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- 1 Two generations of exsolution lamellae in pyroxene from Asuka 09545: clues to the
- 2 thermal evolution of silicates in mesosiderite.
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Abstract

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Mesosiderite meteorites consist of a mixture of crustal basaltic or gabbroic material and metal, possibly derived from the same planetesimal parent body, and their formation process is still debated due to their unexpected combination of crust and core materials while lacking an intervening mantle component. Mesosiderites have experienced an extremely slow cooling rate from ca. 550°C, as recorded in the metal (0.25-0.5°C/Ma). Here we present a detailed investigation of exsolution features in a monoclinic low-Ca pyroxene from the Antarctic mesosiderite Asuka (A) 09545. Two generations of exsolution lamellae are present, with lamellae 1 consisting of augite blebs and lamellae 2, within lamellae 1, of clinoenstatite. Geothermobarometry calculations, lattice parameters, lamellae orientation, and the inversion to clinoenstatite were used in an attempt to constrain the history and cooling rate of pyroxene from 1150°C to 570°C. The formation of two generations of exsolution lamellae requires relatively slow cooling and the preservation of such fine-grained lamellae limits reheating to a peak temperature lower than 570°C. These features, including the presence of monoclinic low-Ca pyroxene as host, are exhibited by only a few mesosiderites, suggesting a different origin and different thermal history from most mesosiderites and that the crystallography (i.e. space group) of low-Ca pyroxene could be a diagnostic cooling rate indicator for this class of meteorites.

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Keywords: pyroxene, exsolution, mesosiderite, thermal history, cooling rate

45 Introduction

Mesosiderites are stony-iron meteorites that consist of a breccia containing roughly equal
amounts of metal and silicate (e.g., Prior, 1918; Rubin and Mittlefehldt, 1993). The
metal component shows some similarities to IIIAB iron meteorites (Hassanzadeh, et al.,
1990), whereas the silicate fraction has been compared with basaltic or pyroxenitic
Howardite-Eucrite-Diogenite (HED) meteorites (e.g., Clayton and Mayeda, 1996;
Greenwood et al., 2015), although they likely originated in a different parent body than
the probable source for most of the HED meteorites, the asteroid 4-Vesta (Rubin and
Mittlefehldt, 1993). The simultaneous presence of silicate and metal is interpreted as a
mixture of basaltic material from the crust and metal from the core, originating either by
collision of two differentiated parent bodies (Wasson and Rubin 1985) or from mixing
within the same parent body (Mittlefehldt et al., 1998; Scott et al., 2001). The silicate
fraction generally consists of basaltic to cumulate gabbro and pyroxenitic clasts, locally
including olivine nodules exhibiting thick reaction rims (e.g., Ruzicka et al. 1994).
Mesosiderites are classified on the basis of their internal structure and relative abundance
of plagioclase and pyroxenitic phases (Powell 1971; Floran 1978). The most peculiar
characteristic of mesosiderites is that the metal has recorded the slowest cooling rate
from ca. 550°C ever measured in the Solar System (e.g., Powell, 1969; Kulpecz and
Ewins, 1978; Haack et al., 1996; Goldstein et al., 2014).
The formation processes of mesosiderites are still debated, and since Prior (1918) many
different models have been proposed, involving planetary differentiation (Delaney,
1983), collision with a metal projectile (Wasson and Rubin, 1985), and remelting of

mixed basalt-gabbro and metal close to the parent body surface (Mittlefehldt, 1990). The currently most credited formation model (e.g., Rubin and Mittlefehldt, 1993; Scott et al., 2001) hypothesizes accretion, followed by different crustal melting phases between 4.56 Ga and 4.47 Ga, collisional disruption and gravitational reassembly (3.9 Ga), and finally impact excavation and ejection of buried material. Mixing of metal and crustal silicate should have occurred during one of the crustal remelting phases. This model provides an explanation for the mixture of crustal and core material and for the slow cooling of metal due to deep burial of the mixed material, but still fails to fully explain why no mesosiderites have been found bearing olivine-rich silicate fractions or rapidly cooled metal (Hewins, 1983). However, the thermal history of the mesosiderite parent body is well constrained. After the mixing event (ca. 4.4 Ga), likely of cold silicate with molten metal, mesosiderites experienced fast cooling to ~600°C, subsequent deep burial in the regolith and extremely slow cooling below 600°C (Stewart et al., 1994; Haack et al., 1996). A similar history has been constrained by Sm-Nd geochronology (Stewart et al. 1994). The young Ar-Ar ages, which were previously interpreted as an impact-induced resetting at 3.9 Ga (Bogard et al., 1990), might simply be caused by the extremely slow cooling of the mesosiderites through the closure temperature for Ar diffusion (Bogard and Garrison, 1998). Haba et al. (2017) dated a younger event in zircon than the common formation age, suggesting that this high temperature event could be either the age of mixing between metal and silicate or a large collision that reheated the whole body. An internal formation hypothesis was proposed by Delaney (1983), but rejected by later studies (e.g., Hewins, 1983). In the Eartch, the delivery of subducted oceanic basaltic crust to the core-mantle boundary (van der Hilst and Karason, 1999; Andrault et al.,

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2014) might lend some inspiration to an internal formation process for mesosiderites, through internal convection in planetesimals (Tkalcec et al., 2013), despite the many differences between Earth and the mesosiderite parent body. The cooling history of the silicate fraction in mesosiderites is not yet clear. Bogard et al. (1990) summarized the three possible scenarios that are consistent with the radiometric ages: after the formation or reheating up to 1150°C at 4.5 Ga, silicates underwent a) rapid cooling, followed by slow cooling of the metal, b) slow cooling, c) further reheating event at ca. 4 Ga, followed by rapid cooling of silicates down to 550°C and subsequent slow cooling of the metal. Bogard et al. (1990) proposed a fourth scenario, where metal silicate mixing occurred at 4.5 Ga, but an important reheating event (temperature peak lower than 550°C) occurred later at <4 Ga. The estimated peak temperature would have been sufficient to reset the Ar age, but not to affect the silicates. Most estimates agree that the silicate cooling rate was fast until ca. 800°C (Delaney, 1983; Ruzicka et al., 1994; Ganguly et al., 1994; Stewart et al., 1994), with proposed values of 1-100°C/day (based on pyroxene overgrowth; Delaney, 1981), and 14°C/ka at 1150°C, ca. 5°C/ka at 600°C, and 1°C/Ma at 250°C (based on new data on Fe-Mg diffusion in pyroxene; Ganguly at al., 1994). In this work, we present a study of mesosiderite Asuka (A) 09545, collected in Antarctica during a joint Belgian-Japanese mission, focusing on pyroxene to characterize the peculiar exsolution processes and constrain the cooling history of silicates in this sample. By comparison with other mesosiderites in the literature, the implications of such observations on the formation processes of mesosiderites are discussed.

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113 Methods

A polished thin section (thickness 35 μm) and a thick polished chip of sample A 09545
were investigated in this work (Fig. 1a). Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) has been
performed at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science (RBINS), Brussels, Belgium,
with a FEI Inspect S50 instrument, equipped with an energy-dispersive spectrometry
(EDS) detector, and at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium, with a JEOL
6400 SEM. Experimental conditions were 10 mm of minimum working distance, 15 kV
acceleration voltage, ca. 300 pA beam current, and 4-6 µm of spot size. Quantitative
analysis of the composition of the investigated phases has been evaluated with a JEOL
JXA-8200 electron microprobe, equipped with five wavelength-dispersive spectrometers
(WDS) and one EDS, at the National Institute of Polar Research (NIPR), Tachikawa,
Japan. Operative conditions were 15 kV acceleration voltage, 12 nA beam current, and
with a fully focused beam. The ZAF corrections were applied. Detection limit for major
elements are: 130 μ g/g for Si, 140 μ g/g for Ti, 90 μ g/g for Al, 170 μ g/g for Cr, 230 μ g/g
for Fe, 240 $\mu g/g$ for Mn, 60 $\mu g/g$ for Mg, 60 $\mu g/g$ for Ca, 110 $\mu g/g$ for Na, and 100 $\mu g/g$
for K. Natural and synthetic materials obtained from C.M. Taylor Company were used as
mineral reference materials. The composition of pyroxene is expressed as end member
components: enstatite (En) mol%, ferrosilite (Fs) mol%, and wollastonite (Wo) mol%.
Image analysis for quantitative petrography has been applied on BSE-SEM images,
using the free software ImageJ.
A FEI Helios NanoLab 650 dual beam system (Field Emission-FE-SEM and focused ion
beam-FIB) was used to prepare site-specific transmission electron microscopy (TEM)
samples by Ga ⁺ ion sputtering, with an ion beam accelerating voltage of 30 kV and a

beam current of 3 nA. TEM has been performed with a Philips CM20 instrument, operated at 200 kV and equipped with a Nanomegas "Spinning Star" precession unit and an Oxford INCA x-sight EDS detector. Microdiffraction, i.e., with a nearly parallel incident beam focused on the specimen with a spot size in the range 10-50 nm, was performed to acquire a single-crystal zone-axis pattern (ZAP). The precession semi-angle was set to 2° to significantly reduce overall dynamical effects. Java electron microscopy simulator (JEMS) software was used for simulation of electron diffraction patterns assuming a kinematic approximation (Stadelmann 2004). Both instruments are located at the Electron Microscopy for Materials Science (EMAT) laboratory of the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Additional optical microscopy was performed at the Natural History Museum of Vienna, Austria, on selected thin sections of mesosiderites from the local collection.

149 Results

Petrographic, geochemical, and crystallographic observations

The sections obtained from A 09545 consist of a clast-supported breccia, with gabbroic clasts of various sizes, containing pyroxene and plagioclase, and amoeboid metal (Fig. 1). The metal fraction is 20-30% in volume, as calculated by image analysis on BSE-SEM images. The sample is crosscut by veins with products of alteration and oxidation, due to terrestrial weathering. No olivine has been detected in this fragment. However, a large nodule with an olivine core and a corona mantle has detached from the sample during the preparation and has been included in the polished chip. In this work, this nodule will not be considered. Plagioclase is anorthitic (An_{91}) and has a homogeneous

composition throughout the sample. Silicate clasts contain also chromite, apatite, and a minor amount of free silica, the latter mostly localized in the upper corner of the polished chip (Fig. 1).

According to the mineralogic classification of the silicate fraction (Mittlefehldt et al. 1998), the sample belongs to the compositional class B mesosiderites, due to the high amount of low-Ca pyroxene with respect to plagioclase, ca. 75% to 25%, respectively, as determined by image analysis on BSE-SEM images (class A are more "basaltic" rather than "pyroxenitic", with near equal proportions of plagioclase and pyroxene). The lack of clastic matrix suggests complete recrystallization, a relatively high metamorphic grade, and textural classification of type 3 (Powell 1971; Floran 1978). Overall this sample can be considered a cumulate gabbro (Rubin and Mittlefehldt 1992).

Figure 1

Pyroxene in the clasts can reach several hundreds of μm in size. All pyroxene crystals, independently on their size, contain two generations of exsolution lamellae. The pyroxene host (host px) is low-Ca clinopyroxene, with composition $Wo_3En_{59}Fs_{38}$ as determined with the electron microprobe (Table 1), and with a diffraction pattern consistent with monoclinic "ferrosilite", space group $P2_1/c$, which can be technically classified as clinoenstatite considering the chemistry(Fig. 2).

Exsolution lamellae 1 (lam 1). The first generation of exsolution lamellae has an orientation roughly parallel to cleavage and is consistent in all lamellae belonging to the same host grain. Lamellae appear in this section as elongated domains with vermicular shape and lower BSE contrast than the host pyroxene. The average size is 20-30 μ m in thickness and up to 100 μ m in length, depending on the section. The composition of the

lamellae corresponds to augite $Wo_{42}En_{41}Fs_{17}$ (Table 1) and the diffraction pattern to that of monoclinic high-Ca pyroxene (space group C2/c; Fig. 2).

Exsolution lamellae 2 (lam 2). Lam 1 contains another set of lamellae. Lamellae 2 are organized in subparallel sets, which appear brighter than lam 1 in BSE-SEM images. The thickness is generally lower than 300 nm, with a regular spacing of about 900 nm. The composition of lam 2 roughly corresponds to Wo₀En₅₆Fs₄₃, as determined by standardless EDS-TEM measurements (Table 1), and the diffraction pattern is consistent with that of clinoenstatite (space group P2₁/c). The composition and the crystal symmetry, therefore, are similar to those of the host pyroxene, but in lam 2 Ca appears to be below the detection limit. The orientation of lam 2 has been reestablished to be parallel to [001] (Fig. 3).

Figures 2-3. Table 1

194 Discussion

Geothermobarometric calculations

The two-pyroxene geothermobarometer of Putirka (2008) and the improved version of Nakamuta et al. (2017), which accounts for the influence of Na, Cr, and Al in the octahedron, have been used to determine the equilibration temperature of the exsolution events. The geothermobarometer of Putirka (2008) was calibrated for the temperature range 950-1400°C, consistent with that experienced by the investigated pyroxene, but for a pressure of ca. 1 GPa, much higher than the assumed pressure recorded by the selected sample, limiting its applicability to determine pressure values. As the first exsolution (inverted pigeonite), resulted in the augite that further exsolved low-Ca pyroxene (lam

2), the original composition of the augite was calculated by evaluating the contribution of the exsolved lam 2 with image analysis (ca. 14% surface; Table 1). The equilibrium conditions between the host and the augite yield a temperature of 946-1028°C and a pressure of ca. 2-24 Kbar following the geothermobarometer of Putirka (2008), and a temperature of 976-1080°C following the geothermometer of Nakamuta et al. (2017). This is roughly consistent with the graphical evaluation based on Lindsley (1983; Fig. 4). The composition of lam2 could be determined only by EDS at the TEM and no Ca was detected. The equilibrium conditions between lam 1 and lam 2 strongly depend on the CaO content in lam 2. Assuming a CaO content of 0.1-0.2 wt% (a reasonable detection limit for the instrument), the equilibration temperature according to the geothermometer by Brey and Kohler (1990) is 681-809°C (only one managed to converge). Following the geothermometer of Nakamuta et al. (2017), the temperature range for the second exsolution is 542-811°C. In any case, the lower content of CaO in the second exsolution process indicates a lower equilibrium temperature than for pigeonite inversion, as also suggested by the graphical evaluation based on the diagram provided by Lindsley (1983; Fig. 4).

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Cooling rate evaluation

Miyamoto and Takeda (1977) determined the cooling rate of eucrites based on the thickness of pyroxene exsolution lamellae. Extrapolating their evaluation to our sample, we obtain a cooling rate of ca. 1°C/Ka for lam 1 and 10°C/yr for lam 2. Grove (1982) used exsolution lamellae in Lunar pyroxene to estimate the cooling rate in the temperature range 1100-800°C. The orientation and the symmetry class of the exsolution

lamellae in pyroxene in the investigated mesosiderite are the same as those in the Lunar samples, as well as the temperature range of formation. Qualitatively extrapolating the evaluation presented in Grove (1982) to our lamellae, we obtained a cooling rate of ca. 10°C/Ma for lam 1, and a faster cooling rate, but slower than the 0.02°C/hr determined for the Lunar pyroxene, for lam 2. However, the thickness of lamellae alone has proven not to be reliable in estimating the cooling rate of pyroxene, because it is potentially controlled also by other factors and different lamella thicknesses can be exhibited in the same sample (e.g., Miyamoto et al. 2001; Sugiura and Kimura 2015). Additional temperature evaluations based on crystallographic characteristics The formation of exsolution lamellae at different temperatures has also been related to the angle between the growth direction (considered (001) and (100)) and the c-axis of the host (Robinson et al., 1977). This angle decreases for increasing temperature of formation in the range 850-1050°C. Unfortunately, neither the angle between the lattice directions nor the lattice parameters were determined in A 09545. However, the described features and the lamellae orientation presented by Robinson et al. (1977) match the observations on lam 2 in A 09545. In detail, the deformation features observed in lam 2 (Fig. 3) might have been caused by the speed in changing symmetry class (from C2/c to $P2_1/c$) that induces lattice strain. The presence of these features and the occurrence of monoclinic, low-Ca pyroxene are consistent with the formation of lam 2 at temperatures in the range 750-900°C. Nakazawa and Hafner (1977) investigated two generations of exsolution lamellae in pyroxene from Lunar basalt. These authors observed that the crystallographic orientation of lamellae is determined by the crystal symmetry of the original host: lamella along

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(001) exsolved from C2/c (high pigeonite) and lamellae along (100) derived from P2₁/c pyroxene. The change in plane of intergrowth depends on the temperature, and in A 09545, the transition between exsolution lamellae subparallel to (100) to those aligned with (001) should have occurred between 550 and 700°C. However, the initial conditions, such as the composition of the pyroxene involved and the overall cooling, in the work by Nakazawa and Hafner (1977) were quite different from those experienced by A 09545, but the presence of (001) lamellae might suggest a similar slow cooling. Constraining the thermal history of pyroxene from exsolution lamellae The applicability of the known two-pyroxene geothermometer might be affected by the Ca content in pyroxene (e.g., Bunch and Olsen, 1974) and the Fe content in augite. The latter effect has been recently demonstrated to be negligible (Murri et al., 2016). The effects of Na, Cr, and Al in the octahedron have been taken into account by Nakamuta et al. (2017), updating the geothermometer of Putirka (2008), and resulted to be negligible in our sample. From geothermometric calculations based on the Fe-Mg exchange in pyroxene, together with the other parameters considered in this study (lattice, lamellae orientation, and ortho-clinopyroxene inversion), the cooling of pyroxene can be followed step by step from an initial temperature of 1150°C (crystallization temperature of pigeonite) to ca. 550°C (inversion to clinopyroxene or to low pigeonite), as represented in Fig. 5. The cooling rate estimated by Ganguly et al. (1994), based on pyroxene zoning in mesosiderite, yielded 1°C/100yr until 850°C and a progressively lower cooling rate for lower temperatures. A more recent study set the change between fast and slow cooling rate at approximately 700°C (Ganguly and Tirone 2001). Our rough calculations indeed

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273 suggest a slower cooling rate at high temperature for the formation of lam 1, but a faster 274 cooling rate at low temperature leading to the formation of lam 2. 275 A definitive evaluation of the cooling rate in the range 700-550°C would be provided by 276 single crystal diffraction of the host clinoenstatite and of the first generation lamellae 277 (e.g., Molin et al. 2006), following the method of Stimpfl et al. (2015) and Murri et al. 278 (2016), and by modelling in detail the cation exchange (e.g., McCallum et al., 2006). 279 Unfortunately, the presence of inclusions, the grain size, and the accessibility to crushed 280 samples hamper the applicability of this technique to the investigate mesosiderite A 281 09545. 282 Numerical modeling demonstrated that slow heating and slow cooling rate is required for 283 pyroxene to register temperature variation (Yamamoto et al., 2017). This excludes 284 impact reheating as the process initiating the exsolution in pyroxene, but rather supports 285 the fact that after initial formation, silicates recorded slow cooling and were not reheated 286 above a certain temperature. Any abrupt reheating above ca. 600°C would have 287 obliterated the described microstructure. 288 The occurrence of clinoenstatite, rather than orthoenstatite (latter with space group 289 Pbca), as host and in lam 2 is further indicative of slow cooling. In most instances of 290 pigeonite inversion, the normal product is a set of augite exsolution lamellae hosted in 291 orthopyroxene. It is possible that in some of the literature the identification of 292 orthopyroxene was based only on the low-Ca content, without pursuing further analyses. 293 According to Ishii and Takeda (1974), exsolution lamellea of augite along (001) form in 294 host metastable pigeonite, whereas augite blebs along (100) form as result of 295 decomposition of pigeonite into orthopyroxene and augite. The different processes are

controlled by the original composition of the pigeonite, which should have been quite Mg-rich to decompose, rather than to exsolve. Although these authors report the presence in the literature of (100) augite blebs in metastable low-Ca pigeonite (called clinohypersthene) in extraterrestrial material, they do not provide a possible explanation of this apparent contradiction to their analyses.

The cooling path of pyroxene in A 09545 likely involved exsolution of high pigeonite

(C2/c) hosting augite exsolution lamellae (C2/c), followed by high-low pigeonite transformation (Fig. 5; C2/c to P2₁/c at ~1000 °C; Brown et al. 1972). Such a metastable transformation skips the orthopyroxene field and enables a restructuring of the host high pigeonite crystal into clinoenstatite with only local rearrangement of the lattice. Another possible path would involve decomposition of pigeonite into orthopyroxene and augite blebs upon slow cooling, followed by low temperature transition from orthopyroxene into low-clinopyroxene (Pbca to P2₁/c at 570-600 °C at low pressure; Ulmer and Stalder, 2001, and references therein). However, the transformation of the entire host pyroxene from ortho- into clinoenstatite requires complete restructuring of the crystal (Smith 1969; Ashworth 1980). The exsolution of lam 2 from lam 1 likely proceeded at low temperature and very slow cooling rates, yielding low temperature clinopyroxene (P2₁/c) with very low CaO contents (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5.

Occurrence of exsolution lamellae in pyroxene in other mesosiderite samples.

Exsolution lamellae due to inverted pigeonite have been commonly observed in eucrites and this feature has been interpreted as indicative of slow cooling after a reheating event > 1000°C (e.g., Yamaguchi et al. 1996). Exsolution lamellae resulting from pigeonite

inversion have been described also in a few mesosiderites (e.g., in Alan Hills A77219, Agosto et al. 1980; in Dyarrl Island, Lowicz, and Patwar, Delaney et al. 1981, in Estherville, Ganguly et al. 1994; in Morristown and Mount Padbury, Powell 1971; and in Vaca Muerta, Rubin and Jerde 1987), but never investigated in detail. Two generations of exsolution lamellae, similarly to those investigated in this work, were presented by Rubin and Jerde (1987) from the Vaca Muerta mesosiderite. The lithic clasts containing two generations of exsolution lamellae were interpreted by these authors as cumulate eucrite clasts, thermally annealed after incorporation into the mesosiderite. According to Powell (1971), inverted pigeonite with exsolution lamellae along two orientations might be common in the sub-group 3 mesosiderites, including examples such as Lowicz, Mincy, and Morristown. Our study of A 09545 supports this interpretation. In other mesosiderite sub-groups, inverted pigeonite might be present, but only with exsolution along one direction. That the Vaca Muerta mesosiderite, classified as type 1, contains two orientations of exsolution lamellae in some clasts is consistent with a complex multistage history for the petrogenesis of this meteorite. Similarly, in some mesosiderites, the exsolution of inverted pigeonite occurs only at the overgrown rim of orthopyroxene (e.g., in Emery and Morristown; Ruzicka et al., 1994). Other than data from the literature, additional mesosiderites were investigated, as representative of the variety of mesosiderites, from the collection of the Natural History Museum of Vienna, to search for pyroxene internal features. The most common feature observed in pyroxene in mesosiderites is chemical zoning in low-Ca pyroxene, with a rim enriched in Fe with respect to the core of crystals (e.g., in Estherville, Lamont, and Veramin). This feature is commonly attributed to impact reheating followed by relatively

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fast cooling and was used to estimate the cooling rate in the range 1150-900°C as 1-100°C/day (e.g., Delaney et al. 1981). Inverted pigeonite is relatively common, but two generations of exsolution lamellae, formed at different temperature during cooling, seems to be rare. However, most of the previous works describe inverted pigeonite as an assemblage of orthopyroxene and augite, without checking by diffraction techniques the real nature of the low-Ca pyroxene. This might actually be clinoenstatite, as in the case of A 09545.

Thermal history of the silicate fraction in the mesosiderite

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The silicate fraction of mesosiderites, in particular pyroxene, exhibits a huge variety of internal features. According to Sugiura and Kimura (2015), this variety is due to a range of cooling rates experienced by mesosiderite precursor materials in their parent body after the reheating event. Different burial depths in the parent body might explain these differences. However, this would not be consistent with the model of fast cooling of silicates at high temperature and slow cooling of metal below 700-550°C. This also excludes the possibility that an important reheating event could be invoked, with peak temperature <550°C, because such fine grained features as the two generations of exsolution lamellae in pyroxene observed in A 09545 would have been completely annealed and obliterated. In conclusion, the variety of microstructures exhibited by mesosiderites indicates a complex thermal history that cannot be accommodated by a unique model applicable to the whole collection of mesosiderites. However, our study indicates that microstructural investigations may be able to identify internally consistent subgroups within this class of meteorites using pyroxene crystallography in combination with conventional microprobe chemical compositions.

366 Implications

The internal features of a mesosiderite, investigated by a classical mineralogical approach, provides important new clues to the thermal history of this sample and the evolution of the mesosiderite parent body(ies). In particular, the crystallography of pyroxene directly correlates with the cooling rate experienced by the material. Among the numerous open questions about mesosiderite formation, the information on the thermal history of its silicate fraction helps constraining several events that affected this class of meteorites.

374 Conclusions

Mesosiderites are breccias consisting of a mixture of metal, chemically similar to IIIAB iron meteorites, and silicates, which resemble HED achondrites (Prior, 1918, Powell, 1971). From microscale metallographic textures and geochemistry, the cooling of the metal fraction from about 550°C appears to be uniquely slow (cooling rate of 0.25-0.5°C/My; Goldstein et al., 2014). On the other hand, the silicates are believed to have cooled rapidly, at least until ca. 700°C (e.g., Ganguly et al., 1994). The mesosiderite A 09545 (Yamaguchi et al., 2014) contains coarse-grained low-Ca monoclinic pyroxene that hosts two generations of exsolution lamellae, which can be used to constrain the thermal evolution of the silicate fraction in the sample. Although the exact cooling rate could not be evaluated, the composition, orientation, and lattice parameters of these lamellae suggest a relatively slow cooling from 1150°C to 570°C that can be considered as occurring through several near equilibrium steps (Fig. 6). The occurrence of these features, as well as the unexpected monoclinic crystallography of the low-Ca pyroxene

host, is uncommon in mesosiderites. The investigated exsolution lamellae in pyroxene from mesosiderite A 09545 suggest, for this sample, a burial depth sufficient to guarantee the slow cooling rate or a reheating event with a peak temperature lower than 570°C, to allow the preservation of such delicate features. The simultaneous occurrence of the above described features in pyroxene points to the possibility that crystallographic investigations could define new mesosiderite subgroups, and ultimately new constraints on the thermal history and origin of the mesosiderite parent body.

Fig. 6.

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574	Figure captions
575	Figure 1. Mesosiderite A 09545. a) Photo of the original meteorite. b) Thin section
576	optical photo. c) BSE-SEM image mosaic.
577	Figure 2. First generation of exsolution lamellae in pyroxene from A 09545. a) BSE-
578	SEM image of the mesosiderite, with the augite exsolutions with darker BSE contrast. b)
579	Detail of lam 1 along cleavage. c) TEM image from the boundary between the host
580	clinoenstatite (host px) and augite lam 1. d) Experimental zone-axis diffraction pattern
581	(ZAP) of host (1) and lam 1 (2) and the corresponding simulated [-7 0 12] and [-14 0 27]
582	ZAP respectively of clinoferrosilite (3) (similar to that of clinoenstatite) and augite (4).
583	Figure 3. Second generation of exsolution lamellae in pyroxene from A 09545. a) BSE-
584	SEM image of pyroxene, with the augite exsolutions with darker BSE contrast and
585	within them lam 2 with brighter contrast. b) TEM image from lam 1 with three sub-
586	parallel lam 2. c) Detail from (b) showing the structural defects within lam 2. d)
587	Experimental ZAP of lam 1 (1) and lam 2 (2) and the corresponding simulated [-7 0 1]
588	and [6 0 -1] ZAP respectively of augite (3) and clinoferrosilite (4).
589	Figure 4. Pyroxene composition diagram after Lindsley (1983). Data from this work and
590	from literature (Estherville, Lowicz, Morristown, and Dyarrl Island after Hewins, 1979;
591	Vaca Muerta and Patwar after Mittlefehldt et al. 1998).
592	Figure 5. Simplified pseudobinary pyroxene phase diagram for low pressure, after Muir,
593	1954, with the composition expressed as Wo content versus temperature. The path likely
594	followed by pyroxene in A 09545 during slow cooling is marked with a dashed line.
595	From the original melt composition (Wo ₆), pigeonite (Pgt) crystallized. From Pgt

exsolved augite (Aug) formed upon cooling and with final compositions Wo₃ and Wo₃₆, respectively. From Aug, further exsolved low-Ca px (Wo₀) and the composition of Aug evolved to Wo₄₂. Finally, the original Pgt underwent transition from high to low and later to clinoenstatite. Mineral abbreviations according to Whitney and Evans (2010).

Figure 6. Simplified scenario for the formation of exsolution lamellae and the thermal evolution of A 09545. Compositions and temperatures after text and Table 1.

Table 1. Chemical composition of the pyroxene clasts and their lamellae as determined with the electron microprobe and TEM-EDS. The composition of the original exsolution lamellae and that of the recombined, bulk pigeonite precursor have been determined by relative percentages using image analysis. Composition is expressed in wt% oxides. Element content has been calculated as molar content. Standard deviation is given in brackets.

wt%	host px	lam 1	lam1 (EDS)	lam 2 (EDS)	calculated	calculated px
	(avg #15)	(avg #14)	(avg #2)	(avg #2)	composition	original
SiO ₂	53.07(22)	52.56(34)	55	52	52.55	53.03
TiO ₂	0.44(3)	0.71(7)			0.61	0.46
Al_2O_3	0.53(3)	0.97(12)			0.84	0.56
Cr_2O_3	0.30(5)	0.48(4)			0.41	0.31
FeO	23.03(31)	10.37(64)	9	27	12.63	22.20
MnO	0.81(5)	0.48(6)			0.41	0.78
MgO	20.96(16)	14.39(24)	15	21	15.32	20.50
CaO	1.58(20)	20.36(49)	21	bdl	17.51	2.85
Na ₂ O	bdl	0.09(2)			80.0	0.02
K_2O	bdl	bdl			bdl	bdl
Total	100.72	100.41			100.37	100.71
Si	1.978	1.960	2.03	1.98	1.964	1.977
Ti	0.012	0.020	2.00	1.00	0.017	0.013
Al	0.021	0.043			0.037	0.025
Cr	0.009	0.014			0.012	0.009
Fe	0.718	0.323	0.28	0.86	0.395	0.692
Mn	0.026	0.015			0.013	0.025
Mg	1.165	0.800	0.83	1.19	0.853	1.139
Ca	0.063	0.813	0.83		0.701	0.114
Na	0.000	0.007			0.006	0.001
Tot	3.994	3.995	3.97	4.02	3.998	3.995
Wo	3	42	43	0	36	6
En	59	41	43	58	43	58
Fs	38	17	14	42	21	36
Mg#	62	71	75	58	68	62

Avg = average; bdl = below detection limit

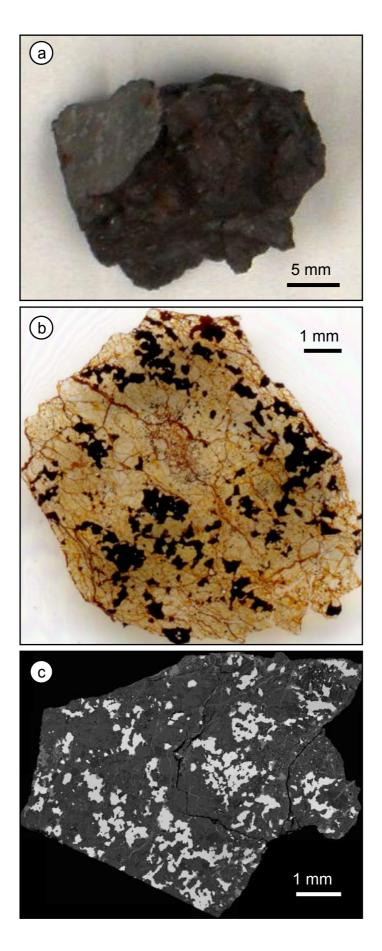


Fig. 1

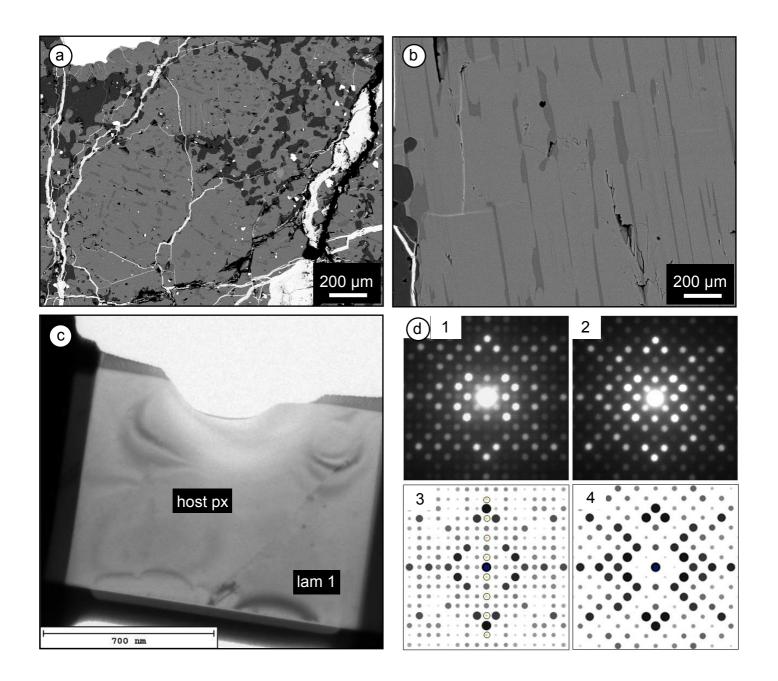


Fig. 2

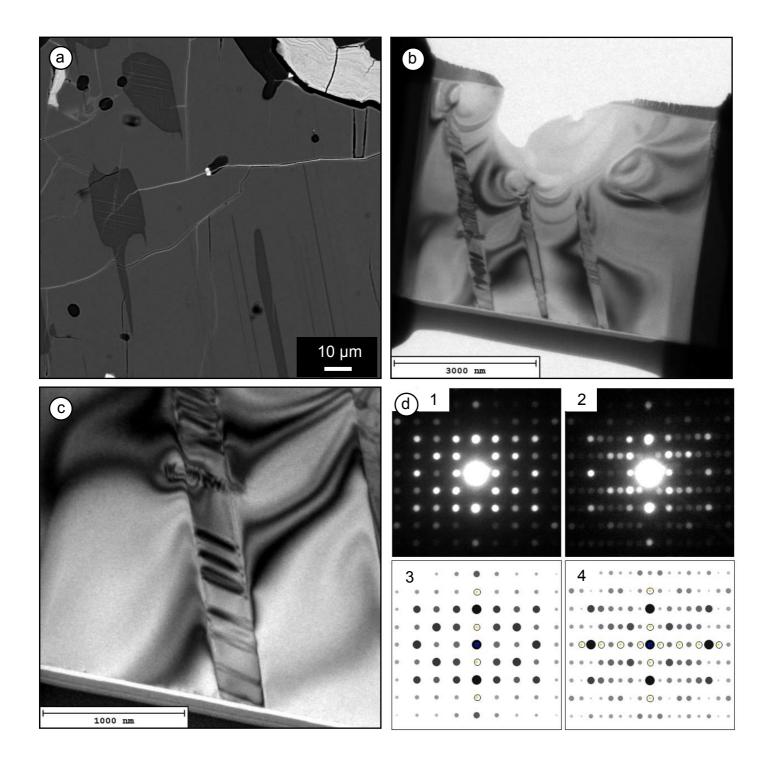


Fig. 3

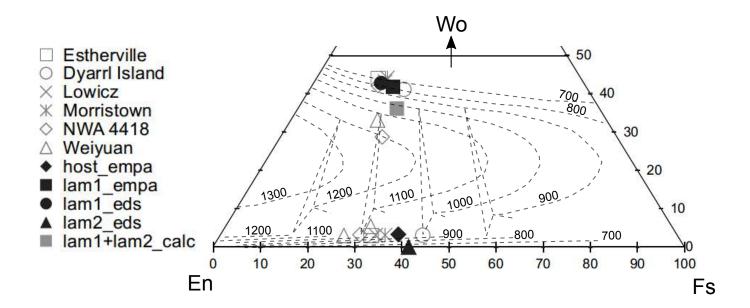


Fig. 4

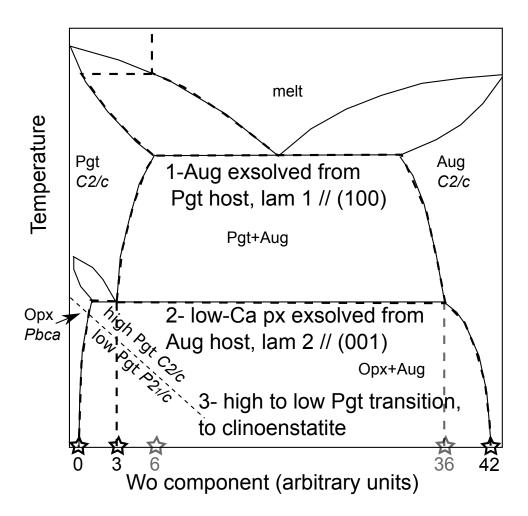


Fig. 5

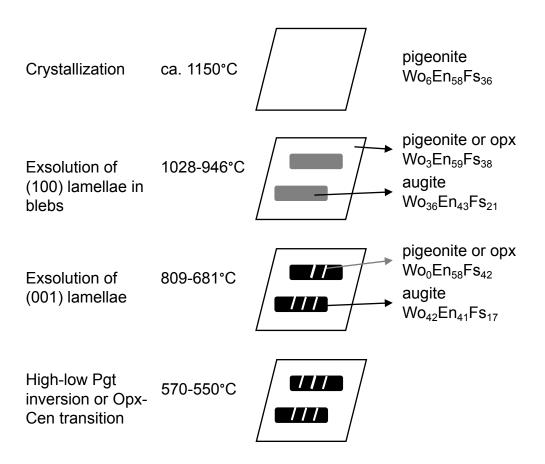


Fig. 6