Siderite in ferruginous sediments: spatially explicit Identification of temporally variable mineral formation

Hendrik Vogel (1), Marina Morlock (1), Jebril Hadi (2), Anneleen Foubert (3), Daniel Ariztegui (4), Martin Melles (5), James M. Russell (6), Satria Bijaksana (7), and the TDP science team

(1) University of Bern, Institute of Geological Sciences & Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research, Bern, Switzerland (hendrik.vogel@geo.unibe.ch), (2) University of Bern, Institute of Geological Sciences, Bern, Switzerland, (3) Department of Geosciences, University of Fribourg, 1700 Fribourg, Switzerland, (4) Department of Earth Sciences, University of Geneva, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland, (5) Institute of Geology and Mineralogy, University of Cologne, 50674 Cologne, Germany, (6) Department of Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912, USA, (7) Faculty of Mining and Petroleum Engineering, Institut Teknologi Bandung, 40132 Bandung, Indonesia

Understanding the temporal and spatial context of authigenic and diagenetic mineral formation in sedimentary environments is critical to utilize them as recorders of past environmental changes. Here we provide detailed insight into spatiotemporal formation relationships of siderite in ferruginous sediments of Lake Towuti (2.75°S, 121.5°E), one of the oldest and deepest lakes in Indonesia. Cores of the entire sediment infill have been recovered in the ICDP Towuti Drilling Project in 2015, including lacustrine sediments covering the last ~1 Myr, continuously.

We combined high-resolution 3D-µCT-scanning (µm-scale) of fresh lake sediment with XRF-scanning, micro-XRF mapping, and traditional thin section analysis. µCT-scanning facilitates the observation of sedimentary structures at the µm-scale in 3D prior to analysis, while high-resolution mapping in 2D aids characterisation of the observed structures once the fragile sample is conserved in resin. Siderite and other high density authigenic phases, such as millerite, produce high density contrasts in the clay-rich Towuti sediment matrix thus facilitating spatial analysis of their formation contexts.

While the formation of siderite is dependent on the chemical and redox environment in the water column and sediment, our µCT analyses reveal a wide variety of both synsedimentary and post depositional structures in which siderite formed in Towuti sediments. These include: 1) discontinuous laminae composed of micritic siderite along the synsedimentary bedding; 2) vertical voids filled with siderite related to post depositional fluid circulation, 3) siderite precipitates on micro-fault planes; 4) up to cm-diameter large siderite nodules with lower density centres suggesting continued post depositional growth. All structures occur repeatedly in the 100 m long soft sediment record and sometimes in close, or even overlapping relation to each other, suggesting that siderite in these sediments contains a mixed signal of different mineral formation generations and processes. Our results thus emphasize the importance of careful identification and characterization of different authigenic mineral formation modes in sedimentary records, prior to utilizing them as recorders of the chemical environment in which they formed.