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Opinion Article

Deep Geodynamics and Metallogenic Mechanisms in Mantle Flow and Lithosphere Interactions

Hamzeh Gheshlaghi*

Department of Mining Engineering, Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran

DESCRIPTION

Beneath Earth's solid crust lies a dynamic and complex structures where geological forces shape the planet's evolution. Understanding the deep geodynamics and metallogenic mechanisms resulting from mantle flow and lithosphere interactions is a key to unlocking the mysteries of Earth's interior processes. This scientific exploration will delve into the intricate relation between the mantle and lithosphere, unraveling the mechanisms that govern metallogenesis.

Deep geodynamics

Earth's deep interior is a structure of constant motion, driven by the heat generated from radioactive decay and primordial heat from the planet's formation. This convective flow within the mantle is a fundamental force shaping the Earth's surface and influencing geological phenomena, including metallogenesis.

Mantle convection: Mantle convection is the process by which heat from the Earth's interior rises towards the surface, driving the movement of tectonic plates. This convective flow is a dynamic force that not only shapes the Earth's surface but also influences the distribution of minerals and metals.

Subduction zones: Subduction zones, where tectonic plates converge, are hotspots for deep geodynamic processes. As one tectonic plate descends beneath another, it undergoes complex interactions with the surrounding mantle, leading to the formation of volcanic arcs and associated mineralization.

Mantle plumes: Mantle plumes are columns of hot rock rising from the deep mantle to the Earth's surface. These plumes can cause volcanic activity and contribute to the formation of large igneous provinces, which often host significant mineral deposits.

Metallogenic mechanisms

Metallogenesis refers to the geological processes that lead to the formation of mineral deposits, including valuable metals such as gold, copper, and nickel. The deep geodynamics of mantle flow and lithosphere interactions play a pivotal role in controlling metallogenic mechanisms on the Earth's surface.

Ore formation in subduction zones: The subduction of oceanic plates into the mantle is a significant metallogenic mechanism. As the subducted slab descends into the mantle, it releases fluids and melts. These fluids can then migrate towards the Earth's crust, carrying with them metals and minerals that may precipitate and form ore deposits.

Volcanic-associated deposits: Volcanic arcs, commonly found in subduction zones, are associated with the release of metals from the mantle to the Earth's surface. The volcanic activity in these regions provides opportunities for the concentration of economically important metals in deposits such as porphyry copper and epithermal gold.

Mantle plumes and large igneous provinces: Mantle plumes, as they rise through the mantle and reach the Earth's surface, can cause widespread volcanic activity and the formation of large igneous provinces. These provinces are known for hosting massive ore deposits, including those rich in nickel, copper, and platinum group elements.

Hydrothermal systems: Hydrothermal systems, driven by the circulation of hot fluids from the Earth's interior, play an essential role in metallogenesis. Deep-seated hydrothermal fluids, often associated with mantle-related processes, can leach metals from rocks and deposit them as ores in fractures and faults within the Earth's crust.

Challenges and advances

Despite significant advancements in understanding deep geodynamics and metallogenic mechanisms, challenges persist. The Earth's interior is inherently inaccessible, and this knowledge relies on indirect observations and models. Advances in technology, such as advanced seismic imaging and geochemical analyses of mantle-derived rocks, contribute to refining the understanding of these deep processes.

Correspondence to: Hamzeh Gheshlaghi, Department of Mining Engineering, Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran, E-mail: gheshlaghiham34@gmail.com

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Seismic tomography: Seismic tomography techniques enable scientists to create detailed three-dimensional images of the Earth's interior, including the mantle. This technology helps in mapping mantle convection patterns and identifying regions of potential metallogenesis.

Geochemical tracers: Geochemical analyses of mantle-derived rocks, including those brought to the surface through volcanic activity, provide valuable insights into the composition and evolution of the mantle. Isotopic tracers help link specific geological processes to the metallogenic potential of different regions.

Numerical modeling: Numerical models simulating mantle convection and lithospheric interactions contribute to the understanding of deep geodynamics. These models aid in predicting the distribution of metallogenic provinces and the factors influencing the formation of ore deposits.

The deep geodynamics and metallogenic mechanisms resulting from mantle flow and lithosphere interactions paint a dynamic picture of Earth's interior processes. From subduction zones to mantle plumes, these deep-seated forces influence the distribution of minerals and metals, shaping the Earth's surface and providing the foundation for the understanding of metallogenesis.