

## **4. DATA REPORT: CARBON AND OXYGEN ISOTOPE GEOCHEMISTRY ALONG A SUBDUCTING PELAGIC SECTION OFFSHORE COSTA RICA (ODP LEGS 170 AND 205)<sup>1</sup>**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this data report we present results from stable isotope measurements ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ) on bulk sediment at several sites located on a transect along a subduction margin offshore Costa Rica (Ocean Drilling Program Sites 1039, 1040, and 1253). Comparison of stable isotope compositions ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ) of the pelagic carbonates Subunit U3C between the reference sites (Site 1039 and 1253) and the underthrust section (Site 1040) reveals similar  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values and minor differences in  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values within four specific intervals. Isotope stratigraphy was then used to further constrain the shipboard age models based on bio- and magnetostratigraphy. The resulting age models are in agreement with those derived from biostratigraphy and confirm that the sedimentation rate of the lower Subunit 3C is roughly constant on the order of 50 m/m.y. This is in contrast with the postulated very high sedimentation rates at ~12.7 Ma and lower sedimentation rates (~18 m/m.y.) in the lower part of the section between 16 and 13 Ma, as suggested by shipboard magnetostratigraphic datums.

<sup>1</sup>Strasser, M., Weissert, H., and Bernasconi, S.M., 2006. Data report: Carbon and oxygen isotope geochemistry along a subducting pelagic section offshore Costa Rica (ODP Legs 170 and 205). In Morris, J.D., Villinger, H.W., and Klaus, A. (Eds.), *Proc. ODP, Sci. Results*, 205, 1–18 [Online]. Available from World Wide Web: <[http://www-odp.tamu.edu/publications/205\\_SR/VOLUME/CHAPTERS/205.PDF](http://www-odp.tamu.edu/publications/205_SR/VOLUME/CHAPTERS/205.PDF)>. [Cited YYYY-MM-DD]

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## INTRODUCTION

The Cocos plate offshore Costa Rica comprises igneous oceanic crust covered by 450 to 500 m of pelagic deposits. Along the Costa Rica convergent margin, this plate is being subducted beneath a prism wedge attached to the Caribbean plate (Morris, Villinger, Klaus, et al., 2003, and references therein) (Figs. F1, F2). During Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) Legs 170 and 205, the sedimentary succession of the subducting plate was drilled at reference sites oceanward of the deformation front (Sites 1039 and 1253) and was also recovered at a prism site (Site 1040) below the décollement (Fig. F2).

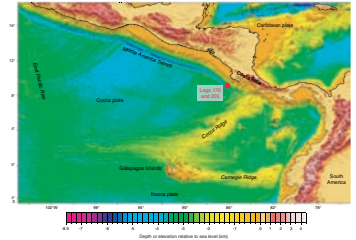
At reference Site 1039, three sedimentary units and one intrusive unit were recovered (Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al., 1997) (Fig. F3). Unit U1 consists of dark olive-green diatomaceous ooze intercalated with ash layers. Below a sharp contact, Unit U2 is distinguished by a rapid decrease in biogenic sediment and consists of dark olive-green silty clay interbedded with light olive-green calcareous clay and ash layers. Unit U3 exhibits a dramatic increase in biogenic sedimentation, changing sharply from the nearly barren clays of Unit U2 to ivory to light green and mottled siliceous calcareous oozes interbedded with calcareous clay and ash. The basal oozes of Subunit U3C are metaliferous. The igneous Unit U4 consists of fine-grained gabbros that are interpreted as intrusive sill (Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al., 1997). Below this ~35-m-thick igneous unit, another ~20 m of pelagic sediment (Subunit U3C) was recovered during Leg 205 at Site 1253 (Morris, Villinger, Klaus, et al., 2003).

Drilling at Sites 1040 and 1043 and subsequent studies (Morris, Villinger, Klaus, et al., 2003, and references therein) show that the sediment section beneath the décollement repeats the complete lithology and sequence of the subducting plate cored at Site 1039 (Fig. F3). Also, the seismic observations indicate complete sediment subduction past the prism front (Fig. F2). The thinning of the underthrust section seen between Sites 1039 and 1040 (Figs. F2, F3) must then reflect compaction and dewatering processes. This leads to a change of the corresponding lithologies from silty clay and calcareous oozes at Sites 1039 and 1253 to claystones and calcareous chalk in the underthrust section at Site 1040.

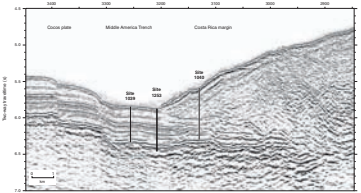
The progressive subduction of the pelagic sediment section along the Costa Rica convergent margin offers the possibility to study in detail compaction and dewatering processes during early subduction. The signature of such processes should be seen in chemical proxies due to diagenesis and alteration of the pelagic sediments. By comparing the chemical signature in the sediments at the reference sites with those of the underthrust section, effects of compaction and dewatering processes on diagenesis could be estimated. In this data report, we present results on stable isotope compositions that show significant differences in the  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values between the unaffected carbonates in sedimentary Unit U3 at reference Sites 1039 and 1253 and the equivalent underthrust section at Site 1040. These results could be used in further studies to test models of sediment compaction and dewatering processes during early subduction.

In addition, the stable isotope analyses of the pelagic carbonates in the reference site oceanward of the deformation front (Site 1039) are used as a chemostratigraphic tool to complement the bio- and magnetostratigraphy of the carbonate section (Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al.,

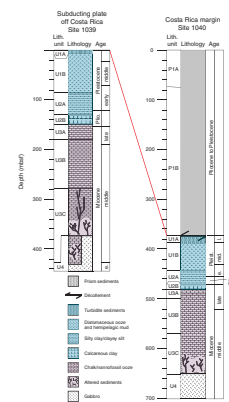
F1. Leg 170 and 205 drilling areas, p. 7.



F2. Seismic profile, p. 8.



F3. Recovered lithologies, p. 9.



1997; Muza, 2000). The occurrence of positive shifts in carbonate  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of up to 1.5‰ in the middle Miocene (known as the Monterey excursion, between 13 and ~17.5 Ma) has been described by Vincent and Berger (1985) in a data set from Deep Sea Drilling Project (DSDP) Site 216 in the tropical Indian Ocean and correlated to several stratigraphic sections all over the world (Woodruff and Savin, 1991; Jacobs et al., 1996; John et al., 2003). The Monterey excursion comprises several higher frequency (~400 k.y. cycles) peaks (carbon isotope maxima [CM]) (Woodruff and Savin, 1991), presumably caused by orbital climate forcing corresponding to long eccentricity cycles (Cramer et al., 2003). Reproducing these isotopic peaks in the analyzed samples from ODP Leg 170 leads to an isotope stratigraphy that is supportive of the biostratigraphy established by Muza (2000), especially in the range between 270 and 370 meters below seafloor (mbsf) (Site 1039), where biostratigraphic datums are lacking and magnetostratigraphic datums reveal controversial ages.

## METHODS

For isotopic analyses, 5-cm<sup>3</sup> samples from the carbonate-rich interval in Hole 1039B (Cores 170-1039B-21X through 41X) were examined at a ~10- (in Subunit U3B) to 5-m (in Subunit U3C) resolution. The same sample volumes were analyzed every ~8 (in Subunit U3B) to 4 m (in Subunit U3C) from the corresponding cores in Hole 1040C (Cores 170-1040C-36R through 52R). In addition to samples from Leg 170, a few samples from the lowermost interval of Subunit U3C recovered during Leg 205 were examined (5-cm<sup>3</sup> samples from squeeze cake material from Cores 205-1253A-1R through 4R and 10-R through 12R; freeze dried at -80°C).

The oxygen and carbon isotope analyses of bulk sediment samples were conducted on a VG Isotech Prism Series II isotope ratio mass spectrometer fitted with a common acid bath automated carbonate device. Clean bulk samples (without pretreatment) were reacted in orthophosphoric acid maintained at 90°C by a water bath and cryogenically purified from water and noncondensable gases before introduction into the mass spectrometer. Analytical reproducibility is better than  $\pm 0.1\text{‰}$  for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values and was monitored through multiple analyses of a laboratory standard, which has been calibrated to the isotopic reference material National Bureau of Standards (NBS)-18 and NBS-19 for conversion to Vienna Peedee belemnite (VPDB) scale. Carbon and oxygen isotope ratios are reported in the conventional delta notation relative to the Vienna Peedee belemnite standard.

Sediment horizon correlations were used to compare the isotopic signals from Site 1039 with the signals from Site 1040. These were established by calculating the solid height profiles (i.e., the theoretical depth profile in a decompacted sedimentary section of solid material only, calculated from measured porosities data) at each site and by assuming constant accumulation rates (D. Saffer, pers. comm., 2002). The sediment horizon correlations are consistent with the boundaries between lithologic units and allow transforming Site 1040 depths to corresponding depths in the reference Site 1039. The transformation is depth dependent and has an estimated maximal absolute error of ~3.5 m.

To construct the age model, the results from Site 1039 were compared visually with the published isotope data from Woodruff and Savin (1991) and John et al. (2003). Maximum ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ) and minimum

( $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ) peaks in the measured data were matched to CM 1–6 and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  Events A–F, respectively (Woodruff and Savin, 1991).

## RESULTS

### Stable Isotope Geochemistry

Results from stable isotope measurements are displayed in Table T1 and shown in Figure F4. The isotopic composition of bulk sediment samples from the carbonate section (Subunits U3B and U3C) falls between  $-1\text{‰}$  and  $+1\text{‰}$  for  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and between  $1.5\text{‰}$  and  $3\text{‰}$  for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ . Only in the immediate vicinity of the intrusive gabbroic unit (U4) are values clearly more negative, reaching values as low as  $-20.5\text{‰}$   $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and  $-0.4\text{‰}$   $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ . This negative shift is interpreted as the result of thermal alteration caused by gabbro emplacement and is not further considered in this study.

A comparison of isotope data from the pelagic sections at Sites 1039 and 1040 (Fig. F5) reveals that  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values from both sites are virtually indistinguishable, except for the interval between 310 and 330 mbsf in the composite section where the two sites show slightly different  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values outside analytical error. On the other hand,  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values of bulk sediment samples from Site 1039 are more negative in four specific intervals (marked with yellow bars in Fig. F5) but do not show significant differences in the other part of the section. A maximum deviation of  $\sim 0.75\text{‰}$  in  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  that clearly lies above the measurement and depth transformation error is reached in the lowermost 30 m of Subunit U3C immediately above the gabbro sill.

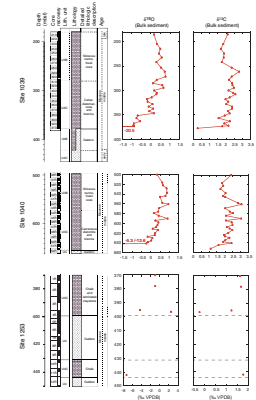
From available data at Site 1040, there is no evidence for higher porosity or for significant lithologic or composition differences that would indicate possible fluid flow or local diagenetic alteration in the respective intervals. However, the observed interval-specific offsets in the oxygen isotopic signal between the reference site and the underthrust section are significant and need further study to investigate their implications for diagenetic alteration and fluid flow during early subduction.

### Isotope Stratigraphy and Age Model

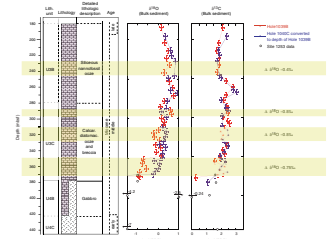
With the assumption that general trends in bulk sediment isotopic composition at the reference Site 1039 mainly reflect trends in the primary isotopic composition of the pelagic carbonaceous components (i.e., coccolithophorids and foraminifers that are well preserved in smear slides and visually do not show diagenetic imprinting; Morris, Villinger, Klaus, et al., 2003; Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al., 1997), results from stable isotope geochemistry are used to establish an isotope stratigraphy for the studied section. Data from  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  analyses show dominant positive peaks of up to  $1.5\text{‰}$  (e.g., at 260 mbsf at Site 1039) that can be correlated to CM events of the Monterey excursion in the middle Miocene (Woodruff and Savin, 1991). Figure F6 shows the correlation between the maximum  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  peaks in Unit U3 of Site 1039 and CM 1–6 measured in a pelagic section in DSDP Site 574 from the equatorial Pacific (Woodruff and Savin, 1991) and outcrop data from a section on the Maltese Islands (John et al., 2003). Site 574 was further used to correlate minima in  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values ( $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  Events A–F; Woodruff and Savin, 1991), revealing a robust age control on the lower stratigraphic section of Site 1039 (Figs. F6, F7).

T1. Isotope values, p. 17.

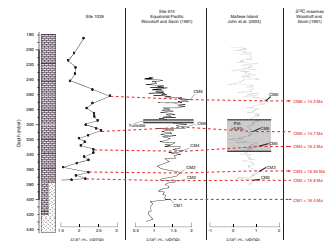
F4. Isotope values, p. 10.



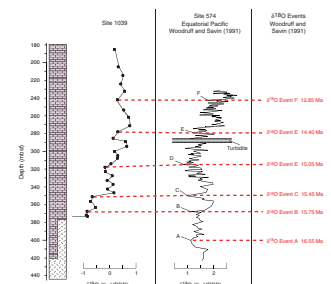
F5. Isotope compositions, p. 11.



F6. Carbon isotope values, p. 13.



F7. Oxygen isotope values, p. 15.



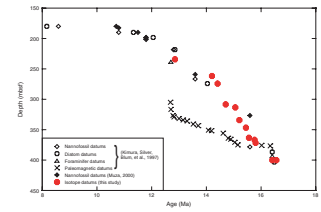
The absolute chronology of the middle Miocene carbonate section recovered at Site 1039 is shown as an age vs. depth diagram in Figure F8. It is compiled from all available biostratigraphic, magnetostratigraphic, and isotopic datums (Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al., 1997; Muza, 2000) (Table T2). The stable isotope stratigraphy presented here is in agreement with the age models derived from biostratigraphy (Muza, 2000) and confirms that sedimentation rate of the middle Miocene carbonate-rich Subunits U3B and U3C is constant and on the order of 50 m/m.y. This is in contrast with the very high sedimentation rates at ~12.7 Ma and lower sedimentation rates (~18 m/m.y.) in the lower part of the section between 16 and 13 Ma, as inferred from the magnetostratigraphic datums (Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al., 1997).

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F8. Age-depth diagram, p. 16.

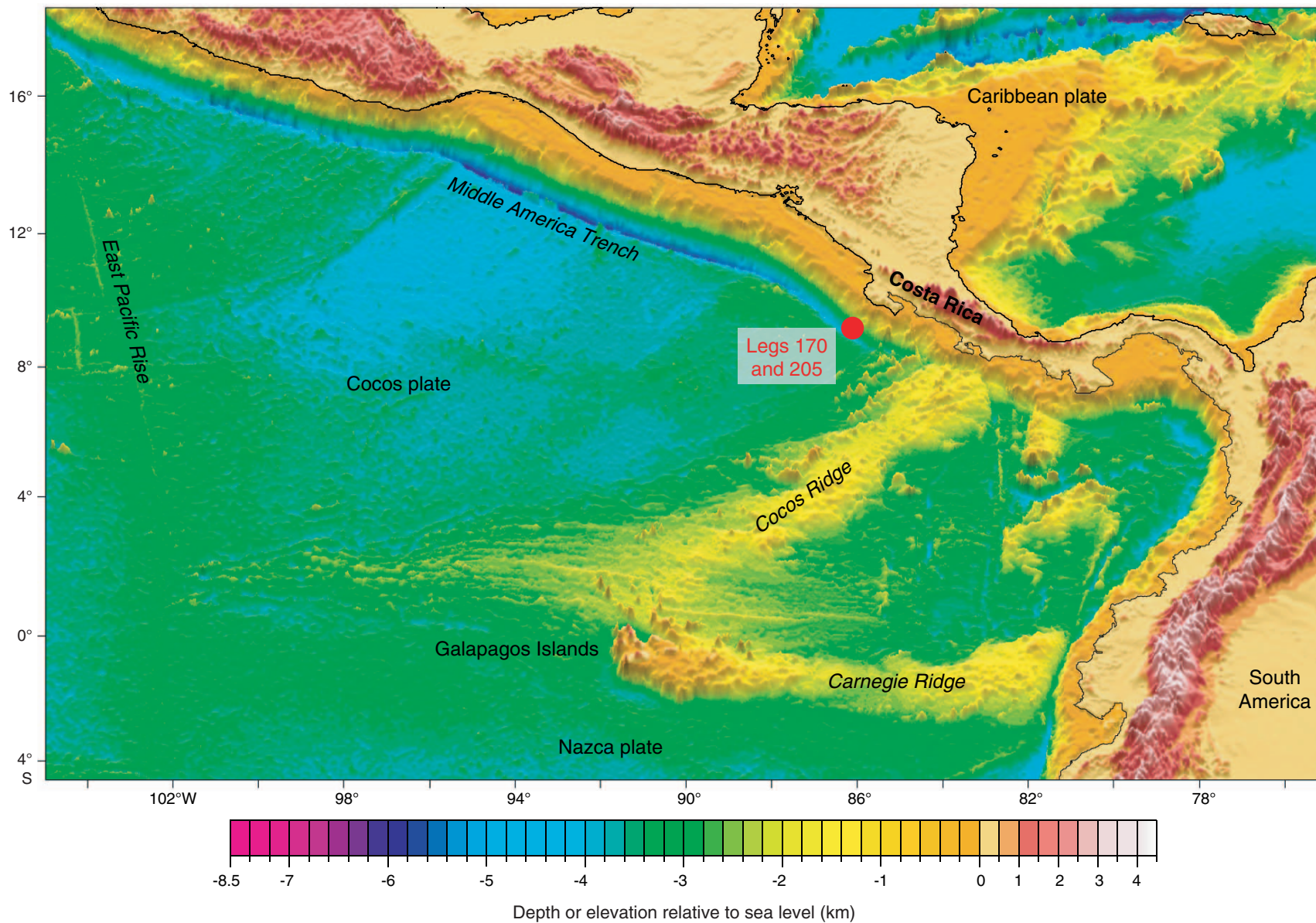


T2. Compiled datums, p. 18.

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**Figure F1.** Bathymetric map of the eastern central Pacific showing Leg 170 and 205 drilling areas in the Middle America Trench offshore Costa Rica. Map is modified after Vannucchi et al. (2003). Elevation data are from Smith and Sandwell (1997).



**Figure F2.** Migrated multichannel seismic Profile BGR-99-44 (C. Ranero and C. Reichert, pers. comm., 2001) across the Middle America Trench showing the general structure of the seaward side of the Middle America Trench, the trench itself, and the lowermost seaward part of the prism. CMP = common midpoint. Shot point numbers from multichannel seismic survey.

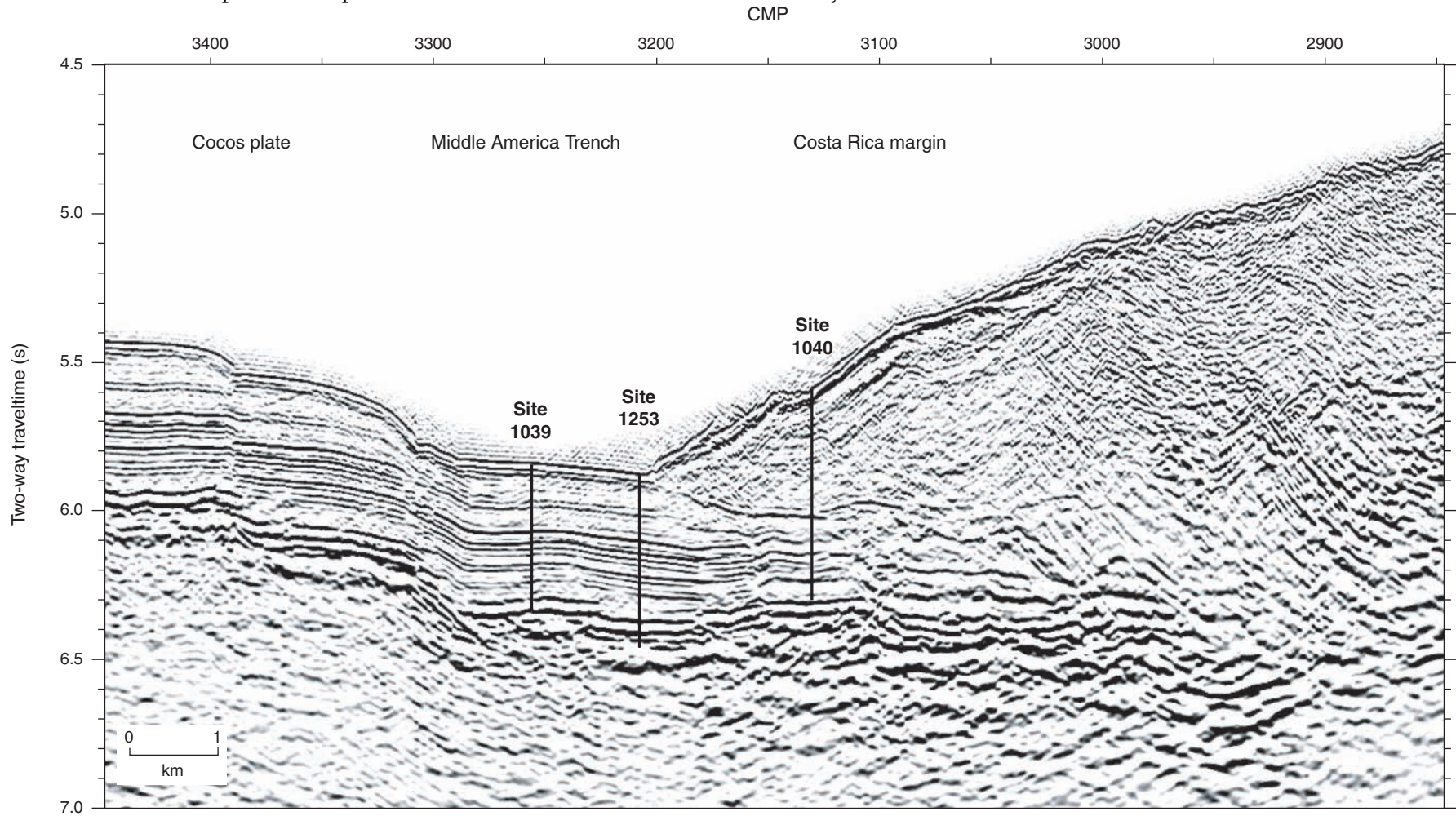




Figure F3. Summary showing recovered lithologies drilled on the incoming plate (Site 1039) and on the Costa Rica margin (Site 1040) (modified after Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al., 1997). Note the repetition of the Site 1039 section below the décollement at Site 1040.

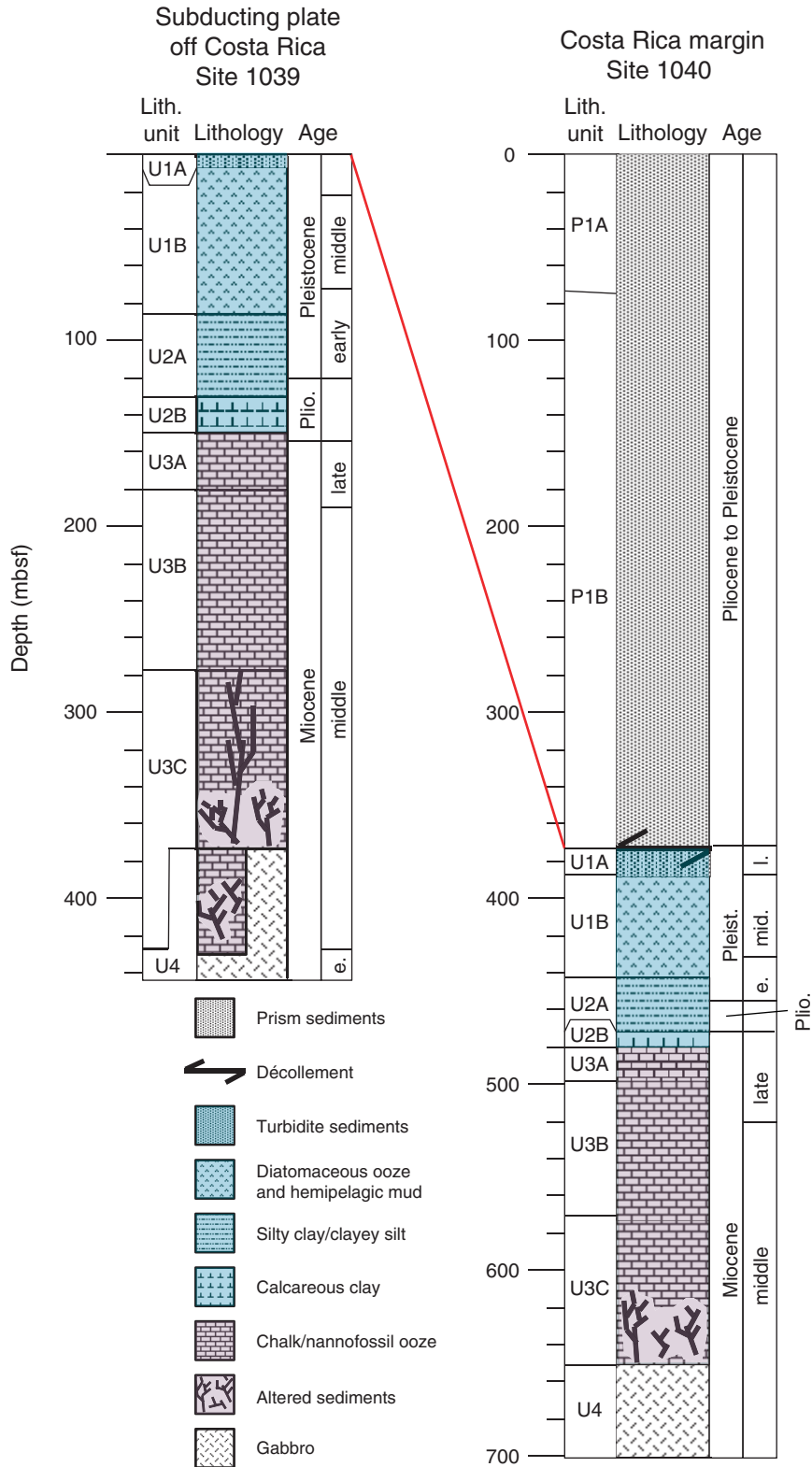
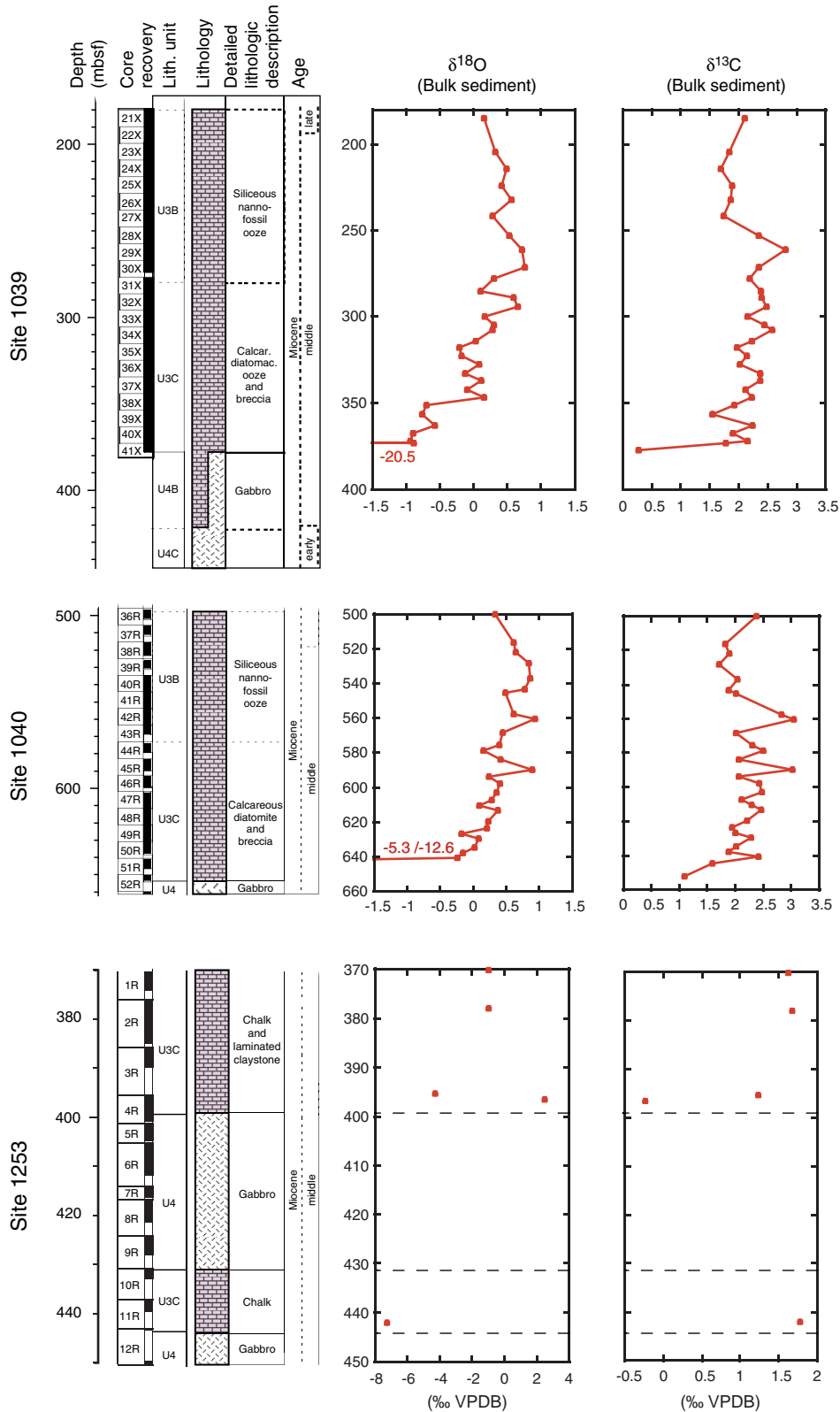
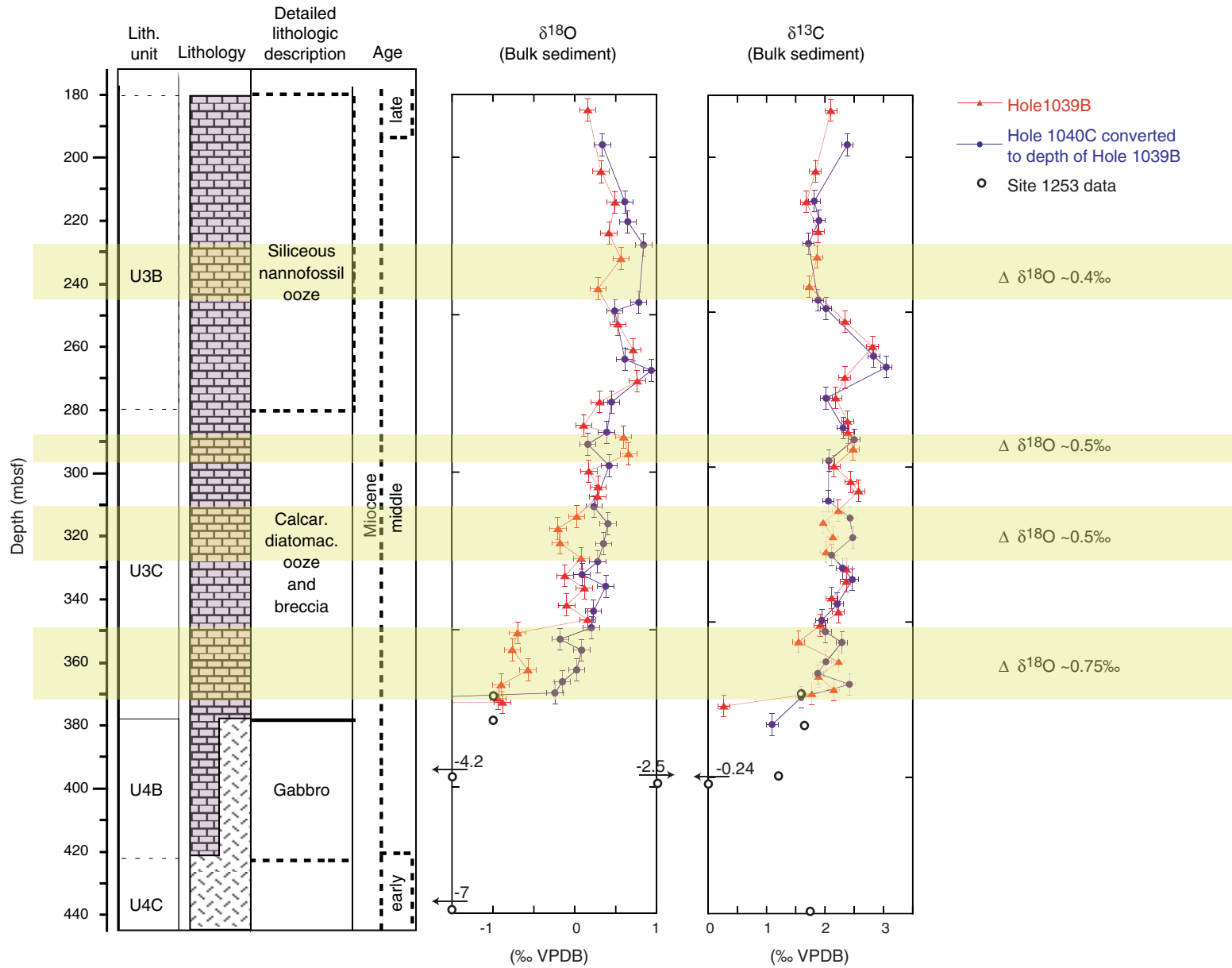


Figure F4. Composite showing lithologic units and bulk sediment  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values from Sites 1039, 1040, and 1253. Negative  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values close to the contact with the gabbro sill that plotted outside the range are given in numbers. Note change in depth scale between diagrams. See Figure F3, p. 9, for lithology keys. VPDB = Vienna Pee Dee belemnite.



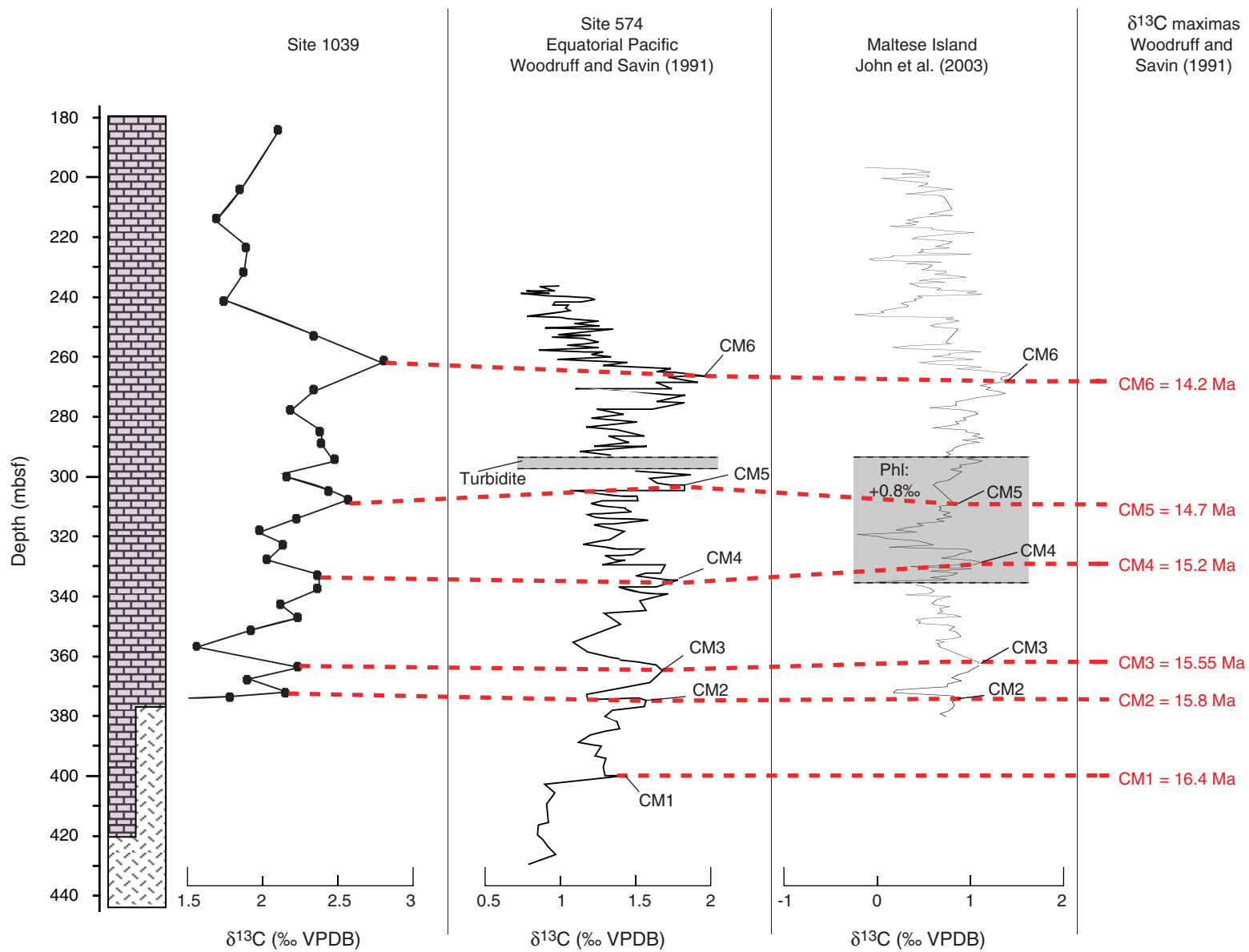
**Figure F5.** Comparison of carbon and oxygen isotope compositions between reference Site 1039 and underthrust section at Site 1040. Transformation from Site 1040 depth to the corresponding depth in reference Site 1039 is based on the sediment horizon correlations that were established by calculating the solid height profiles (i.e., the theoretical depth profile in a decompacted sedimentary section of solid material only, calculated from measured porosity data) at each site and by assuming constant accumulation rates (D. Saffer, pers. comm., 2002). Also shown are data points from Site 1253 which are projected into the depth of Site 1039. Error bars show precision of isotope measurements ( $\pm 0.1\text{‰}$ ) and error of depth transformation (3.5 m). Yellow bars indicate four specific intervals where  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values vary significantly between the reference and underthrust site. VPDB = Vienna Pee Dee belemnite. (Figure shown on next page.)

Figure F5 (continued). (Caption shown on previous page.)



**Figure F6.** Bulk sediment  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values from Site 1039 correlated to middle Miocene  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  records from a pelagic section at Site 574 in the equatorial Pacific (Woodruff and Savin, 1991) and from outcrop data on the Maltese Islands (John et al., 2003). Maximum peaks were matched to carbon isotope maximums (CM) 1–6 (Woodruff and Savin, 1991). Note that absolute values between the three sites are not compared because of lithologic differences, but relative trends and amplitudes of positive  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  excursions are used instead to allow for a robust correlation. Intervals marked with gray bars show specific lithologic intervals that contrast with the general stratigraphic column. In order to use a common scale,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values from the phosphatic layer (Phl) in the Maltese section are shifted 0.8‰ toward more positive values. VPDB = Vienna Pee Dee belemnite. (Figure shown on next page.)

Figure F6 (continued). (Caption shown on previous page.)



**Figure F7.** Bulk sediment  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values from Site 1039 correlated to middle Miocene  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  records from pelagic section at equatorial Pacific Site 574 (Woodruff and Savin, 1991). Minimum troughs were matched to  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  Events A–F (Woodruff and Savin, 1991). Note that the absolute values are not comparable between the two sites because of lithologic differences, but relative trends and the amplitudes of negative  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  excursions allow for a robust correlation. VPDB = Vienna Pee Dee belemnite.

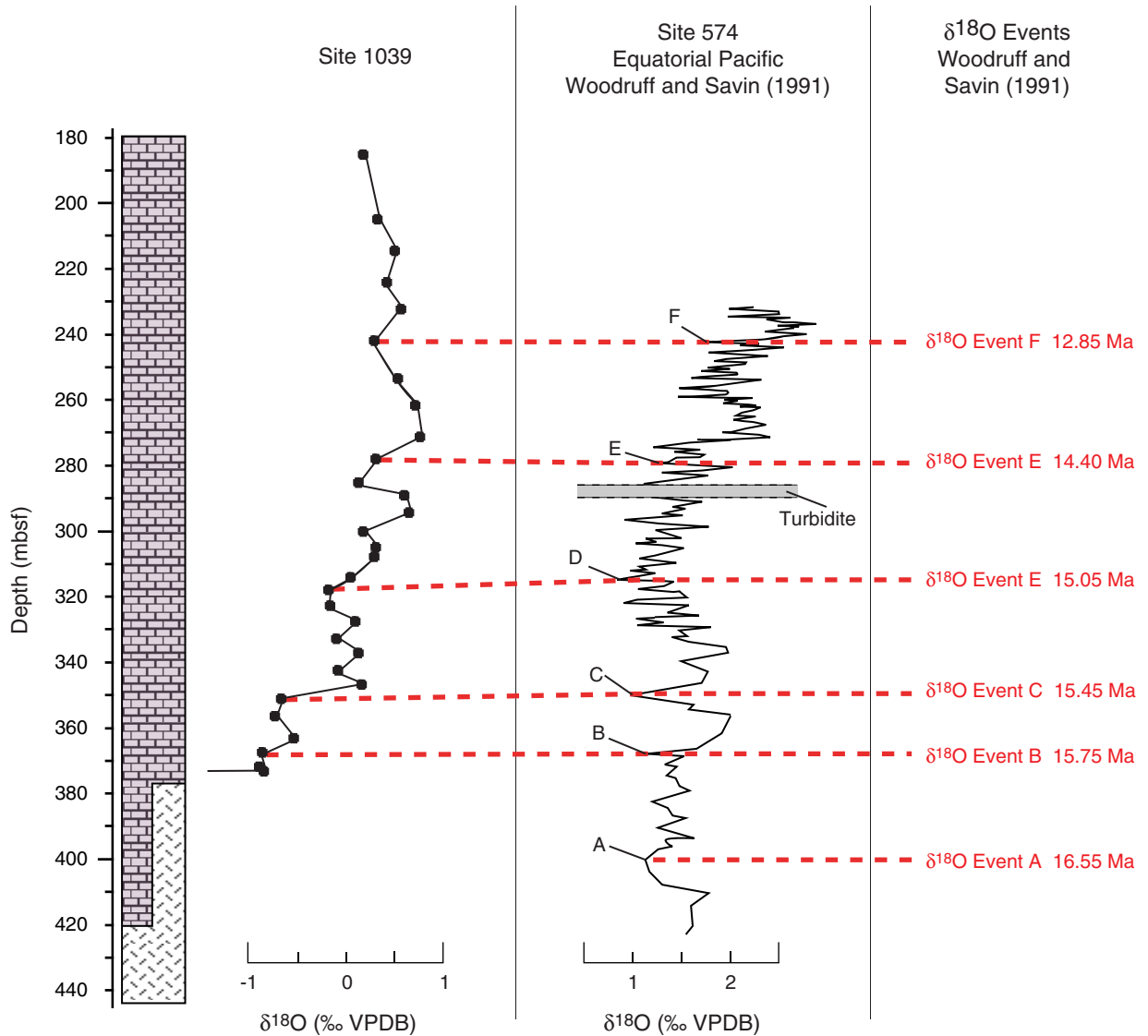


Figure F8. Age-depth diagram for middle Miocene carbonate section at Site 1039 compiled from all available biostratigraphic, magnetostratigraphic, and isotopic datums.

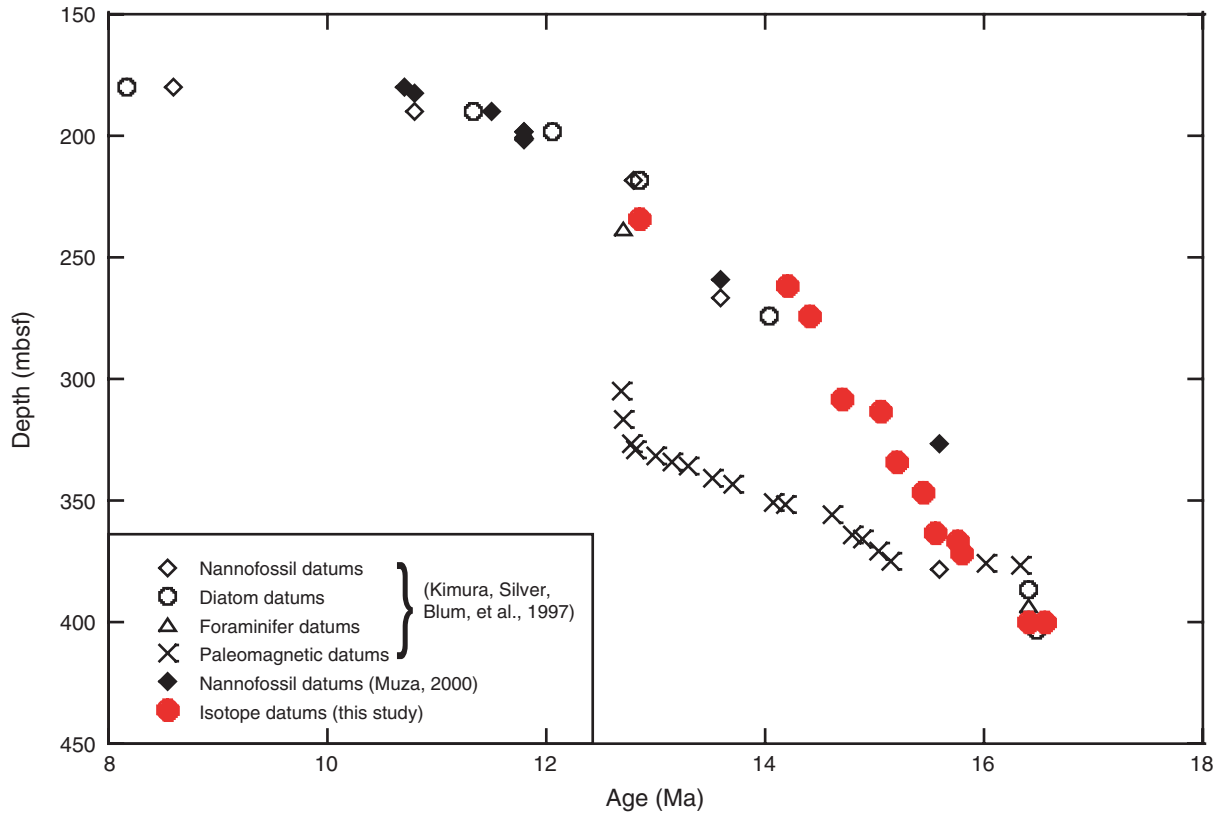




Table T1.  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of bulk sediment samples, Sites 1039, 1040, and 1253.

Core, section, interval (cm)	Depth (mbsf)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰ VPDB)	Core, section, interval (cm)	Depth (mbsf)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰ VPDB)
170-1039B-				38R-5, 52-53	521.82	0.649	1.899
21X-4, 25-26	184.95	0.160	2.102	39R-3, 27-28	528.17	0.842	1.719
23X-4, 55-56	204.55	0.321	1.840	40R-2, 100-101	537.00	0.868	2.048
24X-4, 75-76	214.35	0.495	1.685	40R-6, 122-123	543.22	0.784	1.882
25X-4, 85-86	224.05	0.419	1.886	41R-1, 130-131	545.40	0.490	2.019
26X-3, 80-81	232.20	0.567	1.864	42R-3, 90-91	557.60	0.612	2.834
27X-3, 75-76	241.75	0.284	1.733	42R-5, 90-91	560.40	0.937	3.051
28X-4, 80-81	253.00	0.529	2.344	43R-4, 30-31	568.20	0.449	2.021
29X-3, 80-81	261.20	0.715	2.813	44R-2, 100-101	575.60	0.392	2.311
30X-3, 100-101	271.10	0.765	2.341	44R-4, 90-91	578.50	0.161	2.500
31X-1, 100-101	277.70	0.304	2.187	45R-1, 100-101	583.70	0.421	2.066
31X-6, 100-101	285.20	0.110	2.386	45R-5, 91-92	589.61	0.892	3.024
32X-2, 95-96	288.85	0.599	2.393	46R-1, 135-136	593.65	0.236	2.061
32X-6, 30-31	294.20	0.659	2.483	46R-4, 104-105	597.84	0.407	2.428
33X-3, 70-71	299.70	0.172	2.158	47R-1, 80-81	602.70	0.353	2.475
33X-6, 120-121	304.70	0.299	2.442	47R-4, 68-69	607.08	0.281	2.115
34X-2, 57-58	307.67	0.278	2.577	47R-6, 90-91	610.30	0.090	2.300
34X-6, 95-96	314.05	0.027	2.229	48R-2, 10-11	613.20	0.379	2.471
35X-2, 120-121	317.90	-0.204	1.973	48R-6, 30-31	619.40	0.230	2.212
35X-5, 130-131	322.50	-0.179	2.136	49R-2, 90-91	623.60	0.205	1.945
36X-2, 105-106	327.35	0.081	2.022	49R-4, 85-86	626.55	-0.177	2.008
36X-6, 60-61	332.90	-0.120	2.366	49R-6, 70-71	629.40	0.085	2.291
37X-2, 100-101	336.90	0.119	2.366	50R-3, 76-77	634.56	0.025	2.018
37X-6, 30-31	342.20	-0.098	2.115	50R-5, 88-89	637.68	-0.1504	1.879
38X-2, 130-131	346.80	0.158	2.230	51R-1, 31-32	640.71	-0.2414	2.419
38X-5, 100-101	351.00	-0.697	1.916	51R-3, 95-97	644.35	-4.8968	1.595
39X-2, 130-131	356.40	-0.762	1.547	52R-2, 65-66	652.15	-12.602	1.098
39X-7, 20-21	362.80	-0.5714	2.236	205-1253A-			
40X-3, 130-131	367.50	-0.8994	1.891	1R-1, 13-29	370.13	-0.96	1.624
40X-6, 110-111	371.80	-0.9384	2.149	2R-2, 85-104	377.95	-0.980	1.681
41X-1, 30-31	373.10	-0.8824	1.778	4R-1, 45-46	395.35	-4.289	1.231
41X-3, 130-131	377.10	-19.818	0.271	4R-2, 15-16	396.55	2.503	-0.239
170-1040C-				12R-1, 8-9	442.08	-7.270	1.777
36R-3, 99-100	499.99	0.339	2.385				
38R-1, 103-104	516.33	0.613	1.821				

Note: VPDB = Vienna Peedee belemnite.

**Table T2.** Compiled biostratigraphic, magnetostratigraphic, and isotopic datums, Site 1039.

Depth (mbsf)	Biostratigraphic datum Age (Ma)			Paleomagnetic datum* Age (Ma)	Isotopic datums Age (Ma)
	Nannofossil	Diatom*	Foraminifer*		
180.37	8.6*	10.7 <sup>†</sup>	8.17		
182.21		10.8 <sup>†</sup>			
189.87	10.8*		11.34		
189.87		11.5 <sup>†</sup>			
198.65	11.8*		12.06	11.8	
198.65		11.8 <sup>†</sup>			
201.51		11.8 <sup>†</sup>			
218.43	12.8*		12.86		
234.5					12.85
238				12.7	
259.4		13.6 <sup>†</sup>			
262					14.2
266.84	13.6*				
274					14.4
274.15			14.03		
305				12.678	
308					14.7
313					15.05
317				12.708	
326.83		15.6 <sup>†</sup>			
327				12.775	
329				12.819	
332				12.991	
334				13.139	15.2
336				13.302	
341				13.51	
343				13.703	
347					15.45
351				14.076	
352				14.178	
356				14.612	
363					15.55
364				14.8	
366				14.888	
367					15.75
371				15.034	
372					15.8
375				15.155	
376				16.014	
377				16.327	
378.15	15.6*				
386.39			16.4		
393.6				16.4	
400					16.55
403.06			16.49		

Note: \* = Kimura, Silver, Blum, et al. (1997), <sup>†</sup> = Muza (2000), <sup>‡</sup> = this study.