
Pure forsterite in Nyiragongo lavas: evidence for subsolidus oxidation of volcanic rocks

Badriyo Agama Innocent ^{1,3}, Chazot Gilles ^{2,*}, Kamgang Pierre ¹

¹ Département Des Sciences de la Terre, Faculté Des Sciences, Université de Yaoundé I, B.P. 812, Yaoundé, Cameroon

² Laboratoire Géosciences Océan, Institut Universitaire Européen de la Mer, Université de Brest (UBO), UMR 6538, Place Copernic, 29280, Plouzané, France

³ Observatoire Volcanologique de Goma, B.P. 484, Goma, Nord-Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo

* Corresponding author : Innocent Badriyo Agama, email address : Gilles.Chazot@univ-brest.fr

Abstract :

Some volcanic rocks from Nyiragongo volcano in the Democratic Republic of Congo contain highly oxidized olivine crystals. These olivines crystals are made of two phases, dark olivine on backscattered electron images of pure forsterite composition and grey Mg-poor areas made of olivine and iron-rich oxides. Calculation of the initial composition confirms that they are primary olivine with late separation of two different olivine compositions. Pure forsterite is enriched in SiO₂ but contains lower amounts of CaO than Fe-rich areas, in agreement with expected partitioning of these elements related to the composition of the olivine. Iron-rich oxides formed around or inside the olivine crystals during the separation process and confirm a highly oxidized environment during their evolution. We propose that this separation occurred during subsolidus recrystallization under high fO₂ conditions of the olivine crystals after cooling of the volcanic rocks. It provides evidences for circulation of iron-rich fluids or gas inducing deuteric processes occurring in the large volcanic cone of the Nyiragongo, in relation with the presence of a shallow magma chamber connected to a large and permanent lava lake

Keywords : Nyiragongo, Olivine, Forsterite, Oxidation

21 **1. Introduction**

22 The Nyiragongo volcano, located in the Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the eight
23 volcanoes of the Virunga Volcanic Province (VVP), which is part of the western branch of the

24 East African Rift System. Continental extension and related magmatism in that area started at
25 ca 38 Ma in Ethiopia and has subsequently extended southward into Kenya and Northern
26 Tanzania (Dawson 2012; Jung et al. 2019). The Virunga Volcanic Province is characterized by
27 unusual silica-undersaturated, ultra-alkaline volcanism that started erupting ~ 11 Ma ago and
28 which is still active today in Nyiragongo and Nyamuragira volcanoes (Poucllet and Bram 2021).
29 Nyiragongo volcano is a large cone culminating at 3470 m a.s.l, with a large crater at the top,
30 in which a semi-permanent lava lake is present. The Nyiragongo lavas are foiditites (Le Bas et
31 al. 1986) highly silica undersaturated and belong to the leucite-bearing nephelinite series. The
32 volcano produces highly porphyritic lavas. Phenocrysts are various type of feldspathoids
33 (leucite, nepheline), melilite, clinopyroxene and olivine. We analyse olivine phenocrysts and
34 microlites in many melilitite, nephelinite and basanite samples from Nyiragongo volcano. Their
35 composition can be very Mg-rich in the basanites, with up to 90% forsterite component in some
36 samples. Olivine is more iron-rich in nephelinites, with compositions down to Fo₅₂ (Badriyo
37 Agama, PhD thesis unpublished data).

38 As a whole, olivines in Nyiragongo lavas contain between 0.05 and 0.4 wt.% NiO, but can be
39 very Ca-rich, from 0.5 wt.% CaO in basanites up to 1.5% CaO in nephelinites. Highest values
40 of CaO often occur at the rim of large phenocrysts, but the core of some phenocrysts can also
41 be Ca-rich.

42 In a few samples, olivine phenocrysts appear heterogenous and oxidized under the microscope.
43 It appears that these crystals are made of two contrasted kinds of areas with different chemical
44 compositions. We focussed on these olivine crystals in two selected samples in order to better
45 understand the mechanisms leading to this phenomena.

46

47 **2. Samples**

48 From a large set of volcanic rocks coming from a recent field works on the South flank of the
49 Nyiragongo volcano, two samples containing oxidized olivine phenocrysts were selected for
50 analyses. AND-3 come from the Andrade cone, on the South flank of the Nyiragongo volcano,
51 South East of the Shaheru satellite volcano. MGR-2 was sampled on the Mugara volcanic scoria
52 cone, also on the South flank of the volcano, but at lower altitude.

53 Sample AND-3 comes from a dyke. The volcanic rock looks oxidized, with a reddish colour. It
54 has a microlitic texture with few clinopyroxene phenocrysts and more abundant
55 microphenocrysts of clinopyroxene and olivine. The sample contains many vacuoles of
56 irregular shape. A flow banding is clearly visible on hand-specimen and under the microscope,
57 and is associated with more glassy parts. Olivine is only present as microphenocrysts, and all
58 the crystals are highly oxidized and show two different kinds of composition.

59 Sample MGR-2 is a volcanic bomb from a scoria cone. It is a massive lava with a reddish
60 colour. The rock has a microlitic texture with few clinopyroxene phenocrysts. Microlites are
61 made of clinopyroxene and feldspaths (nepheline) disseminated in a dark groundmass with
62 many small vacuoles. Olivine is present as microphenocrysts, and as for AND-3, all the crystals
63 are strongly oxidized.

64

65 **3. Olivine description**

66 In the two studied samples, all the olivine crystals are oxidized and their shape and organization
67 can only be observed in reflected light or using backscattered electrons (BSE) with the electron
68 microprobe. All the crystals have the same internal structure, with large BSE-dark parts,
69 separated by elongated, not always parallel, BSE-grey zones (Fig. 1). In many crystals, the
70 BSE-grey parts are more regularly organized close to the rim than in the center of the grains.
71 Many crystals are rimmed by a heterogeneous light-grey zone, a few tens of micrometers large,

72 containing many backscatter bright white minerals. In MGR-2 sample, the central part of the
73 BSE-grey zones also sometimes contains small backscatter bright minerals (Fig. 1A).

74

75 **4. Analytical techniques**

76 Major element composition of minerals was measured using an electron microprobe
77 (Microsonde Ouest, CAMECA SX100) at the Laboratoire Géosciences Océan (University of
78 Brest, France) on C-coated polished thin sections. Mineral analyses were performed with
79 operating conditions of 15 kV and 20 nA, 10 s counting time on the peak and a spot size of 1
80 μm . Compositional maps and Back Scattered Electron (BSE) images were acquired on the same
81 microprobe.

82 The $\phi(\rho Z)$ matrix correction was applied based on Pouchou and Pichoir (1988). Standards
83 (element, emission line) are: albite (Na $K\alpha$, Si $K\alpha$), InP (P $K\alpha$), forsterite (Mg $K\alpha$), corundum
84 (Al $K\alpha$), orthoclase (K $K\alpha$), wollastonite (Ca $K\alpha$), synthetic manganese titanate (Mn $K\alpha$, Ti
85 $K\alpha$), pure iron (Fe $K\alpha$).

86 Whole-rock major and some trace elements were measured on the Horiba - Jobin-Yvon[®] Ultima
87 2 ICP-AES at the IUEM (European Institute for Marine Studies, Pôle de Spectrométrie Océan,
88 Brest, France). A description of the analytical procedure is given in Cotten et al. (1995).
89 Elements were determined from an H_3BO_3 solution, boron being used as internal standard for
90 ICP-AES analysis. For major elements, relative standard deviation is 1% for SiO_2 and 2% for
91 the other major elements, except for low values (<0.50 wt. %), for which the absolute standard
92 deviation is ± 0.01 wt. %.

93

94 **5. Results**

95 AND-3 and MGR-2 rocks are basanites with SiO₂ ranging from 40.4 to 42.2 wt.% and MgO
96 content ranging from 5.95 to 7.92 wt.% (Table 1). Similarly to other rocks from Nyiragongo
97 volcano, they are highly silica-undersaturated and their CIPW normative composition contains
98 between 12 and 17 % normative nepheline and between 12 and 18 % normative leucite.

99 We analysed the different parts of several olivine grains in the two samples AND-3 and MGR-
100 2. The results are presented in Table 2 and were compared to olivine analyses we made in other
101 samples from Nyiragongo volcano, similar to already published olivine analyses from this
102 volcano. Our results, in agreement with olivine compositions from Nyiragongo nephelinites
103 published by Platz et al. (2004) or Andersen et al. (2012) show that most olivine have chemical
104 composition ranging from Fo₇₀ to Fo₉₀. In the two studied samples, the BSE-dark part of olivine
105 is always made of almost pure forsteritic olivine, with composition ranging from Fo_{96.3} to Fo_{99.7}
106 (Fig. 2). The composition of the BSE-grey part is more variable, and, if considered as olivine,
107 ranges from Fo₅₆ to Fo₆₁ in MGR-2 and from Fo₂₇ to Fo₇₂ in AND-3. Only one analysis in
108 MGR-2 sample has a composition similar to normal Nyiragongo olivines, with Fo₈₁.

109 Oxide crystals have been analysed in the rims of several crystals. Oxides in volcanic rocks from
110 Nyiragongo volcano are usually Ti-rich, belonging to the titanomagnetite series (Badriyo
111 Agama, unpublished data). Oxides close to olivine grains in AND-3 and MGR-2 contain less
112 than 7 wt.% TiO₂ (except for one analysis) and are Ti-poor titanomagnetite, close to the
113 magnetite end-member (Table 4). Their composition is thus significantly different compared to
114 oxides in Nyiragongo volcanic rocks (Platz et al., 2004; Andersen et al., 2012; Badriyo Agama,
115 PhD thesis unpublished data). End-member calculations performed using the application
116 published by Ferracutti et al. (2015) confirm that the analysed oxides are mostly magnetite-
117 magnesioferrite, with small proportions of ulvospinel component.

118

119 **6. Discussion**

120 *6.1 Composition of primary olivine*

121 In order to understand the processes leading to these “two-phases” olivine crystals in some
122 Nyiragongo volcanic rocks, it is important to know if we can have some information about the
123 composition of the “primary” olivine before oxidation.

124 For the four olivine crystals presented in Fig. 1, we calculated the composition of the primary
125 olivine, before separation in two phases with different forsteritic content, considering that the
126 low-Mg BSE-grey parts are made of olivine. Using image-processing software, we produced
127 colour images of the crystals, with one colour for the BSE-dark parts and another colour for the
128 BSE-grey parts (Fig. 3). We excluded the rim of the crystals because electron microprobe
129 analyses show that they are heterogeneous and made of oxides and different silicates, too small
130 to be analysed. Counting the pixel number for each colour gave us the proportions of the two
131 types of olivine. The results of these calculations are presented in the Table 3 and shown on the
132 Fig. 4B. The proportions of BSE-dark and BSE-grey olivine are similar in the different crystals,
133 with 66 to 77 % dark and 22 to 34% grey. The results of the calculation show that the primary
134 olivines had compositions ranging from Fo₈₅ to Fo₉₁ and CaO content ranging from 0.24 to 0.30
135 wt.%. The high Fo values are similar to the most magnesian olivines from Nyiragongo volcano,
136 and the calculated CaO values are close to the lowest values obtained in the Nyiragongo lavas
137 (Fig. 2 and 4B). The results are broadly consistent with the formation of two different phases
138 during a subsolidus event.

139 *6.2 Partitioning of elements*

140 As shown on the figure 2, olivine in Nyiragongo lavas has a composition ranging from Fo₇₅ to
141 Fo₉₀. Olivines in samples AND-3 and MGR-2 probably shared the same characteristics before
142 their alteration, and the calculations of the primary olivines from the proportions of BSE-dark

143 and BSE-grey parts (Fig. 3) confirm these primary compositions between Fo₈₀ and Fo₉₀ in these
144 samples. During alteration, chemical elements can incorporate preferentially in the Mg-rich
145 olivine or in the Fe-rich phases. In volcanic olivine, SiO₂ is positively correlated to the Fo
146 content, and olivine in Nyiragongo lavas follows the same trend as olivine worldwide (Fig. 4A).
147 In AND-3 and MGR-2 samples, pure forsterite is enriched in silica, with up to 43.7 wt.% SiO₂.
148 This value is in agreement with stoichiometric value calculated for pure forsterite and shown
149 on the figure 4A. On the opposite, the Fe-rich phase is low in silica but lies above the trend for
150 worldwide olivine. These analyses do not follow the trend for stoichiometric olivine (Fig. 4B).
151 This can reflect the fact that the BSE-grey part of the crystals is made of a mixture of olivine
152 associated with iron oxides crystallized during oxidation of the primary olivine, thus pushing
153 the olivine composition above the stoichiometric trend. Microprobe analyses of the BSE-grey
154 parts of olivine crystals can thus be a mixture of olivine and very small crystals of oxides,
155 explaining the low sums of electron probe analyses for these parts of the crystals.

156 The calcium content of olivine crystallizing in mafic melts depends mostly upon the
157 concentration of calcium and alkaline elements in the melt and is independent of pressure,
158 temperature and oxygen fugacity below 20 kbar (Jurewicz and Watson 1988; Libourel 1999).
159 Nyiragongo magmas are Ca-rich, many lavas contain between 14 and 19 wt.% CaO (Platz et
160 al. 2004) and are also highly enriched in Na and K. Accordingly, olivine in Nyiragongo lavas
161 is also Ca-rich, with CaO content up to 1.5 wt.%, well above the trend for worldwide olivine
162 (Fig. 4B). In AND-3 and MGR-2 samples, pure forsterite parts contain lower CaO, always
163 below 0.4 wt.% (except for 2 analyses). During two-phases separation, Ca is preferentially
164 partitioned outside Mg-rich olivine, with content up to 1.3 wt.% CaO in the BSE-grey parts.
165 This observation is consistent with experimental results showing that Ca incorporation in
166 olivine is favoured by the activity of iron, and thus decreases when the Fo value of olivine
167 increases (Jurewicz and Watson 1988).

168 *6.3 Distribution of chemical elements and oxide formation*

169 Chemical mapping was performed on a full olivine grain from MGR-2 (Fig. 5). The results
170 confirm and enhance the observations inferred from the in-situ chemical analyses of the
171 different part of the crystal. The BSE-dark part, made of pure forsterite do not contain any
172 detectable Ca (Fig. 5A) and Fe (Fig. 5B). The iron-rich part is clearly enriched in Ca, as the Ca
173 map shows the same distribution pattern visible on the BSE image (Fig. 1A). These patterns are
174 also well visible with the iron distribution, which is clearly not homogeneous and shows
175 increasing content towards the center of the iron-rich sectors (Fig. 5B). Mg distribution
176 confirms these observations, with high concentrations in the pure forsterite part of the crystal
177 and lower content in the Fe-rich parts (Fig. 5C). As noted for iron, there is a gradient in the Mg
178 content, with decreasing intensity towards the center of these Fe-rich parts. The silica
179 distribution is more homogeneous (Fig. 5D), but still shows slightly higher Si content in pure
180 forsterite, as observed from the chemical analyses (Fig. 4A).

181 On the BSE images (Fig. 1) the olivine crystals are rimmed by a grey zone. At higher
182 magnification, this zone appears to be heterogeneous and made of different mineral phases, too
183 small to be analysed by the electron microprobe (Fig. 5A). It is rich in Ca, Fe and to a lesser
184 extend in Mg (Fig. 5) but very low in K. It is probably made of iron-oxides, clinopyroxene and
185 olivine. On the studied crystal in MGR-2, this zone is surrounded by a darker and larger area
186 connected to euhedral crystals of the same composition (Fig. 1). Very rich in K and Al, but with
187 no Fe, Ca and Na (Fig. 5), it appears to be pure kalsilite.

188 Occurrence of pure forsterite in volcanic rocks is rare and has been described in a few examples,
189 mostly from Iceland (Sigurdsson and Brown 1970), North Baikal region (Wenzel et al. 2002),
190 Stromboli volcano in Italy (Cortès et al. 2006) and the Big Pine Volcanic Field in California
191 (Blondes et al. 2012). In all these cases, the formation of forsteritic olivine is associated with a
192 highly oxidized environment, implying an oxidation event either in subliquidus or subsolidus

193 conditions. Haggerty and Baker (1967) showed that during high temperature deuteric
194 oxidation of olivine, pure forsterite is formed during breakdown of olivine crystals and expulsion
195 of iron. They also demonstrated experimentally that this oxidation event can produce magnetite,
196 hematite and enstatite associated to forsterite at atmospheric pressure, depending upon
197 temperature and in the temperature range 600 – 1000°C.

198 According to these observations, magnetite, hematite and/or enstatite should be present in the
199 Nyiragongo samples containing oxidized olivine. BSE images of some olivine crystals from
200 MGR-2 and AND-3 samples (Fig. 1) confirm the presence of numerous oxides located all
201 around the grains. Electron microprobe analyses show that these oxides are enriched in Fe³⁺.
202 Calculation of the end-members using the EMG application provided by Ferracutti et al. (2015)
203 show that they belong to the magnetite-magnesioferrite series, with a low ulvöspinel
204 component. They differ from the common oxides present as microlites and/or phenocrysts in
205 Nyiragongo lavas which are titanomagnetite with ulvöspinel component ranging from 48 to
206 60% (Minisalle et al. 2019). As these magnetite-rich oxides are produced by olivine oxidation,
207 they should also be present in association with the two different olivine compositions inside the
208 olivine crystals. To check for these peculiar oxides, we produced high-resolution chemical maps
209 of part of olivine crystal from both samples. In MGR-2, BSE image shows bright phases in the
210 core of the low-Mg areas in olivine (Fig. 6A). On the chemical maps, these phases are iron-
211 rich, with low Mg and no silica (Fig. 6B,C,D). They represent iron-rich oxides, probably
212 magnetite of similar composition than the small grains surrounding the olivine crystals, but
213 unfortunately too small to be analysed with the electron microprobe. This observation confirms
214 that the BSE-grey parts of olivine crystals are a mixture of olivine and iron-rich oxides. Similar
215 chemical maps have been obtained from part of an olivine crystal in AND-3. In this case, no
216 bright iron-rich and silica-poor crystals are visible on the BSE and chemical maps (Fig. 7) while

217 some are present just outside the olivine crystal. In this case, it is possible that the resolution of
218 the chemical maps is too low to be able to see these oxides if they are present.

219 *6.4 Possible origin for the forsterite in olivine from Nyiragongo*

220 Petrological observations as well as experimental works have related the occurrence of pure
221 forsteritic olivine to highly oxidizing conditions. At Stromboli volcano, Cortès et al. (2006)
222 argue for a subliquidus process, with forsterite crystallization related to degassing of the
223 magmatic system associated with rapid decompression and increase in f_{O_2} . Subliquidus
224 forsterite crystallization is also advocated for Icelandic basalts, caused by magma-sea water
225 interactions in the magma column (Sigurdsson and Brown 1970). At the opposite, forsterite in
226 Big Pine basaltic flows formed in subsolidus conditions, during oxidation events occurring
227 shortly after lava cooling (Blondes et al., 2012). Similar subsolidus or deuteric conditions have
228 been described and reproduced in experiments by Haggerty and Baker (1967) to explain the
229 formation of forsteritic olivine accompanied by magnetite, hematite and/or enstatite formation.

230 In Nyiragongo lavas, the occurrence of forsterite associated with low-Mg mixture of olivine
231 and iron-rich oxides in strongly oxidized lavas argue for a subsolidus formation of the forsterite,
232 during a deuteric process. This view is reinforced by the calculation of the primary olivine by
233 combining the composition and proportions of forsteritic and low-Mg areas (Fig. 3) to obtain
234 olivine with composition similar to those found in other rocks from this volcano, excepted for
235 the iron content, enriched in the low-Mg parts of the crystals. This secondary oxidation process
236 is confirmed by the global oxidation of the two studied samples, illustrated by their reddish
237 colour.

238 Subsolidus recrystallization under high f_{O_2} conditions have been demonstrated in several cases,
239 and has also been evidenced in Nyiragongo lavas. In their study of low-pressure fractionation
240 trends of the Nyiragongo volcanic rocks, Platz et al. (2004) argued for the presence of large

241 amounts of CO₂ and H₂O allowing to the formation of abundant melilite. Nyiragongo magmas
242 are CO₂-rich, as confirmed by gas analyses (Sawyer et al. 2008) and by the presence of calcite
243 in the groundmass of many volcanic rocks (Andersen et al. 2012). The presence of large amount
244 of CO₂, either in magmas or fluids can increase the f_{O_2} in great proportion, and has been
245 advocated to explain the formation of forsteritic olivine in skarns (Wenzel et al. 2002). In many
246 nephelinites from Nyiragongo, Andersen et al. (2012) observed static recrystallization of the
247 groundmass, with the formation of nepheline-kalsilite aggregates together with crystallization
248 of götzenite and combeite at temperature of ca. 600°C. They also show that post-magmatic
249 reequilibration of some samples has taken place at temperature below 600°C and in highly
250 oxidizing conditions, well above the QFM buffer (Andersen et al., 2014). As already proposed
251 by Sahama (1961, 1962), these low temperature crystallizations occurred in response to thermal
252 metamorphism and metasomatism from H₂O- and CO₂-bearing fluids. The presence of a
253 permanent lava lake connected with a shallow magma chamber at Nyiragongo volcano provides
254 a favourable environment for this process. The lava lake is continuously cooling, partly by
255 thermal conduction through the rocks of the lake walls. Fluctuations of the lava lake in the large
256 Nyiragongo crater allows episodic heating of the rocks in the large cone of the volcano. The
257 degassing magma provides large amounts of H₂O-CO₂ fluid or gas, probably enriched in iron
258 and which can percolate through the adjacent rocks and through the whole volcanic cone,
259 inducing metamorphism and/or metasomatism under high f_{O_2} conditions.

260 This kind of highly oxidizing environment represents ideal conditions for the oxidation of
261 olivine crystals and formation of forsteritic olivine as well as iron-rich oxides. From these
262 observations, we can conclude that oxidized olivine in some Nyiragongo lavas accompanied by
263 the formation of pure forsterite associated to iron-rich oxides is one more evidence for deuteric
264 processes occurring in the large volcanic cone of the Nyiragongo, in relation with the presence
265 of a shallow magma chamber connected to a large and permanent lava lake. Circulation of iron-

266 rich highly oxidizing fluids or gas induces a separation of olivines crystals into two components
267 (pure forsterite and iron oxides). These observations confirm that thermal metamorphism and
268 metasomatism can deeply modify and complexify the mineralogy of the already very special
269 rocks of Nyiragongo volcano.

270

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327

328 **Figure captions**

329 Figure 1: BSE (Back Scattered Electron) images of olivine grains in MGR-2 (A) and AND-3
330 (B, C and D) samples. In each crystal, the dark part is pure forsterite and the grey part is Fe-
331 rich olivine plus Fe-rich oxides.

332 Figure 2: Forsterite content of the different parts of the analyzed grains of olivine in MGR-2
333 (Fig. 1A) and AND-3 (Fig. 1B,C,D), compared to the composition of olivine in other
334 Nyiragongo lavas (Badriyo Agama, unpublished data).

335 Figure 3: Image processed (B) of the BSE image (A) of an olivine crystal from MGR-2 sample.
336 The calculated surface for the green and red colours allows the determination of the different
337 proportion of forsterite and Fe-rich areas considered as olivine, and the calculation of the
338 composition of the initial olivine crystal (See text for explanation).

339 Figure 4: SiO₂ and CaO content in the 4 studied olivine grains in MGR-2 and AND-3 samples
340 versus their forsterite content, assuming that the BSE-grey parts are olivine. The grey circles
341 correspond to olivine analyses from other Nyiragongo lavas (Badriyo Agama, unpublished
342 data). The green field represents olivine compositions from mafic volcanic rocks worldwide
343 (GEOROC database). In A, the black line corresponds to the calculated composition of
344 stoichiometric olivine. In B, the squares represent the calculated composition of the initial
345 olivine grains shown in Fig. 1.

346 Figure 5: Chemical maps of an olivine crystal from sample MGR-2 obtained on the electron
347 microprobe. The colour scale shows the level of concentration of Ca (A), Fe (B), Mg (C) and
348 Si (D).

349 Figure 6: BSE image (A) and chemical maps of a small portion of an olivine crystal from MGR-
350 2 sample obtained on the electron microprobe. The crystal is the large one shown on Fig. 1A, 3
351 and 5. The colour scale shows the level of concentration of Fe (B), Mg (C) and Si (D).

352 Figure 7: BSE image (A) and chemical maps of a small portion of an olivine crystal from AND-
353 3 sample obtained on the electron microprobe. The crystal is the large one shown on Fig. 1B.
354 The colour scale shows the level of concentration of Fe (B), Mg (C) and Si (D).

355

356 **Table captions**

357 Table 1 Major element composition (wt. %) of the two studied samples.

358 Table 2 Electron microprobe analyses of olivine in the two studied samples. D is for BSE-dark,
359 G is for BSE-grey. Fo is the forsterite content calculated from the analyses.

360 Table 3 Calculation of the primary olivine composition from image processing and electron
361 microprobe analyses. Image data columns represent the % of the two kinds of olivine in each
362 analyzed crystal, calculated from image processing. Electron microprobe columns represent the
363 average composition of dark and grey olivine for Fo and CaO. Primary olivine columns show
364 the calculated composition of the primary olivine as a mixing of grey and dark olivine in
365 proportions calculated from the images.

366 Table 4 Electron microprobe analyses of oxides around and inside the studied olivine crystals.

367 Fe^{2+} and Fe^{3+} have been calculated using Ferracutti et al (2015) software.

368

Pure forsterite in Nyiragongo lavas: evidence for subsolidus oxidation of volcanic rocks

Innocent Badriyo Agama^{1,3}, Gilles Chazot^{2*} and Pierre Kamgang¹

¹Département des Sciences de la Terre, Faculté des Sciences, Université de Yaoundé I, B.P. 812, Yaoundé, Cameroon

²Université de Brest (UBO), UMR 6538, Laboratoire Géosciences Océan, Institut Universitaire Européen de la Mer, place Copernic, 29280 Plouzané, France. ORCID : 0000-0002-2182-7459

³Observatoire Volcanologique de Goma. B.P. 484, Goma, Nord-Kivu, RDC

* Corresponding author: Gilles.Chazot@univ-brest.fr

Abstract

Some volcanic rocks from Nyiragongo volcano in the Democratic Republic of Congo contain highly oxidized olivine crystals. These olivines crystals are made of two phases, dark olivine on backscattered electron images of pure forsterite composition and grey Mg-poor areas made of olivine and iron-rich oxides. Calculation of the initial composition confirms that they are primary olivine with late separation of two different olivine compositions. Pure forsterite is enriched in SiO₂ but contains lower amounts of CaO than Fe-rich areas, in agreement with expected partitioning of these elements related to the composition of the olivine. Iron-rich oxides formed around or inside the olivine crystals during the separation process and confirm a highly oxidized environment during their evolution. We propose that this separation occurred during subsolidus recrystallization under high f_{O₂} conditions of the olivine crystals after cooling of the volcanic rocks. It provides evidences for circulation of iron-rich fluids or gas inducing deuteric processes occurring in the large volcanic cone of the Nyiragongo, in relation with the presence of a shallow magma chamber connected to a large and permanent lava lake.

Article highlights

- Some volcanic rocks from Nyiragongo volcano contain oxidized olivine crystals with areas of different chemical compositions
- Primary olivine crystals separated into pure forsterite (F₀₉₉) and Fe-rich oxides

- Forsterite formation occurred during subsolidus recrystallization under highly oxidizing conditions related to H₂O-CO₂-Iron rich gas or fluid percolation

Keywords: Nyiragongo – Olivine – Forsterite- Oxidation

Declarations

Funding: World Bank

Conflict of interest: On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest

Availability of data and material: Most of the data are in the tables. More data and samples are available on request.

Code availability: Not applicable

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Table 1

	AND-3	MGR-2
SiO ₂	42.18	40.41
TiO ₂	3.67	3.39
Al ₂ O ₃	14.44	12.14
Fe ₂ O ₃	13.35	13.10
MnO	0.21	0.20
MgO	5.95	7.92
CaO	11.73	14.67
Na ₂ O	3.66	2.59
K ₂ O	3.84	2.71
P ₂ O ₅	0.71	0.74
LOI	0.23	0.38
Total	99.96	98.26
Mg#	46.9	54.5

Table 2

Sample	MGR-2																			
Analysis n°	28	29	30	31	32	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	22	23	24	25	
	D	G	D	G	D	D	D	D	D	G	G	G	G	G	G	D	D	D	D	
SiO ₂	42.87	38.98	42.80	37.56	43.74	42.59	42.95	43.03	43.09	40.10	39.03	36.27	38.42	38.90	37.60	43.05	43.30	42.67	42.84	
TiO ₂	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.07	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03	
Al ₂ O ₃	0.01	0.11	0.00	0.10	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.06	0.08	0.06	0.12	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.04	
Cr ₂ O ₃	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.00	0.08	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	
FeO	0.67	31.56	0.69	33.40	3.90	2.58	0.71	0.64	0.71	30.86	31.40	35.55	32.65	18.25	29.95	0.38	0.35	1.71	0.79	
MnO	0.14	0.25	0.20	0.20	0.34	0.20	0.14	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.23	0.18	0.19	0.21	0.18	0.11	0.23	0.37	0.28	
MgO	56.80	25.57	56.51	25.05	50.46	54.13	56.21	56.53	57.04	26.68	25.91	25.33	25.33	43.23	29.26	57.51	57.11	54.86	56.71	
CaO	0.05	0.83	0.12	0.91	0.36	0.98	0.02	0.14	0.09	1.01	1.11	0.95	0.77	0.58	0.95	0.03	0.00	0.95	0.32	
NiO	0.24	0.02	0.23	0.05	0.18	0.29	0.19	0.25	0.23	0.10	0.11	0.05	0.08	0.12	0.11	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.05	
Total	100.81	97.40	100.56	97.33	99.01	100.88	100.32	100.85	101.42	99.17	98.16	98.60	97.73	101.48	98.45	101.18	101.03	100.64	101.07	
Fo	99.34	59.09	99.32	57.21	95.84	97.40	99.30	99.37	99.30	60.65	59.53	55.95	58.04	80.85	63.53	99.63	99.66	98.29	99.22	

Sample	AND-3																							
Analysis n°	46	47	48	49	50	56	72	73	27	28	29	30	32	33	38	42	43	44	45	49	50	51	52	
	D	D	G	G	D	D	D	D	D	D	G	G	D	G	G	D	D	G	G	G	G	G	D	
SiO ₂	43.21	42.84	36.31	39.68	43.28	43.33	42.57	42.62	42.83	42.99	39.06	38.04	43.02	38.70	40.27	43.03	42.33	39.96	39.75	36.54	36.71	39.77	42.86	
TiO ₂	0.10	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.17	0.25	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.10	0.05	
Al ₂ O ₃	0.04	0.00	0.12	0.16	0.07	0.05	0.02	0.08	0.04	0.00	0.09	0.06	0.04	0.19	0.32	0.04	0.01	0.06	0.11	0.07	0.14	0.06	0.02	
Cr ₂ O ₃	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	
FeO	2.47	0.70	45.10	27.01	0.80	0.73	1.72	3.66	2.06	1.88	28.73	33.61	1.23	31.92	29.27	0.87	0.87	27.11	37.12	38.27	47.45	24.01	0.88	
MnO	0.34	0.43	0.17	0.51	0.44	0.31	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.34	0.20	0.26	0.24	0.22	0.21	0.30	0.45	0.21	0.24	0.13	0.43	0.26	
MgO	54.21	56.87	14.45	28.66	56.59	56.90	56.07	53.74	55.83	56.04	30.69	26.51	57.08	26.78	28.47	56.81	56.89	29.04	17.34	18.64	9.98	33.93	56.42	
CaO	0.14	0.27	0.45	0.55	0.08	0.11	0.06	0.31	0.16	0.06	0.69	0.58	0.13	0.35	0.18	0.11	0.20	0.59	0.42	1.30	0.11	0.46	0.14	
NiO	0.20	0.17	0.06	0.21	0.16	0.15	0.16	0.21	0.13	0.16	0.12	0.15	0.17	0.06	0.01	0.27	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.05	0.04	0.15	0.19	
Total	100.71	101.32	96.69	96.82	101.49	101.58	100.89	100.91	101.35	101.50	99.81	99.31	101.99	98.65	99.15	101.49	100.89	97.51	95.43	95.35	94.82	99.03	100.90	
Fo	97.51	99.31	36.35	65.41	99.21	99.29	98.30	96.32	97.98	98.15	65.57	58.44	98.81	59.92	63.43	99.14	99.15	65.63	45.44	46.47	27.27	71.59	99.13	

Table 3

	Image data		Electron microprobe data				Primary olivine	
	% dark	% grey	Fo dark	Fo grey	CaO dark (wt.%)	CaO grey (wt.%)	Fo	CaO
MGR-2	77.5	22.5	99.3	60.0	0.10	1.00	90.5	0.30
AND-3 olivine 1	65.9	34.1	98.0	60.0	0.10	0.50	85.0	0.24
AND-3 olivine 2	69.5	30.5	99.1	65.0	0.18	0.50	88.7	0.28
AND-3 olivine 3	77.2	22.8	99.0	65.0	0.18	0.50	91.2	0.25

Table 4

Analysis n°	MGR2		AND3									
	16	17	26	31	34	35	36	37	40	41	46	48
SiO ₂	0.01	0.10	0.04	0.44	0.83	0.04	0.05	0.54	0.02	0.04	0.71	1.96
Al ₂ O ₃	1.36	0.93	1.02	1.09	3.10	0.74	5.95	0.58	0.61	5.12	1.26	1.01
TiO ₂	6.53	3.92	4.31	0.52	1.99	5.07	0.50	0.11	3.82	0.22	6.87	8.97
FeO	79.52	81.47	81.58	87.39	62.96	81.13	64.08	88.38	82.83	65.18	75.81	71.73
MnO	0.81	0.55	0.53	0.07	1.31	0.54	2.09	0.04	0.37	1.84	0.95	0.87
MgO	3.20	2.19	2.26	0.45	22.31	2.78	19.83	0.91	2.12	19.82	5.65	6.16
CaO	0.10	0.08	0.20	0.07	0.14	0.16	0.09	0.03	0.05	0.12	0.27	0.54
Cr ₂ O ₃	0.11	0.02	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
NiO	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.15	0.05	0.12	0.06	0.02	0.21	0.05	0.08
TOTAL	91.69	89.30	90.22	90.04	92.79	90.52	92.71	90.65	89.85	92.56	91.57	91.31
Fe ²⁺ (calculated)	30.54	29.20	29.73	30.29	0.00	29.69	0.00	29.56	29.69	0.00	27.60	28.98
Fe ³⁺ (calculated)	54.42	58.09	57.62	63.45	69.97	57.17	71.21	65.37	59.06	72.44	53.58	47.50

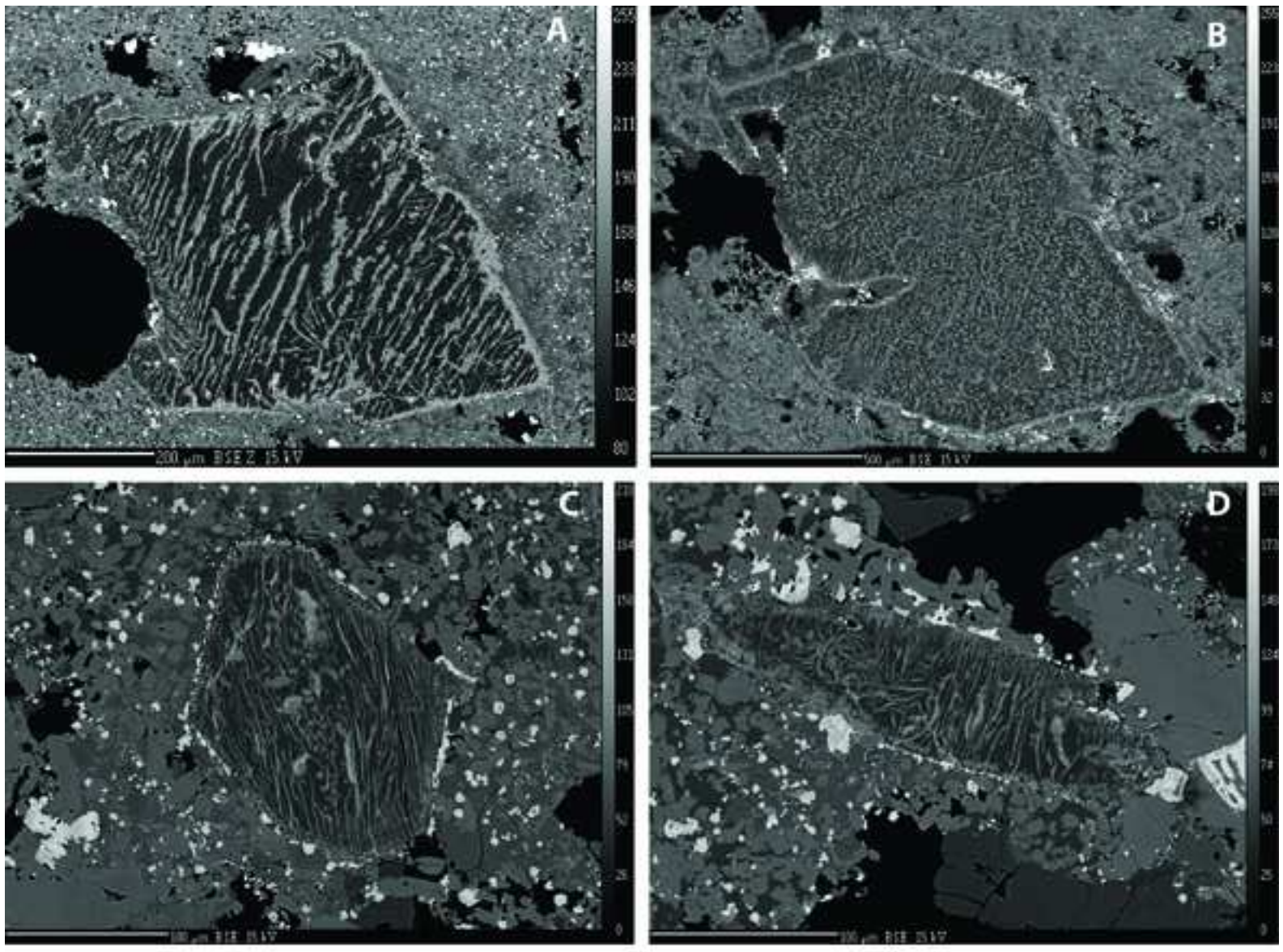


Figure 1

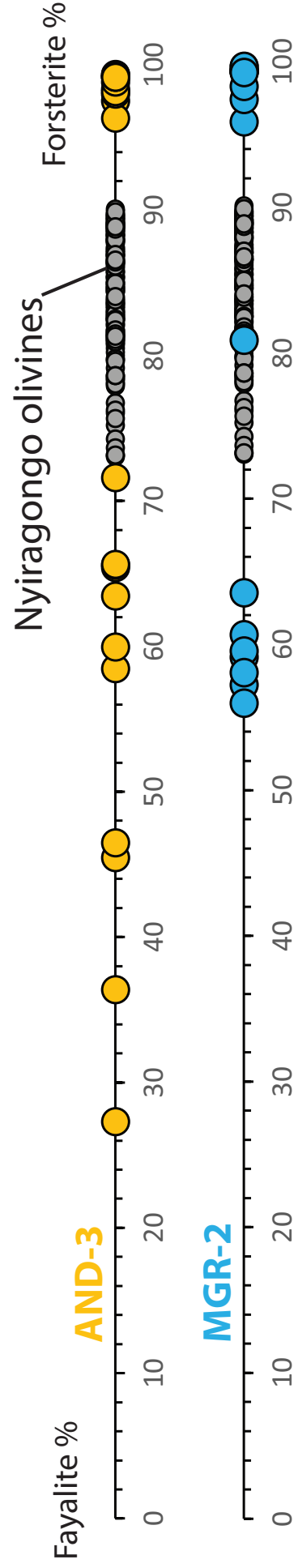


Figure 2

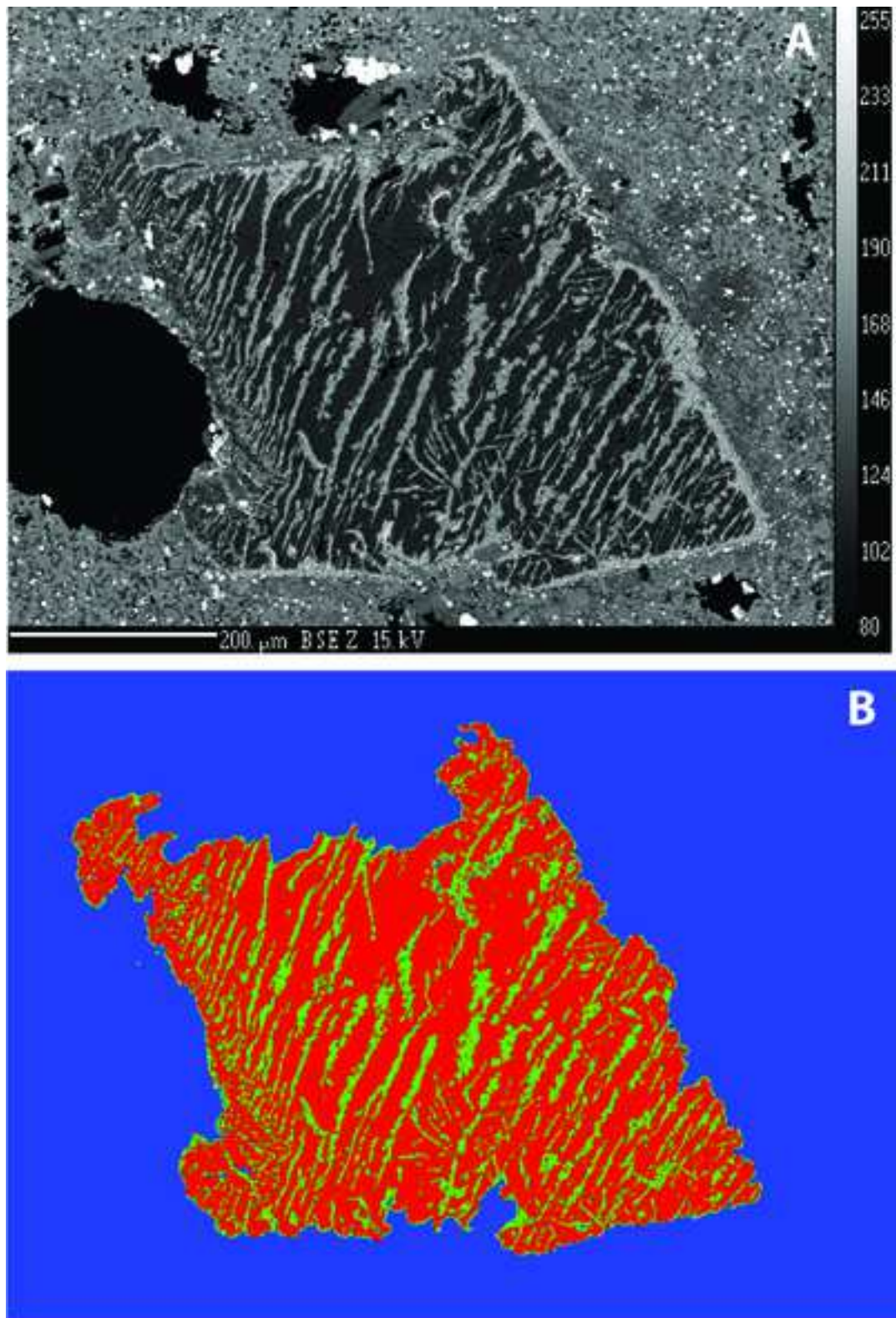


Figure 3

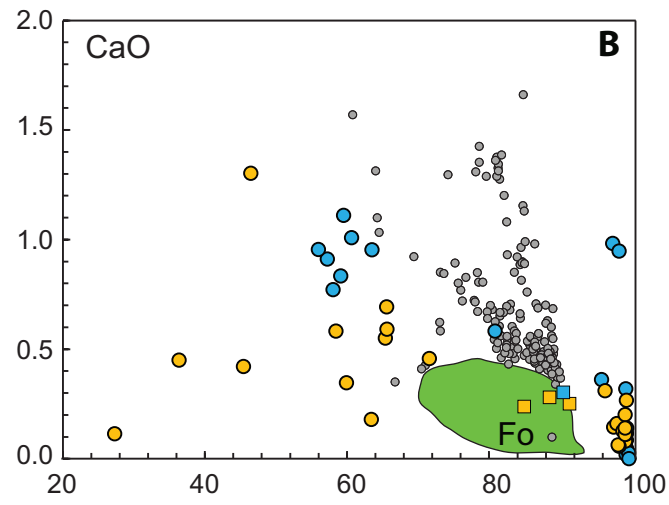
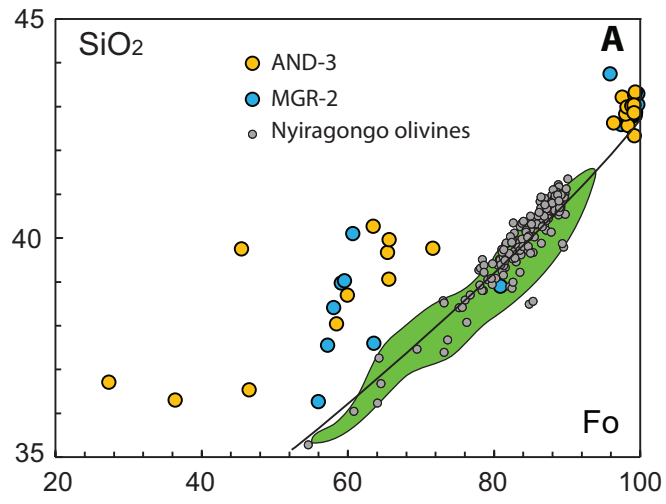


Figure 4

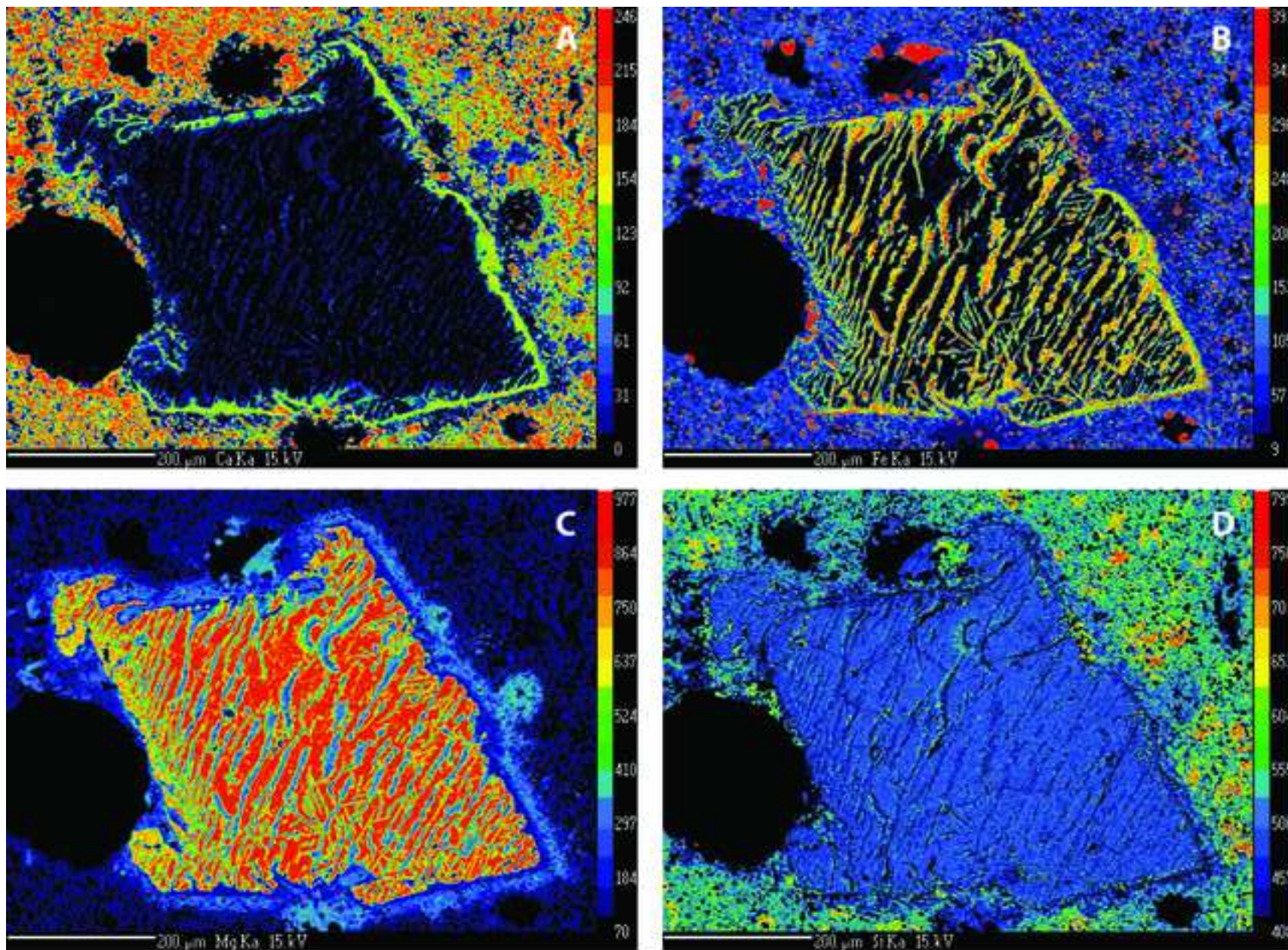


Figure 5

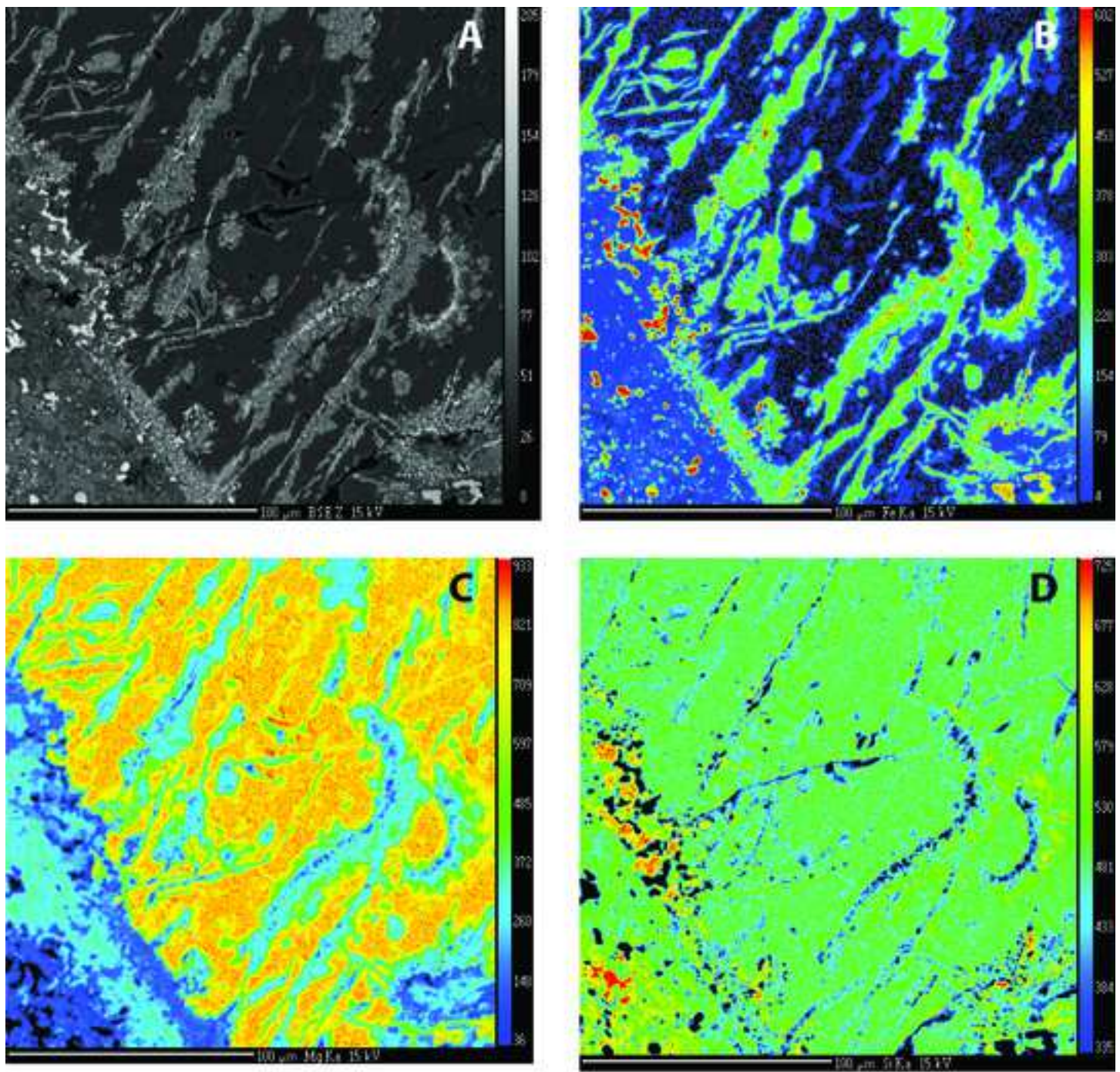


Figure 6

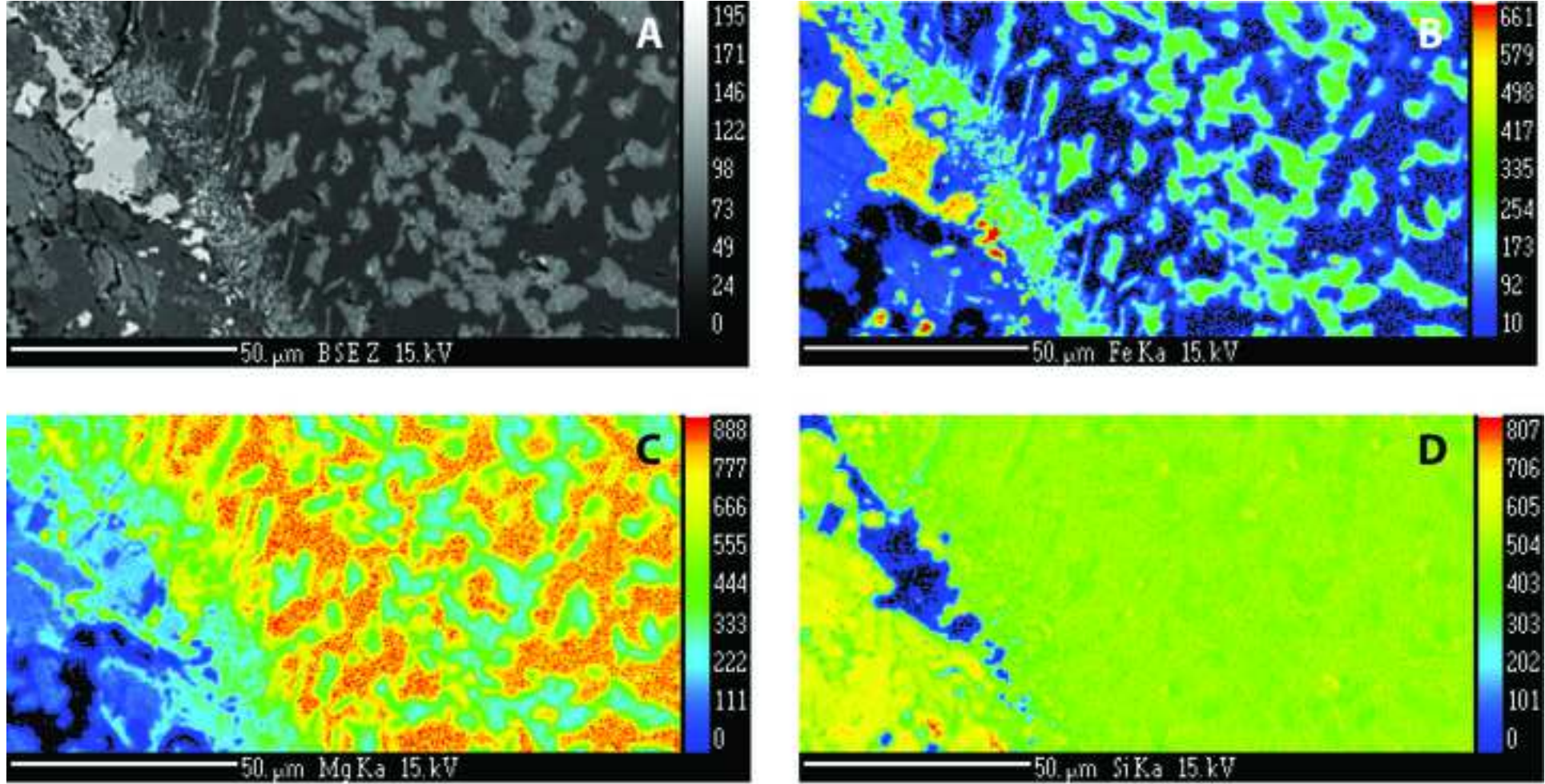


Figure 7