PENTLANDITE IN CHONDRITES: A COMPOSITIONAL INDICATOR OF OXYGEN FUGACITY.
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Introduction: Fe-sulfides are ubiquitous in chondrites and are sensitive indicators of formation and alteration conditions in the protoplanetary disk and small Solar System bodies [e.g., 1–14]. We previously constrained a minimum oxygen fugacity ($f_{O_2}$) needed to form pentlandite, (Fe,Ni)S$_x$, [6,7] and identified trends with pentlandite compositions between distinct meteorite groups [6,7]. We also identified a relationship between the at.% Fe/S ratio of pyrrhotite group sulfides and the $f_{O_2}$ of formation, either in the protoplanetary disk or the parent body during aqueous alteration or thermal alteration [13]. Since pentlandite formed with pyrrhotite (they are typically intergrown in these chondrite groups [1–14]), $f_{O_2}$ may have influenced pentlandite compositions [13]. To increase the information gained from individual mineral systems, here we report the chemical compositions of pentlandite in chondrites that experienced a wide range of formation and parent body alteration conditions (including $f_{O_2}$ [13]). This will allow us to investigate a potential trend(s) with the pyrrhotite at.% Fe/S ratio, and by extension $f_{O_2}$.

Samples and Analytical Procedures: We determined the major and minor element compositions of pentlandite in the following 54 chondrites: CI (Alais), C1-un grouped (Miller Range [MIL] 090292), C2-un grouped (Tarda and Tagish Lake), CY (Belgica [B]-7904), CM1/2 (Allan Hills [ALH] 83100 and Kolang [two lithologies]), unheated CM2s (Aguas Zarcas [multiple lithologies], Mighei, Queen Alexandra Range [QUE] 97990, Theil Mountains [TIL] 91722, and D’Angelo Bluff [DNB] 06004), stage I heated CM2 (Asuka [A]-881458), stage II heated CM2 (Yamato [Y]-793321), CM-like (Sutter’s Mill), CO3.00 (Dominion Range [DOM] 08006), CR1 (Grosvenor Mountains [GRO] 95577), CR-an (Al Rais), CR2 (Elephant Moraine [EET] 87770, EET 92048, EET 96259, Gao-Guenie (b), Graves Nunatak [GRA] 95229, LaPaz Ice Field [LAP] 02342, LAP 04720, MIL 090657, Northwest Africa [NWA] 801, Pecora Escarpment [PCA] 91082, QUE 99177, Shao [033], and Y-793495), shock-heated CR2 (GRO 03116), CV3,0a (Allende), CV3,b (Bali), and CV3,red (Vigarano), CK4 (ALH 85002 and Karooonda), CK5 (Larkman Nunatak [LAR] 06868), CK6 (Lewis Cliff [LEW] 87009), L3.05 (EET 90161 and QUE 97008), LL3 (Semarkona and Vicenca), LL4 (Hamlet and Sokol-Banja), LL5 (Chelyabinsk and Siena), LL6 (Appleby Peak and Saint-Séverin), R3 (MET 01149), R3.6 (LAP 031275), R5 (LAP 03639), and R6 (LAP 04840 and MIL 11207) chondrites. We acquired high-resolution backscatter electron images and quantitative chemical compositions with the JEOL-8530F Hyperprobe electron microprobe analyzer (EPMA) at Arizona State University (ASU) and the Cameca SX-100 EPMA at the University of Arizona (UA) following [13]. Some pentlandite compositions were previously reported [6,7,10,11].

Results and Discussion: Our data show that there is a relationship between the at.% Fe/S of pyrrhotite (data from [13]) and pentlandite compositions. Since the at.% Fe/S ratio of pyrrhotite is a proxy for $f_{O_2}$ [13], this demonstrates that there is a relationship between $f_{O_2}$ and pentlandite composition. Therefore, pentlandite compositions were influenced by the $f_{O_2}$ of formation. This is true whether pentlandite formed: (1) during chondrule formation in the protoplanetary disk (i.e., during chondrule cooling, as previously noted by [6,8,10,11]) for CR2, CO3.00, and LL3.00 chondrules, (2) during thermal alteration on the parent asteroid under relatively reducing (i.e., LL4–6 chondrites) or oxidizing (i.e., R4–6 and CK chondrites) conditions, or (3) during oxidizing aqueous alteration (i.e., as in CI, CM1, CI-ung, and C2-ung chondrites). Therefore, in addition to the at.% Fe/S ratio of pyrrhotite, the chemical compositions of pentlandite can also be used as a proxy for the $f_{O_2}$ of formation. This discovery has implications for the interpretation of pentlandite compositions in meteorites and in asteroid returned samples from Ryugu and Bennu.


Acknowledgements: We thank the Smithsonian Institution, NASA/NSF, the ASU Buseck Center for Meteorite Studies (BCMS), and the National Institute of Polar Research (NiPR) for the loan of the meteorites used in this study, and NASA grant NNX17AE53G (DLS PI, TIZ Co-I) and the BCMS for funding this research.