# Sedimentological and palynological records since 10 ka BP along a proximal-distal gradient on the Armorican shelf (NW France)

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#### Abstract :

New findings acquired in Armorican shelf (core MD08-3204 CQ: Bay of Quiberon and core VK03-58bis: South Glénan islands) depict Holocene paleoenvironmental changes since 10 ka BP through a multiproxy dataset including sedimentological and palynological data. First, grain-size analyses and AMS-14C dates show a common sedimentary history for both study cores. The slowdown of the relative sea level (RSL) rise was accompanied by a drop of the sedimentation rates between ~8.3 and 5.7 ka BP; the rates had been relatively higher at the onset of the Holocene. This interval led to the establishment of a shell-condensed level, identified in core VK03-58bis by the "Turritella layer" and interpreted as a marker for the Maximum Flooding Surface. Palynological data (pollen and dinoflagellate cyst assemblages) acquired in core MD08-3204 CQ argue for an amplification of the fluvial influence since 5.7 ka BP; the establishment of the Highstand System Tract (i.e., mixed marine and fluviatile influences on the platform) then accompanied the slowdown of the RSL rise rates. On the shelf, the amplification of Anthropogenic Pollen Indicators (API) has been better detected since 4.2 ka BP, due not only to the increase of human impact but also due to a stronger fluvial influence on the shelf during the Late Holocene. Palynological data, recorded on the 8.5–8.3 ka BP interval along an inshore-offshore gradient, also demonstrate the

complexity of the palynological signals such as i) the fluvial influence that promotes some pollen taxa (Alnus and Corylus) from proximal areas and ii) the macro-regionalization of palynomorph sources in distal cores. In addition, the comparison of palynological tracers, including API, over the last 7 kyrs BP, with South Brittany coastal and mid-shelf sites subject to northern vs. southern Loire catchment areas, shows a major hydro-climatic effect on the reconstructed palynological signals. Strengthened subpolar gyre (SPG) dynamics, combined with recurrent positive North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) configurations, appear responsible for increased winter precipitation and fluvial discharge over northern Europe, as in Brittany. Conversely, weakened SPG intervals, associated with recurrent negative NAO-like modes, are characterized by intensified winter fluvial discharge over southern Europe. Interestingly, at an infra-orbital timescale, we record major peaks of API during periods of strengthened (/weakened) SPG dynamics in sites subject to detritic-organic matter inputs from Brittany (/Loire) watersheds.

#### Highlights

▶ The Armorican shelf sedimentation reflects the Holocene relative sea level rise. ▶ The condensed *"Turritella* layer" testifies of the Maximum Flooding Surface. ▶ Distortion of palynological signals from proximal to distal environments. ▶ The hydro-climatic forcing affects the anthropogenic pollen signal in shelf sediments. ▶ The Bronze and Middle Ages are recorded as main steps in human activity increase.

**Keywords**: Holocene, South Brittany, Pollen, Dinoflagellate cysts, Paleoenvironmental changes, Turritella layer, Anthropogenic pollen indicators (API), Fluvial discharge

61 **1. Introduction** 

The Holocene (i.e., the last 11.7 kyrs BP) is characterized by climate variability operating 62 63 differently according to timescales. In the first instance, the summer insolation at 65°N 64 gradually decreases during the Holocene and induces a drop in Northern Hemisphere summer air temperatures (Berger and Loutre, 1991) fostering the Mid-Holocene freshening and the 65 66 increase in winter precipitation over Northwestern (NW) Europe (e.g., Morzadec-Kerfourn, 67 1974; Naughton et al., 2007; Penaud et al., 2020). Superimposed on the long-term Holocene climate trend, millennial-scale abrupt climate events derive from repeated cryospheric 68 69 instabilities (i.e., Bond events, Bond et al., 1997; or Rapid Climate Changes with a more globalscale perspective, Mayewski et al., 2004). Over Europe, the infra-orbital Holocene climate 70 71 subsequently oscillates at multidecadal timescales and is mainly driven by North Atlantic Oscillation-like (NAO; e.g., Hurrell, 1995; Hurrel et al., 2003) varying atmospheric regimes 72 73 (e.g., Olsen et al., 2012; Morley et al., 2014) and North Atlantic Ocean gyre dynamics (e.g., 74 Hátún et al., 2005; Thornalley et al., 2009; Moffa-Sánchez and Hall, 2017; Penaud et al., 2020; 75 Lambert et al., 2020).

Following the deglaciation, the Early Holocene is also characterized by high Relative Sea Level 76 77 (RSL) rise rates that decreased during the Mid to Late Holocene along the Atlantic coasts (e.g., 78 Caribbean region and South America, Milne et al., 2005; Southern Bay of Biscay; Leorri et al., 79 2012a, b; North-America, Engelhart et al., 2015; Europe, García-Artola et al., 2018). The RSL 80 evolution is strongly controlled by meltwater inputs and isostatic adjustments, inducing 81 different sea-level rates according to the regions investigated (Leorri et al., 2012a, b; Goslin et 82 al., 2015; García-Artola, 2018). Along the southern Brittany coasts (García-Artola et al., 83 2018), the RSL rose rapidly between 20 ka BP (~ -25 m) and ~7 ka BP (~ -5 m) and 84 subsequently slowed down at ~6 ka BP (Goslin et al., 2015; Stéphan et al., 2015; García-Artola et al., 2018), leading to the development of tidal flats in estuarine environments and saltmarshes 85

86 along the European coasts (e.g., Joly and Visset, 2009; Menier et al., 2010; Stéphan et al., 2019;

*Penaud et al., 2020*). The Holocene marine transgression thus progressively flooded fluvial
paleovalleys, resulting in the geomorphological transformation of French Atlantic coastal
ecosystems (e.g., *Proust et al., 2001; Weber et al., 2004; Chaumillon et al., 2008; Menier, 2004;*

90 Menier et al., 2010; Baltzer et al., 2014; Gregoire et al., 2017).

91 Superimposed on these natural forcings, Holocene paleoenvironments are impacted by the 92 evolution of human societies (i.e., cultural and technical changes), especially since the start of 93 the Neolithic (i.e., ~7 ka BP in Brittany; Pailler et al., 2008). The related landscape changes 94 are mainly recorded thanks to palynological data highlighting the progressive deforestation and 95 the introduction and intensification of the agro-pastoral activities thanks to Anthropogenic 96 Pollen Indicators (API) (e.g., Marguerie, 1992; Visset et al., 1995, 1996; Gaudin, 2004; Visset 97 and Bernard, 2006; Naughton et al., 2007; Fernane et al., 2014, 2015; Penaud et al., 2020). In 98 parallel with terrestrial bio-indicators (pollen grains), aquatic bio-indicators (dinoflagellate 99 cysts or dinocyts) allow discussing surface water evolution through time linked with sea level 100 variations or leaching of nutrients from soils to coastal waters (e.g., Lambert et al., 2018; 101 Penaud et al., 2020). These latter paleoceanographic tracers are found in worldwide sediments 102 and their distribution are mainly driven by sea-surface parameters (i.e., temperature, salinity), 103 nutrient concentration and primary productivity regimes, as well as inshore-offshore gradients 104 (e.g., Zonneveld et al., 2013; Van Nieuwenhove et al., 2020; Marret et al., 2020; de Vernal et 105 al., 2020). Along the Brittany coasts, the modern distribution of dinocysts has recently been 106 updated (Ganne et al., 2016; Lambert et al. 2017, 2022). Furthermore, Penaud et al. (2020) 107 have recently classified dinocyst taxa into ecological groups according to different bathymetric 108 contexts (i.e., estuarine, shallow bay, inner neritic, outer neritic, full oceanic) along a marine 109 (distal or offshore) to coastal (proximal) temporal transect across the Bay of Biscay.

110 The Armorican shelf, subject to both fluvial (i.e., mainly the Loire and Vilaine rivers) and 111 oceanic (i.e., North Atlantic Ocean through gyre dynamics) influences (Fig. 1a), is a key area 112 for conducting paleoenvironmental studies (Naughton et al., 2007; Penaud et al., 2020). In this 113 study, we examine two cores retrieved in the Armorican shelf (Figs. 1a, b): cores MD08-3204 114 CQ (Bay of Quiberon) and VK03-58bis (Grande Vasière, South Glénan sector). Previous 115 studies conducted on core VK03-58bis aimed at discussing the sedimentological structure of 116 the Grande Vasière (Folliot, 2004; Bourillet et al., 2005, 2006) as well as landscape-climate 117 changes in northwestern France (Naughton et al., 2007). Core MD08-3204 CO was previously 118 examined by *Baltzer et al. (2014)* to reconstruct the sedimentary filling of the Bay of Quiberon. 119 The present work is based on i) new radiocarbon dates obtained for both studied cores and ii) 120 new palynological (pollen and dinocyst) analyses conducted on core MD08-3204 CQ. Our first 121 objective is to refine the chronostratigraphy of both sequences to reconstruct the sedimentary 122 dynamics on the shelf in relation with the long-term evolution of the RSL rise. This allows 123 providing a new stratigraphical significance for the "Turritella layer", an interval characterized 124 by a high concentration of Turritella communis shells in core VK03-58bis (Folliot, 2004; 125 Bourillet et al., 2005, 2006; Naughton et al., 2007; Baltzer et al., 2015). Secondly, this study 126 aims at understanding palynological signatures along a proximal-distal gradient from coastal 127 (Lambert et al., 2019; this study), mid-shelf (Naughton et al., 2007) to deep marine 128 environments (Zumaque et al., 2017; Fersi et al., in prep) on the 8.5–8.3 ka BP interval. Finally, 129 the API detection is discussed from continental (South Brittany maritime marsh; Fernane et al., 130 2015) to Armorican shelf environments (Penaud et al., 2020; this study) over the last 7 kyrs BP 131 taking into account anthropogenic and natural forcing.

#### 133 **2. Environmental context**

#### 134 **2.1.** Hydrographical context of the Bay of Biscay

135 The study area extends from the northern part of the Bay of Biscay (BoB), an open oceanic 136 basin in the north-eastern Atlantic Ocean, to the coastal zone of South Brittany. In the BoB, 137 modern residual shelf currents (Fig. 1a) depend on wind-driven, tidally-induced, and density-138 driven flows (Pingree and Le Cann, 1989; Koutsikopoulos and Le Cann, 1996; Castaing et al., 139 1999). Currently, seasonal atmospheric dynamics (Pingree and Le Cann, 1989) and river 140 discharge (Lazure and Jégou, 1998; Lazure et al., 2008) lead to the complex hydrological 141 system presented in Charria et al. (2013). In winter (i.e., October to March), a SW-dominant 142 wind regime forces a SE to NW shelf current as schematized in Fig. 1a, while in summer (i.e., 143 April to September), a NE-dominant wind regime forces a NW to SE shelf current (Charria et 144 al., 2013; Charria, 2018). From mid-autumn to early spring, freshwater discharge of the Loire 145 and Gironde rivers (i.e., values greater than 1500 m<sup>3</sup>/s; *Castaing and Allen, 1981*) are pushed 146 back toward the BoB coastal areas under the influence of sustained wind activity (Fig. 1a). This 147 leads to a salinity decrease and a sea-surface cooling between the coast and the 100 m isobath. 148 Under increasing winter fluvial discharge, the establishment of the resulting modern "winter 149 horizontal thermohaline front" then characterizes the pronounced disconnection of oceanic and 150 shelf waters (Castaing et al., 1999; Costoya et al., 2016; Fig. 1a), identified from 3.3 ka BP on 151 the mid-shelf (Mojtahid et al., 2019; Penaud et al., 2020).

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#### 153 **2.2.** Sedimentological context of the Armorican shelf

154 2.2.1. The Bay of Quiberon (BQ)

The Bay of Quiberon (BQ; 4 to 14 km width) is located in the internal domain of the Armoricanshelf, between the coast and the 50 m isobath (Figs. 1a, b). This shallow internal domain is

157 divided into two sectors separated by large paleovalley networks and weakly incised (Guilcher,

158 1948; Vanney, 1977; Menier, 2004; Menier et al., 2010, 2014): i) the inshore region with water

depths below 25 m (i.e., bays of Quiberon and Vilaine; Fig. 1b) and ii) the offshore region formed by rocky shoals (i.e., islands of Houat and Hoëdic; Fig. 1b). In the BQ, modern sedimentation consists of fine terrigenous sediments (i.e., muddy sand; Fig. 1b), coming mainly from the swells-driven resuspension of the fine sediments deposited in the Vilaine Bay and from the Morbihan Gulf, Vilaine and Loire river plumes (*Menier et al.*, 2010, 2014).

164 The Holocene sedimentary infilling of the BQ, following the Last Glacial Maximum (~20 ka 165 BP) when the BQ was completely submerged, has been thoroughly studied using seismic profiles and sedimentological analyses (Baltzer et al., 2014). The BQ post-glacial flooding was 166 167 initially confined to paleovalleys, gradually filled by fluvial deposits, which evolved to a 168 subtidal bay (Unit 2 in Baltzer et al., 2014). Next, marine deposits indicative of energetic 169 conditions (e.g., sparse marine shell debris, clayey- and sandy-rich deposits) settled during the 170 rapid sea-level rise (8.7 to 6–5 ka BP; Unit 3 in Baltzer et al., 2014) until reaching the Maximum 171 Flooding Surface (MFS). Following the RSL rise, BQ sedimentation now reflects highstand sea 172 level conditions established since ~6–5 ka BP (Unit 4 in Baltzer et al., 2014).

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### 174 2.2.2. The Grande Vasière mid-shelf belt (GV)

The Grande Vasière (GV; 225 km length; 40 km wide; surface of 8,000 km<sup>2</sup>; Fig. 1a), located between 80 and 110 m water depth, is a mid-depth mud belt (*McCave, 1972; Dubrulle et al.,* 2007). The GV generally designates the upper part of the Holocene sediment accumulation built up at a rate of 0.1 to 0.2 cm/yr (*Lesueur et al., 2001*). The GV consists of a thin layer of silty mud, mainly tens of centimeters thick except on the NNW and SSE edges, overlying two sandy units (*Andreieff et al., 1971; Bourillet et al., 2006*). Present-day sediment inputs come from the 181 winter fluvial terrigenous supply (1.5 10<sup>6</sup> t/yr from the Gironde, 0.5 10<sup>6</sup> t/yr from the Loire, and 182 0.1 10<sup>6</sup> t/yr from the Vilaine; Jouanneau et al., 1999) and the wave erosion (storminess and 183 distant swell) of the NW French coast between April and September (Jouanneau et al., 1999; 184 Dubrulle et al., 2007). In the BoB, the winter horizontal thermohaline front derives from the 185 extension of winter fluvial turbid plumes up to the 100 m isobath (Costoya et al., 2016), 186 explaining the extension of the mid-shelf sediment deposits on the GV (Castaing et al., 1999). 187 The provisional sedimentary budget over the last 30 years shows a decrease of the clayey 188 fraction due to the fine material remobilization because of storms and fishing activities 189 (Bourillet et al., 2006).

In the northern part of the BoB, the Loire and Vilaine rivers together represent 95% of BoB 190 191 watersheds. Up to 90% of the nutrient contribution in the northern part of the Armorican shelf 192 comes from the Loire and Vilaine rivers and the southern Brittany coastal river discharge make 193 smaller secondary contributions (Guillaud et al., 2008). The northernmost sector of the GV 194 (southwest of Glénan islands; Fig. 1b) is characterized by a thicker, muddy layer, of a few 195 meters of Holocene silty-clayey sediments (Bourillet et al., 2006). In this area, a characteristic 196 acoustic reflector in seismic profiles has been identified and attributed to the presence of a 197 remarkable concentration of Turritella communis shells, described as the "Turritella layer" in 198 the core VK03-58bis (Folliot, 2004; Bourillet et al., 2005, 2006). The environmental changes 199 required for the establishment of this shell deposit, observed on the Armorican shelf but also 200 elsewhere in the northern Atlantic Ocean (Scottish fjords; Baltzer et al., 2015), are still debated. 201

#### 3. Material and methods 202

#### **Studied cores** 203 3.1.

204 The CALYPSO square (CASQ) core MD08-3204 CQ (47°30'27.6''N; 3°1'18.6''O; 17 m deep; 205 8.91 m long) was collected in the central part of the BQ (Figs. 1a, b) onboard the R/V Marion Dufresne in 2008 (MD169/MICROSYSTEMS cruise; Blamart et al., 2008). Only the three 206 207 upper meters are examined in this study.

208 The VK03-58bis core (47°36.349'N; 4°08.173'W; 96.8 m deep; 2.72 m long) was collected 209 with a vibrocorer, in the NNW edge of the GV off the South Glénan islands (GV; Figs. 1a, b) 210 during the Vibarmor cruise, onboard the R/V Côtes de la Manche (Le Roy, 2003; 'Défi Golfe 211 de Gascogne' 2001-2005, Ifremer). The latter sedimentary archive retrieves the totality of the 212 northern GV sediment accumulation (Bourillet et al., 2005, 2006; Naughton et al., 2007).

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#### 3.2. **Chronological frameworks**

New chronostratigraphies established on both studied cores were used to discuss the 215 sedimentation dynamics on the Armorican shelf. In this study, 11 new AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates were 216 217 obtained for the upper three meters of core MD08-3204 CQ, these were used to build a robust chronostratigraphy based on a total of 15 AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates between 287 and 20 cm (Table 1). 218 Regarding core VK03-58bis, 10 additional AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates were newly acquired (8 on benthic 219 foraminifera and 2 on *Turritella communis* shells), complementing the 5 earlier AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates 220 published in Naughton et al. (2007) (Table 2). All AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates were calibrated with the 221 222 CALIB 7.1 software using the IntCal20 calibration curve (Stuiver and Reimer, 1993; Reimer et 223 al., 2020), first considering a reservoir age of  $-400 \pm 45$  years to radiocarbon dates (point 1559) 224 for the lower Loire in the marine20 database; Tisnérat-Laborde et al., 2010) for both studied 225 cores (Tables 1 and 2).

226 Also, this study aims at understanding palynological signatures along a proximal-distal gradient 227 on the Armorican shelf since the subsequent RSL slowdown at ~6 ka BP. For this purpose, an 228 age model was established on the top core section (134-20 cm) of core MD08-3204 CQ using 229 the rbacon package (Blaauw and Christen, 2011) in R version 4.1.2 (R Development Core 230 Team, 2021; http://www.r-project.org/). This allowed reconstructing the last 5.7 kyrs BP (Fig. 231 2a), while no age model was established for the lower section of the core (287–134 cm) because 232 of the peculiar sedimentological context discussed later in the manuscript (i.e., period of 233 remobilization or no sediment deposition). The palynological records obtained on core MD08-234 3204 CQ were also compared with published palynological datasets from continental (core 235 GL3, Loc'h of Guidel; Fernane et al., 2015) and mid-shelf (core CBT-CS11, Grande Vasière, 236 Penmarc'h sector; Penaud et al., 2020) sedimentary archives (Figs. 1a, b). For the last two cited 237 cores, all AMS-14C dates previously acquired were re-calibrated and their age models were 238 modified using the same chronological methodologies as the one described for core MD08-239 3204 CQ (Fig. 2b).

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241 **3.3.** Sedimentological analyses

In this study, the logs previously established for cores MD08-3204 CQ (*Baltzer et al., 2014*) and VK03-58bis (*Folliot, 2004*) were reviewed thanks to a refined description of the sedimentary facies (Figs. 3 a, b).

Regarding core MD08-3204 CQ, the sedimentological data presented in this study refer to the 246 299–1 cm section also investigated for palynological data. Sedimentological analyses 247 previously carried out on this core (*Baltzer et al., 2014*) include a sedimentological description 248 and total grain-size analyses (after removal of the organic matter) using a Beckman-Coulter 249 LS230 laser particle analyzer. Also, new calcimetry (% CaCO<sub>3</sub>; Fig. 3a) and Total Organic 250 Carbon (% TOC; Fig. 3a) data were acquired (UMR 6249 Chrono-environnement laboratory, 251 Univ. Bourgogne Franche-Comté) thanks to the standard Loss On Ignition (LOI) method (Heiri 252 et al., 2001). Sediments were dried at 105°C during 20 hours and then cooled in a dessicator 253 before burning. After weighing, samples were burned at 550°C during 5 hours and weighed to 254 calculate the TOC content. Then, the samples were burned at 950°C during 2 hours and weighed 255 to calculate the carbonate content.

256 Regarding the VK03-58bis core, new CaCO3-free grain-size analyses (after HCl 30% 257 treatment) were performed on a Malvern Hydro 2000 particle size analyzer (Univ. Bretagne 258 Sud, Pontivy), and added information on previous sedimentological data including grain-size 259 analyses on the total sediment fraction (Bourillet et al., 2005; Naughton et al., 2007; Fig. 3b). Grain-size statistics for both study cores, including median grain-size (D50) values, were 260 261 obtained using the GRADISTAT v 8.0 software (Blott and Pye, 2001).

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263 3.4.

# **Palynological analyses**

264 New palynological data were acquired on core MD08-3204 CQ (BQ; Fig. 1b) for the upper 265 three meters of the core. A total of 61 samples were taken every 10–20 cm, in the lower part of 266 the sequence (i.e., 290–140 cm), and every ~3 cm in the upper part (i.e., 140–10 cm) within a 267 1 cm sample (i.e., corresponding to  $\sim 2 \text{ cm}^3$ ).

268 Palynological treatments on the <150 µm sediment fraction were carried out at the Geo-Ocean 269 laboratory (Univ. Bretagne Occidentale, Plouzané) following the procedure described by de 270 Vernal et al. (1999). First, carbonate and siliceous fractions were removed using chemical 271 treatments (cold 10-25-50% HCl and cold 40-70% HF). Then, mineral clayey fractions were 272 sieved with 10  $\mu$ m mesh size nylon screens. An optical microscope Leica DMC 2500 at  $\times 630$ 273 magnification was used for palynomorph determination, following Beug (1961) and Reille 274 (1995) for pollen and Rochon et al. (1999) and Van Nieuwenhove et al. (2020) for dinocyst 275 identifications. For each sample a minimum of i) 300 pollen grains (150 grains excluding Pinus 276 and indeterminate grains; Fatela and Taborda, 2002) and ii) 300 dinocysts (100 specimens 277 besides the dominant species Lingulodinium machaerophorum), were counted to systematically ensure statistically reliable assemblages (Mertens et al., 2009). Palynological results were then 278 represented in absolute (number of specimens/cm<sup>3</sup>) and relative (percentages) abundances 279 280 (Table 3). Palynological diagrams and cluster analyses were performed using the Psimpoll 281 program (Bennet, 1992), and ecological indexes (number of taxa per sample, Margalef 282 diversity, and dominance; Table 3) were calculated using the Past program v 1.75b (Hammer et al., 2001). The dinocyst and pollen identified in core MD08-3204 CQ are grouping according 283 284 to their ecological affinities (see Table 3).

#### **4. Results**

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## 4.1. Sediment facies description and chrono-stratigraphical model

#### 288 4.1.1. The MD08-3204 CQ core: the inshore domain of the Bay of Quiberon

The age-depth plot (Fig. 3a) defines three main stratigraphical intervals. In the lower part, between 299–196 cm, a short time interval encompassing 200 years (8.5–8.3 ka BP) is characterized by high sedimentation rates of about 4.5 mm/yr. Between 196–134 cm (8.3–5.7 ka BP), a drop in sedimentation rates (decreasing to ~0.2 mm/yr), associated with a reversed date, suggests a period of remobilization or no sediment deposition (grey band in Fig. 3a). From 134 cm (5.7 ka BP) to the top of the core, a resumption of lower and constant sedimentation rates of about 0.24 mm/yr is calculated.

296 Regarding grain-size analyses performed on the total sediment fraction, in the lower part of the 297 core between 299–250 cm, sediments consist of fine to medium sands, with less than 40% of 298 silty-clayey sediments (Fig. 3a). Between 250-200 cm, a larger proportion of silty-clayey 299 sediments (~60% of the grain size distribution) is characterized by an increase of the TOC 300 (higher than 6%; Fig. 3a). Between 200–180 cm, marking the base of the low sedimentation 301 rate interval, total sediment D50 values rise (~40 µm before limit 1 and 150 µm after this limit; Fig. 3a) and correspond to the increase of the proportion of fine to sands. From 180 cm, 302 303 sediments consist in very fine-sandy (~60% of the grain size distribution, limit 2 in Fig. 3a). 304 Finally, at 134 cm (i.e., limit 3 corresponds to the resumption of constant sedimentation rates), 305 total sediment D50 values decrease (~95 µm before limit 3 and 42 µm after; Fig. 3a). At the 306 same time, both calcimetry (4% before 134 cm and 12% after limit 3) and TOC (lower than 6% 307 before 134 cm and between 6-12% after limit 3) increase.

#### 309 4.1.2. The VK03-58bis core in the mid-shelf mud belt (northern Grande Vasière)

The age-depth plot of core VK03-58bis (Fig. 3b) defines three main stratigraphical intervals, as for core MD08-3204 CQ. The lower part, between 266–165 cm (10–8.4 ka BP), is characterized by higher sedimentation rates of about 0.6 mm/yr. Between 165–140 cm (8.4–6.3 ka BP), an abrupt drop in sedimentation rates is observed (decreasing to 0.01 mm/yr; grey band in Fig. 3b). From 137 cm (6.3 ka BP) to the top of the core, a resumption of lower sedimentation rates of about 0.22 mm/yr is reconstructed, with values close to the ones calculated for the post-5.7 ka BP interval described for core MD08-3204 CQ (Fig. 3a).

317 Regarding grain-size analyses performed on the total sediment fraction, during the interval 318 characterized by higher sedimentation rates (~0.6 mm/yr; Fig. 3b), sediments consist mainly of 319 coarser silty sediments with clast debris whose sizes gradually decrease between 270-210 cm. 320 Between ~210–170 cm (Fig. 3b), finer sediments are characterized by decreases of both CaCO<sub>3</sub>-321 free and total sediment D50 values. In addition, the interval characterized by a drop in 322 sedimentation rates (~0.01 mm/yr; grey band in Fig. 3b), encompassing a remarkable 161–149 cm level of Turritella communis, is marked by a rise of CaCO<sub>3</sub>-free and total sediment D50 323 324 values (~18  $\mu$ m before limit 1', and 30  $\mu$ m after this limit). From the first appearance of T. 325 communis at 213 cm, their shell concentration gradually increases until reaching the high 326 concentrated level, known as the "Turritella layer" (TL; Bourillet et al., 2005; Naughton et al., 327 2007; Baltzer et al., 2015), visible on the X-Ray radiography (Bourillet et al., 2005; Fig. 3b). 328 A few Turritella shells, highly scattered, still occur above the TL horizon. From 140 cm 329 onward, corresponding to the resumption of constant sedimentation rates of about 0.22 mm/yr 330 (limit 2'; Fig. 3b), finer silty-clayey sediments are characterized by the decrease of total 331 sediment D50 values (~30 µm before 140 cm and 18 µm after this limit).

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### 4.2. Palynological results of core MD08-3204 CQ

334 The description of palynological results led to the examination of four main palynozones (MD1 335 to MD4; Figs. 4 and 5). These zones were established based on pollen and dinocyst observations 336 in terms of both concentrations (Fig. 4) and percentages (Fig. 5), coupled with a clustering 337 analysis. The palynological data are not described and interpreted in the 196–134 cm interval 338 (grey bands in Figs. 4 and 5) owing to potential taphonomic bias and possible remobilization 339 (subsection 4.1.1.). The palynological data acquired in the 299-210 cm interval are not 340 discussed from a stratigraphic point of view because of extremely high sedimentation rates. 341 Moreover, this interval is marked by extremely low dinocyst concentrations (less than 50 342 dinocysts counted per level in the 299-210 interval; Figs. 4a, f). For these reasons, the 343 palynological data have been summed to get an average picture of the interval in the discussion 344 hereafter. Owing to the constant sedimentation rates, the palynological (pollen and dinocysts) 345 signal is analyzed at a 100-year time resolution from 140 cm onward.

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#### 347 *4.2.1. Diversity and concentrations*

348 A total of 31 different dinocyst taxa were recognized in the whole core, with a mean taxon 349 richness of 14 dinocyst taxa per slide, with lower diversity before 134 cm (i.e., 5.7 ka BP) and 350 higher diversity after this limit (Fig. 4c; and related higher Margalef diversity in Fig. 4b). Total 351 dinocyst concentrations (Fig. 4a) range between ~300 and 53,000 cysts/cm<sup>3</sup>, with very low 352 values estimated in the 290–196 cm interval (mean of 1,400 cysts/cm<sup>3</sup>; MD1 excluding the 353 196–134 cm section). Higher concentrations are recorded in the upper part of the core, divided 354 into three palynozones according to the main fluctuations of concentration values: MD2 (134-355 112 cm; 5.7–4.9 ka BP; mean of 4,600 cysts/cm<sup>3</sup>), MD3 (112–49 cm; 4.9–2.4 ka BP; mean of 356 26,100 cysts/cm<sup>3</sup>) and MD4 (from 49 cm or 2.4 ka BP; mean of 9,200 cysts/cm<sup>3</sup>; Fig. 4a). Total

357 dinocyst concentrations (Fig. 4a; as well as the dominance index in Fig. 4d) are mainly 358 influenced by Lingulodinium machaerophorum occurrences (Figs. 4a, e). Maximal dinocyst 359 concentrations are therefore reached in zone MD3 (mean of 26,000 cysts/cm<sup>3</sup>), in parallel with 360 maximal percentages of *L. machaerophorum* at ~96% (Fig. 4e). Due to the low dinocyst counts 361 (far below 100 specimens/slide) reached in zone MD1 (Fig. 4f: mean of 28 dinocyst counts per 362 slide for the 7 samples between 290-196 cm), the dinocyst data obtained across this 200 yr-363 long interval (8.5-8.3 ka BP) were summed (194 dinocysts) providing mean dinocyst 364 percentages for this interval (Fig. 5a and the following description of results).

365 Regarding pollen analyses, 95 different taxa were recognized in total with an average of 25 pollen taxa per slide, with lower diversity before limit a (134 cm) and higher diversity after this 366 367 boundary (Fig. 4i; and related higher Margalef diversity in Fig. 4h). The maximal pollen 368 diversity is recorded in zone MD4 (~26 different taxa per slide; Figs. 4h, i). Total pollen 369 concentrations (Fig. 4g) range between ~2,700 and 38,000 grains/cm<sup>3</sup>, with high values 370 reconstructed in zone MD1 (mean of 20,299 grains/cm<sup>3</sup>), and especially during the interval of 371 finer sediments (mean of 29,500 grains/cm<sup>3</sup>) that are favorable to a higher concentration of 372 palynomorphs. Considering the upper part of the core, after 134 cm (i.e., 5.7 ka BP), higher 373 pollen concentrations are recorded in zone MD3 (112-49 cm; 4.9-2.4 ka BP; mean of 11,900 374 grains/cm<sup>3</sup>), while MD2 (132–112 cm; 5.7–4.9 ka BP; mean of 8,000 grains/cm<sup>3</sup>) and MD4 (from 49 cm or 2.4 ka BP; mean of 5,700 grains/cm<sup>3</sup>; Fig. 4g) are characterized by lower values. 375 376 The pollen dominance index (Fig. 4j) is mainly determined by *Quercus* percentages (Fig. 4k) 377 all along the core; the lowest values of this taxon being recorded in zone MD4, which is also 378 characterized by the highest pollen diversity.

380 *4.2.2. Description of palynological assemblages* 

381 Zone MD1 is characterized by the dominance of inner neritic (~62%; i.e., Spiniferites lazus, 382 Spiniferites bentorii) and outer neritic (~24%; i.e., Operculodinium centrocarpum sensu Wall 383 & Dale, 1966, Spiniferites mirabilis) taxa (Fig. 5a). Above 134 cm, zone MD2 corresponds to 384 increasing percentages of L. machaerophorum (mean of 77%) and the decrease of other 385 dinocyst taxa (Fig. 5a). In zone MD3, L. machaerophorum reaches maximum values above 386 80%, with two subzones that can be identified. In subzone MD3a, L. machaerophorum reaches 387 its highest values in the whole study sequence (up to 95%), whereas subzone MD3b (80-49 388 cm) is characterized by the progressive rise of inner neritic taxa, mainly due to increasing 389 percentages of S. bentorii and S. lazus. Finally, zone MD4 (49 cm onward; from 2.4 ka BP) is 390 marked by a decrease of L. machaerophorum percentages (mean of 74%), as well as an increase 391 of Spiniferites taxa and coastal heterotrophic percentages (Fig. 5a), especially in subzone MD4b 392 (i.e., from 30 cm).

393 Regarding pollen assemblages (Fig. 5b), zone MD1 is characterized by occurrences of 394 Amaranthaceae (mean of 12%), and high percentages of arboreal taxa (average of 77%), mainly 395 represented by Quercus and Corvlus. Zone MD2 is marked by lower percentages of 396 Amaranthaceae and increasing values of riparian tree taxa, mainly due to the gradual rise of 397 Alnus (Fig. 5b). Zone MD3 is characterized by the highest values of riparian taxa (21%), while 398 thermophilic trees Ulmus and Tilia progressively decline. In subzone MD3b, the decrease in 399 arboreal taxa (i.e., Quercus and Corylus) and the increase in Poaceae percentages are 400 particularly obvious. In addition, occurrences of *Fagus* are noted. In zone MD3b, the decline 401 of the forest system is associated with the increase of ruderal and adventitious taxa and is 402 amplified in zone MD4 (Fig. 5b). The latter zone is characterized by the rise of Poaceae and a 403 sharp decrease in arboreal taxa percentages. Sub-palynozone MD4b stands out by the highest 404 occurrences of cultivated taxa (4%).

#### 405 **5. Discussion**

406

## 5.1. Sedimentary evolution of the Armorican shelf over the last 10 kyrs BP

#### 407 5.1.1. Sedimentation rates during the Holocene transgression

408 In the high sedimentation rate interval (~10-8.4 ka BP), higher sedimentation rates are recorded 409 in the BQ (~4.5 mm/yr; Fig. 3a) compared to the northern GV (~0.66 mm/yr; Fig. 3b). This can 410 be explained by the proximity to the coast of core MD08-3204 CQ (~7 km from present day 411 coastline) and the shallowest depositional environment (~17 m deep today), whereas core 412 VK03-58bis lies farther (~22 km from present day coastline) and deeper (~96 m deep today). 413 Moreover, fine to medium sand sediments are found in core MD08-3204 CQ, reflecting more 414 energetic marine conditions during the flooding of the BQ, whereas at that time the GV was 415 already located in an open oceanic area.

416 Similar trends in sedimentation rates, occurring in the same temporal windows in both study 417 cores, reflect a shared sedimentary evolution related to the evolution of the RSL rise through 418 time (see Fig. 3 with the southern Brittany RSL rise from García-Artola et al., 2018). 419 Specifically, both age-depth plots (Fig. 3) evidence a period of high sedimentation rates i) in 420 the 8.5-8.3 ka BP interval for core MD08-3204 CQ (~4.5 mm/yr) and ii) in the 10-8.3 ka BP 421 interval for core VK03-58bis (~0.6 mm/yr). The fast rhythm of the transgression (~10 mm/yr) 422 during the final step of the rapid RSL rise (García-Artola et al., 2018) led to high sedimentation 423 rates associated with the establishment of the Transgressive System Tract (TST; Figs. 3 and 6). 424 At that time, the occurrences of inner and outer neritic dinocyst taxa together with 425 Amaranthaceae pollen (Figs. 5 and 6) testify that the BQ is a subtidal bay close to extended 426 maritime marshes and detrital sources also explaining extremely high continental palynomorph 427 fluxes to the BQ (Fig. 6). The TST establishment is also recorded in the Loire estuarine system 428 (Delaine et al., 2015; Arthuis et al., 2015; Arthuis, 2020) that extended in the Gulf of Morbihan
429 from ~9 to 5.8–5 ka BP (Perez-Belmonte, 2008).

430 Subsequently, and until 5.7 ka BP, a drop in sedimentation rates is recorded in both studied 431 cores (0.24 and 0.01 mm/yr for cores MD08-3204 CQ and VK03-58bis, respectively; Fig. 3) 432 synchronously with the slowdown of the RSL rise rates, as regionally recorded at ~6 ka BP 433 (Goslin et al., 2015; Stéphan et al., 2015; García-Artola et al., 2018). The Maximum Flooding 434 Surface (MFS) marks the end of the general transgression, inducing a reduction of the accommodation space and leading to lower sediment deposition. For the MD08-3204 CQ core, 435 436 the interval of slowing RSL rise and decreasing sedimentation rates is associated with a reversed 437 date suggesting a period of remobilization. Thus, we suggest a revision for the BQ model 438 established by Baltzer et al. (2014) that previously discussed the establishment of the MFS at 439 ~5 ka BP (Fig. 3a). According to our new chronostratigraphy and the consistent signal obtained 440 with the GV, the transgressive deposit (i.e. TST) ends at 8.3 ka BP, and is followed by a period 441 of sediment remobilization (i.e., MSF establishment) until 5.7 ka BP.

442 Then, from 5.7 ka BP, a resumption of sedimentation, at lower rates (~0.24 mm/yr and 0.22 443 mm/yr for cores MD08-3204 CQ and VK03-58bis, respectively) than during the pre-8.3 ka BP 444 interval, occurs in a period of slower RSL rise (i.e., less than 1 mm/yr after 6 ka BP; García-445 Artola et al., 2018; Fig. 3) corresponding to the establishment of the Highstand System Tract 446 (HST; Figs. 3 and 6). The increase of the continental-fluvial influence is observed over the 447 Armorican shelf through higher percentages (Figs. 5a and 6) and fluxes (Fig. 6) of L. 448 machaerophorum, almost monospecific today in estuarine sediments (Morzadec-Kerfourn, 449 1976, 1977; Ganne et al., 2016; Lambert et al., 2017), and of riparian pollen taxa (Fig. 5b), as 450 recently discussed on the Armorican mid-shelf (Penaud et al., 2020). At the same time, high 451 erosional episodes identified in the Gulf of Morbihan, and the Loire estuary, testify to a

452 predominant runoff and fluvial discharge to the Bay of Biscay (*Perez-Belmonte, 2008; Delaine*453 *et al., 2015; Arthuis et al., 2015; Arthuis, 2020*).

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# 455 5.1.2. "The <u>Turritella</u> layer": a bio-stratigraphical indicator of the Maximum Flooding 456 Surface establishment

The VK03-58bis core is characterized by a layer showing a high concentration of *Turritella communis* shells (Fig. 3b) and described as the "*Turritella* layer" (TL; *Bourillet et al., 2005*; *Naughton et al., 2007*; *Baltzer et al., 2015*). In this core, two shells dated at the base (160 cm:
8.4 ka BP) and at the top (149 cm: 7.5 ka BP) of the TL provide a minimal age extension of
900 years for this ~12 cm-thick deposit.

Previous studies suggested drastic environmental changes as potential drivers of the TL ending. 462 463 First, a potential link between the TL and the abrupt North Atlantic climate shift of the 8.2 ka 464 BP event was proposed (Naughton et al., 2007; Baltzer et al., 2015). It was then hypothesized 465 that the North Atlantic sea-surface cooling and related decreasing salinity (Alley et al., 2003) could have explained the monospecific development of T. communis since these taxa are not 466 467 sensitive to variations of these hydrological parameters (Funder et al., 2002; Baltzer et al., 468 2015). The end of the TL was also attributed to a mortality event induced by the opening of the 469 English Channel, then contributing to major hydrological and sedimentological changes in the 470 north-eastern temperate Atlantic Ocean (Naughton et al., 2007). Finally, Baltzer et al. (2015) 471 suggested that the abrupt sediment supply associated with the rapid RSL rise, and the related 472 lack of oxygen for benthic organisms, could have been responsible for the T. communis death 473 and burial of their shells.

The new AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates obtained for core VK03-58bis (Table 2) suggest that the TL is related to extremely low sedimentation rates (~0.01 mm/yr; Fig. 3b) at the end of the TST in the 476 Armorican shelf. In the TL, juvenile and adult specimens are found in a perfect taphonomic 477 state owing to the absence of broken shells or abrasion marks (Folliot, 2004; Baltzer et al. 478 2015). This likely excludes strong bottom energetic currents during the TL interval and suggests 479 an autochthonous origin and an "in-situ" preservation of T. communis shells in generally living 480 position. A winnowing of fine particles (i.e., no observed sandy inputs or specific grain size distribution) by weak bottom currents may however have occurred, considering the present-day 481 482 mud-burrowing mode of life of these filter-feeder gastropods (Yonge 1946; Carter, 2008). Both 483 taphonomic considerations and <sup>14</sup>C-AMS dates therefore argue for a monospecific within-484 habitat preservation where fossil assemblages are time-averaged (Walker and Bambach, 1971; 485 Kidwell, 1997; Fujiwara et al., 2004), thus implying a succession of several T. communis 486 generations during a long-lasting period (i.e., here ranging between ~1 kyr minimum and 2.1 487 kyrs maximum) of low sediment supply. We therefore suggest that the TL represents a 488 condensed level, occurring synchronously with the slower RSL rise rates at the end of the TST. 489 According to this interpretation, the TL appears as a marker of the MFS in Holocene 490 transgressive deposits of the Armorican shelf.

- 491
- 492 5.2. Palynological records along a proximal-distal gradient during the TST interval
  493 (8.5–8.3 ka BP)

In the lower part of core MD08-3204 CQ, between 290–196 cm (200 yrs: 8.5–8.3 ka BP), palynological results (dinocyst and pollen assemblages) were averaged (Fig. 5). In strictly the same Early Holocene interval, these new palynological data emanating from the inner shelf (i.e., 0–50 m deep) were compared with previously published data acquired from proximal coastal to distal marine domains along the Armorican shelf.

For this purpose, three cores were selected (Fig. 1a): i) the inner-shelf VC2012-08-PQP core
(PROTEUS-DUNES cruises; *Shom*, 2012) hereafter referred to as core VC-08, retrieved at 28

m depth in the shallow coastal Bay of Douarnenez (BD; 17 points extracted from *Lambert et al.*, 2019), ii) the mid-shelf VK03-58bis core (Vibarmor cruise; *Le Roy et al.*, 2003), retrieved at 96 m depth in the South Glénan sector of the Grande Vasière (GV; 5 points extracted from *Naughton et al.*, 2007 for pollen and *Penaud*, *pers. comm.* for dinocyst assemblages), and iii)
the distal marine MD95-2002 core (IMAGES 101 expedition; *Bassinot and Labeyrie.*, 1996),
retrieved at 2,174 m depth on the Meriadzek Terrace (3 points extracted from *Zumaque et al.*, 2017 for dinocyst and *Fersi et al.*, *in prep.* for pollen assemblages).

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#### 9 5.2.1. Averaged 8.5–8.3 ka BP dinocyst observations

510 From inshore to offshore environments, among a palynomorph sum including pollen grains, 511 spores, and dinocysts, the dinocyst proportion increases from < 10% in the bays (cores MD08-512 3204 CQ and VC-08) to slightly over 50% in the mid-shelf (core VK03-58bis) and offshore 513 (core MD95-2002) (Fig. 7a). The proximity to the close terrestrial domains, and hence to the 514 pollinic production sources, appears responsible for the high pollen grain percentages recorded 515 in the bays (Fig. 7a). A maximum dinocyst diversity is recorded in core VK03-58bis (Fig. 7b), 516 mainly subjected to oceanic influences at that time (Penaud et al., 2020). Dinocyst assemblages 517 in the two shallowest cores are dominated by inner neritic taxa (i.e., especially S. bentorii, 518 accompanied by Spiniferites membranaceus-Spiniferites belerius, Spiniferites delicatus, and S. 519 *lazus*) that represent a minor part of the assemblage in the mid-shelf and barely occur offshore 520 (Fig. 7b). Considering the shallow Quiberon and Douarnenez bays, dinocyst assemblages are 521 consistent with sedimentological studies describing fluvial environments subject to tidal 522 influences (Jouet et al., 2003; Le Roy and Jouet, 2005; Baltzer et al., 2014; Gregoire et al., 523 2017; Lambert et al., 2019). A slight difference is seen among inner neritic assemblages with 524 major occurrences of S. bentorii and cysts of Pentapharsodinium dalei in the more enclosed 525 BD, replaced by S. lazus and by the apparition of the neritic group, Spiniferites ramosus526 Spiniferites bulloideus, in the BQ. These assemblages reach their highest values in core VK03-527 58bis (Fig. 7b), testifying to their association with peri-Brittany shelf waters (Morzadec-528 Kerfourn, 1977; Penaud et al., 2020; Lambert et al., 2022). In more distal environments, 529 dinocyst assemblages are mainly composed of outer neritic taxa, especially S. mirabilis and O. 530 centrocarpum, worthy of note are the unique occurrences of full-oceanic Impagidinium species 531 and the absence of the estuarine L. machaerophorum taxon in core MD95-2002 (Fig. 7b). A 532 steeper marine influence is thus recorded in the distal cores during the Early Holocene, as 533 recorded during the Mid to Late Holocene (Penaud et al., 2020) and in present-day (Lambert 534 et al., 2022) dinocyst assemblages along the same inshore-offshore transects.

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#### 5.2.2. Averaged 8.5–8.3 ka BP pollen observations

During the 8.5-8.3 ka BP interval, a short temporal window during the wider Mesolithic 537 538 cultural period (i.e., 10–7 ka BP; 8.5–5.1 ka BC in western Brittany), anthropogenic changes 539 appear limited, as testified by high arboreal taxa percentages (i.e., 80 to 90% in coastal to mid-540 shelf cores) and very low values of anthropogenic taxa (i.e., not exceeding 1%; Fig. 8a). The 541 high representation of arboreal taxa, related to a still large forest cover on the continent, may 542 additionally be explained by the pollination period, especially that of Quercus whose pollen 543 grains are present in the atmosphere mainly during spring months (March to June; Rodríguez-544 Rajo et al., 2005; García-Mozo et al., 2006). In a high boreal summer insolation context, 545 Penaud et al. (2020) suggest that the high pollination of trees, coupled with spring to summer rainfall regimes and related fluvial discharge, could amplify the signature of Quercus pollen 546 547 grains in the platform, therefore accounting for the highest arboreal pollen fluxes recorded in 548 the Armorican shelf during the Early Holocene.

549 The more distal marine sequence (i.e., core MD95-2002) is characterized by the highest pollen 550 diversity and the highest herbaceous percentages when compare with the inshore-offshore 551 transect (Fig. 8a). The most diverse pollen signature of core MD95-2002 (*Fersi et al., in prep*) 552 may be explained by the multi-catchment area pollen sources (i.e., macro-regional fluvial 553 signatures coming from Loire, Gironde, South Brittany, and English Channel watersheds). In 554 contrast, the two bays imply pollen sources from more limited catchment areas close to the 555 collected cores (i.e., MD08-3204 CQ at ~5 m depth and VC-08 at ~16 m depth, under a water 556 column that was 12 m below the present-day sea level; García-Artola et al., 2018). 557 Furthermore, core MD92-2002 presents a unique Cupressaceae signature (including Juniperus), 558 combined with boreal forest taxa (i.e., Picea-Abies) and high percentages of the pioneer taxon 559 Betula (Fig 8b), which are likely associated with a northern European continental signature 560 transported by the English Channel (Fersi et al., in prep). In addition, Mediterranean trees 561 (grouping Quercus ilex and Quercus suber) are recorded at ~1-2%, in the deep core, but also in 562 the mid-shelf sequence (i.e., core VK03-58bis; Figs. 8b, c), and may correspond to southern 563 French river watersheds, implying mainly Loire and to a lesser extent Gironde river influences 564 (Penaud et al., 2020).

565 The pre-6 ka BP interval, still characterized by high RSL rise rates (*García-Artola et al., 2018*) 566 and the intense activity of the North Atlantic Current (Ayache et al., 2018), was described as a 567 "summer-prevailing mode" in the southern Brittany platform (Penaud et al., 2020), i.e., as a 568 prevalent NW to SE shelf residual circulation in the Bay of Biscay. This prevalent oceanic 569 influence over the platform may explain the high dinocyst diversity recorded in the mid-shelf 570 (Fig. 7b). However, the occurrences of Mediterranean tree pollen in the two more distal cores 571 attest to common continental sources inherited from southern France catchments (Figs. 8b, c). 572 In the deep MD95-2002 core, the unique occurrences of Impagidinium spp., 573 Nematosphaeropsis labyrinthus, Brigantedinium spp. oceanic taxa (Fig. 7b), and Cupressaceae

574 and Picea-Abies pollen grains (Figs. 8b, c), indicating rather a distant northern European 575 continental source carried by oceanic currents that however barely affect the mid-shelf. We 576 hypothesize that a hydrological front, formed in the northern Bay of Biscay during summer 577 months, may have prevented the summer transportation of these northern continental sources 578 to the mid-shelf, while a break of the thermohaline front during winter months may have 579 favored the transport of southern continental sources up to the northern Bay of Biscay. This 580 would correspond to the opposite configuration to the one prevailing for the present-day 581 seasonal hydrological mechanism operating in the Bay of Biscay (i.e., "winter prevailing 582 mode", see Fig. 1a), characterized today by the establishment of the thermohaline front during 583 winter months (Castaing et al., 1999; Costoya et al., 2016) and since ~3.3 ka BP (Mojtahid et 584 al., 2019; Penaud et al., 2020).

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#### 5.2.3. <u>Quercus</u> vs. <u>Corylus</u> signature in space and time

587 Arboreal taxa are dominant along the inshore-offshore transect (Fig. 8a) as commonly observed 588 and thoroughly discussed in sediment archives (Broström et al., 2008; Mazier et al., 2008, 2015; 589 Lebreton et al., 2010; Sjögren et al., 2015). In addition, the anemophilous Pinus pollen grains 590 are over-represented in marine sequences (Fig. 8b) due to their strong capacity of dispersion 591 (Turon, 1984; Holmes, 1994). Excluding Pinus and Picea-Abies taxa from the arboreal sum 592 (Fig. 8c), deciduous *Quercus* pollen grain percentages increase from the bays (~same values 593 for both shallow environments) to the mid-shelf, while those of Corylus decrease along this 594 same gradient. Among the two other temperate forest taxa found in the northern European 595 sediment archives, we suggest that the Corylus signal may decrease with the distance from the 596 coast, boosting the deciduous *Quercus* expression in more distal sediments (Fig. 8c). This may 597 explain the fact that the *Corylus* percentages are always higher than the *Quercus* ones, 598 regardless of the period considered over the last 7 kyrs, in south-western Brittany peat deposits (*Fernane et al., 2014*), whereas the opposite is observed in the southern Brittany coastal
(*Fernane et al., 2015*) and mid-shelf (this study; *Penaud et al., 2020*) environments. In addition,
it should be pointed out that *Quercus* has a high degree of resistance to oxidation (*Lebreton and al., 2010*) that may partly explain its over-representation in marine environments.

603 Moreover, previous studies of the Mid to Late Holocene showed an anti-correlation between 604 deciduous Quercus and Corylus pollen percentages, with Quercus contractions and Corylus 605 expansions, and vice-versa, at a pluri-decadal timescale (Joly et Visset, 2009; Fernane et al., 606 2014). Knowing that *Corylus* pollination takes place during winter months (January to March; 607 Bégeot, 1998; Olsen et al., 2000), contrary to deciduous Quercus pollination that occurs during spring months (March to June; Rodriguez-Rajo et al., 2005; García-Mozo et al., 2006), 608 609 *Corylus/Quercus* anticorrelations at an infra-orbital timescale could be explained by a stronger 610 fluvial influence due to enhanced precipitation fostering the Corylus signature during the winter 611 season. In north-western Europe, Alnus flowering is very close to that of Corvlus (Puc and 612 Kasprzyk, 2013). A correlation between Alnus, and also Corylus, and intensified fluvial 613 discharge is identified in modern sediments from the Bay of Brest (Lambert et al., 2017). For 614 this reason, both Alnus and Corylus allowed understanding intensified winter paleo-discharge 615 in the Bay of Brest over the last 2.5 kyrs BP (Lambert et al., 2020). In addition, Penaud et al. 616 (2020) used the Corvlus/Quercus ratio over the last 7 kyrs BP (core CBT-CS11 in the southern 617 Brittany shelf; Fig. 1b) and demonstrated its common trend with alluvial taxa (especially 618 Alnus). From this perspective, Corylus (and Alnus) vs. Quercus pollen percentage fluctuations 619 detected at a pluri-decadal timescale in Holocene records, may be partly reconciled by 620 considering periods of enhanced winter precipitation and related fluvial discharge when 621 Corylus percentages increase, and vice versa.

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# 5.3. Natural vs. anthropogenic impacts since 5.7 ka BP along an inshore-offshore gradient at the scale of the South Brittany platform

625 After 5.7 ka BP, in the MD08-3204 CQ core, the resumption of mixed estuarine-marine 626 sedimentation leads to a continuous palynological record in the BQ. In order to better 627 understand the paleoenvironmental changes that occurred along the South Brittany coast over 628 the last 5.7 kyrs BP (at ~100 yrs time resolution), the main palynological results acquired in 629 this study were selected (i.e., L. machaerophorum, Alnus, Corvlus, Quercus, Poaceae and API; 630 orange curves in Figs. 9 and 10). These data are discussed in parallel with two sedimentological 631 records covering the last 7 kyrs BP (Fig. 2b). First, the mid-shelf CBT-CS11 core (Figs. 1a, b; CABTEX cruise; Dussud, 2010) was acquired at 73 m depth in the south-Penmarc'h sector of 632 633 the GV (*Penaud et al., 2020*: ~80 yrs time resolution between 7–0.5 ka BP; blue curves in Figs. 634 9 and 10). Secondly, the continental GL3 core (Fernane, 2014) was retrieved in the South 635 Brittany coastal wetland of Guidel (Figs. 1a, b) and corresponds to an ancient ria progressively 636 transformed into a maritime coastal marsh during the Holocene transgression (Fernane et al., 637 2015: ~85 yrs time resolution between 7–0.6 ka BP; green curves in Figs. 9 and 10).

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#### 639 5.3.1. Fluvial hydrosystem processes and related shelf sedimentation

Dinocyst data acquired in the BQ over the last 5.7 kyrs BP show a clear dominance of *L. machaerophorum*, that started to increase at ~5.9 ka BP according to the 7 kyr-long CBT-CS11 core (*Penaud et al., 2020*; Fig. 9). This species is tolerant to large drops in salinity and is well known to proliferate in brackish environments (*Reid, 1975; Morzadec-Kerfourn, 1977, 1992, 1997*). At the same time, pollen grains of the riparian taxon *Alnus*, a hydrophilous tree developing mainly along freshwater bodies, reaches its maximum values in both MD08-3204 CQ and CBT-CS11 cores (Fig. 9). The 5.7 ka BP limit corresponds to the major inflection in

the RSL rise rates occurring at ~6 ka BP (Goslin et al., 2015; Stéphan et al., 2015; García-647 648 Artola et al., 2018), then corresponding to the stabilization of fluvial systems (Penaud et al., 649 2020). The riparian vegetation (i.e., Alnus) then progressively colonizes coastal marshes, which 650 in turn promotes the fixation of vegetation in riverbanks and valley alluviation (Penaud et al. 651 2020). The increase in estuarine-sensitive taxa (i.e., Alnus and L. machaerophorum; Fig. 9) in 652 coastal areas argues for a stronger fluvial influence on the shelf since 5.7 ka BP, which is 653 consistent with the HST establishment (subsection 5.1.1). The typical neritic dinocyst 654 assemblage, obvious during the TST configuration, appears extremely different when 655 considering dinocyst percentages after 5.7 ka BP that are characterized by the over-656 representation of L. machaerophorum (mean of 83%; Fig. 6). However, if L. machaerophorum 657 is excluded from the main sum, dinocyst percentages appear quite similar to the pre-5.7 ka BP 658 period (Fig. 6). This argues for an allochthonous signal of the estuarine-sensitive taxon L. 659 machaerophorum, likely carried to the Armorican shelf by main river discharge, especially the Loire and Vilaine rivers (Fig. 6). Furthermore, Delaine et al. (2015) examined the Holocene 660 661 sediment infilling of the upstream Loire Valley and recorded a high erosional regime of the 662 Loire system between ~5.8–2.1 ka BP in a context when sedimentation rates exceeded the RSL 663 rise rates. This may have led to a shift of the sediment depo-center towards the Armorican shelf, 664 as testified by the coarser sedimentation recorded in core CBT-CS11 up to ~3.3 ka BP 665 (Mojtahid et al., 2019; Penaud et al., 2020; D50 CaCO<sub>3</sub> free in Fig. 9). After 3.3 ka BP, the 666 decrease of estuarine-sensitive taxa (i.e., Alnus, Corylus and L. machaerophorum) percentages 667 and sediment grain-size values recorded in core CBT-CS11 (Fig. 9) suggest a decreasing 668 influence of the paleo-Loire erosional dynamics. Geomorphological studies have shown that 669 the sediment load may have exceeded the transport capacity leading to a Loire riverbed 670 elevation at ~2.7 ka BP (Castanet, 2008; Arthuis, 2020). The progressive infilling of the estuarine system contributed to the decrease of the river slope and likely also the load-transport
capacity of the Loire river at ~3 ka BP.

673 In contrast, in core MD08-3204 CQ, estuarine-sensitive taxa percentages remain quite constant 674 around 3 ka BP (Fig. 9). This may be explained by the location of the BQ, semi-isolated by the 675 Quiberon peninsula and islands (Houat, Hoedic and Belle-Ile; Fig. 1b), then exposed to the 676 additional influences of the Gulf of Morbihan and Bay of Vilaine fluvial sediment supply 677 (Menier et al., 2010, 2014). At that time, the Vilaine river dynamics (different from the Loire river ones) may have maintained the sediment load to the platform in the BQ. It is worth noting 678 679 that the Vilaine fluvial system has now been totally altered since the construction of the Arzal 680 dam in 1970, reducing water fluxes (~71 m<sup>3</sup>/s between 1970 and 2000 in Rieux, 681 www.hydro.eaufrance.fr) and thus sediment transfers to the platform, which are therefore no 682 longer comparable today to the above-described Late Holocene discussion for the BQ. After 683 2.4 ka BP, the decline of the general forest cover (i.e., Alnus, Quercus, Corvlus; Fig. 9) is 684 accompanied by an increase in Poaceae and Anthropogenic Pollen Indicators (API; Figs. 9 and 685 10), testifying to the continentalization of the coastal environment under the strong human-686 forced influence on freshwater bodies (Delaine et al., 2015).

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688

#### 5.3.2. The anthropogenic pollen signature along the South Brittany coast

The continental core GL3 (*Fernane et al., 2015*) provides a local anthropogenic signal restricted to southern Brittany watersheds, whereas the two shelf cores CBT-CS11 (*Penaud et al., 2020*) and MD08-3204 CQ (this study) provide a more regional averaged anthropogenic signal at the scale of western French watersheds involving Loire, Vilaine and southern Brittany rivers (Fig. 1b). 694 In our study, during the Neolithic interval (7-4.2 ka BP / 5-2.2 ka BC), arboreal taxa 695 percentages (especially Quercus) remain high in the two shelf sequences, whereas in the 696 continental site of Guidel, sharp fluctuations affect the arboreal trend (i.e., Quercus and 697 Corylus) and are explained mainly by recurrent increases in Poaceae percentages (Fig. 9). In 698 this site, the anthropogenic activity is confirmed by co-occurrences of ruderal and adventitious 699 taxa and discrete occurrences of cultivated plants, occurring mainly in the 6.4-5.1 ka BP 700 interval (/4.4–3.1 ka BC; Fig. 10c; Fernane et al., 2015). Along the South Brittany coast, several 701 continental palynological studies (Visset et al., 1996; Gaudin, 2004; Visset and Bernard, 2006) 702 attest to Neolithic agro-pastoral activities with sporadic Cerealia-type occurrences. On land, 703 the anthropogenic signal is captured by small sedimentary basins, such as the coastal wetland 704 of Guidel. Although deforestation and agro-pastoral practices are well-referenced on land, 705 ruderal and adventitious taxa remain low in shelf cores with no co-occurrences of cultivated 706 taxa (Figs. 10a, b). We suggest that during the Mid-Holocene, Poaceae and API, already weakly 707 recorded far from emission sources, are insufficiently transmitted to the platform to be 708 significantly recorded in marine sediments.

709 From 4.2 ka BP (i.e., the start of the Late Holocene from a stratigraphical point of view; Walker 710 et al., 2019), a major reorganization affects oceanic and atmospheric dynamics, as recently 711 discussed at the Bay of Biscay scale (Penaud et al., 2020). The winter insolation at 65°N 712 increases along the Holocene favoring wetter and milder winters over northern Europe (Benito 713 et al., 2015). The intensification of a winter precipitation regime led to enhanced river 714 discharge, as shown by the high percentages (Figs. 5a and 6) and fluxes (Fig. 6) of L. 715 machaerophorum. Subsequently, higher river discharge led to the establishment of the winter 716 thermohaline front at ~3.3 ka BP along the BoB (Mojtahid et al., 2019; Penaud et al., 2020). 717 This configuration enhanced the transmission of the API signature from the watersheds to 718 coastal waters. From 4.2 ka BP (/2.2 ka BC), and across the Bronze and Iron Ages (4.2-2 ka 719 BP / 2.2 ka BP-50 BC), all sequences point to a synchronous arboreal percentage decrease, together with the progressive increase in Poaceae percentages (Fig. 9). From this boundary, the 720 721 two shelf sequences show an apparent discontinuous record related to the rise of API 722 percentages (i.e., adventitious, ruderal and cultivated taxa; Figs. 10a, b), whereas the rise in API 723 percentages is continuous from 3.3 ka BP at Guidel (Fig. 10c). This palynological trend 724 confirms the major human-induced landscape transformation that occurred under enhanced 725 agro-pastoral activities discussed with archeological (Pailler and Nicolas, 2019) and 726 continental palynological (Marguerie, 1990, 1992, 1993; Gaudin, 2004; van Beek et al., 2018) 727 data. In Guidel, a second major shift in terms of human impact, highlighted by the sharp drop 728 of arboreal taxa and the related increase of Poaceae percentages (Fig. 9), occurs at around 2.4 729 ka BP (/450 BC), i.e., at the second Iron Age. In all sequences, the API signature tends to 730 increase at ~1.2 ka BP (Fig. 10). At that time, the maximum percentages of cultivated taxa are 731 due to the intensification and diversification of agriculture practices in western France 732 (Marguerie, 1992; Visset et al., 1995; Gaudin, 2004; Fernane et al., 2015), showing the massive 733 opening of the landscape and foreshadowing the present-day bocage organization of the area 734 (Barbier, 1999; Cyprien, 2002; Marguerie, 2003).

735

5.3.3. Impact of multi-secular hydro-climatic forcing on the Anthropogenic Pollen
Indicator (API) record

Guidel (continental, core GL3) and Quiberon (protected shelf, core MD08-3204 CQ) environmental contexts are mainly associated with South Brittany watersheds (Fig. 1b). Furthermore, cores MD08-3204 CQ and CBT-CS11 (Fig. 1b) are exposed to additional input from the Loire River especially since the stabilization of the sea level at ~6 ka BP and the subsequent increase of winter fluvial discharge at 4.2. ka BP (subsection 5.3.1.). It is thus possible to compare and discuss these three cores as end-members in terms of continental sources with South Brittany proximal inputs (i.e., Laïta River influence; Fig. 1a) for core GL3,

745 Loire River for core CBT-CS11, and mixed river sources for core MD08-3204 CQ.

746 In core GL3, the increase in API percentages is obvious across the intervals 6.4–5.1, 3.3–2.7 747 and 1.6-1.2 ka BP (grey bands in Fig. 10), identified in Penaud et al. (2020) as periods 748 characterized by enhanced subpolar gyre (SPG) strength at times of Bond events 4, 2 and 1, 749 respectively (Bond et al., 1997, 2001). These API increases are also observed in core MD08-750 3204 CQ, except for the 6.4–5.1 ka BP interval that corresponds to a Mid-Holocene period 751 when we argue for a less continental influence and therefore a lower API transmission to the 752 platform (subsection 5.3.2.). General intensification of anthropogenic activities during these 753 three intervals was not recorded in previous continental studies (Visset et al., 1995, 1996; 754 Gaudin, 2004; Visset and Bernard, 2006; van Beek et al., 2018). Regarding core CBT-CS11, 755 the API signal seems to show an opposite behavior, although the anthropogenic history of the 756 Loire watersheds is not opposite to that of the South Brittany ones. The palynological data 757 acquired on this mid-shelf core were previously discussed in the context of a millennial-scale 758 mechanism implying SPG strength coupled with natural atmospheric oscillations (Penaud et 759 al., 2020). In this model, North Atlantic gyre responses are supposed to be strongly related to 760 persistent North Atlantic Oscillations (NAO) configurations, even though a large non-linearity 761 exists today regarding gyre responses to the atmospheric forcing (Lohmann et al., 2009). Hence, 762 stronger Loire river discharge would represent a conjectural phenomenon of weakened SPG 763 influence under recurrent negative NAO-like modes (Benito et al., 2015). This would explain 764 a higher transmission of the API signal to the mid-shelf (core CBT-CS11) outside the Bond 765 events (higher API amplitudes in between the grey bands identified in Fig. 10a). This model 766 appears consistent with the stronger API detection observed in core GL3 (Fig. 10c) during 767 periods of enhanced SPG, in a general context of the northern location of the westerly storm tracks (Giraudeau et al., 2010; Goslin et al., 2018; Lambert et al., 2020; Penaud et al., 2020) 768

with related increases of winter precipitation and fluvial discharge over northern Europe (*Hurrell, 1995; Hurrell et al., 2003; Tréguer et al., 2014*). Interestingly, it appears that the BQ could be compared to the observations made at Guidel, with however a less clear-cut API signature (Fig. 10b). From 5.7 ka BP, the BQ thus appears as a pivotal zone characterized by a stronger diversity of continental inputs related to different forcing also implying climate regimes at an infra-orbital timescale previously discussed and better expressed with core CBT-CS11.

Then, from 1.2 ka BP (/ 750 AD), in all cores the anthropogenic influence is characterized by
highest amplitude peaks (Fig. 10). This boundary, corresponding to the start of the Middle Ages,
appears as a limit from which anthropogenic forcing may outweigh the natural climate
variability at the sub-orbital timescale.

## 781 **6.** Conclusion

782 Various factors forced coastal paleoenvironmental changes and palynological records during 783 the Holocene, including the Relative Sea Level (RSL) rise that modified sedimentation 784 processes, the fluvial discharge affected by both atmospheric and oceanic dynamics, and the 785 anthropogenic impact. The present study examines Holocene paleoenvironmental changes 786 along the Armorican shelg through a compilation of previously published and recently acquired 787 data. First, new chronostratigraphies of the inner shelf MD08-3204 CQ (Bay of Quiberon, BQ) 788 and mid-shelf VK03-58bis (Grande Vasière, GV) cores allowed refining the sedimentation 789 model of the Armorican shelf. In addition, the new palynological (pollen and dinocyst) data 790 acquired in core MD08-3204 CQ complete a set of pre-existing data acquired from the 791 continental to the mid-shelf domains. This comparative approach has brought about a synthesis 792 of the major environmental and hydrological reorganizations that affected the Armorican shelf 793 over the last 10 kyrs BP:

- From 10 to 8.3 ka BP. The still strong Early Holocene RSL rise rates are responsible
   for the high sedimentation (~4.5 mm/yr in the BQ and ~0.66 mm/yr in the GV) rates
   leading to the Transgressive System Tract (TST) establishment over the Armorican
   shelf.
- From 8.3 to 5.7 ka BP. The slowdown of the RSL rise rates leads to a reduced accommodation space and to sedimentary remobilization in the BQ. In the GV, the condensed level corresponding to the already know "*Turritella* layer" is now identified between 8.4 and 6.3 ka BP, and appears as a biostratigraphical marker of the Maximum Flooding Surface (MFS) establishment in the Holocene sediments of the Armorican shelf.
- *From 5.7 to 3.3 ka BP*. The RSL slowdown and the reduced accommodation space,
   bringing low sedimentation rates (~0.24 mm/yr in the BQ and ~0.22 mm/yr in the

806GV), led to the establishment of the Highstand System Tract (HST). As evidenced807by the rise of estuarine-sensitive taxa (i.e., *Alnus* and *L. machaerophorum*), the808fluvial influence, mainly from the Loire river whose load-transport capacity remains809important, is growing on the platform.

- *From 3.3 to 2.4 ka BP*. The Loire River transport capacity declines, leading to a
   decrease in the erosive dynamics of the paleo-Loire. At that time, a different hydro sedimentary dynamic of the Vilaine River likely maintained a high sediment load
   over the BQ.
- Since 2.4 ka BP. A continentalization of coastal ecosystems is widely recorded.
   Increases of both human activities and fluvial influences provide for a better
   transport of Anthropogenic Pollen Indicators (API), then better recorded over the
   platform, especially from 1.2 ka BP at the start of the Middle Ages.

818 By comparing multiple palynological sequences, located from onshore to offshore domains, our 819 study also demonstrates the complexity of the API record during the Mid to Late Holocene. We 820 suggest that the intensification of the fluvial discharge over the South Brittany watersheds 821 during periods of subpolar gyre (SPG) strengthening tends to enhance continental palynomorph 822 fluxes, particularly API, in Brittany coastal domains. Conversely, a weakened SPG associated 823 with an intensified winter precipitation regimes over southern Loire catchments would tend to 824 increase the API detection on the mid-shelf. In conclusion, at an infra-orbital timescale, the API 825 signal detected in shelf sediments appears strongly connected to the hydro-climatic control on 826 precipitation and related fluvial discharge. Without a fine understanding of all forcing 827 parameters, discussing human dynamics from marine sediments would be biased by natural 828 controls that deserve to be deconvoluted as a first step.

829

#### 830 7. Acknowledgments

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844 The palynological analysis of core VK03-58bis received fundings from a CNRS-INSU project 845 HCOG2 (2013-2014) "Forçages climatiques Holocène et répercussions Côtières et Océaniques 846 dans le Golfe de Gascogne" (coord. A. Penaud) as part of the LEFE-IMAGO research program. 847 We thank Muriel Georget (EPOC; Univ. Bordeaux) and Pierre-Olivier Coste (Geo-Ocean, 848 Univ. Brest) for their palynological laboratory assistance for the VK03-58bis and MD08-3204 849 CQ cores, respectively. To the QUIPALPLO project (coord. A. Baltzer), financed by OSUNA 850 (Observatoire des Sciences de l'Univers de Nantes Atlantique), made possible some 851 palynological analyses realized during the M2 internship of M. Herlédan (2019/2020). Some dates were obtained thanks to the French ARTEMIS <sup>14</sup>C-AMS platform, and the others were 852 853 acquired at the Poznán Radiocarbon Laboratory and Beta Analytics. We are also grateful to 854 Anne Véronique Walter-Simonnet (UMR 6249 Chrono-environnement; Univ. Bourgogne

Franche-Comté) who carried out the grain size, calcimetry, and TOC analyses of core MD08-3204 CQ. The authors are grateful to the ZABrI ("*Zone Atelier Brest Iroise*", CNRS-INEE) and the ArMeRIE program funded by the UBO (Univ Brest) for fruitful interdisciplinary exchanges about human dynamics and Holocene paleoenvironments. This work was supported by the ISblue project (Interdisciplinary graduate school for the blue planet, ANR-17-EURE-0015), cofunded by a grant from the French government under the program "Investissements d'Avenir".

862 8. Data availability

All the data acquired on cores MD08-3204 CQ and VK03-58 bis, and discussed in the manuscript are available in the SEANOE repository: <u>https://doi.org/10.17882/86430</u>

## 866 9. Table captions

**Table 1:** MD08-3204 CQ AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates. In grey: dates previously published in *Baltzer et al.* (2014). In black: new dates from this study acquired at the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory (Poz-x) and ARTEMIS (SacA x). All AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates were calibrated with the CALIB 7.1 software using the IntCal20 calibration curve (*Stuiver and Reimer, 1993; Reimer et al., 2020*), first considering a reservoir age of -400  $\pm$  45 years to radiocarbon dates (point 1559 for the lower Loire in the marine20 database; *Tisnérat-Laborde et al., 2010*).

873

Code	Depth (cm)	Sample nature	Age <sup>14</sup> C BP ± error		Age min (mean) max Cal BP
Lyon 6307	20	Turritella communis	1510	30	955 ( <b>1011</b> ) 1067
Poz-113445	35	Turritella communis	2355	30	1820 ( <b>1884</b> ) 1948
Poz-33086	47	Turritella communis	2745	35	2312 ( <b>2400.5</b> ) 2489
Poz-113447	70.5	Bivalve	3585	30	3361 ( <b>3407.5</b> ) 3454
Poz-33089	79	Turritella communis	3850	40	3616 ( <b>3724</b> ) 3832
Poz-26298	93	Turritella communis	4190	35	4082 <b>(4187)</b> 4292
Poz-117547	111	Shell debris	4755	35	4847 ( <b>4913.5</b> ) 4980
Poz-113448	134	Gastropod	5420	35	5657 ( <b>5776</b> ) 5895
Poz-117549	152	Shell debris	5095	35	5320 ( <b>5400</b> ) 5480
Poz-117550	196	Bivalve	7960	40	8350 ( <b>8375.5</b> ) 8401
SacA 29329	225	Shell debris	8060	40	8386 ( <b>8462.5</b> ) 8539
SacA 29330	231	Shell debris	8160	45	8422 ( <b>8511.5</b> ) 8601
SacA 54334	235.5	Gastropod	8145	35	8442 ( <b>8517</b> ) 8592
SacA 32028	241.5	Gastropod	8025	30	8385 ( <b>8403.5</b> ) 8422
Poz-113449	Poz-113449 287 Gastropod		8210	50	8429 ( <b>8576.5</b> ) 8724

**Table 2:** VK03-58bis AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates. In grey: dates previously published in Naughton et al. (2007). In black: new dates from this study acquired at the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory (Poz-x), ARTEMIS (SacA x), and Beta Analytics (BETA-x). All AMS-<sup>14</sup>C dates were calibrated with the CALIB 7.1 software using the IntCal20 calibration curve (*Stuiver and Reimer, 1993; Reimer et al., 2020*), first considering a reservoir age of -400 ± 45 years to radiocarbon dates (point 1559 for the lower Loire in the marine20 database; *Tisnérat-Laborde et al., 2010*).

882

Code	Depth (cm)	Sample nature	Age <sup>14</sup> C BP ± error		ple nature Age <sup>14</sup> C BP $\pm$ error Age min (mean) matrix Cal BP		Age min (mean) max Cal BP
Poz-47041	32	Benthic foraminifera	2005	30	1408 ( <b>1471.5</b> ) 1535		
Poz-47042	57	Benthic foraminifera	2810	70	2340 ( <b>2526.5</b> ) 2713		
Poz-47043	92	Benthic foraminifera	3930	30	3714 ( <b>3760</b> ) 3806		
Poz-10166	106	Turritella communis	3820	30	3572 ( <b>3647.5</b> ) 3723		
SacA55613	110	Turritella communis	4110	30	3974 ( <b>4038</b> ) 4102		
BETA-550086	125	Benthic foraminifera	5410	30	5653 ( <b>5710</b> ) 5767		
Poz-47044	137	Benthic foraminifera	5940	40	6280 ( <b>6341</b> ) 6402		
SacA55614	140	Turritella communis	7295	30	7678 ( <b>7712.5</b> ) 7747		
Poz-10167	149	Turritella communis	7020	40	7431 ( <b>7476.5</b> ) 7522		
Poz-10168	160	Turritella communis	8030	40	8369 ( <b>8444.5</b> ) 8520		
Poz-10170	177	Turritella communis	8170	40	8429 ( <b>8515.5</b> ) 8602		
BETA-550087	179	Benthic foraminifera	7900	30	8321 ( <b>8347</b> ) 8373		
BETA-550088	210	Benthic foraminifera	8940	30	9486 ( <b>9414.5</b> ) 9543		
Poz-10171	226	Turritella communis	8240	40	8521 ( <b>8648</b> ) 8775		
BETA-550089	266	Benthic foraminifera	9400	40	10170 ( <b>10201</b> ) 10235		

Table 3: This table gathers core MD08-3204 CQ data discussed in this study and describes the
methodology used to calculate palynological relative abundances, absolute concentrations, and
indexes, as well as dinocyst and pollen groups made according to ecological affinities (*Penaud et al.*, 2020).

	MD08-3204 CQ data	METHODOLOGY			
ENTATION	Palynomorph relative abundances (%)	<ul> <li>Pollen percentages are calculated using a main sum excluding i) <i>Pinus</i> counts (<i>Pinus</i> pollen grains thus always tend to be over-represented in marine sediments due to better dispersal and conservation), ii) spores and iii) indeterminable pollen grains.</li> <li>Dinocyst percentages are calculated on a sum of total dinocysts excluding pre-Quaternary specimens.</li> </ul>			
PALYNOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION	Palynomorph absolute concentrations (taxa/cm <sup>3</sup> )	Palynomorph concentrations are based on the marker grain method with <i>Lycopodium</i> spores (de Vernal et al., 1999; Mertens et al., 2009); calibrated tablets of known numbers of spores (here 28 848) being added to each sample before chemical treatments.			
LOGICA	Diversity (Margalef) index	(S-1)/ln(n) where S is the number of taxa per sample and n is the number of individuals (pollen grains or dinocysts) counted in each sample.			
PALYNO	Dominance index	Dominance ranges from 0 (all taxa are equally present) to 1 (one taxa dominates the assemblage). Dominance=1-Simpson index.			
	Taxon richness	Number of different taxa present in each analyzed level			
ROUPS	Sum inner neritic taxa (Cysts of phototrophs or mixotrophs)	Spiniferites bentorii (Sben), Spiniferites lazus (Slaz), Spiniferites membranaceus (Smem), Spiniferites belerius (Sbel), Spiniferites delicatus (Sdel), Spiniferites ristingensis (Sris), Cysts of Protoperidinium dalei (Pdal)			
DINOCYST GROUPS	Sum outer neritic taxa (Cysts of phototrophs or mixotrophs)	Spiniferites ramosus (Sram) / Spiniferites bulloideus (Sbul), Operculodinium centrocarpum sensu Wall & Dale, 1966 (Ocen), Spiniferites mirabilis (Smir)			
DINC	Sum inner neritic taxa (Cysts of heterotrophs)	Cysts of <i>Protoperidinium nudum</i> (Pnud) / <i>Selenopemphix quanta</i> (Squa), Cysts of <i>Protoperidinium stellatum</i> (Pste), <i>Xandarodinium</i> <i>xanthum</i> (Xand)			
	Sum AP (arboreal taxa)	<u>Major taxa &gt;2%</u> : Quercus, Corylus, Hedera, Betula, Ulmus, Tilia, Fagus <u>Minor taxa &lt;2%</u> : Ilex, Carpinus, Prunus, Populus, Taxus, Abies, Viburnum, Juniperus, Ribes			
SAU	Sum riparian trees	<u>Major taxa &gt;2%</u> : Alnus, Salix, Fraxinus			
N GROI	Non-indigenous trees	<u>Major taxa &gt;2%</u> : Castanea <u>Minor taxa &lt;2%</u> : Vitis, Quercus ilex, Buxus, Juglans			
POLLEN GROUPS	Sum NAP (herbaceous taxa)	Majortaxa>2%:Poaceae,Chenopodiaceae,AsteroideaBrassicaceae,Cichorioideae,Cyperaceae,Ericaceae,LotaJuncaceae,Plantagocorronopus,Plantagospp.,Primulacea)Ranunculaceae,SaxifragaMinortaxa<2%:Sagittaria,Amaryllidaceae,ApiaceaBoraginaceae,Campanulaceae,CentranthaSpergula/Spergularia,Caryophyllaceae,Cistus,Sedu			

	Crassulaceae, Ephedra, Euphorbiaceae, Trifolium, Ulex,				
	Fabaceae, Gentianaceae, Geraniaceae, Myriophyllum, Iridaceae,				
	Lemna, Liliaceae, Papaver, Plantago maritima, Veronica,				
	Armeria, Limonium, Potamogeton, Oenotheraceae, Rosaceae,				
	Euphrasia, Scrophulariaceae, Typha/Sparganium, Rubiaceae,				
	Viola, Hypericum, Polygonum, Lamiaceae, Althaenia,				
	Helianthemum, Matthiola, Convolvulus				
Sum ruderal and adventives	<u>Major taxa &gt;2%</u> : Rumex, Artemisia, Plantago lanceolata				
Sum ruderar and adventives	Minor taxa <2%: Mercurialis, Centaurea, Papaver, Urticaceae				
Sum cultivated taxa	<u>Major taxa &gt;2%</u> : Cerealia-type				
Sum currivated taxa	Minor taxa <2%: Cannabaceae				

## 890 **10. Figure captions**

Figure 1: a) Map illustrating the general winter surface circulation in the Bay of Biscay 891 892 (Koutsikopoulos and Le Cann, 1996; Ferrer et al., 2009), the repartition of muddy deposits on 893 the shelf (Allen and Castaing, 1977), the location of the studied cores MD08-3204 CQ (Bay of 894 Quiberon; Baltzer et al., 2014; I on the map a) and VK03-58bis (northern Grande Vasière, South Glénan islands; Bourillet et al., 2005, 2006; Naughton et al., 2007; II on the map a) as 895 well as other cited cores in the text, including GL3 (loc'h of Guidel; Fernane et al., 2015; 1 on 896 897 the map a), CBT-CS11 (northern Grande Vasière, Penmarc'h sector; Mojtahid et al., 2019; 898 Penaud et al., 2020; 2 on the map a), VC-08 (Bay of Douarnenez; Lambert et al., 2019; 3 on 899 the map a) and MD95-2002 (Meriadzec Terrace; Zumaque et al., 2017; Fersi et al., in prep.; 4 900 on the map a). b) Surface sediment distribution over the South Armorican platform (Lesueur 901 and Klingebiel, 1986; Menier et al., 2014) and location of the above mentioned inner to mid-

902 shelf cores.

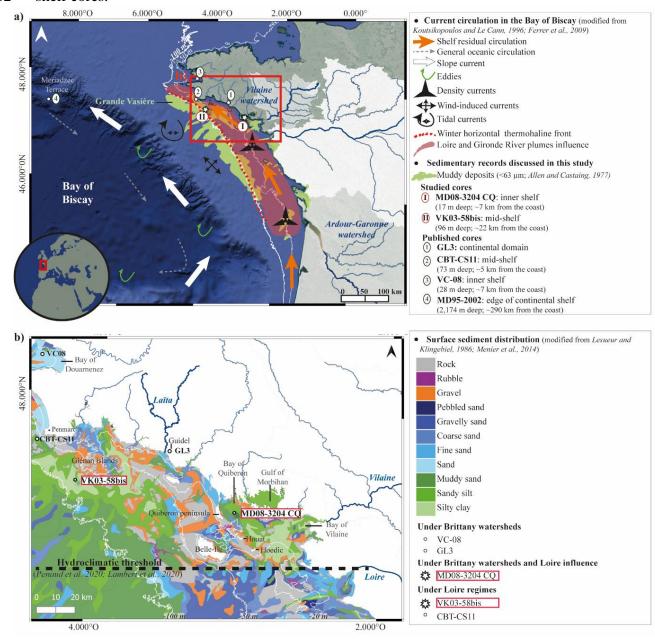
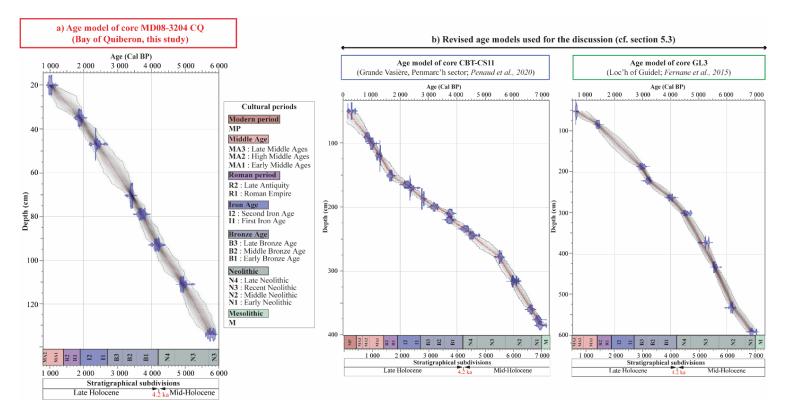
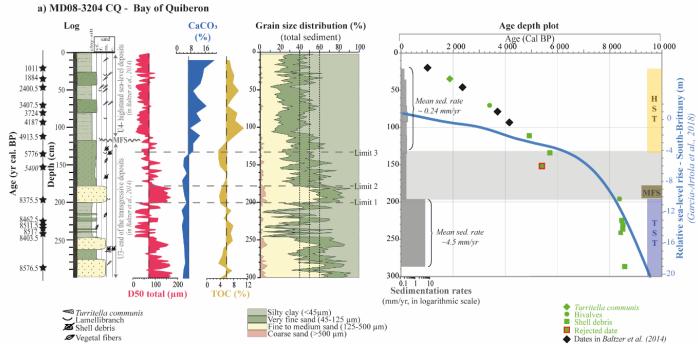


Figure 2: a) Age model of the studied core MD08-3204 CQ over the last 5.7 kyrs BP. b)
Revised age models for cores CBT-CS11 (*Penaud et al., 2020*) and GL3 (*Fernane et al., 2015*).
Age models were established using the rbacon package (*Blaauw and Christen, 2011*) in R
version 4.1.2, and are expressed along cultural subdivisions for western Brittany (*Gorczynska et al., in prep*) and stratigraphical subdivisions (*Walker et al., 2019*).

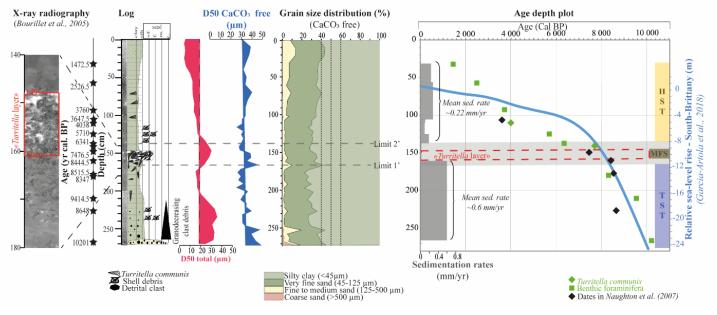


908 Figure 3: Sedimentological description for cores a) MD08-3204 CQ and b) VK03-58bis, 909 including the logs for the description of the sedimentary facies (a and b), X-ray radiography 910 (Bourillet et al., 2005; only b), the median grain-size analysis or D50 on total (a and b) and 911 decarbonated (only b) sediments, grain-size distributions (regarding total sediments for a and 912 decarbonated sediments for b), as well as Total Organic Carbon (TOC) measurements (only a). 913 Age-depth plots for both cores (see Tables 1 and 2) are represented along sedimentation rates 914 and the relative sea level (RSL) for southern Brittany (García-Artola et al., 2018). Intervals of 915 low sedimentation rates linked to sediment remobilization and/or non-deposits are indicated

- 916 using grey horizontal bands. HST: Highstand System Tract; TST: Transgressive System Tract;
- 917 MFS: Maximum Flooding Surface.







919 Figure 4: Along the log of core MD08-3204 CQ (see Fig. 3a): Palynological (dinocyst and 920 pollen) data plotted vs. depth (cm) with concentrations (a and g), diversity Margalef indexes (b 921 and h), number of different taxa (c and i), as well as dominance indexes (d and j) in parallel 922 with percentages of the dominant species in dinocyst and pollen assemblages (e and k, 923 respectively). Also, the number of counted specimens per analysed sample for pollen and 924 dinocysts is highlighted in logarithmic scale allowing better visualizing the few number of 925 dinocysts counted in the lower section of the MD08-3204CQ core. The interval of low 926 sedimentation rates linked to sediment remobilization and/or non-deposits is indicated using a grey horizontal band (see Fig. 3a). 927

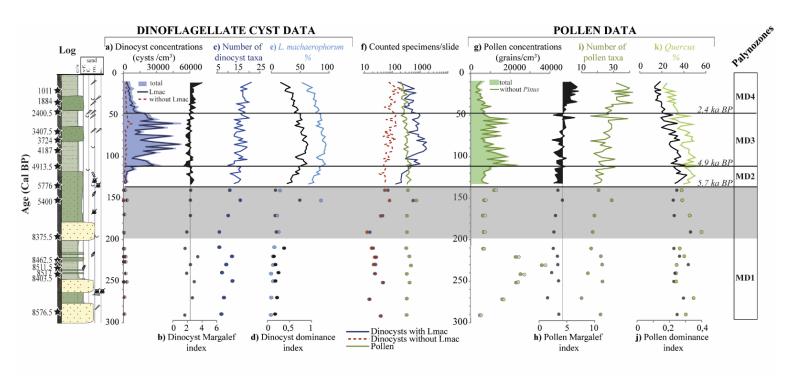


Figure 5: MD08-3204 CQ palynological data plotted vs. depth (cm). Major taxa (greater than 929 930 2% at least once in analyzed samples) of a) dinocyst and b) pollen assemblages. The interval of 931 low sedimentation rates linked to sediment remobilization and/or non-deposits is indicating 932 using grey horizontal bands (see Fig. 3a). Dinoflagellate cyst data are not represented for the 933 latter interval, and they have been summed between 290 and 210 cm due to the extremely low 934 dinocyst counts (see Fig 4). Regarding pollen data, points are represented in the grey band but 935 will never be considered in the discussion. An average of the basal points will be considered 936 for the discussion, as for dinocysts. Colored percentages highlight dinocyst and pollen groups 937 (see Table 3).

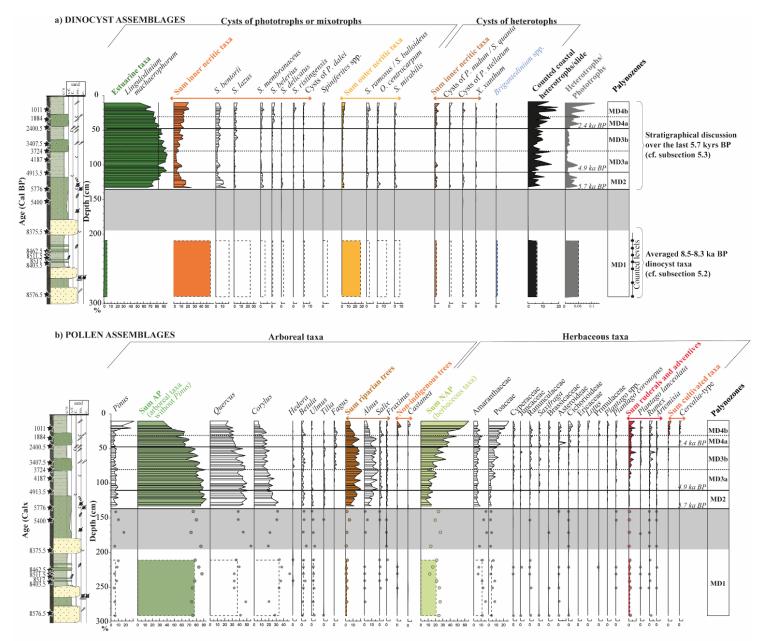
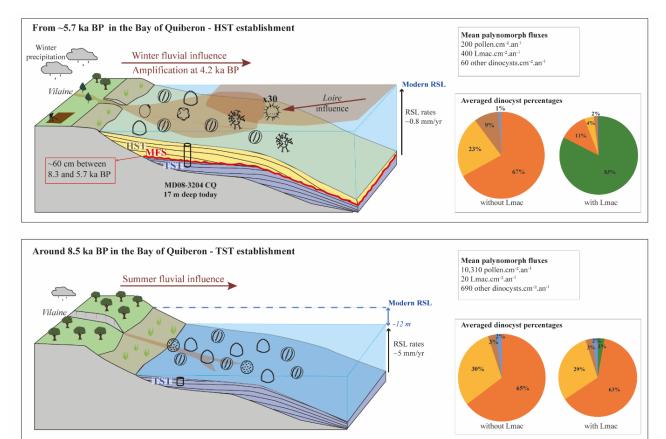
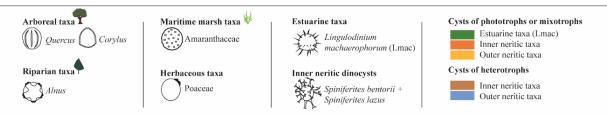


Figure 6: Conceptual model illustrating sedimentological configurations and main
palynological tracers recorded at around 8.5 ka BP and from ~5.7 ka BP in the Bay of Quiberon.
The number of palynomorphs represented in the two figures, respects the proportion of
specimens counted for the two intervals (i.e., 8.5-8.3 ka BP and 5.7-1 ka BP) and are based on
an arbitrary initial value of 4 grains of *Quercus* for the interval 5.7-1 ka BP. On both intervals
gian cyst group (see Table 3; Fig. 5) percentages were also averaged.





- 945 Figure 7: 8.5–8.3 ka BP averaged palynomorph (a) and dinocyst (b) data (~200 yrs) along an
- 946 inshore-offshore gradient with two proximal cores (MD08-3204 CQ, Bay of Quiberon, this
- study; and VC-08, Bay of Douarnenez, *Lambert et al.*, 2019) and two distal cores (VK03-58bis,
- 948 Grande Vasière, Glénan sector, Naughton et al., 2007; Penaud, pers. comm.; and MD95-2002,
- 949 Meriadzec Terrace, Zumaque et al., 2017; Fersi, et al., in prep.). See Fig. 1 for core locations.

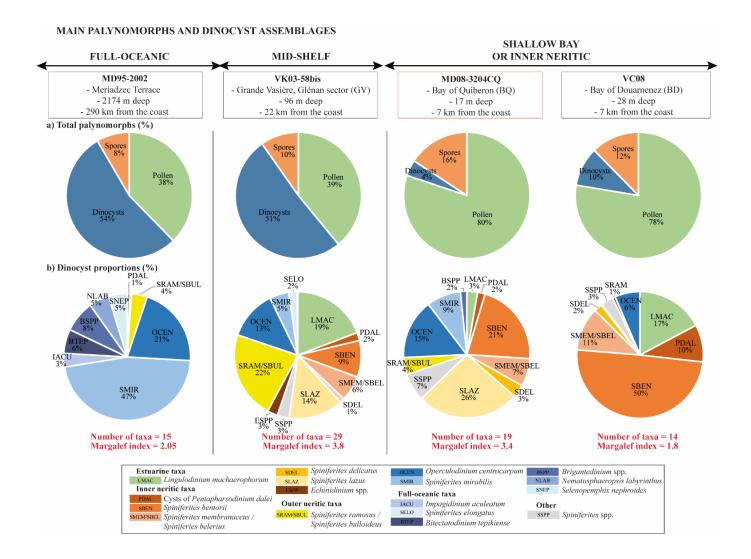
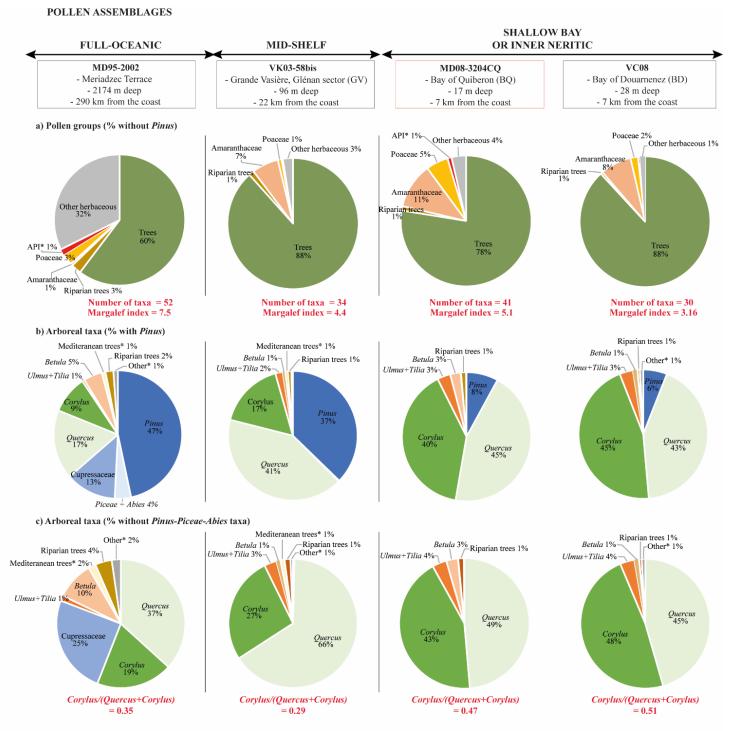


Figure 8: 8.5–8.3 ka BP averaged pollen data (~200 yrs) along an inshore-offshore gradient
with two proximal cores (MD08-3204 CQ, Bay of Quiberon, this study; and VC-08, Bay of
Douarnenez, *Lambert et al.*, 2019) and two distal cores (VK03-58bis, Grande Vasière, Glénan
sector, *Naughton et al.*, 2007; *Penaud, pers. comm.*; and MD95-2002, Meriadzec Terrace, *Turna que et al.*, 2017; *Lengi et al. in puep.*) See Fig. 1 for each logations.

2017; *Fersi, et al., in prep.*). See Fig. 1 for core locations.



API\*: Cannabaceae, Cerealia-type, Plantago lanceolata, Centaurea, Rumex / Mediteranean trees\*: Quercus suber; Quercus ilex / Other\* : main sum taxa <2%

Figure 9: Selected palynological data (i.e., Lingulodinium machaerophorum, Alnus, Quercus, 955 Corylus, Poaceae) acquired on cores MD08-3204 CQ (in orange; this study), CBT-CS11 (in 956 957 blue; Penaud et al., 2020) and GL3 (in green; Fernane et al., 2015) addressed in parallel with 958 stratigraphical and cultural subdivisions (see Fig. 2). Note the additional sedimentological data 959 from core CBT-CS11 (i.e., D50 grain size on decarbonated sediments; Mojtahid et al., 2019) 960 in order to discuss the load-transport capacity of the Loire river. Straight horizontal lines 961 correspond to limits between MD08-3204 CQ palynozones. Dotted horizontal lines correspond 962 to hydrodynamic (4.2 and 3.3 ka BP) or anthropogenic (1.2 ka BP) thresholds previously

963 identified (Penaud et al., 2020).

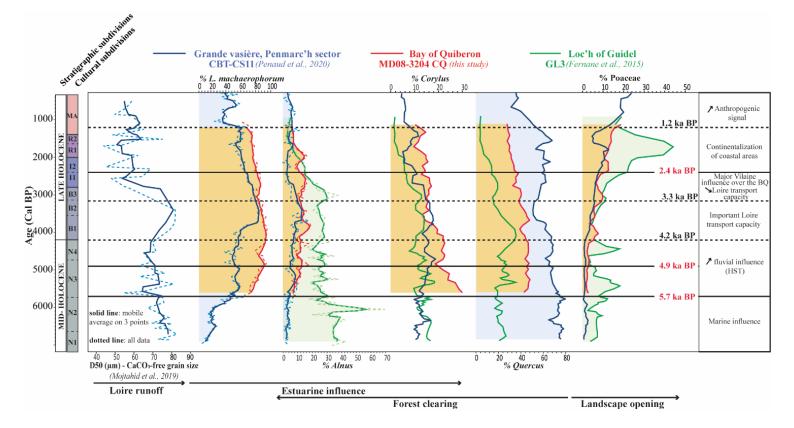
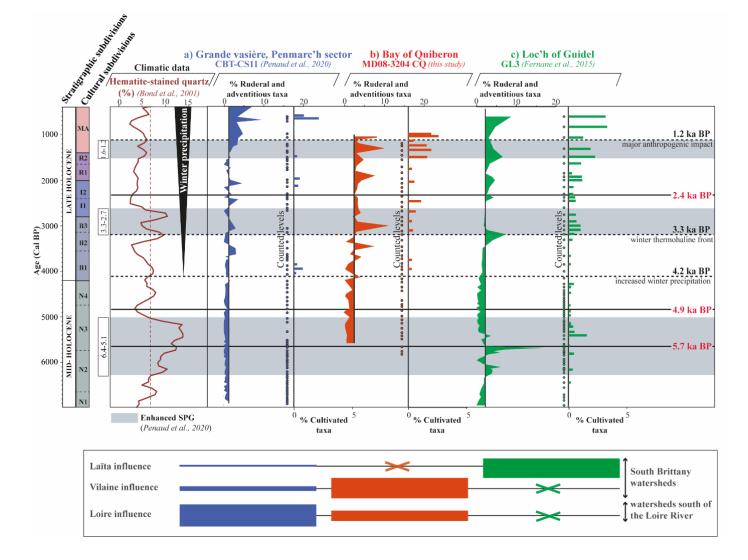


Figure 10: Anthropogenic Pollen Indicators (API: ruderal and adventitious taxa, cultivated
taxa; see Table 3) calculated for cores MD08-3204 CQ (in orange; this study), CBT-CS11 (in
blue; *Penaud et al.*, 2020), and GL3 (in green; *Fernane et al.*, 2015). Palynological data are

addressed in parallel with periods of subpolar gyre (SPG) strengthening (cf. *Penaud et al.*,

- 968 2020), represented using grey horizontal bands. See Fig. 1 for core and rivers locations, as well
- 969 as Fig. 2 for cultural subdivisions. Straight horizontal lines correspond to limits between MD08-
- 970 3204 CQ palynozones. Dotted horizontal lines correspond to hydrodynamic (4.2 and 3.3 ka BP)
- 971 or anthropogenic (1.2 ka BP) thresholds previously identified (*Penaud et al., 2020*).



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