

# THE BIOTITE-CORDIERITE-ALMANDITE SUBFACIES OF THE HORNBLENDE-GRANULITE FACIES

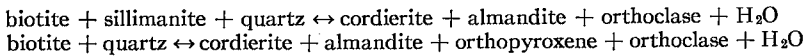
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## ABSTRACT

The common, world-wide occurrence of regional-metamorphic quartz-K feldspar-plagioclase-sillimanite-cordierite-biotite-almandite and quartz-K feldspar-plagioclase-cordierite-biotite-almandite-hypersthene assemblages in pelitic gneisses, associated with hypersthene-bearing metabasites, granulites, and charnockites, are characteristic for the newly established biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies of the hornblende-granulite facies.

Coexistence of reactants and products of the following two reactions is typomorphic for the subfacies:



Equilibrium is a function of  $\text{FeO/MgO}$ ,  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$ ,  $P_{\text{load}}$ , and  $T$ , and may be considered univariant for an open system, or divariant for a closed,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ -deficient system.

The biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies forms the lower  $P_{\text{load}}$  (or higher  $T$ ) portion of the hornblende-granulite facies, bordering on the pyroxene-hornfels facies, and occupying that part of  $P_{\text{load}}-T$  conditions in which cordierite and almandite are stable in common pelitic rocks. Within this stability field of coexisting cordierite and almandite the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies borders at lower  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  (or higher  $T$ ) on the cordierite-almandite subfacies of the pyroxene-granulite facies in which hydrous minerals are absent, and at higher  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  (or lower  $T$ ) on that part of the almandite-amphibolite facies which is characterized by coexisting biotite, cordierite, almandite, and anthophyllite.

## INTRODUCTION

Wynne-Edwards & Hay (1963) presented in this magazine valuable chemical information on the coexisting minerals biotite, cordierite, and garnet, which occur in pelitic gneisses associated with charnockitic and granulitic rocks in the Westport area, Ontario. The authors demonstrate that the assemblage is at equilibrium, and they draw attention to the world-wide distribution of biotite-cordierite-garnet gneisses in high-grade metamorphic terranes. Their conclusion is that the association of biotite, cordierite, and garnet characterizes in pelitic rocks a regional metamorphic environment "transitional between those of granulite and high amphibolite facies" which is not defined by the present facies classification.

The occurrence of cordierite as a stable and widespread mineral in certain granulite-facies terranes was noted by Eskola (1939), and the possibility of a subdivision of the granulite facies based upon the presence or absence of cordierite has been suggested by Eskola (1952, 1957), and

Turner & Verhoogen (1960). Recently, the establishment was proposed of a biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies representing the low  $P_{\text{load}}$  (or high T) portion of the hornblende-granulite facies\*, and a possible cordierite-almandite subfacies of anhydrous assemblages which represents the lower  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  (or higher T) conditions of the pyroxene-granulite facies (de Waard, 1965b).

Although there is agreement on the major point, the validity of stable biotite-cordierite-garnet assemblages as an indicator of a certain metamorphic environment, the *ACF* diagram constructed by Wynne-Edwards & Hay differs in some respects from the one proposed by the writer. This paper serves to amplify the writer's point of view by considering seven mineral phases in a six-component system, and to demonstrate the relative  $P_{\text{load}}-P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}-T$  conditions of the new subfacies with respect to those of the four adjoining subfacies.

#### THE *ACFMK* DIAGRAM

Mineral assemblages of analysed cordierite-garnet gneisses and associated rocks from different high-grade metamorphic terranes of the world are shown in Table 1; the first ten are those from the Westport area. Wynne-Edwards & Hay attempt to demonstrate that the following three-phase assemblages of the *ACF* system can be recognized†: si-al-an si-co-al, and bi-co-al. Accordingly, si-al, co-al, and al-bi joins are shown in the *ACF* diagram.

In the first place it should be remarked that biotite is not properly a phase represented in *ACF*, because  $\text{K}_2\text{O}$  is not a component of this system (eastonitic biotite, when calculated for *ACF*, will plot in the diagram but is then presented as a rock composed of non-potassic phases such as hypersthene and garnet). Furthermore it is evident from Table 1 that cordierite-garnet gneisses have essentially the same mineral assemblage, *viz.*, quartz-K feldspar-plagioclase-sillimanite-cordierite-biotite-almandite. They cannot be divided into distinct groups, and have to be treated as one six-mineral field: or-an-si-co-bi-al, in addition to excess quartz. A co-an tie line must be present in the *ACF* diagram because cordierite and plagioclase coexist in almost all of the cordierite-garnet gneisses, though it may be sparse in several. The *ACF* diagram, as it is constructed here (left triangle in Fig. 1), shows that all of the cordierite-garnet gneisses fall in the an-co-al field.

\*In order to avoid having subfacies of subfacies it is suggested here to elevate the hornblende and pyroxene-granulite subfacies (Turner, 1958) to the status of facies.

†The following abbreviations of mineral names are used: qu (quartz), or (K feldspar), an (anorthite), si (sillimanite), co (cordierite), bi (biotite), al (almandite), op (orthopyroxene).



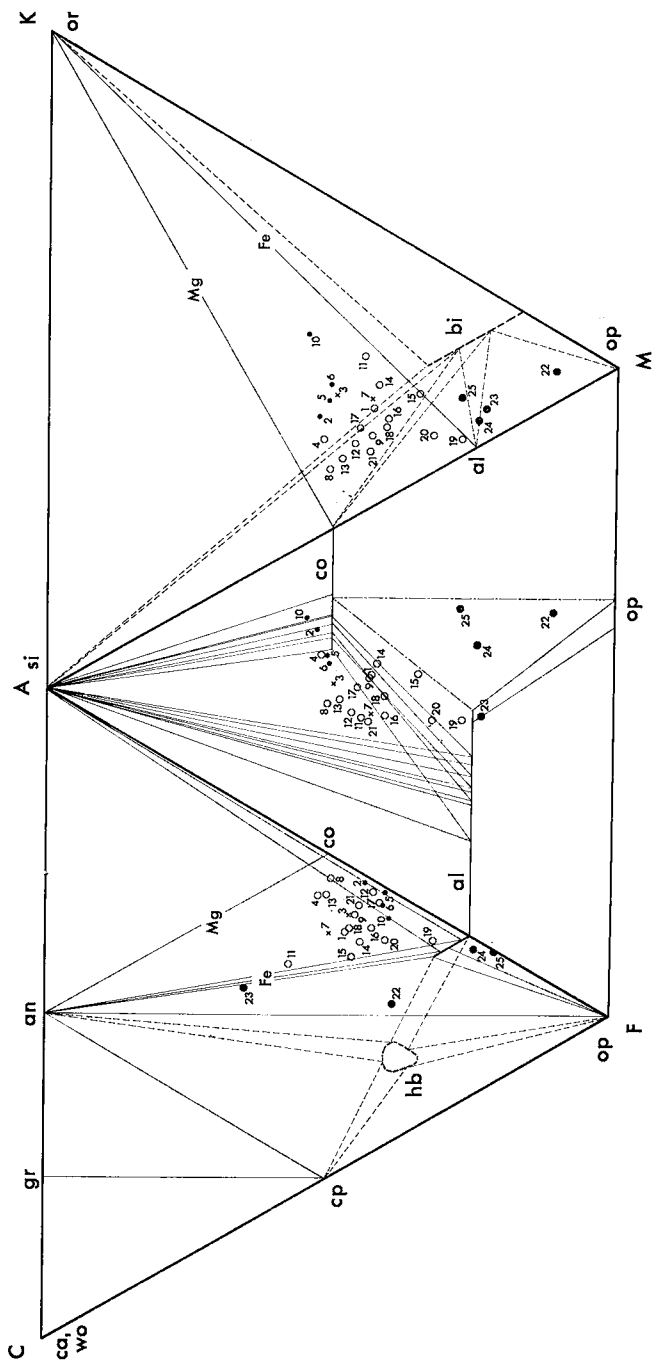


FIG. 1. *ACFMK* diagram for the biotite-cordierite-almamandite subfacies illustrating the mineral assemblages of pelitic rocks. Legend: open circle, biotite-cordierite-garnet gneiss; cross, biotite-garnet gneiss; small dot, biotite-cordierite gneiss; large dot, hypersthene-bearing cordierite-garnet or garnet gneiss. Dashed tie lines and mineral phases represent the upper almandite-amphibolite facies; intersecting full-drawn tie lines represent the pyroxene-granulite facies.

TABLE 1. MINERAL ASSEMBLAGES OF BIOTITE-CORDIERITE-GARNET GNEISSES AND ASSOCIATED ROCKS

No.	Mineral assemblage								An%	FeO/FeO+MgO			
	qu	or	ab	an	si	co	bi	al		rock	co	bi	al
1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		45.7	29.6	45.8	67.4
2	x	x	x	.	x	x	x	-		30.2	20.4	34.5	
3	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x		48.1		50.4	67.4
4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		38.5	34.0	50.2	69.9
5	x	x	x	.	-	x	x	-		39.0	26.8	43.1	
6	x	x	x	.	x	x	x	-		41.7	27.1	52.5	
7	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x		56.4		48.2	65.0
8	x	x	-	-	x	x	x	x		54.1		54.3	70.7
9	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		46.2			
10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-		25.8			
11	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	34	57.6	37.1	53.4	80.8
12	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	28	56.4			
13	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	30-40	52.6	32.1	45.8	72.4
14	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	18	42.9			
15	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	23	46.0			
16	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	28	56.4			
17	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	20	49.2			73.4
18	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	23	51.8			
19	x	.	.	.	-	x	x	x		56.0			
20	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	40	56.5	27.0		63.2
21	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	30	58.6			
no.	qu	or	ab	an	co	bi	al	op	An%	rock	co	al	op
22	-	-	x	x	-	x	x	x		36.3		54.0	35.8
23	x	-	x	x	-	-	x	x		58.5		56.1	40.0
24	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	15	40.7			
25	x	-	-	-	x	x	x	x		32.7			

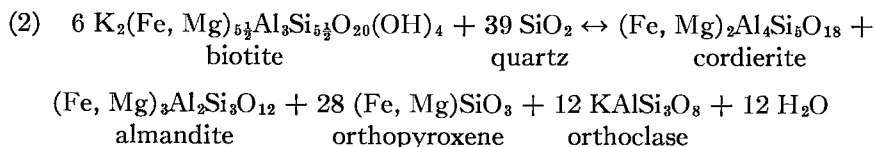
Legend: x present, . present in very small amounts, - absent or not reported. FeO of rocks reduced by TiO<sub>2</sub> to compensate for ore. Location and source: (1) Southeastern Ontario, Wynne-Edwards & Hay (1963), no. H-29; (2) *ibid.*, no. H-60; (3) *ibid.*, no. H-66; (4) *ibid.*, no. H-70; (5) *ibid.*, no. H-90; (6) *ibid.*, no. H-105; (7) *ibid.*, no. H-126; (8) *ibid.*, no. WE-4-58; (9) *ibid.*, no. WE-10-57; (10) *ibid.*, no. WE-17-57; (11) Southwestern New Hampshire, Heald (1950), no. LM1; (12) *ibid.*, no. LM6; (13) Sturbridge, Massachusetts, Barker (1962); (14) Southwestern Finland, Hietanen (1943), Table 3, no. 1; (15) *ibid.*, no. 2; (16) *ibid.*, no. 3; (17) South Finland, Parras (1958), Table 2, no. 53; (18) *ibid.*, no. 57; (19) Lapland, North Finland, Eskola (1952), Table 2, no. 11; (20) *ibid.*, no. 12; (21) South Coast, Western Australia, Clarke, Phillips, & Prider (1954), Table III, no. A, quoted from Simpson (1951), p. 105; (22) Lapland, North Finland, Eskola (1952), Table 1, no. 9; (23) *ibid.*, no. 10; (24) Dangin, Western Australia, Prider (1945), Table III, no. 20481; (25) Mysore, South India, Radhakrishna (1954), Table I, no. 2.

The reaction represents the breakdown of biotite in systems with excess alumina and silica, *i.e.*, in common, sillimanite-bearing, pelitic rocks. The development of coexisting cordierite and almandite, as opposed to that of cordierite or almandite alone, is a function of  $P_{\text{load}}-T$  conditions and FeO/MgO ratios of rocks. The left-hand side of the reaction represents the almandite-amphibolite facies, characterized by coexisting biotite and sillimanite, and expressed by the dashed tie line in *AFK* of Fig. 1. The

right-hand side represents the anhydrous assemblage of the pyroxene-granulite facies, demonstrated by the full-drawn tie lines co-or and al-or in Fig. 1. The combination of reactants and products of the reaction characterizes the hornblende-granulite facies, *i.e.*, the combination si-bi-co-al-or in this particular case.

The total number of coexisting minerals demonstrated by the plots of cordierite-garnet gneisses in Fig. 1, *ACF*: an-co-al, *AFM*: si-co-al, and *AFK*: bi-co-al-or, results in the six-phase assemblage or-an-si-bi-co-al which, in addition to quartz, are the minerals most commonly represented in the mode.

In pelitic rocks deficient in alumina the following reaction takes place instead of, and presumably at higher T (or lower  $P_{H_2O}$ ) conditions than reaction (1):



Four hypersthene-bearing rocks (22-25), associated with cordierite-garnet gneisses, have been plotted in Fig. 1 to demonstrate the composition of this adjoining six-phase field, *ACF*: an-al-op, *AFM*: co-al-op, and *AFK*: bi-or-al-op, which combines to qu-or-an-co-bi-al-op as the maximum number of minerals present in the mode.

#### THE BIOTITE-CORDIERITE-ALMANDITE SUBFACIES

The five-component system *ACFMK*, shown for the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies in Fig. 1, is an attempt to illustrate fields of five (six in this case) mineral phases which can be visualized three-dimensionally in two stages by combining any two of the three triangles to four-component tetrahedrons. *AFK* and *AFM* are faces of the *ACFMK* tetrahedron in which can be seen the si-co-al-or field in full-drawn tie lines, and the si-co-al-bi field in dashed tie lines. *ACF* and *AFM* form two faces of the *ACFM* tetrahedron which includes the si-co-al-an field.

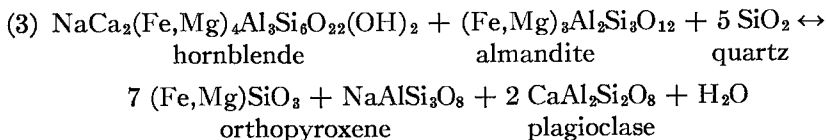
In common rock types the following mineral assemblages may be expected:

- (a) qu-or-an-si-co-bi-al
- (b) qu-or-an-co-bi-al-op
- (c) qu-or-an-bi-hb-op
- (d) qu-or-an-hb-op-cp
- (e) qu-an-bi-al-hb-op

Assemblages (a) and (b), depending on the alumina content of the rock, are found interlayered in pelitic gneisses. Associated charnockites contain assemblage (c) or (d), depending on the alumina-lime ratio of the rock. Assemblages (d) and (e) occur in basic layers which are common in charnockitic and pelitic rock units. The combination of hypersthene and hydrous minerals in assemblages (b), (c), (d), and (e) is characteristic for the hornblende-granulite facies. Assemblages (c), (d), and (e) may occur in both the biotite-cordierite-almandite and the hornblende-orthopyroxene-plagioclase subfacies (see below). Assemblages (a) and (b) are typical for the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies.

The relationships between the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies and adjoining subfacies is shown in diagram, Fig. 2, as a function of  $P_{\text{load}}$ ,  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$ , and  $T$ . Because  $P$  and  $T$  have opposing effects on the boundary reactions the three variables can be reduced to the two pressures which are inversely related to  $T$ . The transition from one subfacies to another may thus be produced also under similar  $P$  conditions by a change of  $T$  in the opposite sense from a change of  $P$ . The biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies occupies the low  $P_{\text{load}}$  (or high  $T$ ) field of the hornblende-granulite facies, borders at higher  $P_{\text{load}}$  (or lower  $T$ ) on the hornblende-orthopyroxene-plagioclase subfacies, and at lower  $P_{\text{load}}$  (or higher  $T$ ) on the pyroxene-hornfels facies. At lower  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  (or higher  $T$ ) it adjoins the cordierite-almandite subfacies of the pyroxene-granulite facies, and at higher  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  (or lower  $T$ ) a cordierite-garnet-containing subfacies which represents the low  $P_{\text{load}}$ , low  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$ , or high  $T$  portion of almandite-amphibolite-facies environments.

As a function of  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}-T$  the boundary between the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies and the upper almandite-amphibolite facies may be defined by reactions (1) and (2). In view of the more general applicability, however, the boundary is better defined by the following reaction which involves the typomorphic assemblages of both the almandite-amphibolite facies and the pyroxene-granulite facies:



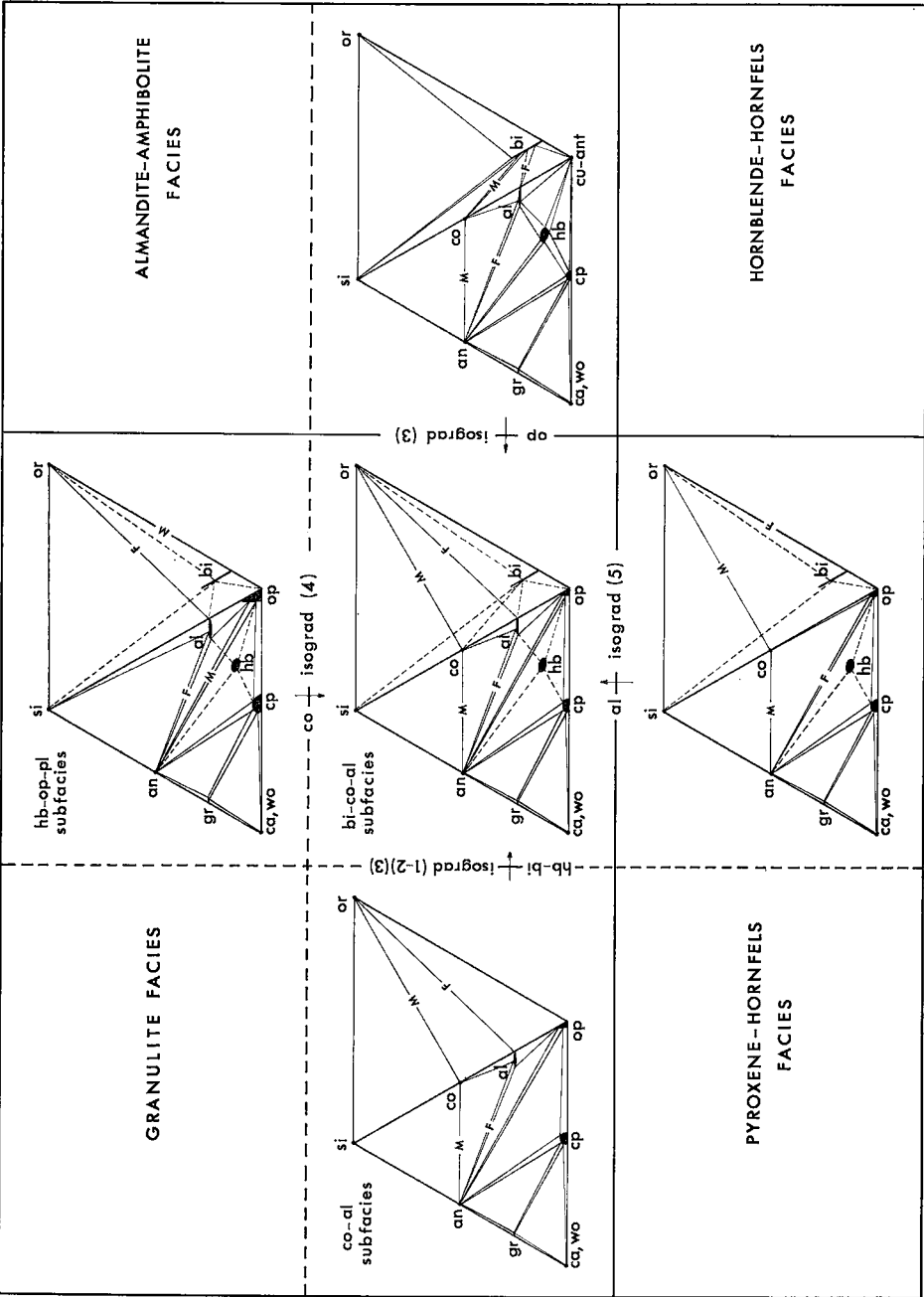
According to the reaction the boundary between the almandite-amphibolite facies and the hornblende-granulite facies is delineated in the field by the first appearance of hypersthene in basic rock types, and the boundary between the hornblende-granulite facies and the pyroxene-granulite facies, ideally, by the last occurrence of hornblende in these rocks. It should be noted that reactions (1), (2), and (3) may well be

ALMANDITE-AMPHIBOLITE  
FACIES

HORNBLende-HORNFELS  
FACIES

GRANULITE FACIES

PYROXENE-HORNFELS  
FACIES



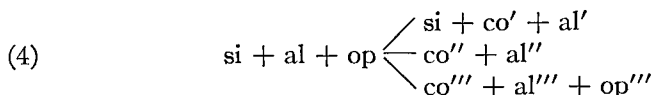
P<sub>load</sub> ↑

→ P<sub>H<sub>2</sub>O</sub>



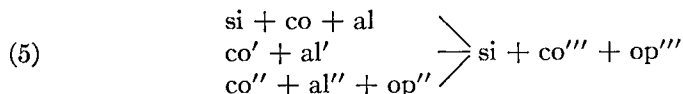
expected to take place at different  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}\text{-T}$  conditions, and that these conditions for each reaction are influenced by cation ratios of the rock.

The biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies is distinguished from the hornblende-orthopyroxene-plagioclase subfacies by the appearance of cordierite in pelitic rocks (*e.g.*, Scheumann, 1925; Scheumann & Huckenholz, 1961). The boundary reaction which limits the stability fields of coexisting femic minerals as a function of FeO/MgO ratios,  $P_{\text{load}}$ , and T may be conveniently expressed in phases of the *AFM* system as follows:



The boundary between the two subfacies is delineated in the field by a cordierite isograd which has coexisting cordierite and almandite in pelitic rocks on one side and a consistent absence of cordierite in sillimanite-biotite-garnet gneisses on the other.

The low  $P_{\text{load}}$  (or high T) boundary of the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies, and of the hornblende-granulite facies, is marked by the disappearance of almandite in the pyroxene-hornfels facies (*e.g.*, Wheeler, 1955):



The coexistence of biotite, cordierite, and hypersthene characterizes the pyroxene-hornfels facies.

The biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies thus occupies a portion of  $P_{\text{load}}\text{-T}$  environments in which the stability fields of cordierite and almandite in pelitic assemblages overlap. The subdivision of this cordierite-almandite field, as shown in Fig. 2, is based upon  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}\text{-T}$ -controlled dehydration reactions, giving rise to adjoining cordierite-almandite-containing subfacies in the pyroxene-granulite and almandite-amphibolite facies.

Regional distribution and common occurrence amply evidence the existence of cordierite-almandite-bearing subfacies. Rocks of the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies, distinguished by bi-co-al-or and bi-co-al-op-containing assemblages, occur on a regional scale and commonly

FIG. 2. Relationships between metamorphic environments of the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies and adjoining subfacies presented as a  $P_{\text{load}}\text{-P}_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}\text{-T}$  controlled,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ -deficient system for rocks with excess  $\text{SiO}_2$  (T and  $P_{\text{load}}$  or  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  have opposing effects on the boundary reactions). Subfacies are represented by *ACF-AFK* diagrams in which tie lines marked *F* and *M* indicate the effect of FeO/MgO on the assemblage.

associated with hypersthene-bearing metabasites, granulites, and charnockites, *e.g.*, in Ontario, Canada (Wynne-Edwards & Hay, 1963) and in the adjoining northwestern Adirondacks (Smyth & Buddington, 1926), in western Greenland (Ramberg, 1949), South Norway (Bugge, 1943), South Finland (Hietanen, 1943, 1947; Parras, 1946, 1958), Lapland (Eskola, 1952), Arctic Russia (Rabkin & Ravich, 1960; Bondarenko, 1964), the Aldan Shield in Siberia (Marakushev, 1964), Mysore and Madras States in South India (Iyer, 1929; Rama Rao, 1945), Ceylon (Cooray, 1963), Western Australia (Prider, 1945, 1958), Central Australia (Wilson, 1960), South Australia (Andrews, 1922; Binns, 1964), and Antarctica (Stillwell, 1918; Tilley, 1940; McCarthy & Trail, 1963).

The cordierite-almandite subfacies, characterized by the absence of hydrous minerals in cordierite-garnet assemblages, occurs in the Egersund area, southwestern Norway (Michot, 1957, 1960). The cordierite-almandite-containing portion of the almandite-amphibolite facies, distinguished by the absence of hypersthene, and the presence of anthophyllite in cordierite-garnet gneisses and in associated rocks, is found, *e.g.*, in Ontario, Canada (Pye, 1957), South Norway (Bugge, 1943), South Finland (Tuominen & Mikkola, 1950), and Western Australia (Johnstone, 1950).

P-T conditions of the cordierite-almandite-containing subfacies are transitional into those of the pyroxene-hornfels and hornblende-hornfels facies, approximately where the vaguely separated environments of regional and contact metamorphism meet. Because of these transitional P-T conditions the subfacies, which are defined by their mineral assemblages and not by their geologic occurrence, may be found in both regional and contact-metamorphic environments. The biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies occurs predominantly in regional-metamorphic setting, but it is also represented in some contact-metamorphic aureoles, and in intermediate cases it is found on a limited scale in and around plutonic domes, such as the bi-co-al-or-gneiss occurrences in New England (Heald, 1950; Barker, 1961, 1962), which may represent local upward bulges in regional-metamorphic isograd surfaces. An example of the presence of the biotite-cordierite-almandite subfacies in contact-metamorphic aureoles is the occurrence of bi-co-al-or hornfelses, which developed from medium-grade regional-metamorphic schists, adjacent to the Lochnagar granodioritic intrusions in Scotland (Chinner, 1962).

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