THE OXIDATION STATE OF TUNGSTEN IN IRON BEARING AND IRON FREE SILICATE GLASSES: RESULTS FROM W L-EDGE XANES MEASUREMENTS. L. R. Danielson1, K. Righter1, S. Sutton2, M. Newville2, L. Le1. 1NASA JSC, 2101 NASA Road One, Houston, TX 77058 United States (lisa.r.danielson@nasa.gov), 2GSECARS University of Chicago, 9700 South Cass Avenue, Bldg. 434A, Argonne, IL 60439 United States.

Introduction: Tungsten is important in constraining core formation of the Earth because this element is a moderately siderophile element (depleted ~ 10 relative to chondrites) and, as a member of the Hf-W isotopic system, it is useful in constraining the timing of core formation. A number of previous experimental studies have been carried out to determine the silicate solubility and metal-silicate partitioning behavior of W, including its concomitant oxidation state. However, results of previous studies (figure 1) are inconsistent on whether W occurs as W4+ or W6+.

It is assumed that W4+ is the cation valence relevant to core formation [8]. Given the sensitivity to silicate composition of high valence cations [8], knowledge of the oxidation state of W over a wide range of fO2 is critical to understanding the oxidation state of the mantle and core formation processes. This study seeks to measure the W valence and change in valence state over the range of fO2 most relevant to core formation, around IW-2.

Experiments: Two compositions were used to determine the effects of iron content. Experiments were conducted at 1300 °C, for durations of 24 to 96 hours and air quenched. One series was conducted using the An-Di eutectic, from log fO2 -7.25 to -18. Experiments using an ankaramite starting composition were conducted from log fO2 -1.65 to -18.3. Experiments were doped with 1wt% of WO3, and at IW+1, one set of experiments was quenched in water.

Figure 1. Comparison of W valence from previous results.

Analytical: A monochromatic X-ray beam from a Si(111) double crystal monochromator was focused onto the sample and the fluorescent X-ray yield was plotted as a function of incident X-ray energy (more detail can be found in [9]). The oxidation state of tungsten was inferred from the energy of the first peak in the LIII-edge derivative spectrum. WO2, WO3, FeWO4, CaWO4 were used as standards.

Results: Results (figures 3 and 4) for the CMAS starting materials suggest that only W6+ is present from the most oxidized conditions to IW (log fO2 -10.75). At IW-1, tungsten starts to exhibit mixed valence but is still dominated by W6+. At IW-2, W4+ becomes more abundant, with the most reduced state observed being equal proportions of W4+ and W6+. These preliminary results suggest that W6+ is still present, even below IW-5. At IW-2 and below, metal exsolves from the silicate, complicating the analyses. For ankaramite, only W6+ is present down to IW-1, with mixed valence beginning at IW-2, i.e., qualitatively similar behavior to the Fe-free samples.
Discussion and Conclusions: Both CMAS and ankaramite glasses show W$^{6+}$ above IW and mixed valence below IW. The mixed states may result from analyses in which both silicate glass and exsolved W-bearing metal are present in the analytical volume in varying proportions. This “nugget effect” is likely to impact the results below IW-2. Nonetheless, the results for nugget-free samples indicate that W is present in the W$^{6+}$ state in systems more oxidized than ~IW-1 and that the transition between W$^{6+}$ and W$^{5+}$ occurs just below IW-1. Quench effects may be significant as indicated by the IW-2 CMAS water quenched run, in which W seems to still be dissolved.

Future experiments will focus on this oxidation state transitional range of fO$_2$, IW-1 and IW-4, and the nugget effect minimized by limiting W concentrations to the 100 ppm range, well below W solubility. The most reducing runs, at the Cr-Cr$_2$O$_3$ buffer, suggest a time series is needed to determine the effects of longer run times at low fO$_2$.

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