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1 **Onset and demise of coral reefs, relationship with regional ocean circulation**  
2 **on the Wyville Thomson Ridge**

3

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17

18 **Abstract** : Results from a vibrocore collected on the northern edge of the Scottish  
19 continental shelf at around 300 m water depth, on the Wyville Thomson Ridge,  
20 enable to reconstruct the history of cold water coral (CWC) reef growth and  
21 demise during the Holocene period. We report on significant age differences  
22 between U/Th and <sup>14</sup>C dates obtained on pristine well-preserved CWC (*Lophelia*

23 *pertusa*), which may reflect an diagenetic process that standard quality tests have  
24 failed to highlight. Additional <sup>14</sup>C dates derived from bivalve fragments (*Venus*  
25 sp.) and foraminifera (*Cibicides refulgens*) samples show a gradual ageing with  
26 core depth but with significant age inversions in the lower section of the sediment  
27 core, which we consider reflects sedimentary mixing. We thus chose to derive an  
28 independent age model using planktonic foraminifera *Globigerina bulloides*  
29 stable isotope profiles. The vibrocore record is divided into 3 phases: 1- Mixed  
30 sediment deposits of glacial age corresponding to the base of the core with ages  
31 older than 13 cal ka BP, 2- The end of the deglacial/early Holocene between 13-  
32 9 cal ka BP and 3- Finally, the Holocene period from around 9 cal ka BP with  
33 abundant *Lophelia pertusa* fossils. Siliciclastic grain size and clay mineralogical  
34 composition show two significant shifts at around 13 and 9 cal ka BP indicating  
35 changes in sedimentary sources and transport associated with the dynamics and  
36 flow patterns of surface currents during the deglaciation and Holocene. Our  
37 results show that the onset of CWC reef growth on the Wyville Thomson Ridge  
38 occurred around 9 cal ka BP and was associated with a shift in flow patterns of  
39 surface currents in this area. This change of circulation patterns induced  
40 favourable sedimentological and hydrological conditions for corals to grow, and  
41 is associated with large scale modifications of North Atlantic circulation patterns  
42 at the end of the deglaciation.

43

44 Introduction

45

46 A number of environmental factors such as temperature, salinity, density, oxygen  
47 availability, carbonate chemistry, food and nutrients and current velocity appear  
48 to control coral reef growth in tropical shallow-water zooxanthellate coral reefs  
49 (e.g. Veron, 1993; Dullo et al., 2008). However, the specific factors that control  
50 growth and settlement of non-zooxanthellate cold water coral (CWC) reefs have  
51 yet to be fully understood (Dorschel et al., 2007; White, 2007). These ecosystems  
52 were more recently discovered along the NW European continental margin (Dons,  
53 1944; Le Danois, 1948; Teichert et al., 1958, Henriot et al., 1998). Over the past  
54 decades of exploration it has become clear that CWC have a world-wide  
55 distribution and *Lophelia pertusa* is one of the most common and widespread of  
56 the reef framework-forming cold-water corals (Roberts et al., 2006; 2009;  
57 Freiwald et al., 2004; 2017). These CWC ecosystems play a key role in marine  
58 biodiversity as they provide habitats for many other species. CWC ecosystems  
59 occur over a wide range of depth and within a specific range of temperature,  
60 salinity, density and physico-chemical conditions (Davies et al., 2008; Findlay et  
61 al., 2014; Robinson et al., 2014).

62

63 In the North-East Atlantic, CWC predominantly occur along the European  
64 continental margin, between ~100 and 1000 m water depth (Freiwald et al., 2004;  
65 2017; Frank et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2014; Dullo et al., 2008). Several  
66 environmental parameters are thought to be important for CWC reef growth in the

67 NE Atlantic. Seawater temperatures commonly range from 4 to 12°C, density is  
68 in the range of 27.35 to 27.65 kg m<sup>-3</sup> (Dullo et al., 2008), and near bottom flow  
69 dynamics are energetic (Frederiksen et al., 1992; Freiwald, 2002; Kenyon et al.,  
70 2003; Roberts et al., 2009; Masson et al., 2003; Findlay et al., 2014). Finally,  
71 modern distributions of CWC seem to be strongly related to the supply of organic  
72 matter (Davies et al., 2009) and bottom currents that permit coral larvae dispersal,  
73 maintain (food) particles in suspension and prevent corals from being smothered  
74 by sediment (Mienis et al., 2007, 2009; Somoza et al., 2014; Sanchez et al., 2014).

75

76 Due to their critical role in modern marine ecosystems and the potential to use  
77 these archives for paleoenvironmental studies (e.g. Robinson et al., 2014) a  
78 number of key papers have attempted to understand and reconstruct the growth  
79 history of CWC reefs and mounds. These studies mainly based on U-series dating  
80 of fossil coral fragments retrieved from carbonate mounds have permitted to  
81 establish the late-Quaternary spatial and temporal distribution of CWC in the  
82 North Atlantic (Lutringer, 2003; Dorschel et al., 2005; Frank et al., 2009; 2011;  
83 López Correa et al., 2012; Douarin et al., 2013; Victorero et al., 2016; Bonneau  
84 et al., 2018). A number of growth models of carbonate mounds and reefs have  
85 been proposed (Wilson et al., 1979; Kenyon et al., 2003; De Mol et al., 2005;  
86 Dorschel et al., 2005; Roberts et al., 2006; Rüggeberg et al., 2007; De Haas et al.,  
87 2009; Bonneau et al., 2018; Pirlet et al., 2011). In more detail, it has been  
88 demonstrated that interglacial climates were favourable for CWC growth and

89 carbonate mound development, while until present no CWC from glacial periods  
90 have been discovered between 50°N and 70°N in the North Atlantic (Schröder-  
91 Ritzau et al., 2005; Van der Land et al., 2014; Frank et al., 2009; 2011; Douarin  
92 et al., 2013; Bonneau et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2015) nor at 25°N in the Gulf of  
93 Mexico (Matos et al., 2018). On the contrary, at temperate latitudes between 20°N  
94 and 50°N in the NE Atlantic, glacial periods are associated with increased  
95 framework forming CWC reef growth. *Lophelia pertusa* reef growth is reported  
96 during glacial periods and cool events such as the Younger Dryas in the Gulf of  
97 Cádiz, Mediterranean Sea and off Mauritania (Wienberg et al., 2009; 2010;  
98 McCulloch et al., 2010; Eisele et al., 2011; Frank et al., 2011).

99  
100 Frank et al. (2011) has proposed that such glacial-interglacial changes in the  
101 distribution of CWC reefs in the North Atlantic could be linked to the North-South  
102 displacement of cold nutrient-rich intermediate waters and surface productivity  
103 driven by changes in the position of the polar front. However, other mechanisms  
104 could be involved in the emergence of this pattern, such as changes in the  
105 temperature and related pycnocline, which is associated with the development of  
106 nepheloid layers (Raddatz et al., 2014; Rüggeberg et al., 2016) or changes in  
107 detrital input (e.g. ice-rafted debris) (Pirlet et al., 2011; Thierens et al., 2012;  
108 Bonneau et al., 2018). The effect of the carbonate chemistry changes and pH and  
109 calcium carbonate saturation conditions of the ocean has been shown to have an  
110 effect on CWC growth (Hennige et al., 2015; Raddatz et al., 2016). More recently,

111 a compilation of U-series dating of CWC fragments collected in a restricted area  
112 of the SW Rockall Trough margin have shown that CWC growth was influenced  
113 by millennial-scale North Atlantic climate variability during the late Holocene  
114 with systematic lower CWC occurrence during cold events of the late Holocene  
115 (Bonneau et al., 2018). A similar study in Mingulay CWC reef also showed that  
116 corals were sensitive to periods of rapid climate change (Douarin et al., 2015;  
117 Dubois-Dauphin et al., 2019).

118

119 In this paper, we investigate a sedimentary record that provides new evidence for  
120 the environmental parameters that control the settlement of CWC reefs on the  
121 northern margin of the British continental shelf at the end of the last deglaciation.  
122 A vibrocore was collected on the continental margin North of Scotland at 282 m  
123 water depth. We obtained numerous U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates on *Lophelia pertusa* (12  
124 of which are paired), and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates on bivalves (*Venus casima* and other *Venus*  
125 sp.) and foraminifera (*Cibicides refulgens*). We also derived a stable isotope  
126 profile from planktonic species *Globigerina bulloides*. Clay mineralogical  
127 composition and laser grain-size distribution were measured in order to relate  
128 changes in sediment sources and dynamic of transport with the appearance of the  
129 CWC reef at this location.

130

131 2. Material and Methods

132

## 133 2.1 Sediment core location

134

135 The British Geological Survey (BGS) vibrocore +59-07/293VE was retrieved  
136 from the UK continental shelf, at the junction with the Wyville Thomson Ridge  
137 and the West Shetland shelf / Hebridean shelf (59°43.40N; 06°28.90W, 282 m  
138 water depth) during a regional mapping survey on board the MV British  
139 Enterprise Four (Long et al., 1999; (Figure 1)). Initial observations of CWC  
140 presence at the study site were obtained in the 19th century (e.g. Wyville-  
141 Thomson, 1874). More recently the area was surveyed and the distribution of  
142 CWC mapped (Long et al., 1999). Results from this survey showed the presence  
143 of living reefs of *Lophelia pertusa* down to a maximum water depth of 500 m with  
144 a maximum presence of living reefs centred between 300-400 m (Roberts et al.,  
145 2003; Long et al., 1999), but only dead CWC were observed at the study site.  
146 Processes governing sedimentation in this area have been studied and show  
147 complex interactions between bathymetry and bottom-water currents (Howe et  
148 al., 2002).

149

150 The total recovery of vibrocore +59-07/293VE was 495 cm. Prior to sub-  
151 sampling, the core was cut frozen with a diamond saw, in order to keep the internal  
152 sedimentary structure intact. The top 300 cm of the core presented extremely  
153 abundant fragments of *L. pertusa*, up to 9 cm length. A one meter section of the  
154 core, between 61.5 to 161 cm, is highly disturbed with only small < 1 cm, highly

155 fragmented and eroded *L. pertusa* samples. The bottom section, from 300-495 cm,  
156 presents no coral fragments. The biogenic fraction is composed of diverse  
157 bivalves, benthic and planktonic foraminifera and numerous well-rounded  
158 glaciomarine rock fragments. The coral-rich section of the core was sampled at  
159 10 cm intervals, documenting the position and state of preservation of each coral  
160 fragment. The bottom 195 cm of the core were sampled at 5 cm intervals. Clay  
161 mineralogical analyses were performed on clay-sized fraction and laser grain-size  
162 analyses were conducted after removal of carbonate and organic matter. Stable  
163 isotopes ( $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ) of *Globigerina bulloides* were measured on sieved sediment  
164 samples. U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  analyses were done on selected fragments of corals  
165 sampled at specific depths down core.

166

## 167 2.2. Hydrological setting

168

169 The site investigated is located on the path of the North Atlantic Current (NAC)  
170 (Figure 1). As the NAC flows northwards it mixes with the European Shelf Edge  
171 Current (SEC) (Marsh et al., 2017; Inall et al., 2009; McCartney and Mauritzen,  
172 2001). The SEC forms a northward-flowing boundary current centered at 200 m  
173 depth that brings warm and saline upper water with Eastern North Atlantic Central  
174 Water (ENACW) characteristics along the European margin to the Faroe-  
175 Shetland Channel (Holliday et al., 2000; White and Bowyer, 1997; Hill and  
176 Mitchelson-Jacob, 1992; Ellett et al., 1986; Pollard et al., 2004) (Figure 1). In

177 addition, the Scottish Coastal Current (SCC), which flows on the shelf margin,  
178 mixes with SEC potentially indirectly affecting flow patterns at our study site  
179 (Inall et al., 2009; Ellet et al. 1986, 1979). The Scottish Coastal Current (SCC)  
180 brings cooler and fresher waters from the Irish and Clyde Seas (Ellett and  
181 Edwards, 1983). In the deeper section of this channel colder waters flow: Arctic  
182 Intermediate Waters (AIW) and Norwegian Sea Arctic Intermediate Waters  
183 (NSAIW), which appear to control the lowest depth habitat of *L. pertusa* in this  
184 area (Roberts et al., 2003).

185

### 186 2.3 Sampling for U/Th and <sup>14</sup>C dates

187

188 In total, 43 downcore pristine fossils of *L. pertusa* were selected for U/Th dating  
189 (Table 1). A 3-4 g piece of each coral fragment was ultrasonically cleaned in  
190 MilliQ water 3 times, as done in (Douarin et al., 2013), to avoid contamination  
191 from sediment and surface deposit. Inner and outer surfaces of CWC samples  
192 were carefully cleaned using a small diamond blade to avoid contamination from  
193 iron and manganese oxides/hydroxides and surface sample re-crystallisation of  
194 aragonite into calcite. The coral fragments were then sub-sampled for X-ray  
195 diffraction (XRD) analysis for mineralogical analysis (aragonite content). The  
196 XRD analysis was performed at GEOPS and confirmed that the cleaned corals  
197 were made of 100% aragonite. Pristine coral samples were dated by <sup>14</sup>C and U-

198 series methods. The amount of material for each coral was larger than required to  
199 account for potential duplicates or other analytic work.

200

#### 201 2.4. AMS $^{14}\text{C}$ dates

202

203 Coral fragments are only present from the core top to 300 cm and thereafter  
204 bivalves and foraminifera were used for  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates. A total of 26 radiocarbon  
205 Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) ages were obtained on a range of  
206 material : 17 CWC, 3 marine bivalve fragments, 6 foraminifera *C. refulgens*  
207 samples (Table 1). For each  $^{14}\text{C}$  date about 10 mg of  $\text{CaCO}_3$  is required. When  
208 possible we used the subsamples of the same *L. pertusa* coral fragments used for  
209 U/Th dates. For the foraminifera, specimens of benthic foraminifera *C. refulgens*  
210 were hand-picked from the 250-1000  $\mu\text{m}$  fraction of the sediment. Fragments of  
211 marine bivalves (*Venus casima* and other *Venus* sp.) were selected and cleaned.  
212 All  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages were calibrated with CALIB 7 program using the calibration curve  
213 Marine13 and assuming a mean constant surface ocean reservoir age of 400 years  
214 (Stuiver et al., 2005; Reimer et al., 2013).

215

#### 216 2.5. U/Th dates

217

218 The CWC fragments selected were U-series dated at the Laboratoire des Sciences  
219 du Climat et de l'Environnement (LSCE, CEA-CNRS-UVSQ, Gif-sur-Yvette). 43

220 *L. pertusa* samples were analysed for uranium and thorium isotopes using a Multi-  
221 Collector Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer MC-ICP-MS. Prior to  
222 analyses, all fragments were examined under a binocular microscope to ensure  
223 against the presence of bio-eroded zones and finally crushed into a coarse-grained  
224 powder with an agate mortar and pestle. The powders (~60-200 mg) were  
225 transferred to acid cleaned Teflon beakers, ultrasonicated in MilliQ water, leached  
226 with 0.01 N HCl for around 15 s and finally rinsed twice with MilliQ water. The  
227 U and Th separation and purification followed a procedure modified from Pons-  
228 Branchu et al. (2005) and Douville et al. (2010). The physically and chemically  
229 cleaned samples were dissolved in 3-4 ml dilute HCl (~10%) and mixed with an  
230 internal triple spike with known concentrations of  $^{229}\text{Th}$ ,  $^{233}\text{U}$  and  $^{236}\text{U}$ , calibrated  
231 against a Harwell Uraninite solution (HU-1) assumed to be at secular equilibrium  
232 (Frank et al., 2004). After Fe-coprecipitation, the U and Th fractions were  
233 separated and purified on 600 l columns packed with U-TEVA and prefilter resins  
234 in nitric media. The U and Th isotope ratios were determined using a Thermo  
235 Scientific<sup>TM</sup> MC-ICP-MS fitted with a desolvating introduction system (aridus  
236 II) following the procedure described by Pons-Branchu et al. (2014). The  
237  $^{230}\text{Th}/\text{U}$  ages were calculated from measured atomic ratios through iterative age  
238 estimation (Ludwig and Titterington, 1994), using the  $^{230}\text{Th}$ ,  $^{234}\text{U}$  and  $^{238}\text{U}$  decay  
239 constants of Cheng et al. (2013) and Jaffey et al. (1971).

240

241 2.6. Stable isotopes: *G. bulloides*  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  profiles

242

243 About 10-20 specimens of *G. bulloides* (250-400  $\mu\text{m}$ ) were hand-picked at a 10  
244 cm resolution from 0-300 cm and thereafter a 5 cm resolution. Samples were  
245 analysed at LSCE (CEA-CNRS-UVSQ, Gif-sur-Yvette) using an OPTIMA GV  
246 mass spectrometer with a common acid bath automatic preparation line. Shell  
247 oxygen isotope values are expressed relative to the isotopic ratio of the carbon  
248 dioxide gas derived from the Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite (VPDB) standard in  
249 conventional delta notation ( $\delta$ ). Ratios are reported in ‰ VPDB defined with  
250 respect to the NBS 19 ( $\delta^{18}\text{O} = -2.20\text{‰}$  VPDB), limestone standard. The mean  
251 external reproducibility (1) of carbonate standard is  $\pm 0.06\text{‰}$  for  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and  $\pm 0.04\text{‰}$   
252 for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ .

253

## 254 2.7. Clay mineralogical analyses

255

256 A total of 69 sediment samples collected from the vibrocore +59-07/293VE were  
257 used for clay mineralogical analyses. The clay minerals were identified by XRD  
258 using a PANalytical diffractometer at the GEOPS laboratory (Université Paris-  
259 Saclay, France) on oriented mounts of non-calcareous clay-sized ( $< 2 \mu\text{m}$ )  
260 particles. Briefly, deflocculation was accomplished by successive washing with  
261 distilled water after removing carbonate and organic matter by treating with acetic  
262 acid (25%) and hydrogen peroxide (15%), respectively. The particles smaller than

263 2 m were separated by sedimentation and centrifugation. Three XRD runs were  
264 performed, following air-drying, ethylene-glycol solvation for 24 hours, and  
265 heating at 490°C for 2 hours. The clay minerals were identified according to the  
266 position of the (001) series of basal reflections on the three XRD diagrams. Mixed  
267 layers composed mainly of smectite-illite (15-17 Å) were included in the  
268 "smectite" category. Semi-quantitative estimates of peak areas of the basal  
269 reflections for the main clay mineral groups of smectite (15-17 Å), illite (10 Å),  
270 and kaolinite/chlorite (7 Å) were performed on the glycolated curve using the  
271 MacDiff software. The relative proportions of kaolinite and chlorite were  
272 determined based on the ratio from the 3.57/3.54 Å peak areas. The replicate  
273 analyses of a few selected samples gave a precision of  $\pm 2\%$  (2). Based on the  
274 XRD method, the semi-quantitative evaluation of each clay mineral had an  
275 accuracy of  $\sim 4\%$ .

276

## 277 2.8. Laser grain-size analyses

278

279 Grain-size distribution measurements in the range of 0.02 to 2000 µm were  
280 carried out on a Malvern Mastersizer 2000 Particle Size Analyzer on the same  
281 samples as those analysed by XRD. Prior to the analyses, bulk sediment was pre-  
282 treated with acetic acid (25%) and hydrogen peroxide (15%) to remove carbonates  
283 and organic matter. The mixture was then rinsed several times with deionized

284 water and gently shaken to achieve disaggregation. The suspension was then  
285 poured into the fluid module of the particle size analyser.

286

287 The total set of grain-size distributions (n=69) has been summarized by an  
288 unmixing algorithm in order to estimate sediment sub-populations representing  
289 different sources or dispersal processes. This approach has been significantly  
290 improved by the last generation of unsupervised linear unmixing under positivity  
291 and sum-to-one constraints (Weltje, 1997). We used the Bayesian Positive Source  
292 Separation (BPSS) algorithm that has the main advantage of having robust  
293 convergence properties (Moussaoui et al., 2006; Dobigeon et al., 2009; Schmidt  
294 et al., 2010). We estimate both the grain-size distributions of each sub-population  
295 (end-members) and the proportion of each end-member through time. The number  
296 of end-members is estimated by the best trade-off between variance  
297 reconstruction and end-member significance.

298

### 299 3. Results

300

#### 301 3.1. Chronology and age model

302

303 All U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates are plotted against sediment core depth (Figure 2, (see also  
304 Figure 4), Table 1, Table 2). A total of 43 U/Th and 17  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates were obtained  
305 on *L. pertusa* samples from this sediment core. Additional  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates were obtained

306 from 6 benthic foraminifera samples (*Cibicides refulgens*) and on 3 bivalves.  
307 Results show that *L. pertusa* U/Th dates are spread more or less evenly downcore  
308 and regularly increase from 2 to 8 ka BP down to 272 cm (Table 2). However,  
309 after 272 cm U/Th dates start decreasing again to 5.6 ka at 306 cm (Table 2, Figure  
310 2). Similarly, *L. pertusa*  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates regularly increase from the core top to 310 cm  
311 ranging from 2.5 to 8.45 cal ka BP. The *C. refulgens*  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates also regularly  
312 increase from 40 to 306 cm ranging from 5.4 to 10.3 cal ka BP. In the bottom  
313 section of the core, from 385-480 cm,  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates are much older 23-40.7 cal ka BP  
314 (Table 1, Table 2, Figure 2). Finally, three  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates were obtained from selected  
315 samples of marine bivalves, *Venus casima* and *Venus* sp. The ages also increase  
316 with depth from 10.7 at 308 cm to 27.4 at 425 cm. The sample selected at 480 cm  
317 has an age older than 50 cal ka BP. We firstly observed an absence of well-  
318 preserved coral fragments in the core from 61.5 to 160.5 cm and we were unable  
319 to obtained reliable U/Th or  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates. Secondly, we observed very significant age  
320 offsets between the U/Th and the  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates (Figure 2, Table 1, Table 2, Figure 4).  
321  
322 We conducted multiple analyses to test for any geochemical or physical alteration.  
323 All the samples presented in this work have passed the standard checks for U/Th  
324 and  $^{14}\text{C}$  quality. Each sample was analysed for XRD and underwent thorough  
325 cleaning and leaching procedures. Replicate analysis were conducted on several  
326 samples for U/Th (Table 2), and we analysed twice the same solution (tests for  
327 analytical reproducibility) and obtained similar ages. For the replicates at 293 cm

328 and 306 cm (Table 2), the U/Th analyses were done on different pieces of the  
329 same coral. A little age difference around 140 years for the sample at 293 cm, or  
330 more important around 400 years for sample 306 cm ( $5.20 \pm 0.04$  and  $5.59 \pm$   
331  $0.03$  ka BP, Table 2) is found for U/Th dating (Table 1). Similarly, the  $^{14}\text{C}$   
332 analyses were run in two separate batches (starred and non-starred samples on  
333 Table 1). Comparable results are found at similar depth: for example 4.8 cal ka  
334 BP at 38.5cm and 4.7 cal ka BP at 39 cm; 8.4 cal ka BP at 268 cm and 8.4 cal ka  
335 BP at 272 cm. Similar ages are also obtained for coral, foraminifera and bivalve  
336 samples from the same sediment depth (for example *C. refulgens* at 250 cm at 8.2  
337 cal ka BP and *L. pertusa* at 247cm at 8.4 cal ka BP). Based on all available data  
338 and results, we conclude that there is no clear evidence for any geochemical or  
339 physical alteration which may have explained the observed offset between U/Th  
340 ages and  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages.

341

342 Given that there appears to be an unexplainable significant discrepancy between  
343 the U/Th ages and the  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages, we decided to use the  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profile as a guide to  
344 build an age model.  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values range from 2.5 to 1‰ from the base of the core  
345 to the top (see Figure 4). These data are compared to a well-dated sediment core  
346 from the North Atlantic (Na87-22, see Figure 5).

347

348 3.2. Siliciclastic grain size

349

350 Grain size of siliciclastic particles in vibrocore +59-07/293VE ranges from 0.6 to  
351 800  $\mu\text{m}$  and the mean grain size varies from 19 to 100  $\mu\text{m}$  (average  $\sim 42$   $\mu\text{m}$ )  
352 (Figure 3). In general, the mean grain size presents higher values in the core  
353 section 300-485 cm (Figure 3). The inversion algorithm for end-member  
354 modelling of composition data for core +59-07/293VE displays a three end-  
355 member model that explains more than 80% of the variance. The coarse end  
356 member EM3 varies within the size range 0.6 to 800  $\mu\text{m}$  (bi-modal grain size of  
357  $\sim 5$  and 110  $\mu\text{m}$ ) (Figure 3). The intermediate end member EM1 varies in the size  
358 range 2-141  $\mu\text{m}$ , with a modal grain size of  $\sim 20$   $\mu\text{m}$ . The fine end-member  
359 EM2 varies in the size range 1-141  $\mu\text{m}$ , and its modal grain size is  $\sim 6$   $\mu\text{m}$ .  
360 These last two end-members (EM1 and EM2) present a clearly defined unimodal  
361 distribution. Relative contributions of the three end-members are plotted against  
362 age in Figure 3. Proportions of the coarser end-member (EM3) display a large  
363 range of variation, between 0 and 87%, with an average value of  $\sim 31\%$ .  
364 Proportions of the intermediate end-member (EM1) vary in a range, from 0 to  
365 65% (average  $\sim 27\%$ ). The last end-member (EM2), which represents the finer  
366 particles, varies between 0 and 80% (average 41%). The intermediate EM1  
367 presents a higher percentage variability with no systematic change downcore.

368

369 The mean grain size is strongly influenced by the proportions of the coarse EM3  
370 (Figure 3). The evolution of the proportion of EM1 and EM3 shows a significant  
371 shift at around 300 cm. The coarser EM1 presents a higher percentage (from 20

372 to 87%, with an average value of ~48%) below 300 cm than in the upper part of  
373 the core (from 0 to 20%, with an average value of ~9%). In contrast, proportions  
374 of EM2 are lower (from 0 to 54%, with an average value of ~29%) below 300 cm  
375 than thereafter (from 16 to 79%, with an average value of ~58%).

376

### 377 3.3. Clay mineralogy

378

379 In core +59-07/293VE, smectite (15-97%) and illite (1.5-49%) are the dominant  
380 clay minerals while chlorite (1.5-26%) and kaolinite (1-19%) are present in lesser  
381 quantities (Figure 4). In general, illite, chlorite and kaolinite contents display  
382 relatively similar distributions and are inversely correlated to smectite contents.  
383 In the bottom section of the core (corresponding to the interval depth from 480 to  
384 300 cm) the clay fraction is characterized by higher proportions of smectite (from  
385 96 to 35%) and lower contents of illite (from 0.5 to 35%), chlorite (from 0.5 to  
386 25%) and kaolinite (from 0.5 to 13%) when compared to the upper 300 cm.

387

388 In detail, between 485-410 cm, smectite content displays higher values (from  
389 around 92 to 96%), before rapidly decreasing to 54% at 410 cm. This decrease in  
390 smectite content is associated with an increase in illite and chlorite content, from  
391 0.5 to 25% and 0.5 to 14%, respectively. In the core section from 390 cm to the  
392 core top, the proportions of smectite continue to decrease rapidly from 54% to  
393 35 % followed by a maximum of smectite (57%) around 315 cm. Thereafter the

394 smectite content decreases again around 300 cm, when the CWC appear, and  
395 decreases progressively from 35 to 10 % to the core top. This general decrease in  
396 smectite content in two steps with sharp transitions centred at 300 and 380 cm is  
397 associated with an increase in illite, chlorite and kaolinite contents.

398

## 399 4. Discussion

400

### 401 4.1. Potential diagenesis effect and the U/Th and $^{14}\text{C}$ age offset.

402

403 The comparison of U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  data sets reveals significant differences in the  
404 age depth relationships, particularly between 160-306 cm (Figures 2, 4 and Tables  
405 1, 2) where differences in age of up to 2500-1500 years can be observed. A total  
406 of 12 paired U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates enable to estimate reservoir ages following  
407 similar approach as in previous studies (Frank et al., 2004; Douarin et al., 2015).  
408 Values range from 530 to >3000 years. Most of these reservoir age estimates are  
409 outside the natural range in the modern ocean and unexpected in surface waters  
410 so close to the area of formation of deep waters in the North Atlantic. In the  
411 section between 0-60 cm, above the interval with highly altered corals, three  
412 reservoir age estimates are between 530-1050 years, which is closer to the  
413 expected values, yet still significantly higher than recent estimates for the  
414 Holocene (Cage et al., 2006). We consider that our results attest of an of a  
415 diagenetic process that standard quality tests have failed to highlight. We further

416 hypothesise that there could be a relationship between the diagenesis processes  
417 and the reworked section of the core between 60-160cm, there are signs of  
418 dissolution and no well-preserved CWC fragments were found in this interval.  
419 We observe the largest age offsets between  $^{14}\text{C}$  and U/Th ages in the core section  
420 160-306 cm, which is just below the reworked layer (Figure 4).

421 Diagenetic processes in CWC environments have first been observed by Foubert  
422 et al., (2007) who proposed that the rapid accumulation (commonly between 50-  
423 100 cm/ka) rates in these environments was associated with an elevated oxidation  
424 of organic matter, which led to dissolution of aragonitic corals. Early diagenesis  
425 observed in sub-modern samples showed significant offsets between recent and  
426 older sections of the same coral fragment. However, these age offsets were of  
427 smaller magnitude and there was a coherent offset for  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages (Pons-Branchu et  
428 al., 2005). More recently, other studies have described similar diagenetic  
429 processes (Pirlet et al., 2009, Raddatz et al., 2014). Pirlet et al., (2009) highlights  
430 the formation of gypsum associated to the oxidation of sedimentary sulphide  
431 minerals such as pyrite and the dissolution of carbonates. These authors explained  
432 the oxidation by a phase of increased bottom currents which caused erosion and  
433 enhanced inflow of oxidizing fluids into the mound sediments. We did not  
434 observe any presence of gypsum in our sediment core but further analyses would  
435 be required to exclude this possibility. However, both  $^{14}\text{C}$  and U/Th dates were  
436 performed on the same sediment core as the one used by Pirlet et al., (2009) and

437 results do not show such large age offsets (Frank et al., 2009). It is thus unclear if  
438 the oxidation of organic matter can cause modifications of the U/Th or  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages.  
439 Such a dissolution event may have occurred and could explain the absence of  
440 well-preserved CWC in the interval 60-160 cm (Figure 4). However, there are no  
441 signs of dissolution of the planktonic and benthic foraminifera which could  
442 indicate that if there was dissolution, this would have affected mainly aragonite  
443 and not calcite. This diagenetic imprint appears to have affected sediments up to  
444 150 cm below the altered zone which was previously observed in the Challenger  
445 mound (Pirlet et al., 2010). The absence of any alterations of the planktonic and  
446 benthic foraminifera seems to indicate that this dissolution event may have  
447 affected mainly aragonite and not calcite. Interestingly, several studies have  
448 previously shown the presence of meter thick sediment layers with similar  
449 characteristics and in similar settings. within sedimentary sequences similar to  
450 that observed here between 60-160 cm (Figure 4) One of these sites is located  
451 with abundant pyrite and dolomite on the Challenger Mound, a meter thick  
452 sedimentary layer was enriched in pyrite and dolomite (Raddatz et al., 2014) .  
453 Similarly, in a sediment core collected offshore Norway there was an absence of  
454 well-preserved coral in a meter-long section (Raddatz et al., 2016). This later  
455 study showed suggested evidence for changes in ocean pH which the authors  
456 associated with post-glacial meltwater inputs. However, the timing of the  
457 observed shift in ocean pH around is older, 5-6 ka BP (determined by U/Th dates)  
458 when compared to results from our study site. Further analyses will be required

459 to fully explain the U/Th -  $^{14}\text{C}$  offsets presented in this study and any links with  
460 sedimentary processes we are observing.

461

#### 462 4.2. Chronology of sedimentary deposits on the Wyville Thomson Ridge.

463

464 Our strategy has thus been to use the *G. bulloides*  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profiles to build an  
465 independent age model for this site based on the principles of isotope stratigraphy.

466 The stable isotope profile of vibrocore +59-07/293VE is compared to the *G.*  
467 *bulloides*  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profile of sediment core Na87-22 (Figure 5), which is a well-dated  
468 sediment core located on the Rockall Plateau (Figure 1) (Waelbroeck et al., 2001).

469 The comparison of the two *G. bulloides*  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profiles enabled to build an  
470 independent age model based on matching of the isotope profiles (Figure 5). The

471 age depth relationship of this stratigraphic age model can be compared with the  
472 U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates (Figure 5D). On Figure 5D, we consider the 60-160 cm zone

473 to be either a reworked altered mixed sedimentary layer. This first order  
474 stratigraphic age model, built by matching *G. bulloides*  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profiles, is based on

475 5 tie-points. T between the age core top 0 cm in modern or close to modern with  
476 and is estimated age around 1.5 cal ka BP . This was the 'best fit' through both the

477 U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates. At 400 cm we estimated the age at around 13 cal ka BP based  
478 on the match between the *G. bulloides*  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profiles (Figure 5). The Finally, the

479 base of the sediment core is considered of glacial age (Figure 5). The accuracy of

480 the age model is variable downcore. The  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  transition observed between 300-  
481 400 cm enables a more robust age estimate compared to the core top 0-300 cm  
482 where a  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  plateau is observed. As a result we do not attempt to interpret  
483 millennial-scale trends in our data at millennial-scale level, as done in previous  
484 studies (e.g. Bonneau et al., 2018 , Colin et al., 2019).

485

486 Using this stratigraphic age model, the results of mineralogy and grain-size data  
487 highlight three phases in sediment deposition, associated with significant shifts in  
488 sedimentation rate. Firstly, glacial age sediment deposits between 400-495 cm  
489 (Figure 5), with ages > 50-13 cal ka BP. Secondly, the deglacial sediments  
490 accumulate between 306-400 cm (Figure 5), with ages between 13-9 cal ka BP.  
491 Thirdly, Holocene sediments are deposited (the past 9 cal ka BP), corresponding  
492 to the period of settlement of CWC, between 0-306 cm (Figure 5).

493

#### 494 4.2.1. Glacial age sediments (40-13 cal ka BP)

495 The age of the base of the core, from 495-400 cm (Figure 5), is constrained by  
496 four  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages derived from marine bivalve fragments and foraminifera (from  
497 22.91 to 40.66 cal ka BP and one age >50 cal ka BP). It dates back to the glacial  
498 period. Sedimentation rates are low around 2-3 cm/ka with potential periods of  
499 non-deposition or even erosion (Figure 5). During this period, the British ice sheet  
500 extended northwards and covered large areas of the continental shelf (Clark et al.,  
501 2010). The core site would have been shallower and closer to the shoreline and

502 potentially ice covered. The nearby continental ice sheets covered Scotland (Clark  
503 et al., 2010) and the Faroe Islands to the North (Figure 1). Episodes of ice-rafted  
504 debris deposits are possible during this period which would explain the presence  
505 of well-rounded large rock fragments and low content of biogenic fraction.

506

#### 507 4.2.2. Deglacial sediments (13-9 cal ka BP)

508 The section between 400-306 cm corresponds to the end of the deglaciation/early  
509 Holocene and range approximately from 13 to 9 cal ka BP (Figure 5). Mean  
510 sedimentation rates increase to around 24 cm/ka. There are no *L. pertusa*  
511 fragments indicating that conditions were not yet suitable for CWC reef  
512 settlement during this interval. The age of this section of the core is mainly based  
513 on correlation of the *G. bulloides*  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profile with core Na-87-22. Several  $^{14}\text{C}$   
514 dates are, however, coherent with this stratigraphic age model: a sample of a fossil  
515 bivalve at 308 cm (10.65 cal ka BP) and a *C. refulgens*  $^{14}\text{C}$  sample at 300 cm  
516 (10.27 cal ka BP). However, one  $^{14}\text{C}$  sample at 385 cm around 22 cal ka BP is too  
517 old and not coherent with the proposed age model. We suggest that this could be  
518 due to mixing or bioturbation of older sediments. This period correspond to the  
519 end of the Younger Dryas event and the following warm event at the end of this  
520 rapid climate cooling.

521

#### 522 4.2.3. Settlement of CWC during the Holocene around 9 ka BP

523 The first well-preserved fossil fragments of *L. pertusa* appear at 306 cm with a  
524 clear increase observed after 300 cm (Figure 4). Using the stratigraphic age model  
525 the age of this transition is around 9 cal ka BP (Figure 5). The ages obtained from  
526 U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  on fossil coral samples during this interval differ by several  
527 thousand years (Figure 4 and 5). The ages derived from the first dated samples at  
528 306 cm are much younger, at around 5.2-5.6 cal ka BP for U/Th dates, whereas  
529 the *L. pertusa*  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates are within error of this age estimate around 8.3 cal ka BP.  
530 As a result estimated mean sedimentation rates are variable (70-34 cm/ka) and  
531 depend on which age model or which data set is used, particularly during the 9-4  
532 cal ka BP interval (Figure 2). In the top 60 cm, both U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  show a drop in  
533 sedimentation rate after 4-5 cal ka BP to around 7 cm/ka (Figure 5).

534 The important difference between the  $^{14}\text{C}$  and U/Th ages raises some uncertainty  
535 on the ages obtained in this section of the core. The chronology proposed based  
536 on stable isotope stratigraphy provides an age around 9 cal ka BP for the  
537 settlement of the CWC reef. This age is, however, supported by  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates 1- *L.*  
538 *pertusa*  $^{14}\text{C}$  date at 306 cm of 8.4 cal ka BP, 2- the *C. refulgens*  $^{14}\text{C}$  date at 300  
539 cm around 10.3 cal ka BP and 3- the *Venus casima*  $^{14}\text{C}$  date at 308 cm is around  
540 10.6 cal ka BP (Table 1). Furthermore, in a nearby site, but in a deeper setting at  
541 around 900 m water depth, a slightly older age has been found for the first  
542 occurrence of *L. pertusa* at around 10.3 cal ka BP (Victoreo et al., 2016). We  
543 consider that these  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages are consistent and support the stratigraphic age model  
544 proposed here.

545

#### 546 4.3. Transition from glacial to deglaciation on the Wyville Thomson Ridge

547

548 The glacial age sediment deposits are characterised by high values of mean grain  
549 size (Figure 5). Grain-size distributions of the siliciclastic fraction can be used to  
550 infer the hydrographic conditions at the time of deposition (e.g. Ballini et al.,  
551 2006; Prins et al., 2002) and have already been used to establish past current  
552 intensity and the presence of IRD deposits in CWC mound records (e.g. Pirlet et  
553 al., 2011; Thierens et al., 2012). The grain-size distribution indicates strong  
554 variations in agreement with lithological description and glacial and interglacial  
555 changes. Glacial age sediments show a poorly-sorted bimodal grain-size  
556 distribution associated with sediments enriched in coarse (>150  $\mu$ m) lithic particles  
557 which points towards ice-rafting as a likely transport and sedimentation  
558 mechanism (Figure 3). The presence of dropstones (rock fragments up to several  
559 centimeters) below 400 cm, confirm that these sediments are of glaciomarine  
560 origin.

561

562 The grain-size distribution of EM3 characterizes poorly sorted sediments,  
563 enriched in the coarser size fractions of up to 800  $\mu$ m, which can be attributed to  
564 sediments transported by icebergs (e.g. Prins et al., 2002; Pirlet et al., 2011;  
565 Thierens et al., 2012) (Figure 3). EM3 dominates the glacial period indicating a  
566 predominance of coarse sediments transported by icebergs most probably from

567 the BIS in agreement with the maximum extent of the continental ice sheets  
568 during this period (Figure 1) (Golledge et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2010). In addition,  
569 such poorly sorted grain-size distribution during glacial times suggests that the  
570 coastal current was sluggish in the studied area and was unable to sort coarse  
571 glaciomarine deposits as it was also observed for glacial sediments of CWC  
572 mounds of the Porcupine Seabight (Pirlet et al., 2011).

573

574 These coarse glacial sediments are associated with high content of smectite that  
575 reach up to 96%. Clay mineral assemblages of the high latitude of the North  
576 Atlantic can reveal information on the palaeo-environmental conditions that  
577 governed continental weathering processes on adjacent landmasses and/or  
578 sedimentary sources (e.g. Chamley, 1989; Fagel et al., 1996; Bout-Roumazeilles  
579 et al., 1997; Ballini et al., 2006; Pirlet et al., 2011). Sediment distributions and  
580 sources in the NE Atlantic have been established in several previous studies  
581 (Biscaye, 1965; Latouche, 1975; Windom, 1976; Grousset et al., 1982; Grousset  
582 and Para, 1982; Latouche and Para, 1976; Pirlet et al., 2011; Thierens et al., 2012).  
583 Clay mineralogical composition of surface sediments of the NE Atlantic (between  
584 the Faroe and Shetland Islands and the northern margin of North Scotland) is  
585 mainly controlled by the petrology of the eroded source area. The clay fraction of  
586 sediments north of the Wyville Thomson Ridge and south of Iceland is  
587 characterized by abundant smectites (50-100%) compared to illite (0-30%)  
588 deriving from the weathering of basaltic rocks from the Iceland and the Faroe-

589 Shetland ridge area (e.g. Latouche, 1975; Grousset et al., 1982). The weathering  
590 of these volcanic rocks provides large quantities of smectite transported  
591 southward by oceanic currents and smectite composes up to 90% of the clay  
592 fraction in the sediments surrounding the Iceland and Faroe Islands (Grousset et  
593 al., 1982) and on the pathway of deep-current circulating along this volcanic  
594 province (e.g. Iceland Scotland Overflow Water; Fagel et al., 1996 ; Ballini et al.,  
595 2006 ; Fagel et al., 2006). On the contrary, the clay fraction in sediments from the  
596 Scottish and Irish continental shelves has high content in illite (> 50% illite)  
597 (Latouche, 1975; Windom et al., 1976) and low smectite concentrations (<20 %)  
598 sourced from physical erosion of soils of northern Europe, which developed on  
599 crustal rock formations under cold and intermediate climates.

600

601 Consequently, the smectite/illite (Sm/I) ratio reported in Figure 5 can be used  
602 here to track clay minerals deriving from the weathering of the northern Iceland-  
603 Scotland Ridge basalts (smectite) and the more local sources of clay derived from  
604 soils developed on crustal rock formations from North Scotland which are  
605 transported via river flow and then coastal currents. Similar studies have used this  
606 proxy to separate the Icelandic source of the clay fraction from sediments in the  
607 North Atlantic at different times scales (e.g. Fagel et al., 1996; Bout-Roumazeilles  
608 et al., 1997; Ballini et al., 2006 ; Fagel et al., 2006). In core +59-07/293VE, this  
609 mineralogical ratio ranges from 0.2 to 33, with last deglacial sediment values

610 being higher than those for the late Holocene (Figure 5), and is characterized by  
611 two abrupt decrease around 13 and 9 ka BP.

612

613 The high concentration of smectite in the glacial deposits at the study site implies  
614 that clay minerals are mainly sourced from a northern volcanic source such as the  
615 Iceland-Scotland Ridge basalts (Ziska and Varming et al 2008). This contrasts  
616 significantly with the grain-size data which imply a local source of ice-rafted  
617 material most probably from the BIS. A possible explanation is that the ice-rafted  
618 material transported small quantities of the illite and chlorite and mainly coarser  
619 material as shown by the high values of EM3. This can be explained by a lack of  
620 soil produced over the ice covered Scottish continent during glacial periods. The  
621 fine sized clay material would be primarily produced during warm interglacial  
622 periods and would be rapidly exported during the initial glacial phase in  
623 agreement with results obtained by Pirlet et al. (2011) and Thierens et al. (2012)  
624 in the Porcupine Seabight. The high values of smectite also imply significant  
625 modifications of ocean circulation with possible southward flow of surface waters  
626 during glacial periods. This is in agreement with a map of reconstructed surface  
627 currents for this area obtained by Sarnthein et al. (1995) indicating that surface  
628 currents were flowing southward during the glacial and northward flowing during  
629 the Holocene.

630

631 At around 13 cal ka BP, there is a sharp transition marked by a reduction of  
632 smectite whereas the mean grain size does not change significantly until around  
633 9 cal ka BP (Figure 5). The proportion of EM3 remains high and sediments are  
634 still poorly sorted, which means that currents in the study area remained sluggish  
635 during this period. The opposing signals observed in the clay mineralogy and  
636 grain-size data imply sources and transports of different sedimentary size  
637 fractions as described during the glacial periods. During the interval 9-13 cal ka  
638 BP, towards the end of the deglaciation, smectite concentrations remain high  
639 around 30-40% corresponding to a mixed volcanic northern source and  
640 sedimentary material from a southern source. This period 13-9 cal ka BP thus  
641 marks a shift in oceanic currents occurs which is at the study site at the end of the  
642 deglaciation, and associated with the initiation of shelf currents (SCC and SEC),  
643 which flow northwards along the west coast of Scotland and transport the  
644 sedimentary material to the study area via (Simson and Hill 1986). In addition, at  
645 9-9 13 cal ka BP, the northern regions of the Scottish mainland were became  
646 progressively ice free (Golledge et al., 2008). The soils that developed during the  
647 warmer climatic conditions of the early Holocene Such a configuration would  
648 have permitted the production and transport by river runoff of a larger quantities  
649 of illite and chlorite from soils that developed during the warmer climatic  
650 conditions of the early Holocene.

651

652 4.4. Cold water reef settlement and sedimentary environment during the early  
653 Holocene

654

655 The final transition in sediment properties occurs during the early Holocene  
656 around 9 cal ka BP when a second significant change in clay mineralogy is  
657 associated with a change in mean grain size and a significant increase in  
658 sedimentation rates (Figure 5). This transition is coeval with the CWC reef  
659 settlement at the study site. There is a strong reduction of the smectite (around  
660 35%, decreasing thereafter to 15%), and a significant increase of both illite (35%,  
661 increasing thereafter to 50%) and chlorite (25%) (Figure 5) . These observations  
662 attest of a reduction of the northern-sourced smectite and an increase of Scottish-  
663 sourced illite and chlorite. The grain-size data shows a sharp reduction of EM3  
664 and an increase of EM2 which implies more energetic bottom-water flow able to  
665 sort sediment and the source of the clay sized fraction. We interpret this data as  
666 evidence for a sudden change in energy and possibly direction of bottom-water  
667 currents around 9 cal ka BP, which we interpret as reflecting an increase in  
668 southern sourced oceanic currents (mainly the SEC and the SCC) that bring clay  
669 minerals from the coastal areas and the continental shelves surrounding the  
670 Scottish mainland. At 9 cal ka BP, the northern regions of the Scottish mainland  
671 are ice free (Golledge et al., 2008). Such a configuration would have permitted  
672 the production and transport by river runoff of a larger quantity of illite and  
673 chlorite from soils .

674

675 The meltwater produced by the final decay of the large continental ice sheets has  
676 been shown to affect ocean circulation patterns in the North Atlantic, reducing the  
677 salinity and the vigour of the North Atlantic Current (and AMOC) until around 8  
678 cal ka BP (Thornalley et al., 2013; Mjell et al., 2013; Hoogakker et al., 2011;  
679 Gherardi et al., 2009; Kissel et al., 2013). These changes in salinity are known to  
680 have affected the strength of the NAC, which could also have affected the flow  
681 regimes of the SCC and SEC in this area. Consequently, the settlement of CWC  
682 at 9 cal ka BP seems related to a major shift in North Atlantic circulation patterns.  
683 sortable silt records from sediment cores located south of Iceland show a gradual  
684 increase in deep-water circulation observed around 8-6 cal ka BP on the Scotland  
685 Iceland overflow water (Mjell et al., 2013; Hoogakker et al., 2011; Thornalley et  
686 al., 2013) associated to an intensification and eastward extension of the sub-polar  
687 gyre (e.g. Thornalley et al., et al., 2009; Colin et al., in press2019). This transition  
688 centred around 8 cal ka BP has been associated with the final decay of the northern  
689 hemisphere ice sheets.

690

## 691 5. Conclusions

692

693 Results from a vibrocore located on the Wyville Thomson Ridge North of the  
694 Scottish continental shelf at 300 m water depth enables to estimate the age of the  
695 onset of cold water coral reef growth in this area. Multiple U/Th and <sup>14</sup>C dates

696 were derived from fossil *Lophelia pertusa*, marine bivalves and foraminifera. The  
697 oldest cold water coral, *L. pertusa*, fragments dated by  $^{14}\text{C}$  and U/Th dates are 8.4  
698 and 7.9 cal ka BP, respectively. However, we observe significant and unexplained  
699 differences between paired samples of  $^{14}\text{C}$  and U/Th dates, which appear to be  
700 affected by a diagenetic effect which we do not yet fully explain. We thus derived  
701 an independent age model based on isotope stratigraphy using profiles of  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$   
702 derived from planktonic species *G. bulloides*. The reconstructed age model  
703 enables to provide an independent estimate of the date the onset of reef growth to  
704 around 9 cal ka BP, which is coherent with the  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates of the oldest CWC  
705 sample.

706

707 Grain size and clay mineralogy provide information about the evolution of the  
708 flow patterns and direction of water currents in this area. These records show 2  
709 marked transitions at around 13 and 9 cal ka BP. We thus identify 3 periods  
710 characterised by different clay mineralogy and grain size: a glacial period (prior  
711 de 13ka BP), an end of deglaciation (13-9 cal ka BP) and a Holocene section (9  
712 to modern cal ka BP).

713

714 The first transition at 13 cal ka BP, is characterized by a shift of smectite-rich,  
715 poorly sorted sediments to a mixed clay mineralogy of smectites and illites. This  
716 transition marks the end of the glacial period, when clay mineralogy was  
717 dominated by smectite (75 to 96%) to the deglaciation when the % smectite

718 reduces to 50%. Such mineralogical changes that can be observed between 13 and  
719 9 cal ka BP indicate large variations of sediment sources from the volcanic  
720 province of the Iceland-Faroe Ridge (smectite) to a crustal province of the north  
721 of Scotland (illite and chlorite). This period is also associated with a strong  
722 decrease of the siliciclastic grain size. Sediments become better sorted which  
723 reflects an increase of bottom-current velocity. There is a decrease of IRD  
724 deposits linked to the retreat of the northern glacial ice sheet and.

725

726 The second transition is clearly associated with the appearance of CWC, *Lophelia*  
727 *pertusa*, at this site. At around 9 cal ka BP, illite and chlorite increase to 49% and  
728 25%, respectively, and the mean grain size reduces and the sediments become  
729 well sorted. Our results show that the onset of CWC growth on the Wyville  
730 Thomson Ridge occurred around 9 cal ka BP and was associated with changes in  
731 ocean circulation patterns in this area. This age corresponds to the final phases of  
732 the post glacial sea level rise and final melting of continental ice sheets. The clay  
733 mineralogy enables to identify a sudden changes in the flow patterns of bottom-  
734 water currents that induces favourable sedimentological and hydrological  
735 conditions for coral growth.

736

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1117 Figures and Tables

1118

1119 Figure 1 : Map of the study area showing the location of vibrocore +59-07/923VE  
1120 investigated in this study (yellow star). Other cores discussed in this paper are  
1121 also reported in the insert (open dots) : (1) MD01-2454G; (2) Na-87-22; (3) +56-  
1122 08/929VE and +56-08/930VE. Arrows represent the main subsurface  
1123 oceanographic currents. NAC: North Atlantic Current; SEC: Shelf Edge Current;  
1124 SCC : Scottish Coastal Current as shown in (Inall et al., 2009). The position of  
1125 the maximum extent on the British Ice Sheet is show dashed line modified from  
1126 Clarck et al., (2010).

1127

1128 Figure 2 : Vibrocore 59-07/293VE detailed plot of U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates from 0-  
1129 300 cm. U/Th *L. pertusa* dates (empty circles) and  $^{14}\text{C}$  *L. pertusa* dates (full  
1130 circles) and  $^{14}\text{C}$  benthic foraminifera *C. refulgens* dates (full squares).  
1131 Sedimentation rates are estimated using  $^{14}\text{C}$  data are (indicated on the right side  
1132 of the plot (black)) and U/Th data are indicated (on the left side of the plot (bold  
1133 red). Mean sedimentation rates are estimated from 160-290 cm (brown full and  
1134 empty circles) and from 0-60 cm (red full and empty circles). Significant  
1135 differences of sedimentation rates are observed between the U/Th and  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages  
1136 are observed in the section 160-290 cm (34.8 cm/ka for U/Th data and 70.9 cm/ka  
1137 for the  $^{14}\text{C}$  data). Similar sedimentation rates are observed in the section 0-60 cm  
1138 (9.1 cm/ka for U/Th and 6.9 cm/ka for  $^{14}\text{C}$  data).

1139

1140 Figure 3 : Vibrocore 59-07/293VE Grain-size data: A- EM1, EM2 and EM3 size  
1141 distributions; B - Vibrocore 59-07/293VE grain-size data versus depth and C -  
1142 Mean grain size versus depth.

1143

1144 Figure 4: Vibrocore 59-07/293VE all data versus depth. The grey band highlights  
1145 the reworked zone between depth 60-160 cm with absence of well- preserved  
1146 large fragments of *L. pertusa* samples. From top to bottom: A: grain-size data. B:  
1147 clay mineralogy. C:  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  profile of *G. bulloides* (left axis) and abundance of coral  
1148 fragments > 2 cm (right axis). D: Age depth distribution in cal ka BP (U/Th (black  
1149 diamonds) and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates for *L. pertusa* (red squares) *C. refulgens* (blue circles)

1150 and marine bivalves (green triangles)) and right axis number of coral fragments >  
1151 2 cm. The dashed lines highlight the transitions at 300 and 400 cm discussed  
1152 herein.

1153

1154 Figure 5 : Vibrocore 59-07/293VE all data versus age. The blue shaded area  
1155 highlights the glacial age deposits > 13 cal ka BP with average mean  
1156 sedimentation rate of 2 cm/ka (the age scale is compressed for easier viewing).  
1157 The red shaded area highlights the end of the deglacial/early Holocene with  
1158 average mean sedimentation rates of 35-8 cm/ka and the yellow shaded area  
1159 highlights the period from 9 cal ka BP-modern period when abundant CWC are  
1160 found and mean sedimentation is the highest: 30-40 cm/ka. From top to bottom:  
1161 A: grain grain-size data. B: clay mineralogy. C:  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  profiles of *G.*  
1162 *bulloides* of core 59-07/293VE (green and red) and Na87-22 (blue and grey). D:  
1163 Age depth relationship for the stratigraphic age model (blue line) and the  
1164 distribution of U/Th (black open circles) and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates for *L. pertusa* (full brown  
1165 circles) *C. refulgens* (red squares) and marine bivalves (green triangles). The tie  
1166 points for the stratigraphic age model with (blue squares). Mean sediment rates  
1167 are indicated for the stratigraphic age model. The glacial section (13-50ka) of this  
1168 diagram has been compressed in order to facilitate viewing of the transitions at 9  
1169 and 13 cal ka BP.

1170

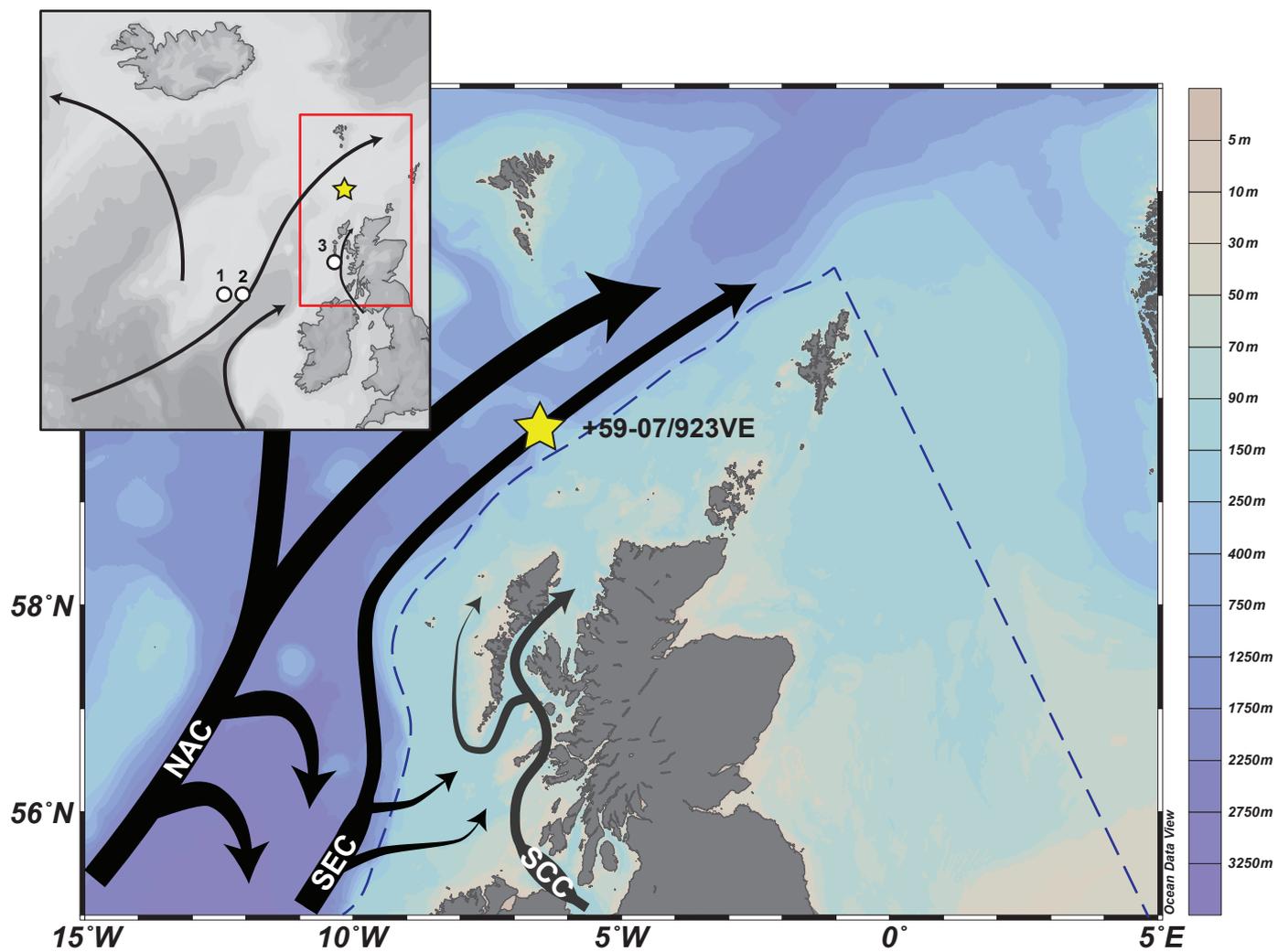
1171 Table 1 : Calibrated AMS  $^{14}\text{C}$  age.  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages were converted into calendar years  
1172 (cal. yr BP, BP = AD 1950) by using the Marine13 calibration data set and the  
1173 CALIB 7.04 program (Stuiver et al., 2005; Reimer et al., 2013). A mean reservoir  
1174 effect of ~400 years has been used.

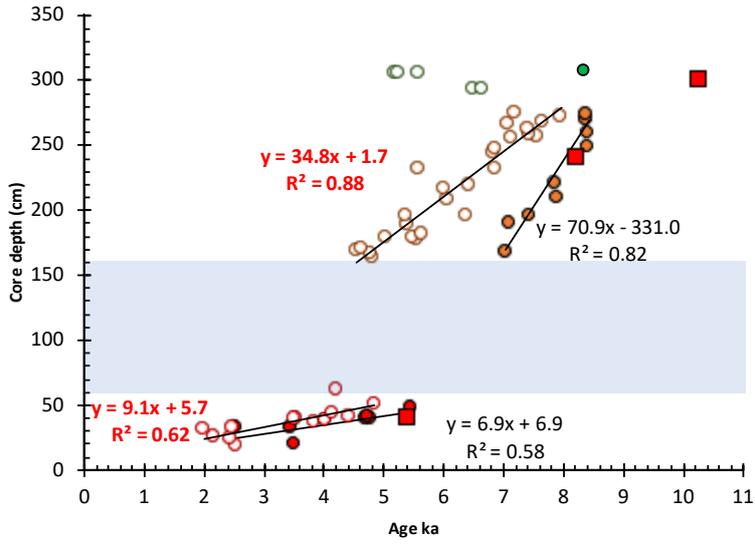
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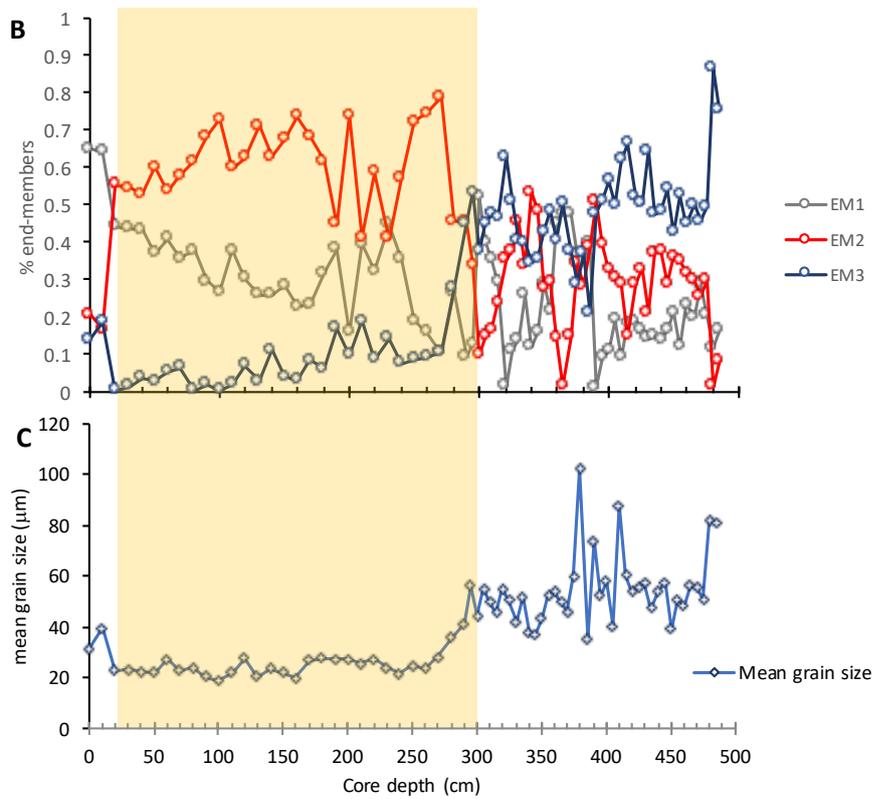
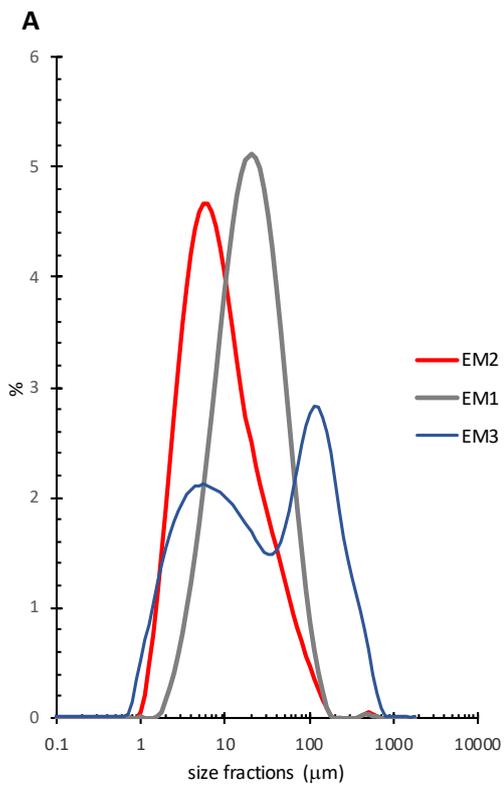
1176 Table 2 :  $^{230}\text{Th}/^{234}\text{U}$  ages for CWC: U and Th content, uranium isotopic initial  
1177 ratio (expressed as  $\delta^{234}\text{U}_0 = ([^{234}\text{U}/^{238}\text{U}]_0 - 1) \times 1000$ ) and corrected ages for detrital  
1178 fraction using  $(^{230}\text{Th}/^{232}\text{Th}) = 10 \pm 4$ . Ages are expressed as ka before 1950.

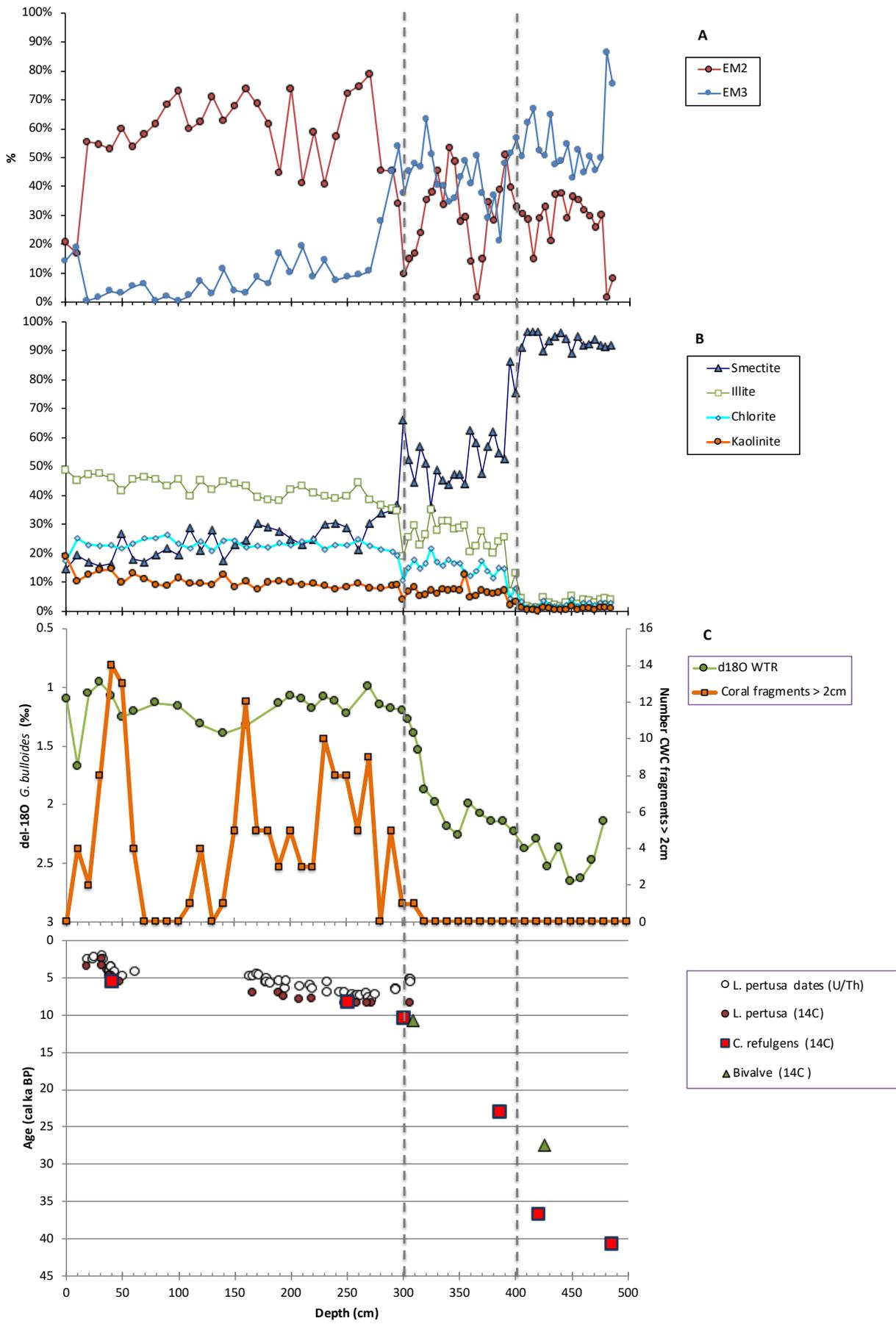
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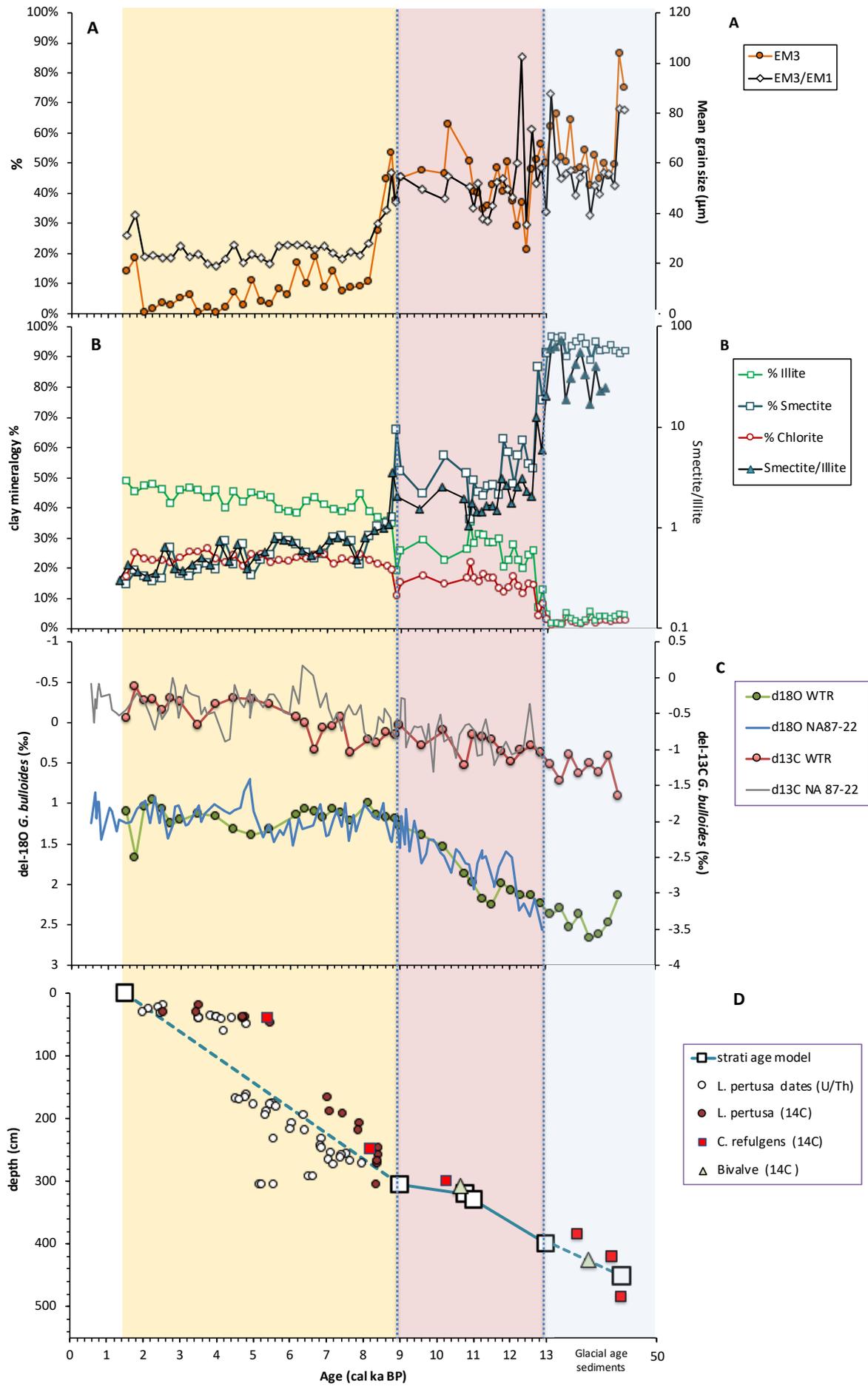
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N° GifA / SacA	Depth (cm)	species	Age BP	Err âge BP (1σ)	Cal years BP Median Probability	2 σ range cal years BP	
14366 / 40200	19	<i>L. pertusa</i>	3625	35	<b>3522</b>	cal BP 3424 - 3627	
14367 / 40201	31.5	<i>L. pertusa</i>	2800	30	<b>2557</b>	cal BP 2423 - 2682	
15305 / 42891	32	<i>L. pertusa</i>	3575	30	<b>3465</b>	cal BP 3378 - 3554	*
14368 / 40202	38.5	<i>L. pertusa</i>	4580	30	<b>4805</b>	cal BP 4689 - 4863	
15306 / 42892	39	<i>L. pertusa</i>	4520	30	<b>4730</b>	cal BP 4612 - 4817	*
14369 / 40203	41	<i>L. pertusa</i>	4525	30	<b>4736</b>	cal BP 4618 - 4820	
15308 / 42894	48	<i>L. pertusa</i>	5100	30	<b>5470</b>	cal BP 5332 - 5338	*
14371 / 40205	166.5	<i>L. pertusa</i>	6530	40	<b>7047</b>	cal BP 6929 - 7155	
14372 / 40206	189	<i>L. pertusa</i>	6590	35	<b>7115</b>	cal BP 6999 - 7217	
15309 / 42895	194	<i>L. pertusa</i>	6945	30	<b>7450</b>	cal BP 7394 - 7524	*
14373 / 40207	208	<i>L. pertusa</i>	7450	40	<b>7911</b>	cal BP 7819 - 7995	
14374 / 40208	219	<i>L. pertusa</i>	7415	40	<b>7880</b>	cal BP 7819 - 7995	
14376 / 40210	247	<i>L. pertusa</i>	7985	50	<b>8443</b>	cal BP 8346 - 8552	
14377 / 40211	258.5	<i>L. pertusa</i>	7990	45	<b>8447</b>	cal BP 8357 - 8548	
15310 / 42896	268	<i>L. pertusa</i>	7945	30	<b>8400</b>	cal BP 8335 - 8485	*
14378 / 40212	272	<i>L. pertusa</i>	7960	40	<b>8417</b>	cal BP 8357 - 8548	
14379 / 40213	306	<i>L. pertusa</i>	7920	45	<b>8381</b>	cal BP 8357 - 8548	
15312 / 42898	40	<i>C. refulgens</i>	5060	30	<b>5410</b>	cal BP 4612 - 4817	*
15313 / 42899	250	<i>C. refulgens</i>	7745	30	<b>8220</b>	cal BP 8144 - 8309	*
15314 / 42900	300	<i>C. refulgens</i>	9440	30	<b>10271</b>	cal BP 10196 - 10383	*
15315 / 42901	385	<i>C. refulgens</i>	19430	70	<b>22905</b>	cal BP 22619 - 23160	*
15317 / 42903	420	<i>C. refulgens</i>	33080	270	<b>36643</b>	cal BP 35998 - 37633	*
15318 / 42904	485	<i>C. refulgens</i>	36430	390	<b>40655</b>	cal BP 39804 - 41461	*
15319 / 42905	308	<i>V. casima</i>	9750	35	10650	cal BP 10196 - 10383	*
15320 / 42906	425	<i>Venus sp.</i>	23490	100	<b>27396</b>	cal BP 27171 - 27603	*
15321 / 42907	480	<i>Venus sp.</i>	48800	1700	<b>&gt;50000</b>		



Lab-code	sample-label	mean depth (cm)	[ <sup>238</sup> U] (ppm)		[ <sup>232</sup> Th] (ppm)		δ <sup>234</sup> U <sub>m</sub> (‰)		<sup>230</sup> Th/ <sup>238</sup> U		<sup>230</sup> Th/ <sup>232</sup> Th		δ <sup>234</sup> U(0) (‰)		age (kyr)		age (kyr) Cor BP	
5426	18-20	19	4.238	0.004	0.1407	0.0004	145.6	0.7	0.0273	0.0001	2639.4	13.3	146.6	0.7	2.63	0.02	2.555	0.019
5428	23-25	24	3.775	0.004	0.2042	0.0005	145.9	0.7	0.0261	0.0002	1551.6	9.9	146.9	0.7	2.52	0.02	2.437	0.024
5427	21-29	25	3.552	0.004	0.1099	0.0003	145.9	0.7	0.0233	0.0001	2414.1	14.4	146.8	0.8	2.24	0.01	2.166	0.019
5268	29-34	31.5	4.189	0.007	0.1067	0.0003	145.9	1.0	0.0216	0.0001	2639.6	13.2	146.8	1.0	2.08	0.01	2.004	0.015
5429	32-33	32.5	4.432	0.007	0.2132	0.0004	146.1	0.8	0.0266	0.0003	1777.7	18.8	147.2	0.8	2.56	0.03	2.482	0.035
5592	36-38	37	3.899	0.007	0.1459	0.0006	145.2	1.2	0.0404	0.0002	3408.1	18.6	146.9	1.2	3.92	0.03	3.846	0.030
5703	37-39	38	3.949	0.012	0.1597	0.0008	145.6	1.3	0.0423	0.0003	3319.4	22.1	147.3	1.3	4.11	0.03	4.033	0.037
5267	37-40	38.5	3.517	0.007	0.1353	0.0006	145.4	0.8	0.0422	0.0002	3427.3	15.3	147.1	0.8	4.10	0.02	4.021	0.026
5704bis	39-41	40	4.147	0.015	0.1684	0.0008	143.3	1.0	0.0372	0.0002	2896.5	17.1	144.8	1.1	3.61	0.02	3.533	0.030
5704	39-41	40	4.125	0.006	0.1746	0.0010	148.5	0.6	0.0373	0.0002	2832.5	15.4	150.0	0.6	3.60	0.02	3.523	0.027
5266	40-42	41	3.552	0.004	0.1199	0.0003	146.4	0.8	0.0465	0.0002	4400.0	19.0	148.3	0.8	4.52	0.02	4.445	0.027
5593	40-46	43	3.783	0.005	0.3153	0.0012	144.9	0.6	0.0437	0.0002	1657.9	8.7	146.6	0.6	4.25	0.02	4.158	0.035
5265	48-52	50	3.181	0.007	0.1936	0.0008	145.5	0.6	0.0505	0.0002	2608.9	8.8	147.6	0.6	4.92	0.02	4.841	0.027
5594	60-63	61.5	3.406	0.007	0.1809	0.0008	144.8	0.8	0.0441	0.0002	2627.6	14.4	146.6	0.8	4.29	0.03	4.207	0.034
5264	161-166	163.5	4.123	0.004	0.2157	0.0007	145.4	0.7	0.0503	0.0002	3014.5	11.6	147.4	0.7	4.90	0.02	4.820	0.028
5263	165-168	166.5	3.838	0.006	0.3510	0.0011	145.1	0.6	0.0502	0.0002	1712.7	6.7	147.1	0.6	4.89	0.02	4.801	0.033
5705	168-170	169	3.907	0.006	0.2673	0.0008	144.2	0.7	0.0475	0.0002	2230.8	8.0	146.1	0.7	4.63	0.02	4.542	0.028
5595	170-172	171	4.191	0.008	0.3109	0.0028	144.3	0.9	0.0486	0.0005	2054.7	23.1	146.3	0.9	4.74	0.06	4.649	0.067
5262	175-179	177	3.465	0.004	0.2475	0.0009	145.9	0.6	0.0576	0.0003	2530.2	11.3	148.2	0.6	5.63	0.03	5.542	0.038
5707	178-179	178.5	3.502	0.005	0.3701	0.0011	145.3	0.6	0.0526	0.0002	1605.6	5.3	147.4	0.6	5.13	0.02	5.039	0.033
5706	175-182	178.5	3.544	0.004	0.1933	0.0002	146.1	0.9	0.0571	0.0001	3198.8	6.3	148.4	0.9	5.58	0.02	5.497	0.023
5596	180-182	181	3.349	0.008	0.3901	0.0017	143.8	0.9	0.0587	0.0003	1582.8	7.4	146.2	0.9	5.75	0.03	5.645	0.046
5261	187-191	189	3.669	0.007	0.9898	0.0038	143.1	0.7	0.0566	0.0003	658.1	3.7	145.3	0.7	5.54	0.04	5.396	0.068
5708	194-196	195	4.019	0.009	0.2034	0.0029	145.3	1.1	0.0658	0.0009	4135.4	59.9	147.9	1.1	6.45	0.10	6.375	0.108
5260	194-198	196	4.120	0.008	0.1098	0.0005	143.9	0.8	0.0556	0.0003	6527.3	31.3	146.2	0.8	5.44	0.03	5.364	0.034
5259	206-210	208	4.127	0.008	0.2235	0.0008	144.0	0.8	0.0628	0.0002	3631.1	13.3	146.5	0.8	6.16	0.03	6.075	0.034
5709	215-219	217	4.216	0.008	0.2455	0.0009	145.6	0.8	0.0623	0.0003	3405.6	14.9	148.1	0.8	6.10	0.03	6.024	0.039
5258	217-221	219	4.264	0.010	0.3412	0.0015	145.1	0.8	0.0664	0.0003	2596.8	13.1	147.8	0.8	6.52	0.04	6.427	0.048
5257	231-233	232	4.509	0.018	0.3317	0.0013	144.5	1.0	0.0579	0.0002	2462.5	8.6	146.8	1.0	5.66	0.03	5.578	0.035
5710	230-234	232	3.563	0.008	0.1546	0.0024	142.0	0.8	0.0705	0.0004	5160.8	28.3	144.9	0.9	6.95	0.04	6.876	0.050

5597	241-246	243.5	3.620	0.018	0.1612	0.0009	142.6	1.3	0.0701	0.0005	4929.1	34.0	145.4	1.4	6.91	0.06	6.829	0.063
5256	245-249	247	3.684	0.005	0.2832	0.0014	146.1	0.7	0.0708	0.0003	2881.8	12.2	149.0	0.7	6.96	0.03	6.872	0.045
5711	253-257	255	3.727	0.006	0.5141	0.0016	146.9	1.1	0.0737	0.0003	1715.4	7.4	149.9	1.1	7.24	0.04	7.134	0.055
5712	255-258	256.5	3.857	0.011	0.3328	0.0013	143.6	1.2	0.0775	0.0003	2846.4	12.7	146.8	1.2	7.65	0.04	7.562	0.054
5255	257-260	258.5	3.310	0.005	0.1561	0.0006	144.3	0.7	0.0761	0.0003	5050.5	20.8	147.4	0.7	7.51	0.04	7.429	0.043
5713	260-264	262	3.298	0.009	0.2888	0.0020	145.6	1.4	0.0761	0.0006	2755.8	21.0	148.7	1.4	7.50	0.07	7.405	0.079
5714	265-268	266.5	3.404	0.009	0.3629	0.0013	142.8	1.2	0.0726	0.0004	2162.2	11.7	145.7	1.2	7.16	0.05	7.066	0.061
5598	267-270	268.5	3.942	0.013	0.4034	0.0017	142.9	1.2	0.0785	0.0003	2413.1	10.7	146.1	1.2	7.76	0.04	7.660	0.056
5254	269-275	272	3.490	0.005	0.2753	0.0010	144.5	0.6	0.0815	0.0003	3234.3	12.5	147.8	0.6	8.05	0.04	7.966	0.046
5253	272-278	275	4.021	0.028	0.3347	0.0029	144.7	0.7	0.0741	0.0002	2739.3	6.9	147.7	0.7	7.30	0.02	7.209	0.034
5252	291-295	293	3.670	0.008	0.3228	0.0005	144.5	1.1	0.0672	0.0002	2354.6	8.3	147.2	1.1	6.60	0.02	6.514	0.034
5430	291-295	293	3.820	0.006	0.1289	0.0003	144.2	0.9	0.0685	0.0003	6536.4	25.0	146.9	0.9	6.74	0.03	6.662	0.036
5431	305-306	305.5	4.482	0.006	0.2389	0.0007	144.6	0.8	0.0541	0.0003	3248.9	15.5	146.8	0.8	5.28	0.03	5.204	0.036
5432	305-307 b	306	4.166	0.006	0.1602	0.0007	144.6	1.0	0.0545	0.0003	4539.4	22.1	146.8	1.0	5.33	0.03	5.250	0.036
5251	305-307	306	4.052	0.008	0.3649	0.0005	145.2	1.0	0.0582	0.0001	1989.6	4.5	147.5	1.0	5.69	0.02	5.594	0.029