

1 First absolute seasonal temperature estimates for greenhouse
2 climate from clumped isotopes in bivalve shells

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14 **ABSTRACT**

15 The seasonal variability of sea surface temperatures plays a fundamental role in climate dynamics
16 and species distribution. As such, it is essential to better understand seasonal variability in warm
17 climates of the past. Previous reconstructions of seasonality in deep time are relatively
18 unconstrained, relying on unsupported assumptions such as estimates of seawater composition and
19 negligible seasonal bias. This work presents the first absolute seasonal temperature reconstructions
20 based on clumped isotope measurements in bivalve shells which, critically, do not rely on these
21 assumptions. Our new approach reconstructs highly precise mid-latitude (~50°N) monthly
22 temperatures from individual oyster and rudist shells of the Campanian (78 million years ago)
23 greenhouse period (15–27 °C seasonal range). Our analysis demonstrates that seasonal bias and
24 previous assumptions about sea water oxygen isotope composition can lead to highly inaccurate
25 temperature reconstructions, distorting our understanding of the behavior of greenhouse climates

26 and our ability to model them. Our results agree remarkably well with fully coupled climate model
27 simulations showing greenhouse climates outside the tropics were warmer with higher seasonality
28 than previously thought.

29

30 **MAIN**

31 **Introduction**

32 Temperature seasonality is a critical component governing the geographic distribution of
33 modern flora and fauna while seasonal extremes were likely also of vital importance for the
34 evolution and distribution of life over geological history¹. The effects of greenhouse warming on
35 seasonal variability in temperature and the hydrological cycle are still highly unconstrained and of
36 considerable interest to allow quantification of projections of future climate and the ongoing
37 biodiversity crisis^{2,3}. Reconstructions of deep time (pre-Quaternary) greenhouse periods yield
38 valuable insights into the dynamics of warm climates and the ecological response to forcing
39 mechanisms such as rising atmospheric CO₂ levels^{4,5}. Accurate reconstructions are imperative to
40 evaluate climate model predictions under dissimilar climate states⁶ in particular seasonal range for
41 which there is little quantitative evidence to constrain climate model behavior. The warm, ice free
42 Late Cretaceous period presents a valuable reference to assess seasonal variability in greenhouse
43 climate^{7,8}.

44 Reconstructions based on stable oxygen isotope ratios ($\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$) in marine carbonates indicate
45 that Late Cretaceous global mean sea surface temperatures (SST) were ~5-6°C warmer than today
46 with a reduced latitudinal temperature gradient (an “equable climate”⁹) and the Late Cretaceous
47 greenhouse is often regarded to have had limited temperature seasonality^{7,10,11,12}. However, the
48 reliability of past seasonal reconstructions is highly questionable as a result of methodological

49 unconstrained assumptions. This hampers our understanding of past warm climates and hinders
50 accurate evaluation of climate models^{13,14}. If a proxy is interpreted as representing annual mean
51 conditions, but is in fact biased to a particular season, then this will limit our understanding of the
52 behavior of greenhouse climates. This further leads to misinterpretation of model-data
53 comparisons of past warm climates¹⁵, and hinders the use of paleoclimate data for informing future
54 climate predictions. In deep time, traditional temperature reconstructions based on fossil
55 assemblages are highly uncertain or contentious, because studied fossil species may not have a
56 modern close relative for proxy calibration¹⁶. In addition, ambient water oxygen isotope
57 composition ($\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$), which forms an important input parameter into the traditional carbonate
58 $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ temperature proxy¹⁷, remains poorly constrained across geological timescales^{18,19}. These
59 complications do not affect the carbonate clumped isotope (Δ_{47}) thermometer, which yields more
60 accurate SST reconstructions^{20,21}. This technique also allows the reconstruction of $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$, yielding
61 information about the local hydrological cycle, an important aspect of climate which is mostly
62 unconstrained in deep time. So far, the large sample sizes required for individual Δ_{47} -based
63 temperature estimates (>2 mg) have complicated paleoseasonality reconstructions using this
64 accurate method²².

65 Here we combine clumped isotope analyses on microsampled (~100 μg) profiles through
66 fossil bivalve shells with a novel statistical data reduction approach to obtain, for the first time,
67 absolute SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ seasonality reconstructions of a greenhouse climate. We apply this new
68 method to well-preserved oyster (*Rastellum diluvianum* and *Acutostrea incurva*) and rudist
69 (*Biradiolites suecicus*) shells from Campanian ($78.1 \pm 0.3 \text{ Ma}^{23}$) coastal localities of the
70 Kristianstad Basin in southern Sweden ($46 \pm 3^\circ\text{N}$ paleolatitude²⁴; see **Fig. 1** and **METHODS**). We
71 further supplement these reconstructions with results from fully coupled climate model simulations

72 of the Campanian greenhouse (see **METHODS**) to explore their implications for the “equable
73 climate” hypothesis.

74

75 **Results**

76 All specimens showed clear seasonal $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ fluctuations of -2.0 – 0.0‰ in *R. diluvianum*, -
77 2.0 – 0.0‰ in *A. incurva* and -2.7‰ – 1.0‰ in *B. suecicus* on which shell chronologies were based
78 (see **Methods**). These seasonal patterns show that the specimens record 3 (*A. incurva* and *B.*
79 *suecicus*) to 6 (*R. diluvianum*) full years of growth. Clumped isotope analyses on small aliquots
80 yielded Δ_{47} ranges between 0.62 – 0.73‰ for *R. diluvianum*, 0.64 – 0.76‰ for *A. incurva* and 0.63 –
81 0.75‰ for *B. suecicus*. Summaries of stable isotope measurement results are displayed in **Table**
82 **1**.

83 Detailed step-by-step results of the data processing routine are shown in **Supplementary**
84 **Methods. Fig. 2** and **Table 1** show monthly Δ_{47} , SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ reconstructions for each
85 specimen. Uncertainties at the 95% confidence level on monthly SST vary between 1.8 and 4.2°C
86 owing to variable monthly sampling density related to intra-shell growth rate variability (**Fig. 2**).
87 Statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) SST seasonality was found in all specimens. Summer and winter
88 temperatures, defined as mean temperatures of the warmest and coldest month, in *A. incurva*
89 (13 ± 2 – $26 \pm 4^\circ\text{C}$) and *B. suecicus* (14 ± 4 – $25 \pm 3^\circ\text{C}$) are statistically indistinguishable ($p > 0.2$), while
90 SST from *R. diluvianum* are significantly higher (20 ± 2 – $29 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$; $p < 0.05$). Significant $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$
91 seasonality was found in *R. diluvianum* (0.0 ± 0.3 – $1.1 \pm 0.3\text{‰VSMOW}$; $p < 0.01$) and *B. suecicus* (-
92 1.8 ± 0.8 – $0.6 \pm 0.5\text{‰VSMOW}$; $p < 0.01$), but not in *A. incurva* (-0.9 ± 0.2 – $0.4 \pm 0.9\text{‰VSMOW}$;
93 $p = 0.07$; **Fig. 2; Table 1**). *R. diluvianum* records significantly higher $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ values ($p < 0.01$) than

94 the other specimens. In all specimens, monthly $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ positively correlates with monthly SST (see
95 **Fig. 2**).

96 Our climate model simulation yields global Campanian latitudinal gradients in summer,
97 winter and Mean Annual Temperature (MAT; **Fig. 3A**) as well as monthly SST in the Boreal Chalk
98 Sea (**Fig. 3B**). The modelled Campanian latitudinal SST gradient (24°C difference between tropics
99 and high-latitude MAT) resembles the modern (25°C gradient). The global mean Campanian SST
100 seasonality (8.2°C difference between warmest and coldest month) is similar to that in the modern
101 ocean (8.6°C). Campanian global average SST at 4× preindustrial atmospheric pCO₂, however is
102 ~22°C compared to ~14°C in the modern ocean (NOAA, 2020), yielding an equilibrium climate
103 sensitivity, or global warming per doubling of atmospheric CO₂ concentration, of ~4°C¹⁵.
104 Specifically, simulated SST at the Campanian Kristianstad Basin with 4× preindustrial
105 atmospheric pCO₂ forcing (12±2–26±2°C seasonal range; **Fig. 3**) are much warmer than in present
106 day southern Sweden (3±0.8–17±0.4°C²⁵).

107 **Discussion**

108 Our novel Δ_{47} -based monthly SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ reconstructions from *A. incurva* and *B.*
109 *suecicus* are statistically indistinguishable from model simulations of Campanian mid-latitude SST
110 seasonality (p>0.05; **Fig. 3**). Higher SST (+4–5°C) and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ (+1.0–1.5‰) in *R. diluvianum* are
111 due to the stronger seasonal insolation effect on its shallower (< 5 m) growth environment
112 (p<0.05). By comparison, the deeper (5-15m) environment of *A. incurva* and *B. suecicus* was less
113 affected by these processes and may have received more water with an open marine $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$
114 signature (closer to the -1‰VSMOW assumed for the ice-free Cretaceous; ²⁶Shackleton, 1986),
115 especially in winter. These highly local differences are not resolved in the climate model
116 simulations but show the unprecedented detail of SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ reconstructions the new clumped

117 isotope approach makes possible (see **Supplementary Discussion**). The ~1‰ higher $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ in
118 summer than in winter shows that summers in the Campanian Kristianstad Basin either
119 experienced excess evaporation, which increases $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ by preferentially removing isotopically
120 light seawater, or less precipitation, which supplies isotopically light meteoric water, reducing
121 $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$. Both processes lead to dry summers and wet winters compared to the annual average. The
122 presence of growth stops cannot be fully excluded despite age model results suggesting none of
123 the species stopped growing during a particular month of the year. A growth stop during extreme
124 season (summer or winter) may cause slight underestimation of the full seasonal SST or $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$
125 range. Nevertheless, the remarkable agreement between Δ_{47} -based SST ranges and our climate
126 model suggest that the average seasonal range reconstructed from all three specimens (15–27°C
127 range, MAT of 20°C) likely represents the most accurate SST seasonality reconstructions for the
128 Campanian Boreal Chalk Sea to date.

129 Strong seasonal fluctuations in $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ (up to 1.3‰ in *B. suecicus*) and regular deviations
130 from the commonly assumed -1‰ VSMOW $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ values²⁶ lead to large differences (up to 8.9°C
131 in *R. diluvianum*) between SST estimates based on Δ_{47} and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{c}}$ (**Fig. 2**). The risk of assuming
132 constant $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ is even more clearly illustrated by significantly (+3.5–6.0°C) higher $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{c}}$ -based
133 seasonal temperature reconstructions for *B. suecicus* compared to *A. incurva*, while both specimens
134 grew under similar SST seasonality conditions (**Fig. 2B**). Similarly, $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{c}}$ -based temperature
135 reconstructions of *A. incurva* and *R. diluvianum* are indistinguishable, while the paleoenvironment
136 of *R. diluvianum* was at least 3.5°C warmer year-round (**Fig. 2B**), illustrating that the constant
137 $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ assumption is only valid in settings with negligible $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ seasonality. Low-latitude
138 Tethyan SST seasonality reconstructions based on rudist $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{c}}$ ¹⁰ agree with model simulations,
139 which may indicate that the constant open ocean $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ assumption may hold in these

140 environments, although data–model agreement is by no means solid evidence for correct $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$
141 assumptions and these should always be independently verified (**Fig. 3A**). A cold bias of $\sim 8^\circ\text{C}$ in
142 $\delta^{18}\text{O}_\text{c}$ -based SST reconstructions due to inaccurate $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ assumptions was previously
143 documented through the Δ_{47} method and proxy comparison^{8,27}, however this does not account for
144 seasonal biases in the proxies.

145 Seasonal variability in growth rates in all specimens (**Fig 2A**) illustrates how bulk sampling
146 of bio-archives can lead to significant biases in MAT reconstructions compared to our more
147 accurate estimates of MAT as an average of monthly SST. In this case, slower summer and autumn
148 growth (months 4-7 in **Fig. 2A**), especially in *A. incurva* and *B. suecicus*, would cause bulk
149 analysis of shell material to underestimate MAT. Indeed, our Campanian mid-latitude SST ranges
150 ($\sim 15\text{--}27^\circ\text{C}$, MAT of 20°C) are significantly higher than previous reconstructions of the same
151 paleolatitude based on fish tooth $\delta^{18}\text{O}_\text{c}$ ($15\text{--}20^\circ\text{C}^{11}$), chalk $\delta^{18}\text{O}_\text{c}$ ($12\text{--}15^\circ\text{C}^{12}$), bulk mollusk Δ_{47}
152 ($5\text{--}12^\circ\text{C}^{28}$), TEX_{86} ($15\text{--}20^\circ\text{C}^8$) and sub-annual mollusk $\delta^{18}\text{O}_\text{c}$ ($15\text{--}22^\circ\text{C}^{10,23}$; **Fig. 3A**). Given the
153 increase in frequency and duration of growth stops in modern mollusks with increasing latitude²⁹,
154 seasonal biases are likely more common in higher latitude environments. These two biases
155 highlight the unique advantage of monthly resolved Δ_{47} records in eliminating the uncertainties of
156 both unresolved seasonal variability and assumptions of constant $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ on SST reconstructions.

157 Our robust data–model agreement down to the monthly scale provides strong evidence for
158 considerably warmer ($\sim 8^\circ\text{C}$) higher latitudes during the Late Cretaceous greenhouse compared to
159 the modern ocean. Previously heavily utilized shallow marine bio-archives from these latitudes are
160 likely much more sensitive to $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ and seasonality bias than low-latitude records. Such biases
161 in previous reconstructions of greenhouse climates likely entail that the notion of greenhouse
162 climates with shallow latitudinal temperature gradients are flawed, and that the Campanian

163 latitudinal temperature gradient resembled that of today. These results concur with the recent trend
164 of converging data and model reconstructions yielding modern-scale Late Cretaceous latitudinal
165 temperature gradients¹³ and challenge the hypothesis of “equable climate” during all greenhouse
166 periods⁹. Future work should see the accuracy of this latitudinal gradient estimate independently
167 verified by applying the clumped isotope seasonality method on bivalve specimens from a range
168 of latitudes in greenhouse climate periods. Moreover, these unique absolute monthly SST
169 reconstructions corroborate growing evidence against the hypothesis of reduced temperature
170 seasonality in greenhouse climates³⁰. Results from *B. suecicus* represent the first Δ_{47} -based SST
171 reconstructions from rudist bivalves, opening up an abundant archive for accurate Mesozoic SST
172 seasonality reconstructions.

173 **Conclusions**

174 Our results merit re-evaluation of classical paleoclimate records that risk bias, such as those
175 based on $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ (assuming constant $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ ^{7,10}), bulk analyses of microfossils with growth
176 seasonality (e.g. mollusks and brachiopods³¹) or microfossils with a fixed growth season (e.g.
177 planktic foraminifera³²) and organic proxies that may be seasonally biased (e.g. TEX_{86} and U_{37}^{K}
178 ^{5,33}). In addition, monthly $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ reconstructions allow, for the first time, the evaluation of local
179 seasonality in the hydrological cycle from shallow marine bio-archives and climate models and
180 reveal that summers were drier than winters in the Campanian Kristianstad Basin. This unique
181 advantage of Δ_{47} -based seasonality reconstructions enables the reconstruction of previously
182 unknown high-resolution variability in salinity, local rainfall and evaporation in past climates.
183 Combined with longer-term, global-scale paleoclimate records, our new method for absolute
184 monthly SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ reconstructions has the potential to resolve critical disagreements
185 between SST proxies, reduce biases of deep-time paleoclimate reconstructions, shed light on new

186 aspects of past climate seasonality and reconcile proxy reconstructions and model simulations of
187 greenhouse climate.

188

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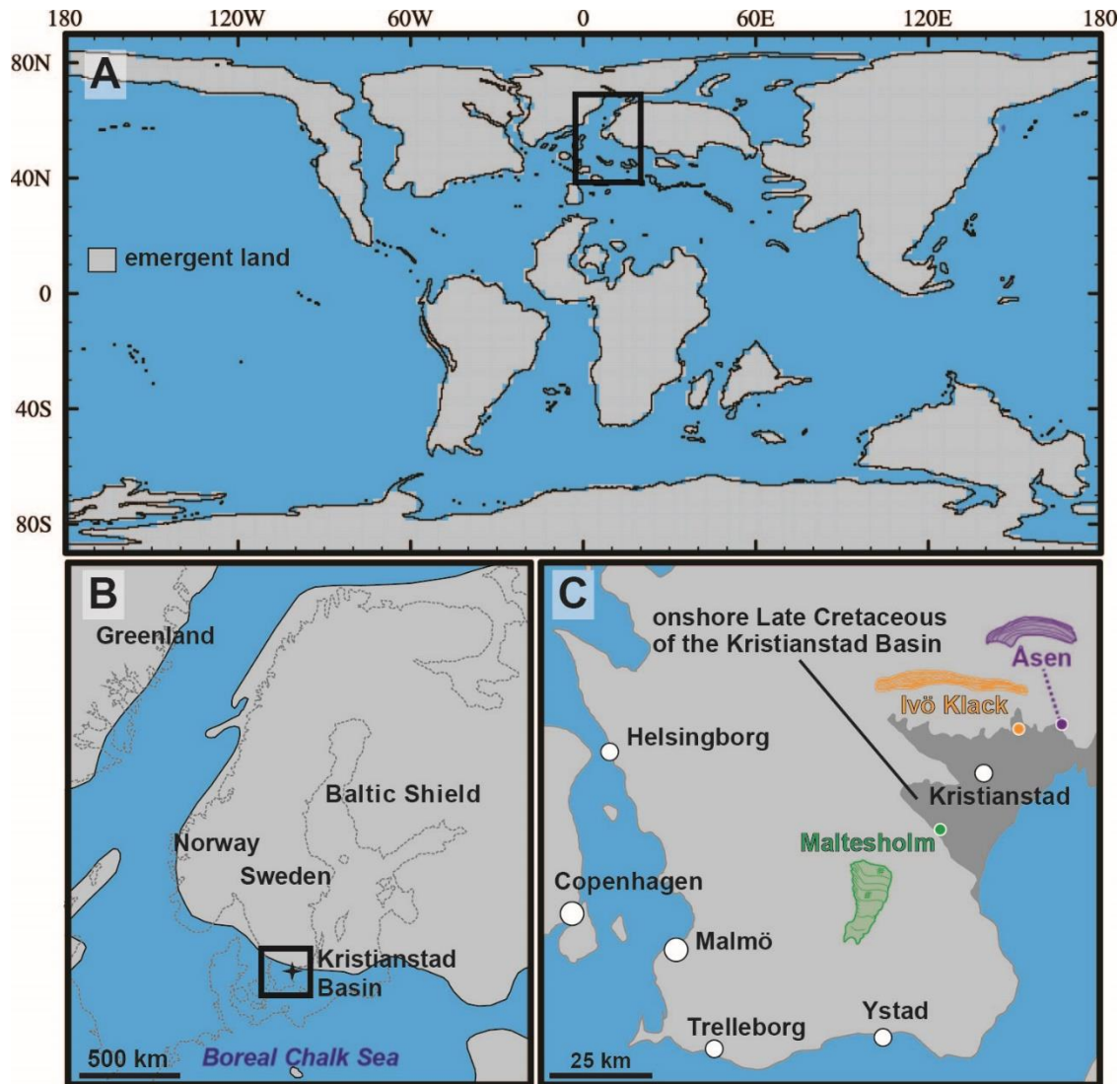
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276 **Table 1: Overview of analytical results ($\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ and Δ_{47}) and reconstructions**

Species (locality)	age [yr]	Measurement results									Monthly reconstructions					
		$\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$			Δ_{47}			$\delta^{18}\text{O}_{sw}$			SST					
		N^b	[‰VPDB]		N	[‰]		[‰VSMOW]			[°C]					
	<i>min.</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>max</i>		<i>min.</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>CM</i> ^c	<i>MA</i> ^d	<i>WM</i> ^e	<i>CM</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>WM</i>			
<i>R. diluvianum</i> (Ivö Klack)	6.2	198	-2.08	-1.16	0.18	121	0.605	0.678	0.795	0.00	0.56	1.08	19.6	24.6	29.2	
			± 0.08	± 0.08	± 0.08		± 0.077	± 0.077	± 0.077	± 0.27	± 0.11	± 0.36	± 1.8	± 0.7	± 2.3	
<i>A. incurva</i> (Åsen)	3.3	150	-2.26	-0.71	0.15	115	0.601	0.706	0.831	-0.89	-0.46	-0.36	12.7	16.4	25.7	
			± 0.08	± 0.08	± 0.08		± 0.077	± 0.077	± 0.077	± 0.18	± 0.09	± 0.87	± 2.3	± 0.7	± 4.2	
<i>B. suecicus</i> (Maltesholm)	3	178	-2.93	-1.99	-0.98	102	0.565	0.688	0.779	-1.81	-1.18	-0.55	13.7	19.3	24.8	
			± 0.08	± 0.08	± 0.08		± 0.077	± 0.077	± 0.077	± 0.78	± 0.17	± 0.45	± 3.9	± 0.9	± 2.6	

277 N = Number of measurements and the age is estimated from the age modelling results (**Supplementary Data 1**), CM =

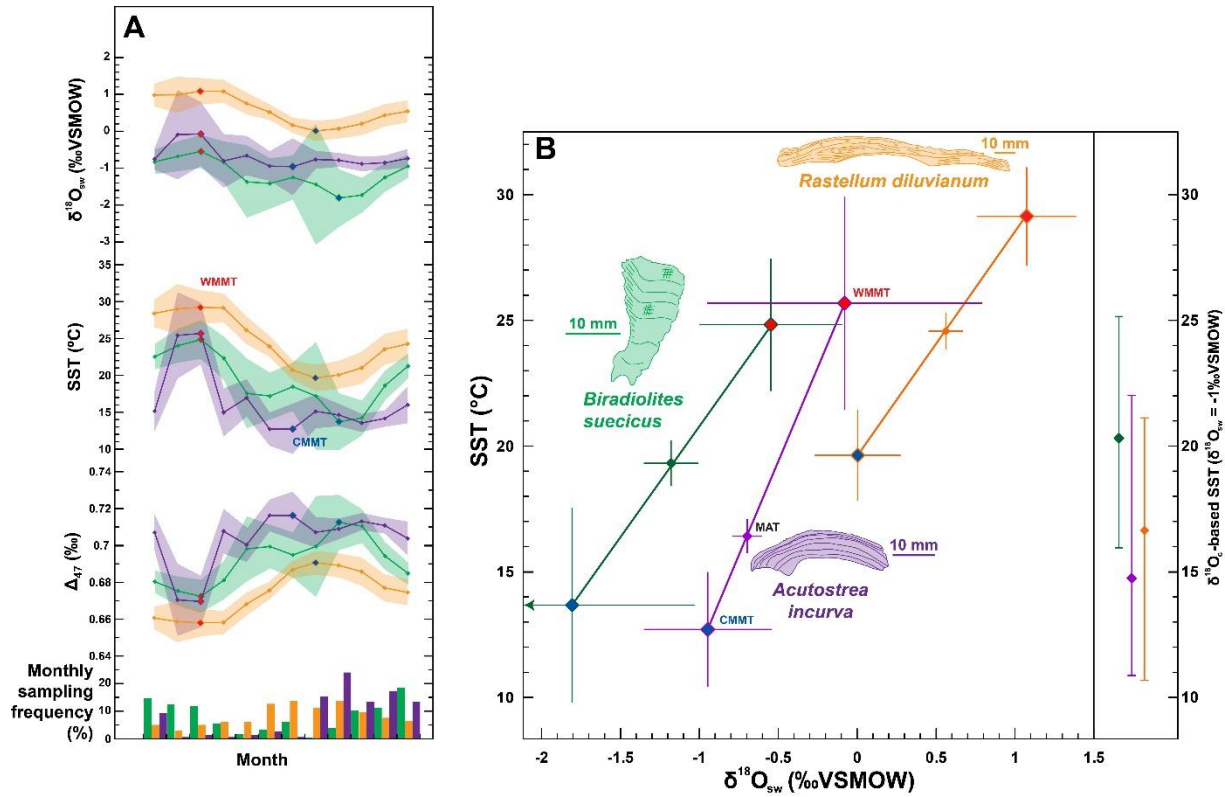
278 Coldest Month, MA = Mean Annual, WM = Warmest Month. All uncertainties are given as 95% confidence levels.



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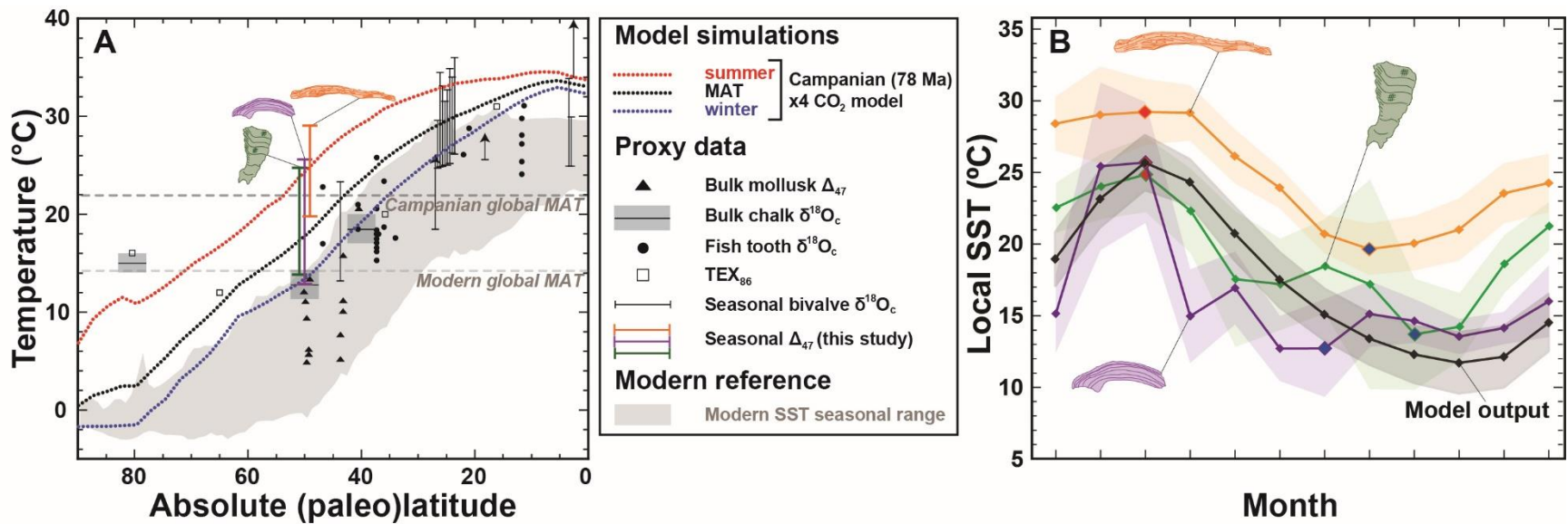
280 **Fig. 1: Campanian (78 Ma) paleogeography and geological setting** A) Global paleogeography
 281 used in climate model¹⁴ B) Northern Europe, black star indicates the Kristianstad Basin C)
 282 Southern Sweden with Kristianstad Basin (submerged in the Campanian). Colored dots indicate
 283 the three sampled localities on the paleoshoreline with schematic representations of the species. In
 284 all maps, blue color indicates sea surface and light grey indicates emergent land. Maps B) and C)
 285 are adapted from³⁴.

286



287

288 **Fig. 2: Paleoseasonality reconstructions** A) From bottom to top: relative monthly sampling
 289 frequencies (bar chart), monthly average Δ_{47} , SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ reconstructions from *R. diluvianum*
 290 (orange), *A. incurva* (purple) and *B. suecicus* (green). Shaded envelopes indicate 95% confidence
 291 levels. Red and blue dots respectively indicate warmest and coldest months. B) SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$
 292 reconstructions of warmest month (red symbols), coldest month (blue symbols) and annual average
 293 (symbols in color of specimen). Thin crosses indicate 95% confidence level uncertainties. Vertical
 294 bars on the right indicate summer, winter and MAT estimates from $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ (assuming constant
 295 $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ of -1‰ VSMOW). Scaled cross-sections through specimens are drawn with horizontal 10
 296 mm scale bars.



297

298 **Fig. 3: Comparison between model and reconstructions.** A) Campanian latitudinal SST gradient with vertical orange, purple and
 299 green bars showing seasonality reconstructions and dashed red, blue and black lines indicating modeled summer (warmest month),
 300 winter (coldest month) and mean annual temperatures respectively. Black symbols and bars show previous SST
 301 reconstructions^{7,8,10,11,12,28,35,36}. The shaded grey envelope indicates modern seasonal SST range²⁵. Horizontal dashed lines mark modern
 302 and Campanian global MAT. B) Monthly SST reconstructions (in orange, purple and green) and local model output (in black) in the
 303 Boreal Chalk Sea. Shaded envelopes show 95% confidence levels and color coding follows Fig. 2.

304 METHODS

305 Geological setting

306 The bivalve specimens used in this study originated from the Ivö Klack (*R. diluvianum*),
307 Åsen (*A. incurva*) and Maltesholm (*B. suecicus*) localities in the Kristianstad Basin in southern
308 Sweden (56°2' N, 14° 9' E; 46±3°N paleolatitude^{24,37}; see **Fig. 1** and **Supplementary Data 7**).
309 The three distinct localities contain a rich (> 200 species), well preserved Campanian rocky shore
310 fauna^{24,34} and were all deposited at the peak of transgression of the latest early Campanian, as
311 supported by the restriction of these deposits to the *Belemnellocamax mammillatus* belemnite
312 biozone and Sr-isotope chemostratigraphy^{23,34,38}. The tectonic quiescence of the region since the
313 Late Cretaceous limited burial and promoted excellent shell preservation²⁴. The Kristianstad Basin
314 represents the highest latitude location for the occurrence of rudist bivalves known to date³⁴.

315

316 Materials

317 Fossil *R. diluvianum* oysters were found *in situ* clinging to the sides of large boulders at a
318 paleodepth of <5 m²⁴, while the *B. suecis* rudist and *A. incurva* oysters were found in a deeper
319 setting (5–15m) among skeletal fragments on the paleo-seafloor³⁹. Trace element (e.g. Sr/Ca and
320 Mn/Ca) patterns and ultrastructure preservation demonstrate excellent preservation of primary
321 calcite^{23,39} (**Supplementary Methods**).

322

323 Sampling

324 Powdered samples (~300 µg) were drilled in growth direction from polished cross sections
325 through the shell's axis of maximum growth using a Dremel[®] 3000 rotary drill (Robert Bosch Ltd.,
326 Uxbridge, UK) equipped with a 300 µm wide tungsten carbide drill bit. High (~100 µm) sampling
327 resolution was achieved by careful abrasive drilling using the side of the drill parallel to the growth

328 lines in the shell. In oyster shells, the well-preserved foliated calcite was targeted, while in the
329 rudist the dense outer calcite was sampled, avoiding the honeycomb structure in the inner part of
330 the outer shell layer which is more susceptible to recrystallization⁴⁰. A total of 145 samples was
331 obtained, from which 338 aliquots of ~100 µg were analyzed (see **Table 1**).

332

333 **Clumped isotope analyses**

334 Clumped isotope (Δ_{47}) analyses were carried out on Thermo Fisher Scientific MAT253 and
335 253 Plus mass spectrometers coupled to a Kiel IV carbonate preparation devices. Calcite samples
336 (individual replicates of ~90 µg for MAT253 Plus and ~150 µg for MAT253) were reacted at 70
337 °C with nominally anhydrous (103%) phosphoric acid. The resulting CO₂ gas was cleaned from
338 water and organic compounds with two cryogenic LN₂ traps and a PoraPak Q trap kept at -40 °C.
339 The purified sample gases were analyzed in micro-volume LIDI mode with 400 s integration time
340 against a clean CO₂ working gas ($\delta^{13}\text{C} = -2.82\text{‰}$; $\delta^{18}\text{O} = -4.67\text{‰}$), corrected for the pressure
341 baseline^{41,42} and converted into the absolute reference frame by creating an empirical transfer
342 function from the daily analyzed ETH calcite standards (ETH-1, -2, -3) and their accepted values⁴³.
343 All isotope data were calculated using the new IUPAC parameters following⁴⁴ and Δ_{47} values
344 were projected to a 25 °C acid reaction temperature with a correction factor of 0.062 ‰^{45,46}. Long-
345 term Δ_{47} reproducibility standard deviation was 0.04‰ based on repeated measurements of ~100
346 µg aliquots of our check standard IAEA C2 (Δ_{47} of 0.719‰; measured over a 20-month period;
347 see **Supplementary Data 8** for details). For the $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ compositions we applied an acid correction
348 factor of 1.00871¹⁷ and reported versus VPDB with a typical reproducibility below 0.08‰ (95%
349 confidence level). Results were combined with $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ data previously measured in the same

350 shells^{23,39} (**Supplementary Data 2**) to improve the confidence of seasonal age models and the
351 temporal resolution of SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ reconstructions.

352

353 **Absolute paleoseasonality reconstructions**

354 We reconstructed absolute SST seasonality by aligning Δ_{47} data relative to the seasonal cycle
355 using an age modelling routine⁴⁷ (**Supplementary Data 1 and 9**). The number of 100 μg Δ_{47}
356 aliquots to combine into monthly SST estimates is optimized by grouping aliquots from the same
357 month in different growth years. Analytical uncertainties are propagated through this optimization
358 procedure using Monte Carlo simulations (details in **Supplementary Methods** and
359 **Supplementary Data 10**). SST's are calculated from Δ_{47} values in monthly time bins (1/12th of
360 the seasonal cycle) using the temperature calibration by ⁴⁸ recalculated in ⁴³, and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{sw}}$ is
361 reconstructed from Δ_{47} -SST and $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{c}}$ following ¹⁷ (**Supplementary Methods** and
362 **Supplementary Data 3**). Seasonality is defined as the difference between the average
363 temperatures in the warmest and coldest month, while mean annual temperature (MAT) is
364 expressed as the average of all monthly temperatures, following USGS definitions⁴⁹. Statistical
365 analyses of seasonality, differences between specimens and differences between data and model
366 are summarized in **Supplementary Data 4**.

367

368 **Climate model**

369 We utilize a fully equilibrated (>11,000 model years) paleoclimate model (HadCM3L)
370 Campanian (78 Ma) simulation. Model boundary conditions (topography, bathymetry, solar
371 luminosity) for the Campanian are the same as in ¹⁴. $p\text{CO}_2$ is set to 1120 ppmV, within the range
372 of $p\text{CO}_2$ reconstructions compiled by ⁵⁰ and a modern astronomical configuration with dynamic

373 vegetation. Local seasonal SSTs are calculated for the paleorotated Kristianstad Basin (42.5-50°N,
374 7.5-15°E; **Supplementary Data 5**). For comparison, modern SST data come from the National
375 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration²⁵ (**Supplementary Data 6**). See **Supplementary**
376 **Methods** for further details.

377

378 **Data availability**

379 Extended methods, data and scripts belonging to this study are available in the open-access
380 database Zenodo (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3865428>).

381

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430

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438

439 **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

440 The initial design of the study was conceived by NJW, NT, CVU and MZ. NJW, IAM, IJK and
441 MZ together were responsible for clumped isotope data acquisition. NT and CVU provided

442 samples used in this study. DJL and AF ran the climate model and provided in-depth input on
443 model-data integration. NJW and PC were responsible for acquiring the funding needed for this
444 study. NJW wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors then contributed to the writing
445 process.

446

447 **COMPETING INTEREST DECLARATION**

448 The authors have no competing interest to declare.

449

450 **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

451 All supplementary material belonging to this manuscript is deposited in the open-source online
452 database Zenodo (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3865428>).