



The structure and metamorphism
of the Irindina supracrustal assemblage
on the western side of the Entia Dome,
Harts Range, central Australia.

Volume One

by

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CONTENTS

VOLUME ONE - RESULTS OF FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
PLATE CAPTIONS	xii
SUMMARY	xiv
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY	xvii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xviii
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Location	1
1.2 Previous studies in the Harts Range	1
1.3 History of ruby exploration and mining	3
1.4 Methods	6
1.5 Concurrent research	7
1.6 Aims	8
CHAPTER TWO - SEQUENCE OF LITHOLOGIES	
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Entia gneiss complex	10
2.3 Bruna granitic gneiss	13
2.4 Irindina supracrustal assemblage	15
2.4.1 Ruby Mine Sequence	16
2.4.1.1 "Unit 1 amphibolite"	16
2.4.1.2 Semipelitic and pelitic metasediments	17
2.4.1.3 Harts Range meta-igneous complex	19
2.4.1.4 Entire anorthosite	20

2.4.1.4.1	Leucocratic anorthosite	20
2.4.1.4.2	Mafic layers	21
2.4.1.4.3	Ultramafic layers	21
2.4.1.5	Sillimanite-rich biotite garnet gneiss	22
2.4.1.6	Uppermost sequence	22
2.4.2	Irindina Creek sequence	23
2.4.3	Mt Palmer sequence	26
2.5	Brady supracrustal assemblage	29
2.6	Correlations within the Arunta Inlier	30

CHAPTER THREE - STRUCTURAL GEOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	33
3.2	Entia gneiss complex	33
3.3	Bruna granitic gneiss	35
3.4	Irindina supracrustal assemblage	38
3.4.1	Southern area	38
3.4.1.1	Original layering (S_0)	39
3.4.1.2	First generation (F_1) folding	39
3.4.1.3	Second generation (F_2) folding	42
3.4.1.4	Third generation (F_3) folding	46
3.4.1.5	Other tight folding	49
3.4.1.6	Fourth generation (F_4) folding	50
3.4.1.7	Fifth generation (F_5) folding	51
3.4.1.8	Deformation at the upper margin of the Brun granitic gneiss	51
3.4.1.9	Structures controlling pegmatite dyke emplacement	52
3.4.2	Mt Palmer area	53
3.5	Brady supracrustal assemblage	55

3.6	Discussion	56
3.6.1	Tectonic setting	56
3.6.2	Correlation of fold events	57
3.6.3	Nature of the strain	61

APPENDIX A - STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE RUBY-BEARING ROCKS

A.1	Introduction	A.1
A.2	Geology of the ruby mine workings	A.1
A.2.1	Excavation I	A.3
A.2.2	Excavation II	A.5
A.2.3	Excavation III	A.6
A.2.4	Excavation IV	A.10
A.2.5	Excavation V	A.11
A.2.6	Other Ultramafic Bodies	A.14
A.2.7	Corundum, kyanite, sapphire occurrence	A.15
A.3	Exploration near Spriggs Creek	A.16
	General key for Appendix A	A.20

VOLUME TWO - RESULTS OF LABORATORY INVESTIGATIONS

CHAPTER FOUR - GEOCHEMISTRY, ORIGIN AND METAMORPHISM OF THE METAPELITIC LITHOLOGIES

4.1	Introduction	66
4.2	Petrography and geochemistry	67
4.3	Microstructure	73
4.4	Conditions of metamorphism	79
4.4.1	Geothermometry	82
4.4.2	Geobarometry	87
4.5	Summary	90

CHAPTER FIVE - THE HARTS RANGE META-IGNEOUS COMPLEX

5.1	Introduction	92
5.2	Lithological descriptions	93
5.2.1	Mafic rocks with gabbroic textures	93
5.2.2	Amphibolites	94
5.2.3	Anorthosites	95
5.2.4	Altered anorthosites	95
5.2.5	Ultramafic rocks	96
5.2.6	Comparable metasediments	97
5.3	Geochemistry and origin of lithologies	98
5.3.1	Mafic rocks with gabbroic textures	99
5.3.2	Banded amphibolites	100
5.3.3	Comparison of amphibolites and calc-silicates	103
5.3.4	The Entire anorthosite	105
5.3.5	Ultramafic lithologies	106
5.4	Timing of recrystallization	107
5.4.1	Recrystallization associated with the first deformation	107
5.4.2	The effects of post-S ₁ folding	111
5.5	Conditions of metamorphism	112
5.5.1	Geothermometry	114
5.5.2	Geobarometry	116

CHAPTER SIX - THE ORIGIN OF THE HARTS RANGE RUBY DEPOSITS

6.1	Possible origins of ruby deposits	118
6.2	Field relationships of the Harts Range ruby deposits	123

6.3	Evaluation of models of origin of the Harts Range ruby deposits	126
6.4	Element mobility during the formation of the Harts Range ruby deposits	130
6.5	Reactions involving hornblende	134
6.5.1	Reactions in the $MgO-Al_2O_3-SiO_2-CaO-H_2O$ system	134
6.5.2	Metagabbro	135
6.5.3	Metanorite	136
6.5.4	Amphibolites	137
6.5.5	Anorthosites	138
6.5.6	Garnet-bearing anorthosites	139
6.5.7	Altered anorthosites	139
6.5.8	Ultramafic rocks	140
6.6	Retrograde metamorphism	143
6.6.1	UMR ultramafic layer	143
6.6.2	Altered anorthosites	144
CHAPTER SEVEN - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS		
7.1	Results of this study	147
7.2	Causes of metamorphism	148
7.2.1	Overthickened crust	149
7.2.2	Thinned lithosphere	150
7.2.3	Significance of early metamorphism	151
7.3	The significance of a major detachment zone	153
7.4	The tectonic significance of early folding and metamorphism	154
7.5	Retrograde metamorphism	157
7.6	Major uplift event	158

7.7	Concluding remarks	159
	REFERENCES	160
	APPENDIX B - PETROGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS	(Microfisch)
	PART 1 - Metapelitic and related lithologies	B.1
	PART 2 - Non-pelitic metasedimentary rocks	B.23
	PART 3 - Rocks of the Harts Range meta-igneous complex	B.33
	APPENDIX C - TOTAL ROCK XRF ANALYSES	(Microfisch)
	APPENDIX D - MICROPROBE ANALYSES	(Microfisch)
	APPENDIX E - CALCULATION OF THE ACTIVITY OF GROSSULAR IN GARNET	
	APPENDIX F - CALCULATION OF THE ACTIVITY OF PYROPE IN GARNET	
	APPENDIX G - THE THERMODYNAMICS OF METHODS USED TO ESTIMATE TEMPERATURES AND PRESSURES OF METAMORPHISM	
	G.1 Garnet biotite geothermometry	G.1
	G.2 Garnet plagioclase sillimanite/kyanite geobarometry	G.9
	G.3 Garnet clinopyroxene geothermometry	G.13
	G.4 Garnet plagioclase clinopyroxene geobarometry	G.15
	APPENDIX H - PROGRAMS USED IN GEOTHERMOBAROMETRY	
	H.1 Garnet biotite geothermometry	H.1
	H.2 Garnet plagioclase sillimanite/kyanite geobarometry	H.3
	H.3 Garnet clinopyroxene geothermometry	H.6
	H.4 Garnet plagioclase clinopyroxene quartz geobarometry	H.7
	APPENDIX I - LAWRENCE ET AL (1987)	
	APPENDIX J - SIVELL ET AL (1987)	

SUMMARY

The Irindina supracrustal assemblage of the eastern Arunta Inlier, central Australia, comprises roughly equal proportions of metamorphosed sedimentary and igneous rocks. The former consist of metapelites with lesser amounts of marble, calc-silicate and quartzite. The latter are classified into the Harts Range meta-igneous complex, which consists predominantly of amphibolites and also contains the Entire anorthosite. Ruby deposits occur within the Entire anorthosite.

The igneous origin of amphibolites assigned to the Harts Range meta-igneous complex is confirmed because they have identical major and trace element compositions to uncommon metagabbro boudins. These amphibolites are considered to have recrystallized from submarine basalts. The Entire anorthosite is ^{considered} comagmatic with the amphibolites and was intruded into the volcano-sedimentary pile prior to deformation and metamorphism.

Typical crustal trace element abundance patterns occur in metapelites and some calc-silicates. These patterns are attributed to detrital material from a provenance of upper crustal material. Some unusual trace element patterns in some calc-silicates and quartzites (metacherts?) and are attributed to chemical precipitation from sea water.

The Irindina supracrustal assemblage was metamorphosed prior to or during the first deformation (D_1) which affected these rocks. Partial melting of basalts produced tonalite veins before metamorphic hornblende formation. Deformation and metamorphism of the basalts and tonalites, during D_1 , produced

banded amphibolites. Ubiquitous felsic augen in the metapelites formed by partial melting or metamorphic segregation, synchronous with tonalite production, and deformation during D_1 . D_1 resulted in pervasive S_1 foliations and L_1 mineral lineations, which developed ^{subsequent to or} during the main metamorphism.

The conditions of metamorphism during D_1 are estimated to be in the range 710–730°C and 6–8 kbar. The estimates are made using modified models for mixing of components within garnet to update existing garnet biotite thermometry and garnet plagioclase sillimanite/kyanite quartz barometry.

Major folds are common in the Irindina supracrustal assemblage and most refold the pervasive S_1 foliation with little or no new fabric development. In the ruby mine area F_2 is isoclinal and major folds have an amplitude of about 10 km. F_3 is represented by an isolated major tight asymmetrical fold. F_2 and F_3 both trend northeasterly parallel to the L_1 mineral lineation. In the Mt Palmer area, 10 km west of the ruby mine area, east-west trending folds are refolded by northeast trending folds. These two fold generations are very tight and are considered to post-date F_2 of the ruby mine area, but their timing relative to F_3 is unknown.

The microstructural features of post F_1 isoclinal to tight folds are similar. In pelitic lithologies S_1 biotite has been recrystallized after folding without producing new foliations. L_1 sillimanite is kinked and not recrystallized. In amphibolites hornblende appears to form an axial lineation in folded samples, but this lineation is attributed to kinking of earlier grains rather than new mineral growth. Folded

quartz-rich layers in amphibolites contain axial planar foliations due to flattening of quartz and consequential rotation of hornblende.

The deposits of semi-precious ruby from the ruby mine area resulted from metasomatic exchange between anorthosite and ultramafic rock within the Entire anorthosite. During isoclinal F_1 folding, ultramafic rock was more competent than anorthosite. Layers of anorthosite in ultramafic rock, produced during F_1 isoclinal folding, were the sites of the most extensive metasomatic alteration. Ultramafic rocks comprising olivine, spinel and clinopyroxene had a lower chemical potential for silica than adjacent anorthosite. Silica migration facilitated the formation of S_1 hornblende in ultramafic rock and the loss of silica from anorthosite produced altered anorthosite which was relatively enriched in alumina. Ruby formed after plagioclase and hornblende in the altered anorthosites became saturated in alumina. The presence of S_1 foliations in the coarser-grained altered anorthosites indicates that metasomatism was complete before the end of the event that produced S_1 .

The formation of secondary chlorite in the ultramafic rocks caused them to become less competent than anorthosite during F_3 folding. Hornblende breakdown during chlorite formation released silica and sodium which resulted in veins of sodic plagioclase within anorthite-enriched anorthosites.