

# Reconstructing Holocene climatic and environmental change using molecular and isotopic proxies from lake sedimentary records

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Matthias Thienemann  
aus Düsseldorf

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Berichterstatter: Prof. Dr. Janet Rethemeyer  
(Gutachter) Prof. Dr. Hans-Rudolf Bork

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*“Die Lebewelt des Sees ist in ihrer Entwicklung nicht nur abhängig von ihrer Umwelt, sie verändert auch ihrerseits ihren Lebensraum; Lebewelt und Umwelt stehen in Wechselwirkung zueinander.“*

Thienemann, August (1941)

## Abstract

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Greater understanding of Holocene climatic and environmental variability and processes, as well as about feedback and forcing mechanisms of the climate system is crucial for the assessment of both natural and anthropogenic future climate and environmental changes. Compared to prior epochs in earth's history, the climate of the Holocene is traditionally regarded as relatively stable. However, Holocene climate also showed significant fluctuations although perturbation were smaller in magnitude compared to Pleistocene. These fluctuations can be assessed by organic geochemical molecular and isotope analyses of lake sedimentary organic matter (OM) that have the potential to reveal a variety of information regarding physical, chemical and biological changes and processes of the lake, its environment, and the climate. Therefore, within the scope of this thesis, sedimentary archives from selected lakes from the Sub-Artic (Lake Torneträsk), the Mediterranean (Lake Dojran), and the African tropics (Lake Dendi) were analyzed using various analytical methods including the analysis of lipid biomarker and compound specific leaf wax stable isotopes, as well as palynological, microcharcoal, and inorganic sedimentological analyses. All three lakes are situated in key regions for the understanding of northern hemispheric Holocene climate variability and natural/anthropogenic forcing and feedback mechanisms:

To constrain changes in atmospheric circulation patterns and their effects on the environment in the Fennoscandian sub-arctic, lipid biomarker, inorganic proxies, and compound specific  $\delta D$  analysis are applied to a Holocene sedimentary record from Lake Torneträsk (NW Sweden). Owing to its climate being influenced by both the North Atlantic and the polar frontal zone, northern Fennoscandia can be regarded as a key region to better understand the regional expression and potential threshold effects of insolation-forced migrations of atmospheric circulation systems. The results indicate a non-linear reorganization of the atmospheric circulation expressed as a change from zonal towards more meridional flow starting at  $\sim 4,000$  and intensifying  $\sim 2,000$  cal yrs BP.

For the reconstruction of the climatic, environmental, and human impact on the southern Balkan Peninsula lipid biomarker, microcharcoal, and pollen analyses are applied to a Holocene sedimentary record from Lake Dojran (Macedonia/Greece). The southern Balkan region played a key role in the early migration of the Neolithic lifestyle to Central Europe and is thus very suitable for studies of human-environment forcing and feedback mechanisms. The results suggest a relationship between anthropogenic activity and centennial to millennial scale environmental/climatic changes, since increased human impact corresponds to phases of higher humidity and high lake levels at Lake Dojran.

To detect changes in atmospheric circulation, hydrology, and vegetation in East Africa, associated with the African Humid Period (AHP), lipid biomarker and compound specific  $\delta D$  and  $\delta^{13}C$  analysis are applied to sedimentary OM from Lake Dendi (Ethiopia). Due to its location in proximity of the Congo Air Boundary (CAB) and the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), the Dendi region can play a crucial role in the understanding of past changes in atmospheric circulation pattern of the tropical regions. The results indicate a rapid re-strengthening of the monsoonal circulation in the Early Holocene followed by Peak AHP conditions between  $\sim 9,800$  yrs cal BP and  $\sim 8,000$  yrs cal BP. Subsequently a moderate decrease in

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precipitation and a shift in moisture sources due to weakening monsoonal systems and associated shifts of the ITCZ and the CAB have been detected.

Together, the lakes datasets suggest a thermal maximum and a northernmost position of the atmospheric circulation systems in the Early Holocene followed by a long-term trend of decreasing temperatures and environmental changes in accordance with decreasing NH summer insolation. Despite some differences in nature and timing, all tree records further indicate a southwards migration and weakening of NH atmospheric circulation systems over the course of the Holocene with significant phases of climatic/environmental changes around 4,500 yrs cal BP and 2,000 yrs.

## Zusammenfassung

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Für die Beurteilung künftiger, sowohl natürlicher als auch anthropogener Klima- und Umweltveränderungen ist ein umfangreiches Verständnis der holozänen Klimavariabilität sowie von Feedback und Forcing Mechanismen des Klimasystems entscheidend. Im Vergleich zu früheren Epochen in der Erdgeschichte gilt das Klima des Holozäns traditionell als relativ stabil. Allerdings weist das holozäne Klima auch signifikante Schwankungen auf, auch wenn diese ein kleineres Ausmaß annehmen, als im Pleistozän. Diese Schwankungen können durch organisch-geochemische, sowie durch Isotopen Analysen an organischem Material aus Seesedimenten erforscht werden. Seesedimente haben das Potenzial eine Vielzahl von Informationen über physikalische, chemische und biologische Veränderungen und Prozesse des Sees, der Umgebung und des Klimas zu speichern. So wurden im Rahmen dieser Arbeit Sedimentarchive aus ausgewählten Seen aus der Sub-Arktis (Lake Torneträsk), dem Mittelmeerraum (Lake Dojran) und den afrikanischen Tropen (Dendi-See) mit verschiedenen analytischen Methoden untersucht. Dazu zählen die Analyse von Lipid-Biomarkern und komponentenspezifischen stabilen Isotopen von Blattwachsen, sowie die Untersuchung von Pollen und Mikro-Holzkohle, als auch anorganische sedimentologische Analysen. Alle drei Seen liegen in Schlüsselregionen, die für das Verständnis von nordhemispherischer, holozänen Klimavariabilität, sowie von natürlichen und anthropogenen Forcing und Feedback Mechanismen von großer Bedeutung sind:

Um Veränderungen in der atmosphärischen Zirkulation und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Umwelt in der skandinavischen Sub-Arktis festzustellen werden Lipid Biomarker, komponentenspezifische D-Isotopenverhältnisse und anorganische Proxies in einem holozänen Sedimentkern aus dem Torneträsk See (NW Schweden) untersucht. Aufgrund der geographischen Lage der Region, deren Klima vom Nordatlantik als auch von der polaren Frontalzone beeinflusst wird, spielt das nördliche Skandinavien eine Schlüsselrolle bei der Erforschung von potenziellen Schwelleneffekten und von insolationsbedingten Migrationen der atmosphärischen Zirkulationssysteme. Die Ergebnisse deuten auf eine nichtlineare Reorganisation der atmosphärischen Zirkulation hin, ausgedrückt durch eine Veränderung von einer dominant zonalen zu einer verstärkt meridionalen atmosphärischen Strömung um  $\sim 4.000$  cal BP und  $\sim 2.000$  cal BP.

Für die Rekonstruktion von Klima, Umwelt und anthropogenem Einfluss auf der südlichen Balkan-Halbinsel werden Lipid-Biomarker, Pollen sowie Mikro-Holzkohlen aus einem holozänen Sedimentkern aus dem Dojran See (Mazedonien/Griechenland) analysiert. Da die südliche Balkanhalbinsel eine wichtige Route für die Migration des neolithischen Lebensstils nach Mitteleuropa darstellte, eignet sich diese Region besonders gut für die Erforschung von frühen Mensch-Umwelt Verflechtungen. Die Ergebnisse deuten auf eine Beziehung zwischen anthropogener Aktivität und Klima-/Umweltveränderungen hin, da Phasen erhöhter menschlicher Aktivität mit Phasen höherer Feuchtigkeit und hohem Seespiegel des Dojran Sees zusammenfallen.

Um Veränderungen in der atmosphärischen Zirkulation, der Hydrologie und der Vegetation in Ost Afrika, assoziiert mit der African Humid Period (AHP), zu rekonstruieren, werden Lipid-Biomarker und komponentenspezifische  $\delta D$ - und  $\delta^{13}C$ -Analysen an sedimentärem, organischem Material aus dem Dendi

## Zusammenfassung

See (Äthiopien) durchgeführt. Aufgrund der Nähe zur Congo Air Boundary (CAB) und der Intertropischen Konvergenzzone (ITCZ) spielt die Dendi-Region eine entscheidende Rolle für das Verständnis holozäner Veränderungen in der atmosphärischen Zirkulation in tropischen Regionen. Die Ergebnisse deuten auf eine rapide Reorganisation der Monsun-Zirkulation im frühen Holozän, gefolgt von Peak-AHP Bedingungen zwischen  $\sim 9.800$  cal BP und  $\sim 8.000$  cal BP, hin. Anschließend werden eine mäßige Abnahme des Niederschlags und eine Verschiebung der Feuchtequellen aufgrund abgeschwächter Monsunsysteme und eine damit verbundene Verschiebung der ITCZ und der CAB festgestellt.

Gemeinsam deuten die See-Datensätze auf ein thermisches Maximum und eine nördliche Position der atmosphärischen Zirkulationssysteme im frühen Holozän hin. Es folgt ein langfristiger Trend abnehmender Temperaturen und Umweltveränderungen in Übereinstimmung mit einer abnehmenden NH-Sommer-Insolation. Trotz einiger zeitlicher Unterschiede weisen alle Datensätze auf eine südwärtige Verlagerung und Abschwächung der atmosphärischen Zirkulationssysteme im Verlauf des Holozäns hin. Phasen von signifikanten Klima-/Umweltveränderungen lassen sich dabei um 4.500 cal BP und 2.000 cal BP feststellen.

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## List of abbreviations

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ACL average chain length	KCl potassium chloride
AgNO <sub>3</sub> silver nitrate	KOH potassium hydroxide
AHP African Humid Period	kV kilovolt
AMS accelerator mass spectrometry	LIA Little Ice Age
AMOC Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation	LMW low molecular weight
AO Arctic Oscillation	LMWL local meteoric water line
AP arboreal pollen	LST lake surface temperature
ASE Accelerated Solvent Extraction	m meter
a.s.l. above sea level	M molar
BC before Christ	mA milliampere
BIT branched vs. isoprenoidal tetraether index	MAT mean air temperature
BP before present (present = 1950)	MBT methylation index of branched tetraethers
br branched	MeOH methanol
C carbon	MEP 2-methylerythroyl-4-phosphate
Ca calcium	MHW medium molecular weight
CAB Congo air boundary	MRT mean residence time
cal calibrated	MVA mevalonic acid
CAM crassulacean acid metabolism	MWP medieval warm period
carb carbonate	<i>n</i> normal
CBT cyclisation ratio of branched tetraether	N <sub>2</sub> nitrogen
CH <sub>4</sub> N <sub>2</sub> O urea	NADPH nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate
CO <sub>2</sub> carbon dioxide	NAO North Atlantic Oscillation
conc concentrated	NAP non arboreal pollen
CPI carbon preference index	NH Northern hemisphere
cts counts	N north
D deuterium	OM organic matter
DCM dichloromethane	PAH polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon
DOXP 1-deoxy-D-xylulose-5-phosphate	Ppb part per billion
E east	R ratio
Et evapotranspiration	R <sup>2</sup> coefficient of determination
EQ equator	rH relative humidity
FA fatty acid	S south
FAME fatty acid methyl ester	SiO <sub>2</sub> Silicondioxid
Fe iron	SST Sea Surface Temperature
FID flame ionization detector	TEX <sub>86</sub> tetraether index of 86 carbons
g gram	Ti titanium
GC gas chromatography	TLE total lipid extract
GDGT glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraether	TOC total organic carbon
GMWL global meteoric water line	TS total Sulphur
H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>MQ</sub> ultrapure water	UHPLC ultrahigh performance liquid chromatograph
ha hectar	V volume
HCl hydrochloric acid	VPDB Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite
HCO <sub>3</sub> bicarbonate	VSMOW Vienna Standard Mean Ocean Water
Hex hexane	W west
HMW high molecular weight	XRF X-ray fluorescence
IRD ice rafted debris	YD Younger Dryas
IRMS isotope ratio mass spectrometry	yr year
ITCZ Intertropical Convergence Zone	yrs years
Iso isoprenoid	µg microgram
K potassium	µm micrometer
ka kiloannum (thousand years)	µS micro Siemens

## **1. Introduction**

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Since the mid-20th century, global ocean and atmospheric temperatures have been rising most likely due to an anthropogenic derived increase in the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases (Oreskes, 2004; Stocker, 2014). For the future, climate models predict an ongoing global warming trend inevitably leading to major climatic and environmental changes all over the globe (Diffenbaugh and Field, 2013; Stocker, 2014). Anticipated effects, apart from rising temperatures, include changing precipitation patterns, melting of glaciers and sea ice, a rising sea level, changing seasonality, ocean acidification, and an increase in extreme weather events (Walther et al., 2002; Meehl et al., 2005; Rosenzweig et al., 2008). However, climate model predictions exhibit significant uncertainties and differences in the magnitude of change due to insufficient knowledge about natural climate variability, processes and feedback mechanisms (Lashof and et al., 1997; Liepert and Previdi, 2009). Thus, more detailed insights into climatic processes and mechanisms are essential for the prediction of future climate and environmental change. Of particular importance is the climate of the Holocene (11.7 ka BP until present; Walker et al., 2012), due to its analogues to the modern day climate. Furthermore, Holocene climate dynamics occur on scales significant to humans and ecosystems (Mayewski et al., 2004). In this context, multiple studies suggest societal collapse of ancient civilizations connected to Holocene rapid climate changes (Hodell et al., 1995; Weiss and Bradley, 2001; deMenocal, 2001; White, 2011; Dalfes et al., 2013). Thus, knowledge about Holocene climatic processes is crucial for the assessment of both natural and anthropogenic future climate and environmental change.

### **1.1 Holocene climate variability – Forcing and Feedbacks**

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Compared to prior epochs in earth's history, the climate of the Holocene is traditionally regarded as relatively stable (Dansgaard et al., 1993; Johnsen et al., 1997). However, Holocene climate also showed significant fluctuations although perturbation occurred on a smaller magnitude compared to Pleistocene (Bond et al., 1997; Bianchi and McCave, 1999; Mayewski et al., 2004). The extrinsic forcing of Holocene climate is mainly controlled by the precession and the changing angle of the earth's axial (obliquity; Milankovitch, 1941; Hays et al., 1976). Changes in these orbital parameters (Fig. 1) resulted in a decrease in the solar radiation (insolation) of ~0.2 % (~40 W/m<sup>2</sup>) in Northern Hemispheric (NH) summer since the Early Holocene until present (Berger and Loutre, 1991). Furthermore, solar activity exhibits periodical fluctuations on different time-scales (solar variation). The most prominent examples include the 11 year Schwabe cycle (Eddy, 1976),

the 88 year Gleißberg cycle (Peristykh and Damon, 2003) and the 205 year de Vries cycle (Wagner et al., 2001).

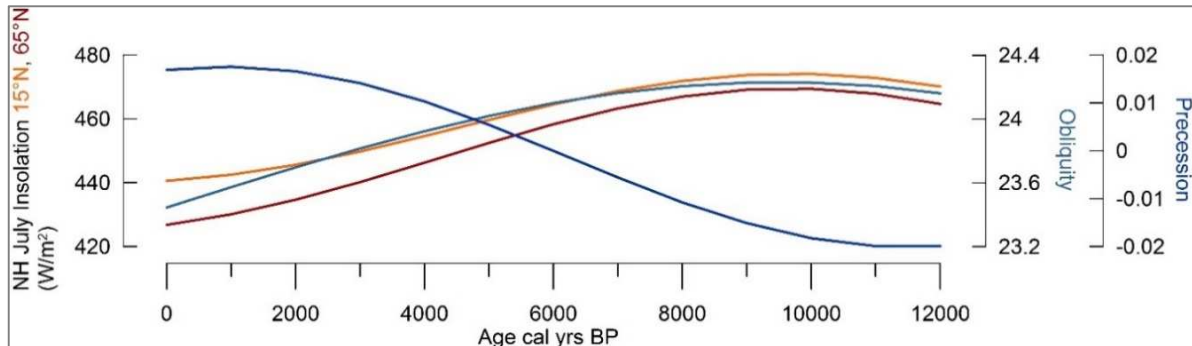
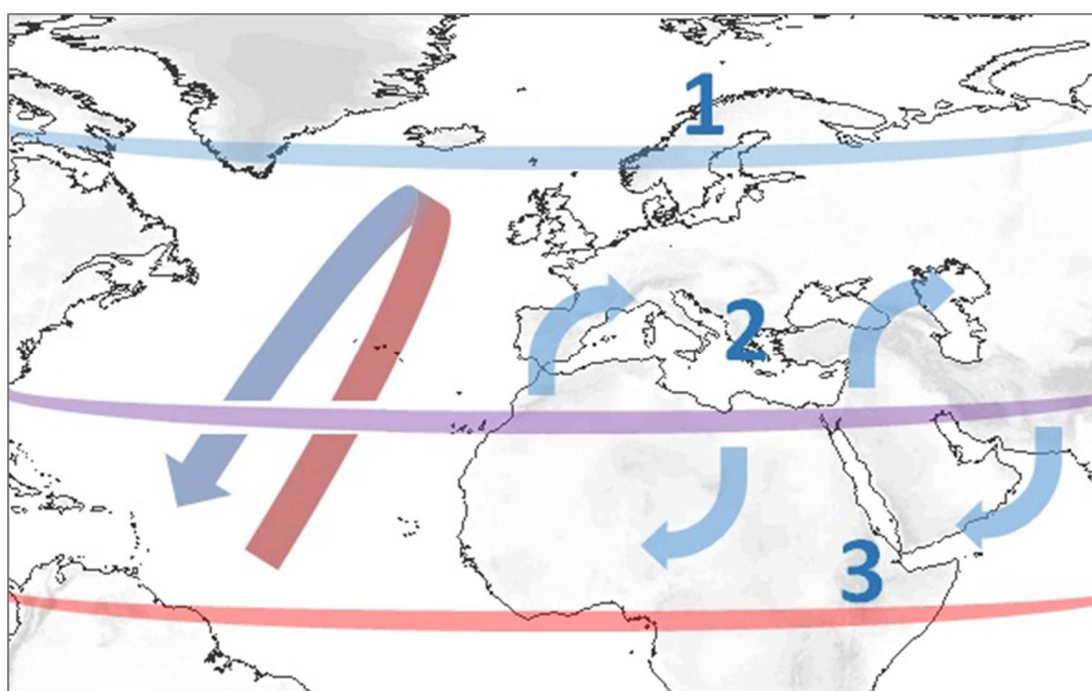


Figure 1. Holocene orbital climate forcing.

Internal variabilities in large-scale atmospheric and oceanic circulation systems (Fig. 2) exhibit the intrinsic forcing of Northern Hemisphere climate: The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), for example, is a large-scale ocean circulation system driven by density variations of the Atlantic Ocean water (Rahmstorf, 2003a) that plays a major role for decadal/multidecadal variability in the climate system (Polyakov et al., 2010; Mahajan et al., 2011). The AMOC is part of the global thermohaline circulation and functions as a heat and energy conveyor to the northern latitudes (Trenberth and Caron, 2001). Therefore, variabilities in the strength of the AMOC can lead to changes in mean annual temperatures of up to 10 °C in the circum-North Atlantic region even on a very short time scale (Ganopolski and Rahmstorf, 2001; Knight et al., 2005). Furthermore, fluctuations in the North Atlantic sea surface temperature (SST), commonly referred to as the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO; Kerr, 2000) exhibit widespread climatic influence on precipitation pattern/distribution in the Sahel (Rowell et al., 1995), in Northeast Brazil (Folland et al., 2001) and in North America (Sutton and Hodson, 2005). Global circulation models suggest a strong linkage between the AMOC and AMO (Wang and Zhang, 2013; Marini and Frankignoul, 2014).

The North Atlantic/Arctic Oscillations (NAO/AO) describe the atmospheric pressure gradient between the Arctic and the lower latitudes and control the position and sinuosity of the polar front, the polar Jetstream and the westerlies (Visbeck et al., 2001; Hurrell et al., 2013). Fluctuations in the NAO/AO index are associated with large-scale changes in temperature, precipitation and atmospheric circulation pattern from northern Africa (Moulin et al., 1997), the Middle East (Felis et al., 2000), and Europe (Rodwell et al., 1999; Trigo et al., 2002), up to the high latitudes (Dickson et al., 2000). It has also been suggested that AMOC and NAO/AO are linked by

strong bilateral teleconnections (Ottera et al., 2010; Frankignoul et al., 2013; Wen et al., 2016). The climate in the lower latitudes is mainly controlled by the seasonal shift of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), a zenithal controlled latitudinal belt of wind convergence and precipitation, and associated monsoonal flow (Shangcheng, 1988; Okajima et al., 2003; Fleitmann et al., 2007). Major monsoonal systems, exhibiting seasonal reversing wind circulations, of the NH include the West African (Weldeab et al., 2007), East African (Weldeab et al., 2014) and Indian Ocean (Fleitmann et al., 2003; Fleitmann et al., 2007) monsoons. In addition to these natural factors, early anthropogenic land-use also exhibited/induced a forcing of Holocene climates and environments. Especially since the Neolithic revolution and the introduction of agriculture roughly 8,000 years ago, humans have altered a significant part of the earth's terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems (Ellis, 2011; Goudie, 2013). Land use practices such as "slash-and-burn" or extensive livestock grazing have often resulted in vegetation shifts, destabilization of soils or water quality degradation (Dubois and Jacob, 2016). By altering the earth's albedo and surface heat balance through widespread deforestation, humans might have even affected regional patterns of hydrology and temperature (Strandberg et al., 2014).



**Figure 2.** Schematic map of NH atmospheric and oceanic circulation pattern including positions of lake sedimentary records analyzed for this thesis: 1) Lake Torneträsk, Sweden (see chapter 3); 2) Lake Dojran, Macedonia/Greece (see chapter 4); 3) Lake Dendi, Ethiopia (see chapter 5). Blue, purple, and red zones indicate the position of the polar front, subtropical high, and the intertropical convergence zone respectively. Blue arrows indicate major wind directions. Red/blue arrow indicates the position of the AMOC.



Holocene climate forcing lead to a long-term cooling trend in the Northern Hemisphere (Davis et al., 2003; Liu et al., 2014; Sejrup et al., 2016) and to migrations of the earths atmospheric and oceanic circulation systems since the Early Holocene (Haug et al., 2001). As of today, the nature, timing and regional environmental impacts of these shifts are still relatively uncharted (deMenocal et al., 2000; Haug et al., 2001; Anderson et al., 2005; Tierney et al., 2017; Kröpelin et al., 2008; Junginger et al., 2014). Furthermore, this long-term climatic trend is thought to be superimposed by centennial to millennial scale climate oscillations with a proposed frequency of  $\sim 2,800$ – $2,000$  years and  $\sim 1,500$  years (Stuiver and Braziunas, 1989; Bond et al., 1997; Mayewski et al., 1997; Bond et al., 2001; Wanner et al., 2008; Nederbragt and Thurow, 2005). Evidence of these events is most prominent by ice-rafted debris found in North Atlantic sediment cores (Bond et al., 1997; Bond et al., 2001). The cyclicity of Holocene millennial scale climate fluctuations, however, is highly debated and forcing mechanisms, whether solar or oceanic/atmospheric are still insufficiently unraveled (Rahmstorf, 2003b; Turney et al., 2005; Braun et al., 2005; Nederbragt and Thurow, 2005; Debret et al., 2007).

### **1.2 Holocene climate evolution**

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The Holocene started with a transitional warming after the cold Younger Dryas period (12.9 - 11.7 ka; Broecker et al., 2010; Carlson, 2010) at the end of the last glacial at about 11,700 yrs cal BP. The end of the YD, led to a reinvigoration of the AMOC and an associated enhancement of northward heat transport (Clark et al., 2002), as well as to a re-strengthening of the Northern Hemisphere monsoon circulations (Weldeab et al., 2014; Fleitmann et al., 2003). After the deglaciation, Holocene peak warming occurred during the so-called Holocene Thermal Maximum period (HTM; Renssen et al., 2012; Marcott et al., 2013) between approximately 9,500 to 5,000 yrs BP. Warmer conditions during the HTM period were interrupted by a short cold and dry spell around 8.200 cal yrs BP, globally known as the 8.2 ka event (Alley and Ágústsdóttir, 2005; Kobashi et al., 2007). This rapid climatic change was most likely initiated by a meltwater pulse to the North Atlantic due to the collapse of the Laurentide ice sheet and resulted in a slowdown of the AMOC and the associated heat transport (Barber et al., 1999; Ellison et al., 2006). After  $\sim 5,000$  yrs cal BP global mean temperatures declined, following a linear decrease in NH summer insolation. The decreasing temperature trend culminated during the Little Ice Age period (LIA  $\sim$  AD 1,300 and 1,900 Bradley and Jonest, 1993; Matthews and Briffa, 2005). Furthermore, an associated southward migration and weakening of global circulation systems over the course of the

Holocene as well as long-term changes in NAO/AO like atmospheric circulation resulted in significant climatic and environmental changes all over the globe: Examples of these changes are drying in the Mediterranean (Wick et al., 2003), drying in northern Africa and the Sahel, known as the termination of the African humid period (AHP; deMenocal et al., 2000; Tierney et al., 2017; Kröpelin et al., 2008), and rebirth/growth of Northern-Hemispheric mountain- (Ryder and Thomson, 1986; Herren et al., 2013) and high latitude glaciers (Nesje et al., 2001) as well as ice sheets (neoglaciation; Kumar, 2011).

### **1.3 Thesis outline**

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The aim of this thesis is to assess the variability and natural/anthropogenic forcing and feedback mechanisms of the Holocene climate and environment. Therefore, molecular, isotopic, and inorganic sedimentological analyses are applied to three different sedimentary records from the Arctic, the middle latitudes and the Tropics (Fig. 2):

**Chapter 2: Lipid Biomarker from lake sediments as proxies for climate and environmental variability.**

This chapter describes and assesses the proxies and methodology used for this thesis.

**Chapter 3: Neoglacial changes in atmospheric circulation patterns over the North Atlantic and Fennoscandia recorded in Lake Torneträsk sediments.**

To constrain changes in Holocene atmospheric circulation pattern in response to orbital forcing and their effects on the environment in Fennoscandia we use lipid biomarker, inorganic proxies, and compound specific  $\delta D$  analysis of sedimentary organic matter from a sedimentary record from Lake Torneträsk (Sweden). Owing to its climate being influenced by both the North Atlantic and the polar frontal zone, northern Fennoscandia can be regarded as a key region to better understand the regional expression and potential threshold effects of insolation-forced migrations of atmospheric circulation systems.

**Chapter 4: Organic geochemical and palynological evidence for Holocene natural and anthropogenic environmental change at Lake Dojran (Macedonia/Greece).**

In this chapter we apply biomarker, microcharcoal and pollen analyses to a sedimentary record from Lake Dojran (Macedonia/Greece) to reconstruct climatic, environmental, and human impact on the southern Balkan.

## Chapter 1

The southern Balkan region played a key role in the migration of the Neolithic lifestyle to Central Europe and is thus very suitable for studies of human-environment forcing and feedback mechanisms. This chapter refers to Thienemann et al., (2017) doi: 10.1177/0959683616683261.

[Chapter 5: Holocene hydrological and atmospheric changes in East Africa inferred from lipid biomarker and leaf wax \*n\*-alkane  \$\delta D\$  of Lake Dendi \(Ethiopia\) sediments.](#)

Here, we use compound specific  $\delta D$  and  $\delta^{13}C$  analysis of sedimentary organic matter from Lake Dendi (Ethiopia) to detect changes in atmospheric circulation pattern, hydrology, and vegetation associated with the African Humid Period. Due to its location in proximity of the Congo Air Boundary and the ITCZ, the Dendi region can play a crucial role in the understanding of past changes in atmospheric circulation pattern of the tropical regions.

## **2. Biomarker from lake sediments as proxies for climate and environmental variability**

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Studies of past climatic and environmental changes can be obtained from multiple diverse types of archives such as ice cores (Mayewski et al., 1997; Abram et al., 2013), stalagmites (Bar-Matthews et al., 1999; Fleitmann et al., 2003; Fairchild and Baker, 2012), tree rings (McCarroll and Loader, 2004; Wilson et al., 2016), peat bogs (Blackford, 2000; Poto et al., 2013), and marine (Schilman et al., 2001; Rothwell and Croudace, 2015), and lacustrine (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993; Leng and Marshall, 2004) sediments. For the investigation of paleo-environmental and -climatic changes, especially on shorter time-scales, lacustrine sediments are particularly suitable as archives for several reasons: The lakes small water body leads to relatively high sedimentation rates and thus allows high temporal resolutions compared to ocean archives. Usually, only small amounts of sediments are lost through discharges, which leads to a high continuity of lacustrine archives. Furthermore the relatively small water body of a lake reacts/responds very quickly to external forcing, thus being able to record rapid centennial to millennial scale climate changes (Talbot and Allen, 1996; Cohen, 2003; Elias, 2006).

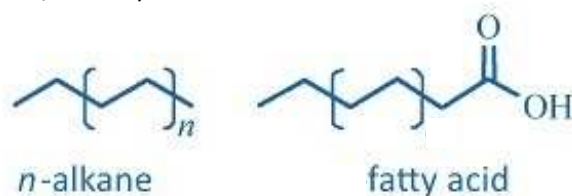
Sedimentary organic matter (OM) from lacustrine archives can reveal a variety of information regarding physical, chemical and biological changes and processes of the lake and its environment (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993). The main sources of sedimentary organic matter are terrestrial higher plants, phytoplankton, bacteria and algae. The deposited OM can be divided into two main groups: material with a terrestrial origin produced outside the lake is designated allochthonous, while aquatic material which is produced in the lake itself, is referred to as autochthonous (Cohen, 2003; Elias, 2006). However, in most lakes, the overwhelming majority (> 99%) of organic matter is recycled while sinking through the water column and in the surface sediment layer (Hedges and Keil, 1995). Only a small fraction of the organic matter, such as certain lipid molecules, is recalcitrant against remineralization and is accumulated in the sediment (Tegelaar et al., 1989). These type of molecules have the potential to be used as so-called biomarkers in paleo-environmental and –climatic studies.

These Biomarker molecules are stable over geological timescales and can be traced to a specific biosynthetic origin or process (Eglinton et al., 1964; Killops et al., 2004b; Eglinton and Pancost, 2004). The majority of biomarker belong to the group of lipids (Brocks and Pearson, 2005), a compound class in organic geochemistry which is insoluble in water but soluble in organic solvents (Killops et al., 2004b). The occurrence, structure, ratio, and isotopic composition of lipid

biomarker molecules from lake sediments can help to unravel paleo-environmental and -climatic questions, e.g., about element cycling, oxidation-reduction conditions, sediment and water chemistry, vegetation, and temperature histories (Peters et al., 2005). Different transport mechanism of biomarker molecules, however, can result in leads and lags of certain proxies (Eglinton and Eglinton, 2008). Thus, for example branched Glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraether produced in soils are transported into the lake via fluvial/riverine input (Schouten et al., 2013). Soil turnover rates and storage of organic matter, however, can vary in different latitudes and climates (Chen et al., 2013) leading to different setbacks of biomarker produced/stored in soils. Other biomarker molecules such as *n*-alkanes can also be transported via an aeolian mode through for example wind-abrasion from plant leaf surfaces (Schefuß et al., 2003). Apart from leads and lags, different transport modes can further lead to proxy signals representing more proximal (fluvial) or more distant (aeolian) source areas (e.g. Thienemann et al., 2017). Dilution effects by lithogenic and aquatic-produced Material can be accounted for by the normalization to the total organic carbon (TOC) content of the sediment.

## 2.1 *n*-Alkanes and fatty acids

Normal- or *n*-alkanes and fatty (alkanoic) acids belong to the group of acyclic hydrocarbons and consist of hydrogen and carbon with the formula  $C_nH_{2n+2}$  (Fig. 3). Fatty acids also contain of a carboxyl group (Killops et al., 2004b).



**Figure 3.** Molecular structure of *n*-alkanes and fatty acids (alkanoic acids).

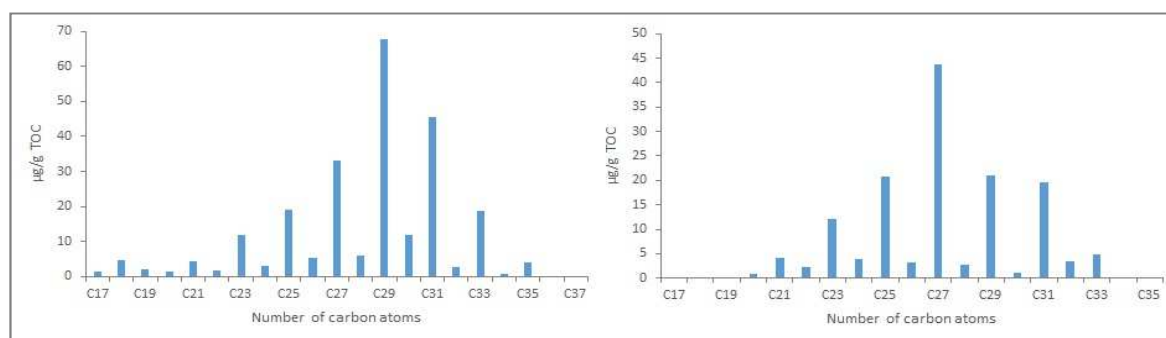
In nature, *n*-alkanes and fatty acids are produced by various types of organisms such as bacteria, archaea, fungi, plants, and animals (Peters et al., 2005). The chain length (number of carbon atoms) of *n*-alkanes and fatty acids can be diagnostic for the respective biosynthetic origin (Cranwell, 1973). In this context, high molecular weight (HMW) fatty acids ( $C_{26}$ - $C_{32}$ ) and *n*-alkanes ( $C_{27}$ - $C_{33}$ ) mainly derive from the epicuticular leaf waxes of higher land plants, protecting the plant against water loss, bacteria, fungi, and leaching of minerals (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993; Bianchi and Canuel, 2011). In contrast, algae and aquatic plants, are dominated by low molecular weight (LMW) fatty acids such as  $C_{16}$  and  $C_{18}$  and the LMW *n*-alkanes  $C_{17}$  and  $C_{19}$ . Due to this fact, changing

concentrations of HMW/LMW *n*-alkanes and fatty acids can indicate a change in terrestrial input versus aquatic production respectively.

Medium molecular weight (MMW) *n*-alkanes (mainly C<sub>21</sub> - C<sub>25</sub>) are dominant in emerged and submerged macrophytes. The average chain length (ACL) of HMW *n*-alkanes can be further diagnostic for specific terrestrial plant types, such as woody or herbaceous/grass vegetation (Maffei, 1996; D'Anjou et al., 2012).

$$(1) \quad ACL = \frac{(C_{27} \cdot 27 + C_{29} \cdot 29 + C_{31} \cdot 31 + C_{33} \cdot 33)}{(C_{27} + C_{29} + C_{31} + C_{33})}$$

Despite the vegetation type, the *n*-alkane chain length distribution is controlled by environmental factors such as temperature and humidity (Gagosian and Peltzer, 1986; Poynter et al., 1989), potentially complicating the use of the ACL proxy. While fatty acids show an even-number over odd-number predominance in higher plants, *n*-alkanes usually occur with an odd over even dominance (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4.** *n*-Alkane distributions from two lacustrine sediment samples displaying an odd over even predominance.

The inverse proportion results from the loss of a carbon atom during decarboxylation from the precursor even-numbered fatty acid (Eglinton and Eglinton, 2008). Furthermore, odd numbered *n*-alkanes can get degraded to even numbered in the processes of diagenesis and catagenesis (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993). The relative abundances of odd and even numbered compounds in a sample is estimated by the carbon preference index (CPI; Bray and Evans, 1961).

$$(2) \quad CPI = 0.5 * \left[ \frac{(C_{27} + C_{29} + C_{31} \cdot C_{33})}{(C_{26} + C_{28} + C_{30} + C_{32})} + \frac{(C_{27} + C_{29} + C_{31} + C_{33})}{(C_{28} + C_{30} + C_{32} + C_{34})} \right]$$

In this context, the CPI can be used as an indicator for the maturity of a sediment sample and for the degree of fossil fuel contribution, which is crucial for the analyses of compound specific stable isotopes. Natural vegetation waxes typically show CPI values above 5 (Eglinton and Hamilton, 1963).

### 2.1.1 Compound specific stable isotope analysis of plant leaf wax hydrocarbons

Studies of stable carbon, oxygen and hydrogen isotopes in lake sediments exhibit a powerful tool for resolving paleo-environmental and –climatic questions. However, organic matter in lacustrine deposits consists of a very wide variety of different organic compounds that each differ significantly in their isotopic composition (Schimmelmann et al., 2006; Chikaraishi and Naraoka, 2007). The analysis of individual compounds, especially lipids, can circumvent this problem (Sachse et al., 2012).

Isotopic values are expressed with the help of the Delta ( $\delta$ ) notation, which describes the relative deviation of the Ratio (R) of the heavy isotope to the light isotope in a sample over the isotope ratio of a standard in per mil (‰).

$$(3) \quad \delta R = \left[ \frac{(R_{sample} - R_{standard})}{R_{standard}} \right] * 1000 \text{ ‰}$$

International reference standards for carbon (Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite; VPDB) and for hydrogen (Vienna Standard Mean Ocean Water; VSMOW) are issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Isotopic ratios are affected by a multitude of isotopic fractionation effects during various physical and biochemical processes. The magnitude of fractionation is expressed as the fractionation factor  $\alpha$ , while the fractionation between source and product can also be expressed with the enrichment factor  $\epsilon$  (Cohen, 2007; Hoefs, 2008; Michener and Lajtha, 2008).

#### Compound specific carbon isotopes

Carbon is the major compound of all living organisms on earth and exhibits two stable isotopes of which the light  $^{12}\text{C}$  occurs with a percentage of ~98.9 % and the heavy  $^{13}\text{C}$  with a percentage of ~1.1 % (Killops et al., 2004a). A multitude of studies from various environmental settings (Bird et al., 1995; Schefuß et al., 2003; Liu et al., 2005; Castañeda et al., 2009; Berke et al., 2012; Tierney and deMenocal, 2013; Aichner et al., 2015) have proven that analysis of compound specific leaf wax carbon isotopes reliably mirror past changes in vegetation type and cover. During plant

photosynthesis, the fixation of carbon from atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> can happen via three different biosynthetic pathways, that each involve different carbon isotopic fractionations. The largest group of plants (C<sub>3</sub>), consisting of ~95% of the earth's terrestrial biomass (including trees and shrubs), use the Calvin-Benson cycle for carbon fixation. In contrast, C<sub>4</sub> plants including mostly grasses (*poaceae*) and sedges (*cyperaceae*), mainly grow in tropical and sub-tropical regions and use the Hatch-Slack cycle for carbon fixation. An additional mechanism is the Crassulacean acid metabolism (CAM), involving uptake and CO<sub>2</sub> fixation during the night and only used by a relatively small group of aridity adapted plants (O'Leary, 1988; Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993). The different carbon isotopic fractionation factors inherent in these pathways are incorporated in the carbon isotopic signature of plant wax lipids such as *n*-alkanes or *n*-fatty acids. Hence, plant leaf waxes of C<sub>3</sub> plants are generally depleted in <sup>13</sup>C with respect to waxes produced by C<sub>4</sub> vegetation (Tab. 1). Leaf waxes derived from plant utilizing the CAM typically show intermediate δ<sup>13</sup>C values (Chikaraishi and Naraoka, 2003; Bi et al., 2005; Eglinton and Eglinton, 2008). *n*-Alkanes and Fatty acids exhibit very similar fractionation factors during photosynthesis (C<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>4</sub>, CAM), leading to similar carbon isotopic signatures. Fatty acids only show a slight <sup>13</sup>C-depletion (averaging 1.4 ‰ ± 1.1 ‰) compared to *n*-alkanes from the same plant species (Chikaraishi et al., 2004; Chikaraishi and Naraoka, 2007;). Furthermore, various environmental factors can influence the δ<sup>13</sup>C values of plant wax lipids: Hence, during periods of higher aridity, plants tend to narrow their leaf stomata to account for enhanced loss of water, which in turn can lead to a <sup>13</sup>C-enrichment of plant lipids (Diefendorf et al., 2010). Decreasing light intensity (canopy effect) can lead to <sup>13</sup>C depleted isotopic values due to variations in in-leaf processes in response to increased shade (van der Merwe and Medina, 1991; Bonafini et al., 2013). The uptake of respired CO<sub>2</sub> from soils, usually depleted in <sup>13</sup>C compared to atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, can lead to a further <sup>13</sup>C depletion of plants (Bowling et al., 2008). Since atmospheric carbon is the source for plant photosynthesis, variations in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> can also alter the plants' carbon isotopic composition (Fontugne and Calvert, 1992; Feng and Epstein, 1995). A similar phenomenon, the so-called "Suess effect", caused by the anthropogenic release of fossil-fuel derived <sup>13</sup>C depleted CO<sub>2</sub> leads to a lowering of modern <sup>13</sup>C values in plants (Keeling, 1979).

**Table 1.** Range of δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>n</sub>-alkane values for different plant types of subtropical (Bi et al., 2005) and tropical African (Castañeda et al., 2009) vegetation.

Subtropical plants		Tropical African plants	
plant type	δ <sup>13</sup> C <sub>n-alkanes</sub>	plant type	δ <sup>13</sup> C <sub>n-alkanes</sub>
C <sub>3</sub>	-38.9‰ to -29.1‰	C <sub>3</sub>	-41.8‰ to -28‰
C <sub>4</sub>	-26.4‰ to -14.1‰	C <sub>4</sub>	-25.5‰ to -15.3‰
CAM	-29.5‰ to -21.5‰		



### Compound specific hydrogen isotopes

With an abundance of 75 %, Hydrogen is the most common element in the universe. Hydrogen exhibits two stable isotopes of which the light  $^1\text{H}$  protium (H) occurs with a proportion of >99.98 %, while the heavy  $^2\text{H}$  deuterium (D) appears with a percentage of <0.002 (Schimmelmann et al., 2006). Compound specific hydrogen isotopes from lake sediments have been shown to reliably record past changes in the hydrological cycle (Schefuß et al., 2005; Tierney et al., 2008; Tipple and Pagani, 2010; Berke et al., 2012; Costa et al., 2014; Zhuang et al., 2014; Aichner et al., 2015). This is due to the fact that plant wax lipids incorporate, by interference, the D-isotopic composition of the plants source water (Sachse et al., 2012). Furthermore, compound specific isotope analysis of leaf wax hydrogen can have several advantages over the use of the classic  $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carbonate}}$  proxy (Leng and Marshall, 2004) that in some cases might be biased by changing in-lake processes such as lake hydrology and temperature, seasonality of precipitation, or changes in taxa/species assemblages. In addition, suitable carbonate or silica producers are not ubiquitous in every lake (Sachse et al., 2012; Sauer et al., 2001). The relationship between  $^{18}\text{O}$  and D in natural waters is described by the global meteoric water line (GMWL) defined after Craig (1961) as:

$$(4) \quad \delta D = 8 * \delta^{18}O + 10\text{‰}$$

Site-specific environmental factors such as differences in humidity/aridity can lead to local deviations from the GMWL, resulting in local meteoric water lines (LMWL; Rozanski et al., 1993). The D isotopic composition of water vapor in the atmosphere shows additionally substantial variations over space and time. This can be attributed to Rayleigh type fractionation processes during evaporation and condensation of water (seawater  $\delta D = 0\text{‰}$ ), with the evaporate being depleted in the heavy isotope D and the condensate being enriched in D (Fig. 5) (Kendall and Caldwell, 1998). These processes can be categorized into several environmental effects:

**Continental/rainout effect:** As precipitation is enriched in D relative to its source vapor, air masses that progress further inland onto the continent get progressively more D-depleted (Dansgaard, 1964; Rozanski et al., 1993). A similar effect occurs with increasing altitude (altitude effect), which leads to water vapor/precipitation being more D-depleted by -1 to -4‰ per 100 m (Holdsworth et al., 1991).

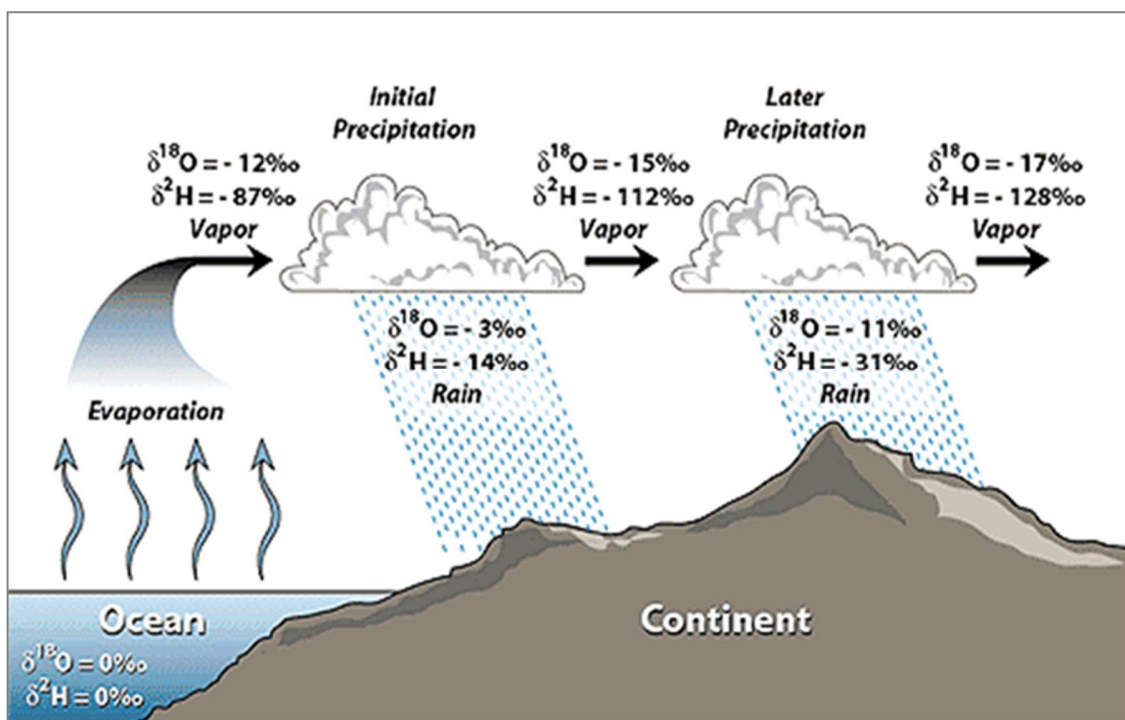
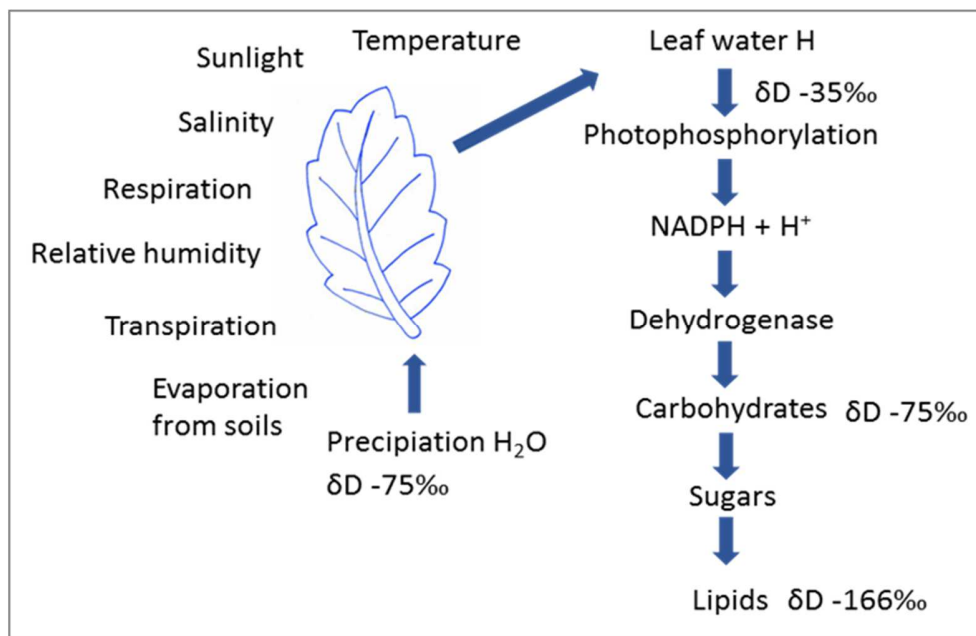


Figure 5. Hydrogen and oxygen fractionation processes during evaporation and change in isotopic signature of precipitation due to the rainout effect (SAHRA, 2014).

**Temperature effect:** The magnitude of isotopic fractionation between vapor and condensate increases with temperature. Thus, at 25°C, liquid water is enriched in  $^1\text{H}^2\text{H}^{16}\text{O}$  by approximately 74 ‰ relative to the source vapor, whereas the fractionation becomes stronger at colder temperature (101‰ at 0°C) (Sachse et al., 2012). Dansgaard (1964) suggest a temperature-isotope relation based on measurements of North Atlantic coastal station of 0.69‰/°C for  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and 5.6‰/°C for  $\delta\text{D}$  respectively. The temperature effect is most prominent in regions with a high magnitude of temperature variability, e.g. the high latitudes and regions with a strong continental climate (Bowen, 2008).

**Amount effect:** The amount effect describes the relationship between precipitation amounts and  $\delta\text{D}$ . Due to evaporation from falling raindrops and associated D-enrichment, small amounts of rainfall exhibit an isotopically heavier signature compared to higher amounts of rainfall (Dansgaard, 1964; Rozanski et al., 1993). This effect is further enhanced by high evaporation in arid climates leading to a further enrichment of environmental waters in D. Some studies suggest a threshold for the effect of evapotranspiration from soils and leaves (Hou et al., 2008; Pedentchouk et al., 2008; Feakins and Sessions, 2010;) at a relative humidity (rH) < 0.7 and

evapotranspiration ( $E_t$ ) < 1,000 mm/yr. The amount effect exhibits a strong control on  $\delta D$  in regions with insignificant temperature fluctuations such as the tropical regions (Bowen, 2008). In addition to Rayleigh type environmental fractionation effects, the D-isotopic composition of lipids is further influenced by fractionation processes during biosynthesis (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** Fractionations during lipid biosynthesis (modified after Yang and Leng, 2009).

**Fractionations during biosynthesis:** The plant's uptake and assimilation of hydrogen involves multiple different biochemical process and enzymatic reactions in which hydrogen is either removed, added, or exchanged. These reactions are associated with a variety of different isotopic fractionation effects leading to a wide range of  $\delta D$  values between  $-400\text{‰}$  and  $+200\text{‰}$  for lipids commonly employed as biomarkers (Sauer et al., 2001; Chikaraishi and Naraoka, 2003; Chikaraishi and Naraoka, 2007; Zhang and Sachs, 2007). The differences in isotopic compositions can be explained by 3 major biosynthetic effects (Sachse et al., 2012 and references therein):

1. Different biosynthetic pathways for lipid biomarker molecules. Steroids and terpenoids are produced via the mevalonic acid (MVA) pathway. The 1-deoxy-D-xylulose-5-phosphate (DOXP)/2-methylerythroyl-4-phosphate (MEP) pathway produces isoprenoid lipids. *n*-Alkyls are produced by the acetogenic pathway (Sachse et al., 2012).

2. Secondary hydrogen exchange reactions, hydrogenations, and dehydrogenations. For example decarboxylation leads to *n*-alkanes commonly being depleted in  $\delta D$  (25‰  $\pm$ 16‰) compared to the corresponding fatty acid (Chikaraishi 2007).

3. Differences in the isotopic composition of H derived from nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate (NADPH; Sachse et al., 2012).

**Influence of photosynthetic pathway and life form:** According to Sachse (2012), *n*-alkanes from C<sub>4</sub> monocots are systematically ~15‰ more D-enriched than *n*-alkanes from C<sub>3</sub> monocots. These differences in fractionation have been attributed to, both, differences in leaf architecture (Helliker and Ehleringer, 2000) and pathways for NADPH formation (McInerney et al., 2011). Furthermore, variations in physiognomy and lipid biosynthesis lead to dicots (shrubs, trees, and forbs) being more D-enriched compared to monocots (grasses; Sachse et al., 2012). In paleo-environmental  $\delta D$  studies vegetational changes have thus to be accounted for. In comprehensive studies (Sachse et al., 2004) found a mean fractionation factor between *n*-alkanes and environmental water of -128 ‰ obtained from a N-S European transect and (Chikaraishi and Naraoka, 2003) reported a fractionation factor of -117 ‰ for long-chain *n*-alkanes from several C<sub>3</sub> plants (Tab. 2).

**Table 2.** Average fractionation factors ( $\epsilon_{\text{water}}$ ) between environmental water and *n*-alkanes of plants from Japan and Thailand detected by (Chikaraishi and Naraoka, 2003).

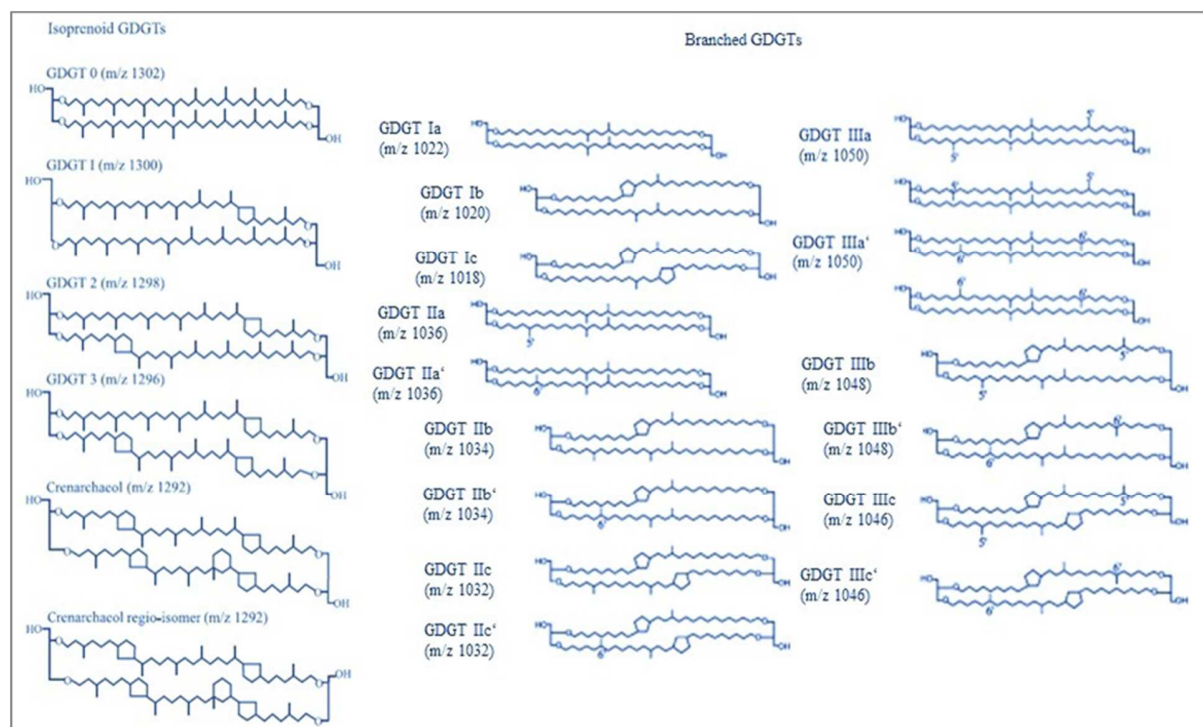
Plant type	$\epsilon_{\text{water}} n$ -alkanes	
C4 plants	-132‰	$\pm$ 12‰
C3 angiosperms	-117‰	$\pm$ 27‰
C3 gymnosperms	-116‰	$\pm$ 13‰
CAM plants	-147‰	$\pm$ 10‰
freshwater plants	-135‰	$\pm$ 17‰

## 2.2 Glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraether lipids

Glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraether (GDGTs) are membrane lipids synthesized by archaea and bacteria (Schouten et al., 2013), that can be found in a very wide variety of natural environments such as marine (Sinninghe Damsté et al., 2002; Wuchter et al., 2005), lacustrine (Powers et al., 2004; Blaga et al., 2009), and terrestrial realms (Weijers et al., 2006; Huguet et al., 2010). GDGTs can be divided into branched (brGDGTs) and isoprenoid (isoGDGTs) forms (Fig. 7). While isoGDGTs

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mainly derive from archaea from the aquatic realm, the inversely structured brGDGTs are produced by bacteria with a mostly terrestrial origin (Schouten et al., 2013).



**Figure 7.** Molecular structure of branched and isoprenoid GDGTs after Schouten et al. (2013) and De Jonge et al. (2014).

Several paleo-environmental proxies are based on the relative abundance of different GDGTs as well as on their structural characteristics which are influenced by environmental factors such as temperature, pH or salinity (Hopmans et al., 2004; Powers et al., 2010; Peterse et al., 2012). For example, the branched vs. isoprenoidal tetraether index (BIT) is based on the distribution of brGDGTs and isoGDGTs and serves as a proxy for soil OM input (Schouten et al., 2013).

$$(5) \quad BIT = \frac{(Ia+IIa+IIIa)}{(Crenarchaeol+Ia+IIa*IIIa)}$$

It can be utilized to reconstruct soil erosion/runoff processes in lacustrine settings or near-shore environments (Verschuren et al., 2009; Sinninghe Damsté et al., 2011). However, in some cases the BIT index is biased by the aquatic endmember isoGDGT (Crenarchaeol). Hence, Fietz et al. (2011) suggest the use of brGDGT concentrations instead of the BIT index as indicator for terrestrial input.

The tetraether index of tetraethers consisting of 86 carbons (TEX<sub>86</sub>) is based on the distributions of isoGDGTs which have been shown to correlate with annual mean sea surface temperatures (SST) (Schouten et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2008). In this context, the application of TEX<sub>86</sub> as paleothermometer has been widely applied in both lacustrine (Berke et al., 2012; Blaga et al., 2013; Morrissey et al., 2017) and marine (Schouten et al., 2003; Huguet et al., 2007; Xing et al., 2013) settings. However, it has been suggested that isoGDGT Crenarchaeol also occurs in soil organic matter (Weijers et al., 2006). Thus, in some environments (BIT > 0.3), high contributions of terrestrial derived Crenarchaeol preclude the use of the TEX<sub>86</sub> proxy as paleothermometer. Furthermore, production of isoGDGTs (mainly GDGT-2, see Fig. 7) by sedimentary Euryarchaeota involved in anaerobic oxidation might render TEX<sub>86</sub> values inappropriate. Therefore, (Weijers et al., 2011) introduced the GDGT-2/Crenarchaeol ratio as a control value for anaerobic oxidation. Furthermore, extensive studies (Weijers et al., 2007b) reported a strong relationship between mean annual air temperature (MAT), soil pH, and the methylation and cyclisation of branched tetraethers (MBT/CBT) in soils, allowing the application of the MBT/CBT as paleothermometer. More recent studies (Peterse et al., 2012), however suggest the use of MBT', which is based on the seven most common brGDGTs in soils, over MBT.

$$(6) \quad MBT' = \frac{(Ia+Ib+Ic)}{(Ia+Ib+Ic+IIa+IIb+IIc+IIIa)}$$

$$(7) \quad CBT = -\log \left[ \frac{(Ib+IIb)}{(Ia+IIa)} \right]$$

A global relationship of MBT' and CBT to MAT is reported by (Peterse et al., 2012) as follows:

$$(8) \quad MAT = 0.81 - 5.67 * CBT + 31 * MBT'$$

However, there are significant differences in the correlations of MBT/CBT with soil pH and MAT at different locations and environmental settings (Sinninghe Damsté et al., 2008; Tierney and Russell, 2009; Shanahan et al., 2013; Coffinet et al., 2017) emphasizes the importance of appropriate local calibrations for the calculation of annual mean air temperature.

## 2.3 Biomarker in Geo-archeology

Recent studies (D’Anjou et al., 2012; Thienemann et al., 2017) apply proxies that have been traditionally used in environmental pollution studies (Readman et al., 1987; Grimalt et al., 1990; Leeming et al., 1996; Carreira et al., 2004) to unravel the interrelations between human, climate and environment. For an extensive review of molecular biomarker of anthropic impacts see (Dubois and Jacob, 2016). Only the biomarkers utilized for the thesis are outlined here:

### 2.3.1 Sterols

Sterols are lipids that belong to the group of triterpenoids and exist in a wide variety of organisms such as plants (Campesterol, Sitosterol, and Stigmasterol), animals (Cholesterol) and fungi (Ergosterol; Peters et al., 2005). After the ingestion of organic matter by humans or mammals, sterols are reduced to stanols (e.g. cholesterol → coprostanol) by intestinal microbial hydrogenation (Bull et al., 2002). 5 $\beta$ -coprostanol is the main stanol present in human feces, while feces of grazing, herbivorous mammals such as cattle are dominated by 5 $\beta$ -stigmastanol (Leeming et al., 1996; Shah et al., 2007; Fig. 8).

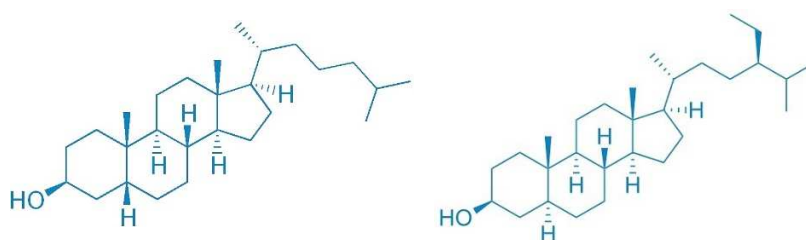


Figure 8. Molecular structure of the fecal stanols 5 $\beta$ -coprostanol and 5 $\beta$ -stigmastanol.

5 $\beta$ -stanols are preserved in sedimentary records and thus can be used as biomarkers for the presence of human/mammalian fecal matter (Bull et al., 2002; D’Anjou et al., 2012). However, other possible sources of 5 $\beta$ -Stanols, such as avian- or even in-situ bacterial distribution have to be further evaluated (Holtvoeth et al., 2010; Devane et al., 2015; Cheng et al., 2016).

### 2.3.2 Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are organic compounds that comprise multiple aromatic hydrocarbon rings (Fig. 9; Boehm, 2005) and are commonly regarded as environmental contaminants (Baek et al., 1991). PAHs are produced through a variety of natural processes

including diagenesis, and biosynthesis (Boehm, 2005). As a result, hundreds of different PAH compounds are present in nature (Bjørseth, 1983; Sander and Wise, 1997). Some of them (Pyrolytic PAHs) are produced from organic matter during combustion processes and thus can be used as a proxy for natural and anthropogenic fire activity (D'Anjou et al., 2012; Thienemann et al., 2017). Due to the fact, that PAHs can be supplied from the atmosphere via dry and wet deposition they can represent signals from proximal as well as distant sources (Lima et al., 2005).



Figure 9. Molecular structure of three different combustion derived polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon.

## 2.4 Analytical methods

In the following, a general overview and description of the methods for lipid analysis is given (Fig. 10). Details are provided in the respective chapters.

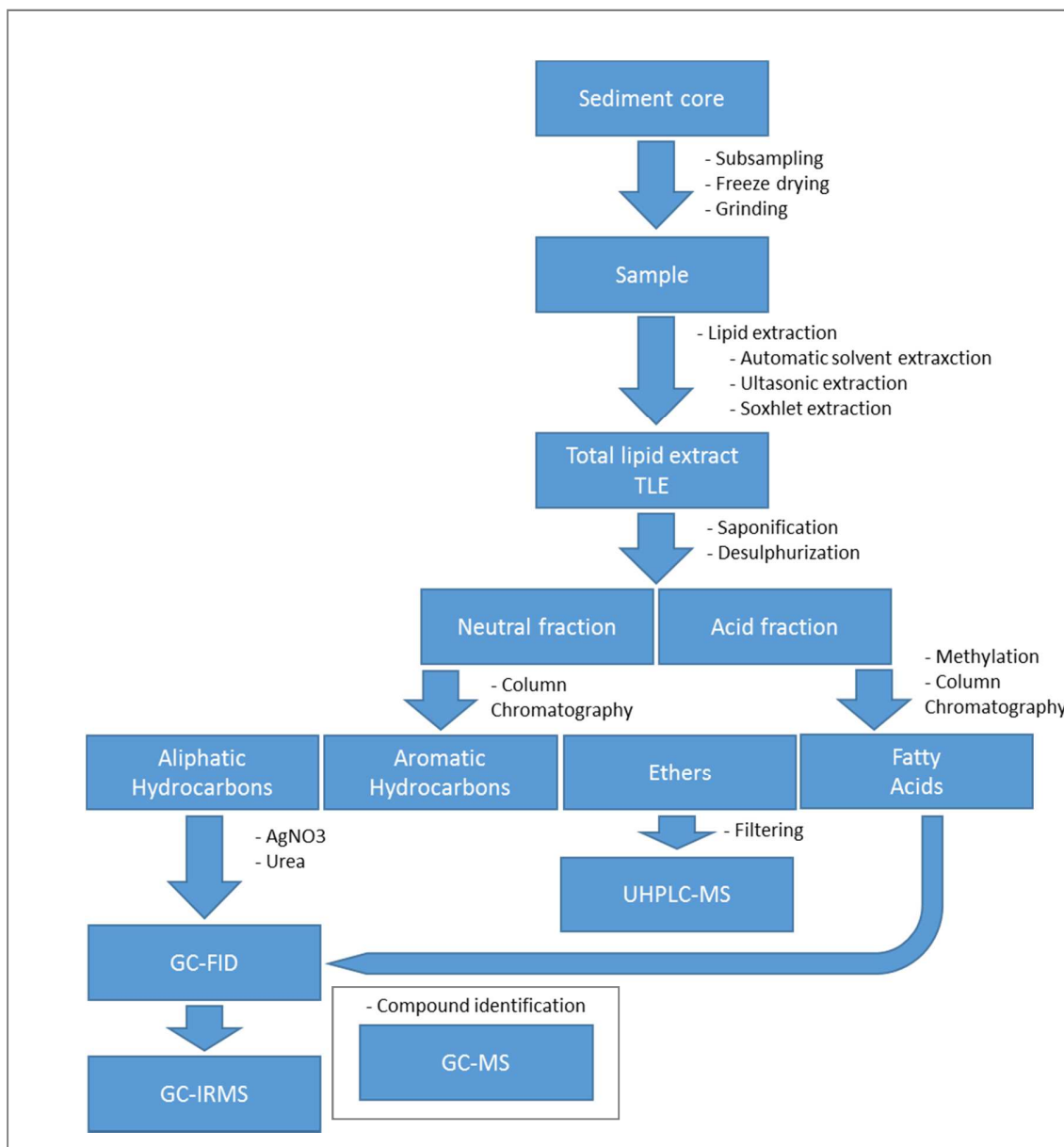
For lipid analyses, the sediment samples have to be ground and freeze-dried. Subsequently, the lipid extraction can be performed by different extraction techniques depending on, for example, sample size, -quantity, and designated compounds:

1. Accelerated solvent extraction (ASE); The ASE exhibits an automated extraction method at elevated pressure and temperature (e.g. 150 bar, 100°C).
2. Ultrasonic extraction; During the ultrasonic extraction, the sediment samples are sequentially extracted in an ultrasonic bath using solvents of decreasing polarity.
3. Soxhlet extraction; Soxhlet extraction exhibits a distillation-condensation extraction method with a mixture of solvents over a longer time period (e.g. 48 h).

After lipid extraction and solvent evaporation, the total lipid extract (TLE) is saponified with 0.5 molar potassium hydroxide (KOH) and Methanol (MeOH) : ultrapure water (H<sup>2</sup>O<sub>MQ</sub>) to release bound fatty acids by the cleavage of ester bonds. Subsequently, the neutral lipids are extracted from the TLE with potassium chloride (KCl) and an organic solvent. The neutral lipids, still containing a multitude of different compounds, can be further separated into fractions of different polarity by column chromatography. The chromatographic separation is based on the



different adsorption of the eluted (mobile phase) analyte compounds to a silica gel ( $\text{SiO}_2$ ) column (stationary phase). Compound classes usually include: 1. Aliphatic hydrocarbons, 2. Aromatic Hydrocarbons, 3. Ethers.



**Figure 10.** Schematic diagram of analytical methods for lipid analyses.

The aliphatic hydrocarbon fraction can be further treated with silver nitrate ( $\text{AgNO}_3$ ) and/or urea ( $\text{CH}_4\text{N}_2\text{O}$ ) for a separation of unsaturated and branched compounds. The remaining saturated aliphatic hydrocarbon fraction (*n*-alkanes) is analyzed on a gas chromatograph equipped with a

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flame ionization detector (GC-FID). Compound identification can be obtained by mass-spectrometry (GC-MS) and the addition of external standards to the samples. For the analysis of GDGTs, the ether fractions has to be filtered with a 0.45  $\mu\text{m}$  Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) filter using Hexane (hex) : Isopropanol (IPA). GDGTs are analyzed on an ultrahigh performance liquid chromatograph equipped with a mass spectrometer (UHPLC-MS).

The residual lipid fraction of the TLE is treated with concentrated Hydrochloric acid ( $\text{HCl}_{\text{conc}}$ ). Subsequently, fatty acids are extracted with dichloromethane (DCM) and then methylated with a mixture of MeOH :  $\text{HCl}_{\text{conc}}$  at 80 °C for a minimum of 10 hours. In cases of subsequent isotopic analyses, the MeOH has to be of a known isotopic composition due to the transferring of a methyl group in the process of methylation. Subsequently, non-methylated compounds are removed by column chromatography using DCM : hexane (2:1). Remaining fatty acids (*n*-alkanoic acids) are analyzed on a GC-FID. Compound specific stable isotope analysis of hydrogen and carbon of the *n*-alkanes and fatty acids are carried out on a gas chromatograph equipped with an isotope ratio mass spectrometer (GC-IRMS).

### **3. Neoglacial changes in atmospheric circulation patterns over the North Atlantic and Fennoscandia recorded in Lake Torneträsk sediments**

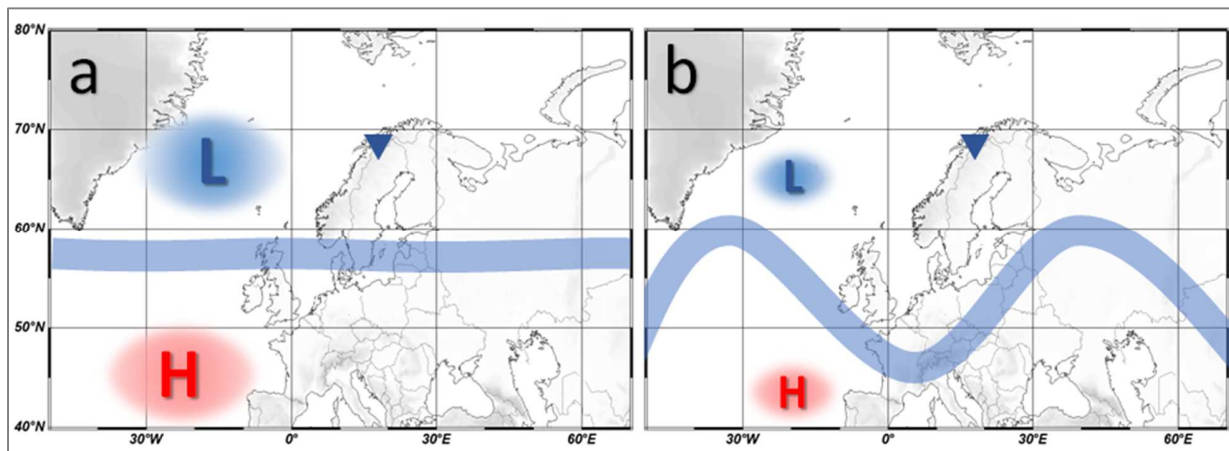
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Earth's northern hemisphere high latitude regions are much more sensitive to climatic change than low latitude regions due to their susceptibility to external climatic forcing and substantial internal amplification through positive feedback mechanisms. Positive feedbacks, working in both temperature directions, involve primarily ice-albedo, ice-insulation, vegetation, and permafrost feedbacks (Bigelow et al., 2003; ACIA, 2005; Miller et al., 2010a; Miller et al., 2010b; Stocker, 2014). Understanding the behavior and modulation of intrinsic factors and thresholds in response to extrinsic and intrinsic forcing is therefore critical to determine the response of high latitude regions to climatic change.

The European high latitudes are located downwind of the North Atlantic, which exerts the dominant influence on atmospheric pressure and circulation patterns, primarily as a result of northward heat advection by the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC; Marshall et al., 2001; Slonosky et al., 2001) and its ability to alter the sinuosity and amplitude of the jet streams via the North Atlantic/Arctic oscillation (NAO/AO; Frankignoul et al., 2013; Wen et al., 2016). Variabilities intrinsic to the AMOC and complex interactions between the North Atlantic and the atmosphere are complicating the identification of the impact of external climate forcing and regional responses during the Holocene. Gradually decreasing temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere high latitudes (Wanner et al., 2008; Sejrup et al., 2016) have been linked to the orbitally forced decline in boreal summer insolation throughout the Holocene (Berger and Loutre, 1991; Miller et al., 2010b). Moreover, as of to date it is suggested that insolation changes also resulted in a long-term southward shift of the Northern Hemisphere atmospheric circulation systems over the course of the Holocene (Seppä and Poska, 2004; Knudsen et al., 2011; Wirth et al., 2013; Benito et al., 2015), similarly to a long-term weakening of the North Atlantic/Arctic Oscillation (NAO/AO) index (Rimbu et al., 2003; Andersen et al., 2004; de Vernal et al., 2005). In turn, this long-term Holocene trend of southward migrating atmospheric circulation systems in combination with an inferred stronger sinuosity of the polar frontal jet is thought to have led to a decrease in westerly zonal airflow and to an increase in meridional circulation (Shemesh et al., 2001; Hammarlund et al., 2002; Rosqvist et al., 2007; Jonsson et al., 2010; Jessen et al., 2011). Reduction of westerly airflow is consequently thought to have led to a decreased supply of warm and moist air from the North Atlantic relative to cold and dry air from the Arctic and Baltic Sea

(Rosqvist et al., 2004; Jonsson et al., 2010). Despite the wealth of information concerning the general long-term Holocene trend of changes in the pattern and style of atmospheric circulation in the North Atlantic realm, relatively little is known about potential climatic and environmental thresholds associated with the transitional pattern.

Owing to its climate being influenced by both the North Atlantic and the polar frontal zone (Fig. 11), northern Fennoscandia can be regarded as a key region to better understand the regional expression and potential threshold effects of the insolation-forced migration of atmospheric circulation systems.



**Figure 11.** Map of Fennoscandia and the North Atlantic region with schematic positions of the polar frontal zone (blue line) at (a) positive NAO/AO index and (b) negative NAO/AO. Asterisk marks the location of Lake Torneträsk.

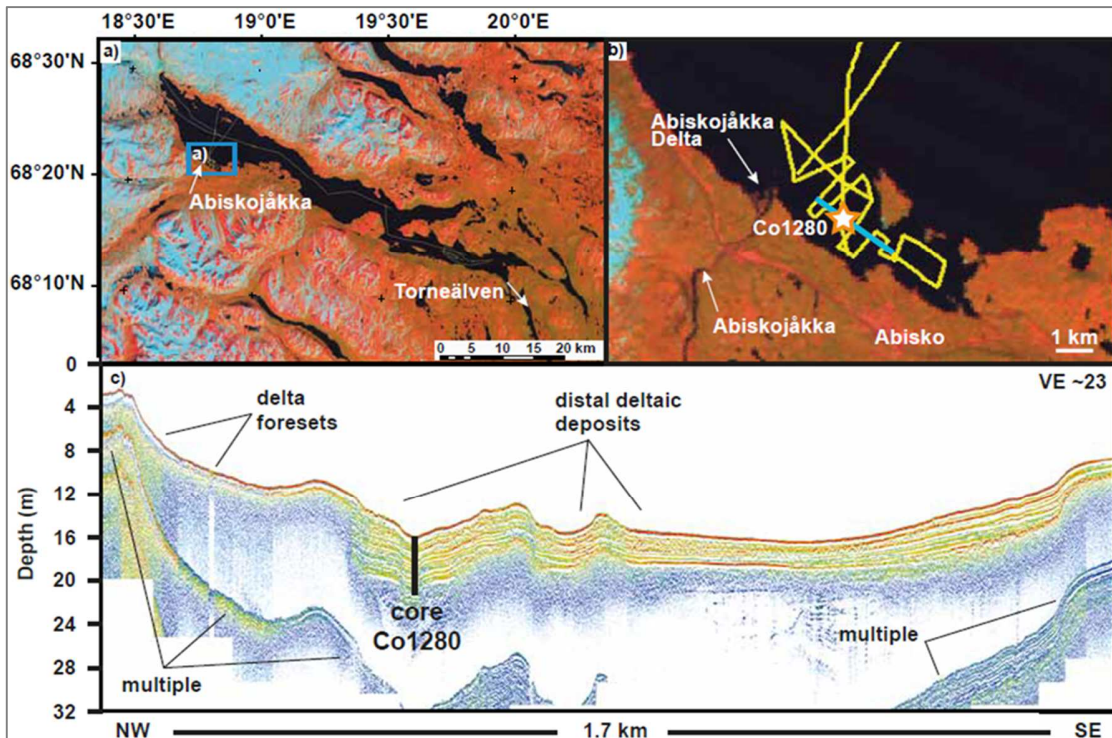
Previous reconstructions (Shemesh et al., 2001; Hammarlund et al., 2002; Rosqvist et al., 2007; Andersson et al., 2010) of changes in atmospheric circulation patterns in this region are based on the stable oxygen isotope composition of endogenic carbonates/microfossils ( $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carbonate}}$ ). Changing in-lake factors such as lake hydrology and temperature, seasonality of precipitation, or changes in taxa/species assemblages may, however, bias the paleoclimatic information obtained from  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  analyses. To overcome these limitations and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Holocene climate-environment interactions, we applied sedimentological and geochemical tools to a lacustrine sedimentary sequence from the representative subarctic catchment of Lake Torneträsk (northernmost Sweden). We used compound-specific  $\delta\text{D}$  analysis of long chain fatty acids (vascular plant leaf wax lipids) and utilized sediment imprints of heavy precipitation events to deduce changes in precipitation sourcing, amount, and intensity. Variations in  $\delta\text{D}$  of fatty acids provide a signal of the changing rainfall isotopic compositions (Sachse et al., 2012) depending on moisture sources and, thus, allow reconstructing atmospheric

circulation changes. In addition, we analyzed branched and isoprenoidal glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraethers (GDGTs) to reconstruct soil erosion processes (BIT index) and to determine changes in mean air temperatures (MAT) that we also use for the evaluation of the temperature fractionation effect. Plant wax lipid proxies (concentrations and chain-length distribution of *n*-alkanes and fatty acids) offer additional insights into local environmental/vegetational feedbacks owing to Lake Torneträsk's sensitivity to experience large biotic shifts (MacDonald et al., 1993; Körner 1998; Barnekow, 1999) due to its location at the present-day tree line.

### 3.1 Site description

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Lake Torneträsk (68°29'–68°11' N, 20°01'–18°36' E; 341 m.a.s.l.; 70 km long, 10 km wide; 330 km<sup>2</sup> surface area; 3350 km<sup>2</sup> catchment; maximum water depth 168 m) is located in the subarctic landscape of NW Sweden, about 50 km east of the Atlantic coast (Fig. 11). The catchment reaches up to 1,800 m.a.s.l. and is drained by several small streams and rivers. The Abiskoån River (Fig. 12) entering to the West of the Abisko village is the largest inlet with a discharge of 14 m<sup>3</sup>·s<sup>-1</sup>. The climate of the Torneträsk region is characterized by a strong oceanicity/continentality gradient from West to East intensified by the orographic effect of the Scandes Mountains (Barnekow, 1999), which results in mean annual precipitation between ~300 and 850 mm (1961–1990; Alexandersson and Eggertsson Karlström, 2001). Precipitation seasonality shows opposite patterns with elevated precipitation in the western compared to the eastern catchment of Lake Torneträsk during winter months and vice versa during summer months. Annual precipitation amount is, however, equally distributed throughout the year. Temperatures (-0.8°C MAT at Abisko station; 388 m.a.s.l., 1971-1990; Alexandersson and Eggertsson Karlström, 2001) show a strong seasonal contrast of extended winters (October–April) with average temperatures of approximately -7°C and short summers (May–September) with average temperatures of on average +7.5°C. The lake is (ultra-) oligotrophic and streams carry only low amounts of dissolved and suspended loads (Jonasson and Nyberg 1999; Andrén et al. 2002) resulting in low sedimentation rates in the distal parts of the lake (Vogel et al., 2013) and minor autochthonous sedimentation (Meyer-Jacob et al., in review). The amount of suspended loads can, however, increase substantially during rare albeit heavy precipitation events occurring during summer months (Jonasson and Nyberg 1999). The present day vegetation in the catchment consists mainly of open subarctic/-alpine birch forest (< 700 m.a.s.l.; Barnekow, 1999) with sporadic stands of pine (< 450 m.a.s.l.) in the SE part of the catchment. Above the present-day tree line dwarf-shrubs, grasses, sedges, and herbs prevail.



**Figure 12.** a) Lake Torneträsk satellite image. b) Coring location of core Co1280. Yellow line indicates track lines of hydroacoustic profiles. c) Seismic profile (blue line) crosscutting Abiskojåkka delta from NW to SE including location of core Co1280. For details on hydroacoustic data acquisition see Vogel et al. (2013).

### 3.2 Material and Methods

The Co1280 composite sequence (600 cm) was recovered from a small embayment in the north-western part of Lake Torneträsk that receiving fluvial sediment supply from the Abiskojåkka River (Fig. 12) in spring 2012. The coring location was chosen based on hydro-acoustic sub-bottom data showing an acoustically stratified and undisturbed sediment package (Fig. 12; Vogel et al. 2013). Sediments in our composite core comprise glacio-fluvial deposits between 600 cm and 410 cm followed by distal deltaic-lacustrine sediments deposited below base level between 410 cm and the core top (Tab. 3). The chronology of Co1280 is based on AMS  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages of seven terrestrial plant macrofossils sampled between 51 cm and 319 cm depth and two bulk sediment samples from 338 cm and 389 cm depth. Conventional radiocarbon ages were calibrated using the IntCal09 calibration curve (Reimer et al. 2009). The age-depth model was fitted using the Bayesian age-depth modelling software Bacon 2.2. (Blaauw & Christensen 2011).

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**Table 3.** AMS  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages of terrestrial plant macrofossils and bulk sediment samples from Core Co1280.

Origin	Location	Core	Depth [cm]	$^{14}\text{C}$ yr BP error	2 sigma cal yr BP age range	Probability distribution
Terrestrial	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-6	51.00	671 ± 47	<b>619-684</b> 553-613	<b>50.9</b> 43.9
Terrestrial	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-5-II	83.80	2371 ± 19	<b>2345-2439</b> 2449-2455	<b>93.1</b> 1.8
Terrestrial	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-3-I	132.80	3374 ± 20	<b>3572-3643</b> 3664-3685	<b>83.4</b> 11.5
Terrestrial	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-5-III	177.80	4002 ± 20	<b>4462-4520</b> 4422-4453	<b>64.6</b> 30.1
Terrestrial	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-5-III	210.60	4789 ± 23	<b>5474-5549</b> 5573-5589	<b>80.2</b> 14.7
Terrestrial	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-3-II	244.60	5619 ± 25	<b>6316-6448</b>	<b>95</b>
Terrestrial	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-3-3	319.00	7412 ± 62	<b>8154-8374</b> 8052-8093 8108-8119 8133-8139	<b>88.7</b> 4.6 1.1 0.6
Lake	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-3-III	338.40	7496 ± 25	<b>8298-8381</b> 8211-8259	<b>79.6</b> 15.4
Lake	Tometräsk Lake - Abisko Bay, NW Sweden	Co_1280-4-1	389.00	9333 ± 69	<b>10369-10710</b> 10298-10334 10336-10357	<b>89.9</b> 3.3 1.7

The molecular analyses were performed on 28 freeze-dried and homogenized samples, which were Soxhlet-extracted using a mixture of dichloromethane and methanol (9:1 v:v). The lipid extract was saponified and further separated into polarity fractions using  $\text{SiO}_2$  column chromatography (Höfle et al., 2013). *n*-Alkanes and fatty acids were analyzed on an Agilent 7890 series II GC-FID following the method described by Höfle et al. (2013) and quantified against authentic external standards including normalization to total organic carbon (TOC) content. GDGTs were analyzed using an Agilent 1290 UHPLC coupled to an Agilent 6460 QQQ equipped with an APCI ion source operated in SIM mode according to Hopmans et al. (2016). MBT'/CBT values were calibrated to annual MAT using the calibration of De Jonge et al. (2014) and Peterse et al. (2012). Compound-specific stable isotope analysis ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta\text{D}$ ) were conducted on the most abundant  $\text{C}_{28}$  and  $\text{C}_{26}$  fatty acids.  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  compositions were measured using a Thermo Trace GC coupled to a Finnigan MAT 252 isotope-ratio monitoring-mass spectrometer (irm-MS) via a modified Finnigan GC/C III combustion interface operated at 1000 °C.  $\delta\text{D}$  was measured with a Thermo Trace GC coupled to a Thermo Fischer Scientific MAT 253 irm-MS via a pyrolysis reactor operated at 1420 °C. Methods were following Häggi et al. (2016). The isotope values were measured at least twice against calibrated reference gas using  $\text{H}_2$  for  $\delta\text{D}$  and  $\text{CO}_2$  for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and are reported in ‰ versus VSMOW and VPDB, respectively. The long-term precision monitored by external standard analyses is 0.3‰ for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and 2.8‰ for  $\delta\text{D}$ . Flood layer identification is based

on macroscopic core descriptions and aided by characteristic elemental distributions and density variations in the sediment core. For this purpose, scanning-XRF elemental analyses (2mm) and radiographic imaging (200 $\mu$ m) were conducted using an ITRAX XRF core scanner (Cox Ltd.) equipped with a Mo X-ray tube set to 30 kV and 30 mA and 50 kV and 50 mA, respectively. Grey-value calculations for flood layer identification were performed using ImageJ (National Institute of Health, USA, ImageJ 1.45s) and BMPix according to Weber et al. (2010). Flood frequency and flood layer thickness are calculated as a 100 yr moving average and a 100 yr mean, respectively (Wirth et al., 2013).

### 3.3 Results and Discussion

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#### 3.3.1 Hydrological source signatures

The Torneträsk catchment receives moisture from three different sources. Moisture advected over the North Atlantic is the predominant source for precipitation, especially for the westernmost parts of the catchment. During periods of a decreased pressure gradient between the North Atlantic and the European continent, the polar frontal zone and the polar jet migrate southwards (Rosqvist et al., 2007) and the Torneträsk catchment receives moisture from the Arctic Ocean and the Baltic Sea (Jonsson et al., 2009). These three different moisture sources are characterized by different D/H isotopic compositions as Arctic and Baltic surface seawaters are both D-depleted relative to the North Atlantic surface waters (Bigg and Rohling, 2000; LeGrande and Schmidt, 2006). In addition, the lower temperatures during evaporation and higher continentality of moisture originating from the Arctic and the Baltic Sea lead to enhanced D-depletion of precipitation from these sources (Rosqvist et al., 2007; Jonsson et al., 2009). Since cuticular leaf wax lipids from vascular plants incorporate the D/H isotopic composition of precipitation (Sachse et al., 2012), changes in the relative contributions of these moisture sources and, by inference, atmospheric circulation patterns across northern Sweden during the Holocene can be traced using compound-specific  $\delta$ D analysis. The Torneträsk compound-specific  $\delta$ D values of the *n*-C<sub>28</sub> and *n*-C<sub>26</sub> fatty acid (Fig. 13, Tab. 4) agree well ( $r^2 = 0.6$ ) and range from -204.1‰ to -185.9‰ (*n*-C<sub>28</sub>) and -202.3‰ and -184.7‰ (*n*-C<sub>26</sub>). In the following, we are referring to  $\delta$ D<sub>C28</sub> as  $\delta$ D<sub>wax</sub>. At Lake Torneträsk,  $\delta$ D<sub>wax</sub> values mainly reflect the summer precipitation  $\delta$ D between May and September due to temperature and light limitations of plant growth in the high latitudes during the rest of the year. However, during snowmelt in May/June, meltwater and associated soil moisture might also contribute to a limited amount to the plants' source water. To confirm



summer precipitation as the major water source for plants, the fractionation factor between the plant wax lipid and the environmental water ( $\epsilon_{\text{wax/water}}$ ) can be calculated using the equation:

$$(9) \quad \epsilon_{\text{wax/water}} = 1000 * [(\delta D_{\text{wax}} + 1000) / (\delta D_{\text{precipitation}} + 1000) - 1]$$

Thus, the Torneträsk (core-top  $\delta D_{\text{wax}}$  -204.1‰) kinetic isotope fractionation factor for  $C_{28}$  metabolized using summer season precipitation, (calculated with isotopic data from Namikaa, Abisko, and Kiruna stations 1975–1980; IAEA/WMO), amounts to  $\epsilon_{\text{wax/water}} = -127.8‰$ . Winter season precipitation exhibits more D-depleted values resulting in a kinetic fractionation factor of  $\epsilon_{\text{wax/water}} = -95.3‰$ . Mean fractionations between precipitation and fatty acids ( $\epsilon_{\text{wax/water}}$ ) of -117‰ (trees) and -171‰ (grasses) were found by Hou et al. (2007). Data obtained by Wilkie et al. (2013) for Lake El'Gygytgyn show a mean fractionation between modern day vegetation  $n\text{-}C_{28}$  and source water of -125‰ (streams) and -116‰ (precipitation) respectively. Despite large interspecies variations in  $\epsilon_{\text{wax/water}}$  (Hou et al., 2007), these values lie much more closely to the Torneträsk summer season  $\epsilon_{\text{wax/water}}$ . Hence, we assume summer precipitation to be the major source of water utilized by plants at our study site, with minor seasonality effects of the source water  $\delta D$  signature during the Holocene. Furthermore, isotopic fractionation effects caused by evaporation can also largely be excluded in the Torneträsk catchment due to the high relative humidity (~0.7) throughout the year and resulting low evaporation rates (~100-150 mm), (Hammarlund et al., 2002). These data argue against an evaporative loss of soil water and transpiration of leaf water (Sachse et al., 2012) and are confirmed by the good agreement ( $r^2 = 0.84$ ) of the slope of the local meteoric water line after Jonsson et al. (2009)

$$(10) \quad \delta D = 7.2 * \delta 18O + 0.3‰$$

and the global meteoric water line (Rozanski et al., 1993) in the Torneträsk region. Accordingly, changes of the molecular D/H isotopic composition throughout the Holocene are interpreted to be largely driven by changes of the atmospheric moisture source. Changes in local condensation temperatures affecting  $\delta D_{\text{wax}}$  values (Dansgaard, 1964; Bowen, 2008) are accounted for by measurements of MBT'/CBT-derived mean summer air temperatures (Fig. 13, Tab. 4). Reliability of the temperature reconstruction is confirmed by the good agreement of the MBT'/CBT core-top value of 5.2°C with instrumental measurements of the Abisko meteorological station during

the summer season (6.3°C during May-October) implying limited bacterial metabolism and brGDGT production during winter when soils are frozen (Weijers et al., 2007a; Rueda et al., 2009).

**Table 4.** Molecular and isotopic data of Core Co1280.

Age (cal yrs BP)	Depth (cm.)	<sup>a</sup> Σ HMW n-alkanes (μg/g TOC)	<sup>b</sup> Σ HMW fatty acids (μg/g TOC)	<sup>c</sup> ACL n-alkanes	<sup>d</sup> BIT	<sup>e</sup> MAT (°C)	<sup>f</sup> MAT (°C)	<sup>g</sup> δD <sub>C26</sub> (‰)	<sup>g</sup> δD <sub>C28</sub> (‰)	<sup>h</sup> δ <sup>13</sup> C <sub>C26</sub> (‰)	<sup>h</sup> δ <sup>13</sup> C <sub>C28</sub> (‰)
-60	0	185	1453	29.0	0.95	5.2	-2.6	-202.3	-204.1	-32.7	-33.0
300	29	175	1372	29.1	0.94	4.8	0.0	-200.3	-200.0	-31.7	-32.4
600	50	188	1410	29.1	0.95	5.0	-0.2	-198.3	-197.1	-31.8	-32.1
910	68	132	1003	29.2	0.94	4.9	-0.1	-198.0	-192.5	-31.8	-32.1
1,200	83	190	1166	29.2	0.90	5.7	0.3	-196.2	-192.5	-31.4	-32.0
1,500	97	282	1584	29.2	0.92	5.9	0.8	-198.1	-191.8	-31.9	-32.2
1,800	110	239	1517	28.0	0.82	5.6	1.8	-189.0	-188.9	-32.5	-32.2
2,090	122	133	767	29.0	0.91	5.2	0.2	-194.8	-189.3	-31.9	-32.3
2,400	134	140	884	29.0	0.88	5.6	0.5	-196.0	-193.6	-31.5	-32.0
2,690	145	114	1160	28.9	0.89	5.2	0.8	-197.1	-192.4	-31.7	-32.2
3,000	156	180	1017	29.1	0.88	5.2	0.8	-197.3	-191.9	-31.8	-32.1
3,490	173	142	1045	29.2	0.89	5.9	0.7	-197.2	-194.6	-31.7	-32.2
4,000	190	92	626	28.9	0.85	5.4	0.9	-193.6	-187.9	-31.8	-32.4
4,500	206	92	664	28.8	0.85	5.8	0.3	-191.8	-186.3	-31.8	-32.1
4,970	221	132	682	28.5	0.79	5.7	1.0	-189.1	-185.9	-32.1	-32.1
5,500	237	94	735	28.5	0.77	5.6	1.4	-191.0	-187.2	-31.8	-32.1
5,790	246	89	587	28.7	0.79	6.1	1.2	-191.8	-186.4	-31.9	-32.1
6,090	255	108		28.6	0.76	4.9	0.8	-	-	-	-
6,390	264	80	606	28.3	0.75	5.7	1.6	-192.9	-188.4	-32.1	-32.3
6,690	273	22	395	27.8	0.73	5.1	1.2	-189.9	-186.4	-32.0	-32.3
7,000	282	193	651	28.2	0.76	6.0	1.5	-190.3	-186.3	-31.9	-32.1
7,500	297	107	789	27.9	0.77	5.6	1.3	-190.3	-187.1	-31.7	-32.2
8,000	312	118	888	28.2	0.79	6.6	2.2	-192.4	-188.0	-32.1	-32.4
8,500	327	131	830	28.2	0.80	5.9	2.2	-192.1	-188.1	-32.4	-32.4
8,990	342	197	1073	28.2	0.80	5.6	2.2	-197.5	-189.3	-32.0	-32.4
9,490	357	108	488	29.1	0.90	6.2	0.4	-196.7	-187.9	-31.5	-31.9
9,980	372	147	1077	28.2	0.82	5.9	1.1	-186.3	-189.3	-32.2	-32.5
10,500	388	90	579	28.3	0.86	6.2	1.0	-184.7	-187.2	-31.6	-31.9

<sup>a</sup> (C<sub>27</sub>+C<sub>29</sub>+C<sub>31</sub>+C<sub>33</sub>)

<sup>b</sup> (C<sub>26</sub>+C<sub>28</sub>+C<sub>30</sub>+C<sub>32</sub>)

<sup>c</sup> (C<sub>27</sub>\*27+C<sub>29</sub>\*29+C<sub>31</sub>\*31+C<sub>33</sub>\*33) / (C<sub>27</sub>+C<sub>29</sub>+C<sub>31</sub>+C<sub>33</sub>)

<sup>d</sup> According to De Jonge et al. (2014)

<sup>e</sup> According to De Jonge et al. (2014)

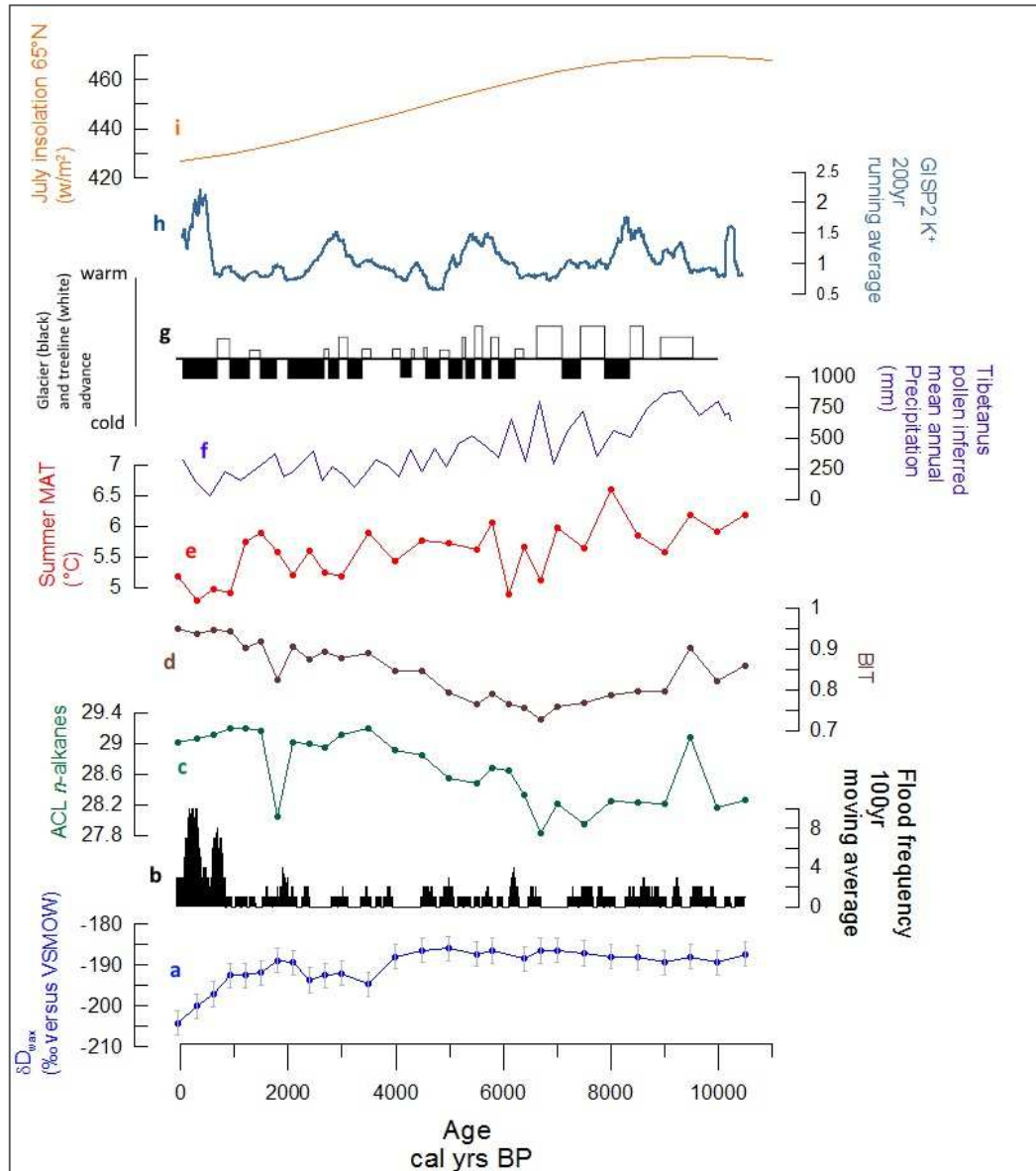
<sup>f</sup> According to Peterse et al. (2012)

<sup>g</sup> calculated vs VSMOW

<sup>h</sup> calculated vs VPDB

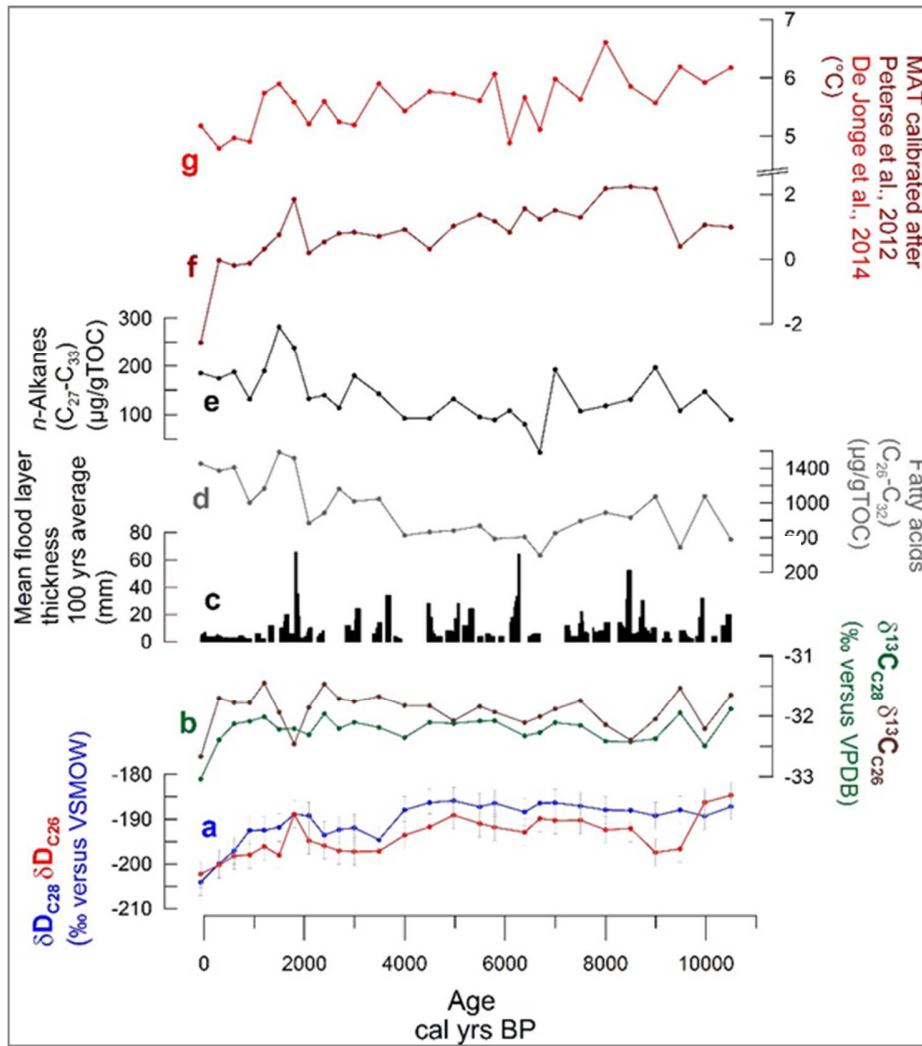
### 3.3.2 Reconstruction of the Holocene hydrological and environmental history

Throughout the Early and Mid Holocene, until  $\sim 4,000$  cal yrs BP, the  $\delta D_{wax}$  record shows little variability with D-enriched values between  $-189.3\text{‰}$  and  $-185.9\text{‰}$  implying stable moisture sourcing primarily from the North Atlantic through predominantly westerly/zonal atmospheric circulation.



**Figure 13.** Biomarker and inorganic data of core Co1280 plotted against age. (a)  $\delta D_{wax}$ , (b) flood frequency, (c) *n*-alkane ACL, (d) BIT index, (e) summer MAT. Also shown are (f) pollen-inferred mean annual precipitation at Lake Tibetanus (Barnekow 1999), (g) Scandinavian glacier and tree line advance (Karlén and Kuylenstierna, 1996), (h) GISP2 potassium ( $K^+$ ; ppb) ion (Mayewski et al., 1997) and (i) July insolation at  $65^\circ N$  calculated after Berger and Loutre (1991).

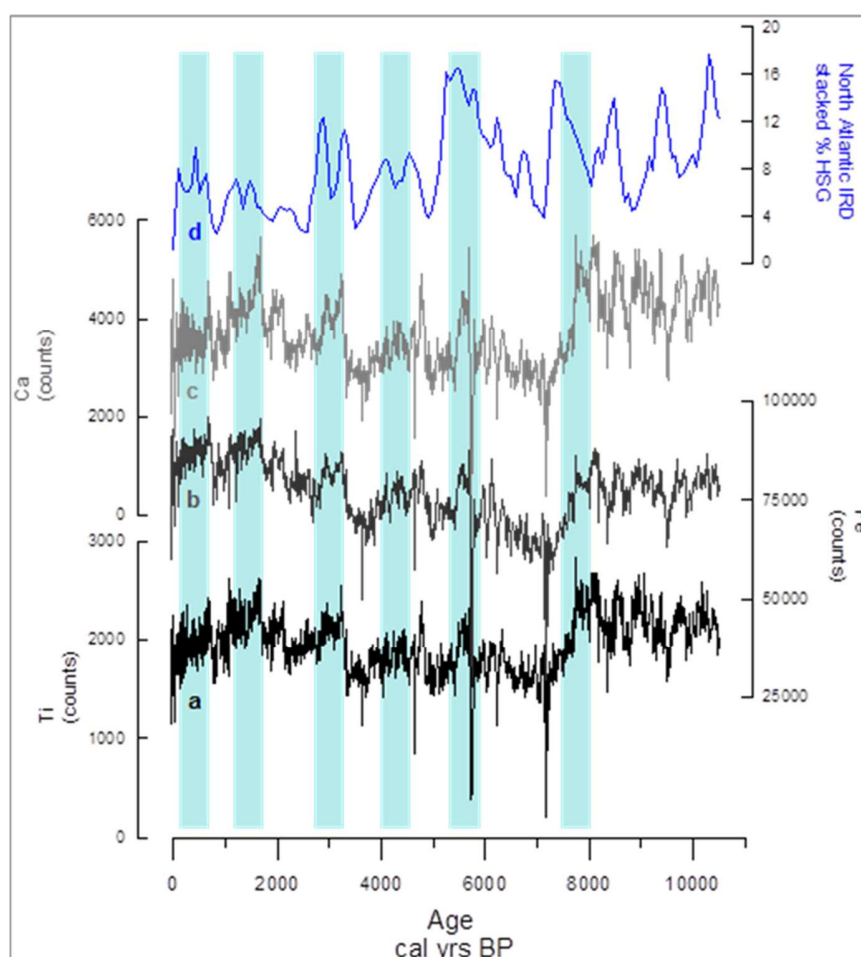
This is also suggested by studies of sea ice cover variability (de Vernal et al., 2005) and North Atlantic SSTs (Rimbu et al., 2003; Andersen et al., 2004), which suggest an early Holocene atmospheric state similar to a positive AO/NAO situation, commonly associated with an increase in westerly winds. Furthermore, modeling atmospheric circulation patterns indicate that the Icelandic Low and the polar frontal jet were located further north during the early Holocene compared to today due to increased summer insolation resulting in an increased westerly flow (Harrison et al., 1992). In addition, Fennoscandian pollen data suggest an enhanced oceanic climate during the Early Holocene compared to today (Giesecke et al., 2008). The Torneträsk  $\delta D_{wax}$  record in combination with the other regional reconstructions, thus, suggests a predominance of moisture sourcing from the North Atlantic as a result of a prevailing positive NAO/AO index and/or a northward position of the polar front. MBT'/CBT-derived mean summer air temperatures amount to  $\sim 6^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the Early Holocene. Deglaciation of the Torneträsk area, including the drainage of the ice-dammed precursor lake and the establishment of the present day shoreline and catchment morphology of Lake Torneträsk around  $\sim 9,500$  cal yrs BP (Shemesh et al., 2001; Stroeven et al., 2002; Bigler et al., 2003). During the deglaciation, strong fluctuations of high molecular weight (HMW) *n*-alkanes ( $\text{C}_{27}$ - $\text{C}_{33}$ ) and fatty acids ( $\text{C}_{26}$ - $\text{C}_{32}$ ) concentrations (Fig. 14, Tab. 4), in the branched and isoprenoid tetraether (BIT) index (up to 0.9 at  $\sim 9,500$  cal yrs BP; Fig. 13, Tab. 4), and high Ti, Fe, and Ca counts all indicate a strong susceptibility of minerogenic and organic substrates to erosion (Fig. 15, appendix). Furthermore, flood frequency and mean flood layer thickness show relatively high variability but low recurrence rates of significant flood events until about 8,000 cal yrs BP (Fig. 13, 14). At  $\sim 8,000$  cal yrs BP we observe a temperature maximum ( $6.6^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) consistent with the Holocene thermal maximum (HTM) in the North Atlantic region (Davis et al., 2003; Andersen et al., 2004; Sejrup et al., 2016) and high boreal summer insolation (Berger and Loutre, 1991). During the HTM between about 8,500 cal yrs BP and 6,000 cal yrs BP, Ti, Fe, and Ca counts decrease and the BIT index declines to as low as 0.75 at 6,700 cal yrs BP suggesting vegetation-driven soil stabilization and reduced catchment erosion. In conjunction with the flood record, indicating lowest recurrence rates between 8,000 and 6,500 cal yrs BP, this suggests reduced occurrence of heavy precipitation events and soil erosion. The increase of the proportion of woody vegetation during the HTM in the Torneträsk catchment, as documented in local vegetation reconstructions (Barnekow, 1999; 2000), is also clearly reflected by low values of the average chain length (ACL) of the odd-numbered HMW *n*-alkanes (27.8 at 6,700 cal yrs BP; Fig. 13, Tab. 4). These combined datasets suggest that soil stabilization by a denser and more extensive vegetation cover is the main factor reducing soil erosion during the HTM.



**Figure 14.** Lake Torneträsk, Core Co1280: Diagram of biomarker and inorganic data plotted against age. a)  $\delta D_{C_{28}}$  (blue),  $\delta D_{C_{26}}$  (red), b)  $\delta^{13}C_{C_{28}}$  (green),  $\delta^{13}C_{C_{26}}$  (brown), c) mean flood layer thickness, d) concentration of HMW fatty acids, e) concentration of HMW *n*-alkanes, f) MBT'/CBT derived MAT calibrated after Peterse et al. (2012), g) MBT'/CBT-derived MAT calibrated after De Jonge et al. (2014).

From the temperature maximum at 8,000 yrs cal BP until present, MATs show a cooling trend of  $\sim 1.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  until present as a result of glacio-isostatic uplift of Fennoscandia and a decrease of Northern Hemisphere summer insolation. Considering a glacio-isostatic uplift of about 100 m since 9,000 cal yrs BP and a general lapse rate for Fennoscandia of  $0.57^{\circ}\text{C}/100\text{ m}$  (Laaksonen, 1976), the cooling effect due to the uplift is about  $0.6^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Palynological data imply subsequent vegetational changes after the HTM from a boreal forest to today's open subalpine woodland and the retreat of the tree-line due to decreasing temperatures and increasing continentality in the Torneträsk catchment (Barnekow, 1999; 2000). These changes are also mirrored by an increasing

trend in the ACL from the HTM (27.8 at 6,700 cal yrs BP) until the modern period (29.2 at 900 cal yrs BP), indicating decreasing contributions from woody and herbaceous vegetation (Cranwell, 1973; D'Anjou et al., 2012). Likewise, the BIT index shows a long-term increasing trend after 6,700 cal yrs BP until present (to 0.95) in tandem with rising ACL values ( $r^2=0.6$ ) suggesting a strong coupling of decreasing vegetation cover and enhanced catchment erosion. Furthermore, concentrations of HMW *n*-alkanes and fatty acids increase between 6,700 cal yrs BP and the present by factors of eight and four, respectively. This increase is paralleled by higher elemental counts confirming a trend towards enhanced detrital silici-clastic input. This long-term trend in the XRF-derived terrigenous elemental data is superimposed by centennial to millennial fluctuations, which are in good temporal agreement with maxima of ice rafted debris (IRD) supply from the North Atlantic (Bond et al., 1997; 2001), indicating a strong coupling to the North Atlantic circulation pattern (Fig. 15).



**Figure 15.** Elemental data of core Co1280 showing a) Titanium (Ti), b) Iron (Fe), and c) Calcium (Ca). Also shown is d) North Atlantic drift ice stack (in percentage variations in petrologic tracers; Bond et al., 2001).

These events are commonly associated with colder conditions and northerly/northeasterly winds due to a short-term southward shift of the polar frontal zone (Bond et al., 2001; Rosqvist et al., 2004). The cold conditions most likely enhanced catchment erosion through a decreasing vegetation cover and promoted export of minerogenic substrates in the Torneträsk catchment. The rapid climatic fluctuations are, however, indiscernible in the biomarker records, most probably due to the coarse sample resolution (~350 yrs) and sedimentary integration (~110 yrs) and, thus, a lack of sensitivity for these short-term changes. Thus, the suggested link between catchment erosion and climatically driven reduction in vegetation cover and the retreating tree line after the HTM is further invigorated.

Between ~4,000 and ~3,500 cal yrs BP, the  $\delta D_{wax}$  values decrease by -6.7 ‰ to as low as -194.6‰. Similar substantial shifts towards a more depleted isotopic composition are also displayed by  $\delta^{18}O$  studies from the region (Shemesh et al., 2001; Hammarlund et al., 2003; Jonsson et al., 2010). The overall increasing trends of BIT index, the elemental data, and in the plant-derived lipid biomarker records since 6,700 yrs cal BP continue implying sustained and enhanced mobilization and transport of soil organic matter in response to the negative temperature evolution. The Torneträsk biomarker signals are matched by similar and contemporaneous signals of catchment erosion in sedimentary records from Lake Tibetanus (Barnekow, 1999) and Lake Njulla (Bigler et al., 2003). After ~2,000 cal yrs BP the  $\delta D_{wax}$  values show a rapid further decrease of -15.2‰ to as low as -204.1‰ at the modern core-top coinciding with a dramatic increase in flood frequency and a drop in summer MAT of ~1°C. A peak in  $\delta D_{wax}$  and the biomarker proxies at 1,800 cal yrs BP results from sampling of reworked/-deposited sediments from a thick flood deposit in the core. The overall decrease in  $\delta D_{wax}$  of ~18.2‰ cannot be explained by the amount effect (Dansgaard, 1964; Rozanski et al., 1993). Both, pollen and diatom-inferred precipitation reconstructions in the region suggest a decreasing trend in precipitation since the Mid Holocene (Fig. 13) (Barnekow, 1999; Seppä and Birks, 2001), which would result in D-enrichment. The drop in  $\delta D_{wax}$  can also not be explained by the temperature of condensation effect (Dansgaard, 1964). Changes in the MBT'/CBT-derived MAT suggest that only -4.1‰ change in  $\delta D_{wax}$  can be explained by temperature considering a local temperature dependency of 2.3‰ per °C (calculated from isotopic precipitation data of Namikaa, Abisko, and Kiruna 1975–1980; IAEA/WMO). When using the  $\delta D$ -temperature dependency for North Atlantic coastal stations (Dansgaard, 1964), the temperature effect would similarly only amount to 10.1‰. Likewise, the vegetation changes described above are thought to have only minor impact on the  $\delta D_{wax}$  trend since palynological data (Barnekow, 1999; 2000) reveal a simultaneous advance of both grass (D-depleted) and shrubs (D-enriched);

Hou et al., 2007) over the Mid and Late Holocene. Changes in C<sub>3</sub>/C<sub>4</sub> vegetation can be excluded, since  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{wax}}$  values of -33.0 to -31.5‰ (+0.3‰) (Fig. 14, Tab. 4) reflect predominantly C<sub>3</sub> vegetation (Chikaraishi et al., 2004; Bi et al., 2005) throughout the Holocene. A slight decreasing trend in modern  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values might mirror the anthropogenic Suess effect (Keeling, 1979). Therefore, we assume the remaining overall decrease in  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$  of about -14.1% (-8.1‰) to be the result of relative changes in moisture sources of the Torneträsk region starting at about 4,000 cal yrs BP and intensifying after 2,000 cal yrs BP. Considering the isotopic signatures of the different moisture sources, the decreasing  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$  trend implies a declining influence of westerly airflow and moisture sourcing from the North Atlantic. Instead, influence of northern/north-easterly and south-easterly airflow and moisture sourcing from the Arctic Ocean and Baltic Sea increases. This relative change in moisture sourcing suggests a shift in atmospheric circulation patterns from a dominant zonal to increasingly meridional air-flow. We attribute this re-organization to a southward migration and/or stronger meandering of the polar front/jet due to a decreased sea-level air-pressure gradient between the Arctic and the Eurasian continent (Visbeck et al., 2001). Similarly, alkenone derived sea surface temperature data as well as an atmospheric circulation model suggest an overall weakening of the NAO/AO and a southward shift of the Icelandic low from the Early to the Late Holocene (Harrison et al., 1992; Rimbu et al., 2003; Bendle and Rosell-Melé, 2007). The rapid change in atmospheric circulation is furthermore supported by the simultaneous and substantial increase in flood frequency starting at ~2,000 cal yrs BP and intensifying after 1,200 cal yrs BP. Contrary to other Scandinavian lakes (Stroeven et al., 2002) and similar to most other settings such as the European Alps (e.g. Glur et al. 2013), the occurrence of flood layers in the Torneträsk record is not linked to snow melt, but primarily to heavy precipitation events during summer and fall (Jonasson and Nyberg, 1999). These events are commonly favored by weather patterns with a distinct meridional component, northward low-pressure system trajectories, and primarily associated with a decrease in the westerly airflow (Hellström, 2005). Furthermore, in Sweden such events mostly occur under cyclonic weather conditions, which are more frequent under zonal conditions, but more vigorous and persistent with a higher probability to promoting major floods during a meridional atmospheric flow (Hellström, 2005; Gustafsson et al., 2010;). Interestingly, both our  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$  and flood records show a relatively abrupt and nonlinear response to extrinsic and intrinsic forcings starting at ~2,000 yrs cal BP, unmatched in the remainder of the Holocene record at our site. Additional regional records are, however, required to discern whether this could represent a true regional pattern and



possibly tipping point of the climate system in the Fennoscandian subarctic with consequences for the vulnerable ecosystems.

### 3.4 Summary and Conclusions

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This study underlines that compound-specific leaf wax stable isotopes are able to constrain changes in atmospheric circulation pattern and moisture sourcing throughout the Holocene. Furthermore, lipid biomarker analyses proves to be a valuable tool for the reconstruction of climate-induced soil erosion processes.

Our data reveal a Holocene thermal maximum in the Torneträsk region at ~8,000 cal yrs BP followed by a long-term cooling trend of ~1.8 °C until present due to glacio-isostatic uplift and a decrease in northern hemisphere summer insolation. The resulting retreat of the tree-line and the development from a boreal forest to an open subalpine woodland vegetation most probably led to a stronger exposure and destabilization of soil. This long-term trend is superimposed by centennial to millennial scale climatic changes, which co-vary with ice rafted debris maxima from the North-Atlantic and thus indicate a strong coupling to North Atlantic climate variability. The  $\delta D_{wax}$  record indicates a stable atmospheric circulation system with a dominant westerly airflow and moisture sourcing from the North Atlantic Ocean until about 4,000 cal yrs BP. Subsequently,  $\delta D$ -depleted values suggest a decreasing role of North Atlantic moisture sourcing being balanced by a stronger influence of air masses from the Arctic and Baltic Sea. Abruptly decreasing  $\delta D_{wax}$  values matched by a contemporaneous increase in flood recurrence rates suggest a further intensification of meridional relative to the zonal atmospheric flow after 2,000 cal yrs BP. This points to a reorganization/change of the atmospheric circulation system in the North Atlantic region in form of a southward migration of the polar front and/or long-term changes in the AO/NAO index towards more negative mode causing a decreasing influence of westerly winds, and a stronger influence of meridional airflow for moisture transport to our site. Both our  $\delta D_{wax}$  and flood records show a relatively abrupt and nonlinear response to forcing extrinsic and intrinsic to Earth's climate system starting at ~2,000 yrs cal BP.

## **4. Organic geochemical and palynological evidence for Holocene natural and anthropogenic environmental change at Lake Dojran (Macedonia/Greece)**

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The Holocene climate promoted the rise and development of early human civilizations all over the globe. Especially the Neolithic revolution, i.e., the spread of agriculture and the transition from a Mesolithic hunter-gatherer to a sedentary lifestyle during the Early Holocene (Willis and Bennett, 1994; Connor et al., 2013), might have been influenced or even triggered by climatic change (Richerson et al., 2001; Feynman and Ruzmaikin, 2007). However, the climate of the Holocene, showed also significant fluctuations (Bond et al., 1997; Bianchi and McCave, 1999; Casford et al., 2001), which supposedly led to relocation, downfall, and even societal collapse of ancient civilizations (deMenocal, 2001; Dalfes et al., 2013; Cullen et al., 2000). In reverse, with the beginning of the Holocene, humans also started to leave significant imprints on landscape and vegetation (Dubois and Jacob, 2016). While earlier Mesolithic hunter-gatherers had only little influence on their environment (Behre, 1988), the Neolithic lifestyle and agricultural land-use has been able to transform landscapes profoundly and on a bigger scale than ever before (Goudie, 2013). Thus, during the Holocene and especially with the beginning of the Neolithic, humans, climate, and the environment became strongly connected. These interrelations may be identified and even explained by the analyses of sediments, which yield valuable climatic as well as anthropogenic paleo-environmental information. For example, D'Anjou et al. (2012) revealed a relationship between human occupation and agricultural activities and summer temperature using lipid biomarkers in lake sediments from northern Norway. The authors showed that humans had a profound impact on the nearby environment including deforestation and increased wildfires. However, human-environment forcing and feedback mechanisms are highly debated and still insufficiently unraveled (Dearing, 2006).

Whilst emerging from the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East, Neolithic lifestyle expanded to central Europe with the Balkan Peninsula acting as an important bridge (Fouache and Pavlopoulos, 2011). Especially the Macedonian region, lying strategically between the Aegean and the Danube river basin, operated as a cultural mediator. Hence, its history can be relevant not only for the Balkan but for the whole of central Europe (Gimbutas, 1974; Kokkinidou and Trantalidou, 1991; Fouache and Pavlopoulos, 2011). Of particular importance for human migration were rivers and lakes as natural pathways and habitats (van Andel and Runnels, 1995). In Macedonia, the Vardar and Struma rivers acted as such pathways for the early Neolithic

cultures (Andreou et al., 1996) migrating from Anatolia and Greece in the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC (Bocquet-Appel et al., 2009; Kaiser and Voytek, 1983). Lake Dojran is located within this natural corridor (Fig. 16) and its sediments have been shown to accurately and sensitively record the regional Holocene climatic change. Using sedimentological and geochemical (Francke et al., 2013), and micropaleontological (Zhang et al., 2014) tools, previous studies of Lake Dojran showed that following a cold and dry Younger Dryas, temperatures and humidity increased during the Early Holocene culminating in relatively stable climatic conditions (warm but changing humidity) throughout the Middle Holocene. During the Late Holocene (since about 3,000 yrs cal BP), the sedimentary record suggests increased anthropogenic activities in concert with varying climatic conditions including the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age. Accordingly, Lake Dojran provides the opportunity to investigate a record of both environmental change and human impact, which spans the entire Holocene.

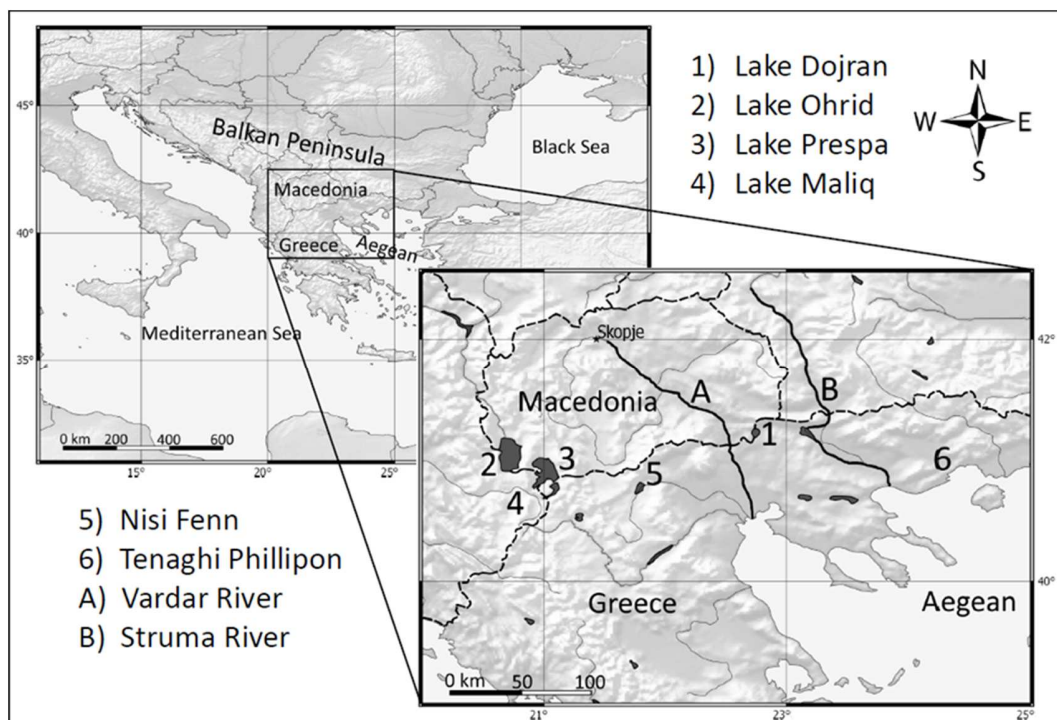
Here, we present a multi-proxy biomarker and palynological approach to trace changes of both past anthropogenic impact and climate in the Dojran area throughout the Holocene. We use aliphatic hydrocarbons (*n*-alkanes) and the glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraethers (GDGTs) based branched and isoprenoid tetraether (BIT) index to reconstruct vegetation type and soil erosion, respectively, as well as annual mean air temperature (MAT) based on the methylation and cyclisation of branched tetraethers (MBT/CBT) indices. Furthermore, we use fecal steroids to investigate human/livestock presence and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) to trace biomass burning, both being traditionally used in environmental pollution studies but fairly new in geo-archaeological approaches (D'Anjou et al., 2012; Dubois & Jacob, 2016). We also align biomarker curves to those of selected pollen groups and microcharcoal concentrations normalized to sedimentation rate (influx curves) as well as previously published sedimentological, geochemical, and micropaleontological data from the same core (Francke et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2014). Our results trace previously observed climate change during the Early and Middle Holocene and indicate a relationship between human impact and environmental/climatic change during the Late Holocene (particularly during Late to Mid Holocene transition, the Medieval and the modern period).

### **4.1 Site description**

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Lake Dojran is located on the southern Balkan Peninsula in a karstic basin directly at the border of Greece and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (Stojanov and Micevski, 1989). It lies at an altitude of 144 m.a.s.l., has a water surface area of about 40 km<sup>2</sup>, and a water depth of

6-7 m, however, seasonal and decadal lake level fluctuations are common. The lake catchment covers 274 km<sup>2</sup> and ranges from the Belasitsa Mountain crest (1874 m.a.s.l.) in the North to the Krusa Mountain crest in the Southeast (Sotiria and Petkovski, 2004). Lake Dojran drains into the Aegean via the Doiranitis and Vardar rivers, but has been endorheic since the 1950s due to increased irrigation and the canalization of the Doiranitis River (Zhang et al., 2014). During winter and spring the lake is fed by small rivers, creeks, and groundwater while during summer a net loss of water is due to evaporation and possible groundwater outflow (Francke et al., 2013). Today, Lake Dojran is dimictic and eutrophic to hyper-eutrophic due to fertilizer input resulting in moderate oxygen depletion (Zacharias et al., 2002).



**Figure 16.** Map of the study area including Lake Dojran and adjacent paleorecords.

The climate of the Dojran area is characterized by a mixture of Mediterranean and continental influences resulting in hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. Mean annual air temperature averages 14.3°C and mean annual precipitation is ~600 mm (Sotiria and Petkovski, 2004). The vegetation of the Dojran catchment is characterized by a typical Submediterranean biome. The lowlands (<400 m.a.s.l.) are mainly covered by sclerophyllous evergreen vegetation and *Quercetalia pubescentis* forest (Athanasiadis et al., 2000). At higher altitudes above 1,000 m.a.s.l. beech forests prevail. In some parts sporadic stands of fir can be found. The direct fringe of the

lake is covered by up to 30 m wide reed bed areas and submerged plants (Athanasiadis et al., 2000). This present-day vegetation is the product of intensive anthropogenic overprinting, especially in the lowland areas. The former natural ecosystem consisted of mesophilous, periodically-flooded, forest (Mattfeld, 1927).

## 4.2 Material and Methods

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Core Co1260 was drilled in the southern central part of Lake Dojran (41°11.703' N, 22°44.573' E) at a water depth of about 6.6 m in June 2011. A total of 7 m sediment were recovered, spanning approximately 12,500 years back to the Younger Dryas. The age model of the core was developed by Francke et al. (2013). The sedimentation rate decreases from 0.14 cm/yr at the base of the core to as low as 0.02 cm/yr (6,320 yrs cal BP) and then increases again until the modern core top to as high as 0.14 cm/yr. For this study, 34 sub-samples at a resolution of approximately 500 to 1,000 year intervals in the lower part of the core and at 200 year intervals in the upper part were selected for lipid biomarker analyses omitting the lowermost core section (Younger Dryas), which consists of reworked sediment (Francke et al., 2013). The samples were freeze-dried, ground, and extracted by ultrasonication using 25 ml of each methanol, methanol: dichloromethane (1:1, v:v) and dichloromethane: hexane (1:1, v:v). Afterwards, the total lipid extract was saponified with 0.5 M potassium hydroxide in methanol: water (9:1, v:v) at 80°C for 2 h. Neutral lipids were liquid-liquid extracted with dichloromethane and further separated into four polarity fractions using silica gel column chromatography. Sequential elution was performed using hexane (aliphatic hydrocarbons), dichloromethane: hexane (7:1, v:v) (aromatic hydrocarbons), chloroform (sterols), and methanol (ethers). Subsequently, the aliphatic hydrocarbon fraction was desulfurized using activated copper and the sterol fraction was derivatized with N,O-bis(trimethylsilyl)trifluoroacetamide at 80°C for 2 h. The ether fraction was filtered over 0.45 µm PTFE filters using hexane: isopropanol (95:5, v:v).

*n*-Alkanes, and sterols were analyzed on a Hewlett Packard 5890 series II gas chromatograph with a flame ionization detector (GC-FID) equipped with an Agilent DB-5MS column (50 m x 0.2 mm, film thickness 0.33 µm). For aliphatic hydrocarbons, the oven temperature was held at 40°C for 2 min, increased to 140°C with a rate of 10°C min<sup>-1</sup> and then to 320°C min<sup>-1</sup> at 3°C min<sup>-1</sup>. For the analysis of the sterol fraction, oven temperature was programmed to be held at 40°C for 2 min and increase to 290°C with 5°C min<sup>-1</sup> and then to 320°C with 0.5°C min<sup>-1</sup>. PAHs were analyzed using a Hewlett Packard 6890N GC coupled to a 5975C MSD and equipped with an Agilent HP-5 column (30 m x 0.32 mm, film thickness 0.25 µm). The oven temperature was programmed from

40°C held for 2 min increased to 140°C with a rate of 10°C min<sup>-1</sup> and to 320°C with a rate of 5°C min<sup>-1</sup>. GDGTs were analyzed using an Agilent 1290 UHPLC coupled to a 6460 QQQ-MS equipped with an APCI ion source following the methods of Hopmans et al. (2004) and Peterse et al. (2012) and were calibrated using the calibration of Peterse et al. (2012). Compounds were identified based on their GC-MS or LC-MS spectra and by comparison with external standards. Compound concentrations were quantified using authentic external standards and are normalized to total organic carbon (TOC) content to exclude effects governed by organic matter delivery or preservation.

Pollen and microcharcoals were extracted from 132 sediment samples with a resolution of about 90 years using hydrochloric acid (37%), hydrofluoric acid (40%) and hot sodium hydroxide (10%). A known amount of *Lycopodium* spores was added to the dry weighted sediment in order to estimate pollen concentrations (number of pollen grains/g of sediment; Stockmarr, 1971). Identification and quantification of pollen grains and charcoals was carried out using a transmitted light microscope (magnification 400x and 630x) with the support of atlases and the reference collection of the University of Rome “La Sapienza”. Pollen data are presented either as total (trees plus herbs) pollen influx (pollen grains incorporated annually per gram of sediment; grains\*cm/g\*yr derived from pollen concentration (grains/g) or percentage curves of plant groups. Microcharcoal particles were counted in pollen slides and sorted in three dimensional classes (10-50 µm, 50-125 µm, and >125 µm) measuring their shortest axis (Sadori and Giardini, 2008). Similarly to those of pollen, results are reported as influx values (particles incorporated annually per gram of sediment; particles\*cm/g\*yr).

## 4.3 Results

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### 4.3.1 Plant wax *n*-alkanes

The odd-numbered high molecular weight (HMW) vascular plant *n*-alkane concentrations (C<sub>27</sub>, C<sub>29</sub>, C<sub>31</sub>, C<sub>33</sub>) decrease in the lowermost part of the record (Fig. 18, Tab. 5) from 34.5 µg/g TOC (total organic carbon) at 11,510 yrs cal BP to 9.3 µg/g TOC at 10,480 yrs cal BP, then increase to 34.3 µg/g TOC at 9,540 yrs cal BP and decrease again to 17.4 µg/g TOC at 8,530 yrs cal BP. Afterwards, HMW *n*-alkane concentrations show an increasing trend to 30 µg/g TOC at 6,190 yrs cal BP followed by slightly lower values until 5,220 yrs cal BP (23.5 µg/g TOC) and a peak at 4,490 yrs cal BP (43.4 µg/g TOC). Between 4,490 yrs cal BP and the top of the core, HMW *n*-alkane concentrations decrease to a slightly lower level with four distinct peaks at 3,290 yrs cal BP (32.6

$\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC), 1,710 yrs cal BP (29.2  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC), 780 yrs cal BP (30.9  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC), and 370 yrs cal BP (40  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC). The average chain length (ACL) of the odd-numbered HMW *n*-alkanes ( $\text{C}_{25}$ ,  $\text{C}_{27}$ ,  $\text{C}_{29}$ ,  $\text{C}_{31}$ ,  $\text{C}_{33}$ ) varies strongly particularly in the upper half of the core (Fig. 18, Tab. 5). In the lower half of the record, we observe an overall trend of decreasing values from 29.3 at 11,510 yrs cal BP to 28.8 at 5,680 yrs cal BP. Between 5,680 and 3,290 yrs cal BP the ACL increase to 29.5 followed by a period of relatively high but strongly fluctuating values with peaks at 2,800 yrs cal BP (29.5), 2,140 yrs cal BP (29.9), and 1,710 yrs cal BP (29.4). From 1,710 yrs cal BP to 1,170 yrs cal BP the ACL decreases to values as low as 28.9 (1,170 yrs cal BP) followed by an overall increase to the core-top (as high as 29.4 at 120 yrs cal BP).

### 4.3.2 Steroids

In the lower part of the record, the fecal stanol (5 $\beta$ -cholestan-3 $\beta$ -ol, 5 $\beta$ -cholestan-3 $\alpha$ -ol) concentrations show an overall increasing trend from 10  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC (11,510 yrs cal BP) to 36.1  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC (4,490 yrs cal BP) with minor peaks at 9,540 yrs cal BP (23.4  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC), 7,180 yrs cal BP (25.3  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC) (Fig. 18, Tab. 5). After 4,490 yrs cal BP the  $\beta$ -stanol concentrations show greater fluctuations with lower values (18.4  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC) from 3,930 yrs cal BP to 3,670 yrs cal BP, higher values from 3,480 yrs cal BP to 2,800 yrs cal BP peaking at 3,110 yrs cal BP (51  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC), and a period of lower values from 2,510 yrs cal BP to 1,520 yrs cal BP (17.1  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC). At 1,520 yrs cal BP  $\beta$ -stanol concentrations start to increase to a maximum at 780 yrs cal BP (60.3  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC) followed by a short decrease until 640 yrs cal BP (32.8  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC). Subsequently,  $\beta$ -stanol concentrations increase again and peak at the core-top (48  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC).

### 4.3.3 PAHs

Combustion-derived polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) (fluoranthene, pyrene, benzo[ghi]fluoranthene, benzo[bj]fluoranthene, benzo[k]fluoranthene, benzo[a]fluoranthene, benzo[e]pyrene, benzo[a]pyrene, and benzo[ghi]perylene) decrease between 11,510 yrs cal BP (560 ng/g TOC) and 10,480 yrs cal BP (280 ng/g TOC) (Fig. 18, Tab. 5). Subsequently, the PAH concentrations increase to 720 ng/g TOC at 9,540 yrs cal BP and then remain fairly stable until 4,490 yrs cal BP (650 ng/g TOC). After 4,490 yrs cal BP, the PAH concentration show a minor peak at 3,930 yrs cal BP (860 ng/g TOC) and a major peak at 3,290 yrs cal BP (1,200 ng/g TOC) followed by an overall decrease until 930 yrs cal BP (40 ng/g TOC). Subsequently, the PAH concentrations increase rapidly to 710 ng/g TOC at 780 yrs cal BP. Following a decrease to 350 ng/g TOC at 570

yrs cal BP, the uppermost part of the core (120 yrs cal BP to modern) is characterized by a strong increase in PAH concentrations reaching the highest values of the entire record with 5,200 ng/g TOC at 120 yrs cal BP.

#### 4.3.4 GDGT-based indices

The BIT index shows relatively high values between 0.75 and 1.00 throughout the entire record (Fig. 18, Tab. 5). The BIT index decreases from 0.85 at 11,510 yrs cal BP to a minimum of 0.75 at 10,480 yrs cal BP. Afterwards, the values steadily increase to 0.98 at 4,490 yrs cal BP. Subsequently, the BIT index decreases to 0.86 at 3,930 yrs cal BP followed by an increase to 0.96 at 3,480 yrs and another decrease to 0.84 at 3,110 yrs cal BP. After 3,110 yrs cal BP the BIT index generally increases until 780 yrs cal BP (0.99). Following slightly lower values at 370 yrs cal BP (0.92), the BIT index increases to 1.00 at the core-top.

MBT'/CBT proxy-inferred annual MATs show the lowest value at 11,510 yrs cal BP (7.6°C) (Fig. 18, Tab. 5). Subsequently, temperatures rise to 10.7°C at 9,540 yrs cal BP followed by an overall decline of about 2.5°C until present (8.3°C). The proxy-derived annual MATs of the core-top sediment (8.3°C) apparently mismatch the instrumental MAT data of 14.3°C (Sotiria and Petkovski, 2004). However, the MBT'/CBT based annual MATs of recent topsoil samples (Fig. 17, Tab. 6) show a similar mismatch with instrumental annual MATs. Accordingly, in the following we will interpret the relative  $\Delta$ MAT changes throughout the sedimentary record rather than absolute annual MAT values.

#### 4.3.5 Pollen

Percentage and influx curves of selected taxa and groups are shown in Fig. 18 and have to be taken as general changes in the environment and in the vegetal landscape (see appendix). The total (trees plus herbs) pollen influx curve shows low/medium values (roughly between 3,000 and 6,000 grains\*cm/g\*yr) from the base of the diagram until around 2,500 years BP. In this time frame, there are three intervals, from between 9,500 and 8,600 yrs cal BP, between 5,600 and 4,600 yrs cal BP, and between 3,200 and 2,800 yrs cal BP with increased influx values (max 13,500 grains\*cm/g\*yr). Subsequently, the total pollen influx shows a strong increase to a maximum of 26,000 grains\*cm/g\*yr at 2,200 yrs cal BP. After a strong decrease to as low as 2,800 grains\*cm/g\*yr at 1,610 yrs cal BP, the pollen influx increases to another relative maximum at



780 yrs cal BP (25,000 grains\*cm/g\*yr) followed by a decrease until 120 yrs cal BP (7,500 grains\*cm/g\*yr).

In general, pollen assemblages of core Co1260 are dominated by arboreal pollen (AP). %AP increases from a minimum of 14% at 11,620 yrs cal BP to 93% at 8,260 yrs cal BP driven mainly by the abundance of deciduous taxa (*Acer*, *Betula*, *Carpinus betulus*, *Fagus*, *Fraxinus*, *Ostrya/Carpinus orientalis*, deciduous *Quercus*, *Quercus cf. cerris*, *Tilia*, *Ulmus*), which increase from 5% to 70% while coniferous taxa (*Abies*, *Juniperus*, *Picea*, *Pinus*) vary between 5% and 18%. Then AP varies between 82% and 95% displaying a relatively stable pattern. However, among “stable” AP the relative abundance of coniferous taxa increase to up 45% from 4,000 to 2,030 yrs cal BP, while deciduous taxa slowly decrease to about 38%. Thereafter, conifers rapidly drop to 6-15% until about 1,090 yrs cal BP causing the concurrent decrease of AP. After a recovery around 1,000 yrs cal BP, AP and deciduous pollen decrease to 68% and 22%, respectively, while conifer relative abundances remain somewhat stable (20-28%) until about 240 yrs cal BP, followed by a decrease to as low as 13% at the core-top. The bulk of non arboreal pollen (NAP) is mirrored by Poaceae, which vary between 1% and 25% while ruderal plant taxa (*Centaurea cf. cyanus*, *Plantago lanceolata* type, *Rumex*, *Trifolium*) generally account for < 2% throughout the record with lowest abundances (0-1%) between 9,500 yrs and 2,800 yrs cal BP.

Relative abundances of pollen grouped as cultivated/cultivable plant taxa (*Castanea*, *Juglans*, *Olea*, *Vitis*, *Hordeum* type, *Secale*, *Avena/Triticum*) vary little until about 2,800 yrs cal BP accounting for < 2%. Subsequently, the relative abundance of these taxa increases while showing stronger fluctuations with values to up to 8%.

#### 4.3.6 Microcharcoals

The influx of small (10-50 µm) microcharcoals varies between 0 and 1,100 particles \*cm/g\*yr in the interval between 11,620 yrs cal BP and 6,580 yrs cal BP with only minor fluctuations except for a peak at 9,950 yrs cal BP (1,300 particles\*cm/g\*yr) (Fig. 18, appendix). Lower values (maximum 500 particles\*cm/g\*yr) between 6,580 yrs cal BP and 4,920 yrs cal BP are followed by increased values (1,500 particles\*cm/g\*yr at 3,870 yrs cal BP). Subsequently, the influx shows stronger fluctuations with many peaks of up to 5,000 particles\*cm/g\*yr). The influx of medium size (50-125 µm) microcharcoal particles varies between 0 and 700 particles\*cm/g\*yr throughout the core showing its maximum at 1,010 yrs cal BP and at the core-top (300 particles\*cm/g\*yr). Microcharcoal particles >125 µm mainly occur in the lower part of the record until 7,870 yrs cal BP, at 2,580 yrs cal BP, and at the core-top.

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**Table 5.** Lake Dojran, core Co1260: Biomarker concentrations and molecular proxy data.

Depth (cm.)	<sup>a</sup> Age (yrs. BP)	<sup>b</sup> $\beta$ -stanols ( $\mu\text{g/g}$ TOC)	<sup>c</sup> PAHs (ng/g TOC)	<sup>d</sup> ACL	<sup>e</sup> $\Sigma$ HMW <i>n</i> -alkanes ( $\mu\text{g/g}$ TOC)	<sup>f</sup> BIT	<sup>g</sup> $\Delta$ annual MAT ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )	<sup>g</sup> MBT	<sup>g</sup> CBT
1	0	48.0	5,010	29.3	26.8	1.00	0	0.28	0.20
25	120	38.3	5,190	29.4	27.8	0.94	0.5	0.28	0.12
57	370	44.0	400	29.3	40.0	0.92	0.4	0.28	0.16
81	570	34.0	340	29.3	20.3	0.93	0.4	0.29	0.16
89	640	32.8	580	29.0	22.7	0.98	0	0.28	0.20
105	780	60.3	710	29.0	30.9	0.99	0.1	0.29	0.22
113	850	46.6	210	29.1	18.5	0.97	0	0.28	0.23
121	930	55.1	40	29.0	16.8	0.96	0.2	0.28	0.19
145	1,170	27.9	110	28.9	22.7	0.94	1.3	0.31	0.13
161	1,340	20.3	310	28.9	16.6	0.91	1	0.30	0.15
177	1,520	17.1	340	28.9	16.9	0.93	1.2	0.30	0.12
193	1,710	22.6	340	29.4	29.2	0.93	0.8	0.30	0.17
209	1,920	26.9	540	29.2	24.5	0.92	1.4	0.31	0.11
225	2,140	27.1	530	29.9	12.9	0.93	1.1	0.30	0.12
241	2,380	25.7	690	29.1	18.3	0.93	1.2	0.30	0.11
249	2,510	17.7	540	29.4	21.7	0.88	1.7	0.30	0.05
265	2,800	37.0	780	29.5	21.3	0.86	1.5	0.30	0.06
273	2,950	35.1	540	29.3	24.6	0.87	1.1	0.29	0.06
281	3,110	51.0	780	29.2	19.6	0.84	1.6	0.30	0.03
289	3,290	29.8	1,200	29.5	32.6	0.91	1.6	0.30	0.05
297	3,480	31.4	560	29.4	29.2	0.96	0.9	0.29	0.11
305	3,690	18.4	580	29.4	17.8	0.93	0.9	0.28	0.07
313	3,930	18.4	860	29.4	27.2	0.86	1.7	0.31	0.04
329	4,490	36.1	650	29.0	43.4	0.98	1.4	0.31	0.11
345	5,220	23.3	560	28.9	23.5	0.95	1.6	0.30	0.05
353	5,680	20.3	530	28.8	25.7	0.95	1.4	0.30	0.10
361	6,190	16.3	700	29.0	30.0	0.95	1.3	0.29	0.07
369	6,710	17.5	580	29.2	24.2	0.95	1.4	0.31	0.11
377	7,180	25.3	690	29.0	23.2	0.94	1.6	0.31	0.08
385	7,600	15.4	570	29.2	17.9	0.89	1.9	0.31	0.07
409	8,530	11.2	620	29.1	17.4	0.89	2.2	0.33	0.11
449	9,540	23.4	720	29.3	34.3	0.81	2.4	0.33	0.07
505	10,480	10.0	280	29.2	9.3	0.75	1.8	0.31	0.07
593	11,510	10.0	560	29.3	34.5	0.85	-0.7	0.27	0.27

<sup>a</sup> According to Francke et al. (2013)

<sup>b</sup>  $5\beta$ -cholestan-3 $\beta$ -ol,  $5\beta$ -cholestan-3 $\alpha$ -ol

<sup>c</sup> Fluoranthene, pyrene, benzo[ghi]fluoranthene, benzo[bj]fluoranthene, benzo[k]fluoranthene, benzo[a]fluoranthene, benzo[e]pyrene, benzo[a]pyrene, and benzo[ghi]perylene

<sup>d</sup>  $(C_{25} * 25 + C_{27} * 27 + C_{29} * 29 + C_{31} * 31 + C_{33} * 33) / (C_{25} + C_{27} + C_{29} + C_{31} + C_{33})$

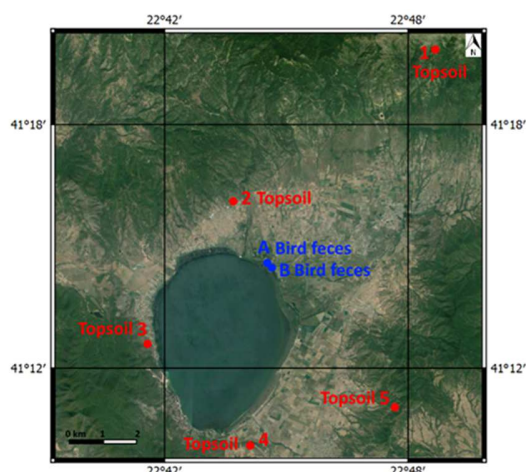
<sup>e</sup>  $(C_{27} + C_{29} + C_{31} + C_{33})$

<sup>f</sup> According to Hopmans et al. (2004)

<sup>g</sup> According to Peterse et al. (2012)

### 4.3.7 Catchment

For comparison of MBT'/CBT proxy-derived annual MATs and instrumental annual MAT data we analyzed five topsoil samples from the lake catchment (Fig. 17, Tab. 6). MBT'/CBT proxy-derived annual MATs are consistently lower than instrumental annual MATs (14.3°C; Sotiria and Petkovski, 2004) consistent with the observations of Peterse et al. (2012) who found significant underestimation of MBT'/CBT proxy-derived annual MATs in arid regions. The significant variability of MBT'-CBT proxy-derived annual MATs in the Dojran topsoil samples restrict their use for a Dojran catchment-specific MBT'/CBT calibration and highlight that relative changes of sedimentary MBT'/CBT proxy-derived annual MATs should be discussed rather than absolute MATs. Bird-feces sampled along the fringe of Lake Dojran (Fig. 17, Tab. 6) contains detectable amounts of the  $\beta$ -stanols coprostanol and epi-coprostanol (1.63 and 1.95  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC) confirming that background  $\beta$ -stanol concentrations in Dojran sediments likely have an avian origin.



**Figure 17.** Map of topsoil (red, 1-5) and bird feces (blue, A-B) samples from the catchment.

**Table 6.** MBT'/CBT proxy-derived annual MAT of catchment topsoil samples and  $\beta$ -stanols of bird feces from the Dojran catchment.

Sample	<sup>a</sup> MAT °C	<sup>b</sup> $\beta$ -stanols $\mu\text{g/g}$ TOC
Topsoil 1	3.8	-
Topsoil 2	9.7	-
Topsoil 3	10.6	-
Topsoil 4	4.2	-
Topsoil 5	7.5	-
Bird feces A	-	2.0
Bird feces B	-	1.6

<sup>a</sup> According to Peterse et al. (2012)

<sup>b</sup> 5 $\beta$ -cholestan-3 $\beta$ -ol, 5 $\beta$ -cholestan-3 $\alpha$ -ol

## 4.4 Discussion

Lake Dojran sediments receive input from various sources including autochthonous production and allochthonous material supplied by different transport modes (aeolian and riverine). Accordingly, the proxies used here represent both broader regional signals as well as signals confined to the Dojran catchment (accordingly, leads and lags of the different proxy records may be caused by different transport modes) and are characteristic environmental and/or anthropogenic markers (for an extensive review see Dubois & Jacob, 2016).

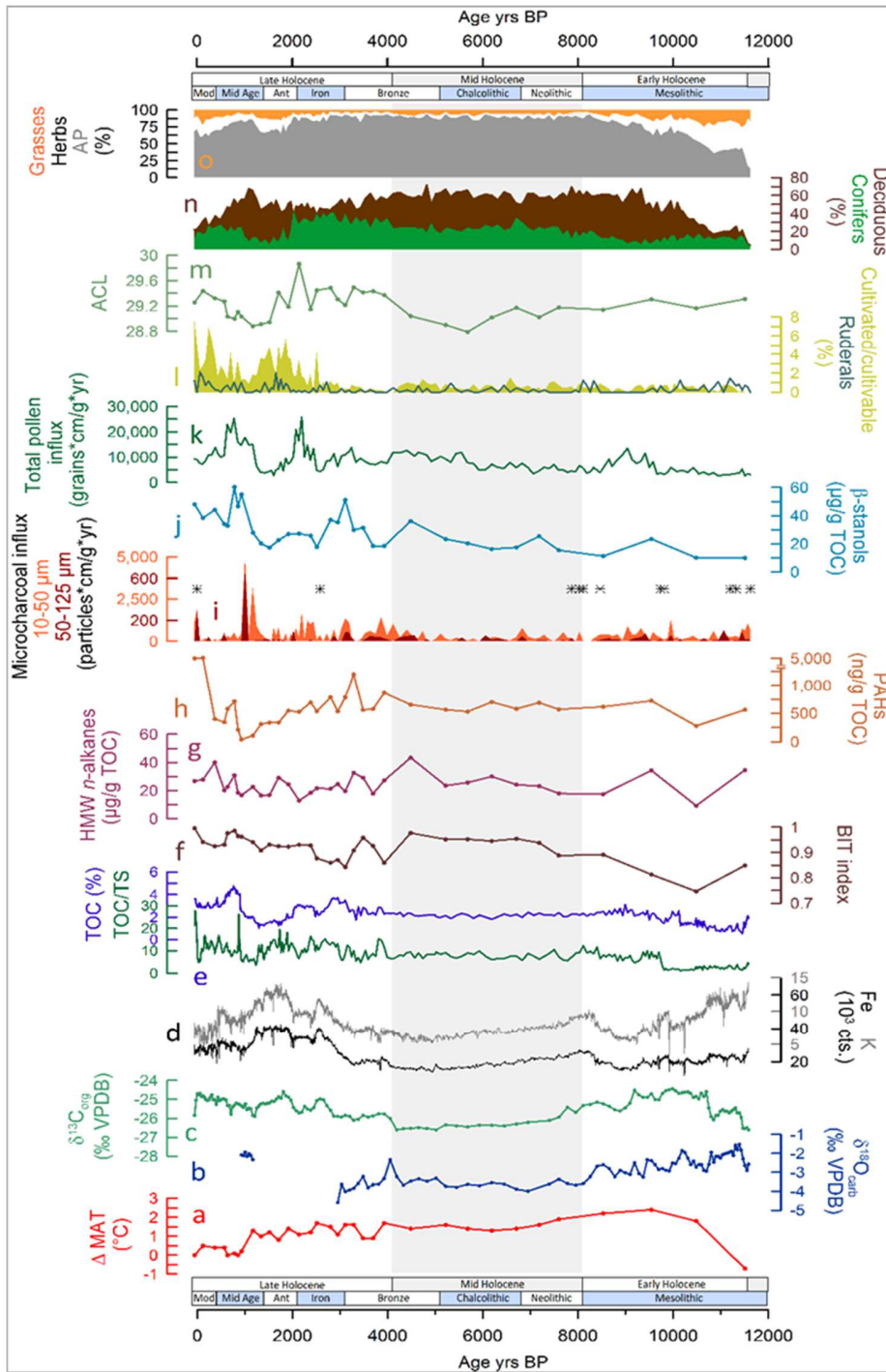
We trace the input of terrestrial vascular plant organic carbon using high molecular weight ( $C_{27}$ ,  $C_{29}$ ,  $C_{31}$ ,  $C_{33}$ ) *n*-alkanes, which derive from the epicuticular wax cover of terrestrial vascular plant leaves (Eglinton & Hamilton, 1967). Their average chain length provides further information about the major vegetation type such as woody and herbaceous/grassy plants and, by inference, temperature and aridity (Castañeda & Schouten, 2011; Ficken et al., 2000; Cranwell, 1973; Meyers, 1997). The molecular information is directly comparable to relative abundances of trees (AP, arboreal pollen) and herbs (NAP, non arboreal pollen) indicating vegetation physiognomy. Likewise, the tree and herb pollen influx can be used as a proxy of plant biomass indicating the density of vegetation (cf. Panagiotopoulos et al., 2013; Sadori et al., 2016; Sadori et al., 2004). Since epicuticular waxes as well as pollen are transported via aeolian and fluvial transport mechanisms, they represent both a regional and catchment-derived signal of vegetation change. Furthermore, we use the BIT index, a ratio of soil-derived and aquatic GDGTs indicating fluvial soil organic matter input (Hopmans et al., 2004; Schouten et al., 2013), to reconstruct soil erosion processes in the catchment. These should either be linked to anthropogenic deforestation and agricultural activities or natural variations in precipitation, runoff, and vegetation cover. For soil-derived biomarkers (*n*-alkanes and GDGTs), we assume relatively rapid turnover since Chen et al., (2013) show that the mean residence time (MRT) of soil organic carbon around 40°N is less than 60 yrs and the good agreement of *n*-alkane ACL and pollen imply no major leads or lags. The reconstruction of human/livestock presence in the catchment is based on the input of feces-derived  $\beta$ -stanols, which are produced from cholesterol by microbes in the mammalian gut and persist in sedimentary records (Bull et al., 2002; D'Anjou et al., 2012). We assume allochthonous  $\beta$ -stanols are supplied solely via runoff of soil OC within the catchment and, thus, carry a local signal. Furthermore, we use pyrolytic PAHs, aromatic hydrocarbons produced from organic matter during combustion processes including natural and anthropogenic fire activities. PAHs are supplied from the atmosphere via dry and wet deposition from proximal as well as distant sources (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993; Lima et al., 2005). Microcharcoal size provides an additional level of information since charcoal fragments  $>125 \mu\text{m}$  are generally taken as an evidence of local fire, while charred fragments between 10 and 50  $\mu\text{m}$  and between 50 and 125  $\mu\text{m}$  indicate regional fire, together with background noise, and fire occurrence at the landscape/regional scale, respectively (Whitlock and Millspaugh, 1996; Sadori et al., 2015b). Besides tracing absolute concentrations of  $\beta$ -stanols, PAHs, and microcharcoal, pollen of cultivated and weed plants provide evidence of human presence and impact in the territory (Marinova et al., 2012).

This multi-proxy approach is particularly useful to disentangle natural and anthropogenic influences for those proxies, which may be influenced both ways. For example, deforestation and “slash-and-burn” agriculture have been used by humans since Neolithic times (Rius et al., 2009). Accordingly, an increase of the *n*-alkanes ACL due to deforestation (growing proportion of herbaceous vegetation) should correlate with an increase of NAP, PAHs and microcharcoals >125 µm, and β-stanol abundances in the record, while an increase of the latter is not expected during natural climatic variations. Likewise, some cultivated plants such as olive or vine are native to the region and both cereal and ruderal plant pollen also include pollen of other grasses or herbs, respectively. Accordingly, we interpret significant increases above the background of pollen as indicator for agricultural activities if they match other “anthropogenic” proxies such as β-stanols. For the following discussion, we use the stratigraphic classification of the Holocene suggested by Walker et al. (2012). The archeological periods are defined according to Marinova et al. (2012).

#### 4.4.1 Early Holocene (11,700 – 8,200 yrs cal BP)

Following a cold and arid Younger Dryas (Bordon et al., 2009; Kotthoff et al., 2008; Kotthoff et al., 2011; Valsecchi et al., 2012; Kallel et al., 1997), the Late Glacial/Early Holocene transition on the Southern Balkan (Bordon et al., 2009; Aufgebauer et al., 2012; Panagiotopoulos et al., 2013), the Aegean (Kotthoff et al., 2008), and the Central Mediterranean region (Allen et al., 1999; Sadori et al., 2011) was marked by more humid conditions, rising temperatures, and increasing vegetation cover. The changing climate and landscape of the Early Holocene is also reflected in our data set. We observe an increase of annual MATs based on GDGTs of about 3°C during the Early Holocene to a relative thermal maximum at 9,540 yrs cal BP. This increase of temperature is accompanied by a significant increase of AP with a concomitant decrease of NAP (Fig. 18). The pollen trend is mirrored by gradually decreasing HMW *n*-alkane ACL (from 29.3 to 29.1), which tracks the input of grasses and/or conifers such as *Pinus* (pine) and fir (*Abies*) (dominance of C<sub>31</sub> *n*-alkane) and deciduous trees such as *Fagus* (beech) (dominance of C<sub>27</sub> *n*-alkane) and deciduous *Quercus* (oaks) (dominance of C<sub>29</sub> *n*-alkane) (Maffei et al., 2004; Holtvoeth et al., 2016). In addition, the rising humidity could have contributed to the decrease in HMW *n*-alkane ACL (Schefuß et al., 2003). While the diatom-inferred rise in lake level might indicate higher runoff (Zhang et al., 2014), the denser vegetation cover and/or root system stabilizing the soils most likely led to reduced soil erosion processes as reflected by the BIT index, which shows the lowest value (0.75 at 10,480 yrs cal BP) of the entire record.

## Chapter 4



**Figure 18.** Lake Dojran, core Co1260: diagram of biomarker and pollen data plotted against age. (a)  $\Delta$  annual MAT, (f) BIT index, (g) HMW *n*-alkanes, (h) PAHs, (i) microcharcoal (asterisks mark the presence of largest microcharcoal particles (>250  $\mu\text{m}$ )), (j)  $\beta$ -stanols, (k) total pollen of terrestrial plants, (l) cultivated/cultivable, (m) ACL, (n) deciduous and conifer trees, and (o) AP (pollen of arboreal plants) comprehending grasses and other herbs (for taxonomic affiliation see section 4.5). Also shown are previously published data including (b)  $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ , (c)  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{org}}$ , (d) potassium and iron counts, and (e) TOC and TOC/TS (Francke et al., 2013).

Absolute pollen data confirm this reconstruction, showing increasing plant biomass (trees and herbs pollen influx). Decreasing erosion rates in the catchment are also implied by the lower input of potassium (K) and iron (Fe) and higher  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{org}}$  values observed by Francke et al. (2013). PAH concentrations are relatively low at the beginning of the Early Holocene (280 to 560 ng/g TOC) implying low natural fire activity in concomitance with microcharcoal influx curves, which indicate low fire activity both locally and regionally. While higher temperatures and a higher proportion of forest vegetation as indicated by pollen and *n*-alkane ACL could promote wildfires (increased fuel; Doyen et al., 2015; Brown et al., 2005), the low PAH concentrations and microcharcoal influx indicate that the fire regime in the Dojran catchment might rather be driven by moisture than fuel availability. Wildfire activity has been correlated to phases of aridity in other humid and woody regions in the Mediterranean (Sadori and Giardini, 2007; Vanni re et al., 2008). The discrepancy in the late Early Holocene (9,540 to 8,530 yrs cal BP) between BIT index indicating rising runoff/humidity and slightly increased PAH and microcharcoal concentrations (all size fractions roughly double) compared to 10,480 yrs cal BP might, thus, result from increased precipitation seasonality, since drier summer conditions favor the occurrence of wildfires (Vanni re et al., 2008). Stronger seasonality of wet winters and dry summers were indeed proposed for Lake Dojran by Zhang et al. (2014) and the Aegean region by Dormoy et al. (2009) during the late Early Holocene.

Since we observe no indication for human settlement activities either in the ACL, BIT index, PAH, or pollen record and archeological evidence for agriculture and Neolithic lifestyle on the Balkan Peninsula is absent (Willis and Bennett, 1994; Bocquet-Appel et al., 2009), we consider the fairly low fecal stanol concentrations throughout the Early Holocene (10-23  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC) to be derived from natural sources. Lake Dojran is known to be a major wintering area for waterbirds under today's conditions (Veleviski et al., 2010), thus, the stanol background may derive from bird feces. While previously reported 5 $\beta$ -stanols profiles in bird feces are inconsistent (Leeming et al., 1996; Martin et al., 1973; Sugano, 1967; Cheng et al., 2016), two bird feces samples taken at the fringe of Lake Dojran in 2015 indeed confirm the presence of 5 $\beta$ -stanols. In addition, for neighboring Lake Ohrid Holtvoeth et al. (2016) suggest that 5 $\beta$ -coprostanol may be produced in-situ by anaerobic bacteria. Such anaerobic bacteria could also contribute to the observed background 5 $\beta$ -stanol concentrations. However, we exclude major contributions from anaerobic bacteria since TOC/TS ratios (Fig. 18) are >5 throughout the record after 9,770 yrs cal BP implying oxygen repletion of bottom waters and surface sediments. During the Early Holocene between 11,510 yrs cal BP and 9,770 yrs cal BP, however, TOC/TS ratios are lower (~2) indicative for more reducing

conditions (Francke et al., 2013), which would have promoted anaerobic in-situ production of  $\beta$ -stanols.

#### 4.4.2 Middle Holocene (8,200 – 4,200 yrs cal BP)

The Middle Holocene Mediterranean climate was characterized by an early humid phase associated with the deposition of sapropel 1b in the Mediterranean Sea (Ariztegui et al., 2000) followed by a shift to higher aridity (Wick et al., 2003; Roberts et al., 2008; Kotthoff et al., 2008; Joannin et al., 2012; Peyron et al., 2011; Abrantes et al., 2012). Temperature reconstructions for the Middle Holocene, however, are rather scarce and show a high variability with both increasing and decreasing temperature trends (e.g., Finné et al., 2011; Abrantes et al., 2012). Our MBT'/CBT proxy-derived annual MATs show an approximately 1°C cooling trend from the Early Holocene thermal maximum across the Middle Holocene (Fig. 18; Tab. 5). The climatic shift towards more arid conditions was only moderate at Lake Dojran, since seismic data as well as bulk organic carbon isotope ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{org}}$ ) and carbonate oxygen isotope ( $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ ) data indicate stable atmospheric and climatic conditions and a relatively high lake level between 7,900 and 4,300 yrs cal BP (Francke et al., 2013). Overall, our data suggest relatively stable conditions for the Middle Holocene in comparison to the Early and Late Holocene as implied by the rather low variability of the data, in particular annual MATs, PAH, and HMW *n*-alkane concentrations as well as stable AP and NAP abundances. More pronounced changes are shown by the BIT index (increasing to up to 0.95) indicating enhanced catchment runoff/soil erosion probably indicating enhanced precipitation. The continued decrease of the *n*-alkane ACL (to 28.8) during the early Middle Holocene coincides with the expansion of deciduous trees as seen in pollen records from neighboring lakes Ohrid (Wagner et al., 2009) and Prespa (Panagiotopoulos et al., 2013) although AP indicate relatively stable forest formations at Lake Dojran. PAH concentrations and microcharcoal influx indicate medium to low fire activity at the local and regional scale. The observed increase of the ACL starting at 5,680 yrs cal BP and continuing into the early Late Holocene matches a concurrent slight increase of pollen influx, which is characterized by increasing proportions of conifers. Since MATs are stable, but runoff and soil erosion are enhanced (increase of the BIT index, high lake level and enhanced nutrient supply inferred by diatoms, Zhang et al. 2014), the ACL trend may not indicate overall aridification but rather increasing seasonality.

Towards the end of the Middle Holocene, during the early Bronze Age, we observe increasing trends of fecal stanol concentrations, HMW *n*-alkane ACL, and the BIT index as well as a slight



increase of pollen of cultivated plants possibly related to first human activities in the catchment. Lithological and sedimentological data including TOC/TS ratios indicate a stable depositional environment throughout the Middle and Late Holocene (Francke et al., 2013), thus, the increase of fecal stanol concentrations should not be driven by increased anaerobic bacterial activity. First small-scale human impact is consistent with archaeological evidence, which indicates that during the Middle Holocene early cultures such as Starčevo and Körös-Criş started to migrate into the Balkans. However, human influence on the environment was limited, since early settlements were very small (usually less than 1 ha) and had only temporal character due to a semi-sedentary lifestyle (Kaiser and Voytek, 1983). The continued increase of HMW *n*-alkane ACL during the early and middle Bronze Age supported by increasing PAH and microcharcoal concentrations might be the result of first “slash-and-burn” agriculture, and/or human wood exploitation although any landscape management was probably mainly related to pastoralism. Nonetheless, human impact probably led to further enhanced soil erosion processes as reflected by the high BIT index (0.98) and a substantial increase of HMW *n*-alkane concentrations. Furthermore, archaeological findings from the site of Vardaroftsa (Axiokhori), about 40 km away from the lake, suggest the beginning colonization of the greater Dojran area in the Bronze Age (Davies et al., 1926; Hammond, 1972).

#### 4.4.3 Late Holocene (4,200 yrs cal BP - present)

The transition from the Middle to the Late Holocene is characterized by a significant climatic and environmental change attributed to the dry and cold 4.2 ka event evident throughout the Mediterranean (Magny et al., 2009; Wagner et al., 2009; Vogel et al., 2010; Sadori et al. 2015a) and the Near East (Bar-Matthews et al., 1999; Masi et al. 2013). Subsequently, in the early Late Holocene, findings from the western and central Mediterranean (Magny et al., 2009) show a restoration of the previous wetter conditions, with increased lake levels and recovery of forests. At Lake Dojran Francke et al. (2013) identify a phase of drier conditions and lower temperatures around 4,000 yrs cal BP (Fig. 18), and observe a general trend towards environmental instability in the early Late Holocene, which is in agreement with our proxy records showing significant changes during the Mid- to Late Holocene transition. BIT index (0.86 at 3,930 yrs cal BP) and HMW *n*-alkane concentrations (17.8 µg/g TOC at 3,670 yrs cal BP) decrease, indicating a period of lower runoff/soil erosion. The simultaneous slight decrease in total pollen influx probably indicates a reduction of overall plant biomass. As conifer pollen continues to increase, the landscape was more open and degraded and the climate most likely changed to more arid conditions accompanied by enhanced fire activity as implied by slightly increased PAH concentrations (860

ng/g TOC) at 3,930 yrs cal BP and an increased influx of microcharcoal. The fecal stanol concentrations (18.4  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC) decrease between 3,930 yrs cal BP and 3,670 yrs cal BP possibly indicating reduced or changing anthropogenic activity. Since Francke et al. (2013) and Zhang et al. (2014) observe decreased autochthonous production and a peak in the TOC/TS ratio indicating oxygen depletion, anaerobic in-situ production of  $\beta$ -stanols can be excluded. Decreased anthropogenic land-use might also be indicated by minimum concentrations of cultivated taxa and the sharp decrease in the BIT index and the total HMW *n*-alkane concentrations due to less human-induced erosion. This decline might have been a response to the climatic perturbation (aridity), which occurred in the Dojran area around 4,000 yrs cal BP as observed by Francke et al. (2013). Site abandonment and resettlement of early Bronze Age cultures following the Mid Holocene-Late Holocene transition were previously reported for Greece and the Levante (Rosen, 1997), indicating a potential anthropogenic response to climatic change in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, starting at the Middle to Late Holocene transition, major vegetational changes occur in the conifer/deciduous tree ratio of AP, which is also reflected by increasing HMW *n*-alkane ACL mirroring the conifer pollen abundances throughout the Late Holocene. The combined vegetational response and the degradation of deciduous forest taxa might be due to both water shortage and long-term effects of previous agricultural and/or pastoral activities.

Starting at 3,670 yrs cal BP, we observe a considerable increase of fecal stanol concentrations (to up to 51  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC at 3,110 yrs cal BP) accompanied by a peak in PAH (1,200 ng/g TOC) and HMW *n*-alkane (32.6  $\mu\text{g/g}$  TOC) concentrations at 3,290 yrs cal BP and increasing abundance of cultivated plant taxa. This together points to a stronger human impact/re-settlement consistent with the Late Bronze Age maximum in settlement activities in the nearby Struma River valley observed by Grebska-Kulowa and Kulow (2007) and the establishment of a permanent settlement at Vardarski Rid (Mitrevski, 2009) approximately 10 km west of Lake Dojran. Higher BIT values and HMW *n*-alkane concentrations as well as increasing input of clastic material (K, Fe) demonstrate reinvigorated soil erosion likely caused by both human agricultural activity and higher humidity/runoff.

Pollen data indicate a strong human impact since 2,600 yrs cal BP implied by increased cultivated and ruderal plant taxa. HMW *n*-alkane ACL also remains at high values, most likely indicating continued forest clearing activities of the deciduous forest in the lowlands of the catchment. However, fecal stanol input and PAH concentrations decrease after 2,510 yrs cal BP. TOC/TS ratios do not indicate changing bottom water oxygenation and lake productivity is already low at 3,000 yrs cal BP (Francke et al., 2013) indicating that the decrease of fecal stanol concentrations should

not be driven by sedimentological changes affecting anaerobic bacteria. Based on the pollen evidence still implying intensive exploitation of the region and a peak in regional fire activity (microcharcoals 10-50  $\mu\text{m}$ ), this might be the result of a reorganization/relocation of the settlements or even a change in settlement type away from pile dwellings (palafittes). Palafittes dating back to the late Bronze/early Iron Age (1,500-700 BC) have been discovered in Lake Ohrid (Mitrevski, 2009a) and Lake Prespa. Even the Greek historian Herodotus described the life in a settlement on ancient Lake Prasiad in the nearby Strymon valley during the fifth century BC. Due to the relative shallowness of Lake Dojran, a lake level change and an expansion of shallow reed areas could have affected lakeside settlements and especially palafittes located on the lake or in the reed beds. Sedimentary (Francke et al., 2013) and microfossil (Zhang et al., 2014) data suggest a substantial lake level lowering between 2,800 and 1,200 yrs cal BP and other records from the Mediterranean region indicate more arid conditions during this period compared to the Mid Holocene (Schilman et al., 2001; Roberts et al., 2008; Sadori and Narcisi, 2001; Sadori et al., 2013, 2016). Temperature reconstructions from NE Italy (Frisia et al., 2005) and the Adriatic Sea (Piva et al., 2008) indicate warmer temperatures attributed to the Roman Warm Period (2,400 yrs cal BP to 1,600 yrs cal BP), albeit MBT'/CBT based annual MATs in our record are relatively stable. Thus, the lake level lowering might have led to settlement relocation further away from the shoreline (i.e. different settlement type) albeit Fouache et al. (2010) suggest that settlements were moving with the shoreline at Lake Maliq. While the input of anthropogenic biomarkers (5 $\beta$ -stanols) into the lake was reduced after 2,510 yrs cal BP, intensive agriculture and forestry might still have been practiced in the catchment. The sharp decrease of pollen influx and conifer pollen abundances in particular as well as the decrease of *n*-alkane ACL during the Roman Period at about 2,000 yrs cal BP may have been the result of lumbering of pines and firs, which have been used as an important construction material for Roman ships and were in fact exported from the Macedonian and Thracian region (Harris, 2013). Forestry might have not required permanent settlements.

In the uppermost core interval, during the Middle Ages and the early Modern Era, Francke et al. (2013) identified climatic fluctuations related to the Medieval Warm Period (MWP) and the subsequent Little Ice Age (LIA). Both climatic oscillations are also recorded in sedimentary records on the Balkan (Wagner et al., 2009; Aufgebauer et al., 2012; Vogel et al., 2010) and the SE Mediterranean Basin (Schilman et al., 2001). For Lake Dojran, Francke et al. (2013) linked more humid conditions and enhanced runoff with a warmer climate between 1,200 and 900 yrs cal BP (MWP), and subsequently colder temperatures and more arid conditions during the LIA. This is

the period in which the AP, in particular *Pinus*, recovers from the previous drastic decline at 2000 yrs cal BP. Our lipid based annual MATs record an approximately 1°C cooling starting at 1,170 yrs cal BP, followed by relatively stable temperatures until present, implying either no or only rather small temperature fluctuations. However, the biomarker record suggests changes in anthropogenic activity that could be related to the hydrological rather than to temperature variations of the MWP and LIA. Thus, the increased fecal stanol input (to up to 60.3 µg/g TOC between 930 yrs cal BP and 780 yrs cal BP) and a peak in PAH and HMW *n*-alkane concentrations as well as in the BIT index at 780 yrs cal BP indicate increased human activity. Pollen data show a constant reduction of arboreal vegetation starting at about 1,010 yrs cal BP. In addition, cultivated and ruderal taxa percentages show high but fluctuating values during this time period. This core section (~1,250 to 850 yrs cal BP) is characterized by fine laminations, high autochthonous production and lower TOC/TS ratios (~5) indicating less oxygenated (but still aerobic) sedimentary conditions (Francke et al., 2013). Thus, β-stanol concentrations could be partly influenced by possible in-situ bacterial production during this period. Subsequently, decreased 5β-stanol concentrations from 640 to 570 yrs cal BP in combination with a low in PAH and HMW *n*-alkane concentrations at 570 yrs cal BP again indicate a decrease of human impact or changes in land-use/settlement pattern. This could imply that hydrological rather than temperature fluctuations during the last 1,000 yrs cal BP may have influenced human settlement history at Lake Dojran. Albeit PAH concentrations follow a similar pattern observed for the BIT index and 5β-stanol concentrations, they remain on a relatively low level during the middle Late Holocene (Antiquity and the Middle Ages) compared to the Middle Holocene and the Early Late Holocene indicating low fire activity. At the same time, the microcharcoal (10-50 µm and 50-125 µm) influx peaks at 1,010 yrs cal BP implying intensified regional fires after the biomass (pollen influx) recovered from the decline during the Roman period.

The uppermost part of the record, i.e. the last two centuries, represents the Modern Era. This is particularly emphasized by the highest PAH concentrations (up to 5,200 ng/g TOC) of the entire record as well as high microcharcoal influx, both reflecting fossil fuel combustion and industrial emissions caused by increasing traffic and tourism, the urbanization of the villages Star and Nov Dojran, and industrialization as shown by other studies (Sanders et al., 1995; Liu et al., 2013). High 5β-stanol concentrations, a maximum BIT value (1.00), and the high abundances of cultivated plant taxa also point to increased anthropogenic activity, respectively, soil erosion processes during the Modern Era. 5β-Stanol concentrations are high at the core top (48.0 µg/g TOC), but lower than at 2,950 yrs cal BP or 780 yrs cal BP. Based on our data, we cannot determine why

absolute 5 $\beta$ -stanol concentrations are lower, but factors may include sewage treatment, different transport mode (sewage vs. soil erosion), reduced livestock presence or a yet unknown mechanism.

## **4.5 Summary and Conclusions**

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Our molecular and palynological data reveal strong humidity and increasing vegetation cover during the Early Holocene with annual MATs rising to a Holocene thermal maximum at 9,540 yrs cal BP and likely increased precipitation seasonality during the late Early Holocene. The Middle Holocene at Lake Dojran is characterized by relatively stable conditions with an only moderate trend towards higher aridity. The Late Holocene is characterized by climatic instability and strong anthropogenic overprint with first evidence for human impact towards the Mid- to Late Holocene transition (early Bronze Age). In the early Late Holocene, we observe a brief phase of decreased anthropogenic activity possibly triggered by climatic perturbation, e.g. aridity, around 4,000 yrs cal BP. Subsequently, we detect a reinvigoration of human impact after 3,670 yrs cal BP. From around 2,500 yrs cal BP until 1,170 yrs cal BP pollen indicate intensive land-use while fecal stanol and PAH concentrations are low, which could be explained by either ecosystem changes and/or settlement relocation/-organization. Forestry and/or agriculture most likely continued to be practiced inside the lake catchment accounting for increased erosion. Increased human activity during the Middle Ages and the Modern Era, with a relative high around 780 yrs cal BP and a relative low around 640 yrs cal BP, may have been linked to hydrological rather than to temperature variations during the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age since temperature variations are small during the last millennium. Overall, the observed pattern suggests a relationship between increased human activity and phases of humidity, i.e., high lake levels, at Lake Dojran.

## **5. Holocene hydrological and atmospheric changes in East Africa inferred from lipid biomarker and leaf wax *n*-alkane $\delta D$ of Lake Dendi (Ethiopia) sediments**

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Tropical Africa and the Sahara region experienced extreme hydrological variations over the course of the Holocene with a prolonged period of strongly increased humidity controlled by the last precessional cycle (Tierney et al., 2010b; Berke et al., 2012; Foerster et al., 2012; Tierney and deMenocal, 2013; Junginger et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2017). The ca. six-fold increase in precipitation (Tierney et al., 2017) between 15 ka and 5 ka, known as the African Humid Period (AHP) (deMenocal et al., 2000), transformed the Saharan desert into an open grass savannah indicated by pollen data and climate simulations (Lézine et al., 1990; Claussen and Gayler, 1997; Kröpelin et al., 2008). Even in the present day hyper-arid core of the Sahara numerous lakes were present (COHMAP-Members, 1988; Tierney et al., 2011b).

While the causes of the AHP are widely understood, spatial and temporal patterns are still highly debated (deMenocal et al., 2000; Kröpelin et al., 2008; Shanahan et al., 2015; Tierney et al., 2017). Uncertainties in the reconstructions arise from the complex nature of the North and East African climate, which is controlled by the strength and interactions of different monsoonal systems (Weldeab et al., 2014), sea surface temperatures of the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, and resulting shifts in the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) and the Congo Air Boundary (CAB) (Tierney et al., 2011b; Tierney and de Menocal, 2013; Costa et al., 2014; Junginger et al., 2014; Castañeda et al., 2016). Therefore, changes in the location of the ITCZ and the CAB may affect the sedimentary archives differently depending on their location (Fig. 19). Further complications arise from the dynamics in Indian Ocean sea surface temperatures connected to the Indian Ocean dipole (IOD) or the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) (Tierney and deMenocal, 2013), land surface feedbacks, the nonlinear behavior and different sensitivity of certain paleoclimate proxies (Castañeda et al., 2016). In addition, centennial- to millennial-scale climatic changes such as the Younger Dryas and the 8.2 ka event further complicate the interpretation of onset and termination of the AHP (Garcin et al., 2006; Revel et al., 2010; Costa et al., 2014).

Due to the location in proximity of the ITCZ and the CAB, paleoclimatic records from the central Ethiopian plateau in Northeast Africa can provide new insights into past shifts in the two major wind regimes in East Africa. The CAB reaches the plateau during northern hemispheric summer (July-August), delivering great amounts of moisture from the Atlantic Ocean. During the rest of the year, the Ethiopian plateau is dominated by precipitation originating from the Indian Ocean

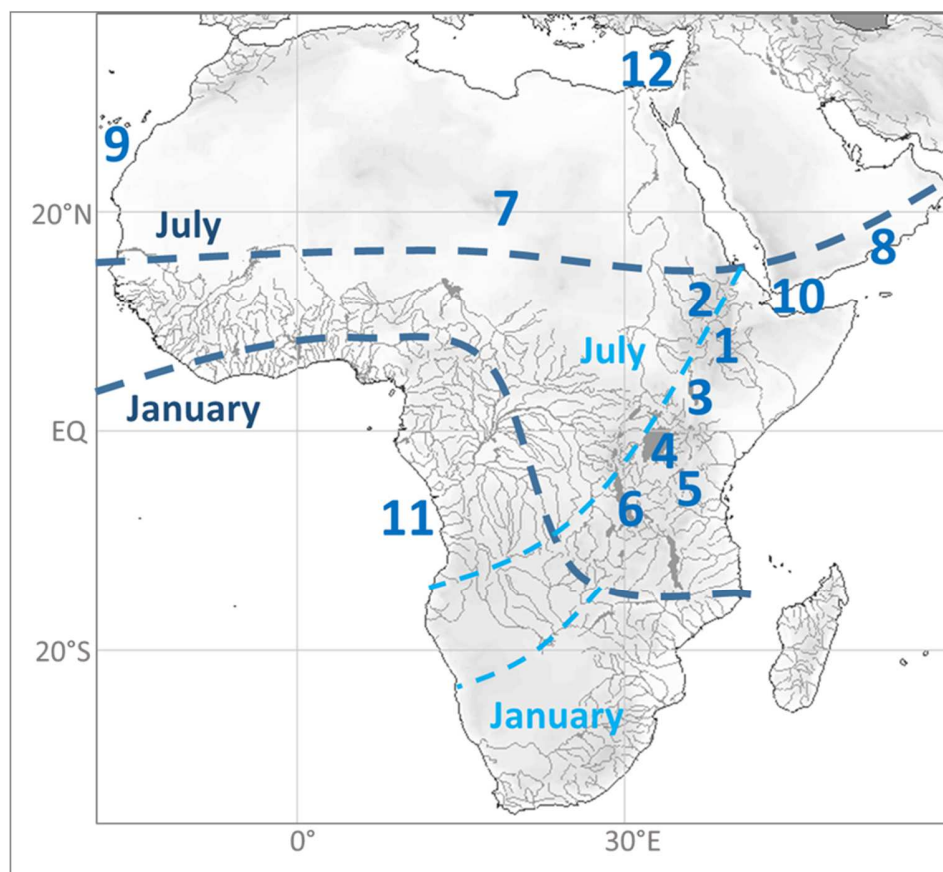
and transported via the ITCZ (Mitchell and Jones, 2005; Degefu and Schagerl, 2015; Wagner et al., in review). In this study, we analyze stable carbon and hydrogen isotopes of plant leaf wax *n*-alkanes in a sediment core from Lake Dendi covering a period of ~12,000 years. This allows us to reconstruct past hydrological and vegetation changes and thereby to identify major changes in moisture sources from the Indian Ocean (via the ITCZ) and the Atlantic Ocean (via CAB) to the Ethiopian highlands over the course of the AHP. In addition, we present Holocene temperature reconstructions based on the MBT/CBT proxy.

## 5.1 Site description

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Lake Dendi is situated at 8° 50' N; 38° 02' E on the Ethiopian Plateau about 80 km to the west of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia; Fig. 19). The lake comprises two basins of ~2 km diameter connected via a shallow sill and has a maximum water depth of 60 m (Wagner et al., in review). Lake Dendi lies 2,836 meters above sea level (m a.s.l.) inside an 8 km wide caldera of the dormant volcano Mount Dendi. The crater rim rises to a maximum elevation of ~3,270 m a.s.l. Maximum water depth of Lake Dendi amounts to 60 m (Wagner et al., in review). The lake is oligotrophic and the water temperature ranges between 15°C and 17°C (Degefu et al., 2014). Lake Dendi has no permanent in- and outflow but is fed by rivers and streams during the rainy season, thereby charging rivers like the Huluka River in lower valley regions (Prabu et al., 2010). The Lake catchment can be associated with the Lower Dega region which is characterized by a sub-humid climate with mean temperatures of 15°C to 16°C during the winter months, the highest mean temperatures being around 18°C during March to May, and 16°C to 17°C from June to October. Annual rainfall of the Dendi region averages ~1,200 mm (Mitchell and Jones, 2005; Degefu et al., 2014). Three hydrological seasons result from the shifting positions of the ITCZ and CAB over the course of the year. As a result, the Dendi catchment experiences a main rainy season from May/June to September when the ITCZ reaches its northernmost position (Fig. 19). During July and August the Congo Air Boundary (CAB) reaches the area, bringing great amounts of moisture from the Atlantic Ocean. A relatively dry season between October and February is characterized by predominant northeasterly winds. February/March to May exhibit a spring rainy season when easterly and southeasterly winds from the Indian Ocean prevail (Wagner et al., in review). Lake Dendi can be assigned to the Afromontane forest region (Heslop-Harrison, 2011). The natural vegetation in the catchment of the lake is most likely a mixture of open forest with dominant conifers, African juniper trees, and African redwood, interspersed with high-mountain steppes, mosses and lichens

(Williams et al., 2004; Fritzsche et al., 2007), which today is largely replaced by a landscape characterized by cleared trees and intensive agricultural activity (Wagner et al., in review).



**Figure 19.** Schematic modern positions of the ITCZ (dark blue) and the CAB (light blue) over Africa during NH summer and winter. Also shown are paleorecords including: 1. Lake Dendi (this study); 2. Lake Tana (Costa et al., 2014); 3. Lake Chew Bahir (Foerster et al., 2012); 4. Lake Victoria (Berke et al., 2012); 5. Lake Challa (Tierney et al., 2011a); 6. Lake Tanganyika (Tierney et al., 2008; 2010b); 7. Lake Yoa (Kröpelin et al., 2008); 8. Qunf cave (Fleitmann et al., 2007); 9. Northwest African margin (deMenocal et al., 2000; Tierney et al., 2017); 10. Gulf of Aden (Tierney and deMenocal, 2013); 11. Congo River outflow (Schefuß et al., 2005); 12. Nile river fan (Castañeda et al., 2016).

## 5.2 Material and Methods

The Lake Dendi sediment cores DEN1 (08°50.178'N, 38°00.974'E) and DEN2 (08°50.153'N, 38°01.075'E) were obtained in March and April 2012 from the eastern twin-lake from a water depth of 50 m and 54 m, respectively (Wagner et al., in review). The cores were correlated based on optical and XRF analyses. Age-depth modelling was conducted using 24 radiocarbon ( $^{14}\text{C}$ ) ages (Wagner et al., in review). The molecular analyses for this study were performed on 57 freeze-dried and ground samples with a resolution of ~200 yrs. Samples were 2 x ultrasonically extracted



using 25ml mixtures of DCM:MeOH (9:1, v:v) and DCM:MeOH (1:1, v:v) respectively. The lipid extracts were saponified and further separated into polarity fractions using SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography using the method of Höfle et al. (2013). The aliphatic hydrocarbons were separated into saturated and unsaturated hydrocarbon fractions using AgNO<sub>3</sub>-impregnated silica gel. The polar fractions, containing the tetraether lipids, were dissolved in HEX:IPA (95:5, v:v) and filtered through 0.45 µm PTFE syringe filters. *n*-Alkanes were analyzed on an Agilent 7890 series II GC-FID following the method described by Höfle et al. (2013) and quantified against authentic external standards including normalization to total organic carbon (TOC) content. GDGTs were analyzed using an Agilent 1290 UHPLC coupled to an Agilent 6460 QQQ equipped with an APCI ion source operated in SIM mode according to Schouten et al. (2007). MBT/CBT values were calibrated to annual mean air temperature (MAT) using the East African Lake calibration of Tierney et al. (2010a). Stable isotopes ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta\text{D}$ ) were measured of the most abundant *n*-alkane compounds (C<sub>29</sub>, C<sub>31</sub>).  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  were measured on a Thermo Trace GC coupled to a Finnigan MAT 252 isotope-ratio monitoring-mass spectrometer (irm-MS) via a modified Finnigan GC/C III combustion interface operated at 1000 °C.  $\delta\text{D}$  compositions were measured with a Thermo Trace GC coupled to a Thermo Fischer Scientific MAT 253 irm-MS via a pyrolysis reactor operated at 1420 °C. Methods were following Häggi et al. (2016). The isotope values were measured at least twice against calibrated reference gas using H<sub>2</sub> for  $\delta\text{D}$  and CO<sub>2</sub> for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and are reported in ‰ versus VSMOW and VPDB, respectively. The long-term precision monitored by external standard analyses is 0.3‰ for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and 2.8‰ for  $\delta\text{D}$ .

## 5.3 Results

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### 5.3.1 Plant wax *n*-alkanes

The *n*-alkane distribution in all sediment samples shows a strong odd over even predominance with highest abundances of the C<sub>29</sub> and C<sub>31</sub> *n*-alkanes. The sum of the high molecular weight (HMW) *n*-alkanes, including C<sub>27</sub>-C<sub>33</sub>, varies between 47 µg/gr TOC and 263 µg/gr TOC, showing the highest fluctuations in the Early Holocene after 5,200 yrs cal BP (Tab. 7). The CPI values of the HMW *n*-alkanes generally amount to over 5, indicating no major contribution from fossil sources (Grice et al., 1968) that might bias compound specific  $\delta\text{D}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values. Average chain length (ACL) values of the HMW *n*-alkanes (C<sub>27</sub>-C<sub>33</sub>) range between 29.3 and 30.5 (Fig. 24, Tab. 7) with highest values (as high as 30.4 at 650 yrs cal BP) in the older and the younger part of the record. The middle part of the record between about 7,200 yrs cal BP and 3,400 yrs cal BP is characterized

by intermediate to low values (as low as 29.3 at 5,210 yrs cal BP). ACL values show a moderate correlation ( $r^2 = 0.5$ ) with the *n*-alkane  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  isotopic values ( $\Delta^{13}\text{C}_{31-13}\text{C}_{29}$ ) (Fig. 24, Tab. 7).

### 5.3.2 Plant wax *n*-alkane hydrogen isotopes

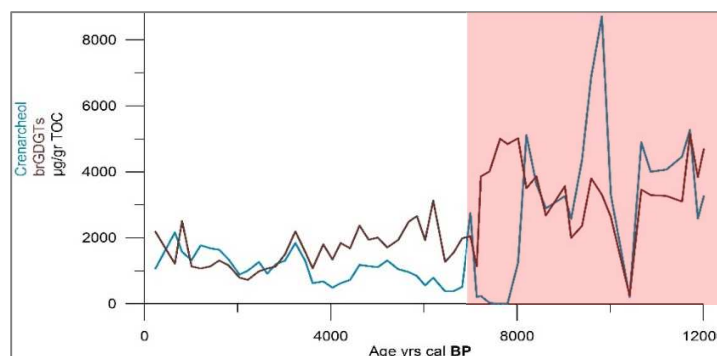
$\delta\text{D}$  values of the most abundant  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$  *n*-alkanes ( $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$ ) show a strong correlation ( $r^2=0.9$ ) and exhibit a wide range of almost 50‰, which is comparable to the record of Lake Tana (~60‰) (Costa et al., 2014), situated ~300 km to the northwest (Fig. 19, Fig. 21, Tab. 7). In comparison to other plant wax  $\delta\text{D}$  records from East Africa (Tierney et al., 2010b; Tierney et al., 2011b; Berke et al., 2012; Tierney and deMenocal, 2013), we observe relatively D-depleted values ranging between -130.1‰ and -178.8‰ ( $\text{C}_{29}$ ) and between 131.7‰ and 178.9‰ ( $\text{C}_{31}$ ) (Fig. 21, Tab. 7). The Late Glacial is characterized by relatively positive  $\delta\text{D}$  values (between -131.2‰ and -142‰) of the  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$  *n*-alkanes. Two rapid decreases of about -20‰ at 11,700 yrs cal BP and 10,000 yrs cal BP, respectively, are followed by a brief plateau phase of about 2,000 yrs with  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$  values around -175‰. Subsequently, starting at ~8,000 yrs cal BP  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$  values exhibit a long-term gradual increase to ca -130‰ at about 2,000 yrs cal BP.  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$  values then gradually decrease of about -10‰ to the present, with some distinct fluctuations.

### 5.3.3 Plant wax *n*-alkane carbon isotopes

$\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of the HMW *n*-alkanes range between -26.8‰ and -21.6‰ ( $\text{C}_{29}$ ) and between -28.8‰ and 25.6‰ ( $\text{C}_{31}$ ) (Fig. 24, Tab. 7).  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{29}$  values generally show little variation but slightly  $^{13}\text{C}$ -enriched values are observed during the Early Holocene until about 8,000 cal yrs cal BP and during the Late Holocene starting at about 2,000 yrs cal BP.  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{31}$  values are generally more  $^{13}\text{C}$  enriched, especially from 9,000 yrs cal BP to 8,000 yrs cal BP and from 6,500 yrs cal BP to 5,000 yrs cal BP. This results in an isotopic spread between  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$ , which shows a gradually increasing trend from the late glacial until 5,500 yrs cal BP, followed by a gradual decreasing trend until the present (Fig. 24). For an estimation of the major vegetation types, we applied a combined weighted two endmember mixing model assuming endmember values for  $\text{C}_3$  and  $\text{C}_4$  vegetation of -34.7‰ and -21.4‰ for  $\text{C}_{29}$  and -35.2‰ and -21.7‰ for  $\text{C}_{31}$  according to Berke et al. (2012) and Castañeda et al. (2009). The resulting percentages of  $\text{C}_3$  and  $\text{C}_4$  plants for  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$  were weighted according to the specific compound concentrations (Fig. 24, Tab. 7). Uncertainties in the endmember values, however, may lead to an error in the percentage of  $\text{C}_4$  vegetation of up to 20% (Castañeda et al., 2009).

### 5.3.4 GDGT-based indices

The BIT index varies in a wide range of 0.21 and 1 (Fig. 24, Tab. 7). In the older part of the record (~8,200 yrs cal BP), the BIT index shows relatively low values between 0.21 and 0.63, mainly driven by high abundances of the aquatic endmember Crenarchaeol (Fig.20). After 8,200 yrs cal BP, the BIT index rises abruptly to values as high as 1 between 7,800 yrs cal BP and 7,400 yrs cal BP, caused by an abrupt decline in Crenarchaeol concentrations. The strongly fluctuating concentrations of both Crenarchaeol and brGDGTs stabilize on a lower level after 7,400 yrs cal BP, complicating the interpretation of the BIT values before 7,400 yrs cal BP (Fig. 20). Therefore, as suggested by Fietz et al. (2011), the concentrations of brGDGTs could be a more reliable proxy for terrestrial input into Lake Dendi before 7,400 yrs cal BP than the BIT index. Furthermore, the high ratios of GDGT-2/crenarchaeol (>2) might indicate the presence of a sulfate-methane transition zone (SMTZ; Weijers et al., 2011). After 7,400 yrs cal BP, BIT values decline until 5,200 yrs cal BP to as low as 0.5, then rise again until 4,200 yrs cal BP (0.7) and then decline until 650 yrs cal BP. The core top (230 yrs cal BP) again shows a higher BIT value of 0.62. The high BIT values (BIT > 0.3) throughout most part of the record indicate substantial terrestrial input of soil OM and thus preclude the use of the TEX<sub>86</sub> proxy as a reliable paleothermometer (Weijers et al., 2006). Therefore, we use temperature estimates based on the methylation and cyclisation indices of branched tetraethers (MBT/CBT; Weijers et al., 2007b). Applying the East-African lake calibration of Tierney et al. (2010a), MAT estimates range between 17.9°C (at 9,400 yrs cal BP) and 15.1 °C (8,600 yrs cal BP; Fig. 23, Tab. 7). Our core-top value of 15.7 °C is close to the measured instrumental values from the Dendi region (Degefu and Schagerl, 2015). MATs show strong fluctuations of about 2.8°C in the older part of the record until ~7,800 yrs cal BP (15.2 °C). Temperatures then gradually increase to 17.2 °C at 1,400 yrs cal BP followed by stronger fluctuations in the uppermost core interval.



**Figure 20.** Concentrations of Crenarchaeol (blue line) and brGDGTs (brown line) in Lake Dendi sediment cores DEN1 and DEN2. Red shading marks strongly fluctuating Crenarchaeol concentrations.

Chapter 5

**Table 7.** Biomarker-based indices, temperatures, and stable carbon and hydrogen isotopic data of Lake Dendi sediment cores DEN1 and DEN2.

<sup>a</sup> Age (yrs cal BP)	<sup>b</sup> BIT	<sup>c</sup> MAT (°C)	<sup>d</sup> HMW <i>n</i> -alkane ACL	$\delta D_{C_{29}}$ (‰ versus VSMOW)	$\delta D_{C_{31}}$ (‰ versus VSMOW)	$\delta^{13}C_{29}$ (‰ versus PDB)	$\delta^{13}C_{31}$ (‰ versus PDB)	C <sub>4</sub> weighted (%)
240	0.62	15.7	30.2	-135.6	-141.2	-26.5	-24.6	71.3
650	0.31	16.7	30.4	-137.7	-143.3	-27.2	-25.9	63.9
810	0.33	16.2	30.3	-135.4	-143.0	-27.7	-26.3	60.6
1010	0.40	15.8	30.3	-133.0	-138.4	-28.2	-26.5	58.9
1210	0.32	16.6	30.4	-139.6	-146.4	-27.1	-25.4	66.2
1410	0.35	17.2	30.2	-139.0	-146.8	-27.3	-25.1	66.0
1600	0.38	17.2	30.3	-136.7	-143.9	-26.9	-25.3	67.5
1810	0.40	16.8	30.2	-132.8	-138.2	-27.3	-25.3	65.4
2040	0.41	16.8	29.8	-130.1	-131.7	-28.4	-25.4	58.5
2220	0.36	16.8	29.9	-	-	-	-	-
2450	0.38	16.8	30.1	-131.7	-136.5	-28.2	-25.3	61.3
2640	0.47	17.0	29.7	-	-	-	-	-
2810	0.43	16.6	29.8	-132.9	-134.6	-27.8	-25.2	62.5
3020	0.47	16.6	30.0	-134.7	-136.1	-27.9	-25.2	62.1
3240	0.48	17.0	29.7	-139.3	-139.5	-27.2	-24.4	68.5
3450	0.48	16.3	29.5	-141.2	-138.3	-27.8	-24.1	65.2
3610	0.57	16.9	29.5	-139.7	-135.0	-28.1	-24.9	60.9
3840	0.67	16.3	29.4	-138.8	-137.0	-28.3	-24.8	60.8
4040	0.68	16.6	29.4	-142.7	-140.1	-28.2	-25.1	59.7
4210	0.70	16.1	29.5	-140.9	-140.6	-28.2	-24.7	60.5
4410	0.64	16.4	29.5	-140.9	-140.6	-28.5	-25.0	58.4
4620	0.61	15.9	29.6	-146.6	-145.3	-28.1	-24.6	62.5
4810	0.57	16.3	29.6	-145.4	-145.9	-28.0	-24.3	63.7
5010	0.59	16.0	29.5	-148.2	-149.6	-27.8	-23.2	66.4
5210	0.50	16.1	29.3	-148.3	-152.4	-27.7	-23.9	67.1
5450	0.59	15.8	29.6	-148.6	-151.4	-27.7	-23.0	70.4
5670	0.67	16.1	29.5	-149.6	-152.8	-27.5	-23.2	70.2
5850	0.71	15.9	29.7	-155.2	-159.5	-27.7	-23.2	69.7
6030	0.73	15.9	29.5	-152.5	-156.7	-27.6	-23.1	70.8
6200	0.76	16.3	29.7	-154.0	-157.9	-27.5	-23.5	70.1
6450	0.73	16.4	29.8	-161.2	-166.1	-27.6	-23.2	71.6
6640	0.76	16.5	29.6	-157.5	-160.0	-27.7	-24.3	65.2
6820	0.75	16.2	29.5	-162.3	-166.9	-27.9	-24.4	64.8
7150	0.81	16.1	29.3	-	-	-	-	-
7240	0.92	15.9	29.5	-162.8	-164.1	-27.7	-24.8	64.0
7430	0.99	16.3	29.7	-167.8	-171.9	-27.6	-24.6	64.6
7650	1.00	15.6	29.8	-165.3	-169.8	-27.6	-24.4	66.1
7810	0.99	15.2	29.8	-168.1	-173.6	-27.2	-23.5	70.6
8040	0.76	16.1	29.9	-173.6	-179.2	-26.4	-22.1	79.4

<sup>a</sup> Age (yrs cal BP)	<sup>b</sup> BIT (°C)	<sup>c</sup> MAT (°C)	<sup>d</sup> HMW <i>n</i> -alkane ACL	$\delta D_{C_{29}}$ (‰ versus VSMOW)	$\delta D_{C_{31}}$ (‰ versus VSMOW)	$\delta^{13}C_{29}$ (‰ versus PDB)	$\delta^{13}C_{31}$ (‰ versus PDB)	$C_4$ weighted (%)
8220	0.34	15.9	30.0	-169.5	-181.1	-25.8	-21.6	84.3
8430	0.45	15.8	29.8	-	-	-	-	-
8630	0.43	15.1	30.1	-168.4	-175.8	-26.7	-24.2	71.4
8840	0.63	15.6	29.6	-	-	-	-	-
9040	0.45	16.8	29.6	-178.8	-178.9	-26.8	-22.8	75.4
9170	0.37	17.6	29.8	-168.4	-177.9	-27.6	-25.6	60.3
9410	0.29	17.9	29.9	-170.7	-178.1	-26.8	-24.4	69.9
9600	0.30	17.1	30.1	-175.1	-178.2	-26.9	-24.6	69.1
9830	0.21	17.4	30.1	-176.5	-179.7	-26.3	-24.4	72.8
10020	0.37	16.8	29.8	-152.8	-156.6	-27.8	-26.8	57.3
10420	0.48	15.7	29.8	-	-	-	-	-
10680	0.34	17.8	29.8	-161.0	-163.1	-26.0	-24.5	72.5
10880	0.38	16.5	30.1	-161.4	-164.9	-25.6	-24.8	72.9
11210	0.37	16.1	30.0	-160.0	-162.8	-25.7	-25.5	70.1
11550	0.36	15.6	30.4	-154.0	-160.9	-25.6	-24.0	77.6
11720	0.42	17.2	30.5	-133.6	-142.0	-26.1	-24.5	74.1
11890	0.53	15.7	30.3	-132.7	-141.9	-26.4	-24.9	71.4
12010	0.52	15.9	30.4	-131.9	-140.5	-26.4	-24.8	71.8

<sup>a</sup> According to Wagner et al. (in review)

<sup>b</sup> According to Hopmans et al. (2004)

<sup>c</sup> According to Tierney et al. (2010a)

<sup>d</sup>  $(C_{27} * 27 + C_{29} * 29 + C_{31} * 31 + C_{33} * 33) / (C_{27} + C_{29} + C_{31} + C_{33})$

## 5.4 Discussion

### 5.4.1 Hydrological source signatures

Compound specific  $\delta D$  analyses of plant leaf waxes from Africa have been frequently used to reconstruct past changes in the hydrological cycle (Schefuß et al., 2005; Tierney and deMenocal, 2013; Castañeda et al., 2016; Tierney et al., 2017). In tropical regions with only minor temperature variations, the most prominent factor influencing  $\delta D$  values is the amount effect (Bowen, 2008; Sachse et al., 2012). Apart from precipitation amounts, shifting wind regimes and associated variations in moisture sources have a strong control on  $\delta D$  values in East Africa (Costa et al., 2014; Castañeda et al., 2016). At Lake Dendi, the main modern sources of precipitation are the Indian and Atlantic Ocean via the ITCZ and the CAB, respectively. The Atlantic Ocean moisture is being recycled through the West African Congo Basin before arriving in East Africa (Schefuß et al., 2003), resulting in unusually low  $\delta D$  values of precipitation (e.g. Levin et al., 2009). During July and

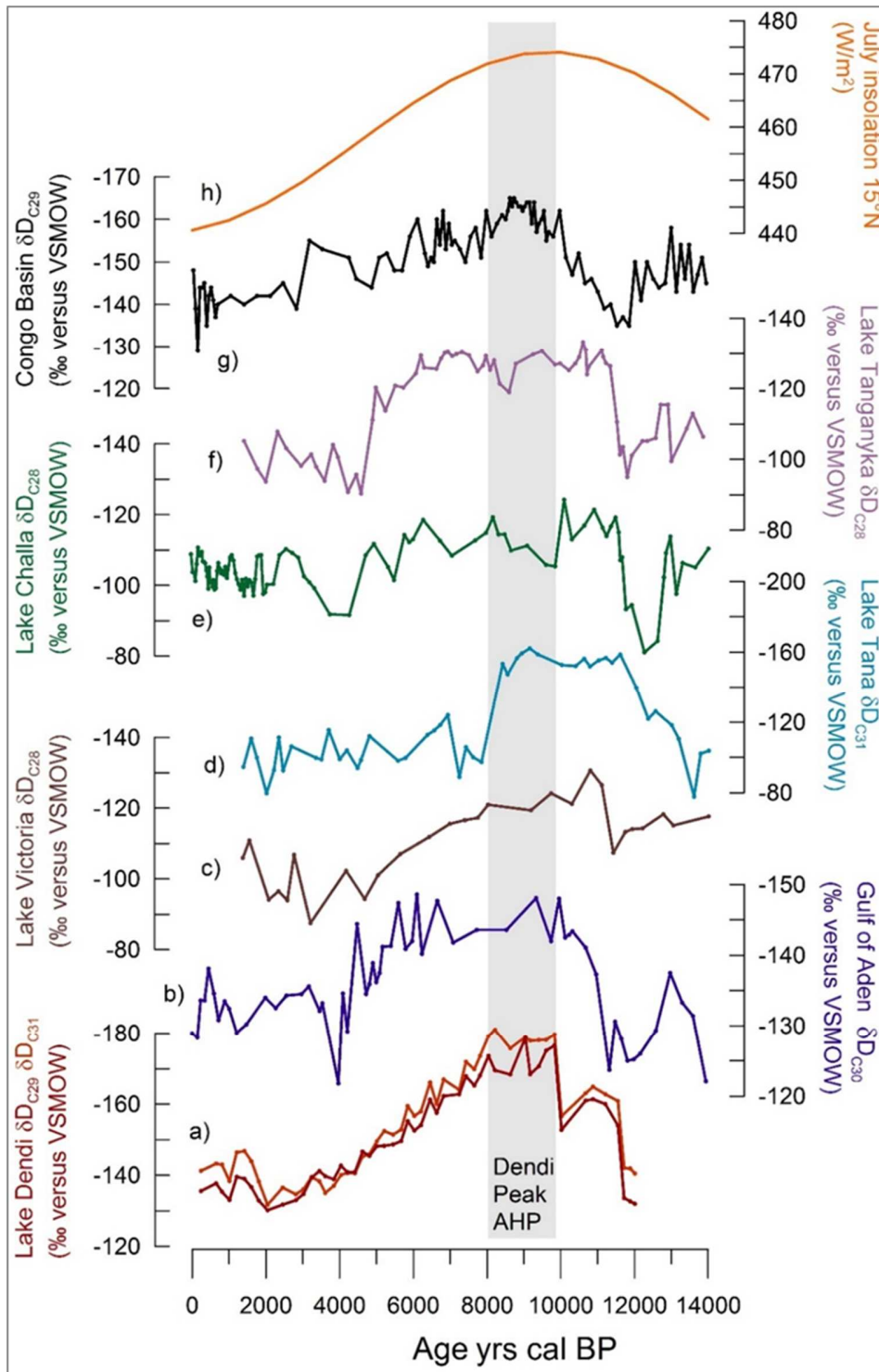
August, when the CAB reaches the Dendi area, isotopic precipitation data from Addis Ababa (IAEA/WMO, 2016) shows relatively D-depleted values, suggesting a D-depletion of moisture originating from the Atlantic ocean/Congo Basin compared to Indian Ocean derived moisture. This isotopic source effect could amount up to about -15‰ D-depletion (Tierney et al., 2011b; Costa et al., 2014). In addition, a modeling study by Herold and Lohmann (2009) suggests that stronger moisture advection from the Atlantic resulted in isotopically depleted rainfall in East Africa during the Eemian with strong analogues to present day conditions. Thus, relative changes in moisture sources (Indian Ocean vs Atlantic Ocean/Congo Basin) could also exhibit a strong impact on the  $\delta D_{wax}$  signature at Lake Dendi.

The  $\delta^{13}C$  inferred vegetational changes (Fig. 22, Tab. 7) do not significantly bias Lake Dendi  $\delta D_{wax}$  values: Assuming endmembers for  $C_{29}$  of 34.7‰ (35.2‰ for  $C_{31}$ ) for  $C_3$  vegetation and 21.4‰ (21.7‰ for  $C_{31}$ ) for  $C_4$  vegetation, respectively (Castañeda et al., 2009; Berke et al., 2012), the vegetational changes at Lake Dendi mirrored by changes in  $\delta^{13}C$  of 3.2‰ ( $C_{29}$ ) and 5.2‰ ( $C_{31}$ ) can account for only -5‰ or -8‰ variation in  $\delta D$ . Furthermore, recent results from the region have shown that fractionation differences of  $\delta D$  between  $C_3$  trees and  $C_4$  grasses may in fact be small, or even negligible (Tierney et al., 2010b).

MBT/CBT inferred temperature changes during the Holocene are rather small ( $\sim 3^\circ C$ ; Fig. 21, Tab. 7), implying only a minor influence of the temperature effect (Dansgaard, 1964) on the  $\delta D_{wax}$  records. Compared to other East-African records, Lake Dendi exhibits strongly D-depleted values, most probably as a result of its high altitude position ( $\sim 2,800$  m) in the Ethiopian highlands, if assuming a D-depletion of about -1 to -4 ‰ per 100 m (Holdsworth et al., 1991; Rozanski et al., 1993). The large amplitude of  $\delta D_{wax}$  values observed at Lake Dendi ( $\sim 50$ ‰; Fig. 21, Tab. 7) points to significant changes in the amount of precipitation but also to a changing influence of the CAB, similar to Lake Tana ( $\sim 60$ ‰) (Costa et al., 2014).

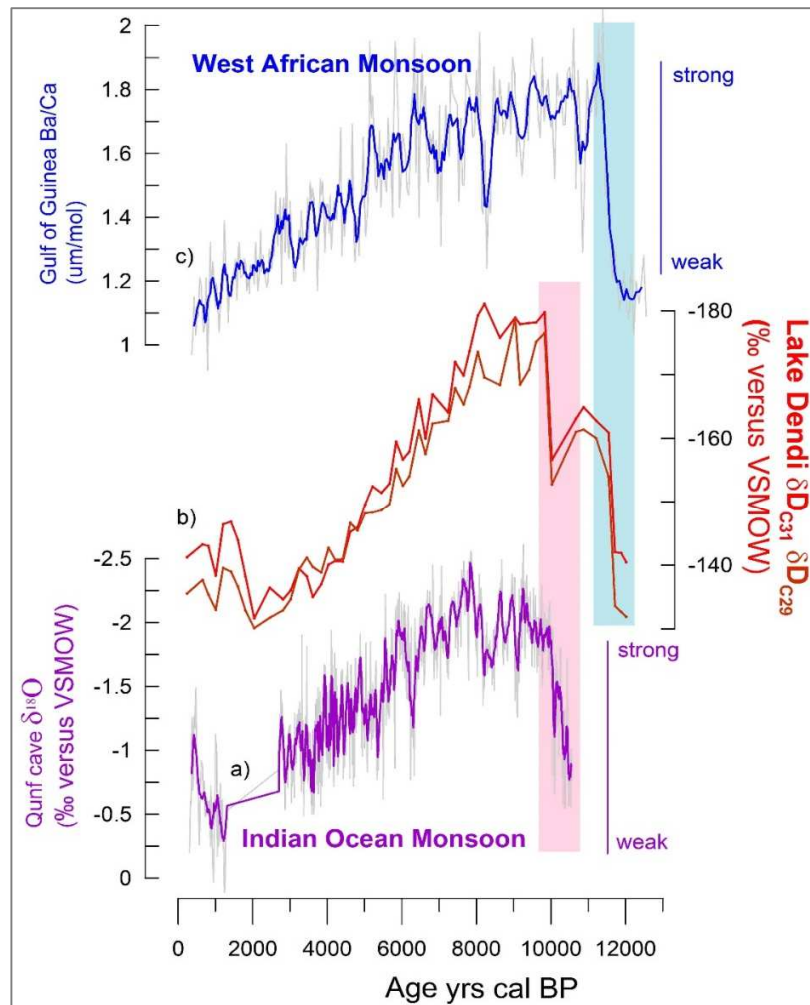
#### 5.4.2 Younger Dryas and Early Holocene - Peak AHP

Strongly D-enriched  $\delta D_{wax}$  values during the Younger Dryas period until 11,700 yrs cal BP coincide with an interruption of the AHP and dry conditions at many Northeast and East African sites (Tierney et al., 2011b; Foerster et al., 2012; Junginger et al., 2014). Relatively dry conditions at Lake Dendi during the YD are also suggested by XRF derived elemental distributions obtained by Wagner et al. (in review). The dry conditions in East Africa were most likely a result of a southwards positioned ITCZ, weakened monsoonal systems, and decreased moisture exchange between oceans and land (Talbot et al., 2007).



**Figure 21.** Comparison of African plant leaf wax  $\delta D$  records including: a) Lake Dendi, b) Gulf of Aden (Tierney and deMenocal, 2013), c) Lake Victoria (Berke et al., 2012), d) Lake Tana (Costa et al., 2014), e) Lake Challa (Tierny et al., 2011b), f) Lake Tanganyika (Tierny et al., 2010b), g) Congo Basin (Schefuß et al., 2005). Also shown is h) the mean July insolation at  $15^{\circ}\text{N}$  after Berger and Loutre (1991).

At Lake Dendi, the transition out of the YD period is characterized by a large change in  $\delta D$  of about  $-40\text{‰}$  that points to an increase in rainfall due to a re-strengthening of the Indian Ocean atmospheric circulation (Tierney et al., 2010b) but also to an eastwards shift of the CAB and an associated increase in moisture during NH summer from the Congo Basin. The return to full humid AHP conditions at Lake Dendi occurred in two rapid steps ( $\sim 20\text{‰}$ ), visible from the  $\delta D_{\text{wax}}$  record, with the first step between 11,700 yrs cal BP and 11,550 yrs cal BP and the second between 10,000 yrs cal BP and 9,800 yrs cal BP, paralleling the re-strengthening of the monsoonal systems (Fig. 22).



**Figure 22.** Comparison of b) Lake Dendi plant leaf wax  $\delta D$  data and pace of the a) Indian Ocean Monsoon (Fleitmann et al., 2003) and c) West African Monsoon (Weldeab et al., 2007).

The first step occurred immediately after the YD and simultaneous to the return to peak AHP conditions at Lake Chala (Tierney et al., 2011b) and Tanganyika (Tierney et al., 2010b), that are



both dominated by Indian Ocean Moisture. It further coincides with a strong increase in Ba/Ca ratios from the Gulf of Guinea, indicating a re-strengthening of the West-African Monsoon (Weldeab et al., 2007) and an associated northward migration of the ITCZ. The second step parallels a rapid decrease in  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values from Qunf cave (Oman), mirroring the onset of the Indian Ocean Monsoon (Fleitmann et al., 2003). The strengthening of the Indian Ocean Monsoon corresponds to an enhanced west–east pressure gradient near the equator (Camberlin, 1997; Junginger et al., 2014) that also leads to advection of moisture from the Congo Basin (shift of the CAB) eastwards to the western part of East Africa (Levin et al., 2009; Kebede and Travi, 2012). The second D-depletion step might therefore mark the advent of the CAB on the Ethiopian Plateau and an increase in D-depleted moisture from the Atlantic/Congo Basin. This also suggests that the isotopic source effect of the CAB cannot be larger than  $\sim -23\text{‰}$  in  $\delta\text{D}$ , without considering any additional D-depletion through the amount effect. Implying a maximum source effect of  $-14\text{‰}$  in  $\delta\text{D}$  for 100% Congo derived moisture (Costa et al., 2014), the increase in precipitation due to the shift of the CAB must be equal to an amount effect of  $-9\text{‰}$ . Despite the suggested precipitation increase inferred from  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$ , the BIT index shows relatively low values (0.21 - 0.63) during the Early Holocene (Fig. 24, Tab. 7). However, the high concentrations of Crenarchaeol (relative to brGDGT concentrations), which might be the result of high nutrient input or an increased lake level, strongly bias the BIT values during this phase (Fig. 20). Indeed, the overall high concentrations of brGDGTs during the peak AHP phase point to strong terrestrial input/runoff (Fig. 20). Furthermore,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{31}$  values of up to  $-21.6\text{‰}$  indicate an enhanced proportion of  $\text{C}_4$  vegetation during the most humid interval.  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{29}$  values are slightly more depleted than  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{31}$  ( $\sim 2\text{‰}$ ), but also show the most  $^{13}\text{C}$ -enriched values during the Early Holocene (Fig. 24, Tab. 7). Vegetational changes at 10,000 yrs cal BP, pointing to a higher percentage of  $\text{C}_3$  vegetation, were most likely initiated by a volcanic eruption of the Wenchi crater 12 km to the west of Lake Dendi (Wager et al., in review) and thus do not necessarily carry a climatic signal.

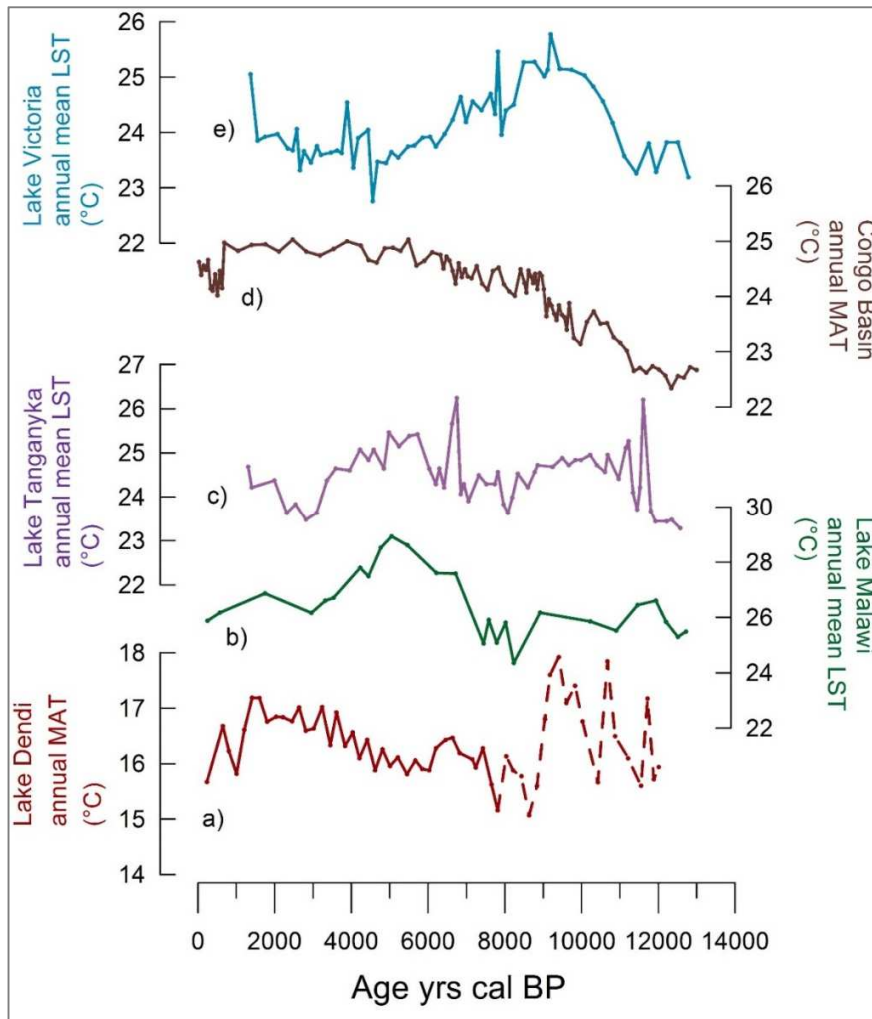
At about 8,600 yrs cal BP we observe a depletion in the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{31}$  record (to  $-24.2\text{‰}$ ) and a slight D-enrichment ( $\sim 10\text{‰}$  in  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\sim 3\text{‰}$  in  $\text{C}_{31}$ ), that could be related to a widespread aridity event in tropical and subtropical Africa around 8.5 ka (Gillespie et al., 1983; Gasse, 2000; Jung et al., 2004; Tierney et al., 2011a) and may be linked to the 8.2 ka event observed in other sites (Alley and Ágústsson, 2005). A lake-level low stand and decreasing precipitation between 8.7 and 8.2 cal kyr BP are also suggested by Junginger et al. (2014) for paleo-Lake Suguta in the East African rift. The observed short-term vegetational changes at Lake Dendi (decreased  $\text{C}_4$  percentage) and the slight aridification visible from the  $\delta\text{D}$  record can be supported by findings of Wagner et al. (in

review). The authors report increased terrigenous input around 8.5 ka at Lake Dendi, which is linked to a reduction in vegetation cover.

### 5.4.3 Middle Holocene - Transition out of the AHP

Starting at about 8,200 yrs cal BP the  $\delta D_{wax}$  records show a gradual long-term increasing aridity trend until ~2,000 yrs cal BP of about +50‰ in accordance to gradually decreasing NH summer insolation (Fig. 21) (Berger and Loutre, 1991) and decreasing strength of the West African Monsoon (Weldeab et al., 2007), Indian Ocean Monsoon (Fleitmann et al., 2003), and the East African Monsoon (Weldeab et al., 2014) (Fig. 22). The BIT index also decreases gradually from about 7,400 yrs cal BP until 650 yrs cal BP, only interrupted by a period of higher values around 4,000 yrs cal BP, indicating a reduction in soil organic matter input (Schouten et al., 2013) most likely due to reduced rainfall runoff over the course of the Middle and Late Holocene. This can be supported by findings from Wagner et al. (in review) who suggest an irregular but rather gradual decline of humidity and rainfall runoff from about 10,000 yrs cal BP until the Late Holocene. The MBT/CBT derived annual MAT estimates display a continuously increasing temperature trend from 15.2°C at 7,800 yrs cal BP to 17.2°C at 1,600 yrs cal BP (Fig. 23). The small  $\Delta MAT$  of 2°C however does not significantly bias the high magnitude of  $\delta D$  values via the temperature effect (Dansgaard, 1964; Majoube, 1971). The general temperature trend at Lake Dendi parallels the trend of the Congo Basin (Weijers et al., 2007c) which might indicate strong atmospheric teleconnections between the regions.

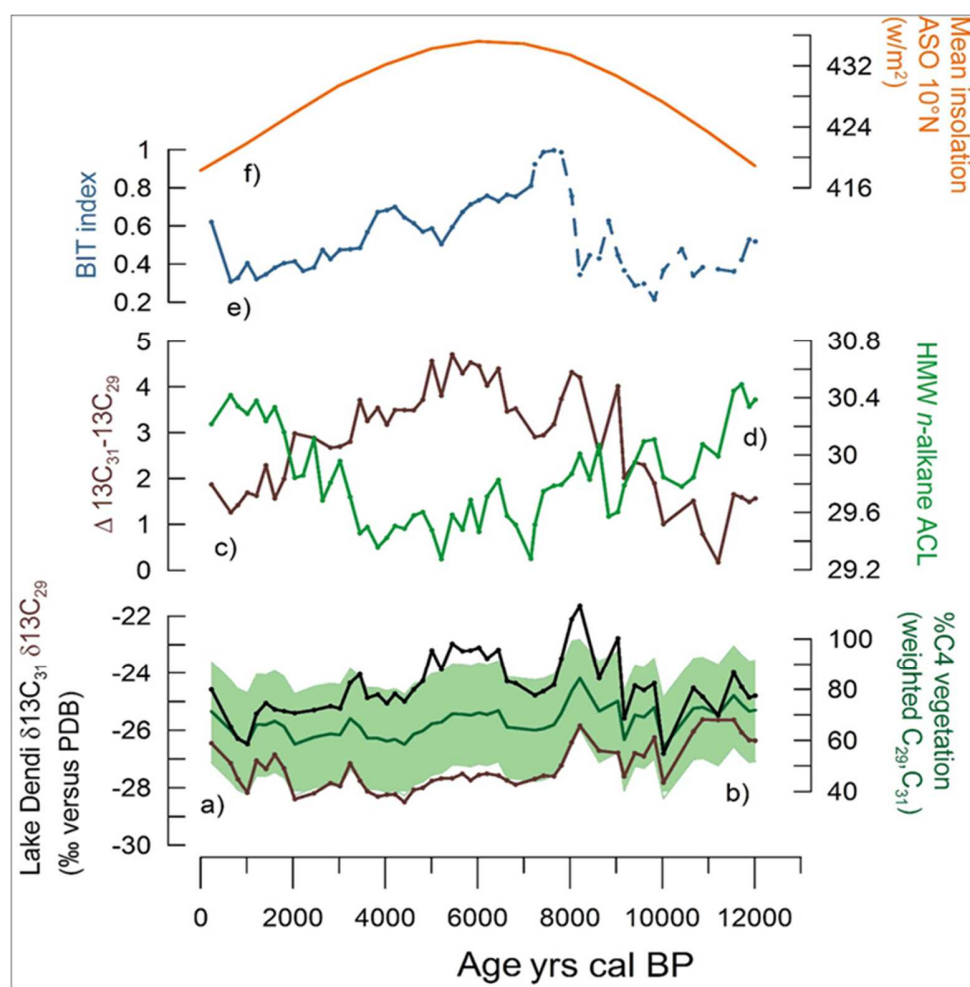
$\delta^{13}C$  values of both the  $C_{29}$  and  $C_{31}$  *n*-alkanes show more depleted values after 8,200 yrs cal BP indicating a shift towards a higher percentage of  $C_3$  vegetation. This trend, however, is in contrast with other Holocene plant wax  $\delta^{13}C$  records from Africa (Tierney et al., 2010b), which mostly show a  $^{13}C$ -enrichment trend and thus a shift towards increased  $C_4$  vegetation during the transition out of the AHP. This discrepancy may result from the high altitude location (~2,800 m) of Lake Dendi in the Ethiopian Highlands. Lake Garba Guracha, situated at a similarly high altitude location in the Bale mountains, (Umer et al., 2007) show a reduction of *Cyperacea/Poacea* (increased  $C_4$ ) and the establishment of a dry Afromontane forest with *Juniperus/Podocarpus* ( $C_3$  trees) in response to decreased rainfall and humidity during the Mid-Holocene. Thus, assuming similar vegetation types in the Dendi catchment, the decrease in  $\delta^{13}C$  and percentage of  $C_4$  vegetation indicate decreasing humidity after ~8,000 yrs cal BP, in agreement with the  $\delta D_{wax}$  records.



**Figure 23.** Comparison of African molecular temperature records including: a) Lake Dendi, b) Lake Malawi (Powers et al., 2005), c) Lake Tanganyika (Tierney et al., 2008), d) Congo Basin (Weijers et al., 2007c), e) Lake Victoria (Berke et al., 2012).

$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{31}$  values, however, stay relatively enriched until about 5,000 yrs cal BP still indicating a considerable proportion of  $\text{C}_4$  vegetation. This vegetation-pattern is also visible in the ACL values, that covariates with the  $^{13}\text{C}$  isotopic spread of  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$  ( $r^2 = 0.5$ ; Fig. 24). Other records from the East African region (Tierney and deMenocal, 2013), that are dominated by Indian Ocean moisture, also indicate relatively wet conditions until  $\sim 5$  ka BP (Fig. 21). Thus the decrease in moisture after 8,000 yrs cal BP at Lake Dendi must have been only moderate, suggesting that the decreasing  $\delta D_{\text{wax}}$  values between 8,000 yrs cal BP and 5,000 yrs cal BP are mainly controlled by a change in moisture sources (less Atlantic Ocean vs. higher Indian Ocean derived moisture) than solely by the amount effect. The decreasing moisture from the Atlantic/Congo Basin could be

compensated by increased Indian Ocean derived precipitation, as suggested by Junginger et al. (2014) for lakes from the East-African rift. Junginger (2013; 2014) imply a buffering effect of increased ITCZ related rainfall due to increasing insolation values during September–October after 8,000 yrs cal BP. Indeed, the Dendi region also experienced a Holocene insolation maximum for August-September-October (ASO) around 6,000 yrs cal BP, coinciding with the high percentage of C<sub>4</sub> vegetation indicated by the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{31}$  values (Fig. 24, Table 7).



**Figure 24.** Lake Dendi plant leaf wax a)  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ , b) %C<sub>4</sub> vegetation estimates, c)  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{29}-\delta^{13}\text{C}_{31}$  isotope spread, d) HMW *n*-alkane ACL (C<sub>27</sub>-C<sub>33</sub>), e) BIT index. Also shown: f) Mean insolation August-September-October at 10°N after Berger and Loutre (1991).

Other regions, experiencing a more abrupt transition, might in contrast miss suchlike buffering mechanisms. A similar development and timing was also suggested for a geochemical record off Tanzania by Liu et al. (2017), who detected an early phase of the AHP from the beginning of the Holocene to ~8 ka, intensified by additional Atlantic/Congo Basin derived moisture and an

eastward position of the CAB. A second, more moderate phase until about 5.5 ka was characterized by a westward shift of the CAB compensated by increased Indian Ocean moisture.

#### 5.4.4 Late Holocene climatic fluctuations and return to wetter conditions

After 2,000 yrs cal BP we observe an overall increasing trend in the  $\delta D_{wax}$  and  $\delta^{13}C_{wax}$  values suggesting a return to slightly wetter conditions (Fig. 21; 24). This is in agreement with findings by Wagner et al. (in review), who suggest an increasing but highly fluctuating terrestrial runoff during the last 1,500 yrs cal BP. Furthermore, our MAT estimates show a cooling of  $\sim 1.5^\circ\text{C}$  until the present. This overall climatic rebound might be connected to a higher influence of precipitation from the Atlantic/Congo Basin as due to a re-strengthening of the Indian Ocean Monsoon after 1,400 yrs cal BP (Fleitmann et al., 2003). The high fluctuations in runoff reported for Lake Dendi (Wagner et al., in review) are also visible in fluctuations in our biomarker records. These might be related to natural short-term climatic/environmental changes during the last millennium including the Medieval Warm Period (MWP) and the Little Ice Age (LIA). Thus, low  $\delta D_{wax}$  and  $\delta^{13}C_{wax}$  values, indicating a decrease in rainfall and in the percentage of  $C_3$  vegetation, coincide with the MWP in Ethiopia around 1,000 yrs, which is frequently associated with a more arid climate, i.e. in central Kenya at Lake Naivasha (Verschuren et al., 2000), or at Lake Bogoria (De Cort et al., 2013). However, Darbyshire et al. (2003) suggested widespread anthropogenic induced environmental change starting at about 500 BC in the northern Ethiopian highlands. Moreover, Umer et al. (2007) detected first anthropogenic activity in the Bale Mountains at about 2,000 cal yrs cal BP, complicating the interpretation of the proxy records during the last two millennia.

### 5.5 Summary and Conclusions

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Based on our plant wax *n*-alkane  $\delta D$  data, the return to full AHP conditions after YD aridity at Lake Dendi occurred in two steps paralleling the re-strengthening of the monsoonal system. The initial step at 11,700 yrs cal BP followed the YD and was characterized by an overall increase in moisture (increase in West African Monsoon strength). The second step at 10,000 yrs cal BP mirrored the eastward shift of the CAB onto the central Ethiopian Plateau most likely due to an enhanced east-west Indian Ocean pressure gradient (increase in Indian Ocean Monsoon strength). Peak AHP conditions at Lake Dendi occurred between 9,800 cal yrs cal BP and 8,000 cal yrs cal BP, interrupted by a short dry spell at 8,600 yrs cal BP, probably linked to the 8.2 ka event (8.5 ka in

## Chapter 5

East Africa). Peak AHP conditions were followed by a westward shift of the CAB and a resultant moderate decrease in precipitation amounts. Increased moisture export from the Indian Ocean due to enhanced ASO insolation and western Indian Ocean SSTs around 6,000 yrs cal BP partly compensated decreased Congo Basin moisture, leading to a gradual transition out of the AHP. Peak aridity occurred around 2,000 yrs cal BP, followed by a return to a generally wetter climate possibly linked to an increase in the Indian Ocean Monsoon strength. A short dry episode around 1,000 yrs cal BP may coincide with more arid conditions reported for the Medieval Warm period in Ethiopia. However, anthropogenic activities might bias the proxy records during the last two millennia. Our results further highlight, that the nature of the transition out of the AHP seems to be controlled by complex interactions and shifts of wind regimes together with local insolation changes at different geographical positions. Thus, the abrupt ending of the AHP at certain regions might be due to missing buffering mechanisms such as increased Indian Ocean derived moisture during ASO in the Dendi region.

## 6. Synthesis and outlook

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In the following, regional differences of Biomarker proxies that have occurred within this thesis and the potential of multiproxy analysis are discussed. Furthermore a synthesis of the results regarding Holocene climate and environmental variability and a future outlook is given.

### 6.1 Biomarker from lacustrine sediments in different environments

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This thesis underlines the importance of lipid biomarker from lake sedimentary organic matter as a powerful tool for paleo-environmental and -climatic reconstructions of the Holocene. Biomarkers enable the answering of questions about vegetational development, temperatures, erosion processes, hydrology, and anthropogenic impact on the environment. In particular the analyses of compound specific leaf wax hydrogen isotopes has proven to reliably constrain changes in the atmospheric circulation pattern and moisture sourcing throughout the Holocene, as shown in chapter three and five.

#### Regional differences in biomarker proxies

However, this thesis also highlights that biomarker data must always be interpreted in the regional context considering for example vegetation types, regional climate, land-use, and catchment hydrology and morphology:

For example, as shown in chapter four, the ACL proxy can be used as an indicator for vegetation changes. However, in this case, local pollen data indicate that changes in the ACL rather mirrors changes in the deciduous/coniferous plants ratio rather than in the forest/herbaceous ratio as suggested by other studies (Cranwell, 1973). These findings underline the importance of local vegetation endmember for the application of the ACL proxy.

Another example for the regional differences/complications of biomarker proxies is given in chapter five: The sedimentary record from Lake Dendi shows that vegetational changes towards increased C<sub>3</sub> vegetation derived from leaf wax carbon isotopes cannot automatically be interpreted as being the result of increasing aridity as in other East African lacustrine records (Tierney et al., 2010b; Berke et al., 2012). This results from the specific high altitude setting of Lake Dendi in the Ethiopian Highlands. At this location a drying climate associated with the end of the African Humid Period most likely led to the establishment of a dry Afromontane forest vegetation dominated by *Juniperus/Podocarpus* (C<sub>3</sub>) instead of increased *Cyperacea/Poacea* (higher C<sub>4</sub> percentage).

Another case (see chapter three) concerns the application of the MBT/CBT paleothermometer to lacustrine sedimentary records. The Lake Torneträsk MBT/CBT derived temperature estimates rather reflect mean summer than annual mean air temperatures like in other studies (Zink et al., 2010; Weijers et al., 2011). This most likely results from limited soil-bacterial production during winter-season, when the ground is frozen, and shows that annual temperature distributions and seasonality have to be considered for the correct interpretation the MBT/CBT paleothermometer values.

### Potential of multiproxy analysis

This work also shows that the combination of organic and inorganic multiproxy data facilitates and strengthens the interpretation of biomarker data from sedimentary records.

For example, in regions with only C<sub>3</sub> vegetation such as northern Sweden (see chapter three), palynological analyses provide independent vegetation proxies which can be utilized to evaluate a potential bias on the application of  $\delta D$  as a precipitation proxy. In addition, Lake Torneträsk flood deposit data, derived by radiographic imaging, strengthens the interpretation of  $\delta D_{wax}$  values in the context of changing atmospheric circulation pattern.

Elemental data, derived by XRF and CNS analyses can reveal valuable information regarding terrestrial input and soil erosion processes as well as about redox conditions and preservation/degradation of organic matter in the lake. Thus, the multiproxy dataset from Lake Dendi exhibits decreasing  $\delta D_{wax}$  values while vegetation and sedimentological data still show enhanced moisture availability and runoff. Hence, the Dendi  $\delta D$  values have to be interpreted in terms of changing moisture sources rather than precipitation amount.

Furthermore, archeological evidence can help in the interpretation of lacustrine sedimentary biomarker data through delivering information regarding the degree of human impact in the respective regions. Hence, a rapid drop in ACL values and pollen of coniferous trees at Lake Dojran around ~2,000 yrs cal BP most likely do not result from climatic changes but rather from the anthropogenic intensive lumbering of pine trees during the roman era.

## **6.2 Holocene climate variability**

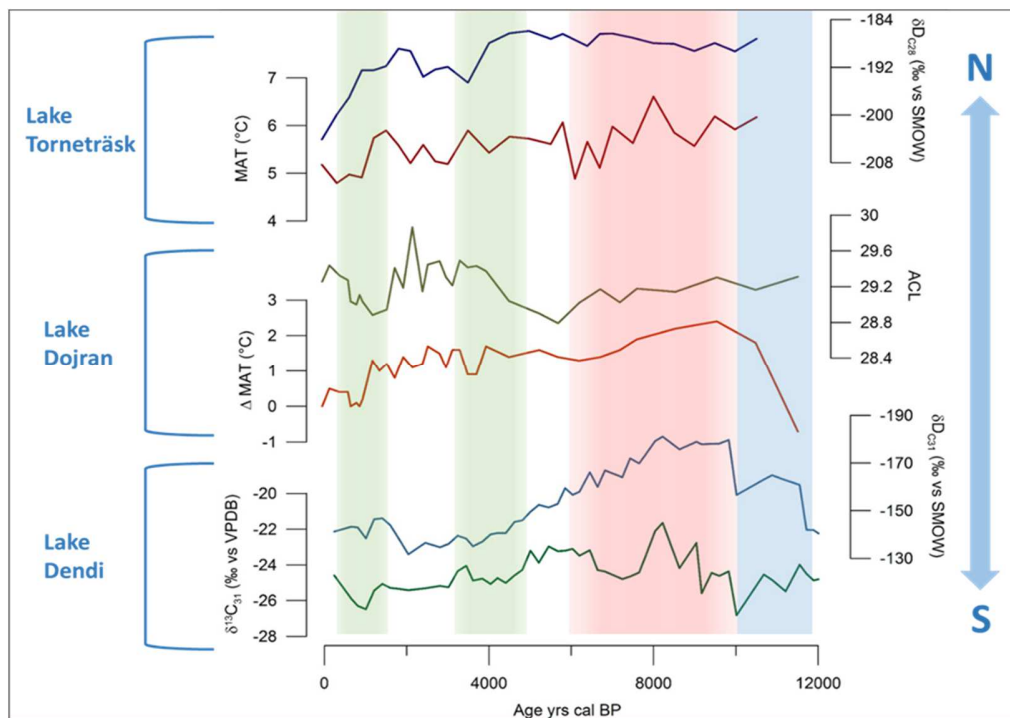
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This thesis strengthens previous interpretation of Holocene NH climatic trends and variability but also enables greater understanding of long-term atmospheric dynamics, as well as of climatic and anthropogenic induced environmental changes (Fig. 25). Furthermore, this thesis gives insight



into Holocene centennial to millennial scale rapid climate changes and its possible influence on human civilization.

In the Early Holocene rapidly increasing precipitation amounts indicated by  $\delta D_{wax}$  data obtained from East African Lake Dendi sediments mirror a rapid re-strengthening of the atmospheric circulation (Indian and West African monsoonal system) at  $\sim 11,700$  yrs cal BP subsequent to the Younger Dryas period. Simultaneously, Early Holocene warming and increasing humidity on the southern Balkan Peninsula is derived from Lake Dojran sedimentary molecular data. Since insolation changes are gradual (Berger and Loutre, 1991), both observations indicate a re-strengthening of the AMOC (weakened during the YD; Chang et al., 2008) which is strongly coupled to the atmospheric circulation and climate in the respective areas by influencing northward heat transport (Rayner et al., 2011) and the intensity of the westerly winds (Wen et al., 2016) (Dojran), and monsoonal flow in Africa (Dendi) (Castañeda et al., 2009). Furthermore, this underlines the strong teleconnections between the high latitudes and the tropics, most likely via the AMOC, since the YD cold event is thought to be initiated in the North-Atlantic region (Broecker, 2006; Carlson, 2010).



**Figure 25.** Selected molecular records of Holocene climate change from Lake Torneträsk, Lake Dojran, and Lake Dendi. Blue box marks the onset of the monsoonal circulation and re-strengthening of the AMOC. Red shading marks the Holocene thermal optimum period. Green shading mark periods of Holocene climatic and environmental changes.

Subsequently, peak AHP conditions with high moisture availability and increased C<sub>4</sub> vegetation at Lake Dendi between ~9,800 yrs cal BP and 8,000 yrs cal BP occur synchronously to a temperature maximum at Lake Dojran at 9,500 yrs cal BP, paralleling the maximum in NH summer insolation (Berger and Loutre, 1991) which is responsible for the northernmost position of the ITCZ and maximum monsoonal intensity during this time period. Warmest conditions, related to the HTM period, at Lake Torneträsk were reached about 1,000 yrs later (~8,500 yrs cal BP). This lag is most likely attributed to slow deglaciation and the presence of large ice sheets and glaciers in the high latitude region (glacial aftermath; Mayewski et al., 2004). Starting at ~8,000 yrs cal BP, Lake Dendi biomarker data suggest a rather moderate reduction in precipitation due to decreasing monsoonal activity and an associated southward shift of the ITCZ. Furthermore  $\delta D_{wax}$  data indicate a change in moisture sources at Lake Dendi, driven by an insolation induced gradual weakening west–east pressure gradient near the equator which lead to an eastward shift of the Congo Air Boundary further onto the African continent. Proxies for vegetation and runoff, however still indicate relative high moisture availability until ~4,500 yrs cal BP. This most likely results from enhanced Indian Ocean derived rainfall due to enhanced local insolation (10°N) during summer/fall. The atmospheric reorganization in East Africa is largely paralleled by a (relatively weak) aridification trend, changing seasonality and decreasing temperatures throughout the Middle and Late Holocene at Lake Dojran (Francke et al., 2013 Zhang et al., 2014; Thienemann et al., 2017). This aridification process is a widespread phenomenon in the mid to low latitude desert belt and the SE Mediterranean region (Schilman et al., 2001). Mediterranean aridity can, however not directly be caused by the weakening of the monsoon systems observed at Lake Dendi, as Tzedakis (2007) found that the African monsoon did not extend to the Mediterranean, and that there has been only an indirect effect in terms of Nile discharge and runoff at the North African coast into the Mediterranean Sea. Today, wetter conditions in the Mediterranean are associated with a NAO+ situation leading to enhanced westerlies and moisture transport into southern Europe. Accordingly, Lamy et al. (2006) suggested an atmospheric pressure pattern similar to a more positive AO/NAO as being responsible for Eastern Mediterranean aridity. This, however would be in contrast to previous work (Rimbu et al., 2003; Davis and Brewer, 2009; Wanner et al., 2008), also including this thesis (see chapter three), that rather point to a long-term declining trend in the NAO/AO over the course of the Holocene. Frigola et al. (2007) suggests that the dry conditions in the western Mediterranean resulted directly from the southward migration of the ITCZ and the decrease in the atmospheric pressure gradient and moisture transport, which would be in agreement with Lake Dendi  $\delta D_{wax}$  data.

However, at Lake Dojran local complexity of climate variability such as local vegetation succession and associated changes in catchment processes might exhibit a more severe control than over-regional climate change (Francke et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2014). Similar to Lake Dojran, Lake Torneträsk biomarker data display a decreasing temperature trend over the course of the Holocene. At Lake Torneträsk, the decreasing temperatures lead to significant environmental changes including a tree-line retreat, the development from a boreal forest to an open sub-alpine woodland, and an associated destabilization of soils and increased catchment erosion. The strong environmental feedback to the declining temperatures most likely results from the lakes sensitivity to experience large biotic shifts (MacDonald et al., 1993; Körner 1998; Barnekow, 1999) due to its location at the present-day tree line.  $\delta D_{wax}$  data, however, suggest a stable northward position of the polar frontal zone until  $\sim 4,000$  yrs cal BP, indicating that the environmental changes described most likely resulted from decreasing temperatures and not from changing atmospheric circulation pattern.

Around 4,500 yrs cal BP to 4,000 yrs cal BP, the sedimentary records from Lake Dendi, Dojran, Torneträsk all suggest significant climatic/environmental transitions (Fig. 25): At Lake Dendi, vegetational changes (obtained from  $\delta^{13}C_{wax}$ , ACL) and changes in runoff (BIT), as well as the ongoing D-enrichment trend suggest increasingly arid conditions around 4,500 yrs cal BP to 4,000 yrs cal BP, associated with the end of the AHP. This most likely results from the southwards migration of wind systems, e.g. the ITCZ and the weakening of the West African monsoon system. The general timing is also relatively consistent with the rather abrupt ending of the AHP in other East African records (Tierney et al., 2008; Tierney et al., 2010b; Tierney and deMenocal, 2013). At Lake Dojran, the Mid- to Late Holocene transition is associated with a general trend towards climatic and environmental instability. However, possible anthropogenic impact in the catchment, indicated by biomarker and pollen data since  $\sim 4,500$  cal yrs BP complicates the identification of natural climatic and environmental changes (Thienemann et al., 2017). Thus, for example the anthropogenic induced deforestation that might have started as early as 4,000 yrs cal BP in the Dojran region, could have contributed to the Late Holocene climatic perturbations via earth-albedo feedbacks, as suggested by a model simulation for southern Europe (Strandberg et al., 2014). At Lake Torneträsk,  $\delta D_{wax}$  data indicate a shift from a dominant zonal to a stronger meridional atmospheric flow starting at  $\sim 4,000$  yrs cal BP. This shift can be attributed to a southward migration of the polar front and/or a change in NAO/AO like circulation pattern and is consistent with the southward movement of the ITCZ indicated by Lake Dendi  $\delta D_{wax}$  data. Thus, the end of the Middle Holocene, between about 4,500 yrs cal BP and 4,000 yrs cal BP, seems to

mark a significant change in the Northern Hemispheric climate and atmospheric system. A similar phase of climatic/atmospheric change is indicated around 2,000 yrs cal BP to 1,500 yrs cal BP with a drop in MAT of  $\sim 1^{\circ}\text{C}$  in all three molecular lake records. Lake Torneträsk  $\delta D_{\text{wax}}$  and flood deposit data furthermore suggest a further southward migration of atmospheric circulation systems i.e. the polar frontal zone. A southward shift of the atmospheric circulation would be associated with weakened monsoonal systems and aridity in East Africa. However, at Lake Dendi a return to more humid conditions is observed after  $\sim 2,000$  yrs cal BP. This discrepancy might be explained by an eastward shift of the CAB and increased Indian Ocean derived precipitation, as Fleitmann et al. (2003) observe a re-strengthening of the Indian Ocean monsoon during the last  $\sim 1,500$  yrs cal BP. The strength of the West African monsoon, associated with the ITCZ over tropical Africa, on the other hand does show an ongoing decreasing trend (Weldeab et al., 2007).

This thesis further supports the existence of NH Holocene centennial to millennial scale rapid climatic changes commonly referred to as “Bond events” (Bond et al., 1997; Bond et al., 2001). Thus, elemental data from Lake Torneträsk exhibit a clear signal of six rapid climate fluctuations paralleling ice rafted debris maxima from North Atlantic sediment records starting at about 8,000 yrs cal BP. At Lake Torneträsk, these rapid climate changes are associated with colder conditions and northerly/northeasterly winds due to short-term southward shifts of the polar frontal zone. Previous events are not discernible, most likely due to deglaciation and the high turnover of the Torneträsk catchment prior to  $\sim 9,000$  yrs cal BP. The sedimentary records from Lake Dojran and Lake Dendi, on the other hand only exhibit rapid climate changes associated with the 8.2 ka event and the 4.2 ka event. Lake Dojran data additionally show climatic fluctuations attributed to the Little Ice Age. During these periods, higher aridity and colder conditions are observed at both Lakes that could result, similar to the situation in Fennoscandia, from short-term southwards shifts of the atmospheric circulation cells and/or reduced atmospheric pressure gradients. However, it cannot be resolved if these rapid climate changes are directly initiated by solar variation through for example affecting land–sea contrasts (Shindell et al., 2001), or transmitted from the higher latitudes via atmospheric and/or oceanic linkages (Frigola et al., 2007; Chiang et al., 2008). At present, efficient atmospheric/oceanic teleconnection exist between the Mediterranean/East Africa and the high latitudes that would enable the transitions of climatic signals: Arctic/N.Atlantic climatic signals are transported atmospherically to the northern Mediterranean via orographically channeled winter outbreaks of cold and dry air from high latitudes (Leaman and Schott, 1991; Poulos et al., 1997), while the tropics are connected to the NH via the AMOC (Broecker et al., 1985). Alternatively, internal oscillations in the AMOC could

also be the driver for Holocene rapid climate changes (Gupta et al., 2003). However, since these events are most prominent in the sedimentary record from Lake Torneträsk, this thesis indicates that Holocene rapid climate changes might be initiated or at least amplified in the North Atlantic region. Furthermore, it is shown that future recurrences of such climatic fluctuations have the potential to greatly affect not only climate and environmental conditions in the North Atlantic region but also in the middle and lower latitudes. In addition, the importance of greater insight into rapid future climate changes is highlighted by sedimentary biomarker and pollen data from Lake Dojran that suggest a potential influence of Holocene centennial to millennial scale climatic fluctuations on human societies.

### 6.3 Future outlook

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This work demonstrates the value and significance of lipid biomarkers and compound specific leaf wax isotopes for the reconstruction of past climate and environmental variability. However, further research is needed about the documented non-linear feedback mechanisms of the climate system to orbital forcing. In this context, potential tipping points/thresholds, that might play an important role in the climate system, have to be further evaluated. This could be accomplished by additional high resolution stable isotope studies on latitudinal gradients for the exact reconstructions of the timing and nature of the migration of the atmospheric circulation cells. In this context, especially regions such as Fennoscandia that lie in proximity to atmospheric boundaries can be of great interest. Furthermore, past changes in the NAO index could be inferred from the comparison of lake sedimentary  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and  $\delta\text{D}$ , as Baldini et al., (2008) observe a present day correlation of the mean winter NAO index and the deuterium-excess in winter precipitation at high-latitude GNIP sites. This, however would require  $\delta\text{D}$  analyses of LMW hydrocarbons derived from lacustrine algae, since land-plant  $\delta\text{D}$  values from the Torneträsk region are mainly controlled by summer precipitation as documented in this thesis. At Lake Dendi, a more extensive comparison of the molecular records with independent sedimentological and palynological data could greatly improve the understanding of driving factors of  $\delta\text{D}_{\text{wax}}$ , (e.g. the amount and source effect) and thus about controls and mechanisms of East African climate. In addition, greater insights in D isotopic fractionation factors in different environments and for different plant types/lipids, as well as a more precise knowledge about timing of leaf wax formation and lipid synthesis could greatly improve future studies of compound specific stable isotopes, which have otherwise been shown to be a promising tool to assess Holocene climate variability.

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## Appendix

Depth (cm)	Age (yrs)	cal BP	Ca	Ti	Fe	Depth (cm)	Age (yrs)	cal BP	Ca	Ti	Fe	Depth (cm)	Age (yrs)	cal BP	Ca	Ti	Fe	Depth (cm)	Age (yrs)	cal BP	Ca	Ti	Fe	Depth (cm)	Age (yrs)	cal BP	Ca	Ti	Fe																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																											
260	6257	2904	1569	63817	273	6692	3463	1725	67878	286	7129	2941	1937	68782	299	7566	3495	1856	68711	312	8001	3956	2017	72783	312.2	8008	4145	1980	74757	312.4	8014	4737	2374	79811	312.6	8021	4741	2340	81256	312.8	8028	5030	2222	82447	313	8034	5307	2631	83932	313.2	8041	5411	2679	83751	313.4	8048	5455	2559	84953	313.6	8054	5175	2355	85064	313.8	8061	5002	2455	81475	314	8068	5576	2677	85876	314.2	8074	5705	2585	87000	314.4	8081	5414	2500	85447	314.6	8088	5545	2647	87387	314.8	8094	5293	2407	85623	315	8101	5237	2371	83927	315.2	8108	5093	2596	84200	315.4	8114	5159	2433	83878	315.6	8121	5071	2596	84970	315.8	8128	5493	2671	88296	316	8134	5483	2564	86764	316.2	8141	5239	2494	84737	316.4	8148	4982	2231	83269	316.6	8154	5292	2564	84652	316.8	8161	5528	2675	86581	317	8168	5479	2571	85903	317.2	8174	5540	2567	86912	317.4	8181	4598	2241	78635	317.6	8188	3751	1765	69405	317.8	8194	4675	2318	80680	318	8201	4535	2243	82139	318.2	8208	4532	2453	80670	318.4	8214	4015	2168	78441	318.6	8221	4137	2186	79455	318.8	8228	4350	2205	79894	319	8234	4040	2089	79751	319.2	8241	4475	2084	78424	319.4	8248	4083	2230	77419	319.6	8254	4124	2136	77871	319.8	8261	4154	2103	78234	320	8268	4392	2176	79895	320.2	8274	4436	2200	80347	320.4	8281	4174	2133	79358	320.6	8287	4080	1906	77004	320.8	8294	3745	1944	75832	321	8301	4213	2151	75497	321.2	8307	4343	2364	77340	321.4	8314	4762	2417	77853	321.6	8321	4333	2296	78202	321.8	8327	3922	2163	74582	322	8334	3967	1963	73179	322.2	8341	3714	2182	72361	322.4	8347	2990	1473	64241	322.6	8354	3382	1790	65565	322.8	8361	3425	1691	68293	323	8367	3912	2033	72886	323.2	8374	3732	2024	73993	323.4	8380	4248	2240	76979	323.6	8387	4343	2145	76257	323.8	8394	4503	2046	74514	324	8400	4422	2210	74403	324.2	8407	4031	1913	73383	324.4	8414	3658	1804	72587	324.6	8420	3880	2188	73849	324.8	8427	3951	2039	74739









## Appendix

Depth (cm)	Age cal yrs BP	Age							charcoal			NAP	AP
		conifer	deciduous	poaceae	mediterranean	cultivated	ruderals	tot pollen	10-50	50-125	>125		
492.9	10307	17.34390486	34.48959366	11.10009911	0.396432111	0.594648167	0.198216056	4001.8	198.3	0		36.47175421	63.52824579
500.9	10424	11.64462764	33.98283552	14.23031237	2.548712664	0.637178166	0.212392722	5858.7	326.6	0		42.90332985	57.09667015
508.9	10537	17.70114943	27.12643678	17.24137931	1.149425287	0.229885057	0.229885057	3423.9	110.2	0		46.89655172	53.10344828
516.9	10645	11.75757576	27.15151515	24	2.424242424	0.96969697	0.727272727	4074.7	148.2	29.6		51.63636364	48.36363636
524.9	10749	14.33172303	20.93397746	17.71336554	0.966183575	0	0	3095.6	129.6	0		56.36070853	43.63929147
532.9	10849	11.44278607	16.91542289	22.13930348	1.243781095	0.248756219	0.497512438	3906.3	602.5	9.7		63.93034826	36.06965174
540.9	10946	13.07550645	18.41620626	16.94290976	2.209944751	0	1.104972376	2563.7	103.9	9.4		61.51012891	38.48987109
550.9	11063	14.4	20	17.2	2.4	0.8	0	2990.8	346.9	107.7		58.8	41.2
562.9	11197	13.4872418	20.17010936	14.82381531	0.972053463	0.729040097	1.458080194	3145.8	259.9	0	500	58.32320778	41.67679222
574.9	11325	10.45751634	25.81699346	17.64705882	1.633986928	0.326797386	0.653594771	3538.1	312.2	11.6	500	56.53594771	43.46405229
580.9	11387	14.87603306	17.3553719	19.4214876	2.066115702	0	0.826446281	3529.3	218.8	14.6		58.67768595	41.32231405
586.9	11448	15.2861757	21.67097831	24.7355611	1.094493854	0.218898771	0.218898771	5297.9	777	92.8		55.38138901	44.61861099
592.9	11508	11.38014528	13.55932203	21.0653753	0.242130751	0	0.726392252	2550.7	636.1	18.5		68.76513317	31.23486683
598.9	11566	4.922644163	6.4697609	10.97046414	0.843881857	0	0.562587904	3444.4	1056.1	19.4		82.70042194	17.29957806
604.9	11624	5.83501006	4.828973843	15.69416499	0	0	0	3068.3	679.1	12.3	500	86.1167002	13.8832998

## Erklärung (Explanation in German)

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Köln, 16.10.2017

Matthias Thienemann