Oral | Symbol B (Biogeosciences) | B-PT Paleontology

[B-PT23_30PM2]Decoding the history of Earth: From Hadean to Modern

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Wed. Apr 30, 2014 4:15 PM - 6:09 PM 411 (4F)

The latest results of Earth's evolution and geological processes through 4.6 billion years from Hadean to Modern, based on various approaches including fieldworks, chemical analyses, experiments and computer simulation, will be presented. In this session, we aim to discuss and understand causal relationships and interplay among the evolution of Earth's deep interior, changes in the surface environments, and development and evolution of life. Wide-ranging topics are accepted.

6:00 PM - 6:09 PM

[BPT23-P05_PG]Development of the African continent constrained from U-Pb chronology of detrital monazite

3-min talk in an oral session

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Keywords:monazite, U-Pb age, LA-ICP-MS, Pan-African

Monazite, a light rare earth element phosphate, occurs as an accessory mineral in peraluminous felsic rocks and metamorphic rocks from subgreenschist- to granulite-facies. Because monazite has high U and Th and low common Pb contents, it is suitable for precise U-Pb chronology. In addition, monazite is moderately resistant to chemical and mechanical weathering, detrital monazites are well preserved and potentially record the timing and nature of peraluminous igneous activities and a wide range of metamorphic events in their provenance area. Consequently, detrital monazites from large rivers can provide valuable insights into orogenic events in the drainage basins on a continental scale (Hietpas et al., 2013). In this study, we have determined U-Pb ages of ca. 100 detrital monazite grains from the Nile and Niger Rivers, which give chronological information on orogenic events in the African continent with a high time resolution. The African continent comprises several Archean-Paleoproterozoic cratons, which are rimmed by orogenic belts. A significant part of igneous and metamorphic basement rocks are covered by sediments and therefore inaccessible to in situ sampling at present. Considering that detrital monazites sampled from river sands would partly be derived from the currently inaccessible basement rocks over an extensive area, U-Pb dating of detrital monazite from large rivers can provide chronological information of the basement rocks complementary to studies of the exposed geology. The samples used in this study were collected at the river mouths of the Nile and Niger Rivers. The sand samples used in this study were previously used for zircon U-Pb dating and Hf isotopic studies by Iizuka et al. (2013). Monazite grains were newly concentrated from the river sand samples using the conventional magnetic and heavy liquid separation techniques. Monazites were randomly hand-picked from the aliquots of monazite concentrates and mounted in an epoxy mount. Before analysis, each grain was imaged by BSE using FE-SEM to check elemental zonation and the presence of inclusions. Monazite U-

Pb isotopic dates were measured using 200nm-FsLA-ICP-MS. Reference monazite 44069 (U-Pb age 425 Ma) is used to correct for instrumental Pb/U fractionation. The monazite grains from the Nile River gave U-Pb ages between 560 and 2100 Ma with a dominant population at 580-800 Ma. Furthermore, the U-Pb age population indicates a sharp peak at 600 Ma. The age peak at 600 Ma of Nile River suggests metamorphic and/or felsic igneous events occurred at that time in the drainage basin, probably related to the collision of the East and West Gondwana continents.The monazite age population of Niger River is dominated by Neoproterozoic ages with the most prominent peak at 580 Ma and peaks at 625 and 645 Ma. The peaks shown in the Niger River monazite (580 Ma and 620-630 Ma) correspond with the timing of previously known orogonic events in Northwest Africa. A peak at 620-630Ma is consistent with a metamorphic event at ca. 625 ± 29 Ma, likely related to the collision of the West Africa Craton and West Gondwana continent (Agbossoumonde et al., 2007). The other peak at 590-600Ma is consistent with a ca. 576 ± 4 Ma post-collisional igneous event at the Pan-African Belt in Cameroon (Kuekam et al., 2013).The age difference in the most prominent peaks of Nile and Niger monazites suggests that the timing of orogonenic event in Northwest Africa was prior to that of in East Africa by ca. 10 Ma. The accumulated monazite age distribution shows populations at 580-590 Ma, 630-640 Ma and 710-720 Ma, corresponding with the timing of Snowball Earth glaciation events. The chronological correspondence can be interpreted that the multiple Pan-African orogenic events during the Gondwana supercontinent assembly enhanced the rates of erosion and weathering via supermountain building that in turn decrease atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration resulted in glaciati