

Palaeoclimate - Understanding the past to predict the future

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GEF1100 Climate Systems 2015

Points to discuss

- **Part I (Tuesday: 12.3.1 – 12.3.3)**
 - **Learn how we can reconstruct past climates**
 - **Palaeoclimate archives and – proxies**
 - **Climate change as a constant feature of Earth's deep time history (the tectonic time-scale)**
 - **Cretaceous Greenhouse climate**
- **Part II (Wednesday) (12.3.4.-12.3.6)**
 - **“Icehouse” climates**
 - **The rhythm of past climatic changes (Milankovitch)**
 - **Post glacial climate variability and future climate change**

Resources

- Powerpoint presentations
- Penum: Atmosphere, ocean, and climate dynamics: an introductory text J. Marshall and R.A. Plumb Chapter 12.3. Palaeoclimate and subchapters (1-6) pp. 269 - 288
- Additional reading:
 - W. F. Ruddiman Earth's Climate
Palgrave Macmillan ISBN 978-1-4292-5525-7
 - Chapters 3, 4-7...
- NOAA Paleoclimate Data
 - <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/data-access/paleoclimatology-data>
- Quote of the 1st lines ch.12.3: “Study of paleoclimate is an extremely exciting area of research, a fascinating detective story in which scientists study evidence of past climates recorded in ocean and lake sediments, glaciers and ice sheets, and continental deposits.”

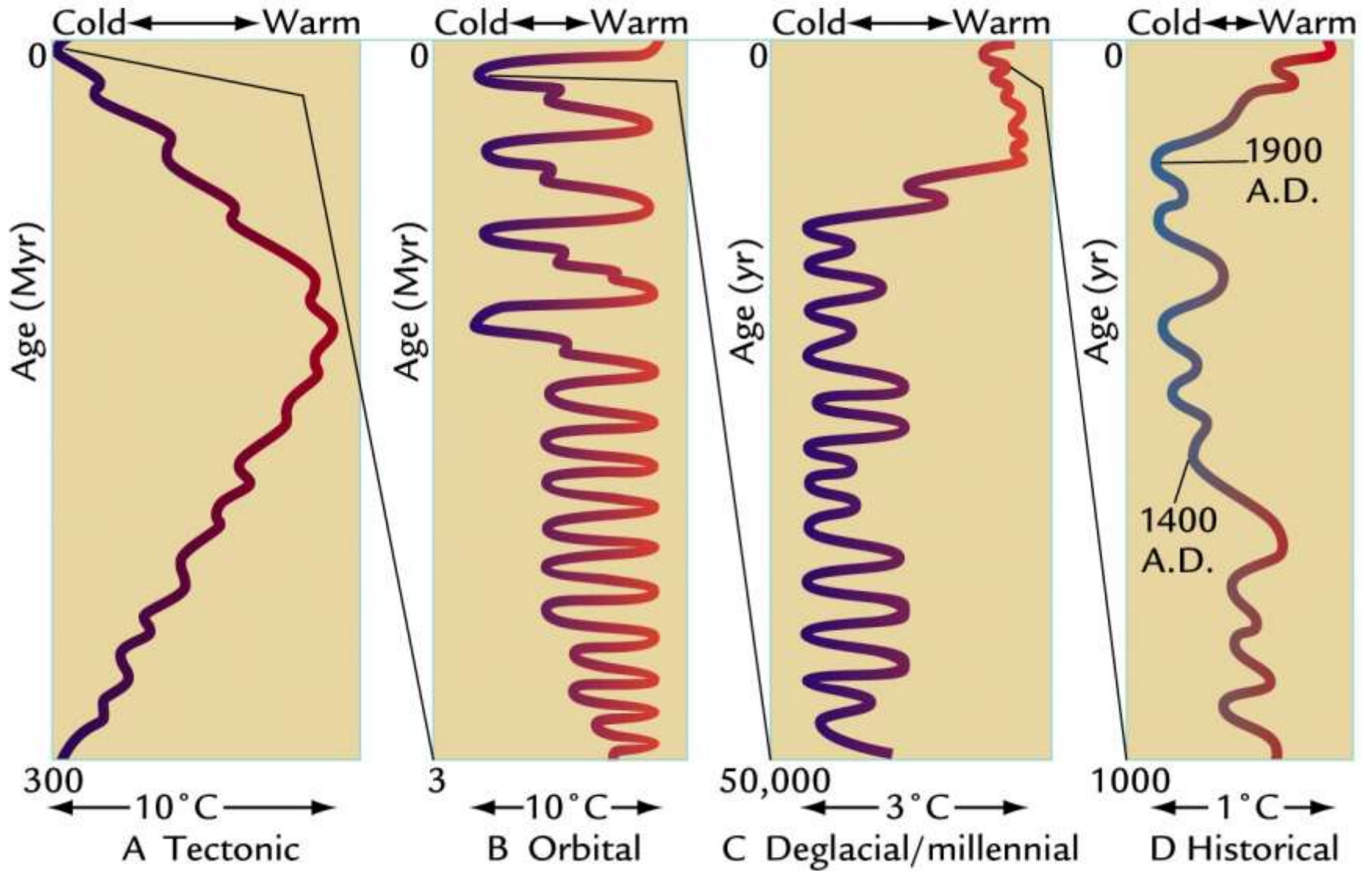
Climate Change

- What is climate?
 - Climate is the long term expression of weather.
- Climate changed since the beginning of the earth.
- Analysis of potential causes of past climate change offers predictions for the future.

	Timescale				Thousands		Million				
	Days	Years	of years	of years							
	h/d	w	m	y	10y	102y	103y	104y	105y	106y	109y
weather	x	x									
Land surface	x	x	x								
Ocean mixed layer	x	x	x								
Sea ice		x	x	x							
Volcano		x	x	x							
Vegetation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Thermocline				x	x	x					
Mountain glaciers					x	x					
Deep Ocean						x	x	x			
Ice sheets						x	x	x	x		
Orbital forcing								x	x		
Tectonics										x	x
Weathering									x	x	x
Solar “constant”				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Figure 12.1

Global temperature



Archives and Proxies

- GOAL: Reading the history of past climate from the natural archive
- Measured weather records (time series)
 - **BUT** instrumental record goes back only into 17th century (major parts on earth much less)
- Historical Archives
- Geological (sedimentary archives)
- Climate proxies:
 - The term proxy (meaning “substitute” / “approximation”) is used in palaeoclimatology because the extraction of climate signals from the indicators in the archive is **NOT A DIRECT** observation of the palaeoclimate.

J. Buisman



DUIZEND JAAR WEER,
WIND
EN WATER
IN DE
LAGE LANDEN



Onder redactie van A.F.V. van Engelen



DEEL 5 1675-1750



Human archive

FEBRUARIUS

17

	Be	U.	Hy	R			
1	49	36	82	00	N.O. 2		♂
2	58	38	81	00	N.O. 2		
3	74	34	80	00	N.O. 2	♂♂	♂
4	02	32	79	01	N.O. 1	S	♂♀
5	93	32	78	00	Novd. 1		♂
6	104	34	77	00	N.W. 1	⊙ -♂♂♀	♀
7	90	35	76	05	Zind. 2	R	♂
8	56	36	76	45	Zind. 2	R	
9	53	44	77	05	Z.W. 2	R	♂
10	65	44	79	00	Z.W. 1	♂♂ 84	♂
11	73	44	80	08	W.Z.W. 1	R	♂
12	80	44	80	01	Zind. 1	R	
13	79	42	81	01	Zind. 1	R	♂
14	85	46	82	02	Zind. 1	R	
15	83	46	83	14	Zind. 1	R	♂
16	84	47	84	00	W.Z.W. 1	R	
17	84	48	85	00	Zind. 1	♂♂♀	
18	67	49	86	76	Zind. 2	R	♂♀
19	59	47	87	25	Zind. 1	R	♂♀
20	76	46	87	00	Z.W. 1	♂♂	♂

27

MARTIUS.

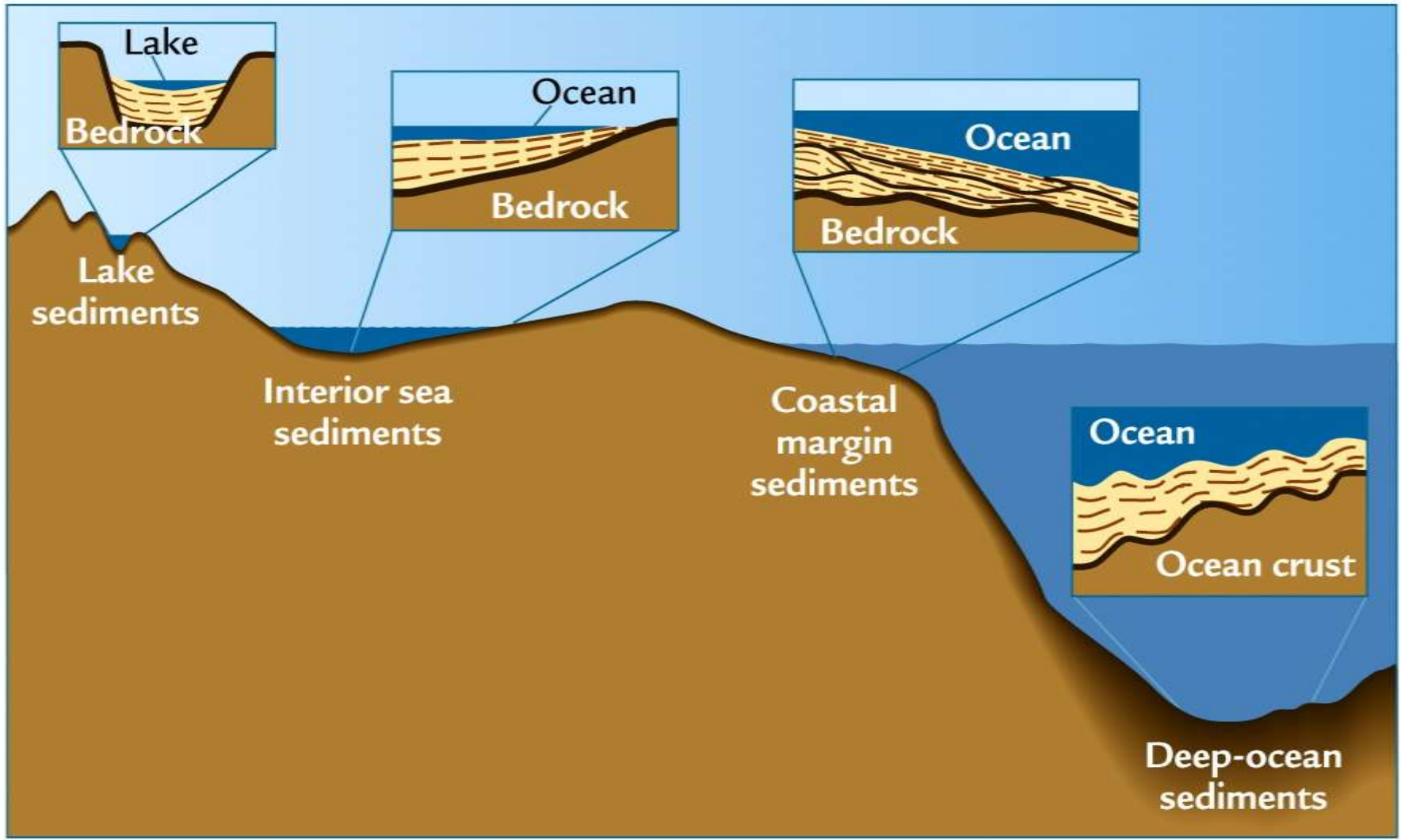
	Be	U.	Hy	R			
1	67	48	83	00	Z.Z.W. 1		
2	58	46	83	00	Z±O. 1		♂♂
3	53	46	83	00	Z.W. 2		
4	56	47	82	00	Z.W. 1		♂
5	48	46	82	130	Zind. Novd. 1	R	♂♀
6	69	30	81	37	N.N.O. 2	R	♂♀
7	107	35	79	00	O.N.O. 1	⊙ *	♂
8	98	35	76	00	O.Z.O. 1	♂♂♀	♂
9	102	40	76	00	West. 1		
10	97	45	78	00	Z.Z.W. 1		♂♀
11	95	43	78	00	N.W. 1		
12	99	43	77	01	W.N.W. 2	R	♂
13	84	43	77	03	West. 2	R.H	
14	88	41	76	00	W.N.W. 2	♂	
15	93	43	75	09	W.N.W. 1	R	♂♂♀
16	92	45	75	12	West. 1	R	
17	87	44	76	12	N.N.W. 1	R	♂
18	87	39	76	00	N.O. 1		
19	97	38	76	00	N.O±O. 1		♂
20	114	42	75	00	N.O±O. 1		♂

Observations Cruquius Delft in Rijnsburg february/march 1727
 (source: Archief Hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland)

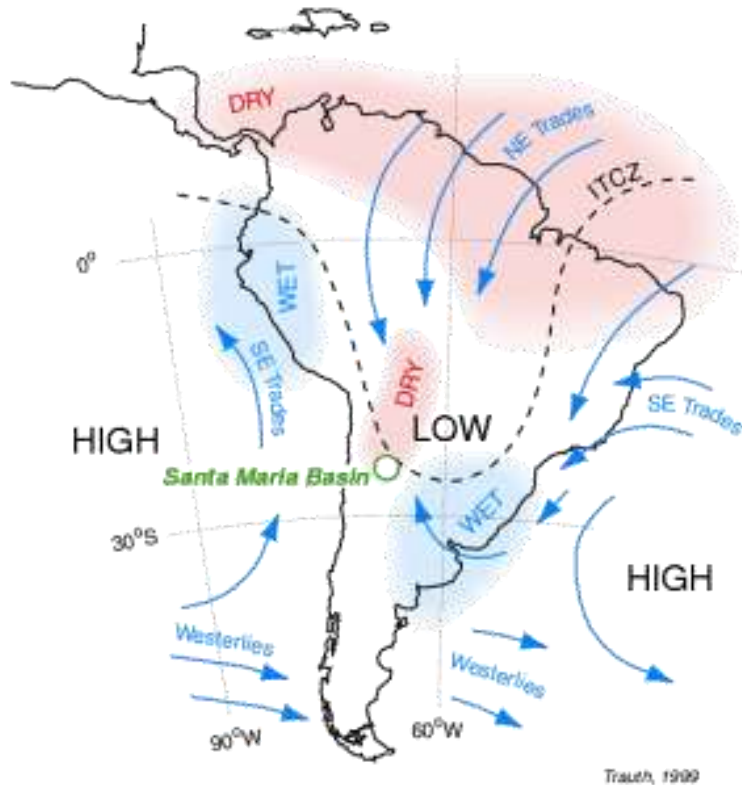


Types of proxies

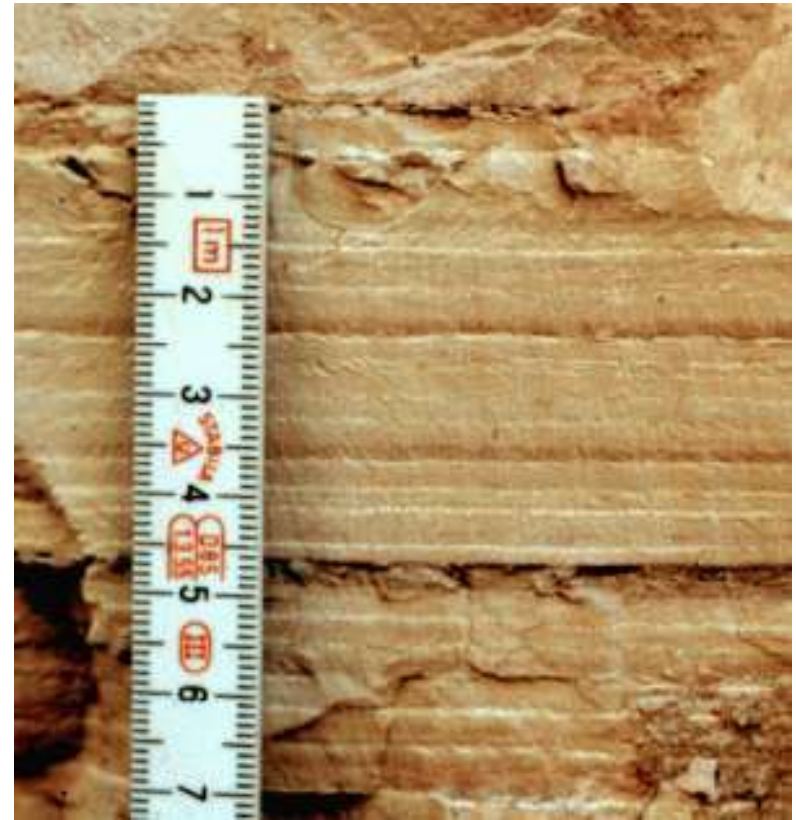
- Sedimentary proxies
 - Type of sedimentary rock indicating for a certain climate (dunes, coals, grain size->varves)
- Biotic proxies
 - Organisms (animals / plants) preserved in the geological archive (terrestrial: plants, marine: corals)
- Geochemical proxies
 - Oxygen isotope composition of carbonate shells (palaeothermometer water)



ENSO Impact on Rainfall in South America

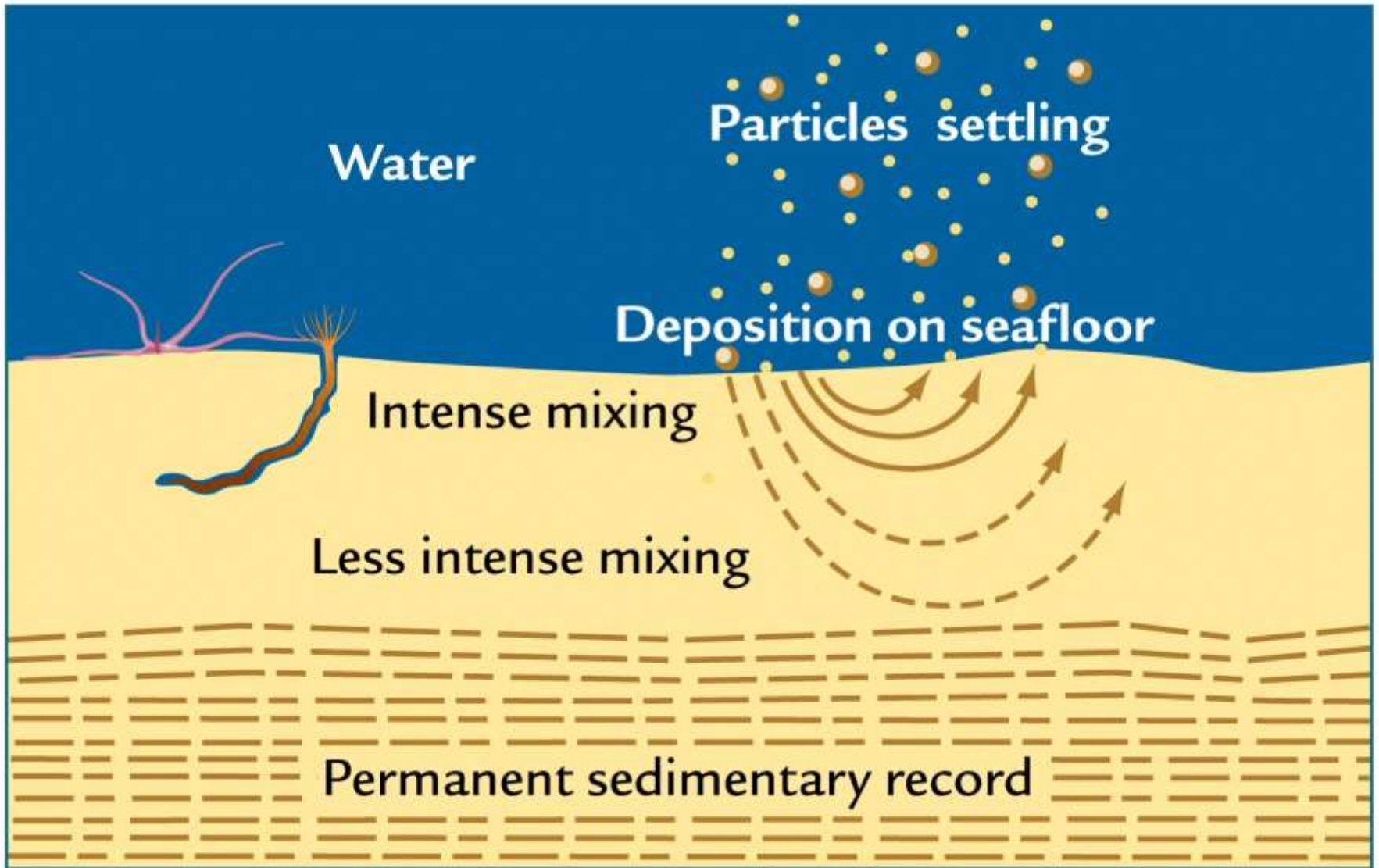


Natural archives: Lake sediments



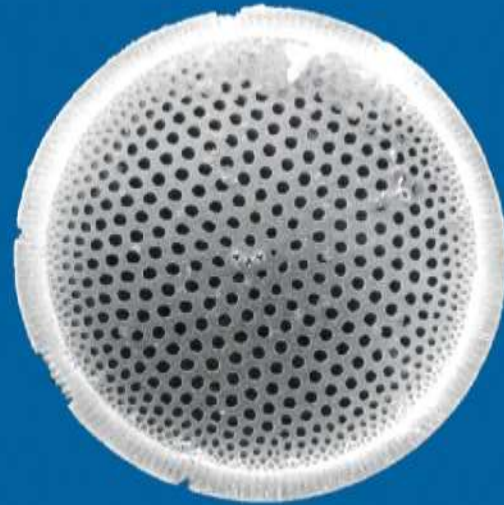
- The Santa Maria Basin in NW Argentina between opposite El Niño influences.
- These influences have changed for the Santa Maria Basin during the Holocene. Varved lake sediments from the Santa Maria Basin offer an archive of variations in the rainfall 30000 years ago.







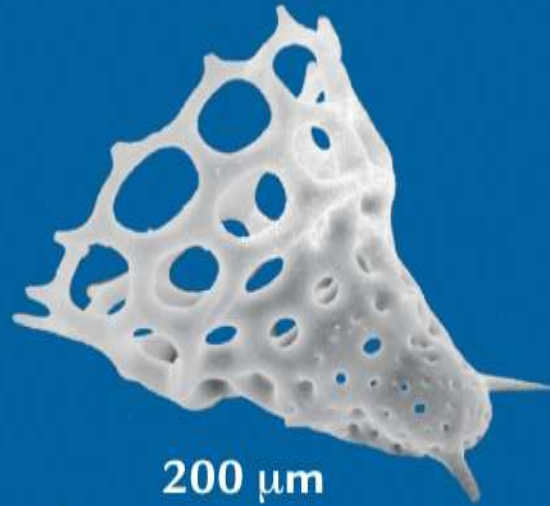
200 μm



20 μm

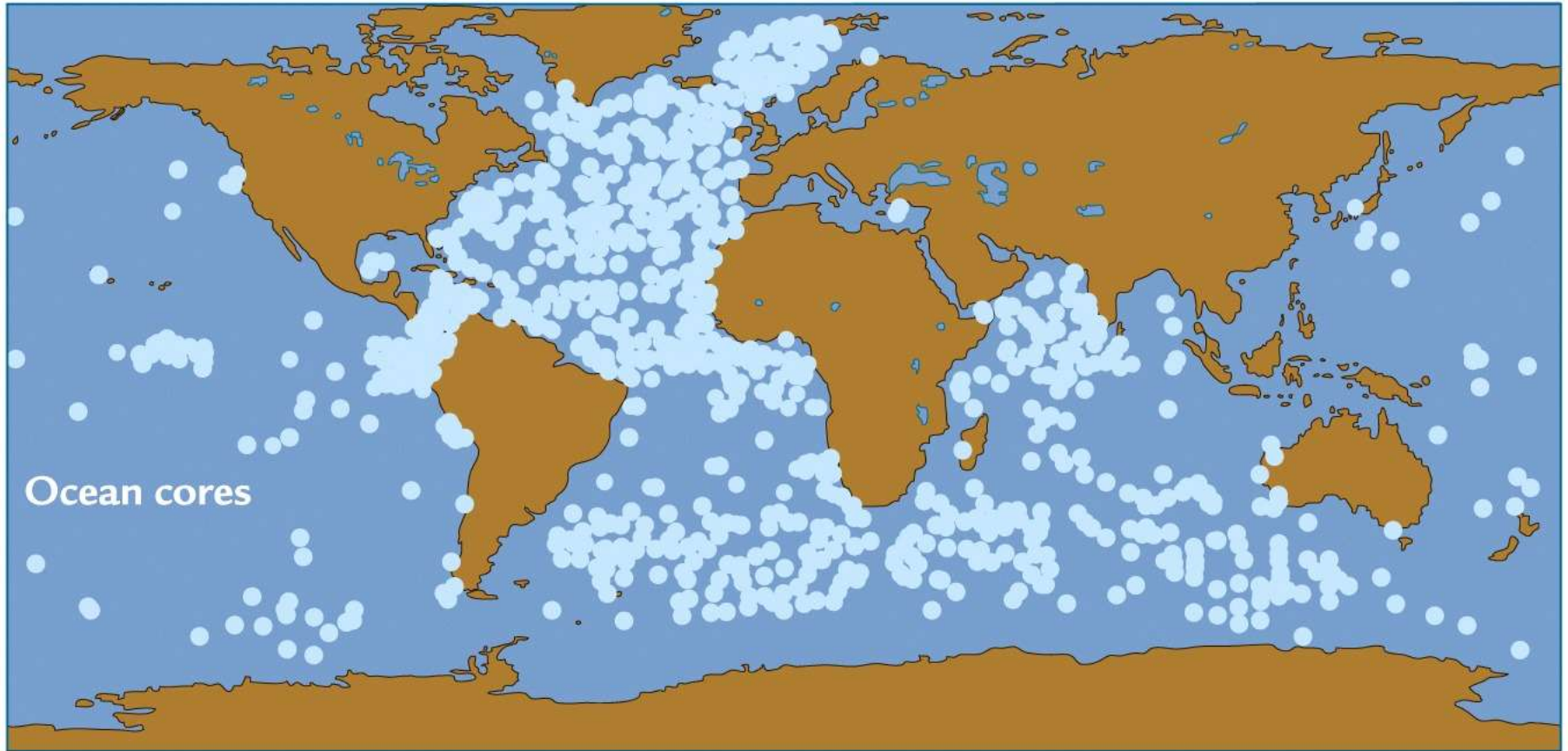


2 μm



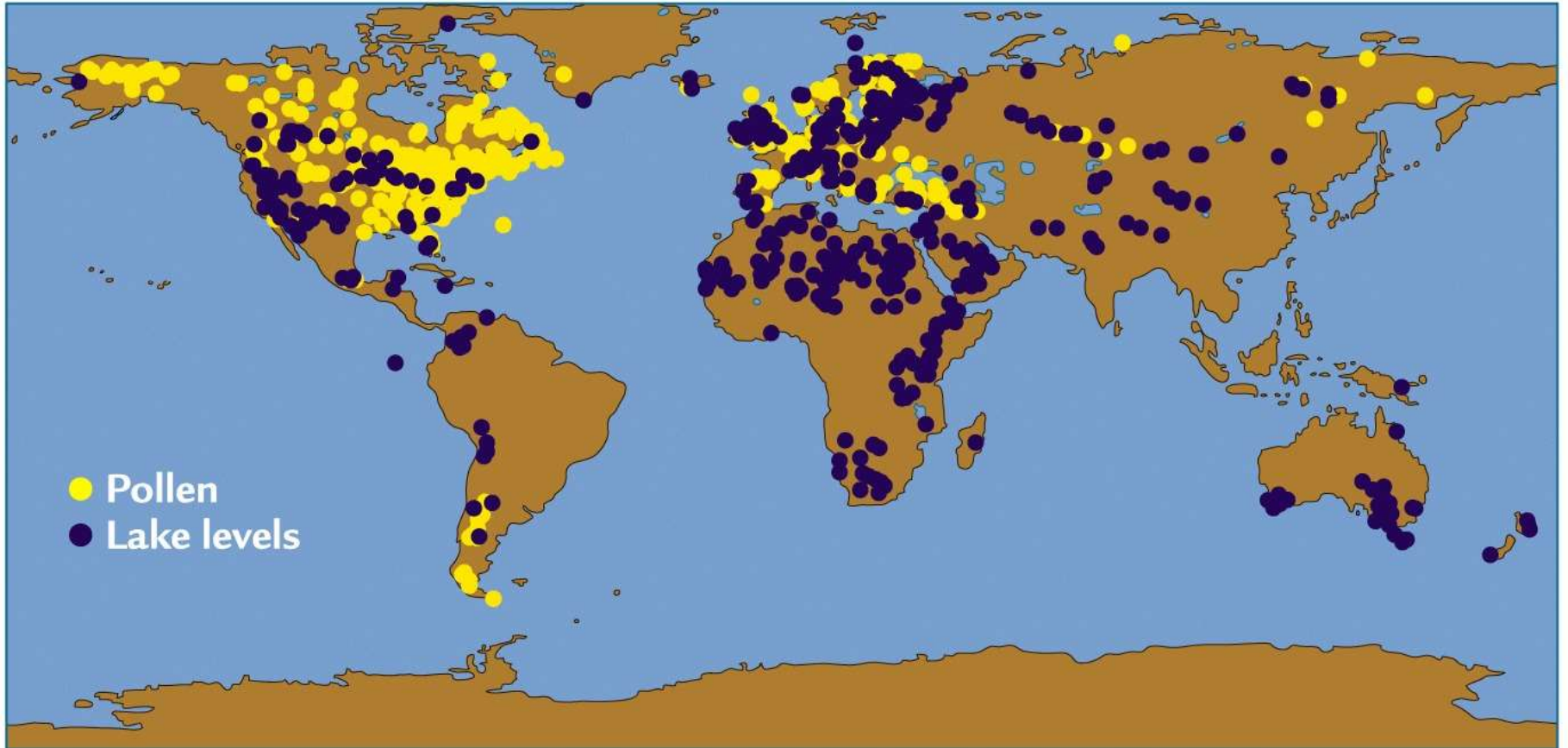
200 μm

Distribution of natural climate archives

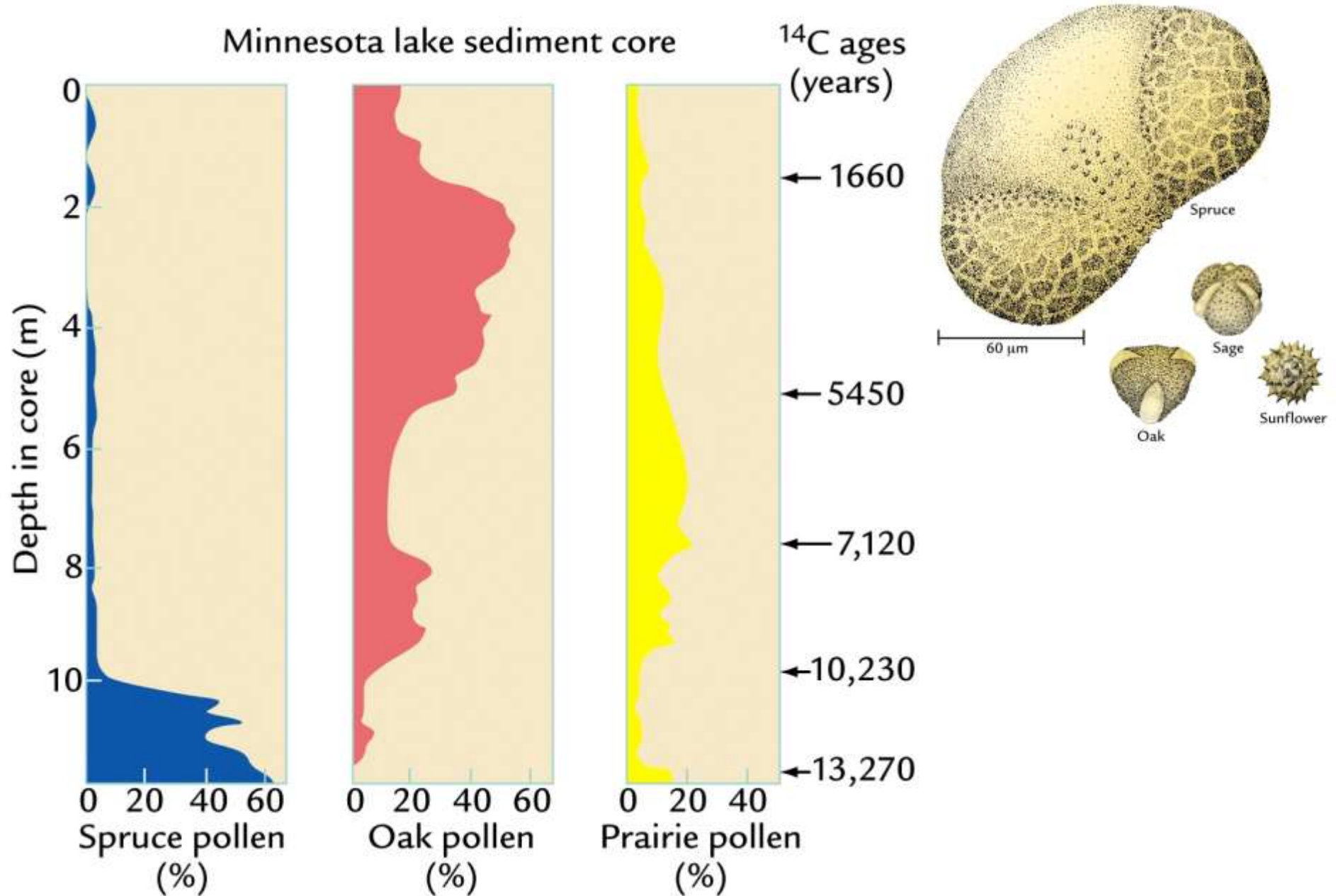


A

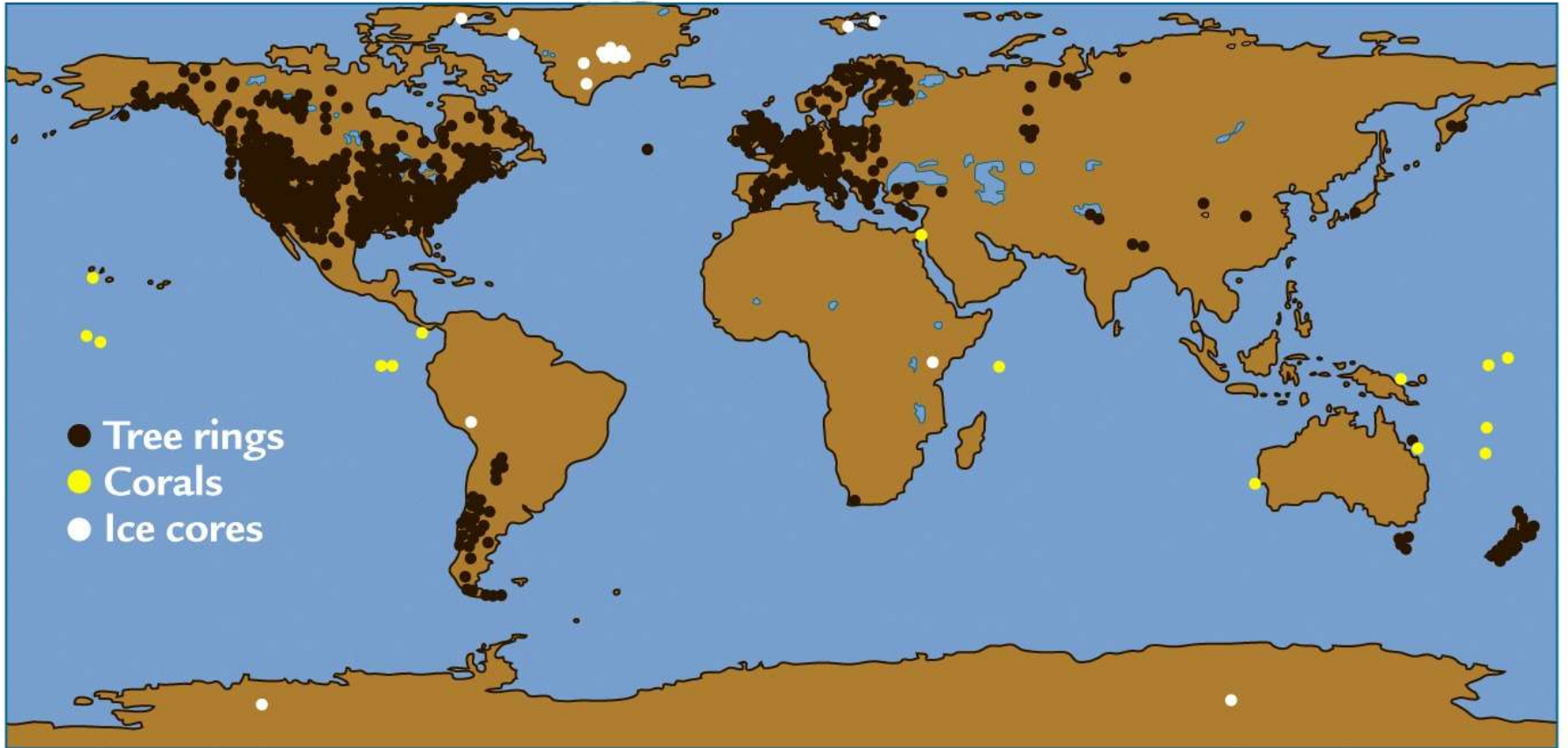
Distribution of natural climate archives



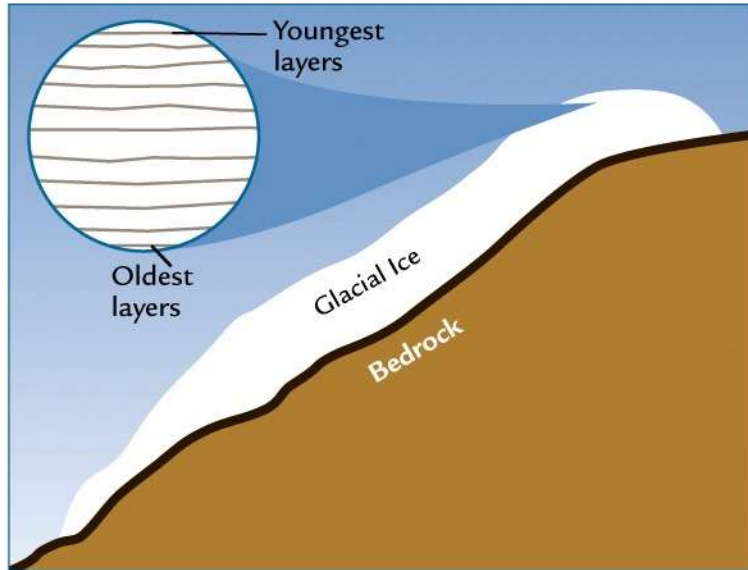
Pollen distribution diagram from lake sediments



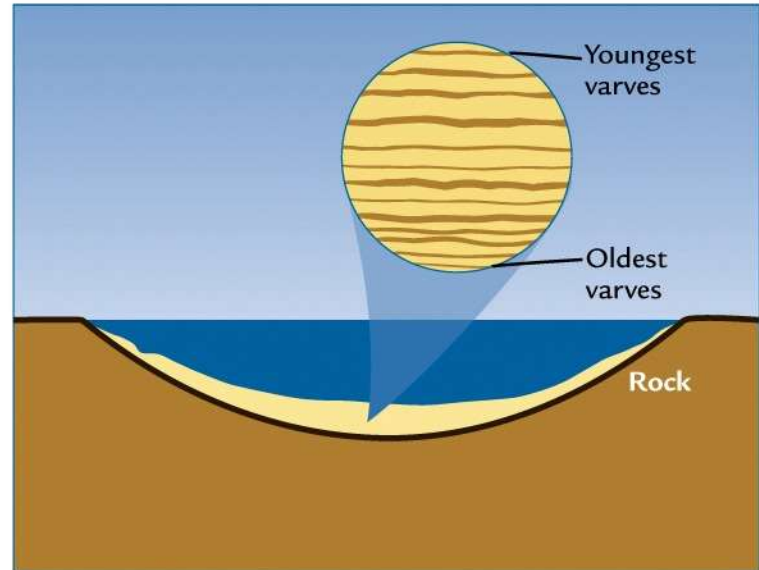
Distribution of natural climate archives



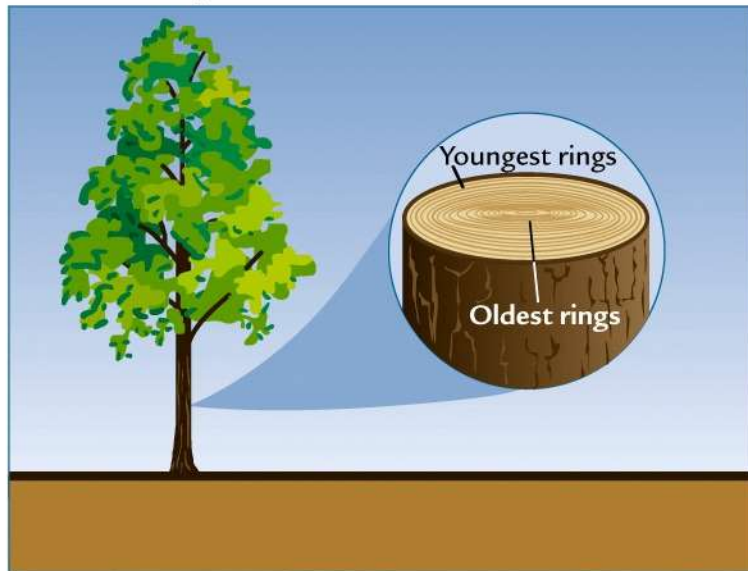
Annual ...



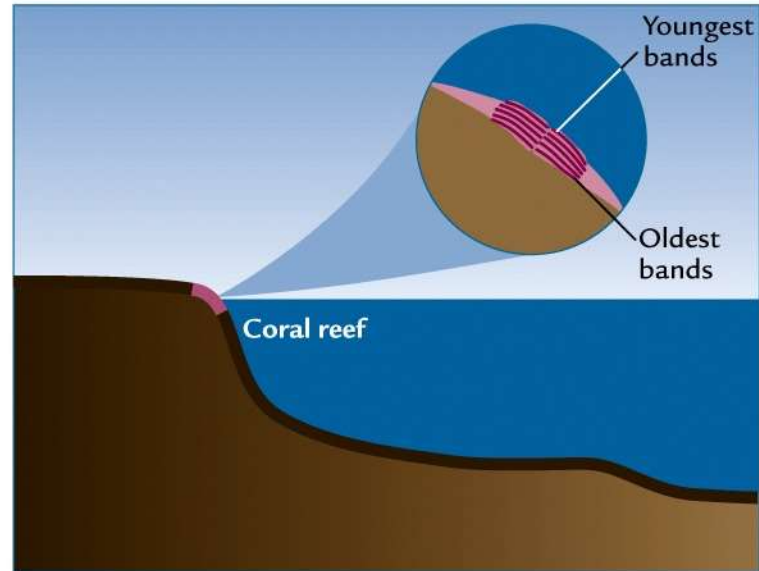
A Annual ice layers



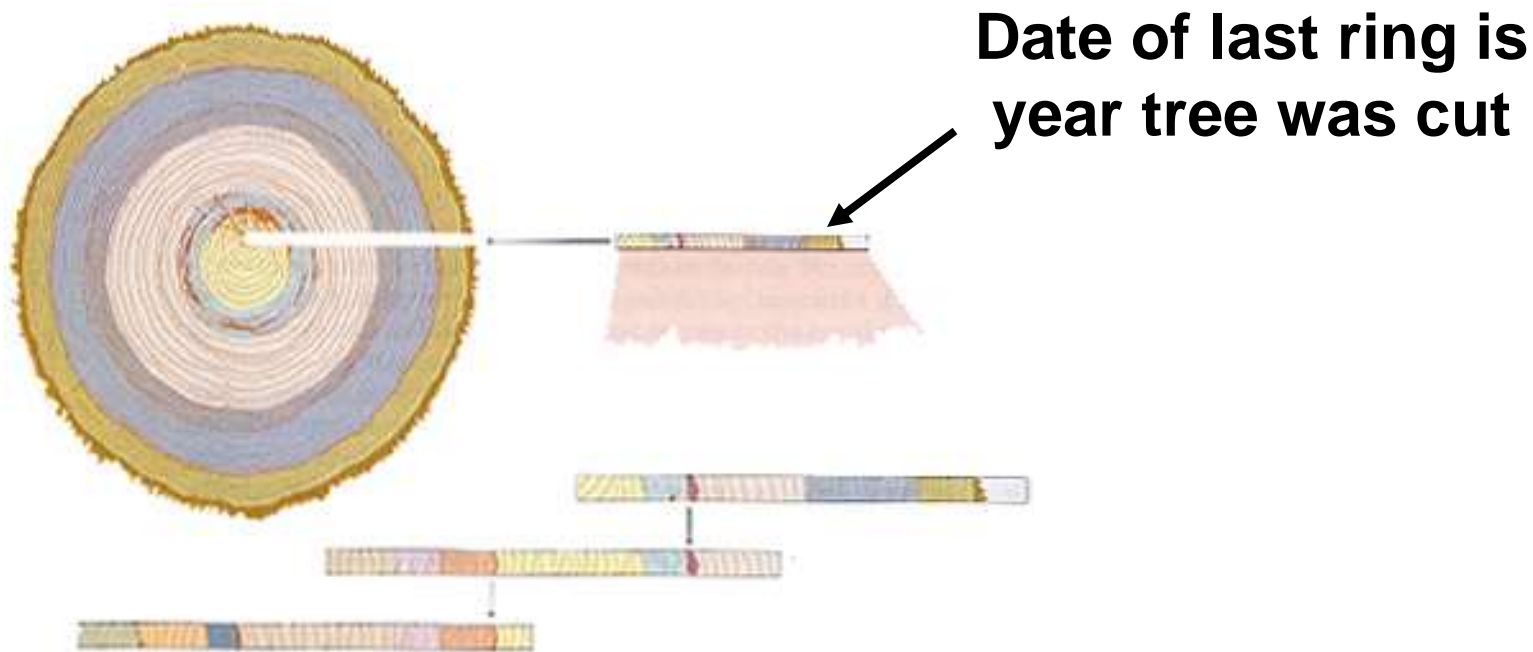
B Annual sediment varves



C Annual tree rings



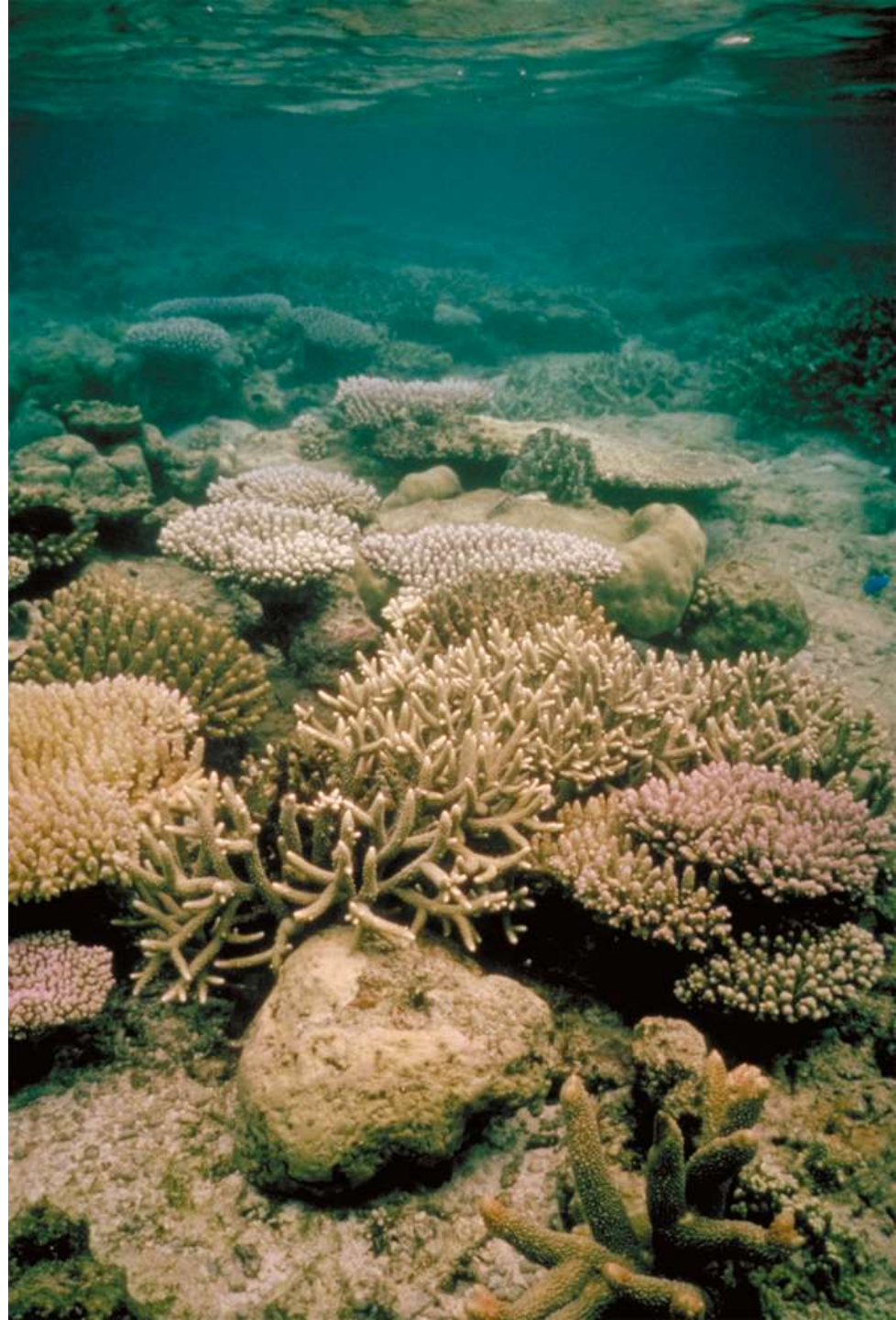
D Annual coral bands



- **dendrochronology** -- the study of the annual variability of tree ring widths
- **climate information: temperature, runoff, precipitation, soil moisture**
- **present-8000 years of climate change**
- **see *Our Changing Planet*, Table 11-1**

ENSO

palaeo-records

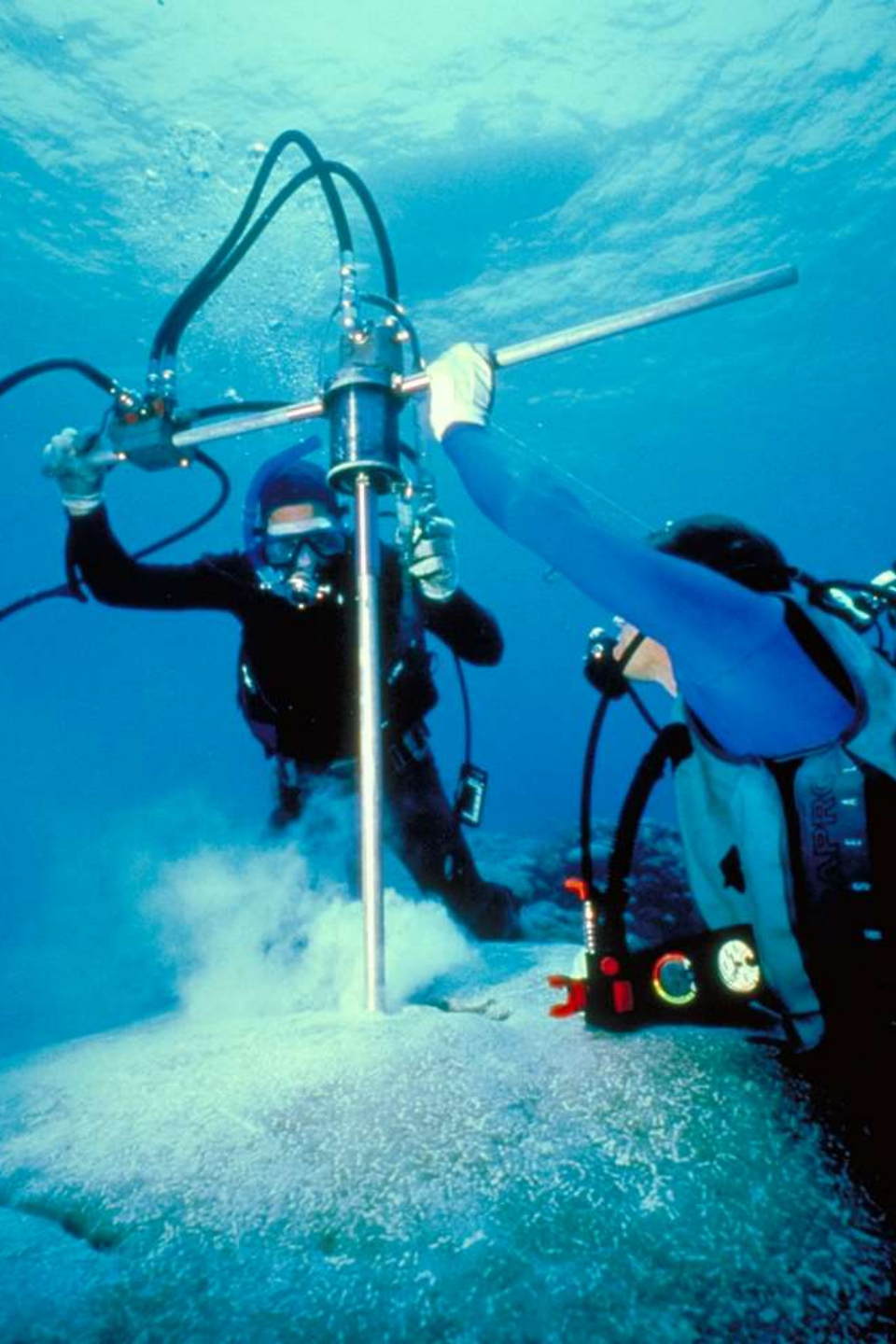


Annual growth “rings”
in a *Pavona clavus*
coral

-seasonal differences

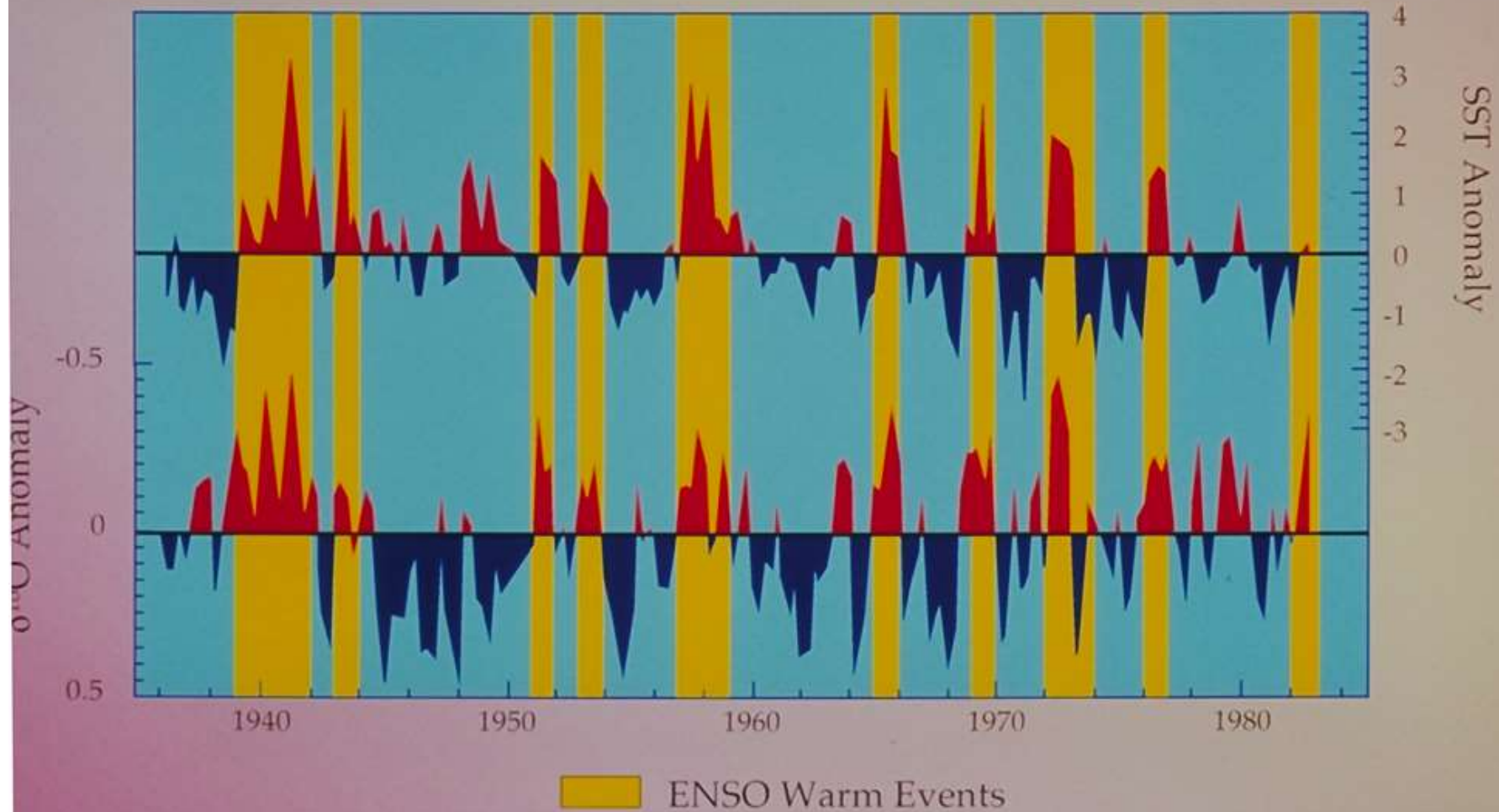






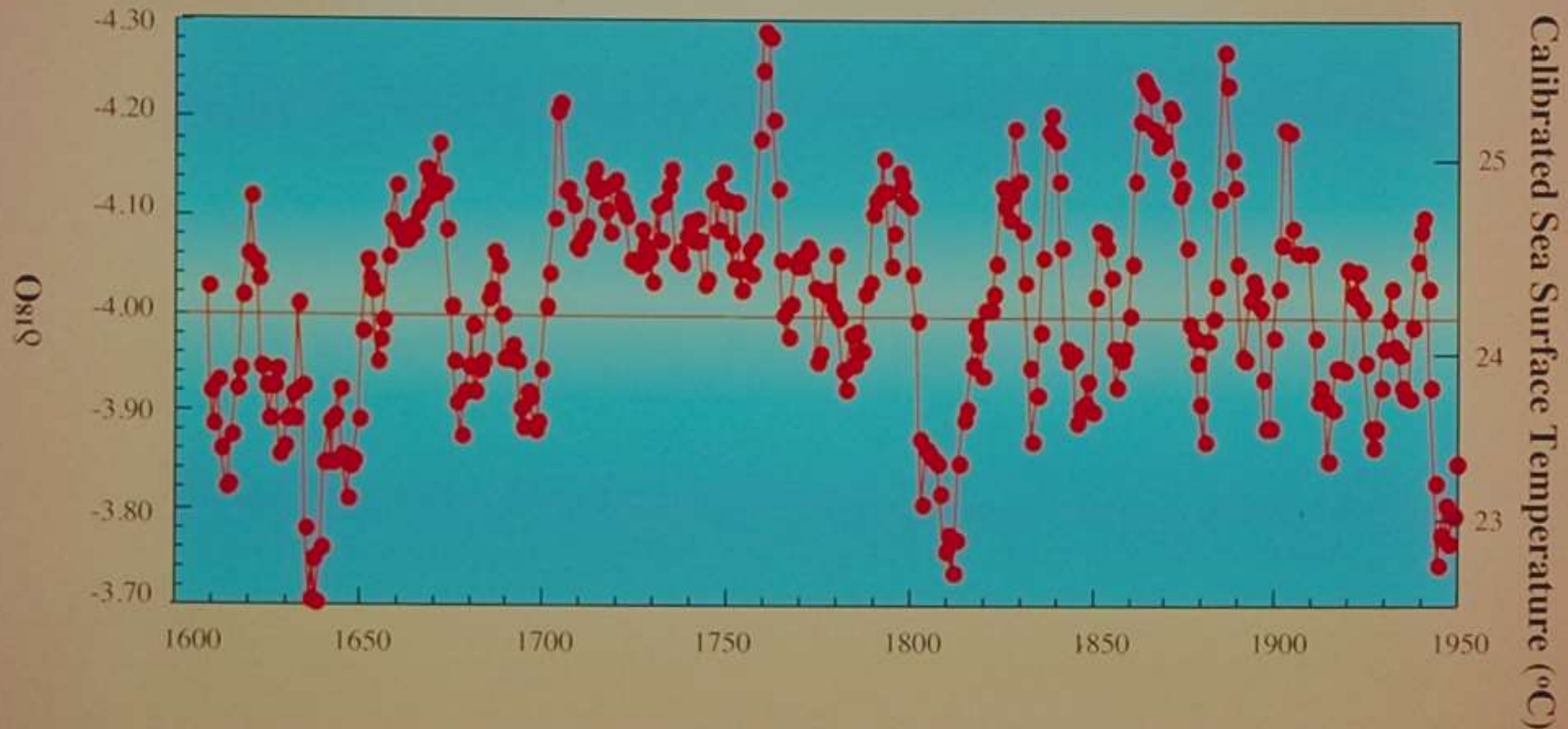


Coral $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ at Punta Pitt, Galápagos Provides a Record of Sea Surface Temperatures in an El Niño Sensitive Area

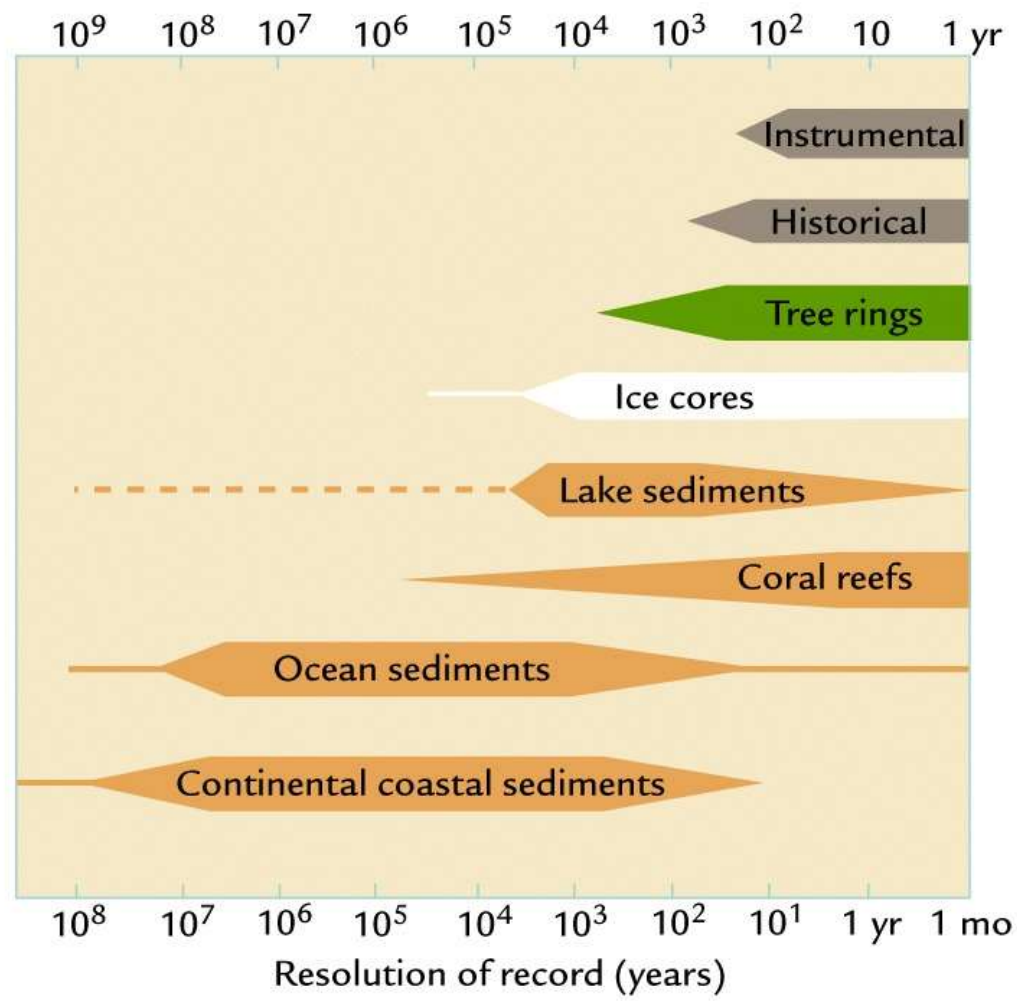
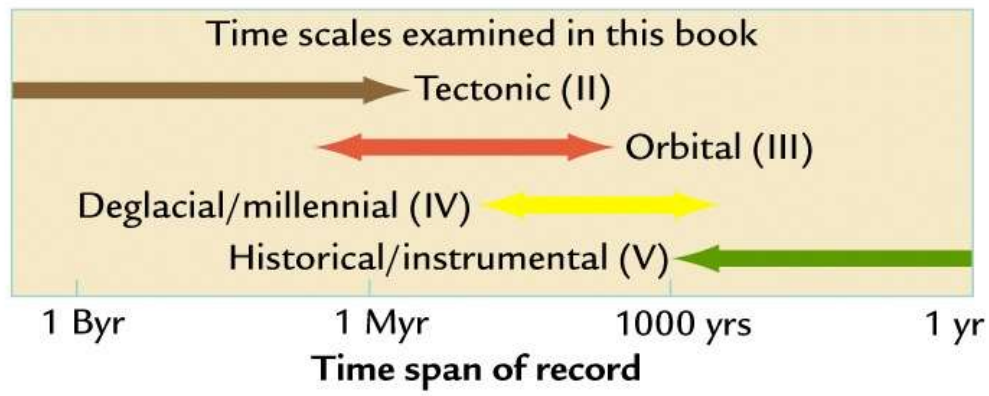


Data from Shen *et al.* (1992)

A 350-year $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ Record from a Specimen of *Pavona clavus* Provides a History of Paleotemperature in the Eastern Pacific (Urvina Bay, Galápagos)



Data from Dunbar *et al.* (1994). Graph presented as a 5-year moving average to filter out high frequency variability.



Earth has been habitable for about 3.55 Billion Years

- Sediments amount to an ancient and long record of liquid water
- Life present at 3.55 billion years or earlier
- Earth was never frozen (or boiled)
- Two main climate states:
 - icehouse – ice sheets present
 - greenhouse (hothouse) - no ice sheets present

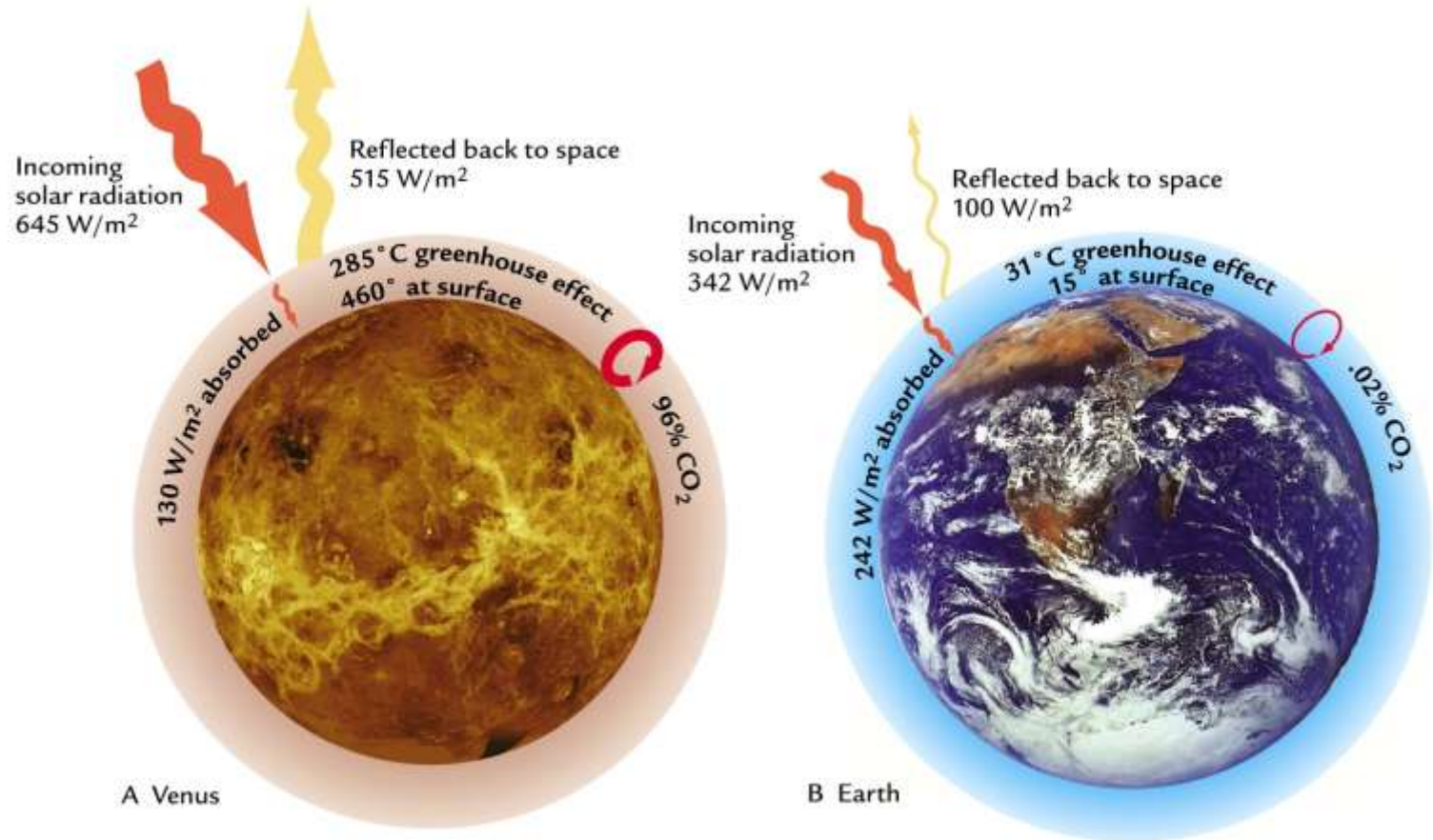
Why Has Earth Been Habitable?

Venus compared to Earth:

Twice the solar flux

Same carbon, but all in atmosphere as CO₂

Higher albedo



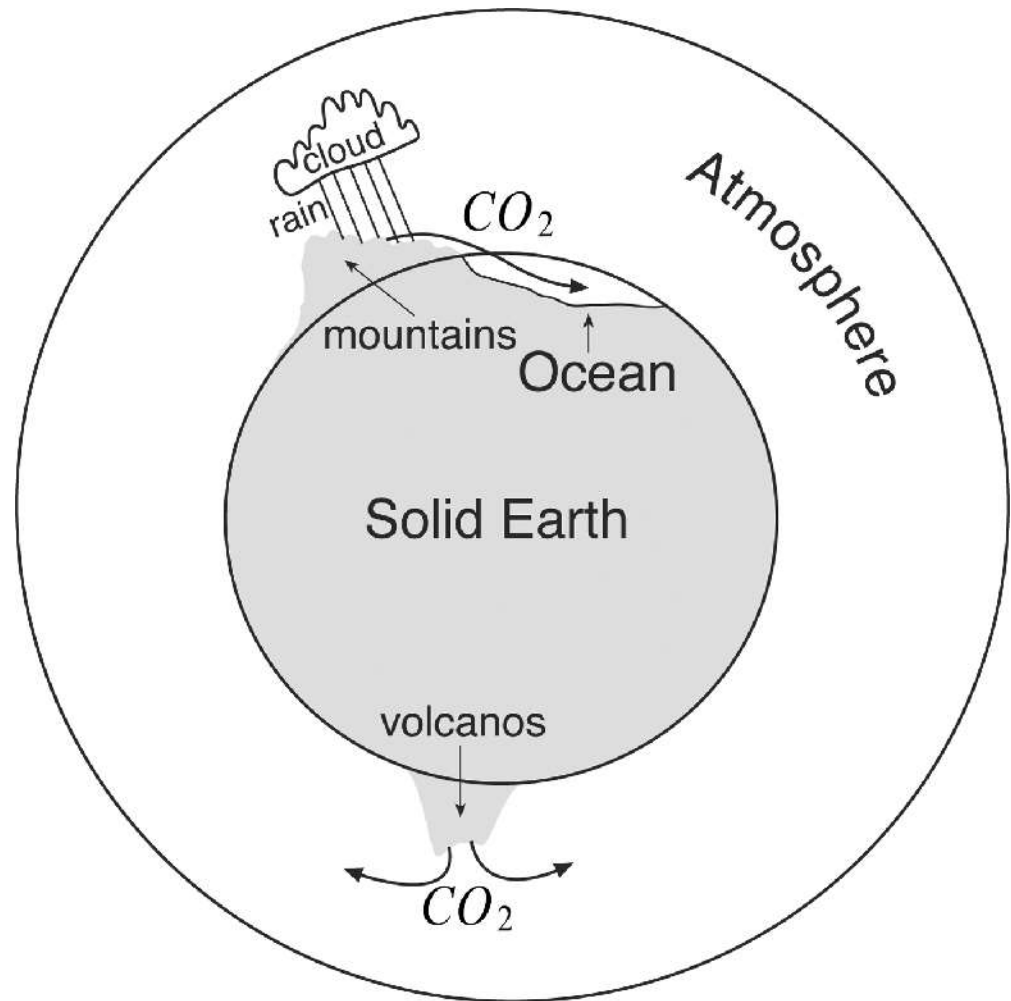
- Venus stinking hot, Earth “just right”
- Factors? Distance from Sun? radiation balance?

Tectonic-Scale Climate Change /Faint Young Sun Paradox

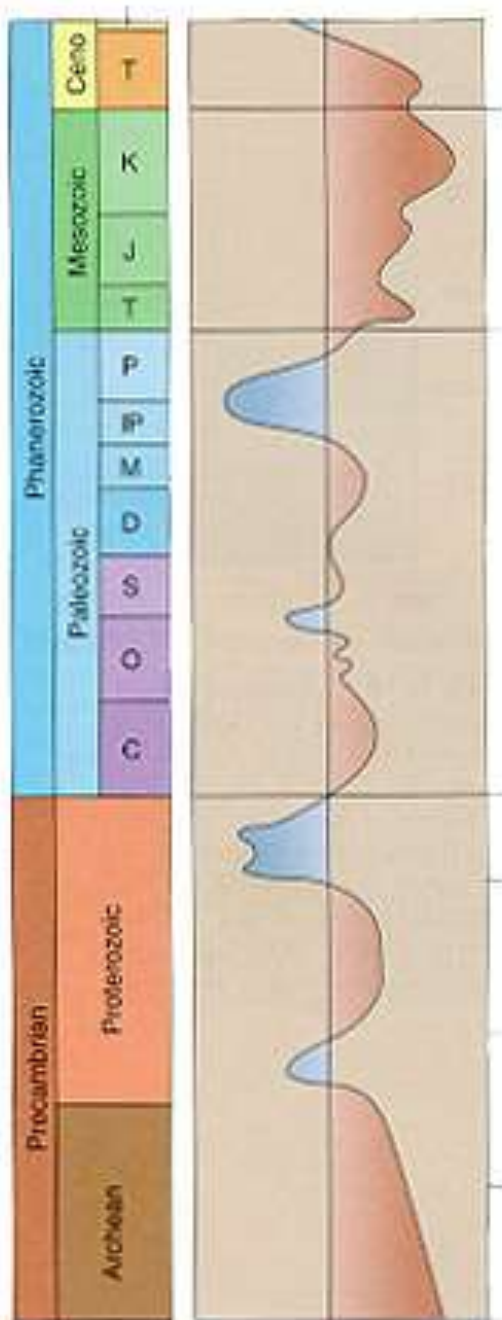
- **Due to lower solar luminosity, there must have been more greenhouse gas in Earth's early atmosphere**
 - **competition between volcanism (source) and weathering (sink) of CO₂**
 - **3.0 billion years ago (50-100x PAL) surface temperatures near 60°C?**

Climate over Earth's history (12.3.1)

Phanerozoic 543M y → 0	Cenozoic 65M y → 0	Quaternary 1.8M y → 0	Holocene 10k y → 0
			Pleistocene 1.8M y → 10k y
			Pliocene 5.3 → 1.8M y
		Tertiary 65 → 1.8M y	Miocene 24 → 5.3M y
			Oligocene 33 → 24M y
			Eocene 55 → 33M y
			Paleocene 65 → 55M y
			Mesozoic 248 → 65M y
		Jurassic 206 → 144M y	
		Triassic 248 → 206M y	
Paleozoic 543 → 248M y	Permian 290 → 248M y		
	Carboniferous 354 → 290M y		
	Devonian 417 → 354M y		
	Silurian 443 → 417M y		
Ordovician 490 → 443M y			
Cambrian 543 → 490M y			
Precambrian 4500 → 543M y	Proterozoic 2500 → 543M y	Archaen 3800 → 2500M y	
		Hadean 4500 → 3800M y	



Climate change on a million-year time scale

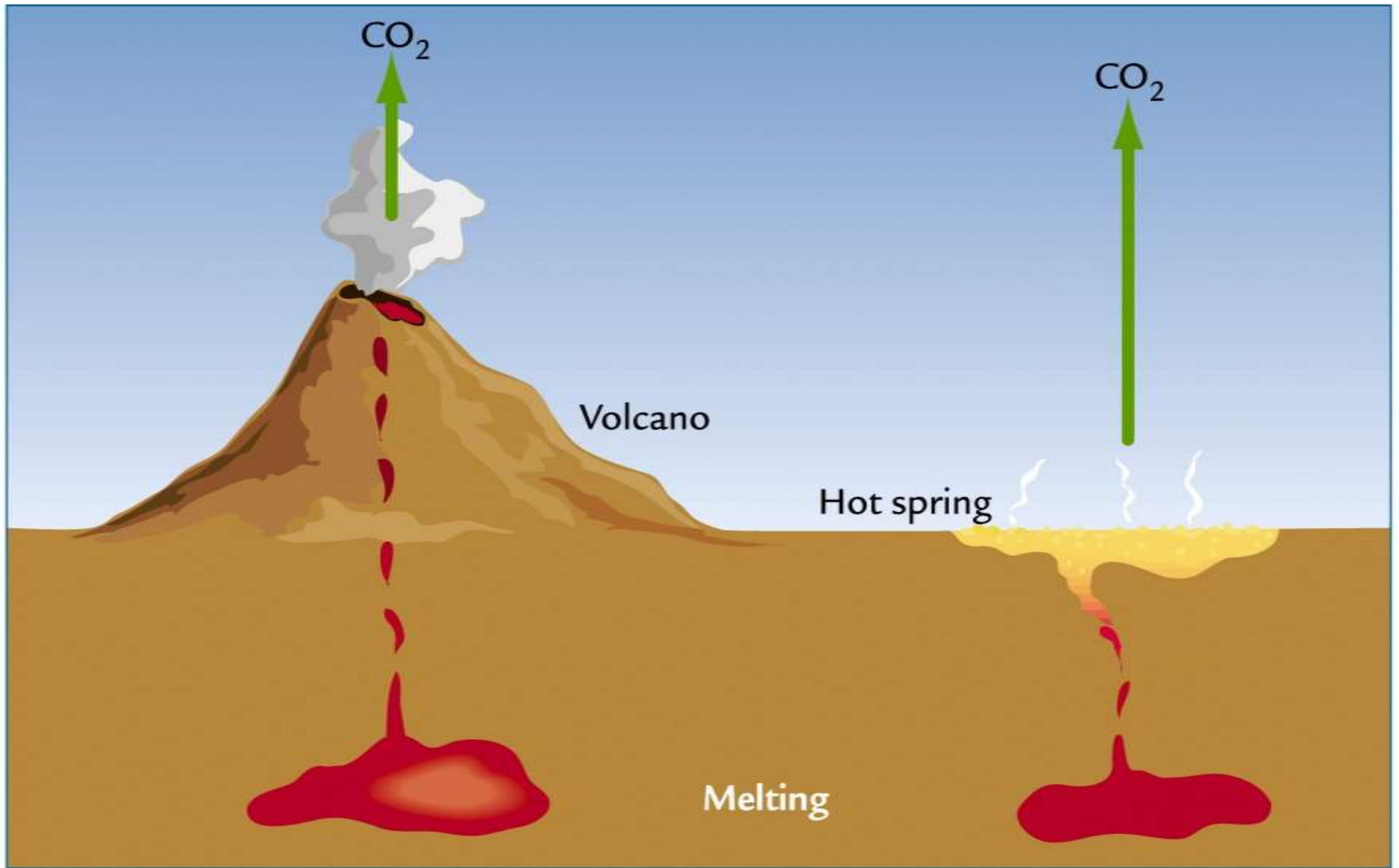


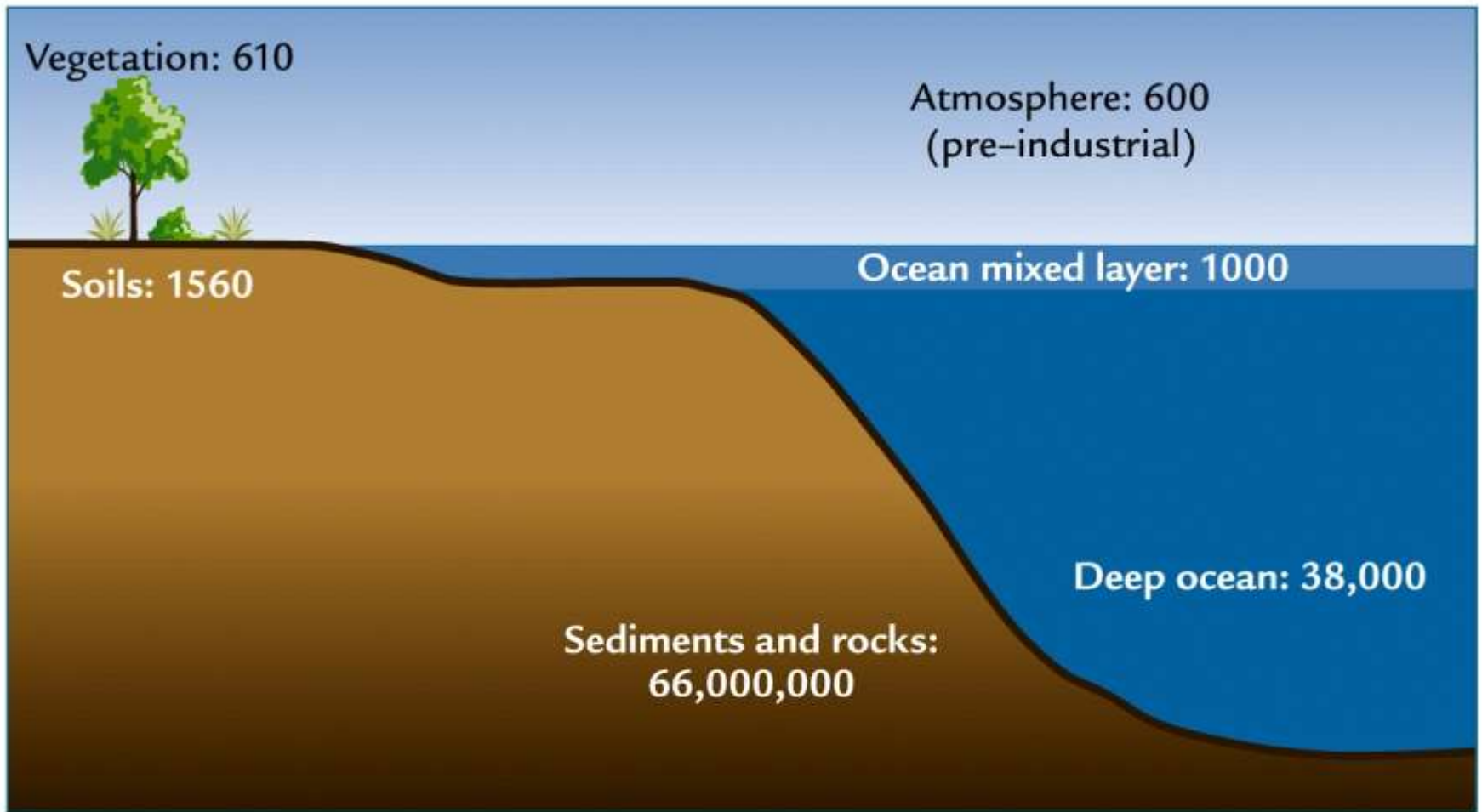
A. Alternating greenhouse and icehouse states

B. The Cretaceous greenhouse

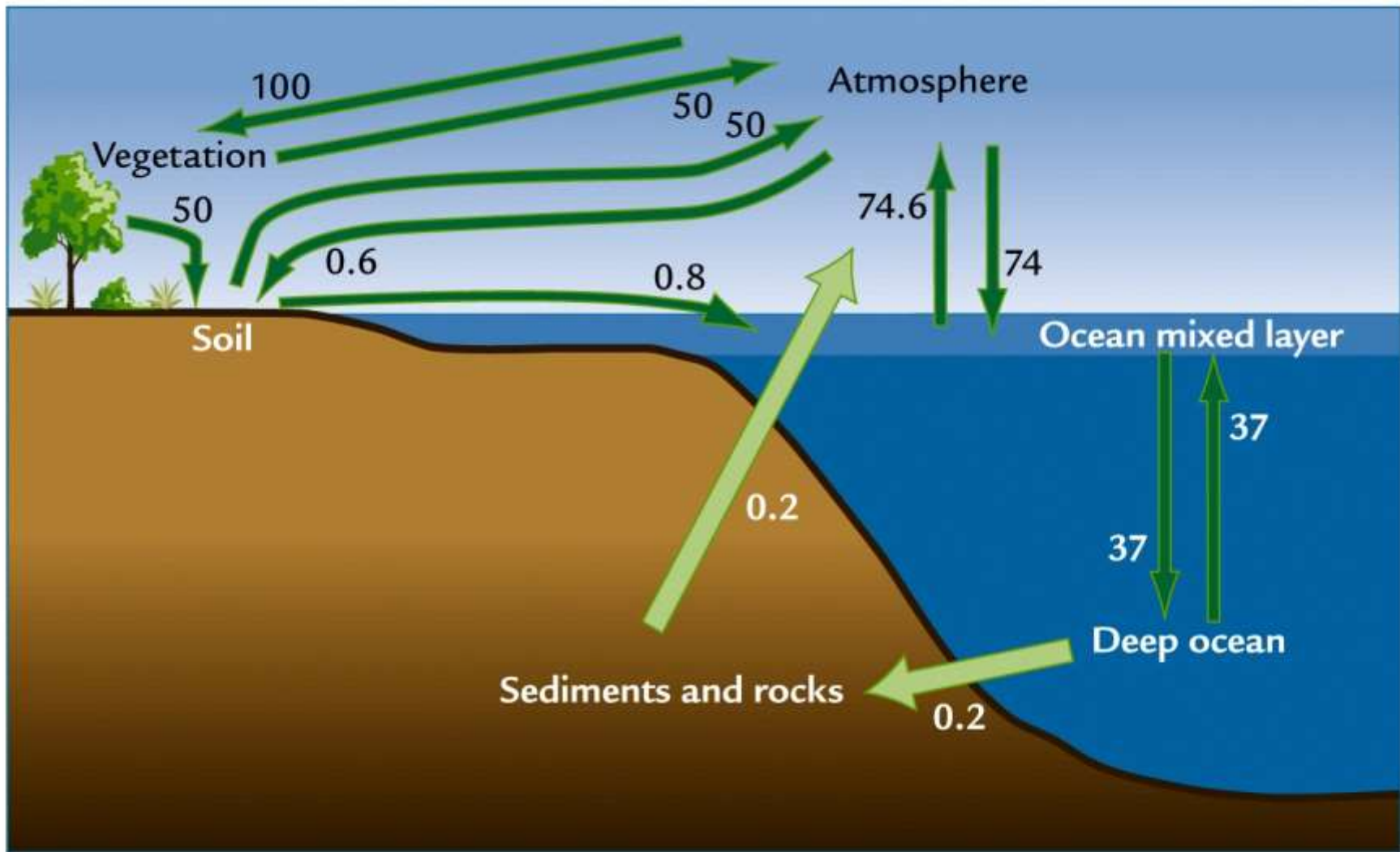
C. post-Cretaceous cooling

Major ice ages occurred in the Pleistocene, Permian and Carboniferous, Ordovician, late and early Proterozoic



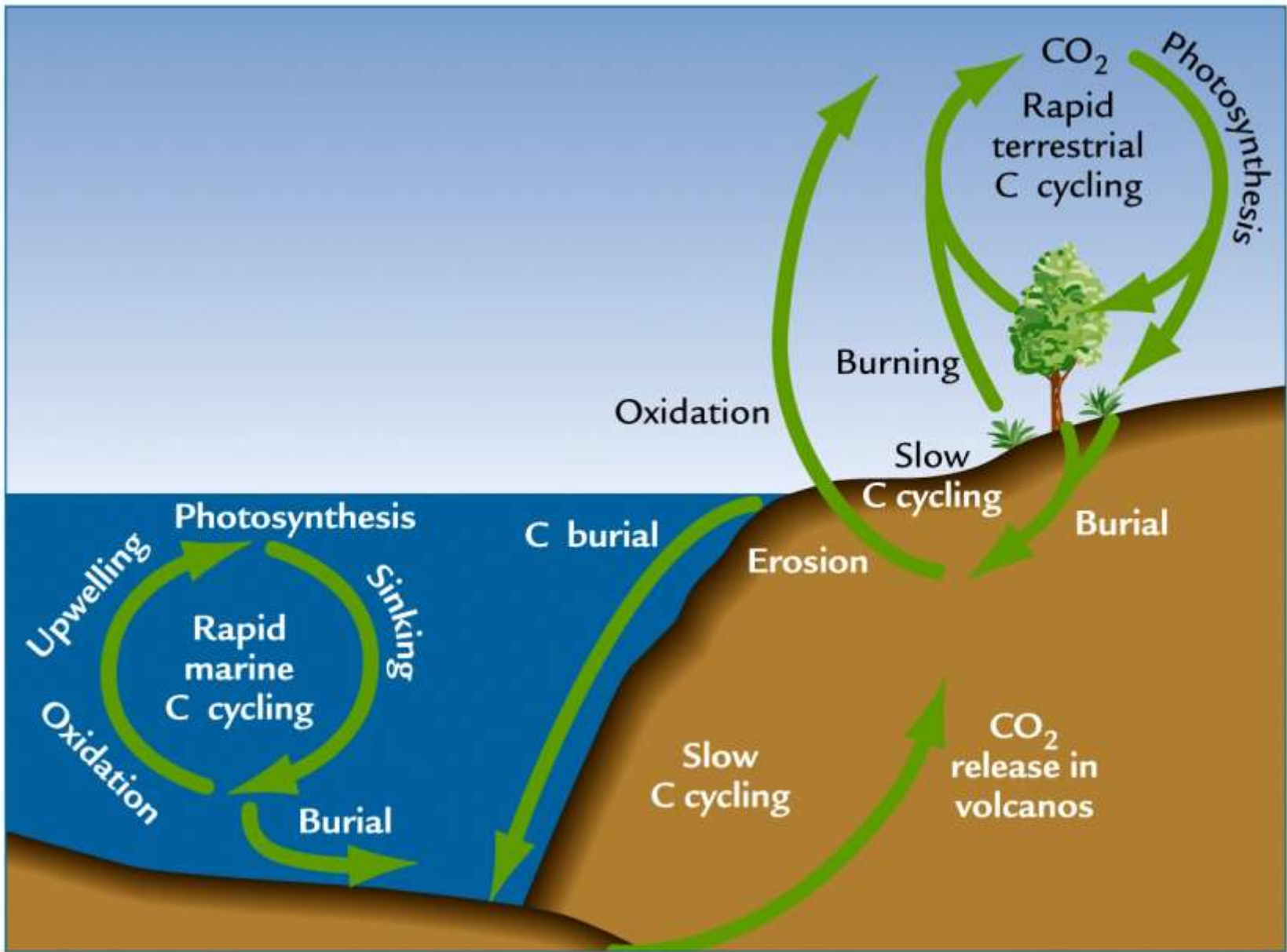


A Major carbon reservoirs (gigatons; 1 gigaton = 10^{15} grams)



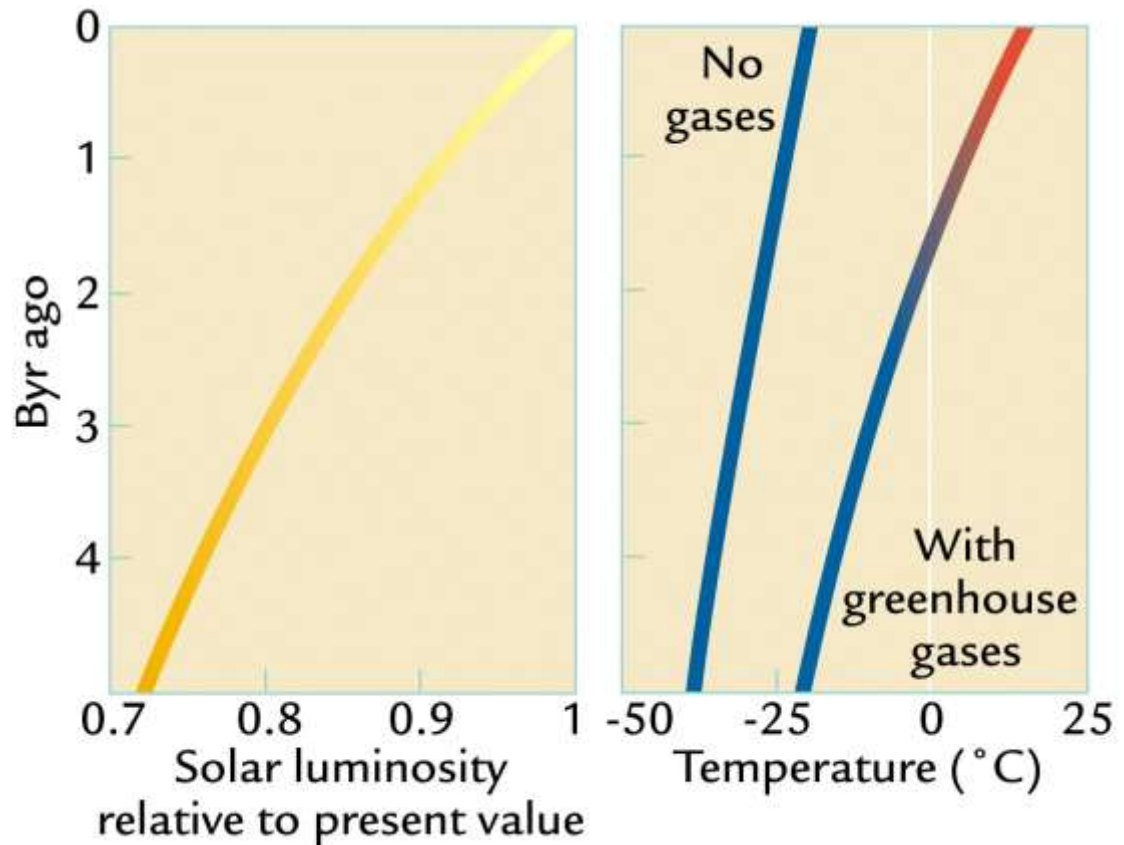
B

Carbon exchange rates (gigatons/year)



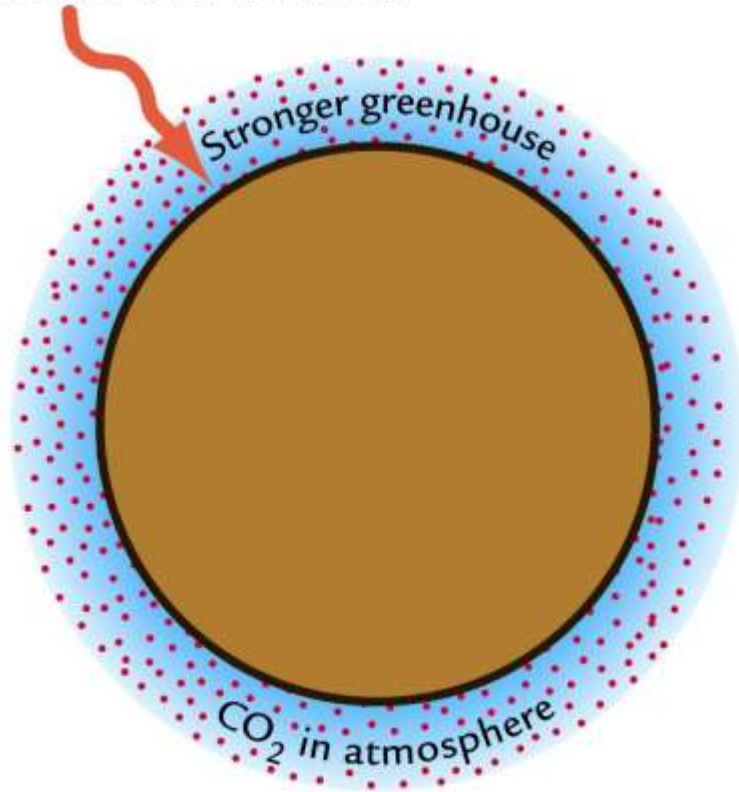
“Faint Young Sun” Paradox

- Sun’s output must have increased by ~50%
- Somehow the increase in solar output has just been compensated
- Implies a natural thermostat exists
- Greenhouse gases must be involved



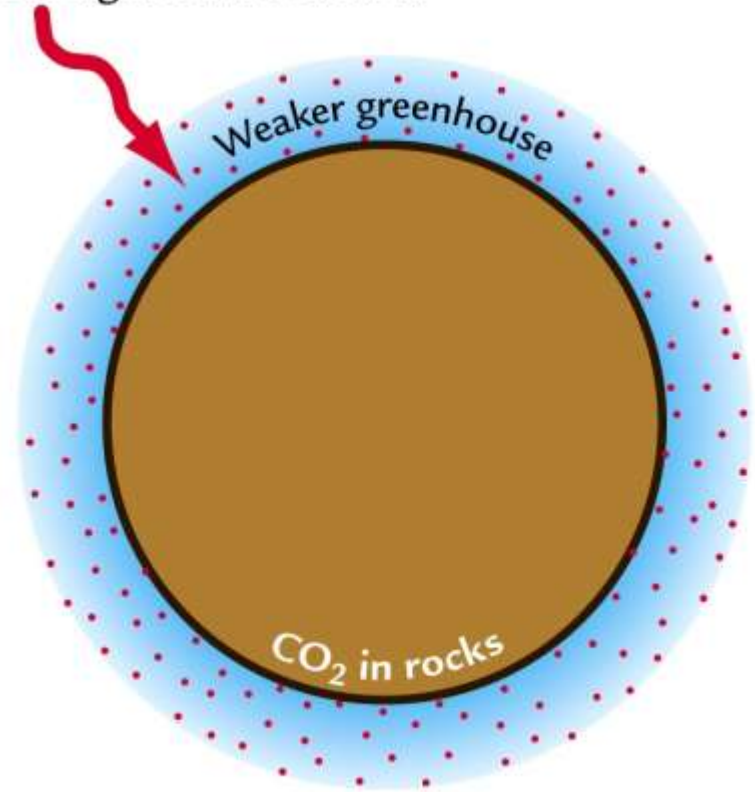
Even with a modern atmosphere, Earth frozen for much of its history

Weaker solar radiation



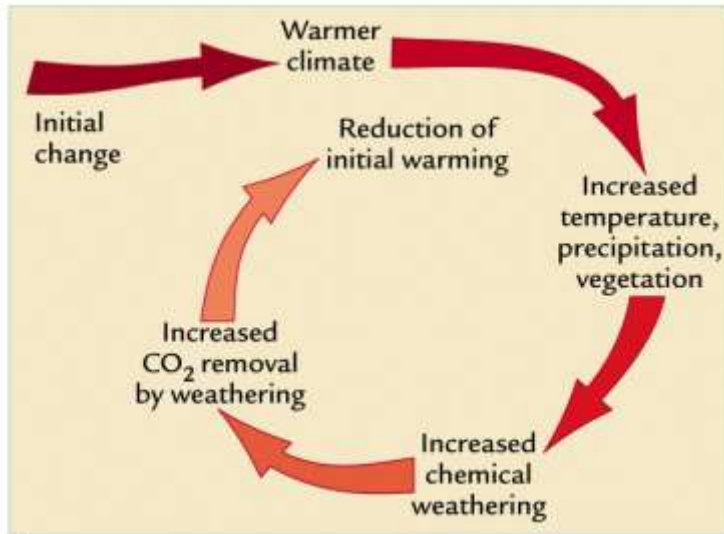
A Early Earth

Stronger solar radiation

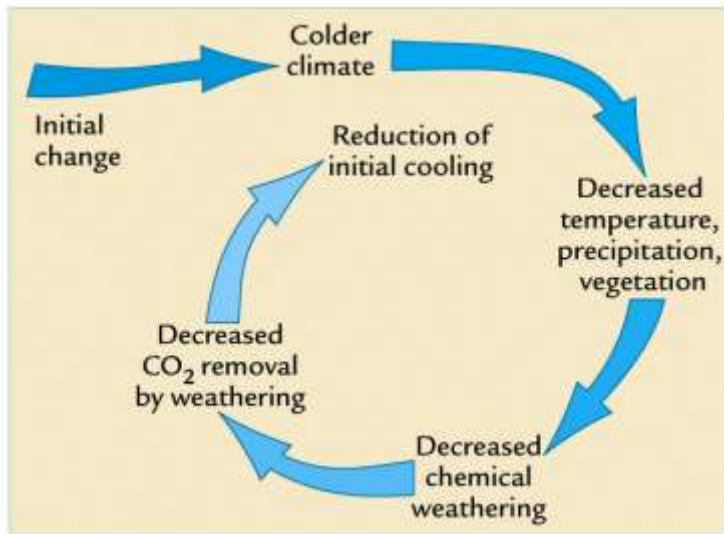


B Modern Earth

Plausible explanation of the faint young Sun paradox: (A) the weakness of the early Sun was compensated by a stronger greenhouse effect due to higher CO_2 in atmosphere (or CH_4). (B) when Sun strengthend increased chemical weathering transfers atm. C into rocks.

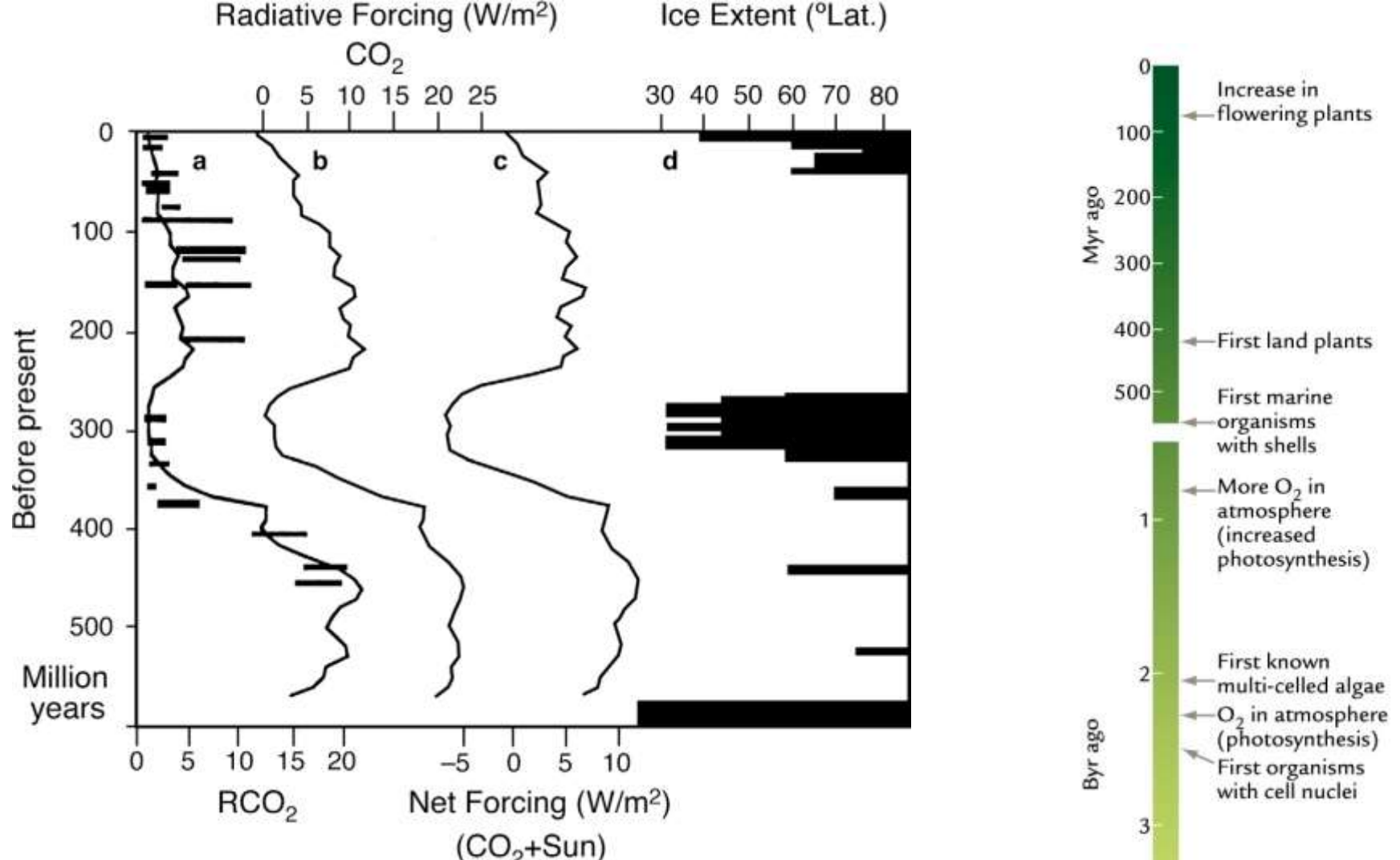


A

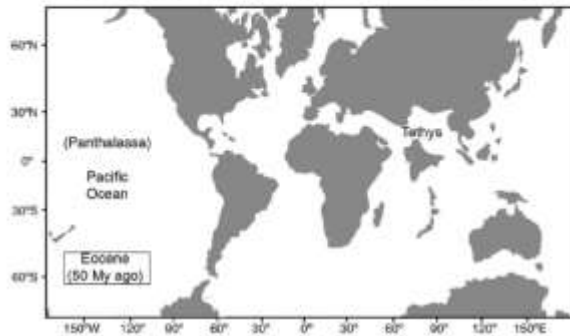
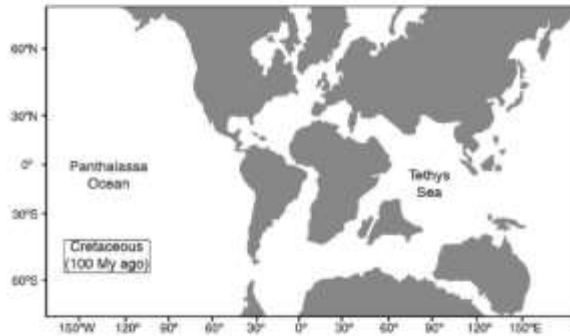
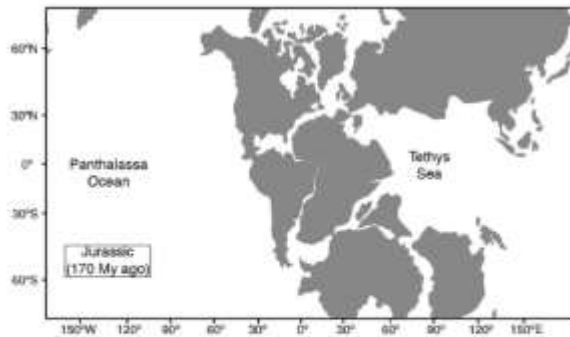


B

Negative feedback loop:
 Chemical weathering acts as a negative climate feedback by reducing the intensity of imposed climate warming (A) and climate cooling.



- (a) Comparison of CO₂ concentrations from a geochemical model (continuous line) with a compilation (Berner, 1997) of proxy CO₂ observations (horizontal bars). RCO₂ is the ratio of past atmospheric CO₂ concentrations to present day levels.
- (b) CO₂ radiative forcing effects. (c) Combined CO₂ and solar radiance forcing effects.
- (d) Glaciological evidence for continental-scale glaciation deduced from a compilation of many sources.



A 200 Myr ago



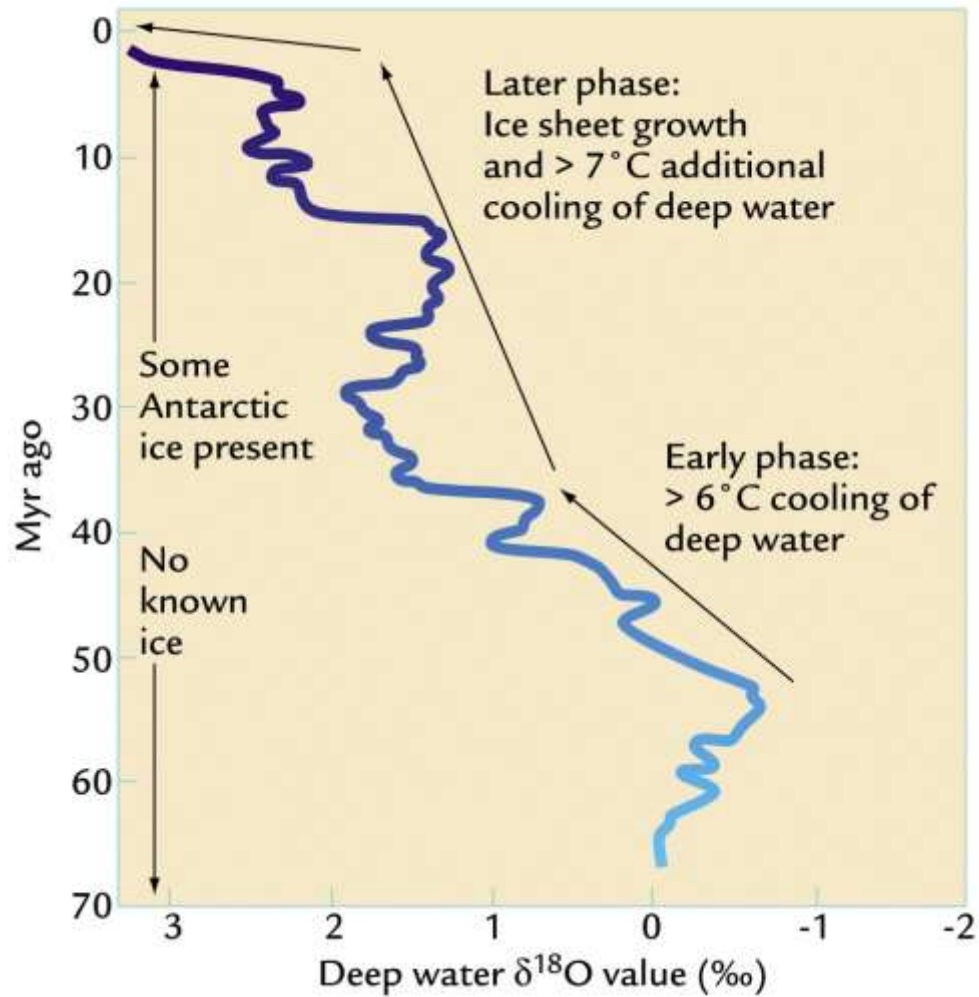
B 65 Myr ago



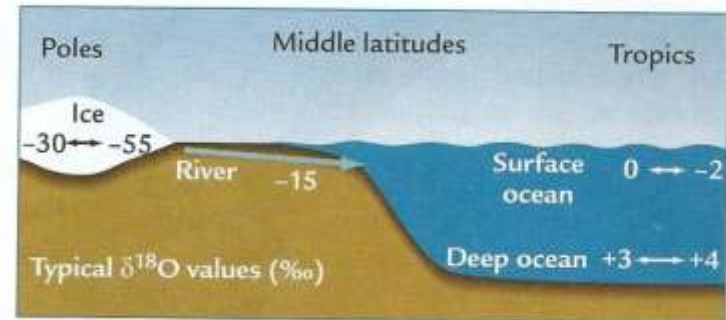
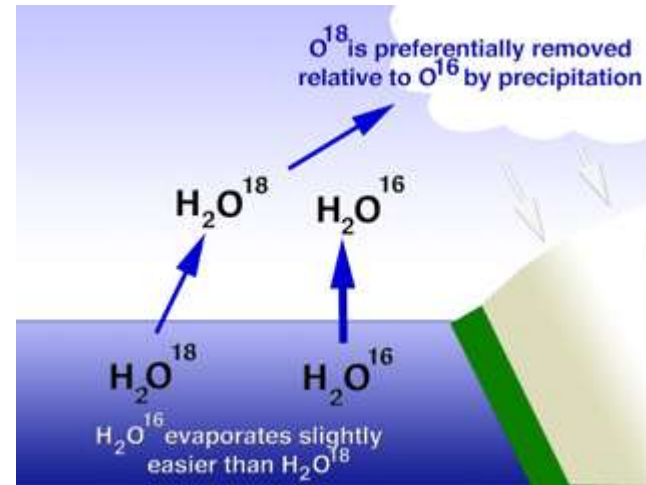
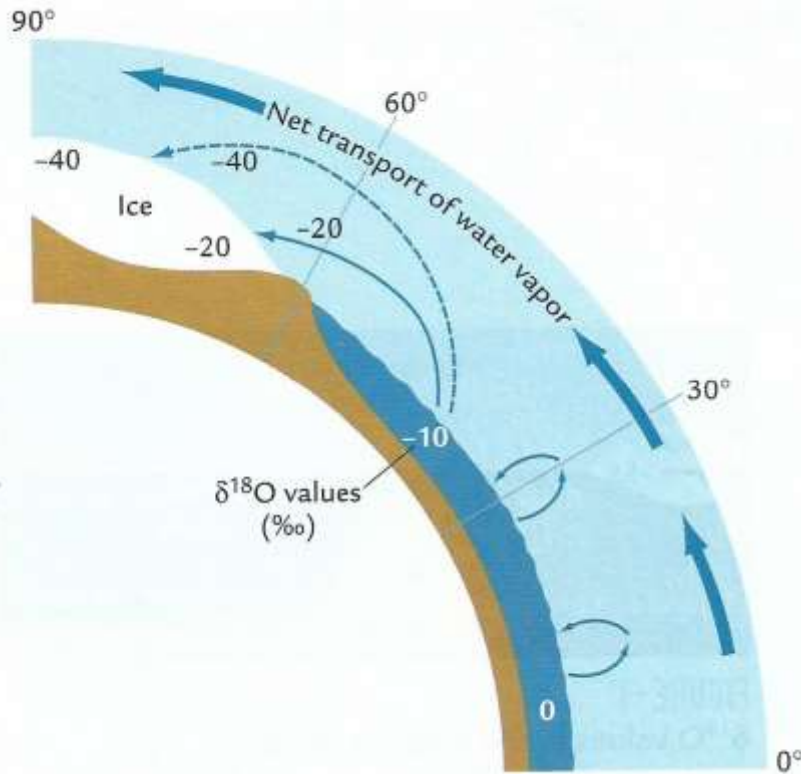
C Today

Paleogeographic reconstructions for (top) the Jurassic (170 My ago), (middle) the Cretaceous (100 My ago), and (bottom) the Eocene (50 My ago). Panthalassa was the huge ocean that in the paleo world dominated one hemisphere. Pangea was the supercontinent in the other hemisphere. The Tethys Sea was the body of water enclosed on three sides by the generally “C-shaped” Pangea.

Long term trend in temperatures over the past 70 Mio. Years (12.3.2.)



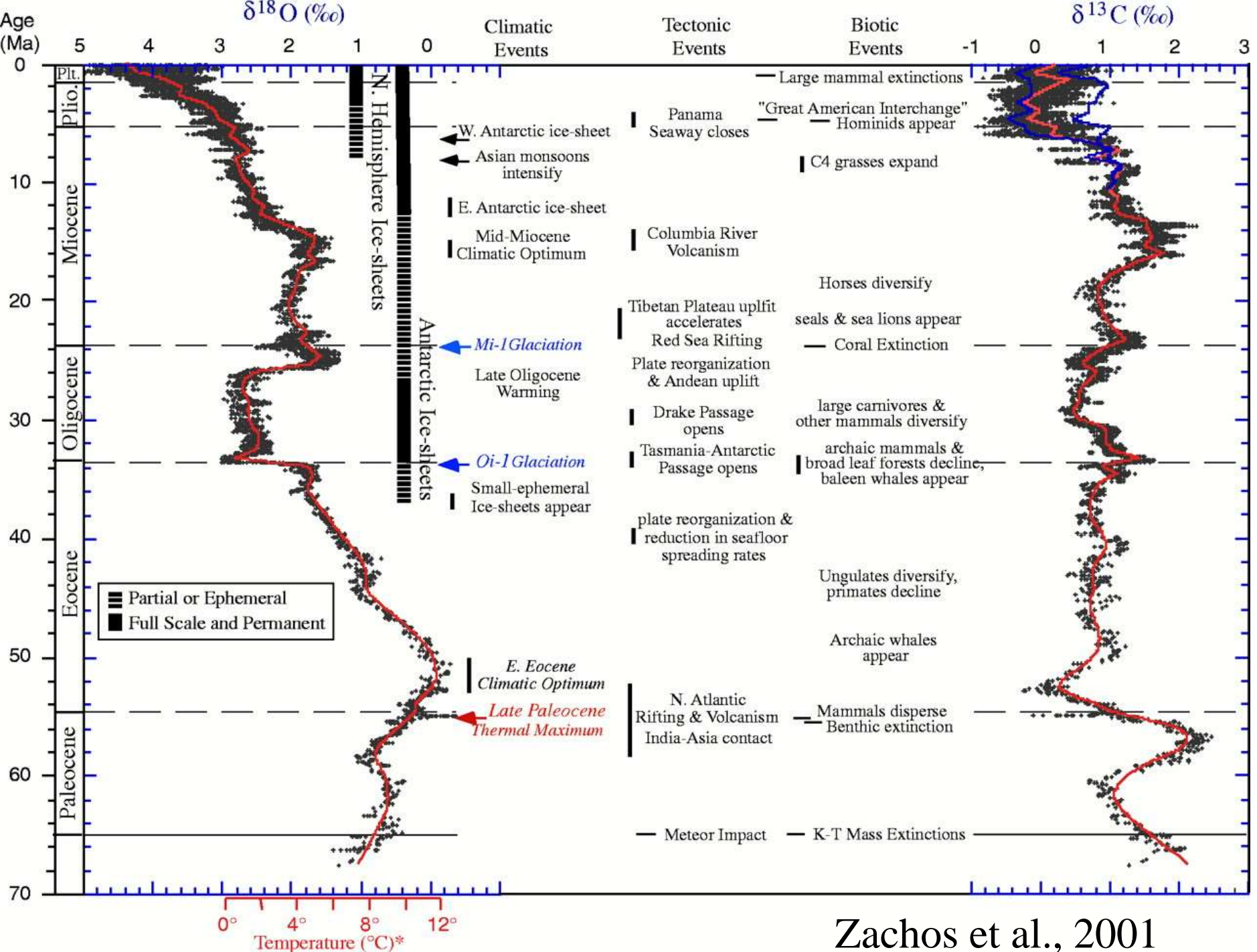
Isotopes of Oxygen



$$\delta^{18}\text{O} \text{ (in ‰)} = \frac{(^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O})_{\text{sample}} - (^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O})_{\text{standard}}}{(^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O})_{\text{standard}}} \times 1,000$$

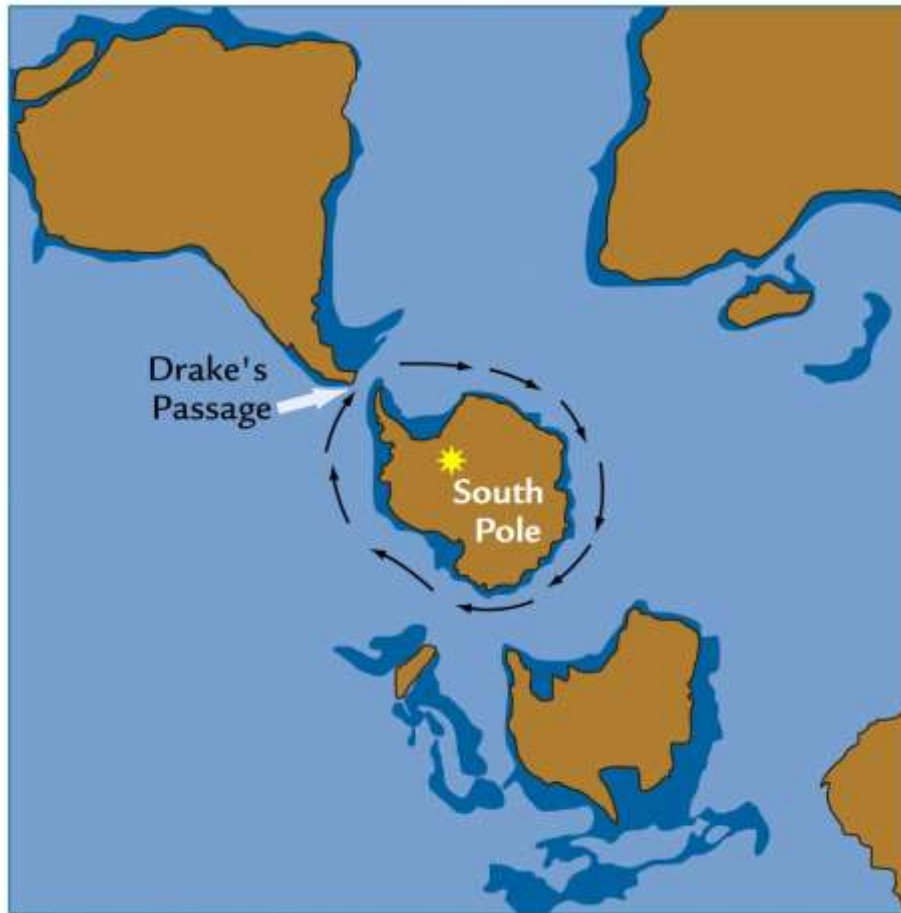
^{16}O is 99% of the total amount of O

More negative values mean enrichment in the lighter ^{16}O

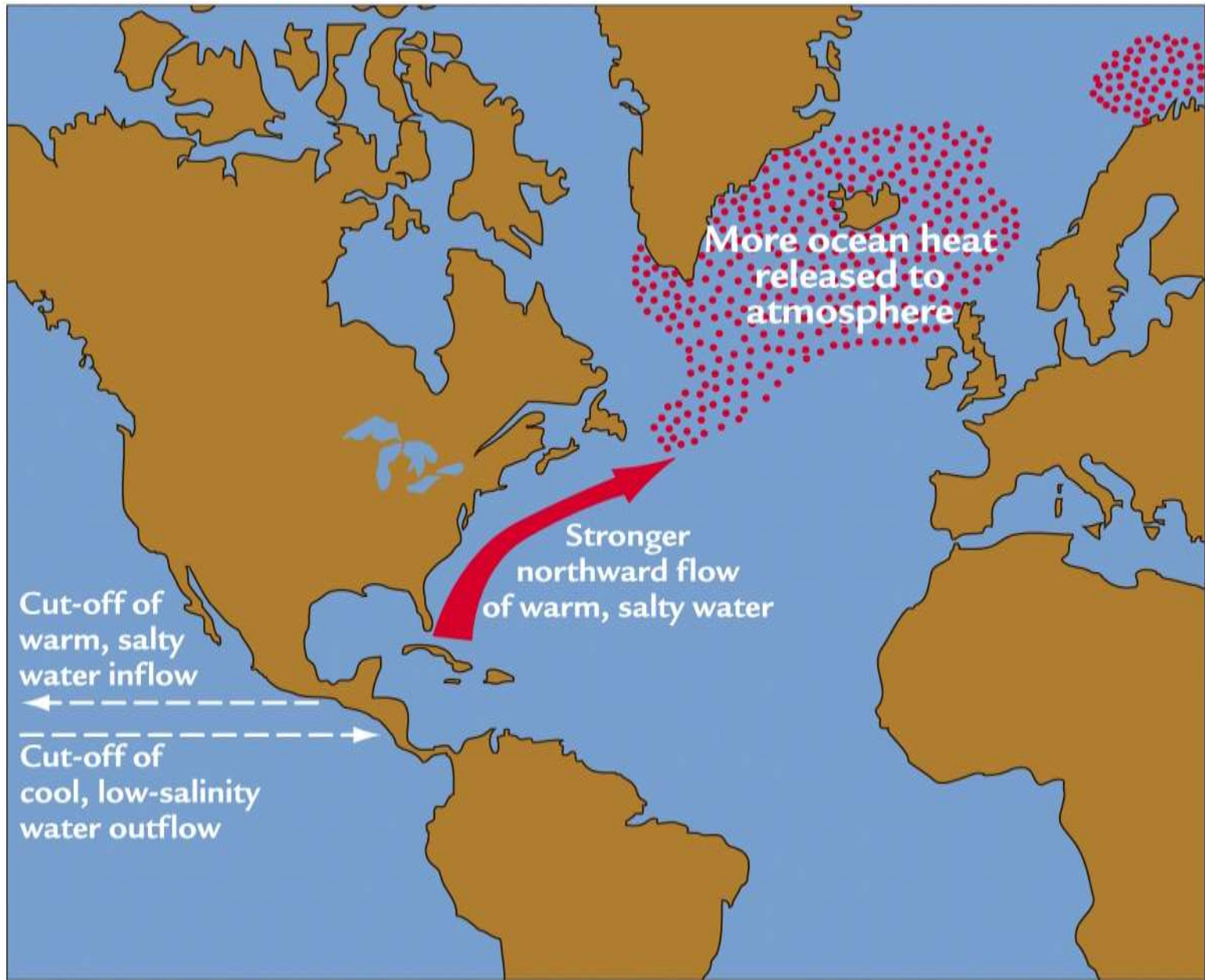


Zachos et al., 2001

Influences of oceanic gateways on long term climate change



Opening of an ocean gap between S-America and Antarctica around 25 Mio years allow strong Antarctic circumpolar current to flow uninterrupted around the Antarctic continent. The passage between Australia and Antarctica had opened around 10 Mio years earlier.



High latitudes vegetation



Early Tertiary



Present day



Cenozoic orogeny and cooling



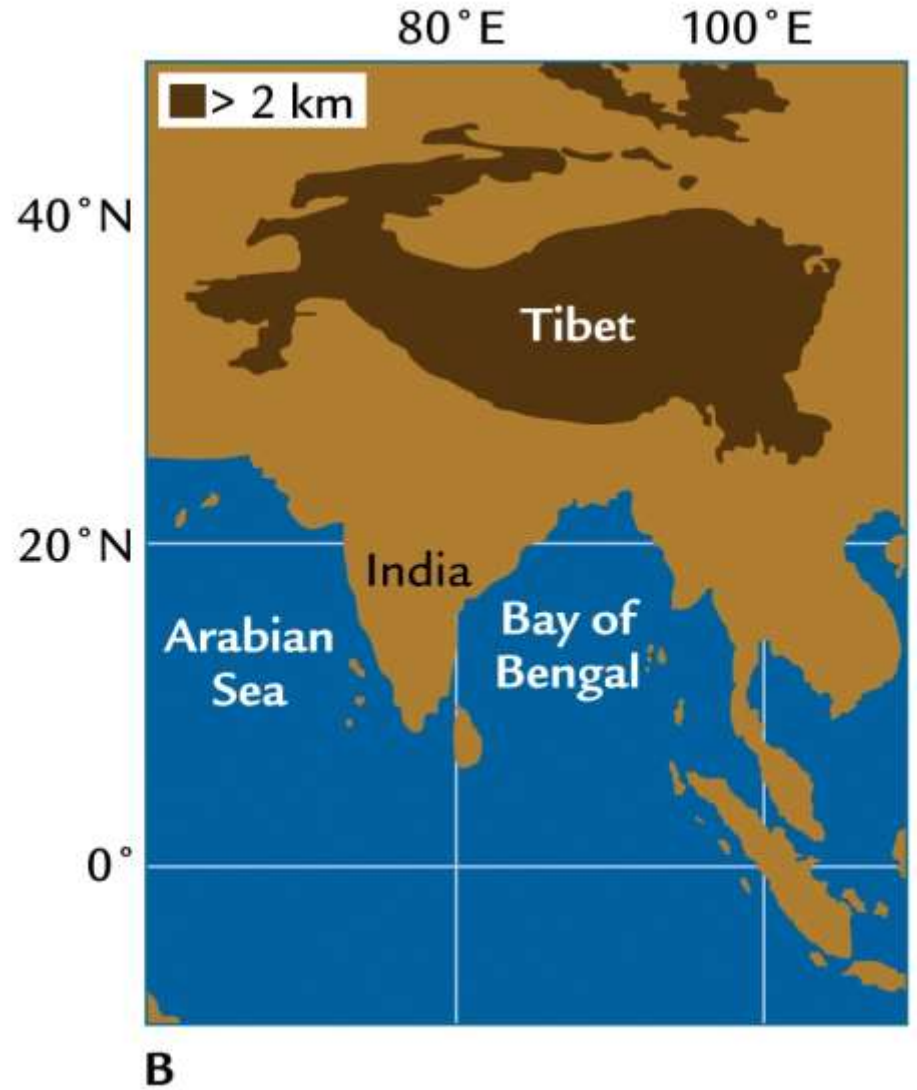
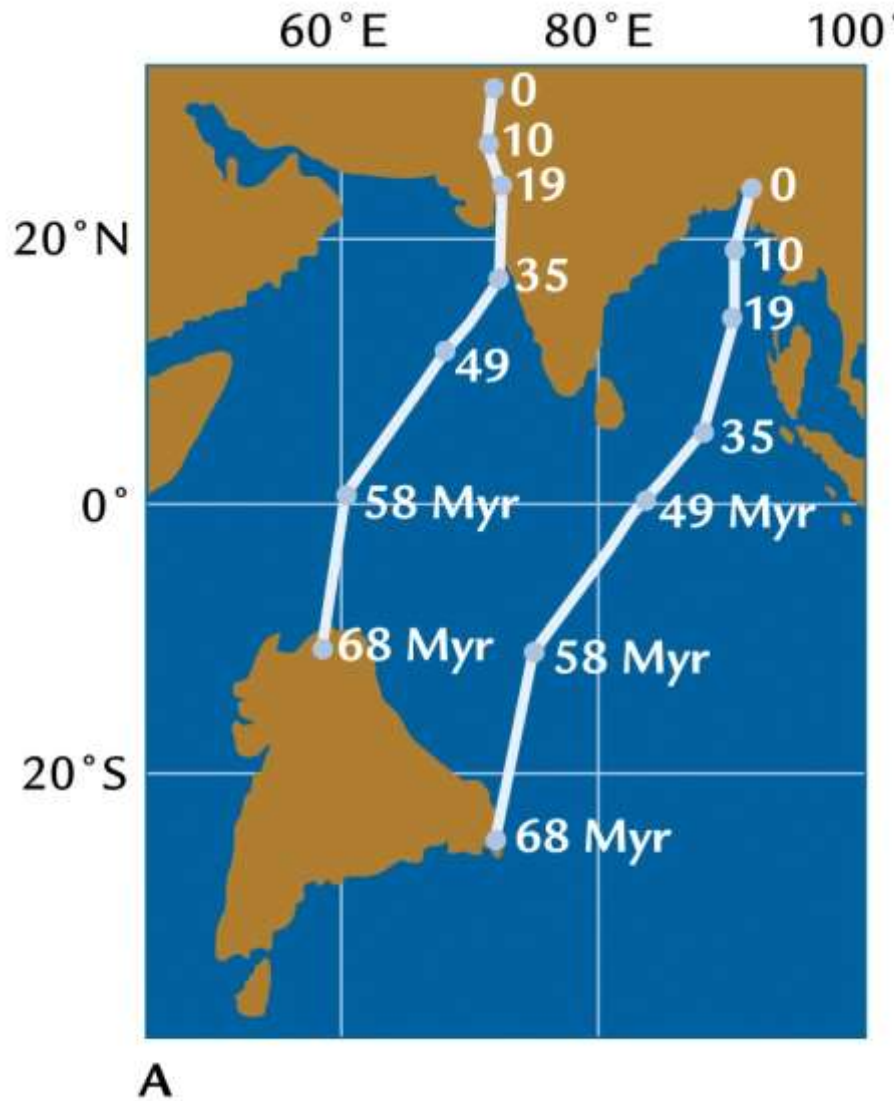
Increased weathering of the continents due to uplift of the Himalaya Mountains and Tibetan Plateau

Tectonic Uplift Hypothesis

after Raymo & Ruddiman (1985)

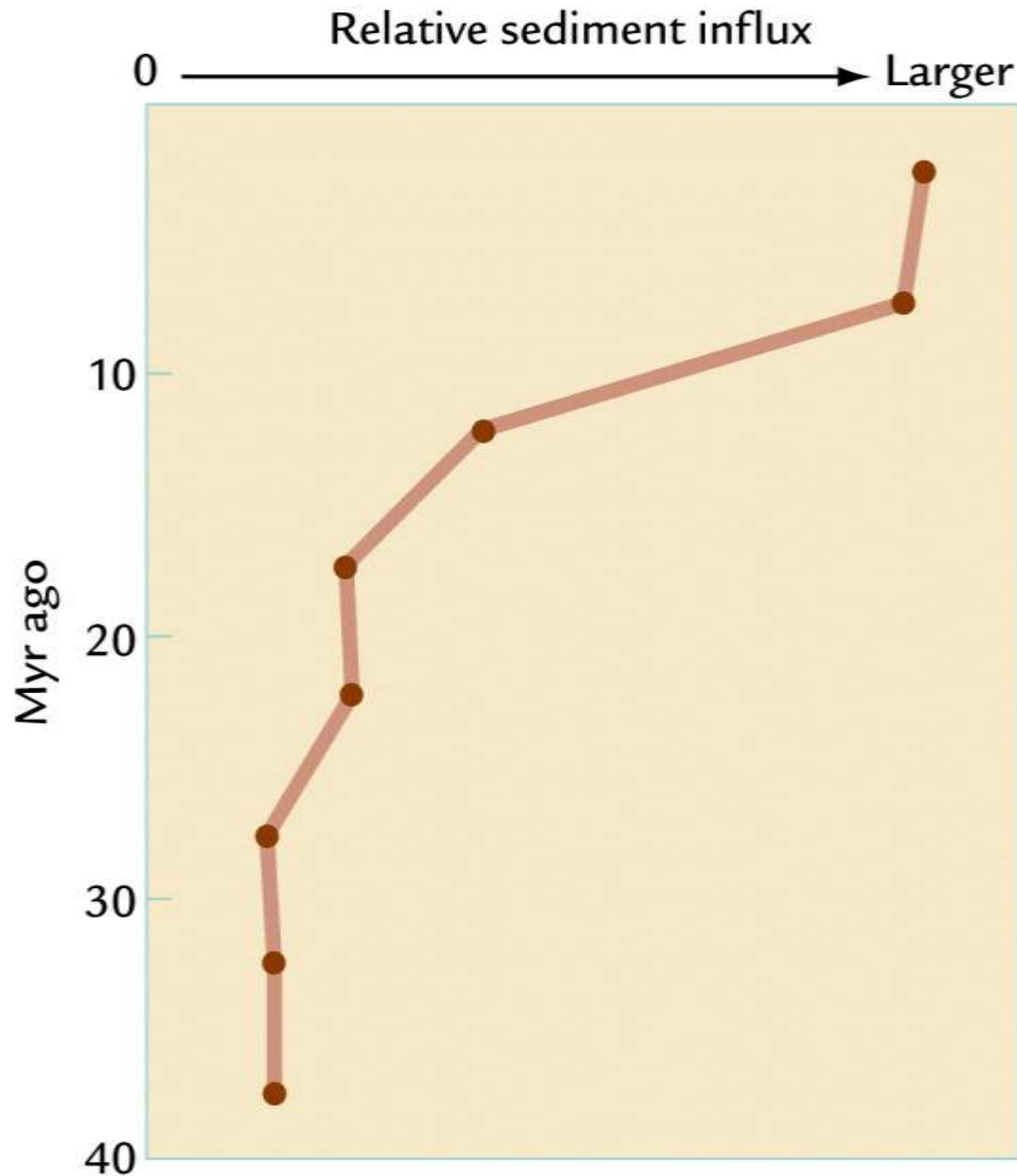
- Tectonic uplift of the Himalayas
- Enhanced silicate weathering
- Reduction of atmospheric CO₂
- Inverse greenhouse effect triggers cooling and extension of East Antarctic Ice Sheet

India - Asia collision and Tibet

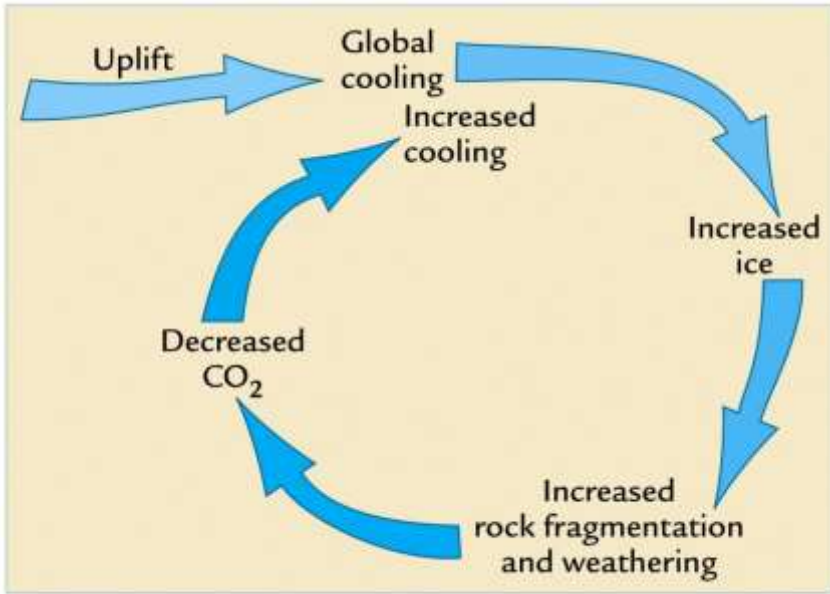


Collision of India and Asia produced the Tibetan plateau

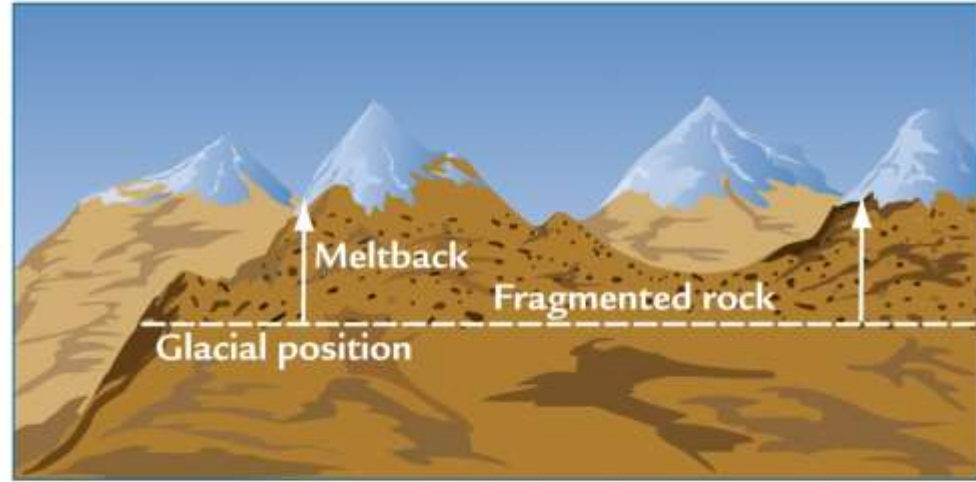
Himalayan sediments in the Indian Ocean



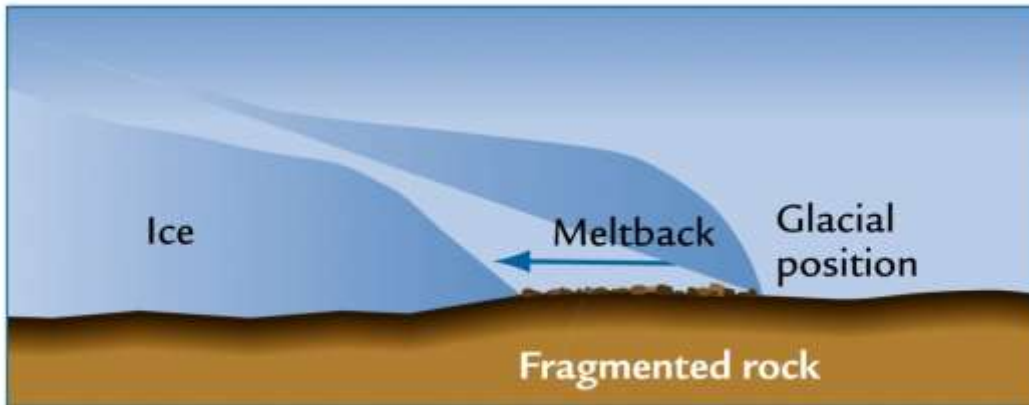
The rate of influx of sediments from the Himalayas and Tibet to the deep Indian ocean has increased 10fold since 40 Mio years ago



A Positive weathering feedback



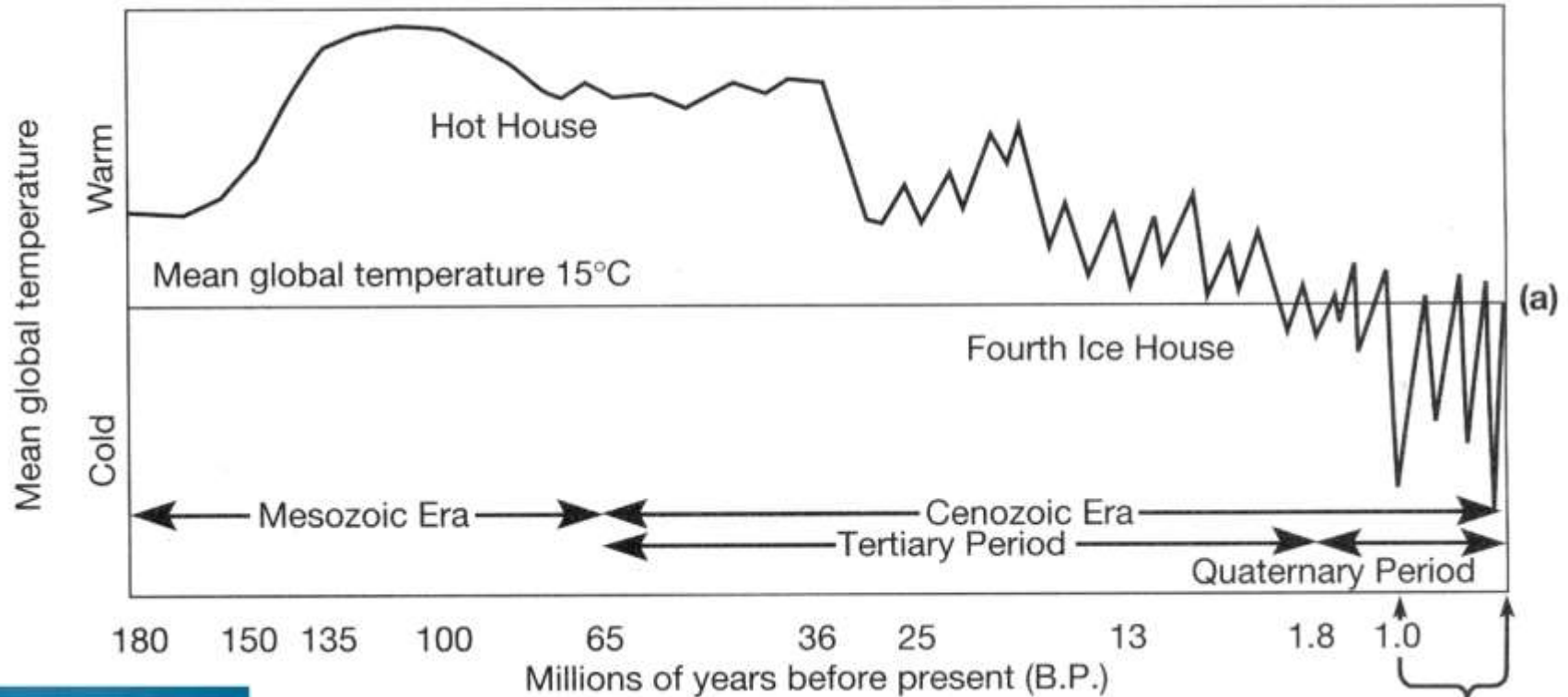
B Mountain glaciers



C Continental ice sheets

Global cooling produces more ice (A), and the ice increases rock fragmentation (B) and near ice sheets (C).

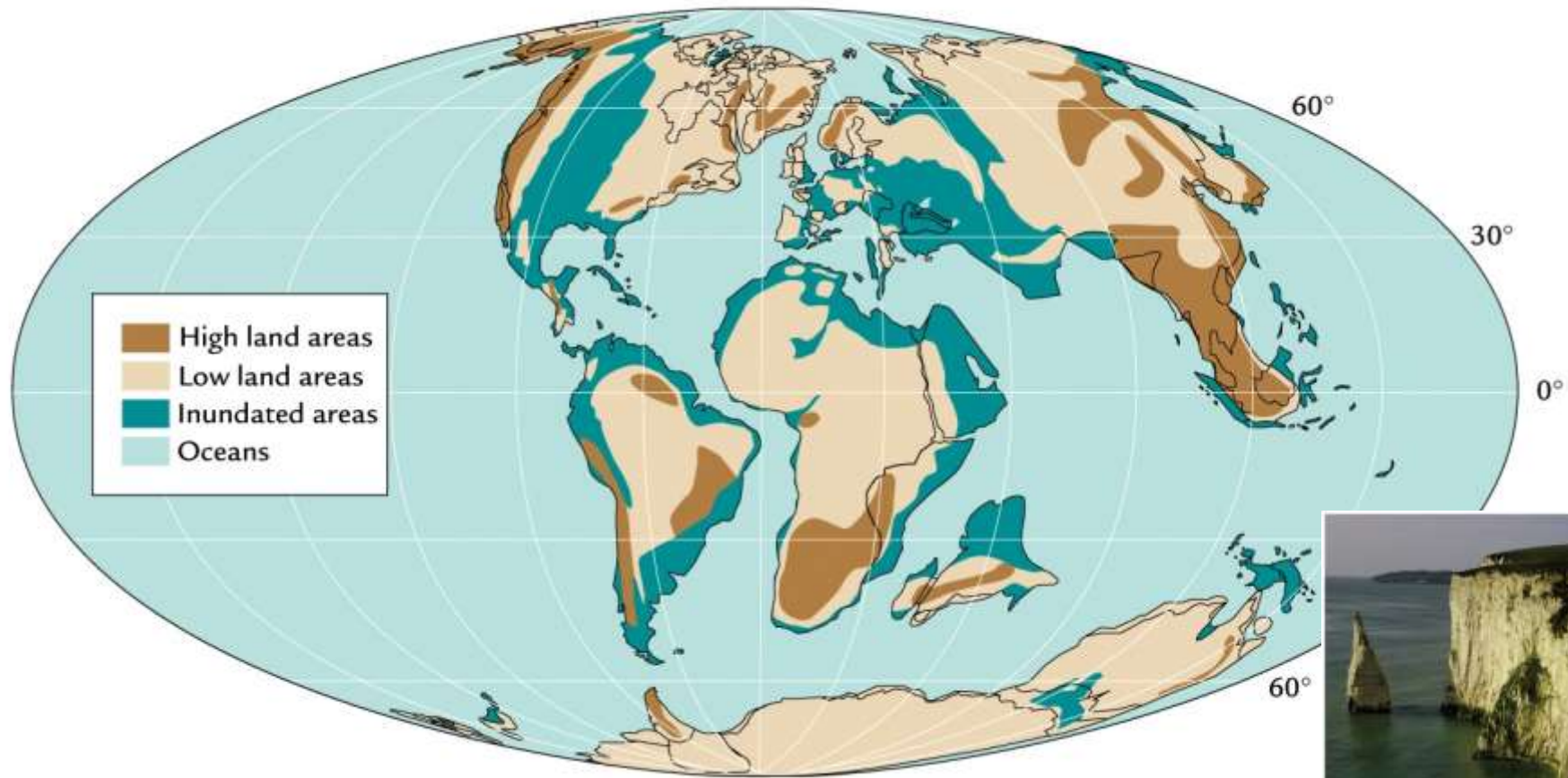
Greenhouse climates (ch. 12.3.3)



- fossil evidence for reptiles, tropical plants in the Arctic
- atmospheric CO₂ some 3-5x PAL
- abundant volcanism

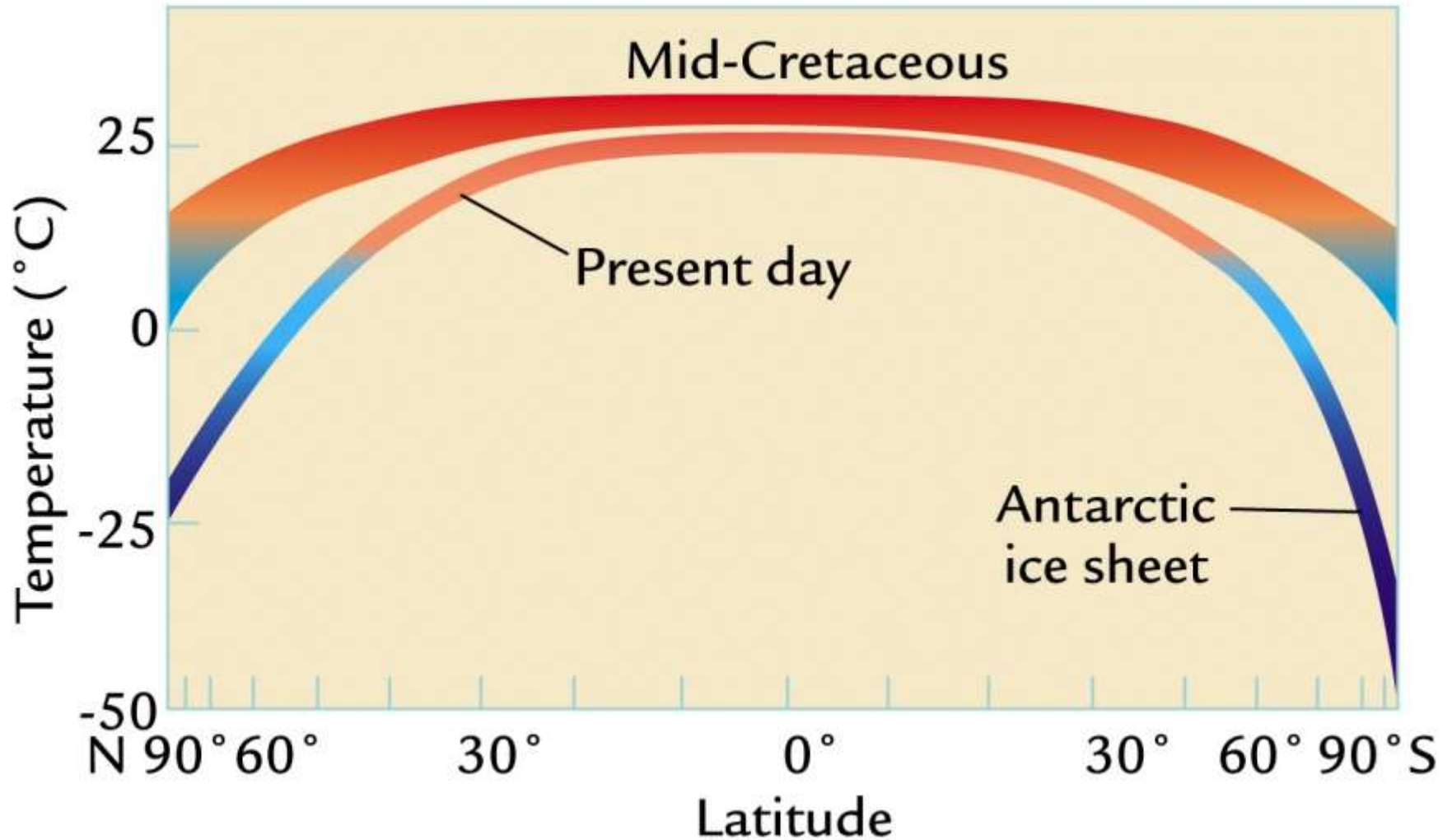


The world in the Cretaceous period (100 Mio years ago)

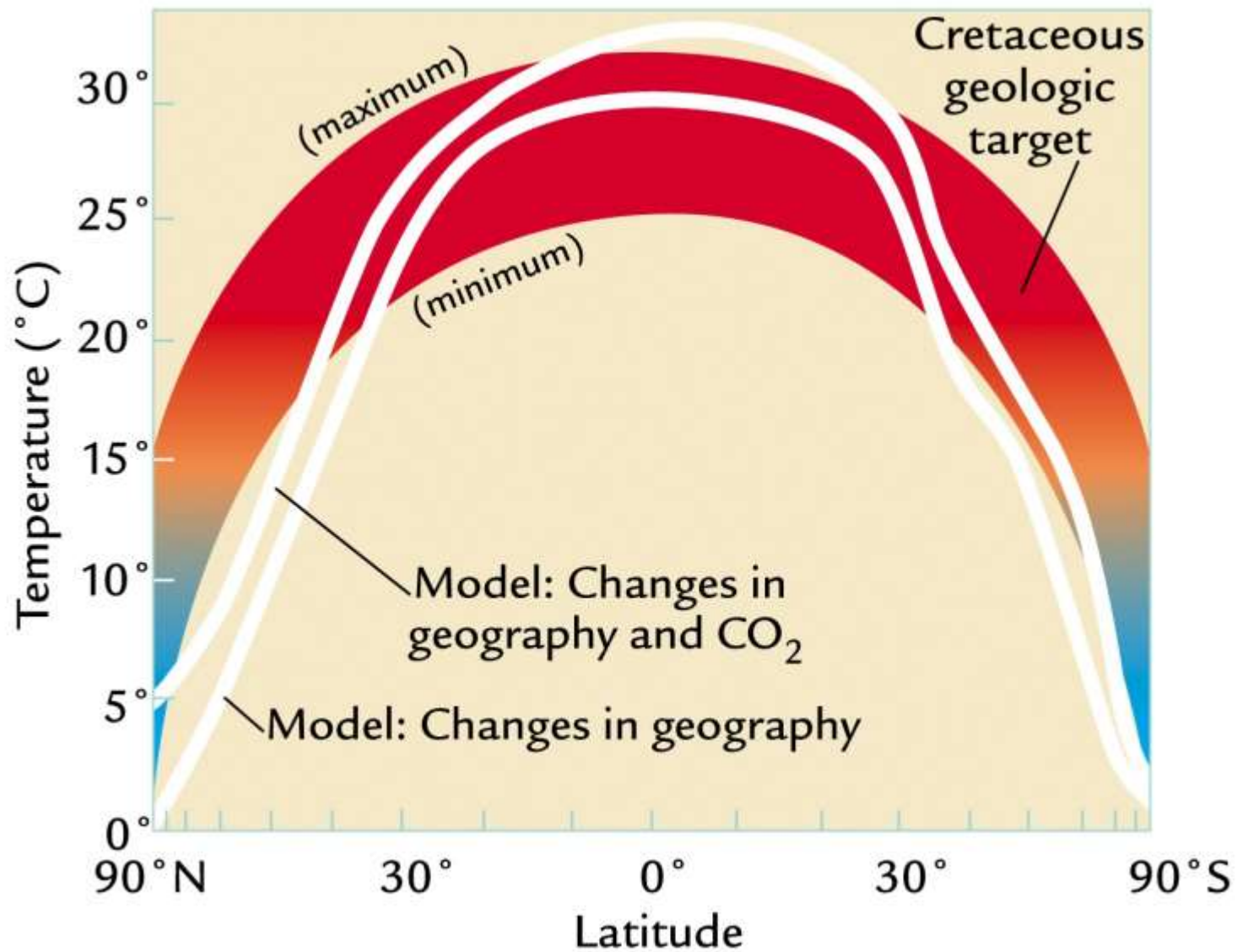


Pangean supercontinent broke apart in smaller continents which were flooded by shallow seas

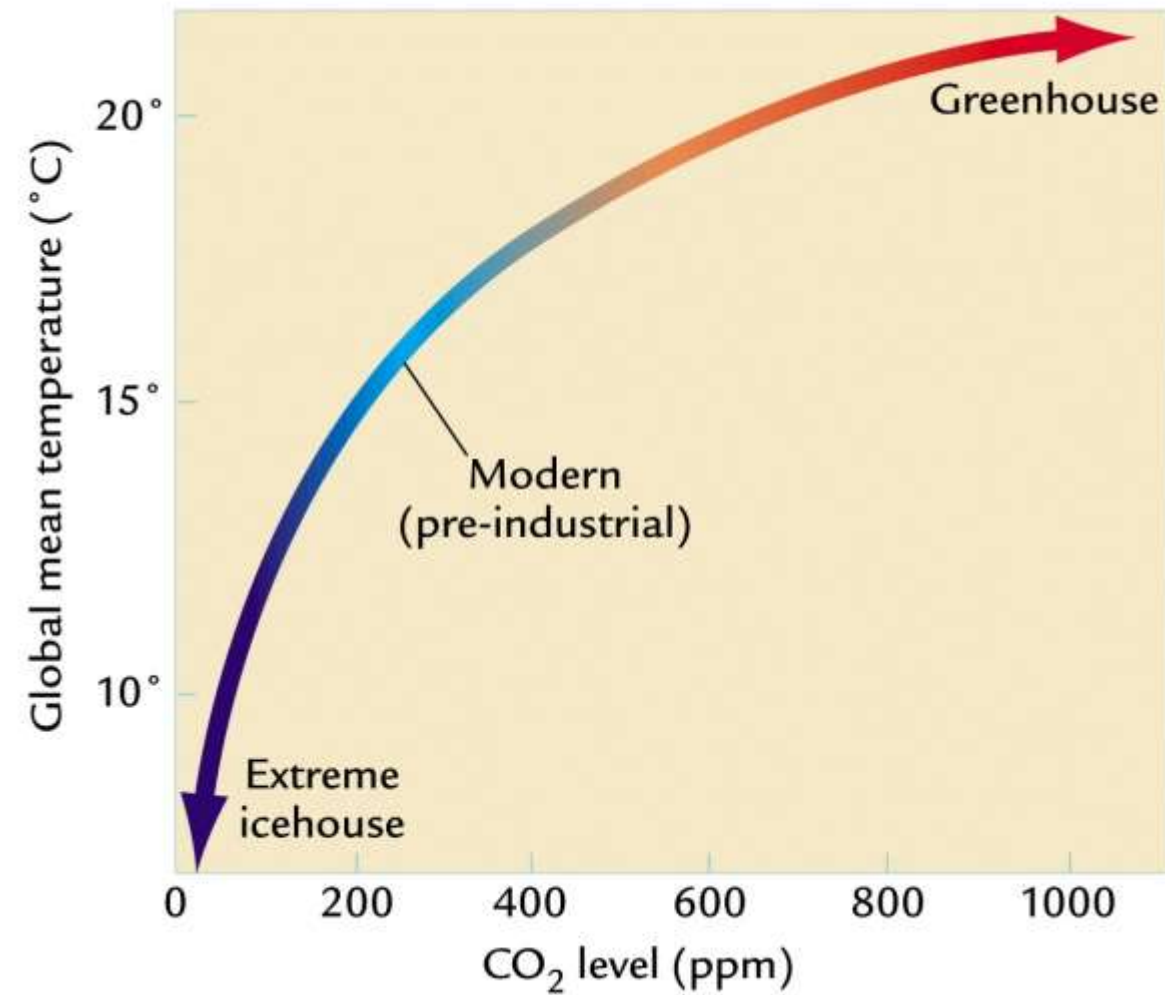
Cretaceous Greenhouse climate



Palaeoclimate scientist gathered geological data (fauna, flora, and geochemical) to compile an estimate of temperature. Temperature was warmer than present day at all latitudes, in particular in the high latitudes.



Climate models are matched against the palaeotemperature data inferred from geological data, One model with changes in geography and another model with changes in geography plus palaeoatmos. CO₂ reproduce some aspect of the palaeoclimate data but none of them can reproduce the warmth at high latitudes.



Greenhouse world (>800):
Large changes in CO₂ have little effect on temperature (CO₂ saturation effect)

Icehouse world (<400):
Small changes in CO₂ have a great effect on temperature because of the positive feedback of lower temperature on snow and seas ice extension and related changes in albedo.

Climate models (GCM) run sensitivity test of the effects of elevated CO₂ on global temperature show greater warmth for higher CO₂ levels, but the rise is not a linear relationship.

Unresolved problems of the Cretaceous greenhouse climate

- Possible causes:
 - High pCO₂ (3-5x present day CO₂ level)
 - Enhanced oceanic heat transport poleward
 - Oceanic deep water was warmer and saltier causing convection in the low latitudes (tropics)
- Presence of reptiles and tropical plants indicates warm frost free winters
- climate models simulate freezing conditions in the continental interior

Cold Climates (12.3.4.)

Glaciers were during ice ages **not** restricted to high latitudes/altitudes



Quaternary ice age

- Quaternary is characterized by ice ages which show a prominent cycle between cold “glacial stages” and warm “interglacial stages”.
- The Quaternary starts with the establishment of the N-Atlantic ice shield at ~2.1 Mio years ago.
- The glacial-interglacial changes appear to occur periodically.
- What causes this periodicity?

Several lines of evidence for ice ages

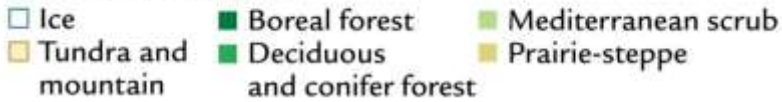
- Landscape formed by glaciers
 - U form valleys
- Occurrence of ice transported rocks (Erratics)
- Surface structures on bedrocks parallel striations
- Vegetation changes



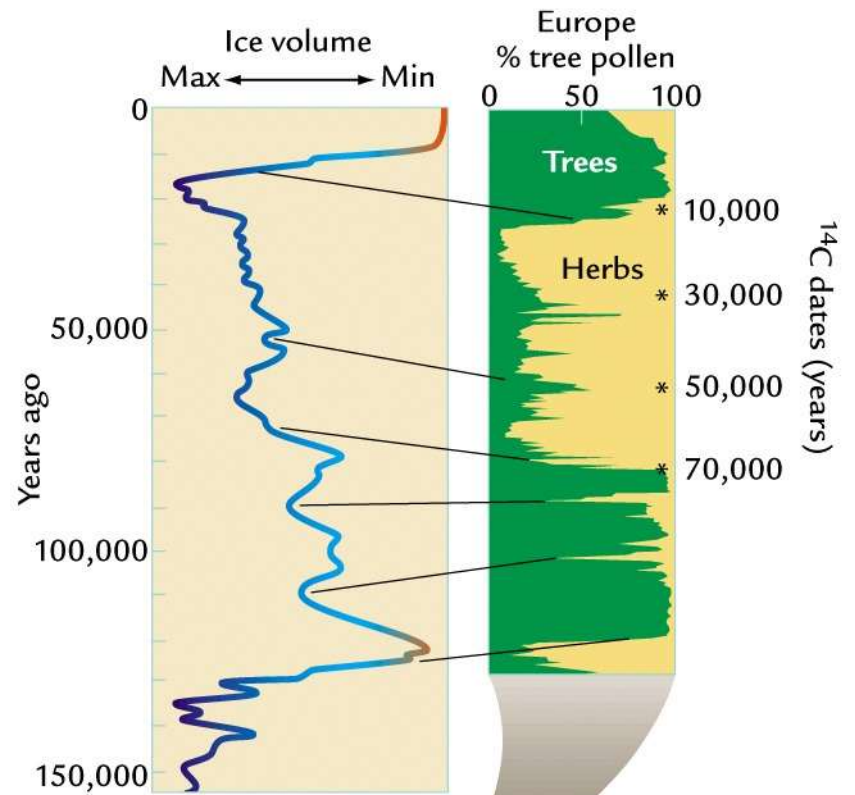
Natural vegetation in Europe:



A Modern vegetation

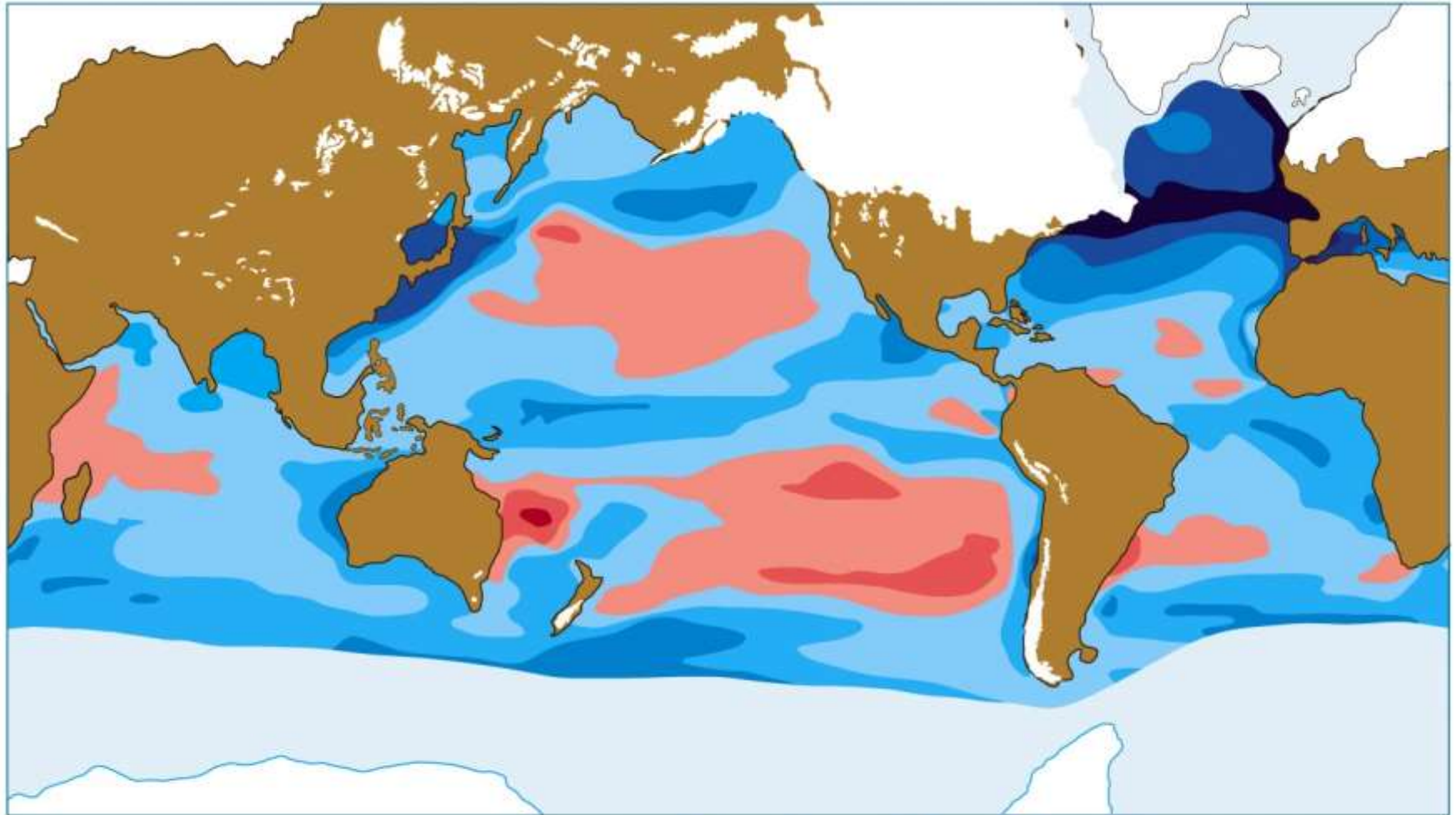


B Glacial vegetation



Pollen diagram indicating vegetation changes during Glacial – Interglacial climate cycle

CLIMAP reconstruction of glacial maximum ocean temperatures

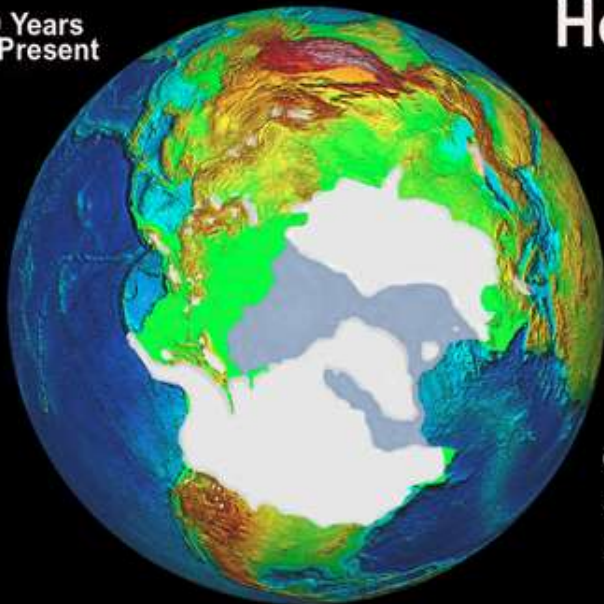


B August ocean temperature change ($^{\circ}\text{C}$)

Cooling	> 8	6 - 8	4 - 6	2 - 4	0 - 2
Warming	0 - 2	> 2			

Map showing the changes in sea surface temperature between LGM and today

18,000 Years
Before Present



Northern Hemisphere

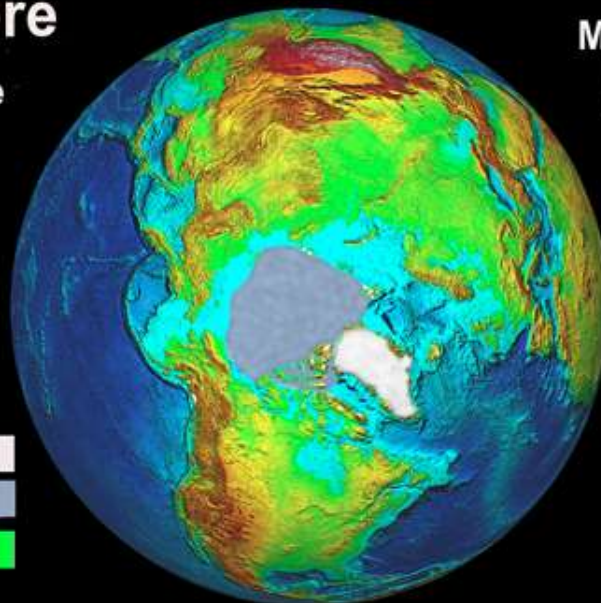
Ice Coverage

Legend



Modern Day

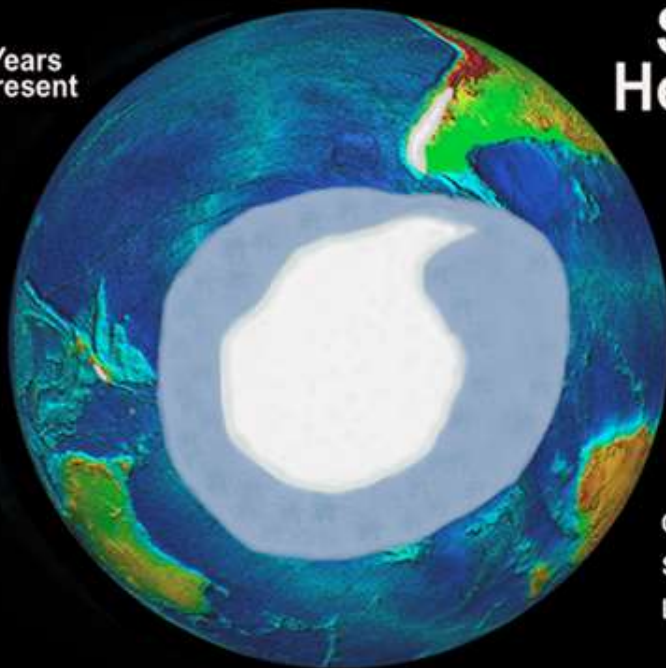
(August)



Note: Modern sea ice coverage represents summer months.



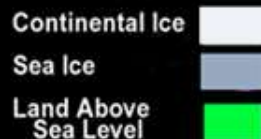
18,000 Years
Before Present



Southern Hemisphere

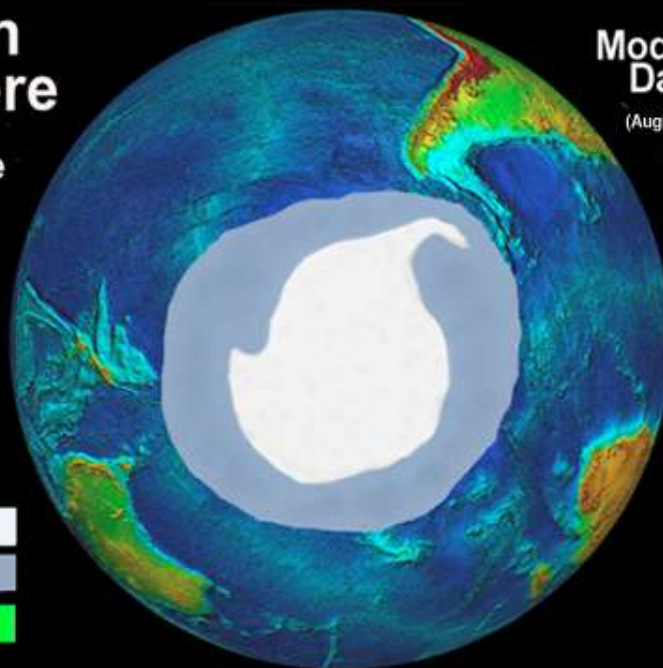
Ice Coverage

Legend

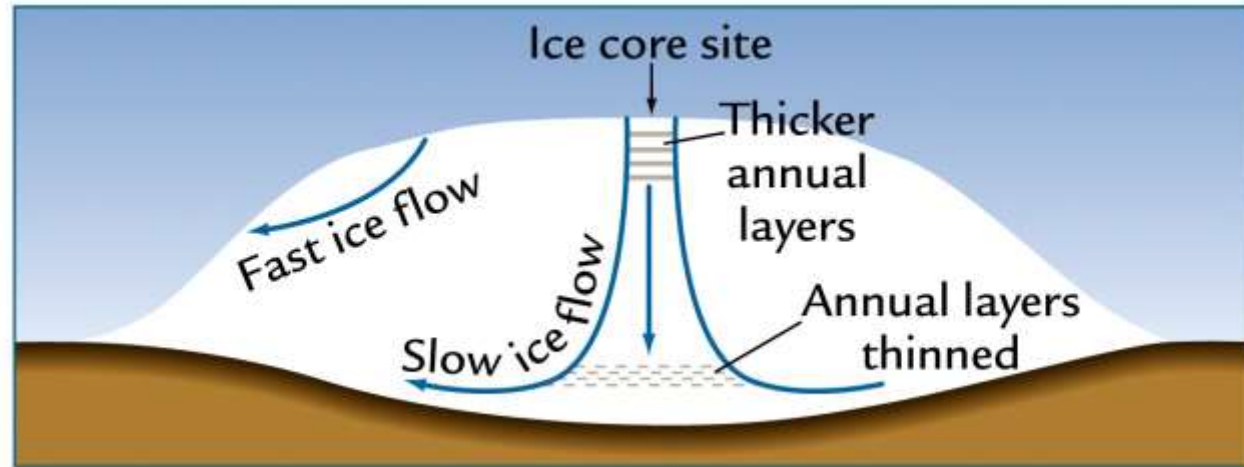


Modern Day

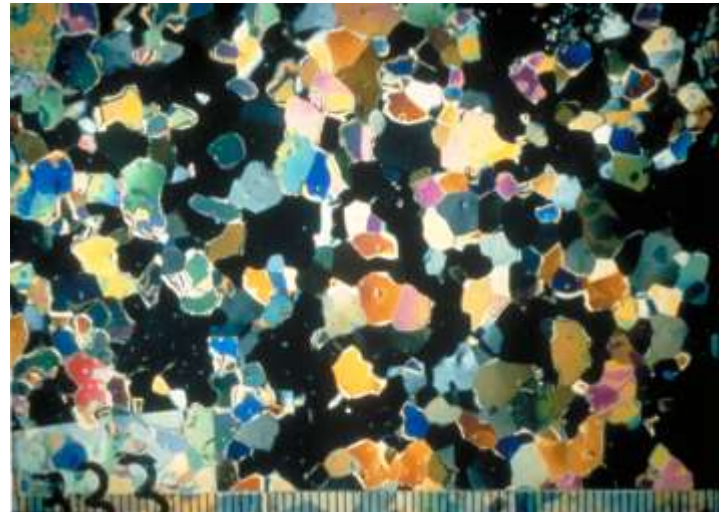
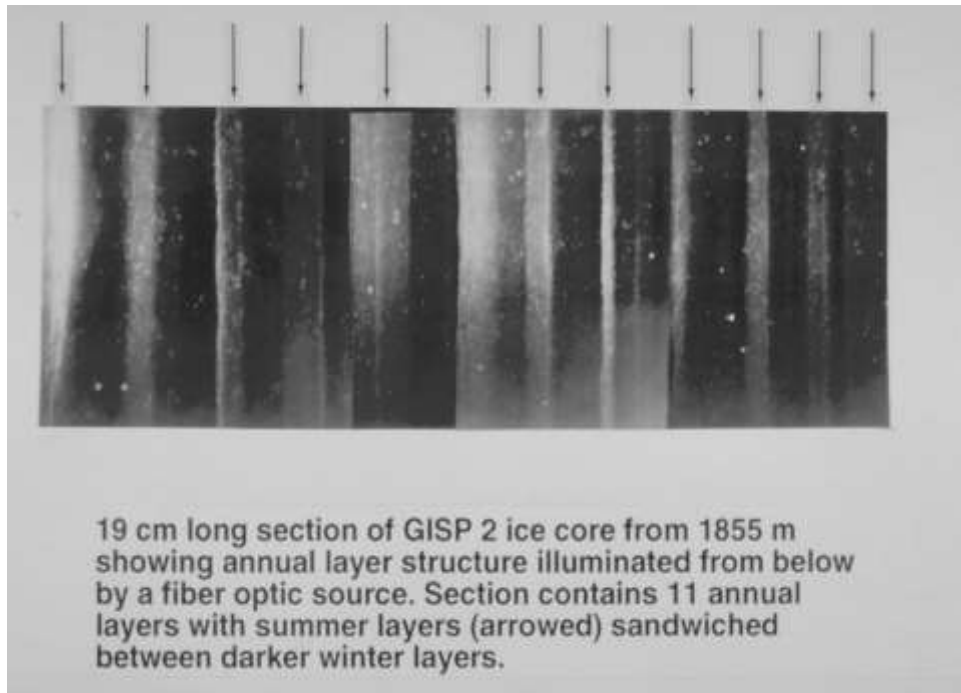
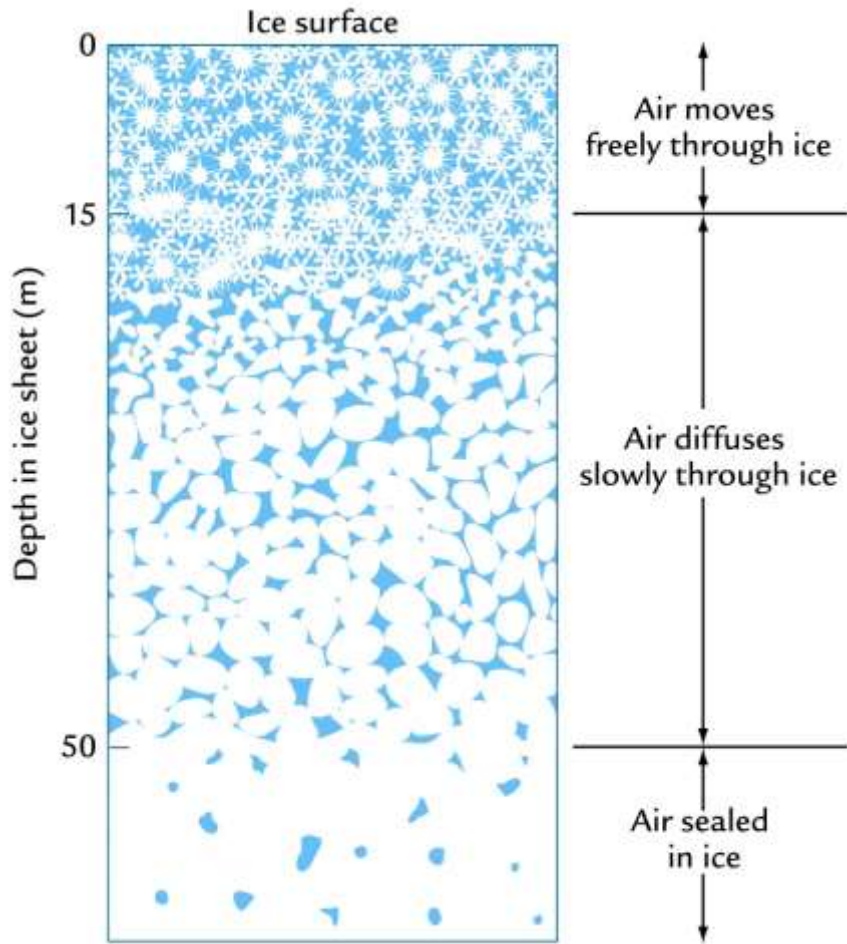
(August)



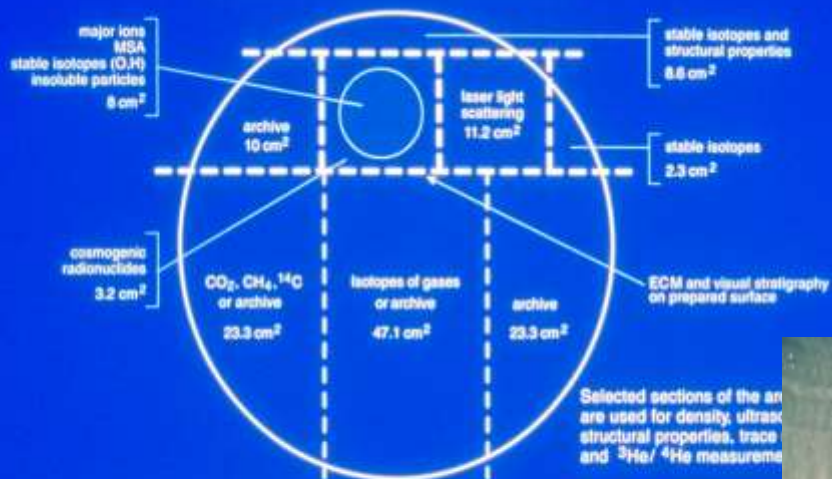
Greenland ice sheet as palaeoclimate archives







GISP2 Ice Core Cross Section

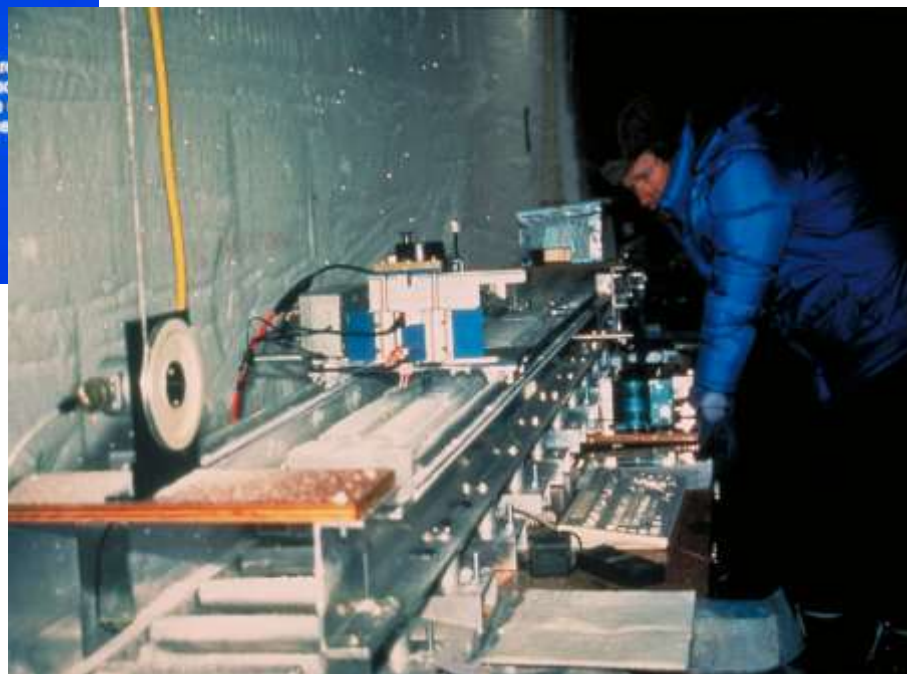


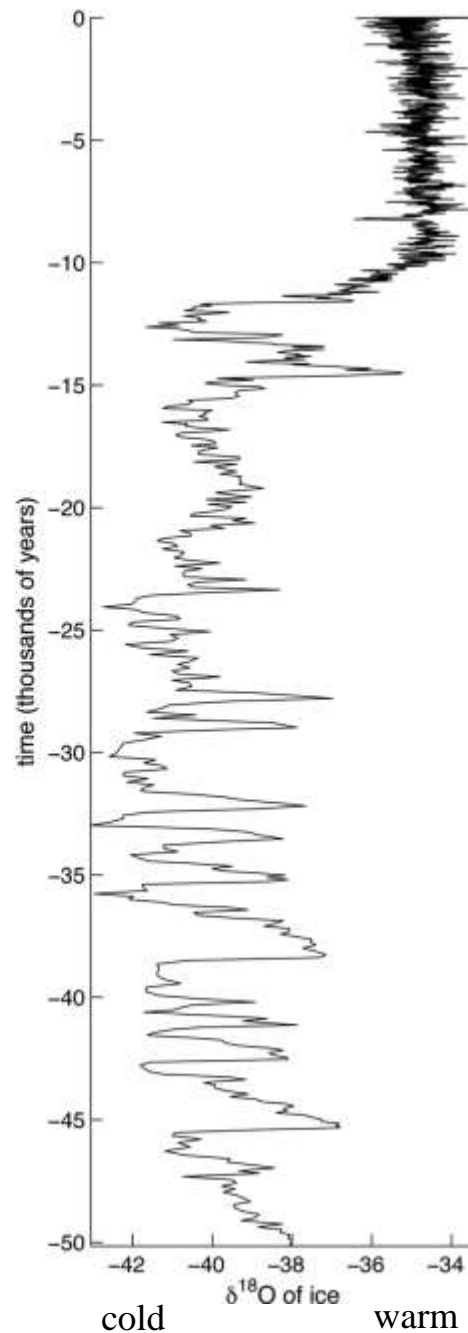
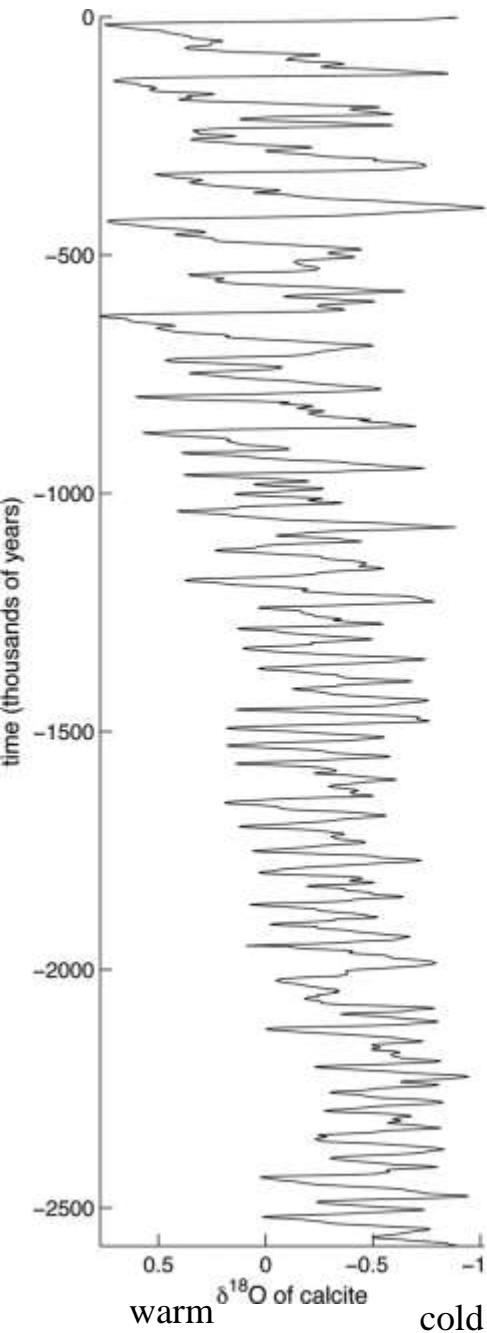
Full Core Cross Section Area = 137 cm² Diameter = 13.2 cm

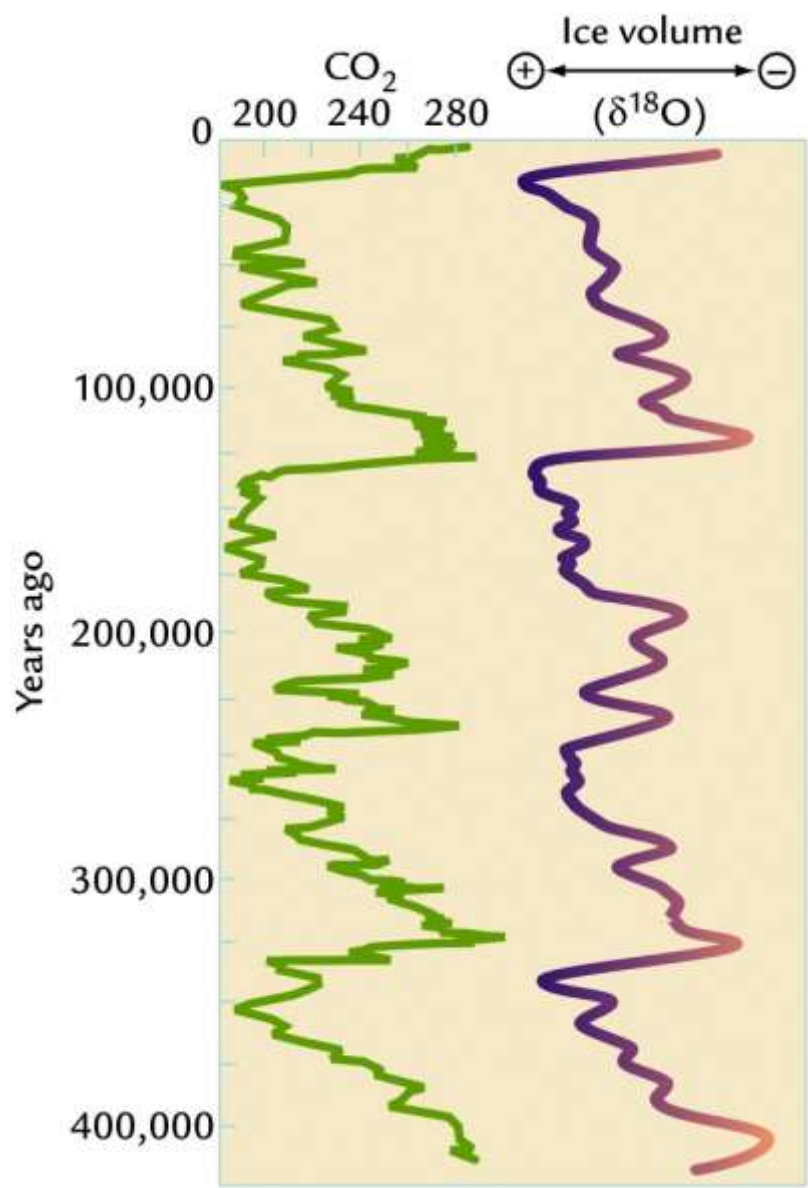
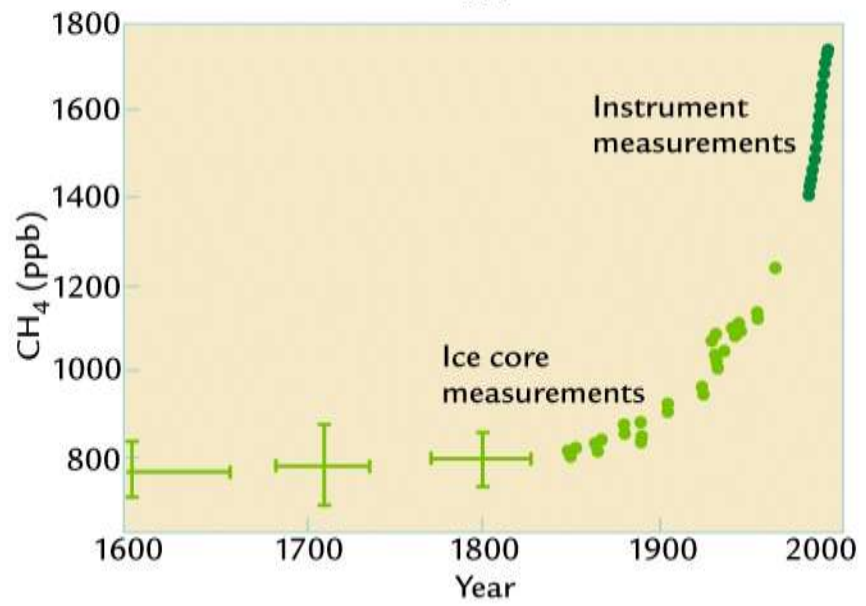
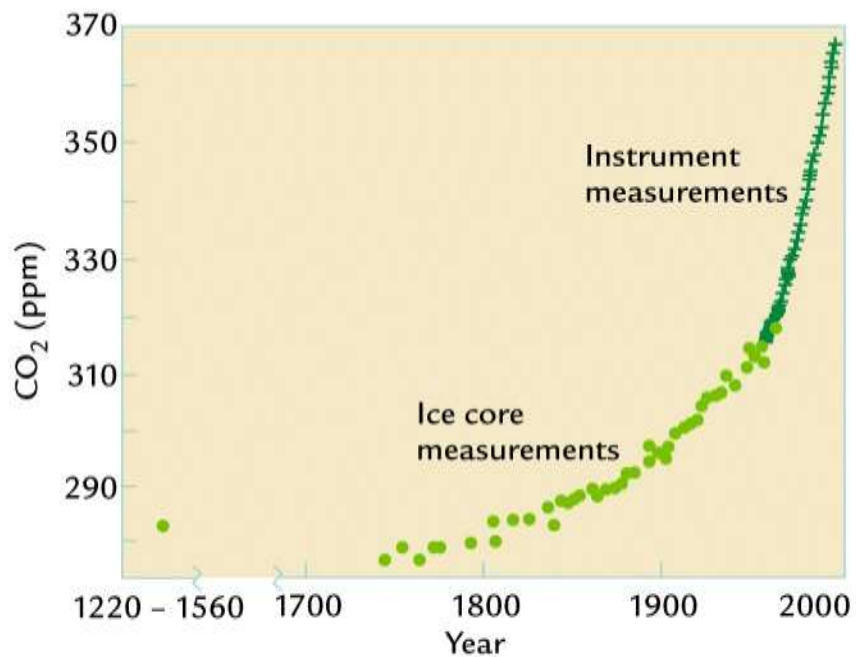
Heavy dashed lines indicate saw cuts made on each piece of core.

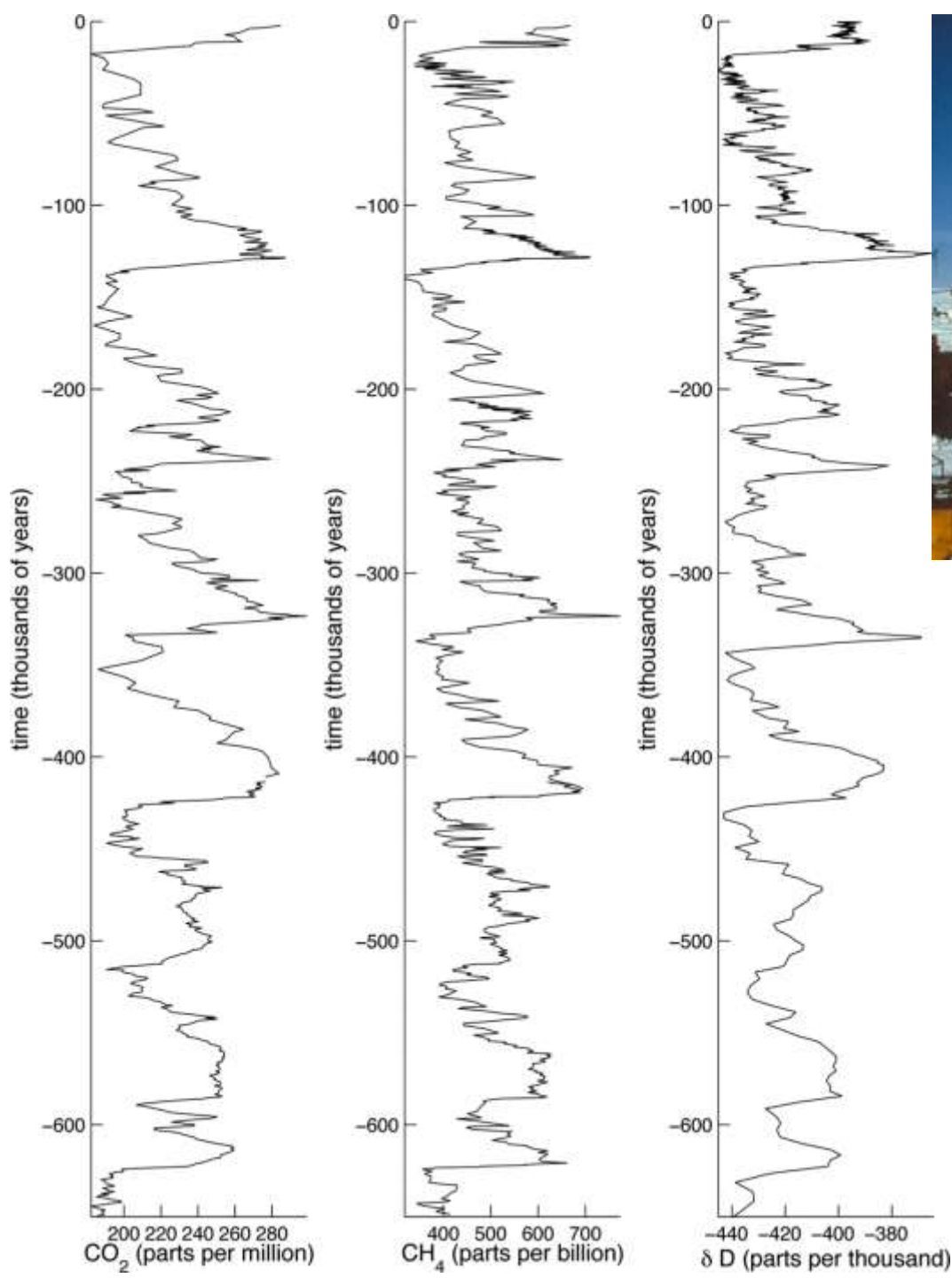
Light dashed lines indicate saw cuts made only at depths selected for sample.

Labels indicate the area of the core used for each of the primary GISP2 analyses.









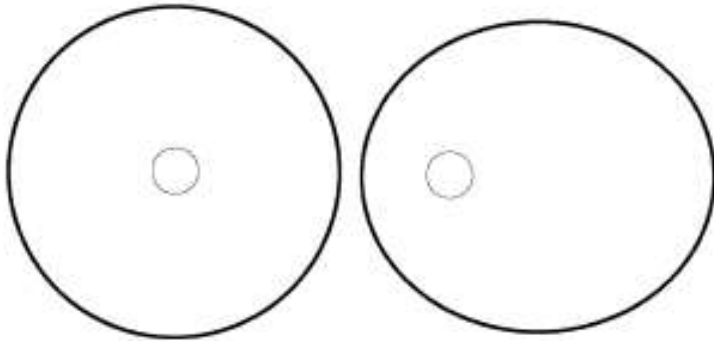
Ice-core records of atmospheric carbon dioxide (left) and methane (middle) concentrations obtained from bubbles trapped in Antarctic ice. Values to 400 k y ago are from Vostok), whereas earlier values are from EPICA Dome C. (right) δD concentrations from EPICA Dome C measured in the ice, as opposed to the bubbles, are indicative of local air temperature variations, similar to $\delta^{18}O$ of ice measurements.

Milankovitch theory (1941)

- Glaciations are a function of variations in the Earth's orbital parameters and the resulting changes in the distribution of the solar radiation.
- The availability of continuous palaeoclimatic records from the ocean floor makes testing of this hypothesis possible.

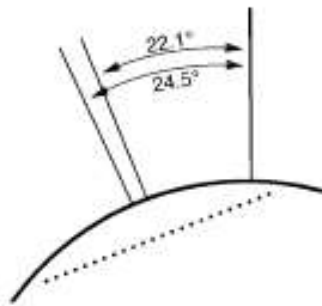


(a) Eccentricity



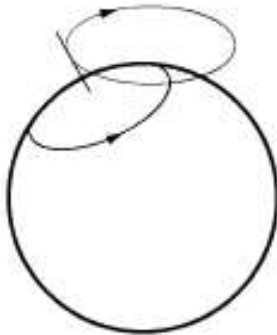
(a) The eccentricity of the Earth's orbit varies on a 100k y & 400k y timescale from (almost) zero, a circle, to 0.07, a very slight ellipse. The ellipse shown on the right has an eccentricity of 0.5, vastly greater than that of Earth's path around the Sun.

(b) Obliquity

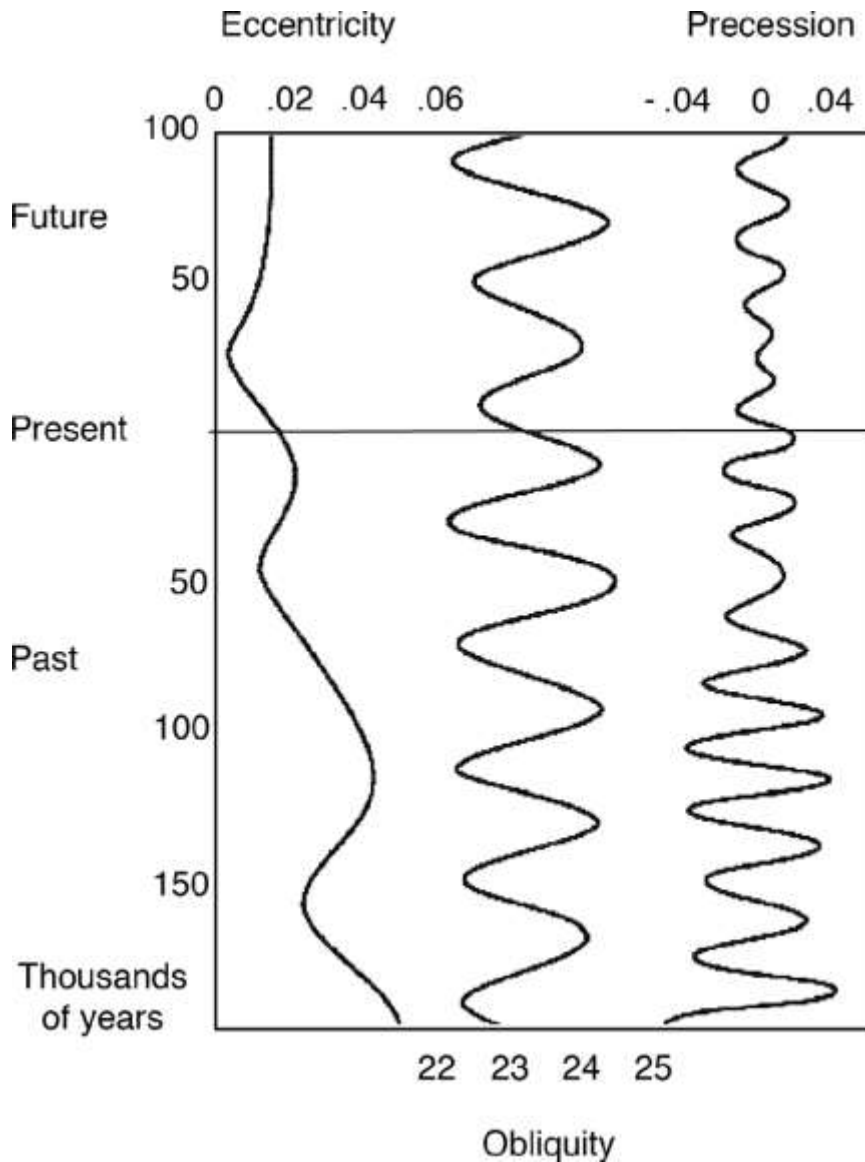


(b) The change in the tilt of the Earth's spin axis—the obliquity—varies between 22.1° and 24.5° on a timescale of 41k ys. The tilt of the Earth is currently 23.5° .

(c) Precession



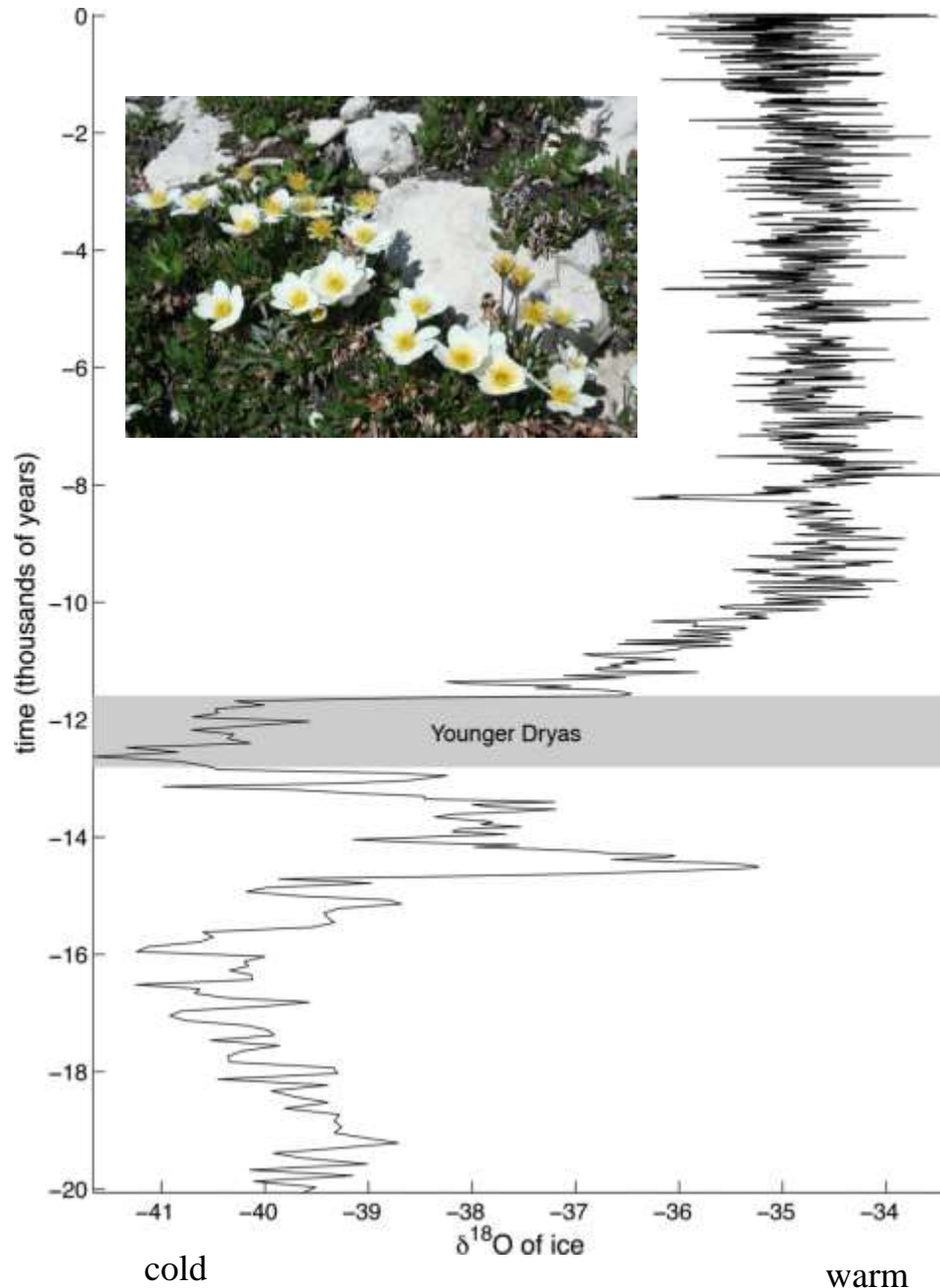
(c) The direction of the Earth's spin vector precesses with a period of 23k y.



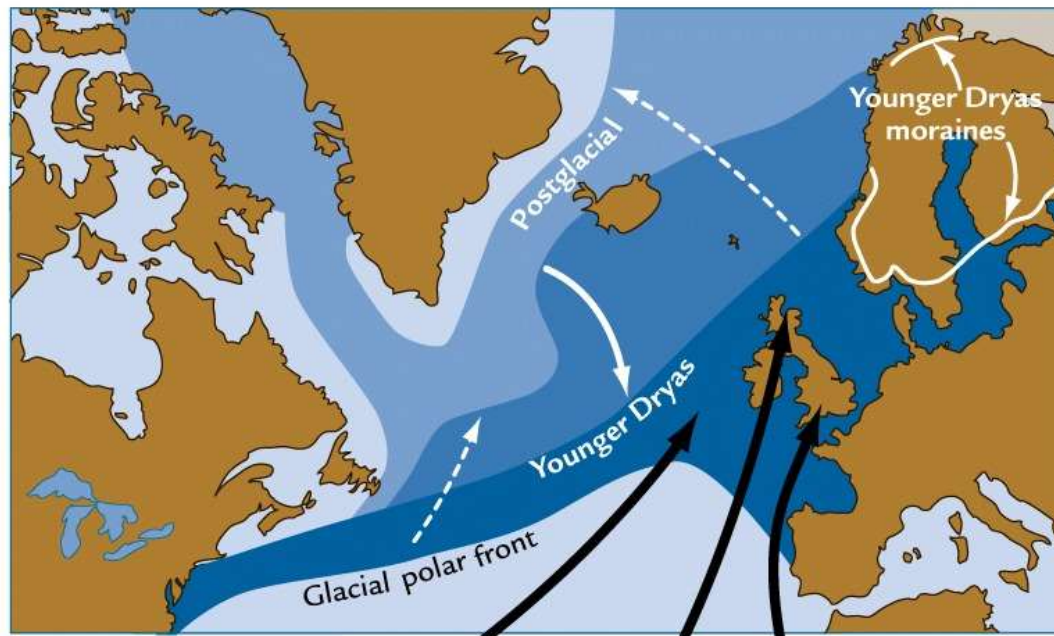
Variations in eccentricity, precession, and obliquity over 300k y, starting 200k y in the past, through the present day and 100k y in to the future. From Berger and Loutre, (1992).

Abrupt Climate Change





The transition from the Last Glacial Maximum to the relatively ice-free conditions of the Holocene took roughly ten thousand years. In certain regions this transition was punctuated by rapid climate variations having timescales of decades to millennia. Shown is the GISP2 ice-core (Grootes and Stuiver, 1997) with shading indicating the return to glacial-like conditions known as the **Younger Dryas**. The Younger Dryas is a prominent feature of many North Atlantic and European climate records and its presence can be detected in climate records across much of the Northern Hemisphere.

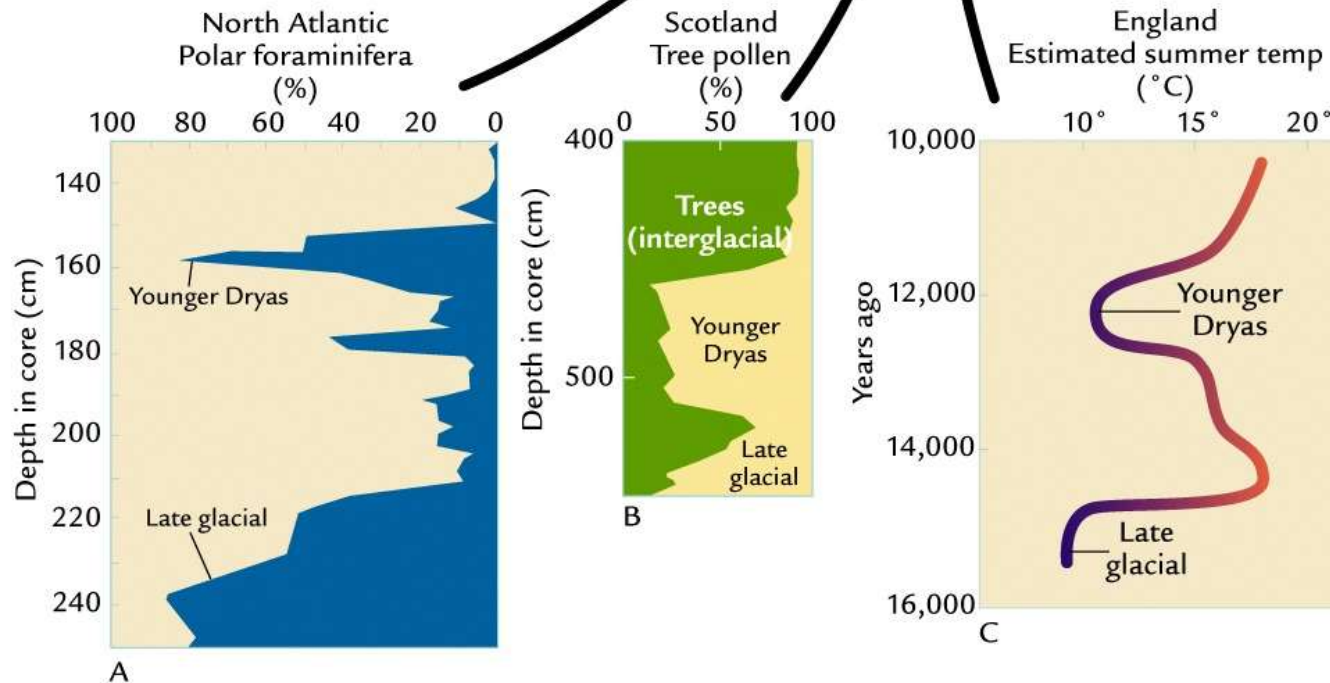


Evidence of a cold episode that interrupted the general deglaciation warming:

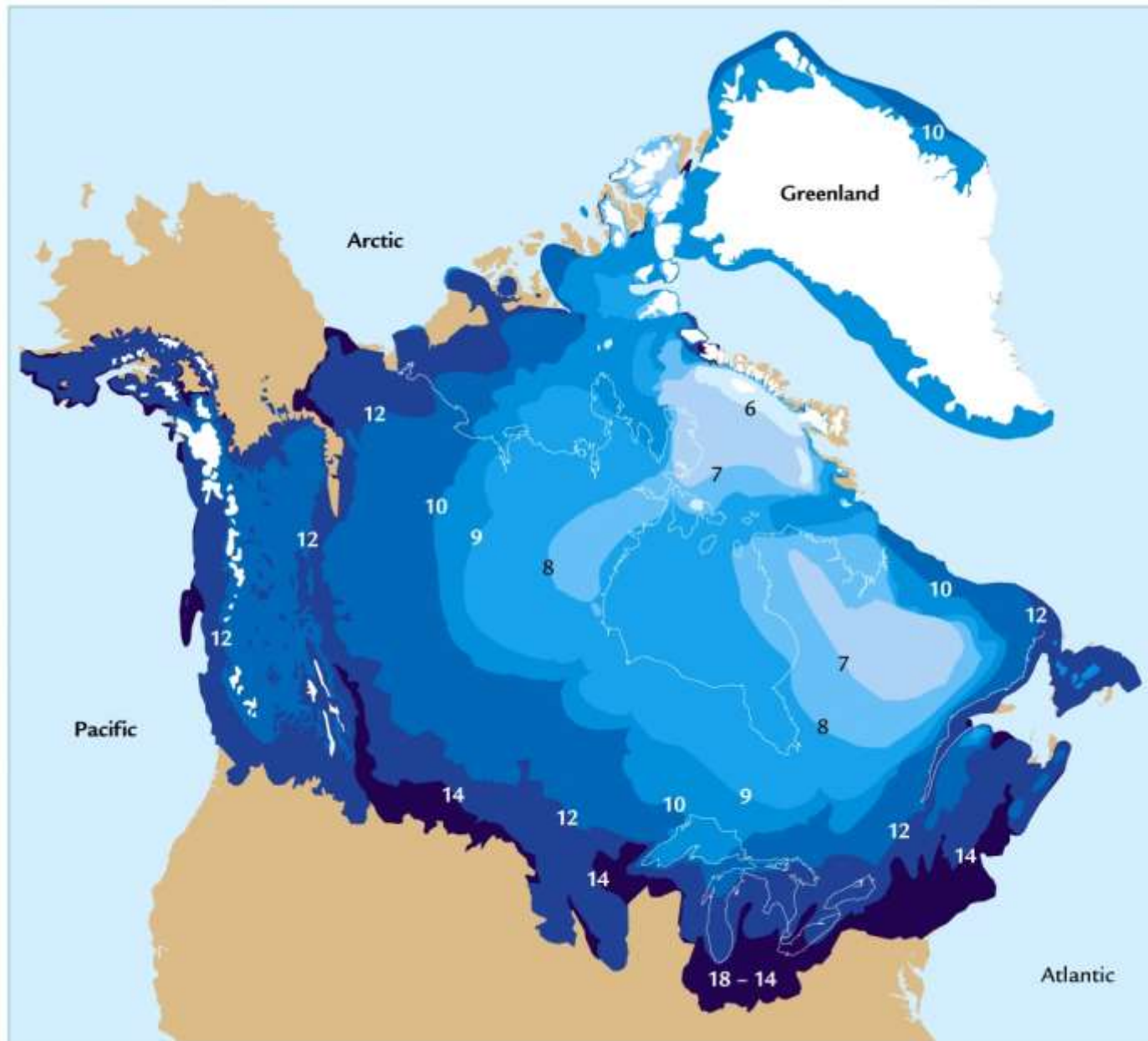
(A) Southward return of cold polar water in the N-Atlantic

(B) Reversal toward Arctic vegetation in Europe (Dryas)

(c) cooler continental temperatures indicated by fossil insects

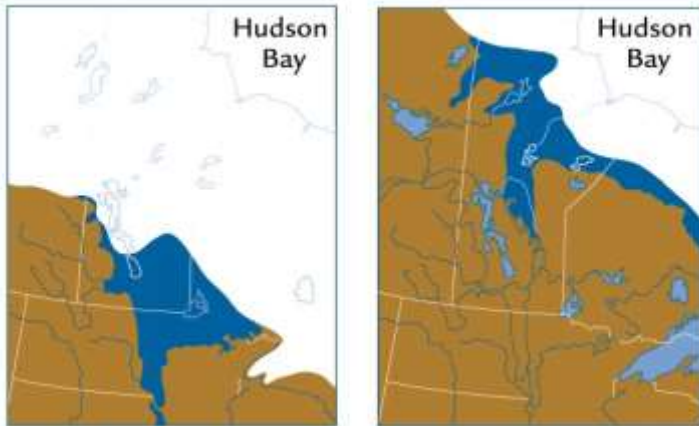


Retreat of the N-American ice sheet during deglaciation





A Total area covered by deglacial lakes



B Lakes during deglaciation

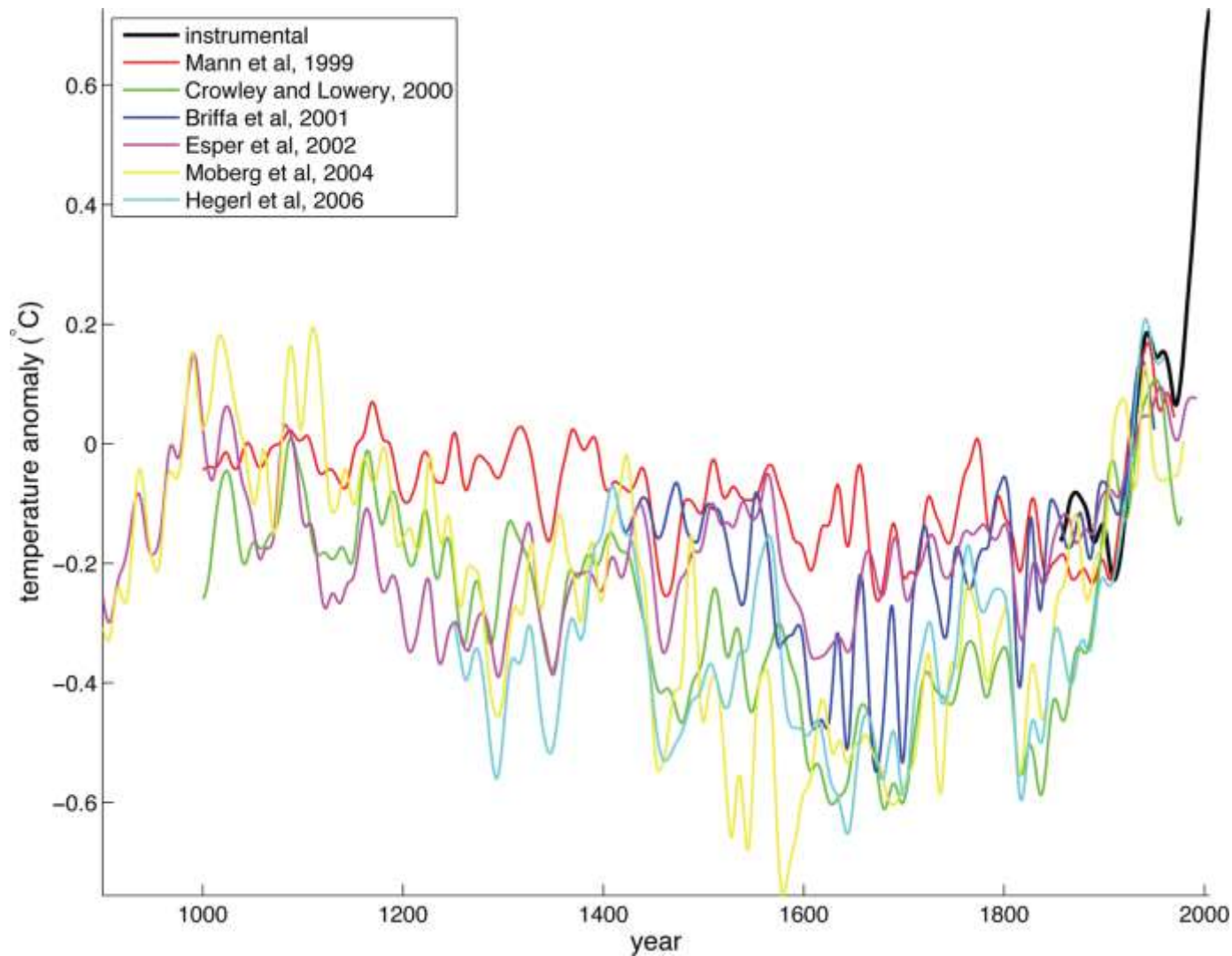
Formation of proglacial lakes in morphological depressions

Routes of meltwater flow:



During the deglaciation the main water flow changed from southward to the Gulf of Mexico to the north into the Arctic Ocean late in the deglaciation





The spread between the reconstructions indicates a lower-bound on the uncertainty in these estimates. All records have been smoothed using a 20-year running average and adjusted to have zero-mean between 1900 and 1960.

Estimates of Northern Hemisphere surface air temperature during the last 1100 years. Temperatures obtained from instruments (Jones and Moberg, 2003) are shown in black. Colored curves indicate different proxy reconstructions of temperature. Proxies, such as tree rings, ice cores, and corals, are necessary for estimating temperature before widespread instrumental coverage, before about 1850.