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Silvio Ferrero, Iris Wannhoff, Iris Wannhoff, Oscar Laurent, Oscar Laurent,
Chris Yakymchuk, Chris Yakymchuk, Robert Darling, Robert Darling, Bernd
Wunder, et al.

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EMBRYOS OF TTGS IN GORE MOUNTAIN GARNET MEGACRYSTS FROM WATER-FLUXED MELTING OF THE LOWER CRUST

FERRERO, Silvio, Institut für Geowissenschaften, Universität Potsdam, Potsdam, 14476, Germany; Museum für Naturkunde (MfN), Berlin, 10115, Germany,

WANNHOFF, Iris, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, 12249, Germany,

LAURENT, Oscar, ETH, Zürich, Zürich, 8092, Switzerland; eCNRS, Observatoire Midi-Pyrénées, Toulouse, 31400, France,

YAKYMCHUK, Chris, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1, Canada,

DARLING, Robert S., Geology Department, SUNY Cortland, Bowers Hall, SUNY Cortland, Cortland, NY 13045,

WUNDER, Bernd, GFZ, Potsdam, 14473, Germany,

BORGHINI, Alessia, Institut für Geowissenschaften, Universität Potsdam, Potsdam, 14476, Germany

O'BRIEN, Patrick J., Institut für Erd- und Umweltwissenschaften, Universität Potsdam, Potsdam, 14476, Germany

The garnet megacrysts of Gore Mountain (Adirondacks, US) are world-renown crystals due to their size, up to 1 m in historical record, which makes them the largest known garnets on the planet. We show here that they are also host to the first primary inclusions of trondhjemitic melt found in natural mafic rocks. The petrological and experimental investigation of the inclusions, coupled with phase equilibrium modelling, shows that this melt is the result of H₂O-fluxed partial melting at $T > 900^{\circ}\text{C}$ of a lower crustal gabbro. The compositional similarity between the trondhjemitic melt inclusions and tonalitic–trondhjemitic–granodioritic (TTGs) melts makes these inclusions a direct natural evidence that melting of mafic rocks generates TTG-like melts, and provides us with the possibility to clarify processes responsible for the formation of the early continental crust. These TTG embryos represent the trondhjemitic end-member of the melts whose emplacement at upper crustal levels, after being modified by mixing and crystallization-related processes, leads to the formation of the TTG terranes. Moreover, our study shows how the melt from H₂O-fluxed melting of mafic lower crust has mismatched major and trace element signatures, previously interpreted as evidence of melting at very different pressures. This poses serious limitations to the established use of some chemical features to identify the geodynamic settings (e.g. subduction versus thickened crust) responsible for TTGs generation and the growth of early crust.