Mineralogy, petrology, geochemistry, and chronology of the Murrili (H5) meteorite fall: The third recovered fall from the Desert Fireball Network.

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To Be Submitted to *Meteoritics and Planetary Science*

ABSTRACT

Murrili, the third meteorite recovered by the Desert Fireball Network, is analyzed using mineralogy, oxygen isotopes, bulk chemistry, physical properties and cosmogenic radionuclides. The modal mineralogy, bulk chemistry, magnetic susceptibility, physical properties and oxygen isotopes of Murrili point to it being an H5 ordinary chondrite. It is heterogeneously shocked (S2-S5), depending on the method used to determine it, although Murrili is not obviously brecciated in texture. Cosmogenic radionuclides yield a cosmic ray exposure age of 6-8 Ma, and a pre-entry meteoroid size of 15-20 cm in radius. Murrili's fall and subsequent month-long embedment into the salt lake Kati Thanda, significantly altered the whole rock, evident in its Mössbauer spectra, and visual inspection of cut sections. Murrili may have experienced minor, but subsequent impacts after its formation 4475.3 ± 2.3 Ma, which left it heterogeneously shocked.

INTRODUCTION

Meteorites are an important resource for understanding the origin and evolution of our solar system and come to us for free. Pieces of this precious material shower Earth every year but falls are rarely witnessed. This means that important context is missing from the meteoritic record; that is, what is the general geologic origin of these precious rocks? The Desert Fireball Network (Bland et al. 2012; Howie et al. 2017) provides a basic framework to determine that context for these rocks, allowing their source region in the solar system to be constrained. Every meteorite that has an orbit provides unique information that can be used to better interpret the structure of the solar system. Murrili (pronounced moo-rree-lee) is the 3rd meteorite recovered by the Desert Fireball Network (Bland et al. 2016).

Sansom et al. (2020) reported observations of a fireball lasting 6.1 s, entering the atmosphere with a speed of ~13.7 km s^{-1} at an altitude of 85 km, slowing to ~3 km s^{-1} at an altitude of 18 km at the end of its luminous flight phase. From these observations they determined that the meteoroid's pre-entry orbit had a semi major axis of 2.521±0.075 AU, an eccentricity of 0.609±0.012 and an inclination of 3.32±0.060 deg. Orbits such as this: with low inclination and near the 3:1 mean-motion resonance with Jupiter, are not uncommon for other H5 chondrites with determined orbits (Jenniskens 2013; Meier 2017).

The meteorite fell in Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre) National Park, South Australia, the land of the Arabana people, on 27 November 2015. The rock specifically fell into South Lake Eyre, in a region referred to as 'Murrili' by the Arabana peoples. Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre) is one of the largest landlocked lakes (>9,500 km^2) in the world. The lake rarely fills completely, but even during dry seasons there is usually some water remaining in smaller sub-lakes. The surface is comprised of a thin layer of halite and gypsum salts on top of brine-saturated, fossiliferous, thick clay mud (Habeck-Fardy and Nanson 2014).

This fall site posed a serious challenge for recovery. The calculated fall site was 6 km from the nearest "shore" (Figure 1). Initial reconnaissance from light-aircraft identified what appeared to be an impact feature in the surface of the lake close to the predicted fall site (Figure 1 inset). Our expedition to recover the meteorite was guided by members of the Arabana people, the traditional custodians of the land. In the time between the fall and the expedition (roughly 1 month), rain had obscured the original impact site. However, searching on foot and with quad bikes, in tandem with aerial and drone surveys, led to the successful recovery of the stone from a depth of 43 cm in the lake. It was recovered on 31st December 2015, <50 m away from the predicted fall line (Sansom et al. 2020).

Here, we present details of the classification, physical attributes, chronology and geochemistry of this meteorite.

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION AND ANALYTICAL METHODS

A single, fusion-crusted, heart-shaped, stone, measuring ~13 × 7 × 6 cm, weighing 1.68 kg, was retrieved (Figures 2 and 3). From this main mass, two small wedges and a thin slab were cut for examination and analyses (Figure 4). The cut surfaces reveal extensive alteration, due to the interaction with the salty lake clays, despite there being no obvious broken surfaces. Samples of altered and unaltered meteorite were distributed to a consortium of international researchers. Details of the allocated materials and methods are summarized in Table 1. We examined both altered and unaltered regions using optical microscopy and computed tomography. Various laboratories analyzed wedges, chips and powders for oxygen isotope and bulk composition, cosmogenic nuclides, porosity/density, and Mössbauer spectroscopy. Details of each method are described below.

Table 1. Sample allocations and methods used in this study, listed by institution.

Method	Institution(s)	Sample type
Optical Microscopy (Shock Analysis)	Western Australian Museum / Curtin University	Thin Section
X-ray Computed Tomography (Density and Porosity)	CSIRO – Kensington / American Museum of Natural History	Whole Rock / 50 g Wedge
Gas Pycnometry (Density and Porosity)	Vatican Observatory / University of Central Florida (UCF)	50 g Wedge (same sample used for CT)
Scanning Electron Microscopy/Electron Microprobe Microanalysis	Curtin University / University of Western Australia	Thick Section

(Modal Mineralogy and Mineral Composition)		
Laser-assisted Fluorination (Oxygen Isotope Analysis)	Open University	30-400 g chips
Inductively Coupled Mass Spectrometry (Bulk Chemistry)	Fordham University	4 x 120 mg chips
Mössbauer Spectroscopy (Terrestrial Alteration)	University of New South Wales - Canberra	300 mg powder
Noble Gas Analysis (Cosmic Ray Exposure age (CRE) and meteroid size)	Swiss Federal Institute of Technology - Zurich	100 mg chip
Cosmogenic Radionuclides (CRE and meteoroid size)	University of California - Berkeley	1.1 g chip
^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar Dating / ^{38}Ar CRE (Impact Heating Age/ CRE)	Curtin University	2 g (fragments)

Optical Mineralogy

We examined two thin sections of Murrili using a Nikon Eclipse LV100 POL microscope at Curtin University in both transmitted (plane and polarised) and reflected light.

Computed Tomography

Two separate labs carried out X-ray Computed Tomography (CT)– CSIRO (Perth, Western Australia) and the American Museum of Natural History (New York, USA).

***CSIRO* -** The sample was scanned in 3D by X-ray computed tomography (CT) using a Siemens SOMATOM definition AS medical scanner installed at the Australian Resources Research Centre (ARRC, Kensington, Western-Australia) allowing the rapid 3D scanning of drill cores. The instrument was calibrated using air as well as a set of five in-house rock standards of known density which are suitable for mineral resources applications (standards have densities varying from 2.7 to 4.3 g/cm^3). The energy of the beam was set-up to have maximal phase contrast between the different minerals of interest (accelerating voltage of 140 kV and x-ray beam current of 1000 mA). The voxel size (a pixel in 3D) for this overview CT scan was 220 x 220 x 100 µm. The voxel size is dictated by the size of the sample – in this case the large meteorite meant that the overall resolution was relatively low. The XCT data was processed and analysed using workflows developed across scale for mineral resource applications (Godel et al. 2006; Godel 2013).

Fordham/AMNH– X-ray microtomography data was collected on one of the smaller wedges (a ~50g pyramid-shaped chunk of Murrili) at the American Museum of Natural History using a GE phoenix v|tome|x s240 µCT system operating with a polychromatic x-ray tube. Data was collected at several resolutions. The entire wedge was imaged at a resolution of 50.5 μm^3/voxel edge. A subsection was imaged at a resolution of 10.0 μm^3/voxel. The latter conditions are known to be adequate for observing morphology and size distributions of metal and sulfide grains in ordinary and other chondrites as well as examining inter-granular porosity structures in partially compacted samples (Friedrich et al. 2008; 2013; 2017). From the 3D datasets, features can be visibly identified and digitally isolated for quantitative examination, and 2D slices (tomograms) can be extracted. Typical tomographic slices of this volume are shown in Figure 5.

We used the method presented in Friedrich et al. (2008; 2013) to quantify the magnitude of foliation of metal grains within Murrili. Our method produces a numerical value for the strength factor, C (Woodcock 1977; Woodcock and Naylor, 1983). The higher the numerical strength factor, the more pronounced the common orientation of the metal grains and the greater the foliation.

Density, volume, porosity, and magnetic susceptibility

We measured bulk volume and density on the same 50g piece that was CT scanned by the AMNH (see above), using a NextEngine ScannerHDPro laser scanner at high resolution (Macke et al. 2015) located at UCF, with a digital scan analysis performed at the Vatican Observatory. The laser scanner produced a 3-dimensional computer model of the meteorite, from which the volume enclosed by the outer surface could be calculated in the software.

Grain volume and density was determined using helium ideal gas pycnometry using a Quantachrome Ultrapyc 1200e following the procedure outlined in Macke (2010). Porosity is calculated from these two densities: $P = 1 - \rho_{bulk}/\rho_{grain}$. Magnetic susceptibility was measured using an SM-30 handheld device, with volumetric and shape corrections according to Gattacceca et al. (2004) and Macke (2010).

Mineral compositions and modes

We determined modal mineralogy on a thick section of Murrili using a Tescan Integrated Mineral Analyzer (TIMA) housed in the Digital Mineralogy Hub (DMH) of the John de Laeter Centre at Curtin University. The automated modal analysis of the TIMA instrument was not optimized for meteorites, therefore, we generated mineral modes from element maps, using the methods outlined in Ford et al. (2008).

Mineral compositions were determined on the same thick section. Silicon, Mg, Ti, Cr, Fe, Ca, Al, and Na were measured in olivine, orthopyroxene, clinopyroxene, and chromite, with a JEOL 8530F electron microprobe based in the Centre of Microscopy, Characterization and Analysis (CMCA) at the University of Western Australia. The probe was operated with an accelerating voltage of 20kV and beam current of 20nA. Well-known standards were used for calibration of the elements.

Oxygen Isotopic Analysis

Oxygen isotope analysis was carried out at the Open University using an infrared laser-assisted fluorination system (Miller et al. 1999; Greenwood et al. 2017). All analyses were obtained on approximately 2 mg aliquots drawn from a larger homogenized sample powder, with a total mass of approximately 100 mg, prepared by crushing clean, interior, whole rock chips. Oxygen was released from the sample by heating in the presence of BrF_5. After fluorination, the oxygen gas released was purified by passing it through two cryogenic nitrogen traps and over a bed of heated KBr. Oxygen gas was analyzed using a MAT 253 dual inlet mass spectrometer. Overall system precision, as defined by replicate analyses of our internal obsidian standard is: ±0.053‰ for $\delta^{17}O$; ±0.095‰ for $\delta^{18}O$; ±0.018‰ for $\Delta^{17}O$ (2σ) (Starkey et al. 2016).

We report oxygen isotopic analyses in standard δ notation, where δ18O has been calculated as: $\delta^{18}O = [(^{18}O/^{16}O)_{sample}/ (^{18}O/^{16}O)_{ref} - 1] \times 1000$ (‰) and similarly for $\delta^{17}O$ using the $^{17}O/^{16}O$ ratio (where ref is VSMOW: Vienna Standard Mean Ocean Water). For comparison with the ordinary chondrite analyses of Clayton et al. (1991) $D^{17}O$, which represents the deviation from the terrestrial fractionation line, has been calculated as: $D^{17}O = \delta^{17}O - 0.52 \times \delta^{18}O$.

Bulk composition

We determined bulk trace and major element compositions using Inductively Coupled Mass Spectrometry (ICPMS) at Fordham University, with methods described in Friedrich et al. (2003) and Wolf et al. (2012). We analyzed four individual chips of Murrili (126.1, 136.6, 120.5, 114.8 mg). In each aliquot, the material used for the analyses was a combination of altered and unaltered material, since the alteration was too intermingled to separate. We used a combination of HF and HNO_3 in a high-pressure microwave digestion system to initially dissolve each chip, then we took the resulting solution to incipient dryness on a hotplate. This was followed by treatment with $HClO_4$ and a further drying to completely dissolve the samples. The dissolved samples were taken up in 1% HNO_3 and analyzed with a ThermoElemental X-Series II ICPMS with the methods outlined in Friedrich et al. (2003) for trace elements and Wolf et al. (2012) for major and minor elements. In addition to the Murrili samples, a procedural blank and the Allende Standard Reference Meteorite were simultaneously analyzed for calibration purposes.

Mössbauer Spectroscopy

In the scope of meteorite analyses, we use Mössbauer spectroscopy to measure the oxidation states of Fe in the sample. In ordinary chondrites, Fe^0 and Fe^{2+} are extraterrestrial in origin, occurring in metallic iron, troilite and silicates, while Fe^{3+} in iron oxides forms solely due to terrestrial contamination, for ordinary chondrites. By measuring the relative abundance of Fe^{3+} to all other iron oxidation species in the sample, we can obtain a quantitative measurement of the meteorite's weathering state (Bland et al. 1998).

The Mössbauer spectra were obtained at room temperature using a standard transmission spectrometer with a ^{57}CoRh source. The spectrometer's drive system was calibrated using a 6µm α-Fe foil. The spectra were fitted using a non-linear, least-squares, full-hamiltonian method.

Noble gas analyses

He and Ne were measured on an in-house-built sector field noble gas mass spectrometer at ETH Zurich, according to a protocol most recently described in detail by Meier et al. (2017). Two fusion-crust-free samples with masses of 45.9 and 22.6

mg, respectively, were wrapped in Al foil, loaded into the sample holder and pumped to ~10^{-10} mbar while being heated to 80°C for one week to desorb atmospheric gases. For gas extraction, the samples were dropped into a crucible and heated in a single step to ca. 1700°C by electron bombardment. Both sample analyses were bracketed by blank (empty Al foil) analyses. For analysis of all He and Ne isotopes as well as the potentially interfering species ($H_2{}^{18}O^+$, $^{12}C^{16}O_2{}^{++}$, $H^{35,37}Cl^+$), we separated He, Ne from Ar using a cryotrap cooled with liquid nitrogen. Interferences were negligible, and blank levels contributed <0.01% for He and <5% for Ne isotopes. For Ar, the blank contribution was inexplicably high (>50%), which eventually led us to discard the Ar data completely, for this approach. Noble gas concentrations and ratios were then used to determine the cosmogenic (cosmic-ray produced) ^{3}He and ^{21}Ne concentrations using two- or three-component deconvolutions with radiogenic, cosmogenic and phase Q endmembers. We used both model-based ("L&M09", Leya & Masarik, 2009) and empirically determined (Dalcher et al., 2013) production rates to calculate the cosmic-ray exposure ages from the cosmogenic concentrations. Uranium-Thorium-Helium radiogenic gas retention ages (^{4}He was corrected for cosmogenic contributions) were calculated based on assumed Th, U concentrations of 42 ppb and 13 ppb, respectively, typical for H chondrites (Kallemeyn et al. 1989).

Cosmogenic Radionuclide analysis

We used a chip of ~1.13 g for analysis of the cosmogenic radionuclides ^{10}Be (half-life=1.36 x 10^6 y), ^{26}Al (7.05 x 10^5 y) and ^{36}Cl (3.01 x 10^5 y). We crushed the sample in an agate mortar and separated the magnetic (metal) from the non-magnetic (stone) fraction. The magnetic fraction was purified by ultrasonic agitation in 0.2N HCl to remove attached troilite. After rinsing the metal four times with MilliQ water and once with ethanol, the separation yielded 146 mg of relatively clean metal, corresponding to 13 wt% bulk metal. The metal fraction was further purified by ultrasonic agitation in concentrated HF for 15 min to dissolve attached silicates, yielding ~140 mg of purified metal. We dissolved ~66 mg of the purified metal in 1.5N HNO_3 along with a carrier solution containing 1.47 mg Be, 1.64 mg Al, and 4.85 mg Cl. After dissolution we took a small aliquot (~3.6%) of the dissolved sample for chemical analysis (Mg, Fe, Co, Ni) by ICP-OES and used the remaining solution for radionuclide separation following procedures described in Welten et al. (2011). The chemical analysis of the dissolved sample yields a Mg concentration of 0.074 wt%, indicating that the purified metal contained ~0.4-0.5 wt% of silicate contamination.

After separating and purifying the Be, Al and Cl fractions, the $^{10}Be/Be$, $^{26}Al/Al$ and $^{36}Cl/Cl$ ratios of these samples were measured by accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) at Purdue University's PRIME Lab (Sharma et al. 2000). The measured ratios were normalized to those of well-known AMS standards (Nishiizumi 2004; Nishiizumi et al. 2007; Sharma et al. 1990) and converted to concentrations in disintegrations per minute per kg (dpm/kg). The ^{10}Be and ^{26}Al concentrations in the metal fraction were corrected for small contributions of ^{10}Be (1%) and ^{26}Al (5.5%) from the stone fraction.

We also dissolved 106 mg of the stone fraction of Murrili, along with 2.93 mg of Be carrier and 3.68 mg of Cl carrier, in concentrated HF/HNO_3 by heating the mixture for 24 h inside a Parr teflon digestion bomb at 125 °C. After cooling off, we separated the Cl fraction as AgCl, and removed Si as SiF_4 by repeated fuming with ~0.5 ml concentrated $HClO_4$. The residue was dissolved in diluted HCl and a small aliquot was taken for chemical analysis by ICP-OES. After adding ~5.2 mg of additional Al carrier to the remaining solution, we then separated and purified the Be and Al fractions and measured the isotopic ratios of the Be, Al and Cl fractions by AMS. Results of the chemical analysis and AMS measurements of both the metal and stone fraction are shown in Table 2.

^{38}Ar age

Cosmic ray exposure (CRE) ages were also calculated based on the spallation of Ca to ^{38}Ar due to the interaction of cosmic rays with the sample. To determine the amount of ^{38}Ar in the sample per gram of Ca (Hennessy and Turner; 1980) we use the cosmochron approach which consists of an isotope correlation diagram with $^{38}Ar/^{36}Ar$ *vs.* $^{37}Ar/^{36}Ar$ (Levine et al., 2007). The exposure age is calculated assuming a nominal production rate of ^{38}Ar from spallation of Ca of $1.81 \times 10^{-8} cm^3$ STP ^{38}Ar/gram of Ca/Ma for plagioclase, $2.30 \times 10^{-8} cm^3$ STP ^{38}Ar/gram of Ca/Ma for pyroxene and a half-way value of $2.05 \times 10^{-8} cm^3$ STP ^{38}Ar/gram of Ca/Ma for matrix which comprises similar quantities of comminuted plagioclase and pyroxene, best suited for the asteroid belt (Eugster and Michel, 1995; Korochantseva et al. 2005). As plagioclase has very low concentrations of Fe and Ti and as the $^{38}Ar_C$ production rate from Ca is ca. 90 and 10 times that of Fe and Ti, respectively, the contribution of the latter elements to the total $^{38}Ar_c$ is negligible (Turner et al., 2013). For a full description of the approach, see Kennedy et al. (2013).

^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar ages

To determine the Ar-Ar age of Murrili, we analyzed 2g of non-fusion crust material which we prepared by disaggregating a larger slice to extract fragments of mineral (pyroxene and plagioclase) as well as whole chondrules. Most of our results are derived from pyroxene grains.

Samples were irradiated for 40 hours and subsequently analyzed at the Western Australian Argon Isotope Facility (WAAIF) using a MAP 215-50 Mass Spectrometer equipped with a 10.4 µm CO_2 laser for stepped heating for 60 seconds, in accordance with Jourdan et al. (2020).

RESULTS

In this section we present the results of each previously listed method. We start with physical properties, proceeding to chemistry and finishing with chronology. In the discussion section we combine these results to weave together the history of the Murrili meteorite and its subsequent fall to Earth.

Physical Properties

As discussed in the introduction, Murrili consists of a single stone roughly 15 cm in longest dimension. It is heart-shaped with a continuous fusion crust, which shows small cracks filled with terrestrially weathered material (Figures 3 and 4). The exterior also shows several large indentations, but there are no obvious broken surfaces.

Visual inspection of the cut surfaces of Murrili shows a heavily altered interior with a heterogeneously distributed reddish stain in the hand specimen (Figure 4). The whole rock CT scan does not reveal obvious boundaries that would indicate brecciation, although a brecciated texture cannot be entirely ruled out (Figure 5). Cracks are evident cutting through the fusion crust and running across whole slices. The weathering, however, is not linearly distributed away from such cracks and the alteration does not seem to affect metal uniformly, as grains both within and away from altered areas appear to be unoxidized (Figure 4).

Density and Porosity

We determined bulk density and porosity for Murrili, using both computed tomography and helium pycnometry. Course-resolution (220x220x100 µm/voxel) CT gave a bulk volume of 467.5 cm^3 for the whole rock, which combined with the total mass of Murrili (1.68 kg), yielded a bulk density of 3.6 g cm^{-3}. Although the course-resolution CT was not detailed enough to resolve micro-cracks to obtain a high-fidelity value for porosity, we were able to deduce a porosity of 3.4%. CT imaging at the highest resolution in this study (10.0 μm^3/voxel) did not reveal any visible porosity, which suggests that the main source of Murrili's porosity is due to microcracks rather than larger vugs or intergranular porosity (Friedrich and Rivers 2013). The bulk density recorded by helium pycnometry of the 50 g wedge is 3.47 ± 0.01 g cm^{-3}, consistent with the results from the CT imaging and data extraction. Helium pycnometry also yielded a value of 3.59 ± 0.01 g cm^{-3} for grain density, which is a measure of the rock's density excluding interior void spaces. Combining bulk and grain density from helium pycnometry allowed us to determine a porosity of 3.4 ± 0.4% for Murrili.

Shock

The shock state of Murrili differs significantly between the results of the optical microscopy and fine-resolution CT. We investigated two thin sections, taken from both altered and unaltered regions, using optical microscopy. We examined 25 olivine grains in both thin sections, and found their extinction features to be straight to slightly undulatory, indicating a low, S2 shock state (Stöffler et al., 1991, 2018).

Using reflected light microscopy, we also examined the Fe,Ni metal and sulfide in the thin sections. The metallography is typical of an undisturbed, slowly cooled ordinary chondrite. In a polished mount briefly etched with a 5% Nital solution, kamacite (bcc Fe,Ni metal) shows a single set of slightly annealed and dilated Neumann bands as the only indication of mild (<130 kb), mechanical shock-loading at low temperature. Many grains of taenite (fcc Fe,Ni metal) are polycrystalline, frequently comprising up to three juxtaposed taenite crystallites each delineated by tetrataenite rims and cloudy etching zones. Large grains (several hundred µm) of zoned taenite show internal decomposition to plessite (kamacite + taenite). Troilite (FeS) is generally fractured and, under crossed polarized reflected light, shows undulose, feathery, extinction. This feature is also typical of low-temperature, mechanical strain. No grains of native copper appeared in our analysis; however, grains of chromite are abundant. In terms of shock level, the metallographic features observed in the opaque phases in Murrili would equate to undulose extinction in the ferro-magnesian silicates. In the polished mount examined, no indication of foliation, or any other directional fabric was observed in the metallic phases.

The high-resolution CT images taken from the 50 g wedge show significant metal-grain foliation. The collective orientation of metal grains observed in the 50 g wedge have a foliation strength factor of 0.75 (Figure 6), which is consistent for a chondrite having experienced significant (S4-S5) shock-related compaction, contrary to the thin section microscopy analysis.

It is important to note that the two thin sections were taken from a separate area than the 50 g wedge. Upon further inspection of the course-resolution CT of the whole rock, we do not see evidence of metal foliation in the thin section-sampled region, while the wedge's original area does reveal foliation. This non-uniformity in the foliation texture, along with low-shock features in the thin sections may suggest a heterogenous shock state across Murrili.

Modal Mineralogy

The mineralogy of Murrili is typical for ordinary chondrites, being dominated by olivine and pyroxene. The backscattered-electron (BSE) image and elementally-derived mineral maps of Murrili's thick section are shown in Figure 7. The modal mineralogy of Murrili is plotted in Figure 8, shown with published values for H Chondrite meteorites (McSween et al. 1991; Dunn et al. 2010), for comparison. Relative to other H chondrites, there is a slight increase in orthopyroxene relative to olivine which is generally associated with reduction processes. However, there is a coupled decrease in the abundance of plagioclase. This variation could be related to the distribution of Ca in the sample.

Composition

Mineral Compositions

Average elemental compositions of olivine, orthopyroxene and chromite, obtained using Electron Probe Micro-Analysis (EPMA) are shown in Table 2. Analysis of 15 olivine grains results in an average fayalite value of 18.8 ± 0.5, indicating a significant amount of equilibration has occurred (consistent with the textural features of the sample). Orthopyroxene (N = 7) has an average Fs value of 16.3 ± 0.3 and an average Wo value of 1.1 ± 0.3. Additionally, Figure 9 plots the abundance of fayalite against ferrosilite in Murrili Fe-Mg silicates, which suggests that, chemically speaking, Murrili is an H chondrite.

Table 2. Average olivine, orthopyroxene and chromite mineral compositions in Murrili. Number of analysed grains in parenthesis. Fa, Fs, Wo, and Chromite endmembers calculated EPMA data. Low total for chromite likely due to missing elements from analysis – most likely Mn and V which can be up to 1wt % each in ordinary chondrites (Bunch et al, 1967) which were not included in the EPMA analysis set up.

	Olivine (N=15)		Orthopyroxene (N=8)		Chromite (N=7)	
	average	stdev	average	stdev	average	stdev
SiO_2	38.46	*0.37*	55.34	*0.73*	0.09	*0.13*
TiO_2	0.02	0.02	0.13	0.05	1.92	0.22
Al_2O_3	0.01	*0.03*	0.15	*0.09*	6.27	*0.26*
Cr_2O_3	0.02	0.03	0.13	0.06	56.95	0.75
FeO	17.77	*0.44*	11.10	*0.15*	28.92	*0.25*
MgO	42.92	0.36	31.21	0.28	2.85	0.13
CaO	0.03	*0.03*	0.59	*0.15*	0.04	*0.04*
Na_2O	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.17	0.27
Total	99.29	*0.49*	98.69	*0.85*	97.21	*0.59*
Fa	**18.85**	0.47				
Fs			**16.45**	0.30		
Wo			**1.12**	0.29		
Fe/Fe+Mg					**85.07**	0.57
Cr/Cr+Al					**85.91**	0.55

Bulk chemistry

We collected data on 53 major, minor, and trace elements (Figure 10). Typically, errors are <12% RSD. Lithophiles (Zr-Ba, n=29) have a mean CI and Mg normalized abundance of 0.84 ±0.08 (1σ). Kallemeyn et al. (1989) demonstrated that ordinary chondrites possess a mean CI and Mg normalized abundance of 0.9, indicating that Murrili is an ordinary chondrite. Within the ordinary chondrites, total siderophile element content increases in the order: LL→L→H. Siderophile elements in Murrili (Re-Pd, n=9; Figure 10) have a mean CI and Mg normalized abundance of 1.30 ± 0.15 (1σ), within errors of the H chondrite range of values.

It is likely that the slight enrichment in calcium, barium and sodium relative to other lithophiles are related to terrestrial contamination, due to the month spent buried in Kati Thanda.

Oxygen isotopic composition

The compositional classification of Murrili as H ordinary chondrite is further supported by its oxygen isotopic composition. We analyzed a minimally-altered piece of Murrili ($\delta^{17}O$ = 2.764 ± 0.016‰; $\delta^{18}O$ = 3.988 ± 0.056‰; and $\delta^{17}O$ = 0.691 ± 0.013‰) as well as an altered region ($\delta^{17}O$ = 2.848 ± 0.016‰; $\delta^{18}O$ = 4.182 ± 0.039‰; and $\delta^{17}O$ = 0.673 ± 0.004‰) (errors 1σ), shown in Figure 11. Both isotope analyses indicate consistent H chondrite classification for Murrili, falling well within the restricted range for H chondrites defined by McDermott et al. (2016) ($\delta^{18}O$ = 4.16 ± 0.42 ‰; $\delta^{17}O$ = 0.73 ± 0.08 ‰ (n=20)). There is a slight shift to a lower $\delta^{17}O$ value and a higher $\delta^{18}O$ value in the altered piece compared to the unaltered piece. It is however, important to note that in terms of its oxygen isotope composition, the degree of alteration is very limited when taking into account the 2σ errors on the respective analyses.

Chronology and Meteoroid Size

Meteoroid Size

Using the cosmogenic noble gas and radionuclide results, we are able to estimate the pre-atmospheric size of the meteoroid that delivered Murrili to Earth. We assume that the radionuclides are saturated, i.e., that the meteorite was exposed as a small object in space for >5 Ma. The $^{36}Cl/^{10}Be$ ratio of 4.33 ± 0.18 in the metal fraction is in good agreement with the $^{36}Cl/^{10}Be$-^{10}Be correlation that was obtained from a large set of meteorites with long exposure ages (Lavielle et al. 1999). The $^{26}Al/^{10}Be$ ratio of 0.71 ± 0.02 in the metal fraction also matches the average saturation ratio of 0.71 ± 0.05 that was found in a large set of meteorites. We thus conclude that the ^{36}Cl, ^{26}Al, and ^{10}Be concentrations in Murrili were all produced by a single cosmic-ray exposure stage >5 Ma (as independently confirmed by cosmogenic noble gases, see below).

The measured ^{10}Be and ^{26}Al concentrations in the stone and metal fraction of Murilli (Table 3) and the stone/metal ratio of 87/13, yield bulk ^{10}Be and ^{26}Al concentrations in Murrili of 19.1 ± 0.3 and 51.4 ± 1.2 dpm/kg, respectively. These values are consistent with production rates in a relatively small object with a radius R = 10-20 cm (Figure 12). The concentration of cosmogenic ^{10}Be (5.6 dpm/kg) in the metal sample of Murilli is ~15% higher than the maximum calculated ^{10}Be production rates in the center of an object of 10 cm radius (L&M09). This suggests that the calculated ^{10}Be production rates in the metal fraction are too low. This is not implausible, since the uncertainty in the absolute production rates are estimated at 10-15% in the model calculations of L&M09. We increased the ^{10}Be production rates of L&M09 in the metal phase - somewhat arbitrarily - by 15% to obtain better agreement with measured ^{10}Be concentrations of up to ~6.5 dpm/kg in the metal fraction of small chondrites. The measured ^{10}Be concentrations in the stone and metal phase yield a radius of 15-20 cm for Murrili and a relatively shallow shielding depth of 3-4 cm (Figure 13). This depth is somewhat lower than the one of >20 cm derived from the $^{22}Ne/^{21}Ne$ ratio, but the inferred size overlaps (see below).

Finally, the measured ^{36}Cl concentration of 6.7 dpm/kg in the stone fraction is consistent with calculated ^{36}Cl production rates in objects of 20-65 cm in radius (Figure 14). However, these calculated production rates only include spallation reactions on K, Ca, Ti, Fe and Ni, while objects larger than ~30 cm in radius also have a significant contribution of ^{36}Cl from neutron-capture on Cl, which can increase the total ^{36}Cl production rates by up to a factor of 3-5 (Welten et al. 2001). Since the measured ^{36}Cl concentration in Murrili shows no evidence of neutron-capture produced ^{36}Cl, this result is also consistent with a relatively small pre-atmospheric size. Based on the cosmogenic radionuclide data, we conclude that the Murrili meteorite probably came from an object with a pre-atmospheric radius of 15-20 cm.

Assuming a simple, single stage exposure, we can also use the model of L&M09 to derive the production rates of ^{3}He and ^{21}Ne for Murrili, either using the $^{22}Ne/^{21}Ne$ ratio as shielding parameter or the ^{26}Al concentration, which is more sensitive to shielding and shows a good correlation with the ^{21}Ne production rate in objects <50 cm in radius.

Based on the Ne isotopic composition of Murrili ($^{22}Ne/^{21}Ne$ = 1.10), only the smallest modelled meteoroid given by L&M09 (with R = 10 cm) can be excluded, since all shielding depths have $^{22}Ne/^{21}Ne$ > 1.10. Since no R = 15 cm model is provided by L&M09, we technically cannot exclude the radius suggested by the radionuclide and fireball results (ca. 15 cm). The next-larger meteoroid provided by L&M09, with R = 20 cm, has a compatible zone at a shielding depth of 14±1 cm. For even larger modelled meteoroids, the compatible zone moves to slightly more shallow shielding depths (e.g., 10±1 cm within a R = 50 cm meteoroid). The measured (average) $^{3}He/^{21}Ne$ ratio of 5.2 is close to the range of values expected under these shielding conditions (ca. 5.2 to 5.6, depending on R), providing further support for a small pre-atmospheric size and minimal to no gas loss during its transfer to Earth.

Table 3. Measured concentrations of major/minor elements (in wt%) and of cosmogenic radionuclides (in dpm kg^{-1}) in the purified metal and non-magnetic ("stone") fraction of the Murrili H5 chondrite fall. The Mg concentration of 0.074 wt% in the metal fraction indicates that the metal contains ~0.45 wt% of silicate contamination.

Element	Metal	Stone
	65.9 mg	106.0 mg
Mg	0.074	16.2
Al	nd	1.21
K	nd	0.12
Ca	nd	1.37
Ti	nd	0.067
Mn	nd	0.23
Fe	90.7	15.0
Co	0.48	0.011
Ni	7.9	0.64

^{10}Be	5.63 ± 0.05	21.1 ± 0.3
^{26}Al	3.99 ± 0.12	58.4 ± 1.4
^{36}Cl	24.4 ± 0.4	6.70 ± 0.11

Table 4: Noble gas concentations and derived values. All concentrations are given in units of 10^{-8} cm^3 STP/g. Given uncertainties include sample mass uncertainties. The last column gives the inverse-variance weighted average of the two samples.

Sample	**Murrili NG-1**	**Murrili NG-2**	Murrili (average*)
Mass (mg)	45.9	22.6	-
Noble gas concentrations			
^{3}He	11.3±0.4	12.6±0.8	11.5±0.3
^{4}He	976±32	1420±94	1020±30
^{20}Ne	1.91±0.06	2.39±0.16	1.98±0.06
^{21}Ne	2.01±0.07	2.54±0.17	2.08±0.06
^{22}Ne	2.22±0.07	2.80±0.19	2.29±0.07
Derived values			
$^{21}Ne_{cos}$	2.00±0.12	2.53±0.21	2.07±0.17
$^{3}He_{cos}/^{21}Ne_{cos}$	5.62±0.01	4.97±0.01	5.18±0.01
$^{22}Ne_{cos}/^{21}Ne_{cos}$	1.105±0.002	1.103±0.003	1.104±0.002
$^{4}He_{rad}$	917±42	1360±130	961±40

Cosmic Ray Exposure (CRE)

In addition to extrapolating a pre-atmospheric entry size for the meteoroid, the cosmic-ray produced ^{3}He and ^{21}Ne concentrations are used to calculate the CRE age. For the noble gas interpretation (excluding Ar), we used the inverse-variance-weighted concentrations of 11.5 (^{3}He) and 2.07 (^{21}Ne) × 10^{-8} cm^3 STP/g. The empirically derived ^{3}He and ^{21}Ne production rates of (1.65-1.78) × 10^{-8} cm^3 STP/(g Ma) and (3.2-3.4) × 10^{-9} cm^3 STP/(g Ma) (L&M09; Dalcher et al. 2013), yield a CRE age of 6.1-7.0 Ma. This determines the time elapsed since Murrili was separated as a small object from its parent body in the asteroid belt, and overlaps with the main CRE age peak at ~7 Ma (Marti and Graf 1995) or ~6-10 Ma (Herzog & Caffee, 2014) for H chondrites.

Based on the measured ^{26}Al concentration of 51.4 dpm/kg for the Murrili H chondrite, the model of L&M09 yields ^{3}He and ^{21}Ne production rates of 1.65 and 0.27 x 10^{-8} cc STP/g/Ma, respectively, for Murrili. This method yields CRE ages of 7.0 Ma for ^{3}He and 7.7 Ma for ^{21}Ne, which still overlap within error with the main H chondrite CRE age cluster at 6-10 Ma (Figure 15). Radiogenic ^{4}He (corrected for a cosmogenic contribution with $^{4}He_{cos}/^{3}He_{cos} = 5.2$) yields a U,Th-He age of 2.7±0.1 Ga.

Using the ^{38}Ar data, gathered from 9 samples of Murrili, we calculate a weighted mean CRE age of 7.12 ± 0.41 Ma. The relative agreement of values obtained from ^{3}He, ^{21}Ne and ^{38}Ar, suggest minimal noble gas loss during atmospheric entry, or during its terrestrial residence.

^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar Age

Our ^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar dating analysis yielded three plateaus and two smaller plateaus, all concordant with an average age of 4475.3 ± 2.3 Ma. Across our 17 samples there was little variation in age results, although 2 samples did yield ages up to 1 Ga younger than the rest. This suggests minor subsequent impact heating events, that had different results on the Ar system, depending on the crystal size and type, along with local porosity.

Alteration

Figure 16 shows the ^{57}Fe Mössbauer spectra of the 'unaltered' and 'altered' materials in Murrili. Both spectra are well-fitted with five components. The paramagnetic doublets of olivine and pyroxene account for 70 to 76 % of the spectral area. Troilite (FeS), Fe^{3+} and FeNi metal comprise the remainder of the spectra. The most prominent difference between the two spectra is the relative spectral area contribution of the paramagnetic Fe^{3+} component. The 'unaltered' sample has an Fe^{3+} area of slightly more than 3 % whereas the 'altered' sample has around 12% relative area. This dramatic increase in the relative amount of the paramagnetic Fe^{3+} component comes at the expense of the olivine, pyroxene and metal components; the relative amount of troilite remains constant. This increase in Fe^{3+} points to an aggressive weathering process (Bland et al. 1998), in this case likely related to 30-day storage in warm, brine-saturated mud at the Lake Eyre fall site.

Another indicator of aggressive weathering may be drawn from the relative area of the silicates (olivine and pyroxene) compared to the metal. The 'unaltered' spectrum has 76.1 ± 6 % relative area for the silicates and 6.8 ± 4 % FeNi metal, yielding a silicate to metal ratio of 11.2 ± 8. For the 'altered' spectrum these numbers are 70.0 ± 6 %, 4.6 ± 4 % and 15.2 ± 14, respectively. The olivine to pyroxene ratios are 1.59 and 1.57 for the 'altered' and 'unaltered' spectra, respectively, putting Murrili firmly in the H-classification according to the work of Wolf et al. 2012. However, the classification work of Verma suggests that our silicon content should be accompanied by about twice as much FeNi metal than we measured, to place Murrili in the 'H' region. We suggest that aggressive weathering of the FeNi component produced the paramagnetic ferric component which is possibly goethite or akaganéite.

DISCUSSION

Classification

The bulk olivine and pyroxene compositions of Murrili fall squarely within the H-chondrite fields (Figures 7, 8, 9). The siderophile elements are more diagnostic than the lithophile elements (Figure 10), in line with the metal/sulfide ratio. The oxygen isotopic composition also confirms that Murrili is an H-type ordinary chondrite. Its magnetic susceptibility (log χ = 5.30) too, is consistent with other, weathered, H chondrites. The modal mineralogy of Murrili is broadly consistent with ordinary chondrites, being dominated by Fe-Mg silicates and containing metal and sulfide in a proportion roughly similar to that of H chondrites (McSween et al, 1991; Dunn, et al, 2010). The modal mineralogy derived from the thin section supports the estimate derived from CT scan density percentages. 73% of the whole rock has a density consistent with silicate mineralogy – the remaining 27% comprises metal, sulfide and minor minerals (phosphates and chromite, etc..). It is interesting to note that the modal mineralogy of the thin section shows a high abundance of orthpyroxene relative to olivine and a significant decrease in abundance of plagioclase relative to other chondrites – which may indicate a slight variation in oxidation states compared to other H-chondrites, or potentially a redistribution of Ca. Mason Gully, another fall recovered by the DFN, showed this modal mineralogical anomaly as well (Dyl et al 2016).

The lack of distinct chondrule boundaries, the absence of striated pyroxene, the lack of chondrule glass, an overall recrystallised texture and the equilibrated silicate mineral compositions ($Fa_{18.8\pm0.5}$; $Fs_{16.4\pm0.3}$; $Wo_{1.1\pm0.3}$; Scott et al 1986), indicate that the petrographic type of this meteorite is most consistent with type 5. The morphologies of the CT scans of both the main mass and the 50 g piece support this.

The above modal mineralogy, mineral chemistry, morphologies, and isotopic compositions, indicate that Murrili is an H5 chondrite with extensive weathering. We will discuss shock features in detail below but based on a difference between features in thin section and CT scans, impact affected this rock heterogeneously and Murrili is a likely a breccia with indistinct lithic clasts.

Terrestrial Alteration

Cut surfaces reveal pervasive alteration with rusty staining heterogeneously distributed in a wormy pattern (Figure 4). Results from Mossbauer spectroscopy (Figure 16) point to an aggressive weathering process. Both of these results are consistent with the length of time Murrili resided in the salt lake environment, allowing alteration to occur throughout the low-porosity rock. There is no difference in mineral composition between the altered and unaltered regions, though there are discrepancies between the two regions in the Mössbauer analyses, and the oxygen isotope measurements.

Physical properties

Density and Porosity

For a fresh fall with an assumed low shock state (proposed by thin section analysis), Murrili's porosity of 3.4% is very low. The average H fall is about 10% porous while most S1s within the H falls are between about 7-14 % porous, with porosity decreasing as shock increases (Consolmagno et al. 1998).

Shock

The thin sections we examined showed an overall low (S2) shock state apparent in undulose extinction in numerous olivine grains, while the fine resolution tomographs of the 50 g wedge show metal foliation, indicative of moderate (S4-S5) shock loading (Friedrich et al. 2008). The course resolution tomographs of the whole meteorite show that metal foliation is present throughout the most of the rock, including the region that the wedge was taken from, but excluding the locality where the thin sections were sampled.

Although we did not observe brecciation at the micro scale in either of our thin sections or in our CT tomographs, larger cracks are apparent in the wedge we used for both helium pycnometry and fine resolution CT (Figure 4a). Due to the heterogeneous nature of its shock features, as well as a lack of micro-scale brecciated texture, Murrili is most likely brecciated at the cm-dm scale.

Chronology

The ^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar age of Murrili is dated to 4475.3 ± 2.3 Ma which fits well with other H Chondrites (Trieloff et al. 2003). Although we recorded some minor variation in 2 of samples, which may suggest post-formation impact events, we do not see apparent evidence of major brecciation. This most likely suggests minor impact events just after recrystallization. This chronological anomaly, along with the heterogenous nature of Murrili's shock state will be investigated further in a forthcoming publication.

Murrili has a cosmic-ray exposure age (CRE) that falls within the broad 6-10 Ma peak in the CRE age histogram of the H chondrites (Graf & Marti, 1995). Graf and Marti (1995) suggested that this peak, which contains about ~50% of the H-chondrites, might be a double peak, with ages around ~6 Ma more prominent for H5 chondrites than for other petrographic types of H chondrites, which typically have CRE ages around ~8 Ma (Figure 15). The CRE age of Murrili, which is between 6.1 and 7.7 Ma depending on the method chosen, cannot provide further support for this pattern. The relatively high $^{3}He/^{21}Ne$ ratio suggests that Murrili is derived from a rather small meteoroid with a radius of ~20 cm (certainly >10 cm). This is compatible with the estimated radius of ~14 cm inferred by Sansom et al. (2020) from the photographic observations of the fireball, and the estimated radius of 15-20 cm from the cosmogenic radionuclide data.

Conclusions

Murrili formed as an H5 chondrite on its parent body 4475.3 ± 2.3 Ma, experiencing subsequent but minor impacts which left it heterogeneously shocked and brecciated at the cm-scale. Approximately 6-8 Ma, Murrili's precursor meteoroid was separated from its parent body, at a size of 15-20 cm in radius. Just prior to its collision with Earth, the meteoroid had an orbit with a semi-major axis of ~2.5 AU with a low inclination, near the 3:1 mean resonance with Jupiter, which is not uncommon for other orbitally-determined H5s.

The meteoroid entered the Earth's upper atmosphere at a speed of ~13 km/s, over South Australia on the night of November 27th, 2015 at 9:15 pm (local time). After it stopped ablating, it eventually fell into the salt lake: Kati Thanda (South Lake Eyre), punching through the upper crust of the lake, embedding itself 42 cm below the surface. Although there was no standing water on the surface of the lake during the fall, the clay soil below the surface was saturated with a salt brine, which heavily weathered some portions of the meteorite before it was recovered a month later. The main characteristics of Murrili, and how we measured them are listed in Table 4.

Although Murrili has been thourougly characterized here, one anomaly remains unexplored with this meteorite: its shock history. Most of the ^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar measurements for Murrili indicate an age of 4475.3 ± 2.3 Ma, except for two readings that yield ages up to 1 Ga younger. This, combined with Murrili's heterogeneous shock state requires further study into its shock history.

Table 4. Summary of the characteristics appearing in the Murrili meteorite.

Property	Results	Method
Petrologic Type	H5	Optical Microscopy, Computed Tomography, Laser Assisted Fluorination,

		TIMA, Electron Microprobe, Magnetic Susceptibility
Porosity	3.4 % 3.4 ± 0.4%	Computed Tomography Helium Pycnometry
Bulk Density	3.6 g cm^{-3} 3.47 ± 0.01 g cm^{-3}	Computed Tomography Helium Pycnometry
Grain Density	3.59 ± 0.01 g cm^{-3}	Helium Pycnometry
Magnetic Susceptibility (log χ)	5.30	Magnetic Susceptibility
Fe(III)/Total Fe	3-12 %	Mössbauer Spectroscopy
Shock Classification	S2 S4-S5	Optical Microscopy Computed Tomography
^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar Age	4475.3 ± 2.3 Ma	^{40}Ar-^{39}Ar Dating
Cosmic Ray Exposure Age	6.1-7 Ma 7 Ma 7.7 Ma 7.12 ± 0.41 Ma	Empirical Derivation L&M09 Model (^{3}He) L&M09 Model (^{3}He) ^{38}Ar concentration
Meteoroid Size (radius)	15-20 cm 14 cm	Noble Gas concentrations Kalman Filter (Sansom et al. 2020)

Acknoledgements- This work was funded by the Australian Research Council (Grant: DP200102073).

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