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The B/Ca proxy for past seawater carbonate chemistry reconstructions-laser ablation based calibrations for *C. mundulus*, *C. wuellerstorfi* and its morphotype *C. cf. wuellerstorfi*

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Abstract

B/Ca ratios in *Cibicides mundulus* and *Cibicides wuellerstorfi* have been shown to correlate with the degree of calcite saturation in seawater ($\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$). In the South Pacific, a region of high importance in the global carbon cycle, these species are not continuously present in down-core records. Small numbers of epibenthic foraminifera in samples present an additional challenge, which can be overcome by using laser ablation-inductively coupled-mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS). We present a laser ablation based core-top calibration for *Cibicides cf. wuellerstorfi*, a *C. wuellerstorfi* morphotype that is abundant in the South Pacific and extend the existing global core top calibration for *C. mundulus* and *C. wuellerstorfi* to this region. B/Ca in *C. cf. wuellerstorfi* are linearly correlated with $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ and possibly display a higher sensitivity to calcite saturation changes than *C. wuellerstorfi*. Trace element profiles through *C. wuellerstorfi* and *C. mundulus* reveal an intra-shell B/Ca variation of $\pm 36\%$ around the mean shell value. Mg/Ca and B/Ca display opposite trends along the shell. Both phenomena likely result from ontogenetic effects. Intra-shell variability equals intra-sample variability, mean sample B/Ca values can thus be reliably calculated from averaged spot results of single specimen. In the global B/Ca– $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ range, we observe an inverse relationship between water mass age and $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$.

1 Introduction

Carbon exchange between the ocean and the atmosphere occurs primarily via CO_2 gas exchange and is mediated by the biological and solubility pumps. The ocean is the largest carbon reservoir in this system and changes in its carbon inventory are thus considered to be potential primary drivers of past glacial to interglacial atmospheric CO_2 fluctuations (Broecker and Peng, 1987). Means to reconstruct oceanic inorganic carbon system parameters for the past are essential in order to better understand the ocean's role in carbon cycling on glacial to interglacial timescales. A close link be-

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into their shells during calcification (Hemming and Hanson, 1992). Based on this, B/Ca ratios as well as the boron isotopic composition in foraminiferal shells have the potential to serve as proxies for past ocean carbonate system parameters (Sanyal et al., 1995; Lemarchand et al., 2000; Henderson, 2002; Pagani et al., 2005; Yu and Elderfield, 2007). Yu and Elderfield (2007) demonstrated a species-specific linear relationship between benthic foraminiferal B/Ca ratios and the degree of calcite saturation ($\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$) in seawater, thus providing a powerful tool for past ocean carbonate ion concentration reconstructions.

1.2 Potential complications

Several studies demonstrated pronounced interspecies variability in B/Ca, hence individual core top calibrations are necessary (Yu and Elderfield, 2007; Brown et al., 2011; Rae et al., 2011). It has moreover recently been recognized that trace element concentrations are offset between different morphotypes of the same species (Rae et al., 2011). Morphotype-specific calibrations are thus essential, when working in areas where *C. wuellerstorfi* and *C. mundulus* sensu stricto are not continuously present.

Raitzsch et al. (2011) documented a heterogeneous distribution of Boron in *C. wuellerstorfi* with increasing B/Ca ratios from the oldest towards the youngest chambers. Seeing that *C. wuellerstorfi* is exposed to relatively constant environmental conditions during its lifetime, intra-shell B/Ca variability is likely indicative of physiological trends (Raitzsch et al., 2011).

In order to minimize the influence of possible ontogenetic effects, we have focused laser ablation spot measurements on the three oldest chambers. In addition, we analysed intra-shell variability in *C. mundulus* in comparison to *C. wuellerstorfi*.

2 Materials and methods

2.1 Samples

This study is based on sediment surface samples, which were recovered with a multicorer from the Pacific Sector of the Southern Ocean between 669 and 3938 m water depth, during marine expeditions ANT XXVI-2 and SO213 (Gersonde, 2011; Tiedemann, 2012) (Fig. 2; Table 1). Core top calibrations are predominantly based on the upper cm of multicorer sediments. Cores where the upper three cm were sampled, stem from close to New Zealand, a region where relatively high sedimentation rates have been documented (~6 cm/1000 yr; Pahnke et al., 2003). To allow comparison of relative offsets between co-occurring *C. wuellerstorfi* and *C. cf. wuellerstorfi*, we analysed down-core material from cores PS75/100-4 and 103-1 in addition (Fig. 5, Table 1).

Foraminifer species *C. wuellerstorfi*, *C. cf. wuellerstorfi* and *C. mundulus* were picked from 19 multicorer samples. Analysed specimens were between 315 and 500 µm in size and did not show signs of alteration or secondary mineral fillings. Both *C. mundulus* and *C. wuellerstorfi* live above the sediment–water interface and we assume a similar living environment for *C. cf. wuellerstorfi*. *C. cf. wuellerstorfi* were identified based on the definition of Hayward et al. (2010), who refer to the genus as *C. dispers*, which is a summary of variable recent planoconvex *Cibicides* morphologies. We use the name *C. cf. wuellerstorfi* in order to specify the morphotype that was chosen for this study, which resembles *C. wuellerstorfi*. Selected specimens have a heavily perforated, flat spiral side that is highly similar to *C. wuellerstorfi*, hence the nomenclature. The convex umbilical side shows no pores under the REM, sutures are slightly depressed and curved back towards the acute periphery (Fig. 3).

2.2 Analytical techniques

B/Ca ratios were analysed at the Geomar Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, using a 193 nm Excimer laser ablation system (Coherent, GeoLasPro) coupled to

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a high resolution-ICP-MS (Nu Instruments, AttoM). For each sample 3–6 shells were used and trace elemental composition was analysed on four spots with 90 μm diameter each, in the three oldest chambers on the umbilical side. The NIST 615 standard (Jochum et al., 2011) was measured before and after sets of five foraminifer shells and used for signal calibration. Given standard deviations depend on the number of shells in each sample and include measurement uncertainty of the standard. In order to exclude contamination effects, foraminifer shells as well as the NIST 615 standard were pre-ablated before analysis begun, and samples with Mn/Ca above $0.2 \text{ mmol mol}^{-1}$ and Al/Ca higher than $0.4 \text{ mmol mol}^{-1}$ were discarded from the dataset.

2.3 Core top calibration with modern hydrography

For the core top calibration, mean sample B/Ca was calculated from averaged spot measurements per shell and compared to modern ocean $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ (Table 1). Modern ocean $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ was calculated with CO_2sys (Pierrot and Wallace, 2006). Required input parameters (TA, DIC, [Si], [P], temperature, salinity and pressure) were taken from ANT XXVI-2 and SO213 cruise data (Gersonde, 2011; Tiedemann, 2012) and nearby GLODAP sites (Key et al., 2004). Following this approach, the carbonate ion concentration in seawater can be reconstructed with:

$$[\text{CO}_3^{2-}] = \Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}] + [\text{CO}_3^{2-}]_{\text{sat}} \quad (1)$$

3 Results

3.1 Relationship between B/Ca and modern oceanographic parameters

Our core top data cover a range of 669 to 3938 m water depth, associated with a temperature and salinity span of $1.4\text{--}6.8^\circ\text{C}$ and $34.29\text{--}34.73 \text{ psu}$, respectively. Plots of foraminiferal B/Ca vs. temperature and salinity might indicate a minor temperature influence in *C. wuellerstorfi* and *C. mundulus*, but show no significant relationship for

−0.9‰ (Key et al., 2004), yet again arguing for a close link between water mass age and $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$.

4.3 Potential of the laser ablation method in the Southern Ocean

The importance of the Southern Ocean with respect to the carbon cycle is evident in the past and today. Currently, the Southern Ocean acts as a sink for CO_2 , which is transported to intermediate and deep waters and consequently alters the inorganic carbon chemistry there (Sabine et al., 2004; Sandrini et al., 2007). In the past, the source-sink behaviour of the Southern Ocean has varied simultaneously with glacial to interglacial climate change (Fischer et al., 2010; Sigman et al., 2010). The majority of paleoceanographic studies linked large parts of the atmospheric CO_2 rise during the last deglaciation to enhanced overturning in the Southern Ocean, which released CO_2 to the atmosphere (Anderson et al., 2009; Meckler et al., 2013). This should have left an imprint on the carbonate ion concentration within the water column of the Southern Ocean, a theory that can be tested with the B/Ca proxy. However carbonate-rich sediments are scarcely abundant in the South Pacific, due to the fact that large areas of the ocean floor lie below the lysocline (4000–4300 m; Milliman et al., 1999). In addition to that, carbonate preservation is generally reduced during Glacials in the Southern Ocean (Diekmann, 2007). Hence, limited sample availability as well as reduced time resolution of sediment records along glacial terminations has hampered down-core studies in the past. In addition to that, low boron concentrations in foraminifers (~ 10 ppm; Rae et al., 2011) make it impossible to measure B/Ca on samples with small numbers of specimen from the same species with the conventional wet-chemical approach, which requires a minimum of 10 individuals per sample. This study as well as work by Raitzsch et al. (2011) demonstrate that the laser ablation technique can be successfully used to overcome this problem. With the new laser ablation core top B/Ca measurements that we present for *C. wuellerstorfi* and *C. mundulus*, we are able to expand the B/Ca– $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ relationship to the Pacific sector of the Southern Ocean.

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5 Conclusions

B/Ca ratios display distinct trends in *C. wuellerstorfi* and *C. cf. wuellerstorfi*, an individual core top calibration for *C. cf. wuellerstorfi* is thus essential. Our data suggest a linear correlation between core top sample B/Ca in *C. cf. wuellerstorfi* and the degree of seawater calcite saturation. The observed relationship is robust for temperature-, $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ - and water depth-ranges of $\sim 1.5\text{--}7^\circ\text{C}$, $-16\text{--}67\ \mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$ and 669–3938 m, respectively. We are thus confident that this calibration can be applied successfully to down-core B/Ca studies in the Pacific sector of the Southern Ocean.

Roughly inverse Mg/Ca and B/Ca trace element profiles in *C. wuellerstorfi* and *C. mundulus* are likely not due to changes in physical and chemical properties in ambient seawater.

Intra-shell variability equals intra-sample variability, hence mean B/Ca can be reliably calculated from individual laser ablation spot measurements.

In the global B/Ca– $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ range, high values appear to be associated with well ventilated water masses, while low values mirror aged, less well ventilated water masses.

The laser ablation technique provides an opportunity to measure trace element compositions on samples with little measurable material that could not be analysed with the conventional wet-chemical approach.

Supplementary material related to this article is available online at:
<http://www.clim-past-discuss.net/9/4425/2013/cpd-9-4425-2013-supplement.pdf>.

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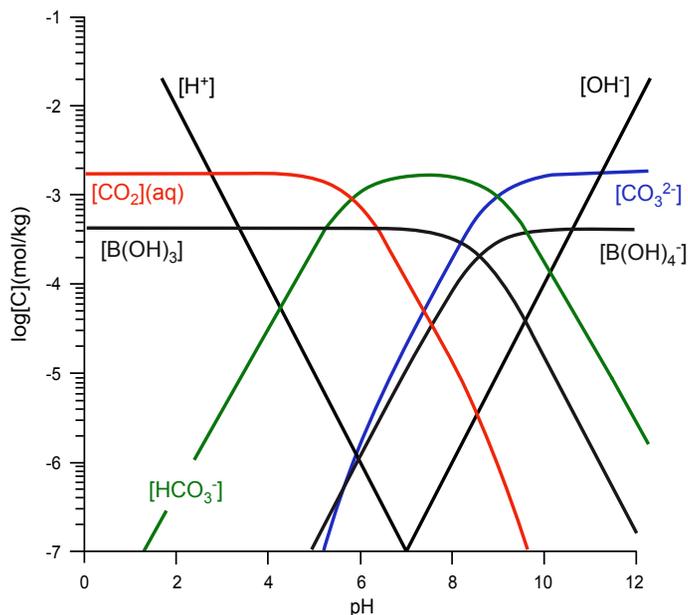


Fig. 1. Concentrations of carbonate, borate and water species in seawater vs. pH at average salinity ($S = 35$ psu) and temperature ($T = 20$ °C). Modified after Emerson and Hedges (2008).

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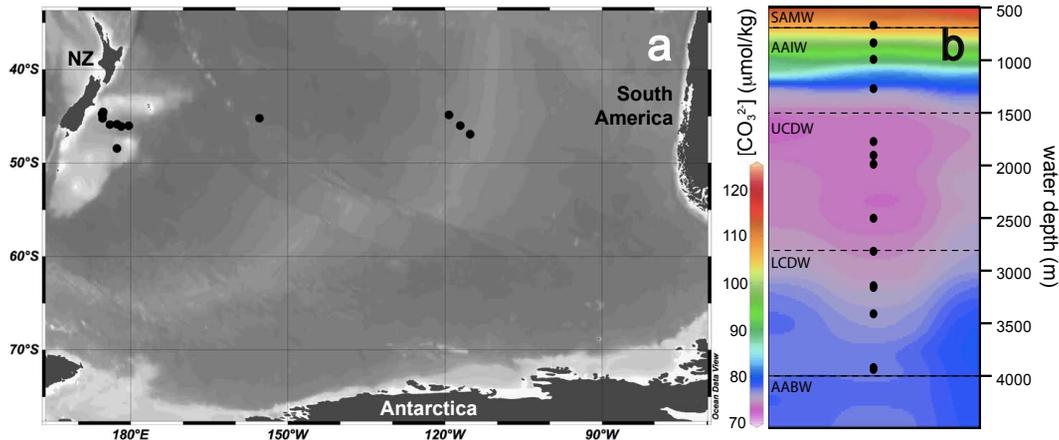


Fig. 2. Location of studied core tops. **(a)** Map view generated with Ocean Data View (Schlitzer, 2012), **(b)** water column profile at $\sim 45^\circ\text{S}$ with $[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ (Key et al., 2004) and important water masses in the study area. Abbreviations as follows: SAMW = Subantarctic Mode Water, AAIW = Antarctic Intermediate Water, U/LCDW = Upper and Lower Circumpolar Deep Water, AABW = Antarctic Bottom Water.

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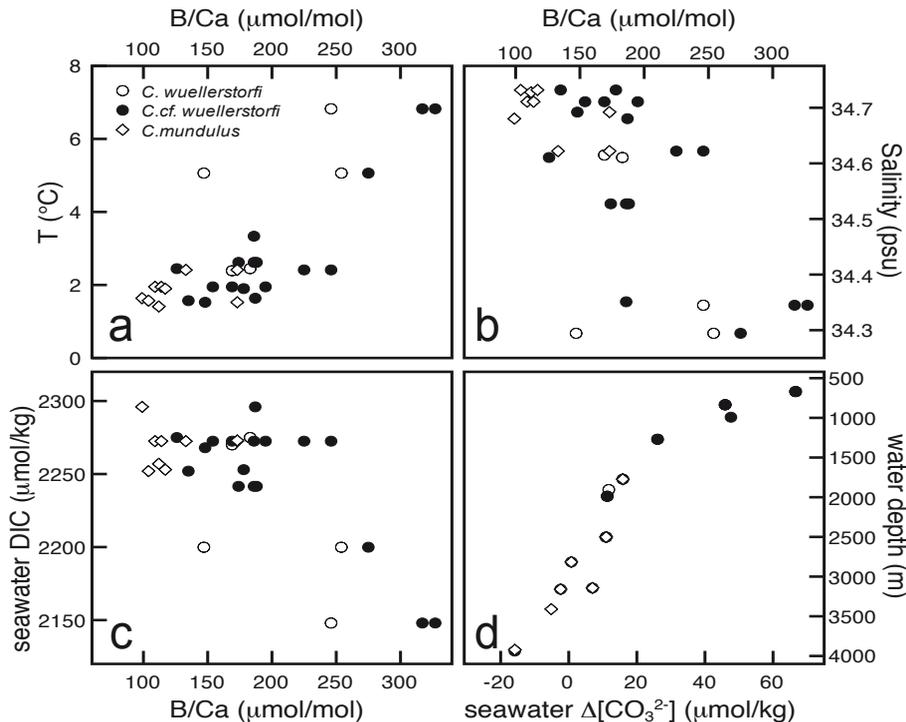


Fig. 4. Foraminiferal B/Ca vs. (a) temperature, (b) salinity, (c) seawater DIC and (d) seawater $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ vs. water depth. Temperature and salinity data from Gersonde (2011) and Tiedemann (2012); DIC and seawater $\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$ data from Key et al. (2004).

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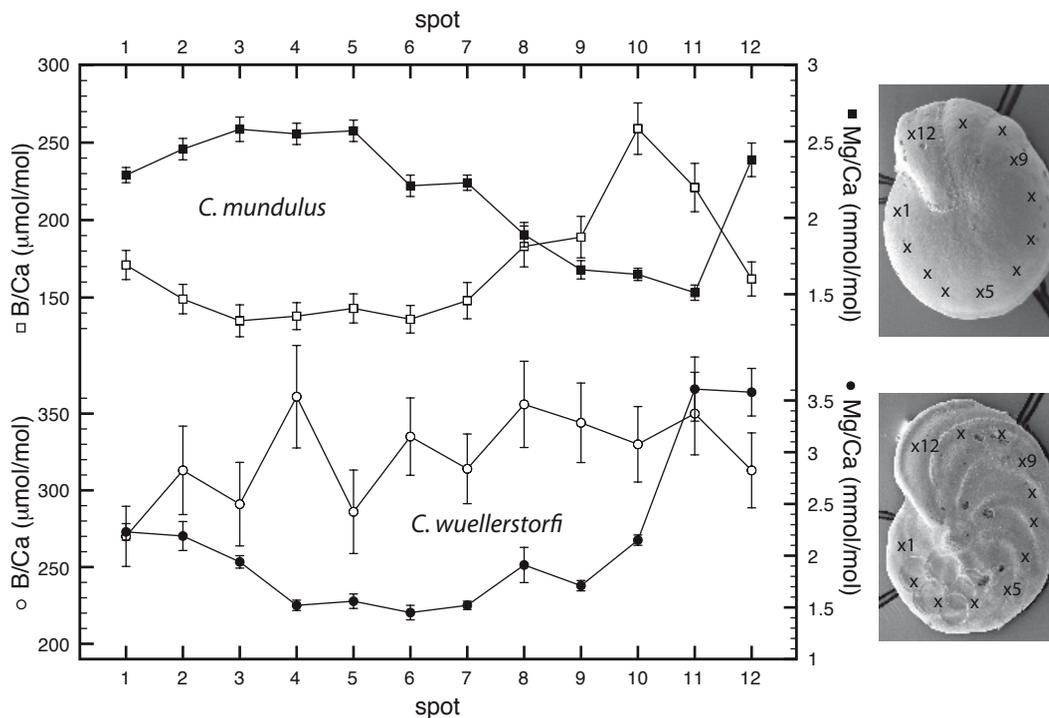


Fig. 6. B/Ca and Mg/Ca element profiles through *C. mundulus* (sample PS75/101-2_0cm, top panel) and *C. wuellerstorfi* (sample PS75/105-1_2cm, bottom panel); crosses indicate placement of laser ablation spots throughout the shells.

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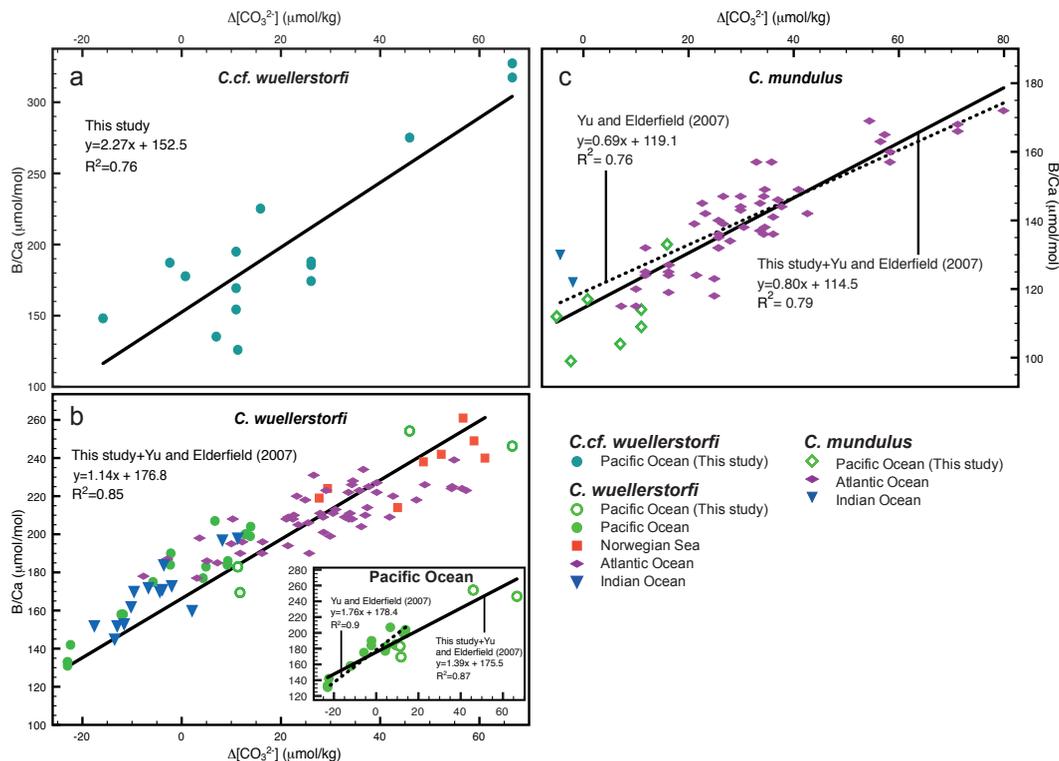


Fig. 7. Empirical relationship between foraminiferal B/Ca and the modern degree of calcite saturation in seawater ($\Delta[\text{CO}_3^{2-}]$) for (a) *C. cf. wuellerstorfi*, (b) *C. wuellerstorfi* and (c) *C. mundulus*. The inset in (b) focuses on Pacific Ocean core tops. Data from Yu and Elderfield (2007) are given to allow comparison to calibrations from this study.