40Ar/39Ar age of hornblende-bearing R chondrite LAP 04840

K. RIGHTER 1 M. COSCA 2

1 Mailcode KT, NASA Johnson Space Center, 2101 NASA Pkwy., Houston, TX 77058
2 US Geological Survey, Denver Federal Center, MS 963, Denver, CO 80225

Chondrites have a complex chronology due to several variables affecting and operating on chondritic parent bodies such as radiogenic heating, pressure and temperature variation with depth, aqueous alteration, and shock or impact heating [1]. Unbrecciated chondrites can record ages from 4.56 to 4.4 Ga that represent cooling in small parent bodies. Some brecciated chondrites exhibit younger ages (<<4 to 4.4 Ga) that may reflect the age of brecciation, disturbance, or shock and impact events (<< 4 Ga).

A unique R chondrite was recently found in the LaPaz Icefield of Antarctica – LAP 04840 [2]. This chondrite contains ~15% hornblende and trace amounts of biotite, making it the first of its kind. Studies have revealed an equigranular texture, mineral equilibria yielding equilibration near 650-700 °C and 250-500 bars, hornblende that is dominantly OH-bearing (very little Cl or F), and high D/H ratios [8,9,10]. To help gain a better understanding of the origin of this unique sample, we have measured the 40Ar/39Ar age.

Age of 4.290 +/-0.030 Ga is younger than one would expect for a sample that has cooled within a small body [4], and one might instead attribute the age to a younger shock event. On the other hand, there is no evidence for extensive shock in this meteorite (shock stage S2; [3]), so this sample may have been re-annealed after the shock event. This age is similar to Ar-Ar ages determined for some other R chondrites [5,6].