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1 **P-T path from garnet zoning in pelitic schist from NE Sardinia, Italy: further constraints on**  
2 **the metamorphic and tectonic evolution of the north Sardinia Variscan belt**

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10

11 **Abstract**

12 Mylonitic micaschists in the south-eastern sector of the Posada-Asinara Shear Zone in the Axial  
13 Zone of the Sardinia Variscan chain were investigated for the reconstruction of their metamorphic  
14 evolution and P-T history. Micaschists underwent polyphase ductile deformation consisting of an  
15 old D1 deformation (~345–340 Ma) associated to shearing and folding and to a penetrative S1 axial  
16 plane foliation. The S1 foliation is progressively transposed by the D2 phase, which is associated  
17 with upright up to NE verging folds and dextral shear zones. Micaschists are characterized by  
18 abundant centimetric garnet crystals with strong compositional zoning. The garnet porphyroblasts  
19 (~15 vol%) are associated with plagioclase, quartz, biotite, staurolite, white mica, chloritoid and  
20 retrograde chlorite. Garnet presents an internal foliation identified by the iso-orientation of quartz  
21 inclusions sometimes arranged into a sigmoidal pattern suggesting rotation of the garnet during  
22 growth, discordant respect to the external S2 foliation. The S2 foliation is identified by the preferred  
23 orientation of micas and chlorite and by the alternance between quartzo-feldspathic and micaceous  
24 layers. The garnet core contains several small inclusions of quartz, rutile, apatite, and minor  
25 monazite and zircon. Additional inclusions, observed in the garnet domain around the core are  
26 ilmenite, chloritoid, staurolite and white mica. EMPA analyses reveal an even more complex  
27 chemical zoning consisting of garnet core, garnet mantle, and rim. The compositional isopleths that  
28 match the composition of the garnet core intersect with isopleths for the highest Si contents in K-  
29 white mica at about T 430–490 °C, P 1.3–1.4 GPa. Garnet rim isopleths and isopleths for the lowest  
30 Si contents in K-white mica indicate P-T conditions close to 560–630 °C/0.6–1.1 GPa. The  
31 resulting P-T path is clockwise, subdivided into two separate stages. The first stage is a prograde  
32 segment suggested by the garnet core to mantle compositional variation whereas the second reflects  
33 garnet rim growth during exhumation.

34

35 *Keywords:* microstructure; garnet; isochemical phase diagrams; P-T path; Variscan Sardinia

36

## 37 **Introduction**

38 Collision type orogens are characterized by polyphase deformation and metamorphism which help  
39 to unravel the tectonic and metamorphic evolution from the initial stages of collision up to the final  
40 ones often characterized by the extensional collapse of the belt when driving forces vanished.  
41 However the records of such a complex evolution are often scattered and both the tectonic  
42 structures and the metamorphic events are elusive especially for the initial stages, being overprinted  
43 by later deformation structures and associated metamorphism. In addition to this the development of  
44 new analytical techniques allows to go into further detail in the tectonic and metamorphic history as  
45 for example the use of petrochronology (Engi et al., 2017) which allows to link mineral ages to  
46 deformation and metamorphism (Williams and Jercinovic, 2012; Montomoli et al., 2013; Carosi et  
47 al., 2012). Among these techniques, the thermodynamic approach to the reconstruction of the rock  
48 history and evolution by means of isochemical phase diagrams (i.e. P-T pseudosection modelling)  
49 provides qualitative and quantitative information on the mineral assemblages that are stable at  
50 specific temperature and pressure. The obtained thermobarometric information is then interpreted  
51 to identify some specific tectonic setting and, eventually with the contribution of geochronology, its  
52 evolution in time. A few recent examples of this approach are given by, among the others, Cao et al.  
53 (2017), Thiessen et al. (2019), Liu and Massonne (2019), Massonne and Li (2020), Bovay et al.  
54 (2021), Freya George et al. (2021), Ganade et al. (2021). It is worth of note that garnet has often a  
55 dominant role, among the rock-forming minerals, for the accurate P-T conditions estimation in rock  
56 samples, being by far the key mineral to be investigated for rigorous reconstruction and better  
57 understanding of P-T evolution of basement areas and geological environments. Garnet is also  
58 known to be resilient to re-equilibration and, as a consequence, to be a good recorder of  
59 polymetamorphism (Thiessen et al., 2019 and references therein).

60 The Variscan belt of NE Sardinia has been regarded as a classical example of a well-preserved  
61 remnant of Variscan continental collision since long time, characterized by a Barrovian prograde  
62 metamorphism moving from SW to the NE from the biotite zone, through garnet zone, staurolite +  
63 biotite zone up to kyanite and sillimanite zone in the Posada Valley (see Fig. 1; Ricci et al., 2004).  
64 Detailed investigations in the chloritoid schists south from the Posada Valley allowed to define P-T  
65 conditions not compatible with previously detected low-grade metamorphic conditions (Cruciani et  
66 al., 2013). These authors found pressure values reaching c.a. 1.7 GPa that is significantly higher  
67 than the Barrovian pressure previously indicated for the garnet zone (c.a. 1.1 GPa; Cruciani et al.,  
68 2015a). Similarly, pressure values up to 1.4 GPa were found by Scodina et al. (2021) in the Posada

69 Valley amphibolites. This finding arises new problems and questions in the tectonic and  
70 metamorphic evolution of NE Sardinia metamorphic basement. The rocks recording HP conditions  
71 represent a slice of continental crust subsequently tectonically coupled with lower-grade  
72 metamorphics or do they represent the relict of the diffuse presence of HP in all the tectonic units?  
73 In the latter case, the Barrovian metamorphism occurred later than HP conditions?  
74 To fix these questions, it is necessary to unravel the tectonic and metamorphic evolution of the  
75 Sardinian belt in the framework of the Southern Variscides.  
76 With the aim to check if HP conditions were recorded elsewhere in the northern Sardinia basement,  
77 we investigated other selected micaschist samples characterized by a significant garnet  
78 compositional zoning cropping out in the southern side of the Posada Valley.

79

### 80 **Geological setting and field geology**

81 The Sardinia-Corsica block, being part together with the Maures-Tanneron Massif and Iberia  
82 peninsula of the Southern Variscan belt or Domain (Matte, 1986; Carmignani et al., 1994; Edel et  
83 al., 2018), is a transect of the Southern Variscan belt lacking Alpine overprint.

84 The metamorphic basement of Sardinia consists of metasedimentary and metaigneous rocks  
85 belonging to the northern margin of Gondwana, affected by Palaeozoic deformation and  
86 metamorphism resulting in a S- to SW-verging stacking of tectonic units with increasing  
87 metamorphic grade from SW to NE (Carmignani et al., 1994).

88 Along a south-west to north-east oriented profile, the Sardinia basement consists of the following  
89 three main tectono-metamorphic zones (Carmignani et al., 1994, 2001): External Zone, Nappe Zone  
90 (in turn subdivided into Internal and External Nappe) and Inner Zone (Fig. 1a).

91 The palaeozoic sequences of the External and Nappe Zones underwent metamorphic conditions  
92 varying from anchizone to greenschist facies conditions, with the only exception of the  
93 southernmost outcrops in the Capo Spartivento area (Mt. Settiballas Formation, in the External  
94 Zone) and Monte Grighini Unit (Nappe Zone) that reached amphibolite-facies metamorphic  
95 conditions (Cruciani et al., 2016; Cruciani et al., 2018, 2019).

96 Northwards to the Nappe Zone, the Inner Zone of the chain extends from northern Sardinia to  
97 southern and central Corsica (Massonne et al., 2018; Cruciani et al., 2021). In northern Sardinia, a  
98 regional scale transpressive shear zone known as the Posada-Asinara Shear Zone (PASZ),  
99 correlated to the Cavalaire Fault of the Maures–Tanneron massif and to the Ferriere –Mollieres  
100 Shear zone of the Argentera Massif of Western Alps (Schneider et al., 2014; Simonetti et al., 2020,  
101 2021, 2018 and references therein), separates the Medium-Grade Metamorphic Complex (MGMC)

102 in the south from the High-Grade Metamorphic Complex (HGMC, also known as Migmatite  
103 Complex) in the north.

104 U–(Th)–Pb analyses on monazite from the PASZ indicate that the shear zone has been active at  
105 ~325–300 Ma in a transpressive tectonic setting, in agreement with the ages of the other dextral  
106 transpressive shear zones in the southern Variscan belt (Carosi and Palmeri, 2002; Carosi et al.,  
107 2020; Simonetti et al., 2018 2020). South of the PASZ, the MGMC mainly consists of micaschist  
108 and paragneiss with relics of HP assemblages (Cruciani et al., 2013) with sporadic quartzite,  
109 metabasite (Cruciani et al., 2010, 2015b) and orthogneiss (Helbing and Tiepolo, 2005).

110 The HGMC mainly consists of sedimentary-derived gneisses and HP migmatites (Massonne et al.,  
111 2013; Cruciani et al., 2014a,b; Fancello et al., 2018), migmatized orthogneiss, calc-silicate nodules,  
112 and metabasite lenses preserving eclogite and granulite facies relics (Cruciani et al., 2011, 2015a,b;  
113 Scodina et al., 2019, 2020, 2021). Layered amphibolites resembling leptyno-amphibolite complexes  
114 have also been described by Franceschelli et al. (2005).

115 In the eclogite, at Punta de li Tulchi (Fig. 1b), Palmeri et al. (2004) found U– Pb zircon weighted  
116 mean ages of  $453 \pm 14$ ,  $400 \pm 10$  and  $327 \pm 7$  Ma, referred respectively to the protolith age, to the  
117 HP eclogitic event (or resulting from Pb loss during the main Variscan event), and to the  
118 retrogression to amphibolite facies P–T conditions. For one sample from eclogite from Punta de li  
119 Tulchi, a concordia age of  $457 \pm 2$  Ma on magmatic zircons was interpreted as the minimum  
120 protolith age (Cortesogno et al., 2004). On a second group of zircons showing the complex zoning  
121 of HP metamorphic zircons, Cortesogno et al. (2004) obtained an age of  $403 \pm 4$  Ma, interpreted as  
122 dating “the zircon crystallization during the high-grade event”. This datum seems to confirm the  
123 value of  $400 \pm 10$  Ma dubitatively proposed by Palmeri et al. (2004) as the actual age of the HP  
124 event in NE Sardinia.

125 Variscan tectono-metamorphic events in Corsica–Sardinia were accompanied by magmatic activity  
126 starting between 345 and 330 Ma with an earlier syn-tectonic Mg–K calc-alkaline association  
127 (Corsica), which was followed (310–280 Ma) by late- to post-tectonic high-K calcalkaline and late  
128 peraluminous granites (Rossi and Cocherie, 1991). The occurrence of polyphase ductile  
129 deformation in northern Sardinia is nowadays widely accepted and described by several authors  
130 (Carmignani et al., 1994; Connolly et al., 1994; Carosi and Palmeri, 2002; Carosi et al., 2005;  
131 Helbing et al., 2006; Elter et al., 2010; Graziani et al., 2020). The oldest deformation D1 (~345–340  
132 Ma, Di Vincenzo et al., 2004; Carosi et al., 2012) is well preserved in some areas of the MGMC  
133 where it is associated to shearing and folding associated with a penetrative S1 axial plane foliation.  
134 Late D1 ductile/brittle shear zones, with top to the SW sense of movement, overprint the F1 folds.  
135 Towards north, the S1 foliation is progressively transposed by the D2 phase, which is associated

136 with upright up to NE verging folds and dextral shear zones. The Variscan D2 transpressive shear is  
137 the main deformation observed in northern Sardinia (Carosi and Palmeri, 2002). Di Vincenzo et al.  
138 (2004) found  $^{40}\text{Ar}$ – $^{39}\text{Ar}$  ages of 320–305 Ma for most syn–D2 white mica in the MGMC, later  
139 confirmed by in-situ U-Th-Pb ages on zircon and monazite in the mylonitic rocks (Carosi et al.,  
140 2012, 2020). In the HGMC, two opposite senses of shear (top-to-the-NW and top-to-the-SE/NE)  
141 on the S2 foliation have been locally detected and interpreted by Elter et al. (2010) as being  
142 associated with the end of compression/crustal thickening (the first, top-to-the-NW) and with  
143 tectonic inversion during the exhumation of the metamorphic basement (top-to-the-SE/NE). A D3  
144 deformation phase forming upright metric to decametric open folds developed subsequently. F3  
145 folds are associated with an S3 axial plane crenulation cleavage. The D4 tectonic phase is revealed  
146 by metric to decametric folds with sub-horizontal axial planes (Cruciani et al., 2015c). An extended  
147 and detailed review of the Variscan orogeny in Sardinia can be found in Carmignani et al. (1994,  
148 2001), Rossi et al. (2009), and Cruciani et al. (2015a).

149 The sampling area (Fig. 1, 40°36'17''N, 9°35'29''E) is located in NE Sardinia close to the  
150 boundary between the MGMC and the HGMC, in the south-eastern sector of the PASZ. The  
151 Variscan metamorphic rocks cropping out in this area, which belongs to the staurolite + biotite zone  
152 of the Barrovian Sardinian metamorphic sequence, mainly consist of micaschist and paragneiss with  
153 an increasing metamorphic grade from south to north. Granodioritic orthogneiss and augen gneiss,  
154 being part of the so called Lodé-Mamone antiform, crop out in the southern sector of the  
155 investigated area, whereas amphibolite lenses, embedded within the metasedimentary sequence of  
156 the kyanite + biotite zone, are aligned along the PASZ a few kilometers north from the study area.  
157 At least twenty metapelitic rock samples were collected along a road cut in the forest, near to a  
158 restored traditional small building locally known as “Su Pinnettu” (Fig. 1) a few km north of the  
159 SP50 road connecting S. Anna (at east) and Lodè (at west) villages. The outcrop, a few tens of  
160 meters in width and in part covered with bushes and vegetation, consists of silver-coloured  
161 mylonitic micaschists characterized by the occurrence of abundant garnet crystals visible by naked  
162 eyes (Fig. 2a,b). The garnet crystals, which are nearly idiomorphic, appear to be homogeneously  
163 distributed in the rock matrix. For a detailed structural reconstruction of the geometrical  
164 relationships between the metasedimentary sequences, granodioritic orthogneiss and augen gneiss  
165 exposed in the study area the reader is referred to Carosi et al. (2005, 2020).

166

## 167 **Methods**

168 All collected samples were prepared in thin section for petrographic and microstructural  
169 investigation. Among these, two samples (FZ13 and FD3X) were selected for thermodynamic

170 modelling based on their spectacular texture and garnet chemical zoning. Sample FZ13 was also  
171 analyzed for rutile thermometry and monazite dating by EMP.

172 Microstructural investigations and BSE imaging on the corresponding polished and carbon-coated  
173 thin-sections were obtained with a FEI Quanta 200 SEM equipped with a nitrogen-free  
174 Thermofisher™ UltraDry EDS Detector at CeSAR, Centro Servizi d'Ateneo per la Ricerca,  
175 Università di Cagliari. Chemical analyses of silicate minerals were performed with a CAMECA  
176 SX100 electron microprobe (EMP) with five wavelength-dispersive spectrometers installed at the  
177 Institut für Anorganische Chemie, Universität Stuttgart. The conditions for the silicate mineral  
178 analyses, including the analytical errors, were reported by Massonne (2012). X-ray concentration  
179 maps for garnet were prepared by stepwise movement of a thin section under the electron beam of  
180 the EMP by using counting times per step of 100 ms and an electric current of 50 nA. Zirconium in  
181 rutile was analysed by the EMP with 15 kV, 200 nA and 5 µm spot size using a TAP crystal and  
182 counting times on peak and background of 200 s each according to the method described in Li et al.  
183 (2017). For in situ dating of monazite with the EMP (Cocherie and Albarede, 2001), a focussed  
184 beam was used with 150 nA beam current, and 20 kV acceleration voltage. The detailed analytical  
185 procedure is fully described in Massonne et al. (2018). Estimation of the garnet core (and garnet  
186 mantle) volume respect to the corresponding garnet crystal was obtained from the EMP X-ray maps  
187 by the free image-analyses software Scion Image.

188 Mineral structural formulae and mineral molar fractions of the solid-solution components were  
189 calculated with CALCMIN (Brandelik, 2009). Determination of modal contents from X-ray maps  
190 were performed with the public domain image processing and analysis software Scion Image  
191 (version Beta 4.0.2).

192 P-T pseudosections were calculated in the system  $\text{SiO}_2\text{--TiO}_2\text{--Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{--FeO--MgO--CaO--MnO--}$   
193  $\text{Na}_2\text{O--K}_2\text{O}$  with the internally consistent thermodynamic dataset of Holland and Powell (1998),  
194 upgraded in 2011, using the 2019 version of *Perple\_X* software package (Connolly, 2009).

195 Isomodes and compositional isopleths were calculated by Werami. All Fe was assumed to be  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ ,  
196 because  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ -bearing oxides are absent in the studied samples and the  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  contents in the main  
197 minerals (garnet, chlorite, chloritoid, white mica) are negligible. The calculation was done in the P-  
198 T range of 0.3–2.1 GPa and 400–650 °C with water in excess. Solution models used in the P-T  
199 pseudosection calculation were those of White et al. (2014) for garnet, biotite, white mica,  
200 staurolite, chloritoid, ilmenite and Benisek et al. (2010a,b) for plagioclase feldspar. For cordierite  
201 the ideal solid-solution model hCrd was used whereas the model by Holland et al. (1998) for  
202 chlorite was used in order to obtain P–T stability fields comparable to those by Gaidies et al.  
203 (2008), mainly in the low P–T boundary of the garnet-forming reaction.

204

## 205 **Petrography**

206 The studied micaschist sample is a silver-coloured strongly foliated rock with mylonitic fabric  
207 characterized by the occurrence of reddish to brownish garnet poikiloblasts up to 1 cm in size and  
208 yellowish staurolite porphyroblasts (Fig. 2b). At the micro scale, a centimeter-thick alternation of  
209 light-coloured, quartzo-feldspathic layers with darker layers rich in mica and mafic minerals is  
210 observed (Fig. 2b). Centimetric garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts (Fig. 3a,b,c) and plagioclase  
211 crystals (Fig. 3d) are enveloped by the main S2 schistosity which is mainly identified by the  
212 orientation of white mica and chlorite in phyllosilicate-rich layers and by the compositional  
213 alternance between quartzo-feldspathic and micaceous layers. Although the size, distribution, and  
214 modal abundance of garnet, micas and staurolite are strongly variable among the different samples  
215 and even among the different layers and/or microdomains of the same sample, the microscopic  
216 investigation on thin sections of about one dozen samples reveals that the schist is mainly composed  
217 (on average) of plagioclase (10 vol%), quartz (25 vol%), garnet (15 vol%), biotite (10 vol%),  
218 staurolite (up to a maximum of 10 vol%), muscovite (30 vol.%), chloritoid and chlorite. Ilmenite,  
219 rutile, corundum, zircon, monazite, paragonite, margarite, apatite and tourmaline occur as accessory  
220 phases in the rock matrix and/or as inclusions inside the above mentioned porphyroblasts.  
221 Within the rock matrix a faint S1 foliation is sometimes preserved by the elongation of micas and  
222 chlorite in mica-rich microlithons. Inside the garnet porphyroblasts, straight to gently curved, pre-  
223 D2 relict foliation(s) is identified by the iso-orientation of several submicroscopic quartz  
224 microinclusions sometimes arranged into a sigmoidal pattern suggesting rotation of the  
225 porphyroblast during its growth (see Fig. 3a,e). Poorly-defined pre-D2 relic foliation is finally  
226 identified by a very weak iso-orientation of muscovite flakes inside plagioclase crystals (see dotted  
227 line in Fig. 3d). The garnet porphyroblasts are rounded or, less frequently, slightly elongated (Fig.  
228 3a,e,f). The garnet core domain contains several small inclusions of quartz, rutile, apatite, sporadic  
229 monazite and zircon, and trace amounts of chlorite. As already mentioned, these inclusions are  
230 arranged as curved inclusion trails often following an oriented spiral-shaped and/or sigmoidal  
231 arrangement (snowball garnet) and recording an earlier S1 schistosity preserved inside the garnet  
232 (Fig. 3e). Rutile inclusions in the garnet core are sporadically associated to (and/or partially  
233 replaced by) ilmenite. Rutile replacement by ilmenite is observed also in the rock matrix. Additional  
234 inclusions, that were observed only in the garnet rim domain, are ilmenite and chloritoid (Fig. 3f,g),  
235 and subordinate staurolite and muscovite. Worthy of note, is the absence of rutile inclusions outside  
236 from the garnet core. The few quartz inclusions observed in the rim domain are significantly bigger  
237 than the several ones that are found in the garnet core (Fig. 3f). Garnet porphyroblasts are often

238 flanked by strain shadows filled with medium-grained quartz and chlorite or with a fine-grained  
239 intergrowth of quartz, phyllosilicates (muscovite and chlorite) and opaques. The staurolite  
240 porphyroblasts (up to 0.5cm in length) contain rounded quartz inclusions, euhedral tourmaline  
241 inclusions, elongated and oriented ilmenite microcrystals and very small, subordinate monazite and  
242 zircon (Fig. 3h). In some samples, several small garnets up to 0.4-0.5mm in size are included in  
243 staurolite. These porphyroblasts appear strongly fractured, surrounded by chlorite and/or  
244 characterized by chlorite overgrowth along veins and fractures. Similarly to what observed for  
245 garnet, the staurolite porphyroblasts are also bordered by strain shadows filled by chlorite, white  
246 mica and/or quartz.

247 Chloritoid, which can be sporadically associated with paragonite, margarite or corundum trace  
248 amounts (Fig. 3g), was only found as inclusions (<1mm in length) in garnet. Corundum, in the  
249 aforementioned occurrence, can be observed at the chloritoid/garnet interface.

250 Muscovite is the main constituent, together with chlorite and biotite (in order of decreasing  
251 abundance) of the phyllosilicate-rich rock portion. An earlier generation of potassic white mica was  
252 also found as small inclusions armoured inside garnet and plagioclase, whereas paragonite was only  
253 observed growing at the expense of chloritoid in garnet.

254 Tourmaline, which mostly occurs in single crystals up to half a millimeter in size is compositionally  
255 zoned and contains very small monazite, quartz and ilmenite microinclusions.

256 The mineral assemblage and metamorphic evolution scheme based on the microstructural  
257 relationships above described, with special reference to garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts, their  
258 mineral inclusions, and surrounding S2 matrix, are summarized in Fig. 4.

259

## 260 **Mineral chemistry**

261 Representative microprobe analyses of garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts, together with analyses  
262 of matrix feldspar, biotite, white mica, chlorite, and inclusions of chloritoid and ilmenite from two  
263 selected samples of the micaschist from the southern side of the PASZ are given in Table 1.

264 Mg, Ca, Mn, Fe and Y compositional X-ray maps of two selected garnet porphyroblasts from the  
265 two samples are shown in Figs. 5 and S1 of Supplementary Material, respectively, whereas core–  
266 rim compositional profiles across the garnets in terms of molar fractions of grossular, pyrope,  
267 almandine and spessartine components are reported in Fig. 6. The EMP X-ray mapping and rim–  
268 core–rim garnet compositional profiles reveal a well-defined zoning of the garnet components  
269 characterized by four compositional domains (core, mantle, rim, outer rim).

270 The composition of the large garnets core is Ca- and Mn-rich ( $\text{Alm}_{45-50}\text{Grs}_{21-27}\text{Prp}_{<2}\text{Sps}_{25-30}$ ) and  
271 differ significantly from the iron-rich compositions of the surrounding shells. A significant decrease



272 in grossular and spessartine contents are observed towards the mantle ( $\text{Alm}_{60-80}\text{Grs}_{10-20}\text{Prp}_{2-5}\text{Sps}_{10-}$   
273  $20$ ). The inner and outer rim are  $\text{Alm}_{80-85}\text{Grs}_{6-10}\text{Prp}_{5-7}\text{Sps}_{1-5}$  and  $\text{Alm}_{>85}\text{Grs}_{<5}\text{Prp}_{>8}\text{Sps}_{<1}$ , respectively.  
274 Additionally, a systematic decrease of titanium content has been observed from garnet core ( $\text{TiO}_2$   
275  $0.1-0.2$  wt.%) to rim ( $0.04-0.08$  wt.%). X-Ray mapping of Yttrium (Fig. S1) shows a discontinuity  
276 of this element corresponding to the mantle/rim interface of the garnet.  
277 Staurolite porphyroblasts show a very slight compositional zoning. They show  $X_{\text{Mg}}$  ratio of  $0.14-$   
278  $0.13$  in the core and  $0.11-0.10$  in the rim. Ti and Mn contents in staurolite is  $\sim 0.1$  and  $0.02-0.05$   
279 apfu, respectively. Staurolite porphyroblasts and staurolite inclusions in garnet rim show the same  
280 composition. Chloritoid shows  $X_{\text{Mg}}$  ratio of  $0.12-0.13$ . The isolated plagioclase single crystals  
281 found in the rock matrix are unzoned oligoclase, with their composition mostly in the range Ab:  $80-$   
282  $90$  mol.%. Biotite in the matrix has  $X_{\text{Mg}}$  ratio of  $0.44-0.46$ , similar to  $X_{\text{Mg}}$  ratio in matrix chlorite  
283 which is  $\sim 0.4$ . Chlorite growing on veins and fractures of staurolite shows similar  $X_{\text{Mg}}$  value ( $0.4$ ).  
284 K-white mica was analyzed in garnet inclusions and in the rock matrix, the latter being aligned to  
285 the S2 schistosity. Considering all mica analyses, a wide range of variability for Si from  $6.10$  to  
286  $6.38$  apfu (Fig. 7) was observed, with  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ , Mg, and Na contents in the ranges  $0.08-0.23$ ,  $0.05-0.22$   
287 and  $0.1-0.8$  apfu, respectively. A slight increase of Fe, Mg, and significant decrease of Na is  
288 observed with rising Si content (Fig. 7). A more restricted range of compositions was observed in  
289 muscovite inside the garnet porphyroblasts which are on average, characterized by highest Si, Mg,  
290 Fe and lowest Na contents (Si  $6.3-6.38$ , Fe  $0.17-0.27$ , Mg  $0.05-0.15$ , Na  $0.09-0.25$  apfu) as  
291 compared to muscovite from the rock matrix (compare full and empty symbols in Fig. 7).  
292 Muscovite in garnet has  $X_{\text{Mg}}$   $0.31-0.38$  whereas muscovite from matrix has  $X_{\text{Mg}}$   $0.41-0.44$  (Table  
293 1).  
294 Paragonite shows  $X_{\text{Mg}}$  close to  $0.15$  and Na of about  $1$  apfu. Ilmenite enclosed in staurolite shows  
295 lower MnO content ( $< 1.5$  wt.%) as compared to ilmenite from the matrix which usually contains  
296 more than  $2.0$  wt.% MnO. Ilmenite inclusions in garnet show decreasing manganese content from  
297 core (Mn  $0.06$  apfu) to rim ( $0.02$ ) of the garnet.  
298 Compositionally zoned tourmaline crystals (up to  $500-600$   $\mu\text{m}$  in size) show a systematic decrease  
299 of iron counterbalanced by increasing magnesium from their core to the rim. The tourmaline rim  
300 generally does not exceed  $200$   $\mu\text{m}$  in thickness.

301

### 302 **Pressure and temperature evolution**

303 The P-T pseudosection for sample FZ13 shown in Fig. 8a is dominated by quadri- and tri-variant  
304 fields with pentavariant fields mostly confined at HP-HT conditions and some minor divariant  
305 fields at low T- high P conditions. Two white mica (potassic and sodic) occur almost in the entire

306 investigated P–T range, with the exception of potassic white mica that disappears in correspondence  
307 of the biotite entry. Garnet, probably overstabilized by the MnO component, is present in the  
308 mineral assemblage of almost all the multivariant fields modelled by the calculation, with the  
309 exception of the small P–T fields at the lower left corner of the P-T pseudosection. Lawsonite is  
310 modelled at  $T < 500$  °C and  $P > 1.1$  GPa, whereas chloritoid is predicted in the middle, upper part of  
311 the equilibrium assemblage diagram, mostly together with chlorite and/or lawsonite. Biotite occurs  
312 at  $T > 550$  °C and  $P < 1$  GPa. Albite/plagioclase (depending on temperature) are stable at P not  
313 higher than 0.8 GPa. The compositional isopleths for garnet and white mica calculated with Werami  
314 are given in Fig. 8b-f. A second P–T pseudosection calculated for micaschist sample FD3X, and the  
315 corresponding compositional isopleths for garnet and white mica are shown in Fig. S2 of  
316 Supplementary Material. Boundaries of the stability P-T fields for the most relevant mineral phases  
317 (garnet, chloritoid, lawsonite, staurolite, biotite, rutile, ilmenite) and compositional isopleths for  
318  $X_{Mg}$  ratio in chloritoid are shown, for both the above mentioned samples, in Fig. S3 of  
319 Supplementary Material.

320

### 321 *Rutile thermometry*

322 Chemical analyses of oxides (including  $ZrO_2$ ) were determined by EMP on in-situ rutile grains on  
323 the petrographic thin section of the selected micaschist sample FZ13. This analytical strategy  
324 allowed us to discriminate directly during the analytical run rutile in the rock matrix from rutile  
325 included in the core domain of the garnet. Rutiles preserved in the core domain of the garnet have  
326 detectable  $ZrO_2$  concentrations suitable for temperature estimates.

327 The temperatures estimated from the Zr-in-rutile thermometer applied to thirtyfive analyses of rutile  
328 grains included in the cores of garnet crystals from sample FZ13 are reported in Table S1 of the  
329 Supplementary Material together with the  $ZrO_2$  concentrations of each single analytical spot. The  
330 pressure that was considered for the calculation of the calibration by Tomkins et al. (2007) was 0.9  
331 GPa. This calibration in fact considers, unlike those by Watson et al. (2006) and Zack et al. (2004),  
332 a slight pressure dependence of the thermometer.

333 The rutile temperatures estimated for 0.9 GPa by the Tomkins et al. (2007) calibration in sample  
334 FZ13 are in the 528–614 °C range with an average value of 577 °C, whereas those estimated with  
335 the Kohn (2020) calibration yielded a slightly lower temperature range of 478–573 °C (average:  
336 531 °C) (Table S1 and histograms in Fig. S4 of Supplementary Material). The estimated error is  
337 ~30 °C (Tomkins et al., 2007) and minimum uncertainty  $\pm 25$  °C (Kohn, 2020). The other two, not  
338 pressure-dependent, calibrations of the Zr-in-rutile thermometer gave: 498–665 °C, average: 594 °C

339 (Zack et al., 2004) and 520–609 °C, average: 570 °C (Ferry and Watson, 2007). The rutile grains  
340 from the rock matrix yielded ZrO<sub>2</sub> concentration below detection limit.

341

#### 342 *Calculation results and P–T path*

343 For the P–T path reconstruction we considered the zoned garnet composition from core to rim.  
344 The whole-rock composition, obtained by XRF analyses and corrected for apatite, was used to  
345 calculate the P–T pseudosections in order to decipher the P–T conditions of garnet core formation  
346 (Table 2). For the growth of garnet rim, an effective bulk composition (EBC1, Table 2) was  
347 obtained by subtracting garnet core + mantle composition after determining the garnet mode in the  
348 rock (15%) and the volume of garnet core (30%) + mantle (40%) with respect to the total garnet.  
349 The P–T pseudosections shown in Figs. 8, S2 were contoured with Werami by isopleths for molar  
350 fractions of garnet components (Ca, Fe, Mn; see Fig. 8b-d) and modal contents of garnet (in vol.%,  
351 Fig. 8e).

352 The metamorphic assemblage preserved in the garnet core of the studied schists (garnet +  
353 muscovite + quartz + rutile) does not allow to constrain a sufficiently narrow area in the P–T  
354 pseudosection. However, the garnet isopleths representing the composition of garnet core (i.e. the  
355 composition with the highest Mn considered to be the earliest grown garnet: Grs<sub>0.26</sub>Alm<sub>0.45</sub>Sp<sub>0.28</sub> in  
356 garnet from sample FZ13, see Table 1) intersect in the field Grt + Ms + Pg + Cld + Chl + Lws + Qz  
357 + Rt indicating P–T conditions in the range 430–480 °C/1.4 GPa in sample FZ13 (Fig. 9a) and  
358 suggest similar P–T conditions in sample FD3X (Fig. 9c). The garnet isopleths are intersected by  
359 those representing the highest Si contents in K-white mica included in garnet (6.30–6.38 apfu, see  
360 Table 1), at 1.5/1.7 GPa (sample FZ13, Fig. 9a) and 1.5 GPa (sample FD3X, Fig. 9c). P–T  
361 pseudosection modeling predicts lawsonite content lower than 2.5 vol.% (in modal amount) and  
362 chloritoid not higher than 10 vol.% at the above mentioned P–T conditions.

363 The grossular and spessartine components of garnet in the studied samples progressively decrease,  
364 whereas the almandine and pyrope components increase from the garnet core to the outer rim (see  
365 Table 1 and Fig. 5). This compositional zoning was already observed in similar rock samples from  
366 the garnet-zone of NE Sardinia investigated by Cruciani et al. (2013). According to the garnet  
367 compositional isopleths shown in Figs. 8, S2, the decrease in spessartine and increase in almandine  
368 components point to an increase of temperature from the core to the rim of the garnet. Following the  
369 same approach, but using the above mentioned fractionated effective bulk composition (Table 2),  
370 the rim composition of the same garnet was used to define the P–T conditions of rim formation.  
371 Garnet isopleths representing the composition of garnet rim (Grs<sub>0.02</sub>Alm<sub>0.85</sub>Sp<sub>0.01</sub>Prp<sub>0.12</sub>) intersect  
372 with the isopleths representing the lowest Si contents in K-white mica from matrix (6.1 apfu, Table

373 1) and with the  $X_{Mg}$  of staurolite (0.14) in the field Grt + Ms + Pg + St + Chl + Rt/Ilm, suggesting  
374 P–T conditions in the range 560–620 °C/0.65–1.1 GPa in sample FZ13 (Fig. 9a) and 590–630  
375 °C/0.7–1.05 GPa in sample FD3X (Fig. 9c) for the outer rim of garnet.

376 The approach explained above allowed us to define two ellipses representing P–T conditions for  
377 garnet core and garnet rim formation, respectively, for the two investigated samples (Fig. 9a,c).  
378 However, the strong garnet zoning revealed by the X-ray maps shown in Fig. 5, provides the  
379 possibility to reconstruct and draw a more complete P-T path by using the Compositional Zoning in  
380 Garnet and its Modification by diffusion (CZGM) software by Faryad and Ježek (2019). This  
381 software allows to compare the initial profiles of the garnet components, along any P-T trajectory  
382 that can be drawn in the P-T space of interest, with the observed garnet profiles measured by the  
383 EMP (Faryad and Ježek, 2019; Kulhánek et al., 2021). For this purpose in Matlab (version R2020b)  
384 the *make\_path* function of CZGM was used to draw in the P-T space 400-650 °C/0.3-2.1 GPa the  
385 modelled P-T trajectories that give the best fit with the measured garnet profiles, considering the  
386 profile of each garnet component ( $X_{Fe}$ ,  $X_{Mg}$ ,  $X_{Ca}$  and  $X_{Mn}$  in Fig. 9b,d). To define the position,  
387 where garnet started to grow along the selected PT path garnet\_no=30 was selected when running  
388 the *make\_garnet* CZGM function. A good fit between the measured and initial garnet profiles is  
389 obtained only modeling two different stages of the P-T path for the core and rim profiles,  
390 separately. The garnet core + mantle prograde growth occurred along stage (a) of the P-T path  
391 shown in Fig. 9 whereas the rim growth occurred mainly along stage (b), which was calculated after  
392 fractionation of the core + mantle (bulk minus core & mantle in Table 2). The comparison between  
393 the calculated initial profiles along P-T path stages (a) and (b) with the profile measured in the  
394 garnet core and mantle and with that of garnet rim, respectively, are given in Fig. 10a,b and c,d. The  
395 fit is fairly good in terms of concentrations and trend of the garnet components, in particular for the  
396 inner part of the garnet. Slightly lower almandine content in the initial profile respect to the  
397 measured spots in garnet rim could be tentatively related to the entry of staurolite or to the  
398 breakdown of chloritoid coeval with rim growth.

399 At the end of the P-T path, approximately below 1 GPa, the P–T path becomes tangential to the  
400 garnet isomodes, implying that new garnet cannot form. The two separate stages of the P-T path  
401 imply that the external part of the garnet core possibly underwent partial resorption (dashed line in  
402 Fig. 9) at the onset of exhumation, as described by Faryad et al. (2019) for garnets from Papua New  
403 Guinea.

404 In summary, the grossular decrease and almandine increase from garnet core (Grs ~25; Alm ~ 50)  
405 to mantle (Grs ~15; Alm > 60) is compatible with a prograde segment of the P-T path from garnet  
406 core formation at 430–490 °C/1.4 GPa to pressure peak at 1.7 GPa. The subsequent, even stronger,

407 increase in almandine ( $\text{Alm} > 80$ ) and abrupt decrease in spessartine ( $\sim 1$ ) and grossular ( $< 5$ ) in the  
408 rim fit with temperature increase, accompanied by pressure decrease, up to the metamorphic peak in  
409 the staurolite + biotite field close to 600 °C. The resulting P-T path is clockwise with peak pressure  
410 diachronous with respect to the peak of metamorphism.

411

#### 412 *Dating results of monazite*

413 Monazite was analyzed in micaschist sample FZ13, where nineteen grains, ten from the rock matrix  
414 and nine preserved as inclusions in garnet rim, staurolite, and tourmaline, were analyzed directly on  
415 thin sections (Table 3). Monazites are small, rounded and/or anhedral grains with maximum size of  
416 50–60  $\mu\text{m}$ . The analyzed monazite systematically contains low  $\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3$  (0.01 to 0.30 wt.%), which is  
417 by far lower than the 2 wt.%  $\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3$  content indicated by Massonne et al. (2018) for monazite that  
418 formed before garnet. Additionally, compositional X-ray maps, show that, at least in a few selected  
419 monazite grains in the matrix, the U and Th content increases from the centre to the periphery of the  
420 crystals, so that a discontinuous, and very thin, U- and Th-enriched rim that surrounds a more wide  
421 homogeneous nucleus can be observed. However, the thickness of the discontinuous rim (only a  
422 very few microns in size) is not enough to be analyzed. For this reason, in all monazite grains,  
423 including those with the discontinuous rim, we analyzed by a single spot size the middle,  
424 homogeneous nucleus of the monazite. The monazite age results are reported in Table 3 and are  
425 plotted versus the different textural position of the analyzed grains in Fig. S5 of Supplementary  
426 Material.

427 The monazite in situ dating yielded ages comprised between 417 and 322 Ma (average 377 Ma) for  
428 monazite inclusions in garnet rim, staurolite, tourmaline and 402–330 Ma (average 357 Ma) for  
429 monazite in the rock matrix.

430 The older analyzed monazite grains correspond to small crystals included inside the garnet or in  
431 tourmaline. The monazite in garnet aged 346 Ma (grain n. 10 in Table 3), i.e. younger than the other  
432 included monazites, probably suffered from its textural position, which were in proximity of a  
433 garnet fracture.

434 The six grains that yielded an age older than 390 Ma are characterized by Th/U ratio  $< 8$ , with four  
435 grains out of these six with Th/U lower than 6. Their  $\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3$  content is comprised between 0.04 and  
436 0.15 wt.%. The younger monazite ages correspond to grains from the rock matrix, with the only  
437 exception of grain n. 8 aged 402 Ma (Table 3), which possibly reflects an inherited old monazite  
438 portion. The two younger grains (330 and 322 Ma), which correspond to monazite in the rock  
439 matrix, yielded higher Th/U ratios of 8.1 and 8.8, and  $\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3$  0.16 and 0.15 wt.%, respectively. All  
440 the remaining monazite grains, with ages comprised between 388–346 Ma, show Th/U ratios in the

441 5-12 range.  $1\sigma$  age error for monazite from the matrix is mostly comprised between 16 and 20, and,  
442 on average, slightly higher (17–28) for monazite included in other mineral phases.

## 443 **Discussion**

444 The clockwise P-T path obtained in this paper consists of a prograde segment which, after the peak  
445 pressure is followed by an increase in temperature of about 100 °C (from 500 to 600 °C) up to the  
446 peak metamorphism in the staurolite field. The temperature increase is accompanied by a significant  
447 pressure decrease of at least 1.0 GPa (from 1.7 to 0.7 GPa). P–T paths with diachronous pressure  
448 and temperature peaks were already known in the Variscan chain of Sardinia since Franceschelli et  
449 al. (1989). Although the areal extent of HP metamorphism in Sardinia has to be further investigated,  
450 this P-T trajectory is compatible with an HP stage, eventually in a subduction regime, of the studied  
451 mylonitic schist before the Barrovian-type metamorphism.

452 On the basis of the new data the following schematic tectono-metamorphic history can be proposed:  
453 - convergence between Gondwana and Armorica and subduction of the oceanic lithosphere below  
454 Armorica continent. In this stage oceanic lithosphere recorded conditions of HP–LT (e.g. P 0.9-1.4  
455 GPa and T 530–590 °C in the boudins of metabasites in the Posada Valley shown in Fig. 1; Scodina  
456 et al., 2021) (yellow asterisk in Fig. 11a);  
457 - collision and HP–LT metamorphic conditions recorded in the more distal part of the continental  
458 lithosphere (pressure peak at 1.7–1.8 GPa ) probably coeval with the development of D1  
459 deformation (red asterisk in Fig. 11b). At the same time metamorphosed oceanic crust is exhumed  
460 during D1 deformation event and thrust above the subducting continental crust. In this way we  
461 can explain the occurrence of boudins of metabasites recording similar peak P values of the hosting  
462 rocks in the Posada Valley. The suture rocks are tectonically dismembered and transported far to the  
463 South (Schneider et al., 2014) and deformed by the following deformation events.  
464 Late D1 exhumation of the HGMC starts by activation of NW–SE striking and top-to-the N–NW  
465 sinistral shear zones with a major dip-slip component of movement (PASZ in northern-central  
466 Sardinia; Frassi et al., 2009; Carosi et al., 2012). This caused the tectonic repetition of the  
467 metamorphic sequence and the building up of the nappe pile by oblique thrusting of the HGMC  
468 onto the L-MGMC;  
469 - after the pressure peak, regional Barrovian metamorphism in an exhumation setting (Carosi and  
470 Palmeri, 2002; Cruciani et al., 2013) led to porphyroblast growth (garnet rim, staurolite) with T  
471 increasing towards the NE (Franceschelli et al., 1989; Ricci et al., 2004) up to peak metamorphism  
472 (570 °C/0.8-0.9 GPa) in a transpressional regime during the development of the D2 event. A

476 possible reason for heating after the peak pressure (Cruciani et al., 2015a,b) could be the thermal  
477 flow related to slab break-off (Faryad and Cuthbert, 2020) also responsible for the production of  
478 Mg–K igneous suite, as in the Bohemian Massif and in Corsica (Janoušek and Holub, 2007; Casini  
479 et al., 2013).

480 - the peak metamorphism was followed by a mylonitic deformation which occurred along the PASZ  
481 which was active at ~325–300 Ma in a dextral, transpressive setting. The new monazite ages in the  
482 studied micaschist span between c.a. 420 and 320 Ma with a mean error around 21 Ma. The error is  
483 quite high and do not allow to precisely discriminate the tectonic events. However making a  
484 comparison with *in-situ* U-Th-Pb analyses of monazite in the same area by Carosi et al. (2020) we  
485 can better link the new P-T-t path and the tectonic setting.

486 Older ages, between 330 and 390 Ma, broadly fall within the expected age of the D1 deformation  
487 event characterized by increasing P and T (Di Vincenzo et al., 2004; Carosi et al., 2012). An age  
488 close to HP metamorphism in the metapelite may be constrained by the Ar/Ar age of ~340 Ma on  
489 phengitic white micas along the S1 foliation within albite porphyroblasts a dozen km south of the  
490 study outcrops (Di Vincenzo et al., 2004). The Ar/Ar age of ~340 Ma is in agreement with the  
491 timing of maximum thickening in the Internal Nappes and may approximate the white mica  
492 crystallization age during the D1 phase. However, it is possible that the phengitic white micas,  
493 partially re-equilibrated at upper crustal levels, do not represent the actual age of the HP  
494 metamorphism and could be a lower limit of the HP event. In this framework ages from 340/350 to  
495 390 could be broadly attributed to HP event. However, a reasonable lower limit of deformation and  
496 metamorphism is constrained by the occurrence of Middle Devonian conodonts in the marbles of  
497 the northernmost part of the Internal Nappes (Di Vincenzo et al., 2004). Older ages up to 420 Ma  
498 can be interpreted as inherited ages.

499 Younger monazite ages around 330 and 320 Ma, detected in the rock matrix, are characterized by a  
500 slight increase of Y with respect to older monazite ages. This is in full agreement with the U/Pb and  
501 U/Th ages of 330–315 Ma of monazite from samples very close to the study ones, where the  
502 structural position of the grains (within staurolite rims and along the S2 mylonitic foliation) and the  
503 chemical composition of the dated domains showing high-Y rims, allow to attribute these ages to  
504 dextral transpressional shearing (Carosi et al., 2020). Comparable ages detected in monazite rims  
505 characterized by high Y and low Th content were attributed to the exhumation of the mylonitic  
506 rocks by dextral transpression along the PASZ (Carosi et al., 2012, 2020).

507 Transpressional deformation continued at upper crustal levels with decreasing temperature, starting  
508 from the amphibolite-facies (D2) down to the greenschist-facies (D3) as testified by syn-kinematic  
509 chlorite along S3 foliation and incipient subgrain rotation recrystallization superimposed to grain

510 boundary migration in quartz (Graziani et al., 2020). Microstructural data showed an evolution of  
511 the D2-D3 transpressional deformation from a pure shear towards a simple shear dominated  
512 transpression (Carosi et al., 2020; Graziani et al., 2020) in the time span 330/325 – 300 Ma.  
513 Our new data confirm that rocks affected by the PASZ underwent HP during the D1 collisional  
514 stage, as was already observed in HP micaschist and paragneiss cropping out near to Punta  
515 Gurturgius (see Fig. 1), ca. 10 km south from the studied area (Cruciani et al., 2013). The new  
516 calculated pressure values obtained in this paper pointed to 0.6 GPa higher values with respect to  
517 the pressure estimations up to now calculated in the literature for the PASZ (maximum P c.a. 1.1  
518 GPa, Carosi et al., 2020), implying a different shape and meaning of the P-T-t path. In the studied  
519 samples staurolite stability field is not reached during increasing P and T but during decompression  
520 and heating. Maximum P was reached during D1 collisional stage during the subduction of the  
521 continental crust. On the other hand staurolite grew after D1 deformation phase and mostly from  
522 pre- to syn-D2 dextral transpressional event along with syn-kinematic biotite and white mica  
523 (Carosi and Palmeri, 2002; Carosi et al., 2020). This marks an important link between P-T-t and D2  
524 dextral transpression allowing us to date this part of the P-T-t path at 325-300 Ma. Dextral  
525 transpression started after 330 Ma marked by the growth of staurolite during decompression from  
526 nearly 0.9 GPa. The first part of the exhumation (nearly 0.8 GPa) should be acquired before dextral  
527 transpression possibly by top-to-the SW shear zones with a dip-slip kinematics as highlighted in  
528 central-northern Sardinia where older down-dip shear zones were overprinted by younger dextral  
529 shear zones with a major strike-slip movement closely related to the PASZ (Carosi et al., 2009;  
530 Frassi et al., 2009). Steeply dipping top-to-the-S and SW shear zone should be efficient to quickly  
531 exhume HP rocks.

532 The observation that the pressure values recorded by the HP event decrease from north to south of  
533 the island suggests that continental crust slices were differently involved by the subduction during  
534 the orogenic event. In this framework we confirm that Barrovian-type metamorphism cannot be  
535 longer regarded as the main prograde metamorphism affecting NE Sardinia (Cruciani et al., 2013a).  
536 The occurrence of HP metamorphism in the studied metapelites in the PASZ suggests that the  
537 occurrence of HP rocks is not sporadic or limited to small slices or boudins of continental crust but  
538 possibly affected all the MGMC up to now regarded as a classical example of prograde Barrovian  
539 metamorphism in Sardinia.

540

#### 541 **Concluding remarks**

542 The studied micaschist samples allowed to shed some light on the following points:



543 - the garnet core composition together with the occurrence of chloritoid and high Si-muscovite in  
544 garnet reveal high – pressure conditions pre-dating the Barrovian metamorphism.  
545 - the clockwise P-T path shows a prograde segment reaching peak pressure at about 1.7GPa. The  
546 temperature peak is reached later at about 600 °C, in the staurolite stability field. The P-T path is  
547 subdivided into two separate stages. The first stage records garnet core to mantle chemical zoning  
548 whereas the second reflects garnet rim growth.  
549 - The new monazite ages in the studied micaschist span between c.a. 420 and 320 Ma with a mean  
550 error around 21 Ma. HP metamorphism should be bracketed between 340/350-390, whereas older  
551 ages up to 420 Ma can be interpreted as inherited ages. Younger monazite ages around 330 and 320  
552 Ma, in the rock matrix, are attributed to dextral transpressional shearing.  
553 - The systematic finding of new HP rocks in northern Sardinia suggests that the Variscan belt  
554 setting is probably more complex than the simple prograde Barrovian sequence described so far.  
555

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562

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792

### 793 **Figure Captions**

794 **Fig. 1.** a) Tectonic sketch map of the Variscan chain of Sardinia (the arrow refers to the area shown  
795 in b); b) Simplified geological map of NE Sardinia metamorphic basement modified from Cruciani  
796 et al. (2020) and references therein. Sample location (red asterisk) is also shown. 1: recent (a) and  
797 Mesozoic (b) sediments; 2: Variscan granitoids, with felsic (c) and mafic (d) dikes; 3: Migmatite of  
798 the Sil+Ms/Sil+Kfs zones with retrogressed eclogite (e) and orthogneiss (f); 4: Micaschist and  
799 gneiss of the St+Bt/Ky+Bt zones, mylonite and amphibolite (g); 5: Granodioritic orthogneiss and  
800 augen gneiss; 6: Micaschist and paragneiss of the Grt+Ab/oligoclase zone; 7: Phyllite and  
801 metasandstone of the Bt zone; 8: Foliation; 9: Fold axes; 10: Fault.

802 **Fig. 2.** a) Silver-coloured mylonitic micaschist with garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts  
803 homogeneously distributed in the rock matrix; b) Thin section photo-scan of micaschist sample  
804 FZ13. Mineral abbreviations after Whitney and Evans (2010).

805 **Fig. 3.** Photomicrographs and BSE images showing the relevant microstructures of the studied  
806 micaschist from NE Sardinia. a) Snowball garnet with quartz microinclusions forming a sigmoidal



807 pattern; Sample FD3X; b) Staurolite wrapped by the S2 schistosity; Sample FD3X; c) Staurolite  
808 bordered by strain shadows filled by chlorite and muscovite. Sample FZ13; d) Plagioclase  
809 preserving a poorly-defined pre-D2 relic foliation (dotted white line) wrapped by the S2 schistosity.  
810 Sample FZ13; e) Microinclusions in a garnet porphyroblast showing a sigmoidal- to spiral-shaped  
811 arrangement of an earlier S1 schistosity preserved inside the garnet. Sample FD3X; f) Garnet with  
812 core and rim domains, distinguishable by the size and distribution of its microinclusions; quartz  
813 inclusions in the rim domain are bigger than those preserved in the core. Sample FZ13; g) Detail of  
814 chloritoid armoured in the rim of the garnet shown in Fig. 4b; h) Staurolite with quartz and ilmenite  
815 inclusions. Strain shadows at both sides of the crystal are filled by chlorite. Sample FZ13.

816 **Fig. 4.** Metamorphic evolution scheme inferred from microstructural relationships and mineral  
817 assemblages with special reference to garnet and staurolite porphyroblasts, mineral inclusions, and  
818 surrounding S2-oriented matrix. Wmca: white mica (including muscovite and paragonite).

819 **Fig. 5.** X-ray Mg, Ca, Mn and Fe concentration maps of garnet porphyroblasts. Warm colours refer  
820 to high concentrations, whereas cold colours refer to low concentrations. The garnet at the top  
821 (which is also recognizable in Fig. 3a) is from sample FZ13 whereas the garnet at the bottom is  
822 from sample FD3X. A-B trace in the Mn-map of garnet from FD3X shows the measuring points for  
823 the compositional profile shown in Fig. 7c.

824 **Fig. 6.** Chemical composition in terms of molar fraction of grossular (+ andradite) versus that of  
825 pyrope ( $X_{Mg}$ ) and spessartine ( $X_{Mn}$ ) for: a) the garnet shown in Fig. 5a (sample FZ13) and b) the  
826 garnet shown in Fig. 5b (sample FD3X); c) Rim-core-rim compositional profile across the A-B  
827 trace of garnet porphyroblast in Fig. 5b.

828 **Fig. 7.** EMP spot analyses of white mica from samples FZ13 and FD3X in terms of Si contents vs.  
829 those of Na, Fe, Mg and Ti cations.

830 **Fig. 8.** (a) P–T pseudosection in the NCKFMASH + Mn + Ti system calculated for the bulk  
831 composition of micaschist sample FZ13. A few small P–T fields are not assigned to a mineral  
832 assemblage; (b) Compositional isopleths for grossular ( $X_{Ca}$ ) component in garnet; (c)  
833 Compositional isopleths for almandine ( $X_{Fe}$ ) component; (d) Compositional isopleths for  
834 spessartine ( $X_{Mn}$ ) component; (e) Isomodes showing garnet content (vol.%); (f) Compositional  
835 isopleths showing Si content (apfu, based on 11 oxygens) and  $X_{Mg}$  ratio (red dotted line) in K-white  
836 mica.

837 **Fig. 9.** (a) and (b) Some selected compositional isopleths for garnet components, Si (apfu) content  
838 in muscovite, and  $X_{Mg}$  in chloritoid and staurolite for the P-T pseudosections shown in Fig. 8a for  
839 sample FZ13 and in Fig. S2a for sample FD3X. Intersecting red and blue lines refer to garnet core  
840 and rim compositions. Solid, dashed, and dotted lines refer to grossular, almandine and spessartine

841 components. (a) and (b) traces in the P-T path are the stages along the initial garnet profiles shown  
842 in Fig. 10 are calculated.

843 **Fig. 10.** Best fits between the measured (dots) and initial modelled profiles (colored lines) in garnet,  
844 calculated by CZGM software along the P-T traces (a) and (b) shown in Fig. 9 for samples FZ13  
845 and FD3X.

846 **Fig. 11.** Sketch of the proposed tectonic evolution of the Sardinian Variscides. a) Convergence  
847 between Gondwana and Armorica: subduction of the oceanic lithosphere where oceanic crust  
848 records HP-LT conditions; b) collision stage at c. 360–340 Ma; tectonic dismembering and  
849 transport to the South of the suture. Start of the D1 tectonic phase in the continental crust and  
850 exhumation of HP–LT oceanic crust slices by (late) D1 sinistral shearing. At the same time the  
851 more distal portions of the continental crust are underthrust reaching HP–LT conditions  
852 comparable with the ones recorded in the oceanic crust. Red asterisk: possible position of the study  
853 HP sample (this paper) in the continental crust; Yellow asterisk: possible position of the HP sample  
854 in the amphibolite derived from oceanic crust by Scodina et al. (2021).

855

## 856 **Table captions**

857 **Table 1** Representative electron microprobe analyses of garnet, feldspar, staurolite, micas, chlorite  
858 and chloritoid in samples FZ13 and FD3X.

859 **Table 2** Bulk–rock analyses (wt%) of samples FZ13 and FD3X determined by X-ray fluorescence  
860 (XRF) spectrometry and modified compositions for the calculation of P–T pseudosections (see text  
861 for explanation).

862 **Table 3** Representative compositions (wt%) and ages of monazite in micaschist sample FZ13. The  
863 structural formula was calculated based on four oxygen atoms.

864

## 865 **Supplementary material**

866 **Fig. S1.** X-ray yttrium concentration maps for the garnet porphyroblasts shown in Fig. 5. Colour  
867 coding as in Fig. 5. Yellow arrows shows the Yttrium concentration jump.

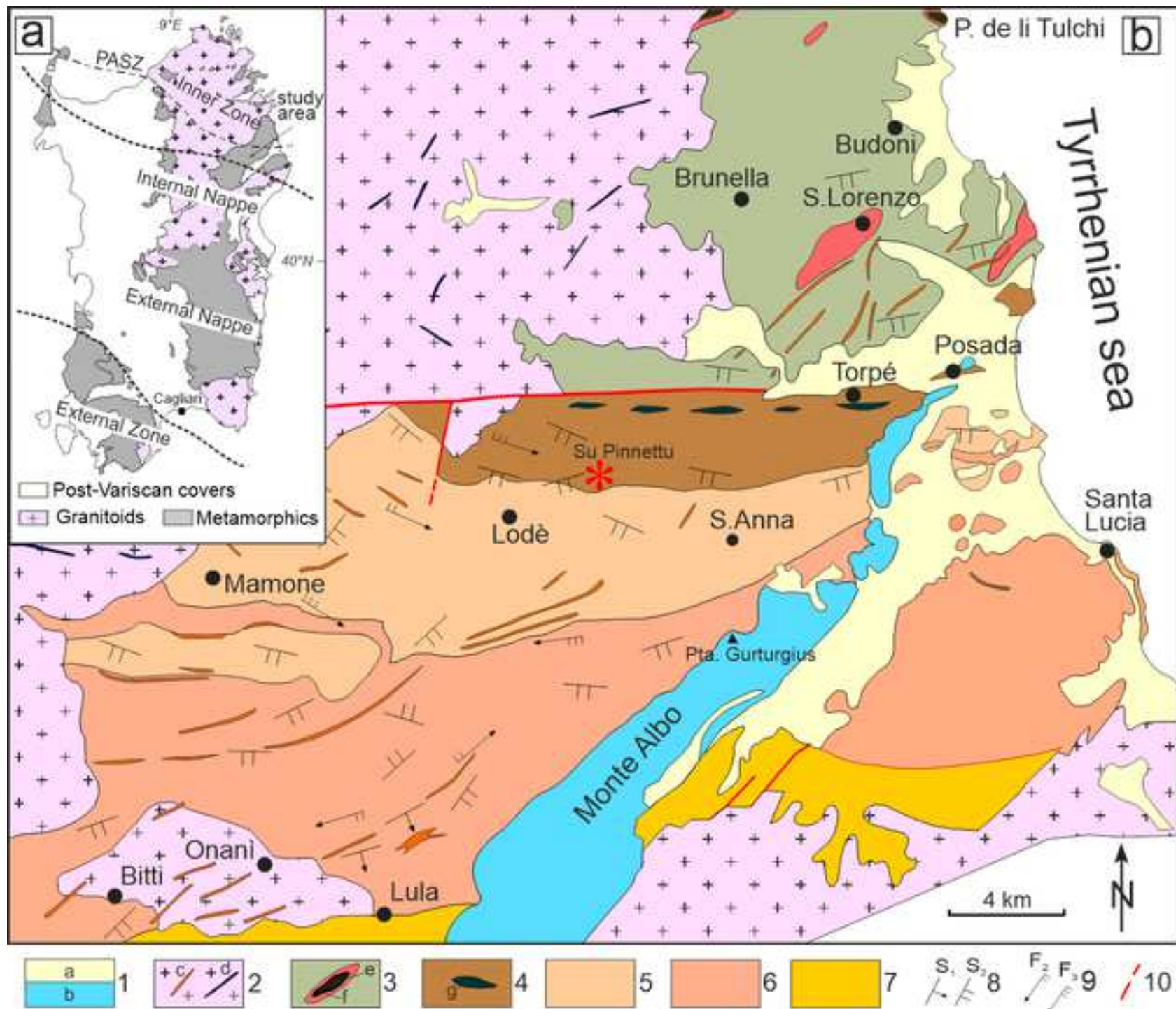
868 **Fig. S2.** (a) P–T pseudosection in the NCKFMASH + Mn + Ti system calculated for the bulk  
869 composition of micaschist sample FD3X. A few small P–T fields are not assigned to a mineral  
870 assemblage; (b) Compositional isopleths for grossular ( $X_{Ca}$ ) component in garnet; (c)  
871 Compositional isopleths for almandine ( $X_{Fe}$ ) component; (d) Compositional isopleths for  
872 spessartine ( $X_{Mn}$ ) component; (e) Isomodes showing garnet content (vol.%); (f) Compositional  
873 isopleths showing Si content (apfu, based on 11 oxygens) and  $X_{Mg}$  ratio (red dotted line) in K-white  
874 mica.

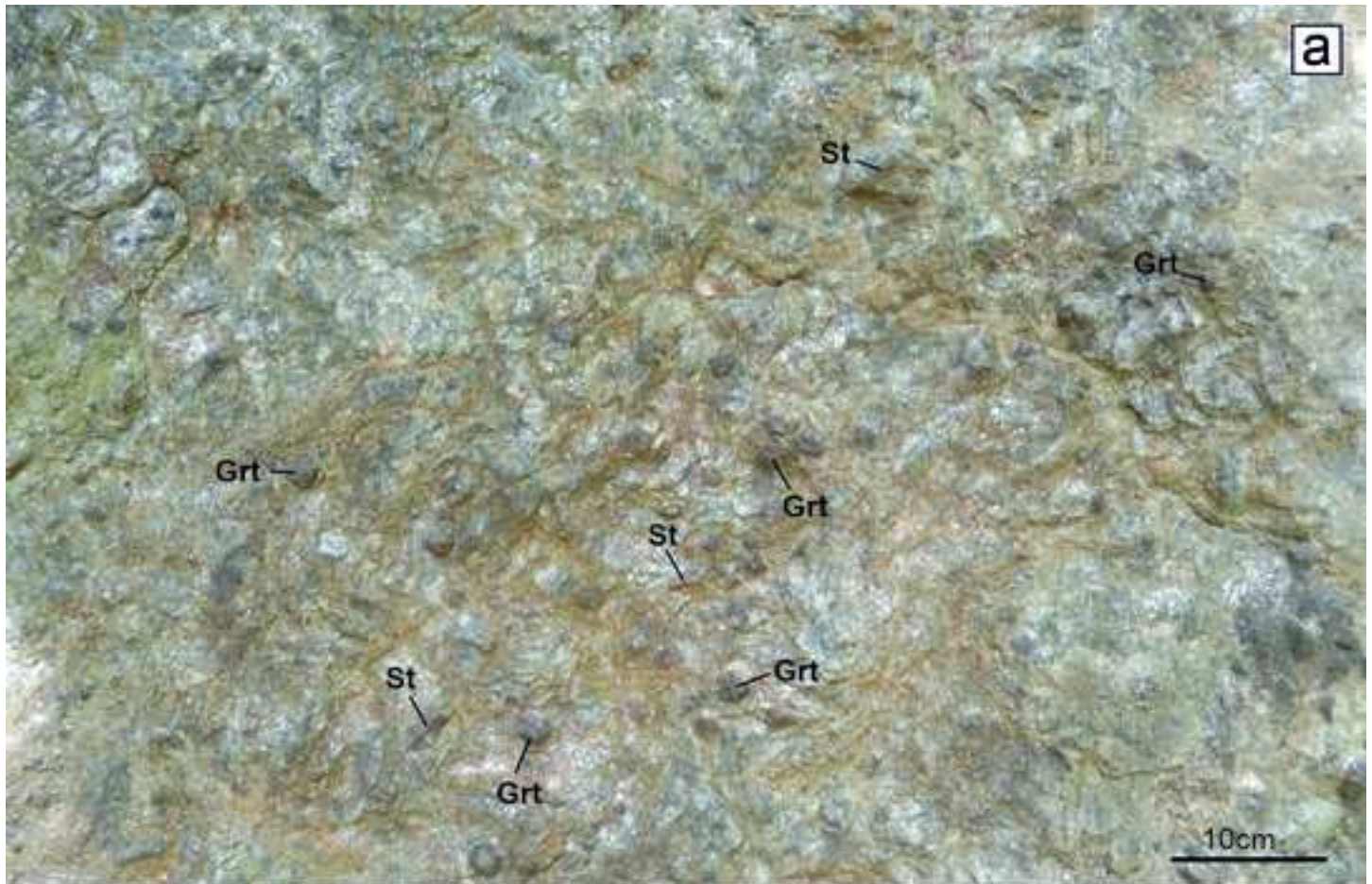
875 **Fig. S3.** Boundaries of the P-T stability fields for the most relevant mineral phases (garnet,  
876 chloritoid, lawsonite, staurolite, biotite, rutile, ilmenite) and compositional isopleths for  $X_{Mg}$  ratio in  
877 chloritoid of samples FZ13 and FD3X.

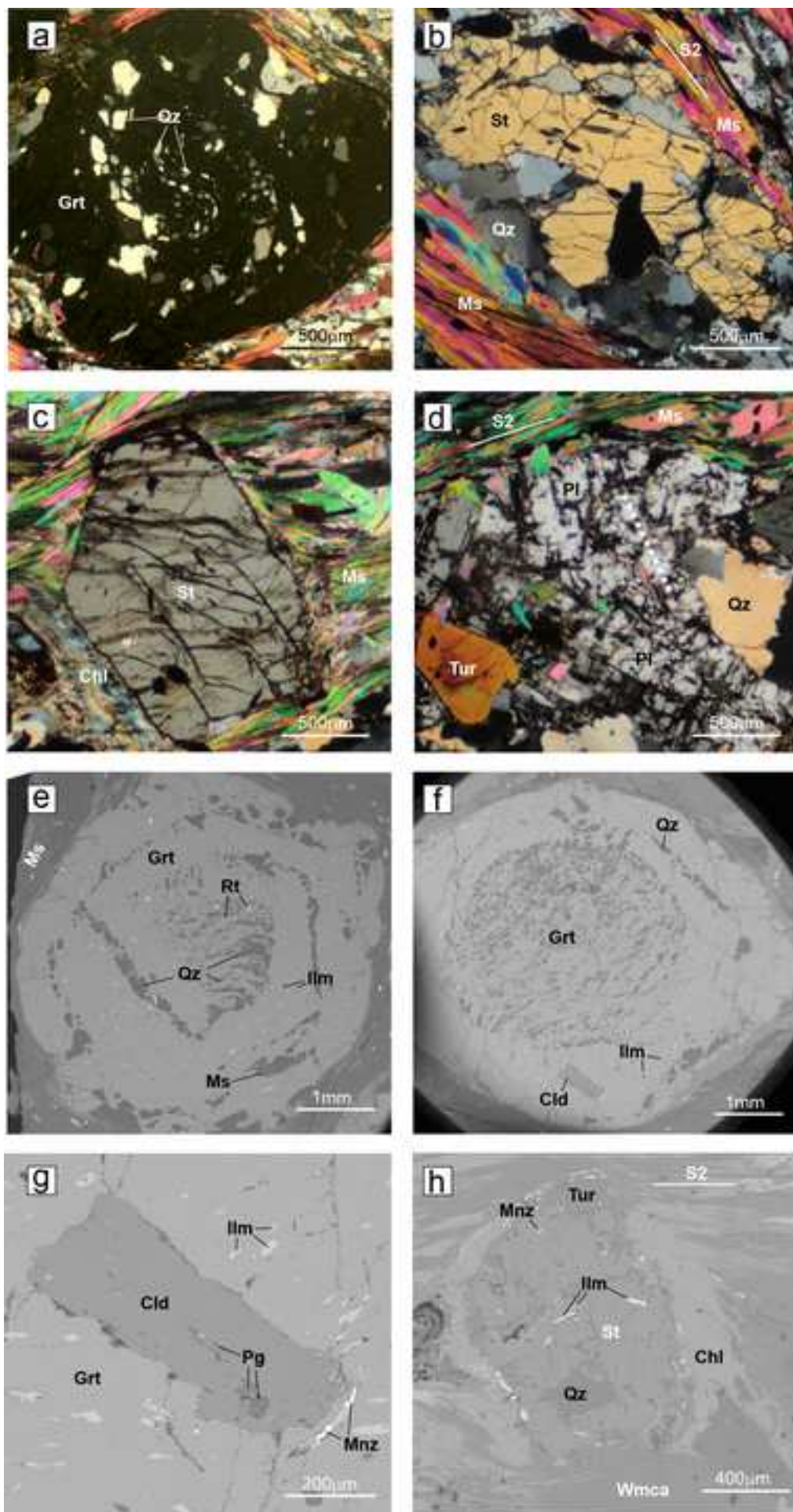
878 **Fig. S4.** Histograms showing results of the application of the Tomkins et al. (2007) and Kohn  
879 (2020) calibrations of the Zr-in-rutile geothermometer.

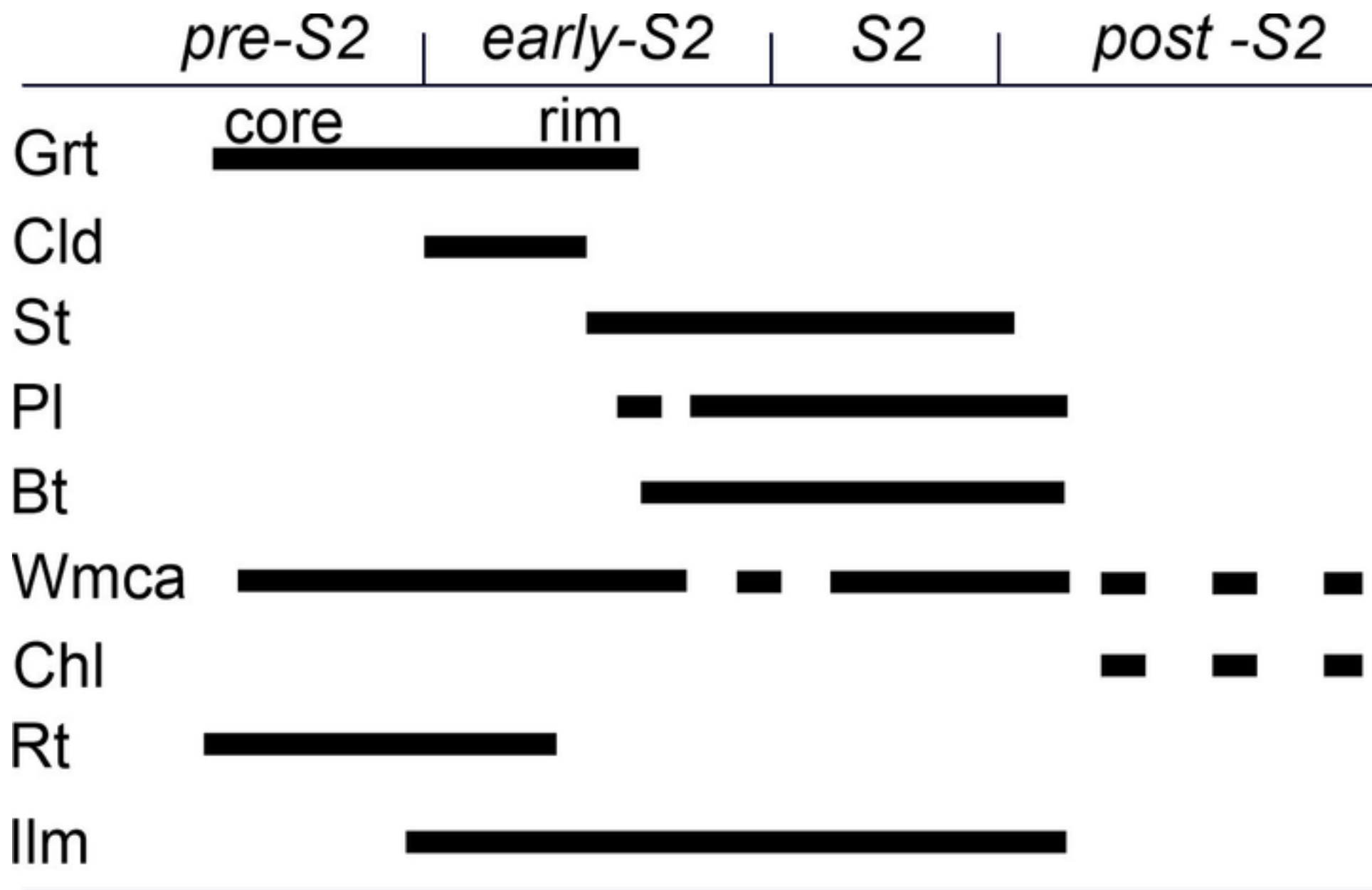
880 **Fig. S5.** Monazite ages (with error bars) plotted versus the different textural position of the  
881 analyzed grains. Synoptic table of tectonic and metamorphic events modified from Cruciani et al.  
882 (2015a) is also shown.

883 **Table S1** EMP chemical analyses of rutile included in garnet, micaschist sample FZ13.  $TiO_2$  was  
884 determined as difference from 100%. Temperatures based on Tomkins et al. (2007) and Kohn  
885 (2020).









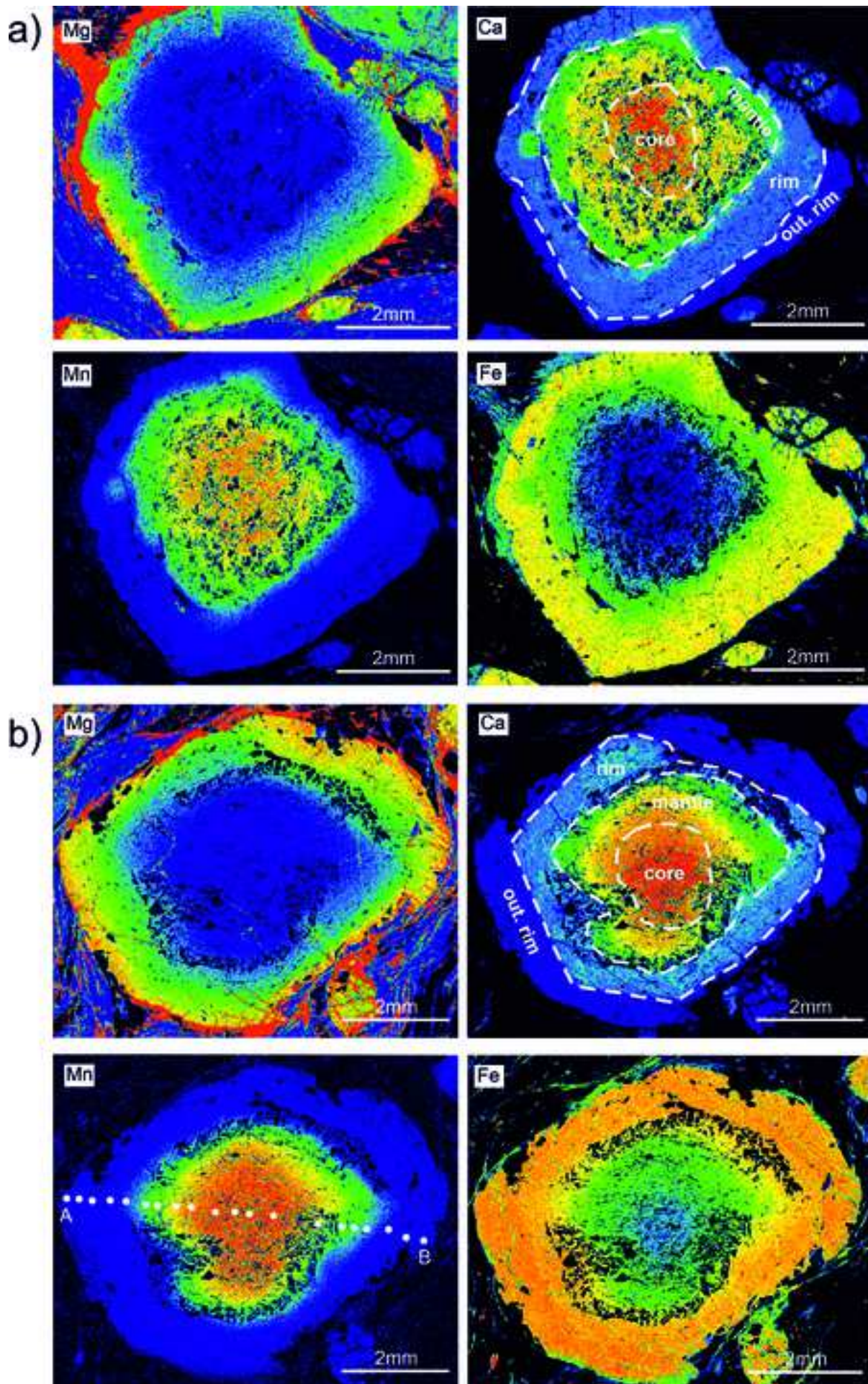
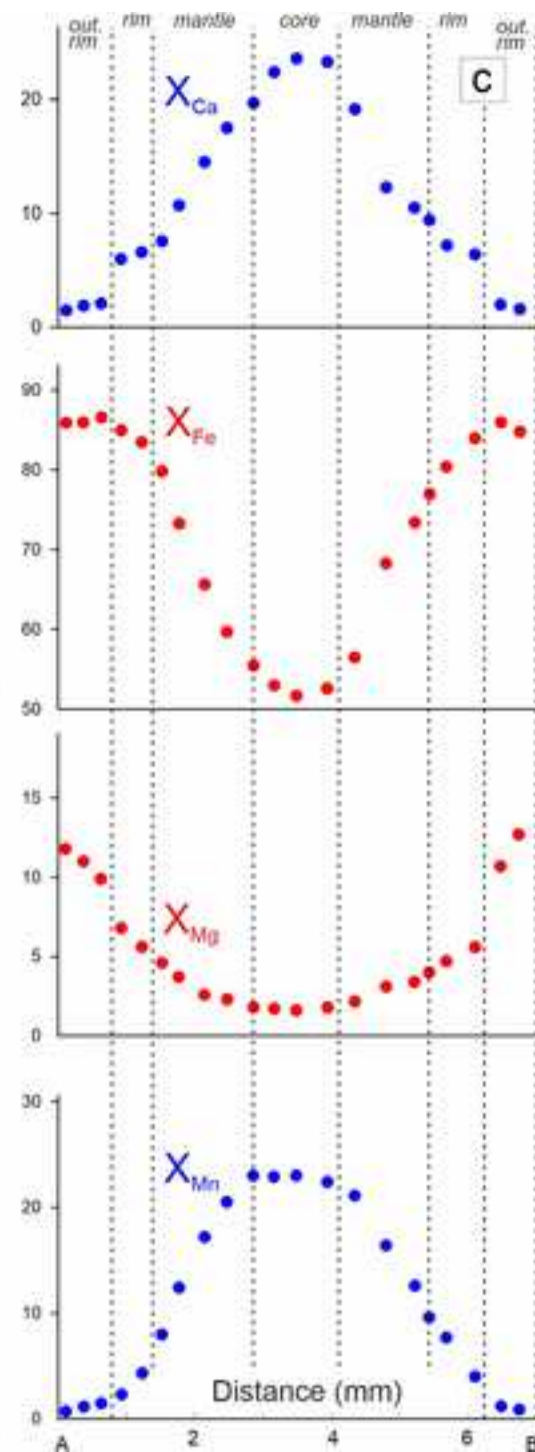
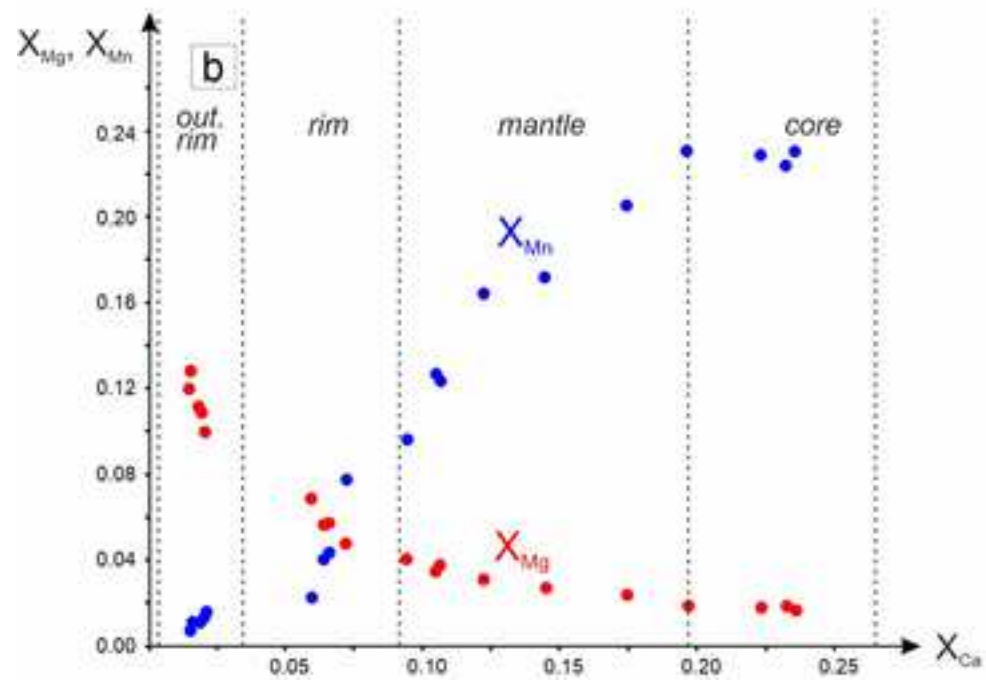
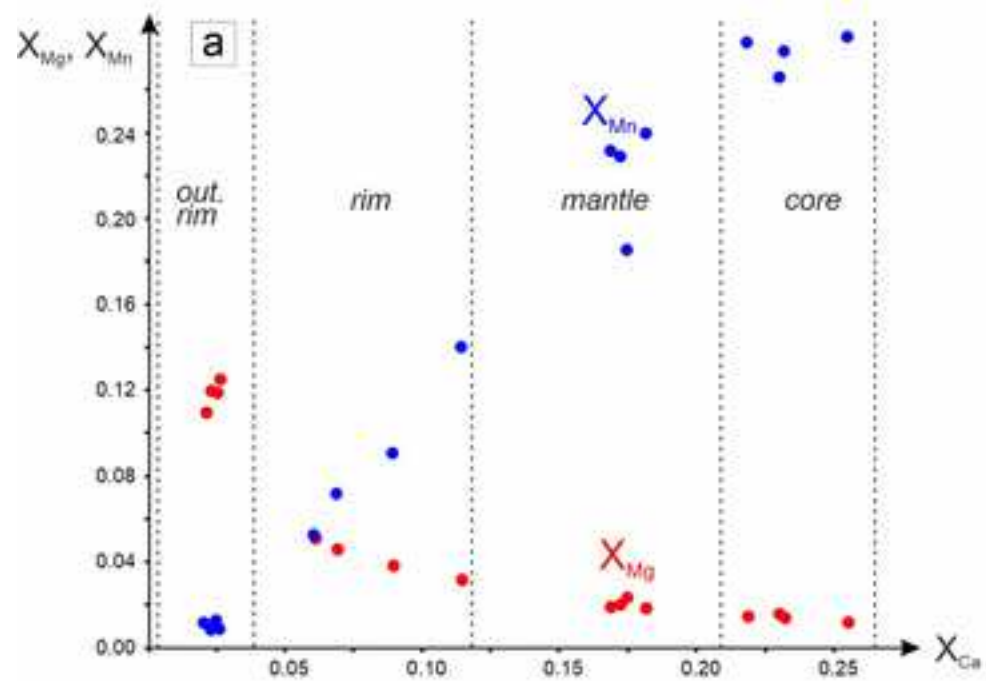
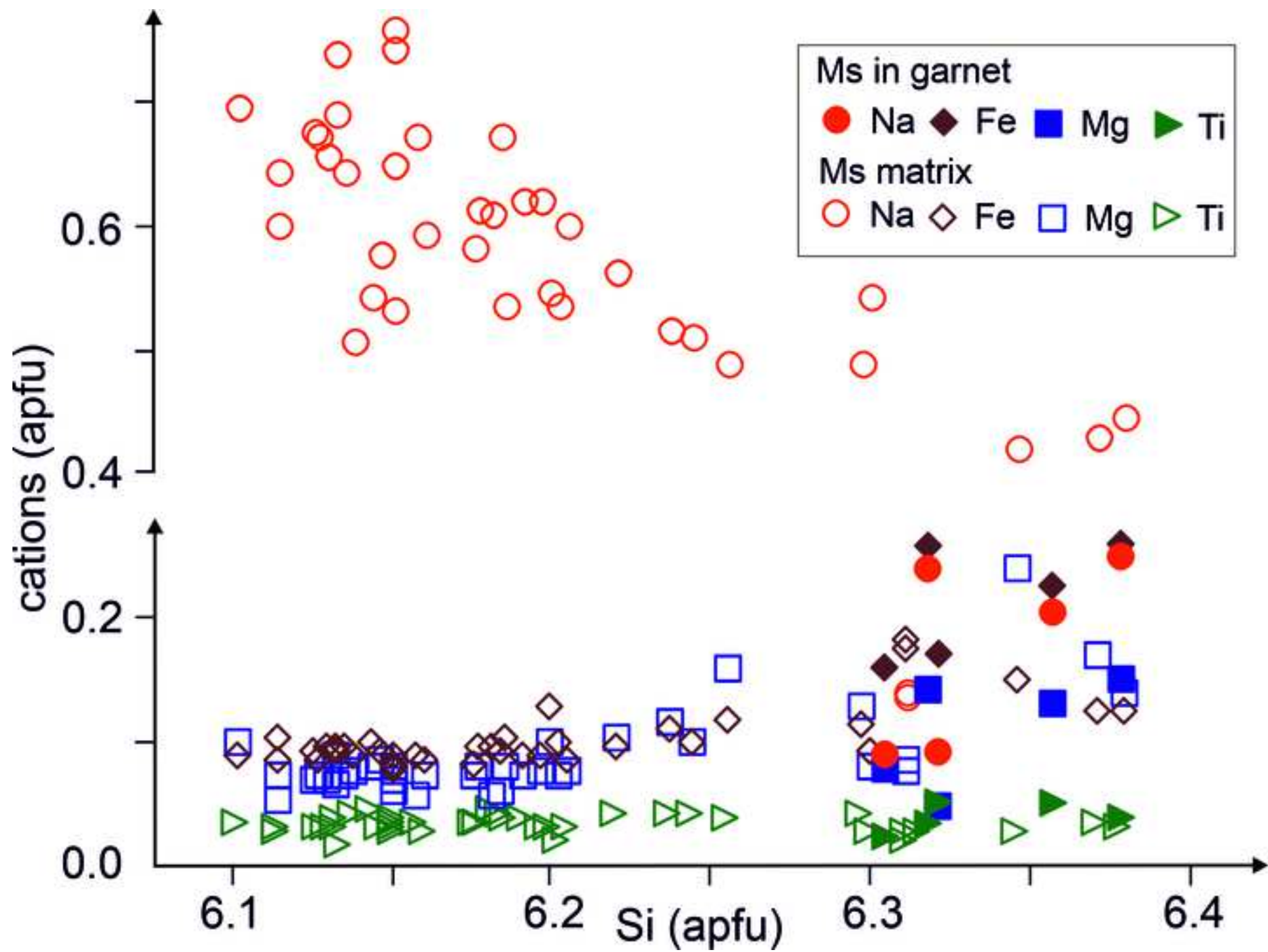
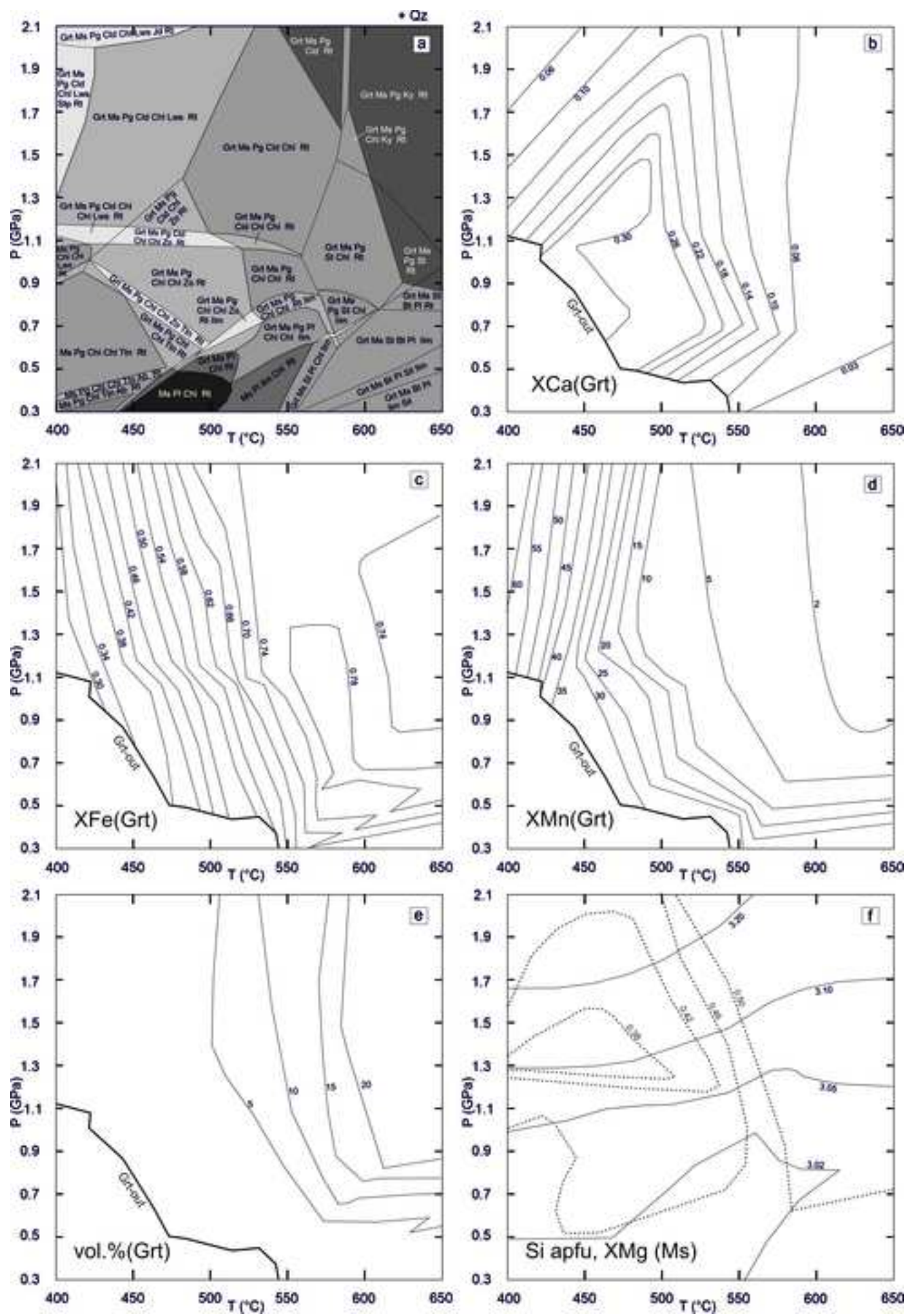


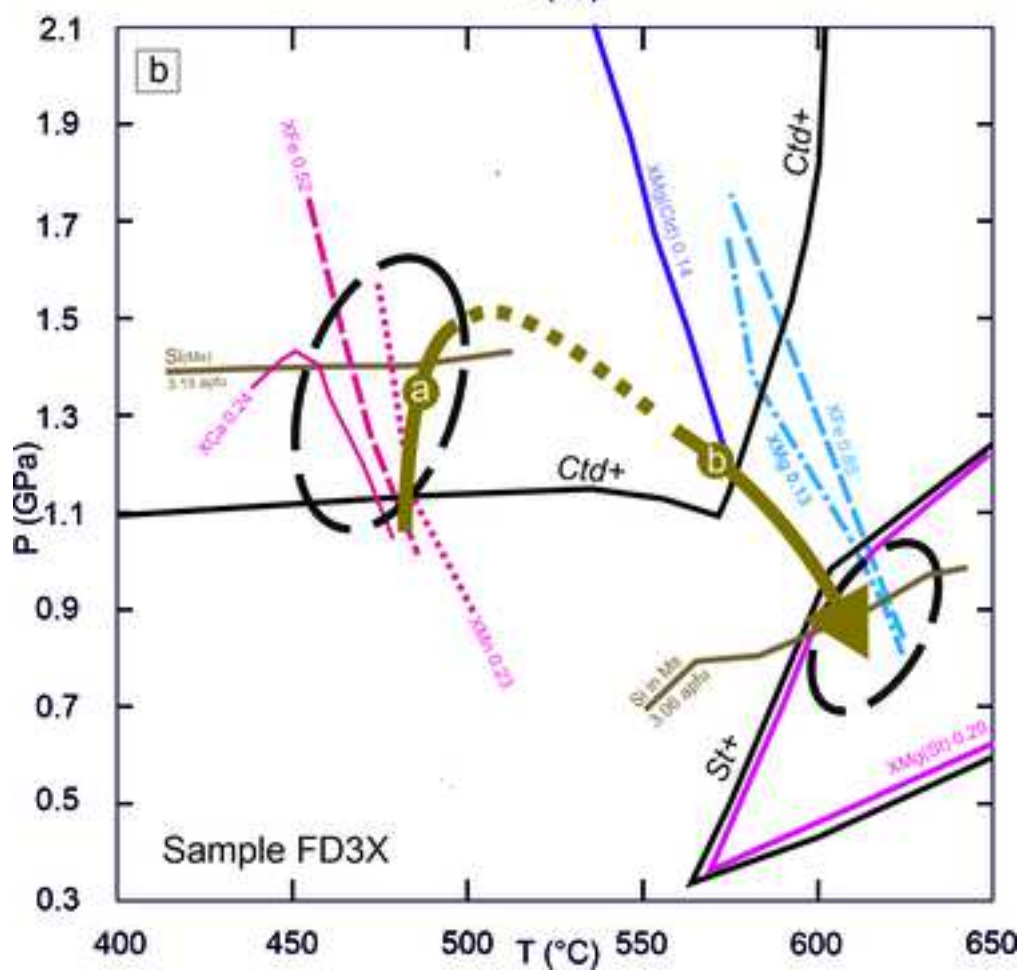
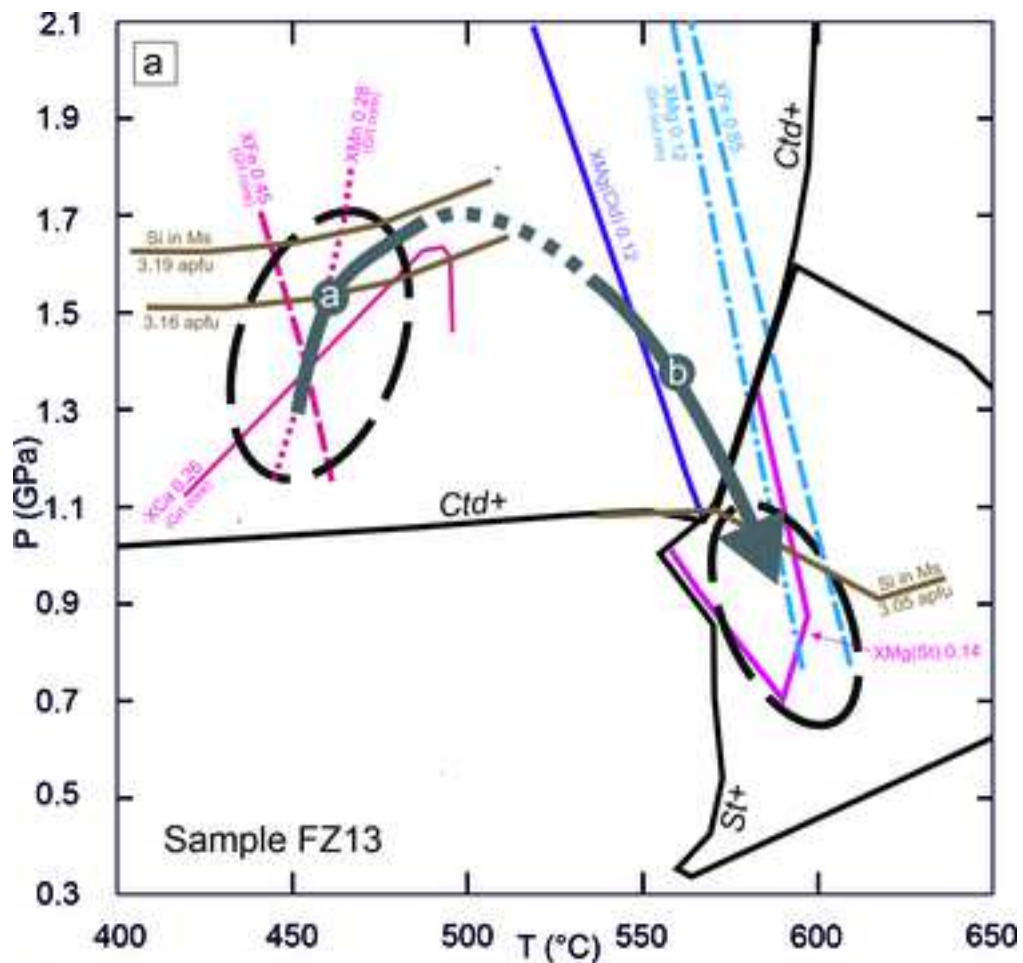


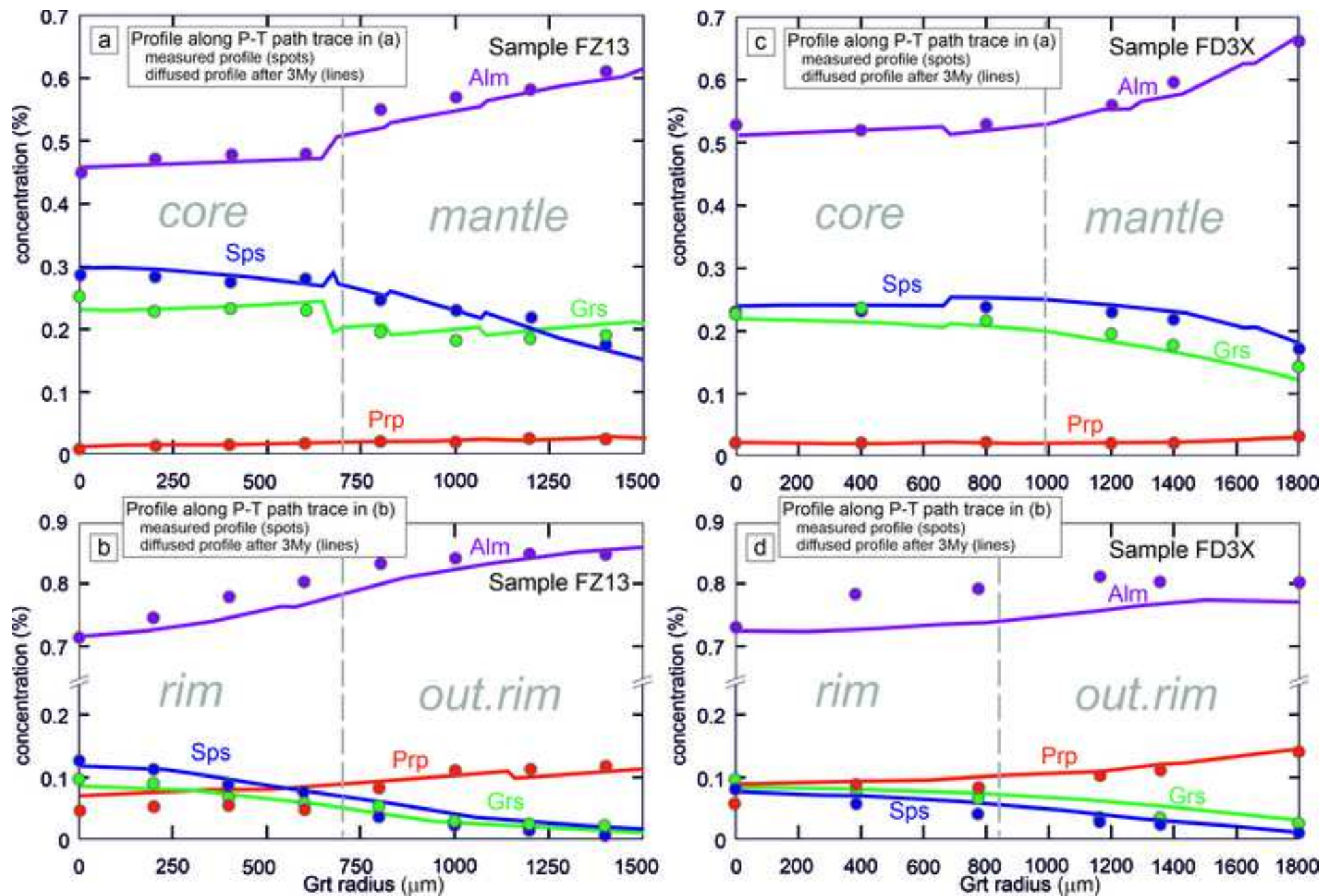
Figure 6

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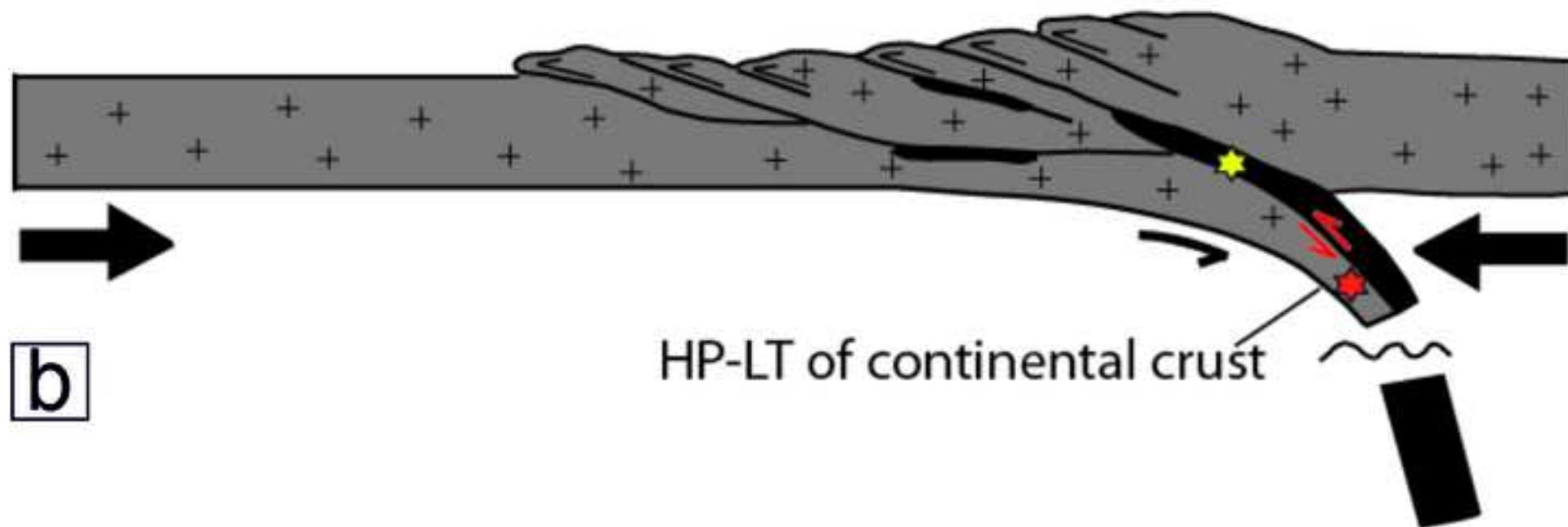
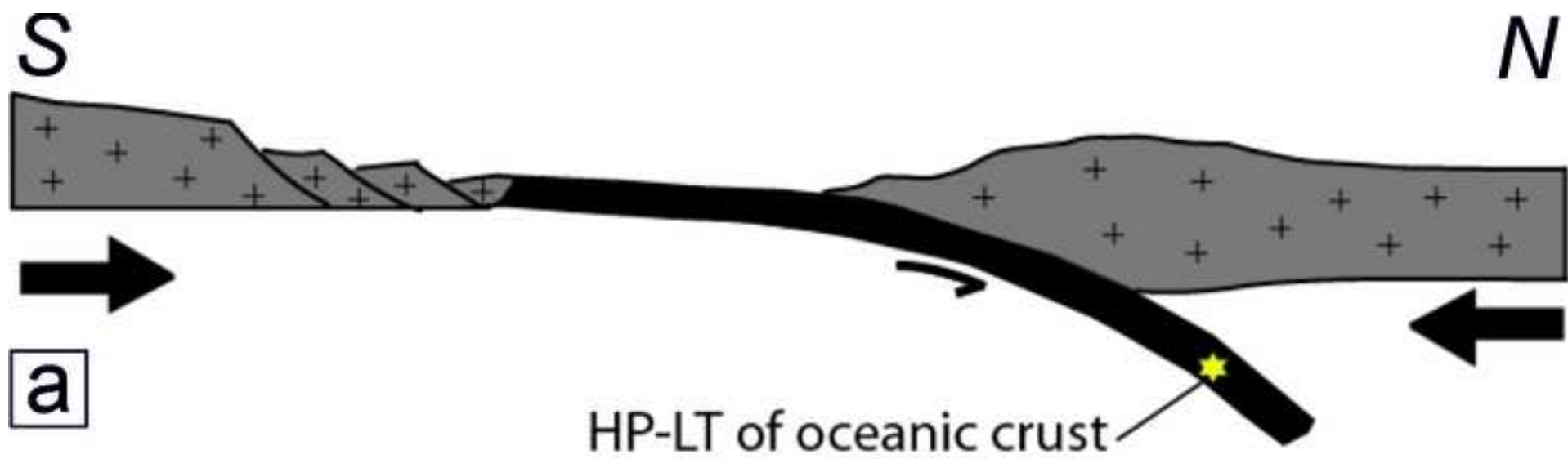


Table 1

## Sample FZ13

	Grt core	mantle	rim	out. rim	Pl	St core	St rim	Ms in Gt	Ms in Gt	Ms mtx	Pg	Bt	Chl	Cld
SiO <sub>2</sub>	36.71	36.63	36.11	36.89	65.74	28.05	27.07	47.79	47.04	46.02	44.76	35.13	23.63	24.11
TiO <sub>2</sub>	0.21	0.19	0.06	0.05	-	0.57	0.55	0.33	0.30	0.32	0.09	1.48	0.06	-
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	20.77	20.81	20.76	21.18	20.93	54.78	56.17	33.00	33.37	36.44	40.90	18.86	22.51	40.51
FeO	20.76	26.32	37.73	38.33	0.04	13.56	13.20	2.30	2.32	0.79	1.03	20.28	30.71	26.12
Cr <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.03	-	0.05	0.11	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.02	-	0.03
MnO	12.90	10.19	2.34	0.46	-	0.17	0.23	-	0.04	-	0.01	0.04	0.11	0.23
MgO	0.28	0.48	1.28	3.00	-	1.16	0.91	0.78	0.71	0.36	0.09	8.95	11.12	2.01
CaO	9.18	6.11	2.15	0.88	2.15	-	-	-	-	-	1.72	-	0.03	0.01
Na <sub>2</sub> O	-	-	-	-	10.9	0.04	0.01	0.96	0.92	2.49	4.04	0.09	0.13	0.05
K <sub>2</sub> O	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.01	9.83	9.96	7.74	1.35	9.59	0.02	-
Tot	100.84	100.74	100.47	100.82	99.76	98.38	98.26	95.04	94.69	94.22	94.02	94.44	88.32	93.07
Oxy	12	12	12	12	8	47	47	22	22	22	22	22	28	12
Si	2.96	2.96	2.95	2.97	2.90	7.89	7.62	6.38	6.32	6.11	5.81	5.43	5.10	1.99
Al	1.97	1.98	2.00	2.01	1.09	18.16	18.63	5.19	5.28	5.71	6.25	3.44	5.73	3.95
Ti	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	-	0.12	0.12	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.17	0.01	-
Fe <sup>2+</sup>	1.39	1.78	2.58	2.57	0.00	3.19	3.11	0.26	0.26	0.09	0.11	2.62	5.55	1.81
Mn	0.88	0.70	0.16	0.03	-	0.04	0.06	-	0.01	-	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02
Mg	0.03	0.06	0.16	0.36	-	0.49	0.38	0.15	0.14	0.07	0.02	2.06	3.58	0.25
Ca	0.79	0.53	0.19	0.07	0.10	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	0.01	0.00
Na	-	-	-	-	0.93	0.02	0.01	0.25	0.24	0.64	1.02	0.02	0.05	0.01
K	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00	1.67	1.71	1.31	0.22	1.89	0.01	-
Alm	45	58	84	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prp	1	2	5	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grs	26	17	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sps	28	23	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
X <sub>Mg</sub>	-	-	-	-	-	0.13	0.11	0.38	0.35	0.44	0.15	0.44	0.39	0.12
Ab	-	-	-	-	0.90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1 Table 1 continued

Sample FD3X										
	Grt core	mantle	rim	out. rim	Pl	St	Bt	Ms in Gt	Ms mtx	Cld
SiO <sub>2</sub>	36.29	36.09	35.94	36.28	65.34	27.29	34.87	47.81	47.12	24.59
TiO <sub>2</sub>	0.15	0.08	0.03	0.05	-	0.31	1.48	0.28	0.34	-
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	20.77	20.48	20.52	20.63	20.96	56.95	19.25	34.68	36.94	41.98
FeO	23.19	29.23	37.07	38.42	-	14.16	19.57	1.59	0.91	25.50
Cr <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.04	0.00	0.02	-	-	0.07	-	0.01	0.09	-
MnO	10.19	7.54	1.89	0.32	-	0.43	0.05	0.14	-	0.32
MgO	0.41	0.66	1.4	2.96	-	1.28	9.36	0.38	0.34	2.38
CaO	8.26	5.04	2.28	0.53	2.19	0.02	0.01	-	0.01	-
Na <sub>2</sub> O	0.04	-	-	0.05	10.85	-	0.17	0.53	2.58	-
K <sub>2</sub> O	-	-	-	-	0.09	0.01	9.66	10.51	8.03	-
Tot	99.34	99.12	99.15	99.24	99.43	100.52	94.42	95.93	96.36	94.77
Oxy	12	12	12	12	8	47	22	22	22	12.00
Si	2.96	2.97	2.97	2.97	2.89	7.55	5.37	6.31	6.13	1.99
Al	1.99	1.99	1.99	1.99	1.09	18.56	3.49	5.39	5.67	4.01
Ti	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	0.06	0.17	0.03	0.03	-
Fe <sup>2+</sup>	1.58	2.01	2.56	2.63	-	3.27	2.52	0.18	0.10	1.73
Mn	0.71	0.53	0.13	0.02	-	0.10	0.01	0.02	-	-
Mg	0.05	0.08	0.17	0.36	-	0.53	2.15	0.08	0.07	0.29
Ca	0.72	0.44	0.20	0.05	0.10	0.01	0.00	-	0.00	-
Na	0.01	-	-	0.01	0.93	-	0.05	0.14	0.65	-
K	-	-	-	-	0.01	0.00	1.90	1.77	1.33	-
Alm	52	66	84	86	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prp	2	3	6	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grs	24	14	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sps	23	17	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
X <sub>Mg</sub>	-	-	-	-	-	0.14	0.46	0.31	0.41	0.14
Ab	-	-	-	-	0.90	-	-	-	-	-




	FZ13			FD3X		
	Bulk XRF	Bulk PERPLE_X	Bulk minus core&mant.	Bulk XRF	Bulk PERPLE_X	Bulk minus core&mant.
SiO <sub>2</sub>	52.06	54.44	57.07	62.25	64.92	69.25
TiO <sub>2</sub>	1.09	1.14	1.32	0.90	0.94	1.08
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	25.43	26.59	27.36	19.35	20.17	19.67
Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	10.88	-	-	8.09	-	-
FeO	-	10.24	6.49	-	7.60	3.05
MnO	0.24	0.25	-	0.16	0.17	-
MgO	1.70	1.78	1.91	1.50	1.56	1.64
CaO	0.62	0.54	-	0.20	0.09	-
Na <sub>2</sub> O	1.27	1.33	1.54	0.89	0.93	1.08
K <sub>2</sub> O	3.53	3.69	4.31	3.47	3.62	4.23
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	0.08	-	-	0.09	-	-
H <sub>2</sub> O	2.77	-	-	2.89	-	-
	99.67	100.00	100.00	99.79	100.00	100.00

Table 3

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Grain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	mtx	in St	mtx	in St	mtx	mtx	mtx	mtx	in Grt	in Grt	mtx	mtx	in Grt	in Grt	in Grt	mtx	mtx	in Tur	in Tur
SiO <sub>2</sub>	0.43	0.31	0.26	0.40	0.33	0.57	0.40	0.32	0.34	0.70	0.35	0.40	0.48	0.57	0.89	0.62	0.55	0.41	0.36
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	29.2	30.1	29.8	29.7	27.8	30.1	29.6	29.9	29.4	31.1	28.8	30.0	28.9	31.1	28.9	28.5	28.7	25.3	26.1
SO <sub>3</sub>	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.03
CaO	0.81	0.59	1.00	0.60	1.00	0.98	0.97	0.46	0.72	0.63	1.01	1.17	0.64	0.68	0.82	0.93	1.20	0.79	0.70
Y <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.15	0.11	0.09	0.15	0.07	0.30	0.35	0.09	0.03	0.00	0.16	0.29	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.07	0.09	0.09	0.13
La <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	15.1	15.0	15.0	15.4	14.9	14.4	14.8	15.1	15.2	15.3	14.6	14.3	15.6	15.2	15.1	14.4	14.1	14.7	15.3
Ce <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	30.0	31.2	30.2	30.8	30.0	28.6	29.7	31.1	30.9	31.2	29.6	29.1	30.5	27.6	29.8	29.4	28.6	29.7	29.6
Pr <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	3.23	3.40	3.21	3.35	3.23	3.13	3.20	3.34	3.33	3.46	3.24	3.18	3.28	2.94	3.21	3.19	3.10	3.21	3.15
Nd <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	12.0	12.2	11.7	12.2	11.7	11.7	11.7	12.4	12.1	12.1	11.9	11.6	12.1	11.6	12.0	11.7	11.3	11.7	11.9
Sm <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	1.96	1.98	1.91	2.06	1.84	2.00	1.99	2.06	1.95	1.90	2.07	1.93	1.93	1.96	1.96	1.91	1.83	1.89	1.97
Gd <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	1.13	0.89	0.88	0.99	0.80	1.23	1.13	0.91	0.79	0.67	1.13	1.08	0.69	0.83	0.75	0.83	0.83	0.90	0.97
Dy <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.14	0.10	0.24	0.26	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.16	0.17	0.05	0.07	0.07	0.10	0.10	0.13	0.11
PbO	0.088	0.071	0.119	0.085	0.098	0.118	0.110	0.067	0.086	0.071	0.092	0.116	0.080	0.098	0.099	0.107	0.127	0.098	0.087
ThO <sub>2</sub>	4.69	3.07	4.83	3.13	4.23	6.25	5.17	2.31	3.79	3.26	4.65	4.95	3.45	3.51	4.16	5.17	5.71	4.07	3.35
UO <sub>2</sub>	0.55	0.39	0.99	0.62	0.69	0.54	0.68	0.50	0.53	0.48	0.59	0.89	0.44	0.63	0.56	0.56	0.73	0.55	0.57
Sum	99.68	99.58	100.24	100.21	97.56	100.34	100.25	99.09	99.37	101.62	99.34	100.06	99.81	97.48	99.99	97.82	97.86	93.58	94.34
Si	0.017	0.012	0.010	0.016	0.013	0.022	0.016	0.012	0.013	0.027	0.014	0.015	0.019	0.022	0.034	0.025	0.022	0.018	0.015
P	0.979	0.997	0.989	0.981	0.957	0.990	0.982	0.994	0.986	0.994	0.965	0.982	0.956	1.017	0.949	0.972	0.969	0.931	0.942
S	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Ca	0.035	0.025	0.042	0.025	0.044	0.041	0.041	0.019	0.031	0.026	0.043	0.048	0.027	0.028	0.034	0.040	0.051	0.036	0.032
Y	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.001	0.006	0.007	0.002	0.001	0.000	0.003	0.006	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003
La	0.221	0.217	0.216	0.221	0.224	0.207	0.214	0.219	0.222	0.213	0.213	0.204	0.224	0.217	0.216	0.214	0.207	0.235	0.240
Ce	0.435	0.447	0.434	0.439	0.446	0.407	0.426	0.447	0.448	0.431	0.428	0.411	0.436	0.389	0.422	0.433	0.417	0.473	0.462
Pr	0.047	0.049	0.046	0.048	0.048	0.044	0.046	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.045	0.047	0.041	0.045	0.047	0.045	0.051	0.048
Nd	0.171	0.171	0.164	0.170	0.170	0.163	0.164	0.174	0.171	0.164	0.168	0.160	0.169	0.159	0.166	0.168	0.160	0.181	0.181
Sm	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.028	0.026	0.027	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.025	0.028	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.027	0.025	0.028	0.029
Gd	0.015	0.012	0.011	0.013	0.011	0.016	0.015	0.012	0.010	0.008	0.015	0.014	0.009	0.011	0.010	0.011	0.011	0.013	0.013
Dy	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.003	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Pb	0.0009	0.0008	0.0013	0.0009	0.0011	0.0012	0.0012	0.0007	0.0009	0.0007	0.0010	0.0012	0.0008	0.0010	0.0010	0.0012	0.0014	0.0012	0.0011
Th	0.042	0.027	0.043	0.028	0.039	0.055	0.046	0.021	0.034	0.028	0.042	0.044	0.031	0.031	0.037	0.047	0.052	0.040	0.032
U	0.005	0.003	0.009	0.005	0.006	0.005	0.006	0.004	0.005	0.004	0.005	0.008	0.004	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.007	0.005	0.005
Age(Ma)	322	389	349	393	359	347	351	402	370	347	330	349	388	418	392	363	371	395	396
1σ	19.0	28.0	16.2	24.4	19.5	16.4	17.4	30.9	22.5	24.4	18.6	16.6	24.4	23.6	21.1	18.3	16.8	21.1	23.8



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