

Significance of High Resolution Proxies: Variations in Speleothems for Terrestrial Climate Reconstruction

M. Bar-Matthews
(matthews@gsi.gov.il)

A. Ayalon, Y. burstyn, I. Orland, A. Matthews,
J. Valley

Speleothems formation as a recorder of climate signals



Speleothems are cave deposits [from Latin *spēlaeum* cave]

their formation include processes related to ocean, atmosphere, hydrosphere, soil, epikarst

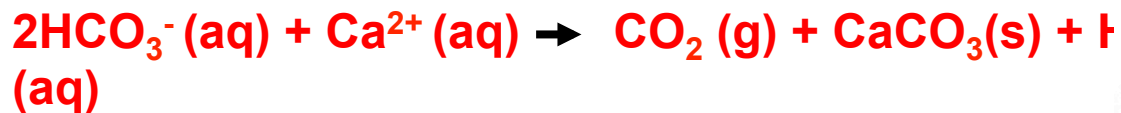
1. Soil CO₂ rainwater carbonic acid:



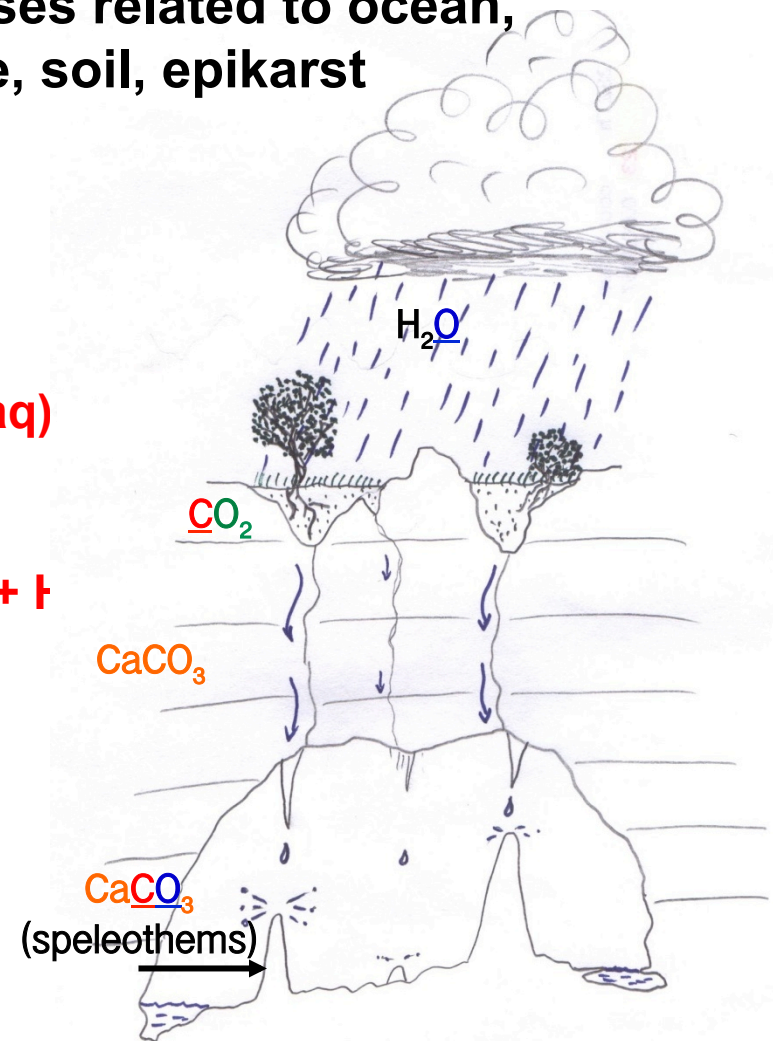
2. Dissolution of the carbonate bedrock



3. CO₂ degassing and carbonate precipitation



Speleothems are laminated and each lamina can be dated precisely. Each lamina carry environmental information.



The $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values of speleothems depend on:

Temperature and the isotopic composition of the water from which the speleothems were deposited, which in turn depends on the isotopic composition of the source (sea surface).

rainfall amount, seasonality, and mixing processes in the unsaturated zone.

$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values of speleothems is a proxy of:

Vegetation type;

plant stress due to water deficiency and temperature, atmospheric CO_2 concentrations, water-soil rock interaction.



speleothems are excellent recorders for continental paleoclimate:

- **Speleothems scattered over most continental areas (large scale teleconnection over distant regions).**
- **The environmental and paleoclimate information can be on different time scale (thousand, hundred, decades, several years, seasonality).**

Their growth period and isotopic and geochemical composition reflects larger scale processes:

- **rainfall source,**
- **storm patterns,**
- **ocean-land heat transfer,**
- **vegetation,**
- **soil-water-rock interactions,**



THE LARGE SCALE PICTURE: Marine—Atmosphere-Land relationships

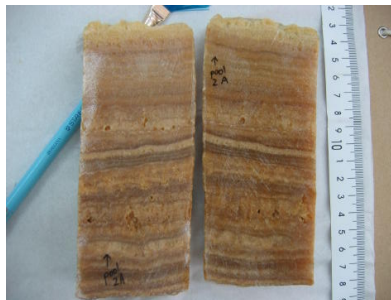


marine cores



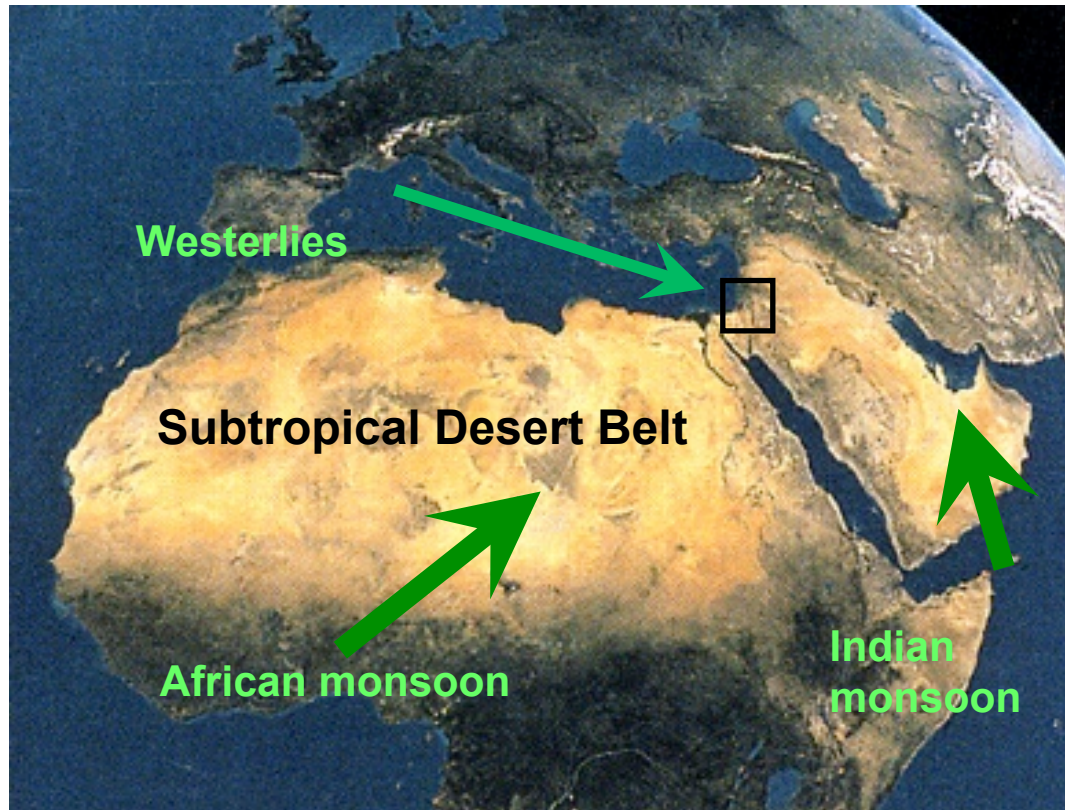
Series of abrupt climate change

speleothems



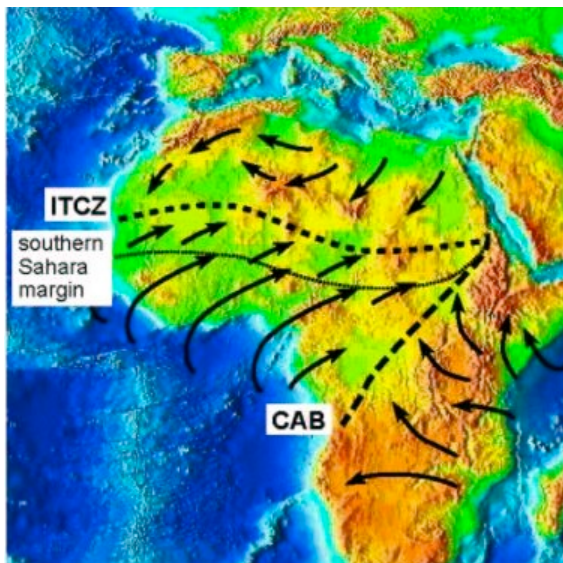
ice core





THE LARGE SCALE PICTURE:
The Middle-East and North Africa, is part of large desert belt, located at the boundary between high - to-mid latitude and tropical-subtropical climate systems.
The Mediterranean Sea moderate the climate in the Eastern Mediterranean (EM).

The synoptic system in the EM. Rainfall fronts originate in the NE Atlantic Ocean, pass over Europe and extract moisture from the Mediterranean Sea.

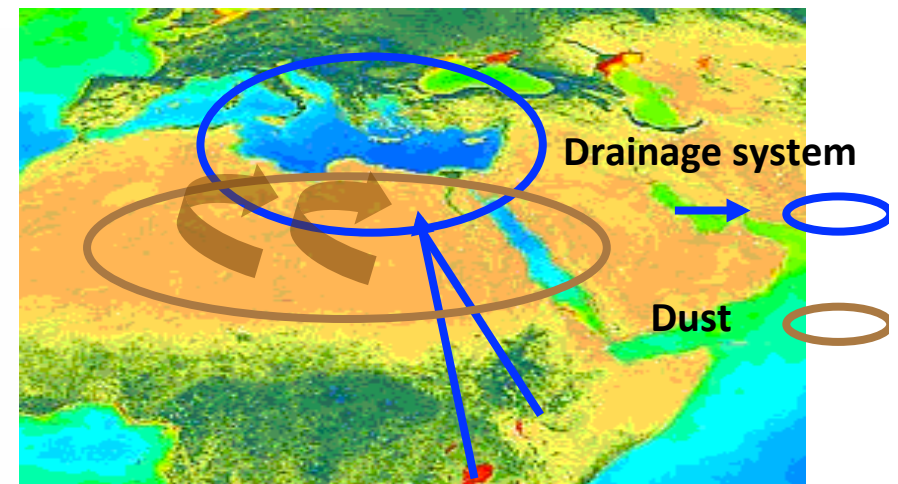
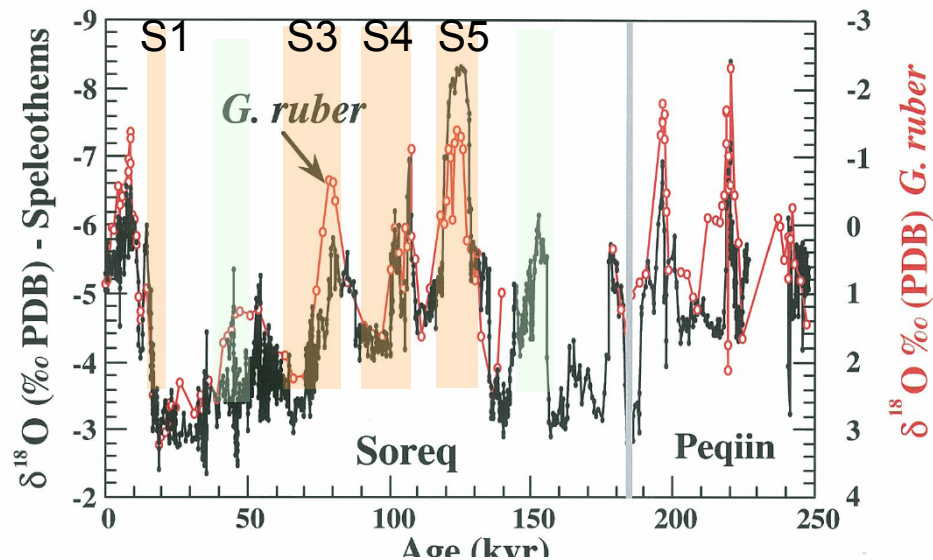


The Nile basin hydrology is connected to the Mediterranean Sea. It is linked to the intensity of the African/Asian monsoon systems that originate in the low latitudes of the Atlantic or the Indian Ocean.

Eastern Mediterranean Speleothems: regional and global synchronicity

1. Monsoon-driven leading to increased River Nile discharge and increased river discharge from central Sahara.
2. Enhanced westerly activity, resulting in increased regional rainfall.
3. **Sapropel layers:** organic-rich marine sediments, finely laminated, devoid of benthic fauna, rich in sulphides, reflecting anoxic conditions.

- Synchronicity over the region.
- Lowest $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ speleothems coincide with sapropels.



How does the land record response to the duality between the Atlantic-Mediterranean system and the intensity of the African/Asian monsoon systems?

What are the human implications?

Location of caves:

From average annual precipitation of 800 mm to less than 50 mm

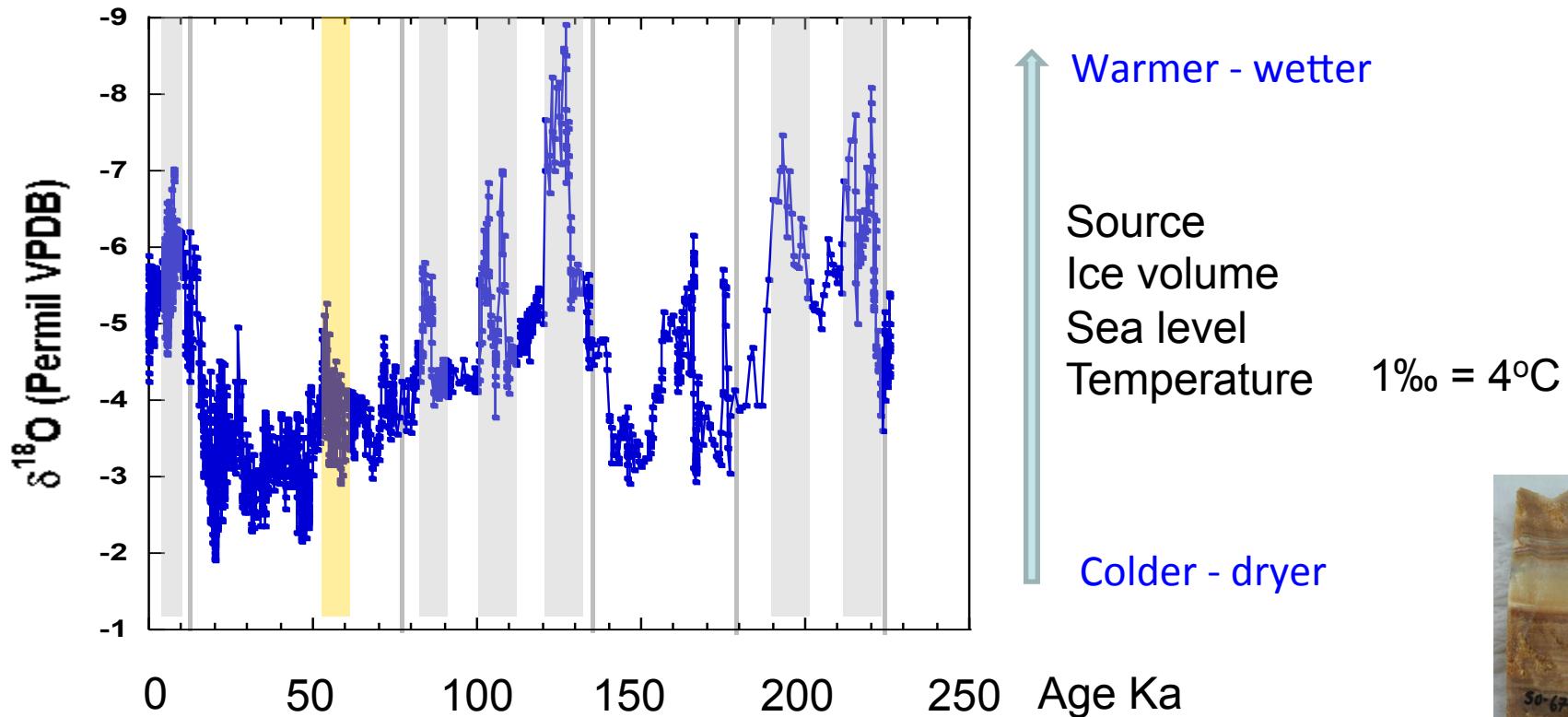


Negev Desert Caves



Eastern Mediterranean Speleothems – The oxygen isotopic record:

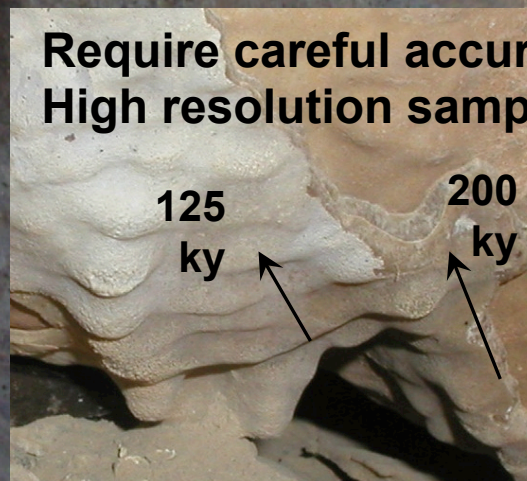
- Continuous growth through glacial/interglacial cycles;
- water was always available; annual precipitation during warm interglacials and cold glacials was higher than a limiting threshold for speleothems growth. For interglacials ~250-300 mm;
- The large isotopic fluctuations are indicative of major climatic changes (resolution ~10-100 years).



There are many caves with speleothems in the present-day arid to hyper-arid North-East Sahara (Negev Desert – Israel) (Vaks et al., 2006; 2007) and Southern Arabia (Burns et al., 1998, 2001; Fleitmann et al., 2003a, b, 2004, 2007; 2011)



**Require careful accurate dating.
High resolution sampling**

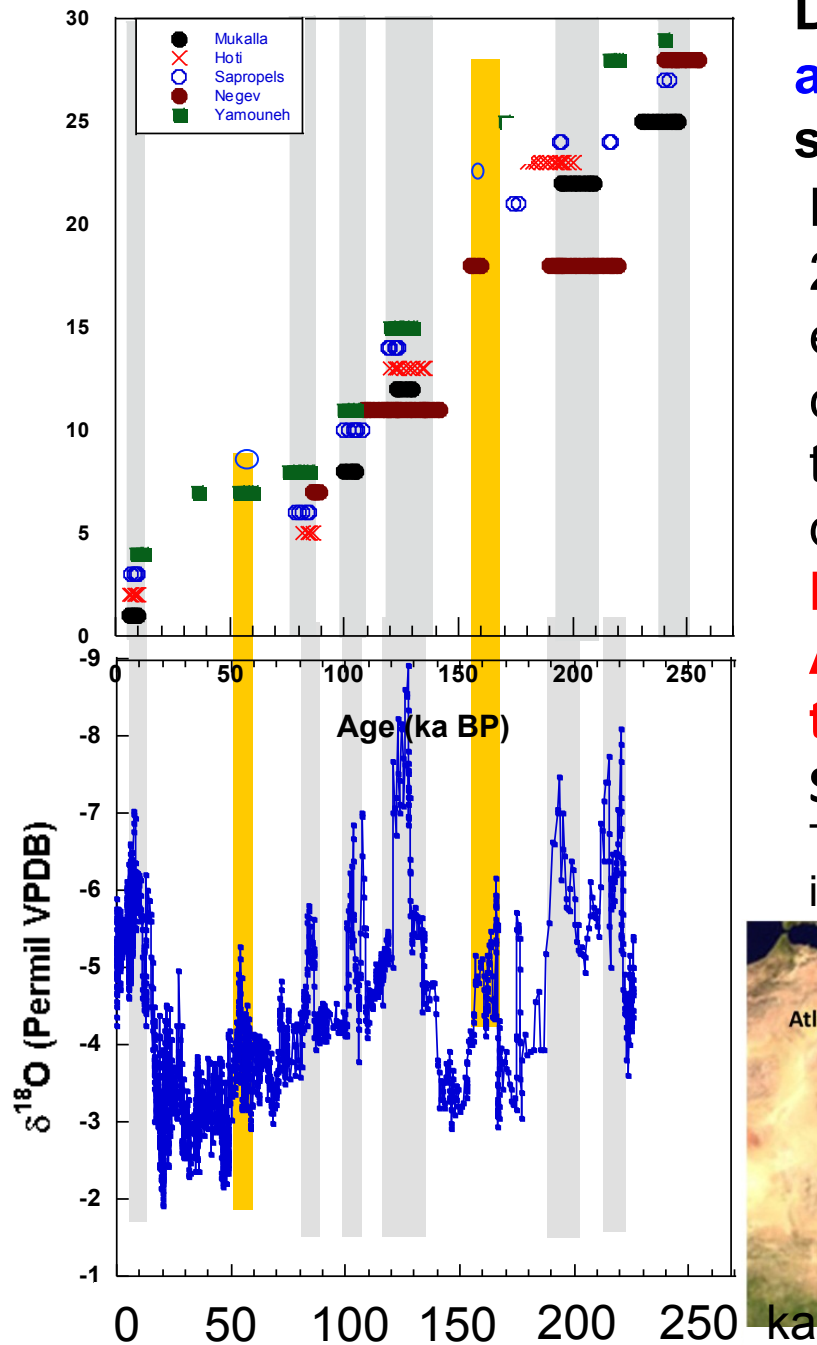


Depositional periods of Southern Arabia and NE Sahara (Negev Desert, Israel) speleothems:

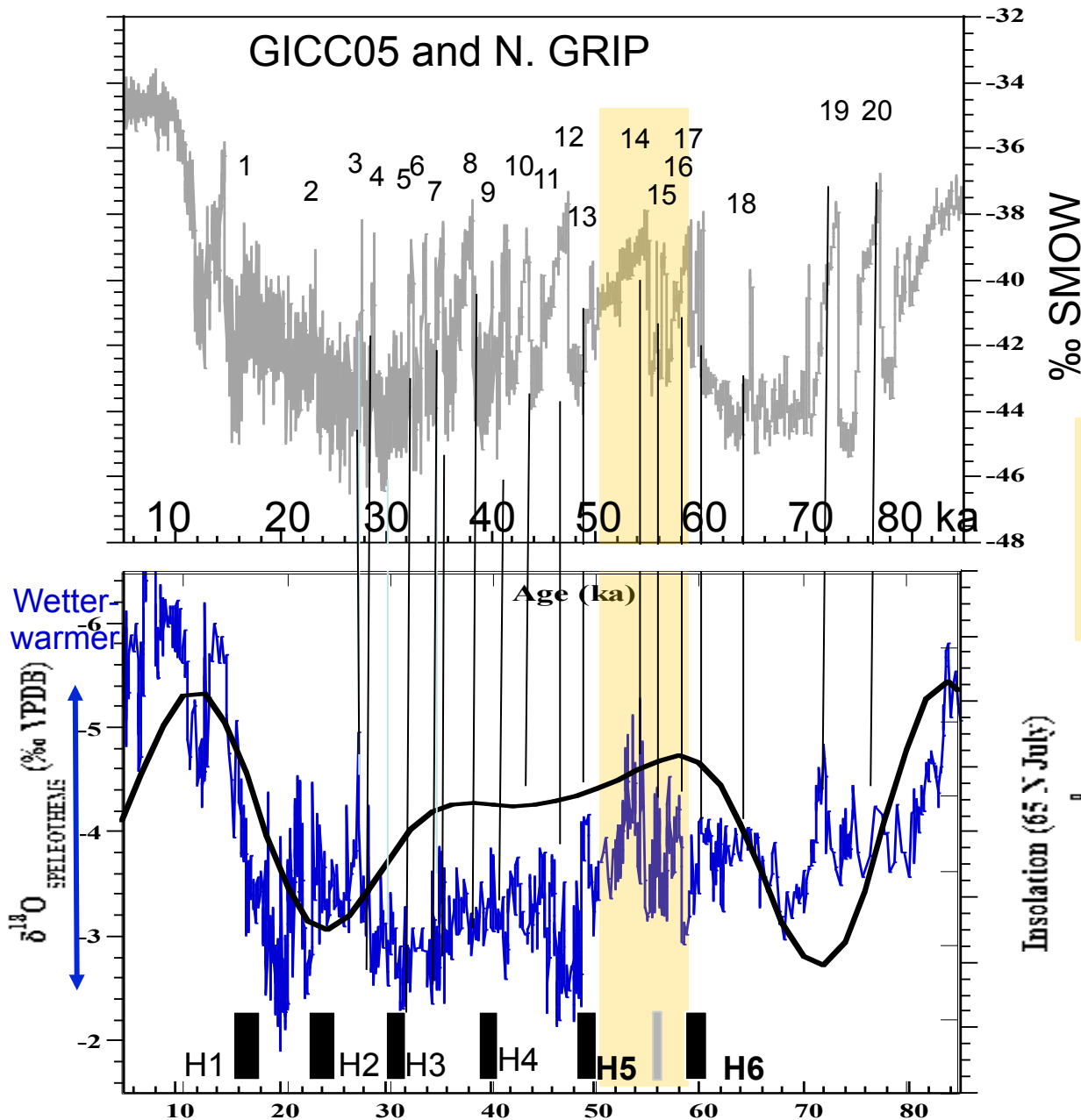
Mainly during peak interglacials; 250-240, 220-200, 130-120, 108-98, 87-84 ka, and early Holocene.

coinciding with periods of reducing size of the arid Sahara, i.e., periods of sapropel deposition. **There are evidence that major human and animal dispersals out of Africa occurred at these intervals and their arrival into the EM (Zuttiyeh, Qesem, Skhul-Qafzeh).**

The annual rainfall require for their deposition during interglacial is estimated at ~250-300 mm.



THE LARGE SCALE PICTURE in the EM – last glacial

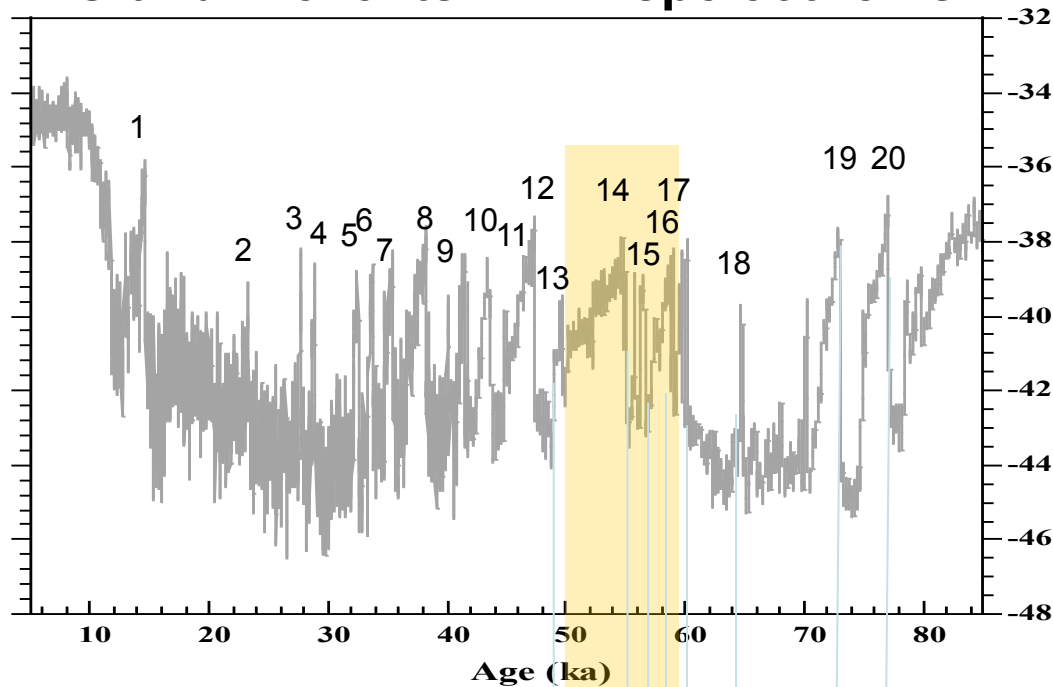


D-O and H events are recorded in EM speleothems.

The most pronounced $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ oscillations occur between H6 and H5, ~60 - 50 ka, during D-O 16 to D-O 13.

the sharpest transition to almost interglacial wet conditions is at D-O 14, at ~54 ka, followed by gradual change to full dry glacial conditions at ~50-48 ka.

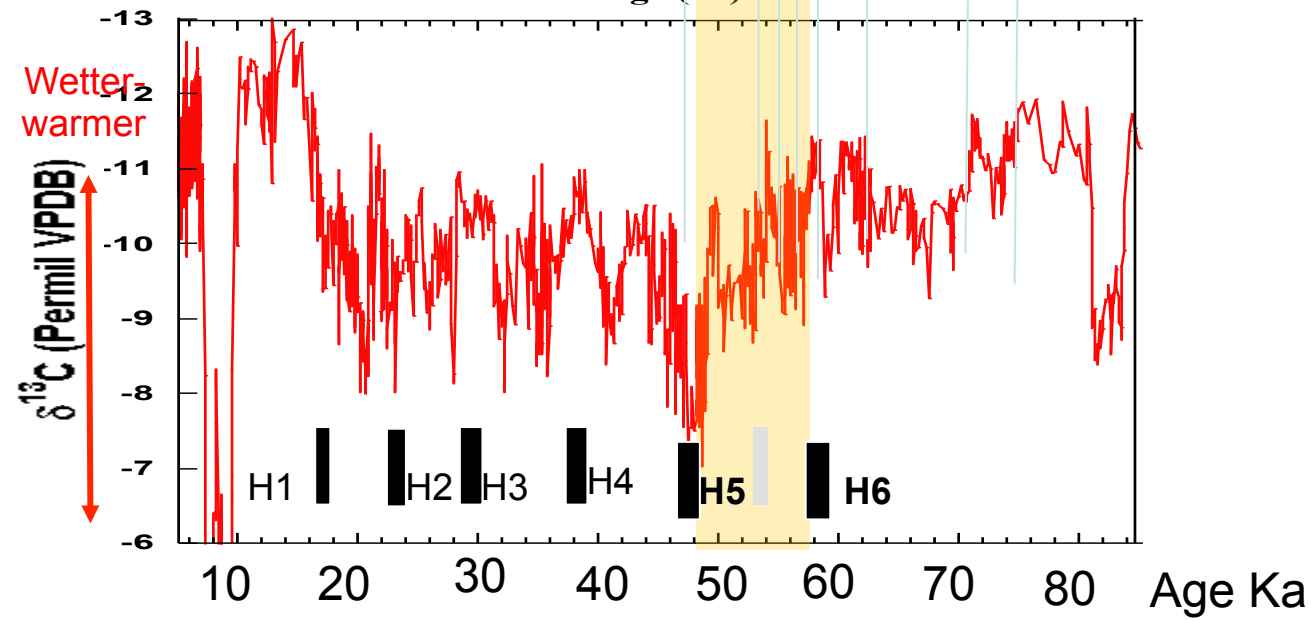
D-O and H events in EM speleothems



GICC05 & N. GRIP (‰ SMOW)

Vegetation response

The carbon isotopic composition increase from ~60-50 ka, suggesting transition from C3 Mediterranean type vegetation to more dominant C4 type vegetation.



Wetter warmer

$\delta^{13}C$ (Permil VPDB)

H1 H2 H3 H4 H5 H6

Age Ka

The Human Connection

Genetic rate of mutation data indicate **very rapid population expansion, the Great Expansion, outside Africa at ~ 60-50 ka.** In this case the expansion occurred between H6 and H5, (D-O 16 to 13). This period can be considered as **The “glacial analogue” to the extreme wet periods during the interglacials.**

Suggesting ideal **“climatic window” for modern human migration out of Africa.** (Manot Cave)

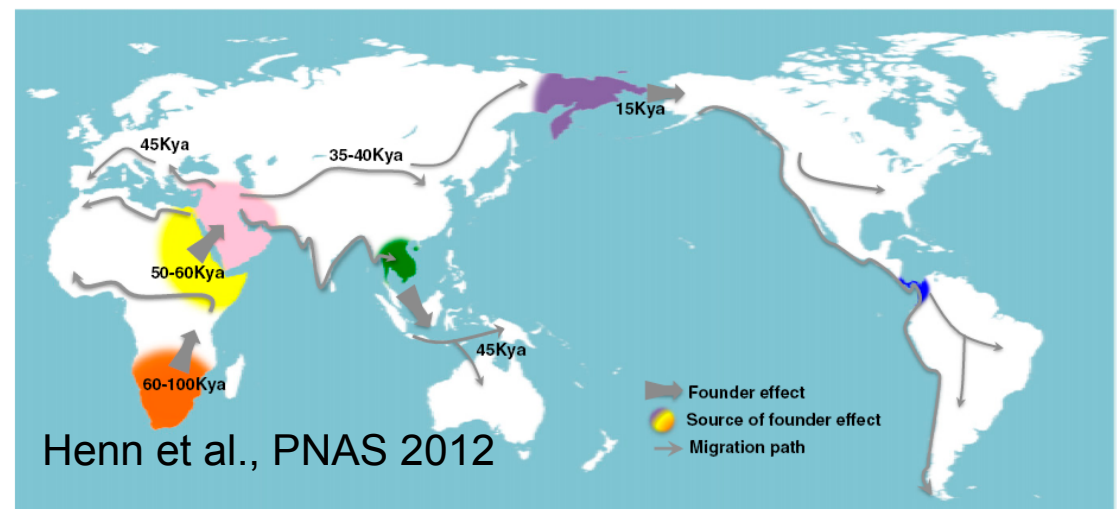
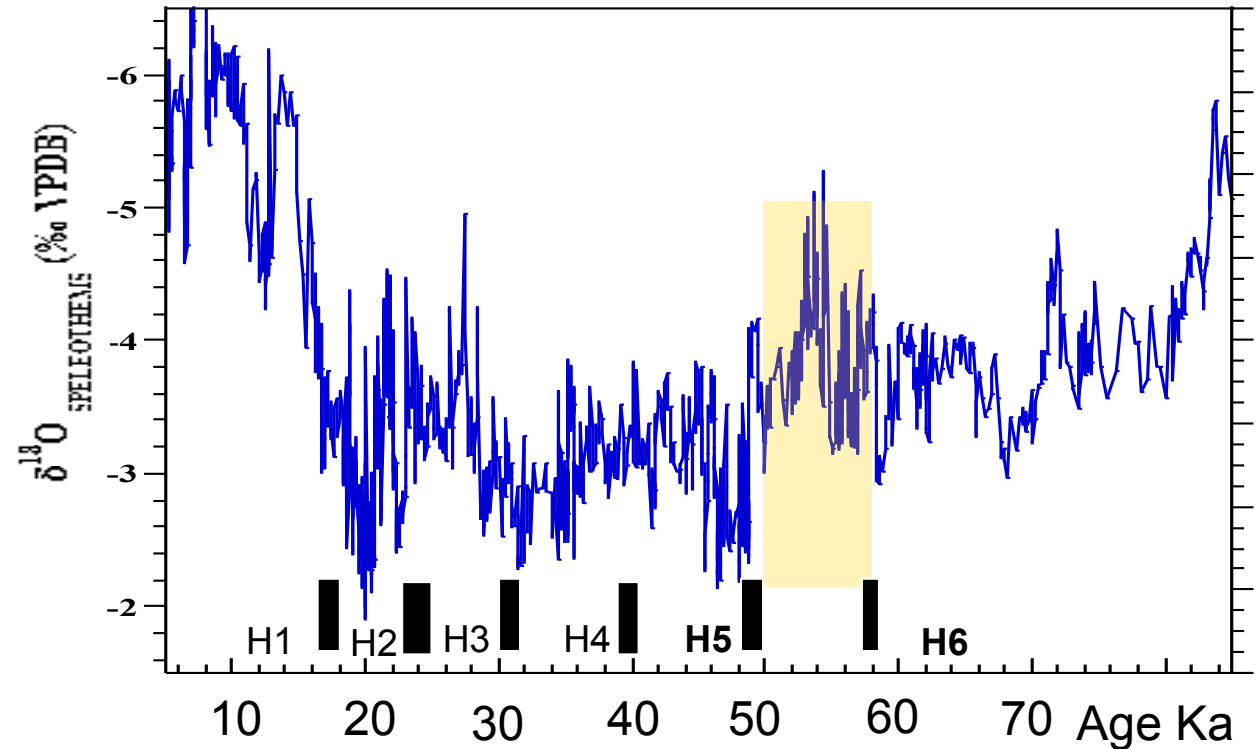


Fig. 4. Ancient dispersal patterns of modern humans during the past 100,000 yr. This map highlights genetic events that began with a source population in



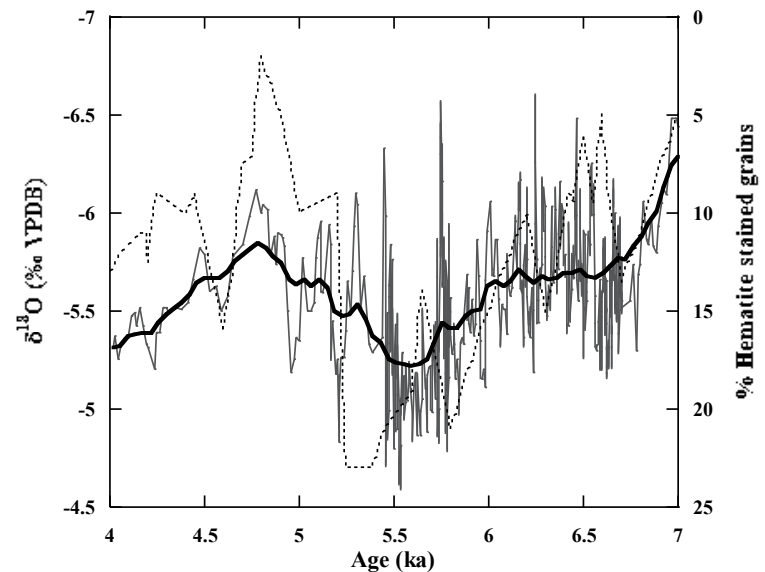
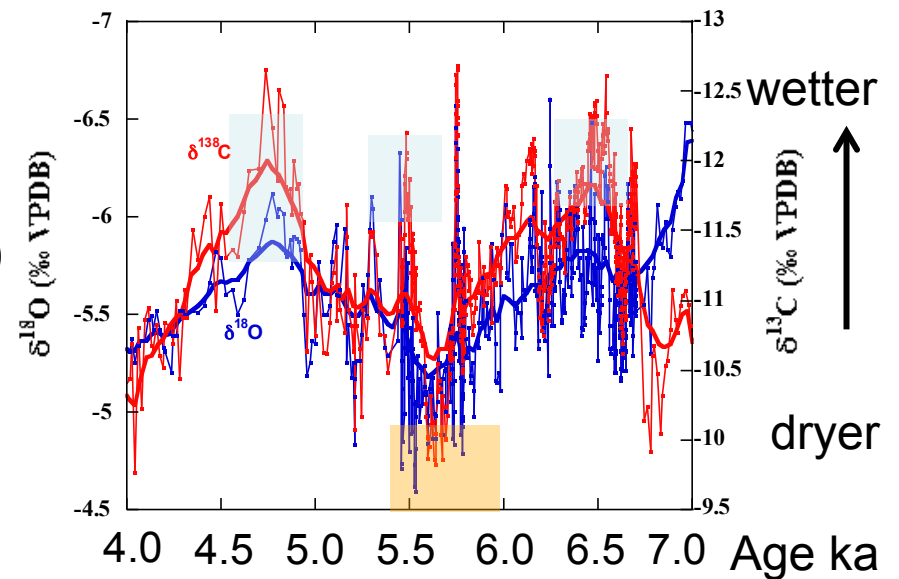
D-O type events during the Holocene and the connection to human history

Fast growing speleothems reveal:
 Mid Holocene, sinusoidal isotopic cyclicity (~1500 years) reflecting changes in rainfall amount.

Droughts
 ~ 300-400 mm

Wet climate
 ~ 700-800 mm

Good match with Bond Cycles (ice-rafted debris, [Bond et al., 2001](#)) suggesting that high latitude cooling, is associated with drier EM.



Bar-Matthews & Ayalon, 2011

A. Frequent $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ oscillations (3-10 years resolution).

Why? What does it reflect?

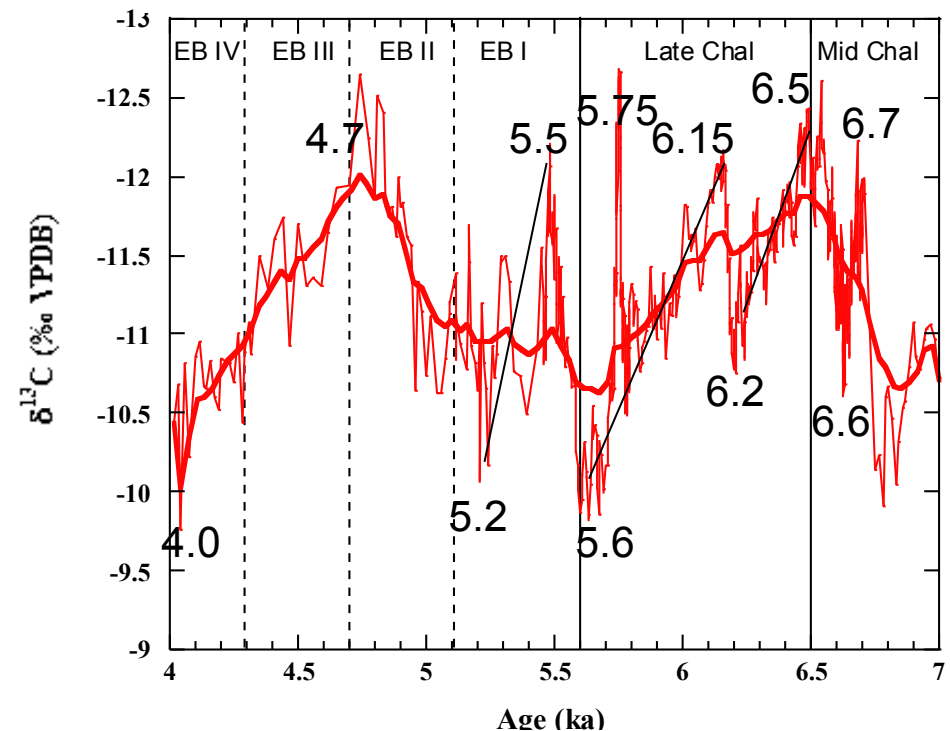
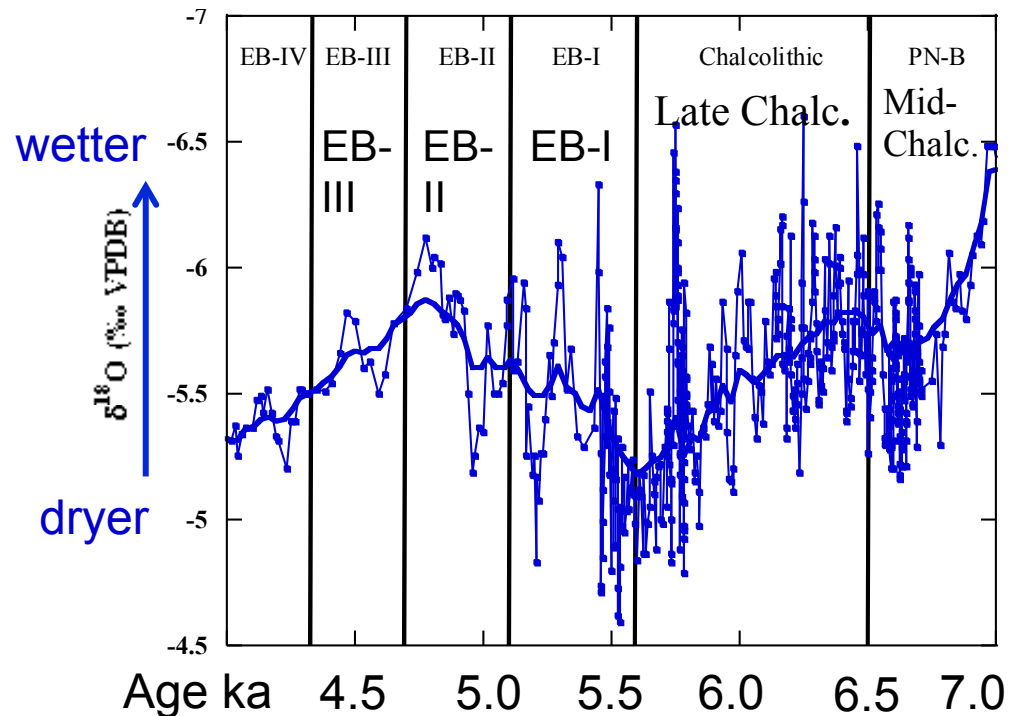
B. Human connection

The transition between Mid-Chalcolithic to Late Chalcolithic, and between Early Bronze II to Early Bronze III occur at the peak of wet climate ~ 700 mm. Transition between Late Chalcolithic to Early Bronze I occur at the peak of dry conditions ~ 300 mm.

Seesaw trend and Rapid Climate Changes (RCC) :

Transitions to wetter conditions are fast ~ 100 y and to drier conditions slower $>200-700$ y

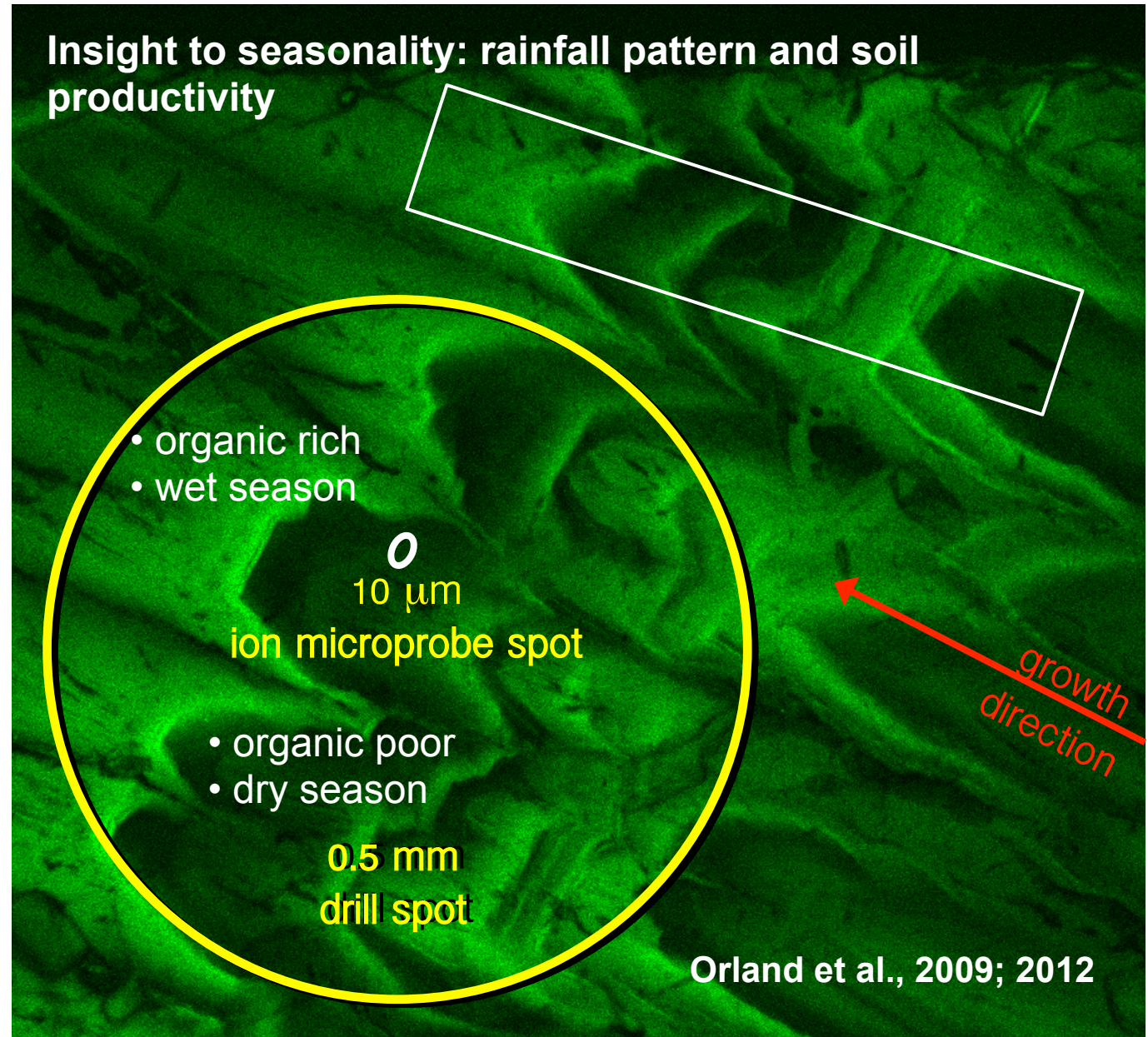
Are they reflected in the archeological record?



Seasonal resolution in speleothems, what can we gain?

We need to apply advanced analytical techniques for High Resolution

- 1) High-precision, high-spatial-resolution $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ analyses
[Ion Microprobe]
- 2) Imaging of annual show seasonal change
[Confocal Laser Fluorescent Microscope - CLFM]

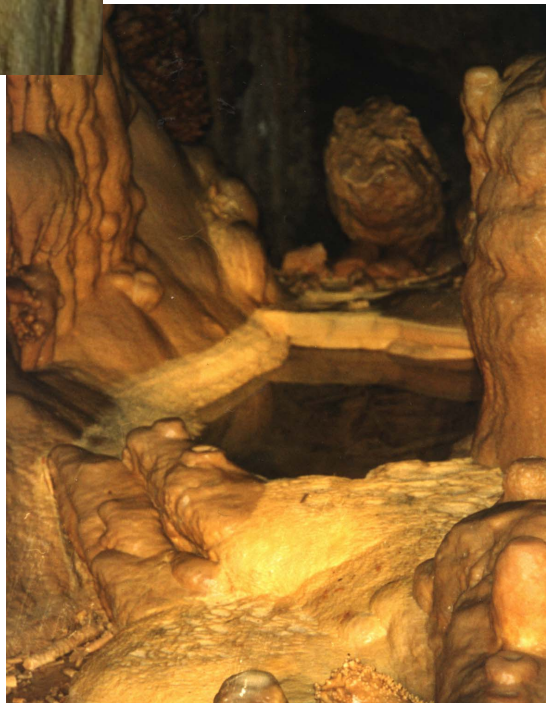




**Monitoring active cave
in the Eastern
Mediterranean semi-
arid climate help
understanding how
speleothems capture
seasonal resolution**



Fast drip – fast
reservoir

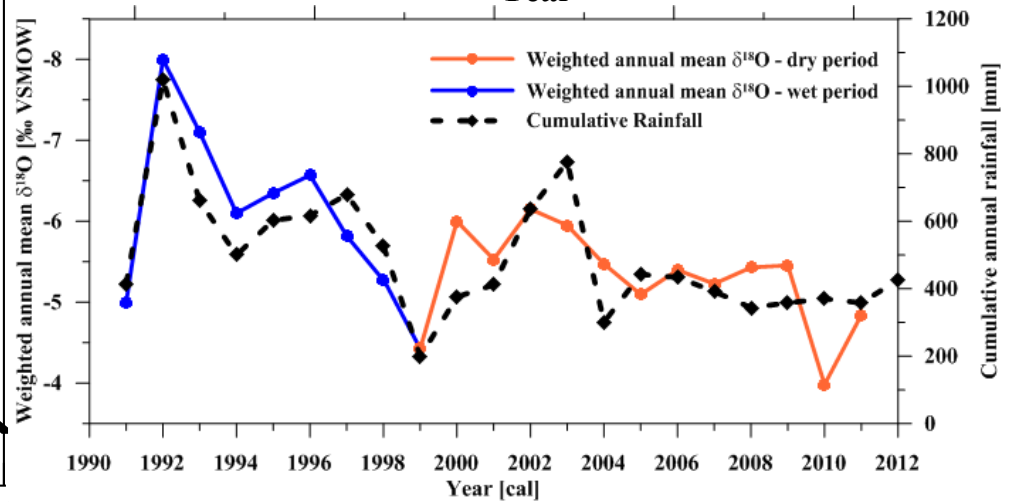
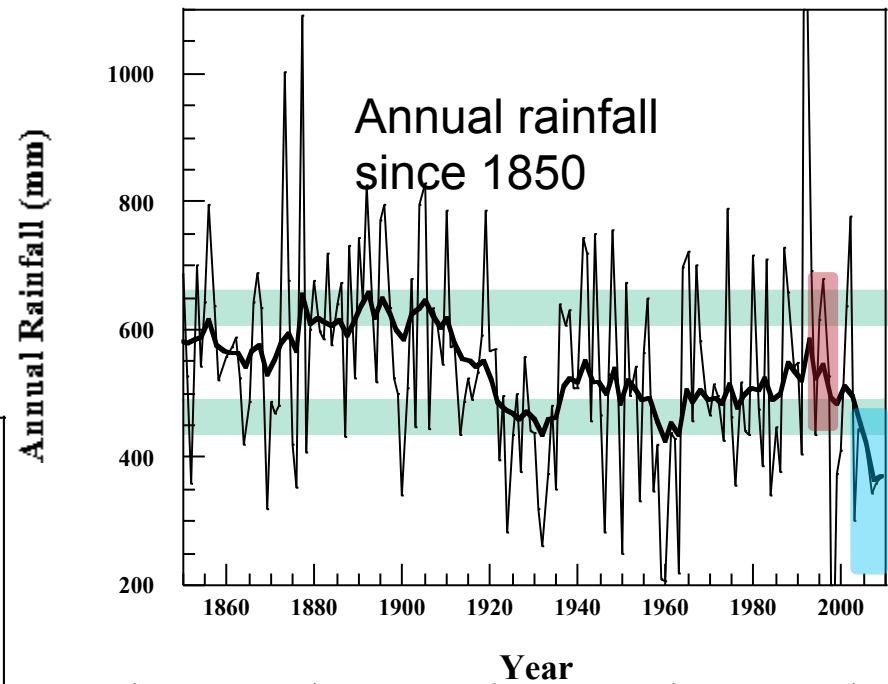
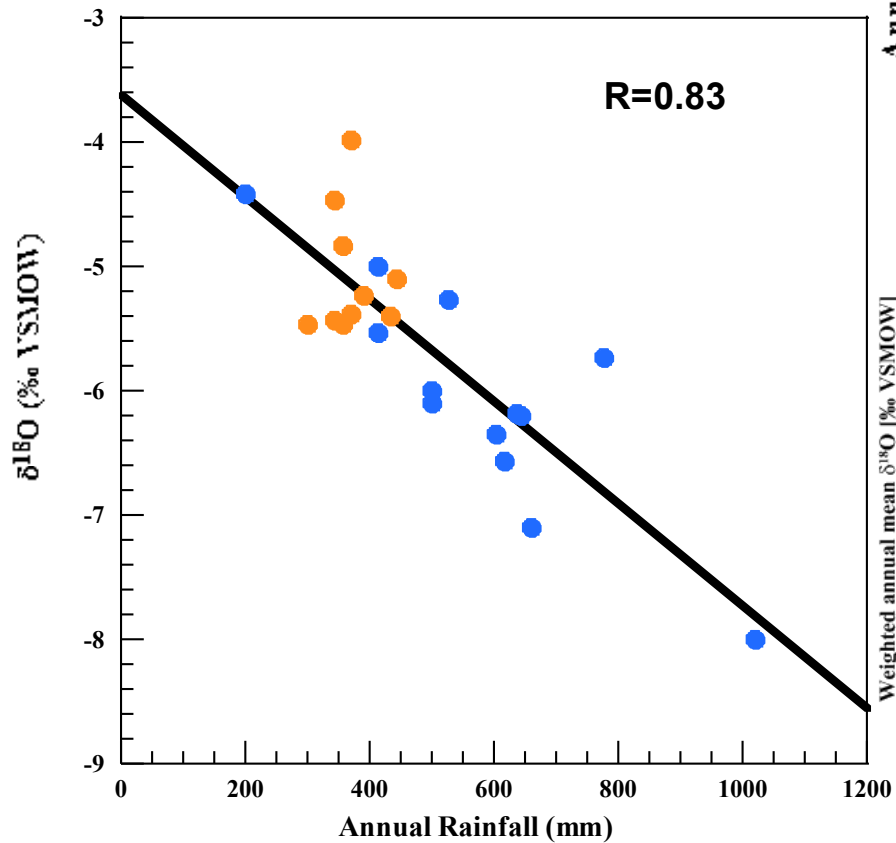


Slow drip - pore water reservoir

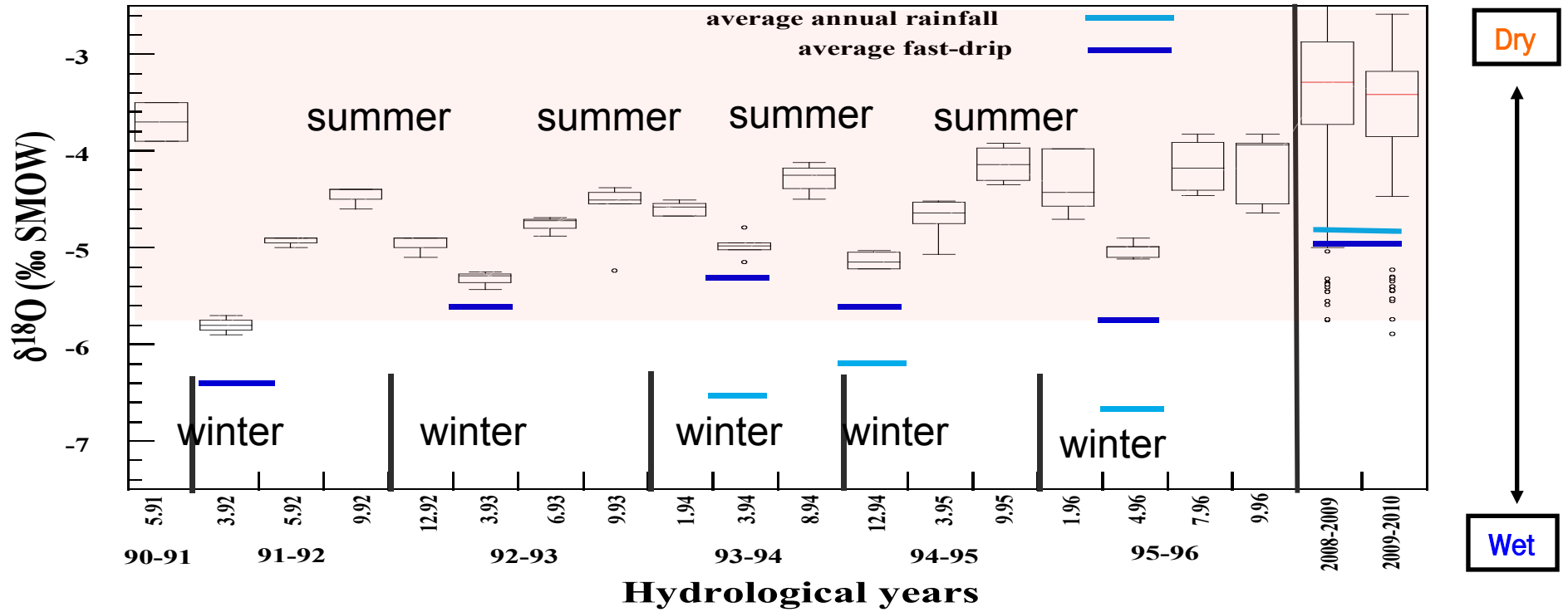


Annual rainfall vs. $\delta^{18}\text{O}$

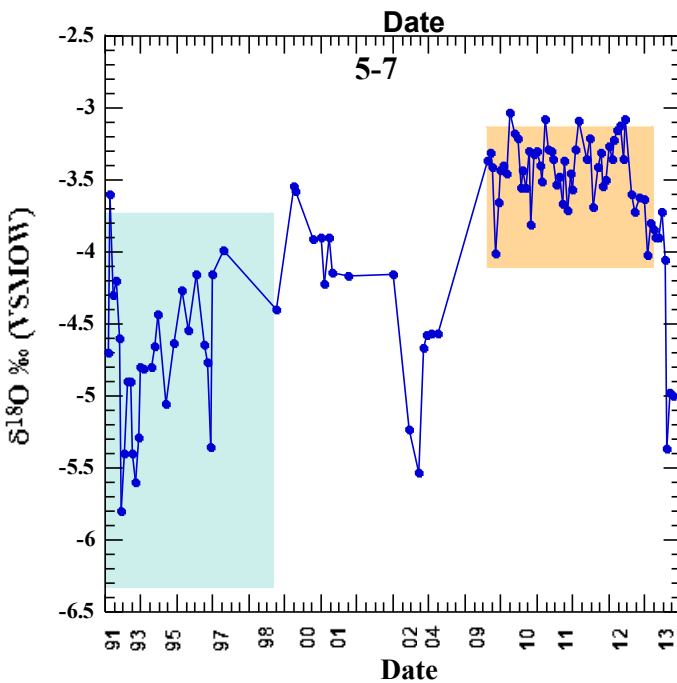
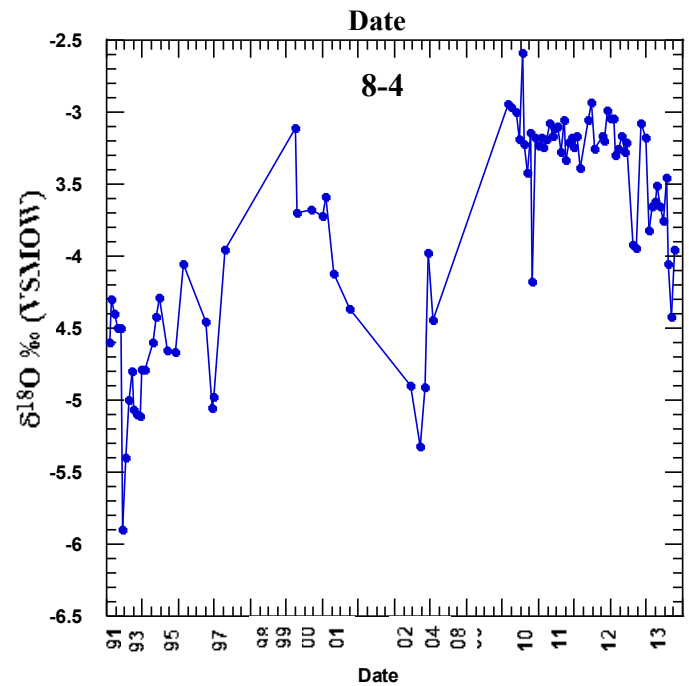
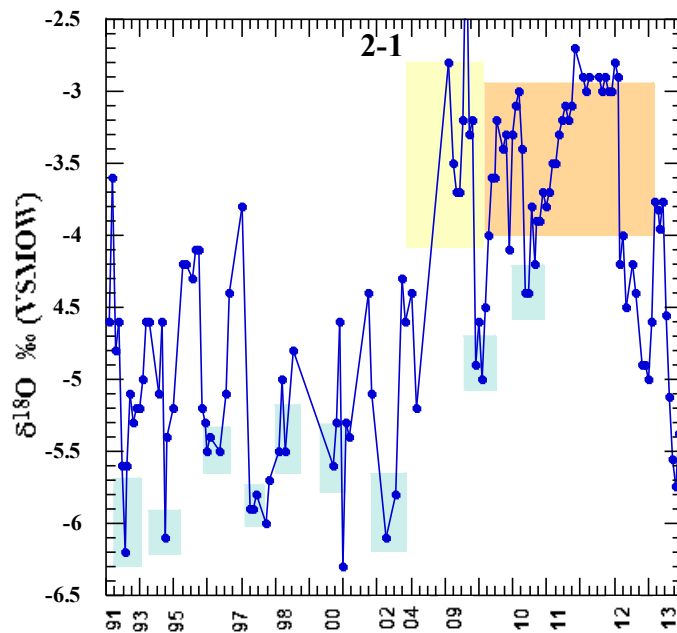
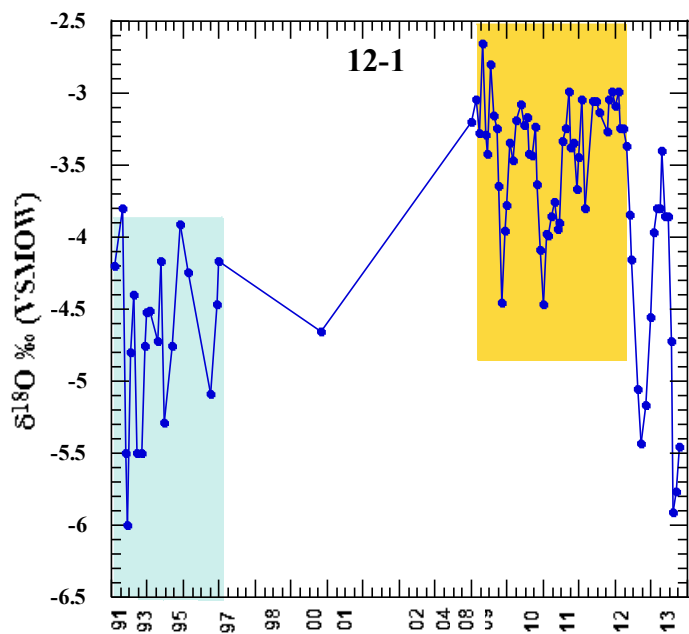
Annual rainfall since 1990
 $1\text{‰} \sim 280 \text{ mm}$



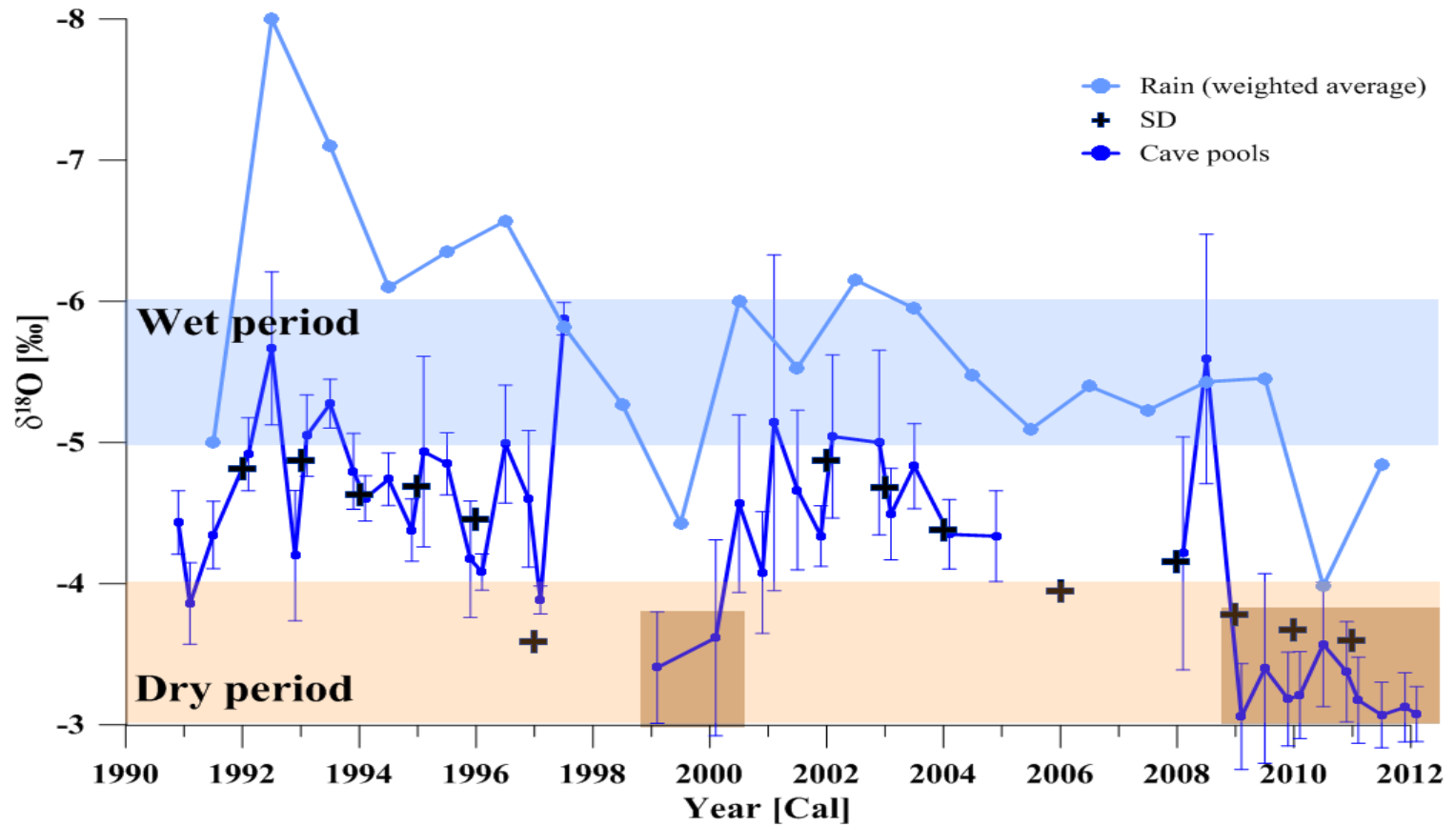
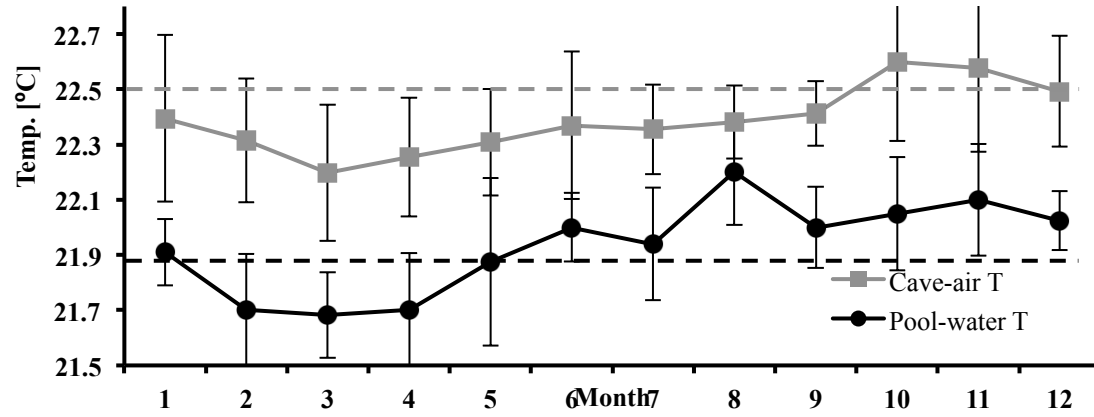
Cave Water Response



Cave Water Response - wet vs. dry periods

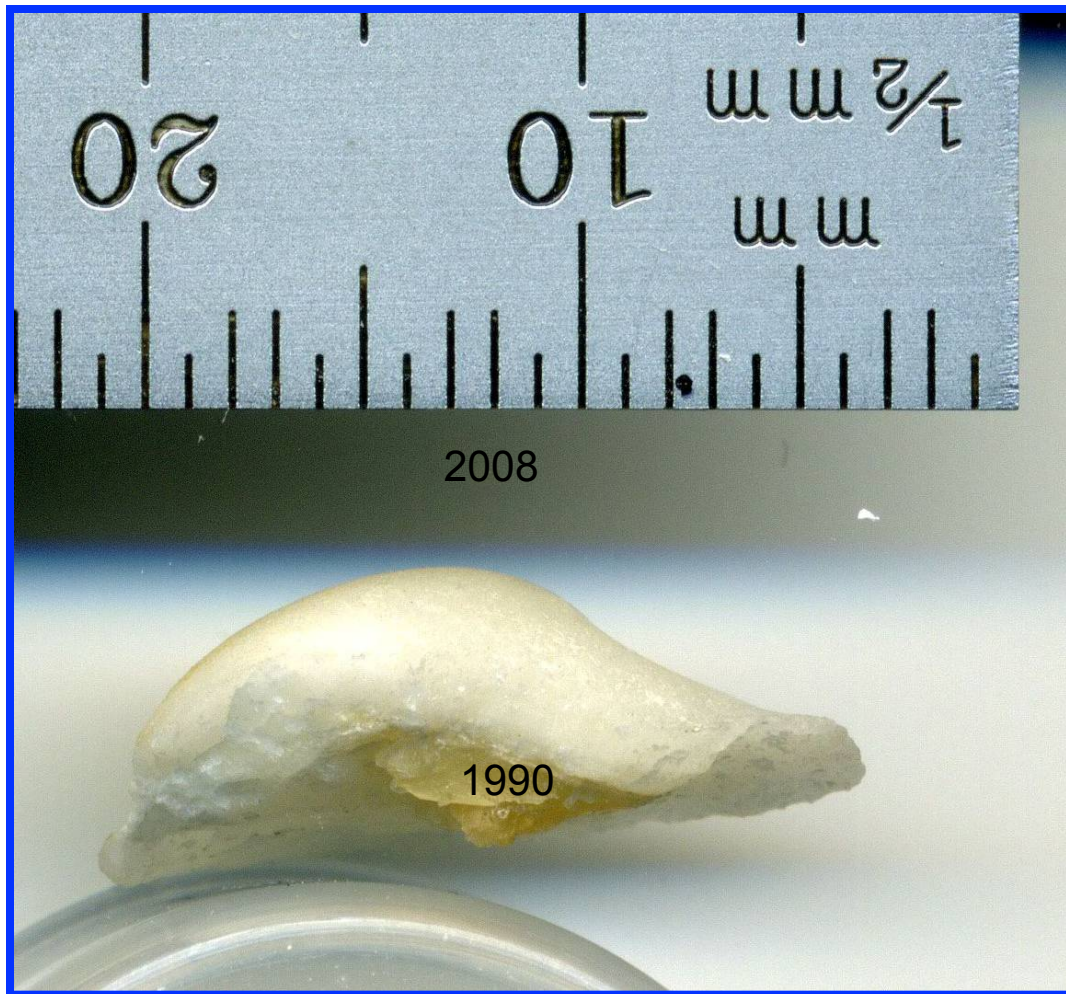


Constant T



How changes in rainfall amount, rainfall $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ -cave water $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ are recorded in speleothems?

Stalagmite 5-3-B grew on our water collector since 1990 until 2008, time period for which we have high resolution monitoring of rain and cave water.



The response of recent speleothems to the cave hydrology

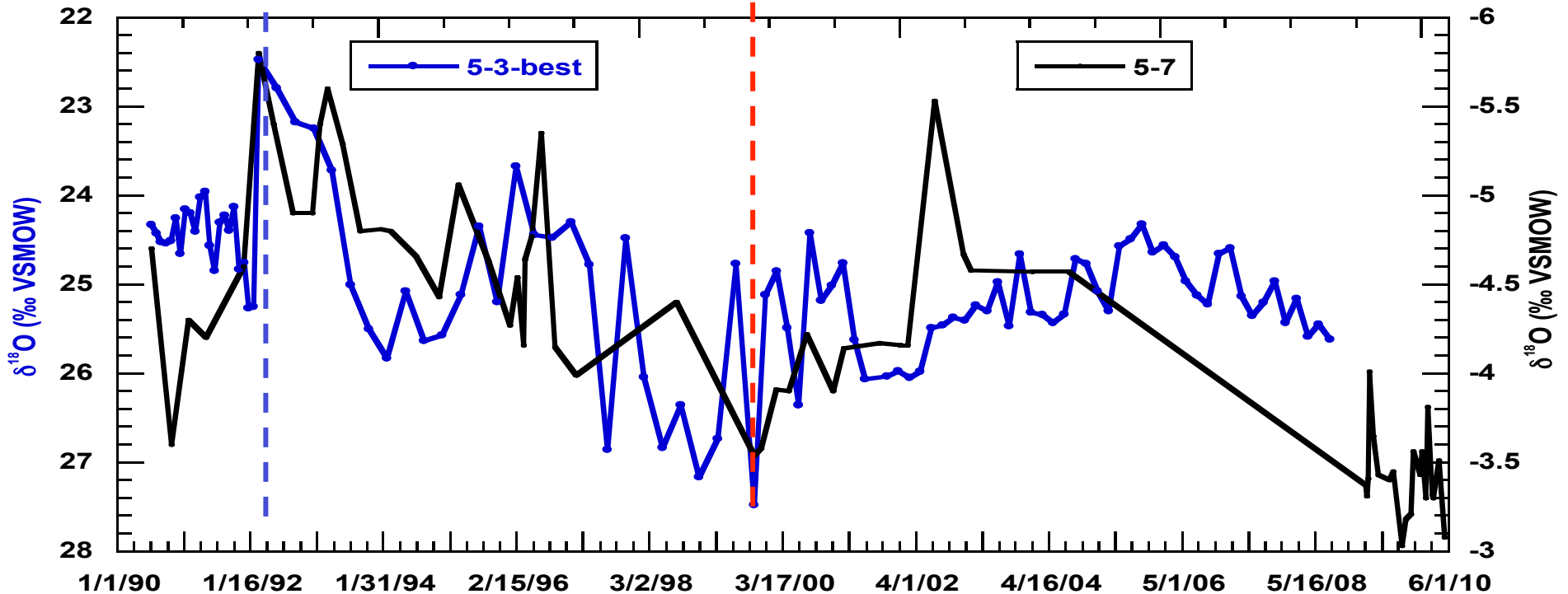
confocal fluorescent microscope and $\delta^{18}\text{O}$

Reveals annual and seasonal changes to the input of organic acids from the soil.
 $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ changes follow cave water

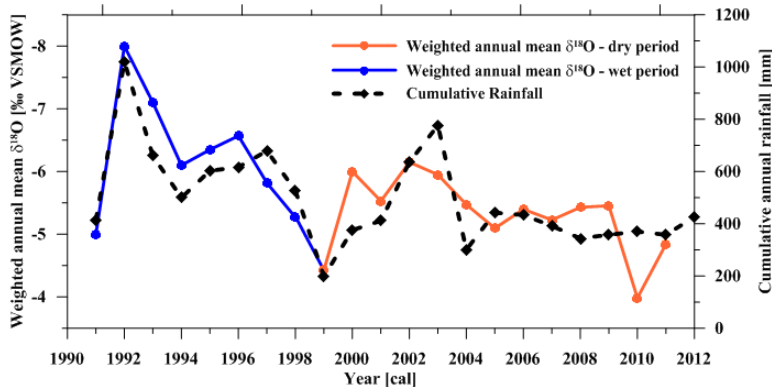
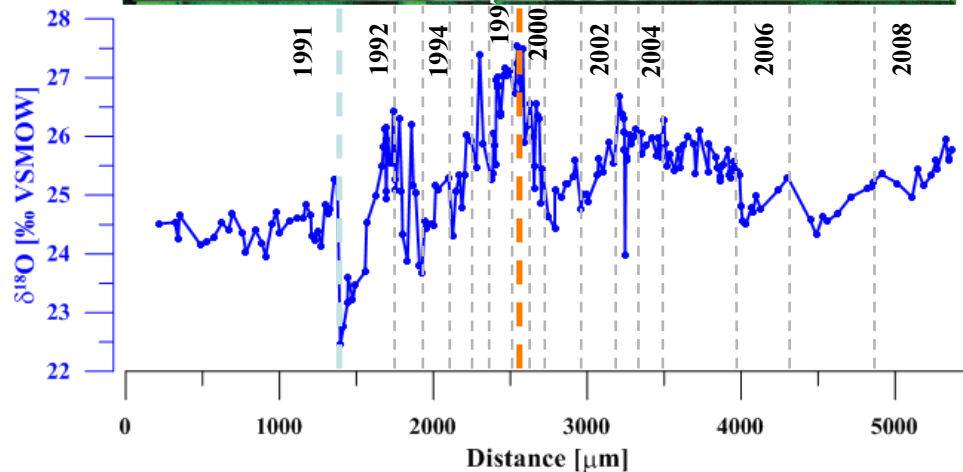
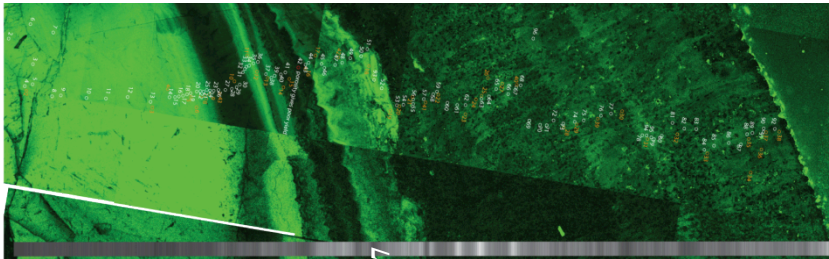


Following “wet” years large seasonality

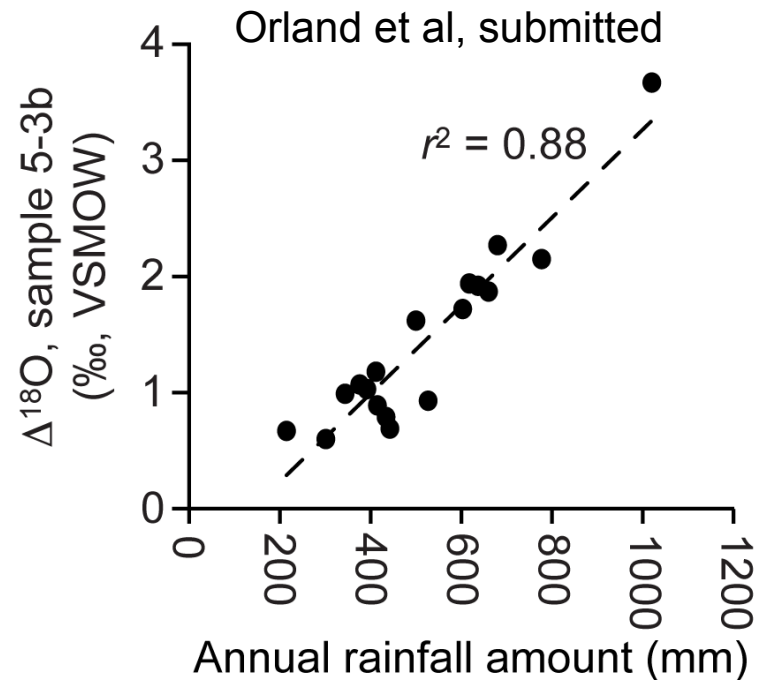
Following “dry” years diffuse seasonality



The response of recent speleothems to the cave hydrology

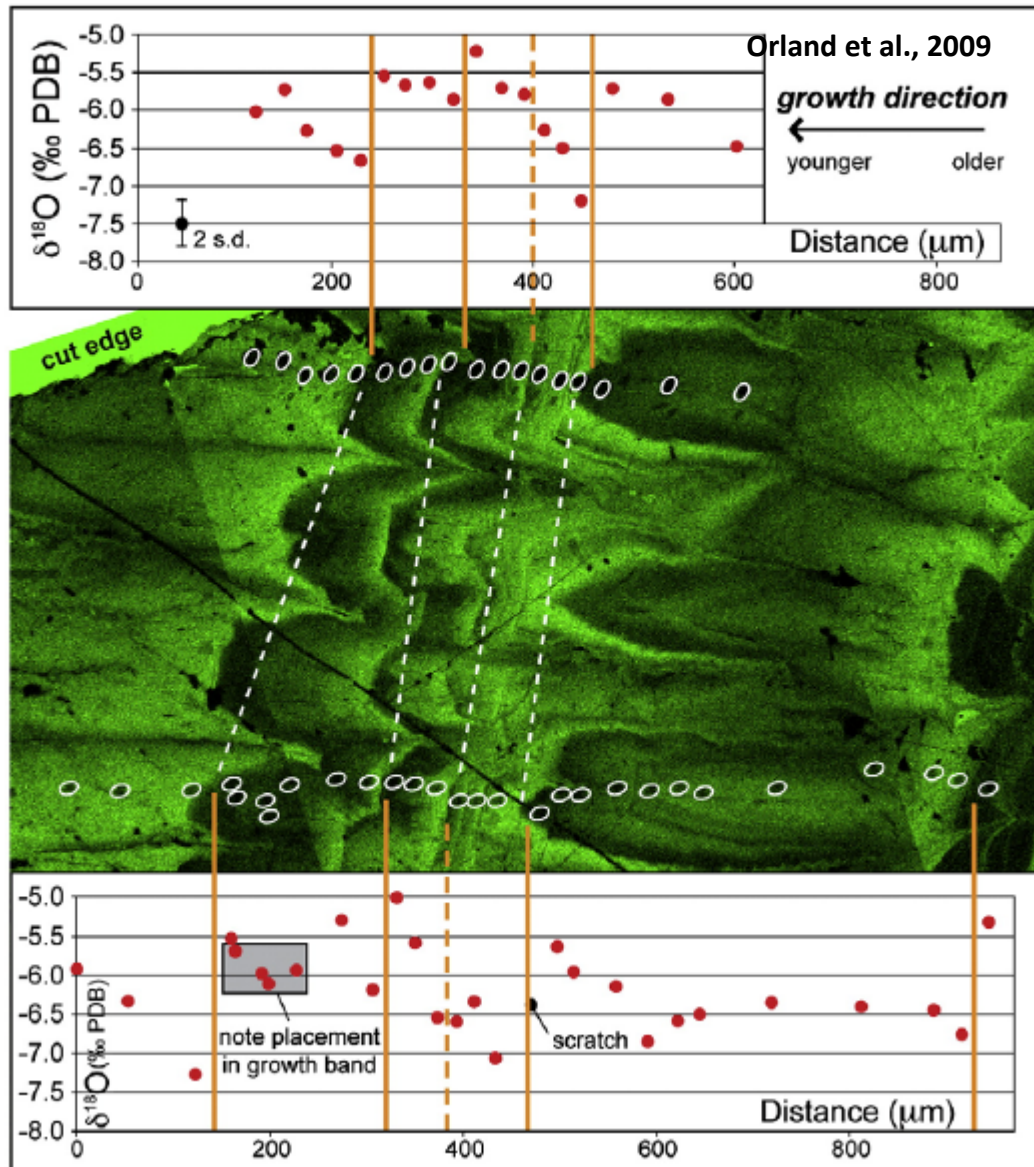


$\Delta^{18}\text{O} = \delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{dark}} - \delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{light}}$
 $\Delta^{18}\text{O} = \delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{calcite}}$ difference between bright and dark laminae as function of rainfall amount



- organic poor
- dry season
- organic rich
- wet season

Late Holocene sample: Seasonal Sawtooth fluorescence banding during the Holocene, what does it mean?

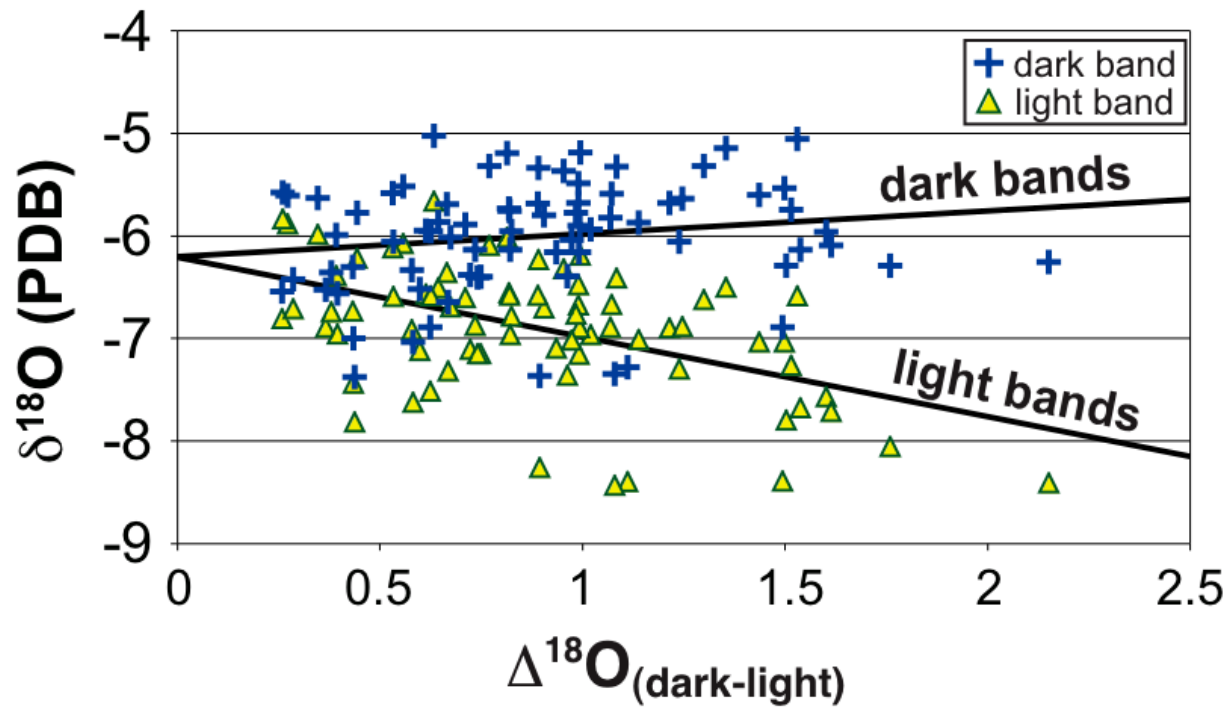
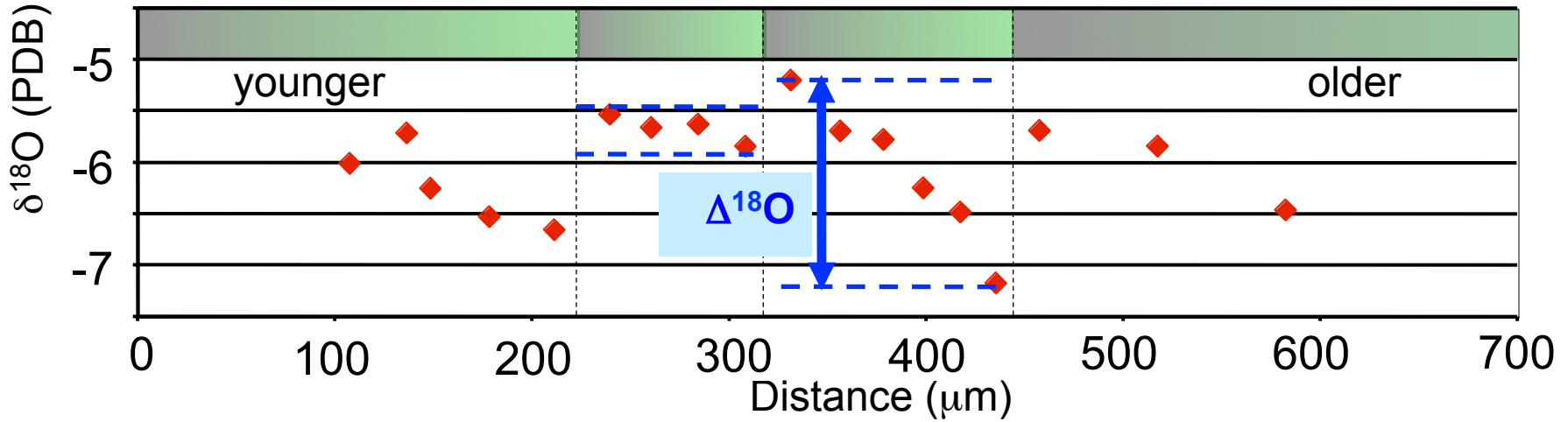


Each band has an abrupt onset of a bright low ^{18}O calcite followed by a gradient to dark higher ^{18}O calcite through time.

The pattern repeats itself and mimics the change in present-day isotopic composition of cave water between winter-summer.

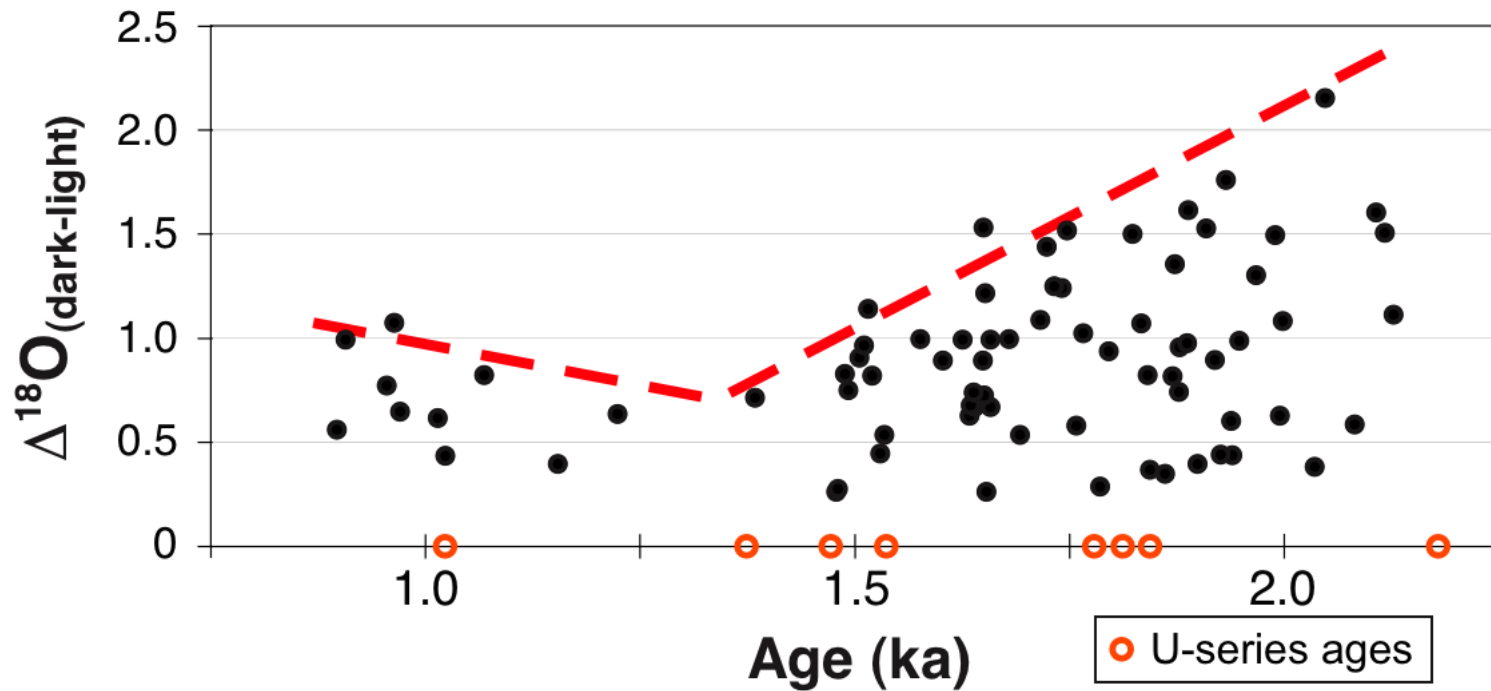
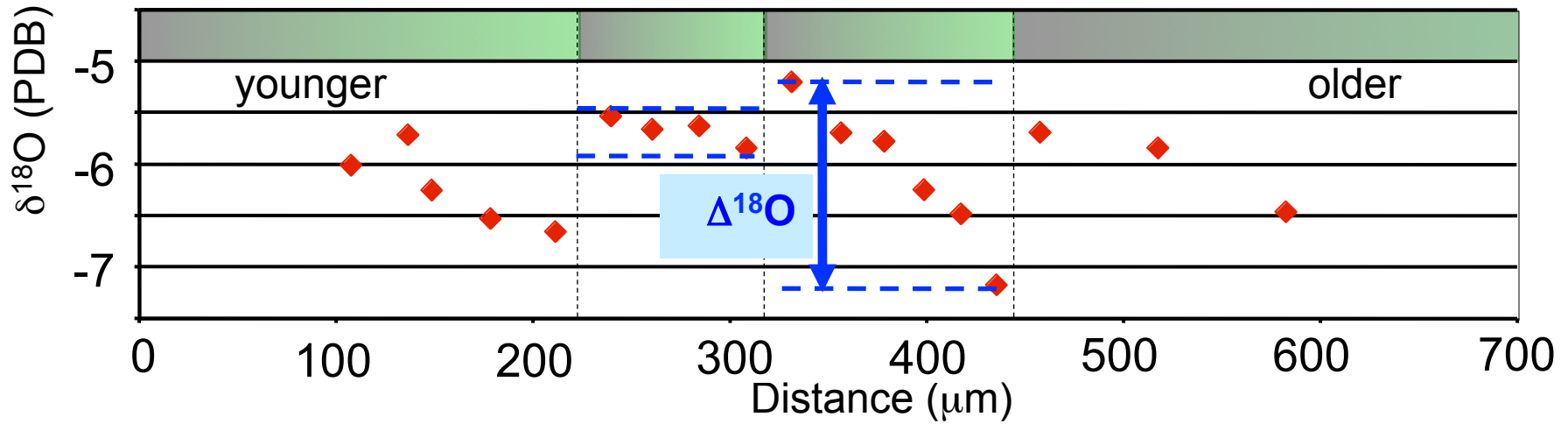
Orland et al., 2009

$$\Delta^{18}\text{O} = \delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{dark}} - \delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{light}}$$



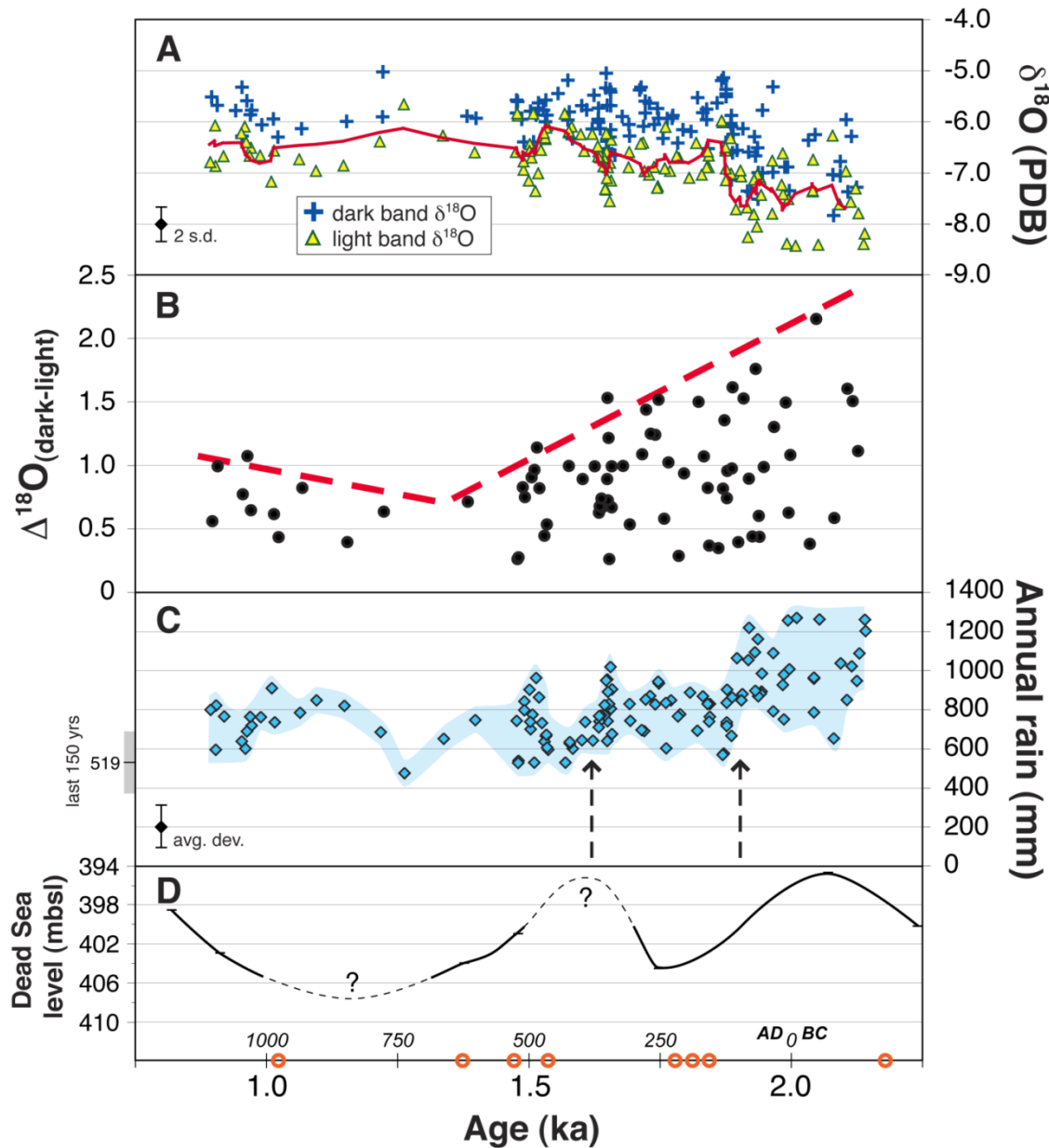
Orland et al.,
2009

$$\Delta^{18}\text{O} = \delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{dark}} - \delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{light}}$$



*Orland
et al.,
2009*

DRY
↑
↓
WET

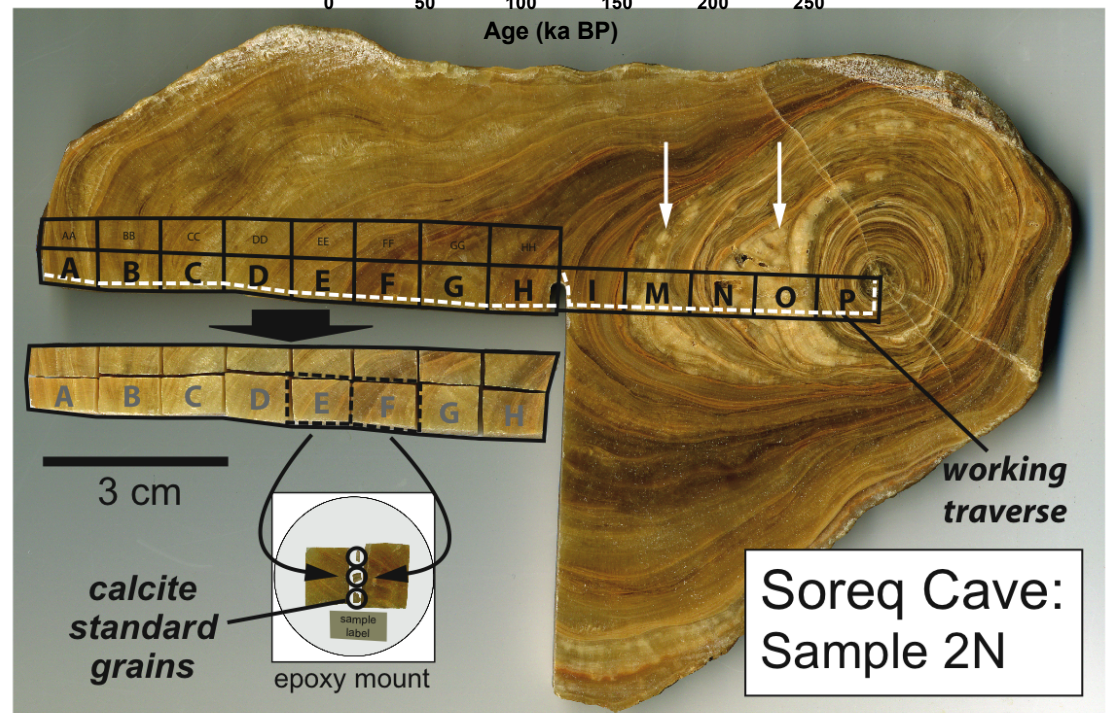
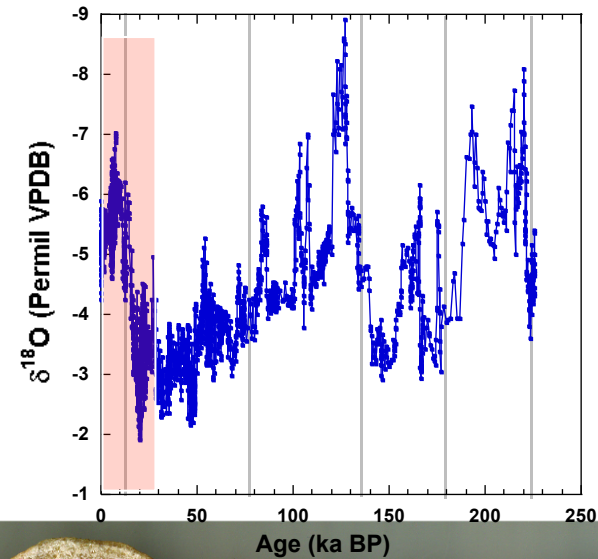
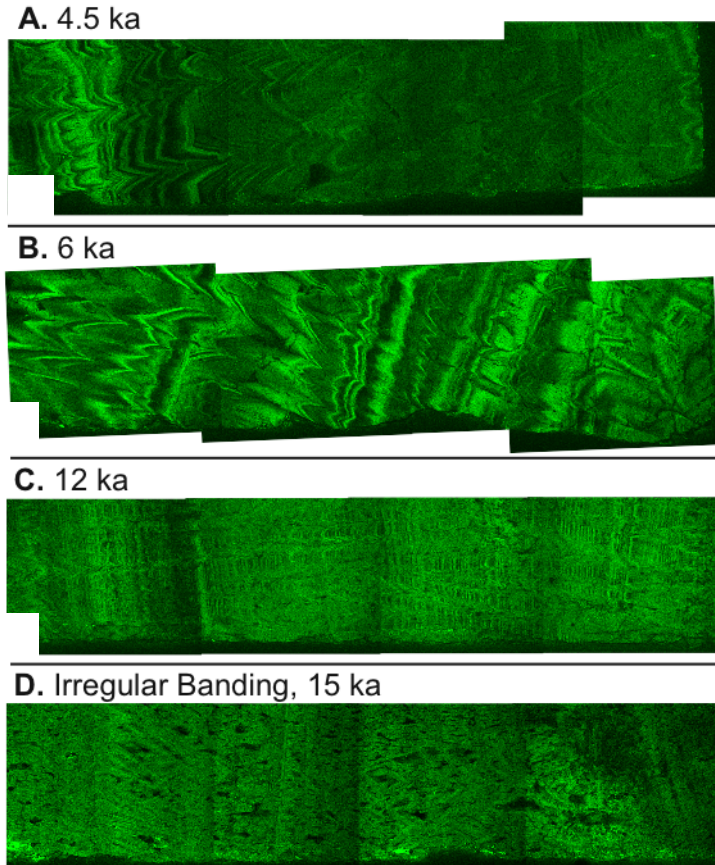


**Connection
to
archeology**

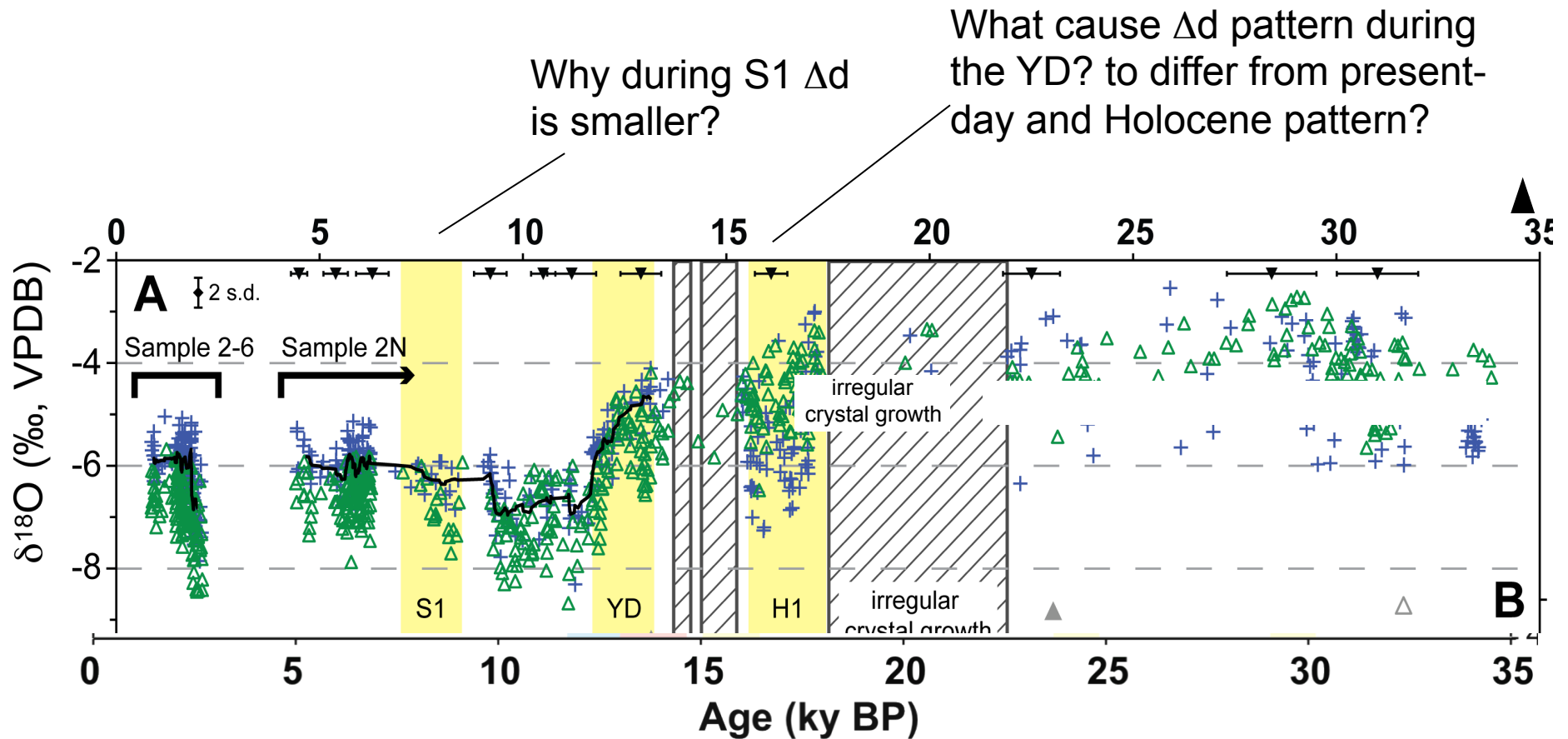
Orland et al., QR 2009

Gradual decrease in rainfall amount, contributed to the decline of the Roman and the Byzantine Empire in the Levant region.

Seasonality pattern: From last glacial into the Holocene



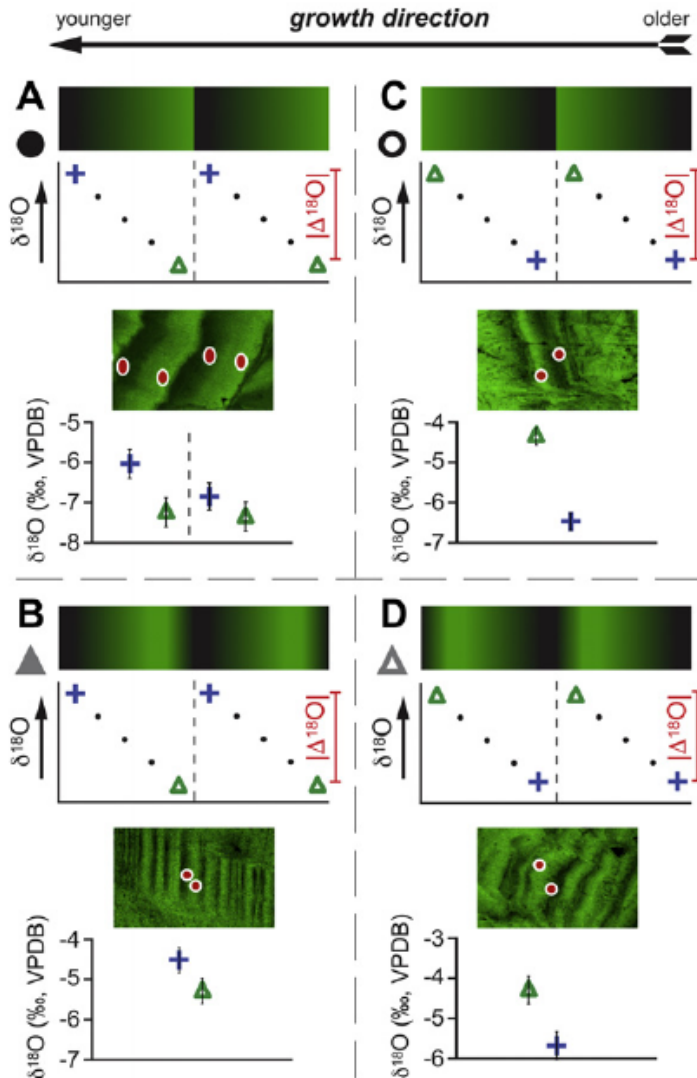
Types of fluorescence banding as function of climate the last 34 ka



Orland et al., GCA 2012

blue symbols: dark fluorescent calcite
 green symbols: bright fluorescent calcite

Types of fluorescence banding as function of climate the last 34 ka

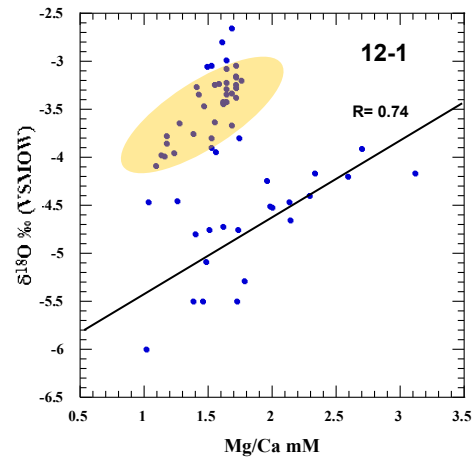
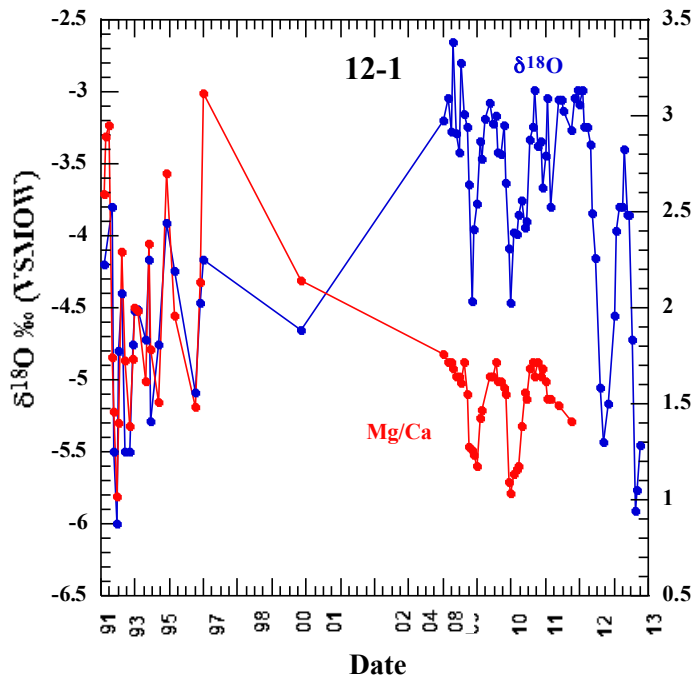
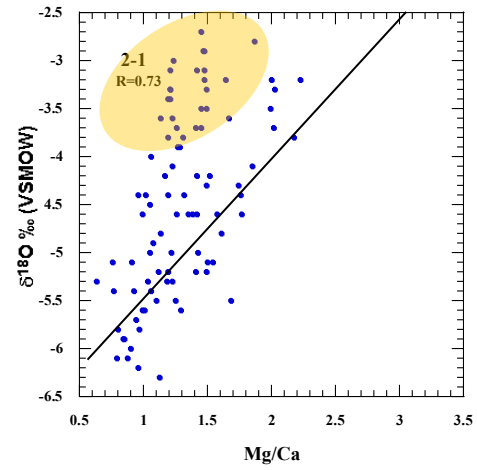
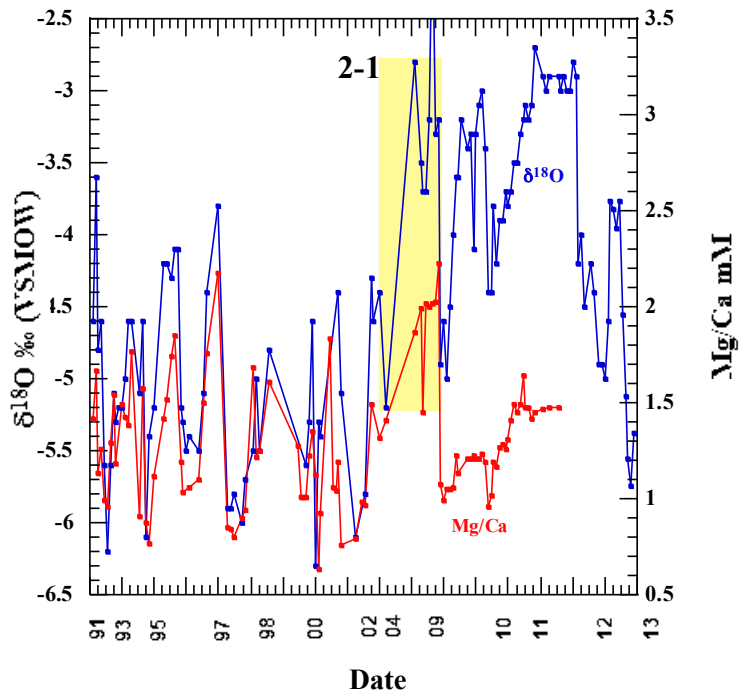


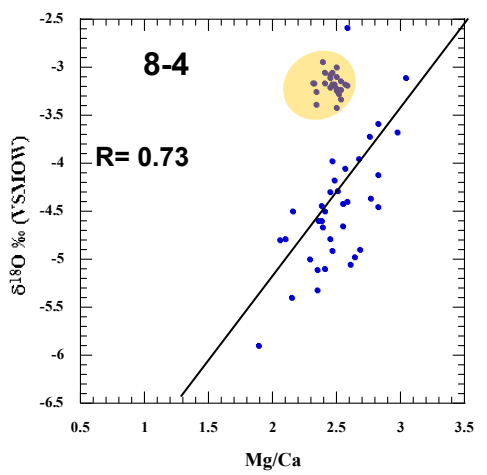
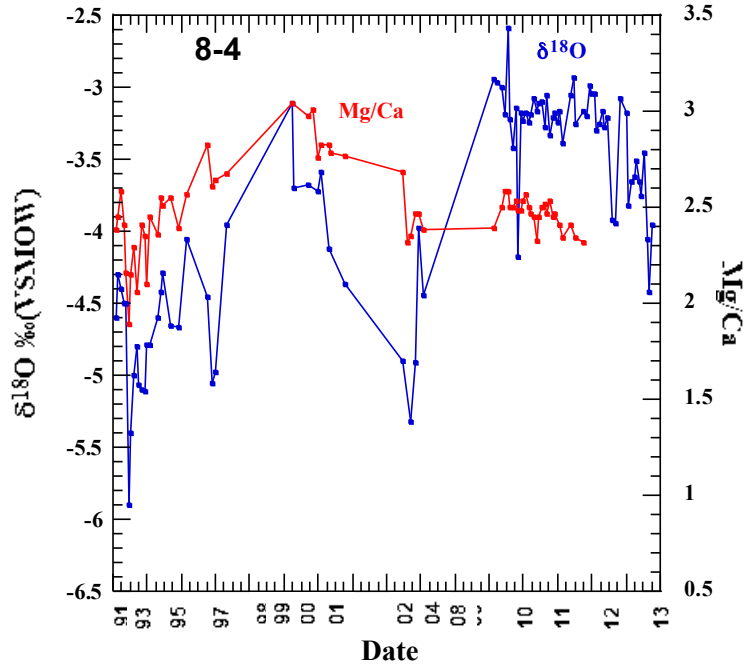
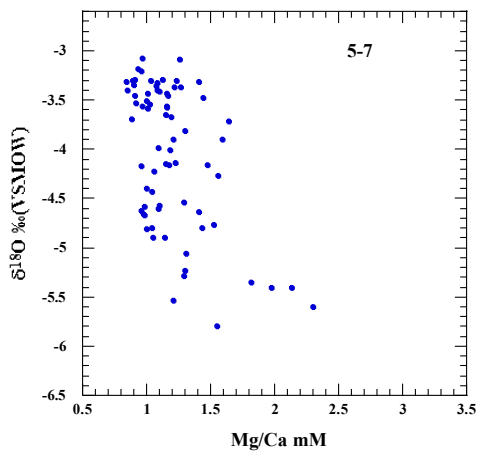
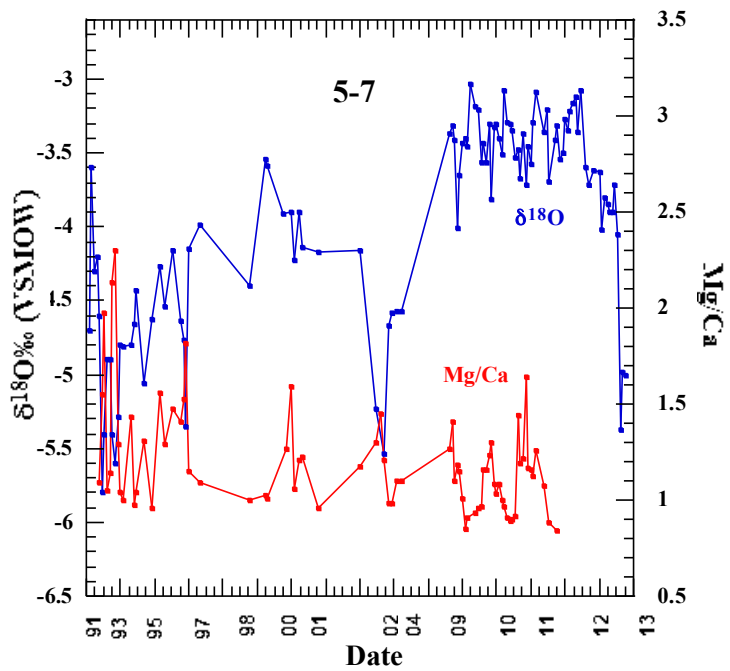
Green triangle bright laminae,
blue cross dark laminae

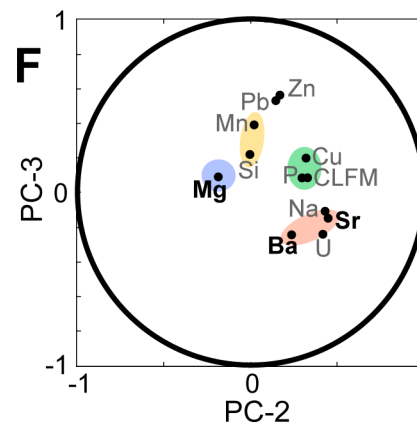
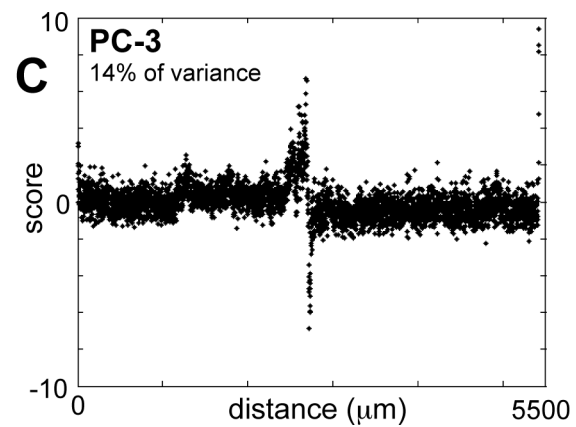
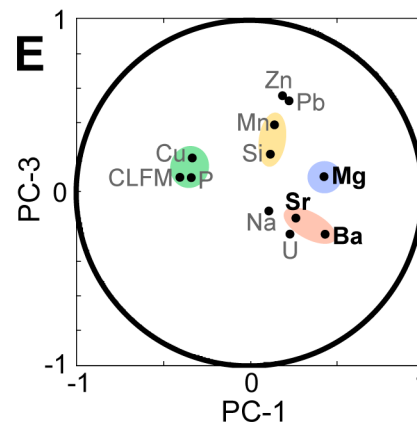
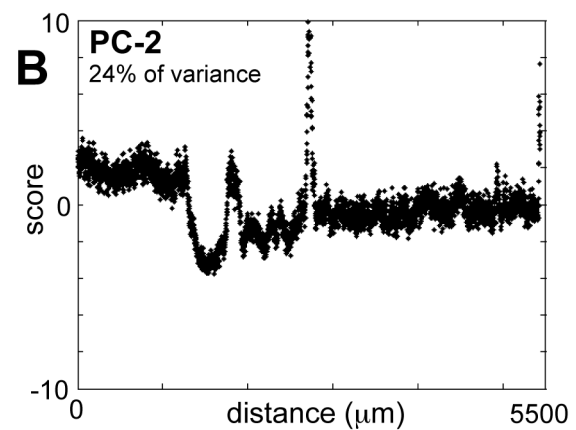
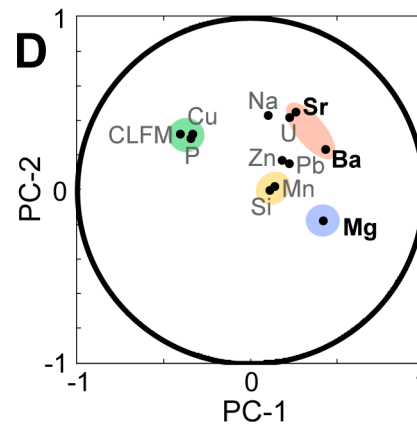
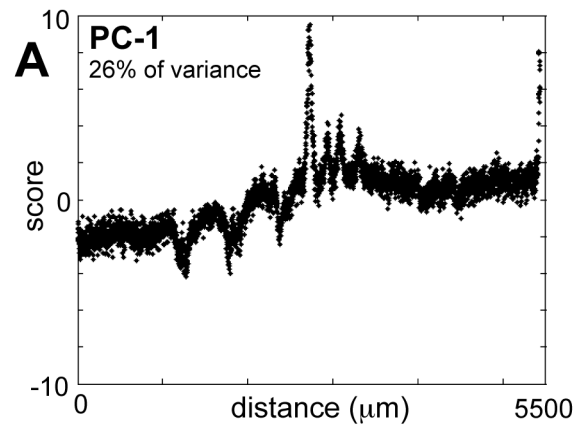
Orland et al., 2012

- A. 10.5 to present; **sawtooth fluorescence**
Distinct wet-dry seasons is the dominant climate regime in the EM since 10.5 ka.
- B. 13.5-11 ka – YD. **Sinusoidal fluorescence**,
majority of bands have gradual gradient from bright to dark and from dark to bright. Water supply was more consistent probably due to reduced gradient in seasonal rainfall, and or change in the organic acid production.
- C. Before 15 ka. **Reversed sawtooth fluorescence**. Onset of dark, gradual transition to bright. Suggesting change in the timing or rate of organic acid production in the soil, reduced seasonal differences, snowfall or frozen ground during winter H1 and YD
- G. H1 and the LGM, **reversed sinusoidal fluorescence**

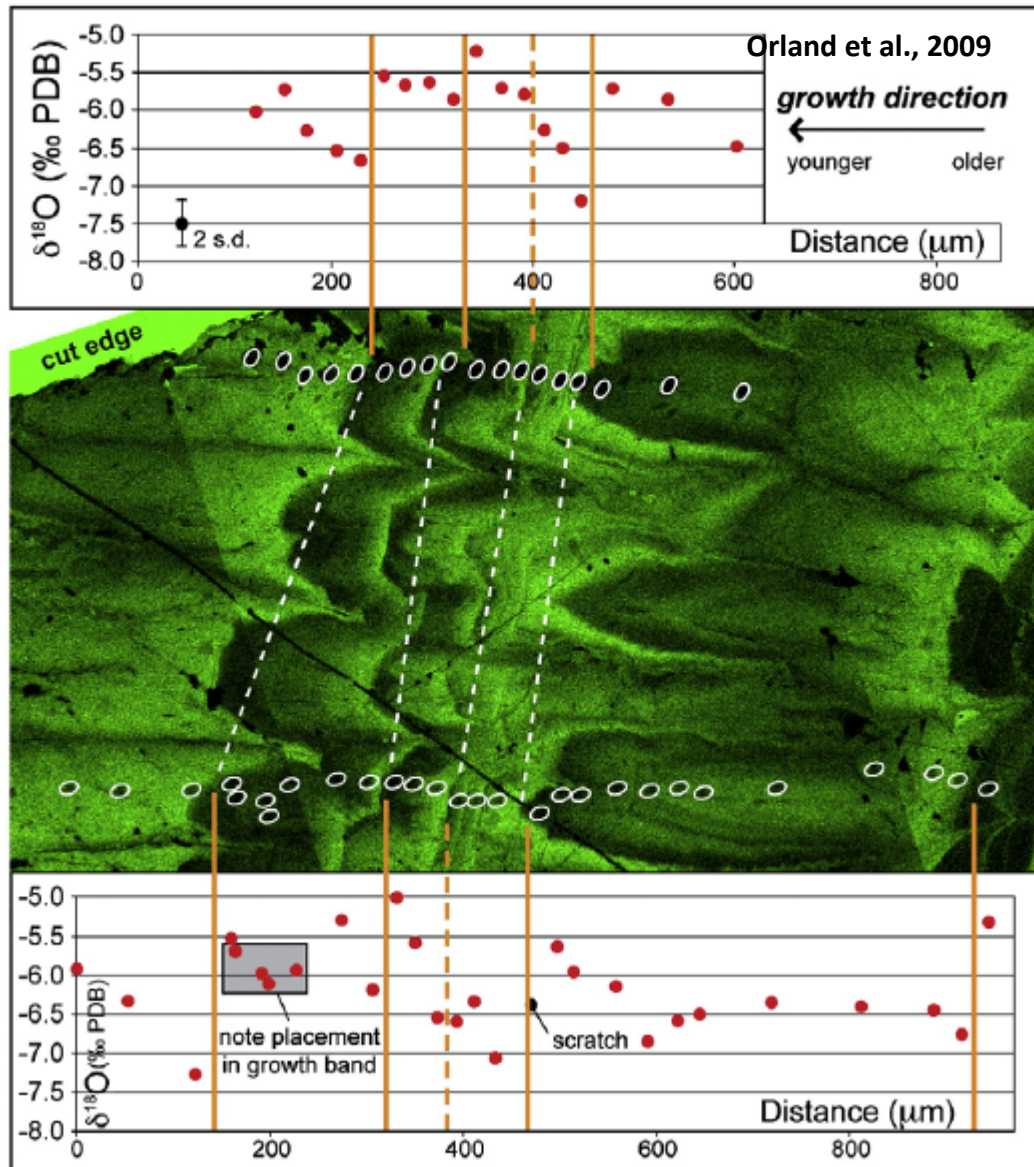
Thank you







Seasonal Sawtooth fluorescence banding during the Holocene, what does it mean?

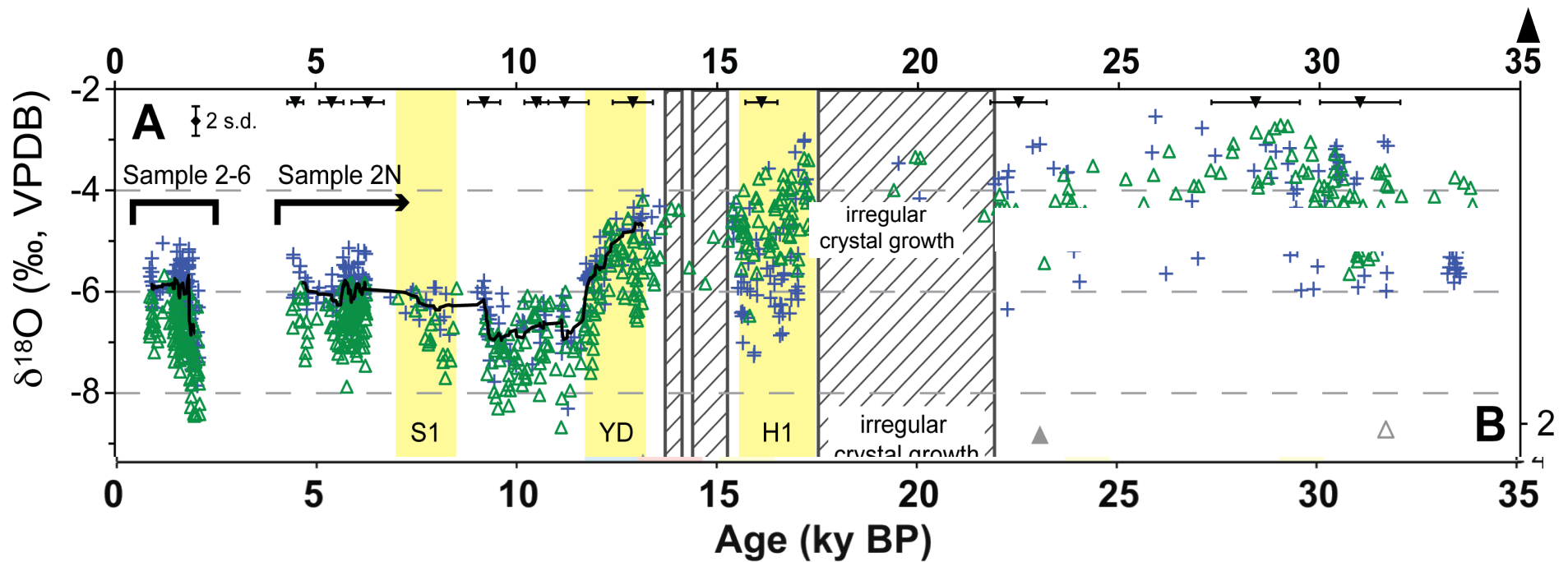


Each band has an abrupt onset of a bright low ^{18}O calcite followed by a gradient to dark higher ^{18}O calcite through time.

The pattern repeats itself and mimics the change in present-day isotopic composition of cave water between winter-summer.

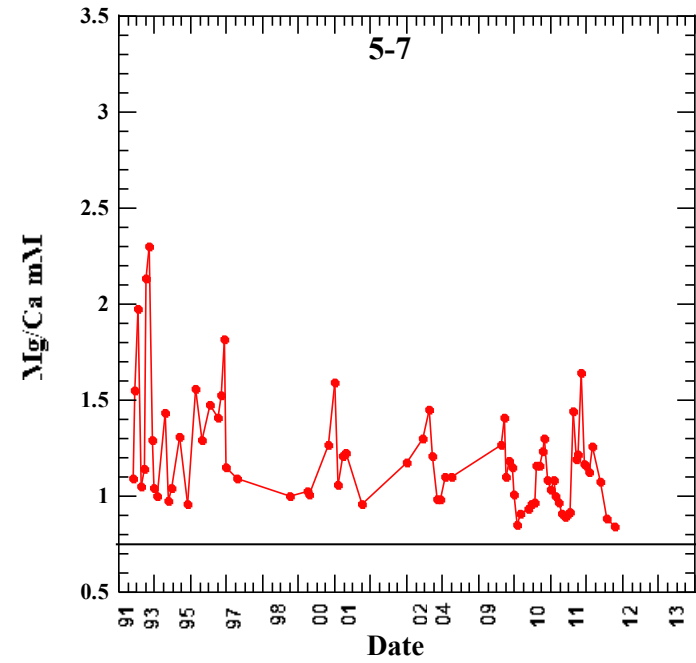
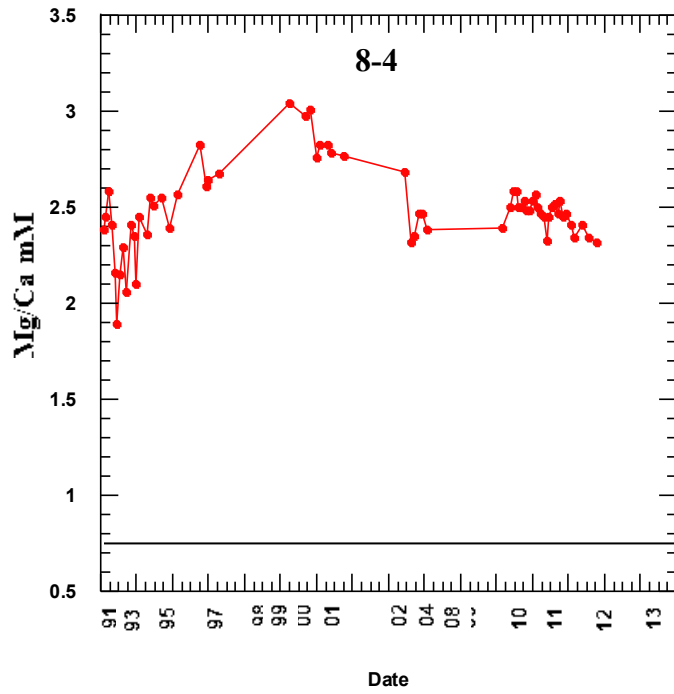
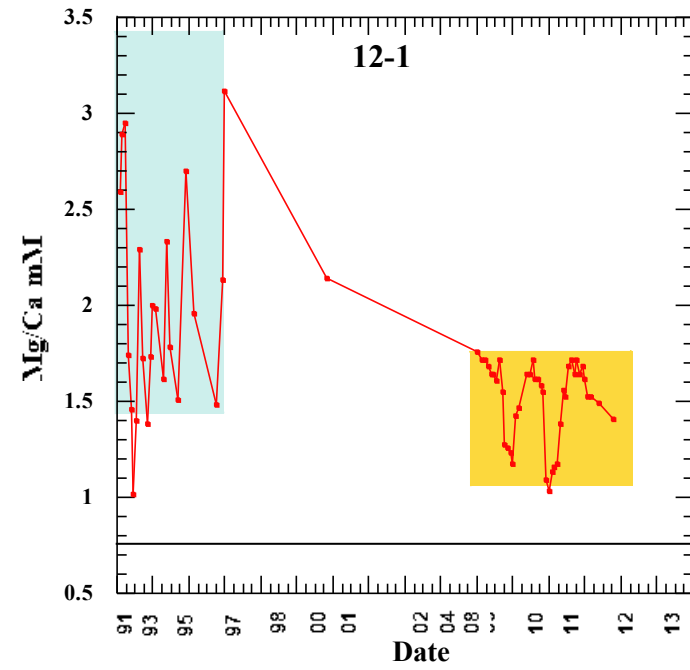
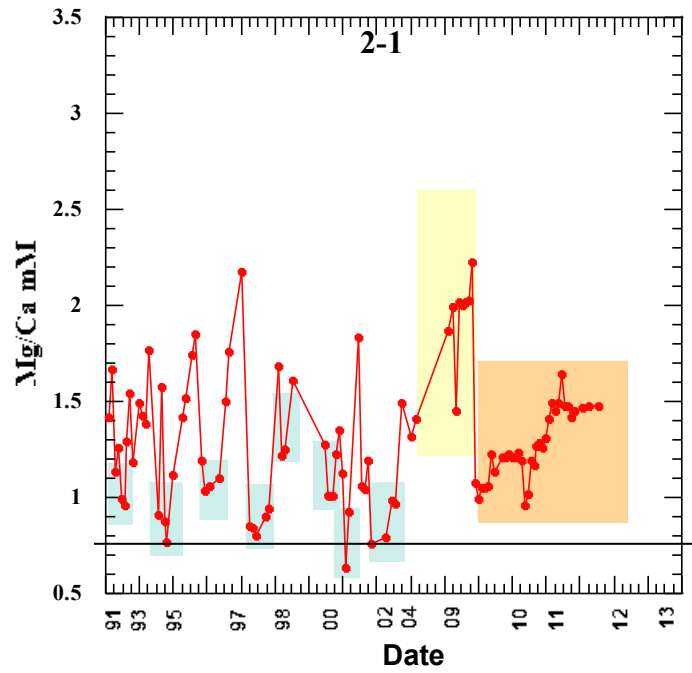
Orland et al., 2009

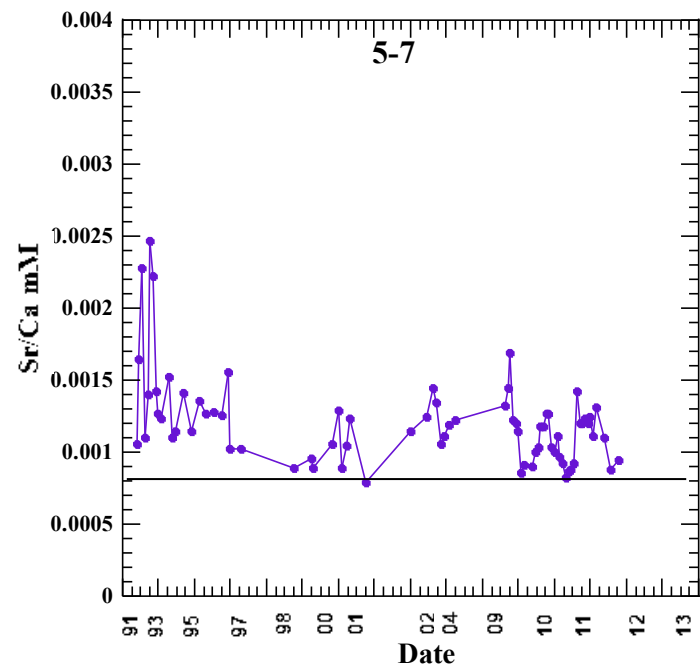
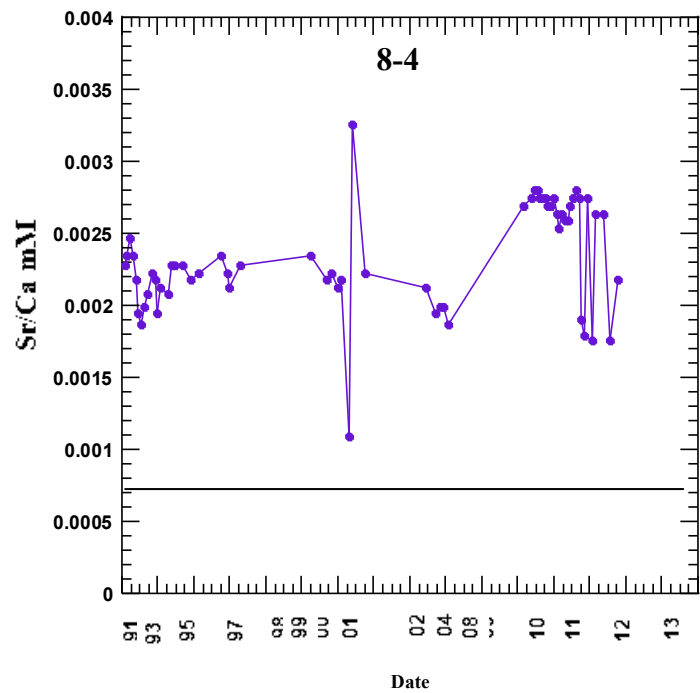
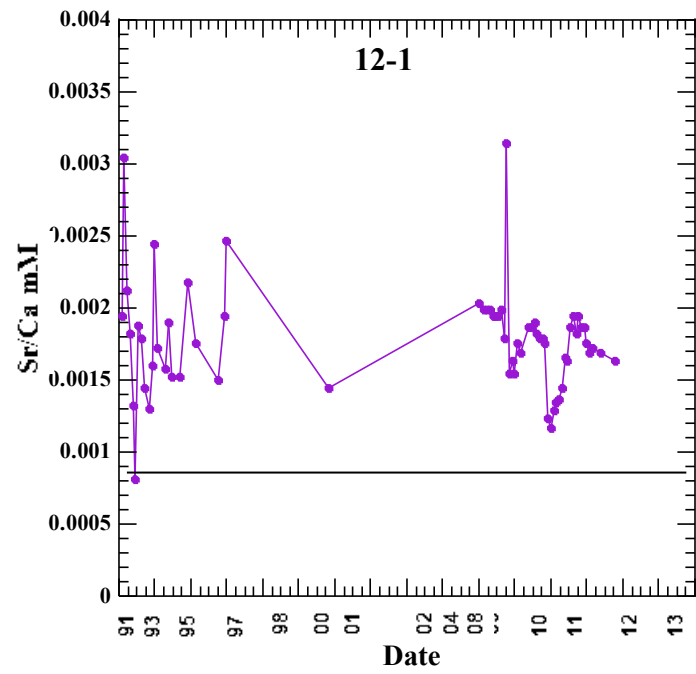
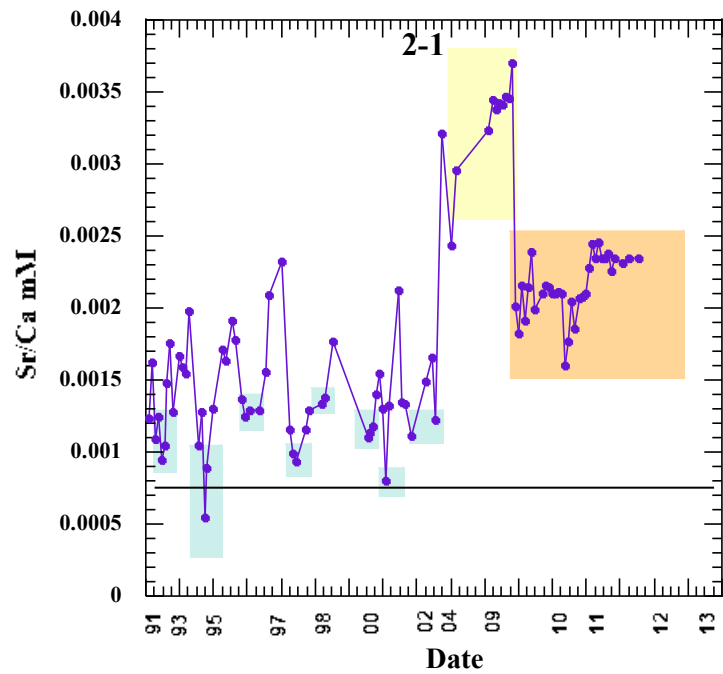
Types of fluorescence banding as function of climate the last 34 ka

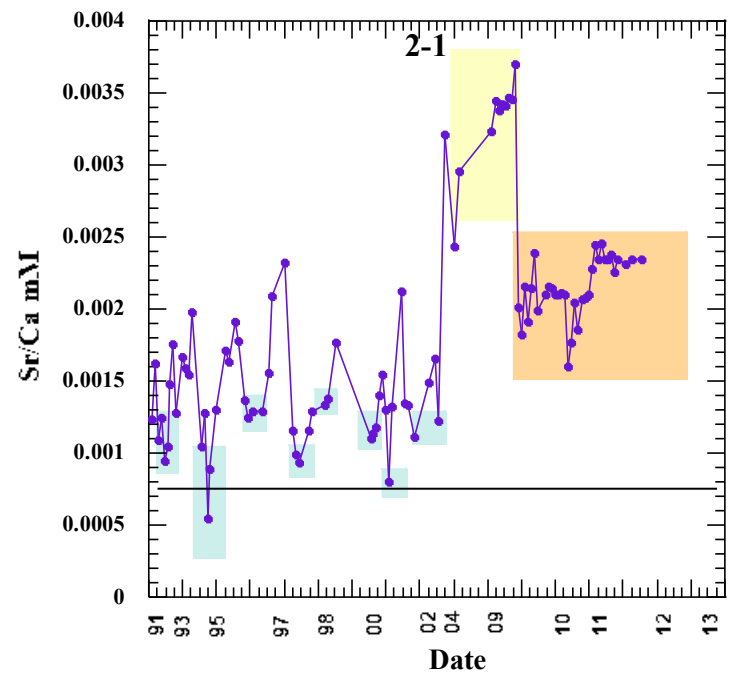
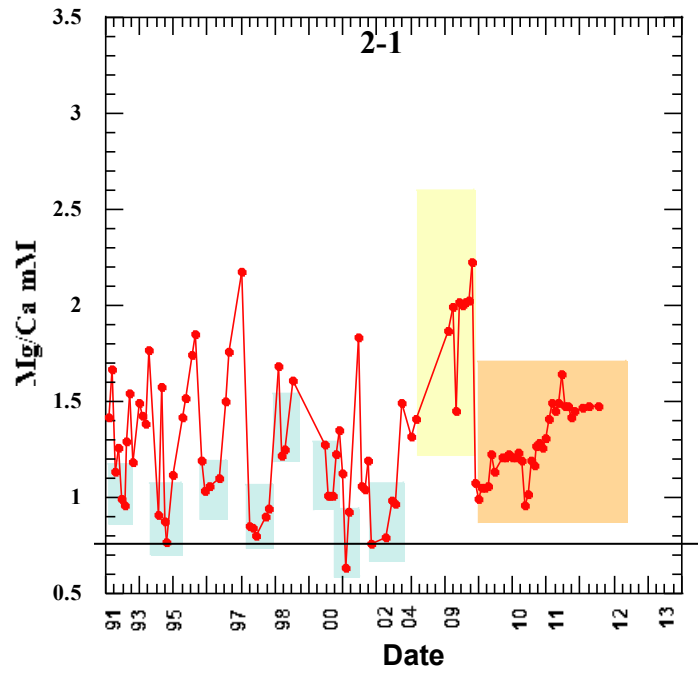


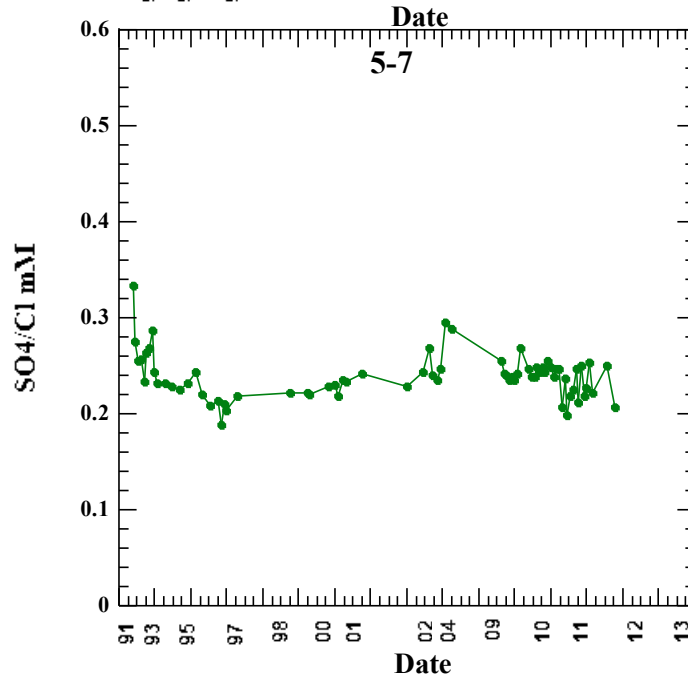
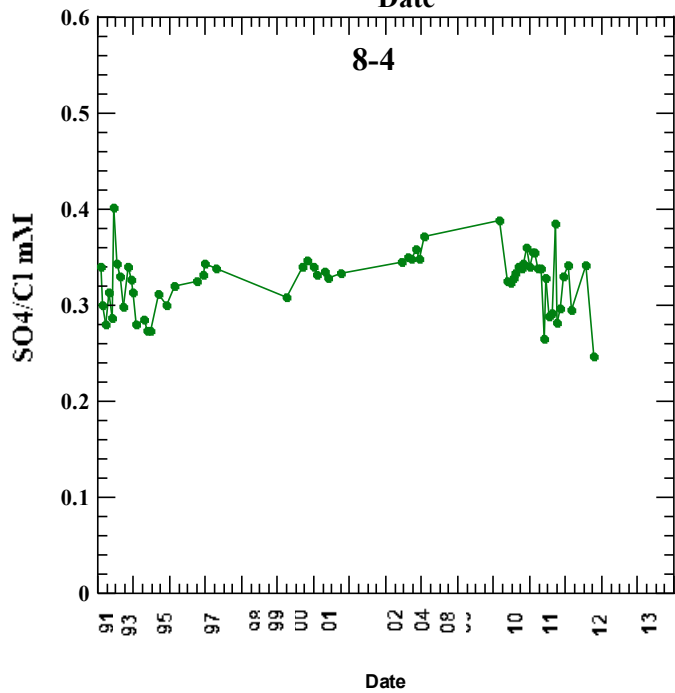
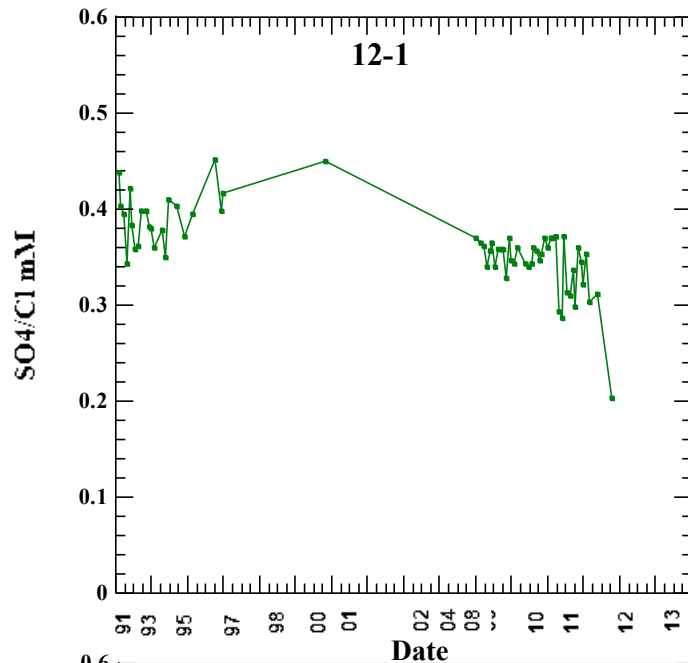
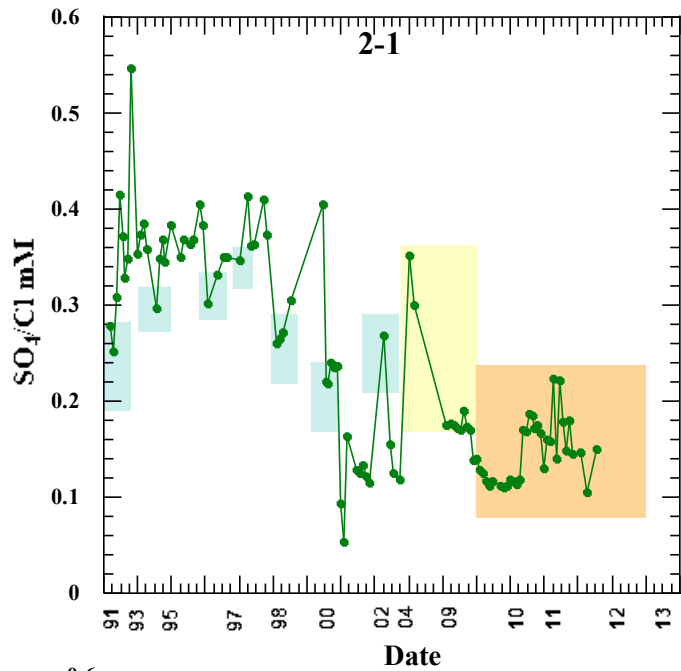
Orland et al., GCA 2012

blue symbols: dark fluorescent calcite
green symbols: bright fluorescent calcite





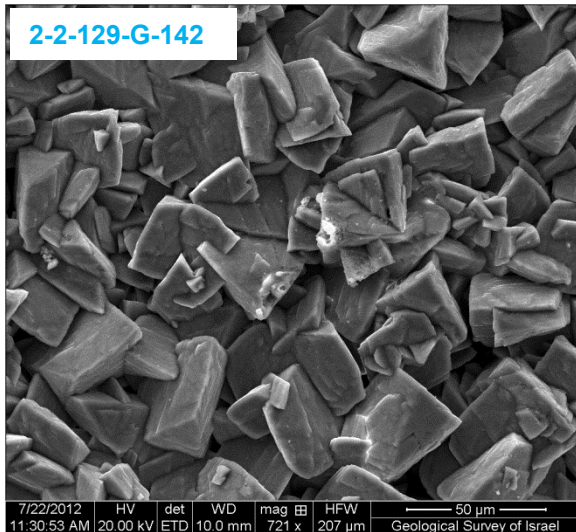




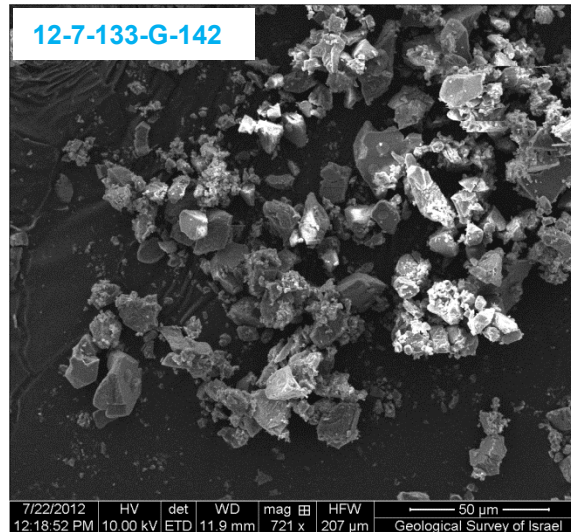
Isotopic equilibrium – Modern calcite

Same habit and fabric

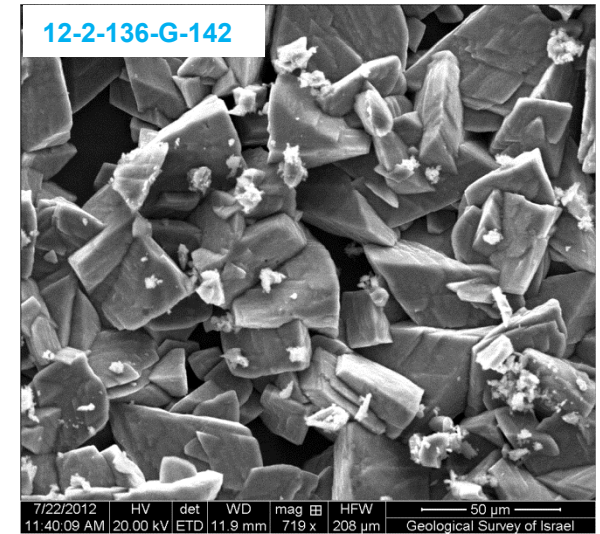
Smallest crystals



Fastest drip rate

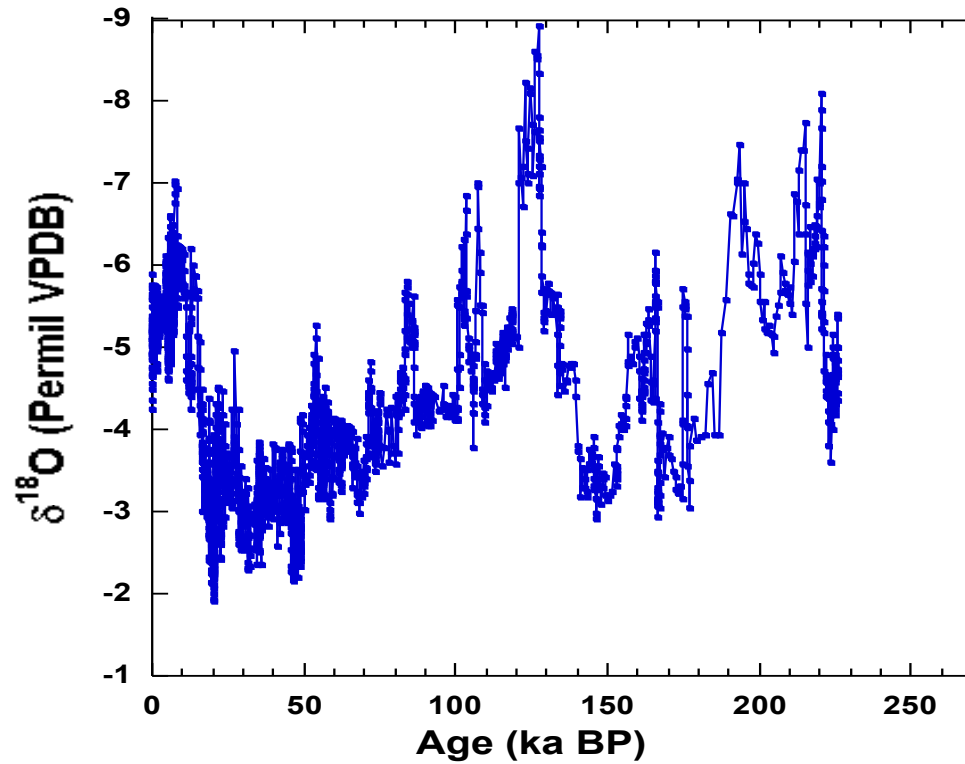


Slowest drip rate



α



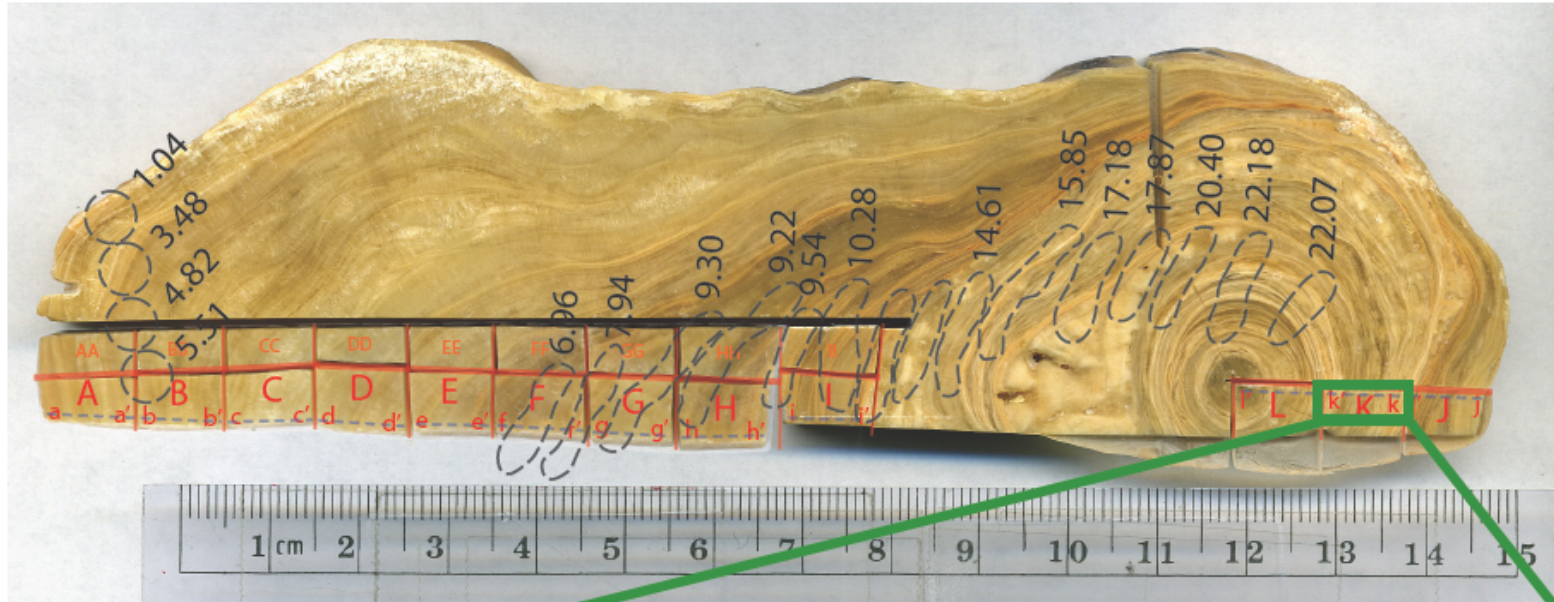


Source

Ice volume

Sea level

Temperature $1\text{‰} = 4^{\circ}\text{C}$

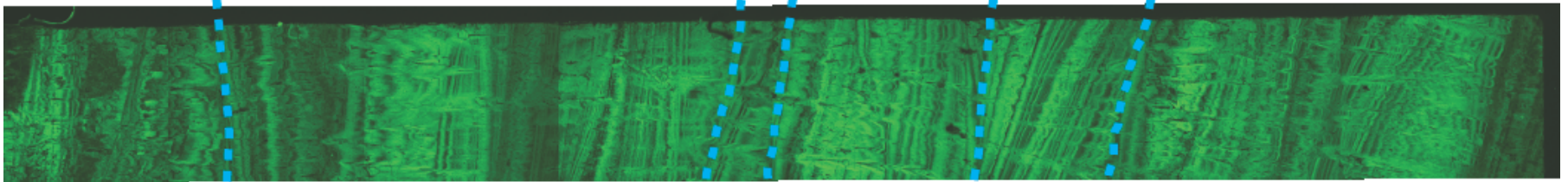


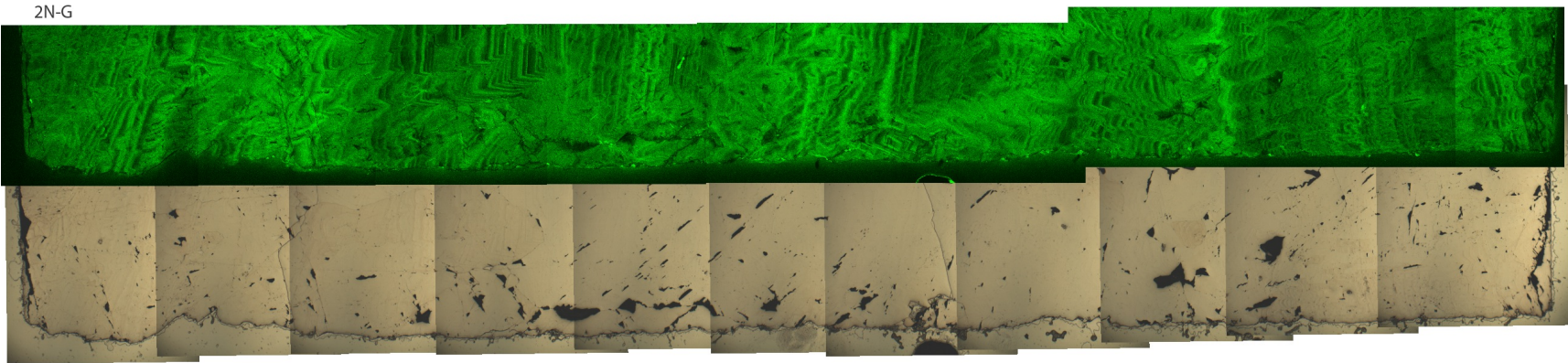
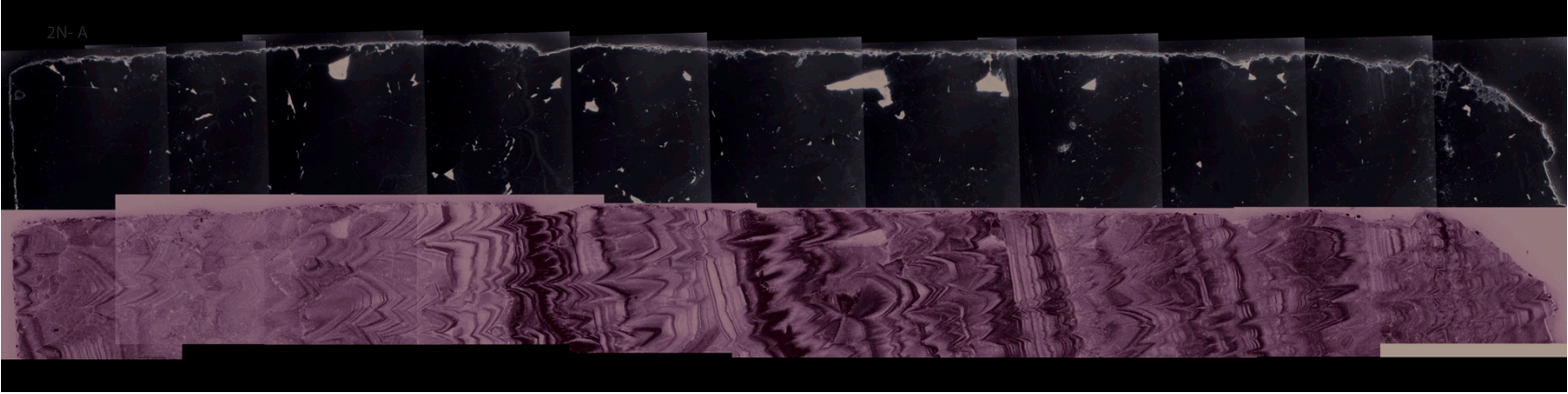
der, (~22ka?) ?

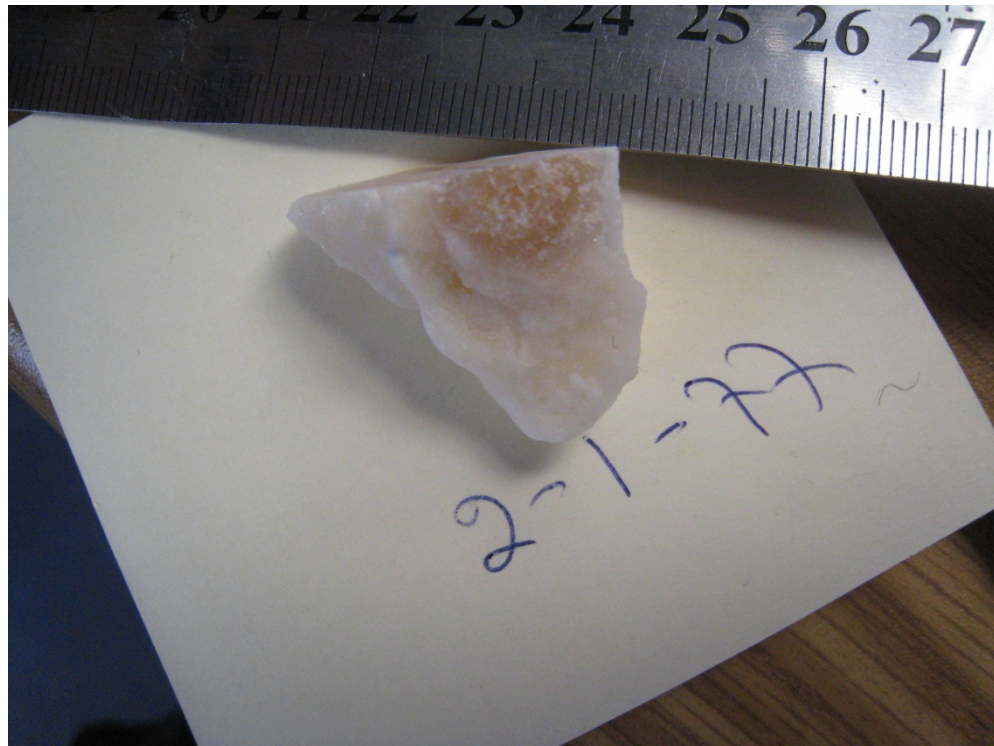
? ?

possible discontinuities

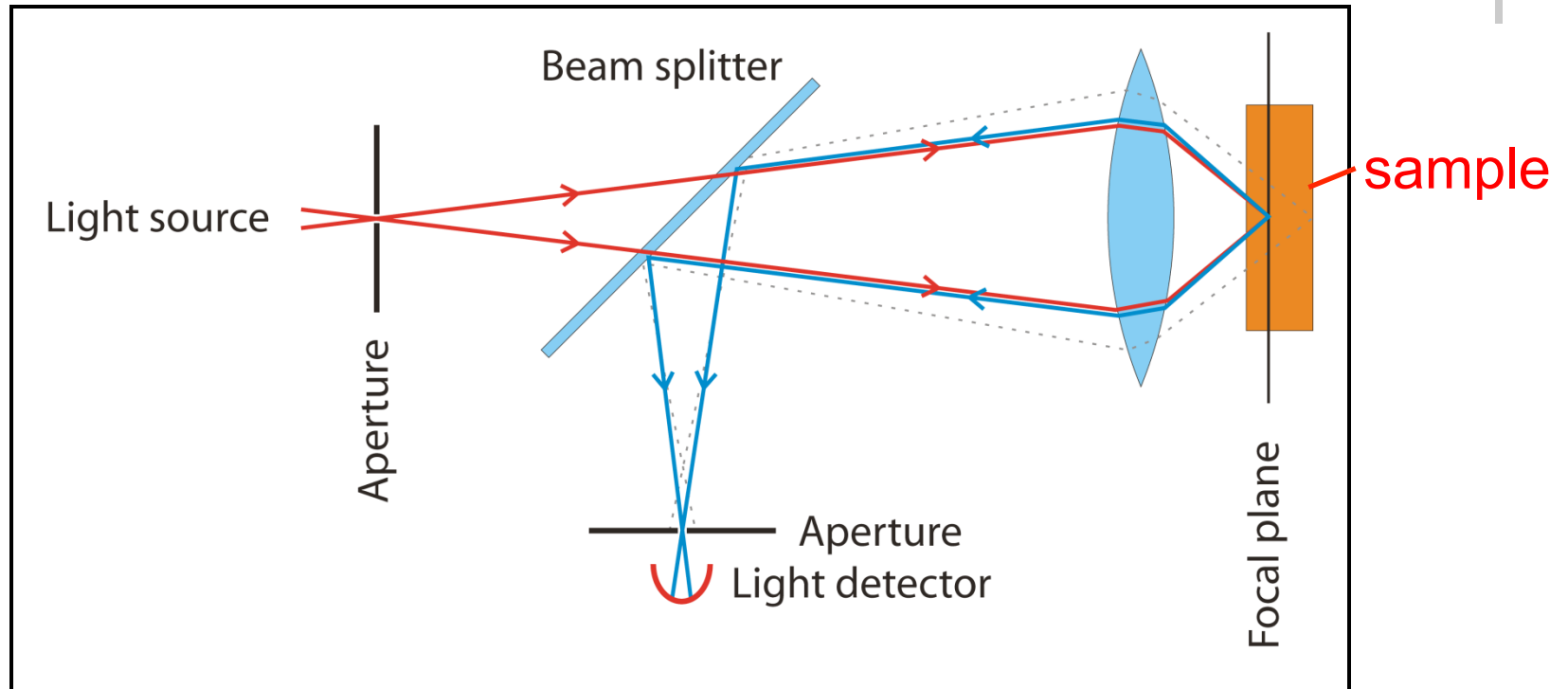
younger, (~15ka?)





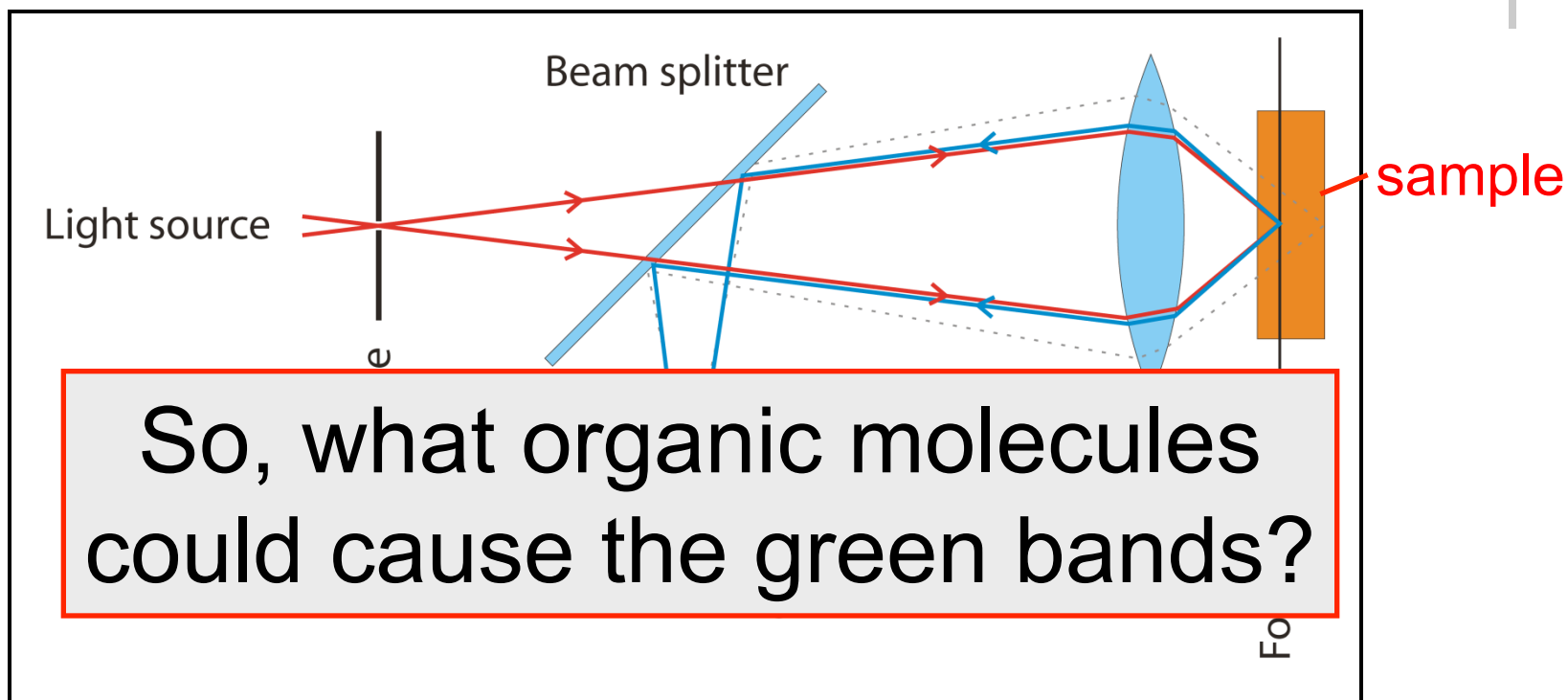


Confocal microscope



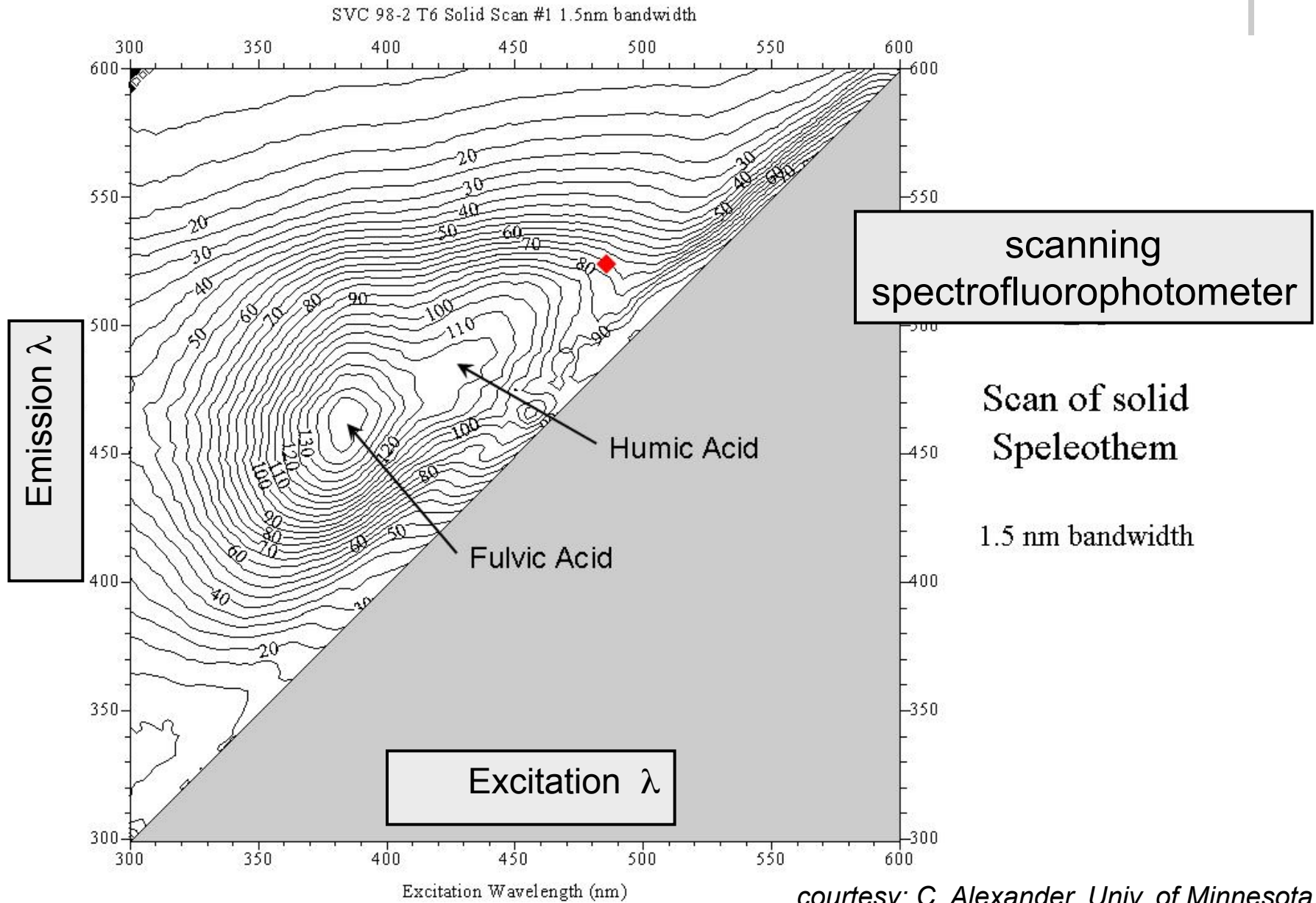
- Light emitted at a specific wavelength (488 nm).
- Incident light re-emitted with a **characteristic** wavelength.
(*Organic molecules vibrate with specific frequencies.*)
- Pinhole aperture isolates a narrow focal plane.

Confocal microscope



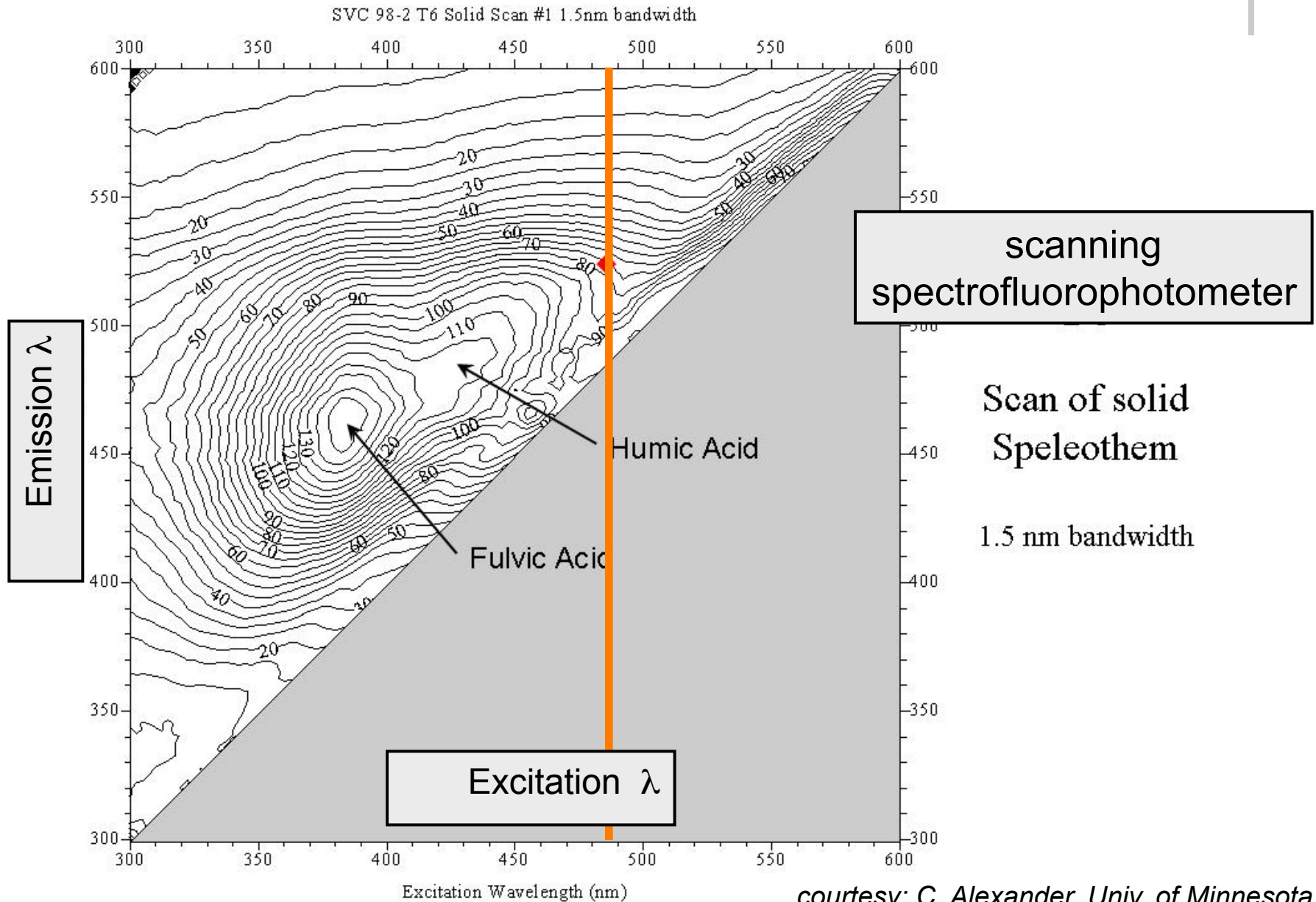
- Light emitted at a specific wavelength (488 nm).
- Incident light re-emitted with a **characteristic** wavelength.
(*Organic molecules vibrate with specific frequencies.*)
- Pinhole aperture isolates a narrow focal plane.

Confocal microscop



courtesy: C. Alexander, Univ. of Minnesota

Confocal microscope

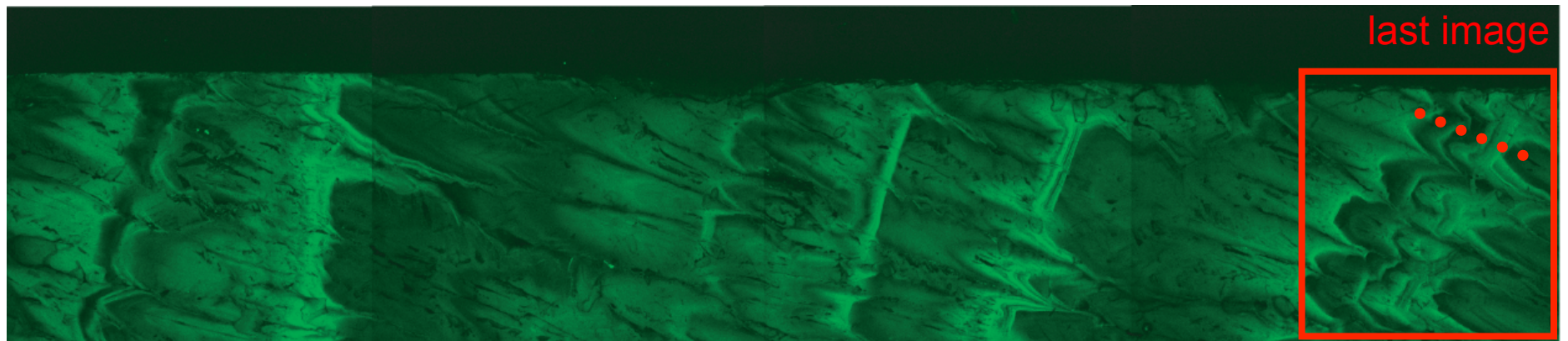


courtesy: C. Alexander, Univ. of Minnesota

Fluorescent band

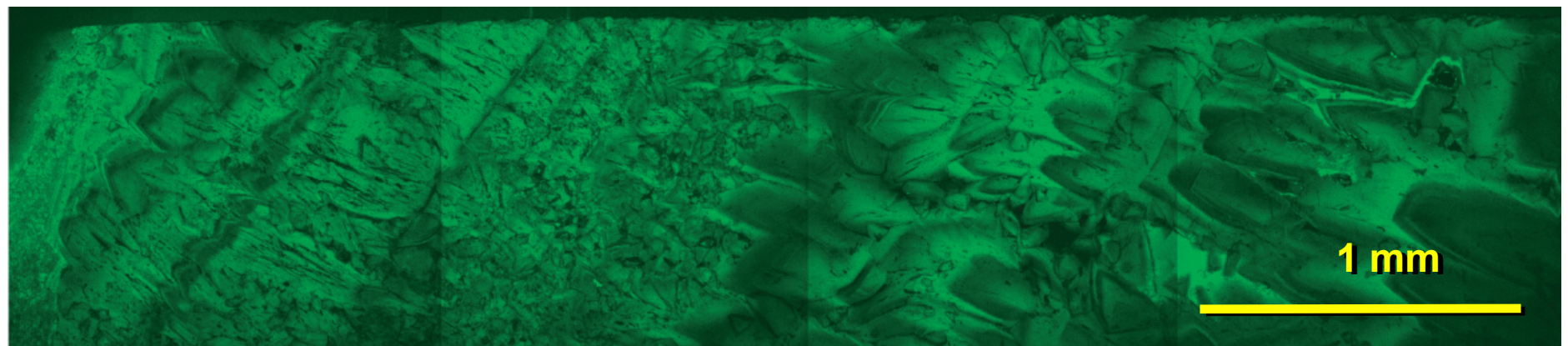


- 182 major bands ($>10\mu\text{m}$), ~ 176 minor bands



younger ←

→ older



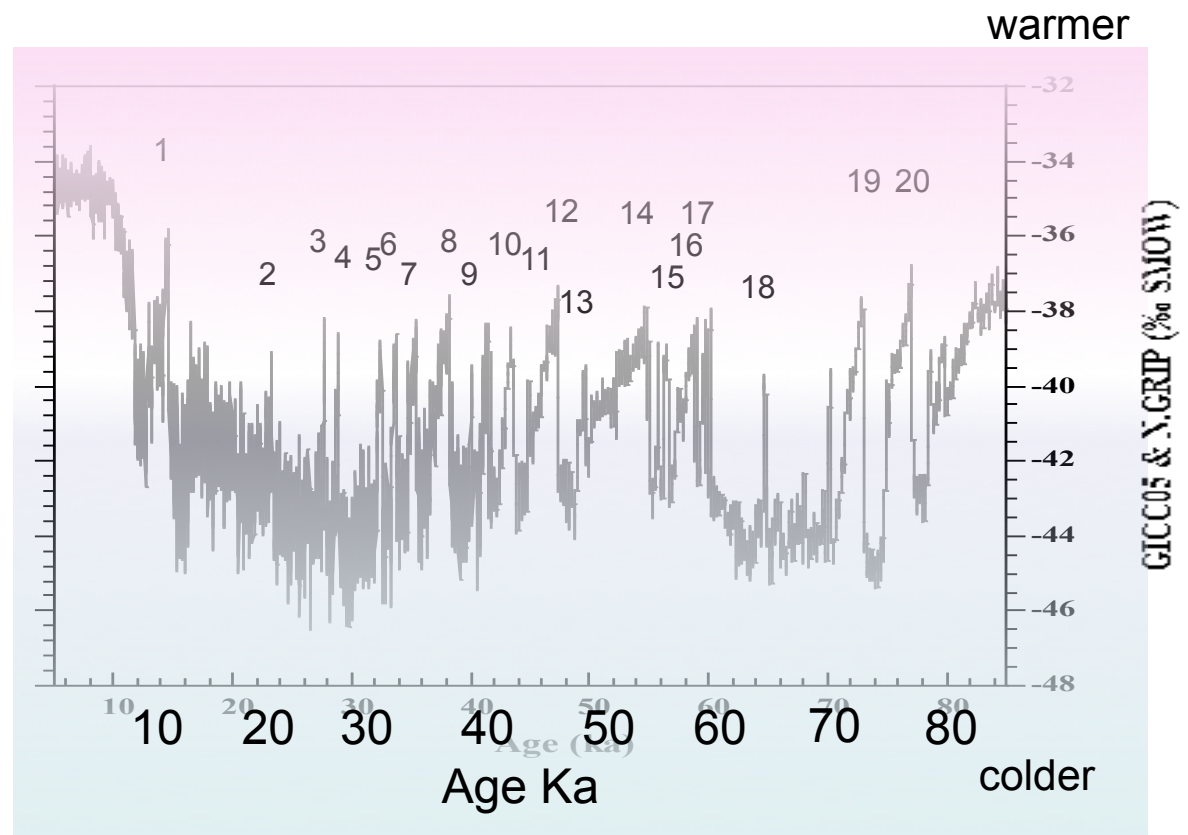


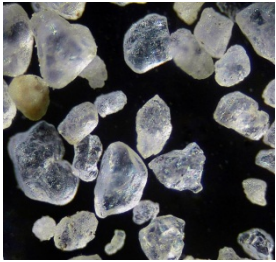
Dansgaard-Oeschger (D-O) events

Drilling into high latitude and altitude ice sheets revolutionized our understanding of paleoclimate, mainly with regards to millennia and shorter time scales changes.

D-O events first reported in Greenland ice cores and occur in irregular 1,470 year cycles. Each cycle represent abrupt warming (matter of decades) to near-interglacial conditions and slower cooling.

D-O events are considered to be a part of a seesaw effect between the hemispheres due to the thermohaline circulation and the capacity to transport heat energy through the ocean.

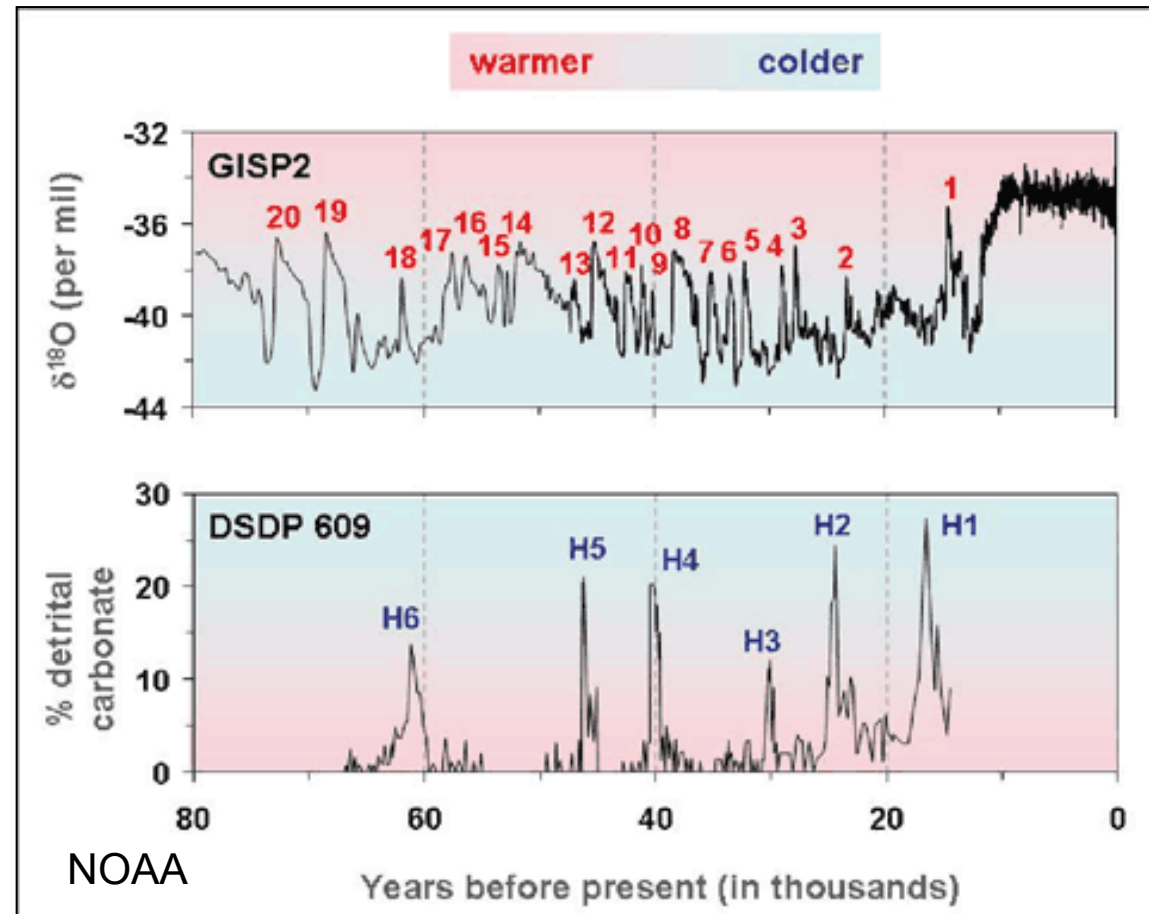




Heinrich (H) Events

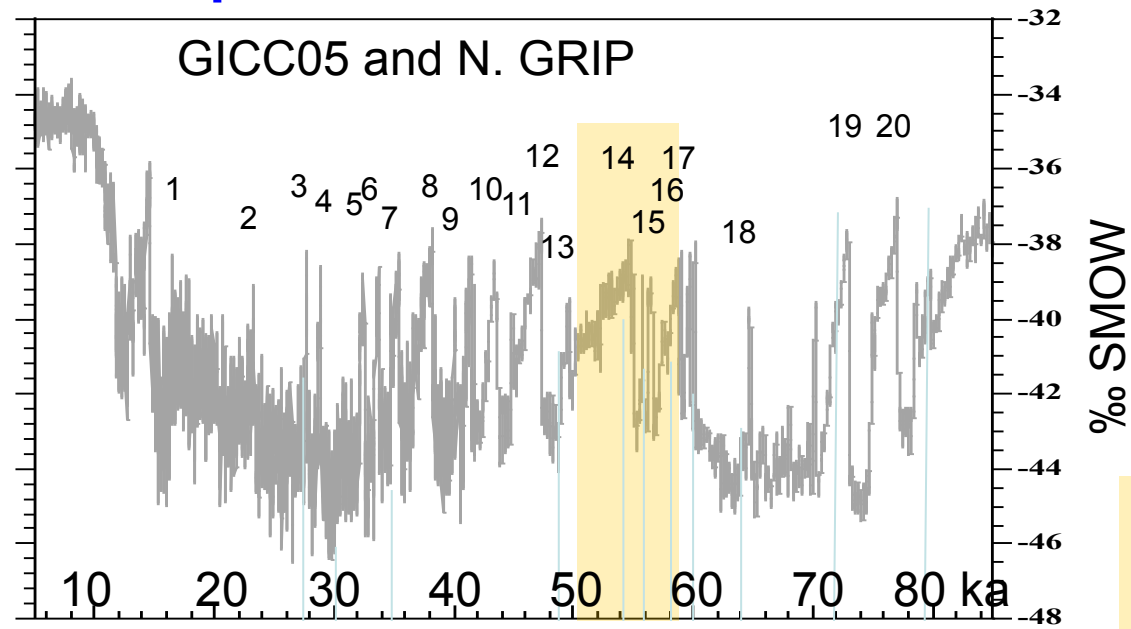
H events (named after H. Heinrich), identified as ice rafted debris. They were found across large areas of the North Atlantic, and are associated with some of the coldest intervals between D-O events.

Injection of freshwater into the ocean followed by dilution of the ocean, slows the thermohaline circulation.



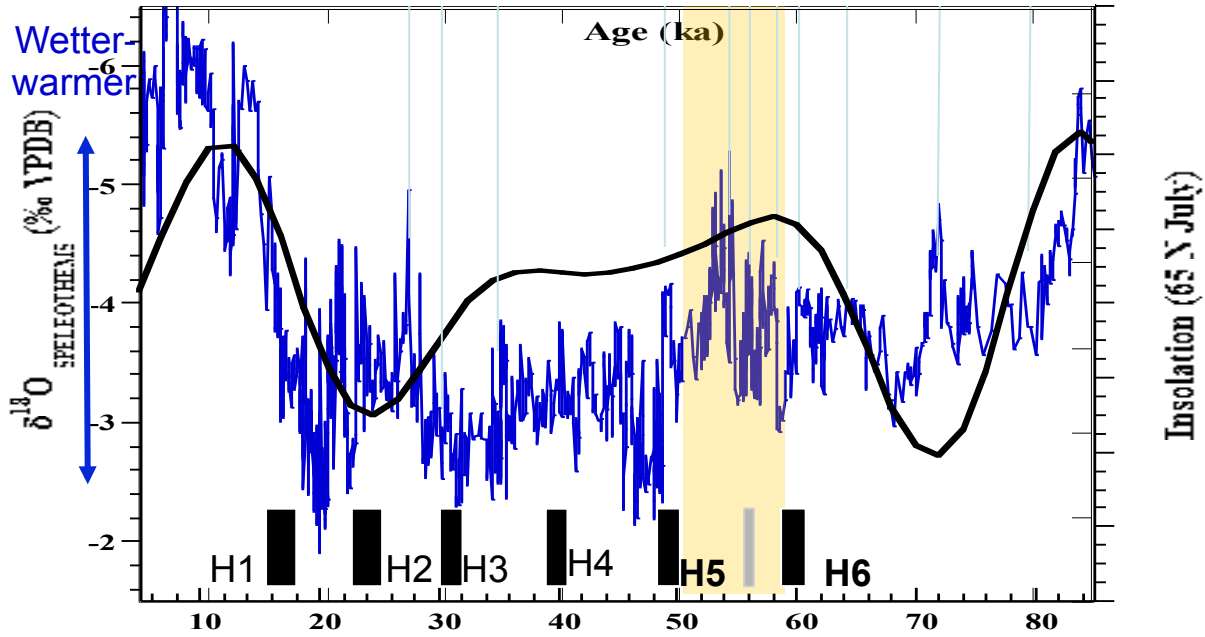
During cold phases in the North Atlantic, large regions of N. America and Eurasia became colder and drier. The tropical rain belt moves southward moistening many parts of the Southern Hemisphere.

D-O and H events and their potential connection to the last Great Expansion Out of Africa ~60-50 ka?



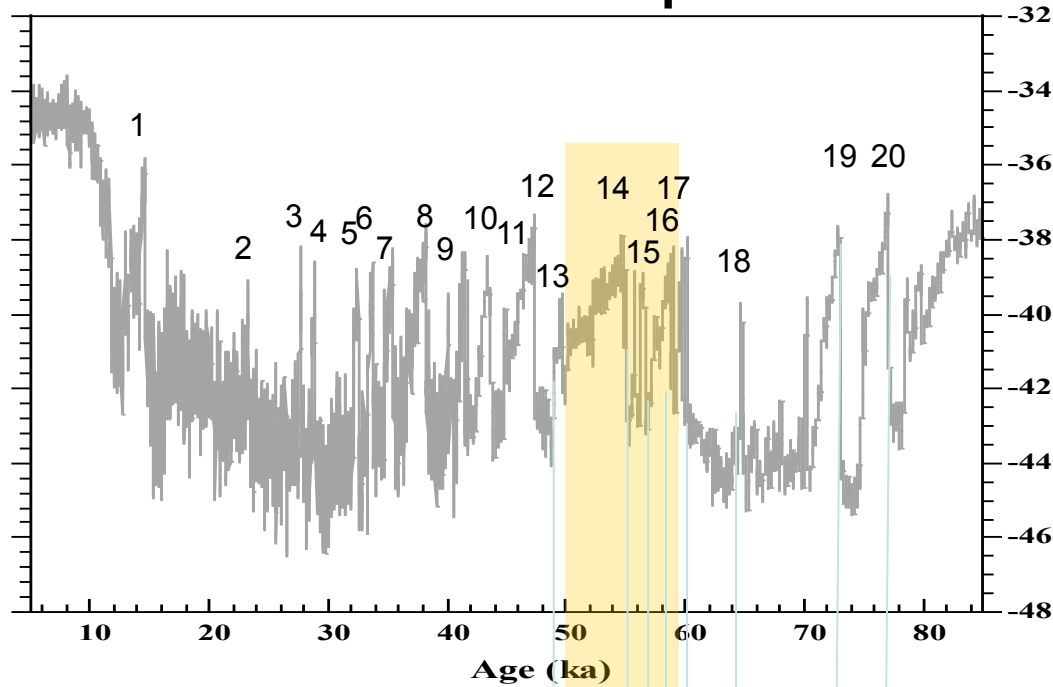
D-O and H events are recorded in EM speleothems.

The most pronounced δ¹⁸O oscillations occur between H6 and H5, ~60 - 50 ka, during D-O 16 to D-O 13.



the sharpest transition to almost interglacial wet conditions is at D-O 14, at ~54 ka, followed by gradual change to full dry glacial conditions at ~50-48 ka.

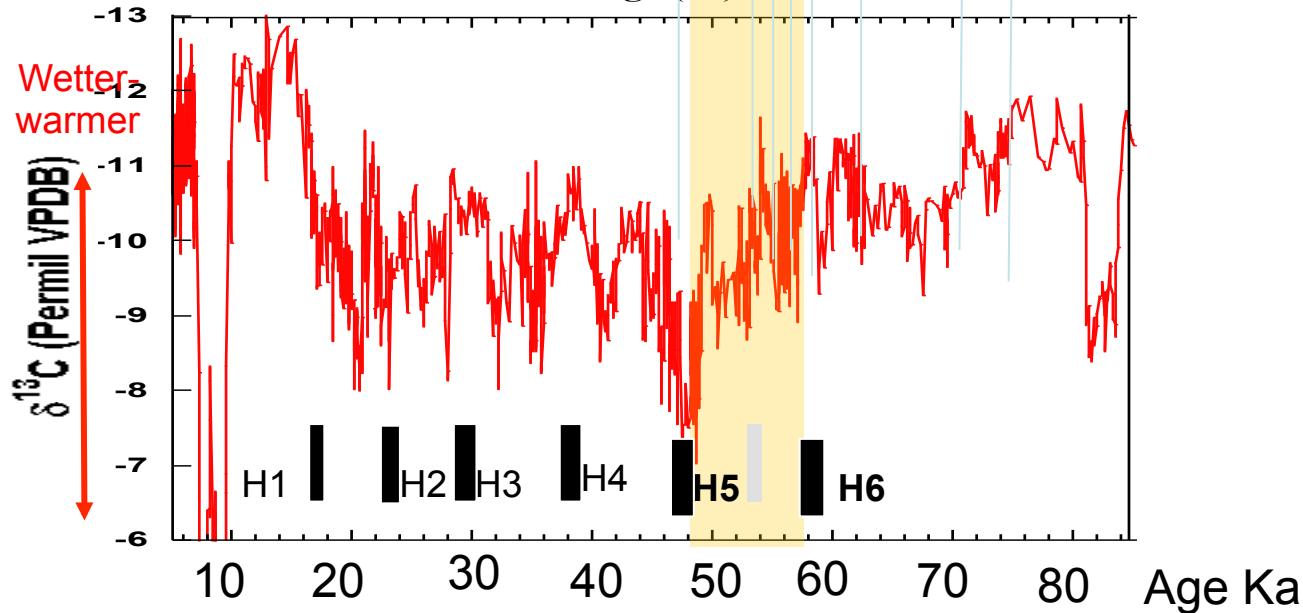
D-O and H events in EM speleothems



GICC05 & N. GRIP (‰ SMOW)

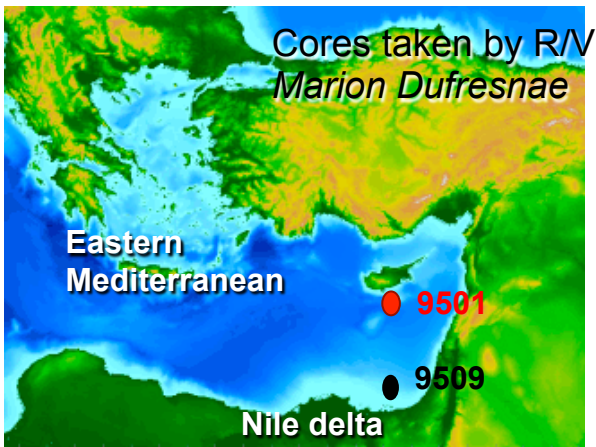
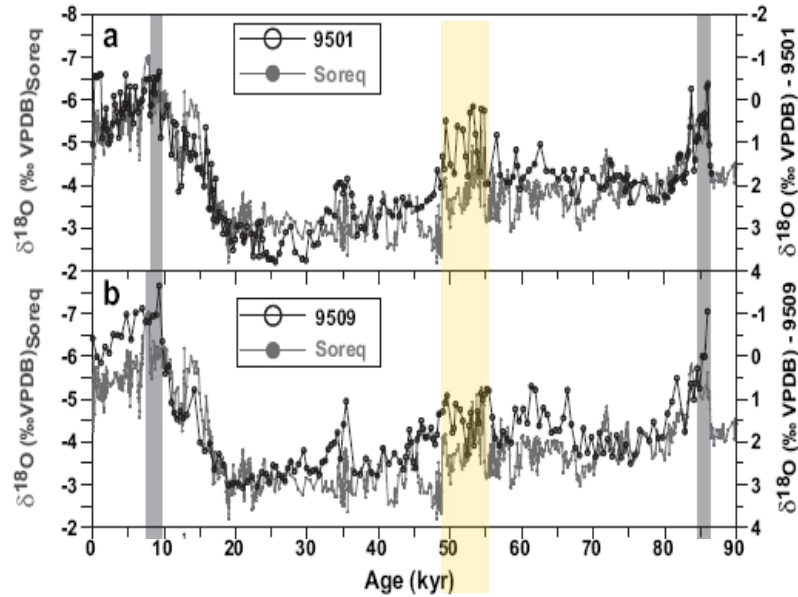
Vegetation response

The carbon isotopic composition increase from ~60-50 ka, suggesting transition from C3 Mediterranean type vegetation to more dominant C4 type vegetation.



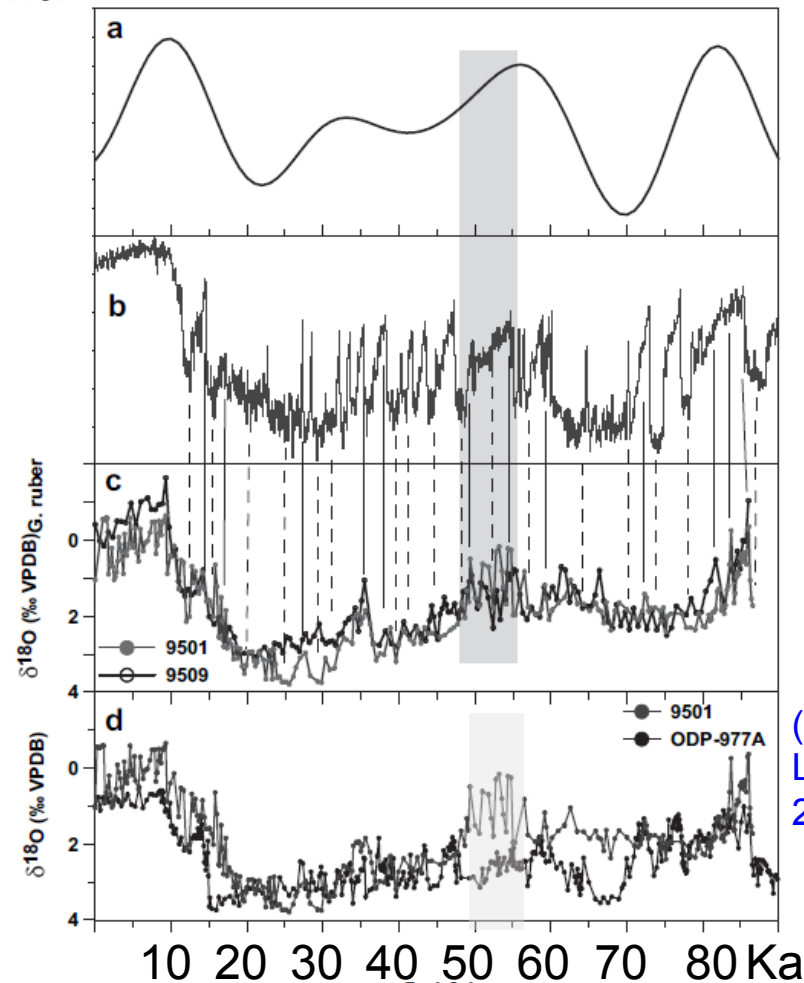
D-O and H events in EM marine record

Accurate dating of the marine record based on the speleothems record



The $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record of the planktonic foraminifera *G. ruber* from the EM reveals correlation with D-O cycles.

The most pronounced is from ~58-50 ka

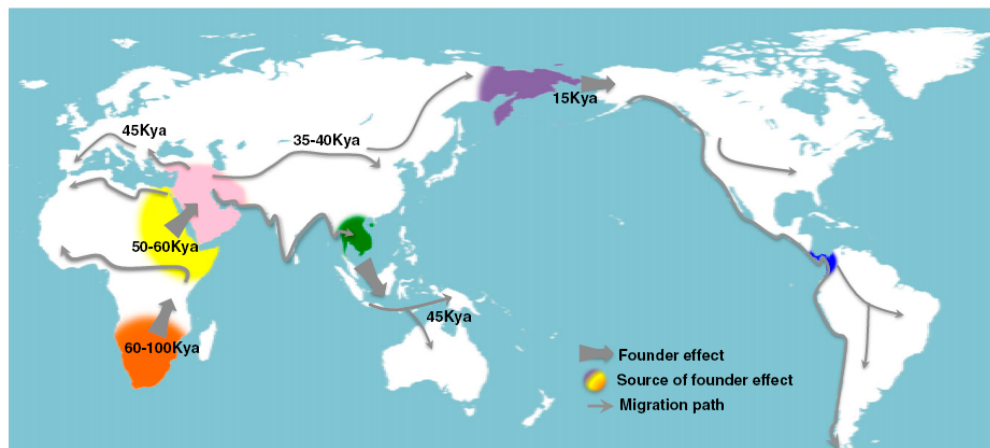


(Almogi-Labin et al., 2009)

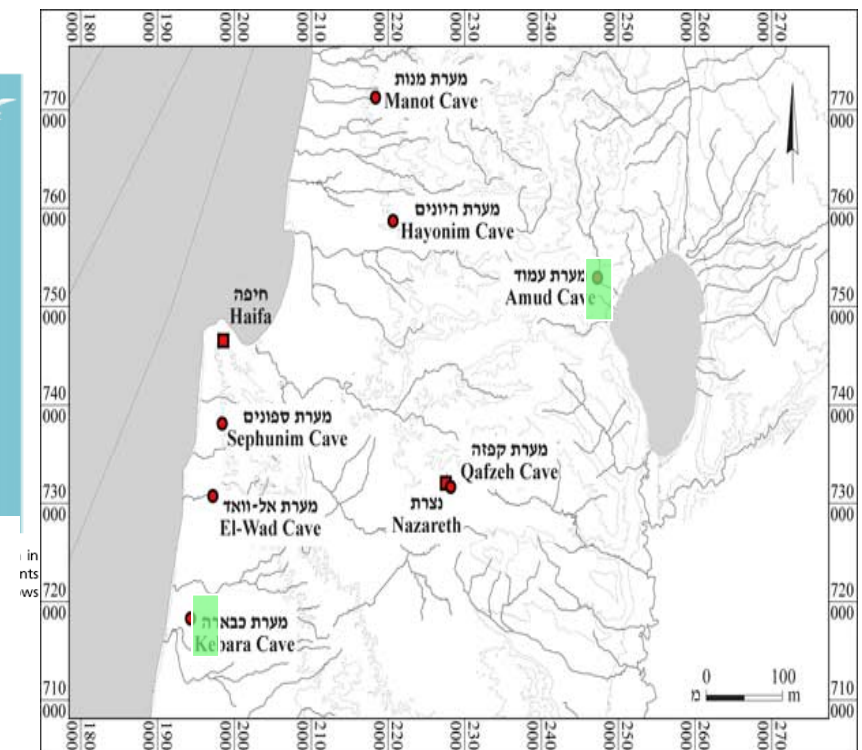
The Human Connection

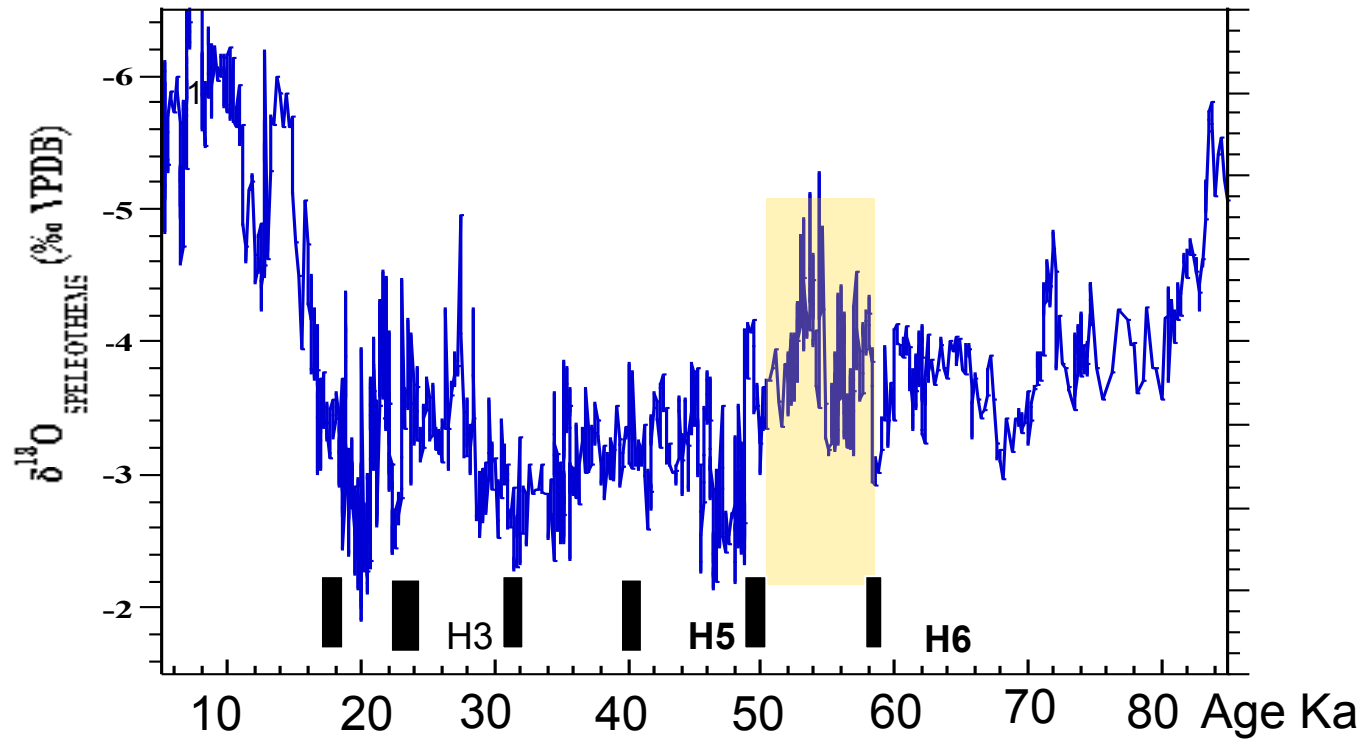
A problem. **Why is there evidence for the existence of Anatomically Modern Human fossils in the Levant during MIS 5, but there is no evidence for their existence during MIS4? Is there evidence missing?**

On the contrary, there are several sites of Neanderthal fossils in the regions (among the best-known from Dederiyeh Cave northern Syria, Amud, Kebara and Tabun caves – Israel).

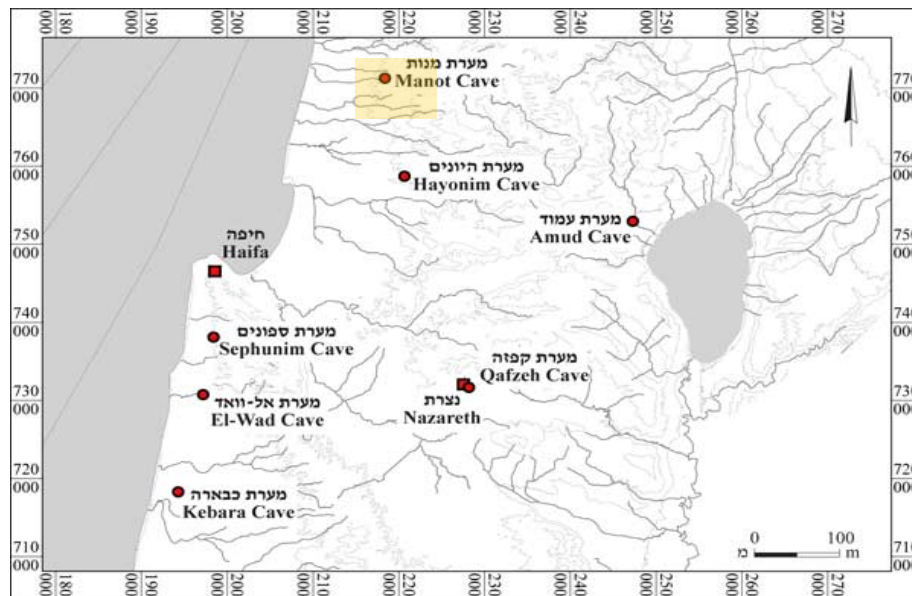


Henn et al., PNAS 2012





Latest preliminary results :

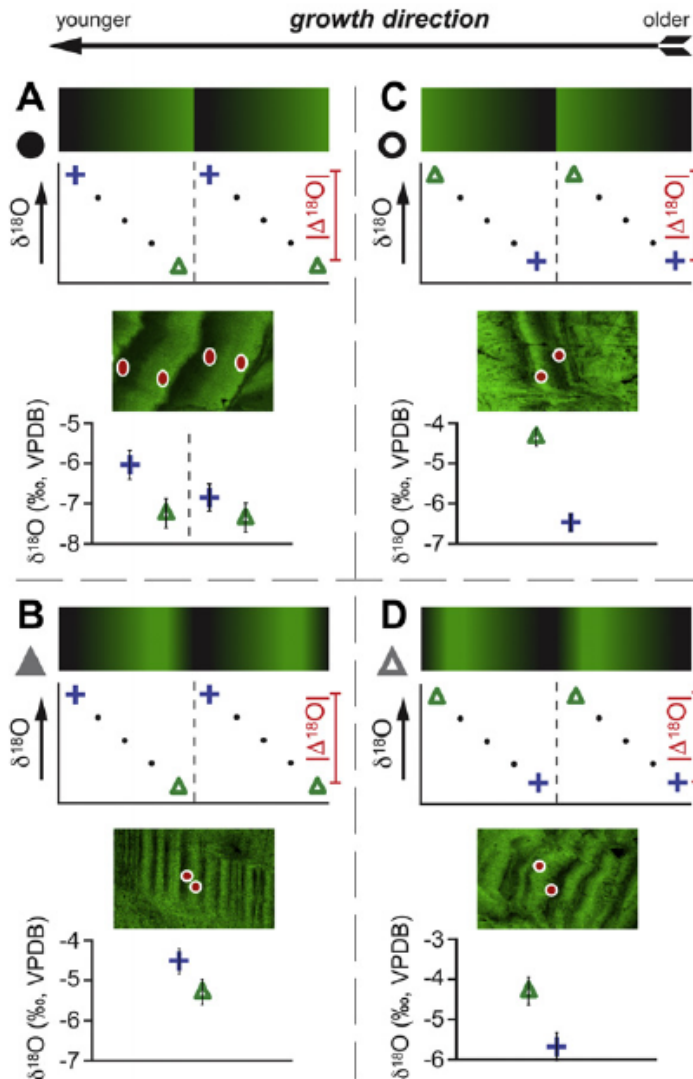


Three dimensional analyses of the skull show close relations with Modern humans of upper paleolithic found in Europe and Africa (Ofer Marder, Israel Hershkovitz, Omri Barzilai)

Manot Cave, western Galilee
Preliminary U-Th ages of carbonate crust on skull, suggest minimum age of ~58-52 ka (Gal Yasur)

Why we have such high oscillations when we increase resolution?

Types of fluorescence banding as function of climate the last 34 ka



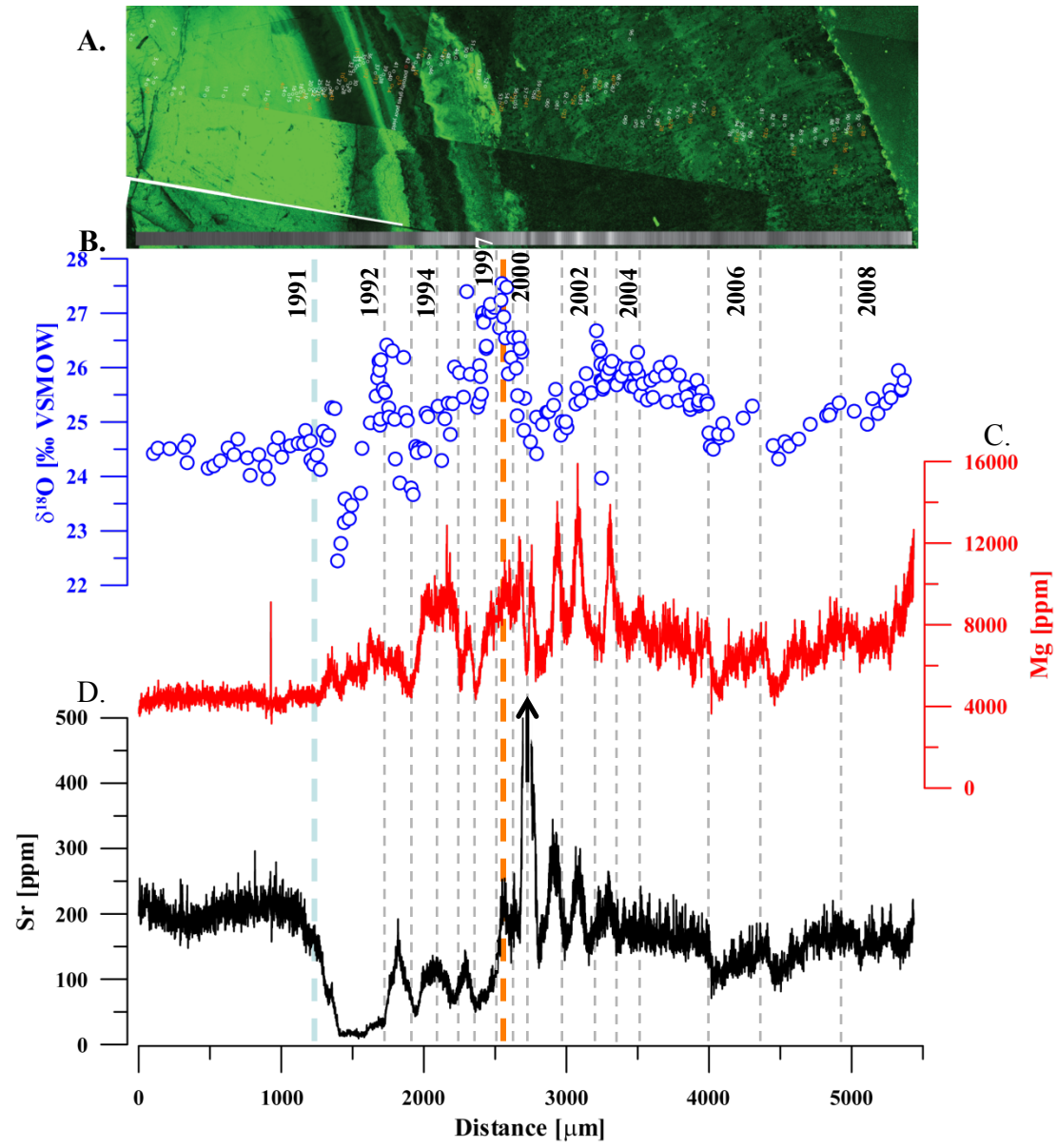
A. In the Holocene, the ubiquitous **sawtooth pattern** of both $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ and fluorescence variability (Fig. 2A) indicates that the modern seasonal regime of wet winters and dry summers has been consistent since 10.5 ka. Smaller $|\Delta^{18}\text{O}|$ values indicate dryer years.

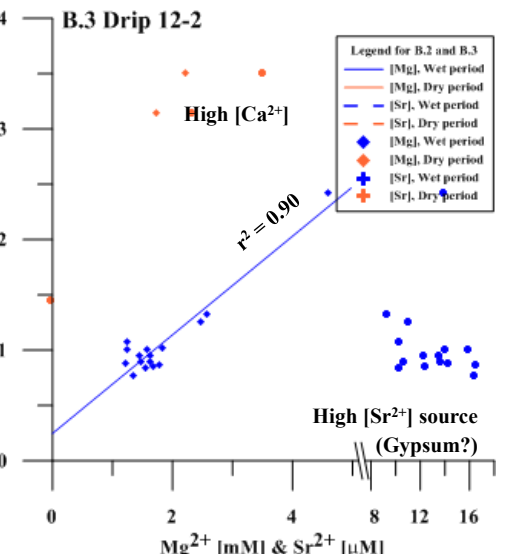
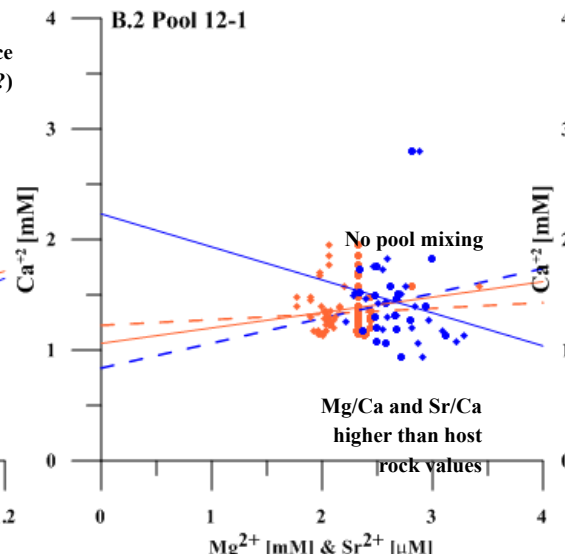
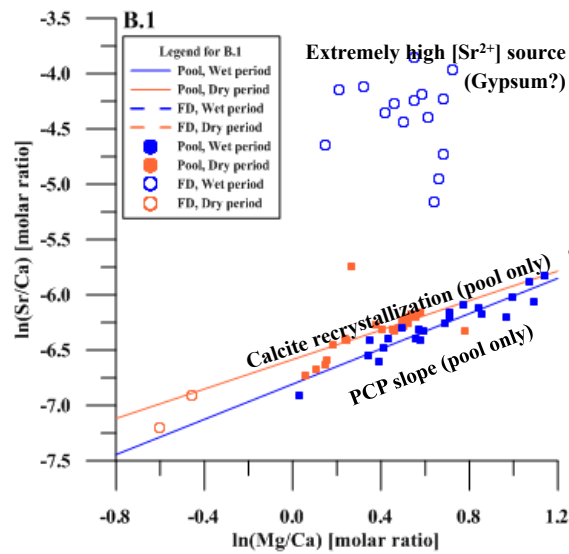
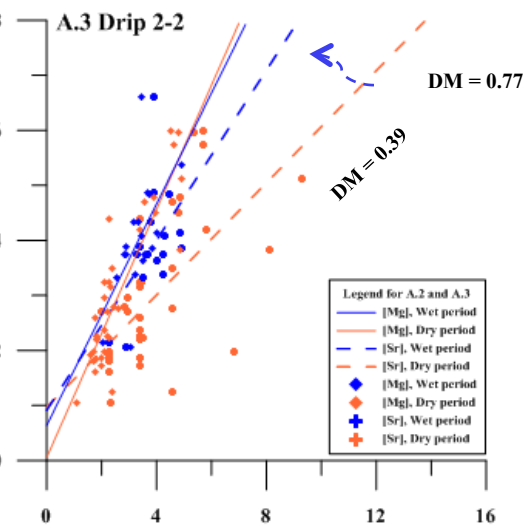
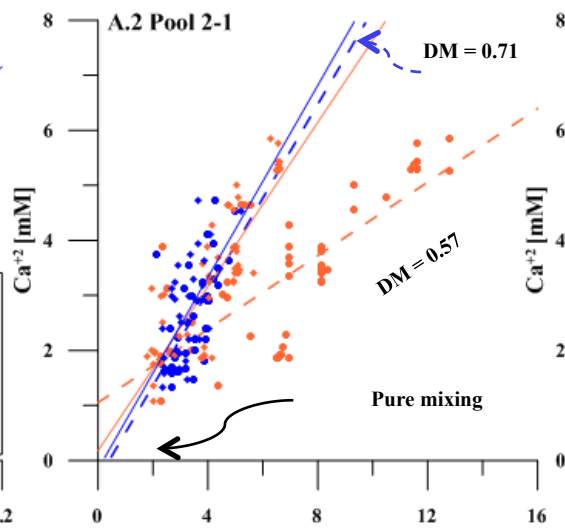
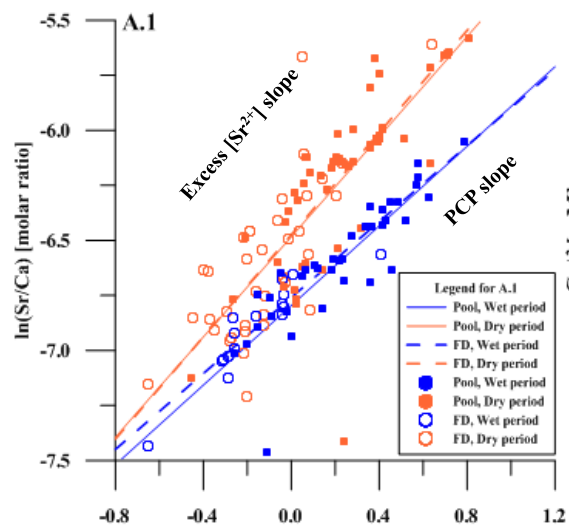
B. 13.5-11 ka – YD. **Sinusoidal intensity** of fluorescent banding, suggests that dripwater supply from the overlying soil column was more consistent throughout the year than in the Holocene.

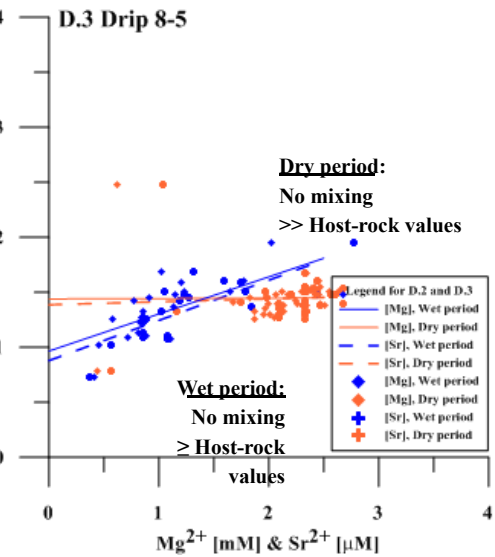
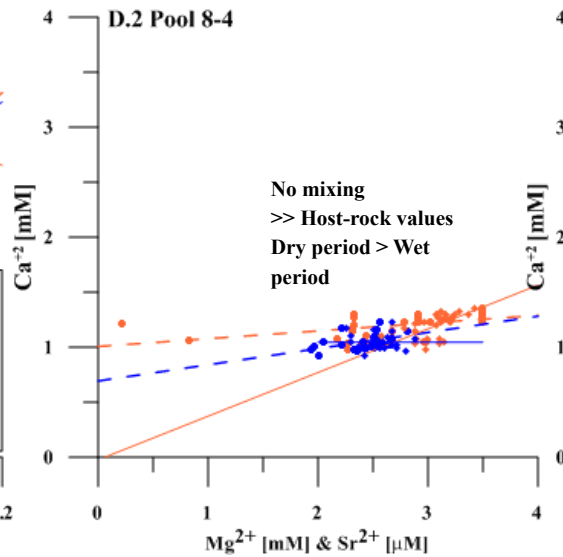
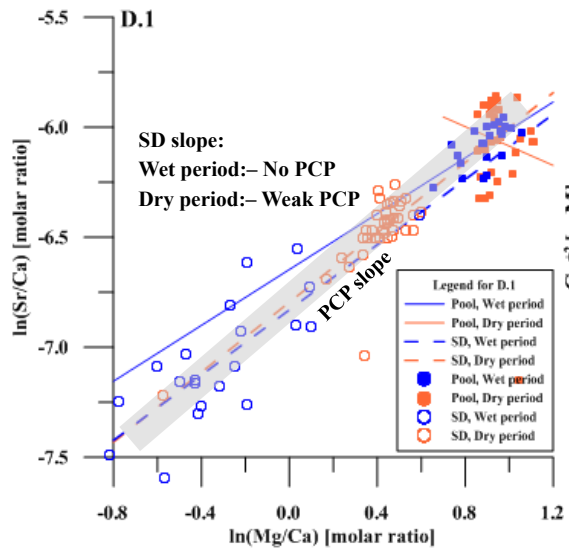
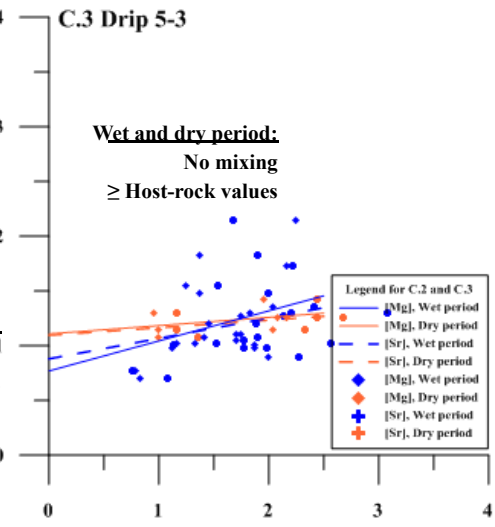
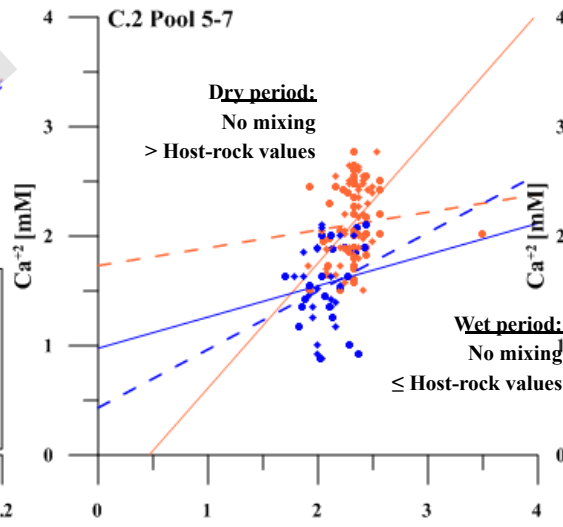
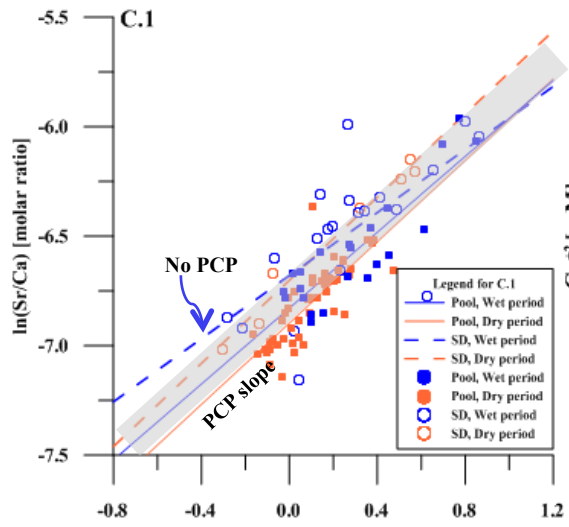
C. The isotope record of the YD termination occurs in multiple stages, and last ~ 12 years.

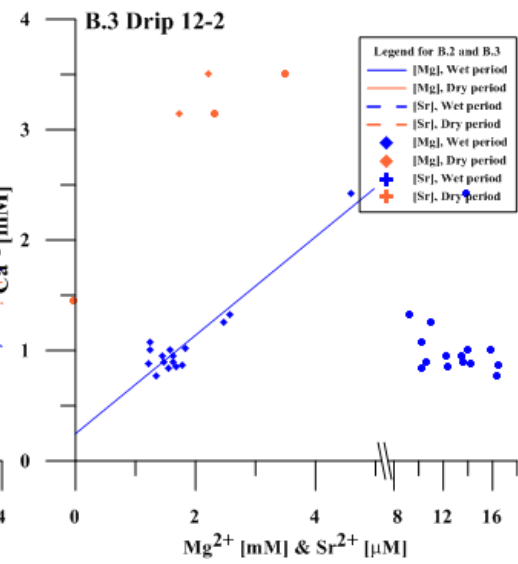
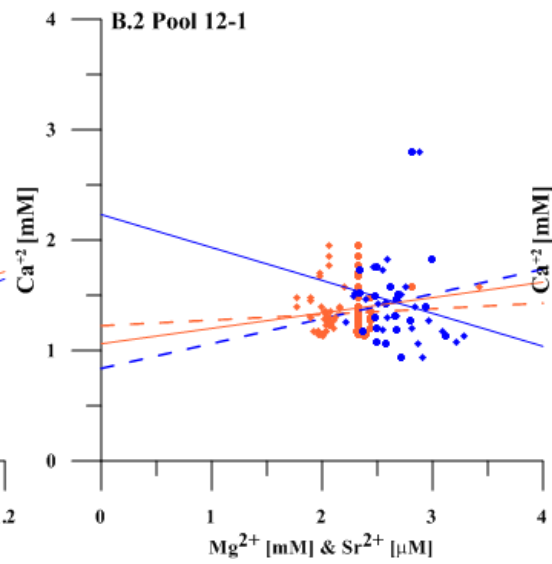
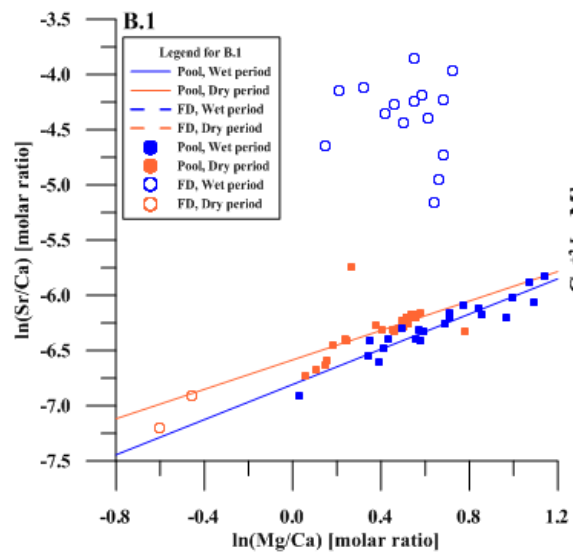
D. The Heinrich 1 event is characterized **reversal in the fluorescent banding pattern** (i.e. dark-before-bright banding) relative to that in the Holocene. Furthermore, the mean $|\Delta^{18}\text{O}|$ value is higher than during the YD and Holocene. Decreased seasonal rainfall gradients, regular snow cover, and different overlying vegetation are proposed as possible causes for these observations. Water supply was more consistent probably due to reduced gradient in seasonal rainfall, and or change in the organic acid production.

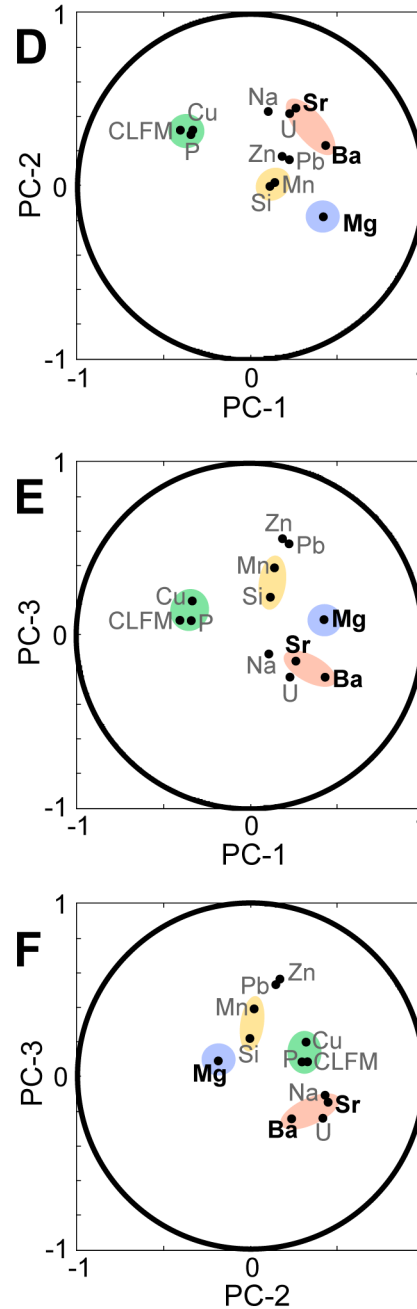
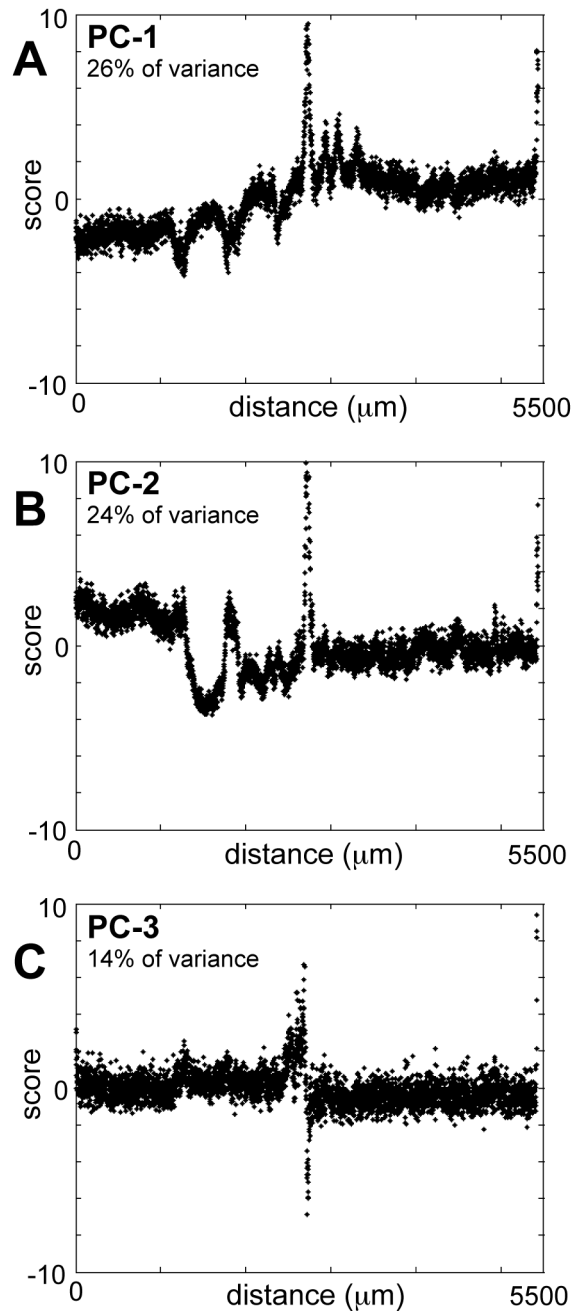
Green triangle bright laminae,
blue cross dark laminae











- Figure 5 (next page):** PCA results for 12 datasets that traverse sample 5-3b, including 11 records of trace element concentration from LA-ICP-MS analysis and one record of fluorescence intensity acquired by CLFM. Section 3.4 explains the PCA terminology. **A-C** show the scores of PCs 1-3, respectively, plotted versus distance from the base of 5-3b. The percentage of total variance (%) represented by each PC is indicated in the upper-left corner of panels A-C. **D-F** show the loadings of the 12 observed datasets for PC2 vs. PC1, PC3 vs. PC1, and PC3 vs. PC2, respectively. Since the sum of the squared loading values of a trace element on all of the principal components equals 1, the unit circles in panels D-F outline the maximum range of possible loadings. For example, if one trace element has a loading of 1 on any principal component, it must have a loading of zero on all others. Notable classes of elements are highlighted in color to facilitate comparison of their relative loadings; divalent cations are colored blue (Mg) and red (Sr, Ba), while elements transported by organic colloids or silicates are green (P, Cu) and yellow (Si, Mn). The similar variability of fluorescence intensity (CLFM) to that of P and Cu likely indicates that fluorescence in sample 5-3b is caused by P- and Cu-laden organic colloids.

