

Temperature variations across the Paleocene-Eocene boundary recorded in Δ_{47} of soil carbonates: the Esplugafreda terrestrial record, Spain

DR. GÁBOR ÚJVÁRI, PHD¹, SÁNDOR KELE¹, LÁSZLÓ RINYU², AITOR PAYROS³, VICTORIANO PUJALTE³, BIRGER SCHMITZ⁴ AND STEFANO M. BERNASCONI⁵

¹HUN-REN Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences

²HUN-REN Institute for Nuclear Research

³University of the Basque Country

⁴Lund University

⁵ETH Zürich

Presenting Author: ujvari.gabor@csfk.hun-ren.hu

Additions of ¹³C-depleted carbon to the atmosphere-ocean system at 55.9 Myr ago led to global warming of 5–8 °C, profound floral/faunal turnovers and alteration of the global hydrological cycle at the Paleocene-Eocene (P–E) boundary. Environmental changes over the late Paleocene and Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM) are well-preserved in continental deposits, formed in the subtropical zone (paleolatitude ~35 °N) in the Tremp-Graus Basin, northern Spain. The Esplugafreda section is made up of ~250 m of red mudstones with abundant paleosols containing numerous soil nodules and gypsum indicating a semi-arid/arid paleoenvironment. The P–E boundary is identified by a 6‰ negative carbon isotope excursion (CIE), spanning ~15–20 m of yellow cumulate paleosols formed during the PETM. The post-PETM interval comprises 20 m of red paleosols rich in gypsum, characterized by normal soil nodule $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values.

Here, we present clumped isotope (Δ_{47}) thermometry data of soil carbonates (SC) from paleosols of the upper Paleocene Esplugafreda Formation and PETM yellow soils to reconstruct paleotemperatures for this terrestrial subtropical site across the P–E boundary. The Δ_{47} measurements were done using a Kiel IV carbonate device coupled to a Thermo Scientific 253 Plus IRMS at the Institute for Nuclear Research, Debrecen, Hungary. Stable carbon, oxygen isotope and Δ_{47} compositions were calculated from 8–16 replicate analyses of 100–150 μg of carbonate. The temperature-dependent mass 47 anomaly is reported on the I-CDES90°C scale. Temperatures were calculated using the Anderson et al. (2021) calibration.

SCs of the Esplugafreda formation yield $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values between –8.55 and –5.85 ‰, while those from PETM yellow soils are significantly more negative (–13.84 to –10.12 ‰). A much smaller, ~1.2 ‰ difference can be observed in $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ between these carbonates ($\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$: –5.46 to –4.13 versus –6.35 to –4.47 ‰). The Δ_{47} -based paleotemperatures ($T_{47\text{carb}}$) indicate mean SC formation of 33.8 ± 9.5 °C during the late Paleocene, which are close to modern summer temperatures of subtropical regions. By contrast, a much higher mean temperature was recorded by SCs of the PETM yellow soils (39 ± 8.5 °C) with extreme (>40 °C) temperatures occurring 4 times more