

1 **THE 1953–1965 RISE IN ATMOSPHERIC BOMB  $^{14}\text{C}$  IN CENTRAL NORWAY**

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6 **ABSTRACT.** Sub-annual measurements, eight increments per year, of cellulose in a Scots  
7 pine tree growing in central Norway are presented as a proxy for tropospheric  $^{14}\text{CO}_2$  at  
8 biweekly to monthly resolution. The results are validated by comparison to direct atmospheric  
9 measurements in the years 1959-1965, and a new dataset is obtained for 1953 to 1958. In this  
10 period, our cellulose measurements deviate from the Bomb 13 NH1 calibration curve, which  
11 is derived from single-year measurements of tree rings. This is due to seasonal cycles in  
12 tropospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentrations, caused by the first series of atmospheric nuclear weapons  
13 tests.

14 **INTRODUCTION**

15 Because carbon is fundamental to life,  $^{14}\text{CO}_2$  has been given special attention among the  
16 radioactive tracers. Bomb radiocarbon is used in many applications, including studies of the  
17 carbon cycle and its dynamics, transport and reservoir exchange of  $\text{CO}_2$  between the  
18 atmosphere, the oceans, and the biosphere (e.g. Nydal 1968; Oeschger et al. 1975; Broecker et  
19 al. 1980; Druffel and Suess 1983; Randerson et al. 2002; Hua and Barbetti 2007; Naegler and  
20 Levin 2009; Levin et al. 2010), dating of young material, and estimating regional fossil fuel  
21  $\text{CO}_2$  levels (e.g. Rakowski et al. 2004; Levin et al. 2011). This research relies on precise  
22 observations of atmospheric  $^{14}\text{CO}_2$  that serve as a reference for the input into the carbon  
23 reservoirs.

24 The first regular measurements of the  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentration of tropospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  in the Northern  
25 Hemisphere revealed a clear seasonal cycle, superimposed on the general rise caused by the  
26 atmospheric nuclear weapons tests in the 1950s and 1960s (Nydal and Løvseth 1965; Nydal  
27 1966; Levin et al. 1985; Levin and Kromer 2004). Prior to the Partial Test Ban Treaty in  
28 1963, most bombs were detonated on the land surface or in the troposphere and the fireball  
29 was lifted into the stratosphere by thermal buoyancy, which then acted as a  $^{14}\text{C}$  reservoir  
30 (Feely 1966; Bergkvist and Ferm 2000).  $^{14}\text{CO}_2$  transferred down into the troposphere through  
31 the Northern Hemisphere spring exchange of air masses and consequently, the concentrations  
32 in the troposphere increased in spring and summer and decreased in autumn and winter  
33 (Nydal and Løvseth 1965; Nydal 1966).

34 However, these direct measurements of the  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentration of atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  started on a  
35 regular basis in 1959 in the Northern Hemisphere (Levin et al. 1985; Levin and Kromer 2004)  
36 and in December 1954 in the Southern Hemisphere (Manning et al. 1990), only after the first  
37 series of nuclear weapons tests had already raised tropospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  levels (Rafter and  
38 Fergusson 1957; Broecker and Walton 1959; Tauber 1960). Thus, the early part of the bomb  
39 calibration curve is based largely on single-year tree rings as a proxy for atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$

40 (Hua et al. 2013). But due to the seasonality in tree growth,  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentrations in the cellulose  
41 of a full ring represent growth-weighted averages and will not capture the variability in  
42 atmospheric radiocarbon within a single year, especially when there are large and rapid  
43 changes in  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentrations.

44 The stratosphere-troposphere mixing period coincides roughly with the growth period of trees  
45 at mid-latitude. Sub-annual sampling of single tree rings over the 1963 bomb peak have  
46 shown that the  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentration of wood cellulose closely follows atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$   
47 concentrations (Grootes et al. 1989; Olsson and Possnert 1992; Cain et al. 2018). We present  
48 sub-annual  $^{14}\text{C}$  measurements for the years 1953-1965, eight samples per year, obtained from  
49 a Scots pine tree (*Pinus sylvestris* L.) growing in central Norway. The results show the  
50 increase in bomb  $^{14}\text{C}$  prior to the record of direct atmospheric measurements at biweekly to  
51 monthly resolution.

## 52 MATERIAL AND METHODS

### 53 Sample description

54 A Scots pine tree growing in Trøndelag, central Norway (63°16'27"N, 10°27'23"E, 134 m  
55 a.s.l.) was sampled from two directions with a 10 mm increment corer at breast height at the  
56 end of August 2017. At these latitudes, Scots pine has a clear annual ring structure and dark  
57 latewood that makes the ring boundaries visible. In this part of the stem, the tree has 86  
58 annual rings, which were dated by ring counting. Ring widths for the period 1953 to 1965, all  
59 from the heartwood, range from 1.98 to 6.14 mm. One core was taken from the east side of  
60 the trunk, from which we sampled the rings from 1953 to 1965 and due to a narrow ring in  
61 1957, two cores were taken from the west side, from which we sampled the rings from 1953  
62 to 1956 and 1957 to 1965, respectively. The tree grows approximately 17 km south of the  
63 closest larger city (Trondheim) and is presumably not influenced by local fossil fuel effects.  
64 The surrounding forest was planted in the 1980s, and the canopy was open in the 1950s and  
65 1960s. Mean annual temperature in this area was 2.7 °C between 1953 and 1965 and the mean  
66 annual precipitation sum in the same period was 958 mm (Norwegian Meteorological  
67 Institute, station code: 68860, 127 m a.s.l.).

### 68 Sample preparation and AMS $^{14}\text{C}$ analysis

69 The cores were incrementally sliced with a hand-held scalpel for the years 1953 to 1965,  
70 where the increment width was chosen to achieve eight slices per year resulting in a total of  
71 208 samples. To remove oils, resin, and waxes, each sample was treated separately with  
72 petroleum ether for one hour. Then, the samples were pre-treated for  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis by  
73 extracting cellulose using an adaptation of the BABAB (base-acid-base-acid-bleach) protocol  
74 (Němec et al. 2010). First, the samples were treated with 4 % NaOH, followed by short steps  
75 of 4 % HCl, 4 % NaOH, and then 4 % HCl again at 75 °C. A bleaching step with a mixture of  
76 5 % NaClO<sub>2</sub> and 4 % HCl at 75° C (pH ≤ 4), with an ultrasonic bath at room temperature,  
77 follows at the end (Seiler et al. This issue). The resulting holocellulose was combusted in an  
78 elemental analyser, and the CO<sub>2</sub> was reduced to graphite with H<sub>2</sub> gas over a Fe catalyst in an

79 automated reduction system (Ohneiser 2006). Seiler et al. (This issue) describe the pre-  
80 treatment and graphitisation procedures in more detail.

81 The  $^{14}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$  ratio and the  $^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$  ratio in the graphite were measured in the 1MV AMS  
82 system at the National Laboratory for Age Determination in Trondheim (Nadeau et al. 2015).  
83 Radiocarbon results are reported as  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  ( $\Delta$  of Stuiver and Polach 1977), which is calculated  
84 after correction for accelerator and preparation background, isotopic fractionation using  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$   
85 measurements from AMS, and the radioactive decay of sample and standards. The  
86 measurement uncertainties were calculated according to Nadeau and Grootes (2013) although  
87 the contributions from the fractionation correction and the normalisation to the standards were  
88 omitted as they are very small compared to the other uncertainties. The measurements were  
89 normalised to the Oxalic Acid II primary standards (NIST SRM-4990C, Mann 1983). The  
90 samples were measured in 15 different wheels together with other unknown samples as space  
91 permitted. Each wheel usually contains 10 (minimum eight) primary standards, five secondary  
92 standards, five process and machine blanks and 30 unknown samples. The blank correction  
93 was made assuming a modern contamination scaling inversely with the mass of the sample  
94 combusted (Seiler et al. This issue). The process blank curve was derived from measurements  
95 of coal samples of different weights measured over a few years as described by Seiler et al.  
96 (This issue).

97 Seventy-six targets (76) made from five different secondary standard materials were measured  
98 together with the samples in the various wheels: FIRI samples D, H, and J (Scott 2003), oxalic  
99 acid I (NIST SRM 4990 B), and IAEA-C7 (Le Clercq et al. 1997). These have a  $^{14}\text{C}$   
100 concentration ranging from 15 to 110 pMC. To compensate for the different radiocarbon  
101 concentrations and measurement uncertainties, the difference between measured and  
102 canonical values was normalised to the compounded uncertainty of the measurement and the  
103 canonical values (normalised deviation). The average of these should be centred around zero  
104 and the width of the distribution should be about 1 as it is in unit of  $\sigma$ . The average of the  
105 normalised deviations ( $n = 76$ ) is  $0.075 \pm 0.11 \sigma$  indicating that there is no systematic offset.  
106 The standard deviation of the distribution is  $1.07 \sigma$  indicating that the quoted uncertainties are  
107 representative of the true uncertainties of the measurements.

108 In addition, we measured the  $^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$  ratio of the cellulose in a Thermo Flash 2000 elemental  
109 analyser connected to a Thermo Delta V Advantage isotope-ratio mass spectrometer (IRMS).  
110 The results are reported relative to the VPDB standard. Due to unexpected results, samples  
111 from 1953 (increments 4, 8), 1954 (2), 1955 (1-8), 1956 (7, 8), 1962 (1-8), 1963 (1, 2), 1965  
112 (1) of the west core were reduced and measured again. The weighted averages of these repeat  
113 measurements are presented, where the weights are the inversed square of the measurement  
114 uncertainty.

### 115 **Timing of tree growth**

116 Cumulative wood formation usually follows a sigmoid shape, with slow increment during  
117 spring and early summer, fast increment in midsummer, and decreasing activity towards the  
118 end of the vegetation period (e.g. Ford et al. 1978; Schmitt et al. 2004). In European and  
119 North American conifers of cold environments, the onset of cambial activity can vary from

120 the beginning of May to early June, depending on intra-annual weather-, snow-depth-, and  
121 soil conditions (Vaganov et al. 1999; Deslauriers et al. 2003; Rossi et al. 2007; Hettonen et al.  
122 2009). Despite these variations, maximum growth rate seems to be limited to a short period,  
123 which in most European and North American conifer species is about the time of maximum  
124 day length (Rossi et al. 2006). Cessation of growth in Scots pine in Finland and Sweden  
125 usually takes place in August, depending on intra-annual conditions. In southern and northern  
126 Finland, wood formation ceased in mid-August (Mäkinen et al. 2008), and in Sweden, radial  
127 growth was found to cease in early- to mid-August (Andersson 1953). We combine  
128 measurements of the progress of the radial increment of Scots pine from the middle boreal  
129 and southern boreal zones in Finland over 15 and 18 years, respectively, between 1978 and  
130 2007 from Hettonen et al. (2009). On average, 10% of the growth was completed by Julian  
131 date  $162 \pm 7$ , while 25%, 50%, 75%, and 90% were completed by Julian dates  $173 \pm 6$ ,  $185 \pm$   
132  $5$ ,  $200 \pm 6$ , and  $215 \pm 9$ , respectively. Due to the increase in density associated with latewood  
133 formation in Scots pine, we do not adjust the timing of the sub-annual increments according  
134 to their mass as described by Cain et al. (2018). Assuming an onset of growth in mid-May and  
135 cessation of growth in mid-August, we thus interpolate a quadratic polynomial function from  
136 the data of Hettonen et al. (2009), and assign the eight sub-annual wood increments to  
137 midpoints at 29th May, 16th June, 21st June, 29th June, 7th July, 17th July, 27th July, and 9th  
138 August. Taking into account that there are differences between geographical regions in  
139 addition to the intra-annual variation, we estimate an uncertainty in assigning the sub-annual  
140 samples to a date of approximately two weeks, with a somewhat higher uncertainty for the  
141 first and last increments.

## 142 **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### 143 **Results of measurements and comparison to direct atmospheric $^{14}\text{C}$ measurements**

144 Cellulose extraction yields were on average 68 % of the original sample mass with a range  
145 from 33-83 %, and cellulose carbon contents were on average 44 %, with an a range from 34-  
146 52 %. We find no seasonal cycle in cellulose extraction yields or carbon content for the  
147 measured samples, however, cellulose extraction yields are on average 7 % lower for the east  
148 core than for the west cores, with minimum values on the east core in 1959. The lowered  
149 cellulose yields are not associated with reduced carbon content or very narrow rings. The  
150 variation in extraction yields might thus be a result of variations in wood composition, in  
151 addition to weighing imprecision and/or humidity. This might also explain the variation in  
152 carbon content, although these are smaller than for the cellulose yields.

153 Due to the uncertainty associated with the assignment of a certain growing period to each sub-  
154 annual increment, attempts were made to fit the IRMS  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  results to the record of  
155 atmospheric  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  measurements in the Northern Hemisphere. This record features two main  
156 trends. Firstly, a seasonal cycle occurs with an increase in the  $^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$  ratio during summer  
157 when the selective assimilation of the light isotope during plant photosynthesis exceeds the  
158 remineralisation of older plant material, and a decrease in winter with reduced or halted  
159 photosynthesis and increased fossil fuel combustion (e.g. Mook et al. 1983). Secondly, a long-  
160 term decrease with time occurs with the increase in combustion of fossil fuels (Keeling 1979).

161 We compared our IRMS  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  results to the seasonal cycle in atmospheric  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  measurements  
162 from Point Barrow, Alaska between 1983 and 2008 (Keeling et al. 2010), corrected for the  
163 inter-annual trend associated with fossil fuel combustion by assuming a linear decrease in  
164 monthly averages. However, the IRMS  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of our tree show an irregular, larger  
165 seasonal amplitude than the Point Barrow atmospheric measurements. We interpret this as the  
166  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  signal in the tree being not only dependent on the atmospheric ratio, but also on other  
167 environmental factors, making our  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  IRMS measurements unsuited for adjusting the  
168 timing of the growing season.

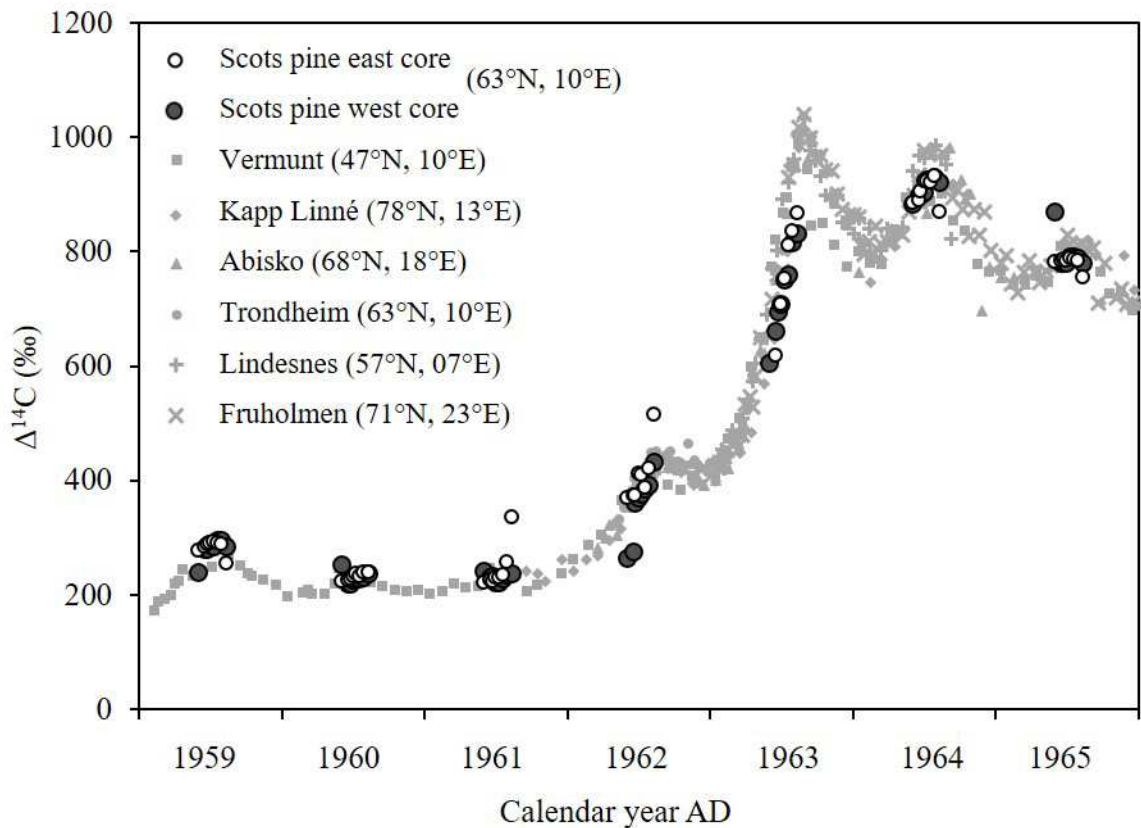
169 We repeated 24 samples of the west core to check reproducibility and some apparently  
170 aberrant results. The average difference between original  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  measurement and repeat  
171 should ideally equate zero. Instead, we get an average offset from zero of 8.4 ‰ with a  
172 standard deviation of 16.1 ‰, much larger than the 3.4 ‰ expected from our measurement  
173 uncertainty. When disregarding deviating measurements between the two cores in the first and  
174 last increments, which might be influenced by wood from the previous or following year, the  
175 average offset is 2.8 ‰ with a standard deviation of 9.8 ‰ over 16 samples with repeats. This  
176 is not significantly different from zero and the standard deviation is closer to the combined  
177 one sigma measurement uncertainty for the differences, which range from 2.3 to 4.8 ‰ for the  
178 16-sample set. Further exclusion of increments from years when the increase in atmospheric  
179  $^{14}\text{C}$  was steep (1962, 63) yields an average offset of 0.8 ‰ and a standard deviation of 5.8 ‰  
180 over 11 samples with repeats. This indicates that poor reproduction of repeats stems mostly  
181 from inhomogeneities in the cellulose, connected to the difficulty of exactly finding the  
182 boundaries for each annual ring in the manual sectioning of the wood core and to rapidly  
183 increasing atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  levels during the growing season.

184 The east and west cores show the same general trend, but with some discrepancies between  
185 the cores, which mainly occur in the first and last increments of a year (Supplementary Figure  
186 S1 and Table S1). Such deviating measurements, visually identified, occur in the west cores in  
187 1958 (increment 8), 1959 (1), 1960 (1), 1962 (1, 2), and in 1965 (1) and in the east core in  
188 1956 (1, 8), 1957 (1), 1958 (7,8), 1959 (8), 1961 (8), 1962 (8), 1964 (8), and 1965 (8). These  
189 could be explained by having some wood of the previous or next year in the sample due to  
190 inaccuracies in the manual sectioning. All the deviating measurements are retained in Figure 1  
191 and 2 and in the supplementary material because, in years with rapidly increasing or  
192 decreasing  $^{14}\text{C}$  content, such deviations could reflect real atmospheric changes. There are also  
193 discrepancies between the east and west cores in 1962 (4, 5), which might be caused by  
194 cellulose  $^{14}\text{C}$  inhomogeneity due to rapidly increasing atmospheric levels (Supplementary  
195 Figure S1).

196 The sub-annual cellulose  $^{14}\text{C}$  measurements of both cores in the period 1959-1965 are  
197 compared to direct atmospheric  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  measurement values from stations in Vermont, Austria  
198 (Levin et al. 1985; Levin and Kromer 2004), Abisko, Sweden (Olsson and Karlén 1965;  
199 Stenberg and Olsson 1967; Olsson and Klasson 1970), Kapp Linné on Spitsbergen (Olsson  
200 and Karlén 1965; Stenberg and Olsson 1967; Olsson and Klasson 1970; Nydal and Løvseth  
201 1983), and in Norway (Nydal and Løvseth 1983) in Figure 1. The highest cellulose  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$   
202 value ( $933.7 \pm 3.3$  ‰) was measured for increment number seven of the east core in 1964,

203 which was assigned to the 27th July midpoint. Tropospheric  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  levels were higher in 1963,  
204 however, the 1963 peak was not reached until late August (Nydal and Løvseth 1983) or in  
205 September (Olsson and Karlén 1965), after the cessation of growth.

206



207

208 **Figure 1:** Sub-annual cellulose  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values in two wood cores from a Scots pine from central  
209 Norway for the years 1959 to 1965, compared to direct measurements of atmospheric  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$   
210 from Vermunt in Austria (Levin et al. 1985; Levin and Kromer 2004), Kapp Linné on  
211 Spitsbergen (Olsson and Karlén 1965; Stenberg and Olsson 1967; Olsson and Klasson 1970;  
212 Nydal and Løvseth 1983), Abisko in northern Sweden (Olsson and Karlén 1965; Stenberg and  
213 Olsson 1967; Olsson and Klasson 1970), Trondheim in central Norway (Nydal and Løvseth  
214 1983), Lindesnes in southern Norway (Nydal and Løvseth 1983), and Fruholmen in northern  
215 Norway (Nydal and Løvseth 1983). Error bars are too small to show in the figure.

216

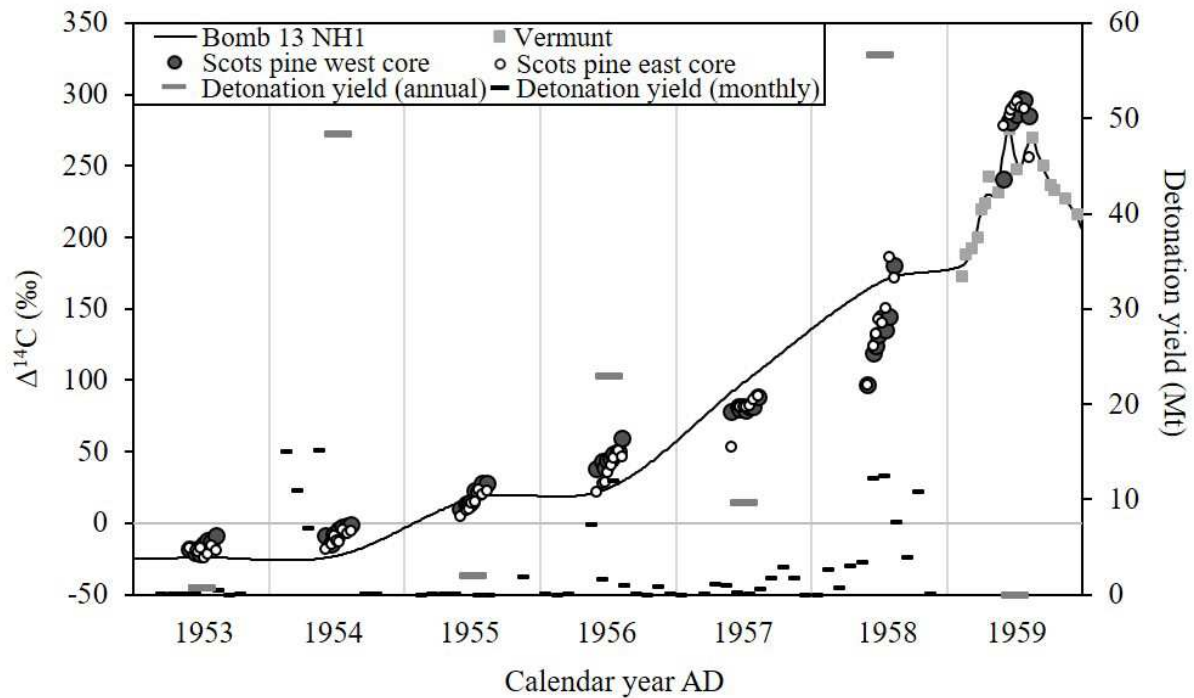
217 Our Scots pine  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values, disregarding the measurements that deviates between the cores,  
218 mimic the direct atmospheric measurements from Vermunt for the years 1959 through 1965,  
219 except for 1963, where they are lower. In 1963, we observe an apparent parallel shift of about  
220 a month in our Scots pine compared to atmospheric measurements (Supplementary Figure  
221 S2). A similar shift was observed by Grootes et al. (1989) and Cain et al. (2018) and was  
222 attributed to a contribution of 13 % to 28 % of soil  $\text{CO}_2$  from decomposing plant material of  
223 previous years and to atmospheric circulation patterns, respectively. When comparing the

224 atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  records of different latitudes in the Northern Hemisphere, we note that  
225 Abisko in northern Sweden and Kapp Linné on Spitsbergen increases later in 1963 than  
226 records from Vermunt and Lindesnes. This could be because of increasing distance from the  
227 area of stratospheric injection into the troposphere although the results from Fruholmen, at a  
228 latitude that of between Kapp Linné and Abisko, do not show this delay. Values for  
229 Trondheim in May, June and July of 1963 are missing and more research is needed to  
230 investigate whether the apparent delay in cellulose  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values compared to the atmosphere is  
231 due to the tree's use of stored photosynthates, growth period changes, soil  $\text{CO}_2$ , or some other  
232 mechanism that results in an apparent reservoir effect.

233

### 234 **Cellulose $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ values between 1953 and 1958**

235 Our measurements in 1954, 1956, 1957, and 1958 (Figure 2) clearly deviate from the Bomb  
236 13 NH1 calibration curve (Hua et al. 2013). The bomb curve interpolates an even increase in  
237  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values between 1956 and 1959 based on full ring values, while our Scots pine  $^{14}\text{C}$   
238 measurements show a clear seasonal signal in this period, analogous to that observed in the  
239 years 1959 to 1965. This is especially pronounced from 1955, following the heavy bomb tests  
240 in the summer of 1954. The growing season in Trondheim starts later and ends earlier than at  
241 mid-latitude. This may explain some of the differences between our measurements and the  
242 calibration curve. This is clearly seen in 1963, when the Trondheim tree does not reach the  
243 atmospheric peak. In 1958, the Trondheim tree suggests an increase of 78.6 ‰ in  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values  
244 based on a weighted average of the two cores from May to August, which is just as steep as  
245 the increase in 1959. This is probably caused by nuclear tests amounting to 6.4 Mt (megaton  
246 TNT equivalent) being detonated in the fall of 1957, together with a larger proportion of  
247 nuclear tests being carried out at high latitudes early in the growing season of 1958 compared  
248 to previous years. The yield of detonations between January and March of 1958 on test sites  
249 in East Kazakhstan (50°N, 78°E) and on Novaya Zemlya (74°N, 56°E) amounted to a total of  
250 3.38 Mt (Bergkvist and Ferm 2000). These explosions may have contributed to raising  
251 tropospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  levels in central Norway in the growing season in the same year. This might  
252 also explain why our cellulose  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  levels are higher than Vermunt atmosphere in 1959. In  
253 1954, when annual detonation yield was over 48 Mt, we only observe a 7.9 ‰ increase in the  
254 cellulose  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values. Although the largest bombs were detonated between January and May  
255 of 1954, these tests were carried out on the Bikini (11°N, 165°E) and Enewetak (11°N,  
256 162°E) atolls in the tropical Pacific Ocean.  $^{14}\text{C}$  created from these explosions does not seem  
257 to have reached central Norway until the atmospheric mixing in the spring of 1955.



258

259 **Figure 2:** Sub-annual cellulose  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values in a Scots pine from central Norway ( $63^\circ\text{N}$ ,  
260  $10^\circ\text{E}$ ) for the years 1953 to 1959, compared to direct measurements of atmospheric  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  from  
261 Vermont ( $47^\circ\text{N}$ ,  $10^\circ\text{E}$ ) in Austria (1959 only; Levin et al. 1985; Levin and Kromer 2004), the  
262 Bomb 13 NH1 calibration curve (Hua et al. 2013), and to monthly and annual detonation  
263 yields (Mt) from aboveground nuclear weapons tests (Bergkvist and Ferm 2000). Error bars  
264 are too small to show in the figure.

265

### 266 **Sub-annual tree-ring measurements as a tracer for atmospheric $^{14}\text{C}$**

267 Because most atmospheric nuclear weapons tests were carried out in the Northern  
268 Hemisphere, large  $^{14}\text{C}$  gradients were observed in the troposphere in the 1960s (Nydal 1966).  
269 Intra- and interhemispheric differences in  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentrations have also been shown to be  
270 modified by atmospheric circulation and ocean uptake in this period (e.g. Randerson et al.  
271 2002; Hua and Barbetti 2007). Therefore, to quantify the immediate atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  response  
272 to nuclear tests carried out in the 1950s and complete the record of atmospheric radiocarbon  
273 for the period 1950-2010 (Hua et al. 2013), our measurements of the  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentrations in the  
274 Trondheim pine should be repeated by sub-annual sampling of tree rings at different latitudes  
275 and longitudes.

276 Recent research has emphasised the significance of rapid excursions in atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$   
277 concentration (Miyake et al. 2012; 2013) and the limitations of decadal averaged calibration  
278 data (Bayliss et al. 2017), which again has prompted researchers around the world to create  
279 and apply more detailed datasets (e.g. Wacker et al. 2014; Sigl et al. 2015; Dee and Pope  
280 2016; Pearson et al. 2018). However, comparisons of the  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentration in the earlywood  
281 contra latewood of certain deciduous tree species have revealed that efforts to produce single-



282 year calibration curves need to take into account the intra-seasonal variability in tree rings and  
283 the differences in the deposition of stored carbon in different species of trees (McDonald et al.  
284 2018). We here confirm the findings of Grootes et al. (1989) that coniferous trees grown in  
285 open conditions can be excellent proxies for atmospheric  $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ , even on a sub-annual basis.  
286 Our results show that in periods of rapid changes in atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentrations,  
287 measuring only the earlywood and latewood is insufficient to utilise the potential for  
288 obtaining the full details on atmospheric change that is available in tree rings.

## 289 **CONCLUSIONS**

290 Sub-annual sampling of Scots pine tree rings in central Norway over the 1959-1965 bomb  
291 peak confirms earlier findings that tree cellulose can trace the changes in atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$   
292 content at a biweekly to monthly resolution. A new dataset for the period 1953 to 1958,  
293 reveals a seasonal signal in atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  before the onset of direct atmospheric  
294 measurements in 1959 and a detailed response of the atmospheric  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentration in central  
295 Norway to the aboveground nuclear weapons tests in this period. Accurate knowledge of the  
296 timing of the tree's radial growth and of its potential use of stored photosynthate or sub-  
297 canopy air is needed to fully utilise the sub-annual information in tree rings.

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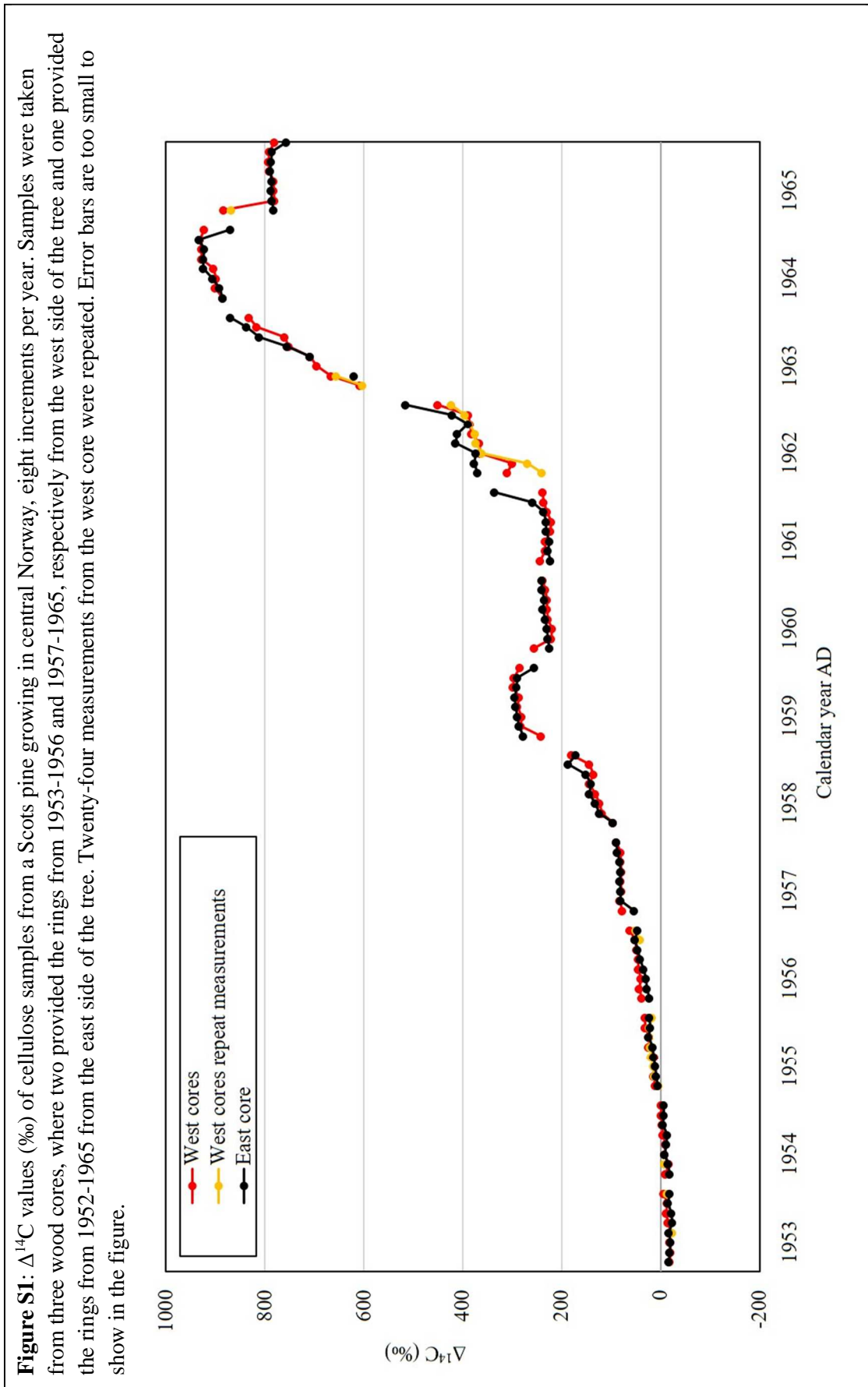
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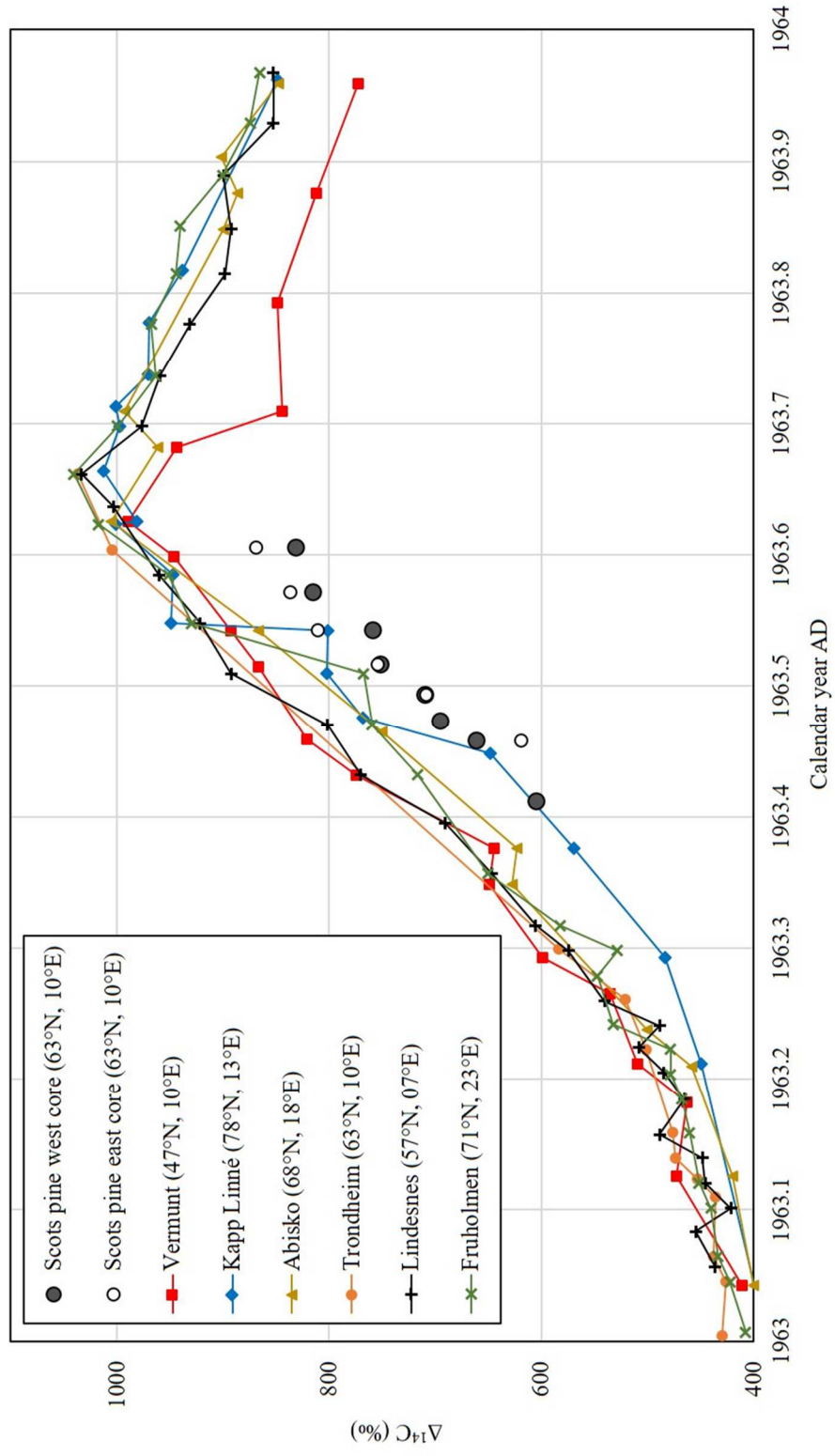
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**Figure S2:** Sub-annual cellulose  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values in two wood cores from a Scots pine from central Norway in 1963, compared to direct measurements of atmospheric  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  from Vermont in Austria, Kapp Linné on Spitsbergen, Abisko in northern Sweden, Trondheim in central Norway, Lindesnes in southern Norway, and Fruholmen, N-Norway.



453 **Table S1:** Radiocarbon measurements of sub-annual increments of Scots pine cored from the  
 454 east and the west side over the years 1953 to 1965. Timing of growth (Year AD), lab ID  
 455 (TRa-#), number of AMS measurements (n),  $\Delta^{14}\text{C}$  values (‰), measurement error ( $\pm$  ‰), and  
 456  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values (‰) from IRMS. Discrepancies between the cores that are mentioned in the text  
 457 and presumed to stem from inaccuracies in the sectioning are marked with an asterisk next to  
 458 the number of AMS measurements.

Cellulose midpoint  Year (AD)	West cores					East core				
	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)
1953.41	12762	1	-17.7	1.1	-25.7	13487	1	-17.1	2.4	-25.2
1953.46	12763	1	-20.4	1.4	-24.5	13488	1	-19.1	3.1	-26.1
1953.47	12764	1	-18.0	1.8	-24.5	13489	1	-19.9	2.8	-25.6
1953.49	12765	2	-21.3	2.8	-24.2	13490	1	-17.1	2.4	-24.8
1953.52	12766	1	-14.7	1.5	-24.3	13491	1	-24.3	2.8	-24.6
1953.54	12767	1	-11.7	1.8	-24.4	13492	1	-21.1	2.7	-24.3
1953.57	12768	1	-12.5	1.3	-24.4	13493	1	-15.1	2.4	-24.1
1953.61	12769	2	-8.8	3.0	-24.3	13494	1	-19.1	2.6	-24.0
1954.41	12770	1	-9.0	1.3	-26.1	13495	1	-18.0	2.7	-24.7
1954.46	12771	2	-14.3	2.6	-26.0	13496	1	-14.3	2.5	-24.6
1954.47	12772	1	-8.1	1.5	-25.9	13497	1	-8.9	2.6	-24.9
1954.49	12773	1	-9.8	1.4	-25.0	13498	1	-12.0	2.4	-24.7
1954.52	12774	1	-4.0	1.6	-24.9	13499	1	-13.1	2.4	-24.3
1954.54	12775	1	-2.3	1.3	-25.6	13500	1	-4.4	2.3	-24.2
1954.57	12776	1	-1.5	1.3	-25.7	13501	1	-6.5	2.2	-24.5
1954.61	12777	1	-1.3	1.5	-25.5	13502	1	-5.6	2.1	-24.8
1955.41	12778	2	9.9	2.7	-26.1	13503	1	4.8	2.3	-25.2
1955.46	12779	2	13.6	2.5	-25.9	13504	1	9.5	2.9	-24.7
1955.47	12780	2	13.4	2.5	-	13505	1	10.4	2.1	-24.8
1955.49	12781	2	15.1	2.5	-	13506	1	14.5	2.2	-24.9
1955.52	12782	2	23.0	2.9	-26.2	13507	1	15.4	2.8	-24.9
1955.54	12783	2	22.5	2.6	-25.4	13508	1	24.2	2.5	-25.0
1955.57	12784	2	28.3	2.3	-25.4	13509	1	20.3	2.2	-24.5
1955.61	12785	2	28.1	3.2	-25.6	13510	1	22.8	2.5	-24.1
1956.41	12786	1	38.3	1.6	-26.2	13511	1*	21.9	2.2	-23.3
1956.46	12787	1	43.5	1.6	-26.0	13512	1	28.6	2.3	-24.2
1956.47	12788	1	39.3	1.7	-25.6	13513	1	28.8	2.3	-25.2
1956.49	12789	1	44.2	1.9	-25.2	13514	1	35.4	2.2	-24.7
1956.52	12790	1	45.0	1.3	-25.1	13515	1	40.9	3.1	-25.1
1956.54	12791	1	48.2	1.3	-24.7	13516	1	46.2	2.9	-24.7
1956.57	12792	2	49.9	3.1	-25.2	13517	1	51.2	2.5	-24.8
1956.61	12793	2	59.9	3.0	-25.5	13518	1*	46.7	2.8	-

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462 *Table S1 continued.*

Cellulose midpoint  Year (AD)	West cores					East core				
	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)
1957.41	13081	1	78.0	2.6	-25.0	13519	1*	53.2	2.3	-24.8
1957.46	13082	1	81.8	2.6	-25.1	13520	1	81.3	2.3	-25.7
1957.47	13083	1	79.9	2.5	-24.8	13521	1	81.4	2.5	-24.9
1957.49	13084	1	81.3	2.6	-24.6	13522	1	82.1	2.4	-24.6
1957.52	13085	1	79.2	2.7	-24.3	13523	1	81.5	2.4	-24.7
1957.54	13086	1	81.4	2.6	-24.3	13524	1	82.3	2.2	-24.1
1957.57	13087	1	81.6	2.7	-24.3	13525	1	87.1	2.2	-24.4
1957.61	13088	1	88.9	2.6	-24.7	13526	1	89.2	2.2	-24.4
1958.41	13089	1	96.6	2.7	-25.5	13527	1	97.0	1.9	-25.2
1958.46	13090	1	119.0	2.7	-25.6	13528	1	124.0	2.2	-25.2
1958.47	13091	1	124.0	2.6	-25.8	13529	1	132.6	2.0	-25.0
1958.49	13092	1	131.9	2.9	-25.2	13530	1	143.4	2.3	-24.7
1958.52	13093	1	144.2	2.7	-25.5	13531	1	140.4	2.3	-24.7
1958.54	13094	1	135.1	2.9	-25.7	13532	1	150.3	2.4	-25.3
1958.57	13095	1	144.9	2.7	-25.7	13533	1*	186.6	1.9	-25.0
1958.61	13096	1*	180.3	2.7	-25.1	13534	1*	171.8	2.4	-25.1
1959.41	13097	1*	241.3	2.8	-25.9	13535	1	278.4	2.8	-24.8
1959.46	13098	1	282.0	2.8	-25.6	13536	1	286.2	2.8	-24.7
1959.47	13099	1	281.4	2.7	-25.4	13537	1	289.9	2.6	-24.5
1959.49	13100	1	290.4	2.8	-25.0	13538	1	292.6	2.8	-24.1
1959.52	13101	1	286.3	2.8	-25.4	13539	1	295.4	2.7	-23.7
1959.54	13102	1	297.4	2.9	-24.2	13540	1	291.4	2.6	-23.6
1959.57	13103	1	296.2	3.2	-24.3	13541	1	290.4	3.0	-23.7
1959.61	13104	1	285.1	4.1	-24.5	13542	1*	256.0	2.6	-24.3
1960.41	13105	1*	254.7	2.3	-25.5	13543	1	224.3	2.8	-25.0
1960.46	13106	1	220.4	2.9	-25.8	13544	1	228.2	2.7	-25.4
1960.47	13107	1	220.3	2.7	-25.8	13545	1	229.4	2.6	-25.0
1960.49	13108	1	228.0	3.5	-25.8	13546	1	233.7	2.6	-24.7
1960.52	13109	1	229.9	3.1	-25.7	13547	1	238.3	2.5	-24.4
1960.54	13110	1	230.0	2.6	-25.1	13548	1	235.0	2.8	-24.1
1960.57	13111	1	232.7	2.7	-24.7	13549	1	239.6	2.7	-24.2
1960.61	13112	1	237.5	2.3	-24.7	13550	1	240.7	2.5	-24.4

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467 *Table S1 continued.*

Cellulose midpoint  Year (AD)	West cores					East core				
	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)
1961.41	13113	1	243.3	3.5	-24.5	13551	1	222.5	2.1	-25.5
1961.46	13114	1	232.8	3.2	-25.0	13552	1	227.3	2.1	-25.9
1961.47	13115	1	233.2	3.7	-25.8	13553	1	224.4	2.4	-25.7
1961.49	13116	1	222.7	2.8	-25.8	13554	1	230.9	2.9	-25.7
1961.52	13117	1	222.0	2.6	-25.9	13555	1	231.0	2.0	-25.1
1961.54	13118	1	229.6	2.2	-25.8	13556	1	235.9	2.2	-25.2
1961.57	13119	1	235.9	2.9	-25.4	13557	1	259.3	2.4	-25.7
1961.61	13120	1	238.2	2.4	-25.3	13558	1*	336.3	2.2	-26.2
1962.41	13121	2*	265.3	4.1	-25.9	13559	1	370.1	2.6	-25.5
1962.46	13122	2*	277.6	4.8	-26.1	13560	1	376.1	2.4	-25.1
1962.47	13123	2	362.7	4.3	-	13561	1	374.3	2.4	-25.0
1962.49	13124	2	370.3	3.7	-	13562	1	414.3	2.7	-25.3
1962.52	13125	2	376.9	4.5	-26.0	13563	1	411.4	2.4	-
1962.54	13126	2	386.4	3.7	-	13564	1	388.1	2.5	-25.1
1962.57	13127	2	392.4	3.5	-25.5	13565	1	422.1	3.0	-25.3
1962.61	13128	2	434.5	4.0	-26.0	13566	1*	516.2	2.9	-
1963.41	13129	2	605.5	3.9	-	-	0	-	-	-
1963.46	13130	2	661.4	4.0	-	13568	1	619.9	5.5	-
1963.47	13131	1	695.4	3.0	-	-	0	-	-	-
1963.49	13132	1	709.7	3.0	-24.6	13570	1	709.0	4.7	-
1963.52	13133	1	751.6	3.0	-	13571	1	754.4	3.3	-24.3
1963.54	13134	1	759.6	3.0	-	13572	1	811.5	3.3	-24.9
1963.57	13135	1	815.8	5.1	-24.3	13573	1	836.8	4.0	-24.6
1963.61	13136	1	831.7	5.1	-24.3	13574	1	869.4	5.1	-25.5
1964.41	13137	1	884.3	3.2	-25.6	13575	1	885.9	4.5	-
1964.46	13138	1	899.7	3.0	-25.4	13576	1	891.7	3.3	-25.5
1964.47	13139	1	898.9	3.6	-	13577	1	906.1	3.2	-25.2
1964.49	13140	1	904.4	5.5	-25.5	13578	1	923.7	4.2	-25.4
1964.52	13141	1	927.8	3.0	-25.6	13579	1	924.8	4.8	-25.2
1964.54	13142	1	927.5	4.4	-25.1	13580	1	922.8	3.3	-24.8
1964.57	13143	1	931.7	2.6	-25.1	13581	1	933.7	3.3	-24.6
1964.61	13144	1	922.6	5.2	-25.0	13582	1*	870.2	3.4	-25.0

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*Table S1 continued.*

Cellulose midpoint  Year (AD)	West cores					East core				
	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)	TRa #	n	$\Delta^{14}\text{C}$ (‰)	$\pm$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)
1965.41	13145	2*	870.3	5.3	-25.4	13583	1	783.3	3.4	-24.7
1965.46	13146	1	781.4	4.5	-25.8	13584	1	785.8	3.2	-25.4
1965.47	13147	1	782.9	4.4	-25.2	13585	1	786.8	3.8	-
1965.49	13148	1	781.9	4.6	-25.2	13586	1	786.5	3.3	-24.6
1965.52	13149	1	791.2	3.2	-25.1	13587	1	788.9	3.9	-
1965.54	13150	1	792.3	3.7	-24.8	13588	1	787.9	3.7	-
1965.57	13151	1	790.6	2.5	-25.3	13589	1	785.3	2.4	-24.8
1965.61	13152	1	781.1	2.5	-25.0	13590	1*	756.1	2.5	-24.6