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1 **Determination of the stable iron isotopic composition of sequentially leached iron**  
2 **phases in marine sediments**

3

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12

13 **Abstract**

14 Reactive iron (oxyhydr)oxide minerals preferentially undergo early diagenetic redox cycling  
15 which can result in the production of dissolved Fe(II), adsorption of Fe(II) onto particle  
16 surfaces, and the formation of authigenic Fe minerals. The partitioning of iron in sediments  
17 has traditionally been studied by applying sequential extractions that target operationally-  
18 defined iron phases. Here, we complement an existing sequential leaching method by  
19 developing a sample processing protocol for  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  analysis, which we subsequently use to  
20 study Fe phase-specific fractionation related to dissimilatory iron reduction in a modern  
21 marine sediment. Carbonate-Fe was extracted by acetate, easily reducible oxides (e.g.  
22 ferrihydrite and lepidocrocite) by hydroxylamine-HCl, reducible oxides (e.g. goethite and  
23 hematite) by dithionite-citrate, and magnetite by ammonium oxalate. Subsequently, the  
24 samples were repeatedly oxidized, heated and purified via Fe precipitation and column

25 chromatography. The method was applied to surface sediments collected from the North  
26 Sea, south of the Island of Helgoland. The acetate-soluble fraction (targeting siderite and  
27 ankerite) showed a pronounced downcore  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  trend. This iron pool was most depleted in  
28  $^{56}\text{Fe}$  close to the sediment-water interface, similar to trends observed for pore-water Fe(II).  
29 We interpret this pool as surface-reduced Fe(II), rather than siderite or ankerite, that was  
30 open to electron and atom exchange with the oxide surface. Common extractions using 0.5  
31 M HCl or Na-dithionite alone may not resolve such trends, as they dissolve iron from  
32 isotopically distinct pools leading to a mixed signal. Na-dithionite leaching alone, for  
33 example, targets the sum of reducible Fe oxides that potentially differ in their isotopic  
34 fingerprint. Hence, the development of a sequential extraction Fe isotope protocol provides  
35 a new opportunity for detailed study of the behavior of iron in a wide-range of  
36 environmental settings.

37

### 38 **Keywords**

39 Iron, sediment, sequential extraction, stable Fe isotopes, early diagenesis

40

### 41 **1 Introduction**

42 The many aspects of the biogeochemical cycle of Fe, such as sources and sinks,  
43 changes in redox state, and phase transformations have been intensely studied in  
44 continental and marine environments. Iron fluxes and the bioavailability of respective Fe  
45 mineral phases, however, are still poorly constrained (Raiswell and Canfield 2012), mainly  
46 due to methodological challenges in tracing the complex reaction pathways in which Fe  
47 participates. As early as the 1960s and 1970s, the need for separation of (highly) reactive Fe  
48 minerals from unreactive phases led to the development of sequential chemical extraction

49 methods (e.g. Mehra and Jackson 1960, Schwertmann 1964, McKeague and Day 1966,  
50 Tessier et al. 1979). Since then these schemes have been modified to enhance their  
51 selectivity (e.g. Lord III 1980, Phillips and Lovley 1987, Cornwell and Morse 1987, Ferdelman  
52 1988, Canfield 1988, Kostka and Luther 1994, Haese et al. 1997, Hyacinthe and Van Capellen  
53 2004, Poulton and Canfield 2005, Raiswell et al. 2010). Although operationally-defined and  
54 not entirely mineral-specific, these methods are now routinely applied in soil and sediment  
55 biogeochemical studies. In soil science, Fe solid phase speciation and distribution patterns  
56 are used to classify soils and to reconstruct pedogenesis (e.g. Wiederhold et al. 2007a). Soil  
57 Fe mineralogy has been shown to control the mobility of pollutants and other nutrients  
58 (Stucki et al. 1988).

59 Fe extractions in modern marine sediments have often been performed to identify  
60 the pool of Fe that is potentially reducible during early diagenesis, either through  
61 dissimilatory iron reduction (DIR) (e.g. Slomp et al. 1997, Jensen et al. 2003), or by direct  
62 abiotic reduction with dissolved sulphide (e.g. Canfield et al. 1992, Poulton et al. 2004).  
63 These extraction procedures have also widely been used to study and quantify the post-  
64 depositional alteration of the primary Fe mineral assemblage – including the overprint of  
65 rock magnetic characteristics of sediments (e.g. Kasten et al. 1998, Riedinger et al. 2005,  
66 März et al. 2008). Furthermore, reactive Fe oxide minerals buried and preserved in  
67 subsurface marine sediments have recently been suggested to be an important substrate in  
68 the anaerobic oxidation of methane (e.g. Beal et al. 2009, Segarra et al. 2013, Riedinger et al.  
69 2014, Sivan et al. 2011, 2014, Egger et al. 2015). Similarly, for ancient sediments, the  
70 analysis of sequentially leached solid phase iron species in black shales and banded iron  
71 formations, has revealed important insight into the redox-state of the past ocean (e.g.  
72 Poulton and Canfield 2011).

73           A growing number of studies on Fe sources to the ocean, and reaction pathways in  
74 the modern or ancient marine environment, have focused on, or have been complemented  
75 by, stable Fe isotope analysis (e.g. Anbar and Rouxel 2007, Johnson et al. 2008, Conway and  
76 John 2014). In particular, biologically-driven redox cycling initiated by DIR may lead to a  
77 specific Fe isotope compositional fingerprint, which distinguishes such Fe from other  
78 sources, such as hydrothermal fluids, river discharge, and dust deposition (Beard et al.  
79 2003a, Severmann et al. 2010, Homoky et al. 2009, 2013). However, experimental studies –  
80 biotic and abiotic – demonstrate the complexity of Fe isotope fractionation during specific  
81 reaction pathways and between the Fe mineral phases involved. For example, isotope  
82 fractionation occurs between dissolved Fe, surface-bound Fe, and the bulk of the Fe-oxide  
83 mineral during both DIR (Crosby et al. 2007) and abiotic equilibrium exchange (Wu et al.  
84 2011). During pyrite formation, Fe isotopes fractionate between dissolved Fe, mackinawite,  
85 and pyrite (Guilbaud et al. 2013). The use of Fe isotopes as a fingerprint for a specific source  
86 or reaction pathway may therefore require analytical discrimination between different Fe  
87 phases.

88           Sequential leaching techniques may provide the means to address the above isotopic  
89 complexity. Initial studies have shown, for example, that the isotopic fingerprint of DIR in  
90 marine sediments is detectable only in the reactive Fe oxides (Severmann et al. 2006,  
91 Staubwasser et al. 2006). Similarly, the first Fe isotope data obtained from partial selective  
92 leaching of soils has provided valuable insight into the weathering of Fe minerals and their  
93 utilization as nutrient sources during plant growth (Wiederhold 2007b, Guelke et al. 2010).  
94 In an attempt to address Fe fluxes to the ocean, Scholz et al. (2014) used Fe concentration  
95 data from sequential leaching extracts, in combination with Fe isotope data from HCl  
96 leaching, to identify diagenetic Fe recycling into the water column on the eastern Pacific

97 margin. The logic next step is to apply Fe isotope analyses directly to a full sequential  
98 leaching protocol. However, there are a number of analytical issues that must be solved  
99 prior to application, such as potential isotope fractionation during the Fe separation  
100 chemistry required for isotope analysis, and matrix-induced mass bias from residual leaching  
101 chemicals during mass spectrometry.

102 Here, we have developed a protocol to measure Fe isotopes in different  
103 operationally-defined Fe pools targeted by a commonly used extraction procedure for  
104 modern and ancient sediments (Poulton and Canfield 2005; henceforth referred to as the  
105 PC-Method). The method was developed mainly to study the redox evolution of depositional  
106 environments recorded in sedimentary archives, but is more broadly applicable to studies of  
107 Fe biogeochemistry in modern and ancient settings. The PC-Method targets a variety of  
108 'highly reactive' Fe phases, including carbonate Fe (e.g. siderite) with acetic acid, easily  
109 reducible Fe hydroxides and oxyhydroxides (ferrihydrite, lepidocrocite) with hydroxylamine-  
110 HCl, reducible (oxyhydr)oxides (goethite, hematite, akaganéite) with a solution of Na-  
111 dithionite and Na-citrate, and magnetite with oxalic acid. Some of these leaching steps have  
112 been applied in earlier Fe isotope studies of recent sediments (Staubwasser et al. 2006) and  
113 soils (Wiederhold et al. 2007a, 2007b, Guelke et al. 2010), but the full sequential scheme has  
114 not previously been applied to Fe isotope studies. The PC-Method includes a separate  
115 chromous chloride reduction of FeS<sub>2</sub>, but this technique extracts other Fe phases as well,  
116 and is also unsuitable for Fe isotope analysis because of a mass interference of <sup>54</sup>Cr on <sup>54</sup>Fe,  
117 which cannot be corrected for if Cr is present above typical blank concentrations during  
118 mass spectrometry. A better method for extracting silicates (with HF) and pyrite (HF-  
119 insoluble residue) was developed by Huerta-Diaz and Morse (1990) and adopted for iron

120 isotope analysis by Severmann et al. (2006). This approach may be used subsequently to the  
121 extraction protocol shown here, to determine the isotopic composition of pyrite Fe.

122

123

## 124 **2 Method development and testing**

### 125 **2.1 Extraction of Fe phases (PC-Method)**

126 Leaching is generally started with 5 mL of 1 M Na-acetate (adjusted to pH 4.5 with  
127 acetic acid) per ~50 mg of sediment for 24 h under an Ar-atmosphere. This extraction step  
128 targets carbonate-associated Fe (Tessier et al. 1979, Poulton and Canfield 2005), but also  
129 removes AVS (Cornwell and Morse 1987, Poulton and Canfield 2005) and surface-reduced  
130 Fe(II) (Crosby et al. 2005, 2007). In the second step, 5 mL of 1 M hydroxylamine-HCl in 25%  
131 v/v acetic acid (Chester and Hughes 1967) are reacted with the residue for 48 h. This step  
132 targets easily reducible Fe oxide minerals such as ferrihydrite and lepidocrocite (Poulton and  
133 Canfield 2005). Leaching is then continued with a 2 h treatment of 5 mL of Na-dithionite (50  
134 g L<sup>-1</sup>)/Na-citrate solution (pH 4.8) (Mehra and Jackson 1960, Lord III 1980). Compared to  
135 Canfield (1989) and Poulton and Canfield (2005) we used less citrate (0.02 M instead of 0.2  
136 M) in order to lower the risk of matrix effects during MC-ICP-MS measurements. Citrate is  
137 commonly added as a complexing agent in excess to complex Fe(II) in solution. We ensured  
138 the stability of Fe in solution by performing this extraction step under anoxic conditions and  
139 observed total dissolution of a goethite-hematite mineral standard (see below) and no re-  
140 precipitation of Fe (oxyhydr)oxides. The sequential extraction is completed by leaching with  
141 0.2 M ammonium oxalate/0.17 M oxalic acid for 6 h to dissolve magnetite. After each  
142 extraction step samples were centrifuged and the supernatants filtered through 0.2 µm  
143 polyethersulfone filters.

144

## 145 **2.2 Preparation of leachate solutions for isotope analysis**

146 The PC-Method was modified to accommodate the requirements for  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  isotope  
147 analysis, where the main problem is uncorrectable matrix-induced bias of measured isotope  
148 ratios. Procedures were developed to remove the leaching chemicals prior to standard  
149 column chromatography and mass-spectrometric methods (see below). The matrix removal  
150 and the accuracies of isotope ratios were verified by reference samples of known  
151 composition. These were a) 0.5 mL of an iron standard solution (1000 ppm Fe Certipur®) to  
152 which for each leaching step the appropriate chemicals were added and subsequently  
153 removed, and b) a hematite-goethite mixture prepared according to Cornell and  
154 Schwertmann (1996) ( $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$ :  $0.26 \pm 0.03\text{‰}$ , see Staubwasser et al. 2006), which was used for  
155 the dithionite extraction step only. These and all other subsequent (natural and artificial)  
156 samples were processed as follows:

157 *Acetate extraction, ( $Fe_{aca}$ ):* After centrifugation and filtration the acetate matrix was  
158 destroyed by repetitive oxidation in a mixture of distilled  $\text{HNO}_3$  and  $\text{HCl}$  (1:3) with additional  
159  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  (supra pure grade) (see below for reproducibility of  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{Fe_{aca}}$  data). The complete  
160 procedure for matrix removal is shown in Figure 1. Iron was precipitated from the solution as  
161 Fe hydroxide (Fig. 1) to ensure complete separation from matrix. (Centrifuging the samples  
162 at  $4^\circ\text{C}$  helps to keep the Fe precipitate at the bottom of the test tube.) Subsequently, column  
163 chromatography was performed using the BioRad AG® 1-X8 anion exchange resin (Strelow  
164 1980), as described by Schoenberg and von Blanckenburg (2005).



165 *Hydroxylamine-HCl extraction ( $Fe_{hyam}$ ):* Filtered samples were repetitively oxidized and re-  
166 dissolved in 6 M HCl before column separation was performed as described for the previous  
167 extraction step (Fig. 1).

168 *Na-dithionite/Na-citrate extraction ( $Fe_{di-ct}$ ):* Samples were oxidized (Fig. 1) and after  
169 evaporation, residues were heated for >7 h at 190°C for thermal destruction of the citrate.  
170 Afterwards, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and *aqua regia* were carefully added to the samples to oxidize the reduced  
171 sulfur species in the remaining dithionite to SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>. Subsequent iron hydroxide precipitation  
172 (Fig. 1) was performed to remove all Fe from the sulfate matrix which would otherwise  
173 overload the anion exchange resin. Furthermore, iron precipitation showed whether citrate  
174 was fully removed from the solution, whereby incomplete iron precipitation was indicated  
175 by a yellowish supernatant color due to citrate remaining in the solution. In this case,  
176 thermal heating was repeated. Further processing of the samples for column  
177 chromatography was performed as described above.

178 *Oxalic acid extraction ( $Fe_{oxa}$ ):* The filtrate was oxidized and after evaporation, samples were  
179 heated for 24 h at 140°C to further oxidize the oxalate to CO<sub>2</sub> (Fig. 1). During heating, oxalate  
180 crystals condensating at the rim of the beakers were flushed back with ultra-pure water.  
181 Residues were re-dissolved in *aqua regia* and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (Fig. 1). After boiling (2 h at 120°C) and  
182 evaporation, iron precipitation and sample preparation for column chromatography was  
183 performed as described above. Iron precipitation was performed to ensure the  
184 completeness of oxalate removal. When Fe precipitation was inhibited, heating of the  
185 sample for oxalate destruction was repeated.

186

### 187 **2.3 MC-ICP-MS setup**

188 Prior to mass-spectrometry, concentrations of leached sediment samples were  
189 matched to 1 ppm following ICP-OES analysis (Spectro Arcos ICP-OES). Iron isotope  
190 measurements were performed on a ThermoFinnigan Neptune MC-ICP-MS instrument at  
191 the Steinmann Institute in Bonn following the method described by Schoenberg and von  
192 Blanckenburg (2005).  $^{53}\text{Cr}$  and  $^{60}\text{Ni}$  were simultaneously measured to monitor interferences  
193 of  $^{54}\text{Cr}$  on  $^{54}\text{Fe}$  and  $^{58}\text{Ni}$  on  $^{58}\text{Fe}$ , and the data corrected accordingly. We used the standard-  
194 sample bracketing method with the IRMM-014 standard. An in-house standard  
195 (Johnson&Matthey, Fe Puratronic wire,  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe} = 0.42 \pm 0.05\text{‰}$ ) was additionally measured  
196 every 6 samples to monitor accuracy. Pore-water samples were matched to 0.2 ppm and  
197 measured using an ESI Apex-Q desolvator instead of the regular glass spray chamber.

198 Data are reported as

$$199 \quad \delta^{56}\text{Fe} [\text{‰}] = \left[ \left( \frac{^{56}\text{Fe}/^{54}\text{Fe}_{\text{sample}}}{^{56}\text{Fe}/^{54}\text{Fe}_{\text{IRMM-014}}} \right) - 1 \right] * 1000$$

200 Iron isotope fractionation between two species X and Y are given as

$$201 \quad \Delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{X-Y}} = \delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{X}} - \delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Y}}$$

202

#### 203 **2.4 Procedure blanks, accuracy and reproducibility of $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$ data leached from sediment** 204 **samples**

205 Recoveries of the Certipur<sup>®</sup> Fe standards were between 83 and 101% for all  
206 extractants, when normalized to the unprocessed standard solution (Table 1). The amount of  
207 Fe in the standards (0.5 mg) was higher, but in the same order of magnitude as that  
208 extracted from sediments. The low recoveries for oxalate are due to loss of material during  
209 the sometimes vigorous oxidation reaction. Reagent blanks were  $1.2 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$  for Na acetate  
210 solution,  $43 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$  for hydroxylamine-HCl,  $54 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$  for dithionite-citrate, and  $4.1 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$   
211 for oxalate. Processing blanks that were added in between sediment samples had between

212 0.1 and 0.4  $\mu\text{g Fe}$  (Table 1) and were thus two to three orders of magnitude lower than Fe  
213 contents of natural samples. Three out of 33 blanks were clearly contaminated (Grubb's  
214 outlier test,  $\alpha=0.05$ ) and therefore eliminated from calculations. Contamination concerned  
215 oxalate samples and may have happened during the thermal destruction step.

216 The Certipur<sup>®</sup> standards that underwent chemical processing were isotopically  
217 identical within error to the unprocessed solution ( $\delta^{56}\text{Fe} = 0.15 \pm 0.03\text{‰}$ ,  $n=9$ ). Values for the  
218 extractants were:  $0.14 \pm 0.03\text{‰}$  for acetate ( $n=7$ ),  $0.13 \pm 0.02\text{‰}$  for hydroxylamine-HCl ( $n=5$ ),  
219  $0.09 \pm 0.03\text{‰}$  for dithionite-citrate ( $n=7$ ), and  $0.14 \pm 0.04\text{‰}$  for oxalate ( $n=5$ ) (Fig. 2). The  
220 reproducibility of our internal Certipur<sup>®</sup> standard, regardless of whether it was subjected to  
221 the extraction steps of the PC-Method or not, suggests that the process that led to the loss  
222 of Fe during processing of the samples did not result in a significant fractionation of Fe  
223 isotopes.

224 The hematite-goethite standard was also dissolved in HCl/HNO<sub>3</sub> and measured  
225 without further chemical treatment, except for the column separation. This gave a  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$   
226 composition of  $0.27 \pm 0.01\text{‰}$  (1SD,  $n=3$ , Fig. 2). The  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  value of the dithionite-leached and  
227 fully processed mineral standards was  $0.30 \pm 0.07\text{‰}$  ( $n=5$ ) compared to  $0.26 \pm 0.03\text{‰}$  given by  
228 Staubwasser et al. (2006) ( $n=11$ ). These data demonstrate the absence of matrix-induced  
229 bias in Fe isotope ratios in samples leached and subsequently processed by the methods  
230 outlined in this study.

231

## 232 **2.5 Selectivity of the Fe extraction steps**

### 233 **2.5.1 Materials and set-up of experiments**

234 *Time resolved leaching rate experiments:* Using synthetic minerals, the selectivity of the  
235 chemical extractions by Na-acetate, hydroxylamine-HCl, and Na-dithionite/Na-citrate was  
236 evaluated. This is important, as dependent on the size of Fe pools and their isotopic  
237 differences, non-selectivity of the leaching can lead to incorrect Fe isotope values for the  
238 actual target fraction. The minerals were synthesized after Cornell and Schwertmann (1996).  
239 About 5 mg of the specific Fe oxide was suspended in 50 mL of an extraction solution not  
240 designed to lead to its dissolution: ferrihydrite was treated with Na-acetate for 12, 24, 36,  
241 48, and 60 h, goethite and hematite were treated with hydroxylamine-HCl for 12, 24, 36, 48,  
242 and 60 h, and magnetite was treated with Na-dithionite/Na-citrate for 1, 2, and 4 h. In  
243 contrast to earlier studies (Canfield 1988, Raiswell et al. 1994, Poulton and Canfield 2005)  
244 magnetite was significantly dissolved by dithionite treatment (see below) and the leaching  
245 was thus repeated using magnetite purchased from Alfa Aesar. Although not used on natural  
246 samples in this study, we also evaluated 0.5 M HCl extraction that targets poorly crystalline  
247 hydrous ferric oxides such as ferrihydrite (Kosta and Luther 1994, Severmann et al. 2006).  
248 The synthetic minerals ferrihydrite, goethite, hematite, and magnetite were subject to 0.5 M  
249 HCl for 0.5, 1, 2, 4, and 8 h at room temperature. After each time step, the respective  
250 samples were centrifuged and aliquots of 15 mL were filtered. Na-acetate, hydroxylamine-  
251 HCl, and dithionite samples were processed as described above, but omitting Fe  
252 precipitation and column chromatography as only Fe concentrations were to be obtained.  
253 The processing of HCl-samples was reduced to evaporation and subsequent re-dissolution in  
254 0.3 M HNO<sub>3</sub> prior to Fe concentration measurement by ICP-OES.

255 *Leaching of pairs of isotopically spiked and non-spiked minerals:* Mixtures of two synthetic  
256 minerals were treated with extractants (hydroxylamine-HCl, Na-dithionite, and 0.5 M HCl) to  
257 test the selectivity of the leaching steps. The respective target mineral was mixed with a

258 <sup>58</sup>Fe-spiked non-target mineral (e.g. non-spiked ferrihydrite plus spiked goethite for  
259 hydroxylamine-HCl extraction). Based on the aforementioned observation of our magnetite  
260 minerals significantly dissolving in dithionite solution, additional tests with magnetite  
261 purchased from Alfa Aesar (non-spiked) were performed with spiked goethite and hematite,  
262 respectively. To allow for the high iron concentrations when using pure phases compared to  
263 natural sediment samples, about 10 mg of the synthetic minerals (5 mg spiked mineral + 5  
264 mg non-spiked mineral) was treated with 50 mL of the respective leaching reagent (in  
265 contrast to 50 mg + 5 mL for sediment samples, see above). For each mineral pair, three  
266 replicates were processed. After centrifugation, 15 mL of the extract was filtered for further  
267 processing for Fe isotope analysis as described above. Dissolution of target and non-target  
268 minerals was evaluated by comparing <sup>58</sup>Fe/<sup>54</sup>Fe ratios of the leachates with those of the  
269 respective pure synthetic minerals. The latter ratios were determined after dissolution of the  
270 pure minerals in *aqua regia*, evaporation, re-dissolution in 6 M HCl, and column  
271 chromatography.

272

## 273 **2.5.2 Selectivity of extraction steps**

274 *Time resolved leaching rate experiments:* With the exception of the dithionite  
275 extraction, the treatment of synthetic Fe (oxyhydr)oxide minerals with reagents that are  
276 commonly used in the subsequent extraction step led to only minor dissolution, verifying the  
277 results of Poulton and Canfield (2005). As expected, mineral dissolution increased with the  
278 duration of leaching (Fig. 3). At optimum times for acetate- and hydroxylamine-HCl  
279 extractions (according to the PC-Method), less than 1% of the non-target minerals  
280 ferrihydrite and goethite + hematite, respectively, were dissolved. Carry-over of ferrihydrite-  
281 Fe into the Na-acetate fraction was 0.3% compared to 1.7% given by Poulton and Canfield

282 (2005) and can thus be considered insignificant. The slightly higher dissolution of hematite in  
283 hydroxylamine-HCl compared to goethite could be related to grain-size differences and also  
284 the degree of crystallinity of the hematite (freshly-precipitated hematite is more readily  
285 dissolved than natural hematite; Raiswell et al. 1994). With respect to iron isotope  
286 signatures, a carry-over of <1% of goethite- and hematite-Fe into the fraction of amorphous  
287 Fe is, however, insignificant for typical marine or fluvial sediments as  $Fe_{\text{hyam}}$  and  $Fe_{\text{di-ct}}$   
288 concentrations usually range in the same order of magnitude.

289 We observed considerable dissolution of magnetite in Na-dithionite/Na-citrate for  
290 both the magnetite synthesized after Cornell and Schwertmann (1996) and the magnetite  
291 purchased from Alfa Aesar. The 2 h-treatment led to dissolution of up to 50% of the  
292 magnetite (Fig. 3), which is in contrast to the results of Poulton and Canfield (2005) who  
293 observed dissolution of only up to 7%, and Raiswell et al. (1994) who observed only 4%  
294 dissolution. In our study the significant difference in dissolution of the magnetite produced  
295 after Cornell and Schwertmann (1996) and the purchased magnetite (52% vs. 32% after 2 h  
296 in dithionite/citrate) indicates that grain size might considerably affect dissolution. However,  
297 the magnetite synthesized after Cornell & Schwertmann was similar to that used by Poulton  
298 and Canfield (2005) and yet was strongly dissolved. Interestingly, Kostka and Luther (1994)  
299 also observed significant magnetite dissolution in dithionite (90.2%). The authors, however,  
300 leached for 4 h at 60°C, so their data are not directly comparable to previous studies. The  
301 disparity in our data relative to previous studies was possibly caused by differences in  
302 sample size used per volume of solution, crystallinity, or potentially by partial oxidation of  
303 magnetite during storage. The 1 h extraction by 0.5 M HCl resulted in effective dissolution of  
304 ferrihydrite (>95%) while goethite, hematite, and magnetite remained largely unaffected  
305 (Fig. 3).

306 *Leaching of pairs of isotopically spiked and non-spiked minerals:* Test results of  
307 experiments with  $^{58}\text{Fe}$  spiked and non-spiked minerals are shown in Table 2. The  $^{58}\text{Fe}/^{54}\text{Fe}$   
308 ratios of samples and pure minerals as end-members are given in the appendix (Tables A.1  
309 and A.2). In accordance with the previous time-resolved experiment, the isotopic data of  
310 leached mineral mixtures demonstrate that goethite and hematite remain unaffected by the  
311 hydroxylamine-HCl extraction. For both pairs (each with ferrihydrite), 98% of the dissolved  
312 Fe in solution was derived from ferrihydrite and ~2% originated from goethite and hematite.  
313 In hydroxylamine-HCl, 87% of the ferrihydrite-Fe was recovered, which is slightly less than  
314 the 99% given by Poulton and Canfield (2005). Dithionite effectively dissolved goethite and  
315 hematite. In the first experiment, where minerals have been mixed with  $^{58}\text{Fe}$ -spiked  
316 magnetite synthesized after Cornell and Schwertmann (1996), ~96% of goethite and  
317 hematite were dissolved after 2 h. In the repeated run with magnetite from Alfa Aesar,  
318 recoveries were, however, lower (79 to 88%; Table 2). In both runs, magnetite was  
319 significantly dissolved and data produced by the mixing experiment match those of the  
320 single mineral extraction: Dithionite extracted up to 50-60% of our synthetic magnetite and  
321 30-40% of the Alfa Aesar magnetite.

322

### 323 **3 Application of the new method to surface sediments of the North Sea**

#### 324 **3.1 Material and methods**

##### 325 **3.1.1 Core location and sampling**

326 Data presented in this study were obtained for surface sediments retrieved by a  
327 multicorer in the German Bight (North Sea,  $54^{\circ}5.06'$  N,  $7^{\circ}54.94'$  E, 36 m water depth; site  
328 HE337-1) in 2010 during cruise HE337 of research vessel HEINCKE. The sediment cores were  
329 collected west of the so-called Helgoland mud area, one of the few depocenters of fine-

330 grained sediments in the North Sea with eddy focusing of fine-grained material from the  
331 rivers Weser and Ems (Hertweck 1983). Sedimentation rates in the Helgoland mud area are  
332 ~2.6 mm/yr for the last 750 years (Hebbeln et al. 2003). The location was chosen as  
333 sediments exhibit an extended ferruginous zone starting directly below the sediment surface  
334 in contrast to deposits within the Helgoland mud area proper, where the upper iron  
335 reduction zone is limited to the upper 15 cm (Oni et al. 2015). At the core location,  
336 bioturbation (and potentially bioirrigation) occur. However, the generally rather undisturbed  
337 pore-water profiles suggest that these processes proceed at a comparatively low rate (see  
338 section 3.2).

339 Sediment analyses performed on one core included the sequential iron extractions of  
340 the PC-Method for iron concentration and iron isotope analysis, bulk sediment total acid  
341 digestion for total Al, Mn, and Fe ( $Fe_{total}$ ) contents, in addition to AVS and pyrite-sulfide  
342 extraction after Canfield et al. (1986) (without subsequent Fe isotope analysis). Sediment  
343 was sampled directly on board using syringes with cut tips. The syringes were sealed and  
344 stored in Ar-filled gas-tight glass containers at -20°C until processing to prevent secondary  
345 mineral precipitation. Pore-water was sampled from a parallel core using rhizons (Seeberg-  
346 Elverfeldt et al. 2005, Dickens et al. 2007) that were inserted into pre-drilled holes in the  
347 liner. In order to inhibit oxidation during sampling, due to  $O_2$  in either the rhizon or the  
348 attached syringe, the rhizons were pre-soaked with ultra-pure water and the first 0.5 mL or  
349 pore-water was discarded. Pore-water aliquots for  $\delta^{56}Fe_{Fe(II)_{aq}}$  were acidified with double  
350 distilled HCl and stored in pre-cleaned vials at 4°C.

351

### 352 **3.1.2 Sequential Fe extraction (PC-Method)**



353 Sediment samples were leached in random order. About 50 mg of freeze-dried  
354 sediment was washed with 5 mL of 1 M MgCl<sub>2</sub> for 2 h in order to remove pore-water  
355 constituents, which will also have removed exchangeable ions on particle surfaces (Tessier et  
356 al. 1979, Poulton and Canfield 2005). The MgCl<sub>2</sub> washing was performed under an Ar  
357 atmosphere to prevent oxidation. The residue was then used for the subsequent extraction  
358 steps (see chapter 2.1). The extraction solutions were processed as described in sections 2.2  
359 and 2.3.

360

### 361 **3.1.3 Bulk sediment composition**

362 Total acid digestion of sediment samples was performed with a CEM Mars Xpress  
363 microwave system using ~50 mg of freeze-dried sediment and a mixture of HNO<sub>3</sub> (3 mL), HCl  
364 (2 mL), and HF (0.5 mL). With each set of samples, blanks and standard reference material  
365 (NIST SRM 2702) were processed. Element concentrations were measured by ICP-OES (Iris  
366 Intrepid II). Recoveries of the standard were 97.5% for Al, 100.4% for Fe, and 98.9% for Mn.

367

### 368 **3.1.4 AVS- and pyrite-S**

369 Acid volatile sulfide and pyrite were determined for the North Sea sediments to both  
370 correct the Na-acetate leached Fe pool for the presence of AVS, and to assess the extent of  
371 early diagenetic iron transformation at the study site. Extractions (after Canfield et al. 1986)  
372 with HCl (for AVS) and chromous chloride distillation (for pyrite) were performed at the  
373 University of Leeds. These extractions determine the concentration of sulfide present, which  
374 is then stoichiometrically converted to the appropriate Fe concentration. Replicates of three  
375 samples (each analyzed 2-4 times) revealed good reproducibility with a RSD of below 5% in

376 all cases. Accuracy was evaluated by analysis of an in-house standard (HN22) with a pyrite-Fe  
377 content of  $2.12 \pm 0.16$  wt% (our measured value: 2.18 wt%).

378

### 379 **3.1.5 Pore-water composition**

380 On board pore-water analyses comprised the determination of  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$  using the  
381 ferrozine method of Stookey (1970) and of alkalinity by titration with HCl (see appendix A.3  
382 for alkalinity). Offshore measurements of  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  were performed as described by Henkel et al.  
383 (2012). Pore-water Fe for  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}}$  analysis was concentrated and purified from anions  
384 using NTA Superflow (Lohan et al. 2005). The acidified samples were titrated with  $\text{NH}_4\text{OH}$   
385 (supra pure grade) to a final pH of 2. In order to oxidize Fe(II) to Fe(III),  $10 \mu\text{M H}_2\text{O}_2$  was  
386 added to the samples before loading of NTA Superflow columns (Qiagen). The NTA columns  
387 were pre-conditioned with HCl (pH2, HCl triple distilled). Fe was subsequently eluted using 1  
388 M HCl. The samples were further purified by anion exchange chromatography as described  
389 in section 2.2 and measured by MC-ICP-MS (see section 2.3).

390

## 391 **3.2 Results and discussion**

### 392 **3.2.1 Geochemical results**

393 Geochemical data gained for Site HE337-1, including Fe phases and pore-water  
394 constituents are shown in Figures 4 and 5 (note that  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}^*$  has been corrected for  $\text{Fe}_{\text{AVS}}$  and  
395 that  $\text{Fe}_{\text{AVS}}$  was a minor constituent of  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  in our samples; Figure 5). Total Fe contents range  
396 between 1.9 and 4.6 wt%. Unsulfidized reactive iron ( $\text{Fe}_{\text{unsulf}} = \text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}^* + \text{Fe}_{\text{hyam}} + \text{Fe}_{\text{di-ct}} + \text{Fe}_{\text{ox}}$ )  
397 varies between 0.5 and 1.0 wt% (Fig. 4). Although  $\text{Fe}_{\text{unsulf}}$  remains relatively constant with  
398 depth, a decrease in  $\text{Fe}_{\text{unsulf}}$  relative to  $\text{Fe}_{\text{total}}$  is observed with depth through the top 10 cm

399 of the sediment. At the core top,  $Fe_{hyam}$  represents about 50% of the unsulfidized Fe pool,  
400 and when normalized to  $Fe_{unsulf}$ , shows an overall decrease to ~20 cm depth (Fig. 5).  $Fe_{aca}$   
401 and  $Fe_{di-ct}$  amount to ~20 and ~30% of  $Fe_{unsulf}$ , respectively. Whereas  $Fe_{aca}/Fe_{unsulf}$  generally  
402 increases towards 20 cm depth, with a subsequent overall decrease below, albeit with  
403 significant variability at certain horizons,  $Fe_{di-ct}/Fe_{unsulf}$  does not show a clear trend with  
404 depth.  $Fe_{oxa}$  is of minor importance, contributing only ~10% to the  $Fe_{unsulf}$  pool throughout  
405 most of the core, perhaps with a slight increase in  $Fe_{oxa}/Fe_{unsulf}$  over the top 10 cm.  
406 Regarding the generally lower amount of  $Fe_{oxa}$  compared to  $Fe_{di-ct}$  in this core, we consider  
407 the effect of any possible magnetite dissolution in the  $Fe_{di-ct}$  extract as being minor.

408 Sulfide-bound Fe is mainly present as pyrite (Fig. 5) with an increase towards 15 cm  
409 depth. The  $Fe_{AVS}$  pool is relatively insignificant, with highest contents of 0.02 wt% at 18 cm  
410 depth. Manganese oxide reduction is evidenced by a pronounced Mn/Al decrease in the top  
411 3 cm (Fig. 4). Pore-water profiles (Fig. 4) indicate organoclastic sulfate reduction at ~7 cm  
412 depth coinciding with a peak in  $Fe(II)_{aq}$  (~200  $\mu$ M) produced by DIR, with ferruginous pore-  
413 water prevailing over the full length of the core.  $\delta^{56}Fe_{Fe_{aq}}$  values are lightest (-1.3‰) at 1.5  
414 and 4.5 cm depth, where DIR dominates Fe cycling. At 0.5 cm, where Fe(II) is removed from  
415 solution by oxidative precipitation (as indicated by a drawdown of  $Fe(II)_{aq}$ ),  $\delta^{56}Fe_{Fe_{aq}}$  is  
416 slightly heavier (-0.9‰). Below 5 cm depth (still within the  $Fe(II)_{aq}$  maximum and coinciding  
417 with the presence of AVS), the isotopic composition of pore-water Fe becomes heavier and  
418 reaches a value of about zero at 18 cm, where  $Fe(II)_{aq}$  concentrations level off to about 40  
419  $\mu$ M.

420 In the leached sediment fractions, a pronounced  $\delta^{56}Fe$  trend with depth is observed  
421 only for  $Fe_{aca}$ , with values that increase from ~-1‰ at the surface, to slightly positive values

422 at depth (Fig. 5).  $\text{Fe}_{\text{hyam}}$  shows an overall depletion in  $^{56}\text{Fe}$  ( $\delta^{56}\text{Fe} = -0.38 \pm 0.11\text{‰}$ ), whereas  
423  $\text{Fe}_{\text{di-ct}}$  and  $\text{Fe}_{\text{oxa}}$  show near zero values ( $-0.07 \pm 0.09\text{‰}$  and  $-0.15 \pm 0.08\text{‰}$ , respectively).

424

### 425 **3.2.2 Early diagenetic iron cycling in shallow North Sea sediments**

426 The Fe phases extracted by the dithionite/citrate and oxalate solutions (goethite,  
427 hematite, magnetite) are largely unaffected by DIR as concluded from the absence of clear  
428 downcore trends in  $\text{Fe}_{\text{di-ct}}$  and  $\text{Fe}_{\text{oxa}}$  contents and respective  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  profiles (Fig. 5). Near zero  
429 values of  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{di-ct}}$  and  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{oxa}}$  reflect largely unaltered terrigenous input of these fractions  
430 (e.g. Johnson et al. 2008).  $\text{Fe}_{\text{di-ct}}$  and  $\text{Fe}_{\text{oxa}}$  contents vary between 0.1 to 0.3 wt% and 0.03 to  
431 0.09 wt%, respectively (see appendix A.4). The downcore variability in  $\text{Fe}_{\text{di-ct}}/\text{Fe}_{\text{react}}$  and  
432  $\text{Fe}_{\text{oxa}}/\text{Fe}_{\text{react}}$  is most likely related to changing depositional regimes/sediment accumulation,  
433 rather than to a diagenetic overprint. As has been pointed out by Hebbeln et al. (2003), the  
434 intensification of beam-trawl fishing off the German coast increased overall sediment  
435 accumulation in the mud area during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and led to a coarsening of sediments.  
436 These changes caused by anthropogenic activity are likely also reflected at Site HE337-1.  
437 Here, west of the mud area, sedimentation rates are expected to be lower than the  $\sim 2.6$   
438 mm/yr in the sediment-focusing mud area (Hebbeln et al. 2003). Consequently, the retrieved  
439 sediment core covers at least the past 150 yrs and thus the time when sedimentation  
440 patterns changed.

441 The slight  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ -depletion in the hydroxylamine-leachable fraction ( $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{hyam}} \approx -$   
442  $0.38\text{‰}$ ), relative to terrigenous sediments typically showing similar  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  values to igneous  
443 rocks ( $\sim 0.1\text{‰}$ ; Beard et al. 2003b) might reflect that part of the pool was diagenetically  
444 altered by precipitation of secondary amorphous Fe oxides in the (sub)oxic zone. Under

445 anoxic conditions (below 1-2 cm depth), this pool is used for DIR reflected by a decrease of  
446  $\text{Fe}_{\text{hyam}}/\text{Fe}_{\text{unsulf}}$  from 0.45 to 0.35 in the top 10 cm (Fig. 5). However, at this location, the  $\text{Fe}_{\text{hyam}}$   
447 reduction does not lead to a significant downcore trend in  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{hyam}}$ .

448 AVS was detected at 3 cm depth, suggesting that sulfidization starts at this depth,  
449 which matches the slight  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$ -drawdown (Fig. 4). Pyrite, however, is already present in the  
450 surface sediment. Bioturbation might have transported iron sulfides previously formed in  
451 the deeper part of the sediments towards the sediment surface. There, AVS is prone to  
452 oxidation whereas pyrite is less susceptible to oxidation and survives longer before being  
453 buried again into the anoxic zone.

454 The  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe}_{\text{aq}}}$  trend towards a slightly heavier value of -0.9‰ at 0.5 cm compared  
455 to -1.3‰ at 1.5 cm and at 4.5 cm, where DIR dominates, is explained by oxidative  
456 precipitation of Fe that preferentially removes light Fe isotopes (Staubwasser et al. 2013).  
457 Since the water column above the sediment is fully oxic, Fe-oxides must precipitate at the  
458 sediment surface. The oxidative layer, however, only extends to about 1 cm. Directly below,  
459 DIR dominates as indicated by the low  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe}_{\text{aq}}}$ . Below 5 cm, and in the sample at 3.5 cm,  
460  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe}_{\text{aq}}}$  is only -0.4‰. We suggest that at these depths, AVS formation removes light Fe  
461 isotopes from solution. The sediment core was significantly bioturbated and the 3.5 cm  
462 sample might reflect local AVS formation in a burrow with elevated TOC contents. Since the  
463  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$  profile suggests maximum rates of DIR at about 6 cm, DIR and AVS formation seem to  
464 coincide at least between 3 and 6 cm depth. Below 18 cm,  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe}_{\text{aq}}}$  reaches values of about  
465 zero suggesting that DIR is no longer significant and Fe diagenesis is dominated by reactions  
466 with  $\text{H}_2\text{S}$ .

467

### 468 3.2.3 Acetate-leachable iron fraction

469 The comparatively high amounts of  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  found at site HE337-1 ( $0.16 \pm 0.05$  wt%) are  
470 unlikely to be due to the presence of siderite or AVS. AVS only accounts for up to 8% of the  
471  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  fraction. The depth of the AVS-maximum (17-21 cm), however, coincides with a local  
472 minimum in  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$ , so the low  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  values at these depths might result from dissolution  
473 of the  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ -depleted amorphous Fe sulfides (Guilbaud et al. 2013) during the Na-acetate  
474 extraction. Siderite is generally considered rare in modern shallow organic-rich marine  
475 sediment as it is thermodynamically unstable in the presence of  $\text{H}_2\text{S}$  (Haese 2006).  
476 Organoclastic sulfate reduction is clearly occurring in these sediments, as indicated by the  
477 presence of AVS and the broad ferruginous zone. As such, even though  $\text{H}_2\text{S}$  is quantitatively  
478 removed from solution by reaction with Fe minerals (Fig. 4), siderite would not be expected  
479 to form in these sediments. Additionally,  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}}$  data support an absence of authigenic  
480 siderite formation: Abiotic siderite precipitation is characterized by a preferential uptake of  
481 light isotopes from  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$ . The respective fractionation factor given by Wiesli et al. (2004) is  
482  $\Delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}-\text{siderite}} = +0.48 \pm 0.22\text{‰}$ . If  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  with  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}}$  ranging between -1 and 0‰ (Fig. 5)  
483 was mainly derived from authigenic siderite, respective  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}}$  values would need to be  
484 between -0.5 and 0.5‰. In the top 10 cm (where DIR dominates)  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}}$  values are,  
485 however, light (-0.4 to -1.4‰) compared to  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}}$ .

486 The  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  extraction does not include  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$  as this has been removed by washing  
487 the samples with 1 M  $\text{MgCl}_2$  before the sequential extraction. Without performing a washing  
488 step,  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$  would potentially amount to a maximum of  $\sim 20$   $\mu\text{g/g}$  sediment, corresponding  
489 to  $\sim 2\%$  of the  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  pool. The above considerations exclude siderite, AVS, and  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$  as  
490 forming a significant proportion of the Na-acetate leached fraction. Instead, we suggest that  
491 this pool dominantly reflects isotopically light  $\text{Fe(II)}$  adsorbed to mineral surfaces following

492 DIR (e.g. Beard et al. 2003a, Williams and Scherer 2004, Crosby et al. 2005, 2007, Mikutta et  
493 al. 2009), or Fe(II) that has formed at the surface of Fe oxide minerals via direct abiotic  
494 reaction with sulfide, but which dissolves only slowly from the mineral surface at  
495 circumneutral pH (Poulton 2003, Poulton et al. 2004). Crosby et al. (2005, 2007) investigated  
496 isotopic fractionation during DIR using synthesized goethite and hematite, and measured  
497 acetate-leached Fe(II)<sub>sorb</sub> with negative  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  values resembling those of Fe(II)<sub>aq</sub> ( $\Delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}-\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{sorb}}=-0.87\pm 0.09\text{‰}$  and  $-0.30\pm 0.08\text{‰}$  for goethite and hematite, respectively). Fe(II)<sub>sorb</sub>  
498 derives from  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ -depleted pore-water and undergoes electron transfer and Fe(II)-Fe(III)  
499 atom exchange with a reactive Fe(III) layer on the ferric substrate (Williams and Scherer  
500 2004; Crosby et al. 2005, 2007). The oxide surface becomes more and more enriched in  $^{56}\text{Fe}$   
501 balancing out the light Fe(II)<sub>aq</sub> (Crosby et al. 2005, 2007). Fe(II)<sub>sorb</sub> thus represents an  
502 intermediate between the light Fe(II)<sub>aq</sub> and isotopically heavy reactive Fe(III). The natural  
503 sediments investigated here represent a mineralogically much more complex environment.  
504 Nevertheless, we observe trends that resemble those shown in laboratory studies. Therefore  
505 we suggest that the underlying processes observed are the same and the light  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  values  
506 we measure for the Fe<sub>aca</sub> pool likely dominantly reflect Fe(II) at the mineral surface that is  
507 fractionated by coupled electron and atom exchange.

509 Our data show variations in  $\Delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}-\text{Fe}_{\text{hyam}}}$  of between -0.7 to 0.6‰, which is distinct  
510 from the fractionation factors found by Crosby et al. (2007). Their  $\Delta^{56}\text{Fe}_{\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{sorb}}-\text{Fe(III)}_{\text{react}}}$  is  
511  $\sim -1.75\text{‰}$  for goethite and  $-2.65\text{‰}$  for hematite experiments. However, the processes at our  
512 study site take place in an open system with diffusive Fe(II)<sub>aq</sub> transport, preferential removal  
513 of  $^{54}\text{Fe}$  from Fe(II)<sub>aq</sub> by sulfide precipitation, and non-controlled exposure times of ferric  
514 minerals to Fe(II)<sub>aq</sub>. In this regard, and due to the fact that Crosby's fractionation factors only

515 correspond to the reactive Fe(III) layer (not to the whole ferric substrate), the fractionation  
516 factors are not directly comparable.

517 The  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  measurements suggest that of the unsulfidized solid phase Fe pools in  
518 modern DIR-dominated marine sediments, the acetate-leachable pool is the most dynamic.  
519 A sequential extraction for marine sediments that uses acetate as a first step followed by  
520 hydroxylamine-HCl or 0.5 M HCl leaching is thus to be preferred over leaching with Na-  
521 dithionite alone. Leaching by Na-dithionite dissolves a mixture of Fe fractions that are  
522 otherwise distinct in origin, reactivity, and isotopic composition and does not selectively  
523 resolve the pools truly affected by DIR. Similarly, extractions using 0.5 M HCl alone (i.e. not  
524 including the  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  extraction first) dissolve the total “easily reducible” Fe fraction, which  
525 mainly includes three isotopically distinct Fe pools: the light  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}$  pool that has been shown  
526 here to mainly comprise surface-reduced Fe(II), unaltered poorly crystalline hydrous ferric  
527 oxides such as ferrihydrite, and  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ -enriched reactive Fe at the oxide surface (as identified  
528 by Williams and Scherer 2004 and Crosby et al. 2005, 2007). Interpretation of the acetate  
529 fraction and its isotopic composition, however, can be problematic where a discrimination  
530 between AVS-Fe, surface-reduced Fe(II), and siderite is not possible and where pore-water  
531  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  data are not available.

532

#### 533 **4 Conclusions**

534 We have developed a procedure to complement an existing sequential extraction  
535 method for Fe phases in marine sediment, to enable stable Fe isotope analysis on the  
536 leachates. Processing of the samples for matrix removal did not lead to significant Fe isotope  
537 fractionation. This new method was applied to surface sediments collected from the  
538 southern North Sea that showed an extended ferruginous pore-water zone. In general, the



539 different  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  values of individual reactive Fe pools demonstrates their different genetic  
540 origin: ferrihydrite/lepidocrocite showed lowest average  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  values ( $-0.38\pm 0.11\%$ ) as they  
541 likely include authigenic/secondary phases originating from light  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$  released into the  
542 pore-water by DIR. The detrital origin of the goethite/hematite and magnetite fractions was  
543 indicated by  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}\approx 0\%$ . Goethite, hematite, and magnetite were not considerably involved  
544 in early diagenetic Fe cycling at this locality. The  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  data show large downcore  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$   
545 variations in the acetate-leachable fraction. This trend could not be explained by AVS-Fe as  
546 respective concentrations were too low. Furthermore, diagenetic siderite was excluded as a  
547 significant contributor to the acetate-leachable fraction. We conclude that in these  
548 sediments the Na-acetate extraction dominantly comprises surface-reduced Fe(II) which  
549 shows a downcore isotopic trend similar to that for  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$ . Although more complex to  
550 interpret based on the variety of processes that occur in natural sediments, our data are  
551 consistent with the previous laboratory results of Crosby et al. (2005, 2007), who showed  
552 that  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{sorb}}$  is (isotopically) an intermediate between  $\text{Fe(II)}_{\text{aq}}$  and the ferric substrate.  
553 Leaching sediments by 0.5 M HCl or Na-dithionite alone would not resolve this. With  
554 extraction by 0.5 M HCl, the isotopically light Fe(II) would be collected together with the  
555  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ -enriched reactive Fe(III) layer at the mineral-surface and the unfractionated initial ferric  
556 substrate. The combination of sequential Fe extractions and subsequent  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  analyses as  
557 performed in this study represents an approach that can be useful for a broad range of  
558 scientific questions in ancient and modern environments characterized by severe redox  
559 changes or where control mechanisms for mineral formation (biotic vs. abiotic) are not fully  
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578

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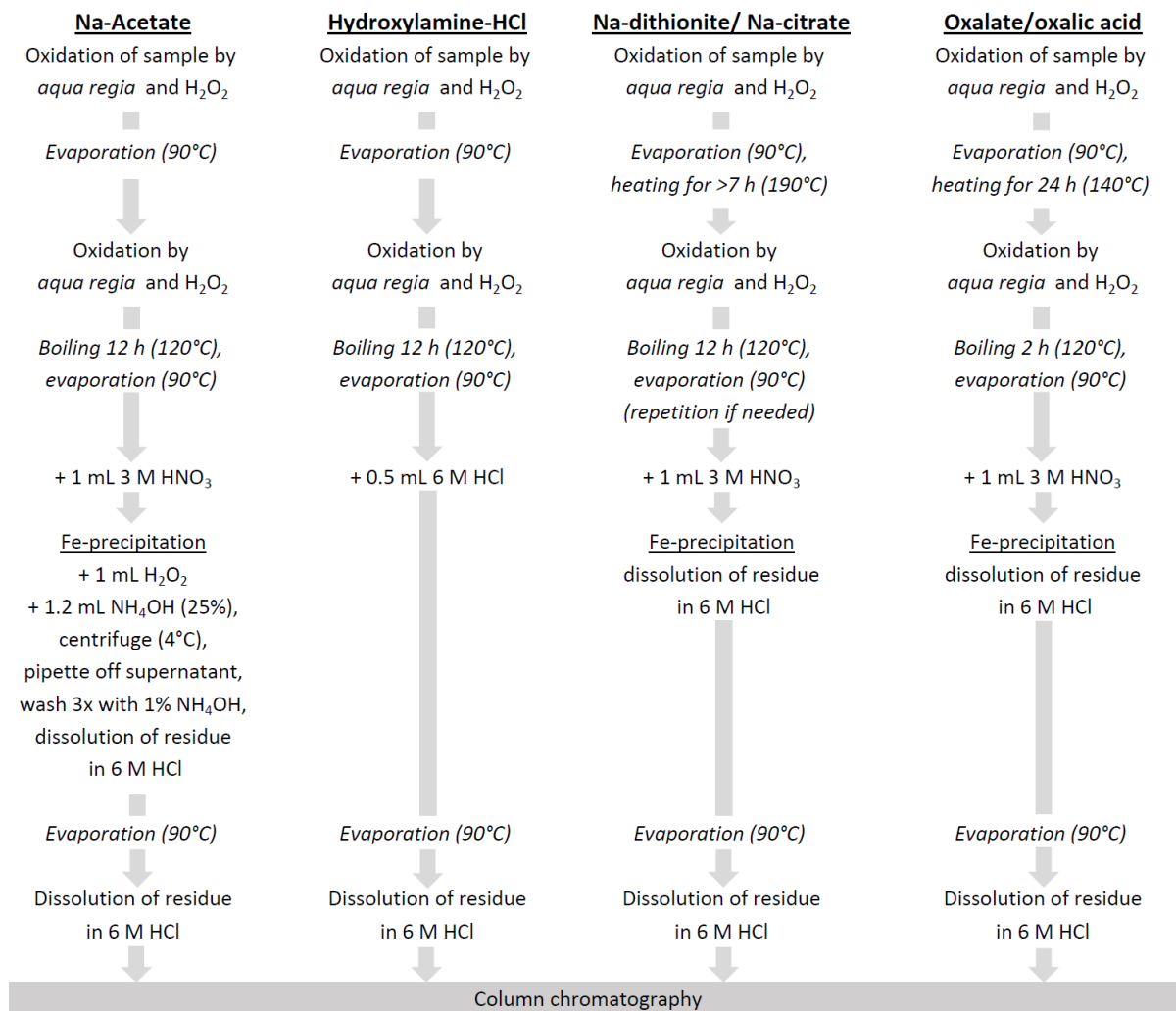
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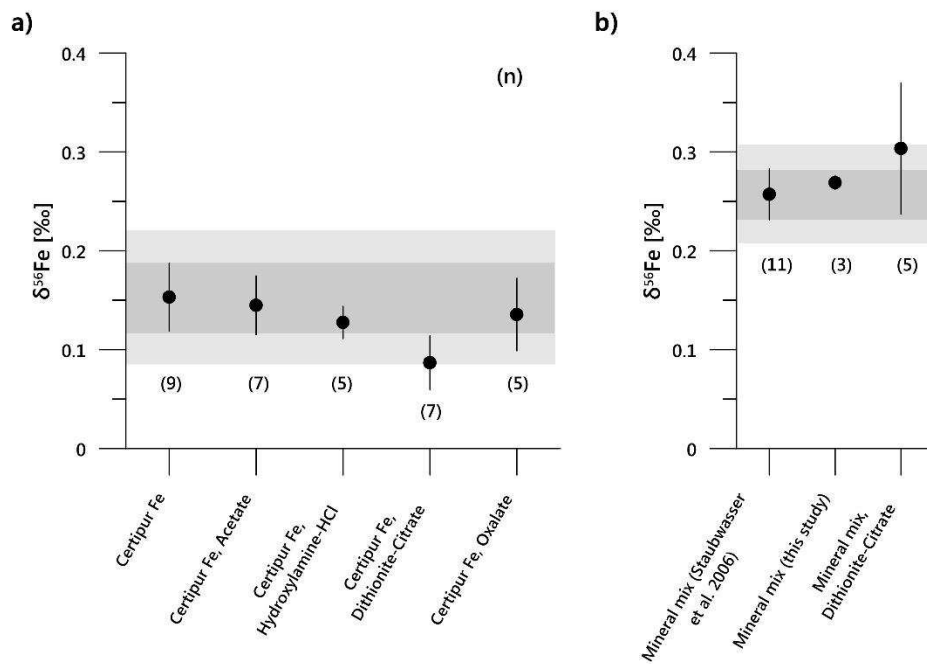
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770 Fig. 1: Chemical processing of iron extracts for Fe isotope analysis.

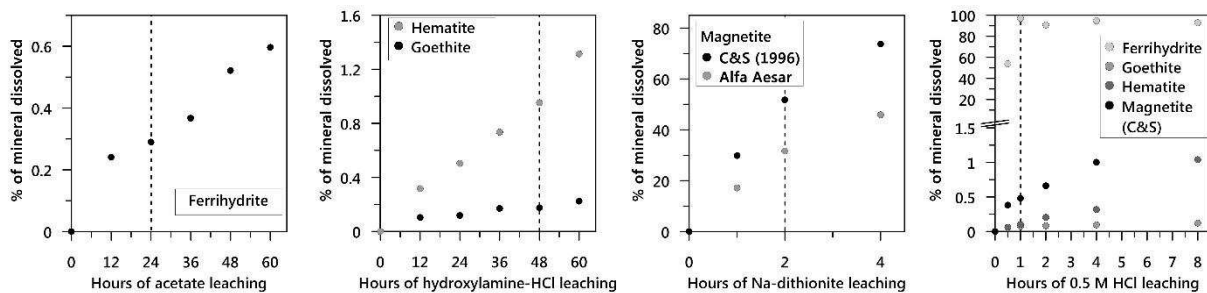
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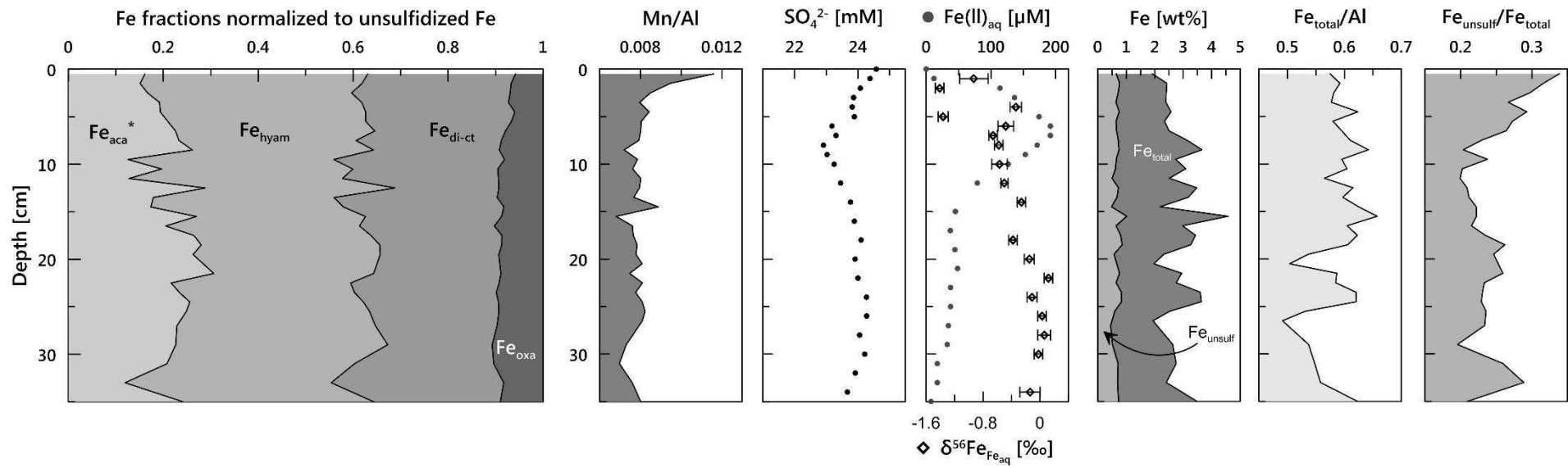
774 Fig. 2: Isotope data ( $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$ ) of a) the Certipur® Fe solution without addition of leaching reagents and  
 775 chemical processing (mineral mix, Certipur® Fe) and after addition of reagents and subsequent  
 776 purification and b) of the mineral mix standard. Error bars are the standard deviation (1SD). The  
 777 light greyish area indicates 2SD of the reference standard.

778



779

780 Fig. 3: Dissolution of non-target minerals by chemical treatment with acetate, hydroxylamine-HCl,  
 781 Na-dithionite and dissolution of target (ferrihydrate) and non-target minerals (goethite, hematite,  
 782 and magnetite) by 0.5 M HCl. The dashed lines indicate optimum extraction times for sediment  
 783 samples at room temperature as given by Poulton and Canfield (2005) and Kostka and Luther  
 784 (1994), respectively. Tests with dithionite were performed with magnetite synthesized after Cornell  
 785 and Schwertmann (1996) and purchased from Alfa Aesar.



786

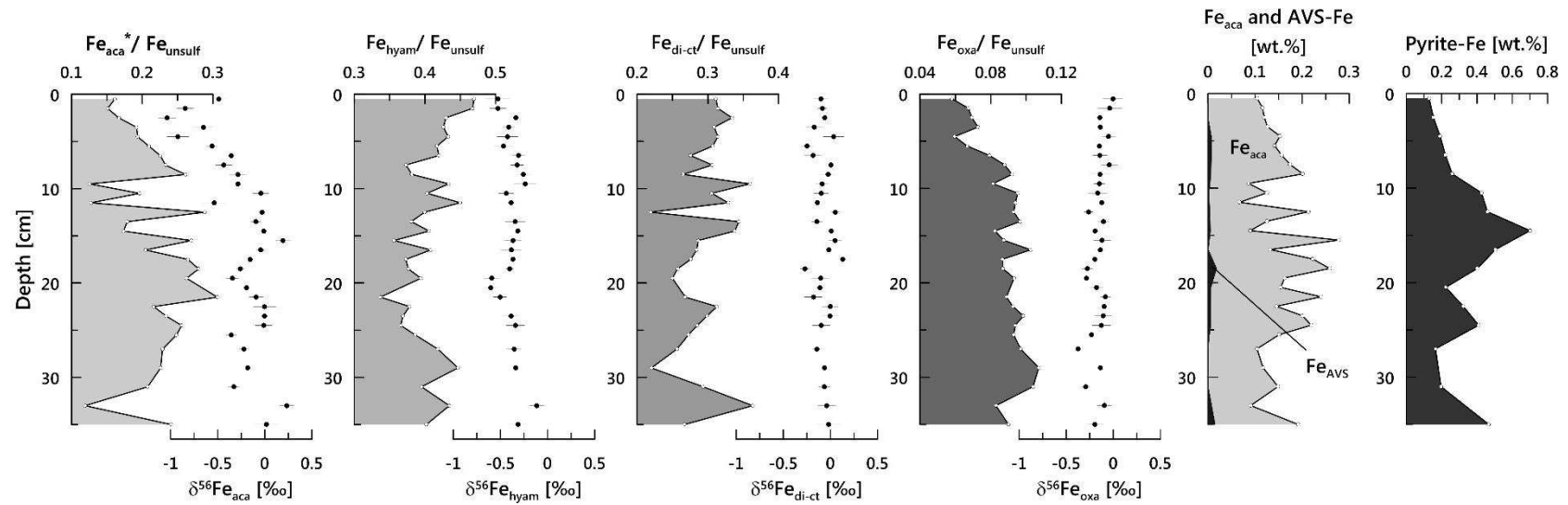
787 Fig. 4: Chemical data to site HE337-1 including sequentially leached Fe fractions normalized to unsulfidized reactive Fe ( $Fe_{\text{unsulf}} = Fe_{\text{aca}}^* + Fe_{\text{hyam}} + Fe_{\text{di-ct}} + Fe_{\text{oxa}}$ ),

788 Mn/Al, pore-water  $SO_4^{2-}$ ,  $Fe(II)_{\text{aq}}$ ,  $\delta^{56}Fe_{Fe_{\text{aq}}}$ ,  $Fe_{\text{total}}$  and  $Fe_{\text{react}}$ ,  $Fe_{\text{total}}/Al$ , and  $Fe_{\text{react}}/Fe_{\text{total}}$ . Solid phase and pore-water data were gained for parallel cores.  $Fe_{\text{aca}}^*$

789 was corrected for  $Fe_{\text{AVS}}$ .

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792

793 Fig. 5: Sequentially extracted Fe fractions normalized to reactive Fe and respective  $\delta^{56}\text{Fe}$  for core location HE337-1. Graphs on the left side show AVS- and  
 794 pyrite-Fe as determined after Canfield et al. (1986).  $\text{Fe}_{\text{aca}}^*$  was corrected for  $\text{Fe}_{\text{AVS}}$ . Isotopic data is also shown in Table A.5.

795

796 Table 1: Recoveries of Certipur® Fe standard and blanks after addition and removal of extraction  
 797 solutions and column separation. Recoveries of Fe were normalized to standards that were  
 798 processed without addition of extraction reagents and chemical processing.

Extractant	Recovery of Fe (%)	n	Fe present in blanks (µg)	n
Na-Acetate	101.1 ± 1.2	6	0.2 ± 0.2	7
Hydroxylamine-HCl	101.4 ± 0.8	5	0.4 ± 0.1	9
Na-dithionite-citrate	97.5 ± 0.8	5	0.4 ± 0.4	7
Oxalate/ oxalic acid	82.9 ± 12.9	5	0.1 ± 0.1	6

799

800

801 Table 2: Selectivity of extraction steps as tested by treatment of pairs of 58Fe non-spiked and spiked  
 802 minerals. Isotopic ratios of mixtures and end-members are given in A.1 and A.2. C&S: magnetite  
 803 synthesized after Cornell and Schwertmann (1996); AA: magnetite purchased from Alfa Aesar.

Non-spiked mineral	Spiked mineral	Extractant and duration	n	Fe from mineral (in % of total dissolved Fe)		% of mineral dissolved	
				Non-spiked mineral	Spiked mineral	Non-spiked mineral	Spiked mineral
Ferrihydrite*	Goethite	Hydrox.-HCl, 48 h	3	98.5 ± 0.2	1.5 ± 0.2	87.5 ± 0.7	0.9 ± 0.3
Ferrihydrite*	Hematite	Hydrox.-HCl, 48 h	3	97.6 ± 0.6	2.4 ± 0.6	86.4 ± 1.8	1.3 ± 0.2
Goethite*	Magnetite (C&S)	Dith., 2 h	3	51.2 ± 3.5	48.8 ± 3.5	96.3 ± 3.0	74.3 ± 1.5
Hematite*	Magnetite (C&S)	Dith., 2 h	3	58.7 ± 11.0	41.3 ± 11.0	95.5 ± 9.2	63.1 ± 19.4
Magnetite (AA)	Goethite*	Dith., 2 h	2	37.4 ± 3.6	62.6 ± 3.6	33.5 ± 3.9	78.5 ± 9.6
Magnetite (AA)	Hematite*	Dith., 2 h	3	34.0 ± 3.6	67.0 ± 4.5	34.1 ± 0.9	88.0 ± 1.5

\*target mineral

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