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Published in:

From Lithium to Uranium: Elemental Tracers of Early Cosmic Evolution

DOI:

[10.1017/S1743921305006423](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743921305006423)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2005

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Letarte, B., Hill, V., Jablonka, P., Tolstoy, E., & [Unknown], DART. (2005). Red Giant Branch Stars in Fornax with VLT/FLAMES. In V. Hill, P. Francois, & F. Primas (Eds.), *From Lithium to Uranium: Elemental Tracers of Early Cosmic Evolution* (pp. 541-542). (Symposium S228 (From Lithium to Uranium: Elemental Tracers of Early Cosmic Evolution); No. 1). International Astronomical Union.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743921305006423>

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Red Giant Branch Stars in Fornax with VLT/FLAMES

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Abstract. The Fornax dSph is an interesting case as it contains five old globular clusters and its field stars, although predominantly of intermediate (3-8 Gyr old) age, cover a wide range of age and metallicity. Detailed abundance analysis is crucial to our understanding of the earliest star formation epochs, where classic CMD analysis fails to provide a unique answer. It also allows us to measure the chemical evolution of the stellar population following tracers of different enrichment mechanisms through time, e.g. SN type II (alpha elements); AGB stars (s-process elements) etc. With our large sample of abundance measurements we will obtain a detailed picture of the evolution of Fornax and of the role played by small galaxies in the building up of larger ones.

Keywords. Stars: abundances, galaxies: abundances, galaxies: evolution, galaxies: individual (Fornax)

In Figure 1, we present preliminary abundance ratios $[\text{Ca}/\text{Fe}]$, $[\text{Mg}/\text{Fe}]$ and $[\text{Ni}/\text{Fe}]$ as a function of their $[\text{Fe}/\text{H}]$, for a sample of 30 stars. It can be seen that the Fornax field star population is relatively metal rich, quite a contrast with the population from the extremely metal poor globular clusters we have studied (Letarte *et al.* 2005, soon to be submitted), where we find an average $[\text{Fe}/\text{H}] = -2.5$, -2.1 and -2.4 for cluster 1, 2 and 3. How these two populations can be reconciled with each other in this small dwarf galaxy is the subject of future work. The 3 points in red (diamonds) are from Shetrone *et al.* 2003 and Tolstoy *et al.* 2003 (derived from UVES spectra). This is just 30% of our sample, more than 70 additional stars will soon be processed in the same way, and we have observed spectral lines for 17 elements, namely: Ba, Ca, Co, Cr, Eu, Fe, La, Mg, Mn, Na, Nd, Ni, O, Sc, Si, Ti and Y. In our final analysis, we will use the recently released MARCS stellar model-atmosphere (<http://marcs.astro.uu.se/>).

References

- Letarte, B., Hill, V., Jablonka, P., Tolstoy, E., *et al.*, soon to be submitted.
Shetrone, M. D., Venn, K. A., Tolstoy, E., Primas, F., Hill, V., & Kaufer, A., 2003, *AJ*, 125, 684S.
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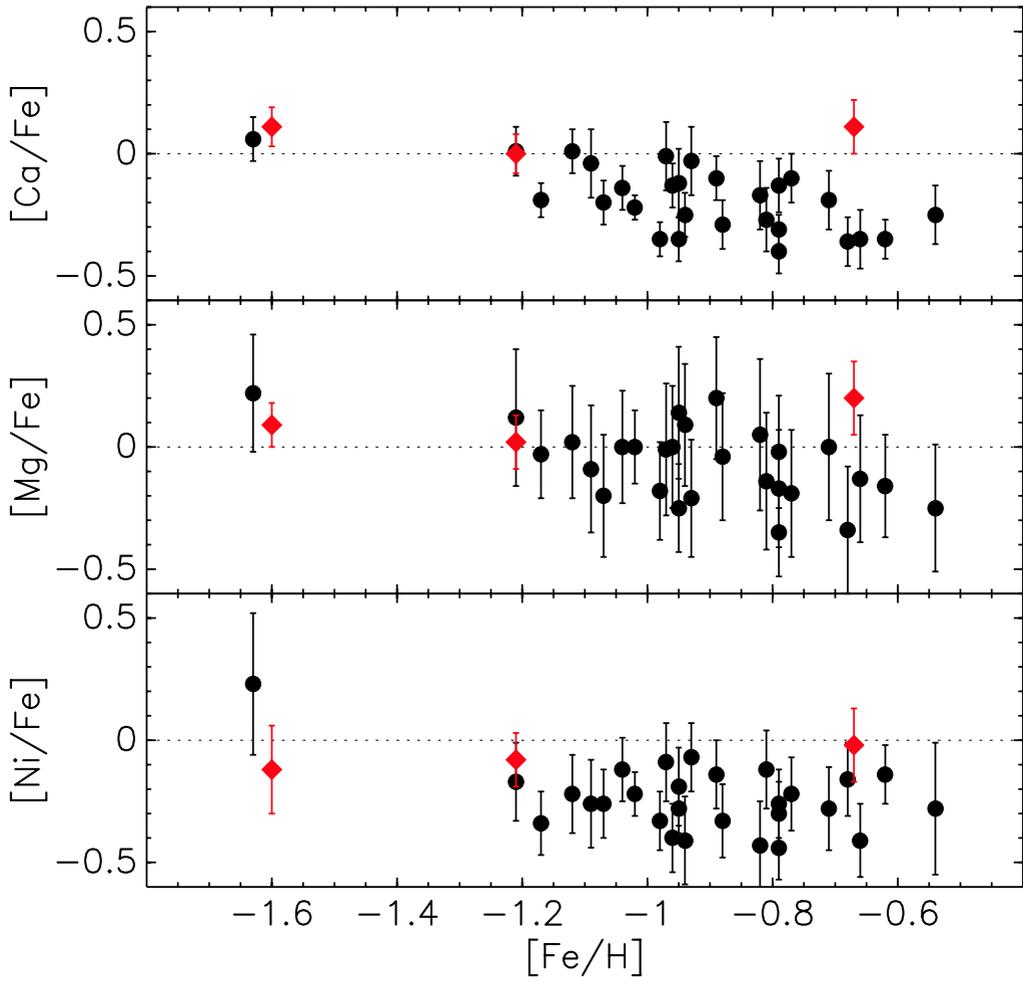


Figure 1. Abundance ratios for a sample of Fornax Field stars. Red (diamonds) are UVES derived abundances taken from Shetrone *et al.* 2003 and Tolstoy *et al.* 2003.