

1 **Chromium isotope fractionation during subduction-related metamorphism, black shale**
2 **weathering, and hydrothermal alteration**

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15

16 **ABSTRACT.** Chromium (Cr) isotopes are an emerging proxy for redox processes at Earth's surface.
17 However, many geological reservoirs and isotope fractionation processes are still not well
18 understood. The purpose of this contribution is to move forward our understanding of (1) Earth's
19 high temperature Cr isotope inventory and (2) Cr isotope fractionations during subduction-related
20 metamorphism, black shale weathering and hydrothermal alteration. The examined basalts and
21 their metamorphosed equivalents yielded $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values falling within a narrow range of -
22 $0.12 \pm 0.13\text{‰}$ (2SD, n=30), consistent with the previously reported range for the bulk silicate Earth
23 (BSE). Compilations of currently available data for fresh silicate rocks (43 samples),
24 metamorphosed silicate rocks (50 samples), and mantle chromites (39 samples) give $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values
25 of $-0.13 \pm 0.13\text{‰}$, $-0.11 \pm 0.13\text{‰}$, and $-0.07 \pm 0.13\text{‰}$, respectively. Although the number of high-
26 temperature samples analyzed has tripled, the originally proposed BSE range appears robust. This
27 suggests very limited Cr isotope fractionation under high temperature conditions. Additionally, in a
28 highly altered metacarbonate transect that is representative of fluid-rich regional metamorphism,

29 we did not find resolvable variations in $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$, despite significant loss of Cr. This work suggests that
30 primary Cr isotope signatures may be preserved even in instances of intense metamorphic
31 alteration at relatively high fluid-rock ratios. Oxidative weathering of black shale at low pH creates
32 isotopically heavy mobile Cr(VI). However, a significant proportion of the Cr(VI) is apparently
33 immobilized near the weathering surface, leading to local enrichment of isotopically heavy Cr ($\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
34 values up to $\sim 0.5\%$). The observed large Cr isotope variation in the black shale weathering profile
35 provides indirect evidence for active manganese oxide formation, which is primarily controlled by
36 microbial activity. Lastly, we found widely variable $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ (-0.2% to 0.6%) values in highly
37 serpentinized peridotites from ocean drilling program drill cores and outcropping ophiolite
38 sequences. The isotopically heavy serpentinites are most easily explained through a multi-stage
39 alteration processes: Cr loss from the host rock under oxidizing conditions, followed by Cr
40 enrichment under sulfate reducing conditions. In contrast, Cr isotope variability is limited in mildly
41 altered mafic oceanic crust.

42

43 **Keywords:** Chromium isotopes, redox proxies, metamorphism, subduction, hydrothermal
44 alteration, black shale weathering

45

46 **1. Introduction**

47 Chromium (Cr) isotopes (with abundances of 2.36% ^{54}Cr , 9.50% ^{53}Cr , 83.79% ^{52}Cr , 4.35%
48 ^{50}Cr) have wide utility for tracking planetary formation, environmental contamination, and
49 paleoenvironmental evolution. Over the past few decades, studies have utilized Cr isotope
50 anomalies in different planetary materials to study spatial and/or temporal heterogeneities in the
51 solar system (Birck and Allègre, 1984; Papanastassiou, 1986; Rotaru et al., 1992; Podosek et al.,
52 1997; Shukolyukov and Lugmair, 2006; Trinquier et al., 2007; Qin et al., 2011). In addition, there

53 has been extensive work on using Cr isotopes to quantify the attenuation of environmental Cr
54 contamination (Ellis et al., 2002; Wanner et al., 2011; Izbicki et al., 2012). More recently, there has
55 been a surge of interest in using Cr isotopes as a paleoredox proxy (e.g., Frei et al., 2009; Crowe et
56 al., 2013; Planavsky et al., 2014; Reinhard et al., 2014).

57

58 Chromium has two major valence states in nature: Reduced, trivalent Cr (denoted as Cr(III)
59 hereafter) and oxidized, hexavalent Cr (denoted as Cr(VI) hereafter). At circumneutral pH, Cr(III) is
60 insoluble and is a trace nutrient, while Cr(VI) is soluble and carcinogenic (Rai et al., 1989).
61 Therefore, *in-situ* reduction of Cr(VI) to Cr(III) can serve as a means of remediating Cr(VI)
62 contamination. In Earth's early history, before the emergence of oxygenic photosynthesis, Cr was
63 likely present almost exclusively as Cr(III) in rocks. After the advent of oxygenic photosynthesis,
64 local and eventually global oxygenated environments passed a critical threshold required for Cr(III)
65 oxidation to Cr(VI), in a process likely linked to manganese redox cycling (Eary and Rai, 1987;
66 Fendorf and Zasoski, 1992; Frei et al., 2009). The oxidized Cr(VI) is carried to the oceans as
67 dissolved oxyanion species and eventually deposited in sedimentary rocks, either as Cr(VI) via
68 adsorption or as Cr(III), typically via reduction by reductants such as ferrous iron and sulfides
69 (Eary and Rai, 1987; Fendorf and Li, 1996; Pettine et al., 1998; Kim et al., 2001). Use of the Cr
70 isotope system as a redox proxy is grounded in the notion that there is up to ~6‰ Cr isotope
71 fractionation during reactions involving electron transfers (Ellis et al., 2002; Schauble et al., 2004;
72 Zink et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2015a), but insignificant Cr isotope fractionations during non-redox-
73 dependent reactions (e.g., Ellis et al., 2004). Studies on modern basaltic weathering profiles have
74 found that isotopically heavy Cr is oxidatively mobilized into rivers, leaving isotopically light Cr in
75 the weathered basalt (e.g., Frei and Polat, 2012). Building on this framework, Cr isotopes have

76 provided a new view of Earth's ocean-atmosphere redox evolution (Frei et al., 2009; Crowe et al.,
77 2013; Planavsky et al., 2014).

78

79 Despite the significant potential of Cr isotopes as a redox proxy, there are several notable
80 gaps in current knowledge. The purpose of this contribution is to examine a series of currently
81 unresolved or poorly constrained questions that affect the use of the Cr isotope system as a
82 paleoredox proxy. First, for all Cr isotope work, it is necessary to establish a robust estimate of the
83 Cr isotope inventory of the solid Earth. Only a few studies have been conducted in the past few
84 years for this purpose. For instance, Schoenberg et al. (2008) and Farkas et al. (2013) proposed
85 bulk silicate Earth (BSE) $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ ($^{53}\text{Cr}/^{52}\text{Cr}$ relative to SRM 979) values of $-0.124\pm 0.101\text{‰}$ and -
86 $0.079\pm 0.129\text{‰}$, respectively. Moynier et al. (2011) reported a bulk Earth (BE) $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ value of -
87 $0.32\pm 0.05\text{‰}$, which is about 0.2‰ lighter than the BSE value. The apparent difference between BE
88 and BSE, and its potential implications for planetary differentiation, provides motivation to expand
89 our current knowledge of the high-T Cr isotope inventory. For this purpose, we explored the $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
90 systematics of a range of basalt samples (both alkaline and tholeiitic) from different localities.

91

92 Second, Cr isotopic systematics in Archean rocks have been used to investigate the earliest
93 emergence of oxygenic photosynthesis (Frei et al., 2009; Crowe et al., 2013). However, most
94 Archean rocks have been subject to various grades of metamorphism. This provides a strong
95 impetus to investigate the magnitude of Cr isotope fractionation associated with metamorphic
96 processes. For this reason, we analyzed a set of subduction-related metamorphosed ultramafic
97 rocks and fluid-altered carbonate rocks. The metamorphic age of these rocks range from
98 Neoproterozoic to Phanerozoic. Although the pattern and depth of subduction may differ on the
99 early and recent Earth, the underlying basic physicochemical processes (e.g., deformation,

100 temperature- or concentration-driven diffusion) are not likely to have varied over time.
101 Furthermore, the Cr isotopic composition of the mantle reservoir has been shown to be the same
102 within error since ~3.5 billion years ago (Ga) (Farkas et al., 2013). Therefore, Cr isotope behavior
103 during high temperature metamorphism derived from recent geological time should be applicable
104 to the Archean.

105

106 Third, our current understanding of the terrestrial Cr cycle is based largely on the study of
107 oxidative weathering of igneous rocks (Middelburg et al., 1988; Van der Weijden and van der
108 Weijden, 1995; Frei et al., 2009; Frei and Polat, 2012; Crowe et al., 2013). However, igneous rocks
109 represent only a small area of the subaerially exposed continental crust relative to sedimentary
110 rocks (e.g., Bluth and Kump, 1991). Therefore, weathering of sedimentary rocks can potentially
111 contribute significantly to riverine Cr flux to the ocean. Among sedimentary rocks, black shales are
112 of special interest because of their relatively high Cr concentrations. Given that black shale
113 weathering typically occurs at low pH, the framework developed from basalt weathering (e.g.,
114 Crowe et al., 2013; Berger and Frei, 2014; Frei et al., 2014) may not apply. Furthermore, previous
115 studies used lack of Cr isotope fractionation in sedimentary rocks to argue for low atmospheric
116 oxygen levels (e.g., Frei et al., 2009; Frei and Polat, 2012; Crowe et al., 2013; Planavsky et al., 2014).
117 However, absence of Cr isotope fractionation in sedimentary records is not necessarily a robust
118 evidence for absence of oxygen (Planavsky et al., 2014). This is because pyrite oxidation could
119 generate acids and dissolve solid Cr without Cr oxidation, and this process leads to Cr enrichment
120 but no isotope fractionation in sedimentary rocks (Konhauser et al., 2011). To resolve this
121 uncertainty, we targeted a well-studied black shale weathering profile to test whether there is Cr
122 isotope fractionation and Cr(III) oxidation in a high oxygen but low-pH weathering environment.

123

124 Lastly, interaction between seawater and oceanic crust is another process that can affect
125 seawater $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values. Although this process may not be very important on a global scale in the
126 modern oceans (e.g., Reinhard et al., 2013), it may affect local water masses and sediments, given
127 that large Cr isotope variations have been reported for Cr-rich hydrothermal minerals (Schoenberg
128 et al., 2008; Farkas et al., 2013). Hydrothermal alteration may also have been important for global
129 Cr isotope mass balance during the early periods of Earth's history due to higher heat flux and more
130 mafic crust. It is essential to determine if there are significant Cr isotope fractionations in
131 hydrothermal systems before using the Cr isotope composition of marine sediments to track
132 surface oxidative processes. To further our understanding of seawater-oceanic crust interactions,
133 we analyzed the Cr isotopic compositions of mildly altered oceanic crust and serpentinized
134 peridotite samples from a range of localities.

135

136 **2. Samples**

137 We selected samples where geochemistry and geological context have been previously
138 studied. Samples for metacarbonates, weathered black shales, altered oceanic crusts, serpentinites,
139 Wudangshan basalts, and Dabie eclogites used powders from previous studies (references in Table
140 1). Below we provide only a short overview of the samples/sites and refer to previous work for
141 more in-depth descriptions.

142

143 **2.1. Basalts and eclogites**

144 We examined basalt and eclogite samples from the ultra-high pressure Qinling-Tongbai-
145 Dabie Orogenic Belt (QTDOB, Fig. 1). The QTDOB separates the North China Block (NCB) and South
146 China Block (SCB), and itself is divided into the South Qinling (SQ) and North Qinling (NQ) orogens

147 by the Shangdan Fault. There were several major episodes of tectonic activity from mid-Proterozoic
148 to Cenozoic time (e.g., Ratschbacher et al., 2003). The tholeiitic and alkaline basalt samples (~680–
149 755 Ma) were sampled from the SQ, while the eclogite samples (~800 Ma) were sampled from the
150 NQ. The basalts and eclogites are geographically close to each other and have the same source
151 material (Ling et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2013). We examined the Cr isotope composition of tholeiitic
152 and alkaline basalts because of their differing oxygen fugacities during formation (e.g., Carmichael
153 and Ghiorso, 1986), which could potentially influence the redox geochemistry of Cr.

154

155 We also examined eclogite, metabasalt and metagabbro samples from Corsica, Greece, USA,
156 and Norway—mafic rocks that experienced typical high pressure or ultrahigh-pressure
157 metamorphism. Alpine Corsica (France) consists mainly of ophiolitic rocks and their sedimentary
158 cover that underwent high-pressure blueschist–eclogite facies metamorphism during the Alpine
159 orogeny Malavieille et al., 1998. One Corsican mafic pillow breccia (CRB) is from the Farinole-
160 Volpajola eclogite unit that experienced metamorphism at ~520 °C and ~2.3 GPa (Vital Brovarone
161 et al., 2011).

162

163 Blueschist–eclogite facies can be found in Syros and Tinos islands in Greece. The
164 metamorphism was caused by subduction of the Apulian microplate beneath the Eurasia plate
165 during the Eocene Alpine orogeny (Keiter et al., 2011 and references therein). Peak metamorphic
166 conditions were ~500–550 °C and ~2.0 GPa (e.g., Trotet et al., 2001; Dragovic et al., 2012). Sample
167 JAGSY-58A (37° 26.660' N, 24° 53.327' E) is an Mg-rich metagabbro from Kini Beach, Syros. It is
168 dominated by large (cm-scale) bright green crystals of Cr-rich omphacite coexisting with phengite
169 and chlorite. Sample JAGTI-1A is an eclogite from the Tinos subduction complex in the Kionia area
170 (Broecker and Enders, 1999).

171

172 The USA Connecticut area experienced eclogite facies metamorphism during the collision of
173 Laurentia with a Taconic arc complex ~456 Ma (Chu et al., in press). Sample JANW-17 is a
174 retrograded eclogite from the Canaan Mountain Formation, northwestern Connecticut, USA
175 (Harwood, 1979a; Harwood, 1979b). The eclogite facies assemblage consisted of omphacite, garnet,
176 hornblende, phengite, epidote, and rutile; “peak” eclogite facies conditions were ~710 °C and 1.4–
177 1.5 GPa (Chu et al., in press). Sample JAQ-158A is a hornblende cumulate ultramafic rock, consisting
178 mostly of hornblende, orthopyroxene, olivine, phlogopite, aluminous spinel, and pyrrhotite. The
179 hornblende is poikilitic and typically encloses orthopyroxene and olivine. These rocks are found as
180 meter-scale pods and lenses within the ultrahigh-temperature (~1000 °C) gneisses of the Brimfield
181 Schist in northeastern Connecticut, USA, described by Ague and Eckert (2012) and Ague et al.
182 (2013).

183

184 The Franciscan Complex of California, USA, formed during eastward-directed subduction
185 beneath the western margin of North America. The samples (CJB2 and 6001) are from exotic
186 blocks of metamorphosed mafic rock in the Central Belt mélangé. Most metamorphic ages in the
187 blocks range from Middle Jurassic to Early Cretaceous (see review in Wakabayashi, 1999). Sample
188 6001 is from the “Junction School eclogite” metamorphosed at maximum pressures of 1.8–2.2 GPa
189 at ~550 °C (Page et al., 2007). The other Franciscan sample (CJB2) is garnetiferous blueschist
190 from Jenner Beach, which records metamorphic conditions of ~1.3 GPa and ~500 °C (Krogh et al.,
191 1994).

192

193 Sample 4-1 is an ultrahigh-pressure kyanite eclogite from locality 1066 on Fjørtoft island,
194 Norway, metamorphosed at ultrahigh-pressures (UHP) near 4 GPa and temperatures of ~820 °C
195 (Terry et al., 2000). UHP conditions were reached when Baltica was subducted during the Scandian
196 orogeny (e.g., Carswell et al., 2006).

197

198 **2.2. Metacarbonates**

199 Greenschist facies metacarbonate samples were taken from the Wepawaug Schist,
200 Connecticut, USA (see Ague, 2003 and references therein). We selected a transect (JAW-197) that
201 starts within a syn-metamorphic vein, through the reaction aureole, and into the wallrock (Fig. 2).
202 Infiltrating fluids precipitated albite, calcite, and quartz in the vein, and replaced muscovite with
203 albite in the reaction aureole. Fluid infiltration occurred under greenschist facies metamorphic
204 conditions (~425°C, 0.6–0.7 GPa) during the ~ 380 – 410 Ma Acadian orogeny (Lanzirotti and
205 Hanson, 1996; Ague, 2002; Lancaster et al., 2008). We focused on this transect given that previous
206 studies reported significant mass transfer of various elements including K, Na, Rb, Sr, Ba and REE,
207 indicating intense alteration at relatively high fluid-rock ratios (Ague, 2003).

208

209 **2.3. Weathered black shale**

210 Weathered black shale samples were obtained from a road cut (37°52.167'N, 83°56.767'W)
211 near Clay City (Powell County, KY, USA) (Fig. 3). The road cut exposes a weathering profile through
212 the Upper Devonian (365 Myr) Ohio Shale, often referred to as the 'New Albany Shale' (NAS). The
213 samples were taken in 2000 (Jaffe et al., 2002) within a single stratigraphic horizon to avoid
214 syndepositional variation. The variations in the vertical position relative to the targeted
215 stratigraphic horizon are estimated to be less than 2 cm. The sample color ranged from brown near

216 the soil surface to black further into the weathering profile. Previous studies have found in the
217 profile loss of organic carbon, pyrite S, mobile elements associated with reduced C/S phases such as
218 Re and Os (Petsch et al., 2000; Petsch et al., 2001b; Jaffe et al., 2002) and disturbance to Re-Os
219 isotope systems (Jaffe et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2015). The pH in the fluids from the shale profile
220 could be as low as 1.8–2.1 (Sullivan et al., 1988; Jaffe et al., 2002). The outcrop is located south of
221 the range of the late Cenozoic North American glaciation; therefore, weathering likely began before
222 the onset of ice sheet growth. However, there are no robust estimates of the timescale of soil
223 development.

224

225 ***2.4. Altered oceanic crust and serpentinites***

226 We examined mildly hydrothermally altered oceanic crust samples derived from Ocean
227 Drilling Program (ODP) Hole 504B (Fig. 4) spanning the upper ocean crust in the equatorial East
228 Pacific (e.g., Alt et al., 1986; Bach et al., 2003). This is so far the deepest drill core into the oceanic
229 crust and it has generated invaluable information on the petrology, geochemistry and physics of the
230 upper oceanic crust over the past 20 years (Bach et al., 2003 and references therein). The basement
231 section of the core (i.e., below 274.5 meter of sediments) can be divided into three zones (from top
232 to bottom): a 571.5 meter Volcanic Zone (VZ) primarily consisting of pillowed and massive basalt
233 flows; a 209 meter thick Transition Zone (TZ) with abundant dikes mixed with pillows and flows;
234 and finally a >1045 meter Sheeted Dike Complex (SDC). There is a high percentage of brecciation in
235 the TZ, and limited brecciation in other zones (~5%). Alteration is non-pervasive and is primarily
236 concentrated in brecciated localities within the TZ. Samples included pillows (P), massive flows
237 (M), breccias (B), and dikes (D). Samples with similar characteristics in each section were mixed in
238 representative proportions in order to make composite samples (see Bach et al., 2003). Oxidative
239 alteration is restricted to the uppermost 200–300 m of basement where the permeability is high,

240 with zoned oxidation halos commonly developed along clay/carbonate/oxyhydroxide grains (e.g.,
241 Alt et al., 1996). The alteration in the lower part of the VZ becomes non-oxidative and with
242 temperatures <150°C. Alteration temperature steeply increases to >250°C within the upper TZ and
243 then up to 500–600°C in the SDC.

244

245 Serpentinite samples examined in this study were obtained from the Iberian margin, Mid-
246 Atlantic Ridge (MAR) 15°20'N fracture zone, an ophiolite sequence in the Northern Apennines in
247 Italy, and a mélangé from the Syros subduction complex. We investigated three drill cores from the
248 Iberian margin: Holes 897C and 897D from ODP Leg149 (see Sawyer et al., 1994), and Hole 1070A
249 from ODP Leg 173 (see Whitmarsh et al., 1998) (Fig. 5B). The peridotites from Site 897 are nearly
250 100% serpentinitized with only minor olivine and pyroxene preserved. Serpentinization occurred at
251 low temperatures <150°C near the seafloor with high water/rock ratios and relatively high fO_2
252 coinciding with complete serpentinitization and depletion of ferrous iron (Alt and Shanks, 1998).
253 Olivine and orthopyroxene are replaced by mesh- and bastite-textured serpentine and minor
254 magnetite. Two samples (897C-3 and 897C-7) were obtained from the 680–710 meter section of
255 Hole 897C and another two samples (897D-9 and 897D-13) were obtained from the 742–773 meter
256 section of Hole 897D (Fig. 5D). Three samples (1070A-1, 1070A-2, 1070A-3) were obtained from
257 the 705–707 meter section of Hole 1070A (Fig. 5E). In the sampled sections of Hole 1070A, between
258 95% and 100% of the primary minerals are replaced by serpentine, but with increasing depth
259 primary orthopyroxene and olivine can be sporadically found (Whitmarsh et al., 1998). Sampled
260 sections from Legs 149 and 173 have elevated sulfur concentrations and negative $\delta^{34}S$ values that
261 suggest extensive microbial reduction of seawater-sourced sulfate (Alt and Shanks, 1998;
262 Schwarzenbach et al., 2012). Late low-temperature fluid circulated through the upper part of the

263 serpentinite and resulted in the formation of abundant carbonate veins (Schwarzenbach et al.,
264 2013).

265

266 Two drill cores were investigated from the MAR 15°20'N fracture zone: ODP Sites 1268A
267 and 1272A (Fig. 5A). Two samples were obtained from each core: 1268A-1 and 1268A-2 in the 35–
268 85 meter section, and 1272A-5 and 1272A-6 from the 99–108 meter section (Fig. 5C). The sampled
269 interval of Hole 1272A comprises serpentinitized harzburgite with minor dunite. The presence of
270 iowaite in this section suggests fairly oxidizing conditions (Bach et al., 2004). The sampled interval
271 of Hole 1268A comprises serpentinitized and talc-altered harzburgite and dunite with pyrite veins
272 (Paulick et al., 2006). At the same time, peridotites underwent two-stage alteration: initial
273 serpentinization forming serpentine + magnetite ± pyrite, followed by talc replacing serpentine (Alt
274 et al., 2007). The serpentinization temperatures are estimated to be <150°C and 250–350°C for
275 1270A and 1268A, respectively.

276

277 Three serpentinite samples (LA3a, LA20a, and LMO27) are from the Northern Apennine
278 ophiolite in Italy (see Schwarzenbach et al., 2013). The ophiolite sequences exposed in this area are
279 considered to result from the rifting of the European and Adriatic plates (~170 Ma) (more details in
280 Schwarzenbach et al., 2013). Extensive calcite veins imply high water-rock ratios and oxidizing
281 conditions with carbonate precipitation at <50–150°C and serpentinization temperatures <240°C
282 (Schwarzenbach et al., 2013).

283

284 Three samples of ultramafic mélange matrix from the subduction complex exposed on Syros
285 were also analyzed (JAGSY-8A-2, -12A, and -13C). Sample 8A-2 is rich in talc and chlorite and is

286 likely a physico-chemical admixture of ultramafic mélange matrix and metasomatised metamafic
287 mélange block material (e.g., Marschall and Schumacher, 2012). Samples -12C and -13C are mantle-
288 derived serpentinites from the mélange.

289

290 3. Methods

291 Samples provided as rock chips were crushed using a ceramic jaw crusher and then
292 powdered with an agate mill. Powders (30 to 100 mg) were then digested with mixed HNO₃ and HF
293 (3:1) on a hotplate. Fluorides were dissolved by repeated fluxing with 6 N HCl. Element
294 concentrations were measured on a Thermo Scientific ElementXR ICP-MS. Prior to Cr purification
295 via ion exchange methods, sample aliquots containing ~1 µg Cr were spiked with a ⁵⁰Cr-⁵⁴Cr double
296 spike (⁵⁰Cr/⁵²Cr=462.917, ⁵³Cr/⁵²Cr=0.580, ⁵⁴Cr/⁵²Cr=354.450, calibrated in the Department of
297 Geology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) so that the spike/sample ratio (i.e.,
298 (⁵⁴Cr)_{spk}/⁽⁵²Cr)_{smp}) was about 0.5.

299

300 For carbonate samples, we purified Cr following the methods described in Bonnand et al.
301 (2011). This method utilizes the cation exchange resin AG50W-X8 (200–400 mesh) to separate
302 Cr(III) cations from other matrix elements. For silicate samples we adopted procedures from
303 Schoenberg et al. (2008), which utilize an anion exchange resin AG1-X8 (100–200 mesh) to
304 separate Cr(VI) anions from matrix elements. For samples high in Fe, Ti, and V, further procedures
305 are needed to remove these elements because they cause isobaric interferences. Residual Fe was
306 separated from Cr in 6 N HCl by passing it through a micro column filled with 0.3 mL AG1-X8 (100-
307 200 mesh) anion exchange resin; sample Cr was collected immediately after loading onto the
308 column. Residual Ti and V were cleaned with a micro column filled with 0.3 mL AG 50W-X8 (200-

309 400 mesh) cation resin following previous methods (Trinquier et al., 2008). The yield for the
310 Schoenberg et al. (2008) method combined with Fe and Ti removal procedures was typically higher
311 than 80%. The yield for the Bonnand et al. (2011) method combined with Fe and Ti removal
312 procedures were typically ~70%. These yields are acceptable since the ^{50}Cr - ^{54}Cr double spike was
313 added before column procedures and therefore, any isotope fractionation due to incomplete
314 recovery is corrected. Procedural blanks were ~0.7 ng and ~20 ng for the cation exchange and
315 anion exchange methods, respectively. The relatively high blank for the anion exchange method
316 was due to the use of the oxidant ammonium persulfate [Acros (99+%) and Sigma Aldrich ($\geq 98\%$)].
317 Sample to blank signal ratios range from 1400:1 to 50:1 and blank $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ was measured to be
318 $0.0 \pm 0.2\%$. Therefore, blank correction was not performed.

319

320 Chromium isotopic compositions were measured on a Neptune Plus MC-ICP-MS housed in
321 the Yale Metal Geochemistry Center in the Department of Geology & Geophysics. Purified Cr
322 samples dissolved in 0.7 N HNO_3 with concentrations of ~250 $\mu\text{g/g}$ were introduced to the plasma
323 with a PFA μFlow nebulizer (~50 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$) coupled with an Apex IR desolvating introduction
324 system (Elemental Scientific) without additional gas or membrane desolvation. With a standard
325 sample cone and X skimmer cone and under high-resolution mode, the obtained sensitivity was
326 $\sim 3 \times 10^{-10}$ A ^{52}Cr on 1 $\mu\text{g/g}$ Cr solution. All ion beams were measured on faraday detectors. The
327 isotopes ^{49}Ti , ^{51}V , and ^{56}Fe were measured to monitor and correct for isobaric interferences of ^{50}Ti ,
328 ^{50}V , and ^{54}Fe . The unprocessed NIST SRM 979 standard was analyzed after every three samples to
329 monitor instrument drift, which was $< 0.1\%$ (Fig. 6). Sample $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values were normalized to the
330 average value of the bracketing NIST SRM 979. The NIST SRM 3112a and geostandard BHVO-2
331 (USGS) were also treated as samples through the digestion and ion exchange procedures and
332 yielded $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values of $-0.01 \pm 0.08\%$ (2SD, $n=10$) and $-0.11 \pm 0.08\%$ (2SD, $n=7$), respectively (Table

333 S1), after normalization to NIST SRM 979. These values agree well with previously reported values
334 (Schoenberg et al., 2008). Therefore, we used 0.08‰ as the external reproducibility for samples.

335

336 **4. Results**

337 Results for all samples are provided in Table 1 and below we describe each sample groups
338 separately.

339

340 ***4.1. Basalts and eclogites***

341 Over a wide range of Cr concentrations (Fig 7.), the examined basalts and eclogites yielded
342 $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values within a narrow range, $-0.12 \pm 0.13\text{‰}$ (2SD, n=33). There was no analytically resolvable
343 difference in $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values between alkaline basalt, tholeiitic basalt, metabasalt, metagabbro, and
344 eclogite samples.

345

346 ***4.2. Metacarbonates***

347 Values for Cr/Zr (Zr serving as a relatively immobile element for normalization purposes)
348 showed a decreasing trend from the relatively fresh wallrock to the vein-wallrock boundary. This
349 matches well with the trend observed in K/Zr (Fig. 8), suggesting loss of elements during fluid-rock
350 interaction. The Cr/Zr ratios in the unaltered portion of the traverse lie slightly above the value
351 estimated for the upper continental crust (Rudnick and Gao, 2003), but decrease to below this value
352 approaching the vein. The metacarbonate rocks were pulverized in agate only, without contact with
353 ceramic material. Therefore, the use of Zr as the normalization element is valid. Despite the

354 significant mobility of Cr evidently caused by the vein-forming fluid, the $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values along the
355 transect are all within analytical of one another.

356

357 **4.3. Black shale weathering**

358 We observed enrichment of Cr and high $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values in the most altered portions of the NAS
359 black shale weathering profile (Fig. 9). The Cr/Ti ratios throughout the weathering profile range
360 from 0.015 to 0.021, which overlap with the ranges reported for the upper continental crust
361 (0.0158 to 0.0240, Condie, 1993; McLennan, 2001; Rudnick and Gao, 2003). However, the Cr/Ti
362 ratios in the most weathered section are about 30% higher than the pristine shale and the $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
363 value is 0.5‰ heavier. The enrichment of Cr in the surface sample is in sharp contrast to depletion
364 of organic matter and the mobile element rhenium. Deeper samples in the profile have $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values
365 that are similar to or slightly higher than that in the pristine shale, except for one sample (NAS-20),
366 which yielded a $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ value of -0.5‰.

367

368 **4.4. Altered oceanic crust and serpentinites**

369 Samples from ODP Hole 504B yielded $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values (Table 1; Fig. 11) that ranged between -
370 0.22‰ and -0.17‰, with an average of -0.18 ± 0.10 ‰ (2SD, n=7), which is within the previously
371 reported range for bulk silicate earth (BSE) (Schoenberg et al., 2008; Moynier et al., 2011; Farkas et
372 al., 2013) and identical to the measured basalts reported above. Chromium concentrations range
373 from 199 $\mu\text{g/g}$ to 387 $\mu\text{g/g}$. No systematic trends were observed in $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values between different
374 alteration zones. However, Cr concentrations tend to be lower in the brecciated zone, where
375 alteration is most intensive.

376

377 In contrast, the examined serpentinite samples had a range of $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values of -0.18‰ to
378 0.52‰ and concentrations varied from 595 $\mu\text{g/g}$ to 3038 $\mu\text{g/g}$ (Fig. 12). Samples with lower Cr
379 concentrations tend to have larger $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values. Further, Cr concentrations in most of the altered
380 peridotites are markedly lower than the estimated average mantle value of 2625 $\mu\text{g/g}$ (blue line in
381 Fig. 12; Sun and McDonough, 1989), indicating loss of Cr during serpentinization.

382

383 **5. Discussion**

384 ***5.1. Basalts and eclogites***

385 The $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values of the investigated basalt and eclogite samples fall within previously
386 reported ranges of the BSE (Schoenberg et al., 2008; Farkas et al., 2013; Shen et al., 2015) (Fig. 7).
387 Based on high temperature rocks/minerals published so far (Schoenberg et al., 2008; Farkas et al.,
388 2013; Shen et al., 2015; this study), the average $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values for fresh silicate rocks (43 samples),
389 metamorphosed silicate rocks (50 samples), and mantle chromites (39 samples) are $-0.13\pm 0.13\text{‰}$,
390 $-0.11\pm 0.13\text{‰}$, and $-0.07\pm 0.13\text{‰}$, respectively (Table S2). All three groups are within error the
391 same, suggesting that there is very limited Cr isotope fractionation under high temperature
392 conditions. Although the number of high temperature samples has nearly tripled, the original BSE
393 value of $-0.124\pm 0.101\text{‰}$, proposed by Schoenberg et al. (2008) is still valid.

394

395 The BSE value can be compared with the value for bulk Earth (BE) as inferred from analyses
396 of carbonaceous chondrites. Moynier et al. (2011) reported an average value of $-0.32\pm 0.05\text{‰}$ from
397 carbonaceous chondrites, which is significantly lower than the BSE range. However, more recent

398 measurements on a limited number of carbonaceous chondrites did not find supporting evidence
399 for significantly lower BE values (Qin et al., 2015). The discrepancy between Moynier et al. (2011)
400 and Qin et al. (2015) may imply that there is Cr isotope heterogeneity in carbonaceous chondrites;
401 additional measurements are needed to test this idea. Nevertheless, given the lower-than-BSE
402 values observed by Moynier et al. (2011), the authors suggested that Earth's core-mantle
403 differentiation induced significant Cr isotope fractionation with light isotopes being incorporated
404 into the core. However, significant equilibrium Cr isotopic fractionation is not likely under high
405 temperatures, as predicted by *ab initio* calculations (Moynier et al., 2011) and natural observation
406 of a wide range of high-temperature rocks (Schoenberg et al., 2008; Farkas et al., 2013; Shen et al.,
407 2015; this study). Therefore, the apparent difference in $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values between the BSE and BE, if
408 true, suggests that either core-mantle differentiation on Earth occurred under relatively low
409 temperature conditions (e.g., during early accretion, Moynier et al., 2011) or that some kinetic
410 process (e.g., thermal diffusion, Furry et al., 1939; Richter et al., 2008; Huang et al., 2010) may have
411 induced Cr isotope fractionation under conditions of higher temperature and pressure. Further
412 analysis of a range of solar system materials can be leveraged to test these alternate hypotheses.

413

414 **5.2. Metacarbonates**

415 Despite significant element mobility during alteration of the Wepawaug Schist sample, there
416 appears to be no significant effect on the Cr isotope composition (Fig. 8). As muscovite was almost
417 certainly the major Cr host in the metacarbonate rock, the metasomatic destruction of this phase
418 led to the observed losses of Cr and K (Ague, 2003). The $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values near and within the reaction
419 aureole are slightly lower than the more distal samples by $\sim 0.04\%$, and the trend appears to be
420 systematic, but the variation is well within the analytical uncertainty. This lack of significant
421 variation in $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values suggests that rocks that have experienced significant metamorphic

422 alteration at relatively high fluid-rock ratios may still record primary Cr isotope signatures, as long
423 as there is no enrichment of Cr from isotopically distinct sources. However, the presence of organic
424 matter and pyrite (Fig. 2) in the Wepawaug Schist carbonate rock indicates overall low fO_2 .
425 Oxidizing metamorphic conditions should be tested in the future for potentially pronounced Cr
426 isotope effects.

427

428 **5.3. Black shale weathering**

429 There is significant enrichment of Cr and large variation (up to 1‰) in Cr isotopic
430 composition in the New Albany Shale weathering profile (Fig. 9). The positive $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values in all but
431 one sample (NAS20) and the enrichment of Cr at the profile surface is in sharp contrast to those
432 observed in basaltic weathering profiles (Frei and Polat, 2012; Crowe et al., 2013; Frei et al., 2014),
433 where Cr depletion and negative isotope fractionation were observed. We propose that the Cr
434 enrichment on the surface of the shale profile is due to short transport followed by immobilization
435 of isotopically heavy Cr(VI). The immobilization could be caused by quantitative reduction or
436 adsorption. Reduction is possible given the elevated remaining organic carbon content (~2 wt.%)
437 despite significant loss relative to the less weathered interior portion of the outcrop (6–8%).
438 However, the remaining organic is unlikely to be labile and active enough to reduce Cr(VI) (e.g.,
439 Petsch et al., 2001b). Alternatively, given the high Fe oxide concentrations (likely formed during
440 initial organic carbon loss) near the surface (Fig. 9E), adsorption of Cr(VI) to Fe oxides or trapping
441 of Cr(VI) during oxide precipitation (co-precipitation) may also have lead to the enrichment of Cr
442 on the surface. Indeed, there is a positive correlation between Cr/Ti ratios and Fe concentrations
443 (Fig. 10). We emphasize that the observed behavior of Cr isotopes in this profile differs from that of
444 Re isotopes in that mobile heavy Re is not immobilized near the soil surface, but instead lost from
445 the profile (Miller et al., 2015).

446

447 The single sample with a negative $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ (-0.52‰) also has two possible explanations. First,
448 this sample is found close to the redox front within the weathering transect (e.g., Jaffe et al., 2002),
449 and it is possible that this sample locality was undergoing active redox reaction and influenced by
450 local partial Cr reduction during weathering that is not yet apparent in, for example, organic carbon
451 content. Therefore, this sample may simply have captured the partially reduced, isotopically light
452 Cr(III). The Re content in the same sample is enriched relative to adjacent samples, which is
453 consistent with reductive sequestration of redox-sensitive elements at this particular locality.
454 However, by mass balance, significant Cr enrichment would have been required to result in such a
455 negative $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ value, and such enrichment is not observed for this sample and is thus unlikely.
456 Alternatively, the negative $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ value may be due to loss of heavy Cr during isotope exchange
457 between solid Cr(III) and soluble Cr(VI) carried by weathering fluids (e.g., Wang et al., 2015a). This
458 isotope exchange process is able to generate large isotope fractionation without net changes in Cr
459 enrichment.

460

461 In any case, the relatively large range of $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values (up to 1‰) in the NAS weathering
462 profile provides clear evidence that there can be active Cr redox cycling in low pH oxidative
463 weathering environments. Manganese oxides are so far the only oxidants found to induce
464 significant Cr(III) oxidation in natural environments (e.g. Eary and Rai, 1987). Formation of
465 manganese oxides is primarily mediated by microorganisms (Tebo et al., 2004) whose growth has
466 been generally deemed to be hindered under low pH conditions (e.g., Mayanna et al., 2015) such as
467 those found in black shale weathering environments (Sullivan et al., 1988; Jaffe et al., 2002).
468 However, some studies have reported microorganisms that can thrive under acidic conditions

469 (Petsch et al., 2001a) and generate manganese oxides (Mayanna et al., 2015). This is in line with our
470 observation of relatively large Cr isotope fractionations in an acidic shale weathering environment.

471

472 The examined profile is only a single system, but it provides support for the notion that a
473 lack of Cr isotope variation in sedimentary records (e.g., as captured in pre-Great Oxidation Event
474 and mid-Proterozoic sedimentary rocks) cannot be well explained by oxidative weathering of a
475 poorly buffered shale-dominated catchment. Instead, it is more likely linked to low oxygen levels at
476 Earth's surface (e.g., Frei et al., 2009; Planavsky et al., 2014). However, this inference rests on the
477 assumption that weathering of black shales is a significant source of Cr to rivers and thus oceans.
478 Given the Cr enrichment in the outer portions of the weathering profile, an intriguing alternative
479 possibility is that weathering of organic-rich shale may not contribute significant Cr fluxes into
480 rivers, and may instead serve as a 'trap' of Cr that is ^{53}Cr -enriched. In this scenario, our finding of
481 significant Cr isotope fractionation during black shale weathering may not be relevant to
482 Precambrian cycling of mobile, unfractionated Cr. More studies of the behavior of redox-sensitive
483 isotope systems (e.g. Cr, Mo, Re, U) in organic-rich shale weathering profiles coupled to surface
484 water analyses should be conducted in the future in order to better constrain contributions to
485 global mass balance from weathering sedimentary rocks relative to weathering of igneous rocks.

486

487 ***5.4. Hydrothermal alteration***

488 The majority of the analyzed serpentinites (Fig. 12) show elevated $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values (up to
489 $\sim 0.5\text{‰}$) compared to fresh peridotite (-0.10‰ to -0.21‰ ; Schoenberg et al., 2008). The values fall
490 within previously reported values for serpentinites (-0.17‰ to $\sim 1.2\text{‰}$, Farkas et al., 2013). Two
491 processes may be responsible for producing the positive $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values: (1) incorporation of

492 isotopically heavy Cr from seawater; and (2) loss of isotopically light Cr from peridotite during
493 hydration processes.

494

495 A simple two-end-member mass balance calculation indicates that direct addition of
496 seawater Cr to fresh peridotite is not likely to induce such large isotope shifts. We assume that: (1)
497 Seawater (0.2 ng/g Cr, Jeandel and Minster, 1987) circulates through the upper oceanic crust (2625
498 $\mu\text{g/g}$ Cr, Sun and McDonough, 1989; 1000 m thick with a density of 2700 kg/m^3 , Staudigel, 2014;
499 area of $2.97 \times 10^8 \text{ km}^2$, Parsons, 1981) with a water flux of about $6.4 \times 10^{14} \text{ kg/yr}$ (Staudigel, 2014)
500 for 100 million years; (2) Cr from seawater gets evenly added to the upper oceanic crust; and (3) Cr
501 in seawater is completely sequestered. Given these assumptions, which are conservative with
502 respect to both water flux and sealing time for the oceanic crust, we find that the amount of Cr
503 supplied by seawater within the 100 million-year alteration timeframe is about six orders of
504 magnitude lower than the size of the native Cr reservoir of the upper oceanic crust. Thus, the
505 isotope effect on the upper oceanic crust as a whole should be negligible. However, we acknowledge
506 that this simple calculation does not rule out localized Cr enrichments. Nevertheless, it is much
507 more likely that isotope variations in serpentinites originate from redox cycling within the upper
508 oceanic crust, rather than addition of Cr directly from seawater.

509

510 Loss of isotopically light Cr during the hydration processes is a possible explanation for the
511 enrichment of heavy Cr during serpentinization. However, previous experimental (Zink et al., 2010)
512 and field (Frei and Polat, 2012; Crowe et al., 2013) observations found that heavy isotopes are
513 preferentially lost during Cr oxidation. Importantly, measurements on crocoite (PbCrO_4), which is
514 thought to precipitate directly from oxic hydrothermal fluids, yielded heavy $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values ranging
515 from 0.01‰ to 1.96‰ (Schoenberg et al., 2008; Farkas et al., 2013). This direction of isotope

516 fractionation during oxidation of Cr(III) is opposite to the prediction by mass-dependent kinetic
 517 isotope effect, whereby light isotopes tend to react 'faster' and thus enrich in the product (e.g.
 518 Bigeleisen, 1965), but is consistent with the prediction by equilibrium isotope effect, whereby
 519 heavier isotopes preferentially enrich in species with stronger chemical bonds, i.e. CrO₄²⁻ (Schauble
 520 et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2015a). However, the fractionation during oxidation is still poorly
 521 constrained, and likely depends on the oxidation kinetics. Further, there is some evidence of
 522 isotopically light Cr(VI) generated by oxidation (Bain and Bullen, 2005), possibly due to a kinetic
 523 isotope effect. Therefore, we can estimate the size of the oxidation fractionation assuming all Cr loss
 524 from peridotite to fluids is due to oxidation. We get a fractionation factor ($\epsilon_{\text{fluid-peridotite}}$) of -0.6‰ to -
 525 0.17‰ (Fig. 12), using a Rayleigh fractionation model:

526

$$527 \quad \delta^{53}\text{Cr} = [\delta^{53}\text{Cr}_{\text{initial}} + 10^3]f^{\alpha-1} - 10^3,$$

528

529 where $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}_{\text{initial}}$ is the $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ value of peridotites and a value of -0.2‰ is used (the lowest of the
 530 examined serpentinites); f is the fraction of Cr remaining after serpentinization, calculated as
 531 $[\text{Cr}]_{\text{serpentinite}}$ divided by the mantle value (2625 $\mu\text{g/g Cr}$); α is the fractionation factor and can be
 532 converted to $\epsilon_{\text{fluid-peridotite}}$ by the equation:

533

$$534 \quad 1000(\alpha-1) \approx \epsilon_{\text{fluid-peridotite}}.$$

535

536 An alternative mechanism for generating isotopically heavy serpentinite is through multi-
 537 stage alteration. The Cr concentrations in the examined serpentinites are up to about four times

538 lower than the average mantle value (2625 $\mu\text{g/g}$, Sun and McDonough, 1989). This suggests that the
539 peridotites experienced net Cr loss. The loss of Cr is likely through oxidative mobilization of Cr(III)
540 in peridotite instead of direct dissolution, given the extremely low solubility of Cr(III) (Rai et al.,
541 1987) under the high pH (9–9.8) conditions generated by serpentinization (Kelley et al., 2001;
542 Kelley et al., 2005). However, serpentinization generally proceeds under reducing conditions in the
543 early stages (e.g., Berndt et al., 1996; Seyfried et al., 2007), usually at high temperatures, followed
544 by oxidizing conditions during later stages (e.g., Alt and Shanks, 1998), usually at low temperatures.
545 Therefore, the loss of Cr likely occurred during later stages of serpentinization. The Cr isotope
546 fractionation during oxidation of solid-state Cr(III) is not been well understood, but we expect it to
547 be small due to a “rind effect” that has been reported for oxidation of solid-phase U(IV) by dissolved
548 oxygen (see Wang et al., 2015b). Further, the long timescales of hydrothermal circulation ($\sim 10^6$
549 years) may allow isotope equilibration between Cr(III)-bearing residual peridotite and Cr(VI)-
550 bearing serpentinization fluid. However, such isotope equilibration should lead to isotopically light
551 Cr(III) phase (Schauble, 2007; Wang et al., 2015a), unless the amount of Cr(VI) in the fluid
552 dominates the Cr contained in the serpentinized peridotites and is very enriched in ^{53}Cr ($\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
553 $> 5.8\text{‰}$). Therefore, it is possible that the high $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values in the serpentinized peridotites could
554 alternatively be caused by addition of isotopically heavy Cr from alteration fluids after the
555 peridotite had lost the majority of their original Cr. Fluids carrying the oxidized Cr(VI) may
556 experience partial reduction during migration, leading to isotopically heavy residual Cr(VI) in the
557 fluid. This isotopically heavy Cr(VI) can be added to the Cr-depleted serpentinites via reduction. By
558 mass balance, $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values of serpentinites that have lost the majority of their Cr can be relatively
559 easily altered by addition of isotopically heavy Cr from fluids.

560

561 Such a multi-stage redox alteration model as outlined above is consistent with sulfur
562 isotope data from the serpentinite samples obtained from Legs 149 and 173 (Alt and Shanks, 1998;
563 Schwarzenbach et al., 2012). Both sulfide and sulfate concentrations (Fig. 13D) in these samples are
564 much higher than the average total S in the mantle (McDonough and Sun, 1995). Furthermore, the
565 $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ values for both sulfide and sulfate in the serpentinites (Fig. 13C) are lower than the seawater
566 and mantle value (see Alt and Shanks, 1998). These observations suggest significant addition of
567 isotopically light sulfur (Fig. 13C) through sulfate reduction. Such reducing conditions may have
568 enabled quantitative reduction of isotopically heavy Cr(VI) carried by the fluids. Furthermore,
569 transport of sulfate supports that oxic conditions existed in the system to allow loss of Cr from
570 peridotites. However, to satisfy isotope mass balance there must be isotopically light Cr produced
571 by partial reduction when the fluid migrates within the upper oceanic crust. As the fluid migrates,
572 the partially reduced, isotopically light Cr may have been diluted into less altered samples with
573 roughly BSE $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values with high Cr concentration, and thus making the isotope shift muted.
574 Alternatively, our sampling may have missed a zone of the serpentinizing system with light $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
575 values.

576

577 In any case, large isotope fractionations in serpentinizing systems are significant given that
578 small Cr isotope variations in sedimentary rocks proximal to hydrothermal systems have been used
579 to track the emergence of biological oxygen production. This and other recent work (Farkas et al.,
580 2013) indicates that a hydrothermal origin of Cr must be ruled out before fractionated Cr in the
581 sedimentary record can be linked unambiguously with terrestrial Cr redox cycling. Although we
582 expect that from a mass balance perspective the overall effect of serpentinizing systems on the
583 Earth surficial Cr isotope cycle is likely to be small on a global scale, the possibility for strongly

584 fractionated high-temperature Cr sources in restricted basins or regions should be kept in mind in
585 future studies (e.g., Farkas et al., 2013).

586

587 **6. Concluding marks**

588 Basalts and their metamorphic products yielded similar $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values to published values of
589 silicates and chromites. This suggests limited Cr isotope fractionation under high temperature
590 conditions. Furthermore, carbonate rocks that have experienced significant fluid infiltration during
591 regional metamorphism show very limited Cr isotope fractionation. These results suggest that
592 sedimentary and igneous Cr isotope signatures may not to be strongly altered by metamorphic
593 alteration, as long as there is minimal transport of isotopically distinct Cr to/from the system and
594 there is no significant shift in redox state.

595

596 Up to $\sim 1\text{‰}$ variation in $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values in a black shale weathering profile are suggestive of
597 active redox cycling of Cr driven by manganese oxide formation in an acidic black shale weathering
598 environment. However, net isotope variation may be restricted for the shale weathering profile as a
599 whole due to efficient short-range immobilization of the oxidized Cr(VI).

600

601 Mild alteration of mafic oceanic basalt by seawater does not appear to fractionate Cr
602 isotopes significantly. However, serpentinization of ultramafic peridotites results in serpentinites
603 with large positive $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values. These high $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values can be explained by a kinetic isotope
604 fractionation during loss of Cr during serpentinization, or by a multistage alteration hypothesis
605 where peridotites lose Cr via oxidation without significant isotope fractionation in the first stage

606 and then accumulates isotopically heavy Cr through later-stage sulfate reduction. Significant Cr
607 isotope fractionation during serpentinization indicates that a hydrothermal origin of Cr must be
608 ruled out before fractionated Cr in the early sedimentary record can be linked robustly to terrestrial
609 Cr redox cycling.

610

611 **Acknowledgement**

612 Funding for this research was provided by Agouron Institute to XLW, National Science
613 Foundation (NSF) EAR-0105927 and EAR-1250269 to JJA, and NSF EAR-1324566 to ES. NJP and
614 CTR acknowledge funding from the Alternative Earths NAI. XLW wishes to thank T.M. Johnson for
615 providing the chromium double spike, Wen-Li Ling for providing Wudangshan basalt samples and
616 Ci Zhang for logistic handling of the Qinling-Tongbai-Dabie samples. JJA thanks E.F. Baxter, O.
617 Beyssac, M.T. Brandon, C.M. Breeding, M. Broecker, X. Chu, and A. Vitale Brovarone for samples and
618 discussions, and the Deep Carbon Observatory, and Yale University for support. This research used
619 samples provided by the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP). The authors would like to thank Dr.
620 Catherine Chauvel for handling the manuscript and three anonymous reviewers for providing
621 constructive comments that greatly improved the quality of the original manuscript.

622

623 **Figure captions**

624

625 Figure 1. A tectonic sketch of the Qinling-Tongbai-Dabie orogen separating the north China block
626 from the south China block. Basalt samples are from South Qinling and eclogite samples are from
627 North Qinling. Detailed geological setting information can be found in Wang et al. (2013) and Ling
628 et al. (2002).

629

630 Figure 2. Images for the metacarbonate rock from the Wepawaug Schist. A: A photograph showing
631 the vein intruding the wall rock, generating a reaction aureole. Cal, Ank, Qtz, Ab, Chl, Rt, Ms refer to
632 calcite, ankerite, quartz, albite, chlorite, rutile, and muscovite, respectively. The fluid was associated
633 with regional metamorphism (~380–410 Ma) during the Acadian orogeny that created the
634 Wepawaug Schist, Connecticut, USA. Details on the geological setting are provided in Ague (2003).
635 The dashed line shows the sampled transect with distance being zero in the center of the vein and
636 increasing toward the right side of the image. B: Mineral assemblage of the vein. Note the calcite
637 rims surrounding the albite grains. C: The contact between the reaction aureole and the vein. Note
638 the pyrite within the aureole. D: Organic matter within the aureole. E: Wallrock with no apparent
639 alteration. F: Albite and chlorite near the contact.

640

641 Figure 3. A schematic of the New Albany Shale weathering profile exposed by a road cut near Clay
642 City, Kentucky, USA. The light gray layer represents weathered black shale whereas the darker gray
643 represents deeper layers that are relatively unweathered. Circles represent sampling points. Care
644 was taken to sample from the same horizon to avoid potential syn-depositional variations. Further
645 information can be found in Jaffe et al. (2002).

646

647 Figure 4. Location of ODP Hole 504B in the Equatorial Eastern Pacific. On the left is the simplified
648 lithological column in meters below basement (mbbm). Depth in meters below seafloor is also
649 indicated. The basement rock is divided into a volcanic zone, transition zone, and sheeted dike zone.
650 Brecciation is developed in each zone and occurs where alteration is most intensive. Samples with
651 similar characteristics in each section are combined in representative proportions in order to
652 create composite samples. Further information is given in Bach et al. (2004).

653

654 Figure 5. Locations of ODP drill cores from the Iberia margin and the 15°20'N Mid-Atlantic-Ridge
655 Fracture Zone, and simplified lithological columns of all the cores from which the investigated
656 serpentinite samples were obtained. Red stars denote sample localities; numbers next to the red
657 stars are $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values ($\pm 0.08\text{‰}$). Further information for the cores can be found in Sawyer et al.
658 (1994), Whitmarsh et al., 1998, and Shipboard Scientific Party (2004).

659

660 Figure 6. Reproducibility of SRM 979 standard analyzed during this study ($-0.08\pm 0.05\text{‰}$, 2SD,
661 $n=64$). The dashed lines represent the 2SD envelope. Samples are normalized to the average $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
662 value of SRM 979 of each session, during which the SRM 979 $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ variation is typically less than
663 0.1‰ .

664

665 Figure 7. $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values of high temperature igneous rocks and their metamorphosed equivalents,
666 plotted against their Cr concentrations. The average $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ for fresh silicates ($n=43$),
667 metamorphosed silicates ($n=50$), and chromites ($n=39$) are $-0.13\pm 0.13\text{‰}$ (2SD), $-0.11\pm 0.13\text{‰}$
668 (2SD), and $-0.07\pm 0.13\text{‰}$ (2SD), respectively (data compiled in Table S1). Note that the x-axis is on
669 logarithmic scale.

670

671 Figure 8. $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values, Cr/Zr ratios, and $\text{K}_2\text{O}/\text{Zr}$ ratios for the metacarbonate rock from Wepawaug
672 Schist. The red bar in B indicates upper continental crust Cr/Zr ratio. Yellow shaded region denotes
673 the vein and gray shaded region denotes the reaction aureole. The error bars are the external
674 analytical uncertainty (0.08‰ , see 'Methods' section).

675

676 Figure 9. $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values, Cr/Ti ratios, organic carbon, Re/Ti ratios, and Fe concentration for the New
677 Albany Shale weathering profile. Data other than $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ and Cr/Ti ratios are from Jaffe et al. (2002).
678 The shaded area in A represents the estimated BSE range (Schoenberg et al., 2008 and Farkas et al.,
679 2013; this study); the shaded area in B represents estimated upper continental crust Cr/Ti (Condie,
680 1993; McLennan, 2001; Rudnick and Gao, 2003). The vertical dashed line shows the boundary of
681 visible weathering.

682

683 Figure 10. Cr/Ti ratios plotted as a function of iron content. The positive correlation suggests that
684 the Cr enrichment on the surface of the NAS weathering profile is a result of adsorption of mobile
685 Cr(VI) to the iron oxides.

686

687 Figure 11. $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values and Cr concentrations for altered oceanic crust composite samples from
688 ODP drill core 504B. The blue shaded region in A denotes the 2SD range around the average $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
689 value of the basalt flows and fresh sheeted dike samples, which we use to represent the least
690 altered oceanic crust; the blue shaded region in B represents the average Cr concentration of the
691 same samples. Note that the samples are composite samples and therefore the plotted depth does
692 not represent true depth.

693

694 Figure 12. $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values plotted against Cr concentration for the serpentinite samples examined in
695 this study. The horizontal gray bar denotes $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ range for the North Atlantic seawater (Scheiderich
696 et al., 2015); the vertical gray bar denotes the estimated Cr concentration of the mantle (Sun and
697 McDonough, 1989), which is thought to represent average fresh peridotites. Altered peridotites
698 with heavy $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values have less Cr than average fresh peridotite, suggesting that the heavy $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$
699 values are not a result of direct addition of seawater Cr. The high $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values are possibly due to
700 kinetic isotope fractionation where light isotopes were preferentially lost. The dashed trends are
701 modeled using a Rayleigh fractionation model. The fractionation factors used are -0.6‰ and $-$
702 0.17‰ . The initial $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ value used is -0.2‰ .

703

704 Figure 13. $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ values, Cr concentrations, $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ values, and sulfur concentrations in the examined
705 serpentinites. The gray and blue bars in A denote $\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ range for the BSE (Schoenberg et al., 2008
706 and Farkas et al., 2013; this study) and the North Atlantic seawater (Scheiderich et al., 2015),
707 respectively. The blue bar in B denotes mantle Cr concentration estimates (Sun and McDonough,
708 1989). Sulfur data are from Alt and Shanks (1998) and Schwarzenbach et al. (2012). Dashed and
709 solid blue lines in C indicate $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ values for the mantle and modern seawater, respectively (Alt and
710 Shanks, 1998). Blue dashed line in D shows the sulfur concentration of the mantle (McDonough and
711 Sun, 1995).

712

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983 Table 1. Basic information and results for all samples examined in this study.

984

	Sample ID	Location	Literature	Distance from surface (m)	[Cr] (ug/g)*	$\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ (‰)	error (‰)**	n***
NAS shale	NAS0	Kentucky, USA	Jaffe et al., 2002	0.00	107.4	0.47	0.08	2
	NAS3	"	"	0.91	93.6	0.13	0.08	2
	NAS8	"	"	2.44	89.1	0.17	0.08	2
	NAS14	"	"	4.27	77.3	0.15	0.08	2
	NAS20	"	"	6.10	74.5	-0.53	0.08	2
	NAS26	"	"	7.92	73.0	0.07	0.08	2
	NAS36	"	"	10.97	72.8	0.00	0.08	2
	NAS46	"	"	14.02	71.1	0.02	0.08	2
				Depth (mbsf)****				
Serpentinite	1268A-1	MAR 15°20' fraction zone	Paulick et al., 2006	35.4	883.3	-0.02	0.08	1
	1268A-2	"	"	82.1	1153.6	0.06	0.08	1
	1272A-5	"	Bach et al., 2004	99.4	1168.5	0.04	0.08	1
	1272A-6	"	"	107.5	792.0	0.25	0.08	1

1070A-1	Iberian Margin	Schwarzenbach et al., 2012	705.6	1250.6	0.26	0.08	2
1070A-2	"	"	706.3	1692.4	0.09	0.08	1
1070A-3	"	"	707.02	1253.3	0.09	0.08	1
1070A-3- dc*****	"	"	"	"	0.10	0.08	1
897C-3	"	Schwarzenbach et al., 2013	680	858.5	0.52	0.08	1
897C-3-dc	"	"	"	"	0.51	0.08	1
897C-7	"	"	710	595.5	0.10	0.08	1
897D-9	"	"	742.2	659.0	0.14	0.08	1
897D-13	"	"	773	980.2	0.20	0.08	1
LA3a	Cava dei Marmi	Schwarzenbach et al., 2012		1604.4	-0.11	0.08	1
LA20a	"	"		1717.5	0.12	0.08	1
LM027	Cava Montaretto	"		1951.7	-0.15	0.08	1
LM027-dc	"	"		"	-0.13	0.08	1
JAGSY12A	Syros, Greece	37° 29.607' N, 24° 54.556' E		2514.4	-0.18	0.08	1
JAGSY12A-dc	"	"		"	-0.16	0.08	2

	JAGSY12A- dd*****	"	"	"		-0.17	0.08	1
	JAGSY13C	"	37° 29.421' N, 24° 54.078' E		3037.8	-0.11	0.08	1
	JAGSY8A-2	"	Marschall et al., 2012		2454.3	-0.17	0.08	1
Altered oceanic crust		Equatorial East Pacific						
	VZP		Bach et al., 2003	274.5-846	316.0	-0.19	0.08	1
	VZM	"	"	"	387.1	-0.22	0.08	1
	VZB	"	"	"	264.7	-0.17	0.08	1
	TZP	"	"	"	358.2	-0.07	0.08	1
	TZM	"	"	"	360.3	-0.23	0.08	1
	TZM-dc	"	"	"	"	-0.21	0.08	1
	SDCB	"	"	> 1055	199.2	-0.20	0.08	1
	SDCD	"	"	"	333.9	-0.18	0.08	1
				Distance from vein (cm)				
MetaCarbonate	JAW-197 AS	Connecticut, USA	Ague, 2003	-1	26.3	-0.05	0.08	1
	JAW-197 AS-dc	"	"	"	"	-0.04	0.08	1
	JAW-197 Ai	"	"	0	27.8	-0.05	0.08	1

JAW-197 Aii	"	"	3	32.2	-0.05	0.08	1
JAW-197 Aiii	"	"	5	35.5	-0.03	0.08	1
JAW-197 Aiii- dc	"	"	"		-0.01	0.08	1
JAW-197 Aiv	"	"	6	35.3	-0.01	0.08	1
JAW-197 Av	"	"	8	35.3	-0.01	0.08	1

Mafic/Metamafic

WD05-02	Hubei, China	Ling et al., 2008		136.4	-0.13	0.08	1
WD05-07	"	"		1255.6	-0.04	0.08	1
WD05-10	"	"		1260.3	-0.02	0.08	1
WD05-11	"	"		1259.1	-0.03	0.08	1
WD05-23	"	"		96.1	-0.08	0.08	1
WD06-52	"	"		335.6	-0.12	0.08	1
WD05-54	"	"		148.8	-0.21	0.08	1
WD05-56	"	"		162.2	-0.20	0.08	1
WD05-61	"	"		224.3	-0.19	0.08	1
WD05-63	"	"		131.3	-0.13	0.08	1
10QL136	Henan, China	Wang et al., 2013		158.1	-0.10	0.08	1
10QL137	"	"		153.6	-0.11	0.08	1

10QL138	"	"	51.9	-0.01	0.08	1
10QL139	"	"	126.8	-0.10	0.08	1
10QL140	"	"	163.3	-0.08	0.08	2
10QL141	"	"	119.9	-0.08	0.08	1
10QL144	"	"	100.8	-0.10	0.08	1
10QL145	"	"	48.2	-0.08	0.08	2
10QL147	"	"	48.0	-0.08	0.08	1
10QL149	"	"	93.2	-0.06	0.08	1
CRB	Farinole, Corsica	Vitale Brovarone, 2011	404.6	-0.22	0.08	1
CRB-dc	"	"	"	-0.21	0.08	1
JAGTI-1A	Tinos, Greece	Broecker and Enders, 1999	62.5	-0.08	0.08	2
JAGSY-58A	Syros, Greece	37° 26.660' N, 24° 53.327' E	1576.6	-0.24	0.08	1
JAQ158A	Connecticut, USA	41° 52.423' N, 72° 16.335' W	663.3	-0.08	0.08	2
JANW-17	Connecticut, USA	Harwood, 1979a, b	50.1	-0.17	0.08	1
CBJB2	California, USA	Krogh et al., 1994	65.5	-0.16	0.08	1
6001	"	Page et al., 2007	120.8	-0.20	0.08	1

6001-dc	"	"	"	-0.14	0.08	2
4-1	Norway	Terry et al., 2000	498.8	-0.22	0.08	1

* Based on isotope dilution.

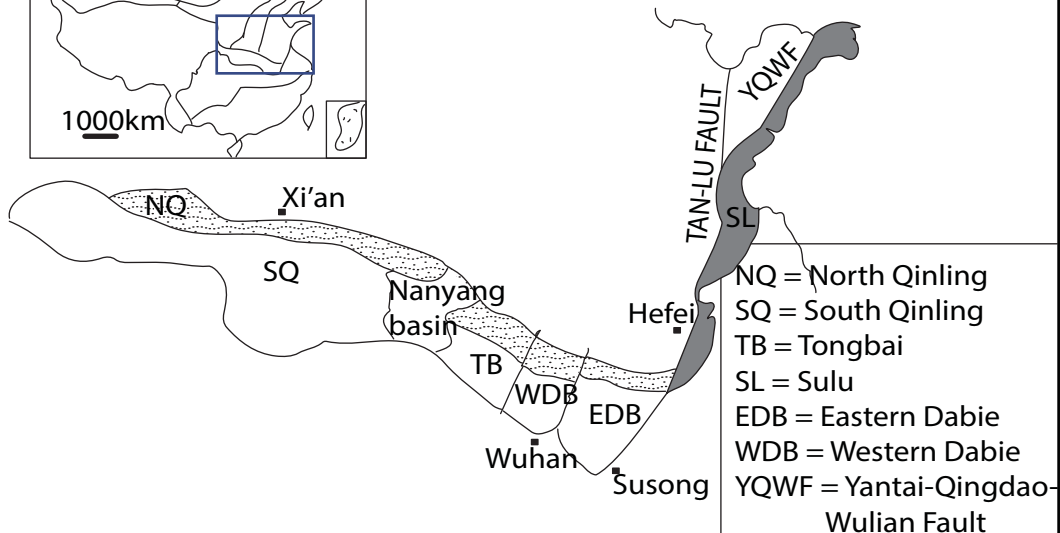
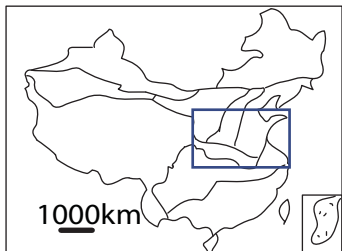
** 2 standard deviation of NIST SRM 3112a and USGS BHVO-2 that went through the same chemical procedures as samples.

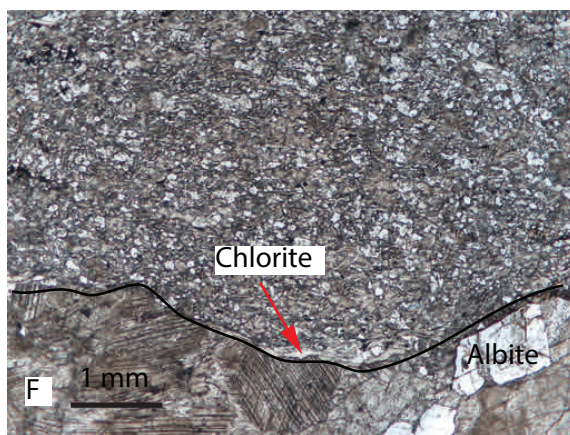
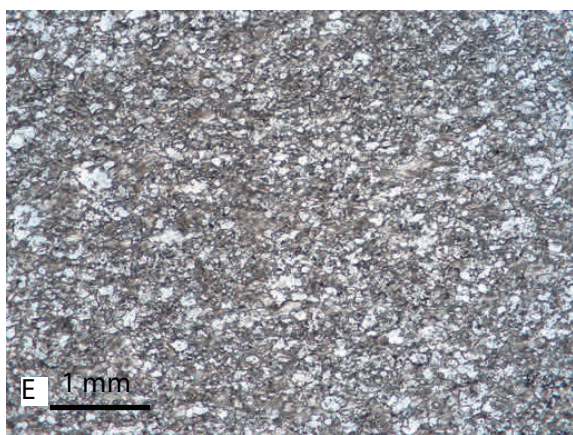
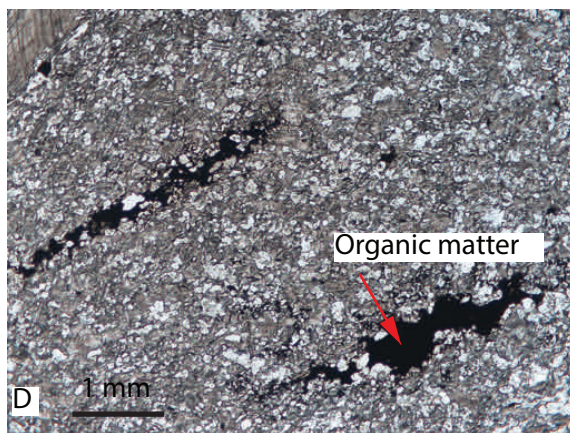
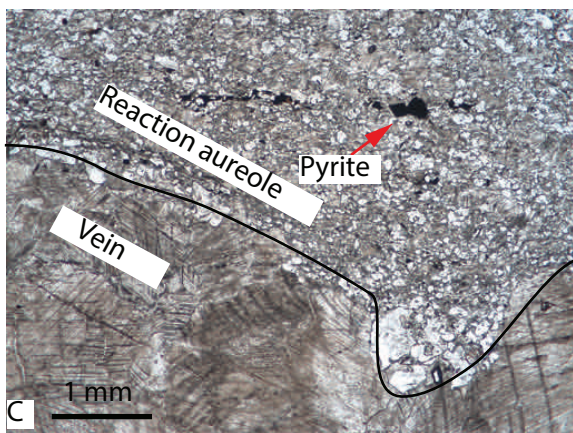
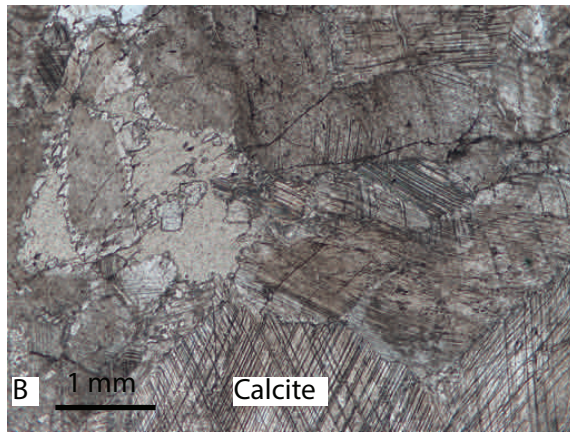
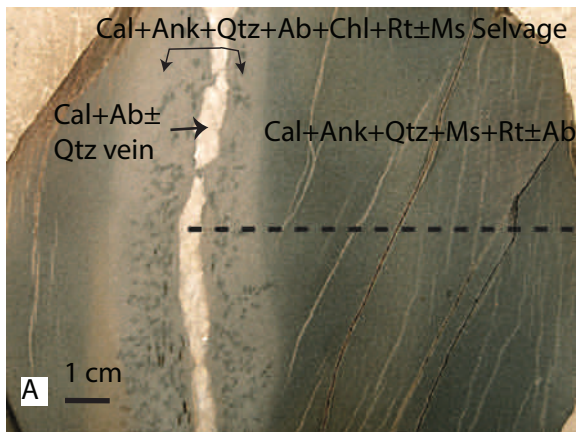
*** remeasurement of the same purified sample solution

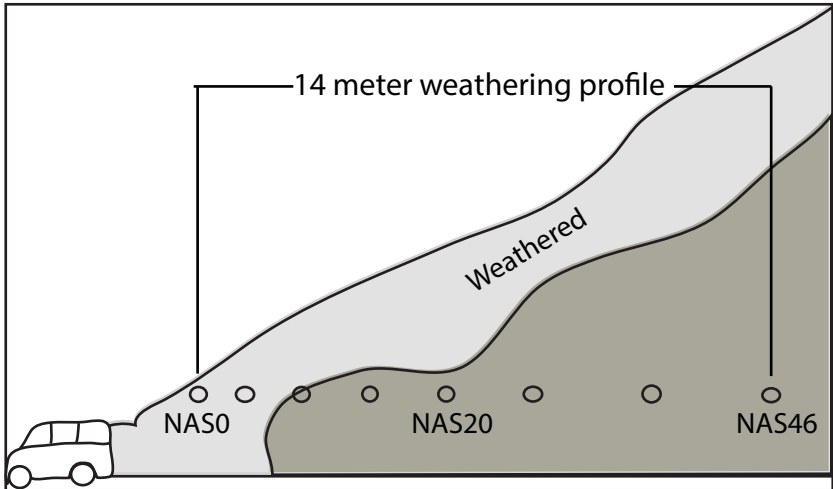
**** meters below seafloor

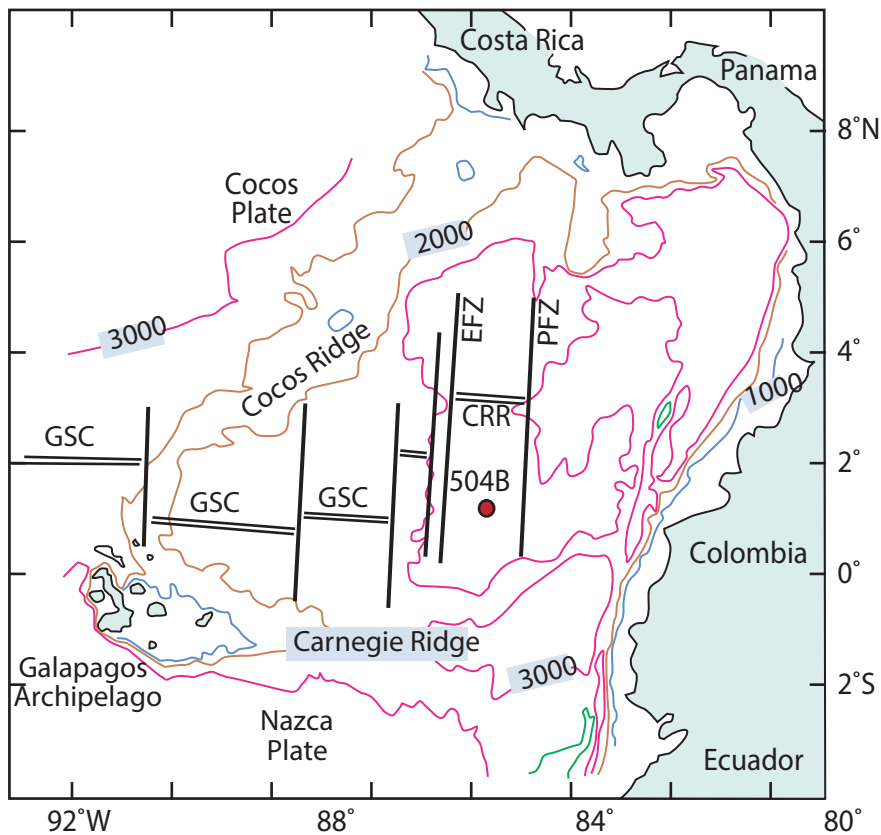
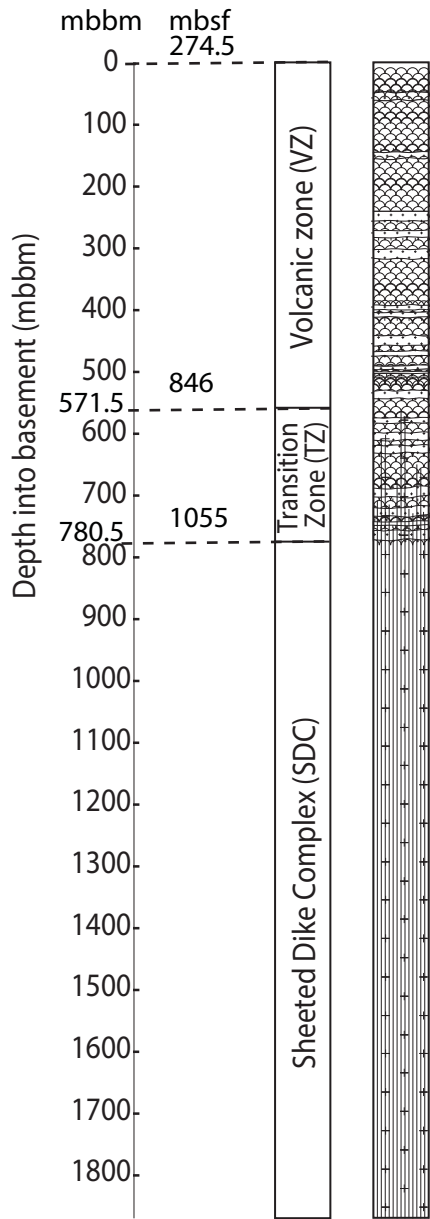
*****'dc' represents duplicated column chemistry; 'dd' represent duplicated digestion+column chemistry.

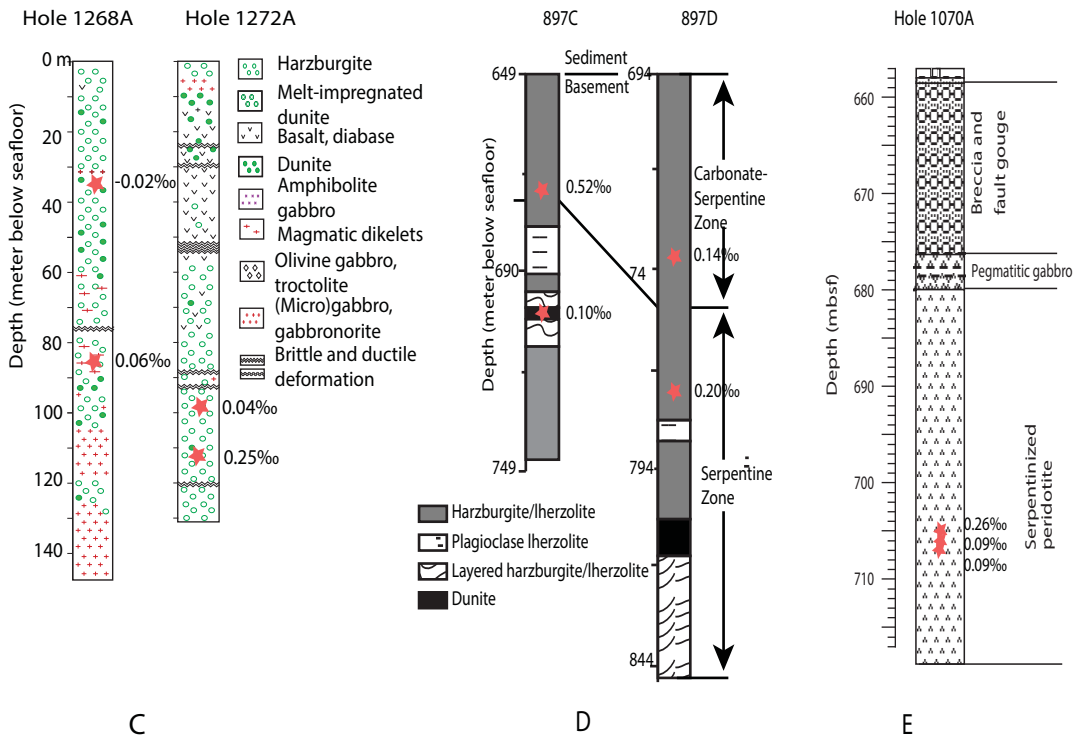
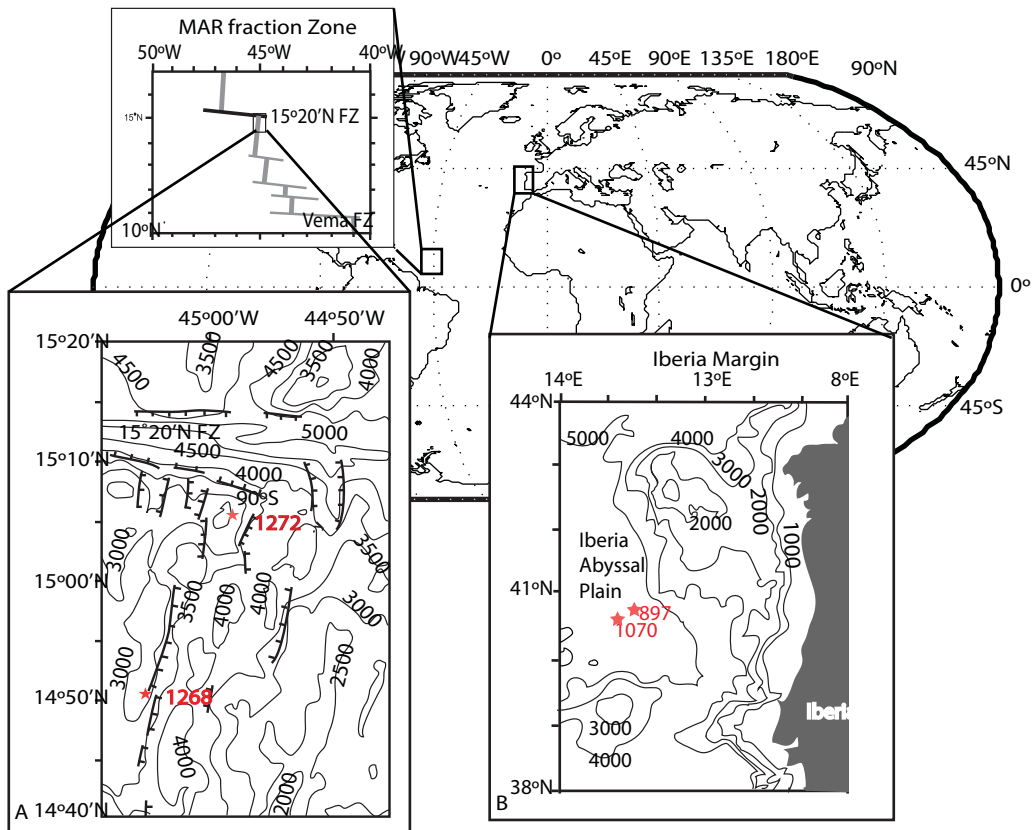
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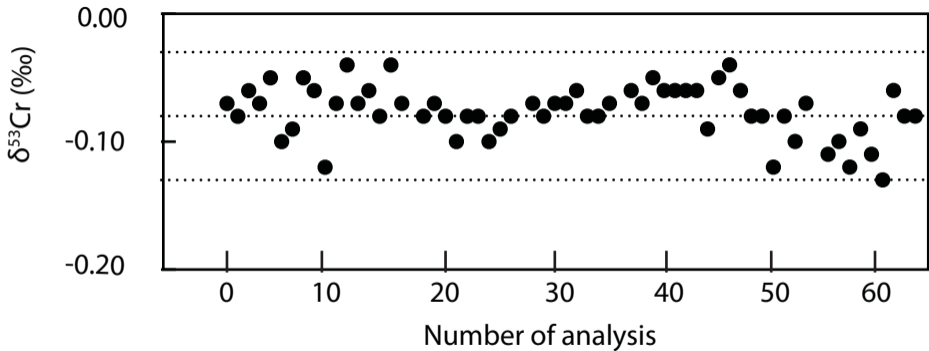


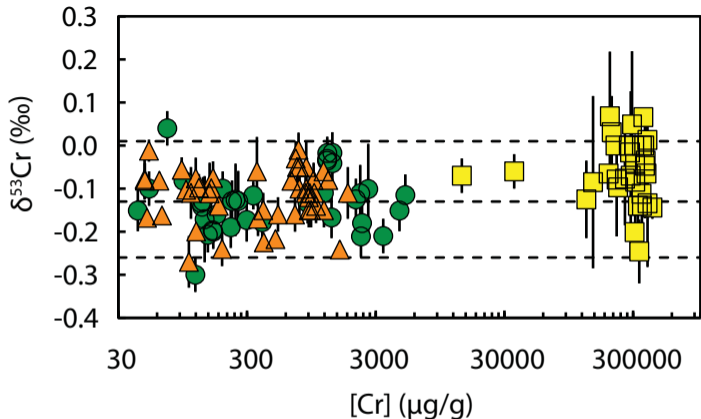








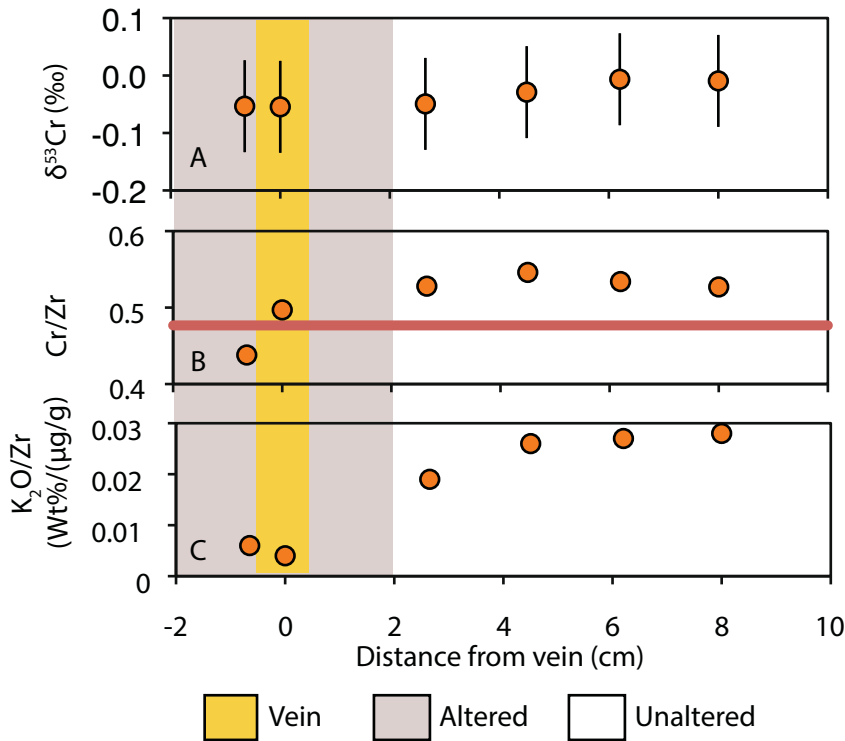


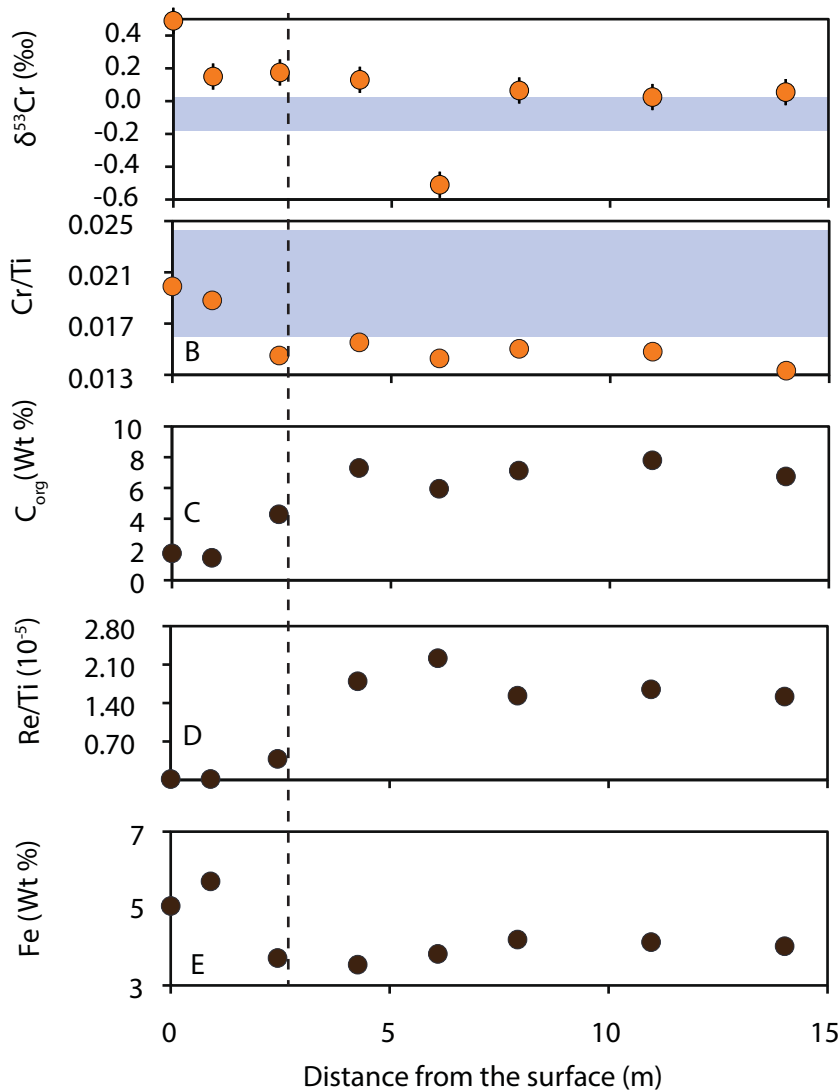


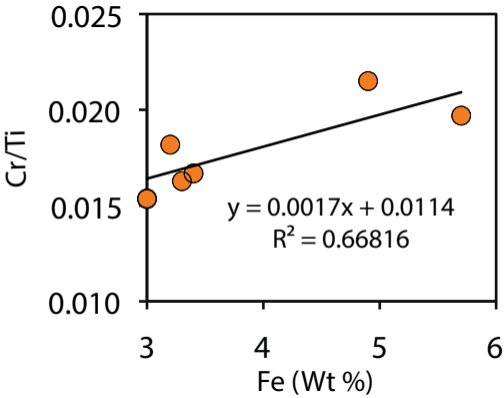
● Fresh silicate

▲ Metamorphosed silicate

■ Chromite ($\text{FeMgCr}_2\text{O}_4$)







$\delta^{53}\text{Cr}$ (‰)[Cr] ($\mu\text{g/g}$)

-0.25

-0.15

-0.05

100

200

300

400

500

0

200

400

600

800

1000

1200

1400

Depth (mbbm)

▲ Breccia

■ Pillow lava

● Massive flow

◆ Unbrecciated dike

A

B

