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Citation for published version:

De Hoog, C-J 2015, 'Water contents of natural zircons are controlled by their Y+REE contents', 25th Annual Goldschmidt Conference 2015, Prague, Czech Republic, 16/08/15 - 21/08/15.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

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Water contents of natural zircons are controlled by their Y+REE contents

J.C.M. DE HOOG^{1*}, C.J. LISSEBERG²,
R.A. BROOKER³, R.W. HINTON¹, D. TRAIL⁴,
E.W.G. HELLEBRAND⁵

¹School of GeoSciences, Univ. Edinburgh, EH9 3FE, UK

(*correspondence: ceesjan.dehoog@ed.ac.uk)

²School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, Cardiff Univ., UK

³School of Earth Sciences, Univ. Bristol, UK

⁴Dept. Earth and Envir. Sciences, Univ. Rochester, USA

⁵Dept. of Geol. and Geoph., Univ. Hawai'i at Mānoa, USA

The water and trace element contents of non-metamict igneous zircons were determined to constrain the H incorporation mechanism and to evaluate the use of zircon to constrain water contents of melts [1]. Zircons from Fe-Ti oxide gabbros from the Vema Fracture Zone [2] contain up to 980 ppm H₂O, 1.4 wt% Y₂O₃ and 0.6 wt% P₂O₅ and are generally strongly zoned. Y+REE are partially charge-balanced by P ($Y^{3+}+P^{5+}=Zr^{4+}+Si^{4+}$) but a large Y excess is present (Fig. 1A). On an atomic basis, this excess closely matches the amount of H present in the zircons (Fig. 1B). We therefore conclude that H is incorporated by a charge-balance mechanism ($H^{+}+Y^{3+}=Zr^{4+}$). This is supported by FTIR data, which show a strongly polarised absorption band at 3100 cm⁻¹ similar to experimental Lu-doped hydrous zircons. No other absorption bands are visible, excluding a hydrogrossular-type exchange mechanism. Because of charge-balanced uptake of H, P and Y+REE in zircon, the partitioning of these elements into zircon is dependent on each of their concentrations. Hence, using H in zircon to determine water contents of melts is challenging. As Ce⁴⁺ partitioning is not affected, Ce anomalies may depend on H₂O and P₂O₅ contents of the melt, in addition to its oxidation state [3].

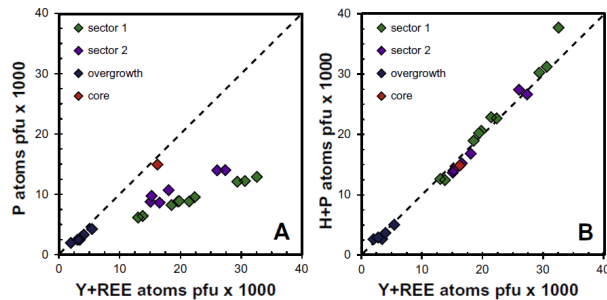


Figure 1: (A) P vs Y+REE (B) H+P vs Y+REE

[1] De Hoog *et al.* (2014) *Geoch Cosmoch Acta* **141**, 472-486.

[2] Lissenberg *et al.* (2009) *Science* **323**, 1048-1050. [3] Trail

et al. (2012) *Geoch Cosmoch Acta* **97**, 70-87.