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# Deglacial laminated facies on the NW European continental margin: The hydrographic significance of British-Irish Ice Sheet deglaciation and Fleuve Manche paleoriver discharges

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#### **Abstract:**

We have compiled results obtained from four high sedimentation rate hemipelagic sequences from the Celtic sector of the NW European margin (NE Atlantic) to investigate the paleoceanographic and paleoclimatic evolution of the area over the last few climatic cycles. We focus on periods characteristic of deglacial transitions. We adopt a multiproxy sedimentological, geochemical, and micropaleontological approach, applying a sampling resolution down to ten microns for specific intervals. The investigation demonstrates the relationships between the Bay of Biscay hydrography and the glacial/deglacial history of both the proximal British-Irish Ice Sheet (BIIS) and the western European continent. We identify recurrent phases of laminae deposition concurrent with major BIIS deglacial episodes in all the studied cores. Evidence for abrupt freshwater discharges into the open ocean highlights the influence of such events at a regional scale. We discuss their impact at a global scale considering the present and past key location of the Bay of Biscay versus the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC).

**Keywords:** Celtic margin; glacial terminations; laminated sediments; freshwater pulse/discharge; icerafted detritus; planktonic microfossils.

### 36 **1. INTRODUCTION**

37 It is now commonly accepted that major glacial-interglacial climatic changes are primarily 38 forced by changes in the insolation budget, directly linked to the Earth's orbital parameters 39 (Berger, 1978; Imbrie et al., 1989; Berger and Loutre, 1991). During the Quaternary, 40 boundary conditions between glacial and interglacial stages were repeatedly reached in 41 response to the 100,000 year period of the eccentricity cycle (Imbrie et al., 1993; Shackleton, 42 2000). The forcing linked to the precession and the obliquity cycles are also registered, the 43 former especially in tropical palaeoenvironments through its influence on monsoon dynamics. 44 Nevertheless, high resolution palaeoclimatic and palaeoceanographic studies, recently 45 supported by modelling experiments, have shown that the orbital forcing may not have been 46 the only control on ice sheet growth and decay (e.g. Shackleton, 2000; Khodry et al., 2001; 47 Crucifix et al., 2001; Charbit et al., 2002). Sub-orbital abrupt events associated with ice sheet 48 calving over the last 40,000 years known as Heinrich events (Heinrich, 1988) clearly illustrate 49 such a phenomenon as their cyclicity does not match any of the classic orbital periodicities 50 (e.g. Bond et al., 1993). Additional evidence similarly comes from the recurrent asynchronism 51 that is observed between major ice-sheet decay and optimum values of June insolation at the 52 top of the atmosphere at 65°N. This parameter is classically taken by the palaeoclimatic 53 community to represent the solar forcing of changing global climate (Imbrie et al., 1993). 54 Such asynchronism indicates major feedback mechanisms involving the atmosphere, the 55 cryosphere, the oceans and the biosphere, that are far from being completely understood (e.g. 56 Piotrowski et al., 2004; 2005).

57 Global climate modelling is one of the best tools to investigate these questions: the 58 development of models of intermediate complexity (EMIC) has furnished robust hypotheses 59 to explain global climate sensitivity (e.g. Petoukhov et al., 2005). Nevertheless, ice sheets 60 incorporated in these models are often highly simplified in their dimensions, especially with 61 regards to their latitudinal extent. They are classically resolved as massive polar ice caps, 62 following the pattern of those that were developed over large continental areas during glacial 63 maxima (e.g. Smith *et al*., 2003). Even if the physical processes which drive ice sheet growth 64 and decay are increasingly precisely incorporated into models predicting isostatic rebound and 65 sea-level rise calculation (e.g. Shennan et al., 2000, 2002 for the UK; Spring-AGU 2004 for 66 the Laurentide), until now few simulations (Crucifix et al., 2001) have tested in detail the 67 sensitivity of the response of small-sized and temperate ice sheets to global climate change. 68 Although often small in global terms, the mass balance of these ice sheets is often very 69 sensitive to moisture supply and sea-level change, and they are often situated in critical and 70 sensitive locations with respect to the thermohaline dynamics of the adjacent ocean. This is 71 the case for the British - Irish Ice Sheet (BIIS; MCabe et al., 2005). This temperate ice sheet 72 developed during the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM, Lambeck, 1995; Scourse et al., 2000; 73 Scourse and Furze, 2001; Richter et al., 2001; Bowen et al., 2002; Bourillet et al., 2003; 74 MCabe et al., 2005; Hiemstra et al., 2006) and during earlier glacial periods (Gibbard, 1988; 75 Bowen, 1999; Gibbard and Lautridou, 2003). Based on the identification of a typical 76 sedimentological facies, for which one of the major distinctive features is the deposit of 77 millimetric scale laminations, previous work (Zaragosi et al., 2001a; Mojtahid et al., 2005) 78 has evidenced melting events characteristic of the BIIS / Manche paleoriver purges at the 79 onset of major deglaciation. Until now, these events were documented in the Bay of Biscay on 80 only two cores retrieved in the same area of the Celtic margin (Mojtahid et al., 2005). Here 81 we present data from additional cores retrieved on the Celtic sector of the NW European Margin 82 (from the Porcupine Bight to the Trevelyan Escarpment), all of which showing evidences of 83 the recovery of this typical laminated facies. Integrating these new sequences, the purpose of 84 this paper is to document and discuss the sedimentological and microapaleontological 85 specificity of these events. As potentially representing abrupt BIIS/European deglacial events,

86 their impact on the local and regional sea-surface conditions will also be discussed, 87 introducing some elements concerning their possible significance on the Atlantic Meridional 88 Overturning Circulation (AMOC).

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### 90 **2. "THE MANCHE PALEORIVER".**

91 The study area (**Figure 1**) is located in the northern part of the Bay of Biscay on the Celtic 92 margin, a margin characterised by two mid-sized deep-sea turbidite systems: the Celtic and 93 Armorican fans (Auffret et al., 2000; Zaragosi et al., 2000; Zaragosi et al., 2001b). These 94 systems were linked to north-western European continental drainage areas via the "Manche 95 palaeoriver" during low-stands of eustatic sea level (Bourillet et al., 2003). This fluvial 96 system extended from the southern North Sea to the Bay of Biscay. It included the English 97 Channel, a portion of the continental shelf, the slope where the canyons network split around 98 two structural hights, the Trevelyan escarpment (TE) and its adjoining Meriadzek terrace 99 (MT), feeding down slope the Celtic and Armorican fans (Bourillet et al., 2006). The TE and 100 MT stand at least 600 meters above the adjacent abyssal plain (**Figure 1**). During the most 101 recent glacial stages of the Quaternary, the Manche palaeoriver flowed westwards from the 102 southern North Sea along the centre of the English Channel (Lericolais, 1997, Lericolais et 103 al., 2003). This palaeoriver was supplied via the connected drainage basins of modern rivers 104 including the Seine, the Somme, the Solent and probably the Meuse, the Rhine and the 105 Thames (Larsonneur et al., 1982; Gibbard, 1988; Lericolais, 1997). It fed via the palaeovalley 106 (Lericolais, 1997) and the delta of the palaeoriver (Bourillet et al., 2006) into some of the 107 canyons of the slope (Bourillet and Lericolais, 2003) converging at the edge of the continental 108 shelf (200 m) and extending into the deep ocean (4500 m). Sediment fluxes into the deep 109 ocean were directly influenced by the growth and decay of the adjacent BIIS, both via the

- 110 Manche palaeoriver and the Irish Sea Basin (e.g. McCabe and Clark, 1998; Richter et al., 111 2001; Bowen et al., 2002; McCabe et al., 2005).
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### 113 **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

114 Several cruises onboard the oceanographic research vessels "*Marion Dufresne II*" (IPEV) and 115 *Atalante* (Ifremer) have been undertaken on the margin during the last 10 years (IMAGES 1, 116 SEDIMANCHE, ZEE-GASC, SEDIFAN, GINNA, GEOSCIENCES, SEDICAR), allowing 117 the discovery of particular sites and the subsequent recovery of high sedimentation rate 118 sequences. Cores MD95-2001 and MD95-2002 located respectively on the TE and the MT 119 (**Table1; Figure 1**), complemented by core AKS01 (SHOM cruise, 1996) retrieved at the 120 western boundary of the TE, reveal a detailed record of the last 25 ka with a regionally 121 coherent deglacial scheme strongly influenced by the BIIS history (Grousset et al., 2000; 122 Zaragosi et al., 2001a). These records have been recently complemented by cores MD01-2461 123 and MD03-2692, retrieved from the western Porcupine Bight and Trevelyan Escarpment 124 respectively. These cores, of which the longest extends to 360 ka, have provided access to 125 older terminations: i.e. Terminations 2, 3 and 4.

126 Following the work described in Zaragosi et al. (2001a), a multidisciplinary approach has 127 been applied to the study the four cited MD cores, using physical, stratigraphical, 128 geochemical, sedimentological and micropaleontological tools.

129 The microstructure of the sediment were investigated using X-ray imagery, using the SCOPIX 130 image-processing tool (Migeon et al., 1999). For part of the core containing laminae, this was 131 coupled to microscopic photography on impregnated sediment sections (image acquisition 132 consisted of a fully automated Leica DM6000 Digital Microscope with multiple 133 magnifications giving access to a 10  $\mu$ m resolution; see the detailed method in Zaragosi et al., 134 2006). This was complemented by individual granulometric analyses (Malvern Mastersizer S) 135 of the laminae with a delicate sub-sampling of the X-Ray dark versus the X-Ray bright 136 laminae for which automatical counts of lithics >150 µm were also made.

137 Known aliquots of the dried residues (>150µm) were counted for their planktonic 138 foraminiferal content to obtain relative abundances (percentages) of *Neogloboquadrina*  139 *pachyderma* sinistral versus the total planktonic fauna. The coarse lithic grains (CLG) were 140 characterized and counted on the same fraction (>150µm) and include Ice Rafted Detritus 141 (IRD) which indicate iceberg melt fluxes. The data were then expressed in concentration: 142 number of grains per gram of dry sediment. Palynomorph analysis was performed using the 143 <150 µm fraction. Counting included quaternary and non-quaternary (reworked) dinocysts 144 and fresh-water alga *Pediastrum* sp.. The ratio calculated on the basis of reworked versus 145 modern dinocysts  $[R_d/M_d]$  is here interpreted as an index of allochtonous sedimentary 146 supplies (Zaragosi et al., 2001a). Identification of reworked dinocysts shows that they are 147 derived from mixed sources of Jurassic, Cretaceous and Palaeogene chalk, marl and limestone 148 (Kaiser, 2001). This information does not really allow us to constrain the sediment source 149 area as these geological formations can be localized both in the Irish Sea, the south of UK, the 150 north of Belgium, the Paris basin and the Manche substratum itself.

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The age models of the studied cores have been established on the basis of AMS  $^{14}C$  dates 153 between 0 and 30 ka for MD95-2002 (**Figure 2, Table 2**;  $11<sup>14</sup>C$  dates, Zaragosi et al., 2006), 154 MD01-2461 (13<sup>14</sup>C dates for the last deglaciation, see Peck et al., 2006) and MD03-2692 155 **C Table 2:** 16<sup> $14$ </sup>C dates, this study). Radiocarbon ages were calibrated to calendar years before 156 present (yr BP) using the CALIB programme (version 5.1.0 with the MARINE04 data set, 157 incorporating a 400 yr correction for marine reservoir; same methods and correction as those 158 used in Menot et al., 2006). Oldest ages were converted using Bard (1998). Ages between the 159 stratigraphic references have been calculated by polynomial regression - d° 5 for MD95-2002 160 and MD03-2692 (cores used in this paper as references for the area; Figure 2). A polynomial 161 fit was calculated separately for the  $^{14}C$  ages and for the calibrated ages. Calibrated ages in 162 Table 2 are based on the original dates and not on  ${}^{14}C$  ages derived for the respective depth from the polynomial fit. Beyond the range of AMS  $^{14}$  C ages, the stratigraphy has been 164 complemented by stable isotope and carbonate content measurements. Benthic and planktonic  $165$   $\delta^{18}$ O records reveal climatic oscillations that can be used to constrain the age models by a 166 direct comparison with the SPECMAP  $\delta^{18}$ O curve (Martinson et al., 1987). The software used 167 for this peak to peak correlation was the "AnalySeries" software (Paillard et al., 1993; the 168 detailed method is explained in Mojtahid et al., 2005). Stable isotope carbonate, and light 169 reflectance records obtained also on the closely related sequences AKS01 and MD95-2001 170 were used to tied their stratigraphy to a regional scale.

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### 172 **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### 173 *4.1. What is characteristic of the laminated sequences of the Celtic margin?*

174 The studied sequences all consist of hemipelagic clays. On the basis of X-ray imagery, we 175 have recognized typical sedimentary fabrics and facies, i.e. laminated sediments, that previous 176 works have genetically and principally linked to increased runoff of the Manche palaeoriver 177 both due to deglacial melting of the BIIS and of alpine glaciers (Zaragosi et al., 2001a; 178 Mojtahid et al., 2005). In this paper, we show that these laminated sequences occur in almost 179 all the studied cores from the northernmost (51.7°N) to the southermost site (46.8°N) of the 180 investigated area (**Figure 1**), therefore potentially enlarging the BIIS/European deglacial 181 melting plume influence on the Celtic Margin. **Figure 3** identifies their intervals within the 182 respective records. They are presented in depth in the cores to underline the regional 183 similarity of their thickness, that extends from 100 cm for the thinner (core MD95-2001, MIS 184 6) to 270 cm for the thickest record (core MD95-2002, MIS 2). These laminated deposits are

185 distinguished from the rest of the hemipelagic background sedimentation on the basis of the 186 following criteria (**Figures 4 et 5**):

187 **(1)** The laminae intervals consist of a succession of strictly horizontal and parallel X-ray dark 188 and bright laminations (**Figure 4**). All the laminae present a main granulometric mode at 4µm 189 confirming that they are primarily composed of clays. Granulometric curves of the dark 190 laminae present slightly higher values in the silt and sand fractions (black curves on **Figure** 191 4). Observations of the sediment slides (**Figure 4**) show that the coarse fraction is 192 characterized by sub-angular silts and sands floating in a clayey matrix. This suggests that all 193 the laminae are composed by the same clayey material but with the addition of coarse grained 194 clasts for the X-ray dark laminae. The absence of cross bedding, graded bedding and the 195 mainly clayey composition of all the laminae exclude a contouritic or turbiditic origin for the 196 laminae. These coarse-grained clasts therefore probably originated from the deposition of ice-197 rafted debris. According to sedimentation rates of about 0.5 cm/yr, the thin section in Fig 4a 198 (core MD03-2692) represents about 20 years of sedimentation; 16 ice-rafted laminae are 199 found within this interval.

200 **(2)** Concentrations of coarse lithic grains (CLG, including ice-rafted detritus -IRD) are low in 201 the studied cores, excepted during deglacial events: i.e. Heinrich Events (HEs, Heinrich 1988; 202 Grousset et al., 2000; Zaragosi et al., 2001a; Auffret et al., 2002; Mojtahid et al., 2005; Peck 203 et al., 2006). With regards to the laminae deposits, these CLG concentrations reach values in 204 between 200 to 500 grains./g dry sed. (**Figure 5**). The laminae are often marked by abrupt 205 changes in the CLG concentrations. No clear temporal succession is observed for the deposits 206 of MIS6, in contrast to MIS 2 where the laminae sequence records a typical multi- step 207 structure associated with Termination 1 (**Figure 5a and 5b**).

208 The HE1 boundary we used conforms to the age limits published by Elliot et al. (1998, 2001) 209 and those used in Zaragosi et al. (2001a). According to our records, HE1 first occurrence of 210 CLG at 18.2 ka cal-BP (15 ka-<sup>14</sup>CBP) synchronously corresponds to first evidence of *N*. 211 *pachyderma* monospecific values and to the onset of laminae deposits. Concentrations of 212 CLG then increase from 0 to a mean of 300 grains./g dry sed., a concentration that remains 213 constant during the laminae event. It is later followed by an abrupt increase by a factor 4 to 5 214 of CLG concentrations (up to 2000 grains./g dry sed.), that corresponds to the massive 215 Canadian discharge (Grousset et al., 2000; Zaragosi et al., 2001a; Auffret et al., 2002; Menot 216 et al., 2006). It has been attributed to a two-step regional record within HE1, first with diluted 217 IRD concentrations, that indicate iceberg calving but also high freshwater and sedimentary 218 fluxes from proximal sources in response to ice jump and snow melt flood (fluvial-sourced 219 via the Manche palaeoriver in connection to major European rivers, including those linked to 220 the French Alps; Zaragosi et al., 2001a; Menot et al., 2006; Van Vliet-Lanoë, pers. com.). 221 Indeed sedimentation rates reach 400 cm.  $ka^{-1}$  in core MD95-2002. This event is then 222 followed by the major calving of pan-Atlantic ice sheets (**Figure 6**; Zaragosi et al., 2001a; 223 Auffret et al., 2002; Mojtahid et al., 2005), documented as early as 17.5 ka cal BP in the 224 North Atlantic by a cessation of the AMOC (McManus et al., 2004). Interestingly, this change 225 in IRD concentrations and sedimentary fluxes (**Figure 6**) occurs synchronously from a BIIS extensive deglaciation (Bowen et al., 2002). At 16.7 ka cal BP (14 ka  $^{14}C$  BP), a short ice-227 sheet readvance known as the Killard Point stadial (McCabe et al., 2005) is noted on land in 228 northern Britain but also in the north Irish Sea basin. This was followed by a rapid ice z29 recession after 16.4 ka cal BP (13.8 ka  $^{14}$ C BP).

230 **(3)** Other analysed proxies (micropalaeontological tools) complement the characterization of 231 sea-surface conditions linked to the laminae deposits. The deposits show quasi-232 monospecifism of the polar foraminiferal species *N. pachyderma* sinistral. It indicates cold 233 sea-surface temperatures (SST), with a mean annual SST of  $\lt$  5°C. This could be linked to 234 either migration of the Polar Front or the local establishment of cold superficial conditions.

235 Evidence for such cold environments suggests a zonal change in the water mass distribution. 236 This change was particularly marked by the contrasting conditions prevailing prior to the onset 237 of laminae deposition which, as demonstrated by low values in *N. pachyderma* s. percentages, 238 must correspond to warm SST (**Figure 5a and 5b**).

239 With the study of palynomorphs from the < 150µm fraction, we also observed major changes 240 in the composition of the phytoplanktonic microflora (**Figure 5**). The most pronounced 241 feature is a marked increase in the relative abundances of the estuarine dinocyst *L.*  242 *machaerophorum,* synchronous with an increase in the flux of non-Quaternary reworked 243 palynomorphs and freshwater algae (*Pediastrum* sp.). It was recurrently observed for the 244 laminae section of both MIS2 and MIS6, suggesting surficial water-masses invaded by large 245 freshwater plumes.

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247 Together these observations are coherent to indicate large freshwater injection events in the 248 northern Bay of Biscay. We named them Celtic-freshwater pulses (Celtic-FWP). This work 249 shows, for the first time, that these events could have extended on a radius as long as 500 km 250 away from their main source area, i.e. the mouth of Manche palaeoriver, probably at this time 251 joined by a contributor through the Irish sea (McCabe et al., 2005; Hiemstra et al., 2006). 252 Material included in the laminae was derived from large decay both linked to riverine and 253 meltwater sources (Zaragosi et al., 2001a, 2006; Menot et al., 2006).

254 Concerning the recurrence of these events, a remaining question is the absence of laminae in 255 core MD01-2461 during Termination 1 (Peck et al., 2006) while they are well preserved 256 during the MIS6 laminae event (**Figure 2**). It should also be noted that this facies was also 257 absent within the OMEX cores from the deeper parts of the Goban Spur (**Figure 1**, Hall and 258 McCave, 1998a and b). This dissimilarity occurring inbetween the two time periods could be 259 explained by a different routing of meltwaters (Knight and McCabe, 1997; McCabe et al.,

260 1998; McCabe et al., 2005). For the last deglaciation, the melting of the Irish Ice-Sheet was 261 mainly routed via the Irish Sea towards the Bay of Biscay as demonstrated with the mapping 262 of an Irish Sea Basin paleo-ice stream (Stockes et Clark, 2001; Richter et al., 2001; McCabe 263 et al., 2005; Hiemstra et al., 2006). Maybe this routing did not allow the deposit to occur as 264 far north as the Porcupine bight. This could also be due to differences in the Fennoscandian 265 melting ice edge which could have been closer to the study area (case of MIS6, Svendsen et 266 al., 2004) and could potentially have led to a higher freshwater run-off that induced laminae 267 formation even in the Porcupine Bight. Further cores are clearly needed in order to address 268 this issue.

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### 270 *4.2. The laminae: an imprint of the BIIS seasonal decay?*

271 The duration of the FWP events is a key question that relates to the question of laminae 272 frequency: do the laminae constitute a multi-annual, annual, or even a seasonal signal? It is 273 important that this is interpreted in the light of the radiometric data. We therefore focus our 274 discussion on the laminae event of "early Termination 1". This event is recorded in the cores 275 MD95-2001, MD95-2002 and MD03-2692 (**Figure 1**, **Figure 3**). We previously interpreted it 276 as the record of annual changes in sedimentation (Mojtahid et al., 2005; Zaragosi et al., 2006). 277 This interpretation was supported by the glacial context of the region at this time involving 278 large IRD flux into the Bay of Biscay from seasonal decay during the spring. Such a model 279 was first presented in Mojtahid et al. (2005) based on a comparison with the results obtained 280 during HEs in the Labrador Sea (Hesse and Khodabakhsh, 1998). For the present work, six 281 AMS radiocarbon dates were obtained within the laminated sequence in core MD03-2692 to 282 address the critical issue of its exact duration (**Figure 6**). These <sup>14</sup>C dates indicate that the 283 laminated sequence accumulated over an interval of 700 years (1000 years cal BP at this 284 period). Previous work on core MD95-2002 (Zaragosi et al., 2001a) constrained the duration

285 of this event to 800  $\pm$  100 years (14C) based on two dates over the laminated interval. 286 However, these duration could be questioned regarding the reservoir ages in this period of 287 intensified freshwater release and probable ventilation inhibition (Waelbroeck et al., 2001; 288 Björck et al., 2003; Peck et al., 2006). Accordingly the dates we obtained potentially over- or 289 under-estimate the duration of the laminae event. To solve this question, other dating methods 290 need to be investigated (e.g. optically stimulated luminescence dating, work in progress). This 291 would also be improved by an accurate micro-sampling of the laminae.

292 Apart from these methodological problems, however, the laminae duration could be compared 293 to results of recent modelling exercises that show that HEs were abrupt and violent events 294 (Ganopolski and Rahmstorf, 2001; Roche et al., 2004). For example, for HE4, one of the most 295 extreme HEs recorded in the North Atlantic (Cortijo et al., 1997), the duration of the 296 freshwater release was calculated as representing a perturbation of  $250 \pm 150$  years (Roche et 297 al., 2004). This is quite short compared to our estimation for the HE1 laminae event, that 298 constitute furthermore only the first part of the injection of freshwater in the system (early 299 part of HE1 only). Conversely, a duration of 700 years is compatible with the data presented 300 by Hemming (2004), who gives a range for the duration of HE1 of between 208 and 1410 301 years.

302 The highest concentration of laminae, with at least two laminae per cm, is recorded at the 303 beginning of the event. During this interval, sedimentation rates were in excess of 500 cm/ka, 304 equivalent to 0.5 to 1 cm per year. This high accumulation rate implies that the laminae are 305 likely to be annual or semi-annual in nature and supports the seasonal hypothesis presented in 306 Mojtahid et al. (2005). Based on the assumption of an annual signal, individual counting of 307 laminae in MD03-2692 give an age of 91 years for the duration of the event. This must, 308 however, represent a minimum estimate, as fine laminae might have been missed and also

309 because continuous laminae deposition through time is rare, even in lakes (Tian et al., 2005),

310 and should therefore not be expected in the deep-sea environment of the Bay of Biscay.

311

## 312 *4.3. The laminae : are they recurrent phenomenon marking the onset of Termination?*

313 As previously shown on **Figure 3**, laminae events were also recorded during the late Marine 314 isotope stage (MIS) 6. They were observed on the 3 cores extending beyond MIS5, therefore 315 representing a latitudinal expansion as large as for the MIS2 event. The stratigraphical 316 position of these laminae events was determined on the basis of a correlation between the SPECMAP curve (Martinson et al., 1987) and our benthic  $\delta^{18}O$  records, as explained in 318 Section 3. In the core MD01-2461, the dating of a perfectly preserved coral found at 1560 cm 319 by U-TH methods (GEOTOP, http://www.geotop.uqam.ca/) has given a date of 139.77 ka BP  $320 \pm 2500$  years (Claude Hillaire-Marcel and Bassam Ghaled, pers. com.). This solitary coral was 321 localized more than 200 cm above the last occurrence of laminae, implying therefore that their 322 deposit occurred prior to Termination 2. This result corroborates Mojtahid et al. (2005), who 323 have dated this Celtic-FWP between 150 and 145 ka BP. This event hence represents an early 324 event of melting that leads the onset of northern hemisphere deglaciation (**Figure 7**). The 325 existence of this delay brings to mind a long standing debate concerning the chronology of 326 Termination 2, that was initiated by the datation of a speleothem (Devils Hole, US) by 327 Winograd et al. (1992, 1997). The speleothem position at stage 6/5e transition at Devils hole 328 at 144 yr BP suggests that the penultimate deglaciation may have begun earlier that the SPECMAP marine isotope curve reveals. It was later supported by  $^{230}$  Th and  $^{231}$  Pa dating of coral terraces (Galup et al., 2002). On the other hand, stacked benthic  $\delta^{18}O$  curves including 331 SPECMAP (e.g. Imbrie et al., 1984, Martinson et al., 1987; Raymo, 1997; Waelbroeck et al. 332 2002) depict a double step process for the penultimate deglaciation, with a first deglacial

333 pulse dated between 150 and 145 ka (6.3 event, if we follow the recent and robust chronology 334 of Waelbroeck et al., 2002) that perfectly fits with the Celtic -FWP.

335 Climate warming preceding high latitude ice sheet retreat at Termination 2 has been reported 336 from other records worldwide. In the north Atlantic, the Celtic-FWP event is 337 contemporaneous with a warming recorded in the tropics (Schneider et al., 1999). This 338 warming is registered in UK-37 SST, in phase with an eccentricity minima but it shows a lag 339 of 20 ka with the benthic  $\delta^{18}$ O record. Such an early warming has also been suggested by Lea 340 et al. (2002), with the onset of the warming at around 150 ka BP. The cited records are from 341 mid- to low latitudes implying that the warming during the glacial–interglacial transition 342 occurred first at low latitudes. No pertinent records exist in closer area of the Celtic margin to 343 depict this early warming in Europe (neither speleothems, nor pollen records with the 344 requested resolution and stratigraphic accuracy for this time slice). Some confusions could 345 occur considering the Zeifen interstadial but several studies dated its occurrence later within 346 the Termination 2 (after 140 ka, Seidenkrantz et al., 1996; Sanchez-Goni et al., 1999).

347 Interestingly, the age of 150 ka corresponds in the northern hemisphere insolation curve to a 348 decoupling between the 15°N and 65°N July insolation values, with a maxima for tropical insolation larger than 25 Watt/m<sup>2</sup> comparing to the maxima that occurs at the same time in 350 high latitudes (**Figure 7**). Such a feature is unique but seems recurrent prior to every 351 termination. This decoupling could argue for early response of the temperate BIIS, 352 asynchronously from boreal ice-sheets. It may therefore imply that the BIIS decay is first 353 forced by low latitude climatic changes. If confirmed, this result underlines its sensitivity and 354 maybe a precursive reaction to climate change. It is also coherent with models that show that 355 deglaciation is primarily driven by insolation (Charbit et al., 2005).

356 Our results reinforce the question about the age and duration to consider for the Ultimate 357 Glacial Maximum (ULM) in MIS6, as still debated for the orbital theory of ice ages (see 358 Cannariato and Kennett, 2005).

359 The discussion of the occurrence of laminae for the older terminations is limited by the fact 360 that to date, only the MD03-2692 core preserves a record for these periods. In this core, no 361 laminations were associated for either Termination 3 nor Termination 4 (as far as our record 362 allows us to document the last millennia of MIS10). For Termination 3, Motjahid et al. (2005) 363 interpreted this as related to the size of the BIIS. It is consistent with the trend observed in the 364 late Quaternary based on benthic oxygen isotope records (e.g. Shackleton et al., 1988, 365 Waelbroeck et al. 2002; Siddal et al., 2003) which show a reduced mid-amplitude of Northern 366 Hemisphere glaciation during MIS8. If BIIS development was then limited at that time, 367 deglacial supplies may not have been large enough to allow laminae deposition. If pertinent, 368 this observation could definitively argue for a genetic link between laminae and maximal BIIS 369 development. No deposition could also be inferred from changes in the extend of the 370 Scandinavian Ice Sheet into middle Europe and in the routing for the meltwater run-off. At 371 least during MIS 6, the Scandinavian Ice Sheet advanced much further south into Germany 372 and the Netherlands (Svendsen et al., 2004) hence its melting ice edge would have been closer 373 to the study area and could potentially have led to a higher freshwater run-off that induced 374 laminae formation. However, precise palaeogeographic informations are lacking to interpret 375 correctly MIS 8 ice-sheet extension and its potential meltwater routing (Mangerud et al., 376 1996).

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378 *4.4. Could the melting have introduced a perturbation in the AMOC system? Ideas and*  379 *controversial points* 

380 The last deglaciation period is the only one that allows a discussion on processes and 381 feedback mechanisms characteristic of deglacial transitions thanks to a robust chronological 382 framework. The following discussion will thus be focussed on the MIS 2 Celtic-freshwater 383 pulse (Celtic-FWP). We will analyse the temporal sequencing of events (**Figure 6**) to address 384 the significance of the Celtic-FWP to regional or even global climate.

385 During the early deglaciation, the first deposit of laminae is dated around 18 ka cal BP, 386 contemporaneous with the beginning of HE1 in the open Atlantic (Elliot et al., 2001) and an 387 induced collapse of the AMOC (Mc Manus et al., 2004, Hall et al., 2006). This laminae 388 deposit ended at 17 ka cal BP, followed by the most intense phase of HE1 (sensu Heinrich, 389 1988). The Laurentide Ice-Sheet (LIS) HE1 event, identified on the NW European margin 390 cores by high magnetic susceptibility values (Zaragosi et al., 2001a; Auffret et al., 2002), is recorded later in our core with CLG concentrations approaching  $2000$  grains/cm<sup>3</sup>. This two 392 step structure, also previously identified on this margin (Grousset et al., 2001; Zaragosi et al., 393 2001a; Auffret et al., 2002; Knutz et al., 2001; Peck et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2006) and in the 394 Norwegian Sea (Lekens et al., 2005) and off Portugal (Schönfeld et al., 2003) suggests a 395 regionally consistent signature for HE1 on the NW European margin.

396 The phasing between the Celtic-FWP event and then the BIIS decay with the major glacial 397 discharges of the Laurentide and Fennoscandian ice sheets during HE1 might imply a causal 398 relationship between the two events. There are at least two possible candidate mechanisms: (*i*) 399 a sea-level change and (*ii*) a disruption of the thermohaline circulation. We discuss them 400 below :

401 (*i*) The BIIS at the LGM, which was approximately twice its ice volume during HE1, only 402 contributes to a global glacio-eustatic lowering of 0.91 m (Boulton et al., 1977), some 0.76% 403 of the global ice volume difference between the LGM and the present day (Scourse, 1997). 404 Thus, even if the entire BIIS had collapsed during the early part of HE1, which we know was

405 not the case from terrestrial evidence (Mc Cabe et al., 2005), sea level would only have risen 406 by less than 0.5 m. The actual figure may be estimated at being closer to 0.1 m. This value lies 407 within the tidal range of the region at this time (Uehara et al., submitted) and could easily be 408 generated by a small storm surge. It is unlikely to cause widespread destabilisation of pan-409 Atlantic ice sheets and shelves.

410 (*ii*) The second mechanism is, to some extent, supported by our data. We provide evidence for 411 the establishment of polar conditions in the Bay of Biscay coeval with freshwater arrivals and 412 the deposition of the laminae. Prior to that, the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM sensu Mix et al., 413 2001) was punctuated by several warm events in this region (Zaragosi et al., 2001a; Mojtahid 414 et al., 2005) with palynological data suggesting active penetration of the North Atlantic Drift 415 (NAD) across the Celtic margin (Eynaud, 1999). The warmth associated with this current 416 would have been inhibited as soon as freshwater/meltwater injection began. This is evidenced 417 south of the BIIS by our data, but also in northwestern environments by meltwater injections 418 into the Rockall Trough (Richter et al., 2001; Knutz et al., 2001; Clark et al., 2004). In these 419 areas, the BIIS has been a potential source of continuous iceberg releases (Knutz et al., 2007). 420 Given the significance of freshwater flux in controlling the stability of AMOC in the North 421 Atlantic (e.g. Broecker et al., 1990; Mc Manus et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2006), it could be 422 possible, as also suggested by Clark et al. (2004), that it has had direct impact on the NAD, 423 maybe partially deviating it far off the British Isles. It could thus have possibly resulted in a 424 perturbation of the subpolar gyre with consequences on the Irminger Current (IC, Blindheim 425 et al., 2000; **Figure 1**). A change in the heat flux associated with this major component of the 426 thermohaline circulation (THC) could have had a very sensitive effect on the Nordic seas 427 (especially in the Iceland-Faeroe-Shetland major sill area) and therefore on the surrounding 428 continents. This scenario presently lacks a modelling exercise, but very few coupled models 429 possess the required sensitivity and gridding as small as is needed for the modelling of the

430 Celtic-FWP and its impact on the North Atlantic. However, we can tentatively draw down a 431 conceptual scenario based on the existing literature concerning the AMOC.

432 Perturbations of the AMOC have been intensively modelled during the last decade (hysteresis 433 response, e.g. Stocker et al., 1997; Rahmstorf, 1999; Wood et al., 1999; Paillard, 2001; Seidov 434 and Haupt, 2003; Roche et al., 2004) demonstrating the significance of thresholds within the 435 climate system. In a recent paper, Charbit et al. (2005) demonstrated that, for the last 436 deglaciation, the melting of the North American ice sheet was critically dependent on the 437 deglaciation of Fennoscandia through processes involving switches of the thermohaline 438 circulation from a glacial mode to a modern one and associated warming of the northern 439 hemisphere. Both the surface and deep structure of the THC could be affected by only a minor 440 change in the saline budget (freshwater runoff and precipitations) of the Nordic seas if 441 freshwater is injected into convectively sensitive locales (see Clark et al., 2002).

442 More than the volume implied in these mechanisms, is the geographic location of the 443 freshwater injection of major significance. Actually, evidence on BIIS thickness and extent, 444 and therefore volume, suggest that in sverdrup-equivalent units it was not sufficiently large 445 enough to disrupt the THC (Scourse, 1997; Shennan et al., 2002; Clark et al., 2004; Evans et 446 al., 2005). At the opposite, the western peri-BIIS hydrographic setting is presently very 447 sensible regarding thermohaline circulation, as it includes two major components: the NAD 448 and the Mediterranean Overflow Waters (MOW), upwelled off Ireland at 53°N (Porcupine 449 Bank; Van Akken, 2000). This junction has been named the "Mediterranean salinity valve" as 450 the MOW increases the salt budget of the NAD and contributes to the warm inflow to the 451 Nordic Seas (McCartney and Mauritzen, 2001). It has been recognized as a major actor of the 452 AMOC, especially during glacial–interglacial climate changes, but also during short-term 453 climatic changes (Johnson, 1997; Cacho et al., 2000; Schönfeld and Zahn, 2000; Voelker et 454 al., 2006; Dorschel et al., 2006).

455 What kind of scenario then could be drawn under glacial conditions? The major topographic 456 control of MOW flow suggests a significant reorganisation of this system from the Gibraltar 457 Strait to the Porcupine Bight (Dorschel et al., 2006). Apart from periods of extreme low stand 458 of sea-level, the MOW contribution to the AMOC was efficient, and then possibly 459 strengthened during HEs (Voelker et al., 2006). However, with surface freshwater injections 460 in close area of the MOW upwelling, could we envisage that the salt adjunction of the MOW 461 was still efficient? Does it question the balance between the cyclonic flow of the NAD along 462 the Norwegian coast and its anticyclonic branch, the IC? According to Johnson (1997), 463 strengthening of the IC results in warming of the Labrador Sea that enhances precipitation 464 over Northern Canada, finally driving the growth of the Laurentide Ice Sheet. Conversely, 465 following Hulbe et al. (2004), this warming could have initiated the disintegration of ice-466 shelves surrounding the Labrador Sea, thus initiating a HE.

467 However a controversial point consists in how the MOW impacts on AMOC: under "the deep 468 source" hypothesis, inflow waters to the Nordic Seas originate from the core of the MOW in 469 the Gulf of Cadiz carried northward at mid-depth by the eastern boundary undercurrent in the 470 subtropics, continuing into the subpolar gyre along the eastern boundary, and rising from 471 depths near 1200 m in the Rockall Trough to less than 600 m to cross the Wyville-Thomson 472 Ridge into the Faroe-Shetland Channel and thence the Nordic Seas (McCartney and 473 Mauritzen, 2001). Following McCartney and Mauritzen (2001), this deep source hypothesis is 474 however not fully supported by data. Accordingly, the MOW forcing would be better defined 475 in its temperature-salinity relationship of the interior of the subtropical gyre from which the 476 NAD draws its water, rather than by direct northward advection. If verified, this last option 477 definitively closes our questioning regarding the impact of the Celtic-MWP on AMOC via 478 derived MOW perturbation.

480

### 481 **5. CONCLUSIONS**

482 A regionally recurrent pattern of sedimentation characteristic of deglacial transitions has been 483 identified on the Celtic margin, characterised by: (*i*) freezing sea-surface conditions with 484 evidence for freshwater discharges and IRD deposition; (*ii*) laminae deposits possibly 485 representing seasonal signals. On the basis of a compilation of multicore and multiproxy data, 486 we interpret these facies as representing deglacial signal of the adjacent BIIS with a possible 487 contribution from the Alps routed via the Rhine river and the Manche palaeoriver. It is likely 488 that the injection of this freshwater and the iceberg release into the climatically-sensitive NE 489 Atlantic have perturbed regional hydrography. This naturally brings stimulating, but hard to 490 solve questions about its impact on the AMOC. This impact could have been emphasized by 491 the short duration of the event, possibly shorter than 100 years (based on laminae counts).

492 Interestingly, dates obtained on the younger part of the studied cores reveal a synchronism of 493 the Celtic-FWP with the beginning of HE1 and subsequently the last deglaciation in the open 494 Atlantic. On the other way, this phasing is not recorded for the penultimate deglaciation, 495 suggesting a decoupling of the BIIS response with the larger boreal ice-sheets and then 496 possibly a tropical control of BIIS decay mechanisms at this time. It addresses questions about 497 the similarity and structures of the terminations throughout time, and consequently about the 498 orbital ice-age theory.

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### 820 **FIGURE CAPTION :**

821 **Figure 1:** Location of the studied cores along the Celtic margin in relation to the 822 palaeogeography of the adjacent continent during the LGM (BIIS maximal extension, after 823 Stokes et al., 2001); the palaeovalleys of the Manche river (after Lericolais,1997) are shown 824 in dark blue. Bathymetric contour intervals are 50 m on the shelf (0 - 250 m), 500 m on the 825 slope (500 - 4000 m) and 1000 m in the deep sea (4000 - 4900 m).

826 Schematic view (after Blindheim et al., 2000; McCartney and Mauritzen, 2001) of the North 827 Atlantic major surface currents (NAD: North Atlantic Drift, NAC: Norwegian Atlantic 828 Current, IC: Irminger Current) and the intermediate Mediterranean Outflow Water current 829 (MOW).

830

831 **Figure 2:** Age models for the last 30 ka BP of the two reference cores MD95-2002 and 832 MD03-2692 (see al so Table 2).

833

834 **Figure 3:** Position of the laminated sequences (number of laminae per cm) in the respective 835 cores studied with regards to the light reflectance data  $(L^*)$ . Grey bars underline the 836 interglacial marine isotopic stages (MIS 5 to 9). The dark star localize a deep-sea coral that 837 has been found during the sampling procedure of core MD01-2461 and dated by U-TH 838 methods (GEOTOP, http://www.geotop.uqam.ca/).

839

840 **Figure 4:** X-ray imagery and microphotography of the sediment thin sections corresponding 841 to laminae in (a) MIS 2- core MD01-2461 and (b) MIS 6-core MD03-2692. Black arrows 842 indicate the laminae position and are proportional to the larger grain concentrations. Black stars indicate <sup>14</sup>C AMS age positions in core MD03-2692 (15,100  $yr^{14}C$  BP at 203cm and  $15,160 \text{ yr}^{14}$ C BP at 260cm). (c) Grain size diagrams showing in red X-Ray bright laminae, in 845 black X-ray dark laminae. (c1) : MIS2 in core MD03-2692; (c2) : MIS6 in core MD01-2461. 846

847 **Figure 5:** Structure of Termination I (5a, 5b) and II (5c, 5d, 5e) with regard to the 848 multiproxy studies conducted on the cores (No. of laminae /cm; % *Np*s: relative frequencies 849 of the polar species *Neogloquadrina pachyderma* s.; CLG. c.: coarse lithic grain 850 concentrations; palynomorphs: concentration in *Pediastrum* sp./cm<sup>3</sup>, % Estuar. d. : relative 851 frequencies of the estuarine dinocyst species, nQ/Q : Ratio non Quat. din./Quat. din.). The 852 same depth scale has been kept for each of the section presented here to highlight the 853 difference in the recovery of the laminae events (grey bars). For core sections of MIS2, the 854 limits of the Heinrich Event 1 (HE1) conform to those published by Zaragosi et al. (2001a, 855 Figure 6) and Elliot et al. (1998, 2001). The end of the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) period 856 is also noted. The grey bands underline the laminae events only.

857

858 **Figure 6:** MIS2 BIIS MWP in cores MD95-2002 and MD03-2692. Empty losangic dots 859 indicate the age control points. HE1 and HE2 limits after Elliot et al. (1998; 2001) after 860 conversion with CALIB (version 5.1.0 with the MARINE04 data set, incorporating a 400 yr 861 correction for marine reservoir). The mid-ages of theses events (dark horizontal bars) are 862 taken from Thouveny et al. (2000); for HE1 it conforms to those of Bond et al. (1997), Peck et 863 al. (2006) and to the Heinrich 1 meltwater event of Hall et al. (2006); vertical bars on the left 864 locate the major hydrographic events identified in the proximal North Atlantic Ocean: AMOC 865 collapse (after Mc Manus et al., 2004); BMevent: British Margin negative  $\delta^{18}O$  event (after 866 Knutz et al., 2007).

867 Losangic dots locate terrestrial events of the BIIS history. BIIS –DEG: BIIS extensive 868 deglaciation, BIIS-MAX: maximum BIIS size, after Bowen et al. (2002); KPS: Killard Point

869 stadial after McCabe et al. (2005); K-MWP: Kilkeel meltwater pulse after Clark et al. (2004). 870 Planktonic  $\delta^{18}O$  measurements in MD95-2002 were carried out on *G. bulloides* and *N.* 871 *pachyderma,;* benthic δ<sup>18</sup>O measurements in MD03-2692 were carried out on *Uvigerina* 872 *peregrina*, *Pullenia bulloides* and *Planulina wuellerstorfi.*

873

874 **Figure 7:** MIS6 BIIS MWP in core MD03-2692 (labels: % *Np*s: relative frequencies of the 875 polar species *Neogloquadrina pachyderma* s.; CLG. c.: coarse lithic grain concentrations). 876 Ages indicated on the right are those used as tie-points for the construction of the age model 877 (correlation with SPECMAP  $\delta^{18}O$  benthic record, Martinson et al., 1987; The SPECMAP 878 stack was obtained from ftp://ftp.ncdc.noaa.gov/pub/data/paleo/paleocean/specmap/). 879 Insolation values after Berger et Loutre, 1991. The Termination 2 limits are those cited in 880 Cannariato and Kennet, 2005. Black stars on the right localized the tie-points used to 881 constrain the age model by a direct comparison with the SPECMAP  $\delta^{18}$ O curve (Martinson et 882 al., 1987).

883

### 884 **TABLE CAPTION :**

885 **Table 1:** Details of the studied cores.

**Table 2**: Radiocarbon control points used for the reference cores. Δa <sup>14</sup>C: age uncertainty; 1 887 sigma values are based on the calibrated age range and indicate the margin between the mean 888 age (CALIB5.1.0. calculations).









 898 FIG3 







903<br>904 905



 907 FIG7 



908

Table 1 910



 $\frac{1}{912}$ <br>913

Table 2