

1 Revision 1

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3 **Tourmaline composition and boron isotope signature as a tracer of**  
4 **magmatic-hydrothermal processes**

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## ABSTRACT

24 This study presents a petrogeochemical and boron isotope study on  
25 tourmaline from the barren Damai, and the contemporaneous but ore-bearing  
26 Dewulu and Meiwu intrusions, to better understand the origins, sources and fluid  
27 evolution of magmatic-hydrothermal ore systems, and provide ore formation  
28 implications for gold, copper, and iron deposits in the Xiahe-Hezuo polymetallic  
29 district in the West Qinling, China. Tourmaline from all three intrusions shows  
30 similar compositions and encompasses Na-Fe schorl and Na-Mg dravite.  
31 Tourmaline at Dewulu is primarily found in tuffaceous breccias and quartz diorite  
32 porphyry. In the tuffaceous breccia body, tourmaline occurs as fine-grained  
33 anhedral masses that fill voids and cement fragments of breccia and sickle quartz.  
34 Tourmalines in breccia are texturally similar to those formed in typical breccia  
35 pipes, which are attributed to explosion or collapse induced by a transition from  
36 magmatic to hydrothermal Si- and B-rich fluids. They display element  
37 substitutions controlled by  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$ , indicating a reduced environment. Values of  
38  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  are  $-6.6\text{‰}$  to  $-4.0\text{‰}$ , representing the primary magmatic-hydrothermal  
39 fluids. Tourmaline from the Dewulu quartz diorite porphyry is coarse-grained,  
40 euhedral and found in quartz-sulfide veins. The tourmaline displays oscillatory  
41 zoning textures but lack correlative variations of major elements. The  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$   
42 and  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$  substitution mechanisms are dominant demonstrating more oxidized  
43 fluids. The  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values in the cores, ranging from  $-7.1\text{‰}$  to  $-5.6\text{‰}$ , suggest that  
44 the tourmalines in the quartz veins were inherited from magmatic-hydrothermal

45 fluids that precipitated the fine-grained tourmaline in the tuffaceous breccia body.  
46 A large  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  isotopic fractionation that decreases from cores ( $-5.6\text{‰}$ ) to rims  
47 ( $-10.7\text{‰}$ ) indicates a significant fractionation of degassing occurred, increasing  
48 oxygen fugacity of the residual liquid. The Meiwu locality hosts fine-grained  
49 euhedral tourmalines coexisting with magnetite. Their composition is controlled  
50 by substitution between  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  by  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ , and have the lightest  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values ranging  
51 from  $-11.4$  to  $-10.0\text{‰}$ . They are interpreted to result from skarn formation  
52 under oxidized condition. In contrast,  $^x\text{Al}(\text{NaMg})_{-1}$  is the dominant substitution  
53 mechanism for Damai tourmalines and attributed to (geochemically) reduced  
54 fluids with a low salinity. The assessment concludes that tourmalines with low Fe  
55 values, substitution mechanisms dominated by  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$ , and large shifts of B  
56 isotopic composition, have better potentials as an ore-forming indicator in the  
57 Xiahe-Hezuo polymetallic district.

58

59 Keywords: Tourmaline origin, Textural occurrence, Boron isotope signature,  
60 Magmatic-hydrothermal processes, Ore-forming tracer

61

## INTRODUCTION

62 Magmatic-hydrothermal systems host a wide range of ore deposits in diverse  
63 tectonic settings, including porphyry, skarn, and epithermal deposits (Sillitoe  
64 2010; Hong et al. 2017; Maner et al. 2019). Tourmaline is a common gangue  
65 mineral in many of these deposits worldwide owing to its stability over a wide  
66 range of temperature and pressure conditions (Jiang et al. 2008; Marschall and  
67 Jiang 2011; Slack and Trumbull 2011). Tourmaline may preserve textural,  
68 compositional, and isotopic features during growth and hence reveal considerable  
69 detail about the environment in which it crystallized (Mlynarczyk and Williams-  
70 Jones 2006; Pal et al. 2010). Consequently, documenting the magmatic and  
71 hydrothermal record in tourmaline is an important step for furthering our  
72 understanding of the origin and evolution of ore fluids, the mineralizing  
73 processes, and thereby providing a potentially valuable tool for mineral  
74 exploration (Garda et al. 2009; Hong et al. 2017).

75 The Xiahe-Hezuo polymetallic district located in the Triassic West Qinling  
76 Orogen in central China has been the focus of significant (ore deposit)  
77 exploration and research in recent years (Jin et al. 2017; Qiu and Deng 2017; Sui  
78 et al. 2018; Qiu et al. 2020; Yu et al. 2020a, b). The widespread Triassic  
79 magmatism in the district, attributed to northward subduction of the Paleo-Tethys  
80 Oceanic slab beneath the South Qinling block, produced dozens of gold, copper  
81 and iron deposits (Qiu et al. 2018; Li et al. 2019). Although tourmaline  
82 commonly occurs in the felsic granites in quartz-tourmaline veins, and were

83 locally mined as ore, their origins, sources, and relationships with mineralization  
84 are incompletely understood.

85 The purpose of this study is to document tourmaline in the barren Damai,  
86 and the causative Dewulu and Meiwu intrusions from the Xiahe-Hezuo  
87 polymetallic district. The origins and evolution of the tourmaline and the fluids  
88 from which they grew are investigated using compositional and isotope analyses.  
89 We assess the potential of tourmaline as a fertility indicator in distinguishing  
90 mineralized from barren host-granites.

91

## 92 **GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

93 The roughly WNW-trending West Qinling Orogen extends for 400 km  
94 between the North China and South China blocks, occupying a key position in  
95 the Central China Orogenic belt (Fig. 1a; Dong and Santosh 2016; Deng et al.  
96 2018; Luo et al. 2018). It consists of various (meta)sedimentary sequences,  
97 ranging from Proterozoic to Neogene (Fig. 1a; Zhang et al. 2001; Deng and Wang  
98 2016). The Proterozoic basement in West Qinling consists of the Paleoproterozoic  
99 Qinling Group gneiss, amphibolite, and marble; the Meso-Neoproterozoic  
100 Kuanping Group ophiolite unit; and the youngest Neoproterozoic sedimentary  
101 units in the northeast. Another Phanerozoic cycle produced the widespread  
102 sedimentary cover that accumulated continuously until the middle Triassic (Dong  
103 at al. 2011; Deng et al. 2017; Meng 2017).

104 The West Qinling has undergone four major episodes of accretion and  
105 collision between discrete continental blocks: the Neoproterozoic southward  
106 subduction and accretion of the North China block to the North Qinling block  
107 along the Kuanping suture; the Paleozoic amalgamation between the North and  
108 South Qinling blocks along the Shangdan suture; the Triassic collisional orogeny  
109 occurred between the South Qinling block and South China block along the  
110 Mianlue suture; and post-Triassic intercontinental deformation, orogen collapse  
111 and depression (Dong and Santosh 2016; Yu et al. 2020b). The NW-oriented fold  
112 and fault systems throughout West Qinling were formed during the Triassic  
113 collisional orogeny and were reactivated during the Cenozoic by the distant effect  
114 of the collision between the India and Eurasia plates. Extensive felsic magmatism  
115 during the early Mesozoic migrated progressively eastward. Voluminous granitoid  
116 batholiths in the northern domain of the West Qinling were associated with the  
117 Triassic amalgamation between the South Qinling and South China blocks (Dong  
118 and Santosh 2016; Geng et al. 2017).

119 Triassic granitoids are widespread in Xiahe–Hezuo polymetallic district,  
120 situated in the northwestern most part of the West Qinling Orogen (Fig. 1). These  
121 granitic bodies usually have elliptical shapes and are discontinuously distributed  
122 in a NW–SE direction with a total exposed area of approximately 700 km<sup>2</sup>. They  
123 generally consist of fine- to medium-grained biotite granodiorite and biotite  
124 quartz diorite, and biotite quartz diorite porphyry, intruding the Carboniferous to  
125 Triassic greenschist-facies slate and carbonate rocks. Numerous studies showed

126 that these granitoids were emplaced at 250 to 235 Ma and are I-type, high-K to  
127 shoshonitic, and are metaluminous to weakly peraluminous. Bulk-rock  
128 geochemical features are consistent with arc-related magmatism (Chappell and  
129 White 1974; Yang et al. 2015a, b; Qiu et al. 2016, 2018; Gou et al. 2019). Such  
130 Triassic granitoids have been recognized to be generated during the continuous  
131 northward subduction of the Paleo-Tethys oceanic slab (Qiu and Deng 2017; Yu  
132 et al. 2020a).

133

## 134 **HOST ROCKS AND TOURMALINE TEXTURES**

### 135 **Sampling locality and host rock lithology**

136 Samples investigated in this study were collected from the barren Damai  
137 stock, and the mineralized Dewulu stock and Meiwu batholith in the Xiahe–  
138 Hezuo polymetallic district (Fig. 1b). The barren Damai stock was emplaced into  
139 the Permian slate (Figs. 1, 2). It is mainly composed of fine- to medium-grained  
140 biotite granodiorite (Fig. 2a-c). Zircon in the granodiorite was dated using LA-  
141 ICPMS U-Pb to  $238 \text{ Ma} \pm 4 \text{ Ma}$ , which was interpreted as the age of emplacement  
142 (Jin et al. 2005). Quartz-tourmaline veins ranging in width from 5 to 25 cm are  
143 observed in the granodiorite with 2-3 vein sets per 10 m (Fig. 2b). No  
144 economically viable mineralization has been discovered within or around the  
145 Damai stock.

146 In contrast, the mineralized Dewulu stock intruded Permian clastic and

147 carbonate rocks, and the Early Triassic tuff (Figs. 1, 3, 4). It contains two main  
148 phases described as the biotite quartz diorite and the biotite quartz diorite  
149 porphyry that are identified by their textures. Tourmaline occurs in both phases of  
150 the Dewulu stock and the Early Triassic tuff, but is more abundant in the biotite  
151 quartz diorite porphyry (Fig. 4). The tuff and quartz diorite porphyry have zircon  
152 U–Pb ages of  $252.9 \pm 4.1$  Ma and  $247.0 \pm 2.2$  Ma (Yu et al. 2020a). The quartz  
153 diorite porphyry has been recognized as a causative intrusion associated with the  
154 Ludousou Au-Cu deposit. The estimated pre-mining resources of the Ludousou  
155 deposit included more than 8 t Au at an average grade of 3.8–5.5 g/t. Copper is  
156 currently recovered as a by-product. The ores are characterized by up to 30%  
157 tourmaline, which grew in tourmaline-quartz-chalcopyrite-pyrite-arsenopyrite  
158 veins, massive quartz-tourmaline-arsenopyrite-pyrite–chalcopyrite veins, and  
159 quartz diorite porphyry containing disseminated tourmaline (Figs. 4; Yu et al.  
160 2020a).

161 The mineralized Meiwu batholith intruded into the Carboniferous and  
162 Permian meta-sedimentary rocks (Figs. 1, 5). It may be subdivided into three  
163 phases, namely the monzogranite, the biotite granodiorite, and the biotite quartz  
164 diorite. Mafic (microgranular) enclaves ranging from 5–50 cm in diameter  
165 occasionally occur in the biotite granodiorite (Fig. 5a, b). Luo et al. (2015)  
166 reported weighted mean  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ages of the Meiwu batholith, ranging from  
167 244 to 240 Ma, of which the biotite granodiorite is recognized to be the causative  
168 phase for several iron skarn deposits in the vicinity. Locally, tourmaline is



169 abundant as 5 to 25 cm wide quartz-tourmaline-magnetite veins in the biotite  
170 granodiorite (Fig. 5a-c).

171

## 172 **Tourmaline morphology**

173 **Damai tourmaline.** The tourmaline grains occurring in quartz-tourmaline  
174 veins in the Damai pluton are commonly black, and appear as radial aggregates  
175 (Fig. 2a, b). Tourmaline forms euhedral crystals of up to 1.5 mm in diameter and  
176 coexists with quartz and minor sericite (Fig. 2e). It locally contains quartz  
177 inclusions (Fig. 2e) and replaces plagioclase (Fig. 2d, e). Optical microscopy  
178 reveals that the tourmaline exhibits a homogeneous light green center and a thick  
179 (50–300  $\mu\text{m}$ ) brown rim with oscillatory zoning perpendicular to the c-axis (Fig.  
180 2d, e).

181 **Dewulu tourmaline.** Barren tourmaline breccia bodies (Fig. 3) and  
182 mineralized tourmaline veins (Fig. 4) are found in the Dewulu stock. The host  
183 rocks of the breccia bodies are felsic to intermediate volcanic rocks. The breccia  
184 fragments vary in size from 1 to 20 cm in diameter (Fig. 3a). Most of the  
185 fragments are tuffaceous gravel and enveloped by a ~0.5 cm wide fine-grained  
186 tourmaline-quartz rim (Fig. 3a-c). These tourmaline grains mostly vary from 30  
187 to 60  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter and exhibit moderate pleochroism with small cyan centers  
188 and thin brown rims (Fig. 3c). The matrix comprises quartz, plagioclase, sericite,  
189 and disseminated tourmaline, and cements fragments of tuff breccia and sickle

190 quartz (Fig. 3b). The tourmaline grains in the matrix are commonly less than 20  
191  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter. No sulfide minerals are found in the tourmaline breccia bodies.

192 The mineralized tourmaline veins are distinguished from tourmaline in the  
193 breccia by the mineral assemblages and textural occurrence of tourmaline (Fig.  
194 4). The tourmaline veins occur in the biotite quartz diorite porphyry and are the  
195 main ores in the Ludousou Au-Cu deposit, with an average gold grade of 3.8–5.5  
196 g/t (Yu et al. 2020a). The vein type tourmaline may be further divided into three  
197 styles, namely the tourmaline-quartz vein (Fig. 4a, b), the massive quartz-  
198 tourmaline vein (Fig. 4c, d), and the disseminated tourmaline (Fig. 4a, b, e).

199 Tourmaline-quartz veins are typically 5–40-cm-wide and commonly occur along  
200 joints of host rocks (Fig. 4a, b). They consist mostly of tourmaline and quartz,  
201 with chalcopyrite, pyrite, and lesser arsenopyrite and rutile (Fig. 4j). The massive  
202 tourmalines are distributed in the middle part of the Dewulu stock and may  
203 contain silicified porphyry xenoliths (Fig. 4c). They coexist with abundant  
204 arsenopyrite and lesser pyrite and chalcopyrite (Fig. 4d, k). The volume of  
205 massive tourmaline, occurring over an area of  $50 \times 100$  m hosts the major gold  
206 and copper resources of the Ludousou deposit (Fig. 4c, d). The disseminated  
207 tourmalines are commonly hosted by the quartz diorite porphyry proximal to  
208 tourmaline-quartz veins and massive quartz-tourmaline veins (Fig. 4a, b, e). The  
209 tourmaline grains coexist with quartz, sericite, rutile, and coarse-grained pyrite  
210 (Fig. 4f, i).

211 All three styles of the vein type tourmaline coexist with quartz, chalcopyrite,

212 pyrite, arsenopyrite, with minor rutile and sericite (Fig. 4). Compared with fine-  
213 grained tourmaline in the tourmaline breccia bodies, the tourmaline crystals in  
214 the biotite quartz diorite porphyry are much larger, mostly ranging from 200  $\mu\text{m}$   
215 up to 1500  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter (Fig. 4). The tourmalines are characterized by  
216 moderate pleochroism and well-developed color growth zoning with light green  
217 cores and thick light green to brown rims (Fig. 4g-h). Some grains have sector  
218 zoned cores, although the majority have homogeneous cores surrounded by  
219 oscillatory zoned rims (Fig. 4i, k, l).

220 **Meiwu tourmaline.** The tourmaline grains occur in 5–15 cm wide quartz-  
221 tourmaline-magnetite veins in the Meiwu pluton (Fig. 5a-c). The euhedral  
222 homogeneous crystals are black in hand specimen, and are much smaller than  
223 other occurrences, mostly ranging from 50 to 80  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter (Fig. 5d).  
224 Tourmaline coexists with quartz and magnetite, and replaces plagioclase (Fig. 5d-  
225 f).

226

## 227 **ANALYTICAL METHODS AND DATA REPRESENTATION**

### 228 **Sample preparation**

229 Doubly polished thin section samples were prepared for petrographic  
230 analysis. Representative tourmaline grains were located on each thin section, and  
231 subsequently 1.5  $\times$  1.5 cm squares with each tourmaline texture of interest were  
232 extracted and mounted in epoxy for in situ micro-analysis of major elements and

233 boron isotope analyses using EPMA and LA-MC-ICP-MS. The sampling  
234 description and locality are given in Supplementary Table 1.

235

### 236 **Electron-probe micro-analysis of tourmaline**

237 The major element compositions of 55 tourmaline grains from Damai,  
238 Meiwu, and Dewulu were determined using a JEOL JXA-8100 electron probe  
239 micro-analyzer equipped with four wavelength dispersive-type spectrometers at  
240 the Institute of Mineral Resources, Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences  
241 (CAGS), Beijing, China, using analytical procedures given in Huang et al. (2016).

242 The analytical data are presented in Supplementary Table 2. Tourmaline  
243 structural formulae were calculated by normalizing to 15 cations in the  
244 tetrahedral and octahedral sites (T + Z + Y), and assuming stoichiometric  
245 compositions with regard to three B atoms per formula unit (a.p.f.u.), four  
246 (OH+F) a.p.f.u. (Henry and Dutrow 1996).

247

### 248 **LA-MC-ICP-MS boron isotope analysis of tourmaline**

249 In situ tourmaline boron isotope analyses were carried out on the same 55  
250 tourmaline grains over the top of the same points analyzed by EPMA. Boron  
251 isotopic compositions of tourmaline were conducted by LA-MC-ICP-MS at the  
252 State Key Laboratory for Mineral Deposits Research at the Nanjing University,  
253 China. A Neptune Plus MC-ICP-MS (Thermo Finnigan) coupled with a

254 NewWave UP193 LA system were used. A laser repetition rate of 5 Hz at 11 J/m<sup>2</sup>  
255 was used for ablating tourmalines with a 60 μm spot. Detailed operating conditions  
256 of the laser ablation system and the MC-ICP-MS instrument and data reduction  
257 are provided in Yang et al. (2015). The Boron isotope compositions are expressed  
258 in the standard delta notation ( $\delta^{11}\text{B} = (\text{R}_{\text{sample}}/\text{R}_{\text{standard}} - 1) \times 1000$ ), where R is the ratio  
259 of <sup>11</sup>B/<sup>10</sup>B, reported as permil (‰) deviations from the NIST SRM-951  
260 international standard (Catanzaro et al., 1970). Mass bias of the instrument and the  
261 fractionation of isotopes were calibrated in this study using the standard-sample-  
262 bracketing (SSB) method. The tourmaline IAEA B4 ( $\delta^{11}\text{B} = -8.71$  ‰; Tonarini et  
263 al. 2003) was used as the primary standard. The reproducibility and accuracy of the  
264 procedure was checked by repeated measurement of the Tourmaline reference  
265 materials IMR RB1 of  $\delta^{11}\text{B} = -13.86 \pm 0.73$  (2σ, n=70), which are consistent with the  
266 recommended values of  $\delta^{11}\text{B} = -12.96 \pm 0.97$  (2σ, n=57; Hou et al. 2010). The boron  
267 isotope data are given in Supplementary Table 3.

268

269

## RESULTS

### 270 **Chemical composition of tourmaline**

271 The analysis totals for tourmaline are less than 90 wt.% because EPMA  
272 cannot determine B, H<sub>2</sub>O, and Li (Supplementary Table 2). Overall, no systematic  
273 trends in major element abundances from cores to rims are observed in the Damai  
274 and Dewulu tourmalines (Figs. 6, 7). Meiwu tourmalines are homogeneous

275 without compositional zoning (Figs. 5-7).

276 Most of the tourmalines described in this study belong to the alkali group in  
277 the Ca-X-site vacancy-Na(+K) ternary diagrams (Fig. 6a). In the ternary Al-Fe-  
278 Mg diagram of Henry and Guidotti (1985), the Damai tourmalines plot in field 2,  
279 suggesting that they formed in an environment similar to Li-poor granitoids and  
280 associated pegmatites and aplites (Fig. 6b). The other tourmaline grains at  
281 Dewulu and Meiwu fall mainly within field 5 in the ternary Al-Fe-Mg diagram,  
282 similar to metapelite and metapsammite samples lacking Al-saturating phases  
283 (Fig. 6b).

284 The Damai tourmalines have Mg/(Fe+Mg) and Na/(Na+Ca) ratios between  
285 0.32 and 0.44, and 0.82 to 0.93, and plot in the schorl (Fe-rich) field (Fig. 7a).  
286 These Damai tourmalines have lower and less variable Ca contents (Fig. 7b).  
287 Plots of Al versus Fe and Na versus Al indicate the influence of  $X_{\square}Al(NaMg)_{-1}$   
288 substitution mechanism for the Damai tourmalines (Fig. 7c-e). Tourmalines in the  
289 tuffaceous breccia body at Dewulu have Mg/(Fe+Mg) and Na/(Na+Ca) ratios  
290 from 0.49 to 0.71 and 0.39 to 0.76. Nearly all of the fine-grained tourmalines plot  
291 in the dravite field (Fig. 7a). Plots of Al versus Fe and Mg versus Fe suggest that  
292 the  $Fe^{2+}Mg_{-1}$  substitution plays an important role for the tourmaline found in the  
293 tuffaceous breccia body (Fig. 7c, d). Tourmaline grains from the tourmaline-  
294 quartz, massive tourmaline, and disseminated tourmaline samples at Dewulu  
295 exhibit similar compositions. They have Mg/(Fe+Mg) and Na/(Na+Ca) ratios  
296 from 0.40 to 0.83 and 0.54 to 0.90 respectively, and plot in the schorl (Fe-rich) to

297 dravite (Mg-rich) field (Fig. 7a). Plots of Al versus Fe and Mg versus Fe (Fig. 7c,  
298 d) document the influence of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$  and  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$  substitution mechanisms for  
299 the tourmaline-quartz, massive tourmaline, and disseminated tourmaline  
300 samples. The Meiwu tourmalines belong to the Mg-rich dravite group with  
301  $\text{Mg}/(\text{Fe}+\text{Mg})$  and  $\text{Na}/(\text{Na}+\text{Ca})$  ratios from 0.60 to 0.82 and 0.61 to 0.90  
302 respectively (Fig. 7a) and variable Ca contents (0.09 to 0.36 a.p.f.u) (Fig. 7b). The  
303 variation of Al-contents in tourmalines may be controlled by some substitution of  
304  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  in accordance with the  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$  (Fig. 7c).

305

#### 306 **Boron isotopic composition of tourmaline**

307 **Damai tourmaline.** The  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values of the Damai tourmalines range from  
308  $-9.1$  to  $-7.9$  ‰. No systematic variations in  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values from cores to rims were  
309 observed (Figs. 2e, 8).

310 **Dewulu tourmaline.** The tourmalines from Dewulu have  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values ranging  
311 from  $-10.8$  to  $-4.0$  ‰. The tourmalines in the breccia body yield the highest  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$   
312 values, ranging from  $-6.6$  to  $-4.0$  ‰ (Figs. 3c, 8). The tourmalines in the  
313 tourmaline-quartz, massive tourmaline, and disseminated tourmaline samples  
314 have  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values of  $-10.8$  to  $-5.6$  ‰,  $-9.6$  to  $-6.2$  ‰, and  $-9.6$  to  $-7.1$  ‰,  
315 respectively. For those tourmalines exhibiting oscillatory zoning texture, the core  
316 generally yields higher  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values than rims (Figs. 4k, i, 8).

317 **Meiwu tourmaline.** The Meiwu tourmalines have a narrow range of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$

318 values of  $-11.4$  to  $-10.0$  ‰. They show no systematic variations in  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values  
319 within individual tourmaline grains (Fig. 8).

320

## 321 **DISCUSSION**

### 322 **Origins of tourmaline**

323 Fine-grained tourmaline that are common in the Dewulu tuff occurring in  
324 the breccia matrix and quartz-tourmaline rims (Fig. 3a), have textures similar to  
325 those formed in breccia pipes (Pirajno et al. 2000; Dill et al. 2012). The textures  
326 suggest formation of breccia that caused expulsion of accumulating fluids and  
327 gases from the magma (high-pressure regime) into the fractures (low pressure  
328 regime) within the host-rock tuff. It has been established that the major element  
329 composition of tourmaline in hydrothermal systems may be influenced, in part,  
330 by host rock composition depending on the water/rock ratios (e.g., Henry and  
331 Guidotti 1985; Pal et al. 2010; Yang et al. 2015). The tourmalines display high  
332  $\text{Mg}/(\text{Mg}+\text{Fe})$  and Ca values, and low  $\text{Na}/(\text{Na}+\text{Ca})$  values, comparable to those  
333 of the host Dewulu tuff, and thus attest to tourmaline growth that inherited the  
334 composition of the original magmatic–hydrothermal fluid (Fig. 7a; Yang et al.  
335 2015; Deng et al. 2020). Such textural and geochemical characteristics suggested  
336 that tourmaline which filled the newly formed open spaces during brecciation  
337 precipitated by magma-fluid immiscibility during a transition from magmatic to  
338 hydrothermal process (Dill et al. 2012).



339 Other tourmalines in the Xiahe-Hezuo polymetallic district are represented  
340 by euhedral to subhedral grains that coexist with quartz and sericite in quartz-  
341 tourmaline veins with sharp contacts toward host granitoids (Figs. 2, 4, 5).  
342 Plagioclase is replaced by disseminated tourmalines in host granitoids near the  
343 vein, leaving only residual plagioclase grains (Figs. 2d, 4f), or fragmenting the  
344 plagioclase grains into several pieces (Fig. 5d). Taking into consideration that  
345 hydrothermal minerals such as quartz, tourmaline, and sericite occur in the veins,  
346 sharp contact relationships between the quartz-tourmaline vein and wall rock,  
347 and the replacement texture suggest that all tourmaline crystallized from B-rich  
348 hydrothermal fluids, and not from a B-rich melt (Yang et al. 2012; Yang et al.  
349 2015 and references therein).

350 The Dewulu and Meiwu tourmalines in quartz-tourmaline veins have wide  
351 ranges of major element compositions (Fig. 7a). This may be attributed to the  
352 dissolution of Mg- and Ca- rich minerals, such as biotite, plagioclase, and  
353 amphibole, as water/rock ratios increased during tourmaline crystallization (Fig.  
354 4f, 5d; Huang et al. 2016). The massive quartz-tourmaline-sulfide veins without  
355 any biotite, plagioclase, and amphibole relicts in the Dewulu quartz diorite  
356 porphyry show high Mg and Ca values (Figs. 4d, g, h, 7a, b). Yang et al. (2012)  
357 pointed out that, when fluid becomes dominant, the silicate minerals of the host  
358 rock may provide the requisite Mg–Ca–Al constituents necessary for the B-rich  
359 fluids to crystallize extensive tourmaline. The release of iron from biotite and  
360 amphibole also increases iron concentrations in hydrothermal fluids (Pal et al.

361 2010; Yang et al. 2012; Hong et al. 2017; Qiu et al. 2020), and promotes  
362 precipitation of sulfides and magnetite in the Dewulu and Meiwu quartz-  
363 tourmaline veins (Figs. 4g-j, 5e, f). The slightly higher Na/(Na+Ca) and lower Ca  
364 values in the Meiwu tourmaline compared to that of Dewulu (Fig. 7a, b) suggests  
365 additional controls on the Meiwu tourmaline composition (Pal et al. 2010). Such  
366 controls are probably ascribed to the formation of iron skarn deposits in Meiwu  
367 during which Ca-bearing minerals crystallized, depleting Ca in the fluids, which  
368 led to high Na/(Na+Ca) values in the tourmalines (Fig. 7).

369 The Damai tourmalines in the quartz-tourmaline vein display distinct major  
370 element compositions, low Mg and Ca values, and high Al and Fe values,  
371 compared to the host Damai stock and tourmalines at Dewulu and Meiwu (Fig.  
372 7a). The geochemical homogeneity and absence of textures attributable to post-  
373 crystallization alteration suggest that formation of the Damai tourmaline was  
374 from a single fluid with limited fluid-rock reaction. The Damai tourmalines,  
375 corresponding to tourmalines from Li-poor granitoids (Fig. 6b), are therefore  
376 most likely precipitated from a hydrothermal fluid that evolved from granite,  
377 without assimilation of the surrounding rocks.

378

### 379 **Source and evolution of fluids**

380 Tourmalines in tourmaline-quartz breccias from Dewulu likely reflect the  
381 original magmatic–hydrothermal fluids. The  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  of the fine-grained tourmalines

382 (−6.6 ‰ to −4.0 ‰) therefore should approximate that of the parental granitic  
383 magma. Such values are slightly higher than that of typical continental crust  
384 (−13 ‰ to −7 ‰), but are consistent with ~90 % of values reported worldwide for  
385 granites and pegmatites (−16 ‰ to −4 ‰), granite-related veins (−24 ‰ to −4 ‰),  
386 and mid-ocean ridge basalt and mantle (−10 ‰ to −1 ‰) (Fig. 8; Marschall and  
387 Jiang 2011; van Hinsberg et al. 2011). Consequently, the boron isotope signature  
388 is consistent with derivation from continental crust with lesser mantle  
389 contribution. This finding is consistent with the geochemical and Sr-Nd isotopic  
390 composition of granitoids in the Xiahe–Hezuo polymetallic district, indicating  
391 that the magma was derived from partial melting of mafic lower crust and  
392 enriched lithospheric mantle (Luo et al. 2015; Qiu and Deng 2017).

393 Most of the tourmaline grains in quartz-tourmaline veins from Dewulu  
394 display oscillatory zoning textures (Fig. 4g-i, k, l). Their cores generally display  
395 heavier  $^{11}\text{B}$  values, ranging from −7.1 ‰ to −5.6 ‰ (Fig. 8), indicating that the  
396 tourmalines in quartz-tourmaline veins were inherited from magmatic–  
397 hydrothermal fluids that precipitated the fine-grained tourmaline in tuffaceous  
398 breccia. In contrast, a significant negative shift of  $^{11}\text{B}$  was observed in the rims  
399 (Fig. 8). Two different models have been proposed to explain the isotopic  
400 variations between cores and rims of single tourmaline grains: (1) mixing of  
401 fluids from multiple sources; and (2) evolution of a fluid from a single source  
402 induced by temperature changes, fluid unmixing, crystallization, and degassing  
403 (e.g., Smith and Yardley 1996; Huang et al. 2016; Albert et al. 2018). The

404 tourmaline from Dewulu shows similar ranges of major element compositions,  
405 which excludes the possibility that the tourmalines with oscillatory zoning texture  
406 formed from multiple sources (Figs. 6, 7; Yang et al. 2015; Huang et al. 2016).  
407 Consequently, the boron isotope variation most likely resulted from evolution of  
408 the fluid-geochemistry. A change in temperature is obviously not sufficient to  
409 result in such a large isotope variation (Fig. 9; Meyer et al. 2008; Huang et al.  
410 2016) and no evidence illustrating fluids unmixing was observed in previous or  
411 current studies (Wang 2004; Jin 2013). The possibility that the isotope variations  
412 resulted from continuous tourmaline crystallization is therefore excluded. If this  
413 were the case, the tourmaline should have gradually heavier isotope values from  
414 cores to rims, because  $^{10}\text{B}$  partitions preferentially into the tourmaline relative to a  
415 liquid phase, leading to an increase in the  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  of the residual fluid (Palmer et al.  
416 1992; Meyer et al. 2008; Albert et al. 2018). Experimental studies have shown that  
417 the escaping fluid and/or vapor will carry  $^{11}\text{B}$  and produce a significant  
418 enrichment of  $^{10}\text{B}$  in the residual phase during degassing processes (Jiang and  
419 Palmer 1998; Albert et al. 2018). Hence, it suggests that continuous vapor loss  
420 attributed to brecciation was induced by liquid-gas immiscibility and gave rise to  
421 the significant isotope shift between cores and rims of the tourmalines at Dewulu.  
422 The significant B isotope fractionation reflected in the decrease in  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values  
423 from cores ( $-5.6\text{‰}$ ) to rims ( $-10.7\text{‰}$ ), may be modeled using Rayleigh  
424 fractionation, and indicates that a relatively large proportion of the fractionation  
425 is attributable to degassing ( $F < 0.2$ ) during fluid evolution in Dewulu (Fig. 9;

426 Leeman et al. 1992; Huang et al. 2016).

427 The substitution mechanisms in the crystallization of the tourmaline rims in  
428 the vein type tourmaline are  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$  and  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$ , compared to tourmalines in  
429 the tuffaceous breccias, which are dominated by the substitution mechanism of  
430  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$  (Fig. 7c, d). This indicates a higher oxygen fugacity fluid forming the  
431 vein type tourmaline. Yang et al. (2002) and Pal et al. (2010) proposed that  
432 continuous degassing may cause loss of  $\text{H}_2$  in the liquid phase, and increase  
433 oxygen fugacity of the residual liquid. The substitution mechanism of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$ ,  
434 therefore, is interpreted as a result of the degassing. Moreover, most of the  
435 tourmalines in Meiwu display a good correlation of Al with Fe, suggesting a  
436 substitution of  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  by  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  (Fig. 7c, d). This implies that the fluids precipitating  
437 Meiwu tourmalines are oxidized ( $>\text{FMQ}$ ), consistent with the observation that  
438 large amounts of magnetite coexist with tourmaline in Meiwu (Fig. 5e, f; Fuchs  
439 et al. 1998; Roda-Robles et al. 2015).

440 Although there is little evidence for intra-crystal boron isotopic variations in  
441 Meiwu tourmalines because of their tiny crystal size, the lightest  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values  
442 ( $-11\text{‰}$ ) indicate that significant degassing occurred before the tourmaline  
443 crystallized (Fig. 8). The high Al contents in Damai tourmaline, in excess of the  
444 six cations per formula unit for ideal schorl–dravite, correlate negatively with Na.  
445 This suggests that excess Al is charge-balanced by the substitution  $^{\text{X}}\square\text{Al}(\text{NaMg})_{-1}$   
446 rather than  $\text{AlO}(\text{Mg}(\text{OH}))_{-1}$  (Fig. 7e; Baksheev et al. 2015). Henry and Dutrow  
447 (2012) proposed that high proportions of the X-site vacancy in tourmaline are

448 caused by low Na content (1.8 wt.% NaCl eq.) of mineralizing fluids. The strong  
449 linear substitution between ( $X_{\square}\text{Al}$ ) and (NaMg) also supports this proposition  
450 (Fig. 7e).

451

#### 452 **Tracer for magmatic-hydrothermal mineralization**

453 Geochemical indicators, including substitution mechanisms of major  
454 elements, Fe content, and shift of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values in tourmaline clearly distinguish the  
455 mineralized intrusion (Dewulu and Meiwu) from the barren granite (Damai) in  
456 the Xiahe-Hezuo polymetallic district.

457 The substitution mechanisms of major elements reflect the oxygen fugacity  
458 and salinity of fluids. A good correlation of Al with Fe at Dewulu and Meiwu,  
459 indicating substitution of  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  by  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ , is suggestive of oxidized fluids. On the  
460 contrary, a substitution of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$  at Damai implies a reduced fluid (<MW). An  
461 important feature of the magmatic-hydrothermal deposits is that the primary fluid  
462 had a relatively low oxygen fugacity that plots in the pyrite and chalcopyrite  
463 stability field. The substitution mechanism changed during growth of the  
464 tourmaline from  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  by  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  to  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  by  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ , suggesting a sharp increase of  
465 oxygen fugacity. This facilitates the reduction of metal solubility and promotes  
466 metal deposition. (e.g., Williams-Jones 2009). The substitution mechanism of  
467  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$ , therefore, has a positive impact on mineralization. However,  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$   
468 and  $X_{\square}\text{Al}(\text{NaMg})_{-1}$  substitutions suggest that the fluids may be reduced (<MW)

469 and of low salinity (1.8 wt.% NaCl eq.) (Fuchs et al. 1998; Henry and Dutrow  
470 2012; Roda-Robles et al. 2015). Yardley (2005) described the importance of  
471 aqueous chlorite complexes for producing economic deposits because these  
472 complexes dominate the transport of metals in magmatic hydrothermal fluids.  
473 This implies that low salinity magmatic fluids are less likely to transport  
474 dissolved-metals budgets sufficient to produce economic deposits. This implies  
475 that the fluids crystallizing tourmalines with  $\text{Fe}^{2+}\text{Mg}_{-1}$  and  $^x\text{Al}(\text{NaMg})_{-1}$   
476 substitutions have low ore-forming potential. The Fe value in tourmaline also  
477 serves as a good indicator for mineralization. Experimental petrology studies  
478 indicate that Fe was released from biotite decomposition into B-rich fluids to form  
479 tourmaline and iron sulfides or oxides during fluid-rock interaction (Cheng et al.  
480 2020). As a result, low Fe content in tourmalines at Dewulu and Meiwu reflect  
481 high abundances of iron sulfides or oxides, indicating a greater ore-forming  
482 potential. In contrast, all the tourmaline grains at Damai exhibiting high Fe  
483 contents, reflecting the lack of significant metal-enrichment in the intrusion. The  
484 shift of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values is another indicator that may reflect the degree of degassing.  
485 Degassing may increase the oxygen fugacity of the fluids by loss of  $\text{H}_2$ , and also  
486 concentrate metallogenic elements. A significant negative shift of  $^{11}\text{B}$  observed in  
487 most of the tourmaline grains at Dewulu is likely to signify a distinct degassing  
488 event (Fig. 9). The Dewulu granitoids crystallized from magmas that were  
489 chemically reducing and characterized by low oxygen fugacity (Jin et al. 2017; Sui  
490 et al. 2018), which are not conducive to the formation of magmatic hydrothermal

491 deposits (Sun et al. 2015; Yu et al. 2019). Yet, such degassing processes increased  
492 the oxygen fugacity and the concentrations of metallogenic elements in the fluid,  
493 contributing to formation of the Dewulu deposit. The shift of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values of  
494 tourmalines, therefore, may be used to distinguish metal fertility from granitoid to  
495 granitoid.

496

497

## IMPLICATIONS

498 Geochemical characteristics described above highlight the potential of  
499 tourmaline as a tracer of magmatic-hydrothermal processes and mineralization.  
500 Both major element and isotope compositions in tourmaline change as  
501 physicochemical conditions of magmatic-hydrothermal fluids vary. For  
502 tourmalines from causative granitoids, their major element compositions are  
503 controlled by  $\text{Fe}^{3+}\text{Al}_{-1}$  substitution, suggesting that fluids became more oxidized  
504 due to the liquid-gas immiscibility processes. Also the large negative shift of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$   
505 from cores to rims documented in these tourmalines reflects the immiscibility.  
506 Rayleigh fractionation models of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  may effectively reflect the degree of boron  
507 degassing, which is directly related to decreasing metal solubility and promotes  
508 the formation of ores. In contrast,  $^{\text{X}}\square\text{Al}(\text{NaMg})_{-1}$  is the dominant substitution  
509 mechanism for tourmalines in barren granitoids owing to crystallization in the  
510 presence of reduced fluids with low salinity. Such magmatic-hydrothermal fluids  
511 cannot transport enough metal to give rise to economic mineralization. Diagrams  
512 that plot  $\text{Al}/\text{Fe}$ ,  $\text{Mg}/\text{Fe}$ ,  $\text{Al}/\text{Na}$ ,  $\text{Fe}$  values, and shift of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values in tourmaline



513 are proposed as discriminators to explore ore-bearing granites from barren  
514 intrusions.

515

516

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- 759

760 **Figure Captions**

761 Figure 1. (a) Simplified geological map of the West Qinling orogen in central  
762 China. The inset shows the location of the study area (modified after Zhang et al.,  
763 2001; Dong et al., 2016; Qiu et al., 2017). (b) Geological sketch map of the  
764 Xiahe-Hezuo polymetallic district showing locations of granitoids hosting  
765 tourmaline samples analyzed in this study and their spatial distribution of related  
766 ore deposits (modified after Qiu and Deng, 2017; Gou et al., 2019; Qiu et al.,  
767 2020).

768

769 Figure 2. Quartz-tourmaline vein at Damai. (a, b) One 4 cm-wide quartz-  
770 tourmaline vein hosted in biotite granodiorite with 3 cm-wide silicification  
771 selvage on both sides. Tourmalines appear as radial aggregates. (c) Biotite  
772 granodiorite contains quartz, plagioclase, biotite, and hornblende. (d, e)  
773 Tourmaline coexisting with quartz and minor sericite, contains quartz inclusions,  
774 and replaces plagioclase. It exhibits a homogeneous light green center and wide  
775 brown rim with oscillatory zoning. Amp = amphibole, Bt = biotite, Pl =  
776 plagioclase, Qz = quartz, Ser = sericite, Tur = tourmaline. Note the  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values  
777 and spots locations. CPL = cross-polarized transmitted light, PPL = plane-  
778 polarized transmitted light.

779

780 Figure 3. Tourmaline in tuffaceous breccia body from Dewulu. (a) Fine-grained

781 tourmaline and quartz rim the fragments of tuffaceous breccia. (b) Matrix  
782 comprises quartz, plagioclase, sericite, and disseminated tourmaline, cementing  
783 the fragments of tuffaceous breccia and sickle quartz. (c) Anhedral tourmaline  
784 grains from tourmaline-quartz rim exhibit moderate pleochroism with small cyan  
785 center and thin brown rim. Note the  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values and spots locations.

786

787 Figure 4. Quartz-tourmaline veins (a, b), massive tourmaline veins (c, d), and  
788 disseminated tourmalines (e) from Dewulu. (f) Tourmaline coexisting with  
789 sericite replacing plagioclase. (g, h) Tourmalines are characterized by moderate  
790 pleochroism and well-developed color growth zoning with a light green core and  
791 light green to brown rim. (i) Tourmaline shows sector zoned centers. (j, k, l) The  
792 tourmaline coexists with pyrite, arsenopyrite, chalcopyrite, quartz, with minor  
793 rutile, and sericite. Note the  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values and spots locations. A significant negative  
794 shift of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values between cores and rims was observed. See text for details. Apy  
795 = arsenopyrite, Ccp = chalcopyrite, Py = pyrite, Rt = rutile. RL = reflected light.

796

797 Figure 5. Quartz-tourmaline-magnetite veins from Meiwu. (a-c) Several quartz-  
798 tourmaline-magnetite veins crosscut mafic enclaves found in granodiorite. (d-f)  
799 Tourmaline coexisting with quartz, sericite, and magnetite, and replacing  
800 plagioclase. Mag = magnetite. Note the  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values and spots locations.

801

802 Figure 6. (a) Ternary classification of the tourmalines after Hawthorne and Henry  
803 (1999) based on the principal constituents at the X-site; (b) Al–Fe–Mg ternary  
804 diagram after Henry and Guidotti (1985) with compositions of tourmaline.  
805 Labelled fields are: (1) Li-rich granitoid pegmatite and aplites, (2) Li-poor  
806 granitoids, pegmatites and aplites, (3) Fe<sup>3+</sup>- rich quartz–tourmaline rocks (altered  
807 granitoids), (4) metapellites and metapsammites with Al-saturating phases, (5)  
808 metapellites and metapsammites lacking Al-saturating phases, (6) Fe<sup>3+</sup>-rich  
809 quartz–tourmaline rocks, calc-silicate rocks and metapelites, (7) low-Ca  
810 metaultramafic rocks and Cr–V-rich metasedimentary rocks, and (8) meta-  
811 carbonates and meta-pyroxenites.

812

813 Figure 7. Geochemical compositions of tourmalines expressed in terms of atomic  
814 ratio and atoms per formula unit (a.p.f.u.) after Pal et al., 2010. (a) Mg/(Mg + Fe)  
815 versus Na/(Na + Ca), (b) Mg/(Mg + Fe) versus Ca (a.p.f.u.), (c) Al (a.p.f.u.)  
816 versus Fe (a.p.f.u.), (d) Mg (a.p.f.u.) versus Fe (a.p.f.u.), (e) Al (a.p.f.u.) versus Na  
817 (a.p.f.u.). The arrows in Figure c-e depict the trend of the major compositions of  
818 the tourmalines. Data of average whole-rock major element composition of the  
819 Damai, Dewulu, and Meiwu granitoids are from Luo et al. (2015) and Jin et al.  
820 (2017).

821

822 Figure 8. Histograms of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values of tourmalines from Damai, Dewulu, and

823 Meiwu, and compiled boron reservoirs from Marschall and Jiang, 2011;

824 Trumbull and Slack, 2018. MORB = mid-ocean ridge basalt.

825

826 Figure 9. Rayleigh fractionation models for evolution of  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values of the  
827 Dewulu hydrothermal fluid systems, showing  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  variations of tourmaline  
828 during degassing. The vapor–fluid fraction factor ( $\alpha$ ) is assumed to be 1.0017 at  
829 250 °C and 1.0012 at 295 °C taken from Leeman et al. (1992). Temperature data  
830 of ore-forming fluids (250–295 °C) are from Wang (2004) and Jin (2013). The  
831 initial  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  value is -5 ‰ assumed from the average  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  values from tourmalines  
832 in tourmaline in the tuffaceous breccia body. The large  $\delta^{11}\text{B}$  isotopic fractionation  
833 decreasing from cores to rims indicates a relative large fraction of degassing  
834 ( $F < 0.2$ ).

835

### 836 **Supplementary Tables**

837 Supplementary Table 1. Summary of tourmaline samples investigated in this  
838 study.

839

840 Supplementary Table 2. Major element composition of tourmaline samples from  
841 the Xiahe-Hezuo polymetallic district.

842



- 843 Supplementary Table 3. Boron isotope of tourmaline samples from the Xiahe-  
844 Hezuo polymetallic district.

FIG. 1

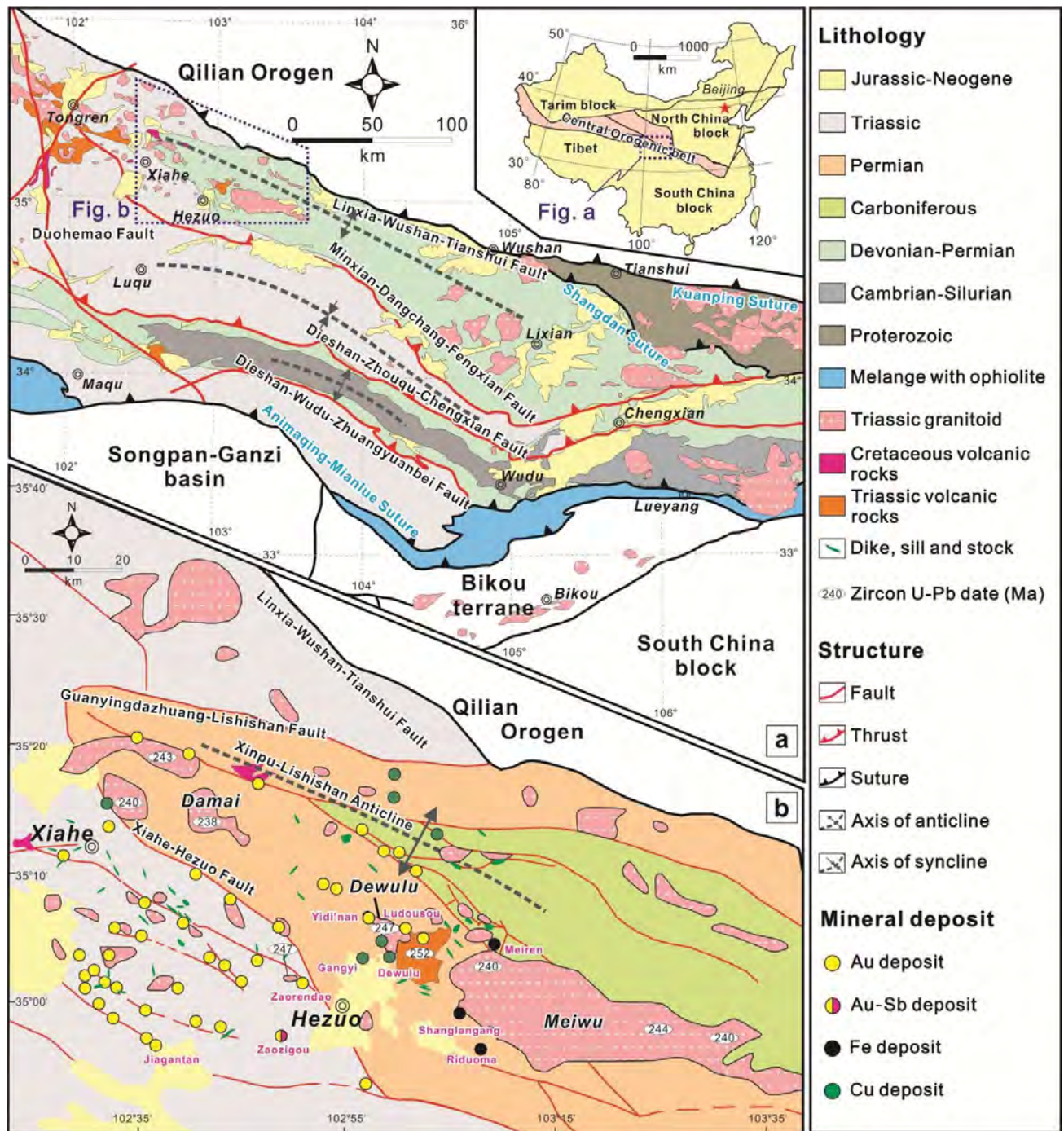


FIG. 2

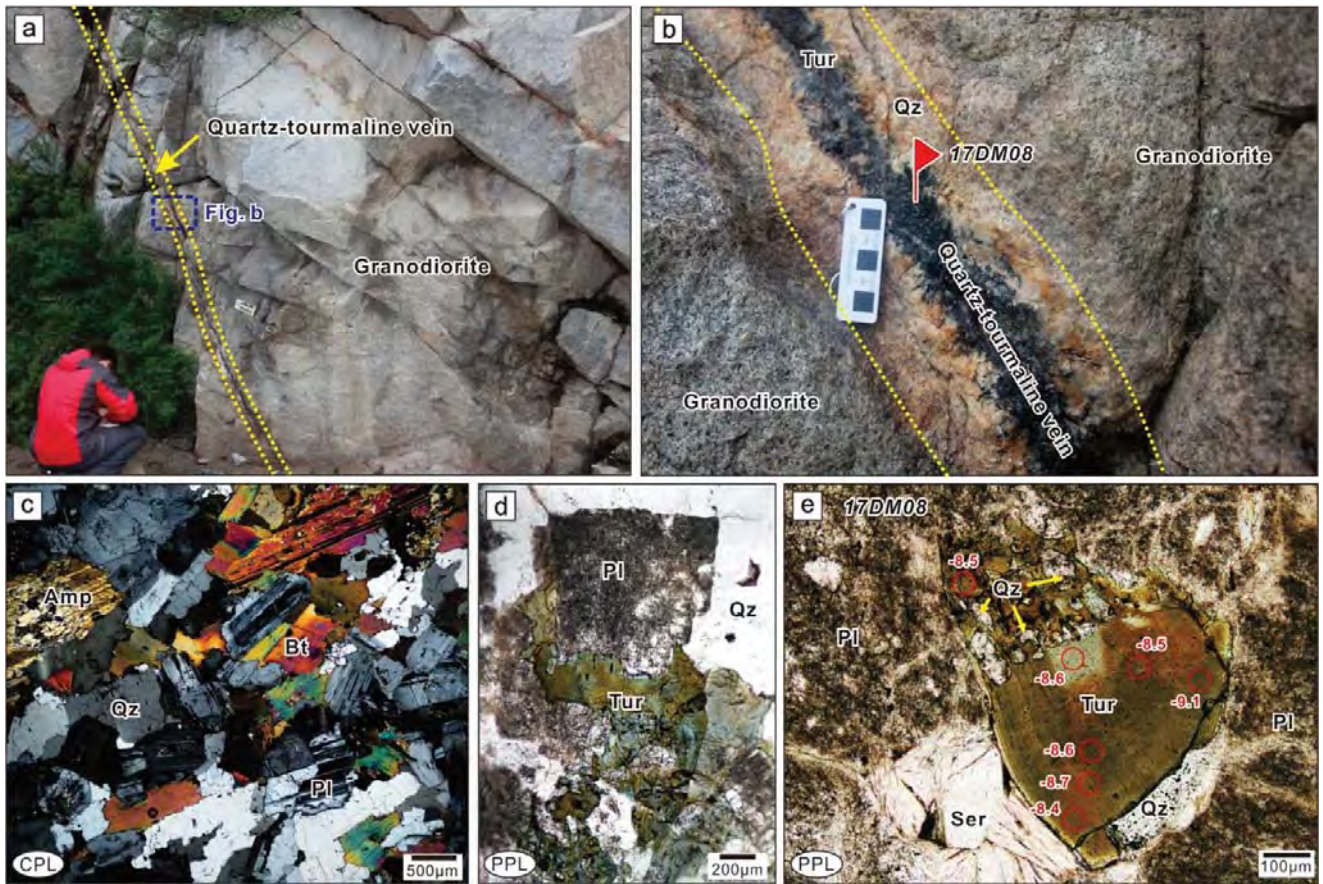


FIG. 3

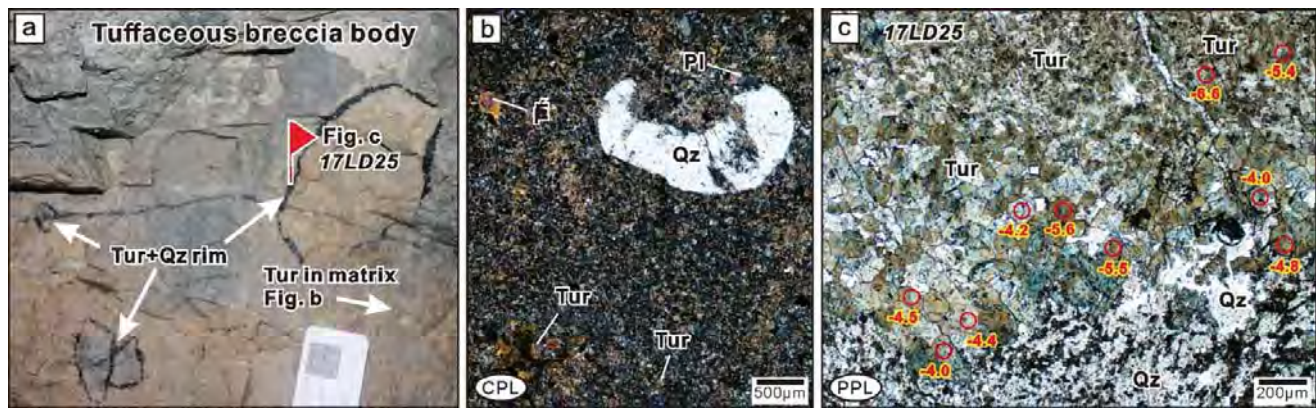


FIG. 4

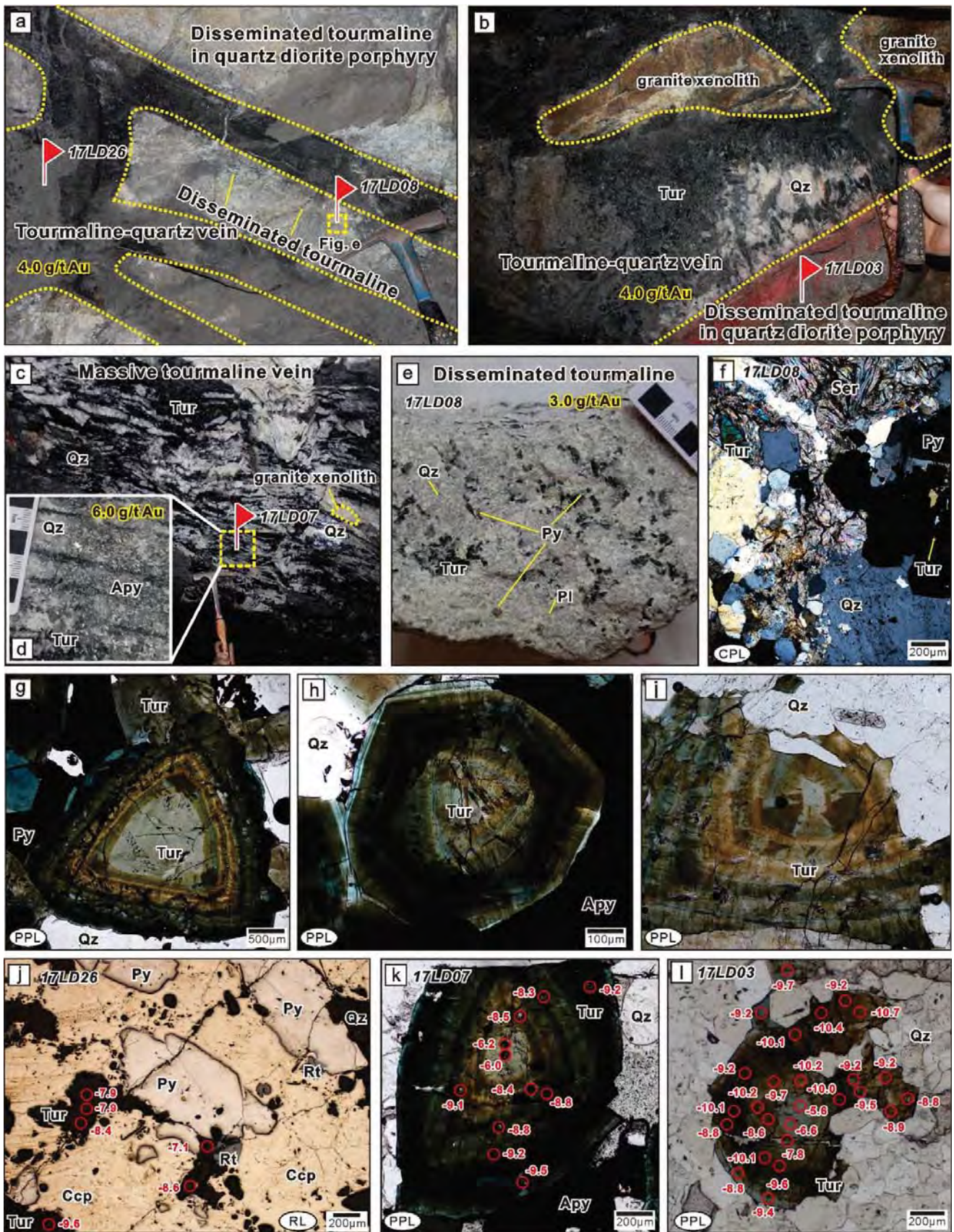


FIG. 5

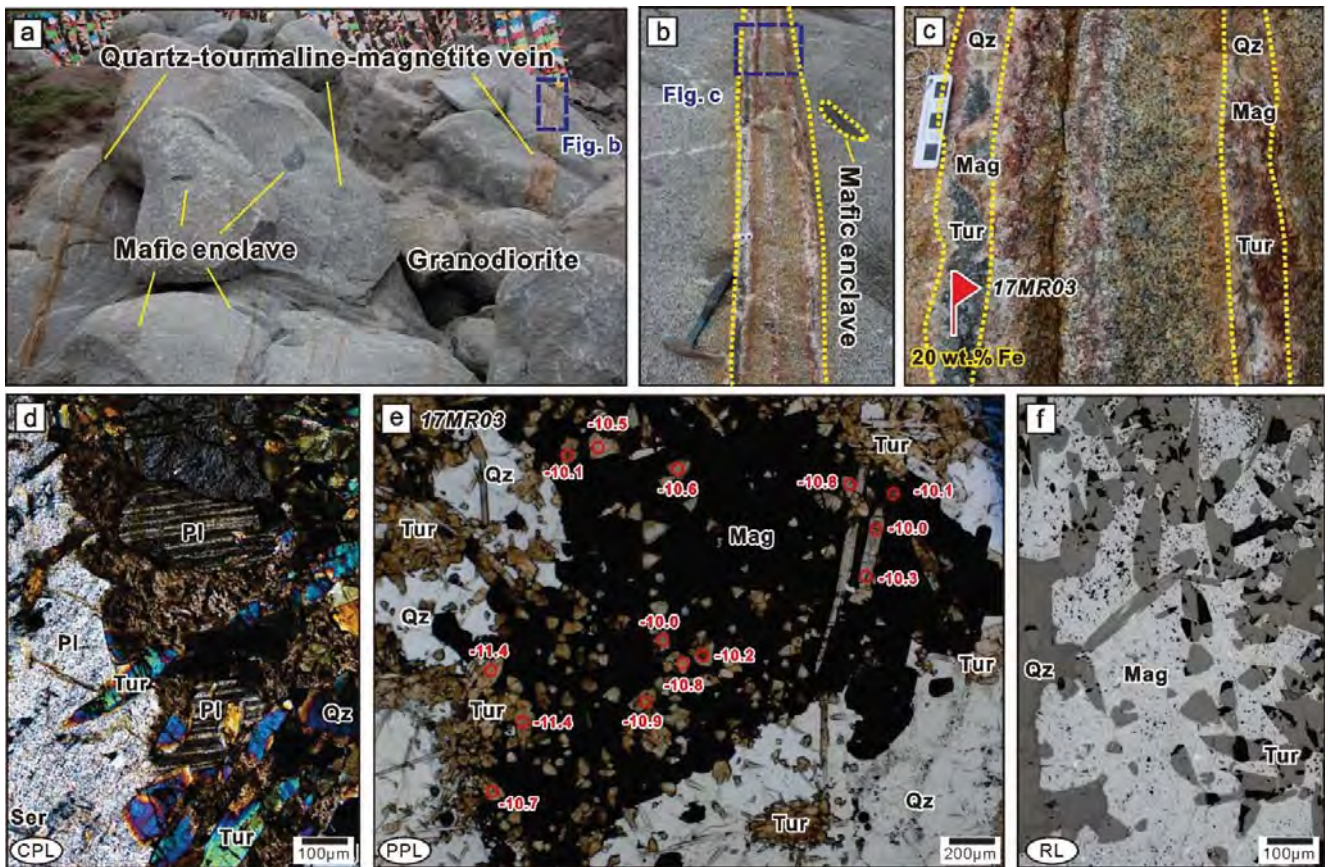


FIG. 6

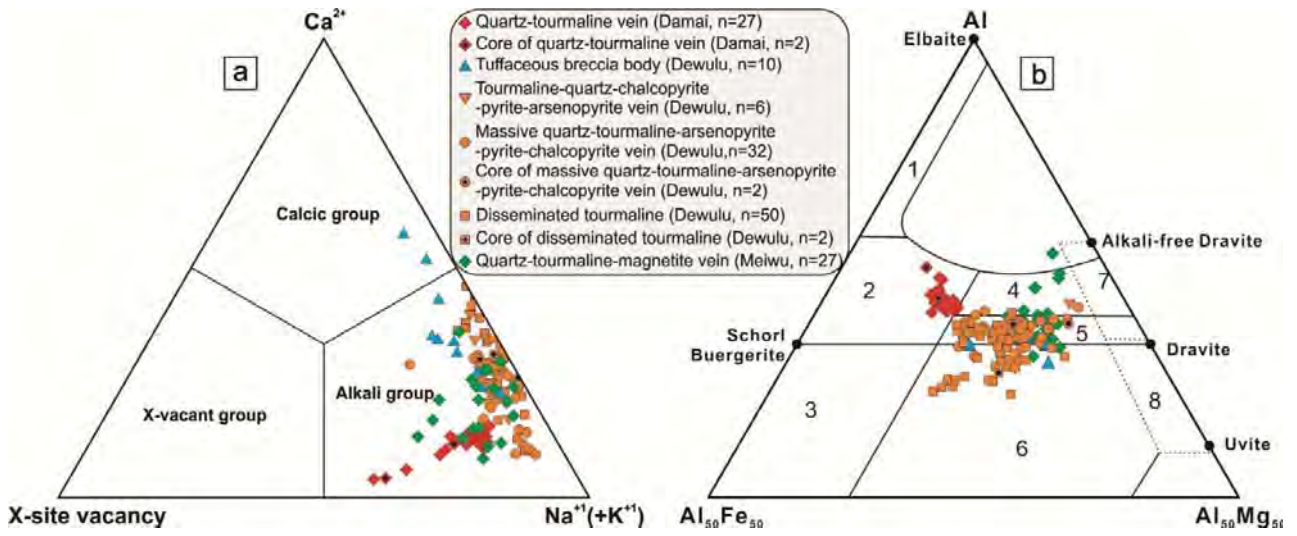


FIG. 7

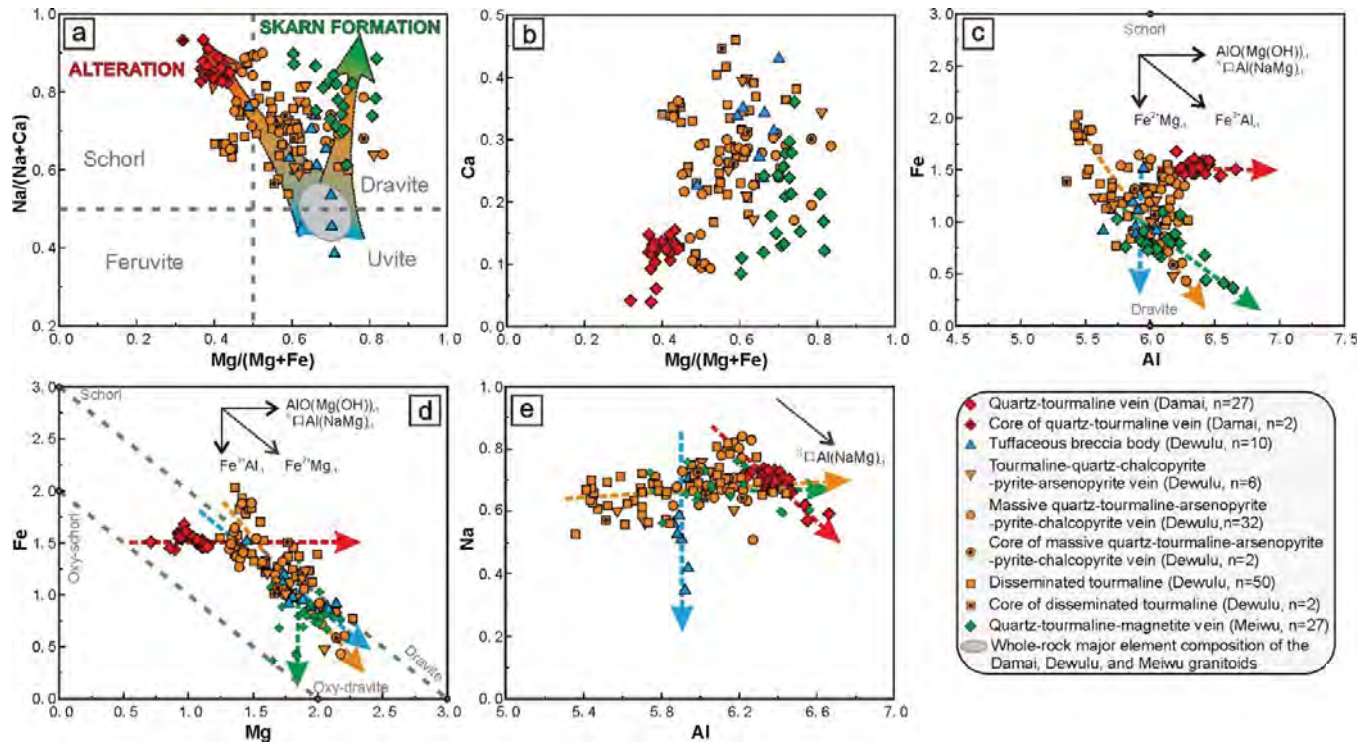




FIG. 8

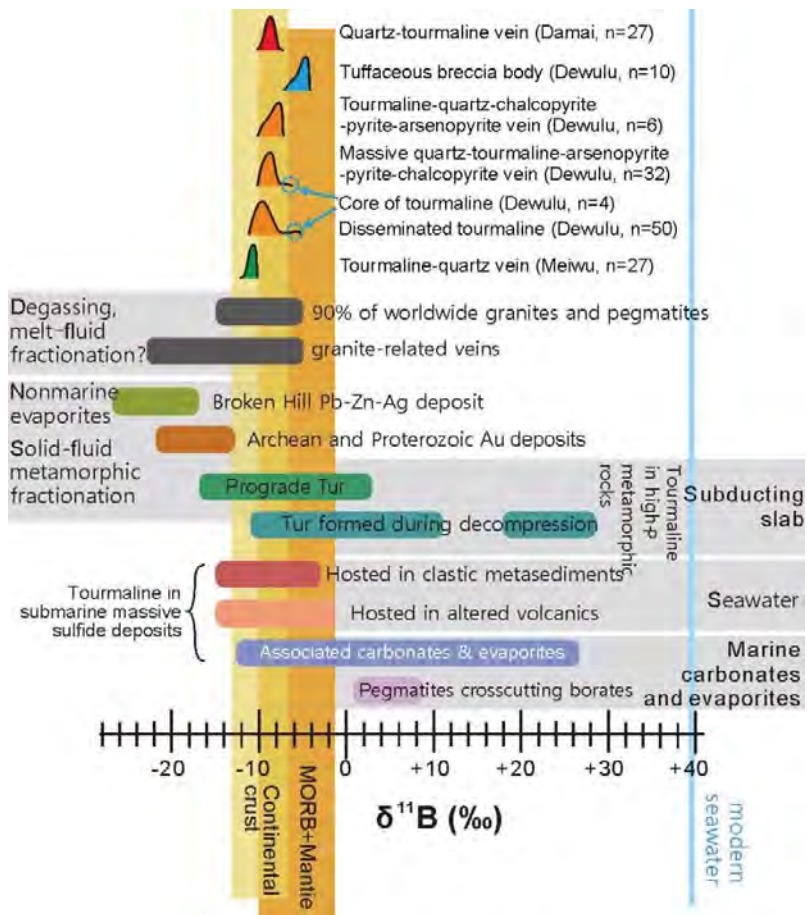


FIG. 9

