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Geobarometric evidence for a LM/TZ origin of $CaSiO_3$ in a sublithospheric diamond

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Abstract

Breyite is the second most abundant mineral inclusion in super-deep diamonds after ferropericlase. Though breyite stability extends to 300 km along typical mantle geotherm, this phase is often assumed to be the product of retrograde transformation of $CaSiO_3$-perovskite, and thus has the potential to retain information from as deep as 800–1000 km. In this study, we determined the depth of formation of a breyite inclusion still enclosed in its host diamond from Juîna, Brazil, by X-ray diffraction. The measured >5 % smaller unit cell for breyite indicates a stored residual pressure showing that the breyite was entrapped between about 9(1) and 10(1) GPa. These are the highest estimates of formation pressure ever determined for a breyite inclusion. For ambient mantle temperatures higher than 1400–1500 °C, these pressures would exceed the maximum *P* of the breyite stability field. Breyite in this diamond cannot be primary but is rather a back-transformation product from $CaSiO_3$-perovskite formed in the transition zone or the lower mantle. The co-existence magnesite in diamond JU55 and the slab-association of sublithospheric diamonds is evidence of carbon transport to lower mantle depths.

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Introduction

Diamond and its entrapped mineral inclusions represent the deepest natural materials from Earth's interior. The stability field for diamond in Earth, determined by laboratory experiments, ranges from about 150 km down to a depth of 2900 km (Maeda *et al.*, 2017). Diamond often encloses surrounding mantle minerals during growth (*e.g.*, Stachel, 2001; Brenker *et al.*, 2007; Stachel and Harris, 2009; Bulanova *et al.*, 2010), providing an exceptional window into the Earth's deep interior. A rare category of diamonds (Stachel and Harris, 2008), the so-called super-deep diamonds (or sublithospheric diamonds), are interpreted to crystallise between 300 km and a minimum of 800 km depth (Harte, 2010). This interpretation is based on mineral phases found as inclusions in these diamonds, although some are thought to be products of retrograde transformations from the transition zone or lower mantle precursors (*e.g.*, Shirey *et al.*, 2013).

The Earth's lower mantle mainly consists of ~75–80 % bridgmanite (~$MgSiO_3$), 10–15 % ferropericlase [(Mg,Fe)O], and 5–10 % of a $CaSiO_3$-phase with perovskite structure (*e.g.*, Harte, 2010). If these phases become trapped inside a diamond during its growth, they can be transported to the Earth's surface without reacting kimberlite magma or ambient mantle material (*e.g.*, Brenker *et al.*, 2021). During ascent, the inclusions remain chemically pristine but often transform to their lower-pressure polymorphs. However, in all other cases reported so far, a direct pressure determination that breyite (formerly called $CaSiO_3$-walstromite) formed at lower-pressure after $CaSiO_3$-perovskite has not been possible. After ferropericlase, breyite is the second most abundant (Brenker *et al.*, 2021) and the dominant Ca-bearing mineral found in super-deep diamonds (Joswig *et al.*, 1999). The $CaSiO_3$-phases are amenable to hosting elements such as Nd, Sr, U and Pb that allow radiometric dating and tracer isotopic studies. Therefore, constraining the ultimate depth of origin of $CaSiO_3$-inclusions is critical to understanding the geochemical information coming from these studies.

When breyite is simply considered to be the product of back-transformation from $CaSiO_3$-perovskite, it would be derived from a high-pressure assemblage of peridotitic/eclogitic mantle rocks at depths below 520 km (Kaminsky, 2012; Anzolini *et al.*, 2018). However, there are indications that breyite can also be a primary inclusion phase originating from much shallower depths within the upper mantle (Anzolini *et al.*, 2016; Thomson *et al.*, 2016). Recently, Brenker *et al.* (2021) summarised possible formation scenarios for breyite that do not necessarily require

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great depths and showed that breyite formation is possible within the upper mantle as well. Thus, the abundance of breyite as an inclusion in sublithospheric diamonds makes determining its primary or retrograde mineral history essential in understanding mantle dynamics.

Breyite formation *via* exsolution from a $CaSiO_3$-$CaTiO_3$-perovskite solid solution only requires pressures below 10 GPa, corresponding to depths of 270–300 km within the upper mantle, shown experimentally (Kubo *et al.*, 1997) and through natural intergrowths between the two phases (*e.g.*, Bulanova *et al.*, 2010; Zedgenizov *et al.*, 2016). Further, breyite can form as a product of the retrograde reaction of larnite (β-Ca_2SiO_4) and titanite-structured $CaSi_2O_5$ at pressures between 9 and 10 GPa at depths not greater than 270–300 km (Brenker *et al.*, 2005; Anzolini *et al.*, 2016, 2018). The reaction of carbonate and a Si-rich component can also lead to breyite formation (Brenker *et al.*, 2005, 2007). For this last scenario, two different pressure estimates were postulated: one at very low pressures of about 6 GPa or less (Fedoraeva *et al.*, 2019) under SiO_2-poor conditions, and another at a maximum pressure of about 6–8 GPa (Woodland *et al.*, 2020) in SiO_2-enriched environments.

These different formation mechanisms show that the sole occurrence of breyite in a diamond cannot be used as a standalone criterion to propose its depth of origin (Brenker *et al.*, 2021) without other independent geobarometric determinations. It is known that diamond retains a certain pressure on its inclusions, known as "residual pressure" P_{inc} (or internal pressure) (see Supplementary Information; Angel *et al.*, 2022). By determining the residual pressure of an inclusion by single-inclusion elastic geobarometry, a minimum pressure for a given

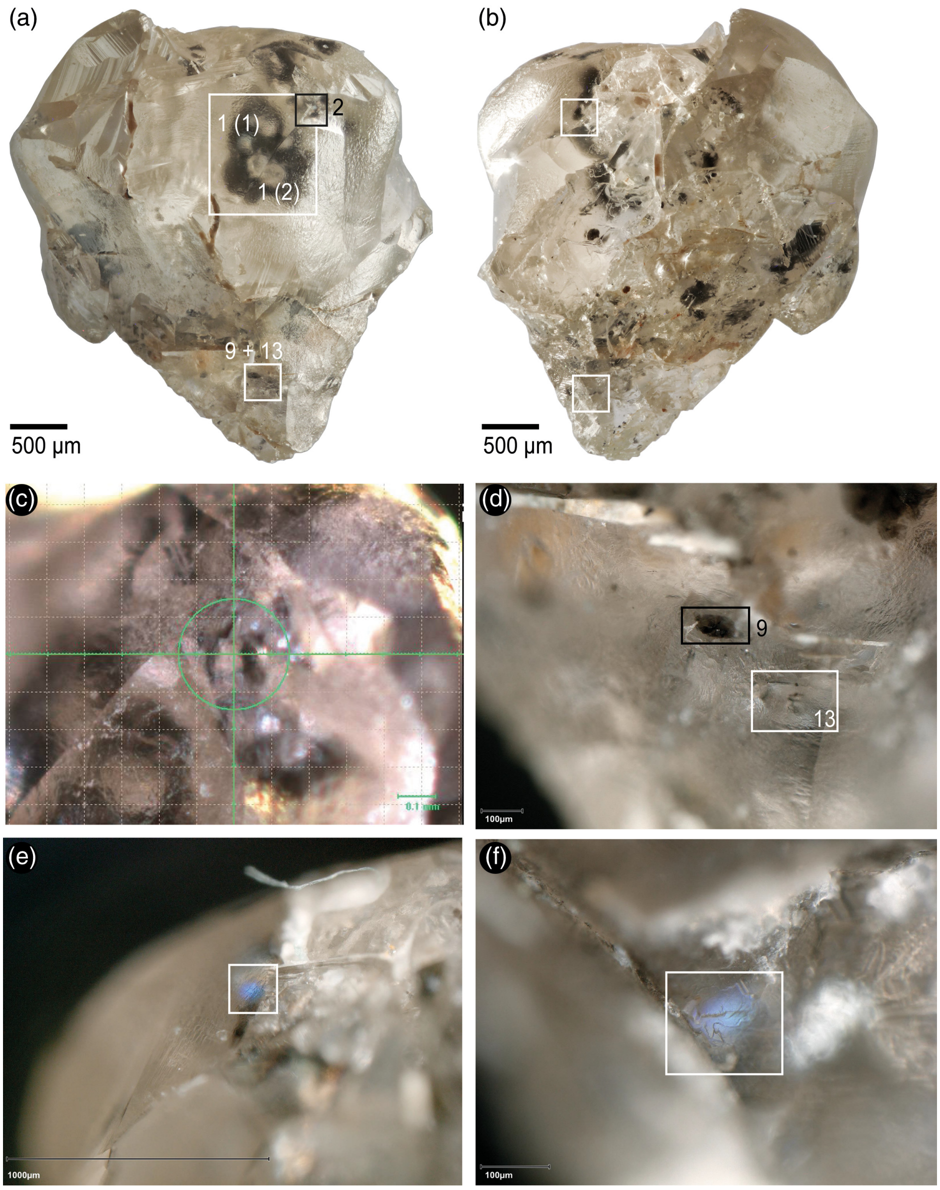

Figure 1 **(a)** Overview of the front of diamond JU55 of this work. The black square shows the location of the breyite inclusion 2, while the larger white square shows two groups of colourless breyite inclusions, groups 1(1) and 1(2). The white square shows inclusions 9 and 13, resulted to be the two TiO_2 polymorphs (inclusion 9) rutile and anatase, and magnesite (inclusion 13). **(b)** Overview of the back of diamond JU55. The white squares show the locations of the ferropericlase inclusions. **(c)** Detailed view of the breyite inclusion 2. **(d)** Detailed view of inclusion 9 (black square) and 13 (white square). **(e)** Detailed view of the first ferropericlase inclusion. **(f)** Detailed view of the second ferropericlase inclusion.

temperature of the entrapment of a mineral inclusion in its host diamond can be calculated (Angel *et al.*, 2014, 2015). The presence of fractures and/or cracks around the inclusions can affect and decrease the residual pressure as discussed in detail by Angel *et al.* (2022).

A very reliable way to measure P_{inc} is by X-ray diffraction getting the unit-cell volumes of the inclusion before and after release from the host diamond (Anzolini *et al.*, 2019) or by comparison to a second, stand-alone reference sample of the inclusion mineral. Using this approach, we present the highest residual pressure ever measured for a breyite-diamond pair, which allows us to constrain the origin and geological implications of this super-deep diamond.

Results

Entrapment pressure of breyite. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction (SCXRD) measurement resulted in the following unit-cell parameters for JU55 inclusion 2 (Fig. 1a, inclusion in the black square): $a = 6.31(3)$ Å, $b = 6.60(1)$ Å, $c = 9.24(3)$ Å, $\alpha = 84.3(2)°$, $\beta = 71.8(3)°$, $\gamma = 77.38(3)°$, and $V = 356(2)$ Å^3. This unit-cell volume was used to calculate the residual pressure (P_{inc}) using the EoSFit7c software (Angel *et al.*, 2014) and the equation of state of breyite published by Anzolini *et al.* (2016). This was possible comparing our unit-cell volume with that of the holotype breyite (Brenker *et al.*, 2021), which was measured using exactly the same instrumental set-up used in this work. The room pressure volume determined in Brenker *et al.* (2021) was 376.72(4) Å^3. Comparing this volume with our volume determination and using the *P*–*V* equation of state of breyite (Anzolini *et al.*, 2016), we obtained a residual pressure P_{inc} value of 5.4 ± 0.6 GPa. This is the highest residual pressure ever stored in a diamond existing at Earth's surface in a single-phase breyite inclusion. Using this P_{inc} along with the thermo-elastic properties of breyite (Anzolini *et al.*, 2016), of diamond (Angel *et al.*, 2015) and the EosFit-Pinc software (Angel *et al.*, 2017, 2022), we calculated the so-called "isomekes" (see Supplementary Information), which provide the entrapment pressure (P_{trap}) of the diamond-breyite pair over a temperature range from 1000 to 2000 °C (Table 1). This approach yielded a pressure of formation ranging from ~9 ± 1 GPa (about 270 km depth) at 1000 °C to ~10 ± 1 GPa (310 km depth) at 2000 °C. These pressures are only minimum estimates because the inclusion shows small, optically visible cracks (Fig. 1c). The uncertainty given for P_{trap} only represents an estimation. The minimum and maximum variation of P_{trap} was determined as a function of P_{inc} and its uncertainty (Table 1). The entire range of *T*–*P* entrapment conditions of our breyite is plotted in Figure 2 within the phase diagram of the $CaSiO_3$-system. Our calculated T_{trap}–P_{trap} plots in the deepest possible area of the breyite stability field, close to the phase boundary between $CaSi_2O_5$-titanite and larnite (β-Ca_2SiO_4). At ambient mantle temperatures close to 1400–1500 °C, our calculated P_{trap} (Fig. 2) definitively exceeds the breyite *T*–*P* stability field. The diamond contains further breyite inclusions [Fig. 1a; at least four colourless inclusions are visible within the largest white rectangle indicated by two groups, 1(1) and 1(2)]; however, the diffraction and micro-Raman data (see Supplementary Information) on such inclusions indicated very low residual pressure P_{inc} likely due to typical pervasive presence of fractures that likely led to a significant pressure release.

Table 1 *T*–*P* entrapment conditions for breyite in this study. The table reports the T_{trap}–P_{trap} data calculated at $P_{inc} = 5.4 \pm 0.6$ GPa obtained from our X-ray diffraction volume data. These data were used to plot the T_{trap}–P_{trap} area in Figure 2. The uncertainty given for P_{trap} is an estimation given by using the minimum and maximum value of P_{inc} to calculate P_{trap} with the EosFitPinc software (Angel *et al.*, 2017, 2022).

T_{trap} (°C)	P_{trap} (GPa) for $P_{inc} = 5.4 \pm 0.6$ GPa
1000	8.9
1100	9.1
1200	9.2
1300	9.4
1400	9.5
1500	9.7
1600	9.8
1700	9.9
1800	10.1
1900	10.2
2000	10.3

Note: the estimated uncertainty in P_{trap} is ±1 GPa.

Phase identification by optical microscopy. Optical microscopy was used to identify phases which could not be analysed by micro-Raman spectroscopy and X-ray diffraction (see Supplementary Information). Most inclusions were black and small; based on their black colour these inclusions were interpreted to be graphite. Two inclusions showed a bright metallic and typical iridescent blue colour and we interpreted them as two ferropericlases (Fig. 1e, f). Unfortunately, the extremely small size of these two inclusions did not allow us to identify them by X-ray diffraction.

Discussion

An individual breyite inclusion in a super-deep diamond can form in the upper mantle by a variety of mechanisms, as described in Brenker *et al.* (2021). Yet, breyite can also form as the higher-pressure polymorph of Ca-silicate perovskite encapsulated in diamond in the transition zone or lower mantle. Distinguishing between these two crystallisation scenarios is essential to better understand geochemical recycling and mantle convection across the mantle transition zone. With the direct determination of residual pressure by X-ray diffraction in the lab and the elastic geobarometric calculation tools available now for this mineral, as proposed by Anzolini *et al.* (2016, 2018), we can more accurately estimate the minimum pressure of breyite crystallisation at depth. Our results in this study indicate that the single breyite shows extremely high entrapment pressures (Fig. 2). These entrapment pressures are too high for the maximum *T*–*P* stability field determined experimentally for breyite and are not physically possible.

The logical explanation is that our breyite was formed originally as $CaSiO_3$-perovskite, likely in the transition zone or in the lower mantle. Two iridescent inclusions, optically identified as ferropericlase but too small to confirm by other methods (Fig. 1e, f), would support this explanation because $CaSiO_3$-perovskite + ferropericlase is a typical assemblage of the lower mantle in presence of bridgmanite and would be stable at least from a minimum depth of 450 km (Liu, 1979). We interpret the absence of bridgmanite as due to the generally poor ability of diamond to capture a complete modal mineral assemblage from its host rock; this is typical in diamond crystallisation. The alternative explanation, *i.e.* our breyite formed as a back transformation from larnite + $CaSi_2O_5$-titanite above 11–12 GPa, can be ruled out because, at least to our knowledge, no *HP*–*HT* experimental evidence exists for larnite + $CaSi_2O_5$-titanite + ferropericlase as a stable assemblage in the upper mantle down to 410 km depth.

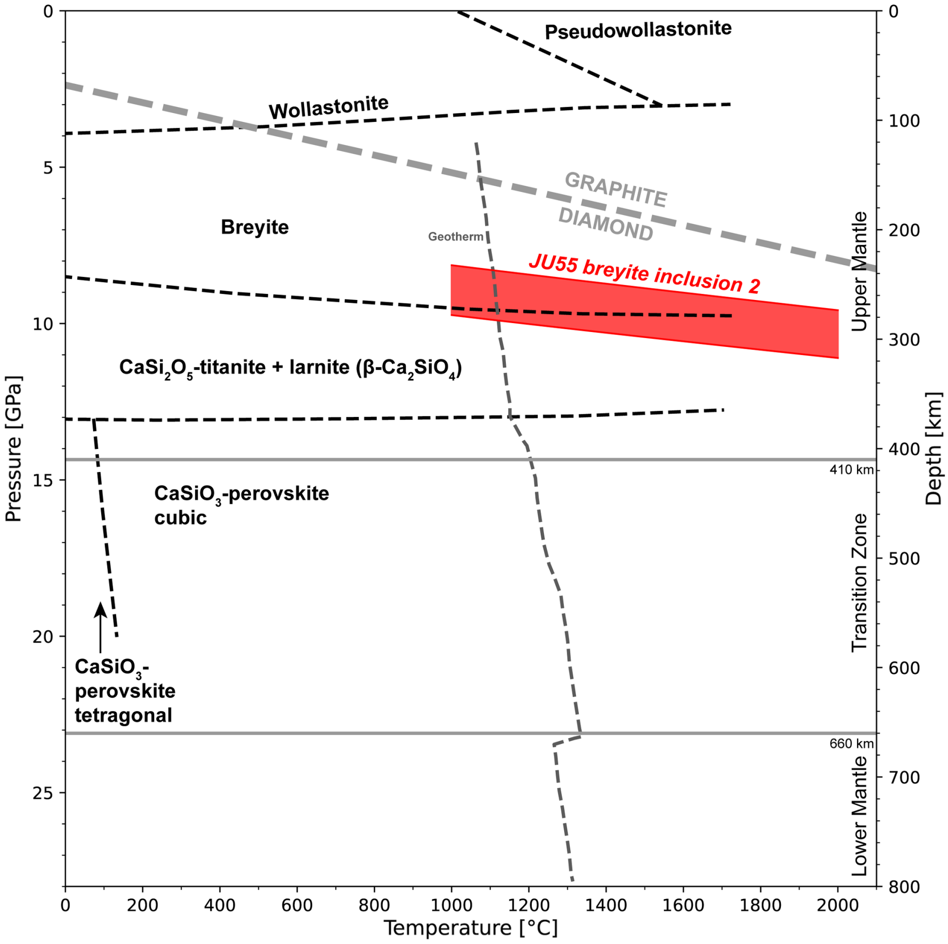

Figure 2 Phase diagram of the $CaSiO_3$ system for inclusion 2 in JU55, where the $CaSiO_3$ phase relations of Sagatova *et al.* (2021) are given as black dashed lines. The graphite-diamond phase boundary is given as a grey dashed line (Day, 2012). The geotherm was taken from Agee (1998). The 410 and 660 km discontinuities are given as grey lines. The entrapment pressures of the breyite inclusion are indicated by the red area.

The ability to use common minerals such as breyite, often found singly in super-deep diamonds, as a reliable pressure indicator contributes greatly to understanding the geology of the mantle transition zone and lower mantle—especially when combined with other inclusions in the same diamond. Important constraints are needed on the fate of subducted slabs, how slabs release fluids at depth, how much fluid is in this region, and even the longstanding question of material transport across the 410 and 660 km seismic discontinuities. For example, the presence of magnesite (see Supplementary Information) in diamond JU55, combined with our geobarometric determinations on breyite, provides direct evidence for the existence of carbonate at lower mantle conditions. Given the link between super-deep diamonds and subducting slabs (*e.g.*, Shirey *et al.*, 2021; Walter *et al.*, 2022), along with constraints from slab thermal modelling and phase equilibria showing the possibility of transporting carbonate to the lower mantle in the carbonated crust of subducting slabs (Walter *et al.*, 2022), we suggest that the breyite *T–P* estimates and magnesite in diamond JU55 are evidence of carbon transport to lower mantle depths.

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Additional Information

Supplementary Information accompanies this letter at https://www.geochemicalperspectivesletters.org/article2313.

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