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What stays in the slab and what returns to the surface? A geochemical mass balance model perspective

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We have developed the Arc Basalt Simulator (ABS), a quantitative forward model to calculate the mass balance of slab dehydration and melting, and slab fluid/melt-fluxed mantle melting, in order to quantitatively evaluate magma genesis beneath arcs. ABS models can reproduce magma compositions in many arcs.

The model suggests that the slab-derived component at volcanic fronts (VF) is mostly generated by dehydration, but successful models for most VF and all rear arc (RA) magmas also require the slab to melt. The compositions of slab fluids and melts are controlled primarily by the breakdown of amphibole and lawsonite beneath the VF and by the breakdown of phengite beneath the RA in addition to residual eclogite mineral phases including garnet, clinopyroxene, and quartz.

In the model, about 78-98% of relatively fluid-immobile elements including Nd and Hf in the arc lavas come from mantle peridotite. However, most liquid-mobile elements come from the slab. Modeled residual peridotite compositions are similar to those in some supra-subduction zone ophiolites and mantle xenoliths, providing constraints on reactions in the mantle wedge.

Altered oceanic crust (AOC) and sediment in the residual slab are modified by the subtraction of melt- and fluid-mobile elements. Unmodified AOC potentially becomes the EM I mantle component after 1 Ga, whereas melted AOC can have extremely fractionated U-Pb and become the HIMU source after 1-2 Ga. Element re-distribution beneath arcs can form the recycled materials that have been detected in ocean island basalts.

Keywords: arc, magma, geochemistry, mass balance