

Interactive comment on “Variations in mid-latitude North Atlantic surface water properties during the mid-Brunhes: Does Marine Isotope Stage 11 stand out?” by A. H. L. Voelker et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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Review of Voelker et al. “Variations in mid-latitude North Atlantic surface water properties during the mid-Brunhes: Does Marine Isotope Stage 11 stand out.

This paper presents high-resolution data from the North Atlantic Ocean between 300–550 ka. The paper aims to investigate the differences and similarity between Marine oxygen Isotope Stages (MIS) 9, 11 and 13. It concentrates on the surface records of the North Atlantic Ocean. It is a long and detailed paper. The data is excellent and presented clearly and discussed in great detail. The methods are detailed and the authors highly respected. The authors conclude that MIS 9 and 11 are similar. MIS 11 is a prolong interglacial confirming what has been shown by many other records. MIS

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13 is cooler and more variable than either MIS 11 or 9. In addition they make some observations regarding the glacial periods and ice rafting events.

So in many ways the paper is acceptable for publication as there are no fundamental flaws in the work. But here I will be a heretic and ask what is the point of this paper? Because I cannot see what fundamental step forward it makes to our understanding of past interglacials. This paper will cause the Editor a dilemma. As I have described above there is nothing wrong with the science, it is presented clearly, the data is excellent and discussed in great detail. But in many ways this paper is a data dump, making some general points about interglacials MIS 9, 11 and 13, which other papers have already made. Does it change the way we think about the mid-Brunhes? The answer is no. Will this be a highly cited paper? Well I have to argue no, as I can only see people using the data presented in this paper citing it. Does this make the paper invalid? No, but the editor must decide that this data is a valid reason for publishing this paper. It also raises the question of why we should write papers. My own view is that each paper takes us so long to write and publish that it should push the boundaries of our knowledge. In this case one has to wade through 55 pages to find some general comments about the surface waters of the North Atlantic Ocean during the period 300–550 ka. I would argue that this paper does not push our boundary anywhere near further enough to warrant being published. So would recommend rejection due to a lack of scientific significance. Though I would stress the data and the writing are excellent, there are just no new ideas in this manuscript.

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