Accepted Manuscript

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| PII: | S0040-1951(18)30287-7 |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| DOI: | doi:10.1016/j.tecto.2018.08.009 |
| Reference: | TECTO 127912 |
| To appear in: | Tectonophysics |
| Received date: | 22 April 2017 |
| Revised date: | 9 August 2018 |
| Accepted date: | 12 August 2018 |

Please cite this article as: Shuyun Cao, Franz Neubauer, Manfred Bernroider, Johann Genser, Eocene high-pressure metamorphism and Oligocene retrogression on Naxos, Cyclades, Greece: Significance for Aegean tectonics and 40Ar/39Ar dating in polyphase metamorphic rocks. Tecto (2018), doi:10.1016/j.tecto.2018.08.009

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Eocene high-pressure metamorphism and Oligocene retrogression on Naxos, Cyclades, Greece: Significance for Aegean tectonics and ⁴⁰Ar/³⁹Ar dating in polyphase metamorphic rocks

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Abstract

In this study, we report new microfabrics, pressure-temperature estimates and ⁴⁰Ar/³⁹Ar ages from high-pressure (HP) rocks of southeastern Naxos in Cyclades, Aegean Sea. Most metapelitic rocks contain two generations of white mica, high-Si phengites crystallized during HP metamorphism and low-Si white mica formed during subsequent retrogressive overprint. 40 Ar/ 39 Ar white mica dating of five white mica samples yielded ages of ca. 51–40 Ma, with a mean at 45 Ma for the peak pressure conditions and ca. 35-29 Ma for the retrogressive greenschist-facies overprint, as well as ca. 16 Ma for the strongly sheared rocks. Even though the overprint at the greenschist-facies conditions is at ca. 350°C and 5 kbar, the phengite ages show that the white mica still records the age of the HP metamorphism. This implies that further factors such as deformed microstructure processes and fluid flow along with temperature-controlled diffusion contributed to Ar loss. The age and conditions of this first stage of greenschist-facies overprint at 35–29 Ma are similar over a large area of the southern Aegean Sea. This event represents an exhumation event, when the continental Adriatic microplate entered the subduction zone. The greenschist-facies marked a thermal pulse during exhumation. Stacking of passive margin cover successions of the subducted continental crust in a caterpillar-like mode would have triggered this, as previously suggested by modelling work.

Keywords: microfabrics, subduction, exhumation, Aegean Sea, ⁴⁰Ar/³⁹Ar geochronology,

retrogression

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