Textures, trace elements, and Pb isotopes of sulfides from the Haopinggou vein deposit, southern North China Craton: implications for discrete Au and Ag–Pb–Zn mineralization

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Abstract

The Haopinggou deposit in the Xiong'ershan district, southern margin of the North China Craton, comprises numerous Au and Ag–Pb–Zn veins hosted in metamorphic rocks of the Late Archean to early Paleoproterozoic Taihua Group. Two stages of mineralization have been recognized: Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins and Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins. Some pyrite–quartz veins are surrounded or cut by Pb–Zn-sulfide veins, others occur as independent veins. Six generations of pyrite have been identified at Haopinggou: Py1 to Py3 in Stage 1 and Py4 to Py6 in Stage 2. Pyrites from Stage 1 are enriched in Au, As, Co, Ni, and Bi, whereas Stage 2 pyrites contain higher Ag, Pb, Zn, Sn, and Sb. Invisible Au mostly occurs as lattice-bound gold in Py2 (up to 92 ppm Au) and Py3 (up to 127 ppm Au) and has a close relationship with As. Native Au grains are also present in Py3 and likely resulted from mobilization and reprecipitation of the invisible Au previously locked in the precursor pyrite. This view is supported by extensive plastic deformation in Stage 1 pyrite as revealed by electron backscatter diffraction analysis. In Stage 2, Ag is mostly present as lattice-bound silver closely associated with Sb in galena (up to 798 ppm Ag). A variety of silver minerals are also present as inclusions within galena or as interstitial grains. These silver minerals were likely formed via Ag–Cu exchange reaction between tetrahedrite and galena or represent exsolution from galena due to a temperature decrease. Pb isotopic compositions differ remarkably between Stage 1 and Stage 2 sulfides, indicating different sources of lead. Pb in Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins is consistent with the Haopinggou porphyry close to the veins. The field, textural, compositional, and lead isotopic data led us to conclude that the early gold-bearing pyrite–quartz veins and late silver-bearing Pb–Zn-sulfide veins likely formed from distinct fluid systems related to discrete mineralization events. Our study suggests that Au and Ag–Pb–Zn veins hosted in the same metamorphic terrains may not be genetically related to each other.

Introduction

Gold vein deposits in Precambrian metamorphic terrains constitute one of the world's most important gold resources, both in terms of historical production and current reserves (Groves 1993; Groves et al. 1998, 2003; Goldfarb et al. 2005). They typically consist of auriferous quartz–carbonate–sulfide veins and sulfide disseminations and stockworks in hydrothermally altered wall rocks (McCuaig and Kerrich 1998). The sulfide minerals either contain free, visible gold, or refractory, invisible gold (Oberthür et al. 1997; Groves et al. 1998; Goldfarb et al. 2001). Silver–lead–zinc veins also occur widely in many Precambrian metallogenic districts worldwide (Leach et al. 1988; Lynch 1989; Beaudoin and Sangster 1992; Box et al. 2012). They are mostly hosted in greenschist to amphibolite facies metasedimentary terranes (Beaudoin and Sangster 1992, and reference therein) and are commonly controlled by crustal-scale faults and secondary or higher-order structures (Beaudoin et al. 1991; Leach et al. 1998; Li et al. 2013). Although both Au and Ag–Pb–Zn veins occur in metamorphic terrains and commonly have similar geological and alteration features, they are rarely found in the same district (e.g., Leach et al. 1988; Groves et al. 1995). Consequently, whether or not they are genetically related remain poorly understood.

The southern margin of the North China Craton (NCC) is well endowed with Au, Mo, and Ag–Pb–Zn deposits (Mao et al. 2002, 2008), forming one of the most important metallogenic belts in China (Fig. 1). Within this metallogenic belt, the Xiong'ershan district (Fig. 1) contains numerous auriferous quartz-sulfide veins and several Au-bearing breccias (Mao et al. 2002; Chen et al. 2009). Auriferous veins are mostly hosted in Late Archean to Paleoproterozoic high-grade metamorphic rocks or, less significantly, unmetamorphosed late Paleoproterozoic volcanic rocks (Chen and Fu 1992; Mao et al. 2002; Chen et al. 2008; Tang et al. 2013). In the last two decades, a number of Ag–Pb–Zn vein deposits have been discovered in the Xiayu ore field, west of the Xiong'ershan district (Fig. 2; Chen and Guo 1994; Chen et al. 2004; Mao et al. 2006). These veins were localized in the NNE-trending faults cutting the Late Archean high-grade metamorphic rocks. The Shagou, Haopinggou, and Tieluping deposits (Fig. 2) are the best examples of Ag–Pb–Zn veins and are currently the largest Ag producers in the southern NCC.

The Haopinggou deposit in the northern Xiayu ore field (Fig. 2) is the only deposit in the region where both Au and Ag–Pb–Zn veins have been recognized, providing an ideal opportunity to study their formation, evolution, and interrelationships. In this paper, we first present textural and compositional data for pyrite from the Haopinggou deposit to reveal the occurrences, distribution patterns, and enrichment mechanisms of gold and silver. We then use in situ lead isotopic data for galena and pyrite to constrain the metal sources for Au and Ag–Pb–Zn veins. All these data are used to uncover the relationships between gold and Ag–Pb–Zn mineralization at Haopinggou.

Geological setting

The NCC consists of the Western and Eastern Blocks, which are separated by the Trans-North China Orogen formed due to the collision of the two blocks at ca. 1.85 Ga (Zhao et al. 2001). From the late Paleoproterozoic to the end of the Paleozoic, the NCC behaved as a coherent, stable continental block, marked by the relatively continuous deposition of shallow–marine carbonate platform sediments throughout the craton (Yang et al. 1986). Large areas along the margins of the NCC were affected by late Paleozoic to early Mesozoic orogenic events (Chen and Fu 1992; Dong et al. 2011). Collision of the Yangtze and North China Cratons during the Triassic produced the Qinling–Dabie orogenic belt extending for ca. 1500 km (Fig. 1; Li et al. 1993). The subconinental lithospheric mantle

beneath the eastern portion of the NCC has been thinned significantly during the late Jurassic to early Cretaceous (Menzies et al. 1993; Fan et al. 2000; Yang et al. 2008; Zhu et al. 2012). The lithospheric thinning has resulted in voluminous bimodal magmatism (Wu et al. 2005; Mao et al. 2010; Pei et al. 2011), numerous extensional basins (Tian et al. 1992; Ren et al. 2002; Zhu et al. 2010), metamorphic core complexes (Zheng et al. 1991; Zhang and Zheng 1999; Liu et al. 2005), and pervasive hydrothermal mineralization over the entire eastern half of the NCC (Mao et al. 2002, 2008; Li et al. 2006, 2012a, b; Goldfarb and Santosh 2014; Zhu et al. 2015).

The Xiong'ershan district is dominated geologically by the Xiong'ershan metamorphic core complex (MCC), with the Luoning detachment fault separating the lower and upper plates of the complex (Figs. 1, 2; Shi et al. 2004). The lower plate consists of the Late Archean to early Paleoproterozoic metamorphic Taihua Group, including amphibolite, felsic gneiss, migmatite, and metamorphosed supracrustal rocks intercalated with mafic to ultramafic rocks (Hu et al. 1988; Chen and Fu 1992). The upper plate of the MCC consists of the Paleoproterozoic Xiong'er Group and Mesozoic to Cenozoic terrestrial sedimentary rocks (Fig. 1). The Xiong'er Group is composed of volcanic sequences dominated by andesites, with lesser basalts and rhyolites and minor intercalations of clastic rocks (Zhao et al. 2002; Peng et al. 2008). In situ U–Pb isotope data of zircon grains indicate that rocks of the Xiong'er Group were erupted between 1.78 and 1.75 Ga (Zhao et al. 2004; He et al. 2009).

The Xiong'ershan district is bounded structurally by the Luoning Fault to the north and the Machaoying Fault to the south (Fig. 1). The Luoning Fault is a detachment fault of the Xiong'ershan MCC; it is characterized by a well-developed zonation from bottom to top of gently dipping mylonitic rocks, retrograde chloritized breccias, and cataclasites (Shi et al. 2004). The north-dipping Machaoying Fault extends east–west for more than 200 km (Fig. 1). It was generated by the Mesozoic continental collision between the Yangtze and North China Cratons (Hu et al. 1988; Yan et al. 2000; Dong et al. 2011). Geophysical data interpretations have revealed that the Machaoying Fault is a trans-lithospheric structure (Hu et al. 1988). Secondary or higher-order NNE-trending faults are widespread in the district (Fig. 1), notably in the west where major Ag–Pb–Zn veins are developed (Fig. 2). Structural analysis indicates that these faults were characterized by early compressional deformation and then reactivated as late extensional faults (Mao et al. 2006; Gao et al. 2011).

Mesozoic granitoids intruded the Archean and Paleoproterozoic rocks in the Xiong'ershan district and adjacent areas (Fig. 1). The Wuzhangshan and Huashan plutons (Fig. 1) have SHRIMP zircon U–Pb ages of 156.8 ± 1.2 and 132.0 ± 1.6 Ma, respectively (Mao et al. 2010). The Heyu pluton (Fig. 1) is an intrusive complex generated by multiple phases emplaced between 148 and 127 Ma (Guo et al. 2009; Gao et al. 2010; Mao et al. 2010). Many Mo-mineralized granitoid porphyries occur within the Xiong'ershan and Luanchuan districts (Fig. 1). They were emplaced between 158 and 131 Ma as constrained by zircon U–Pb geochronology (Li et al. 2005; Mao et al. 2010).

Geology and mineralization of the Haopinggou Au–Ag–Pb–Zn deposit

The Haopinggou Au–Ag–Pb–Zn deposit is located in the northern portion of the Xiayu ore field (Fig. 2) and is hosted in amphibolite and migmatized felsic to mafic gneiss, with minor marble and magnetite-bearing quartzite of the Taihua Group (Luo et al. 2000). Mesozoic and Cenozoic continental sedimentary rocks are locally present and unconformably overlie the Taihua Group. Northeast-striking extensional faults are common, mostly dipping 60°–85° to the northwest (Fig. 2).

The Haopinggou granite porphyry intruded amphibolites of the Taihua Group to the northwest of the mine (Fig. 2). This porphyry has a SHRIMP zircon U–Pb age of 133.5 ± 1.4 Ma (Ye 2006). A NE-striking breccia body occurs immediately to the southwest of the Haopinggou porphyry. The breccias consist of rocks of the Taihua and Xiong'er Group.

Au–Ag–Pb–Zn mineralization at Haopinggou has been recognized within more than 20 NE-oriented fault zones (Figs. 2, 3), but only several of them contain industrial ore bodies. The H15, H16, and H17 veins are the most important, accounting for ca. 75 % of the proven reserves of the deposit. To 2013, the deposit has proven and probable reserves of 43.8 Koz Au at an average grade of 1.18 g/t, and 4.0 Moz Ag at an average grade of 107 g/t, 54.6 Kt Pb at 4.71 wt%, and 14.3 Kt Zn at 1.24 wt% (Stephenson et al. 2014). Potential for new discoveries has been highlighted by a recent deep drill hole that uncovered a 1.42-m-wide ore shoot at −82 m, with average grades of 263 g/t Au, 335 g/t Ag, 0.73 wt% Pb, and 1.74 wt% Zn (Silvercorp Metals INC., unpub. data).

A majority of mineralized veins at Haopinggou strike northeast and dip 50°–85° NW. They are 600–2100 m long and continue for several hundred meters down plunge. Individual veins contain more than one ore body, with high-grade shoots separated by subeconomic or unmineralized segments. The ore bodies typically consist of an early pyrite–quartz assemblage (Stage 1) and a late Pb–Zn-sulfide assemblage (Stage 2). There are clear crosscutting relationships between the two stages (e.g., Fig. 3a, b), with the Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins containing fragments of Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins (Fig. 3c). Metallic minerals in Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins are dominated by pyrite, with minor to trace amounts of chalcopyrite, pyrrhotite, arsenopyrite, galena, sphalerite, native gold, electrum, and kustelite (Fig. 3a–e). The gangue minerals are mainly quartz and siderite (Fig. 3a, b, d, e). Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are dominated by sphalerite, galena, and pyrite, with subordinate chalcopyrite, tetrahedrite, and a variety of silver minerals (Fig. 3a–c, e, f), associated with quartz, ankerite, and calcite (Fig. 3a–b, f).

The mineralized veins are surrounded by alteration halos ranging from 10 cm to 2 m in width (Fig. 3a–c). The alteration assemblages consist mainly of sericite, quartz, chlorite, and carbonate, with minor disseminations of sulfide minerals (e.g., pyrite, chalcopyrite, and galena). The Haopinggou breccia body, located west of the mine (Fig. 2), mainly consists of rocks of the Taihua Group and the Xiong'er Group. The breccia body is barren in gold mineralization, although pyrite, sphalerite, galena, quartz, and carbonate occur as hydrothermal cements in areas where it is intersected by NE-striking faults.

Samples and analytical methods

Samples used for this study were collected from underground work areas, mainly from the economically most important H15, H16, and H17 veins. Sample details are summarized in Table 1. Polished thick and thin sections from each sample were examined petrographically in order to characterize mineralogy, textures, and paragenesis. Acid etching (HNO_3) was used to reveal internal textures in pyrite grains. Selected thin sections were analyzed by a JEOL Quanta-200 environmental scanning electron microscope (SEM) equipped with an energy dispersive spectrometer (EDS), which enabled combined analysis of morphology and major element compositions of phases of interest. Electron microprobe (EMP) analyses of the ore minerals were performed using a JXA-8100 superprobe. Standards and unknowns were analyzed using a 5-μm beam diameter, an accelerating voltage of 20 kV, and a beam current of 20 nA. The standards, spectral lines, and detection limits (ppm) for each element are: Fe (FeS_2, Kα, 110), Cu (Cu, Kα, 120), Zn (ZnS, Kα, 160), S (FeS_2, Kα, 50),

As (GaAs, Lα, 200), Sb (Sb, Lα,110), Cd (Cd, Lα, 260), Te (Te, Lα, 150), Co (Co, Kα, 100), Ni (Ni, Kα, 80), Ag (Ag, Lα, 70), and Au (Au, Lα, 250). The data were reduced using the ZAF correction method. Crystallographic orientation data of pyrite were collected by indexing EBSD Kikuchi patterns using an Oxford Instruments HKL Nordlys II EBSD detector coupled to a FEI Quanta 450 field emission gun SEM. The analyses were operated at 15 kV, 25 mm working distance and 70° sample tilt in high vacuum mode. Orientation maps of pyrite were acquired in automatic mode with a step size of 1 or 5 μm. All the above experiment equipments are hosted at the State Key Laboratory of Geological Processes and Mineral Resources (GPMR), China University of Geosciences, Wuhan.

In situ trace element analyses of pyrite

In situ trace element analyses of pyrite were conducted using laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma mass spectroscopy (LA-ICPMS) at the Center of Excellence in Ore Deposits (CODES), University of Tasmania, Australia. Analytical instrumentation consists of a New Wave 213-nm solid-state laser microprobe and an Agilent 7500a Quadrupole ICP-MS. The operating conditions and procedures applied to pyrite have been detailed in Large et al. (2007, 2009) and Danyushevsky et al. (2011).

Spot analyses of pyrite were performed by laser-ablating spots of 35 μm diameter. The repetition rate was 5 Hz, and laser beam energy was maintained between 4 and 5 J/cm^2. Analysis time was 90 s, consisting of 30-s background (laser off) and 60-s analysis (laser on). Calibration was performed using an in-house reference material STDGL2b2 (Danyushevsky et al. 2011), which was analyzed twice every 1.5 h to correct for instrument drift (100-μm beam size at 5 Hz). Data reduction was made using SILLS software following standard methods (Longerich et al. 1996). Iron was used as the internal standard, and the Fe contents were quantified by EMP analyses. Imaging of trace element distributions in pyrite was performed by ablating a set of parallel lines arranged in a grid over the sample. Beam diameters were 12, 15, or 22 μm depending on sample size. The beam was rastered at 10-Hz repetition rate and at a speed equal to the beam size per second. Redeposition of sample back onto the surface was controlled by preablating each line prior to analysis. Images were produced for each element using a logarithmic color scale.

In situ Pb–Pb isotope analyses of galena

In situ Pb–Pb isotope analyses of galena were performed using a Nu Plasma HR multi-collector ICPMS coupled to a Photon Machine Analyte G2 laser ablation system at the Geological Survey of Finland in Espoo, Finland. The MC-ICP-MS is equipped with nine Faraday detectors and amplifiers with 10^{11} Ω resistors. Baseline and ablation data were measured on peak, collected in static mode (^{208}Pb, ^{207}Pb, ^{206}Pb, ^{204}Pb, ^{205}Tl, ^{203}Tl). The raw data were filtered at 2 s and corrected for mass discrimination using an exponential law. The mass discrimination factor for Pb was determined using a ~20 ppb Tl solution nebulized at the same time as the sample, using a desolvating nebulizer. Samples were ablated in He gas (gas flows = 0.4 and 0.1 l/min) within a HelEx ablation cell (Müller et al. 2009). The gas mixture was optimized daily for maximum sensitivity. All analyses were made using rasters with a stage stepping speed of 1 micron/second. Ablation conditions were: 5 μm beam diameter; 5 Hz pulse frequency; 1.4 J/cm^2 beam energy density. A single Pb–Pb measurement included 1-min baseline measurement (measure zero) prior to a batch of ratio measurements, each of the latter consisting of data acquisition for 45 s with laser on. Breaks in an analytical session, or refilling the Tl solution necessitated a new measure zero.

A galena from Broken Hill was used to monitor the precision and accuracy of the measurements. It was analyzed every ten samples over the entire period of analysis. The obtained accuracy is estimated to be equal to or better than 3 ‰ for $^{208}Pb/^{204}Pb$, 2 ‰ for $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$, 2 ‰ for $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$, and 0.34 ‰ for $^{207}Pb/^{206}Pb$ (2σ), compared with the certified value of Townsend et al. (1998) and Stevenson and Martin (1986).

In situ Pb–Pb isotope analyses of pyrite

In situ lead isotope analyses of pyrite were performed on a Neptune Plus MC-ICP-MS (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Dreieich, Germany) equipped with a Geolas 2005 excimer ArF laser ablation system (Lambda Physik, Göttingen, Germany) at the State Key Laboratory of Geological Processes and Mineral Resources, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan. In the laser ablation system, helium was used as the carrier gas for the ablation cell and was mixed with argon (makeup gas) after the ablation cell. The spot diameter ranged from 44 to 90 μm dependent on Pb signal intensity. The pulse frequency was from 4 to 10 Hz, but the laser fluence was kept constant at ~3 J/cm^2. A new signal-smoothing and mercury-removing device was used downstream from the sample cell to efficiently eliminate the short-term variation of the signal and remove the mercury from the background and sample aerosol particles (Hu et al. 2014). The Neptune Plus was equipped with nine Faraday cups fitted with $10^{11}\,\Omega$ resistors. Isotopes ^{208}Pb, ^{207}Pb, ^{206}Pb, ^{204}Pb, ^{205}Tl, ^{203}Tl, and ^{202}Hg were collected in Faraday cups using static mode. The mass discrimination factor for Pb was determined using a Tl solution (NIST SRM 997) nebulized at the same time as the sample, using an Aridus II desolvating nebulizer. The ^{202}Hg signal was used to correct the remaining ^{204}Hg interference on ^{204}Pb, using the natural $^{202}Hg/^{204}Hg$ ratio.

In this method, the natural Tl isotopic composition was assumed. MASS-1, a sulfide standard reference from USGS (Wilson et al. 2002), and two in-house standards PY-3 and Sph-2 were then run to define the mathematical relationship between Tl and Pb mass bias (Woodhead 2002). The Pb isotopic compositions of those three sulfides samples were previously determined by solution-MC-ICP-MS at GPMR. MASS-1 was used to monitor the precision and accuracy of the measurements after ten sample analyses, over the entire period of analysis. The obtained accuracy is estimated to be equal to or better than ±0.6 ‰ for $^{208}Pb/^{204}Pb$, $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$, and $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$ compared to the solution value by MC-ICP-MS, with a typical precision of 0.4 ‰ (2σ).

Results

Gold and silver mineralogy

Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins contain abundant visible gold minerals, including native gold, electrum, and kustelite (Fig. 4; Table 2). They occur as anhedral to subhedral inclusions within pyrite and, less commonly, in magnetite, siderite, and quartz. They are also locally present as small grains along grain boundaries of the host minerals. Native gold is mostly hosted in siderite and magnetite (Fig. 4a, b). It contains 85.9–93.9 wt% Au and 5.3–12.5 wt% Ag, with a mean gold fineness of 905 (Table 2). Electrum is the most abundant gold mineral, commonly enclosed in or marginal to pyrite, magnetite, or siderite (Fig. 4b–e). The Au and Ag contents in electrum are 69.8–75.0 wt% and 23.5–27.9 wt%, respectively (Table 2). Kustelite typically occurs as inclusions in siderite (Fig. 4e, f), and it has

comparable Au (46.3–53.8 wt%) and Ag (44.5–52.6 wt%) contents (Table 2). Traces of Cu, Zn, and Fe are also detected in the gold-bearing minerals (Table 2).

Silver-bearing minerals are widespread and abundant in Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins, mainly including tetrahedrite, argentiferous tetrahedrite, stromeyerite, pyrargyrite, polybasite, argentite, and native silver (Fig. 5; Table 2). They occur as microscopic aggregates within galena, sphalerite, and chalcopyrite, as interstitial grains between the major minerals, or as stringers infilling Pb–Zn-sulfide grains (Fig. 5). Tetrahedrite has a close paragenetic relationship with chalcopyrite and is locally equilibrated with polybasite (Fig. 5a) or argentiferous tetrahedrite. Tetrahedrite contains 1.56–6.69 wt% Ag, 0.28–1.44 wt% Fe, 34.48–37.40 wt% Cu, and 6.31–7.08 wt% Zn (Table 2). Argentiferous tetrahedrite, the most common silver mineral at Stage 2, occurs as veinlets within sphalerite (Fig. 5b) and as inclusions or aggregates in galena (Fig. 5c) and chalcopyrite (Fig. 5f). Compared to tetrahedrite, argentiferous tetrahedrite contains higher Ag (18.39–28.09 wt%) and Fe (2.04–2.80 wt%) coupled with lower Cu (17.83–24.34 wt%) and Zn (4.11–4.98 wt%; Table 2). The contents of Sb (22.90–25.61 wt%) and As (1.02–2.68 wt%) are relatively homogeneous both in tetrahedrite and argentiferous tetrahedrite (Table 2). Stromeyerite, commonly coexisting with argentiferous tetrahedrite and chalcopyrite, occurs as fracture fillings in sphalerite (Fig. 5b). Stromeyerite has highly variable Ag and Cu contents ranging from 28.70 to 61.62 and 16.56 to 42.05 wt%, respectively (Table 2). Polybasite also has a widespread distribution and is intergrown with other silver minerals such as pyrargyrite (Fig. 5c, d). The contents of Ag and Sb are 59.75–60.56 and 21.29–22.63 wt% in pyrargyrite and 71.32–77.06 and 4.96–9.95 wt% in polybasite (Table 2). Argentite occurs in textural equilibration with polybasite and native silver (Fig. 5e, f) and contains 79.49–84.34 wt% Ag (Table 2). Native silver consists of 97–98 wt% Ag with minor Au (0.27–0.40 wt%) and Cu (0.45–1.11 wt%; Table 2). Gold contents are generally very low (<0.4 wt%; Table 2) in all silver minerals. Textural relationships indicate a paragenetic sequence for the silver minerals consisting of, in an order of precipitation, tetrahedrite, argentiferous tetrahedrite and stromeyerite, pyrargyrite and polybasite, and agentite and native silver (Fig. 5). This implies that the late-stage minerals became progressively more enriched in Ag (Table 2).

Pyrite textures

Pyrite is the predominant sulfide mineral both in Stage 1 and 2 veins. Petrographic observations of acid-etched thin sections and back-scattered electron imaging revealed six generations of pyrite (Fig. 6), with three (Py1-3) from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins and the other three (Py4-6) from Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins. The first generation (Py1) is coarse-grained pyrite with abundant fine-grained inclusions of quartz, chalcopyrite, and galena (Fig. 6a, b). The second generation (Py2) consists of masses of subhedral to euhedral pyrite overgrowths on Py1 (Fig. 6a, b). Py2 is texturally homogeneous and rarely contains mineral inclusions. Py3 typically occurs as overgrowths of Py1 and Py2 and is also present as discrete subhedral to euhedral grains (Fig. 6a, c). Py3 contains abundant galena and chalcopyrite inclusions, but differs from Py1 in that it hosts numerous native gold and electrum grains (Fig. 6c).

In Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins, Py4 generally has porous textures and contains abundant inclusions of chalcopyrite, ankerite, and lesser quartz (Fig. 6d, e). Py5 encloses Py4 and is characterized by subhedral to euhedral and texturally homogeneous clean grains (Fig. 6d–f). Py6 has overgrown Py5 and is characterized by the presence of numerous galena, sphalerite, and quartz inclusions (Fig. 6f).

Field and petrographic observations suggest plastic deformation of pyrite from Stage 1 veins (Fig. 3b, d). The deformation is confirmed and further characterized by results of EBSD analysis (Fig. 7). The orientation contrast image (OCI) and colored EBSD image (Fig. 7b, c) of pyrite from sample HP32 provide additional evidence for the plastic deformation of the studied pyrite grains. In addition, the scattered pole figures of pyrites show an anticlockwise rotation in the range of 0°–15° around one [100] axis of pyrite (Fig. 7d), indicating that the apparent grains or subgrains are inherited from a single former parent pyrite grain. Euler orientation image and matched scattered pole figures of another pyrite aggregate from sample HP41 (Fig. 7e) confirm that this aggregate consists of several pyrite grains with different crystallographic orientations (Fig. 7f, h). The colored EBSD map shows a range of 0°–4° for the crystallographic misorientations of one selected grain (Fig. 7g), which is interpreted as reflective of low-angle subgrain boundaries resulted from intragranular plastic deformation.

Trace element compositions of pyrite

A total of 91 LA-ICPMS spot analyses were completed on various generations of pyrite from Haopinggou. A total of 26 elements were analyzed: Cr, Mn, Fe, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Ga, As, Se, Mo, Ag, Cd, Sn, Sb, Te, Ba, Gd, Hf, Ta, W, Pt, Au, Tl, Pb, and Bi. The results are given in ESM 1. Selected trace element compositions of Py1 to Py6 are illustrated in Fig. 8. Representative time-resolved LA-ICPMS spectra for each generation of pyrite recorded during spot analyses are shown in Fig. 9. In addition to spot analyses, LA-ICPMS element mapping was conducted on six grains to characterize the distribution patterns of trace element in the various pyrite generations, involving Au, As, Ag, Mn, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Pb, Bi, Te, Se, Sn, Ti, Cd, Mo, W, S, Fe, Zr, Al, Si, V, K, and Ca. Three representative sets of LA-ICPMS element images are shown in Figs. 10 and 11.

Py1 contains higher Co (mean 179 ppm) and Ni (453 ppm) compared to Py2. Other elevated trace elements in Py1 include Ag (mean 5.6 ppm), Pb (74 ppm), Cu (269 ppm), Sb (4.6 ppm), and Bi (4.3 ppm). Notably, Py1 has low Au (<0.02–0.47 ppm) and highly variable As (3–1741 ppm). In sharp contrast, Py2 has much higher contents of As (mean 2363 ppm) and Au (9.3 ppm) but other trace elements are generally very low compared to Py 1 (e.g., <71 ppm Cu, <6 ppm Zn, and 0.02–111 ppm Pb). Py3 is enriched in As (mean 1534 ppm), Au (19.1 ppm), Ag (25.9 ppm), Pb (1853 ppm), Bi (19.6 ppm), Sb (5.2 ppm), Cu (210 ppm), Co (820 ppm), and Ni (336 ppm). Results of the spot analyses for Py1, Py2, and Py3 are consistent with and confirmed by the LA-ICPMS time-resolved spectra that show the ion signal intensities of the trace elements (Fig. 9a–c). LA-ICPMS images of pyrite from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins also reveal spectacular compositional zoning patterns (Fig. 10), which correspond to distinct generations of pyrite revealed by petrographic observation of acid-etched grains. Figure 10a highlights three generations of a selected pyrite grain: the porous and inclusion-rich core (Py1) has elevated Ag, Pb, Cu, Sb, Bi, Zn, Cd, and Sn, whereas the overgrowth (Py2) has relatively high concentrations of As and Au compared to Py 1. The thin rim (Py3) has high concentrations of Co, Ni, As, Au, Ag, Pb, Cu, and Bi. Similar distribution patterns of trace elements in Py1 and Py2 are also observed in another pyrite grain (Fig. 10b). The microfractures within this grain are enriched in gold and other trace elements (e.g., As, Ag, Pb, Bi, and Cu), with two gold nanoparticles being observed (Fig. 10b).

Py4 has elevated concentrations of Ag (mean 62 ppm), Sb (7.9 ppm), Cu (317 ppm), Pb (109 ppm), Zn (910 ppm), Co (158 ppm), and Ni (333 ppm), but Au is extremely low (<0.01–0.25 ppm) and As ranges from below detection limit to 830 ppm. Compared to Py4, Py5 is enriched in As (mean 1224 ppm), but depleted in most other trace elements (e.g., <1.2 ppm Ag, <4 ppm Cu, <37 ppm Pb, and

<0.5 ppm Zn), with low Au contents (<0.01–0.51 ppm). Py6 contains unusually high concentrates of Pb (mean 6120 ppm) that most likely result from abundant microinclusions of galena (Fig. 6f). Other trace elements include Ag (mean 43 ppm), Au (0.69 ppm), Cu (118 ppm), Zn (22.7 ppm), and Sb (10.2 ppm), all much higher than values of Py5. The spot analysis results for Py4 to Py6 are consistent with their LA-ICPMS spectra (Fig. 9d–f). LA-ICPMS element images of pyrite grains from the Pb–Zn-sulfide veins also show conspicuous compositional zoning (Fig. 11). Figure 11 shows a porous core (Py4) enriched in Ag, Pb, Cu, Zn, Sb, Mn, Co, and Ni, and a rim (Py5) that has elevated As and Au compared with Py4.

Lead isotope compositions of galena and pyrite

In situ lead isotope data of galena are listed in ESM 2. Thirty-nine galena grains analyzed from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins have $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$ ratios of 17.624–17.811, $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$ of 15.473–15.503, and $^{208}Pb/^{204}Pb$ of 38.245–38.319. Nine galena grains from Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins have $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$ ratios of 18.128–18.173, $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$ of 15.527–15.544, and $^{208}Pb/^{204}Pb$ of 38.471–38. 508.

In situ lead isotope data of pyrite are listed in ESM 3. There are no obvious isotopic variations among different generations of pyrite from each individual stage. Lead isotopic compositions of five pyrite grains from Stage 1 range between 17.640 and 17.671 for $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$, 15.487 and 15.508 for $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$, and 38.270 and 38.345 for $^{208}Pb/^{204}Pb$. Twenty pyrite grains from Stage 2 have $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$ ratios of 18.130–18.290, $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$ of 15.502–15.565, and $^{208}Pb/^{204}Pb$ of 38.481–38.572.

Discussion

Occurrence and enrichment mechanism of gold

Numerous studies have shown that gold in sulfide minerals either occurs as visible grains or as invisible nanoparticles and lattice-bound solid solutions (Cabri et al. 1989; Cook and Chryssoulis 1990; Reich et al. 2005; Fougerouse et al. 2016a). Precipitation of gold is affected by several factors, including concentration and chemical state of gold in the ore fluids, temperature, pH, oxygen and sulfur fugacity, and metamorphic history (Heinrich and Eadington 1986; Cathelineau et al. 1989; Cabri et al. 2000; Reich et al. 2005; Large et al. 2007; Morey et al. 2008). Recent research highlights the importance of sulfide growth rate on controlling the distribution of nanoscale gold clusters in auriferous sulfides (Fougerouse et al. 2016c). Pyrite and arsenopyrite are among most important Au-bearing minerals, and Au-bearing pyrite is commonly high in arsenic, which is believed to be favorable for co-precipitation of Au in the pyrite structure (e.g., Cook and Chryssoulis 1990; Pals et al. 2003; Reich et al. 2005; Sung et al. 2009).

At Haopinggou, Au is significantly enriched in Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins (P < 0.05 by statistical t test), whereas Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are basically devoid of gold (Fig. 12a). In Stage 1, porous Py1 grains have low Au contents (below or marginally above the detection limit; ESM 1) and minor amounts of Ag (mean 5.6 ppm). Py2 is characterized by elevated Au (mean 9.3 ppm) and As (mean 2363 ppm) and yields relatively smooth LA-ICPMS spectra for Au and As (Fig. 9b), indicating a predominance of lattice-bound gold in the As-rich pyrite, consistent with element maps (Fig. 10). Py3 is enriched both in Au (mean 19.14 ppm) and Ag (mean 25.94 ppm), which are most likely present as microinclusions of Au–Ag compounds in view of the coincident spiky signals of Au and Ag in the LA-ICPMS spectra (e.g., Fig. 9c). This view is consistent with petrographic observations of abundant inclusions of electrum and base-metal sulfides in Py3 (e.g., galena, chalcopyrite; Figs. 4c, d, 6c).

In summary, invisible Au is present mostly in Py2 and Py3 (Figs. 8a, b, 9b, c), whereas Au inclusions have been observed in Py3, siderite, and magnetite (Figs. 4, 6c). Based on results of LA-ICPMS spot analyses and trace element imaging, there is a positive correlation between Au and As in Stage 1 pyrite (Figs. 9, 12b). Similar positive correlations of these elements have been reported from orogenic-type and carlin-type gold deposits worldwide (e.g., the Sukhoi Log deposit in Siberia, the northern Carlin Trend in Nevada), where they have been interpreted to reflect a predominance of invisible gold in arsenian pyrite (e.g., Cook and Chryssoulis 1990; Ashley et al. 2000; Pals et al. 2003; Reich et al. 2005; Sung et al. 2009; Large et al. 2009). Most LA-ICPMS spot analyses of arsenian Py2 and Py3 plot below the gold saturation line in Fig. 12b, confirming that gold in Py2 and Py3 occurs mostly likely as invisible gold.

Previous studies have shown that invisible Au and associated trace elements locked in the lattice of sulfide minerals can be liberated during subsequent deformation, metamorphism, and/or hydrothermal overprints, leading to reprecipitation of visible gold particles on grain boundaries or microfractures (Mumin et al. 1994; Vaughan and Kyin 2004; Morey et al. 2008; Sung et al. 2009; Cook et al. 2009; 2013; Reddy and Hough 2013; Fougerouse et al. 2016b). Three mechanisms may explain the mobilization of trace element at mineral scale: (1) fluid-mediated replacement (Putnis 2009; Sung et al. 2009; Harlov et al. 2011; Fougerouse et al. 2016a, b); (2) intragrain diffusion (Reddy et al. 2006, 2007; Reddy and Hough 2013; Vukmanovic et al. 2014); and (3) partial melting of the sulfide ore (Mavrogenes 2001; Tomkins et al. 2004; Ciobanu et al. 2006). At Haopinggou, Stage 1 pyrite grains are marked by plastic deformation (Figs. 3b, d, 7), which could have generated lattice dislocations and orientation boundaries (Fig. 7) that in turn facilitated intragrain diffusion through fast pathways (e.g., Reddy and Hough 2013) and fluid-mediated liberation (e.g., Fougerouse et al. 2016b) of invisible Au. The remobilized Au can be efficiently scavenged by deformation-related fluids and reprecipitated as particles within microfractures of the same pyrite grain or included in overgrowths surrounding the parental grains (Figs. 6c, 7, 10) and nearby gangue minerals (Fig. 4a–d). A similar process has been documented at El Callao gold district, Venezuela (Velásquez et al. 2014). Py3 at Haopinggou is enriched in many other trace elements, especially chalcophile elements including Cu, Pb, Bi, Sb, Te, and Ag (Fig. 8a, b). In addition, chalcopyrite and galena are intergrown with gold minerals as inclusions in Py3 or within microfractures (Figs. 6c, 10b). Thus, those chalcophile elements could also have been remobilized from earlier pyrite together with Au during the deformation process.

Occurrence and enrichment mechanism of silver

Silver is enriched in pyrite from Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins at Haopinggou, particularly in Py4 (mean 64 ppm) and Py6 (mean 43 ppm). Laser ablation ICP-MS time-resolved spectra and element images of Py4 show that Ag is positively correlated with Pb, Cu, Zn, and Sb (Figs. 9d, 11), indicating that the elevated Ag is related to microinclusions of base-metal sulfides, particularly galena. A similar scenario is noted in Py6, which contains numerous inclusions or stringers of galena and sphalerite (Fig. 6f). Representative LA-ICPMS spectra for Py6 show extremely high Pb (up to 1.4 wt%), providing additional evidence for the presence of galena microinclusions in pyrite (Fig. 9f). The spectrum of Ag is parallel to that of Pb and Sb, confirming that Ag occurs mainly in inclusions of galena or Sb-bearing silver minerals (Fig. 9f).

A close association of Ag and galena has been documented in many ore deposits (e.g., Sharp and Buseck 1993; Lueth et al. 2000; Zeng et al. 2000; Costagliola et al. 2003). Silver can enter into the crystal lattice of galena together with Sb (or Bi) by substitution for Pb as illustrated in the formula $Ag^+ + (Sb, Bi)^{3+} = 2Pb^{2+}$. The maximum solubility of Ag in galena can be up to 9.4 wt% at 350–400 °C (Foord et al. 1988; Foord and Shawe 1989). Both Py4 and Py6 from Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins contain abundant galena inclusions (Fig. 6d–f) and yield flat LA-ICPMS spectra indicating elevated but uniform Ag and Sb (Fig. 9d, f), further demonstrating that Ag enrichment in pyrite grains is largely caused by the galena inclusions. This interpretation is also confirmed by the LA-ICPMS element images (Fig. 11) and positive correlations between Pb and Ag (Fig. 12c), and Ag and Sb (Fig. 12d).

Silver can be incorporated into tetrahedrite to form argentiferous tetrahedrite (Fig. 13a) via an Ag–Cu solid-state exchange reaction (Sack et al. 2002, 2003). Silver can also form minerals via exsolution of silver from galena (Fig. 13b) due to decreasing temperatures (Sharp and Buseck 1993; Chutas et al. 2008; Voudouris et al. 2011). These silver minerals include, in order of precipitation, argentiferous tetrahedrite and stromeyerite, pyrargyrite and polybasite, and argentite and native silver (Fig. 5). At Haopinggou, Ag is progressively enriched whereas Cu becomes progressively depleted in paragenetically late silver minerals (Table 2). According to the fractional crystallization model of Hackbarth and Petersen (1984), progressive Ag enrichment in paragenetically late minerals can be explained in terms of preferential removal of Cu from the ore-forming solution by precipitation of Cu-bearing minerals (chalcopyrite, tetrahedrite, etc.)

Two mineralizing events at Haopinggou

Field relations at Haopinggou indicate that the gold-mineralized pyrite–quartz veins predated the silver-mineralized Pb–Zn-sulfide veins (Fig. 3a–c). These two stages either formed from a single, evolving hydrothermal system, or from two spatially overlapping but temporally distinct hydrothermal systems that were associated with different metallogenic events. The following observations and considerations led us to conclude that Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins and Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are the results of two discrete mineralizing events:

1. The two vein assemblages formed under different structural regimes. Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins display well-developed foliations (Fig. 3a, b, d), indicating that they have undergone post-mineralization plastic deformation. Results of the EBSD analysis confirm grain-scale plastic deformation for pyrite grains of Stage 1 veins (Fig. 7). In contrast, Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are characterized by open-space filling textures (Fig. 3b, c) and lack deformation, consistent with formation under an extensional tectonic regime with no post-mineralization deformation;

2. The trace element patterns in pyrite from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz and Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are remarkably different. Stage 1 pyrite is enriched in Au, As, Bi, Co, and Ni, whereas Stage 2 pyrite contains much higher Ag, Pb, Zn, and Sb (Fig. 8e);

3. The lead isotopic compositions of sulfide from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz and Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are distinctly different. In the $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$ versus $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$ diagram (Fig. 14), most of the Stage

2 ores have lead isotopic compositions consistent with that of the Cretaceous Haopinggou porphyry, suggesting that the Pb–Zn-sulfide veins have a magmatic source for Pb and, by inference, Zn and Ag. One Pb–Zn-sulfide vein sample has sericite $^{40}Ar/^{39}Ar$ age of 134.9 ± 0.8 Ma that agree with a zircon U–Pb age of 133.5 ± 1.1 Ma for the Haopinggou porphyry (Ye 2006). The age consistency confirms a magmatic source for the stage 2 veins. In comparison, Stage 1 sulfides have lower $^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb$, $^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb$, and $^{208}Pb/^{204}Pb$ ratios (ESMs 2, 3; Fig. 14), which are distinctly different from values of the Haopinggou porphyry (Fig. 14) and thus rule out a genetic relation between the two.

Taken together, the field, textural, compositional, and isotopic data indicate that Stage 1 and Stage 2 veins at Haopinggou formed under contrasting tectonic regimes and are related to different mineralization events (Fig. 15). Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are likely related to magmatism presumably represented by the Haopinggou porphyry, but genesis of the Stage 1 quartz-pyrite veins remains uncertain. To the east of the Xiayu ore field, numerous Triassic gold veins have been recognized, as best illustrated by the Shanggong and Dianfang gold deposits (Fig. 1), which have been considered to be the result of the orogenic deformation due to collision of the Yangtze and North China Cratons (Chen et al. 2008; Tang 2014). Considering that Stage 1 gold mineralization predates Stage 2 Ag–Pb–Zn mineralization, we tentatively infer that gold mineralization at Haopinggou could have formed in the Triassic. Further geochronological and geochemical investigations are needed to better understand the evolution of the Haopinggou deposit, particularly the age and genesis of the stage 1 auriferous quartz-sulfide veins.

Conclusions

The Haopinggou deposit consists of two distinct mineralization stages with distinct mineral assemblages and trace element compositions. Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins are dominated by gold mineralization with negligible Ag, whereas the Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are characterized by silver mineralization without Au enrichment. Different generations of pyrite (Py1 to Py3 of Stage 1; Py4 to Py6 of Stage 2) record compositional evolution of the deposit. Stage 1 pyrites are enriched in Au, As, Co, Ni, and Bi, whereas Stage 2 pyrites contain much higher Ag, Pb, Zn, Sn, and Sb. Both visible and invisible gold are present in Stage 1 pyrite–quartz assemblages. The invisible Au is mostly lattice-bound in arsenian Py2, whereas visible Au occurs as inclusions in Py3 and associated metallic and gangue minerals. Similarly, both invisible and visible Ag are present in Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins. Invisible Ag is mostly hosted in the lattices of galena and has a positive correlation with Sb, whereas visible Ag is represented by a variety of silver minerals included in galena or interstitial to sulfide or gangue minerals. Lead isotopes of sulfide minerals, combined with textural, geochronological and geological data, allow that the Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins are genetically related to early Cretaceous magmatism presumably represented by the Haopinggou porphyry proximal to the veins, whereas the Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins may have formed during the Triassic orogeny due to collision of the Yangtze and North China Cratons. This study highlights that Au and Ag–Pb–Zn veins may occur in the same metamorphic terrains and share similar geological and alteration features, but may have no genetic relation to each other.

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Fig. 1 Geological map showing major mineral districts along the southern margin of the North China Craton (modified from Mao et al. 2010). Inset indicates tectonic location of the southern North China Craton in East China. For more details see text. MCC metamorphic core complex

Fig. 2 Geological map of the Haopinggou deposit in the Xiayu ore field (simplified from Nonferrous Metals Geological Survey of Henan Province, unpublished data, 2003). For location of the map see Fig. 1

Fig. 3 Photographs (a–c) and reflected light photomicrographs (d–f) showing structures, textures, and mineralogy of Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins and Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins at Haopinggou. a Polymetallic sulfide vein as fracture infillings. The marginal pyrite–quartz vein was intruded by the Pb–Zn-sulfide vein and enclosed by intensive hydrothermal alteration. Note the pyrite–quartz vein was deformed. b Pb– Zn-sulfide veins crosscutting the pyrite–quartz vein. Note that foliation and banded structures are well developed in the pyrite–quartz vein and Pb–Zn-sulfide vein, respectively. c Fragments of pyrite–quartz veins included in the Pb–Zn-sulfide vein. d Stage 1 coarse-grained pyrite aggregates have abundant microfractures with a preferred orientation. The microfractures are locally filled with chalcopyrite. Siderite is the major gangue minerals intergrown with pyrite. Position of Fig. 7a is indicated. e Massive Stage 2 galena replacing coarse-grained pyrite in Stage 1 pyrite–quartz vein. Note that the pyrite contains abundant galena inclusions. f Quartz-ankerite vein crosscutting Pb– Zn-sulfide assemblages at Stage 2. Py pyrite, Qz quartz, Sp sphalerite, Gn galena, Cal calcite, Sd siderite, Ccp chalcopyrite, Ank ankerite

Fig. 4 Reflected light photomicrographs (a–d) and back-scattered electron images (e–f) showing occurrences and textural features of gold minerals from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins. a Native gold forming irregular grains in siderite and magnetite. Minor galena inclusions occur in magnetite. b Native gold and electrum present in siderite as inclusions. Magnetite, arsenopyrite, and galena also occur in siderite. c Irregular electrum grains in pyrite, magnetite, and galena. Chalcopyrite and galena replacing magnetite and pyrite; all these metallic minerals are altered by siderite and quartz. d Electrum grains in pyrite or between pyrite and quartz. e Irregular electrum and kustelite grains or stringers in siderite. Minor pyrite and quartz also occur in siderite. f Kustelite grains intergrown with pyrite in siderite. Abbreviations as in Table 1

Fig. 5 Reflected light photomicrographs (a–d) and back-scattered electron images (e–f) showing occurrences and textural features of silver minerals from Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins. a Tetrahedrite and polybasite intergrown with galena, all replacing chalcopyrite. b Argentiferous tetrahedrite, stromeyerite, chalcopyrite, and quartz forming a vein filling sphalerite. Chalcopyrite is present as inclusions in sphalerite. c Argentiferous tetrahedrite, polybasite, and pyrargyrite intergrown with chalcopyrite, all included in galena. d Polybasite and pyrargyrite intergrown with sphalerite in galena. e Polybasite and argentite replacing chalcopyrite in quartz. Polybasite is surrounded by argentite. f Aggregates of argentiferous tetrahedrite, argentite and native silver in chalcopyrite. Abbreviations as in Table 1

Fig. 6 Reflected light photomicrographs (a, c–e) and back-scattered electron images (b, f) showing three generations of pyrite from the Stage 1 pyrite–quartz vein (Py1 to Py3; a–c) and Stage 2 Pb–Znsulfide (Py4 to Py6; d–f). See text for more details. Pyrite grains in a, d, and e were etched with nitric acid to reveal growth zonation patterns. Abbreviations as in Table 1

Fig. 7 Results of EBSD analysis of selected pyrite grains in Stage 1 (a–d from sample HP32; e–h from sample HP41). a Reflected light photomicrograph showing oriented microfractures (dashed red arrows) in pyrite aggregates. Note that siderite veins and chalcopyrite inclusions (red arrows) are

present mainly in the microfractures. Circled red line refers to pyrite grains imaged in c. b Orientation contrast image (OCI) showing the variation of lattice orientation in different pyrite grains. c Colored EBSD image showing crystallographic misorientations of selected pyrite grains in the range of 0°–15°. The initial "reference" orientation point is marked as a red cross on the grain. d Scattered pole figures for pyrites in c suggesting an apparent

anticlockwise rotation around one [100] axis. Rotation direction is marked by black arrow. e Reflected light photomicrographs showing a pyrite aggregate. Inclusions of galena (black arrows) and chalcopyrite (red arrows) occurring mainly in intergrainular boundaries and microfractures of pyrite grains. Position of a pyrite grain in f and g is marked by circled red curves. f Euler orientation image showing the aggregate is composed of seven pyrite grains with different colors. g Colored EBSD image showing slight crystallographic misorientations (0°–4°) in selected pyrite grain. The initial "reference" orientation point is marked as a red cross. h Scattered pole figures for the seven measured pyrite grains in f. Abbreviations as in Table 1

Fig. 8 Diagrams showing the concentrations of selected trace elements in different generations (a–d) and stages (e) of pyrite. a–b Ranges of content (a) and comparisons of mean content (b) of trace elements in Py1 to Py3 from the pyrite–quartz stage. c–d Ranges of concentrations (c) and comparisons of mean concentrations (d) of trace elements in Py4 to Py6 from the Pb–Zn-sulfide stage. Red dotted line indicates the detection limits of the trace elements. e Spidergram showing the average concentrations of trace elements of three pyrite generations in Stage 1 and Stage 2. Pyrites from Stage 1 and Stage 2 are enriched in Au, As, Co, Ni, Bi and Ag, Pb, Zn, Sn, Sb, respectively

Fig. 9 Representative LA-ICPMS time-resolved spectra for pyrite grains of different generations at Haopinggou. a Py1; note the relative high counts of Pb, As, Bi, Sb, Zn, Cu, and Ag, and low counts of Au. b Py2; high counts of As and Au. Note the profiles for As and Au are parallel with that for Fe. c Py3; note the profiles for most elements are unstable except the profile for As. The spikes both in the profiles for Au and Ag indicate microinclusions of Au–Ag compounds. d Py4; note the relative high counts of As, Cu, Zn, Ag, Sb, and Pb and the fact that the profiles for these elements are mostly parallel. e Py5; note the high counts of As, whereas the counts for other elements are quite low. f Py6; note the extremely high counts of Pb, followed by Ag, Sb, etc

Fig. 10 LA-ICPMS images with logarithmic color scales (in ppm) showing contents and distribution patterns of trace elements of pyrite from Stage 1 (a from sample HP41; b from sample 32). a The same pyrite aggregate as in Fig. 7e. The boundaries of three large grains are highlighted by red line, with one grain consisting of three generations of pyrite (Py1, Py2, Py3). Note that gold nanoparticles occur in grain boundary. b A pyrite grain consists of two generations of pyrite. The core (Py 1) is enriched in inclusions of galena (red arrows) and chalcopyrite (black arrows), whereas the overgrowth (Py2) is free of inclusions. Note that the pyrite grains are penetrated by microfractures (red dashed lines) which are filled with chalcopyrite veins and gold nanoparticles. See text for more explanations

Fig. 11 LA-ICPMS images with logarithmic color scales (in ppm) showing trace element contents of pyrite from Stage 2 (sample HP46). This grain consists of two generations of pyrite (Py4, Py5). More textural details of this pyrite grain are shown in Fig. 6d. See text for more explanations

Fig. 12 Binary plots of selected trace elements in different generations of pyrite at Haopinggou. The solid and dotted lines in a, b represent the compositional trend of pyrite from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz vein and Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide vein, respectively. The shaded areas show the average detection limits of the trace elements. a Gold and silver in pyrite from both assemblages are broadly correlated

positively. Note that pyrite from Stage 1 quartz-pyrite veins is enriched in Au, whereas pyrite from Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins contains much higher Ag. b Au versus As plot showing several spot analyses from Py3 plot above the Au saturation line (Reich et al. 2005), indicating microinclusions of native gold contained in pyrite. The remaining analyses below this line are consistent with the predominance of invisible gold within the pyrite, particularly in Py2 and Py3. c A positive correlation between Pb and Ag indicates that Ag may be contained in galena inclusions in pyrite grains. d Silver and Sb are positively correlated in pyrite from the Pb–Zn-sulfide veins, indicating that both Ag and Sb are hosted in galena inclusions or occur as Ag–Sb-sulfosalt inclusions in pyrite. Such a correlation, however, is not observed for pyrite from the pyrite–quartz veins

Fig. 13 Back-scattered electron images showing silver minerals in galena at Haopinggou. a Tetrahedrite and argentiferous tetrahedrite as inclusions in galena. b Stringers of argentiferous tetrahedrite and polybasite in galena. Abbreviations as in Table 1

Fig. 14 In situ LA-ICPMS analyses of ^{207}Pb/^{204}Pb and ^{206}Pb/^{204}Pb on galena and pyrite from Stage 1 and Stage 2 at Haopinggou. The diameters for spots on galena and pyrite are 5 and 44 μm, respectively. The model Pb curve (μ = 9.74) is from Stacey and Kramers (1975). Data from Stage 1 and Stage 2 plot in completely separate areas of this diagram; however, they are both seated on the Pb curve with μ = 9.4. The shaded area indicates the Pb isotopic compositions of feldspar from the Haopinggou porphyry (Wang et al. 1997). Abbreviations as in Table 1

Fig. 15 Schematic diagram showing formation and evolution of various pyrite generations from Stage 1 pyrite–quartz veins (a) and Stage 2 Pb–Zn-sulfide veins (b). a Auriferous fluids initially migrated into the faults and deposited the early pyrite–quartz veins containing three generations of pyrite (Py1, Py2, and Py3). Py1 is coarse-grained and contains clusters of very fine-grained inclusions (e.g., sulfides) that likely explain the enrichment of a variety of trace elements such as Ag, Pb, Cu, Ni, Sb, and Bi in the pyrite. Py2 typically occurs as overgrowths of Py1 and rarely contains mineral inclusions. Trace elements are generally depleted in Py2, with the exceptions of As and Au. Py3 occurs as selvages enclosing the earlier formed pyrite or as microfracture fillings in the earlier pyrite. The Py3 contains abundant mineral inclusions, particularly native gold and electrum and has high contents of a large number of trace elements such as Au, Ag, As, Co, Pb, Zn, Cu, Sb, and Bi. b In an independent mineralizing event, Ag-rich fluids were introduced into the same fault systems and deposited the Pb–Zn-sulfide veins that overprinted or crosscut the earlier pyrite–quartz veins. The Pb–Zn-sulfide veins consist of three generations of pyrite, namely Py4, Py5, and Py6. Py4 contains abundant mineral inclusions and is enriched in Ag, Sb, Cu, Pb, Co, and Ni. In contrast, Py5, enclosing Py4, is depleted in most of these trace elements with the exceptions of As and Au. Py6 contains a variety of mineral inclusions dominated by Pb–Zn-sulfides, indicating that the formation of Py6 was coeval with the Ag–Pb–Zn mineralization. In addition, Py6 has high contents of Ag and Sb, most likely due to the presence of galena inclusions as Ag can be incorporated into the lattices of galena together with Sb by substitution for Pb. Meanwhile, a variety of silver minerals with close relationships with galena formed through Ag–Cu solid-state exchange reaction (Sack et al. 2002, 2003) or by Ag exsolution from the galena due to temperature decrease (Sharp and Buseck 1993; Chutas et al. 2008)
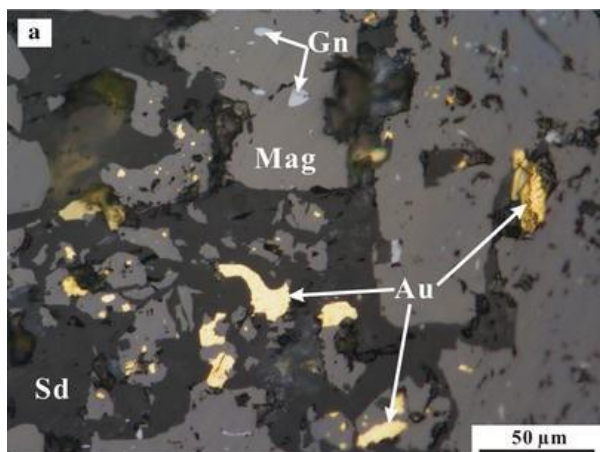

Table 1 Locations and descriptions of samples used for this study

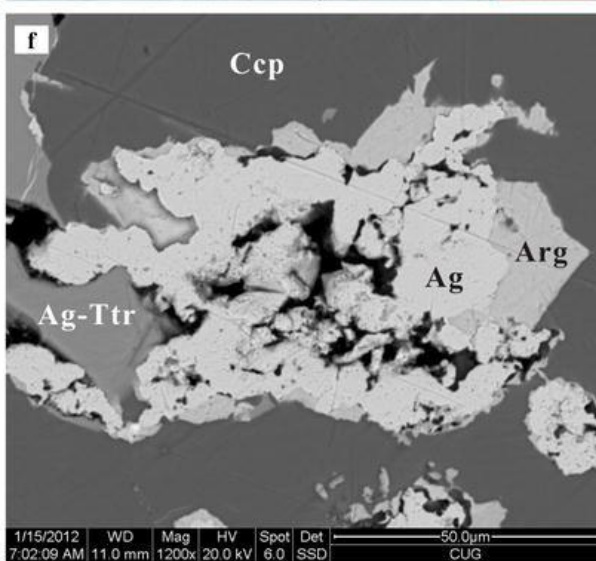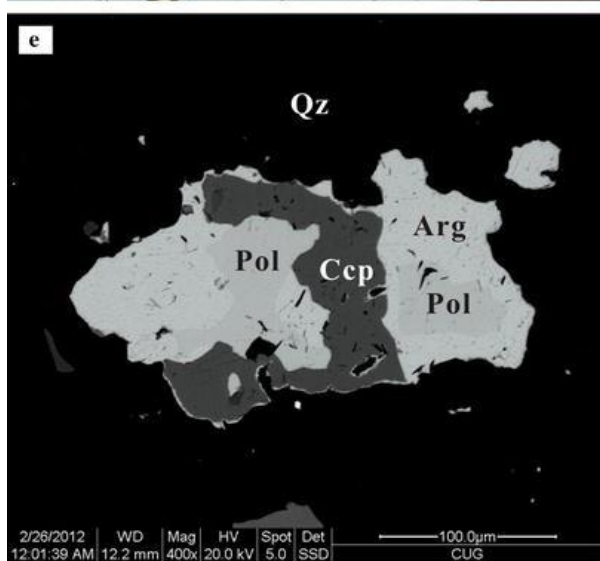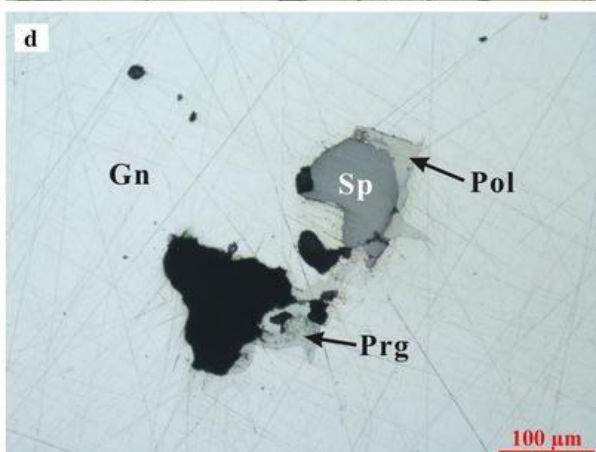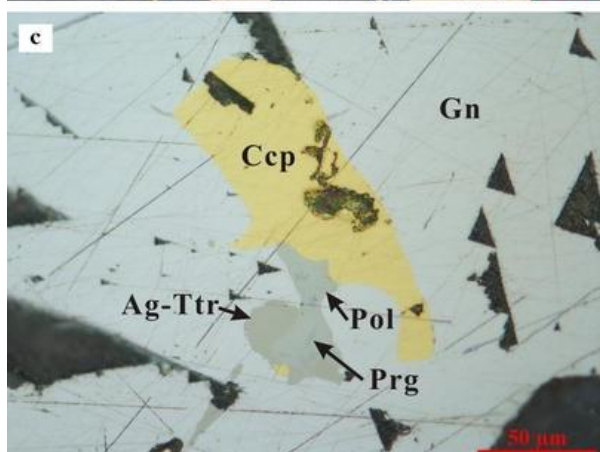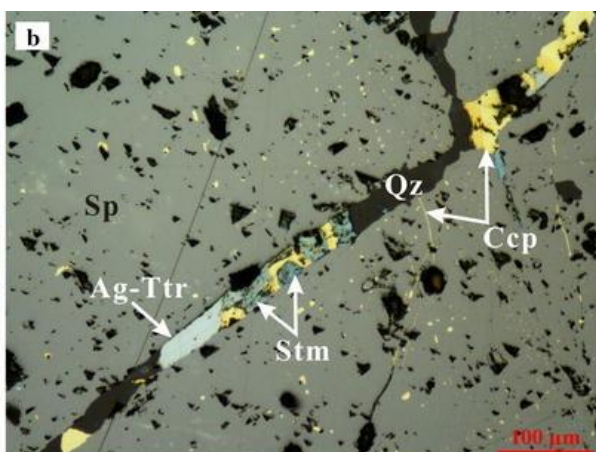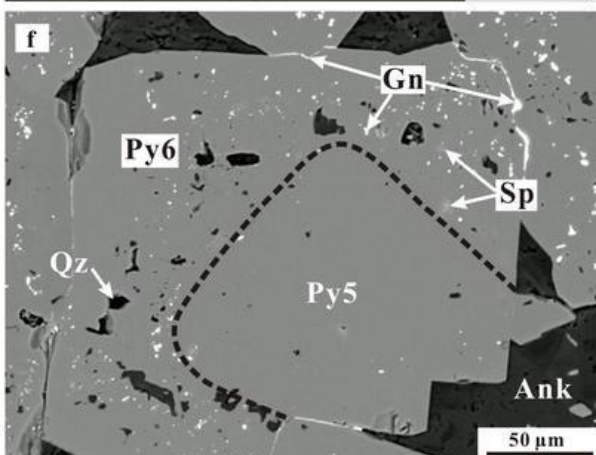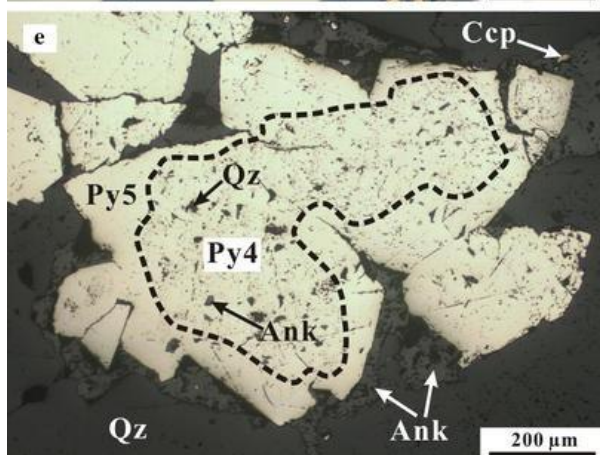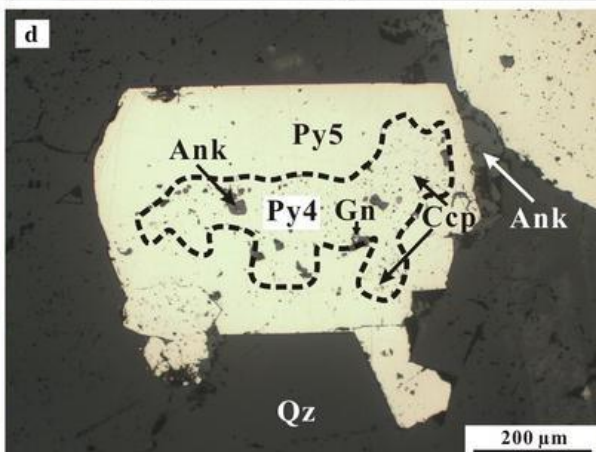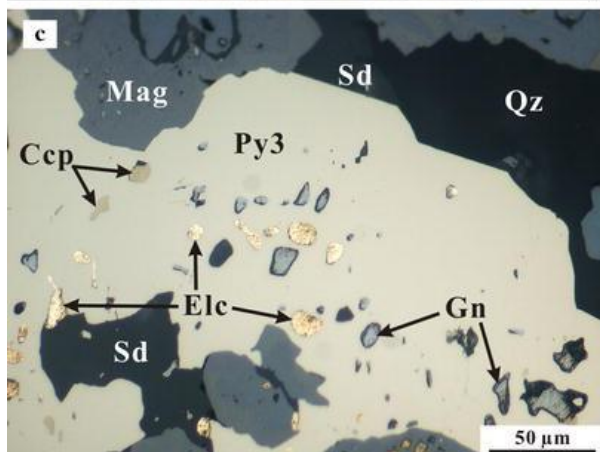Table 2 Electron microprobe data of gold and silver minerals from Haopinggou deposit

Legend:
- Mesozoic-Cenozoic sedimentary rocks
- Neoproterozoic Taowan Group
- Neoproterozoic Luanchuan Group
- Mesoproterozoic Guandaokou Group
- Paleoproterozoic Xiong'er Group
- Late Archean to Paleoproterozoic Taihua Group
- Proterozoic granitoid
- Mesozoic granitoid
- Mesozoic A-type granite
- Mesozoic granite porphyry
- Porphyry Mo deposit
- Vein Mo deposit
- Skarn Pb-Zn deposit
- Vein Pb-Zn-Ag(Au) deposit
- Vein Au deposit
- Breccia-hosted Au deposit
- Detachment fault
- Fault
- Town

	Mesozoic-Cenozoic sedimentary rocks		
	Paleoproterozoic Xiong'er Group		
	Late Archean to Paleoproterozoic Taihua Group		
	Mesoproterozoic gabbro		Fault and vein
	Mesoproterozoic diorite		Detachment fault
	Mesozoic granite porphyry	▲	Ag-Pb-Zn vein deposit
	Haopinggou breccia	⬠	Haopinggou deposit

a Sd Py 100 μm

b 100 μm

c Py misorientation (°) 15 10 5 0 100 μm

d {100} {110} {111}

e Qz Py 200 μm

f 200 μm

g Py misorientation (°) 0 1 2 3 4 200 μm

h {100} {110} {111}

a

200 μm

Au197 | As75 | Ag107

Pb208 | Bi209 | Sb121 | Cu65

Zn66 | Cd111 | Co59 | Ni60

b

100 μm

Au197 | As75 | Ag107

Pb208 | Bi209 | Sb121 | Cu65

Zn66 | Cd111 | Co59 | Ni60

200 μm

Py5
Py4

Au197

As75

Ag107

Pb208

Bi209

Sb121

Cu65

Zn66 ppm

Cd111 ppm

Co59 ppm

Ni60 ppm

a

Au (ppm) vs Ag (ppm)

Legend:
- Py1 (orange filled circle) — Stage 1
- Py2 (green filled square) — Stage 1
- Py3 (dark blue filled triangle) — Stage 1
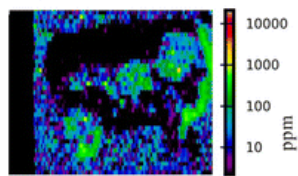- Py4 (orange open circle) — Stage 2
- Py5 (green open square) — Stage 2
- Py6 (blue open triangle) — Stage 2

b

Au (ppm) vs As (ppm)

Au saturation line

c

Ag (ppm) vs Pb (ppm)

Pb = 100Ag

d

Ag (ppm) vs Sb (ppm)

Stage 2

a

Gn

Ttr

Ag-Ttr

1/15/2012 | WD | Mag | HV | Spot | Det | ———————100.0μm———————
2:44:05 AM | 11.4 mm | 500x | 20.0 kV | 6.0 | SSD | CUG

b

Gn

Ag-Ttr

Pol

Ag-Ttr

1/15/2012 | WD | Mag | HV | Spot | Det | ———————200.0μm———————
1:01:39 AM | 11.5 mm | 300x | 20.0 kV | 6.0 | SSD | CUG

Stage 1

	Pyrite generation		Trace element	Gold enrichment
	Py1	sulfide or gangue mineral	Ag, Pb, Cu, Ni, Sb, Bi	Low gold
	Py2		As, Au	Invisible lattice-bound gold in arsenic pyrite
	Py3	galena / gold mineral / gangue mineral	Au, Ag, As, Co, Pb, Zn, Cu, Sb, Bi	Major: visible gold minerals, e.g., native gold, electrum Minor: invisible lattice-bound and submicroscopic gold

Alteration zone — Py+Qz vein — Wall rocks — 20 cm

b

Stage 2

	Pyrite generation		Trace element	Silver enrichment
	Py4	sulfide or gangue mineral	Ag, Sb, Cu, Pb, Zn, Co, Ni	Invisible lattice-bound silver in galena inclusions
	Py5		As	Low silver
	Py6	galena / silver mineral / gangue mineral	Ag, Pb, Au, As, Cu, Zn, Sb	1. invisible lattice-bound silver in galena inclusions 2. visible silver minerals, e.g., native silver, polybasite

Alteration zone — Py+Qz vein — Sp+Gn vein — Wall rocks — 20 cm
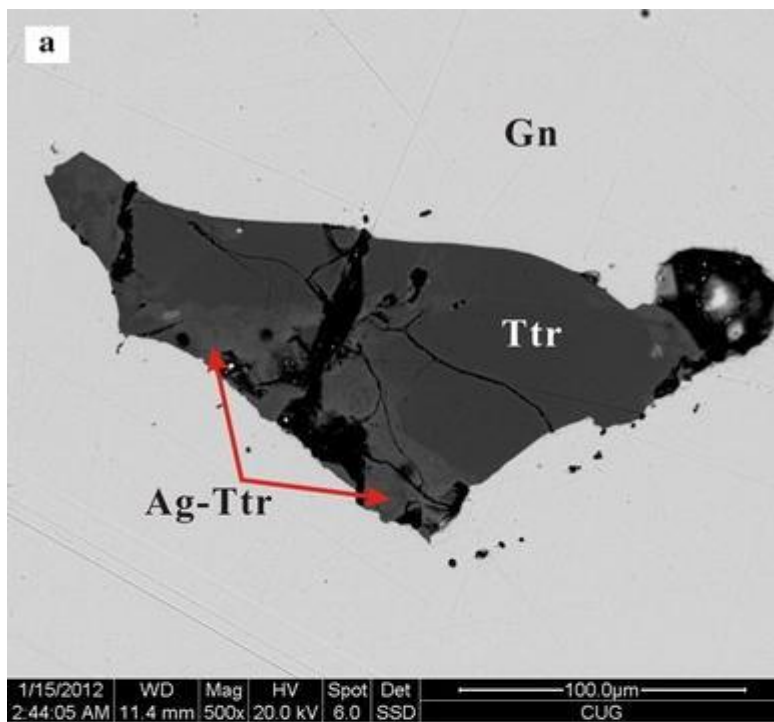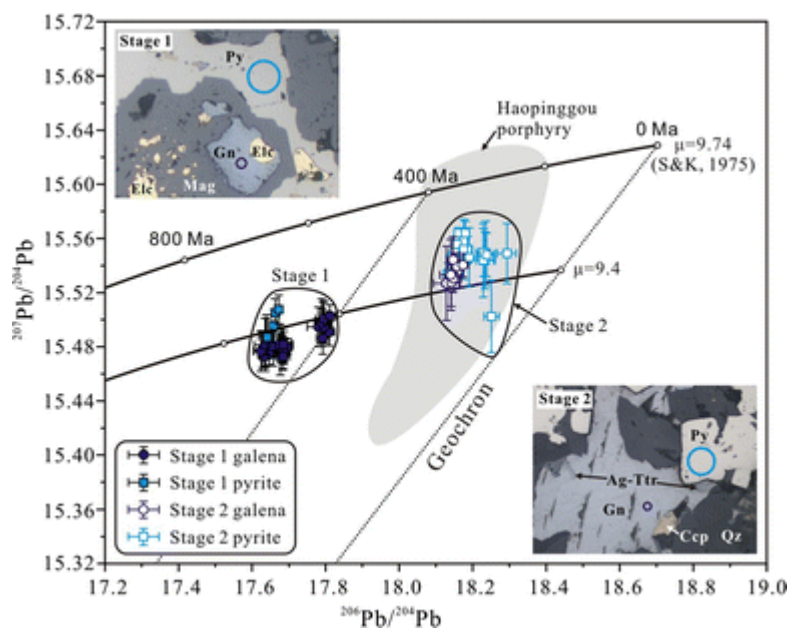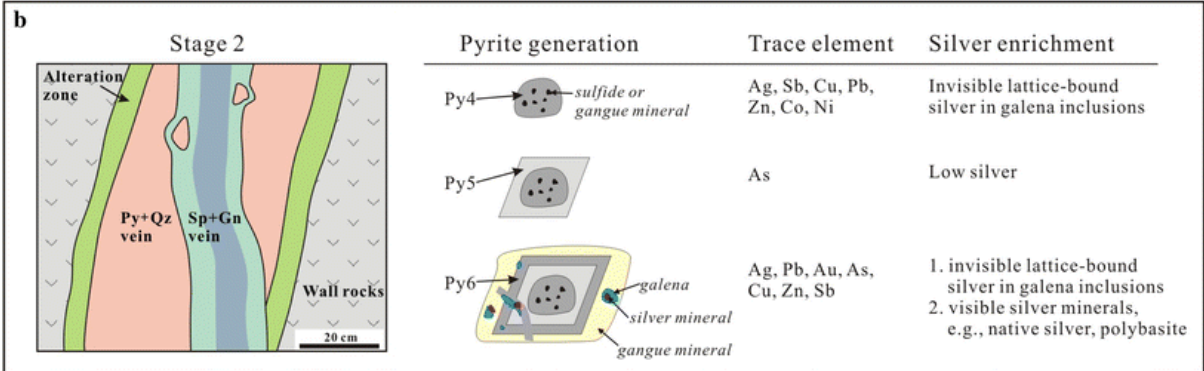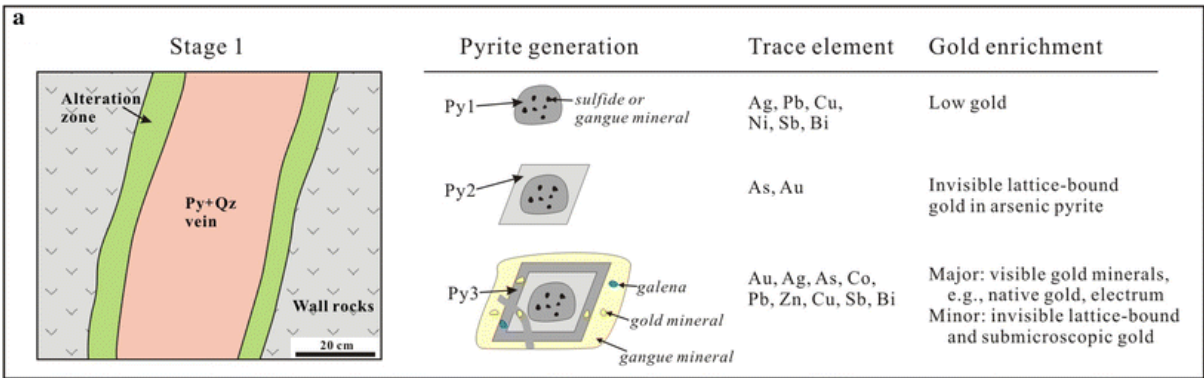
Sample no.	Vein no.	Tunnel	Level (m)	Stage	Ore minerals		Gangue minerals	Analyses
					Major	Minor		
HP04	H16	Outcrop	660	Stage 1	Py	Ccp, Gn	Qz	SEM–EDS, LA-ICP-MS
HP32	H16	PD5	610	Stage 1	Py	Ccp, Sp, Elc	Qz, Sd	SEM–EDS, EBSD, LA-ICP-MS
HP41	H16	PD5	610	Stage 1	Py	Ccp, Apy, Gn, Kut	Qz, Sd	SEM–EDS, EBSD, EMP, LA-ICP-MS
HP62	H16	PD5	610	Stage 1	Py, Ccp	Sp, Gn	Qz	SEM–EDS, LA-ICP-MS
HP66	H15	PD3	340	Stage 1	Py	Gn, Ccp, Elc	Qz, Sd, Mag	SEM–EDS, EMP, LA-ICP-MS
HP67	H15	PD3	340	Stage 1	Py	Gn, Po, Au, Elc	Qz, Sd	SEM–EDS, EMP, LA-ICP-MS
HP68	H15	PD3	340	Stage 1	Py	Gn, Sp, Po	Qz, Sd	SEM–EDS, EMP, LA-ICP-MS
HP15	H16	Outcrop	660	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Py	Ccp, Pol, Prg	Qz	SEM–EDS, EMP
HP42	H16	PD5	610	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Ccp	Ttr, Pol	Qz, Ank	SEM–EDS, EMP
HP46	H16	PD5	610	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Py	Ag–Ttr, Pol	Qz	SEM–EDS, LA-ICP-MS
HP47	H16	PD5	610	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Py	Ag–Ttr, Pol, Arg	Qz	SEM–EDS, LA-ICP-MS
HP63	H16	PD5	610	Stage 2	Sp, Gn	Py, Ttr, Ag–Ttr, Pol	Qz, Ank	SEM–EDS, LA-ICP-MS
HP69	H15	PD2	530	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Ccp	Py, Cv, Str, Arg	Qz, Ank	SEM–EDS, EMP
HP70	H15	PD2	530	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Py	Ag–Ttr, Pol, Arg	Qz	SEM–EDS, EMP, LA-ICP-MS
HP79	H17	PD3	470	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Py	Ccp, Ttr, Ag–Ttr	Qz, Cal	SEM–EDS, LA-ICP-MS
HP81	H17	PD3	470	Stage 2	Sp, Gn, Ttr	Ccp, Pol, Arg, Ag	Qz	SEM–EDS, EMP

Py pyrite, *Sp* sphalerite, *Gn* galena, *Ccp* chalcopyrite, *Po* pyrrhotite, *Au* native gold, *Elc* electrum, *Kut* kustelite, *Cv* covellite, *Ttr* tetrahedrite, *Ag –Ttr* argentiferous tetrahedrite, *Stm* stromeyerite, *Prg* pyrargyrite, *Pol* polybasite, *Arg* argentite, *Ag* native silver, *Qz* quartz, *Mag* magnetite, *Sd* siderite, *Ank* ankerite, *Cal* calcite

Mineral	Analysis no.	Au	As	Ag	S	Fe	Co	Cd	Ni	Sn	Cu	Sb	Zn	Te	Total
Native gold	HP67-1	93.87	b.d.	5.34	0.2	0.22	0.02	0.12	b.d.	0.03	0.15	0.07	0.23	b.d.	100.24
	HP67-2	91.98	b.d.	6.48	0.19	0.24	0.01	0.08	b.d.	0.06	0.19	0.08	0.26	b.d.	99.58
	HP67-3	85.86	b.d.	12.48	0.12	0.31	0.02	0.07	b.d.	0.06	0.13	0.09	0.31	0.04	99.6
Electrum	HP66-1	70.97	b.d.	27.54	0.1	0.42	0.03	0.11	b.d.	0.02	0.14	0.08	0.22	b.d.	99.62
	HP66-2	74.95	b.d.	23.48	0.1	0.21	0.01	0.07	b.d.	0.06	0.13	0.07	0.21	0.04	99.34
	HP66-3	70.6	b.d.	27.57	0.07	0.52	0.03	0.09	b.d.	0.04	0.13	0.06	0.23	b.d.	99.33
	HP66-4	70.51	b.d.	27.88	0.06	0.73	0.02	0.1	b.d.	0.02	0.12	0.03	0.22	b.d.	99.69
	HP66-5	71.21	b.d.	26.9	0.06	0.84	0.01	0.1	b.d.	0.08	0.13	0.09	0.19	0.02	99.63
	HP66-6	69.81	b.d.	27.62	0.06	0.96	0.02	0.09	b.d.	0.04	0.14	0.02	0.21	0.05	99.03
Kustelite	HP41-1	53.78	b.d.	44.48	0.1	0.21	0.03	0.09	b.d.	0.03	0.16	0.01	0.17	0.08	99.14
	HP41-2	49.19	b.d.	50.08	0.1	0.2	0.04	0.08	b.d.	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.15	0.07	99.96
	HP41-3	46.29	b.d.	52.55	0.26	0.26	0.04	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	0.09	0.02	0.21	0.05	99.84
Tetrahedrite	HP42-1-1	0.18	2.68	1.56	25.32	1.26	0.08	0.06	0.16	0.19	37.4	24.69	6.31	b.d.	99.89
	HP42-1-2	0.26	2.22	1.61	25.07	1.3	0.07	0.05	0.16	0.24	37.26	25.45	6.31	b.d.	100
	HP42-2-1	0.26	2.23	1.67	25.62	1.44	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.25	37.01	25.58	6.63	b.d.	100.9
	HP81-1-3	0.23	1.4	6.69	24.4	0.28	0.05	0.06	b.d.	0.21	34.48	25.08	7.05	b.d.	99.92
	HP81-1-4	0.23	1.54	5.58	24.6	0.31	0.04	0.06	b.d.	0.25	35.16	25.24	7.08	b.d.	100.08
	HP81-1-5	0.23	1.39	5.02	24.65	0.33	0.05	0.05	b.d.	0.24	35.19	25.61	7.03	b.d.	99.8
	HP81-2-1	0.23	1.49	5.48	24.56	0.31	0.06	0.05	b.d.	0.23	35.08	25.28	7.03	b.d.	99.79
Argentiferous tetrahedrite	HP70-2-1	0.27	1.74	18.39	23.09	2.2	0.04	0.07	b.d.	0.23	24.34	24.52	4.98	b.d.	99.88
	HP70-2-2	0.28	1.64	19.43	23.2	2.04	0.05	0.06	b.d.	0.21	23.7	24.36	4.88	b.d.	99.84
	HP70-2-3	0.25	1.02	26.28	21.71	2.49	0.05	0.06	b.d.	0.22	18.94	24.69	4.3	b.d.	100.01
	HP70-2-4	0.31	1.71	28.09	21.37	2.8	0.04	0.05	b.d.	0.22	17.83	23.53	4.11	b.d.	100.06
	HP70-1-2	0.29	2.43	19.75	23.12	2.62	0.08	0.06	b.d.	0.18	24.05	22.9	4.84	b.d.	100.32
	HP70-1-3	0.23	2.14	19.75	23.09	2.54	0.05	0.07	b.d.	0.2	23.89	23.38	4.93	b.d.	100.25
Stromeyerite	HP69-2-3	0.21	0.01	28.7	26.45	0.25	0.05	0.05	b.d.	0.05	42.05	0.04	1.68	0.04	99.58
	HP69-2-4	0.18	0.01	32.22	25.57	0.03	0.04	0.06	b.d.	0.03	39.27	0.04	1.57	0.08	99.1
	HP69-3-1	0.32	b.d.	60.1	20.48	0.35	0.03	0.04	b.d.	b.d.	17.35	b.d.	0.5	0.2	99.37
	HP69-3-2	0.26	b.d.	61.62	19.55	0.98	0.03	0.06	b.d.	b.d.	16.56	0.01	0.35	0.19	99.59
	HP69-3-3	0.15	0.03	52.55	19.88	0.31	0.03	0.07	b.d.	b.d.	26.87	0.05	0.17	0.17	100.29
Pyrargyrite	HP15-1-4	0.29	0.03	60.56	16.68	0.12	0.05	0.07	b.d.	0.12	0.43	21.29	0.14	b.d.	99.8
	HP15-1-5	0.26	0.03	59.75	16.52	0.08	0.06	0.06	b.d.	0.12	0.33	22.63	0.12	b.d.	99.95
	HP15-1-6	0.29	0.05	60.4	16.42	0.03	0.06	0.06	b.d.	0.13	0.27	22.27	0.15	b.d.	100.13
	HP15-1-7	0.28	0.01	60.41	16.55	0.08	0.06	0.08	b.d.	0.11	0.34	21.86	0.12	b.d.	99.9
	HP15-1-8	0.28	0.02	60.35	16.18	0.22	0.03	0.05	b.d.	b.d.	0.36	21.67	0.13	0.08	99.35
Polybasite	HP70-1-1	0.25	0.63	73.57	13.43	0.05	0.05	0.06	b.d.	b.d.	3.23	4.96	3.5	0.12	99.85
	HP70-3-1	0.34	0.84	77.06	13.74	b.d.	0.04	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	2.48	5.76	0.16	0.17	100.68
	HP70-3-2	0.32	0.79	75.24	13.6	b.d.	0.07	0.08	b.d.	b.d.	3.39	5.79	0.17	0.16	99.58
	HP70-3-7	0.35	0.62	76.04	13.05	0.02	0.05	0.08	b.d.	b.d.	2.24	7.04	0.4	0.11	99.98
	HP42-2-2	0.3	b.d.	71.32	13.08	0.52	0.05	0.08	b.d.	b.d.	4.22	9.95	0.19	0.08	99.78
Argentite	HP69-2-1	0.33	0.08	79.89	15.23	b.d.	0.03	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	3.17	b.d.	1.18	0.13	100.12
	HP70-3-3	0.26	b.d.	84.34	14.07	b.d.	0.05	0.07	b.d.	b.d.	0.4	0.01	0.14	0.23	99.55
	HP70-3-4	0.27	b.d.	81.18	17.63	b.d.	0.05	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	0.27	b.d.	0.15	0.2	99.84
	HP70-3-6	0.34	0.1	84.04	12.87	b.d.	0.05	0.07	b.d.	b.d.	0.48	0	0.93	0.27	99.14
	HP81-3-1	0.28	b.d.	79.49	16.1	0.48	0.05	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	3.51	0	0.19	0.19	100.37
Native silver	HP81-1-1	0.3	b.d.	97.56	0.67	b.d.	0.06	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	0.5	b.d.	0.46	0.31	99.95
	HP81-1-2	0.32	b.d.	97.99	0.64	b.d.	0.07	0.08	b.d.	b.d.	0.45	b.d.	0.28	0.32	100.15
	HP81-2-2	0.3	b.d.	97.01	0.86	0.28	0.07	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	1.11	0.01	0.27	0.28	100.26
	HP81-2-3	0.27	b.d.	97.06	1.37	0.02	0.06	0.09	b.d.	b.d.	0.69	0.02	0.21	0.34	100.12
	HP81-3-2	0.4	b.d.	97.51	0.82	0.12	0.04	0.11	b.d.	b.d.	0.74	b.d.	0.21	0.34	100.28
	HP81-3-4	0.29	b.d.	97.42	0.64	0.08	0.05	0.1	b.d.	b.d.	0.78	0.02	0.17	0.27	99.82

b.d. below detection