

1 **Primary spinel+chlorite inclusions in mantle garnet formed at**  
2 **ultrahigh-pressure**

3  
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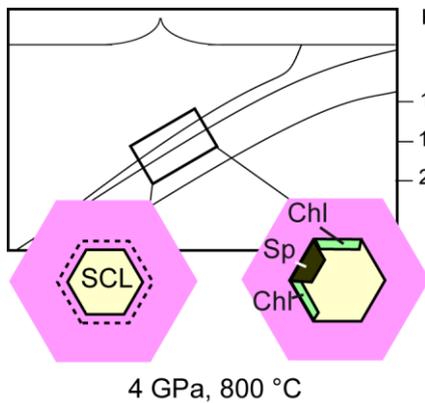
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11

12 ABSTRACT



Km Multiphase inclusions represent microenvironments where the  
100 interaction between fluid and host mineral is preserved during  
150 the rock geological path. Under its peculiar chemical-physical  
200 constraints, the entrapped solute-rich fluid might follow a  
crystallisation mechanism which is not predictable through  
simple equilibrium arguments. In this letter, by modelling of

19 solid-solution equilibrium and the application of principles of mass conservation, we demonstrate  
20 that cavities in mantle garnet filled with slab-derived fluids can re-equilibrate to  
21 pyrope+spinel+chlorite assemblage at the same high P-T of their formation. The basis of this  
22 occurrence is a dissolution-reprecipitation mechanism, triggered by a dilute, non-equilibrated slab  
23 fluid.

24

## 25 **Introduction**

26 Primary inclusions (fluid or solid multiphase) in mantle minerals represent the remnant of the fluid  
27 phase produced by dehydration reactions in the subducted slab and subsequently equilibrated with  
28 the overlying supra-subduction mantle peridotites. Natural and experimental studies demonstrated  
29 that saline aqueous inclusions with variable solute load prevail in high pressure (HP) rocks  
30 (Scambelluri and Philippot, 2001; Touret, 2001), whereas multiphase solid inclusions in some  
31 ultrahigh pressure (UHP) rocks have been attributed to silicate-rich fluids or hydrous melts at  
32 supercritical conditions, namely supercritical liquids (Bureau and Keppler, 1999; Carswell and van  
33 Roermund, 2005; Ferrando *et al.*, 2005; Korsakov and Hermann, 2006; Malaspina *et al.*, 2006;  
34 Stöckhert *et al.*, 2001). These inclusions are frequently hosted by minerals stable at mantle depths,  
35 such as garnet, and show the same textural features as fluid inclusions (Frezzotti and Ferrando,  
36 2015; Fig. 1). The mineral infillings of the solid multiphase inclusions are generally assumed to  
37 have crystallised by a simultaneous precipitation from the solute load of dense supercritical liquids  
38 equilibrating with the host rock. Moreover, the occurrence of phases stable at UHP, such as coesite  
39 or microdiamond, has long been considered evidence of precipitation from such liquids at pressure  
40 above 3 GPa. Here, we demonstrate that even a mineral association characterised by phases usually  
41 considered stable at relatively low pressure in mantle system (*e.g.* spinel + chlorite), would  
42 potentially crystallise at UHP by chemical fluid/host interaction.

43 We will consider as a case study a well-known example of multiphase solid inclusions occurring in  
44 the cores of garnets forming orthopyroxenites from the Maowu Ultramafic Complex (Eastern  
45 China), interpreted as hybrid rocks resulting by the interaction of previous harzburgites and slab-  
46 derived silica-rich liquids ( $P = 4$  GPa,  $T = 800$  °C) at the slab-mantle interface (Chen *et al.*, 2017;  
47 Malaspina *et al.*, 2006). These multiphase inclusions have negative crystal shapes and constant  
48 volume proportions of the mineral infillings consisting of spinel  $\pm$  orthopyroxene, and hydrous  
49 phases gedrite/pargasite, chlorite, phlogopite,  $\pm$  talc,  $\pm$  apatite ( Malaspina *et al.*, 2006, 2015; Fig. 1).

50 Some inclusions still preserve liquid water at the interface between mineral infillings and the cavity  
51 wall (Malaspina *et al.*, 2017). Recently, Malaspina *et al.* (2015) demonstrated the epitaxial  
52 relationship between spinel and garnet (Fig. 1A) which suggested nucleation of spinel under near-  
53 to-equilibrium conditions. On the contrary, hydrous phases (amphiboles, chlorite and  $\pm$ talc  
54  $\pm$ phlogopite) nucleate in a non-registered manner and likely under far-from-equilibrium conditions.  
55 The epitaxial growth of spinel with respect to garnet and the ring-shaped chlorite + water  
56 assemblage filling the space between the host garnet and the other inclusion minerals (Malaspina *et*  
57 *al.*, 2017), suggest that spinel and chlorite formed at UHP together with the garnet cores. However,  
58 from a thermodynamic point of view, spinel should never be stable in a chemical system  
59 characterised by pyrope + H<sub>2</sub>O, at any P-T range (Fig. 2). Surprisingly, in nature we can count a  
60 number of examples where spinel occurs in garnet-hosted primary diamond-bearing (hence UHP)  
61 multiphase inclusions from Bardane, Ugelvik and Svartberget in the Western Gneiss Region  
62 (Carswell and van Roermund, 2005; Malaspina *et al.*, 2010; Scambelluri *et al.*, 2010; van  
63 Roermund, 2009; van Roermund and Drury, 1998; Van Roermund *et al.*, 2002; Vrijmoed *et al.*,  
64 2008, 2006). We will show how this occurrence is driven by a dissolution-reprecipitation  
65 mechanism triggered by precise constraints on the composition of the supercritical liquid phase  
66 released by the slab.

67

## 68 **Results**

69 Multiphase solid inclusions in garnet represent the heritage of a series of processes comprising: i)  
70 formation of the cavity, and ii) crystallisation of the solute within the cavity. The determined  
71 morphological and compositional features of the solid phases can be exploited in order to gain  
72 insights into the dynamics of these processes. Among the identified solid phases within  
73 microcavities in garnet, spinel occupies a distinctive position (Fig. 1). The reasons for that derives  
74 from the following characteristics, which were already evidenced by (Malaspina *et al.*, 2015): i)

75 spinel is not present in all the cavities, ii) spinel is the only (anhydrous) oxide phase when present,  
76 iii) spinel is the only epitaxial phase with garnet when present. On the basis of these characteristics,  
77 spinel was attributed a role of nucleation initiator for the solid phases occupying the cavity. Here,  
78 we obtain deeper insights into the crystallization mechanism by the analysis of solution-solid  
79 equilibrium in a model MgO-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-SiO<sub>2</sub>-H<sub>2</sub>O (MASH) system and the application of principles of  
80 mass conservation.

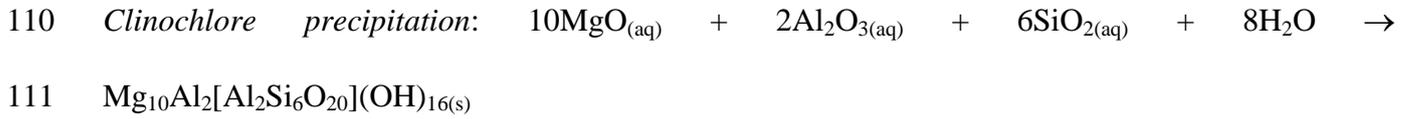
81 If aqueous fluids released by the slab are under the condition to equilibrate with solid phases, their  
82 molal composition would be close to 0.11, 0.18, and 3.7, in terms of dissolved MgO, Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and  
83 SiO<sub>2</sub> components, in accordance with the experimental composition of the fluid phase in  
84 equilibrium with a K-free eclogite at 4 GPa and 800 °C (Kessel *et al.*, 2005, Fig. 3). This means that  
85 the water released by the dehydration of slab minerals might enrich by significant amounts of the  
86 sole silica component, as far as its path is sufficiently long before the slab-mantle interface is  
87 reached. The effects of such fluids on the peridotite layer at the slab-mantle interface might be  
88 distinguished as follows: i) if in contact with a pure water fluid, the minerals of the peridotite layer  
89 might undergo dissolution. Dissolution might be negligible if the transition of fluids is fast and  
90 alternated by periods of dry conditions. On the contrary, dissolution might persist if the fluid is  
91 entrapped in cavities. ii) If in contact with a silica-rich fluid, the forsteritic component of the  
92 peridotite layer might react with the fluid, giving rise to a pyroxene-rich layer, according to the  
93 reaction  $\text{Mg}_2\text{SiO}_4 + \text{SiO}_{2(\text{aq})} = \text{Mg}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_6$ , acting as a "filter".

94 At a late stage of process ii), the fluid escaping the pyroxene-rich filter might be at a composition in  
95 equilibrium with the mantle peridotite, namely 5.3, 0.31, and 3.0 in terms of MgO, Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and SiO<sub>2</sub>  
96 molalities (Dvir *et al.*, 2011, Fig. 3).

97 As far as process i) is concerned, one should evaluate if a subsequent event of dissolution-  
98 reprecipitation within pyrope cavities might bring about an equilibration of the fluid-solid system at  
99 the same P-T conditions of its formation. In order to demonstrate this evolution of the cavity, we  
100 must perform a hypothesis on the precipitating phases. On the basis of the assessed composition of

101 our multiphase inclusions in pyrope-rich garnet (Malaspina *et al.*, 2015), it is clear that spinel and  
 102 clinochlore can be reasonably considered the products of this precipitation, since stable assemblage  
 103 pyrope-spinel-clinocllore occurs only at  $P \geq 4$  GPa, and forsterite, corundum, Mg-staurolite, and  
 104 coesite are never present within the cavity (Fig. S1). Hence, the cavity should contain, at  
 105 equilibrium, spinel and clinochlore as phases nucleated on pyrope after its dissolution, [leaving a](#)  
 106 [fluid with a composition in equilibrium with the pyrope-spinel-clinocllore assemblage.](#)

107 Pertinent chemical equations read:



112  
 113 If one refers to 1 kg  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , the mass balance of the whole process reads:

114  $M = m + 3p_y - s_p - 10c_l$

115  $A = a + p_y - s_p - 2c_l$

116  $S = s + 3p_y - 6c_l$

117  $H = 56 - 8c_l$

118 Where  $M$ ,  $A$ , and  $S$  ( $m$ ,  $a$ , and  $s$ ) are the final (initial) molalities of  $\text{MgO}$ ,  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ , and  $\text{SiO}_2$  of the  
 119 fluid entrapped in the cavity,  $H$  are the moles of free water,  $p_y$ ,  $s_p$ , and  $c_l$  are the moles of  
 120 congruently dissolved pyrope, precipitated spinel, and precipitated clinochlore, respectively. The  
 121 solution of this system of equations gives:

122 
$$p_y = \frac{A-a}{2} + \frac{2(S-s)}{3} - \frac{M-m}{2}$$

123 
$$s_p = \frac{S-s}{3} - (A-a)$$

124 
$$c_l = \frac{A-a}{4} + \frac{S-s}{6} - \frac{M-m}{4}$$

125 The constrain of positive values for  $p_y$ ,  $s_p$ , and  $c_l$  allows us to define the space of the  $m$ ,  $a$ , and  $s$   
 126 parameters, which determine the composition of the slab-derived fluid when the composition of the  
 127 fluid in equilibrium with the pyrope-spinel-clinochlore assemblage is known. Such fluid was  
 128 calculated to have a composition of  $M = 0.15$ ,  $A = 0.0096$ , and  $S = 0.12$  (Supplementary  
 129 Information, Fig. 3B). These concentrations appear reliable if compared with the 0.13 molal  
 130 experimental congruent solubility of garnet grossular (Fockenberg *et al.*, 2008). For our purposes,  
 131 we consider the fluid in equilibrium with the pyrope-spinel-clinochlore assemblage to have  
 132 concentrations within the intervals  $M = 0.15 \div 0.39$ ,  $A = 0.0096 \div 0.13$ , and  $S = 0.12 \div 0.39$ , which give

133 
$$p_y = (0.01 \div 0.13) - \frac{a}{2} - \frac{2s}{3} + \frac{m}{2}, \quad s_p = (0.0 \div 0.030) + a - \frac{s}{3}, \quad c_l = (-0.015 \div 0) - \frac{a}{4} - \frac{s}{6} + \frac{m}{4}. \quad A$$

134 trivial upper limit of initial molalities is  $m = M$ ,  $a = A$ , and  $s = S$ , which zero the first member of the  
 135 equations, whereas the lowest limit of pure water ( $m = a = s = 0$ ) is admitted. Since the  $m$  term is  
 136 positive in each equation, the mass balance gives no constrain on the upper limit of  $m$  and, while  $c_l$   
 137 increases with  $m$ ,  $s_p$  is independent of  $m$ . On the contrary, a silica-rich fluid as that in equilibrium  
 138 with the slab ( $m = 0.11$ ,  $a = 0.18$ ,  $s = 3.7$ ) would give rise to negative  $p_y$ ,  $s_p$ , and  $c_l$ .

139 By way of example, consider a fluid with composition  $m = 0.20$ ,  $a = 0$ , and  $s = 0$ . Under such  
 140 hypothesis the roots are  $p_y = 0.11 \div 0.23$ ,  $s_p = 0 \div 0.030$ , and  $c_l = 0.035 \div 0.050$  ( $H$  undergoes a  
 141 decrement of  $0.5 \div 0.7\%$ , which gives rise to a negligible correction of the previous molalities). By  
 142 scaling these results on the volume of a typical cavity ( $10^4 \mu\text{m}^3$ ), considering that the molar volume  
 143 of water is  $14 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1}$  at 4 GPa and 800 °C (Zhang and Duan, 2005), the moles of pyrope  
 144 dissolved in the cavity and the moles of precipitated spinel and clinochlore are  $(1.4 \div 2.9) \times 10^{-12}$ ,  
 145  $(0 \div 3.8) \times 10^{-13}$ , and  $(4.5 \div 6.4) \times 10^{-13}$ , respectively. Assuming a molar volume of 110, 40 and 1100  
 146  $\text{cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1}$  for pyrope, spinel, and clinochlore, respectively, the dissolved volume of pyrope results

147 150±300 μm<sup>3</sup>, whereas the volume of precipitated spinel is 0±15 μm<sup>3</sup> and that of clinocllore is  
148 500±700 μm<sup>3</sup>. All these volume predictions are consistent to what observed in nature (Fig. 1).

149

## 150 **Conclusions**

151 The systematic presence of spinel+chlorite inclusions in many subduction zone mantle peridotites  
152 reflects a slab-mantle interface characterised by the transit of dilute aqueous fluids which may  
153 consist of pure H<sub>2</sub>O. These fluids are non-equilibrated fluids released by the slab minerals having  
154 the attitude to dissolve garnet (Fig. 4). If slab-derived fluids are SiO<sub>2</sub>-enriched (Fig. 3), they will  
155 react with the overlying mantle peridotites forming orthopyroxenite layers (grey zone in Fig. 4).  
156 Once entrapped in the metasomatic-forming garnet (stage 1 in Fig. 4), they can dissolve it and bring  
157 the system to an equilibrium state of py-sp-cl assemblage (Fig. S1) through a dissolution-  
158 reprecipitation mechanism (stage 2 in Fig. 4). The subsequent retrograde path undergone by the  
159 inclusion-bearing rock triggers the crystallisation of the other hydrous phases (gedrite, phlogopite,  
160 pargasite, talc), leaving an eventual residue of water solution (stage 3 in Fig. 4). On the light of the  
161 drawn conclusions, spinel-chlorite bearing multiphase inclusions can be considered as witnesses of  
162 crystallization processes at UHP. The fingerprint of such processes is sometimes revealed by a  
163 “surprising” composition which, if analysed by sole equilibrium arguments, would lead to wrong  
164 inferences about their formation history.

165

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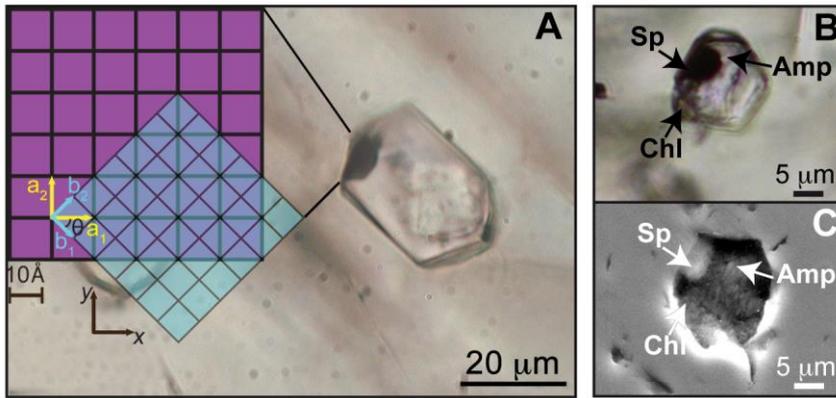
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243 **Figure 1**

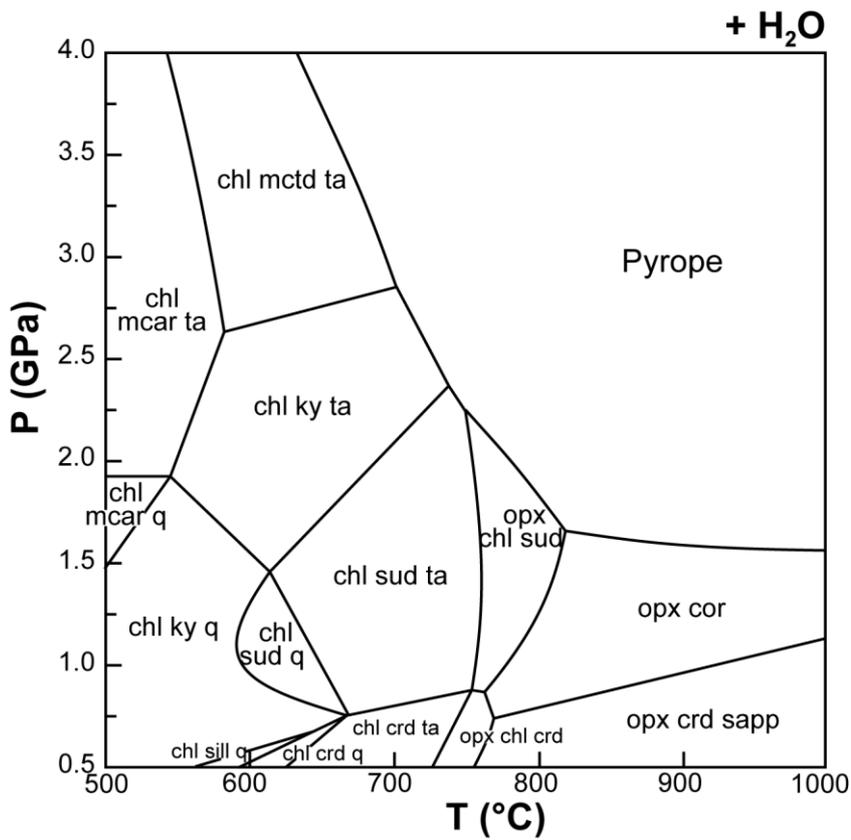


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245 **Figure 1** A) Photomicrograph of a multiphase solid inclusion in metasomatic garnet from  
246 Maowu Ultramafic Complex (Dabie Shan, China). Inset represents the relative orientation of the  
247 spinel {100} surface lattice (light blue) with respect to the garnet {100} surface lattice (violet) for  
248 the coincidence at  $\theta = -45^\circ$  (from Malaspina *et al.*, 2015); B, C) Negative-crystal shaped  
249 multiphase solid inclusion (plane polarised transmitted light and Secondary Electron image) with  
250 evident microstructural relations between spinel, chlorite and amphibole (gedrite).

251

252 **Figure 2**

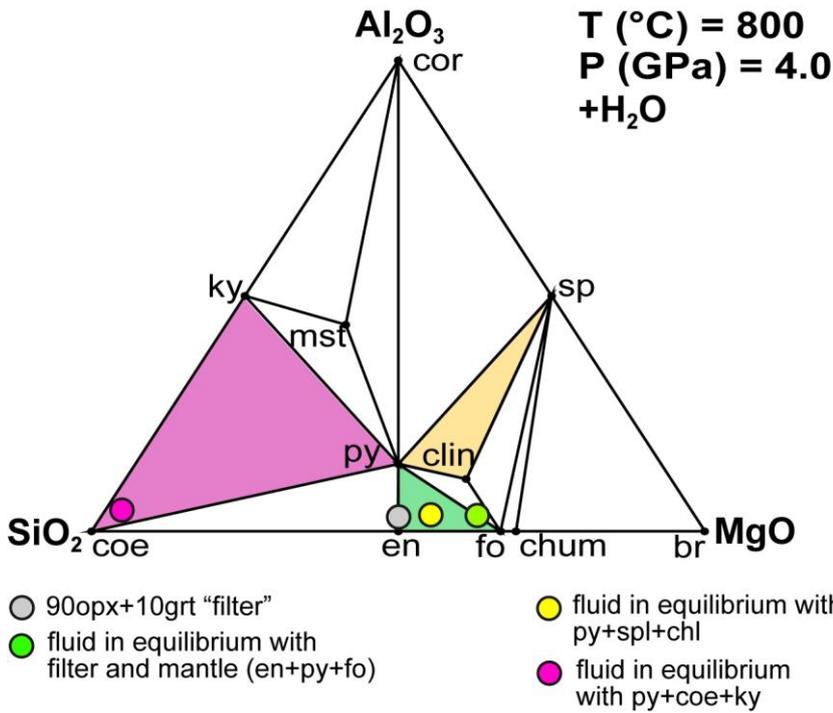


253

254 **Figure 2** Predicted P-T stability fields for mineral assemblages in the simplified system MgO  
255 (3 mol) - SiO<sub>2</sub> (3 mol) - Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (1 mol) + H<sub>2</sub>O calculated with Perple\_X software package  
256 (Connolly, 1990). Mineral abbreviations: chl=chlorite, mctd=Mg-clorithoid, ta=talc, mcar=Mg-  
257 carpholite, ky=kyanite, q=quartz, opx=orthopyroxene, sud=sudoite, cor=corundum, sill=sillimanite,  
258 crd=cordierite, sapp=sapphirine.

259

260 **Figure 3**

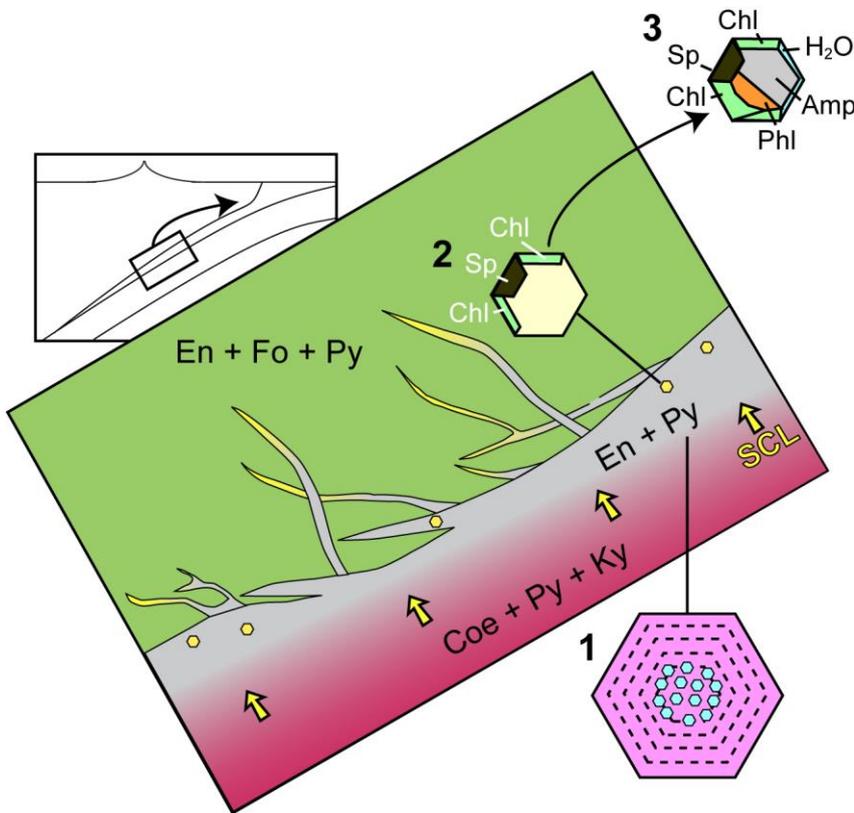


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262 **Figure 3** Chemographic projection of a water-saturated MgO-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-SiO<sub>2</sub> system at 4 GPa and  
 263 800 °C, showing stable assemblages of coe-ky-py, py-en-fo, and py-sp-clin. **Experimental**  
 264 equilibrium slab fluid compositions and mantle fluid compositions are indicated by purple and  
 265 green dots, respectively. **Calculated** compositions of a fluid in equilibrium with py-sp-chl  
 266 assemblage is indicated by yellow dot. The composition of the orthopyroxenite containing  
 267 multiphase inclusions in garnet is indicated by a grey dot. Mineral abbreviations same as in Figure 2  
 268 and coe=coesite, mst=Mg-stauroilite, py=pyrope, en=enstatite, clin=clinocllore, sp=spinel,  
 269 fo=forsterite, chum=clinohumite, br=brucite.

270

271 **Figure 4**



272

273 **Figure 4** Schematic cartoon showing aqueous fluid entrapped by growing metasomatic garnet  
 274 (1) after the interaction of slab-derived supercritical liquid (SCL) and the supra-subduction mantle  
 275 peridotite forming garnet orthopyroxenite (grey layer and veins). Light blue hexagons represent  
 276 primary aqueous inclusions in pyrope. Garnet/fluid interaction yields to a dissolution and  
 277 precipitation process that triggers epitaxial nucleation of spinel and chlorite during garnet growing  
 278 at UHP (2). Subsequent post-entrapment crystallisation of the other hydrous phases such as gedrite,  
 279 phlogopite, pargasite and talc during retrograde P-T path (3) leaves an eventual residue of water  
 280 solution (light blue rim). Modified after Malaspina *et al.* (2017).

281

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294 **Supplementary Information**

295

296 **Thermodynamic modelling.** The P–T isochemical section of Figure 2 was calculated by Gibbs free  
297 energy gridded minimisation with the software Perple\_X (Connolly, 2005), considering a fixed bulk  
298 composition corresponding to pure pyrope ( $\text{Mg}_3\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_3\text{O}_{12}$ ) at  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ -saturated conditions. We used  
299 the thermodynamic database and equation of state for  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  of Holland and Powell (1998).

300 The compatibility diagrams of Figure 3 and Figure S1 were calculated with the software Perple\_X  
301 in the MASH system ( $\text{MgO}-\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3-\text{SiO}_2-\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), projected from  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ .

302  $\text{MgO}$ ,  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{SiO}_2$  dissolved in water in equilibrium with py+coe+ky (pink in Figure 3),  
303 en+fo+py (green in Figure 3), and py+cl+sp (yellow in Figure 3) were calculated using the aqueous  
304 speciation-solubility code EQ3 (Wolery, 1992) adapted to include equilibrium constants calculated  
305 with the Deep Earth Water (DEW) model (Facq *et al.*, 2014; Sverjensky *et al.*, 2014). The results

306 of such calculations are reported in the following tables for comparison with experimental  
307 solubilities found in literature:

308

Equilibrium slab-fluid	
DEW-EQ3 (py-coe-ky assemblage)	EXP (Kessel et al. 2005) pink dot in Fig. 3
0.017	0.11
0.0037	0.18
1.77	3.7

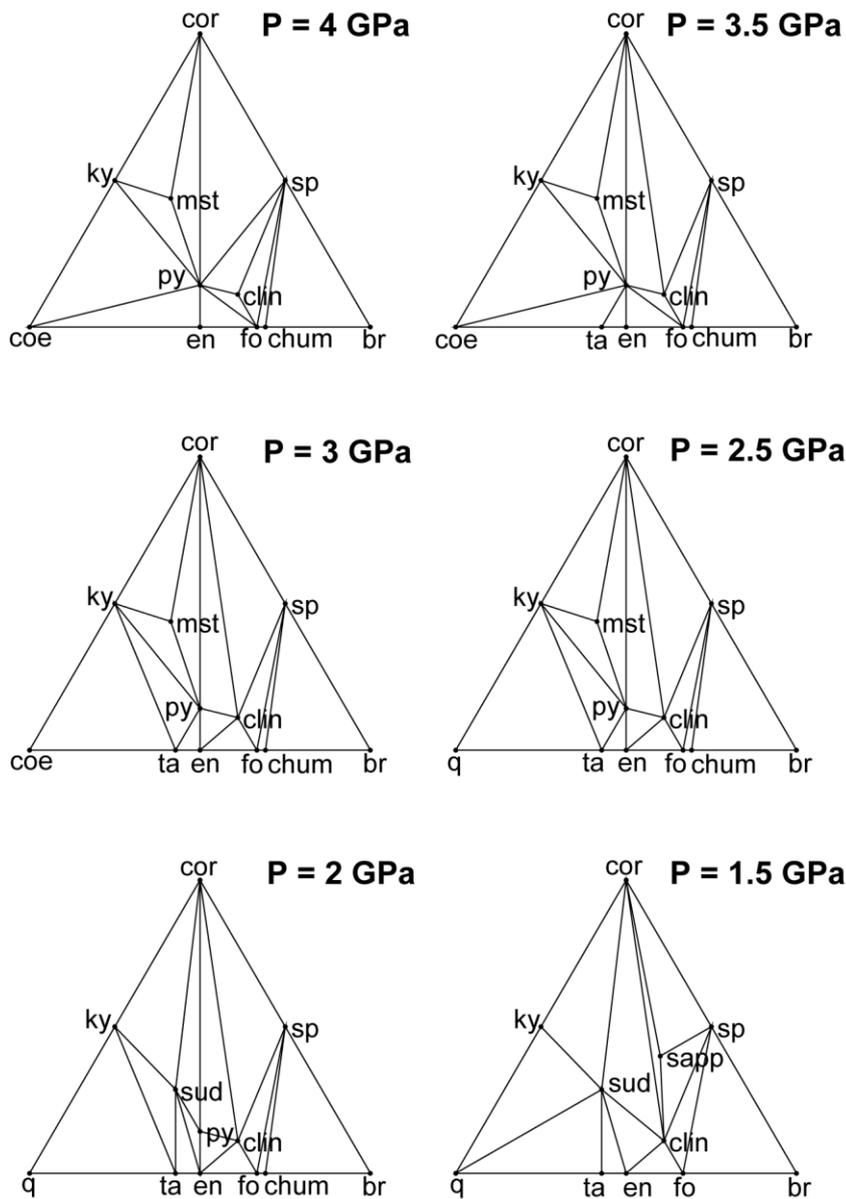
309

Equilibrium mantle-fluid	
DEW-EQ3 (en-fo-py assemblage)	EXP (Dvir et al. 2011) green dot in Fig. 3
0.25	5.29
0.0026	0.31
0.20	3.0

310

Fluid in equilibrium with py-sp-cl assemblage	
DEW-EQ3	EXP (Fockenberg et al. 2008) yellow dot in Fig. 3
0.15	0.39
0.0096	0.13
0.12	0.39

311



312

313 **Figure S1** Compatibility diagrams of water-saturated MgO-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-SiO<sub>2</sub>-H<sub>2</sub>O system at 800 °C  
 314 and 1.5–4 GPa, projected from H<sub>2</sub>O, showing that the stable assemblage pyrope-spinel-clinochlore  
 315 occurs only at UHP conditions. Mineral abbreviations same as Figures 2 and 3 of the manuscript.

316

317 **Supplementary References**

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