

Geochemical features of “invisible gold” in pyrites from the Akeshi and Kasuga deposits, Kagoshima, Japan

*石田 美月¹、Rurik Romeo^{2,3}、Mathieu Leisen^{2,3}、鳥本 淳司⁴、野崎 達生^{4,5,6,7}、安川 和孝^{1,6}、藤永 公一郎^{6,1}、中村 謙太郎¹、Martin Reich^{2,3}、加藤 泰浩^{1,6,5}

*Mizuki Ishida¹, Rurik Romeo^{2,3}, Mathieu Leisen^{2,3}, Junji Torimoto⁴, Tatsuo Nozaki^{4,5,6,7}, Kazutaka Yasukawa^{1,6}, Koichiro Fujinaga^{6,1}, Kentaro Nakamura¹, Martin Reich^{2,3}, Yasuhiro Kato^{1,6,5}

1. 東京大学大学院工学系研究科システム創成学専攻、2. チリ大学数物科学研究科地質学専攻卓越アンデス地熱センター、3. チリ大学数物科学研究科沈み込み帯における物質循環解明ミレニアム基点、4. 国立研究開発法人海洋研究開発機構、5. 東京大学大学院工学系研究科エネルギー・資源フロンティアセンター、6. 千葉工業大学次世代海洋資源研究センター、7. 神戸大学大学院理学研究科惑星学専攻

1. Department of Systems Innovation, School of Engineering, The University of Tokyo, 2. Department of Geology and Andean Geothermal Center of Excellence (CEGA), FCFM, 3. Millennium Nucleus for Metal Tracing Along Subduction, FCFM, Universidad de Chile, FCFM, 4. Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC), 5. Frontier Research Center for Energy and Resources, School of Engineering, The University of Tokyo, 6. Ocean Resources Research Center for Next Generation, Chiba Institute of Technology, 7. Department of Planetology, Graduate School of Science, Kobe University

The occurrence of gold in ore is one of the most important information in gold deposit research. This information allows us to optimize beneficiation and smelting processes, as well as providing valuable insights into the mineralization mechanism, which can improve exploration strategies (e.g., [1]).

In hydrothermal gold deposits, gold is not always visible as native gold, electrum, caraverite (AuTe₂) or other gold minerals. In many cases, it also exists as submicrometer-size inclusions and solid solution in other minerals, which is so-called “invisible gold” [2]. Pyrite is the most ubiquitous and well-known host mineral for this invisible gold, and its trace element geochemistry has been increasingly recognized as a useful tool to understand the mineralization processes (e.g., [3]).

In this study, we report the geochemical features of invisible gold in pyrites collected from the Akeshi and Kasuga deposits. These deposits, located in the southern part of the Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, are currently under operation, and are classified as high-sulfidation gold deposits. In both Akeshi and Kasuga, gold minerals are only reported from high-grade ores, and other hosts of gold in lower-grade ores remain still uncertain [4]. Pyrite is the most common sulfide mineral in these deposits. Here, we report the results of EPMA (Electron Probe Micro Analyzer) and LA-ICP-MS (Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry) trace element analyses of pyrite, in order to determine their mineralization processes.

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