



## **The last glacial inception in continental northwestern Europe: characterization and timing of the Late Eemian Aridity Pulse (LEAP) recorded in multiple Belgian speleothems.**

Stef Vansteenberge (1), Sophie Verheyden (2,1), Yves Quinif (3), Dominique Genty (4), Dominique Blamart (4), Maxim Deprez (5), Jeroen Van Stappen (5), Veerle Cnudde (5), Hai Cheng (6,7), R. Lawrence Edwards (7), and Philippe Claeys (1)

(1) Department of Analytical, Environmental and Geochemistry, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium (svsteenb@vub.ac.be), (2) Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences, Brussels, Belgium, (3) Faculté Polytechnique, Université de Mons, Mons, Belgium, (4) Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement, Gif-sur-Yvette, France, (5) UGCT/PProGRess, Department of Geology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, (6) Institute of Global Environmental Change, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xi'an, China, (7) Department of Earth Sciences, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

Interglacial-glacial transitions represent important turnovers in the climate system. In contrast with glacial terminations, they are described as a more gradual cooling. So far, the last interglacial has yielded a wealth of knowledge regarding climate dynamics during past warm periods. On top of the assumed gradual temperature drop starting at  $\sim 119$  ka, evidence for the presence of a drastic drying/cooling event in northern Europe has been observed.

In lake records from Germany, a distinct shift in pollen assembly at 117.5 ka is interpreted as the consequence of a short dry event lasting  $\sim 470$  years, defined as the Late Eemian Aridity Pulse (LEAP, Sirocko et al., 2005). In a Belgian stalagmite from Han-sur-Lesse Cave, the LEAP is characterized by a 5‰ increase in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  occurring in just 200 years. The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  enrichment is dated at 117.5 ka and associated with a vegetation change above the cave, induced by a drying and/or cooling event (Vansteenberge et al., 2016). Also, within North Atlantic sediment cores, an increase in ice rafted debris was linked to the occurrence of a colder period at  $\sim 117$  ka (Irvali et al., 2016). Its coevality with the LEAP indicates a likely more regional extent than previously thought. Up to now, no independent chronology exists and little is known about the continental climatic expression of the LEAP.

This study aims at 1) constructing an improved and independent chronology for the LEAP event, 2) characterizing this event in terms of its climatic expression and 3) placing the LEAP within the context of an interglacial-glacial transition. For this, two additional speleothems (Han-8, RSM-17) from two different Belgian caves (Han-sur-Lesse, Remouchamps) are added to the existing Han-9 dataset. Exceptionally high growth rates (0.5 mm yr<sup>-1</sup>) and a presumed annual layering of the RSM-17 sample enable an annual to decadal resolution to investigate the LEAP. U-Th age models covering the glacial inception are constructed with  $\sim 25$  dates on the three speleothems. All samples are investigated through a multiproxy approach consisting of growth rate, stable isotopes ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ) and trace elements (Mg, Sr, Ba, Zn, Pb, U). Furthermore,  $\mu\text{CT}$  scans with a resolution down to  $10\mu\text{m}$  characterize pronounced changes in speleothem morphology.

First results show the presence of similar  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  excursions in the two newly analyzed speleothems. The plenitude of U-Th dates now confirms the timing of the LEAP at 117.5 ka, as determined from Han-9 but significantly reduce the age error to 0.4 ka. Also, the various proxies demonstrate that pre-LEAP climate conditions were not reestablished after the event, indicating that, at least in Belgium, the LEAP may have had a more severe impact than previously thought. This study shows that events such as the LEAP are an important feature within the gradual cooling occurring during glacial inceptions, and they contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of an interglacial-glacial transition.

### References:

- Irvali, N., et al., 2016, *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 150, 184-199.  
Sirocko, F., et al., 2005, *Nature*, 436, 833-836.  
Vansteenberge, S., et al., 2016, *Climate of the Past*, 12, 1445-1458.

