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NEW K-Ar DATES FROM THE KIRTLAND FORMATION (CRETACEOUS), SAN JUAN BASIN, NEW MEXICO

D. G. BROOKINS
J. K. RIGBY

Department of Geology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131
Bureau of Land Management, Albuquerque, NM 87107

We report K-Ar ages for four K-feldspar concentrates from volcanic ash units from the Kirtland Formation, San Juan Basin, New Mexico. Data for two altered biotites are presented, but the ages are anomalously low (see comments under nos. 2 & 4). The ashes have been subjected to alteration, with pronounced development of montmorillonite on volcanic clasts and post-formational calcite coating grains and filling original voids. Large samples from four sites were collected in summer 1981 by J. K. Rigby and analyzed by Geochron Laboratories, Cambridge, MA 02139. These dates are considered important as the ash units occur in rocks at or close to the Campanian-Maastrichtian boundary

SAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS

1. *JKR-54* K-Ar
Volcanic ash, Kirtland Formation (center S23, T24N, R13W; 108°11'29.5''W, 36°18'03.5''N; Alamo Mesa West quad, San Juan Co., NM). *Analytical data:* K = 3.145, 3.184%, ⁴⁰Ar = 0.01805, 0.01791 ppm, ⁴⁰Ar/Σ⁴⁰Ar = 0.791, 0.636.
(sanidine; some quartz) 78.0 ± 3.1 m.y.
2. *JKR-54* K-Ar
Volcanic ash, Kirtland Formation (center S23, T24N, R13W; 108°11'29.5''W, 36°18'03.5''N; Alamo Mesa West quad, San Juan Co., NM). *Analytical data:* K = 6.450, 6.317%, ⁴⁰Ar = 0.03136, 0.03269 ppm ⁴⁰Ar/Σ⁴⁰Ar = 0.790, 0.687. *Comment:* This biotite is considered too young as ammonites from the overlying and underlying rocks suggest a 72 m.y. date with reference to standard time scales.
(biotite; altered) 69.0 ± 2.6 m.y.
3. *JKR-62* K-Ar
Volcanic ash, Kirtland Formation (center SE¼ SE¼ S21, T24N, R13W; 108°13'28.6''W, 36°17'43.9''N; Alamo Mesa quad, San Juan Co., NM). *Analytical data:* K = 2.562, 2.604%, ⁴⁰Ar = 0.01386, 0.01346 ppm, ⁴⁰Ar/Σ⁴⁰Ar = 0.413, 0.793.
(sanidine; some quartz) 72.7 ± 3.0 m.y.
4. *JKR-62* K-Ar
Volcanic ash, Kirtland Formation (center SE¼ SE¼ S21, T24N, R13W; 108°13'28.6''W, 36°17'43.9''N; Alamo Mesa quad, San Juan Co., NM). *Analytical data:* K = 1.439, 1.461%, ⁴⁰Ar = 0.005396, 0.005907 ppm, ⁴⁰Ar/Σ⁴⁰Ar = 0.188, 0.131. *Comment:* This biotite is clearly much too young; we interpret this as due to the severe alteration of the sample.
(altered biotite) 53.8 ± 2.4 m.y.
5. *JKR-4* K-Ar
Volcanic ash, Kirtland Formation (center NW¼ S3, T24N, R13W; 108°11'46.9''W, 36°16'30.8''N; Alamo Mesa quad, San Juan Co., NM). *Analytical data:* K = 2.440, 2.425, ⁴⁰Ar = 0.01363, 0.01348 ppm, ⁴⁰Ar/Σ⁴⁰Ar = 0.564, 0.438.
(sanidine; some quartz) 76.5 ± 3.1 m.y.
6. *JKR-93* K-Ar
Volcanic ash, Kirtland Formation (T24N, R12W; 108°08'4.5''W, 36°16'04.8''N; Alamo Mesa quad, San Juan Co., NM). *Analytical data:* K = 2.430, 2.418%, ⁴⁰Ar = 0.01301, 0.01410 ppm, ⁴⁰Ar/Σ⁴⁰Ar = 0.679, 0.462.
(sanidine; some quartz) 76.8 ± 3.1 m.y.

