

1 Compound-specific stable carbon and hydrogen isotope analyses of Late-Holocene vegetation  
2 and precipitation change at Laguna Los Mangos, Costa Rica

3  
4 Elizabeth A. Yanuskiewicz<sup>a</sup>, Chad S. Lane<sup>a,\*</sup>, Sally P. Horn<sup>b</sup>, Erik N. Johanson<sup>c</sup>, Douglas W.  
5 Gamble<sup>a</sup>

6  
7 <sup>a</sup> Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences, University of North Carolina Wilmington,  
8 Wilmington, NC 28403, USA

9 <sup>b</sup> Department of Geography, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996, USA

10 <sup>c</sup> Department of Geosciences, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL 33431 USA

11 \* Corresponding author

12 *E-mail address:* [lanec@uncw.edu](mailto:lanec@uncw.edu) (C. Lane).

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24 Abstract

25 New compound-specific isotope analyses of a sediment core from Laguna Los Mangos in  
26 southern Pacific Costa Rica improves understanding of late-Holocene precipitation change in a  
27 region with limited paleoprecipitation records that is vulnerable to future climate change. We  
28 established paleoprecipitation and paleovegetation records from compound-specific stable  
29 hydrogen and carbon isotopic compositions of terrestrially-derived *n*-alkanes ( $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  and  
30  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{alkane}}$ ) to assess paleohydrologic variability and potential linkages to paleoecological change  
31 and human activity as revealed by prior analyses of the Los Mangos core. The  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  values  
32 were corrected for isotopic fractionation using pollen counts from the same core. The Los  
33 Mangos record extends to 4200 cal yr BP and small increases in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of  $\text{C}_{29}$ , +0.6‰, and  
34  $\text{C}_{31}$  alkanes, +0.3‰, ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29,31}$ ) indicate a slight increase in  $\text{C}_4$  vegetation after initial  
35 introduction of maize agriculture to the watershed at ca. 3360 cal yr BP. This slight increase in  
36  $\text{C}_4$  vegetation is followed by the largest positive carbon isotope excursions in the record, as  
37 compared to record averages ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29} = +3.2\text{\textperthousand}$ ,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31} = +5.0\text{\textperthousand}$ ). Paleohydrologic variability  
38 likely influenced vegetation and human activity at Los Mangos. Lake desiccation during the late-  
39 Terminal Classic Drought (TCD) resulted in a sedimentary hiatus in the Los Mangos record from  
40 ca. 950 to 450 cal yr BP. Positive excursions in comparison to record averages occur for both  
41  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  proxies ( $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29} = +25.3$  to +13.4‰ and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31} = +6.5\text{\textperthousand}$ ) during the middle  
42 Little Ice Age (LIA) and indicate drier than average conditions, but there is no evidence of  
43 desiccation during this period. Thus, drought conditions during the LIA were apparently not as  
44 severe at Los Mangos as during the TCD, possibly because of differing forcing mechanisms for  
45 LIA climate that originated, or were more clearly expressed, in the Atlantic basin.

46

47 *Keywords:* Hydrogen isotopes; Carbon isotopes; Terminal Classic Drought; Little Ice Age;  
48 Ocean-atmospheric dynamics; Costa Rica

49

50 1.0

51 Introduction

52 Sedimentary records of past climate variability and prehistoric human-environment  
53 interactions offer temporally-unique insights into the range of climate variability, the evolution  
54 of complex ecological systems, and the response of human populations to environmental  
55 stressors (Bhattacharya et al., 2015; Haug et al., 2003; Hodell et al., 2005; Kerr et al., 2020; Lane  
56 et al., 2014). Understanding how natural and human systems respond to climatic stress on  
57 decadal to centennial timescales is particularly important with projected increases in the  
58 amplitude and duration of extreme climate conditions over the coming decades (Magrin et al.,  
59 2014). Periods of time with spatially and temporally robust proxy evidence for anomalous  
60 regional climate conditions such as the Terminal Classic Drought (TCD; 1200 to 850 cal yr BP)  
61 or Little Ice Age (LIA; 500 to 100 cal yr BP) offer particularly good case studies that, in  
62 combination, can also be used to isolate potential climate forcing mechanisms. Bhattacharya et  
63 al. (2017) and Wu et al. (2019) compiled climate proxy records during the TCD and Lane et al.  
64 (2011a) compiled records during the LIA that document drought in the circum-Caribbean to  
65 discuss specific climate forcing mechanisms that may have caused regional droughts. However,  
66 those studies demonstrated a lack of records from sites on the Pacific slope of Middle America or  
67 with precipitation regimes controlled primarily by atmospheric forcing mechanisms associated  
68 with the Pacific Ocean. Such records are required to isolate potential climate forcing mechanisms

69 for the circum-Caribbean because of the region's sensitivity to both Atlantic and Pacific climate  
70 dynamics (Giannini et al., 2001).

71 Laguna Los Mangos (Los Mangos) is a freshwater lake on the Pacific slope of Costa Rica  
72 in the Térraba River basin, where the precipitation regime is strongly linked to Pacific ocean-  
73 atmospheric dynamics such as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO; George et al., 1998;  
74 Krishnaswamy et al., 2001). Johanson et al. (2019) analyzed the Los Mangos sediment core for  
75 pollen, charcoal, and bulk sediment geochemistry to interpret the timing and spatial variability of  
76 pre-Columbian land use and modification. Pollen analysis of the Los Mangos core indicated that  
77 the site supported tropical moist forest dominated by C<sub>3</sub> plants prior to forest clearance for  
78 prehistoric maize agriculture (Johanson et al., 2019). Maize pollen first appears in the Los  
79 Mangos sedimentary record around 3360 cal yr BP and persists until the early TCD (1170 cal yr  
80 BP), signaling continual agricultural activity and the expansion of C<sub>4</sub> plants.  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  values  
81 remain above the profile mean after 3360 cal yr BP until the middle LIA, offering some insight  
82 on the scale of vegetation change to the area, which is not possible by analyzing pollen alone.  
83 The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  record is particularly valuable for estimating the scale of past maize cultivation.  
84 Maize pollen disperses only short distances (Raynor et al., 1972), and is typically rare in  
85 sediment cores even when present (Horn, 2006), such that pollen percentages may not be  
86 sensitive to the extent of maize agriculture in watersheds (Taylor et al., 2013). The addition of  
87  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  values assists in detecting dominant photosynthetic pathways through the Los Mangos  
88 record, allowing for interpretations of vegetation replacement due to agricultural activities even  
89 if maize pollen counts are low (Lane et al., 2009a). Johanson et al. (2019) hypothesized that  
90 extreme drought and associated decreases in lake level during the early TCD would have  
91 significantly affected maize agriculture around Los Mangos due to decreased water availability.

92 Agriculture proxies such as  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$ , charcoal area influx, carbon to nitrogen ratios (C:N), and  
93 percent organic matter (%OM) all show decreasing values just after ca. 1170 cal yr BP and  
94 extending through the LIA and Spanish arrival (Johanson et al., 2019). No data are available for  
95 the period 950–450 cal yr BP, when drought resulted in a hiatus in the sediment profile  
96 (Johanson et al., 2019). Johanson et al. (2019) concluded that severe aridity during the late TCD,  
97 aridity during the LIA, and population decline from the spread of disease following the Spanish  
98 Conquest drove declines in agricultural activity around Los Mangos until the twentieth century.  
99 However, bulk sediment isotope and pollen datasets can be ambiguous when trying to isolate  
100 natural vs. anthropogenic changes in the environment. The addition of more diagnostic  
101 compound-specific isotope proxies at Los Mangos could improve our understanding of regional  
102 climate variability and the response of both natural and anthropogenic systems to such variability  
103 through time. Analyzing  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{alkane}}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  proxies can reveal how climatic events  
104 influenced Los Mangos and how such events may have affected human occupation, as previously  
105 explored by Johanson et al. (2019) based on bulk stable isotopes, charcoal, and pollen.

106 In this study, we apply carbon and hydrogen isotope analyses of terrestrially-derived *n*-  
107 alkanes to the Los Mangos sediment core to assess whether clear linkages exist between  
108 paleoprecipitation dynamics, vegetation change, and agricultural activity over the Late Holocene.  
109 We also investigate the expression of the TCD and LIA on the Pacific slope of southern Costa  
110 Rica to better understand potential forcing mechanisms for extended drought events in this  
111 region of scarce studies.

112

113 2.0

114 Regional setting

115 2.1

116 *Laguna Los Mangos*

117 Los Mangos (9.0894 N, 83.4666 W) is a 0.3 ha, closed basin freshwater lake located at  
118 475 m elevation in the Fila Costeña of southern Pacific Costa Rica. The Los Mangos basin  
119 appears to have formed from a landslide around 4300 cal yr BP and has a maximum water depth  
120 of 0.5 m (Johanson et al., 2019). Johanson et al. (2019) retrieved a sediment core 752 cm long in  
121 2014 near the center of Los Mangos; all prior and compound-specific (this study) proxies are  
122 derived from this sediment core.

123 Los Mangos is located within the Diquís subregion of the Gran Chiriquí archaeological  
124 region of southern Pacific Costa Rica and western Panama. The major cultural periods of the  
125 Diquís subregion document the transformation from hunter-gathers to a complex hierarchical  
126 society with large populations dependent on maize agriculture (Corrales, 2000). The latest  
127 period, the Chiriquí period, ended with the Spanish Conquest, when the Chiriquí lost an  
128 estimated 90–95% of its population (Dobyns, 1966).

129 Sediment cores have been analyzed from several other lakes in the Diquís subregion:  
130 Laguna Zoncho cores spanning 3600 cal yr BP to present (Clement and Horn, 2001; Lane et al.,  
131 2004; Taylor et al., 2013; Taylor et al., 2020), Santa Elena spanning ca. 1950 cal yr BP to present  
132 (Anchukaitis and Horn, 2005; Kerr et al., 2020), Vueltas spanning from at least 1200 cal yr BP to  
133 present (Horn and Haberyan, 2016), and Gamboa from 2500 cal yr BP to present (Horn, 2006)  
134 are located in the southeastern part of the Diquís subregion, and their records begin at or after the  
135 arrival of maize agriculture (Figure 1, top; Horn, 2006). Lagunas Danta (ca. 800 cal yr to  
136 present) and Carse (ca. 350 cal yr BP to present) (Johanson et al., 2020) are located near Los  
137 Mangos in the western part of the Diquís subregion, but their records cover less than 800 years,

138 beginning well after the arrival of maize agriculture. Only Los Mangos in the western Diquís has  
139 a record that begins prior to the establishment of maize agriculture, establishing a baseline for the  
140 natural environment (Johanson et al., 2019).

141 *2.1.1*

142 *Present regional precipitation dynamics*

143 Precipitation dynamics in Central America are influenced by multiple forcing  
144 mechanisms related to latitudinal position, isthmian geography, and topography. Southern  
145 Pacific Costa Rica receives 2500–5000 mm precipitation annually (Instituto Meteorológico  
146 Nacional), with a rainy season from May to October (Sánchez-Murillo et al., 2016). Generally,  
147 the descending branch of the Hadley cell controls regional circulation. The trade winds dominate  
148 low-level circulation during the dry season (November–April, Durán-Quesada et al., 2020) with  
149 dominant easterly flow reducing precipitation along the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, because of  
150 rain shadowing and intensification of the easterly Caribbean Low-Level Jet (Wang, 2007;  
151 Hidalgo et al., 2019). In the wet season, the northward migration of the Pacific limb of the ITCZ  
152 decreases trade wind intensities and creates cross-equatorial winds that recurve to become  
153 southwesterly and transport Pacific moisture into southwestern Costa Rica via the westerly  
154 Chorro del Occidente Colombiano (CHOCO) jet that does not typically penetrate past the  
155 Cordillera (Sánchez-Murillo et al., 2016). Numerous anomalous events may disrupt normal state  
156 conditions for Costa Rica, one major influencing anomalous event is the El Niño-Southern  
157 Oscillation (ENSO) originating in the tropical Pacific.

158 ENSO events can be termed either cold “La Niña” or warm “El Niño” events. Cold and  
159 warm events are fundamentally different, and all events differ from one another (Sarachik and  
160 Cane, 2010). ENSO is mainly controlled by anomalous heating in the central and eastern

161 equatorial Pacific, which develops a zonal seesaw in sea level pressure between the eastern  
162 equatorial Pacific and the tropical Atlantic. Lower than average sea level pressures occur in the  
163 eastern equatorial Pacific with higher than average sea level pressures in the tropical Atlantic  
164 (Curtis and Hastenrath, 1995; Hastenrath and Heller, 1977; Covey and Hastenrath, 1978; Poveda  
165 and Mesa, 1997; Gianni et al., 2001). Drier than average conditions occur in the Caribbean  
166 Basin during July-October of the first year of a warm ENSO event due to divergence in the basin  
167 (Ropelewski and Halpert, 1987, 1996). During dry years the velocity and duration of the  
168 northeast trade winds and associated Caribbean Low-Level Jet increase over the Caribbean  
169 because of opposing signs of pressure in the North Atlantic and the eastern equatorial Pacific  
170 (Hastenrath and Lamb, 1977; Waylen and Laporte, 1999; Bhattacharya et al., 2017). This trade  
171 wind dynamic results in increased precipitation on the Caribbean slope of Costa Rica from  
172 onshore flow of northeast trade winds (Vargas and Trejos, 1994), while the Pacific slope of  
173 Costa Rica, which lies in the rain shadow, experiences lower rainfall than the Caribbean slope  
174 because of the significant orographic effect of the central highlands (Vargas and Trejos, 1994).  
175 Additionally, Pulwarty and Diaz (1993) found during warm ENSO events the eastern equatorial  
176 Pacific intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ) shifts to a south-west position, which would also  
177 inhibit convection and decrease rainfall along the Pacific slope of Costa Rica (Durán-Quesada et  
178 al., 2020).

179 Pacific Ocean dynamics most directly influence the precipitation regime around Los  
180 Mangos today, with ENSO as one of the strongest controls on inter-annual precipitation  
181 variability in the Térraba watershed (George et al., 1998; Krishnaswamy et al., 2001).  
182 Ropelewski and Halpert (1987) identified seventeen global regions with teleconnections between  
183 ENSO and regional precipitation, of which Central America and the Caribbean is one. Waylen et

184 al. (1996) analyzed precipitation totals from over 100 stations in Costa Rica to determine  
185 responses of precipitation to ENSO events and found annual precipitation varies by region due to  
186 different responses to ENSO. Generally, along Costa Rica's Pacific slope droughts occur during  
187 warm (El Niño) events. Specifically, in the Térraba river basin, a hydrologic year may be  
188 generally defined as dry (El Niño), wet (La Niña), or normal, depending on the ENSO forcing  
189 (Krishnaswamy et al., 2001).

190 The North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), a major contributor to interannual variability in  
191 atmospheric circulation (Hurrell, 1995), also influences Central American rainfall variability  
192 (Giannini et al., 2000; Bhattacharya et al., 2017). The positive phase of the NAO decreases  
193 precipitation in the Caribbean region due to surface divergence or subsidence (Giannini et al.,  
194 2001). NAO phases also describe the state of the North Atlantic subtropical high (NASH)  
195 pressure cell (Lachniet et al., 2017). A positive NAO is associated with a stronger NASH,  
196 reducing boundary layer moisture over southern central America (Bhattacharya et al., 2017).  
197 Through analysis of proxy and instrumental records and general circulation model simulations,  
198 Bhattacharya et al. (2017) found the NAO to be negatively correlated with precipitation in  
199 Mexico and Central America, but this correlation is geographically focused along the Atlantic  
200 coast. A warm ENSO event paired with a positive NAO phase could constructively interfere to  
201 enhance drought conditions, but along the Pacific slope in southern Costa Rica, ENSO is the  
202 leading ocean-atmospheric influence on interannual variability (Durán-Quesada et al., 2020).

203 The latitudinal range of the seasonal migration of the ITCZ also exerts major control over  
204 sub-annual and inter-annual patterns of precipitation in Central America and is sensitive to sea  
205 surface temperature gradients and radiative forcing between the Northern and Southern  
206 Hemispheres (Broccoli et al., 2006). In both the eastern-central Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans

207 the ITCZ displays an annual cycle of latitudinal migration (Wang and Wang, 1999). Rasmusson  
208 and Carpenter (1982) proposed that eastern-central Pacific ITCZ variability is driven by the  
209 relationship between sea surface temperature (SST) gradients and ENSO, while the Atlantic  
210 ITCZ dynamics are more complex (Chiang et al., 2000).

211 The Cariaco Basin is located at about 10 °N and represents a well-studied site used to  
212 interpret the position of the Atlantic ITCZ through time based on the elemental composition of  
213 the laminated marine sediments that accumulate in this marine basin. Haug et al. (2001, 2003)  
214 interpreted titanium content (%Ti) in the Cariaco Basin sediments as a direct measure of  
215 terrigenous sediment delivery resulting from variations in regional rainfall and river runoff in  
216 northern South America. Seasonal patterns of latitudinal migration of the Atlantic ITCZ are  
217 recorded in the sediments of the anoxic Cariaco Basin by alternation between terrigenous and  
218 marine-dominated material, and the amount of terrigenous material can be used to infer the  
219 position of the Atlantic ITCZ (Haug et al., 2001). Generally, a more northerly mean annual  
220 position of the Atlantic ITCZ creates wetter conditions for much of the circum-Caribbean and a  
221 drier climate is expected when the Atlantic ITCZ is in a more southerly mean annual position  
222 (Figure 1, bottom).

223 2.1.2

224 *Past regional precipitation dynamics*

225 Haug et al. (2003) inferred multiyear drought events through %Ti minima beginning at  
226 ca. 1040 cal yr BP, 1090 cal yr BP, 1140 cal yr BP, and 1190 cal yr BP in the Cariaco Basin  
227 record. These multiyear drought events coincide with the period known as the Terminal Classic  
228 Drought (TCD; 1200 cal yr BP to 850 cal yr BP). The TCD is a period of severe drought that  
229 occurred in two distinct phases from about 750–875 AD and ~1000–1075 AD (~1200–1075 cal

230 yr BP and ~950–875 cal yr BP; Hodell et al., 2005) and is one of the driest intervals in the region  
231 within the last millennium (Bhattacharya et al., 2017). Numerous studies have correlated the  
232 timing of the TCD to the timing of the demise of the Classic Maya civilization in the Yucatan  
233 Peninsula (Haug et al., 2003; Hodell et al., 2005; Webster et al., 2007). Aridity during the TCD  
234 is also evident at locales outside of the Yucatan Peninsula including the Basin of Mexico  
235 (Lachniet et al., 2012), Caribbean Antilles (Lane et al., 2009b, 2014), Belize (Kennett et al.,  
236 2012), Panama (Lachniet et al., 2004), and Costa Rica (Lane and Horn, 2013; Taylor et al., 2013,  
237 2020; Wu et al., 2017, 2019; Kerr, 2019; Kerr et al., 2020).

238 Several climate forcing mechanisms have been linked to the TCD: changes in solar  
239 activity (Hodell et al., 2001), shifts in the ITCZ (Hodell et al., 2005), significant volcanic  
240 eruptions in the past 2500 years (Sigl et al., 2015), and anthropogenic deforestation by the Maya  
241 and other pre-Columbian peoples (Oglesby et al., 2010). However, Bhattacharya et al. (2017)  
242 hypothesized that solar activity changes were quite small over the time period of the TCD. Also,  
243 volcanic activity (Sigl et al., 2015) and anthropogenic deforestation (Oglesby et al., 2010; Cook  
244 et al., 2012) could have amplified the cooling and aridity of the TCD, but further research is  
245 needed to determine if those two mechanisms caused the TCD (Bhattacharya et al., 2017).  
246 Bhattacharya et al. (2017) analyzed proxy data and general circulation models to investigate long  
247 term drought dynamics in Middle America, which revealed the TCD was driven by basin-wide  
248 cooling in the North Atlantic, amplification of the North Atlantic Subtropical High (NASH), and  
249 atmospheric drying over southern Central America.

250 Other notable %Ti minima in the Cariaco Basin record are evident during the timing of  
251 the Little Ice Age (LIA) with %Ti levels lower than values occurring during the Younger Dryas  
252 (Haug et al., 2001). The LIA is another severe, multidecadal period of drought that may have

253 been a larger magnitude drought than the TCD. Until recently, the LIA was only thought to have  
254 affected high-latitude climates, particularly in the North Atlantic. There is now evidence of LIA  
255 cooling in the tropical Andes from oxygen isotope compositions of glacial ice (Thompson et al.,  
256 2006); sedimentary evidence indicating LIA glacial advance in the Andean highlands (Markgraf  
257 et al., 2000; Polissar et al., 2006); geochemical evidence of LIA aridity from sediment cores  
258 from the Caribbean slope of the Cordillera Central, Dominican Republic (Lane et al., 2011a), the  
259 Yucatan Peninsula (Hodell et al., 2005), Nicaragua (Stansell et al., 2013), and the Gulf of  
260 Mexico (Richey et al., 2007); and evidence of LIA cooling from chironomid assemblages in  
261 southern Pacific Costa Rica (Wu et al., 2017). Few paleoclimate records include evidence of LIA  
262 climate change in the Pacific, but Sachs et al. (2009) documented significant changes in the  
263 latitudinal range of migration of the Pacific ITCZ during the LIA. Typically, the modern ITCZ  
264 ranges from 3–10 °N in the boreal winter and summer, respectively; however, Sachs et al. (2009)  
265 provided evidence of dry climates on Washington Island (4° 43'N, 160° 25' W) in the Northern  
266 Line Islands during the LIA related to a near-equator positioned ITCZ, supporting the idea of a  
267 change in the latitudinal range of migration of the Pacific ITCZ.

268 The decreased temperatures and increased aridity during the LIA in the high latitudes of  
269 the Northern Hemisphere and the circum-Caribbean, respectively, are thought to have been  
270 caused by decreases in solar insolation. During the LIA, the Maunder and Spörer sunspot minima  
271 occurred (Stuiver and Braziunas, 1989), along with increased volcanic activity (Crowley et al.,  
272 2003), resulting in decreased solar insolation that favored a negative NAO phase (Shindell et al.,  
273 2001) and weakened the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC; Lund et al.,  
274 2006). In turn, this decrease in solar insolation caused a decrease in both Atlantic and Caribbean  
275 sea surface temperatures (SST; Druffel, 1982; Winter et al., 2000; Wantanabe et al., 2001) and

276 therefore, decreased the cross-equatorial SST gradient. This decreased cross-equatorial SST  
277 gradient restricts the ITCZ movement into the northern tropics and results in a drier climate for  
278 Central America (Peterson and Haug, 2005; Lane et al., 2011a; Burn and Palmer, 2014).

279 Both the TCD and LIA are hypothesized to have resulted primarily from Atlantic climate  
280 variability, leading to droughts in the circum-Caribbean (Lane et al., 2011a; Bhattacharya et al.,  
281 2017). Yet, paleorecords used to analyze the TCD (Hodell et al., 1995; 2005; Curtis et al., 1996;  
282 Haug et al., 2003; Webster et al., 2007; Lane et al., 2009b, 2011b, 2014; Kennett et al., 2012;  
283 Fensterer et al., 2013; Bhattacharya et al., 2015; 2017; Douglas et al., 2015) and the LIA (Haug  
284 et al., 2001, 2003; Nyberg et al., 2001; Watanabe et al., 2001; Peterson and Haug, 2005; Lane et  
285 al., 2009b, 2011a; Fensterer et al., 2012;) are overwhelmingly located on the Atlantic slope of  
286 Middle America and have climate regimes dominated by Atlantic ocean-atmosphere dynamics.  
287 To investigate potential Pacific Ocean forcing mechanisms on past precipitation in Central  
288 America requires more paleorecords from the Pacific slope. The location of Los Mangos on the  
289 Pacific slope in southern Costa Rica and the linkage between ENSO and modern Térraba River  
290 Basin streamflow make the site ideal for investigating potential Pacific forcing mechanisms on  
291 paleoprecipitation dynamics.

292 2.1.3

293 *Existing proxies for Laguna Los Mangos*

294 Sediment in the Los Mangos core varies from fine mineral silts and clays to coarse  
295 organic sediment with wood fragments (Johanson et al., 2019). The sediment below the hiatus  
296 from ca. 950 to 450 cal yr BP (192–202 cm; Figure 2) shows evidence of incipient pedogenesis  
297 on a lake bed exposed by desiccation (Johanson et al., 2019). The hiatus indicates a severe  
298 drought that would have affected agricultural activity around Los Mangos (Johanson et al.,

299 2019). Notably, this does not mean that the drought lasted for 500 years as some sedimentary  
300 material may have been lost due to deflation of the exposed lake bed, but does provide  
301 bracketing ages for the time period within which the drought occurred.

302 The Los Mangos pollen record indicates maize agriculture at ca. 3360 cal yr BP. C<sub>3</sub> trees  
303 and shrubs, such as Melastomataceae/Combretaceae and *Ficus*, were dominant until the  
304 introduction of maize, after which C<sub>3</sub> taxa declined and C<sub>4</sub> grasses and herbs increased (Figure  
305 3). Microscopic charcoal influx is variable at Los Mangos, but shows a slight increase that  
306 matches the timing of the first evidence of maize in the record, perhaps related to initial forest  
307 clearance (Johanson et al., 2019). Percent organic matter (% OM) increases from less than 10%  
308 at the base of the record to ca. 80% at 3100 cal yr BP, and then decreases until the last century  
309 (Figure 3; Johanson et al., 2019).

310 The carbon to nitrogen ratio (C:N) of bulk sediments is sensitive to relative contributions  
311 of aquatic vs. terrestrial organic matter inputs to the sedimentary organic matter (SOM) pool.  
312 Higher C:N values (>20) indicate that terrestrially-derived organic matter is the dominant  
313 contributor to the SOM pool. Lower C:N (<10) indicate aquatic-derived organic matter is the  
314 dominant contributor to the SOM pool (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993). C:N ratios in Los Mangos  
315 are variable, with one large peak at ca. 2900 cal yr BP that indicates an increase in terrestrial  
316 carbon deposited in the lake sediments, possibly from deforestation (Figure 3; Kaushal and  
317 Binford, 1999; Johanson et al., 2019).

318 The stable carbon isotopic composition of the bulk sediment ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$ ) toward the base of  
319 the Los Mangos core is relatively low (-29.6‰) and remains lower than the profile mean of -  
320 27.5‰ until a shift coincident with early maize agriculture at ca. 3360 cal yr BP (Johanson et al.,  
321 2019). This shift could represent a transition from primarily C<sub>3</sub> vegetation to increased amounts

322 of C<sub>4</sub> plants (peak at -24.5‰) associated with maize agriculture. Another relatively positive  
323 δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>TOC</sub> value occurs around the timing of the TCD at ca. 1170 cal yr BP, likely in part due to  
324 aridity enhancing water use efficiency in vegetation. Subsequently, δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>TOC</sub> values decrease by  
325 ca. 290 cal yr BP to slightly below mean levels for the record. This decline in δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>TOC</sub> coincides  
326 with the later portion of the LIA (ca. 290 cal yr BP) and the Spanish Conquest (ca. 450 cal yr  
327 BP). The most recent section of the core shows increasing δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>TOC</sub> values that are indicative of  
328 modern agriculture. However, the δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>TOC</sub> record is influenced by both changes in plant species  
329 assemblages (C<sub>3</sub> vs C<sub>4</sub> vegetation) and water use efficiency (Diefendorf and Freimuth, 2017),  
330 thus, adding δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>C29</sub> and δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>C31</sub> records will help disentangle variability within the δ<sup>13</sup>C<sub>TOC</sub>  
331 record.

332

333 3.0

334 Materials and methods

335 3.1

336 *n*-alkane extraction

337 Following the methods of Lane et al. (2018) for extraction and purification of *n*-alkanes,  
338 we lyophilized 61 sediment samples and ground them to a homogenized powder using a mortar  
339 and pestle. We used an accelerated solvent extractor, ASE 350 Dionex California, U.S.A.  
340 system, with hexane at 125°C at a pressure of 1500 psi for 10 minutes to solvent-extract *n*-  
341 alkanes. The excess solvent added during the ASE process was removed using a rotary  
342 evaporator to condense the *n*-alkanes in each sample. To isolate the aliphatic fraction of the  
343 solvent extracted *n*-alkanes, we used silica column chromatography solid phase extraction with

344 hexane as the eluting solvent. Lastly, we conducted urea adduction to isolate straight-chain  
345 monomers from branched and cyclic compounds within the aliphatic fraction.

346 3.1.1

347 *Identification and quantification*

348 We identified and quantified *n*-alkane abundances using a Thermo 1310 gas  
349 chromatograph coupled with an ISQ quadrupole mass spectrometer and a flame ionization  
350 detector. To confirm identification and quantify abundance, a standard of C<sub>7</sub>-C<sub>40</sub> *n*-alkane  
351 mixture (Sigma Aldrich) was used in full scan mode and compared to all sample spectra. A TG-5  
352 SILMS silica column (30m, 0.32mm i.d., 0.32 $\mu$ m film thickness) was used with an oven  
353 temperature program of 70°C isothermal for 1 minute, 20°C/min to 180°C, 4°C/min to 320°C,  
354 320°C isothermal for 5 minutes, 30°C/min to 350°C, and 350°C isothermal for 1 minute for the  
355 gas chromatograph injections completed in splitless mode at 300°C. The abundances of *n*-  
356 alkanes are presented in units of  $\mu$ g g OM<sup>-1</sup>, where OM is the percent organic matter as  
357 determined by loss on ignition analyses by Johanson et al. (2019). We used the average chain  
358 length (ACL) equation of Diefendorf et al. (2011) and the carbon preference indices (CPI)  
359 equation proposed by Marzi et al. (1993) to determine the dominant carbon source.

360 3.1.2

361 *Compound-specific stable isotope analyses*

362 We conducted compound-specific carbon and hydrogen isotope ratio analyses of *n*-  
363 alkanes using a Thermo Delta V plus mass spectrometer coupled with a Thermo 1310 gas  
364 chromatograph via an Isolink II device. We used a Thermo TG-5 SILMS silica column (60m,  
365 0.25mm i.d., 0.25 $\mu$ m film thickness) for homologue separation. The injection and oven  
366 temperature parameters were the same as the programs used for the identification and

367 quantification of compounds. We injected Indiana University mixture B4 as alkane standards  
368 every third sample to monitor sample precision. We analyzed samples in duplicate and precision  
369 was calculated based on multiple injections of a single alkane sample. We corrected raw data to  
370 the Vienna Pee-Dee Belemnite (for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  data) and Vienna Standard Mean Ocean Water (for  $\delta^2\text{H}$   
371 data) standards using the Indiana University mixture B4 standard. The standard error for all  
372 sample measurements was calculated using the methods of Polissar and D'Andrea (2014).

373 3.1.3

374 *Apparent fractionation ( $\varepsilon$ ) corrections*

375 Feakins (2013) paired hydrogen isotope values for plant leaf wax ( $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{wax}}$ ) with pollen  
376 data from the same sediments to evaluate species-specific isotopic fractionation and devise a way  
377 to correct for potential bias in paleohydrological reconstructions from  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{wax}}$ . We used a  
378 modified version of Feakins' (2013) end-member mixing model to correct the  $\delta^2\text{H}$  composition  
379 of each individual  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$  alkane sample for variations in apparent isotope fractionation ( $\varepsilon$ )  
380 between precipitation and leaf waxes based on co-occurring or stratigraphically adjacent fossil  
381 pollen assemblages. We present hydrogen isotopic values only from alkanes  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$  as we  
382 are interested in changes in the terrestrial climate and higher chain length *n*-alkanes are derived  
383 from terrestrial higher plants (Eglinton and Hamilton, 1967). We grouped existing pollen counts  
384 from Los Mangos into appropriate plant life form categories to determine the approximate  
385 contribution of each plant life form to the total pollen sum. The isotopic end-members were  
386 determined using data provided by Sachse et al. (2012) for  $\varepsilon$  of  $\text{C}_{29}$  and  $\text{C}_{31}$  alkanes by plant life  
387 form, as angiosperms,  $\text{C}_3$  graminoids,  $\text{C}_4$  graminoids, forbs, and pteridophytes have different  $\varepsilon$   
388 values (Appendix, Table A.1). Gymnosperm  $\varepsilon$  values were omitted from the mixing model  
389 calculations because there are no gymnosperms in the study area. The same technique used by

390 Kerr (2019) was applied to correct the hydrogen isotope values for alkanes C<sub>29</sub> and C<sub>31</sub> (C<sub>x</sub>)  
391 using estimated  $\varepsilon$  values from pollen counts. The  $\varepsilon$  values were calculated as:

392 
$$\varepsilon_{C_x} = [f_{C_3 \text{ Angiosperm trees and shrubs}} * \varepsilon_{C_3 \text{ Angiosperm trees and shrubs}}] + [f_{C_3 + C_4 \text{ Graminoids}} * \%C_3$$
  
393 
$$\text{Graminoids} * \varepsilon_{C_3 \text{ Graminoids}}] + [f_{C_3 + C_4 \text{ Graminoids}} * \%C_4 \text{ Graminoids} * \varepsilon_{C_4 \text{ Graminoids}}] + [f_{C_3 + C_4}$$
  
394 
$$\text{Forbs} * \varepsilon_{C_3 + C_4 \text{ Forbs}}] + [f_{\text{Pteridophytes}} * \varepsilon_{\text{Pteridophytes}}]$$

395 Where the fraction of pollen by type ( $f_x$ ) is derived from the values calculated by grouping Los  
396 Mangos pollen data by plant life form and  $\varepsilon$  is equal to the apparent fractionation values for C<sub>29</sub>  
397 and C<sub>31</sub> by growth form provided by Sachse et al. (2012).

398 The  $\varepsilon$ -corrected hydrogen isotope ( $\varepsilon$ -corrected  $\delta^2\text{H}$ ) values for the alkanes C<sub>29</sub>, and C<sub>31</sub> (C<sub>x</sub>) are  
399 calculated for each individual sample as:

400 
$$\varepsilon\text{-corrected } \delta^2\text{H}_{C29,31} = ((\delta^2\text{H}_{(C_x)} + 1000) / ((\varepsilon_{C_x} / 1000) + 1)) - 1000$$

401 Where  $\delta^2\text{H}_{C_x}$  is equal to the raw  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values of C<sub>29</sub>, and C<sub>31</sub> found for each Los Mangos sample  
402 and  $\varepsilon_{C_x}$  is equal to the calculated  $\varepsilon$  for C<sub>29</sub> and C<sub>31</sub> based on the co-occurring or stratigraphically  
403 adjacent pollen assemblage for each sample (Figure 4 and Appendix, Table A.2).

404

405 4.0

## 406 Results

407 The CPI of alkanes in the Los Mangos samples range from 0.861 to 7.01 with an average  
408 of 3.28. The ACL of alkanes in all samples is 23.3. The most abundant *n*-alkane in each sample  
409 is C<sub>29</sub>. The average  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of C<sub>29</sub> and C<sub>31</sub> *n*-alkanes ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{C29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{C31}$ ) for the entire Los  
410 Mangos record are -33.3‰ and -34.0‰, respectively (Figure 5, Appendix, Table A.2). The  
411  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{C29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{C31}$  values are variable before the largest positive excursion at 3071 cal yr BP

412 with a  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  value of  $-30.1\text{\textperthousand}$  and a  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  value of  $-28.9\text{\textperthousand}$ . The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values  
413 show a sharp positive increase at 1713 cal yr BP to  $-31.5\text{\textperthousand}$  and  $-30.9\text{\textperthousand}$ , respectively. The  
414 beginning of the Terminal Classic Drought (TCD), before the hiatus, displays a slight increase in  
415  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values. The early LIA has more negative  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values that are  
416 slightly below the average  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values for the entire record. At 285 cal yr BP,  
417 corresponding to the middle LIA, the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  value of  $-32.8\text{\textperthousand}$  is above the entire record average  
418  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  value, but following this there is a trend toward more negative  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  values at the top of  
419 the sedimentary record. The carbon isotopic composition of  $\text{C}_{29}\text{ }n$ -alkanes is not strongly  
420 correlated with the carbon isotopic composition of the bulk sediment ( $R^2 = 0.205$ ) but the  
421 relationship is statistically significant ( $p = 4.01 \text{ E-17}$ ,  $n=23$ ).

422 The average  $\varepsilon$ -corrected  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  (Figure 4) and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  (Appendix, Table A.2) values of  
423 the Los Mangos sedimentary record are  $-57.3\text{\textperthousand}$  and  $-56.1\text{\textperthousand}$ , respectively, and isotopically  
424 lighter than the modern precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$  value of  $-47.0\text{\textperthousand}$  estimated for Los Mangos (Bowen,  
425 2019). The  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  profiles closely resemble the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  profiles until ca.  
426 3360 cal yr BP. Following ca. 3360 cal yr BP, the most negative hydrogen isotope values occur  
427 at 3071 cal yr BP ( $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29} = -122\text{\textperthousand}$ ;  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31} = -96.6\text{\textperthousand}$ ), corresponding with the most positive  
428  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values. The  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values then become variable with a 100-year  
429 period of aridity lasting from approximately 1850–1750 cal yr BP as indicated by above-average  
430  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values. The early TCD has slightly above-average  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values at  
431 1198 cal yr BP ( $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29} = -51.0\text{\textperthousand}$ ;  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31} = -50.1\text{\textperthousand}$ ) before transitioning to below-average  $\delta^2\text{H}$   
432 values at 1166 cal yr BP. The early LIA reveals a sharp positive  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  peak at 397 cal yr BP  
433 with a  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  value of  $-32.0\text{\textperthousand}$ . The middle LIA  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values remain slightly above  
434 the average  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values for the record until 285 cal yr BP. After 285 cal yr BP, the

435 late LIA and modern (100 cal yr BP to present)  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values remain below the  
436 average  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  for the record.

437

438 5.0

439 Discussion

440 Out of the three sediment cores taken within the western portion of the Diquís subregion,  
441 the Los Mangos record begins well before the Lagunas Danta and Carse records. The 4200 cal yr  
442 BP record of Los Mangos contains an 840 cal yr period prior to the first evidence of maize pollen  
443 in the record. This period is representative of the pre-agricultural landscape surrounding Los  
444 Mangos, which was dominated by C<sub>3</sub> vegetation before 3360 cal yr BP (Johanson et al., 2019).

445 Both C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>4</sub> species have a range of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values due to environmental and biological factors  
446 (Diefendorf and Freimuth, 2017) and enzymatic subtypes (Hattersley, 1982). Various  
447 environmental factors influence the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  signatures of C<sub>3</sub> plants, generating a larger range of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$   
448 values as compared to those of C<sub>4</sub> species, 20‰ vs 10‰, respectively. Climate generates large  
449 net isotope effects on C<sub>3</sub> plants through the influence of precipitation on stomatal conductance  
450 (Farquhar et al., 1989; Diefendorf and Freimuth, 2017). Decreased precipitation reduces stomatal  
451 conductance and increases water use efficiency in plants, which would increase the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  
452  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values of alkanes (Farquhar et al., 1989; Diefendorf and Freimuth, 2017).

453 The 10‰ difference between  $\varepsilon$ -corrected (this study) and the modern precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$   
454 values may be due to small changes in the fractional contributions of different plant life forms  
455 throughout the 4200 cal yr BP sedimentary record of Los Mangos or the seasonal timing of  
456 alkane biosynthesis, which most likely occurs during the wet season when precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$   
457 values are lower (Sánchez-Murillo et al., 2016). The  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values of terrestrially-derived *n*-alkanes

458 are controlled by a combination of the  $\delta^2\text{H}$  composition of precipitation, subsequent  
459 evapotranspiration of soil water prior to plant uptake, and species-specific biosynthetic  
460 fractionations during lipid biosynthesis (Sachse et al., 2012). The  $\delta^2\text{H}$  of precipitation in tropical  
461 locales is typically assumed to be controlled primarily by the  $\delta^2\text{H}$  of atmospheric vapor source  
462 waters and subsequent rainout, otherwise known as the ‘amount effect’, with higher rates of  
463 precipitation corresponding to lower  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values of precipitation (Sachse et al., 2012). However,  
464 Sánchez-Murillo et al. (2016) proposed that the amount effect is not a significant control on  
465 precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values and that moisture source (Pacific vs. Atlantic) has minimal influence on  
466 southern Costa Rican regional precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values. Sánchez-Murillo et al. (2016)  
467 documented large decreases in precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values during the wet season (65‰) as  
468 compared to the dry season (19‰) that show strong statistical relationships with relative  
469 humidity and lifting condensation level, which are themselves interrelated. The data of Sánchez-  
470 Murillo et al. (2016) indicate that not only are precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values a strong proxy for mesic  
471 vs. arid conditions, but also that moisture source and transport are not the primary controls on  
472 regional  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values. If moisture source or transport were the primary drivers of precipitation  
473  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values in the region, the expected pattern would be more negative precipitation  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values  
474 during the dry season due to the combined effects of Atlantic-sourced moisture that has a lower  
475  $\delta^2\text{H}$  value than that of the Pacific, and subsequent orographic distillation of air masses moving  
476 over the Cordillera.

477         Based on these modern dynamics and isotopic systematics, we interpret a decrease in  
478  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  values to indicate an increase in relative humidity and overall precipitation while  
479 increased  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  values indicate decreased relative humidity and decreased overall  
480 precipitation. For instance, at 4053 cal yr BP a relatively low  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C29}}$  value (-74.3‰), in

481 comparison to the record average, indicates an increase in relative humidity and overall  
482 precipitation. At 3907 cal yr BP  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  values increase and remain above the record average for  
483 about 200 years, signaling a period of decreased relative humidity and decreased overall  
484 precipitation (Figure 4).

485 A slight increase in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values after the first occurrence of maize pollen at  
486 3360 cal yr BP likely indicates a small increase in the contribution of C<sub>4</sub> plants to the  
487 sedimentary organic pool, associated with land clearance and the establishment of C<sub>4</sub> crops and  
488 associated weeds. After 3360 cal yr BP the  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values shift toward more negative  
489 values as compared to the record averages, which we interpret as an increase in relative humidity  
490 and overall precipitation. Also, during this time  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$ , C/N, % OM, and P/Al values slightly  
491 increase and maize pollen is present, supporting the interpretation of active agriculture and land  
492 modification around Los Mangos (Figure 5). Thus, the slight increase in both  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$   
493 values after the first occurrence of maize pollen at 3360 cal yr BP most likely reflect organic  
494 matter contributions from vegetation composed of different plant species, such as an increase in  
495 C<sub>4</sub> crops and weeds, as opposed to reflecting increased water use efficiency due to limited  
496 precipitation. The small amplitude of the positive excursion, <1‰, indicates that cultivation may  
497 have been on a relatively small scale during the earliest stages of site occupation. Further, the  
498 relatively small differences (<4‰) in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  values between intervals of maize agriculture and  
499 later forest regeneration at Los Mangos indicate less replacement of C<sub>3</sub> vegetation (e.g., tropical  
500 forest) by cultigens or associated weedy taxa at Los Mangos compared to Laguna Santa Elena  
501 (~8‰ compound-specific isotopic data; Kerr, 2019), located ca. 65 km to the southeast. Proxy  
502 evidence of relatively low C<sub>4</sub> biomass at Mangos could represent smaller scale agricultural

503 activities or a greater reliance on C<sub>3</sub> cultigens relative to these other sites in the southern Pacific  
504 region.

505 The similar trends in the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  record (Johanson et al., 2019) and the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C29}}$  record  
506 (this study) may signify that both proxies are responding similarly to temporal changes in  
507 vegetation around Los Mangos (Lane et al., 2016) prior to ca. 3360 cal yr BP. The relationship  
508 between the proxies is not strongly correlated ( $R^2 = 0.205$ ), but is statistically significant ( $p =$   
509  $4.01 \times 10^{-17}$ ,  $n = 23$ ). This result is likely the consequence of data points that deviate from the  
510 linear regression, which most likely reflects the sensitivity of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  values to different carbon  
511 sources (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993). In contrast,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C29}}$  values reflect sedimentary plant  
512 waxes (Diefendorf and Freimuth, 2017) and may better quantify proportional contributions of C<sub>3</sub>  
513 vs. C<sub>4</sub> vegetation to the landscape (Goldsmith et al., 2019). Lane et al. (2016) compared coeval  
514  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C29}}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  values from Laguna Castilla, Dominican Republic and found them to be  
515 positively correlated ( $R^2 = 0.52$ ). The authors interpreted this matched temporal response of the  
516  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C29}}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  proxies to indicate a lack of ‘pre-aging’ of alkanes in the terrestrial  
517 environment before burial in the lake sediments (Lane et al., 2016). However, the lack of a  
518 strong correlation between  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C29}}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$  values in the Los Mangos record does not  
519 necessarily indicate an age offset exists or that the proxies are not responding temporally to shifts  
520 in vegetation, because bulk sedimentary isotope proxies represent organic matter from different  
521 sources (Lane et al., 2016). Instead, the lack of a strong temporal correlation between the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$   
522 and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C29}}$  records for the Los Mangos proxies is likely because both nonvascular aquatic plants  
523 (C:N = 4–10) and vascular land plants (C:N =  $\geq 20$ ) (Meyers and Ishiwatari, 1993) have  
524 contributed to the sedimentary organic matter pool. Mean C:N ratios of 13.6 in the Los Mangos

525 record indicate a well-mixed sedimentary organic matter pool of both allochthonous and  
526 autochthonous origin.

527 At 3071 cal yr BP the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$  values reach the highest levels for the entire  
528 record, which could be interpreted as an increase in C<sub>4</sub> vegetation and/or drought stress. This  
529 increase corresponds to the most negative  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values in the entire Los Mangos  
530 record, the highest C:N ratio, highest concentration of organic matter, a slight increase in  
531 charcoal influx, a shift in elemental composition of the sediments (P/Al), and the presence of  
532 maize pollen (Figure 5). As previously mentioned, more negative  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values  
533 indicate increased relative humidity and increased overall precipitation, but Rosenmeier et al.  
534 (2002) proposed the hypothesis that extensive deforestation could significantly alter hydrological  
535 budgets of lake basins, thereby causing the  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  proxies to reflect hydrologic change due to  
536 land use instead of precipitation variability. Inferred land use change around Los Mangos at ca.  
537 3071 cal yr BP may have influenced the  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  records as deforestation reduces the  
538 rates of transpiration at the basin scale and, as a result of decreased soil moisture flux, can  
539 theoretically reduce the  $\delta^2\text{H}$  value of groundwater (Rosenmeier et al., 2002) used by plants  
540 during lipid biosynthesis.

541 The most positive  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values of the entire Los Mangos record occur at  
542 ~1840 cal yr BP and are preceded by ~200 years of variable  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values. This period of inferred  
543 hydrologic variability terminated by extended drought appears to have potentially affected  
544 agriculture around Los Mangos as indicated by a 250-year hiatus in maize pollen deposition and  
545 lack of evidence of site occupation in other proxy data, for example low charcoal area influx  
546 (Figure 5).

547 Johanson et al. (2019) concluded that drought in the lowlands of southern Pacific Costa  
548 Rica during the late Terminal Classic Drought (TCD) was a driver of the sediment hiatus that  
549 began after 950 cal yr BP in the Los Mangos record. Several sites in Costa Rica and the wider  
550 circum-Caribbean contain evidence of increased aridity during the TCD: Laguna Zoncho (Wu et  
551 al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2020), Lago de las Morrenas 1 (Kerr, 2019), Lago de las Morrenas 3C  
552 (Wu et al., 2019), Laguna Bonillita (Kerr, 2019), and Las Lagunas (Lane et al., 2009b, 2014).  
553 However, these sites with evidence of TCD aridity, with the exception of Laguna Zoncho (65 km  
554 southeast of Los Mangos), are all in Atlantic watersheds. Kerr (2019) concluded that Laguna  
555 Santa Elena, located near Laguna Zoncho, was not consistently dry during the TCD, but had  
556 variable precipitation conditions. Warm ENSO events should result in drought around Los  
557 Mangos based on the positive correlation between regional precipitation and ENSO  
558 (Krishnaswamy et al., 2001). Thus, amplified ENSO event frequency coinciding with the TCD  
559 should include warm events that may be responsible for the documented desiccation of Los  
560 Mangos, which is in contrast to the hypothesis that climate variability in the Atlantic was the  
561 primary mechanism forcing circum-Caribbean droughts around this time period (Bhattacharya et  
562 al., 2017). While amplified ENSO events should also include wet periods for Los Mangos, our  
563 record does show slightly below average  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values at 1166 cal yr BP that coincide  
564 with maize pollen presence just before the sedimentary hiatus, which could represent wetter  
565 conditions prior to an extreme drying event. Lachniet et al. (2004) also documented dry  
566 conditions in eastern Panama, ~30 km from the Pacific coast, during this period and concluded  
567 ENSO is the primary driver of precipitation anomalies for the study region and possibly the  
568 entire Pacific coast of Central America.

569 Warm ENSO events are associated with increases in northeast trade wind and Caribbean  
570 Low-Level Jet velocities (Hastenrath and Lamb, 1977) and as these winds reach Costa Rica the  
571 rain shadow is enhanced along the Pacific slope of the cordilleras (Vargas and Trejos, 1994).  
572 Typically, the northerly migration of the ITCZ in the boreal summer perturbs the rain shadow,  
573 bringing precipitation to the Pacific slope of Costa Rica (Waylen et al., 1996), but a decreased  
574 cross-equatorial SST gradient would inhibit northward movement of the ITCZ, a consequence of  
575 an El Niño event (Figure 1, bottom). Proxy records of El Niño events from Laguna Pallcacocha,  
576 Ecuador (Moy et al., 2002) reveal maximum ENSO frequency during the TCD. While the  
577 Laguna Pallcacocha ENSO proxy record has received some criticism for potentially not  
578 capturing all ENSO events accurately (Schneider et al., 2018), other sites throughout the Pacific  
579 support the hypothesis of enhanced El Niño frequency and strength coincident with the TCD.  
580 The El Junco Lake, Galapagos record (Conroy et al., 2008) contains grain size evidence of  
581 enhanced El Niño frequencies between ~1000 and 500 cal yr B.P. relative to the preceding 500  
582 years. Sedimentary records from the Western Pacific also indicate increased amplitude of ENSO  
583 events during the TCD (Rodysill et al., 2019). Sachs et al. (2021) found evidence of drying in  
584  $\delta^2\text{H}$  records from Washington Island, but concluded that this drying is likely from large volcanic  
585 eruptions because the apparent increase in El Niño frequency during this time should have led to  
586 greater precipitation on Washington Island. We propose that lake desiccation, decreased  
587 agricultural proxies, and increases in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C29}}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C31}}$  values during the TCD at Los Mangos  
588 resulted largely from Pacific climate forcing mechanisms, such as high-amplitude or high-  
589 frequency El Niño events. Koutavas et al. (2006) found variance in Pacific-based  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  data from  
590 *G. ruber* foraminifera to be strongly correlated to ENSO dynamics during the late Holocene,  
591 while mid-Holocene  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  data showed no correlation with ENSO. George et al. (1998) analyzed

592 modern stream flow data and found that Costa Rican watersheds draining into the Pacific had  
593 strong connections to ENSO cyclicity whereas rivers draining into the Caribbean showed unclear  
594 connections to ENSO cyclicity. Thus, both past (Koutavas et al., 2006) and modern (George et  
595 al., 1998) Pacific records show a strong connection to ENSO cyclicity and strength. The drying  
596 observed at Los Mangos during the TCD is likely due to this locale being heavily influenced by  
597 increased El Niño frequency or strength at this time.

598 The Little Ice Age (LIA) also appears to have affected precipitation dynamics around Los  
599 Mangos, but at an apparently lower evaporation to precipitation ratio as compared to the TCD  
600 because the Los Mangos record does not include evidence of lake desiccation during the LIA.  
601 The Los Mangos  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  profile indicates a wet early LIA (453 to 434 cal yr BP), dry middle LIA  
602 (434 to ca. 300 cal yr BP), and wet late LIA (ca. 300 to present). In contrast, the sediments of the  
603 Cariaco Basin display the lowest %Ti values of the entire Holocene during the middle LIA. At  
604 this time, Los Mangos  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  proxies signal drier than average conditions, but there is  
605 no evidence of lake desiccation like that observed for the TCD. After ca. 300 cal yr BP both the  
606  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  proxies and the Cariaco Basin %Ti profile show increases in precipitation with  
607 below-average  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values and higher Ti percentages, respectively (Figure 6). Also,  
608 in Pacific Costa Rica, Kerr (2019) documented increased  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  values around 215 cal yr BP at  
609 Santa Elena and interpreted the increased  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{alkane}}$  values as evidence of severe drying towards  
610 the end of the LIA. Los Mangos  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values increased starting ca. 430 cal yr BP and  
611 the apparent drying persisted for about 130 years before transitioning to wetter than average  
612 moisture conditions as the LIA ended (Figure 6). The period of aridity at Santa Elena lasted  
613 longer, for a total of 330 cal yr, until the end of the LIA (Kerr, 2019). The lack of evidence of  
614 severe drought during the LIA, such as expressed by the unconformity during the TCD, may

615 implicate Atlantic basin climate dynamics as the primary forcing mechanism of arid conditions  
616 during the LIA. Lane et al. (2011a) summarized widespread proxy evidence of LIA paleoclimate  
617 and palaeoceanographic change in the western tropical Atlantic that is consistent with a decrease  
618 in the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC) that would drive a decrease in  
619 Caribbean SSTs and a diminished cross-equatorial SST gradient, leading to a southward  
620 suppression of the ITCZ.

621 Analyzing total lipid extract (TLE)  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values from a sediment core containing a  
622 microbial mat, Sachs et al. (2009) found that Washington Lake ( $4^{\circ} 43' \text{N}$ ,  $160^{\circ} 25' \text{W}$ ) on  
623 Washington Island, part of the Northern Line Islands in the central Pacific Ocean, also  
624 experienced extended periods of decreased precipitation from ca. 530 to 390/310 cal yr BP and  
625 periods of increased precipitation after 390–310 cal yr BP. Presently, Washington Island receives  
626 about 2900 mm of precipitation per year due to its position within the latitudinal range of the  
627 annual migration of the Pacific ITCZ (Sachs et al., 2009). The sedimentary record of Washington  
628 Lake indicates the most arid conditions relative to the entire record occurred during the LIA (530  
629 to 390–310 cal yr BP) based on positive hydrogen isotope values of total lipid extracts, inferred  
630 high salinity, and a gelatinous red-orange microbial mat containing the extremely salt-tolerant  
631 cyanobacteria, *Aphanothecce* (Sachs et al., 2009). Sachs et al. (2009) concluded the mean annual  
632 position of the Pacific ITCZ was located south of Washington Island during a portion of the LIA,  
633 creating hypersaline conditions in Washington Lake, but this southward positioning of the  
634 Pacific ITCZ was short lived. The most arid conditions on Washington Island, 530–390/310 cal  
635 yr BP, correlate to arid conditions at Los Mangos, ca. 430–300 cal yr BP. After 300 cal yr BP,  
636 Los Mangos transitioned to a wetter climate with two significant periods of increased  
637 precipitation indicated by negative  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  and  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$  values at 285 and 130 cal yr BP.

638 Sachs et al. (2009) also documented  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values from dinosterol, a lipid from  
639 dinoflagellate algae, signaling a transition to a wetter climate in Spooky Lake, Palau ( $7^{\circ}09'N$ ,  
640  $134^{\circ}22'E$ ), and  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values from botryococcenes, a lipid from the B race of green algae, in El  
641 Junco Lake, Galápagos ( $0^{\circ}54'S$ ,  $89^{\circ}29'W$ ) signaling a transition to a drier climate after  
642 approximately 150 cal yr BP (Figure 6). The increased  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{botryococcenes}}$  values from El Junco Lake  
643 after 150 cal yr BP temporally correlate to decreased  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{lipid}}$  values from Los Mangos,  
644 Washington Lake, and Spooky Lake, which is expected due to the position of each study site.  
645 Los Mangos, Washington Lake, and Spooky Lake all lie near or just north of the northern extent  
646 of the modern annual position of the Pacific ITCZ while El Junco Lake lies south of it. Thus,  
647 opposing  $\delta^2\text{H}$  records from Los Mangos, Washington Lake, and Spooky Lake compared to El  
648 Junco Lake support the idea that the near-equator positioned Pacific ITCZ eventually migrated  
649 northward, producing a wetter climate at Los Mangos, Washington Lake, and Spooky Lake  
650 toward the late-LIA (Sachs et al., 2009).

651 Cooling in the Northern Hemisphere during the LIA most likely decreased the cross-  
652 equatorial sea surface temperature gradient, keeping the Pacific ITCZ further south (Sachs et al.,  
653 2009) and creating drier conditions at Los Mangos. Rodysill et al. (2019) proposed that La Niña  
654 related flooding in Indonesia decreased at the end of the Medieval Climate Anomaly (MCA) and  
655 the early LIA due to decreased amplitudes (rainfall extremes) of ENSO events during this period  
656 of relatively cool Northern Hemisphere temperatures. Rodysill et al. (2019) suggested ENSO-  
657 driven precipitation dynamics become more extreme during periods of above average Northern  
658 Hemisphere mean temperatures. The TCD overlaps with the Medieval Warm Period, a time  
659 period known for warmer than average Northern Hemisphere temperatures. Desiccation of Los  
660 Mangos sediments during the TCD may have occurred due to more severe (higher amplitude

661 increases in evaporation to precipitation ratios) warm-phase ENSO-driven droughts during this  
662 relatively warm period of the late Holocene. Conversely, the LIA may have been a period of  
663 lower-amplitude (smaller amplitude increases in evaporation to precipitation ratios) droughts that  
664 never led to desiccation of the Los Mangos lake basin. This conceptual model implicates both  
665 Pacific (ENSO) and Atlantic (NAO/NASH) dynamics as potential drivers of drought conditions  
666 in the circum-Caribbean over the last 2000 years, with particularly arid conditions possibly  
667 related to high-amplitude warm phases of ENSO, perhaps in concert with an expanded NASH.

668

669 6.0

670 Conclusions

671 Sedimentary and radiocarbon evidence of a hiatus in sedimentation signifies extreme  
672 drought during the TCD at Los Mangos. Conversely, the *n*-alkane hydrogen isotope proxies  
673 ( $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{wax}}$ ; Figure 6 and Appendix, Table A.2) at Los Mangos indicate relatively small decreases in  
674 precipitation during the LIA. We propose that ocean-atmosphere dynamics of both Atlantic and  
675 Pacific basins influenced drought events at Los Mangos. However, drought impacts at Los  
676 Mangos during the TCD were apparently much more severe than during the LIA. This contrast in  
677 drought amplitude is in good agreement with recent and past records of ENSO-driven rainfall  
678 extremes in the Pacific basin, indicating that TCD and LIA drought dynamics in the neotropics  
679 were not solely controlled by North Atlantic ocean-atmosphere dynamics. The TCD, in  
680 particular, may have been related primarily to Pacific ocean-atmosphere dynamics (ENSO) and  
681 resulting teleconnections, in contrast to the LIA, for which Atlantic expressions of the climatic  
682 event appear to be more severe.

683 Author contributions

684 Lane, Horn, Johanson, and Gamble designed the research and Horn and Johanson  
685 collected the sediment core used for analyses. Lane and Yanuskiewicz conducted compound-  
686 specific isotope analyses of the Laguna Los Mangos sediment samples and wrote the majority of  
687 the manuscript. Johanson contributed pollen, charcoal, and bulk sediment geochemistry data,  
688 significantly contributing to the manuscript; assisted with figure development; and provided  
689 manuscript edits. Horn contributed pollen data expertise and significantly edited the manuscript.

690

691 Data availability

692 All data are available by request to the authors.

693

694 Declaration of competing interest

695 The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal  
696 relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

697

698 Acknowledgements

699 We thank Krysden Schantz for assistance with isotope sample processing, and Kimberly  
700 Duernberger for assistance with isotopic measurements. We also thank Matthew Kerr for  
701 assistance with isotopic measurements and guidance in the correction of raw isotopic values.

702

703 Funding

704 This research was funded by the National Science Foundation (Award #1660185) and the  
705 UNCW College of Arts and Sciences.

706 7.0

707 References

708 Anchukaitis K.J., and Horn, S.P., 2005. A 2000-year reconstruction of forest disturbance from  
709 southern Pacific Costa Rica. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 221,  
710 35–54.

711

712 Berger, A., and Loutre, M.F., 1991. Insolation values for the climate of the last 10 million years.  
713 *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 10, 297–317.

714

715 Bhattacharya, T., Byrne, R., Böhnel, H., Wogau, K., Kienel, U., Ingram, B.L., Zimmerman, S.,  
716 2015. Cultural implications of late Holocene climate change in Cuenca Oriental, Mexico.  
717 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112, 1693–1698.

718

719 Bhattacharya, T., Chiang, J.C.H., Cheng, W., 2017. Ocean-atmosphere dynamics linked to  
720 8001050 CE drying in Mesoamerica. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 169, 263–277.

721

722 Bowen, G. J., 2019. The Online Isotopes in Precipitation Calculator, version 3.1.  
723 <http://www.waterisotopes.org>.

724

725 Broccoli, A.J., 2006. Response of the ITCZ to Northern Hemisphere cooling. *Geophysical  
726 Research Letters*, 33, 1–4.

727

728 Burn, M.J., Palmer, S.E., 2014. Solar forcing of Caribbean drought events during the last  
729 millennium. *Journal of Quaternary Science*, 29, 827–836.

730

731 Chiang, J.C.H., Kushnir, Y., Zebiak, S.E., 2000. Interdecadal changes in eastern Pacific ITCZ  
732 variability and its influence on the Atlantic ITCZ. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 27,  
733 3687–3690.

734

735 Clement, R.M., and Horn, S.P., 2001. Pre-Columbian land-use history in Costa Rica: a 3000-year  
736 record of forest clearance, agriculture and fires from Laguna Zoncho. *The Holocene*,  
737 11,4, 419–426.

738

739 Conroy, J.L., Overpeck, J.T., Cole, J.E., Shanahan, T.M., Steinitz-Kannan, M., 2008. Holocene  
740 changes in eastern tropical Pacific climate inferred from a Galápagos lake sediment  
741 record. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 27, 1166–1180.

742

743 Cook, B., Anchukaitis, K., Kaplan, J., Puma, M., Kelley, M., Gueyffier, D., 2012. Pre-  
744 Columbian deforestation as an amplifier of drought in Mesoamerica. *Geophysical  
745 Research Letters*, 39, 1–5.

746

747 Corrales F (2000) An Evaluation of Long Term Cultural Change in Southern Central America.  
748 University of Kansas (Dissertation), 1–361.

749

750 Covey, D. L., and S. Hastenrath, 1978: Pacific El Niño phenomenon and the Atlantic circulation.  
751      Monthly Weather Review, 106, 1280–1287.

752

753 Crowley, T.J., Baum, S.K., Kim, K.Y., Hegerl, G.C., Hyde, W.T., 2003. Modeling ocean heat  
754      content changes during the last millennium. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 30, 1–4.

755

756 Curtis, J.H., and Hodell, D.A., 1996. Climate variability on the Yucatan Peninsula  
757      (Mexico) during the past 3500 years, and implications for Maya culture evolution.  
758      *Quaternary Research*, 46, 37–47.

759

760 Curtis, S., and Hastenrath, S., 1995: Forcing of anomalous sea surface temperature evolution in  
761      the tropical Atlantic during Pacific warm events. *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 100,  
762      15,835–15,847.

763

764 Diefendorf, A.F., Freeman, K.H., Wing, S.L., Graham, H.V., 2011. Production of n-alkyl lipids  
765      in living plants and implications for the geologic past. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica  
766      Acta*, 75, 7472–7485.

767

768 Diefendorf, A.F., and Freimuth, E.J., 2017. Extracting the most from terrestrial plant derived  
769      nalkyl lipids and their carbon isotopes from the sedimentary record: A review. *Organic  
770      Geochemistry* 103, 1–21.

771

772 Dobyns, H.F., 1966. An appraisal of techniques with a new hemispheric estimate. *Current  
773      Anthropology* 7: 395–416.

774

775 Douglas, P.M.J., Pagani, M., Canuto, M.A., Brenner, M., Hodell, D.A., Eglinton, T.I.,  
776      Curtis, J.H., 2015. Drought, agriculture adaptation, and sociopolitical collapse in the  
777      Maya Lowlands. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112, 5607–5612.

778

779 Druffel, E.M., 1982. Banded corals: Changes in oceanic carbon-14 during the Little Ice Age.  
780      *Science*, 218, 13–19.

781

782 Durán-Quesada, A.M., Sorí, R., Ordoñez, P., Gimeno, L., 2020. Climate perspectives in the  
783      Intra-Americas Seas. *Atmosphere*, 11, 959; doi:10.3390/atmos11090959

784

785 Eglinton, G., and Hamilton, R.J., 1967. Leaf epicuticular waxes. *Science*, 156, 1322–1335.

786

787 Farquhar, G.D., Ehleringer, J.R., Hubick, K.T., 1989. Carbon isotope discrimination and  
788      photosynthesis. *Annual Reviews, Plant Physiology*, 40, 503–537.

789

790 Feakins, S.J., 2013. Pollen-corrected leaf wax D/H reconstructions of northeast African  
791      hydrological changes during the late Miocene. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology,  
792      Palaeoecology*, 374, 62–71.

793

794 Fensterer, C., Scholz, D., Hoffmann, D., Spötl, C., Pajón, J.M., Mangini, A., 2012. Cuban  
795 stalagmite suggests relationship between Caribbean precipitation and the Atlantic  
796 Multidecadal Oscillation during the past 1.3 ka. *The Holocene*, 22, 1405–1412.

797

798 Fensterer, C., Scholz, D., Hoffmann, D., L., Spötl, C., Schröder-Ritzrau, A., Horn, C., Pajón,  
799 J.M., Mangini, A., 2013. Millennial-scale climate variability during the last 12.5 ka  
800 recorded in a Caribbean speleothem. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, 361, 143–151.

801

802 George, R.K., Waylen, P., Laporte, S., 1998. Interannual variability of annual streamflow and the  
803 Southern Oscillation in Costa Rica. *Hydrological Sciences Journal*, 43:3, 409–424.

804

805 Giannini, A., Cane, M.A., Kushnir, Y., 2001. Interdecadal changes in the ENSO teleconnection  
806 to the Caribbean region and the North Atlantic Oscillation. *Journal of Climate*, 14, 2867–  
807 2879.

808

809 Goldsmith, Y., Polissar, P.J., deMenocal, P.B., Broecker, W.S., 2019. Leaf wax  $\delta D$  and  $\delta^{13}C$  in  
810 soils record hydrological and environmental information across a climate gradient in  
811 Israel. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Biogeosciences*, 124, 2898–2916.

812

813 Hastenrath, S. L., and Heller, L., 1977: Dynamics of climatic hazards in northeast Brazil.  
814 *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, 103, 77–92.

815

816 Hastenrath, S.L., and Lamb, P.J., 1977. *Climatic atlas of the tropical Atlantic and eastern Pacific  
817 Oceans*. The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI.

818

819 Hattersley, P.W., 1982.  $\delta^{13}C$  values of C<sub>4</sub> types in grasses. *Australian Journal of Plant  
820 Physiology*, 9, 139–154.

821

822 Haug, G.H., Hughen, K.A., Sigman, D.M., Peterson, L.C., Röhl, U., 2001. Southward migration  
823 of the Intertropical Convergence Zone through the Holocene. *Science*, 293, 1304–1308.

824

825 Haug, G.H., Günther, D., Peterson, L.C., Sigman, D.M., Hughen, K.A., Aeschlimann, B.,  
826 2003. Climate and the collapse of Maya civilization. *Science*, 299, 1731–1735.

827

828 Hidalgo, H.G., Alfaro, E.J., Amador, J.A., Bastidas, A., 2019. Precursors of quasi-decadal dry-  
829 spells in the Central America Dry Corridor. *Climate Dynamics*, 53, 1307–1322.

830

831 Hodell, D.A., Curtis, J.H., Brenner, M., 1995. Possible role of climate in collapse of Classic  
832 Maya civilization. *Nature*, 375, 391–394.

833

834 Hodell, D.A., Brenner, M., Curtis, J.H., Guilderson, T., 2001. Solar forcing of drought frequency  
835 in the Maya lowlands. *Science*, 292, 1367–1370.

836

837 Hodell, D.A., Brenner, M., and Curtis, J.H., 2005. Terminal Classic Drought in the northern  
838 Maya lowlands inferred from multiple sediment cores in Lake Chichancanab (Mexico).  
839 *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 24, 1413–1427.

840 Horn, S.P., 2006. Pre-Columbian maize agriculture in Costa Rica: pollen and other evidence  
841 from lake and swamp sediments. In: Staller J.E., Tykot R.H., and Benz B.F. (eds)  
842 *Histories of Maize: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Prehistory, Biogeography,*  
843 *Domestication, and Evolution of Maize*. Amsterdam: Academic Press, 367–380.

844

845 Horn, S.P., and Haberyan K.A., 2016. Lakes of Costa Rica. In: Kappelle M (ed) Costa Rican  
846 Ecosystems. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 656–682.

847

848 Hurrell, J.W., 1995. Decadal Trends in the North Atlantic Oscillation: Regional Temperatures  
849 and Precipitation. *Science*, 269, 676–679.

850

851 Hurrell, J.W., Deser, C., Phillips, A.S., 2019. North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO). *Encyclopedia of*  
852 *Ocean Sciences* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn), 447–454.

853

854 Instituto Meteorológico Nacional. N.d. Precipitación Promedio Anual en Costa Rica, 1961–  
855 1980. Escala 1:1,600,000. <https://www.imn.ac.cr/web/imn/atlas-climatologico>

856

857 Johanson, E.N., Horn, S., Lane, C., 2019. Pre-Columbia agriculture, fire, and Spanish contact: a  
858 4200-year record from Laguna Los Mangos, Costa Rica. *The Holocene*, 29, 1743–1757.

859

860 Johanson, E.N., Horn, S.P., Lane, C.S., Sánchez, M., Cecil, J.A., 2020. In Press. Fire history  
861 across the Little Ice Age in southern Pacific Costa Rica. Accepted for publication by the  
862 *Journal of Paleolimnology*.

863

864 Kaushal, S., and Binford M.W., (1999) Relationship between C:N ratios of lake sediments,  
865 organic matter sources, and historical deforestation in Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts,  
866 USA. *Journal of Paleolimnology* 22: 439–442.

867

868 Kennett, D., Breitenbachm, S.F.M., Aquino, V.V., Asmerom, Y., Awe, J., Baldini, J.U.L.,  
869 Bartlein, P., Culleton, B.J., Ebert, C., Jazwa, C., Macri, M.J., Marwan, N., Polyak, V.,  
870 Prufer, K.M., Ridley, H.E., Sodemann, H., Winterhalder, B., Haug, G.H., 2012.  
871 Development and disintegration of Maya political systems in response to climate change.  
872 *Science*, 338, 788–791.

873

874 Kerr, M.T., 2019. Holocene precipitation variability, prehistoric agriculture, and natural and  
875 human-set fires in Costa Rica. PhD Thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

876

877 Kerr, M.T., Horn, S.P., Lane, C.S., 2020. Stable isotope analysis of vegetation history and land  
878 use change at Laguna Santa Elena in southern Pacific Costa Rica. *Vegetation History and*  
879 *Archaeobotany*, 29, 477–492.

880

881 Koutavas, A., deMenocal, P.B., Olive, G.C., Lynch-Stieglitz, J., 2006. Mid-Holocene El Niño  
882 Southern Oscillation (ENSO) attenuation revealed by individual foraminifera in eastern  
883 tropical Pacific sediments. *Geology*, 34, 993–996.

884

885 Krishnaswamy, J., Halpin, P.H., Richter, D.D., 2001. Dynamics of sediment discharge in relation  
886 to land-use and hydro-climatology in a humid tropical watershed in Costa Rica. *Journal*  
887 of *Hydrology*, 253, 91–109.

888

889 Lachniet, M.S., Burn, S.J., Piperno, D.R., Asmerom, Y., Polyak, V.J., Moy, C.M., Christenson,  
890 K., 2004. A 1500-year El Niño/Southern Oscillation and rainfall history for the Isthmus  
891 of Panama from speleothem calcite. *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 109, 1–8.

892

893 Lachniet, M.S., Bernal, J.P., Asmerom, Y., Polyak, V., Piperno, D., 2012. A 2400 yr  
894 Mesoamerican rainfall reconstruction links climate and cultural change. *Geology*, 40,  
895 259–262.

896

897 Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P., and Mora, C.I., 2004. Stable carbon isotope ratios in lake and swamp  
898 sediments as a proxy for prehistoric forest clearance and crop cultivation in the  
899 Neotropics. *Journal of Paleolimnology*, 32, 375–381.

900

901 Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P., Taylor, Z.P., Mora, C.I., 2009,a. Assessing the scale of prehistoric human  
902 impact in the neotropics using stable carbon isotope analyses of lake sediments: a test  
903 case from Costa Rica. *Latin American Antiquity*, 20, 120–133.

904

905 Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P., Mora, C.I., Orvis, K.H., 2009,b. Late-Holocene paleoenvironmental  
906 change at mid-elevation on the Caribbean slope of the Cordillera Central, Dominican  
907 Republic: a multi-site, multi-proxy analysis. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 28, 2239–  
908 2260.

909

910 Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P., Orvis, K.H., Thomason, J.M., 2011,a. Oxygen isotope evidence of Little  
911 Ice Age aridity on the Caribbean slope of the Cordillera Central Dominican Republic.  
912 *Quaternary Research*, 75, 461–470.

913

914 Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P., Mora, C.I., Orvis, K.H., Finkelstein, D.B., 2011,b. Sedimentary stable  
915 carbon isotope evidence of late Quaternary vegetation and climate change in highland  
916 Costa Rica. *Journal of Paleolimnology*, 45, 323–338.

917

918 Lane, C.S., and Horn, S.P., 2013. Terrestrially derived n-alkane  $\delta D$  evidence of shifting  
919 Holocene paleohydrology in highland Costa Rica. *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine*  
920 *Research*, 45, 342–349.

921

922 Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P., and Kerr, M.T., 2014. Beyond the Mayan Lowlands: impacts of the  
923 Terminal Classic Drought in the Caribbean Antilles. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 86,  
924 89–98.

925

926 Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P., Taylor, Z.P., Kerr, M.T., 2016. Correlation of bulk sedimentary and  
927 compound-specific  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values indicates minimal pre-agrain of *n*-alkanes in small tropical  
928 watershed. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 145, 238–242.

929

930 Lane, C.S., Taylor, A.K., Spencer, J., Jones, K.B., 2018. Compound-specific isotope records of  
931 the late-quaternary environmental change in southeastern North Carolina. *Quaternary*  
932 *Science Reviews*, 182, 48–64.

933

934 Lund, D.C., Lynch-Stieglitz, J., Curry, W.B., 2006. Gulf Stream density structure and transport  
935 during the past millennium. *Nature Letters*, 444, 601–604.

936

937 Magaña, V., Amador, J.A, Medina, S., 1999. The midsummer drought over Mexico and Central  
938 America. *Journal of Climate*, 12, 1577–1588.

939

940 Magrin et al., 2014. Central and South America. In: Climate Change 2014: impacts, adaptation,  
941 vulnerability. Part B: regional aspects. Contributions of the Working Group II to the fifth  
942 assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 1499–1566.

943

944 Markgraf, V., Baumgartner, T.R., Bradbury, J.P., Diaz, H.F., Dunbar, R.B., Luckman, B.H.,  
945 Seltzer, G.O., Swetnam, T.W., Villalba, R., 2000. Paleoclimate reconstruction along the  
946 Pole- Equator-Pole transect of the Americas (PEP 1). *Quaternary Science Reviews* 19,  
947 125–140.

948

949 Martinez, N.C., Murray, R.W., Thunell, R.C., Peterson, L.C., Muller-Karger, F., Astor, Y.,  
950 Varela, R., 2007. Modern climate forcing of terrigenous deposition in the tropics (Cariaco  
951 Basin, Venezuela). *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, 264, 438–451.

952

953 Marzi, R., Torkelson, B.E., Olson, R.K., 1993. A revised carbon preference index. *Organic*  
954 *Geochemistry*, 20, 867–900.

955

956 Meyers, P.A., and Ishiwatari, R., 1993. Lacustrine organic geochemistry- an overview of  
957 indicators of organic matter sources and diagenesis in lake sediments. *Organic*  
958 *Geochemistry*, 20, 867–900.

959

960 Moy, C.M., Seltzer, G.O., Rodbell, D. T., Anderson, D.M., 2002. Variability of El  
961 Niño/Southern Oscillation activity at millennial timescales during the Holocene epoch.  
962 *Nature*, 420, 162–165.

963

964 Nobre, P., and Shukla, J., 1996. Variations of sea surface temperature, wind stress, and rain fall  
965 over the tropical Atlantic and South America. *Journal of Climate*, 9, 2464–2479.

966

967 Nyberg, J., Kuijpers, A., Malmgren, B.A., Kunzendorf, H., 2001. Late Holocene changes in  
968 precipitation and hydrography recorded in marine sediments from the northeastern  
969 Caribbean Sea. *Quaternary Research*, 56, 87–102.

970

971 Oglesby, R.J., Sever, T.L., Saturno, W., Erickson, D.J., Srikishen, J., 2010. Collapse of the  
972 maya: could deforestation have contributed? *Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres*, 115, D12106.

973

974

975 Peterson, L.C., Haug, G.H., 2005. Variability in the mean latitude of the Atlantic intertropical  
976 convergence zone as recorded by riverine input of sediments to the Cariaco Basin  
977 (Venezuela). *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*, 1–17.  
978

979 Polissar, P.J., Abbott, M., Wolfe, A.P., Bezada, M., Rull, V., Bradley, R.S., 2006. Solar  
980 modulation of Little Ice Age climate in the tropical Andes. *Proceedings of the National  
981 Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 103, 8937–8942.  
982

983 Polissar, P.J., and D'Andrea, W.J., 2014. Uncertainty in paleohydrologic reconstructions from  
984 molecular  $\delta D$  values. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*, 129, 146–156.  
985

986 Poveda, G., and Mesa, O.J., 1997: Feedbacks between hydrological processes in tropical South  
987 America and large-scale ocean–atmospheric phenomena. *Journal of Climate*, 10, 2690–  
988 2702.  
989

990 Pulwarty, R.S., and Diaz, H.F., 1993. A study of the seasonal cycle and its perturbation by  
991 ENSO in the tropical Americas. IV International Conference on Southern Hemisphere  
992 Meteorology and Oceanography, American Meteorological Society, 262–262.  
993

994 Rasmusson, E.M., and Carpenter, T.H., 1982. Variations in tropical sea surface temperature and  
995 surface wind fields associated with the Southern Oscillation/El Niño, *Monthly Weather  
996 Review*, 110, 354–384.  
997

998 Raynor, G.S., Ogden, E.C., and Hayes, J.V., 1972. Dispersion and deposition of corn pollen from  
999 experimental sources. *Agronomy Journal*, 64, 420–427.  
1000

1001 Richey, J.N., Poore, R.Z., Flower, B.P., Quinn, T.M., 2007. 1400 yr multiproxy record of climate  
1002 variability from the northern Gulf of Mexico. *Geology*, 35, 423–426.  
1003

1004 Rodysill, J.R., Russell, J.M., Vuille, M., Dee, S., Lunghino, B., Bijaksana, S., 2019. La Niña  
1005 driven flooding in the Indo-Pacific warm pool during the past millennium. *Quaternary  
1006 Science Reviews*, 225, 1–11.  
1007

1008 Ropelewski, C.F., and Halpert, M.S., 1987. Global and regional scale precipitation patterns  
1009 associated with the El Niño / Southern Oscillation. Climate Analysis Center/ National  
1010 Meteorological Center, NWS/NOAA, monthly weather review, 115, 1606–1626.  
1011

1012 Ropeleski, C.F., and Halpert, M.S., 1996: Quantifying Southern Oscillation–precipitation  
1013 relationships. *Journal of Climate*, 9, 1043–1059.  
1014

1015 Rosenmeier, M.F., Hodell, D.A., Brenner, M., Curtis, J.H., Martin, J.B., Anselmetti, F.S.,  
1016 Ariztegui, D., Guilderson, T.P., 2002. Influence of vegetation change on watershed  
1017 hydrology: implications for paleoclimatic interpretation of lacustrine  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  records.  
1018 *Journal of Paleolimnology*, 27, 117–131.  
1019

1020 Sachs, J.P., Sachse, D., Smittenberg, R.H., Zhang, Z., Battisti, D.S., Golubic, S., 2009.  
1021       Southward movement of the Pacific intertropical convergence zone AD 1400–1850.  
1022       Nature Geoscience, DOI: 10.1038/NGEO554.

1023

1024 Sachs, J.P., Mügler, I., Sachse, D., Prebble, M., Wolhowe, M., 2021. Last millennium  
1025       hydroclimate in the central equatorial North Pacific (5°N, 160°W). Quaternary Science  
1026       Reviews, 256, 106906.

1027

1028 Sachse, D., Radke, J., Gleixner, G., 2006.  $\delta D$  values of individual *n*-alkanes from terrestrial  
1029       plants along a climatic gradient- Implications for sedimentary biomarker record. Organic  
1030       Geochemistry, 37, 469– 483.

1031

1032 Sachse, D., Billault, I., Bowen, G.J., Chikaraishi, Y., Dawson, T.E., Feakins, S.J., Freeman,  
1033       K.H., Magill, C.R., McInerne, F.A., van der Meer, M.T.J., Polissar, P., Robins, R.J.,  
1034       Sachs, J.P., Schmidt, H.L., Sessions, A.L., White, J.W.C., West, J.B., Kahmen, A., 2012.  
1035       Molecular Paleohydrology: Interpreting the hydrogen isotopic composition of lipid  
1036       biomarkers from photosynthesizing organisms. Annual Review of Earth and Planetary  
1037       Sciences, 40, 221–249.

1038

1039 Sánchez-Murillo, R., Birkel, C., Welsh, K., Esquivel-Hernández, G., Corrales Salazar, J., Boll,  
1040       J., Brooks, E., Roupsard, O., Sáenz-Rosales, O., Katchan, I., Arce-Mesén, R., Soulsby,  
1041       C., Araguás-Araguás, L.J., 2016. Key drivers controlling stable isotope variations in daily  
1042       precipitation of Costa Rica: Caribbean Sea versus Eastern Pacific Ocean moisture  
1043       sources. Quaternary Science Reviews, 131, 250–261.

1044

1045 Sarachik, E.S., and Cane, M.A. *The El Niño-Southern Oscillation Phenomenon*, Cambridge  
1046       University Press, 2010. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,  
1047       <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/miami/detail.action?docID=501290>.

1048

1049 Schneider, T., Hampel, H., Mosquera, P.V., Tylmann, W., and Grosjean, M., 2018. Paleo-ENSO  
1050       revisted: Ecuadorian Lake Pallcacohca does not reveal a conclusive El Niño signal.  
1051       Global and Planetary Change, 168, 54–66.

1052

1053 Shindell, D.T., Schmidt, G.A., Mann, M.E., Rind, D., Waple, A., 2006. Solar forcing of regional  
1054       climate change during the Maunder Minimum. Science, 294, 2149–2152.

1055

1056 Sigl, M., Winstrup, M., McConcell, J., Welten, K., Plunkett, G., Ludlow, F., Büntgen, U.,  
1057       Caffee, M., Chellman, N., Dahl-Jensen, D., et al., 2015. Timing and climate forcing of  
1058       volcanic eruptions for the past 2500 years. Nature, 523, 543–549.

1059

1060 Snarskis, M.J., 1981. The archaeology of Costa Rica. In: Abel-Vidor S and Bakker (eds)  
1061       Between Continents, Between Seas. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 15–84.

1062

1063 Stansell, N.D., Steinman, B.A., Abbott, M.B., Rubinov, M., Roman-Lacayo, M., 2013.  
1064       Lacustrine stable isotope record of precipitation changes in Nicaragua during the Little  
1065       Ice Age and Medieval Climate Anomaly. Geology, 41, 151–154.

1066 Stuiver, M., Braziunas, T.F., 1989. Atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  and century-scale solar oscillations.  
1067 *Nature*, 338, 405–407.

1068

1069 Taylor, Z.P., Horn, S.P., and Finkelstein, D.B., 2013. Maize pollen concentrations in Neotropical  
1070 lake sediments as an indicator of the scale of prehistoric agriculture. *The Holocene*, 23,  
1071 78–84.

1072

1073 Taylor, Z.P., Lane, C.S., Horn, S.P. 2020. A 3600-year record of drought in south Pacific Costa  
1074 Rica. *Quaternary Research*, 98, 36–48.

1075

1076 Thompson, L.G., Mosley-Thompson, E., Brecher, H., Davis, M., Leon, B., Les, D., Lin, P.N.,  
1077 Mashiyotta, T., Mountain, K., 2006. Abrupt tropical climate change: past and present.  
1078 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 103,  
1079 10536–10543.

1080

1081 Vargas, A.B., and Trejos, V.F.S., 1994. Changes in the general circulation and its influence on  
1082 precipitation trends in Central America: Costa Rica. *Ambio*, 23, 87–90.

1083

1084 Wang, C., 2007. Variability of the Caribbean Low-Level Jet and its relations to climate. *Climate  
Dynamics*, 29, 411–422.

1085

1086 Wang, B., Wang, Y., 1999. Dynamics of the ITCZ-equatorial cold tongue complex and causes of  
1087 the latitudinal climate asymmetry. *Journal of Climate*, 12, 1830–1847.

1088

1089 Watanabe, T., Winter, A., Oba, T., 2001. Seasonal changes in sea surface temperature and  
1090 salinity during the Little Ice Age in the Caribbean Sea deduced from Mg/Ca and  $^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O}$   
1091 ratios in corals. *Marine Geology*, 173, 21–35.

1092

1093 Waylen, P., and Laporte, M.S., 1999. Flooding and the El Niño-Southern Oscillation  
1094 phenomenon along the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. *Hydrological Processes*, 13, 2623–  
1095 2638.

1096

1097 Waylen, P.R., Quesada, M.E., Caviedes, C.N., 1996. Temporal and spatial variability of annual  
1098 precipitation in Costa Rica and the Southern Oscillation. *International Journal of  
Climatology*, 16, 173–193.

1099

1100 Webster, J.W., Brook, G.A., Railsback, L.B., Cheng, H., Edwards, R.L., Alexander, C., Reeder,  
1101 P.P., 2007. Stalagmite evidence from Belize indicating significant droughts at the time of  
1102 Preclassic Abandonment, the Maya Hiatus, and the Classic Maya collapse.  
1103 *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*, 250, 1–17.

1104

1105 Winter, A., Ishioroshi, H., Watanabe, T., Oba, T., Christy, J., 2000. Caribbean sea surface  
1106 temperatures: two-to-three degrees cooler than present during the Little Ice Age.  
1107 *Geophysical Research Letters*, 27, 3365–3368.

1108

1109

1110

1111 Wu., J., Porinchu, D.F., Horn, S.P., 2017. A chironomid-based reconstruction of late-Holocene  
1112 climate and environmental change for southern Pacific Costa Rica. *The Holocene*, 27,  
1113 73–84.

1114

1115 Wu, J., Porinchu, D.F., Horn, S.P., 2019. Late Holocene hydroclimate variability in Costa Rica:  
1116 Signature of the terminal classic drought and the Medieval Climate Anomaly in the  
1117 northern tropical Americas. *Quaternary Science Reviews* 215, 144–159.

1118

1119

1120

1121

1122

1123

1124

1125

1126

1127

1128

1129

1130

1131

1132

1133

1134

1135

1136

1137

1138

1139

1140

1141

1142

1143

1144

1145

1146

1147

1148

1149

1150

1151

1152

1153

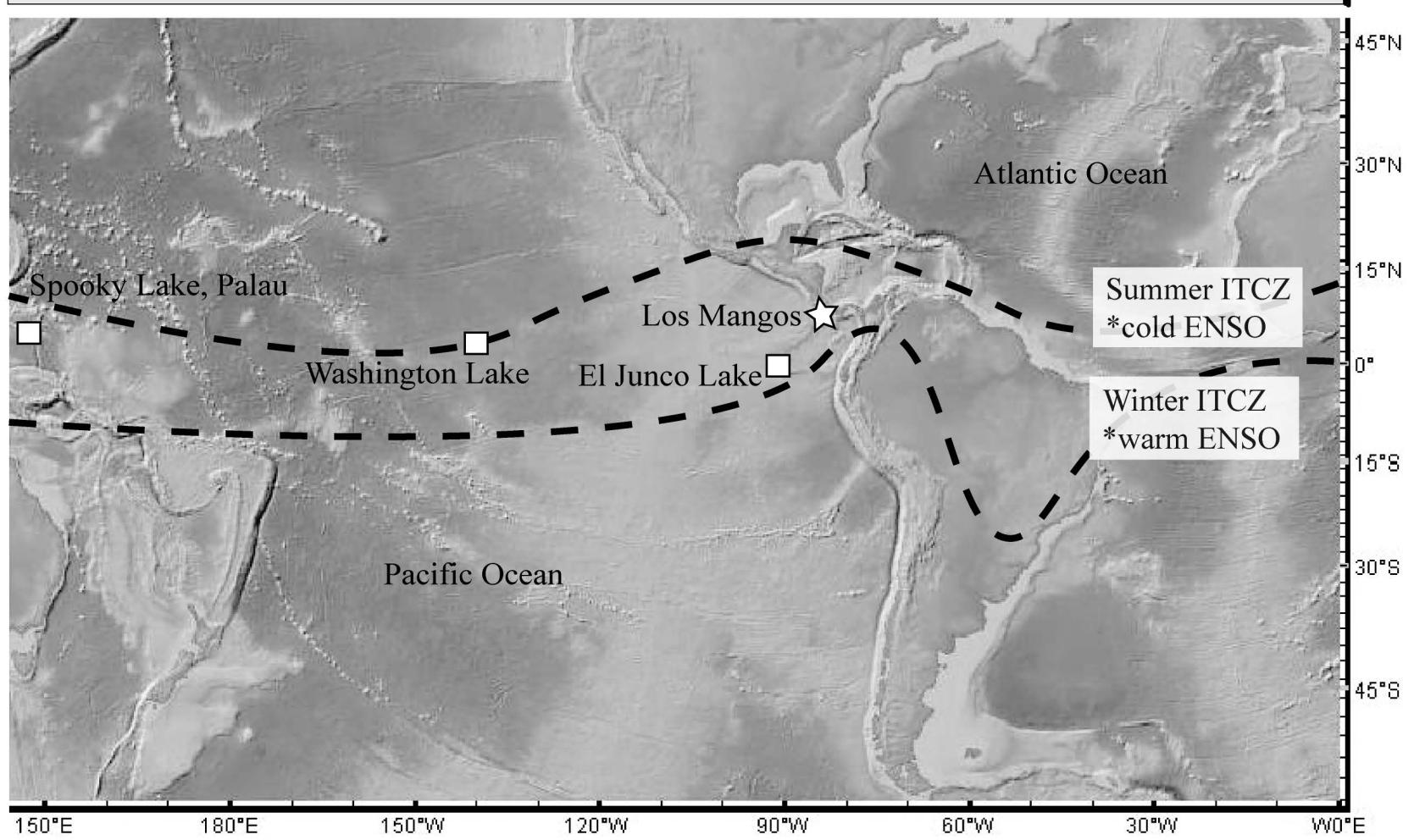
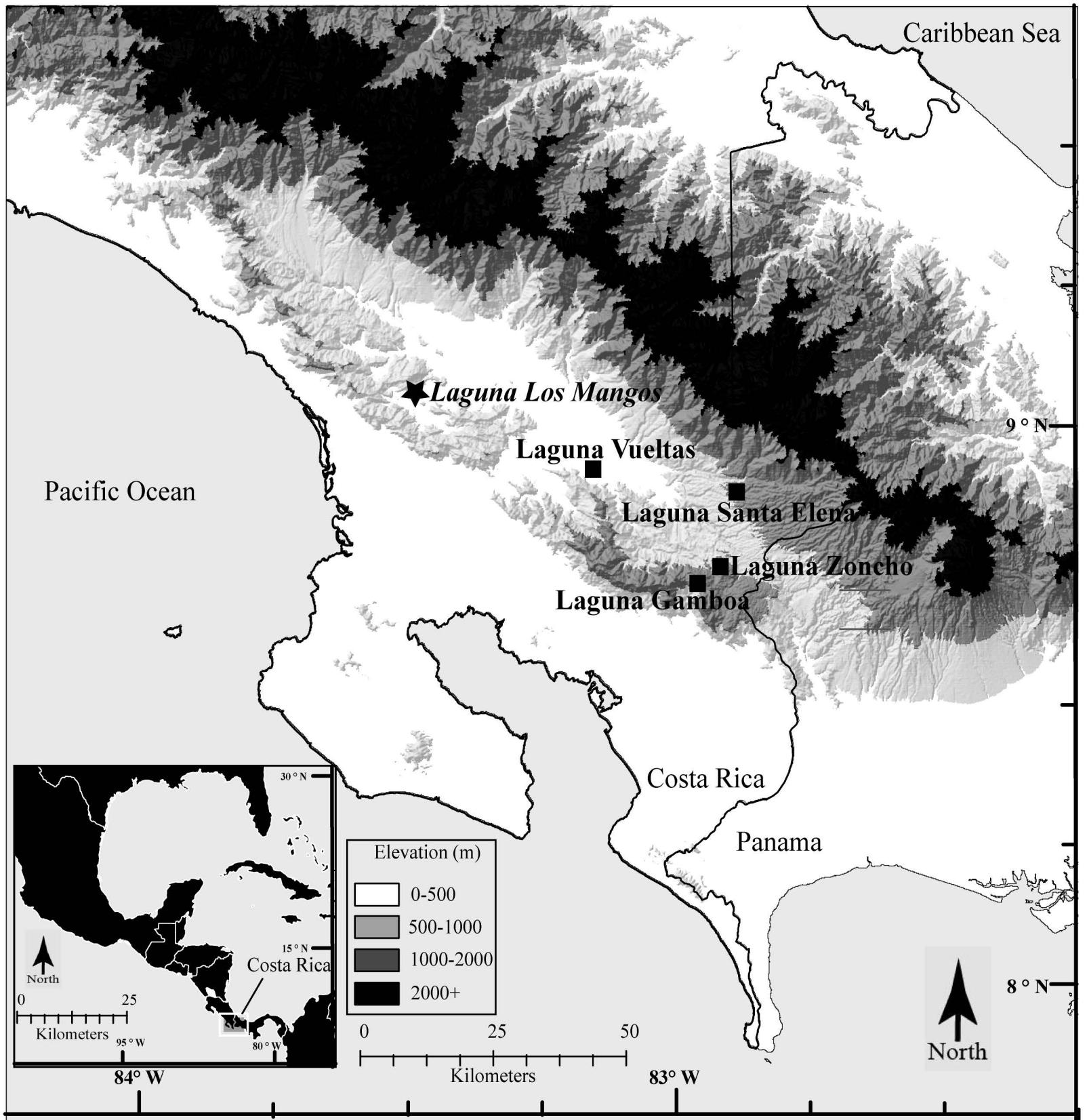
1154

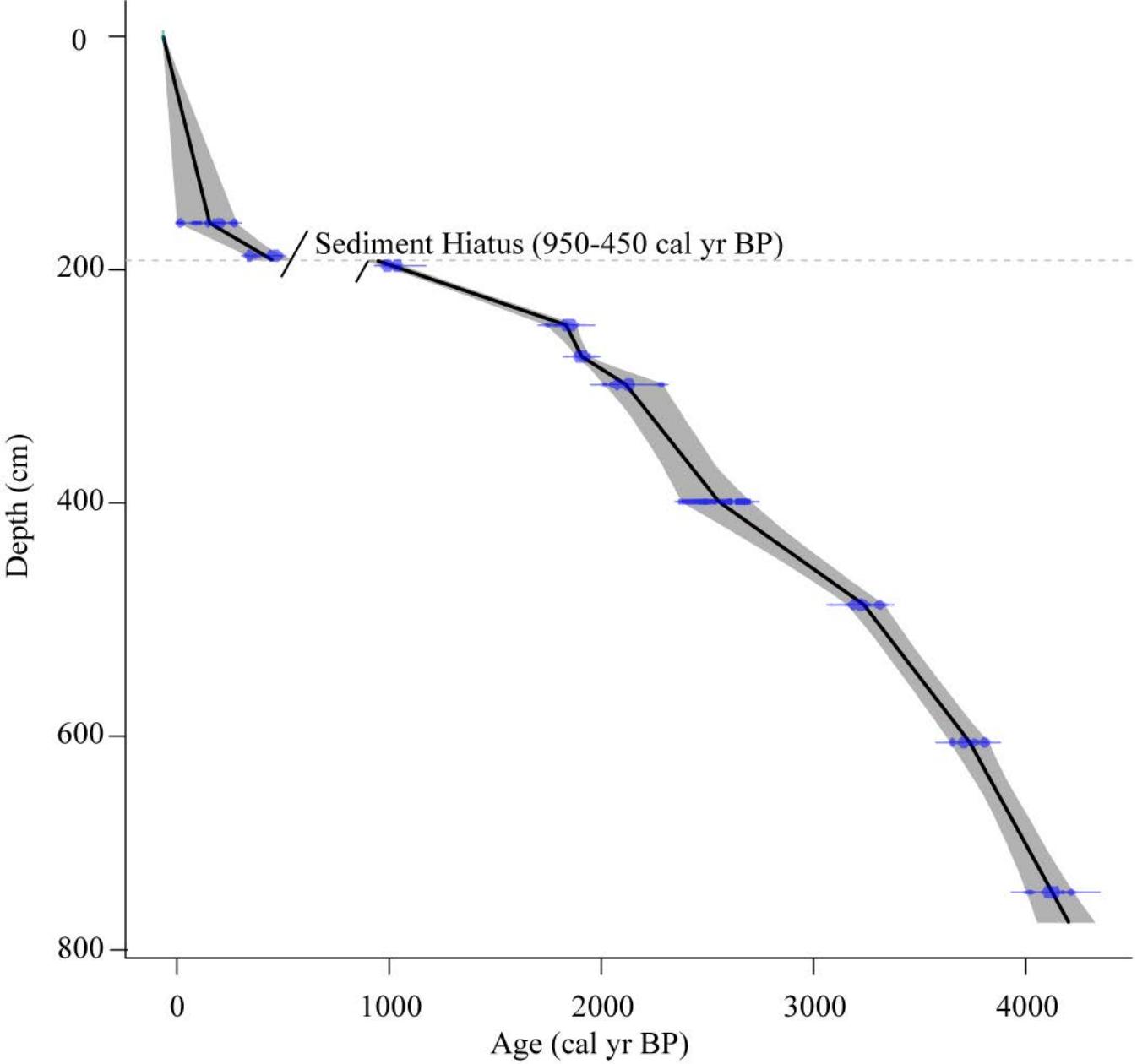
1155

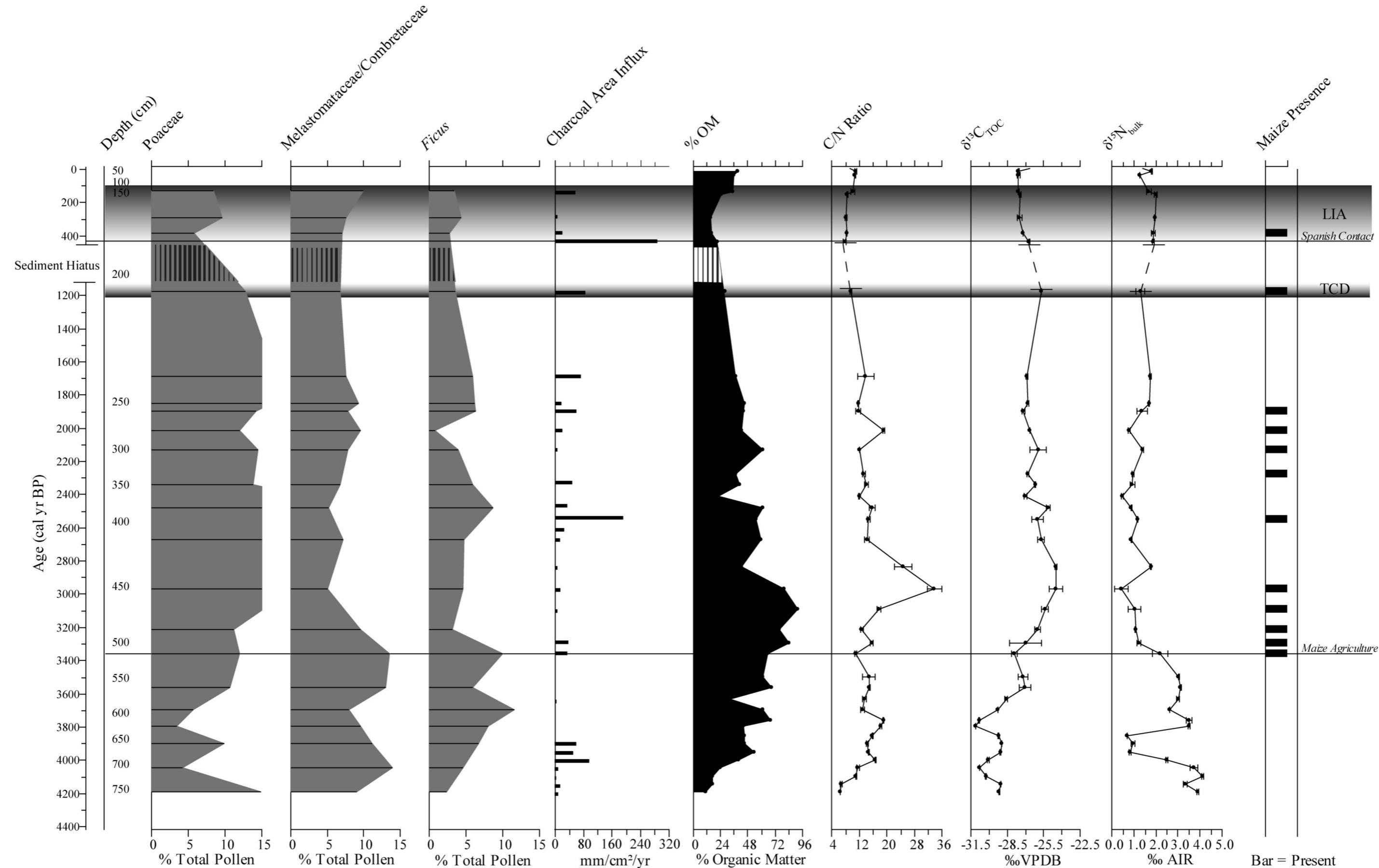
1156

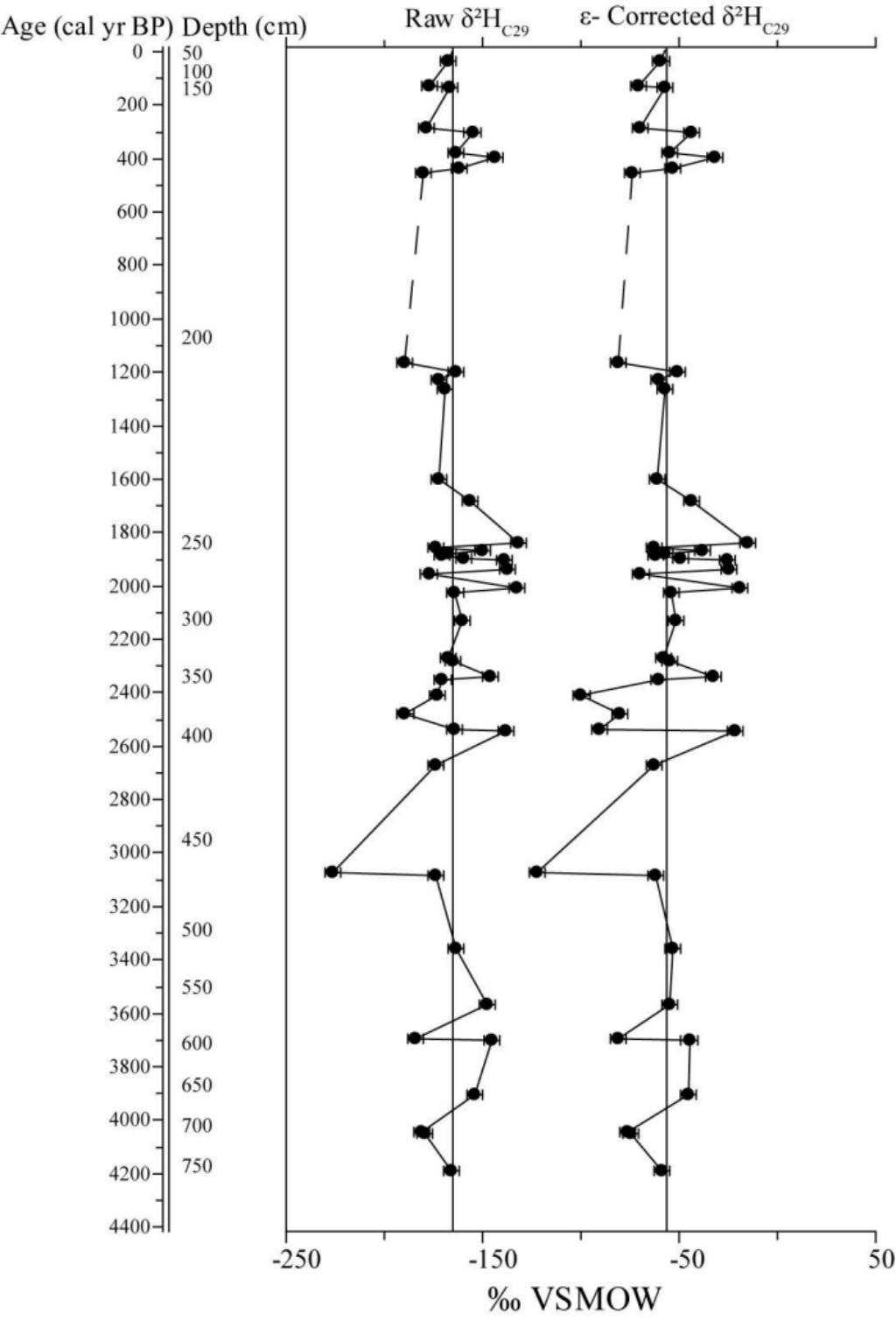
1157 Figure legends  
1158  
1159 Figure 1. Location of Laguna Los Mangos and other paleolimnological sites in the Diquís  
1160 archaeological region of Costa Rica, modified from Johanson et al. (2019) (top). Location of Los  
1161 Mangos in comparison to other Pacific-based paleo  $\delta^2\text{H}$  records (Sachs et al., 2009) and the  
1162 general latitudinal migration range of the ITCZ during the Northern Hemisphere summer and  
1163 winter (Haug et al., 2003). The Northern Hemisphere summer (winter) position of the ITCZ  
1164 generally represents the position of the ITCZ during a cold (warm) ENSO event due to an  
1165 increase (decrease) in the cross-equatorial SST gradient (bottom).  
1166  
1167 Figure 2. Radiocarbon age-depth model for the Los Mangos sedimentary record developed using  
1168 the Clam age-depth modeling program (after Johanson et al., 2019).  
1169  
1170 Figure 3. Los Mangos proxies after Johanson et al. (2019): pollen (Poaceae,  
1171 Melastomataceae/Combretaceae and *Ficus*), charcoal area influx, percent organic matter (%OM),  
1172 organic carbon to organic nitrogen ratio (C/N ratio), carbon isotope composition of the bulk  
1173 sediment ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{TOC}}$ ), nitrogen isotope composition of the bulk sediment ( $\delta^{15}\text{N}_{\text{bulk}}$ ), and presence  
1174 of maize in the sediment record. The Poaceae curve provides a signal of the replacement of  $\text{C}_3$   
1175 forest vegetation with herbaceous vegetation or crops that include more  $\text{C}_4$  plants, indicating land  
1176 clearance or possibly climate change, while Melastomataceae/Combretaceae and *Ficus* represent  
1177  $\text{C}_3$  forest taxa. The solid horizontal lines indicate the timing of the first evidence of maize  
1178 agriculture in the Los Mangos watershed and of the arrival of the Spanish. The grayscale  
1179 gradation zone represents the timing of the TCD and LIA at 1200 cal yr BP to 850 cal yr BP and  
1180 550 cal yr BP to 100 cal yr BP, respectively. The TCD and LIA records are interrupted by a  
1181 hiatus in the sediment profile from ca. 950 cal yr BP to 450 cal yr BP. Error bars represent one  
1182 standard deviation of replicate analyses.  
1183  
1184 Figure 4. Raw  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  values in comparison to  $\varepsilon$ -corrected  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  values for the Los Mangos  
1185 record. The dashed lines indicate the hiatus in the sediment profile from ca. 950–450 cal yr BP.  
1186 The vertical lines extending through both proxies represent the mean value of each proxy for the  
1187 entire record and are used to determine significant deviations from normal precipitation  
1188 conditions.  
1189  
1190 Figure 5. Compound-specific carbon and hydrogen isotope proxies from terrestrially derived *n*-  
1191 alkanes of the Los Mangos sediment record (this study) compared to existing Los Mangos  
1192 proxies (Johanson et al., 2019). The two horizontal lines drawn across the profiles represent the  
1193 timing of the earliest evidence of maize agriculture in the Los Mangos watershed and the arrival  
1194 of the Spanish. The gray shaded zones represent the timing of the TCD and LIA at 1200 cal yr  
1195 BP to 850 cal yr BP and 550 cal yr BP to 100 cal yr BP, respectively. The TCD and LIA are  
1196 interrupted by a hiatus in the sediment profile indicated by dashed lines from ca. 950 cal yr BP to  
1197 450 cal yr BP. The vertical lines extending through compound-specific proxies (this study)  
1198 represent the mean value of each proxy for the entire record and are used to determine significant  
1199 deviations from normal conditions. Error bars (where applicable) represent one standard  
1200 deviation from duplicate analyses.  
1201

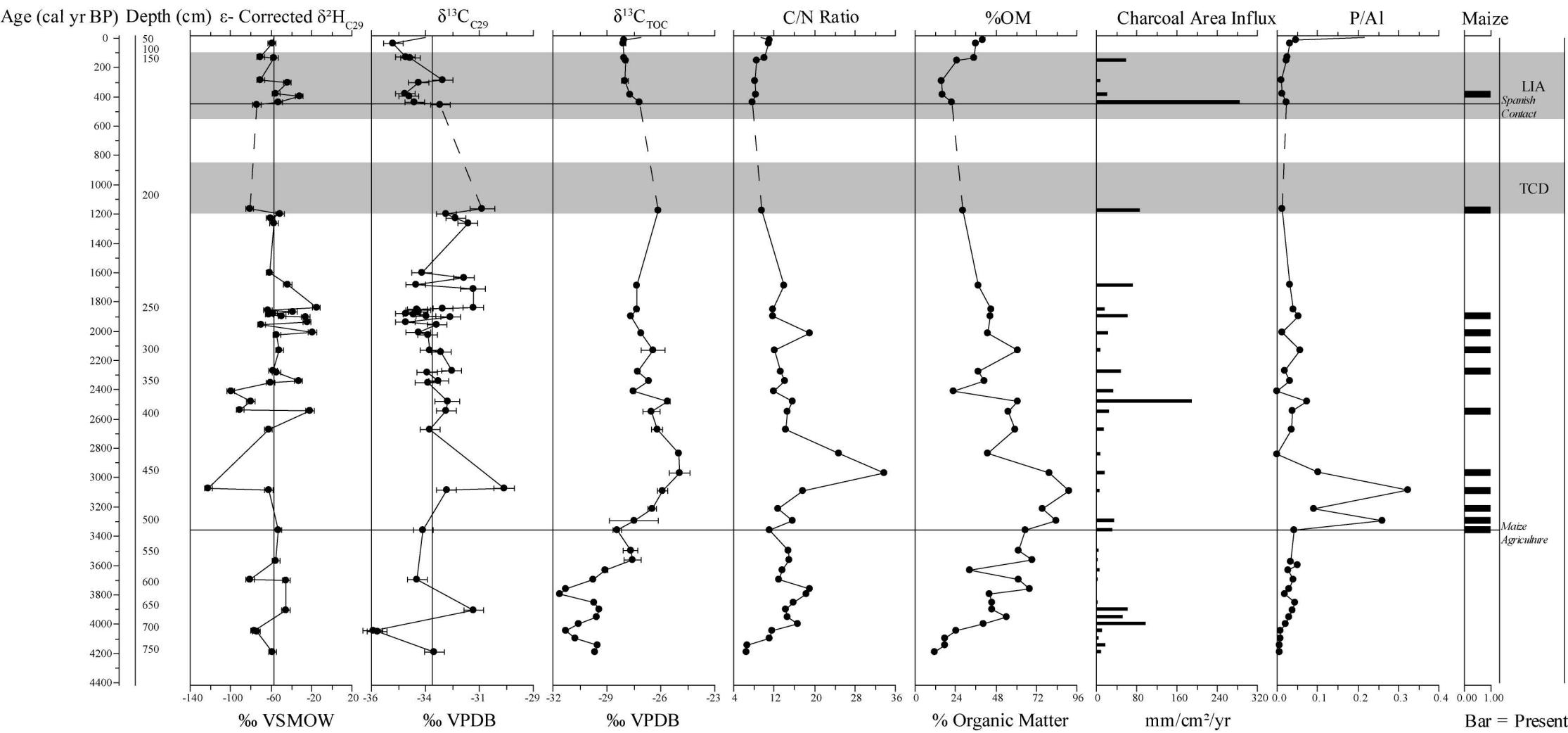
1202 Figure 6. Compound-specific hydrogen isotopic values of C<sub>29</sub> *n*-alkanes at Laguna Los Mangos  
1203 (this study), and  $\delta^2\text{H}$  records from Washington Lake, Spooky Lake, and El Junco Lake from  
1204 Sachs et al. (2009) compared to percent Ti (%Ti) from the Cariaco Basin site ODP 1002 (Haug  
1205 et al., 2001, 2003). Haug et al. (2001, 2003) related increased (decreased) amounts of %Ti  
1206 deposited in the Cariaco Basin to increased (decreased) precipitation. The vertical lines  
1207 extending through each record represent the mean value of each proxy for the entire record and  
1208 are used to determine significant deviations from normal precipitation conditions. The dashed  
1209 line between  $\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$  Los Mangos data points indicate a hiatus in the sediment profile. The gray  
1210 shaded zones represent the timing of the TCD and LIA at 1200 cal yr BP to 850 cal yr BP and  
1211 550 cal yr BP to 100 cal yr BP, respectively. The light gray box on the TLE  $\delta^2\text{H}$  Washington  
1212 Lake record represents the timing of the most arid conditions as compared to the entire record  
1213 indicated by increased  $\delta^2\text{H}$  values and dominance of salt-tolerant cyanobacteria (*Aphanothecce*).

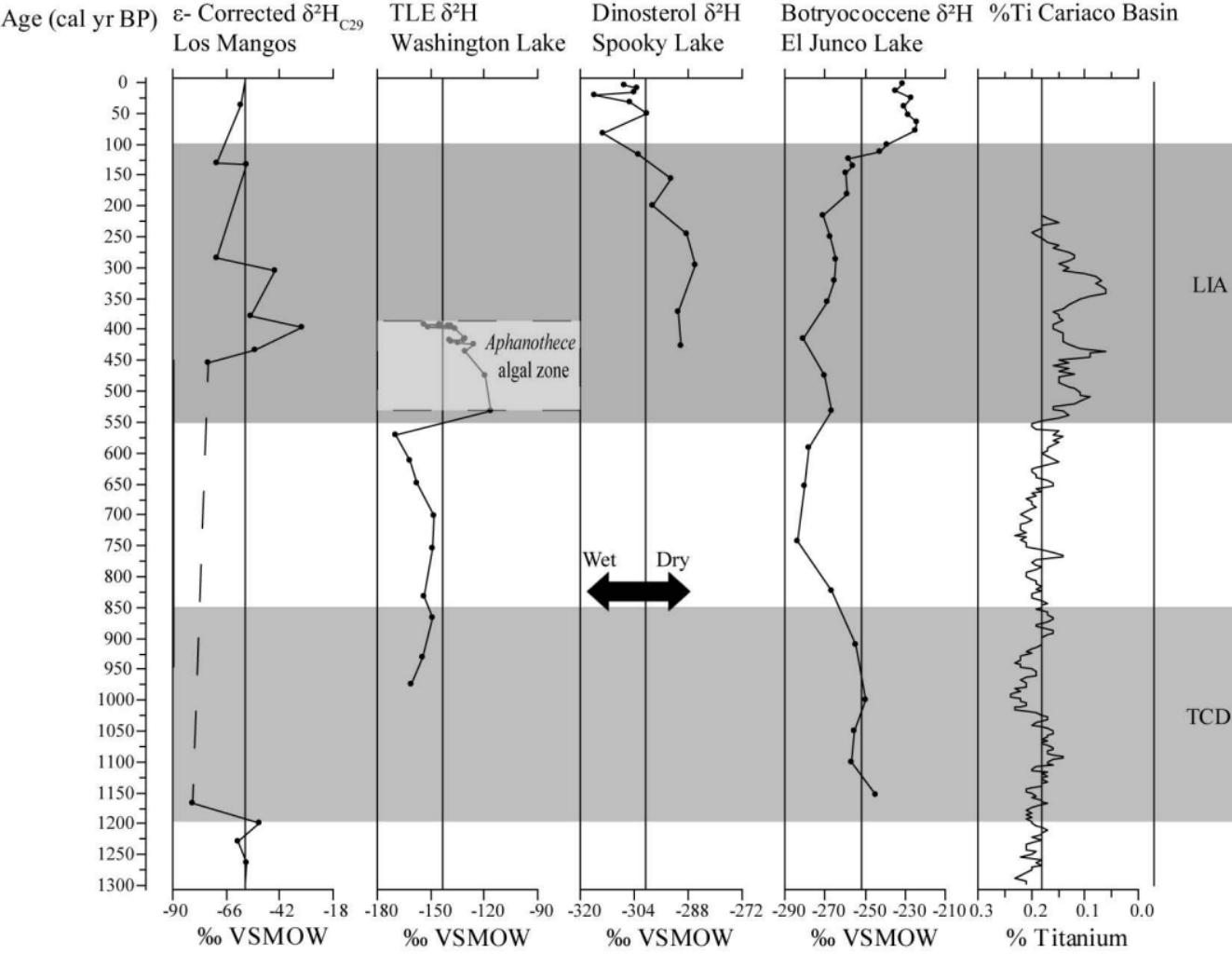












Taxa	Life Form Category	εC27	εC29	εC31
Anacardiaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Apocynaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Arecaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Ericaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Malpighiaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Melastomataceae/ Combretaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Mimosoideae ( <i>Mimosa</i> )	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Myrtaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Rhamnaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Rubiaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Sapindaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Sapotaceae/Meliaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Solanaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Tiliaceae	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Urticales (di- + triporate)	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Acalypha</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Alchornea</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Alfaroa</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Alnus</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Bursera</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Cecropia</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Celtis</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Croton</i> (Euphorbiaceae)	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Ficus</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Hedyosmum</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Ilex</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Iriartea</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Myrica</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Myrsine</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Piper</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Quercus</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Sapium</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Trema</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Ulmus</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Virola</i> (Myristicaceae)	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
<i>Weinmannia</i>	Angiosperm tree + shrub	-107‰	-111‰	-107‰
Amaranthaceae	Forb	-124‰	-128‰	-130‰
Apiaceae	Forb	-124‰	-128‰	-130‰
Asteraceae	Forb	-124‰	-128‰	-130‰
Caryophyllaceae	Forb	-124‰	-128‰	-130‰
Cucurbitaceae	Forb	-124‰	-128‰	-130‰
Cyperaceae	Graminoid (C4)	-131‰	-132‰	-136‰
Poaceae	Graminoid (C4)	-131‰	-132‰	-136‰

<i>Zea mays</i> subsp. <i>mays</i>	Graminoid (C4)	–131‰	–132‰	–136‰
Mono- and Trilete fern spores	Pteridophytes	–103‰	–108‰	–114‰
Urticales polyporate <sup>1</sup>	Cannot Classify			
Cuphea <sup>2</sup>	Cannot Classify			
Polygalaceae <sup>3</sup>	Cannot Classify			
Violaceae <sup>3</sup>	Cannot Classify			
Acanthaceae <sup>3</sup>	Cannot Classify			

<sup>1</sup> Cannot classify because this group may contain taxa of multiple life forms.

<sup>2</sup> Cannot classify because genus includes annual and perennial herbs, semi-shrubs, and shrubs.

<sup>3</sup> Cannot classify because this family includes herbs, shrubs, and trees.

Sample	Depth (cm)	Age (cal yr BP)	ug/g OM		ug/g OM		ug/g OM		ug/g OM		$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}29}$	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{C}31}$	$\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}29}$	$\delta^2\text{H}_{\text{C}31}$
			C27	C29	C31	C33	C35							
M1	40	-9	6.64	15.45	18.55	10.18	1.81	-33.2	-33.4	-66.9	-71.9			
M2	42	-7	6.65	15.23	16.47	9.41	3.22	-33.4	-33.5	-56.6	-63.9			
M4	74	36	6.01	27.32	36.79	19.72	3.87	-35.0	-35.4	-59.1	-64.5			
M5	142	130	4.52	26.03	37.38	18.66	2.32	-34.5	-35.0	-70.4	-72.8			
M6	144	133	6.99	30.14	39.33	18.37	4.10	-34.3	-34.5	-56.8	-63.1			
M7	174	285	0.10	0.67	0.91	0.57	0.12	-32.8	-35.4	-70.2	-70.8			
M8	176	304	5.99	29.41	35.94	22.02	4.06	-33.9	-34.1	-43.9	-49.6			
M9	184	378	0.12	0.78	1.21	0.84	0.19	-34.5	-34.3	-55.0				
M10	186	397	6.74	32.11	36.81	20.88	5.23	-34.3	-34.3	-32.0				
M11	190	434	4.64	20.92	29.42	19.32	5.76	-34.1	-34.5	-52.8	-53.8			
M12	192	453	4.66	14.58	20.39	16.89	8.26	-32.9	-33.0	-74.1	-69.8			
M13	206	1166	1.28	2.91	4.47	3.27	1.20	-31.1	-32.9	-81.0	-67.6			
M14	208	1198	7.84	15.53	21.46	16.02	4.75	-32.7	-33.7	-51.0	-50.0			
M15	210	1230	1.72	3.34	4.60	4.45	1.81	-32.3	-33.3	-60.5	-60.5			
M16	212	1263	3.94	8.96	9.68	6.54	2.79	-31.7	-34.0	-57.1	-56.8			
M17	233	1601	3.37	10.94	12.45	7.57	2.92	-33.8	-34.2	-61.0	-62.1			
M18	235	1633	1.71	4.47	4.82	3.27	2.37	-31.9	-33.0					
M19	238	1681	3.33	13.53	12.82	6.90	2.63	-34.0	-34.3	-43.4	-42.5			
M20	240	1713	1.34	1.91	1.87	1.80	1.90	-31.5	-30.9		-96.4			
M23	250	1841	0.59	1.87	1.78	1.26	0.67	-31.5	-35.3	-15.1	-12.1			
M24	252	1846	0.27	1.25	1.19	0.86	0.51	-32.8	-33.9					
M25	254	1852	1.49	3.89	3.15	2.10	1.50	-34.0	-34.2					
M26	256	1857	2.14	9.73	10.15	6.65	3.58	-33.9	-33.4	-62.8	-63.5			
M28	261	1871	3.64	13.41	13.29	9.34	5.65	-33.9	-34.3	-38.4	-48.3			
M29	265	1882	3.99	13.99	14.21	9.44	4.77	-34.5	-35.0	-57.5	-53.0			
M30	266.5	1886	2.06	5.66	4.74	3.16	1.96	-34.1	-34.3	-61.7	-62.8			
M31	270	1895	4.79	17.80	19.76	12.30	5.47	-33.6	-34.2	-49.0	-50.3			
M32	272	1901	0.26	1.04	1.07	0.73	0.38	-32.5	-34.3	-25.7	-27.9			
M33	278	1938	5.10	27.74	27.88	17.73	8.70	-34.5	-34.7	-24.2	-46.8			
M34	280	1955	2.02	7.67	6.91	4.26	2.79	-33.1	-34.1	-69.5	-68.0			
M35	286	2007	1.83	11.20	9.25	5.30	3.35	-33.9	-34.3	-19.0	-30.9			
M36	288	2025	4.61	22.32	21.21	16.03	9.49	-33.5	-34.7	-54.1	-55.5			
M37	302	2131	0.04	0.14	0.19	0.26	0.24	-33.4	-34.6	-51.5				
M38	304	2140	1.10	3.38	3.08	2.22	1.29	-32.9	-33.5		-48.1			
M39	334	2270	4.55	16.27	18.23	12.26	5.44	-32.4	-33.5	-57.7	-57.2			
M40	336	2279	3.46	11.02	12.18	8.35	3.34	-33.5	-34.1	-54.6				
M41	350	2340	4.59	15.61	12.71	6.62	1.57	-33.0	-34.2	-32.8	-31.2			
M42	352	2349	2.42	7.93	5.35	2.76	1.69	-33.5	-33.4	-60.4				
M43	366	2410	0.27	0.64	0.63	0.14	0.14	-34.6	-34.6	-99.6				
M45	382	2480	1.05	3.04	3.87	4.53	0.85	-32.6	-33.4	-79.8	-73.2			
M47	395	2536	0.88	2.22	3.36	3.66	1.28	-33.3	-30.6	-90.6	-51.9			

M48	397	2545	2.36	10.40	10.12	8.08	1.59	-32.7	-35.0	-21.5	-21.6
M49	414	2670	2.63	10.64	12.57	11.58	2.46	-33.4	-34.2	-62.4	-57.4
M52	452	2963	0.02	0.17	0.10	0.14	0.10		-34.4		
M53	466	3071	14.50	16.40	5.79	1.70	1.34	-30.1	-28.9	-121.9	-96.6
M54	468	3087	7.64	31.60	28.97	18.01	7.64	-32.7	-33.7	-62.0	-55.8
M57	516	3358	3.89	8.89	8.93	3.05	0.76	-33.7	-34.0	-53.1	-50.1
M60	566	3569	1.36	2.40	2.70	1.81	1.18		-35.9	-55.1	-35.5
M61	596	3696	2.87	6.85	5.47	2.24	0.27	-34.0	-36.1	-80.7	-80.2
M62	598	3704	5.18	3.12	2.75	2.00	1.58		-35.0	-44.8	-18.1
M64	662	3907	4.67	11.04	10.25	6.42	3.19	-31.5	-32.2	-45.2	-40.6
M65	708.5	4047	3.93	12.12	17.35	8.17	0.99	-35.9	-34.8	-76.2	-75.5
M66	710.5	4053	0.35	1.16	1.76	0.83	0.26	-35.7	-34.7	-74.3	-81.8
M67	755.5	4189	6.51	20.30	27.90	16.37	2.31	-33.2	-34.4	-58.5	-56.4