

Multiscale monsoon variability during the last two climatic cycles revealed by spectral signals in Chinese loess and speleothem records

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1 **Abstract**

2 The East Asian Monsoon exhibits a significant variability on timescales ranging from
3 tectonic to centennial as inferred from loess, speleothem and marine records. However,
4 the relative contributions and plausible driving forces of the monsoon variability at
5 different timescales remain controversial. Here, we spectrally explore time series of
6 loess grain size and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records and decompose the two proxies into
7 intrinsic components using Empirical Mode Decomposition method. Spectral results
8 of these two proxies display clear glacial-and-orbital periodicities corresponding to
9 ice-volume and orbital cycles, and evident millennial signals which are in pace with
10 Heinrich rhythm and DO cycles. Five and six intrinsic components are parsed out
11 from loess grain size and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records, respectively, and combined signals
12 are correlated further with possible driving factors including the ice volume,
13 insolation and North Atlantic cooling based on a linear point of view. The relative
14 contributions of components differ significantly between loess grain size and
15 speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records. Coexistence of glacial and orbital components in the loess
16 grain size implies that both ice volume and insolation have distinctive impacts on the
17 winter monsoon variability, in contrast to the predominant precessional impact on the
18 speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ variability. Moreover, the millennial components are evident with
19 variances of 13 % and 17 % in loess grain size and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records,
20 respectively. A comparison of the millennial-scale signals of these two proxies reveals
21 that abrupt changes in the winter and summer monsoons over the last 260 kyr share
22 common features and similar driving forces linked to high-latitude Northern
23 Hemisphere climate.

24

25 **1 Introduction**

26 The East Asian Monsoon (EAM), as a significant part of Asian monsoon circulation,
27 plays an important role in driving the palaeoenvironmental changes in East Asia (An,
28 2000). The EAM fluctuations can be quantified at different time intervals ranging
29 from thousands of years to intraseasonal periodicities, and the primary driving force

1 of the monsoon variability on each timescale is not unique (An et al., 2015).
2 Multiscale monsoon variability has been inferred from numerous proxies generated
3 from deep-sea sediments (e.g., Wang et al., 1999; Wang et al., 2005), eolian deposits
4 (e.g., An, 2000, Sun et al., 2012), and speleothem records (e.g., Wang et al., 2001,
5 2008), which provide valuable insights into the changing processes and potential
6 driving forces of the EAM variability. In particular, Chinese loess has been
7 investigated intensively as a direct and complete preserver of the EAM changes, with
8 great efforts on deciphering on the EAM variability on both orbital and millennial
9 scales (e.g., An et al., 1990; Ding et al., 1994, 2002; Porter and An, 1995; Guo et al.,
10 1996; Chen et al., 1997; Liu and Ding, 1998; Liu et al., 1999; An, 2000; Chen et al.,
11 2006).

12 On the orbital timescale, the EAM variation recorded by Chinese loess-paleosol
13 sequences was characterized by an alternation between the dry-cold winter monsoon
14 and the wet-warm summer monsoon (Liu and Ding, 1998; An, 2000). A strong 100
15 kyr periodicity was detected in the Chinese loess particle size record, implying an
16 important impact of glacial boundary conditions on the EAM evolution (Ding et al.,
17 1995). Obliquity and precession signals were also clear in loess based proxies (Liu et
18 al., 1999; Ding et al., 2002; Sun et al., 2006). Apart from these dominant periodicities,
19 some harmonic periodicities related to orbital parameters were also found in the EAM
20 records, such as the ~75, ~55, and ~30 kyr spectral peaks (Lu et al., 2003; Sun et al.,
21 2006; Yang et al., 2011). In contrast, absolute-dated speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records revealed
22 an evident 23 kyr cycle, implying a dominant role of summer insolation in driving the
23 summer monsoon variability (Wang et al., 2008; Cheng et al., 2009). Different
24 variances of obliquity and precession signals in monsoonal proxies suggest that the
25 responses of the winter and summer monsoons to the orbital forcing were dissimilar
26 (Shi et al., 2011). The various patterns of orbital-scale monsoon fluctuations between
27 the loess proxies and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records likely reflected the sensitivity of
28 various archives and proxies to the EAM variability (Clemens et al., 2010; Cheng et
29 al., 2012; Sun et al., 2015; Cai et al., 2015).

1 At the millennial timescale, the rapid monsoon oscillations inferred from Chinese
2 loess were not only persistent during the last two glacial cycles (Porter and An, 1995;
3 Guo et al., 1996; An and Porter, 1997; Chen et al., 1997; Ding et al., 1999; Sun et al.,
4 2010; Yang and Ding, 2014), but were also evident during early glacial extreme
5 climatic conditions (Lu et al., 1999). The millennial-scale monsoon variability during
6 the last glacial period was strongly coupled to climate changes recorded in Greenland
7 ice-core and North Atlantic sediments, indicating a dynamic connection between the
8 EAM variability and the high-latitude Northern Hemisphere climate (Porter and An,
9 1995; Guo et al., 1996; Chen et al., 1997; Fang et al., 1999). Recently, a combination
10 of proxies from Chinese loess, speleothem, and Greenland ice-core with modeling
11 results indicated that the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation might have
12 played an important role in driving the rapid monsoon changes in East Asia during the
13 last glaciation (Sun et al., 2012).

14

15 Though previous studies have revealed that past EAM variabilities principally
16 comprise a mixture of forcing signals from ice volume, solar radiation, and North
17 Atlantic climate, the relative contributions of glacial, orbital and millennial forcing to
18 the EAM variability remain unclear. In this study, we conducted a comprehensive
19 investigation of multiscale EAM variability over the last 260 kyr, by analyzing mean
20 grain size (MGS) record from a Gulang loess sequence (a proxy indicator of the East
21 Asian winter monsoon intensity) and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record of Hulu and Sanbao
22 caves (a debatable indicator of the summer monsoon intensity). Our objectives are to
23 evaluate the relative contributions of glacial–interglacial to millennial signals
24 registered in these two widely employed monsoon proxies, and to emphasize the
25 glacial-interglacial discrepancy and millennial similarity between loess and
26 speleothem records during the last two glacial cycles.

27

28 **2 Data and methods**

29 The data for the loess sequence was collected at a section in Gulang, Gansu Province,

1 China (37.49°N, 102.88°E, 2400 ma.s.l.), which is situated in the northwestern part of
2 the Chinese Loess Plateau. It is about 10 km to the southwest margin of the Tengger
3 desert (Fig. 1). In this region, the average annual precipitation and temperature over
4 the last 20 years are 350 mm and 5.7 °C, respectively. About 70 m loess was
5 accumulated at Gulang during the last two climate cycles. High sedimentation rate
6 and weak pedogenesis in this region make the Gulang loess sequence very sensitive to
7 orbital and millennial monsoon changes (Sun et al., 2012, 2015). The samples used in
8 this study were collected at 2cm intervals, corresponding to 50–100 yr resolution for
9 the loess-paleosol sequence. The grain size data of the upper 20 m were from a 20-m
10 pit near Gulang (Sun et al., 2012), and the lower part spanning the last two glacial
11 cycles was from another 50-m section. Mean grain size data of the composite 70-m
12 section have been employed for a chronological reconstruction (for a detailed
13 description, see Sun et al., 2015). The Gulang chronology was evaluated by
14 comparison with a 249-kyr grain size stack (CHILOMOS) record in the northern
15 Loess Plateau (Yang and Ding, 2014) (Fig.2); the good matches between these two
16 records imply a high reliability of our Gulang age construction. Unlike previous
17 studies (Sun et al., 2012, 2015), we performed spectral and decomposing analysis on
18 the mean grain size time series in order to decipher multiscale variability and
19 dynamics of the winter monsoon.

20 The absolute-dated speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records from Sanbao/Hulu caves (0-224 kyr,
21 Wang et al., 2008) and the Sanbao cave (224-260 kyr, Cheng et al., 2009) (Fig. 1)
22 were selected to infer summer monsoon variability spanning the last two
23 glacial–interglacial cycles. Compatible with the analysis by Wang et al (2008), we
24 plot the Hulu $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ data 1.6‰ more negative than that from the Sanbao cave (Fig. 2).
25 Interpretation of the Chinese speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records remains debatable as a direct
26 indicator of summer monsoon intensity since various factors like seasonal changes in
27 precipitation amount, moisture sources, and circulation patterns would influence the
28 speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ composition (e.g., Yuan et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2001, 2008; Cheng
29 et al., 2009; Clemens et al., 2010; Dayem et al., 2010; Pausata et al., 2011; Maher and

1 Thompson, 2012; Caley et al., 2014). Nevertheless, high similarity between millennial
2 events in Chinese speleothem and Greenland ice core revealed that speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ is
3 a reliable indicator of seasonal monsoon change (Wang et al., 2001; Clemens et al.,
4 2010). More recently, a model-data comparison suggested that Chinese speleothem
5 $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ can be regarded as a monsoon proxy to reflect the southerly wind intensity rather
6 than the precipitation change (Liu et al, 2014). Thus, spectral and decomposed results
7 of the composite speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record time series were used in this study to
8 address multiscale variability and dynamics of the summer monsoon.

9 To detect the presence of glacial-to-millennial periodicities, we performed spectral
10 analysis on the 260 kyr records of Gulang MGS and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ using both of
11 Multitaper (MTM, implemented in the SSA toolkit, Vautard et al., 1992)
12 (<http://www.atmos.ucla.edu/tcd/ssa/>) and REDFIT (Schulz and Mudelsee, 2002)
13 methods, which are related to Empirical Orthogonal Function and Lomb–Scargle
14 Fourier transform, respectively. MTM method has the advantages of quantified and
15 optimized trade-off between spectral leakage reduction and variance reduction and
16 being suitable for series affected by high-noise levels (Lu et al., 1999), but MTM
17 requires equally-spaced data and therefore an interpolation is needed. The REDFIT
18 program estimates the first-order autoregressive (AR1) parameter from unevenly
19 sampled time series without interpolation, which avoids a too “red” spectrum (Schulz
20 and Statterger, 1997), but uses WOSA methods for spectral leakage reduction and
21 variance reduction, which makes the trade-off not quantifiable. The similar spectral
22 periodicities derived from both REDFIT and MTM methods were regarded as
23 dominant frequencies at glacial-to-millennial bands.

24 The decomposed components of loess MGS and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records were parsed
25 out using the technique of Empirical Mode Decomposition (EMD) (Huang et al.,
26 1998). EMD directly extracts energy which is associated with intrinsic time scales in
27 nonlinear fluctuations, and iteratively decomposes the raw complex signal with
28 several characteristic time scales coexisting into a series of elementary intrinsic model
29 function (IMF) components, avoiding any arbitrariness in the choices of frequency

1 bands in this multiscale study. The EMD method has been widely employed over
2 various palaeoclimate database, such as ice-cover (Gloersen and Huang, 2003), North
3 Atlantic oscillation (Hu and Wu, 2004), solar insolation (Lin and Wang, 2006), and
4 temperature under global warming (Molla et al., 2006). This approach has also been
5 used to decipher the multiscale variations of Indian monsoon (Cai et al., 2015).
6 However, the application of EMD method on the loess record remains poorly
7 investigated with limited understanding of decomposed components at
8 glacial-and-orbital timescales due to the low-resolution proxy variations (Yang et al.,
9 2001, 2008). In this study, we applied EMD on linearly interpolated loess and
10 speleothem data with 100 yr interval to quantify the relative contributions of both
11 orbital and millennial components.

12

13 **3 Multiscale monsoon variability**

14 The highly comparable spectral results between REDFIT and MTM methods show
15 that apparent periods identified in the MGS spectrum are at ~100, ~41, ~23, ~15, ~7,
16 ~5, ~4, and ~3-1 kyr over the 80 % and 90 % confidence levels, respectively, for
17 REDFIT and MTM methods (Fig. 3). It is shown that the potential forcing of the
18 glacial–interglacial and orbital EAM variability is part of the external (e.g., the
19 orbital-induced summer insolation, An, 1991; Wang et al., 2008) and the internal
20 factors (e.g., the changes in the ice volume and CO₂ concentrations, Ding et al., 1995;
21 Lu et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2015). The coexistence of the ~100, ~41, and ~23 kyr
22 periods in the Gulang MGS record confirms the dynamic linkage of the winter
23 monsoon variability to glacial and orbital forcing. Based on the spectral results, many
24 millennial frequencies are detected, which can be mainly divided into two groups of
25 ~7-4 and ~3-1 kyr, which, possibly correspond, respectively, to the Heinrich (~6 kyr)
26 rhythm and the Dansgaard–Oeschger (DO, ~1.5 kyr) cycles recorded in the North
27 Atlantic sediments and Greenland ice core (Bond et al., 1993; Dansgaard et al., 1993;
28 Heinrich, 1988). Taking into account the sampling resolution and surface mixing
29 effect at Gulang, the residual component (< 1 kyr) might contain both centennial and

1 noisy signals, which is excluded for further discussion in this study.

2 Compared to the MGS spectral results, the speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ spectrum shares similar
3 peaks at the precession (~ 23 kyr) and millennial bands (~ 5 , ~ 3 , ~ 2.4 , ~ 2 , ~ 1.5 , ~ 1.3 ,
4 and ~ 1 kyr), but is lack of distinct peaks at ~ 100 kyr and ~ 41 kyr (Fig. 3). Notably,
5 precession peaks at ~ 23 and ~ 19 kyr are more dominant in the speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ than
6 in the loess MGS record. Moreover, the speleothem spectrum shows a peak over the
7 80 % and 90 % confidence levels in REDFIT and MTM spectrum, respectively,
8 centered at ~ 10 kyr frequency, which is, approximately, related to the semi-precession
9 frequency.

10 The different oscillation patterns composing loess MGS and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ time
11 series are separated out using EMD method as presented in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5,
12 respectively. Redfit spectral analysis are further conducted on each IMF with with
13 dominant periods as shown. Five IMFs are generated for the Gulang MGS data on
14 glacial-to-millennial timescale. The variability of Gulang MGS is dominated by the
15 lowest frequency signal with variances of 32 % (IMF5). Two periodicities (41 kyr and
16 23 kyr) in orbital component (IMF4) are linked to obliquity and precession,
17 contributing altogether 40 % to the total variance. The periodicities in IMF3
18 dominated by 15-kyr periodicity likely correspond to the second precessional cycle.
19 The variances of two millennial components (IMF2 and IMF1) are very close with
20 variances of 8 % and 5 %, respectively, in the Gulang MGS record. Similarly, six
21 IMFs are decomposed for the speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record on frequencies lower than 1 kyr,
22 and all the glacial-to-orbital periodicities correspond to Milankovitch parameters.
23 Compared with decomposed results of Gulang MGS record, glacial (IMF6) and
24 obliquity (IMF5) components are not clear in the speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record with
25 variances of 12 %, respectively. The precession component (IMF4), however, is the
26 most dominant signal among the six components, accounting for 59 % of the variance.
27 Notable millennial components (IMF3, 2, and 1) are evident with variances of 8 %,
28 6 % and 3 %, respectively.

29 **4 Dynamics of multiscale EAM variability**

1 **4.1 Glacial and orbital forcing of the EAM variability**

2 We combine IMF3, 4, and 5 of Gulang MGS and IMF 4, 5, and 6 of speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$
3 records as the low-frequency signals (period > 10 kyr) to reveal the glacial-and-orbital
4 scale variations of the winter and summer monsoon, respectively. The
5 glacial-and-orbital variations of the loess and speleothem records represent the total
6 variances of ~87 % and ~83 %, respectively. The low-frequency signals of the loess
7 MGS and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records are compared with changes in the ice volume and
8 solar insolation at 65°N (Berger, 1978) to ascertain plausible impacts of glacial and
9 orbital factors on the EAM variability (Fig. 6).

10 The low-frequency component of the Gulang MGS record is well correlated to global
11 ice volume change inferred from the benthic $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record (Lisiecki and Raymo, 2005)
12 with correlation coefficient (R^2) of 0.56, reinforcing the strong coupling between the
13 winter monsoon variation and ice-volume changes, particularly in terms of
14 glacial-interglacial contrast, (Ding et al., 1995). However, fine MGS signals at the
15 precessional scale seem more distinctive than those in the benthic $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ stack. For
16 example, the remarkable peaks in the MGS around 85, 110, and 170 kyr have no
17 counterpoints in the benthic $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record. By comparing MGS data with the summer
18 insolation record, the overall ~20 kyr periodicity is damped but still visible during
19 both glacial and interglacial periods, except for insolation maxima around 150 and
20 220 kyr (Fig. 6). The coexistence of the glacial and orbital cycles in loess MGS
21 indicates that both the ice volume and solar insolation have affected the winter
22 monsoon variability, and their relative contributions are 32 % and 55 %, respectively,
23 as estimated from variances of the glacial (IMF5) and orbital (IMF4 and 3)
24 components.

25 The speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ record varies quite synchronously with the July insolation,
26 characterized by a dominant precession frequency (Fig. 6). This in-phase change is
27 thought to support a dominant role of summer insolation in the Northern Hemisphere
28 in driving the summer monsoon variability at the precession period (Wang et al.,
29 2008), given that the palaeoclimatic interpretation of the speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ is quite

1 controversial (Wang et al., 2001, 2008; Yuan et al., 2004; Hu et al., 2008; Cheng et al.,
2 2009; Peterse et al., 2011).

3 The different contributions of glacial and orbital variability in the loess MGS and
4 speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records indicate that the driving forces associated with these two
5 proxies are different. The loess grain size is directly related to the northwesterly wind
6 intensity, reflecting that atmospheric surface process is linked to the
7 Siberian-Mongolian High (Porter and An, 1995). The speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ might be
8 influenced by multiple factors such as the isotopic depletion along the vapor transport
9 path (Pausata et al., 2011), changes in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values of meteoric precipitation or the
10 amount of summer monsoon precipitation (Wang et al., 2001, 2008; Cheng et al.,
11 2009), and seasonality in the amount and isotopic composition of rainfall (Clemens et
12 al., 2010; Dayem et al., 2010; Maher and Thompson, 2012). Even at the orbital
13 timescale, proxy-model comparison suggested that the response of the winter and
14 summer monsoon to obliquity and precession forcing are dissimilar (Shi et al., 2011)

15 It is quite clear that the EAM is formed by the thermal gradient between the Asian
16 continent and the Pacific Ocean to the east and southeast (Halley, 1986; Xiao et al.,
17 1995; Lestari and Iwasaki, 2006). In winter, due to a much larger heat capacity of
18 water in the ocean than that on the land surface, a higher barometric pressure forms
19 over the colder Asian continent with a lower pressure over the warmer ocean. This
20 gradient is the driving force for the flow of cold and dry air out of Asia, consequently,
21 the winter monsoon forms (Gao, 1962). On the glacial–interglacial timescale, the
22 buildup of the northern high-latitude ice sheets during the glacial periods strengthens
23 the barometric gradient which results in intense winter monsoons (Ding et al., 1995;
24 Clark et al., 1999). The contemporaneous falling sea level and land-ocean pressure
25 gradient further enhances winter monsoon circulation during glacial times (Xiao et al.,
26 1995). The other factor that influences the land-ocean differential thermal motion is
27 the orbitally induced solar radiation changes. The precession-induced insolation
28 changes can lead to regional land-ocean thermal gradients whilst obliquity-related
29 insolation changes can result in meridional thermal gradients; both of which can

1 substantially alter the evolution of the Siberian and Subtropical Highs and the EAM
2 variations (Shi et al., 2011).

3 **4.2 Impacts of high-latitude cooling on millennial EAM oscillations**

4 The EAM variations are persistently punctuated by apparent millennial-scale
5 monsoon events (Garidel-Thoron et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2001; Kelly et al., 2006).

6 The millennial-scale events of the last glacial cycle were firstly identified in
7 Greenland ice cores (Dansgaard et al., 1993; Meese et al., 1997). Subsequently,
8 well-dated loess grain size and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records in China have been found to
9 have apparent correspondences with rapid climate oscillations in the North Atlantic
10 (Porter and An, 1995; Guo et al., 1996; Chen et al., 1997; Ding et al., 1998; Wang et
11 al., 2001). The most striking evidence is the strong correlation between the loess grain
12 size, speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ and Greenland ice core $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records during the last glaciation
13 (Ding et al., 1998; Wang et al., 2001; Sun et al., 2012). These abrupt changes have
14 been extended into the past glacial–interglacial cycles from loess and speleothem
15 records (Ding et al., 1999; Cheng et al., 2006, 2009; Wang et al., 2008; Yang and
16 Ding, 2014) and from the North Atlantic sediments (McManus et al., 1999; Channell
17 et al., 2012).

18 Unlike previous comparison based on original proxy variability, here we combine the
19 IMF1 and 2 components of the loess MGS and IMF1, 2, and 3 components of
20 speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records as robust reflection of millennial-scale signals of the winter
21 and summer monsoons, with variances of 13 % and 17 %, respectively. The
22 combination of the two millennial signals of the loess MGS and speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$
23 records are compared further with the North Atlantic cooling events over the last two
24 glacial cycles, to reveal the dynamic links of abrupt climate changes in East Asia and
25 the North Atlantic (Fig. 7). The Younger Dryas (YD) and Heinrich Events (H₁-H₆) are
26 well detected in loess and speleothem records around 12, 16, 24, 31, 39, 48, 55, and
27 60 kyr, respectively. Most of the millennial-scale events in the loess MGS and
28 speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ records are well aligned with comparable timing and duration during

1 the last two glacial cycles. However, some MGS valleys such as A17, A23, B17, B18,
2 and B22 are not well matched with the speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ minima, possibly due to
3 uncertainties in the loess chronology. The comparable millennial scale events between
4 grain size of Gulang and CHILOMOS stack (Yang and Ding, 2014) shows the nature
5 of replication of Gulang MGS record within the dating uncertainty, confirming the
6 persistent millennial-scale winter monsoon variability spanning the last two glacial
7 cycles (Fig. 7).

8 The millennial-scale monsoon signals over the last two glacial cycles have been well
9 compared with the cooling events recorded in the North Atlantic sediments,
10 demonstrating a dynamic link between abrupt climate changes in East Asia and the
11 North Atlantic. As identified in Chinese speleothem records, the magnitudes of abrupt
12 climate events are identical between the last and the penultimate climatic cycles
13 (Wang et al., 2008). However, the duration and amplitude of these millennial events
14 seems quite different between the glacials and interglacials. The duration of millennial
15 monsoon events is relatively shorter and the amplitude larger during glacial periods,
16 suggesting a plausible glacial modulation on rapid climate changes (McManus et al.,
17 1999; Wang et al., 2008). The potential driving mechanism for rapid EAM changes
18 has been attributed to changing climate in the high-latitude Northern Hemisphere, e.g.,
19 the reduction of the North Atlantic deep water circulation triggered by fresh water
20 inputs from melting icebergs (Broecker, 1994). The North Atlantic cooling can affect
21 the zonal high pressure systems, including the Azores- Ural-Siberian-Mongolian high
22 (Palmer and Sun, 1985; Rodwell et al., 1999; Yuan et al., 2004), which can further
23 transmit the abrupt cooling effect into East Asia and result in significant EAM
24 changes (Porter and An, 1995; Wang et al., 2001). Apart from the geological evidence,
25 numerical modeling also suggests that the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation
26 might affect abrupt oscillations of the EAM, while the westerly jet is the important
27 conveyor introducing the North Atlantic signal into the EAM region (Miao et al.,
28 2004; Zhang and Delworth, 2005; Jin et al., 2007; Sun et al., 2012).

29

1 **5 Conclusions**

2 The multiscale signals were spectrally detected and naturally decomposed from
3 Chinese loess and speleothem records over the last two climatic cycles, permitting an
4 evaluation of the relative contributions of glacial, orbital and millennial components
5 in the EAM record based on a linear point of view. Spectrum of Gulang MGS and
6 speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ data show similar periodicities at glacial-to-orbital and millennial
7 timescales, corresponding to the rhythms of changing ice-volume, orbitally induced
8 insolation, and North Atlantic cooling (i.e., Heinrich rhythm and Dansgaard–Oeschger
9 cycles), respectively. Amplitude variances of the decomposed components reveal
10 significant glacial and orbital impacts on the loess grain size variation and a dominant
11 precession forcing in the speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ variability. The millennial components are
12 evident in the loess and speleothem proxies with variances of 13 % and 17 %,
13 respectively. Millennial IMFs were combined to recognize the synchronous nature of
14 rapid changes of these two proxies. High similarity of millennial-scale monsoon
15 events both in terms of the rhythms and duration between the loess and speleothem
16 proxies implies that the winter and summer monsoons share common millennial
17 features and similar driving forces.

18

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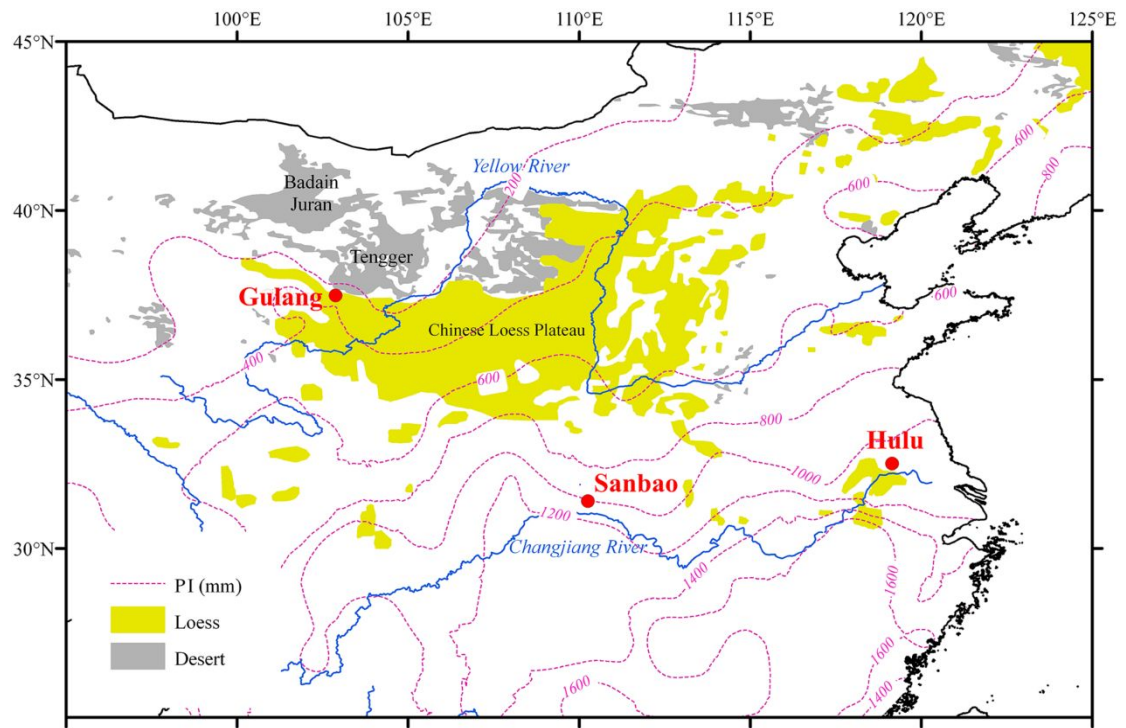
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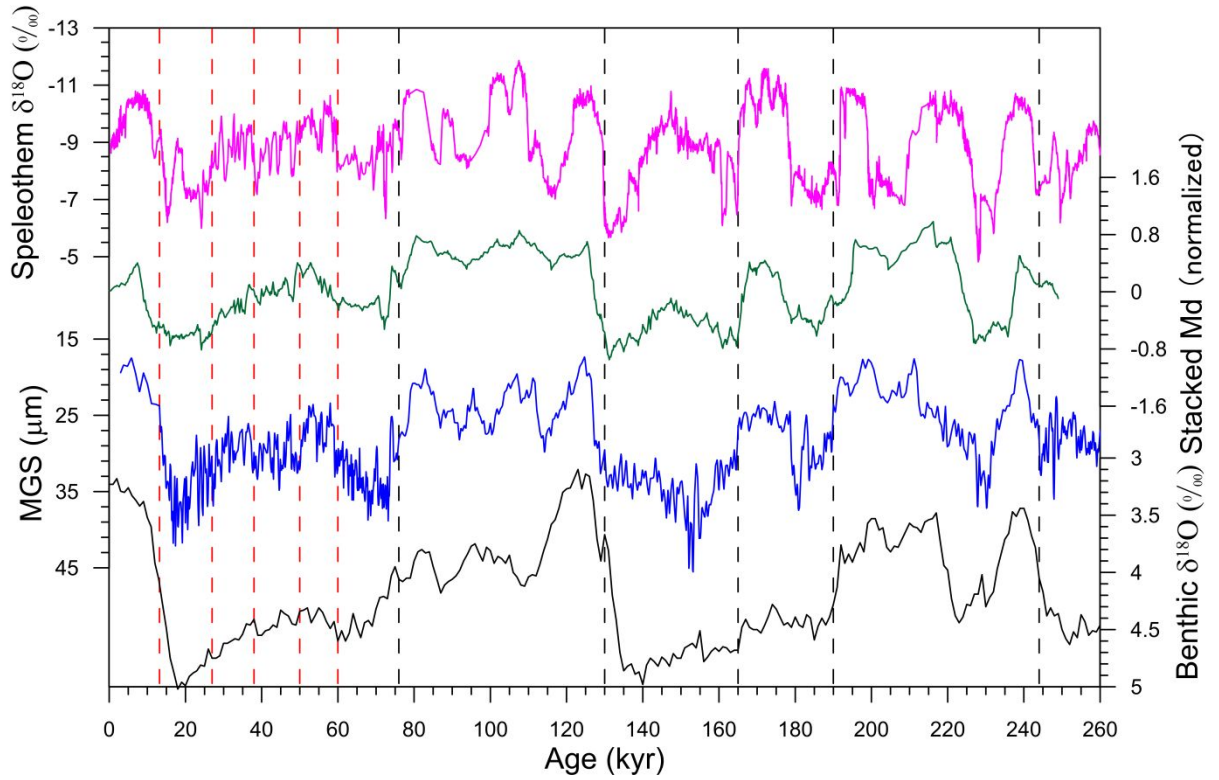


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2 Figure 1. Map showing the loess distribution and locations of Gulang loess section,
 3 Sanbao, and Hulu caves. Dotted lines indicate the precipitation isohyets (PI).

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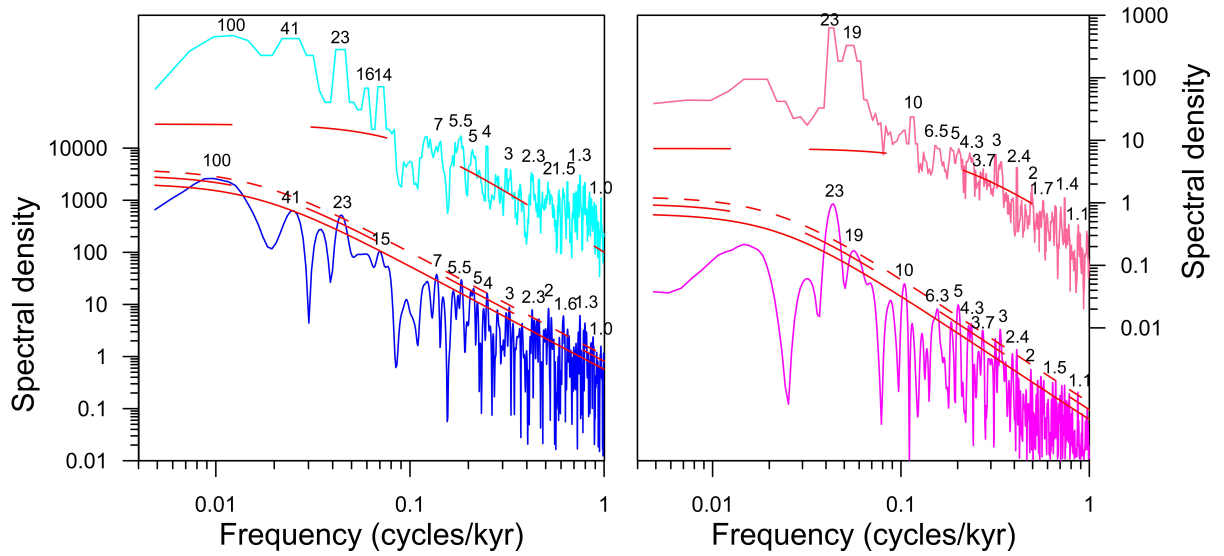


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3 Figure 2. Comparison of Gulang MGS (blue, [Sun et al., 2015](#)) and CHILOMOS stack
4 Median grain size (Md, green, [Yang and Ding, 2014](#)) with the benthic $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ (black,
5 [Lisiecki and Raymo, 2005](#)) and Sanbao/Hulu speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ (magenta, [Wang et al.,](#)
6 [2008; Cheng et al., 2009](#)) records. The red and black dashed lines denote tie points
7 derived from optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating and benthic $\delta^{18}\text{O}$
8 correlation, respectively.

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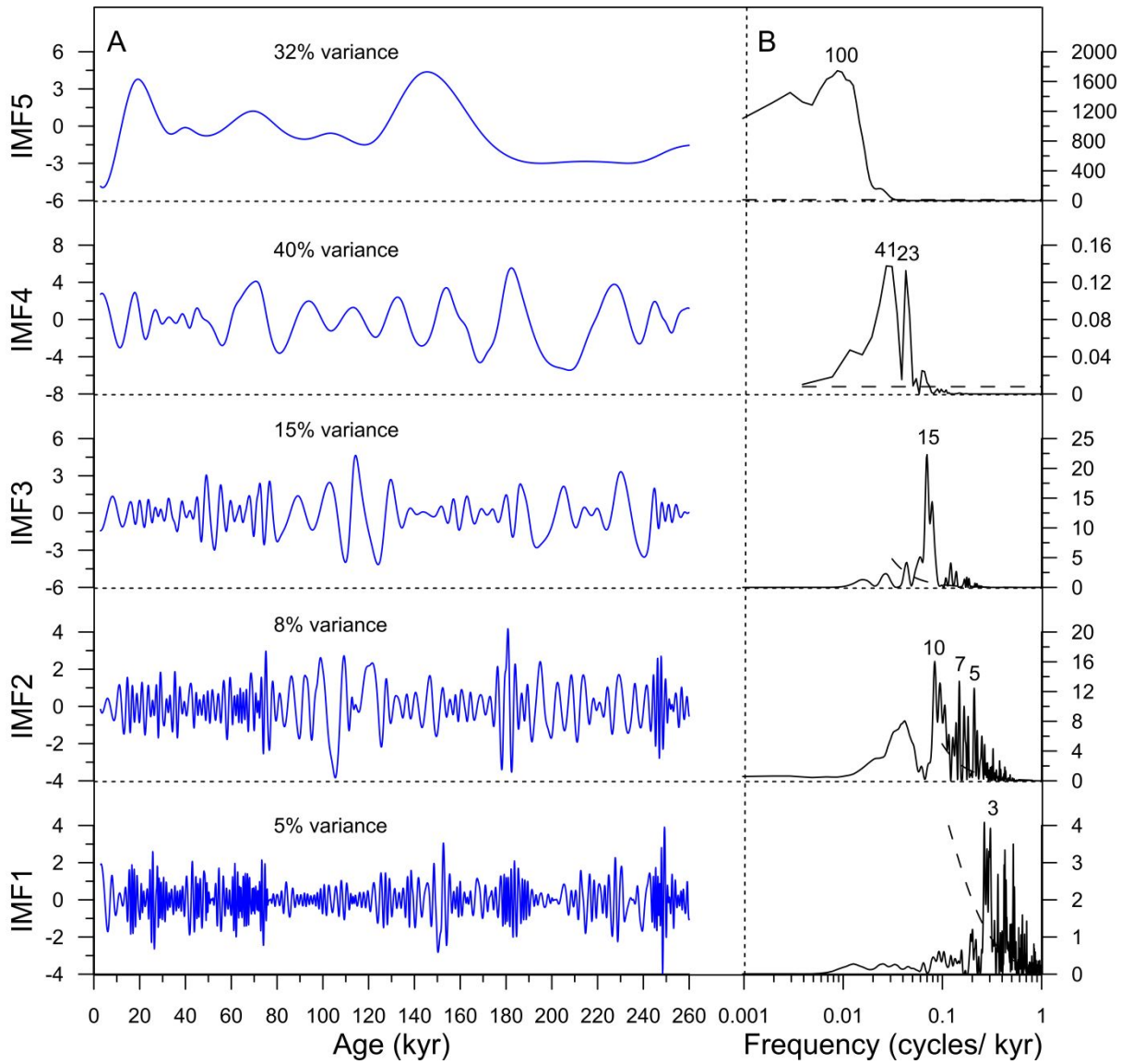
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3 Figure 3. Spectrum results of Gulang MGS (A) and Sanbao/Hulu speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ (B)
4 (Wang et al., 2008; Cheng et al., 2009) records using REDFIT (lower) and MTM
5 (higher) methods. The red solid, long-dotted, and short-dotted lines represent the 80%,
6 90% and 95% confidence levels. Periodicities are shown above the spectral curves.
7 (For REDFIT: nsim = 1000, mctest = T, ofac = 4.0, hifac = 1, rhopre = -99.0, n50 = 1,
8 iwin = 2; for MTM: sampling interval = 0.1, MTM parameters = Default value,
9 computation of tapers window = Default value, Null hypothesis = Red, Signal
10 Assumption = Either, Spectrum = Adaptive, Normalization = N, Reshape Threshold =
11 90%, Noise Estimation = Robust, Misfit Criterion = Log Fit, Median Smoothing
12 window width = 0.1).

13

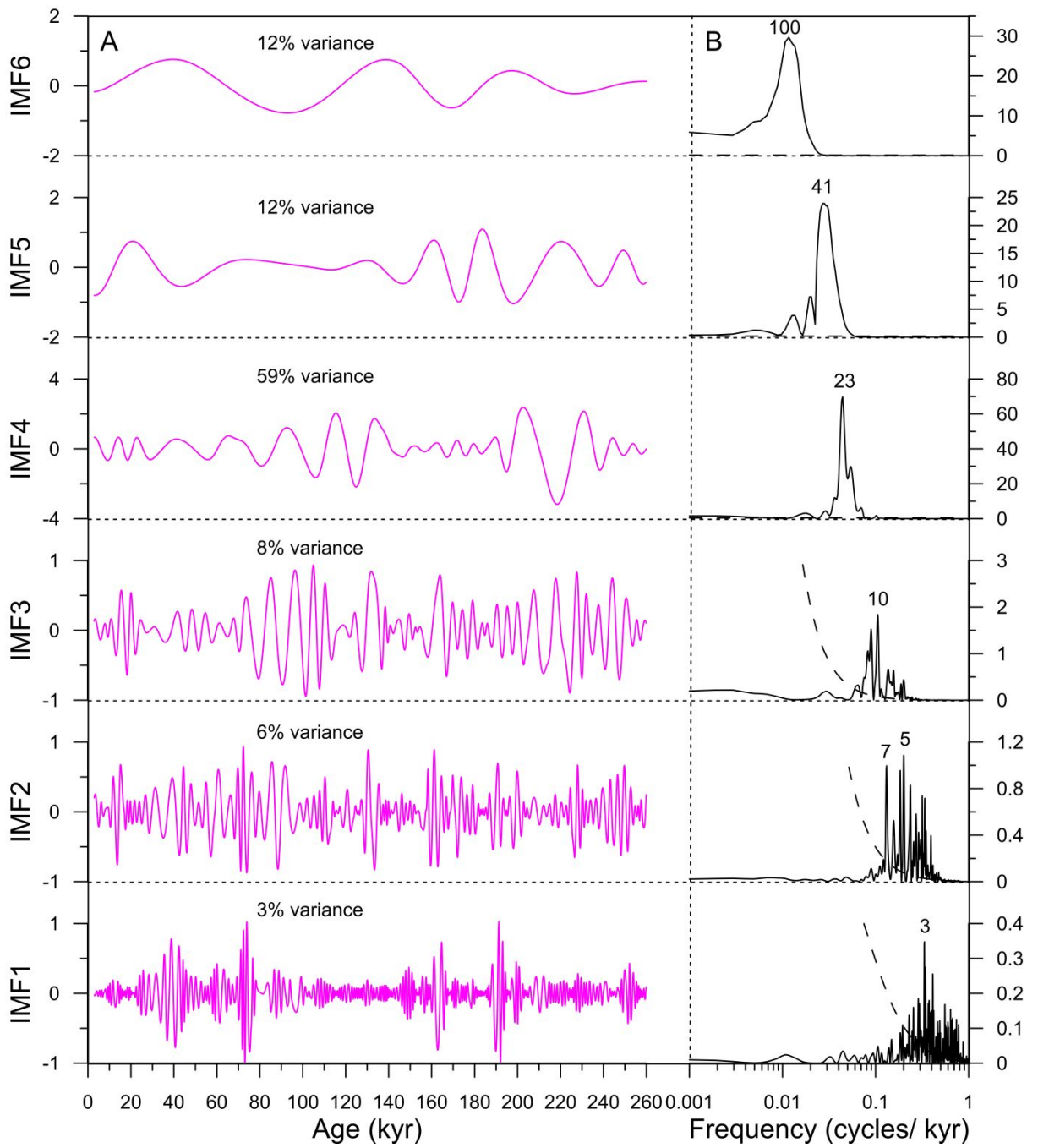


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2 Figure 4. IMFs of Gulang MGS series (A) and corresponding spectrum (B). Black
 3 numbers are dominant periods and dotted lines represent the 90% confidence level.

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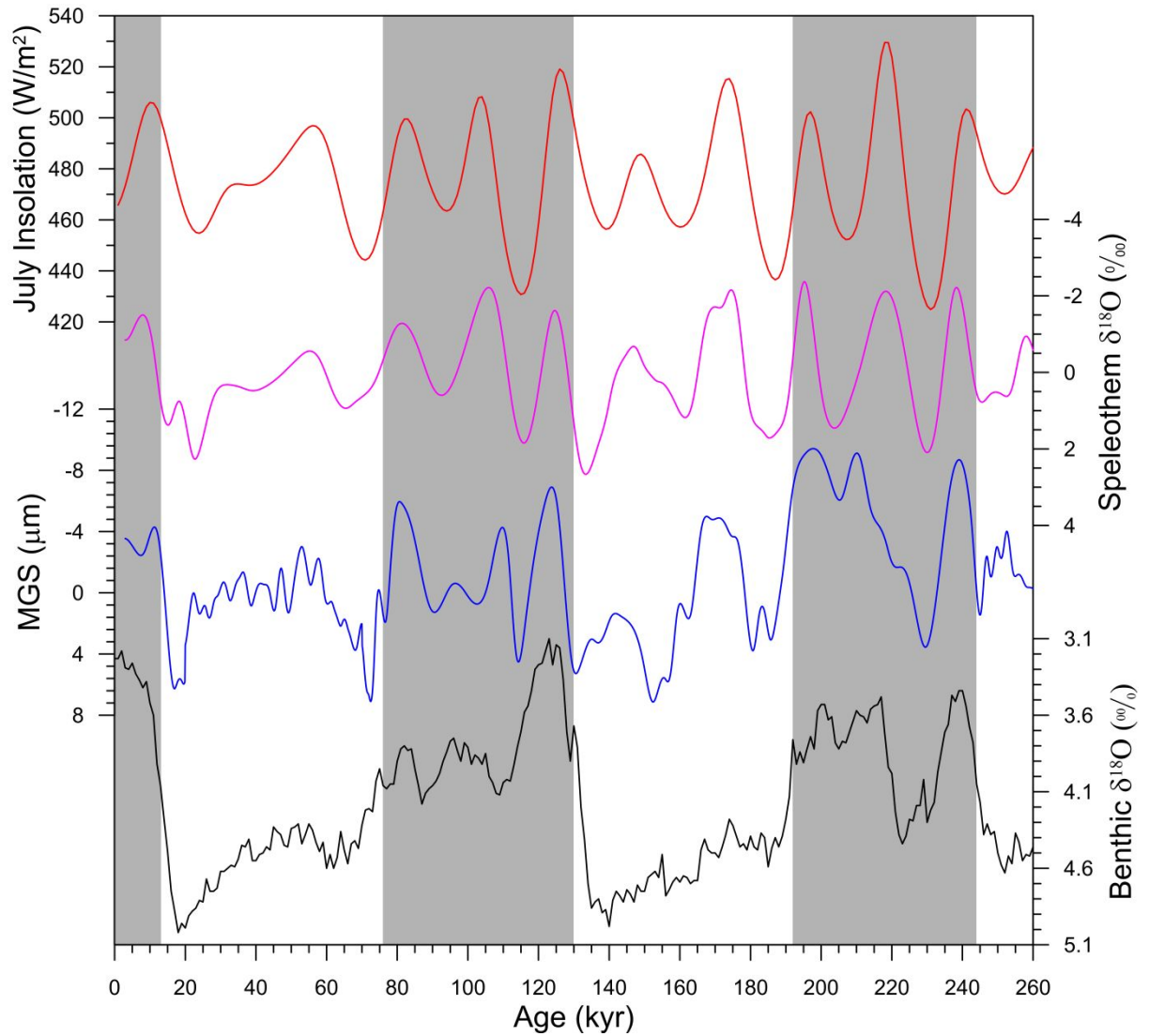
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3 Figure 5. IMFs of speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ series (A) and corresponding spectrum (B). Black

4 numbers are dominant periods and dotted lines represent the 90% confidence level.

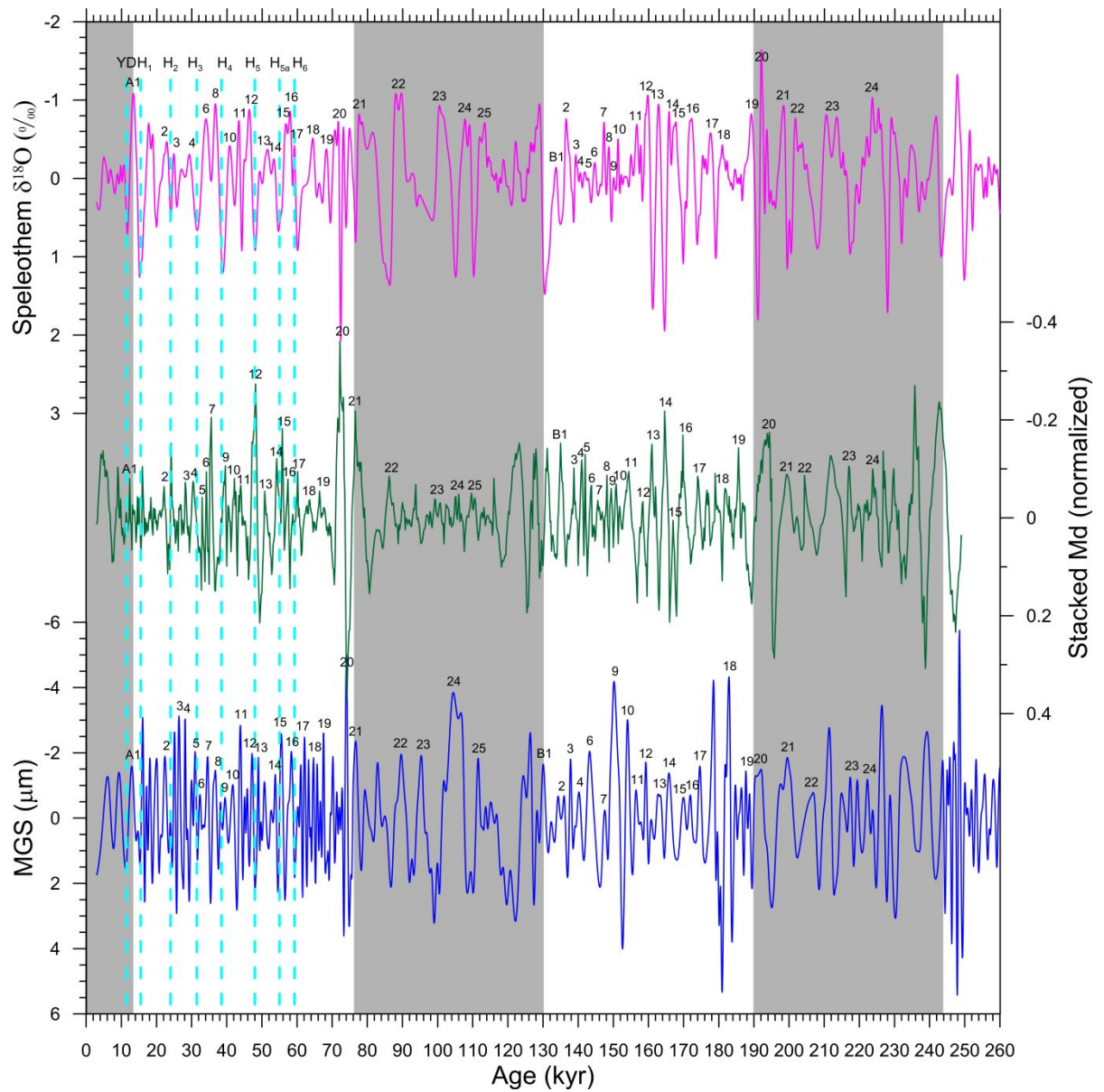


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2 Figure 6. Comparison of the glacial-and-orbital scale components of Gulang MGS
 3 (blue) and Sanbao/Hulu speleothem $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ (magenta, Wang et al., 2008; Cheng et al.,
 4 2009) records with summer insolation at 65°N (red, Berger, 1978) and benthic $\delta^{18}\text{O}$
 5 record (black, Lisiecki and Raymo, 2005). The vertical gray bars represent the
 6 interglacial periods.

7

1



2

3 Figure 7. Comparison of millennial-scale variations among Gulang MGS (blue),
4 CHILOMOS stack Md (green, [Yang and Ding, 2014](#)) and Sanbao/Hulu speleothem
5 $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ (magenta, [Wang et al., 2008](#); [Cheng et al., 2009](#)) records over the last two
6 glacial-interglacial cycles. Cyan dotted lines are the YD and the Heinrich events
7 identified among the three records and gray bars indicate interglacial periods. The
8 numbers represent well-correlated Chinese interstadials identified among the three
9 records.