e., alteration mediated by the solar wind, solar and galactic cosmic rays, and micrometeoroid impacts). Indeed, both shock heating and space weathering have been proposed as possible explanations for results of near-IR spectroscopic measurements of Ryugu by the Hayabusa2 spacecraft [2]. Here we have characterized the petrography and mineralogy of a regolith grain for evidence of aqueous alteration, shock deformation, and space weathering.

Materials and methods: The grain studied is 70×90 μm in size, and all analytical work was undertaken at the University of Glasgow (UoG). The outer surface of the grain was characterized by secondary electron imaging using a Zeiss Sigma SEM operated at 2 kV, then a wafer was cut and extracted from it using a Ga-FIB. Bright-field (BF) diffraction-contrast TEM images and selected area electron diffraction (SAED) patterns were acquired from the wafer using a FEI T20 TEM at 200 kV, and both BF and high angular annular dark-field (HAADF) images were obtained using a JEOL ARM STEM operated at 200 kV. Grains were chemically analysed by energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX) and electron energy loss spectroscopy (EELS) using the same STEM.

Results: SEM shows that the outer surface of the grain is covered by very thin platy crystals of phyllosilicate that are up to ~1 μm in length. Projecting through them are euhedral grains of dolomite several micrometers in size, and objects composed of radiating arrays of close-packed magnetite needles.

The FIB wafer contains relatively coarse grains within a fine-grained phyllosilicate-rich matrix (Fig. 1). The coarse grains comprise two magnetite spherules, one grain of pyrrhotite and one dolomite. The magnetite spherules are composed of closely packed acicular crystals 2–4 μm in length by ~50–70 nm in width (Fig. 2a), and BF images show that these crystals contain abundant ~100 nm size pores or inclusions (Fig. 2b).

Figure 1. BF TEM image of the Pt-coated FIB wafer that contains magnetite (Mag), pyrrhotite (Po) and dolomite (Dol) in a porous phyllosilicate-rich matrix.
The arrangement of the phyllosilicate crystals in the vicinity of the pyrrhotite grain is indicative of late-stage (post aqueous alteration) compaction (i.e., after phyllosilicate and dolomite crystal growth). The brittle fracturing of the phyllosilicate crystals shows that they were deformed at a high strain rate as can result from impact shock, rather than at a low strain rate that can accompany lithostatic compaction in the interior of a large asteroid, or the semi-viscous flow of water-saturated matrix [4]. Although further work is required on their crystallographic properties, the twins in the pyrrhotite grain could be further evidence for shock deformation. The dolomite is also another target for future analysis of shock deformation because carbonate microstructures have been used to identify mild shock deformation of the Orgueil meteorite [5].

The impactor responsible for deformation of the matrix may have been a large meteoroid/asteroid either pre or post parent body break up, one or more micrometeoroids that were responsible for space weathering, or the sampling device (a tantalum projectile [6]). An argument against micro-meteoroids is that there is no evidence for space weathering of the grain’s outer surface, such as a vesicular melt or micrometeoroid impact craters, although such features could have been lost during natural ‘regolith gardening’ or sample collection [7, 8].

Conclusions: The Ryugu grain studied is mineralogically closely comparable to the CI meteorites. The fabric of the phyllosilicate matrix shows that the grain has undergone high strain-rate deformation, which could have been in response to a meteoroid impact, or sample collection. Further microstructural work to seek evidence for shock deformation of the pyrrhotite and dolomite crystals may help to answer this question.

Acknowledgements: We thank JAXA for the loan of Ryugu samples, and the UK Science and Technology Facilities Council for funding this research through grant ST/T002328/1.