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Valentine Combaudon, Olivier Sissmann, Sylvain Bernard, Jean-Christophe Viennet, Valentine Megevand, et al.. Are the Fe-rich-clay veins in the igneous rock of the Kansas (USA) Precambrian crust of magmatic origin?. *Lithos*, 2024, 474-475, pp.107583. <10.1016/j.lithos.2024.107583>. <hal-04533762>

**HAL Id: hal-04533762**

**<https://lilloa.hal.science/hal-04533762v1>**

Submitted on 25 Nov 2024

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1 **Are the Fe-rich-clay veins in the igneous rock of the Kansas (USA) Precambrian crust of**  
2 **magmatic origin?**

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16

17 **Highlights**

- 18 • The igneous rock from the Kansas basement is a fayalite-bearing monzo-diorite.
- 19 • Two generations of iron-rich clay minerals are described within the monzo-diorite.
- 20 • Reduced-iron-rich clay minerals are formed by precipitation of a late magmatic fluid.
- 21 • Oxidized-iron-rich clay minerals are formed by deuteric alteration of the fayalite.
- 22 • Late magmatic alteration could be prone to produce hydrogen by iron oxidation.

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35 **Abstract**

36 The North American Mid-Continent rift (MCR) is a 1.1 Ga aborted rift, which has recently  
37 become an area of intense focus for energy resource exploration following the report of H<sub>2</sub>  
38 emissions. To document the nature of the producing rocks, we conducted a multi-scale study  
39 on preserved drill-core samples from the DR1-A well located in the same area as the H<sub>2</sub>-  
40 producing wells in Kansas. We showed that this well reaches an unmapped part of the MRS  
41 composed of fayalite-bearing monzo-diorites in which we identified atypical veins of  
42 iddingsite, a complex mixing of Fe-rich phyllosilicates. Combining scanning and transmission  
43 electron microscopy (SEM and TEM) with scanning transmission X-ray microscopy (STXM)  
44 allowed us to differentiate at least two types of sub-micro-meter Fe-rich veins. A central  
45 reduced vein cutting the fayalite, other mafic minerals, the plagioclase, and to a lesser extent  
46 the alkali feldspar, contains a complex mix of serpentine, chlorite, and mica. Furthermore, a  
47 border vein, with a higher degree of Fe-oxidation, is found to be contained only within the  
48 fayalite. This external vein mainly contains iron and silicon, together with a few percent of  
49 potassium and calcium, and can be divided into two sub-veins composed of Fe<sup>3+</sup>-rich  
50 interstratified chlorite-smectite and Fe<sup>3+</sup>-rich serpentine in direct contact with the fayalite.

51 Textures and microstructures of these phyllosilicates suggest that they have crystallized from a  
52 late magmatic and differentiated fluid, which precipitation produced the central vein together  
53 with the exsolution of an H<sub>2</sub>O-enriched fluid phase. This exsolved fluid, chemically far from  
54 equilibrium with the fayalite, appears to have induced a deuteric alteration of the fayalite,  
55 leading to the crystallization of the external veins enriched in ferric iron. These observations  
56 bring new perspectives on the history of formation of iron-rich clay minerals, which may,  
57 somehow, be related to H<sub>2</sub> production.

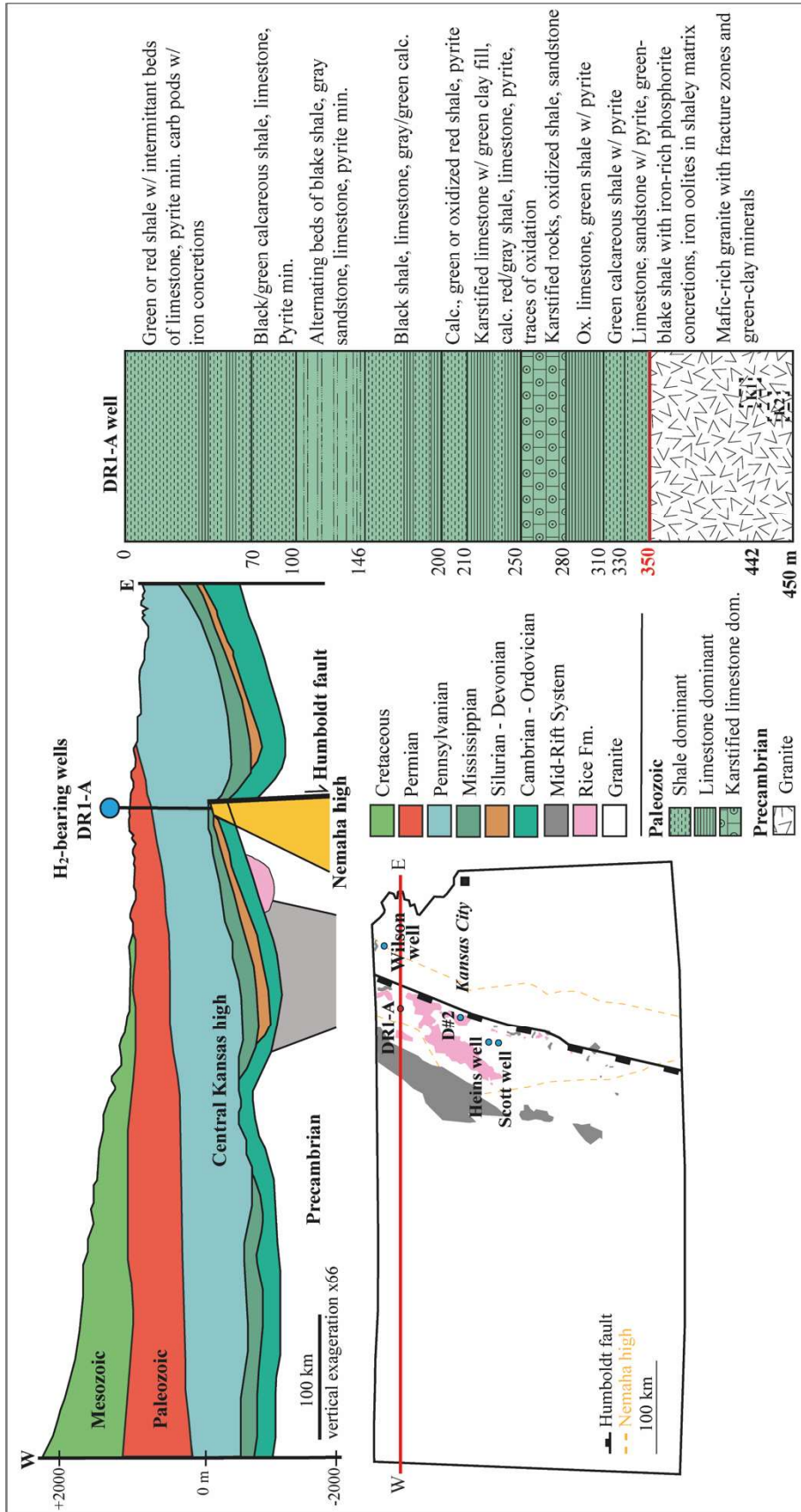
58 **Keywords:** fayalite, iron-rich clays, Mid-Continent rift, Precambrian, hydrogen

## 59        **1. Introduction**

60        Since the eighties, old water wells in northeastern Kansas have been emitting gas with an  
61        average of 29-37 mol% of natural hydrogen (Coveney et al., 1987). A more recent study from  
62        Guélard and co-authors (2017) shows similar gas composition up to 92 mol% of H<sub>2</sub>,  
63        highlighting a persistent regional flux. Noble gas analyses and on-site spectrophotometry on  
64        water samples showed that the gas flux coming from the wells has a deep crustal origin  
65        associated with iron oxidation, coinciding with these wells reaching the basement (Guélard et  
66        al., 2017). The basement in the area corresponds to the Mid-Continent rift (MCR), a 1.1 Ga  
67        aborted rift composed of a km-scale accumulation of mafic rocks intruded in the Precambrian  
68        granitoid crust (Woelk et al., 1991). The emplacement of the rift was responsible for a major  
69        crustal reworking, resulting in half grabens bounded by normal faults (Ojakangas et al., 2011).  
70        The last tectonic event occurred during the Pennsylvanian (300 million years ago) and was  
71        responsible for reactivating the normal Proterozoic faults in crustal faults and for uplifting  
72        major parts of the basement (Merriam., 1963; Coveney et al., 1987; Newell et al., 2007). The  
73        H<sub>2</sub>-emitting wells are located above the Nemaha High and the Humboldt crustal fault, in  
74        northeastern Kansas, and are also located about tens of kilometers east of the mapped area of  
75        the Mid-Continent rift (Figure 1). The source of hydrogen emissions has thus been attributed,  
76        thanks to previous gas analyses, to the Precambrian crust and potentially to the MCR (Guélard  
77        et al., 2017). Yet, the fine-scale petrography of the producing rocks has remained poorly  
78        documented.

79        Here, we report the characterization of preserved drill-core samples coming from the DR1-A  
80        well located above the Nemaha High and the Humboldt fault and reaching the basement (Figure  
81        1). It crosses 350 meters of Paleozoic sedimentary rocks and nearly 100 meters of Precambrian  
82        basement rocks (Figure 1). We report here the results of a multi-scale petrographic study  
83        including scanning electron microscopy (SEM), scanning transmission X-ray microscopy

84 coupled to X-ray absorption near edge structure spectroscopy (STXM-XANES), and  
85 transmission electron microscopy (TEM) performed on two samples K1 and K2 from the DR1-  
86 A well. This study, thus, describes the mineralogy of the rocks investigated and the petrological  
87 processes having led to the production of the late phases based on the fine scale partitioning of  
88 iron, elemental composition, and textural and structural specificities.



91 *Figure 1: West-East cross-section of Kansas with the location of the H<sub>2</sub>-bearing wells and the*  
92 *DR1-A well (modified from Bickford et al., 1981, Kansas Geological Survey (1984), Coveney*  
93 *et al., 1987, and Guélard et al., 2017), simplified geological map of the basement top with the*  
94 *location of the H<sub>2</sub>-bearing wells and DR1-A well (modified from Bickford et al., 1981, Coveney*  
95 *et al., 1987 and Guélard et al., 2017) and schematic stratigraphic log of the DR1-A well with*  
96 *the position of K1 and K2 samples (descriptions of the Paleozoic units are from the DR1-A*  
97 *drilling well report and are summary of the rock description's provided in the report. For more*  
98 *details, please refer to the drilling report available on the Kansas Geological Survey website).*

99

## 100 **2. Materials and methods**

### 101 **2.1. Samples**

102 The K1 and K2 samples belong to the DR1-A well (Figure 1). The depth of the well is 457  
103 meters. K1 sample corresponds to a depth of 442 meters while K2 sample corresponds to a  
104 depth of 450 meters. The preserved drill-core samples were provided by the Kansas Geological  
105 Survey (KGS).

106

### 107 **2.2. Mineralogy**

108 Optical microscopy images have been acquired with a petrographic microscope at Institut  
109 Français du Pétrole et des Energies Nouvelles (IFPEN, Rueil-Malmaison, France) in  
110 transmitted and reflected light. Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) and Energy-dispersive  
111 X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) mapping were performed on thin sections of the K1 and K2 samples  
112 using a Zeiss Gemini SEM at IFPEN (Rueil-Malmaison, France) and a Tescan VEGAIL LSU  
113 SEM at Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris, France). International MAC standards

114 for olivine, forsterite, diopside, albite and orthoclase were used to calibrate the acquired signal.  
115 The SEM chemical compositions of the standards were also compared to their chemical  
116 compositions acquired with a microprobe. Images and chemical analyses were performed at a  
117 15 kV accelerating voltage using an 8 mm working distance in backscattered electron detection  
118 mode. Data were processed using the Hyperspy software (de la Peña et al. 2017).

119

### 120 **2.3. FIB**

121 To be characterized by STXM-XANES and TEM, samples must be transparent to electrons,  
122 i.e., with a thickness between 30 to 80 nm. To obtain electron-transparent sections, the samples  
123 were prepared using an SEM equipped with a Focused Ion Beam (FIB). This technique allowed  
124 us to prepare nanometric-scale samples that were studied to obtain high-resolution information  
125 (Ciobanu et al., 2011). FIB-thin sections were extracted from the K1 and K2 samples using an  
126 FEI Strata DB 235 (IEMN, Lille, France) at low Ga-ion current to minimize local gallium  
127 implantation, amorphization, mixing of components, local compositional changes, or  
128 redeposition of the sputtered material on the sample surface (Bernard et al., 2009; Wirth, 2009).

129

### 130 **2.4. Scanning transmission X-ray microscopy and X-ray absorption near edge** 131 **structure spectroscopy**

132 Scanning transmission X-ray microscopy (STXM) and X-ray absorption near edge structure  
133 (XANES) data were collected on the FIB-thin sections using the HERMES STXM beamline at  
134 the synchrotron SOLEIL (Belkhou et al., 2015; Swaraj et al., 2017). XANES combined with  
135 STXM enables the speciation of a chemical element (iron in this work), obtained in the form of  
136 an absorption spectrum, and the quantification of the element of interest, represented as a  
137 chemical map of the FIB-thin section (Bourdelle et al., 2013). XANES data were extracted from

138 image stacks collected at energy increments of 0.1 eV over the iron (690–740 eV) absorption  
139 range with a dwell time of 1 ms per pixel to prevent irradiation damage (Wang et al., 2009).  
140 Data processing was done by fitting peaks of spectra from which the background was removed,  
141 and the concentration of Fe<sup>3+</sup> was determined following the method described by Bourdelle and  
142 co-authors (2013) and Le Guillou and co-authors (2015).

143

## 144 **2.5. Transmission electron microscopy**

145 Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) was performed on one FIB-thin section of the K1  
146 sample and two different FIB-thin sections of K2. The aim was to obtain images of the samples  
147 at the nanometric scale as well as diffraction patterns of the minerals constitutive of the samples.  
148 These latter, previously investigated by STXM-XANES, were studied by TEM, in parallel  
149 beam with selected area electron diffraction (SAED) with a JEOL 2100 F equipped with a field  
150 emission gun (FEG) operating at 200 kV and in scanning transmission electron (STEM) modes  
151 with a Thermofisher TITAN Themis-300 aberration-corrected FEI TEM operating at 300 kV.  
152 EDS data were collected by a super-X detectors system with four windowless silicon drift  
153 detectors, using a probe current of 500 pA with a dwell time of 4 μs per pixel. These data were  
154 then processed using the Hyperspy software package which allow for quantitative mapping (de  
155 la Peña et al. 2017). The chemical composition of each phase is determined by considering each  
156 pixel independently. It can also be determined by considering an area of pixels representative  
157 of a mineral and then by extracting an average EDS signal. Both methods have been used. All  
158 the data are accessible in the supplementary files (Supplementary 1 and Supplementary 2).

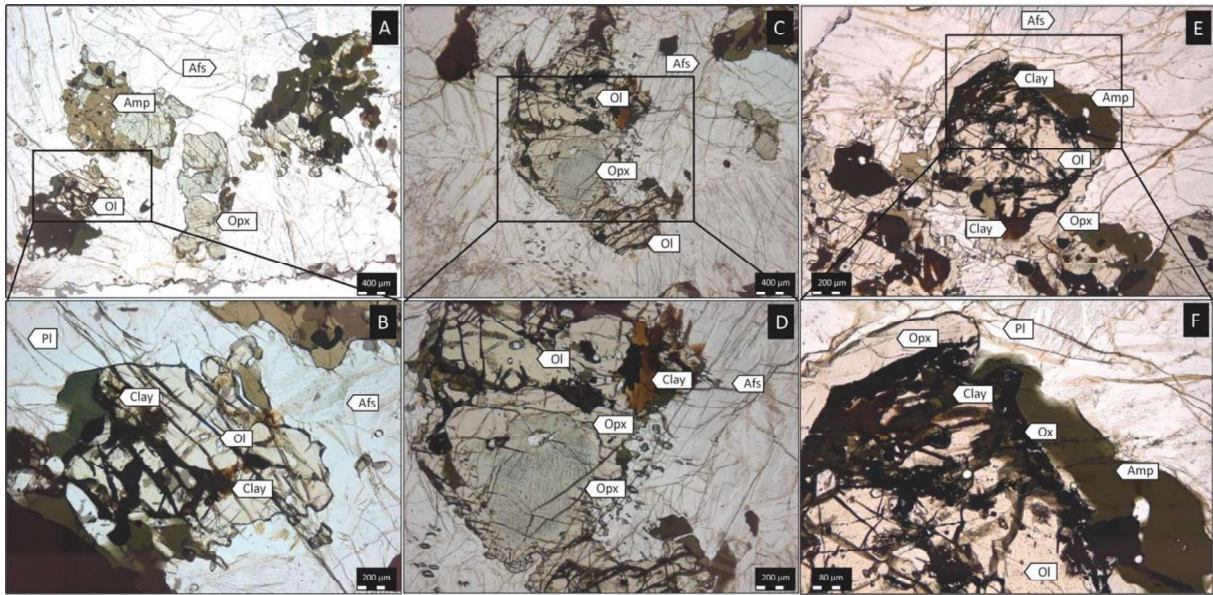
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## 160 **3. Results**

### 161 **3.1. Characterization at the micrometer-scale**

162 Optical micrographs of K2 and K1 samples from the DR1-A well are shown in Figure 2. Their  
163 mineralogical assemblage is close to a monzo-diorite. They reveal feldspars, olivine, pyroxene,  
164 and amphibole as the main mineral phases. They are uncolored under in-plane polarized light  
165 and grey under crossed polars. K-feldspars have perthitic textures composed of plagioclase.  
166 Polysynthetic twinning is observed in plagioclase. Amphibole is light brown under in-plane  
167 polarized light and tends to appear brown to green under crossed polars. Pyroxene is uncolored  
168 to light green under in-plane polarized light and has second order birefringence colors under  
169 crossed polars. Their orthogonal cleavages are visible. Pyroxene and amphibole are mostly  
170 clustered around the olivine throughout the rock (Figure 2A, C, D, E, and F). Olivine is  
171 uncolored to slightly yellow under in-plane polarized light and has second order birefringence  
172 colors under crossed polars (Figure 2A, B, C, D, E, and F). They are cut by a thin and light  
173 yellow to dark brown mineral forming veins (Figure 2B and D). The thickness of these veins  
174 varies from several tens of microns to a few microns. The mineral forming the veins also  
175 mimics, in some places, the olivine shape and is associated with iron oxide (Figure 2F). The  
176 mineral forming the veins is present within the olivine, as well as within minerals in contact  
177 with the olivine. At this scale, it does not appear as clearly in the felspathic matrix as in the  
178 olivine.

179



180

181 *Figure 2: A- Optical micrographs in plane polarized light showing the K2 sample*  
 182 *mineralogical assemblage; B- Optical micrographs in plane polarized light zoomed on an*  
 183 *olivine crystal and its associated aggregates of light yellow to dark brown clay mineral seen in*  
 184 *A; C- Optical micrograph showing K2 olivine and associated mafic minerals inside the feldspar*  
 185 *matrix; D- Optical micrographs in plane polarized light zoomed on the olivine – orthopyroxene*  
 186 *association seen in C; E- Optical micrographs in plane polarized light showing the K1 sample*  
 187 *mineralogical assemblage; F- Optical micrographs in plane polarized light zoomed on the*  
 188 *olivine and clays seen in E (Pl is for plagioclase, Afs is for K-feldspar, Ol is for olivine, Opx is*  
 189 *for orthopyroxene, Amp is for amphibole, Mag is for magnetite. Abbreviations have been*  
 190 *defined by Whitney and Evans., 2010).*

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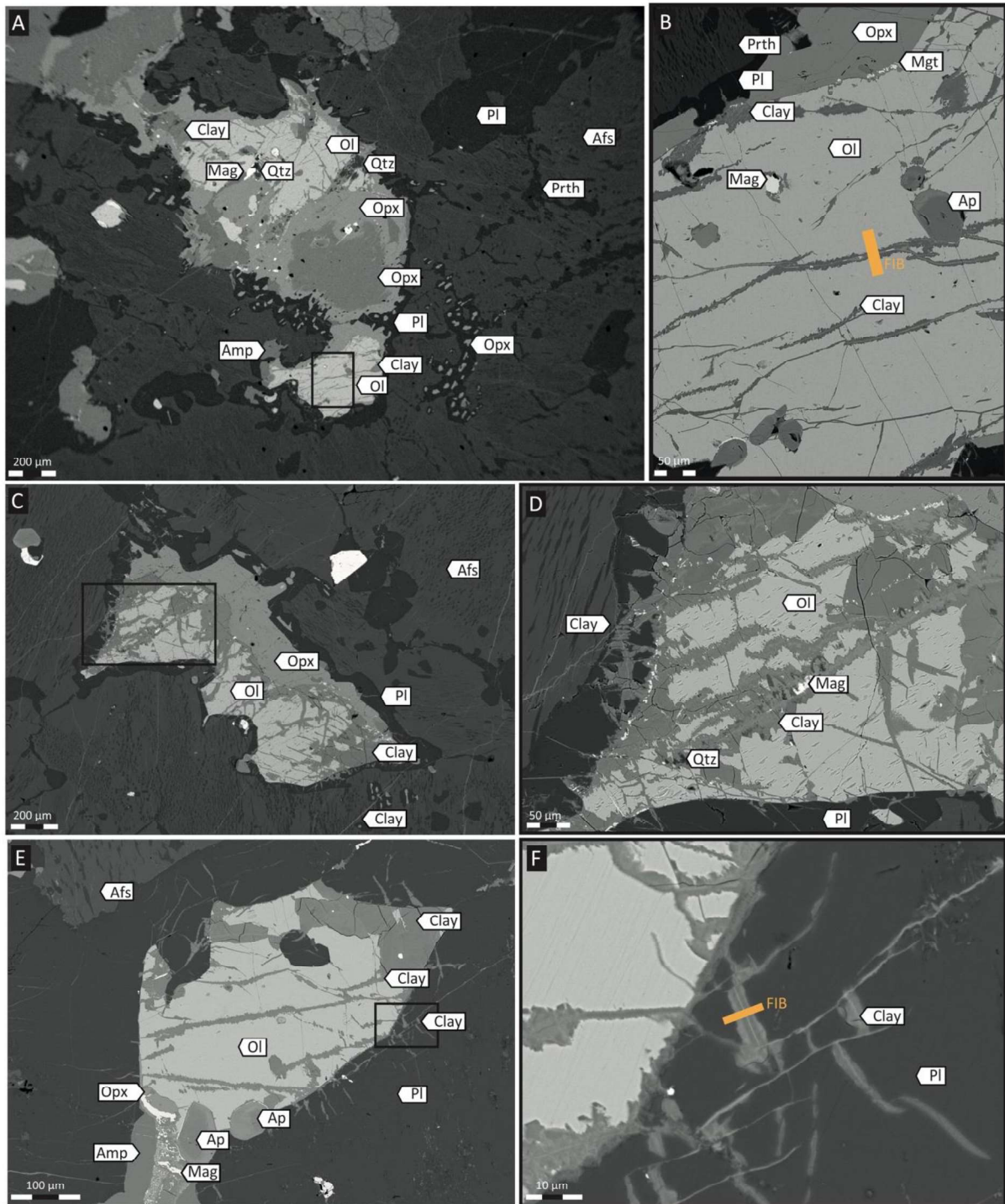
192 SEM data on K2 and K1 samples are shown in Figure 3. SEM-EDS provides semi-quantitative  
 193 chemical compositions. All structural formulae given below have been recalculated from EDS  
 194 data acquired with the SEM. K-feldspar is orthoclase with the following structural formula:  
 195  $K_{0.8}Na_{0.2}AlSi_3O_8$ . Plagioclase is albite with the following structural formula:  
 196  $Na_{0.8}Ca_{0.2}Al_{1.2}Si_{2.8}O_8$ . Rims of plagioclase are seen around the olivine, which is not the case for

197 orthoclase. Both feldspars are closely associated and form perthitic textures with the albite  
198 being formed from the orthoclase.

199 Mafic minerals are seen as aggregates and can also form rims around olivine (Figure 3A and  
200 C). Note that plagioclase is also found at the border of these rims. These mafic rims are  
201 composed of amphibole identified as iron-rich pargasite:  
202  $\text{Na}_{0.4}\text{Ca}_{1.7}\text{Fe}_{3.5}\text{Mg}_{1.1}\text{K}_{0.2}\text{Al}_{1.9}\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{22}(\text{OH})_2$  and orthopyroxene as ferrosilite:  
203  $\text{Fe}_{1.6}\text{Mg}_{0.5}\text{Mn}_{0.1}\text{Si}_2\text{O}_6$  (Figure 4A, B, and C). In some areas, these ferrosilites are associated with  
204 clinopyroxene identified as augite:  $\text{Ca}_{0.7}\text{FeMg}_{0.3}\text{Si}_2\text{O}_6$ . Together they form large exsolution  
205 textures of several hundreds of microns in length. These iron-rich minerals have crystallized  
206 around more or less well-preserved olivine. They have been identified as fayalite, the iron-rich  
207 endmember of olivine:  $\text{Fe}_{1.8}\text{Mn}_{0.1}\text{Mg}_{0.1}\text{SiO}_4$ . They are crosscut by veins of minerals rich in Fe  
208 and Si (Figure 3B and D).

209 Veins crosscutting fayalite in the K2 and K1 samples exhibit different phases, symmetrically  
210 distributed along the axes of the vein. They are made of an external part in direct contact with  
211 the fayalite. Note that veins only exhibit external parts within the fayalite. The contact between  
212 the external part of the veins and the hosting olivine is mostly characterized by scalloped  
213 patterns (Figure 4A). These veins are also made of a central part sometimes associated with  
214 iron oxide, apatite, and quartz (Figure 3B and D and Figure 4A). SEM investigations reveal that  
215 the central part of the vein is observed in the fayalite, the amphibole, the orthopyroxene, and  
216 the albite. Except for the areas containing iron oxide, apatite, and quartz, these veins are mainly  
217 composed of Si and Fe, with the internal parts exhibiting higher Fe/Si values (Fe/Si of 1.2) than  
218 the external part of the veins (Fe/Si of 0.9). Narrower veins (smaller than a micron) can also be  
219 seen within the K-feldspar mesostasis (Figure 3D and Figure 4). Their width, being under the  
220 resolution of the SEM, does not allow to conclude on their composition and similarities and/or

221 differences with the veins within the other minerals. Patches of such Fe and Si-rich minerals  
222 are also identified within the fayalite.

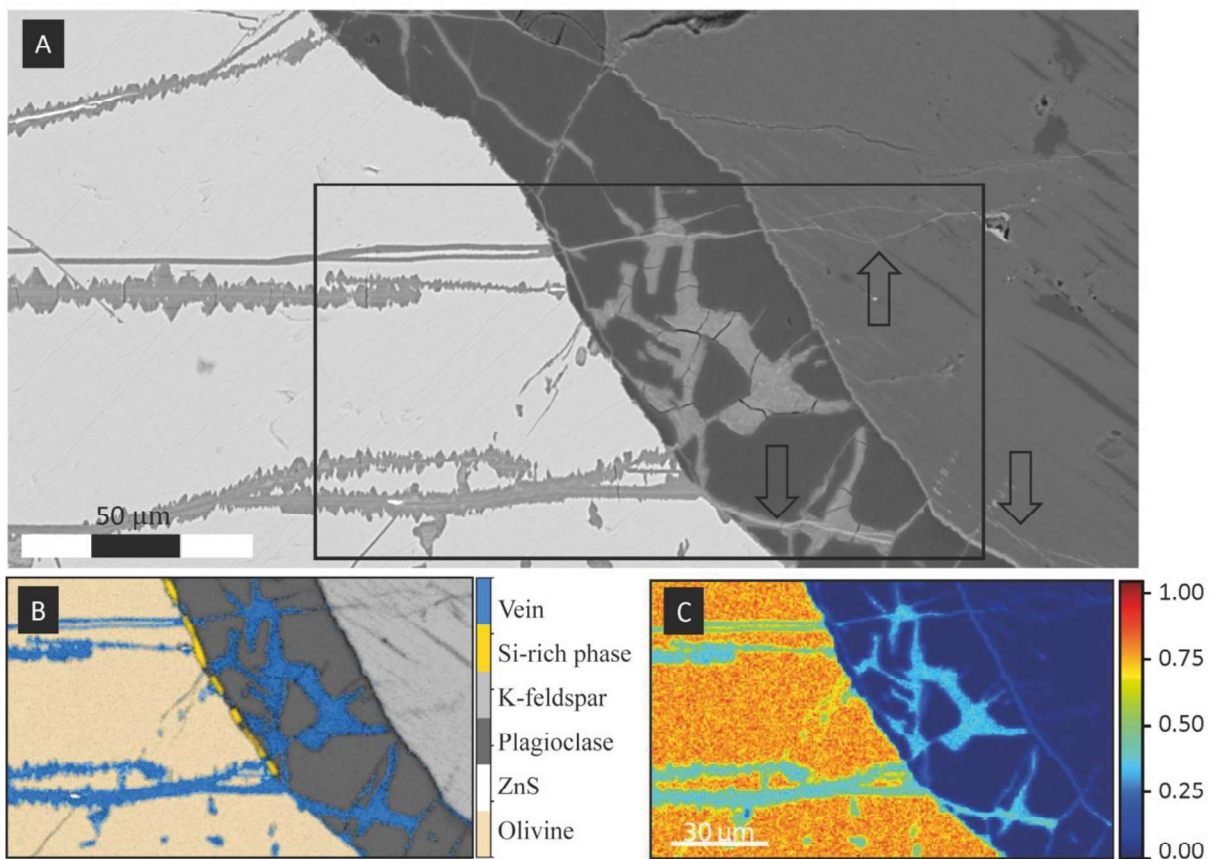


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224 *Figure 3: SEM images of A- The mineralogical assemblage of the K2 sample with an aggregate*  
225 *of mafic minerals; B- Veins of clay minerals going through an olivine grain, associated with*  
226 *apatite and iron oxide with the location of the FIB thin-section; C- The mineralogical*

227 assemblage of K1 sample with a rim of orthopyroxene and plagioclase in a K-feldspars  
228 mesostasis; D- Veins and patches of clay minerals inside a olivine crystal, clay minerals are  
229 associated to iron oxide and quartz; E- The mineralogical assemblage in K1 with the  
230 propagation of the veins in the plagioclase; F- Zoom on the veins within the plagioclase and  
231 localization of the K1 FIB thin-section (Pl is for plagioclase, Afs is for K-feldspar, Ol is for  
232 olivine, Opx is for orthopyroxene, Amp is for amphibole, Mag is for magnetite, Ap is for apatite,  
233 Qtz is for quartz, Prth is for perthite).

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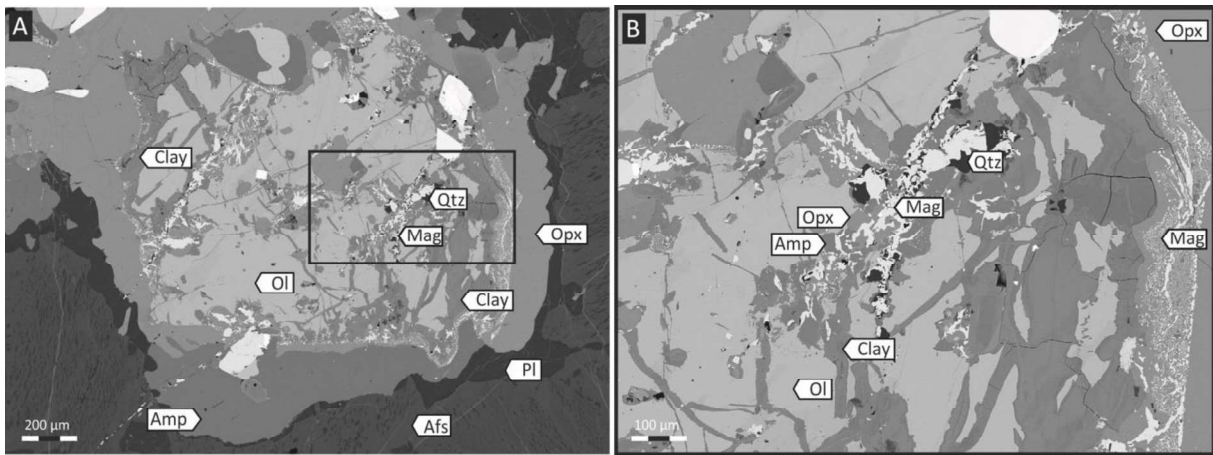


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236 Figure 4: A- High-resolution SEM image of the olivine grain in the K2 sample and the  
237 propagation of the veins inside the rim and the mesostasis (see black arrows); B- Phase  
238 mapping (hyperspy) of the propagation of the veins; C- Mapping of the Fe/Si ratio signal, the  
239 color scale represents the ratio of the intensity of the X-ray signal, i.e., the number of counts.

240

241 Similar veins were observed in the K1 sample, showing orthopyroxenes and amphiboles in  
242 addition to quartz, iron oxides, and Fe – Si-rich minerals (Figure 5A and B). Due to the complex  
243 symplectitic texture, it is difficult to assign these minerals to a specific part of the vein but what  
244 is striking is that these symplectites are limited to the fayalite and do not propagate to the other  
245 minerals. Some small iron oxides are also visible at the contact between the fayalite and  
246 orthopyroxene (Figure 5B).



247

248 *Figure 5: SEM images of the K1 sample, A- An olivine crystal with its rim of mafic minerals*  
249 *(Opx and Amp) and plagioclase; B- A zoom on one vein inside the olivine showing intergrowth*  
250 *of clay minerals, quartz, and magnetite and mafic minerals such as amphibole and*  
251 *orthopyroxene, at the right of the image magnetite can also be found at the border of the*  
252 *orthopyroxene.*

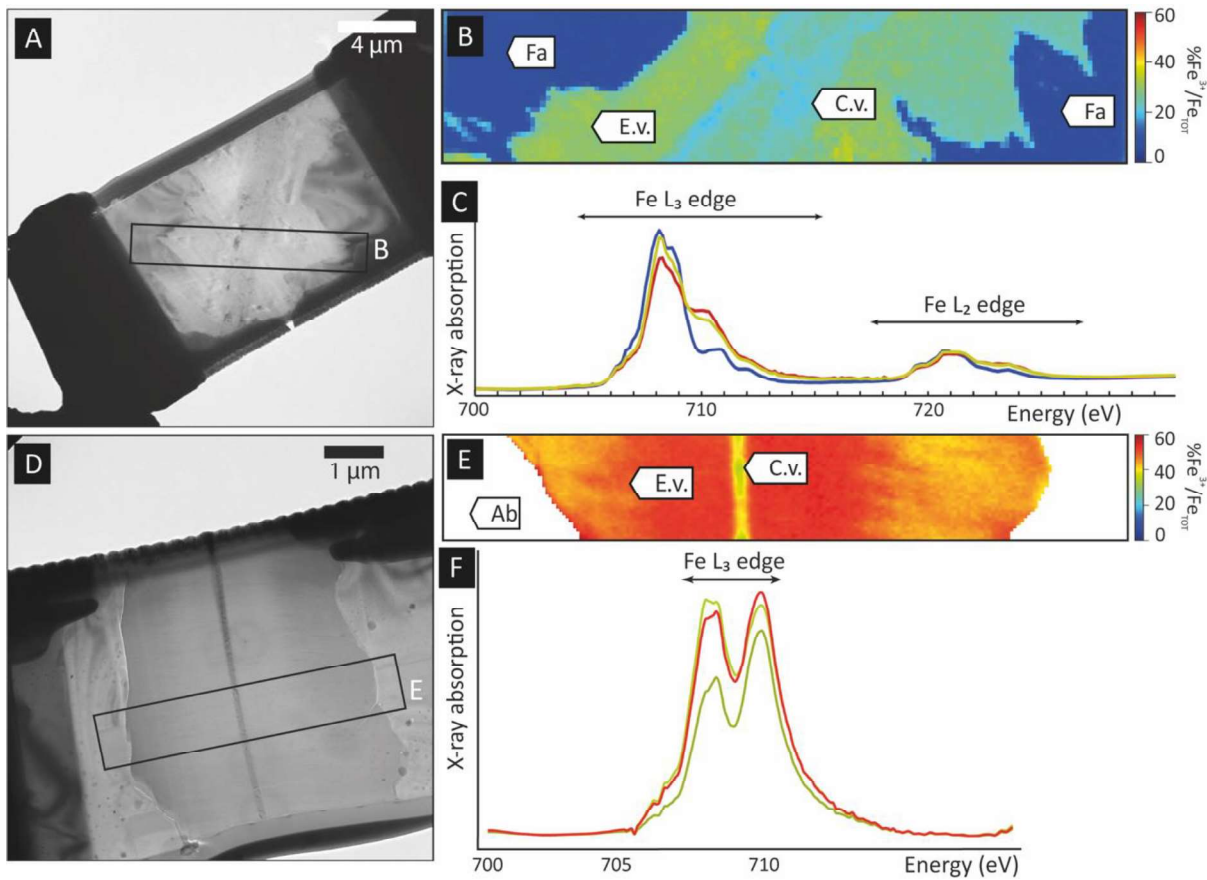
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254 Further investigations down to the nanoscale were conducted using STXM and TEM on FIB  
255 thin sections extracted from a vein hosted by a fayalite from the K2 sample and a vein hosted  
256 by a plagioclase from the K1 sample.

257

258 **3.2. Characterization at the sub-micrometer-scale**

259 The spatially resolved STXM-XANES data collected over the FIB-thin section extracted from  
 260 a vein hosted by fayalite from the K2 sample (Figure 6A) reveal that the fayalite does not  
 261 contain  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  ( $[\text{Fe}^{3+}]/\Sigma\text{Fe}=0.01\pm 0.02$ ). In contrast, the phases composing the veins contain more  
 262 than 20% of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ . The external part of the vein in direct contact with the fayalite is richer in  
 263  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  ( $[\text{Fe}^{3+}]/\Sigma\text{Fe}=0.27\pm 0.02$ ) than the internal part ( $[\text{Fe}^{3+}]/\Sigma\text{Fe}=0.19\pm 0.02$ ). The internal part  
 264 of the vein is also not homogeneous in terms of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  concentrations, with areas exhibiting  
 265 ( $[\text{Fe}^{3+}]/\Sigma\text{Fe}$ ) values higher than 0.2 while other areas of the internal part display values of about  
 266 0.15 (Figure 6B and C).



267

268 *Figure 6: A- TEM image of the K2 FIB thin-section with the area mapped; B- Quantitative map*  
 269 *of iron(III) in the K2 FIB-thin section, each pixel corresponds to the percentage of iron(III) on*  
 270 *total iron (Fa is for fayalite, E.v. is for external vein, C.v. is for central vein); C- Global X-ray*  
 271 *absorption spectra for each part of the FIB-thin section (blue spectra is for the fayalite, red*

272 *spectra is for the external vein and green spectra is for the central vein), D- TEM image of the*  
273 *K1 FIB-thin section with the area mapped; E- Quantitative map of iron(III) in the K1 FIB thin-*  
274 *section (Ab is for albite, E.v. is for external vein, C.v. is for central vein); F- Global X-ray*  
275 *absorption spectra for each part of the area mapped (light green spectra is for the center of the*  
276 *vein, red spectra is for the border of the vein in direct contact with the plagioclase and dark*  
277 *green spectra is for the part between the border and the center mineral).*

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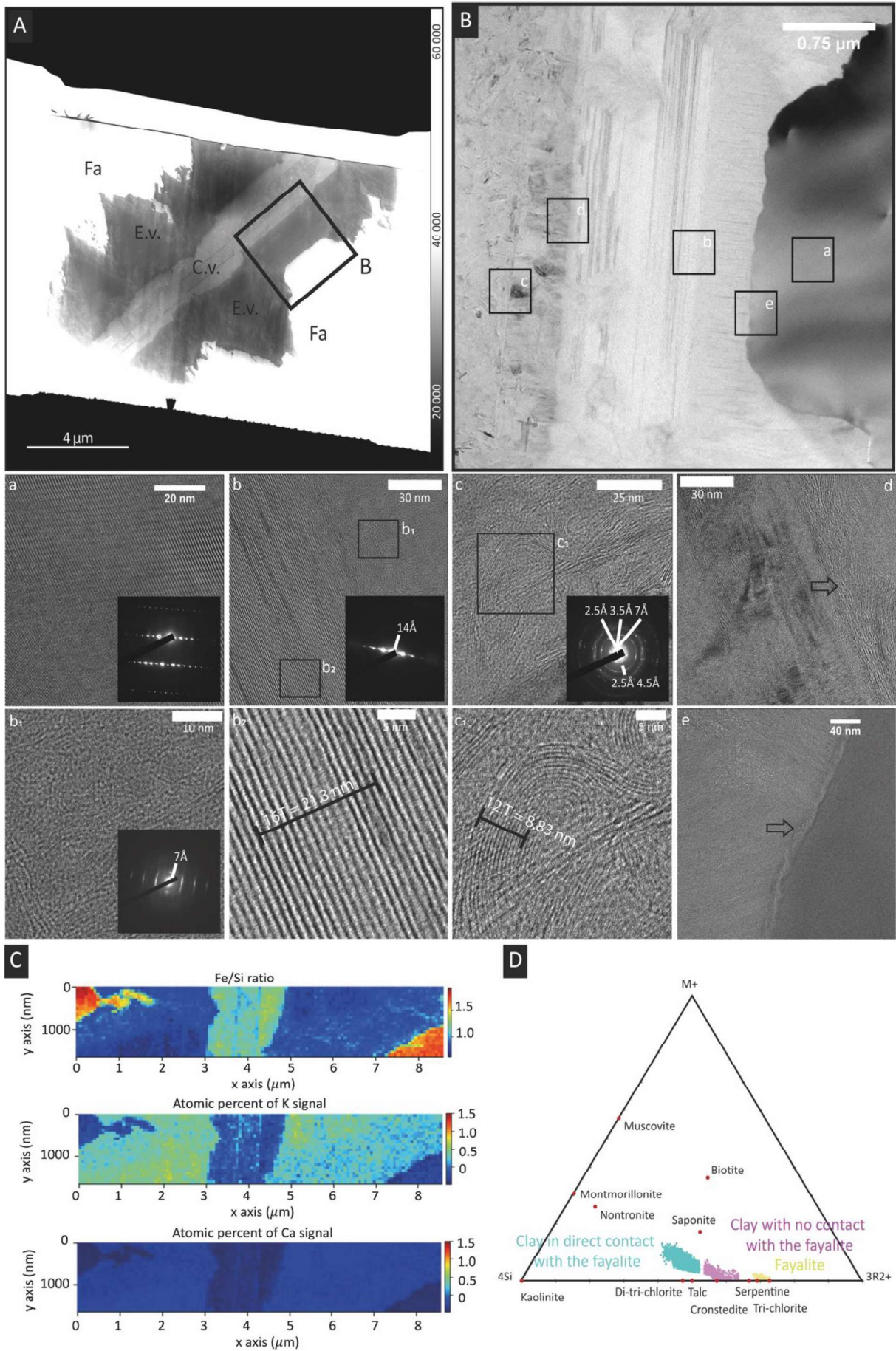
279 Spatially resolved STXM-XANES data were also collected on the FIB-thin section extracted  
280 from a vein hosted by an albite from the K1 sample (Figure 6D). The collected data reveal that  
281 the vein is not homogeneous in  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ , with values of about 0.40 in the very central part (Figure  
282 6E and F) while the remaining vein shows a gradient, with values close to 0.44 in the area in  
283 direct contact with the plagioclase and increasing up to 0.51 towards the center.

284 Further investigations were conducted using transmission electron microscopy (TEM),  
285 revealing that the veins are mostly made of phyllosilicates. Electron diffractions (SAED), high-  
286 resolution TEM and STEM images, as well as EDXS data, were collected to identify these  
287 phases more precisely (Figure 7).

288 The external part of the vein appears to be composed of two different parts displaying two  
289 distinct crystalline orientations (Figure 7A and Figure 7B). The clay minerals in direct contact  
290 with the fayalite were very unstable under the beam, but SAED patterns show d spacings of  $7\text{\AA}$ ,  
291 allowing their identification as serpentine sharing crystal orientations with the fayalite (Figure  
292 7B b1). The contact with the fayalite presents scalloped patterns typical of alteration fronts.  
293 Conversely, the clay minerals composing the more internal part of the external vein appear well  
294 crystallized and exhibit d spacings of  $14\text{\AA}$ , suggesting these are chlorite. It also shares crystal  
295 orientation with the fayalite (Figure 7B b2). These two parts of the external vein display similar  
296 Fe/Si values of 0.9 and exhibit 0.1 and 0.15 at% of potassium and calcium (Figure 7C),

297 pinpointing the presence of interstratified chlorite/mica or chlorite/smectite, as also suggested  
298 by the ternary diagram shown on Figure 7D.

299 The internal part of the vein is heterogeneous but mostly composed of phyllosilicates which do  
300 not share crystal orientations with the fayalite (Figure 7B c). Some sheets are sub-circular and  
301 exhibit d spacings of  $7\text{\AA}$  (Figure 7B c1). The SAED patterns correspond to a typical  
302 polycrystalline diffraction and show three well-distinguishable spots indicating d spacing of  
303 2.5, 3.5, and  $7\text{\AA}$ , and two more diffuse rings indicating d spacing of 2.5 and  $4.5\text{\AA}$ , likely  
304 corresponding to the (001), (002), and  $(2\bar{1}1)$  reflection of a serpentine, even though it could  
305 also correspond to chlorite. The internal part of the vein exhibits Fe/Si values of 1.2 and lower  
306 contents of Ca and K than the external part of the vein. As the external vein, the internal vein  
307 likely contains a mixture of possibly interstratified chlorite/smectite/mica and serpentine, as  
308 also suggested by the ternary diagram shown in Figure 7D. Unlike the contact between the  
309 external part of the vein and the fayalite, the contact between the internal and the external parts  
310 of the vein is sharp.

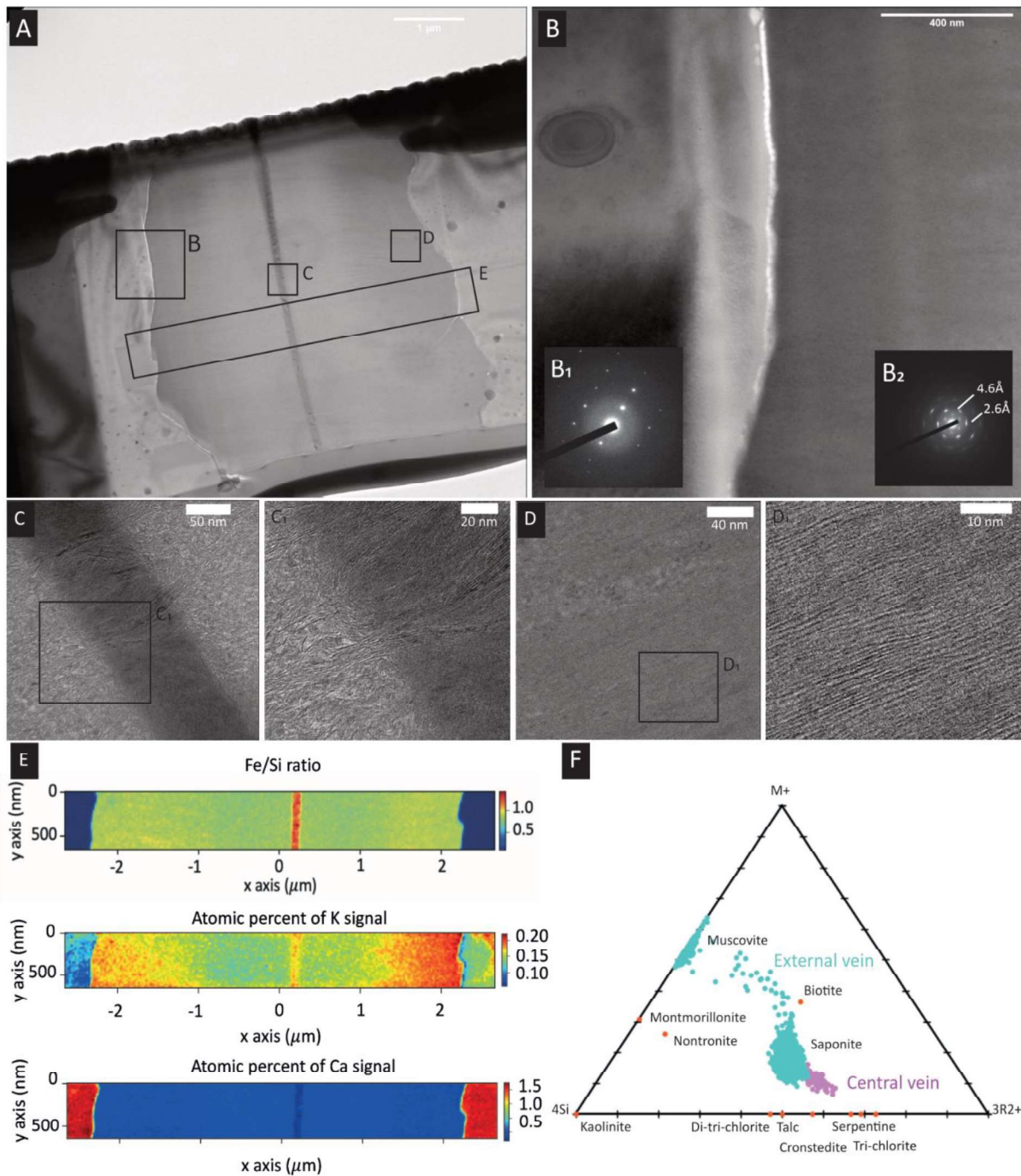


312 *Figure 7: A- STEM image of the K2 FIB thin-section showing the multiple veins inside the*  
313 *fayalite. The black square is for the localization of the TEM image in B (Fa is for fayalite, C.v.*  
314 *is for central vein and E.v. is for external vein); B- TEM image of the filling of the vein with*  
315 *multiple zooms on areas of interest; a- TEM high-resolution image of the fayalite and its*  
316 *associated electron diffraction; b- TEM high-resolution image of the clay mineral having a*  
317 *direct contact with the fayalite, its associated electron diffraction, and location of zooms b1*  
318 *and b2 on the clay sheets; b1- Zoom on the clay mineral in direct contact with the fayalite; b2-*  
319 *Zoom on the well-crystallized sheets of the clay mineral in contact with the fayalite; c- TEM*  
320 *high-resolution image of the clay mineral with no direct contact with the fayalite and its*  
321 *associated electron diffraction and location of zoom c1; c1- Zoom on the sheets of the central*  
322 *clay mineral; d- TEM image of the contact between the two clay minerals; e- TEM image of the*  
323 *contact between the fayalite and the clay mineral; C- STEM-EDS maps of the Fe/Si ratio,*  
324 *atomic percent of K, and atomic percent of Ca of the clays going through the olivine; D- ( $M^{+}$ ;*  
325  *$4Si$ ;  $3R^{2+}$ ) ternary diagram representing the endmembers of clay minerals and the studied clay*  
326 *minerals in function of  $M^{+}$ , the interlayer cationic charge as Ca or Na cations,  $3R^{2+}$ , the*  
327 *number of divalent cations in octahedral position as Fe or Mg cations and  $4Si$ , the amount of*  
328 *silica. It highlights the mixing of the phases between the chlorite, the smectite, and the*  
329 *serpentine endmembers.*

330

331 TEM investigations reveal that the architecture of the vein varies between the ones hosted by  
332 the olivine and the one hosted by the plagioclase. The vein hosted by the plagioclase only  
333 consists of the central part of the ones found in the olivine. The border part identified in direct  
334 contact with the olivine is not found in the plagioclase. Also, the vein hosted by the feldspar  
335 does not show any alteration features at the contact with the host mineral (Figure 8). Figure 8B  
336 shows a TEM image of the straight contact between the clay mineral and the plagioclase with

337 a typical SAED pattern for the plagioclase. The SAED pattern of the vein exhibits two sets of  
338 distinguishable hexagonal spots indicating distances of 2.6 and 4.6Å, matching with the ( $\bar{1}11$ ),  
339 ( $1\bar{1}1$ ), (020) and ( $\bar{1}31$ ), ( $1\bar{3}1$ ), (200) reflection of a clinocllore or a mica. Figure 8C C1 shows  
340 that crystallite expands over the very central part to the rest of the vein, highlighting that this  
341 very central part is made of the same phyllosilicates. These phyllosilicates exhibit variable  
342 orientations in the very central part of the vein (Figure 8C C1) but appear perpendicular to the  
343 contact with the plagioclase (Figure 8D). In addition, STEM-EDS maps reveal Fe/Si values  
344 from 1.0 for the main part of the vein to 1.2 for the very central part (Figure 8E). Gradients in  
345 potassium and calcium maps are visible from the border to the center, with high values at the  
346 border and in the very central part. The ternary diagram, Figure 8F, shows a gradual evolution  
347 of the composition of the clay minerals from the serpentine to the micas, passing by the chlorite  
348 endmembers. It highlights that this vein, within the plagioclase, is a complex mixing of phases.



349

350 *Figure 8: A- TEM image of K1 FIB thin-section; B- TEM image of the contact between the*  
 351 *plagioclase and the vein; b1- the electron diffraction of the plagioclase; b2- The electron*  
 352 *diffraction of the mineral filling the vein; C- HRTEM image of the center of the vein; C1- Zoom*  
 353 *on the layers of the clay mineral filling the vein; D- HRTEM image of the border of the vein,*  
 354 *D1- Zoom on the layers of the clay mineral that are in contact with the plagioclase; E- STEM-*  
 355 *EDS maps of the Fe/Si ratio, the K and Ca contents (in atomic percent); F- ( $M^+$ ;  $4Si$ ;  $3R2^+$ )*

356 *ternary diagram representing the endmembers of clay minerals and the studied clay minerals*  
357 *in function of  $M^+$ , the interlayer cationic charge,  $3R^{2+}$ , the number of divalent cations in*  
358 *octahedral position and  $4Si$ , the amount of silica. It highlights the mixing of the phases between*  
359 *the serpentine, the chlorite, and the micas endmembers.*

360

#### 361 **4. Discussion**

362 Previous studies and drilling reports concluded that in the Nemaha County, where the DR1-A  
363 well was drilled, the Precambrian basement was composed of granite, rhyolite, and  
364 metasediments (Bickford and al., 1981; Newell et al., 2007). The drilling report from 1999  
365 described the part of the basement reached by the well as “*a mafic-rich and dark granite with*  
366 *little or no quartz*”. The present study concluded that the basement is closer to a monzo-diorite.  
367 K1 and K2 samples contain mafic minerals such as fayalite, iron-rich pargasite, ferrosilite, and  
368 augite dispersed within an albite and orthoclase mesostasis which does not contain any crystal  
369 of quartz. Mafic minerals have crystallized in aggregates and have a rim of albite. Pyroxene,  
370 located in contact with the fayalite, displays exsolution textures. The rest of the sample is  
371 composed of orthoclase with perthitic textures. These textures indicate K-feldspars and  
372 pyroxenes that have undergone a sub-solidus re-equilibration (Harlov et al., 1998, Putnis et al.,  
373 2007). This type of sub-solidus evolution is typical of plutonic rocks which undergo more or  
374 less slow cooling or have enough water, chlorine, and/or fluorine to have a sufficiently low  
375 enough solidus. Indeed, water, chlorine, and fluorine induce changes in the properties of the  
376 magma (Filiberto and Treiman, 2009 a & b, Dalou et al., 2015). Altogether, the rock composing  
377 the Precambrian basement in that area has been produced following a classical sequence of  
378 crystallization with fayalite crystallizing first, followed by pyroxene, iron-rich pargasite, albite,  
379 and then orthoclase. The whole-rock analysis shown in the supplementary material  
380 (Supplementary 3) confirms that this rock is a monzo-diorite. Thus, the Precambrian basement

381 reached by the DR1-A well at the depth of 442 and 450 meters is not a Precambrian granite, as  
382 previously reported. Although that well is located around 100 km east of the axis of the Mid-  
383 Continent rift, we suggest that it reached an eastern and so-far unmapped extension of the rift.

384

385 A main observation of the present study is the occurrence of veins crosscutting the fayalite and  
386 the albite/orthoclase mesostasis in all the investigated samples. The internal part of the veins is  
387 present within all the other minerals and is associated with magnetite, apatite, and quartz, while  
388 the external part is only observed within the fayalite. While they present differences at the  
389 nanoscale, these veins have similarities with iddingsite, a mixture of hydrous silicates of  
390 iron(III) previously described in several publications (Ross, 1925; Edwards, 1938; Baker, 1967;  
391 Eggleton, 1984; Smith, 1987). Iddingsite mineralogical definition and conditions of formation  
392 have been debated over the last decades (see references above). It has been described as a light  
393 yellow to reddish brown mineral (Ross, 1925) and it is associated with both non-altered augite  
394 and feldspars (Ross, 1925 and Baker, 1967). Baker (1967) has shown that iddingsite is found  
395 in fracture inside the olivine, and that its formation allows for preserving the shape of olivine.  
396 Two hypotheses of formation have been formulated: 1) deuteric alteration of olivine by a  
397 residual magmatic liquid at high temperature; 2) post-deuteric (i.e., hydrothermal) alteration of  
398 olivine at intermediate to low-temperature conditions (compared to magmatic temperatures).

399 Deuteric alteration has been proposed by Ross (1925) and Edwards (1938) and described as the  
400 result of interactions between a residual magmatic liquid and previously formed minerals,  
401 resulting in the metasomatism replacement of olivine by iddingsite. Authors inferred that this  
402 process happened at the end of the cooling sequence, in the presence of a residual differentiated  
403 magma rich in water (and magmatic gas) responsible for iron oxidation (Edwards, 1938). In  
404 contrast, post-deuteric (i.e., hydrothermal) alteration was proposed as the source of iddingsite  
405 by Baker (1967), Eggleton (1984), and Smith (1987). Such intermediate to low-temperature

406 alteration of olivine by an external oxidizing fluid circulating throughout the rock may lead to  
407 the formation of more or less interstratified chlorite, smectite, and goethite (Baker, 1967,  
408 Eggleton, 1984). Interstratification seems to be controlled by the temperature, with high to  
409 intermediate temperature giving chlorite and then decreasing temperature giving a mix of  
410 chlorite, smectite, and then goethite. The temperature of formation is easily constrained because  
411 goethite is only stable under 140°C (Eggleton et al., 1984). It seems more complicated to  
412 constrain chlorite formation as its range of formation goes from magmatic temperature (Viennet  
413 et al., 2020, 2021) to several hundred degrees (Baker, 1967). In this iddingsite definition, the  
414 system is marked by a loss of silica and magnesium, but a preservation of manganese, and iron,  
415 this latter being oxidized.

416 Here, the most likely scenario for the formation of iddingsite veins involves deuteric alteration  
417 (Figure 9). The internal part of the veins could have been produced via the direct precipitation  
418 of a late, differentiated magmatic fluid having been exsolved during the crystallization of the  
419 K-feldspars as perthites. The internal part of the veins is, indeed, composed of interstratified  
420 chlorite/smectite/mica mixed with serpentine, iron-oxide, apatite, and quartz (Figure 9B),  
421 which are mineral phases typical of what could produce a residual, differentiated magma close  
422 to a granitic composition (De Pasquale and Jenkins, 2023).

423 Here, such residual magma liquid, likely obtained during the crystallization of K-feldspars, has  
424 penetrated within the fractures or voids within the previously formed mafic minerals and  
425 plagioclase. This magmatic fluid being chemically far from equilibrium with the fayalite, was  
426 responsible for deuteric alteration of this latter, producing the external parts of the veins (Figure  
427 9C). The first phase replacing the fayalite must have been the interstratified chlorite-smectite.  
428 At some point, with the decreasing temperature, the alteration of the fayalite led to the  
429 production of serpentine (Figure 10D). Such production of Fe-rich clay minerals via the deuteric  
430 alteration of fayalite is supported by the recent study of De Pasquale and Jenkins (2023), having

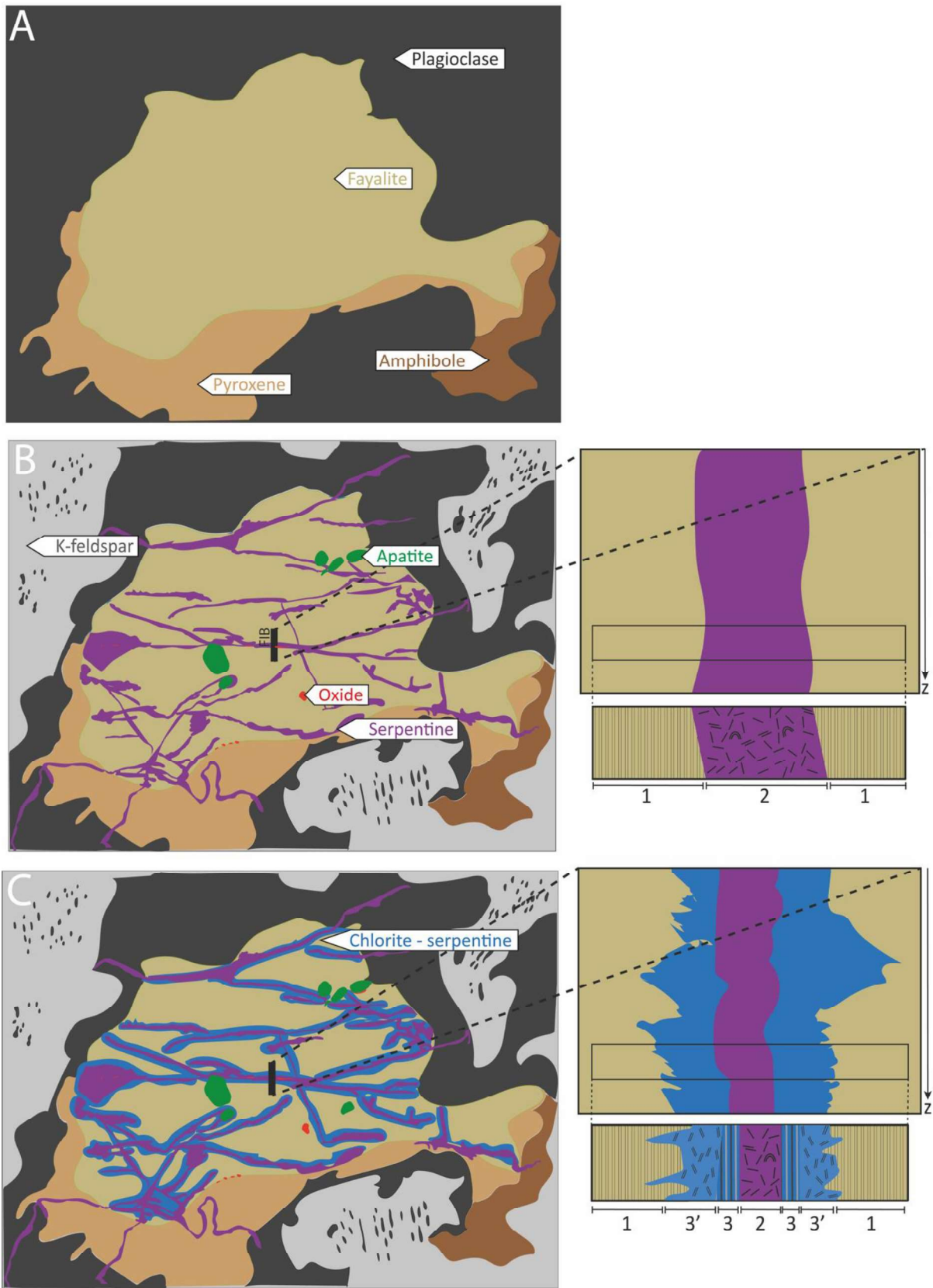
431 shown that a mixture of fayalite and more differentiated phases such as iron oxide, albite,  
432 quartz, and magnetite exposed to a decreasing temperature in the presence of water leads to the  
433 production of Fe-rich smectite.

434 Of note, the clay minerals composing the internal vein hosted by the fayalite and the veins  
435 hosted by the albite exhibit spatially variable Fe contents and  $[\text{Fe}^{3+}]/\Sigma\text{Fe}$  values. Similar  
436 variations have been described by Meunier et al. (2008, 2012) for masses of magmatic Fe-rich  
437 saponite and chlorite found in basalts from the Mururoa Atoll (French Polynesia). These authors  
438 interpreted the Fe-zoning of these clay minerals, which crystallized at the end of the cooling  
439 stage of the basaltic bodies, as resulting from variations of iron availability in the residual  
440 magmatic fluid. Indeed, the authors propose that during the cooling stage, the composition of  
441 the magma changes with increasing crystallization ratio so that the composition of the residual  
442 magmatic liquid yielding the clay minerals varies. In addition, during the crystallization of the  
443 residual liquid, some elements are depleted because they are solubilized or because they are  
444 consumed by the crystallizing minerals, leading to the zoning observed. A similar explanation  
445 can be proposed here to explain the observed variations in Fe/Si values and  $[\text{Fe}^{3+}]/\Sigma\text{Fe}$  values  
446 within the same veins.

447 An alternative scenario may involve external fluids having circulated within the monzo-diorite.  
448 Surface cold waters are usually undersaturated with respect to feldspars, which means that  
449 plagioclase and alkali feldspar may undergo weathering processes occurring at low temperature  
450 (Plümper and Putnis., 2009). Such processes may lead to mineral replacement, which will result  
451 in the production of new phases such as sericite or epidote exhibiting sharp mineral interfaces  
452 and a higher porosity (Plumper and Putnis., 2009). This is not the case here, which suggests  
453 that the rocks investigated did not experience fluid circulation at low temperature. However, it  
454 is commonly acknowledged that hydrothermal waters above 200°C are close from equilibrium  
455 with plagioclase and alkali feldspar, which means that such fluids will not alter these mineral

456 species (Stefánsson and Arnórsson., 2000). Thus, a late circulation of external fluids at rather  
457 high temperature cannot be excluded based on the mineral assemblage described here. The  
458 chemical composition of such a fluid would have to be close to that of a residual magmatic fluid  
459 to allow for such a precipitation of chlorite, smectite, and mica interstratified at the nanoscale  
460 (Mas et al., 2008).

461



462

463 *Figure 9: Synthesis sketches of the crystallization sequence in the K1 and K2 samples and*  
 464 *zooms on veins formation; A- Fayalite, pyroxene, amphibole, and plagioclase in rims around*

465 *the mafic minerals; B- Circulation of a differentiated residual magmatic liquid which give*  
466 *perthitic K-feldspars and leads to the crystallization of the center chlorite/smectite/mica mixed*  
467 *with serpentine and the exsolution of water. Apatite and iron oxides also crystallize at that time.*  
468 *The mixture of minerals is crosscutting every previous mineral. Associated are zoom and*  
469 *sketches of the filling of the vein (1 is for the crystallization of the fayalite and 2 for the*  
470 *crystallization of the chlorite/smectite/mica mixed with serpentine); C- Deuteric alteration of*  
471 *the fayalite by the exsolved water leading to the crystallization of the interstratified chlorite-*  
472 *smectite and then of the serpentine in direct contact with the fayalite while the temperature is*  
473 *decreasing. These two clay minerals are only found in fayalite. Associated are zoom and*  
474 *sketches of the filling of the vein (1 is for the crystallization of the fayalite, 2 for the*  
475 *crystallization of the chlorite/smectite/mica mixed with serpentine, 3 for the crystallization of*  
476 *the interstratified chlorite-smectite, and 3' for the crystallization of the serpentine of the border*  
477 *vein).*

478

## 479 **5. Conclusions and implications for H<sub>2</sub> production**

480 The monzo-diorites investigated here which have been described as the source of H<sub>2</sub> emissions  
481 contain veins of Fe-rich clay minerals, composed of a nanoscale mixture of chlorite, smectite,  
482 mica, and serpentine, likely produced via the direct precipitation of a late, differentiated  
483 magmatic fluid. Because this magmatic fluid was chemically far from equilibrium with the  
484 fayalite, it has been responsible for its deuteric alteration, producing the external parts of the  
485 veins. The crystallization begun with the fayalite being replaced by the interstratified chlorite-  
486 smectite. While the temperature was decreasing, the crystallization process ended with fayalite  
487 being replaced by serpentine via deuteric alteration.

488 The deuteric alteration of olivine being an oxidative process (Ross., 1925; Edwards., 1938), the  
489 production of the external part of the veins hosted by the fayalite via deuteric alteration may  
490 have produced the H<sub>2</sub> that is now measured at the surface. Alternatively, or concurrently, it can  
491 be conceived that H<sub>2</sub> was originally present in the magma, as reported in some systems (Fischer  
492 and Chiodini., 2015), with H<sub>2</sub> still present within the residual magmatic liquid from which the  
493 veins have precipitated. Both these hypotheses involve magmatic processes, implying that the  
494 generation of H<sub>2</sub> occurred during the formation of the rock, i.e., not recently (the basement of  
495 this intracratonic area originates from the Precambrian and currently does not exceed 60°C -  
496 Newell et al., 2007). Therefore, from the material studied here, H<sub>2</sub> could be considered partly  
497 as a “fossil” volatile. The measurements of H<sub>2</sub> during the last decades (Coveney et al., 1987;  
498 Newell et al., 2007; Guélard et al., 2017) and the petrological observations presented in this  
499 study suggest that H<sub>2</sub> has been stored in these rocks in some way, either as fluid inclusions or  
500 within the structure of the minerals. Malaspina and co-authors (2023) have recently  
501 demonstrated that molecular H<sub>2</sub> could be stored in inclusions within olivine under high pressure  
502 conditions, while Truche and co-authors (2018) have demonstrated that H<sub>2</sub> could be stored in  
503 nanopores of chlorites thanks to adsorption mechanisms. This could be the case here, potentially  
504 making the clay minerals studied here the reservoir of H<sub>2</sub> if not both the source and the reservoir.

505 Despite all these observations and conclusions, it is essential to mention that H<sub>2</sub> generation at  
506 the well head in Kansas was shown to be a regional trend and to be characterized by a  
507 continuous flux of gas by Guélard and co-authors (2017). We therefore cannot exclude that,  
508 other processes, such as current and low-temperature oxidation of iron, could take place in other  
509 rocks of the basement (not reached by the DR1-A well). Thus, part of H<sub>2</sub> generation and  
510 migration could still be a contemporaneous and active process. Furthermore, iron oxidation  
511 reactions occurring within the 350 meters of Paleozoic sedimentary rocks are also not to be  
512 excluded. We propose here a first scenario of H<sub>2</sub> generation linked to a late magmatic event.

513 However, since H<sub>2</sub> is currently produced at the surface and is characterized by a regional flux,  
 514 it remains possible that this gas is the product of multiple reactions.

515

516 **Appendix A. Supplementary Material**

Elementary composition in %at	K1 sample		
	Albite	Central vein	External vein
Al	9.18	2.22	1.78
C	3.80	6.32	4.77
Ca	1.53	0.06	0.29
Cl	0.02	0.00	0.10
Cr	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cu	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fe	0.10	14.45	12.52
Ga	0.00	0.00	0.00
K	0.05	0.11	0.06
Mg	0.06	0.90	0.51
Mn	0.01	0.26	0.41
N	1.44	2.43	1.68
Na	2.79	0.00	0.00
Ni	0.00	0.00	0.00
O	60.54	59.43	61.79
P	0.07	0.05	0.03
S	0.05	0.03	0.01
Si	20.35	13.70	16.01
Ti	0.00	0.00	0.00
Zn	0.01	0.05	0.04

517

518 *Supplementary 1 : Mean elemental composition of the phases of the FIB thin section of K1 (data*  
 519 *have been acquired by TEM analysis and are in atomic percent)*

520

521 Please see the Excel files attached.

522 *Supplementary 2 : Full elemental composition of the FIB thin section of K2 (data have been*  
 523 *acquired by TEM analysis and are in atomic percent)*

524

		SiO <sub>2</sub> %	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> %	Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> %	MnO %	MgO %	CaO %	Na <sub>2</sub> O %	K <sub>2</sub> O %	TiO <sub>2</sub> %	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> %	Total %
ICP-OES iCap6500 (ox.%)	K2	56.32	16.38	9.90	0.30	0.90	4.01	4.09	5.44	1.33	0.43	98.82
	>10 %	<2%	<2%	<2%		<2%	<2%	<5%	<5%	<5%		
	>5 %		<10%			<2%	<5%	<5%	<5%	<5%		
	>1 %		<15%	<10%	<5%	<10%	<10%	<10%	<10%	<10%	<5%	
Uncertainties (%) in the function of the concentration	>0.5 %	<10%		<15%	<15%	<15%	<15%	<15%	<20%	<20%	<15%	
	>0.1 %	<20%	<20%								**	
	>0.05 %	**	**	<20%	<20%	<20%	<25%	<25%	<25%	<25%		
	>0.01 %			**	**	**	**	**	**	**		
Detection limit	L.D. %	0.05	0.04	0.015	0.015	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.10	

525

526 *Supplementary 3: Whole-rock chemistry data of the K2 sample (in weight percent)*

527

528 **Declaration of competing interest**

529 The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal  
530 relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

531

532 **Acknowledgments**

533 This work was supported by E2S UPPA/ the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and by the “France  
534 2030” Investment Program managed by the French National Research Agency (ANR-16-  
535 IDEX-0002). H. Derluyn acknowledges the support from the European Research Council  
536 (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant  
537 agreement No 850853)”. The authors wish to acknowledge the workforce of the SEM facility  
538 (PtME) at MNHN (Sylvain Pont) and of the TEM facility at IMPMC (Jean-Michel Guignier).  
539 Special thanks also go to David Troadec for the preparation of FIB sections at IEMN, as well  
540 as to Stefan Stanescu and Sufal Swaraj for their expert support with the HERMES STXM  
541 beamline at SOLEIL. The HERMES beamline (SOLEIL) is supported by the CNRS, the CEA,  
542 the Region Ile de France, the Departmental Council of Essonne, and the Region Centre. The  
543 TEM facility at the CCM (Lille University) is supported by the Chevreul Institute, the European  
544 FEDER, and Region Nord-Pas-de-Calais. The authors wish to acknowledge the Kansas  
545 Geological Survey and K.D. Newell for their help through sampling.

546

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