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**The development of rock magnetic proxies for paleoclimate  
reconstruction.**

A thesis  
submitted to the faculty of the graduate school of the University of Minnesota by

Christoph Eberhard Geiss

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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March 1999

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## **Abstract**

Many geologic and limnologic processes that can affect the magnetic properties of lake sediments are influenced by shifts in climatic conditions. They cause changes in concentration, particle-size distribution and composition of magnetic minerals. These changes have to be measured indirectly by a combination of rock magnetic techniques because most magnetic grains are too small to be observed directly. A study of three glacial lakes in Illinois and Minnesota shows that sediment-magnetic parameters agree well with the paleoclimatic information obtained through pollen, diatom and ostracod studies and allows for the construction of a conceptual model that links paleoclimatic change to sediment-magnetic variations:

In the early postglacial stage of lake development the magnetic properties of the sediment reflect the magnetic composition of the source material. Subsequently, a forested watershed and humid interglacial conditions result in lower erosion rates and high rates of organic productivity. The influence of terrigenous material decreases and the sediment magnetic properties are characterized by a fine-grained component of authigenic SD and SP magnetite. Erosion of magnetically enhanced soil material can lead to lake sediments enriched in fine and ultrafine-grained maghemite. Low lake levels and fluctuating water tables during dry periods result in the reductive dissolution of ferrimagnetic minerals that can affect older sediments to considerable depth (several meters). Subaerial weathering can cause the formation of secondary antiferromagnetic hematite. Loess deposition during dry periods can have a similar effect on the sediment magnetic properties. Holocene sediments are often characterized by high sedimentation rates and high concentrations of magnetic minerals. Because of their young age, these sediments are little affected by reductive dissolution and tend to be finer grained than older deposits.

The sequence of climatic change in southern Illinois as reconstructed from these sites agrees well with previous studies. Correlation with a speleothem record from Crevice Cave, Missouri, however, offers two alternative age models for the probable timing and duration of interglacial conditions in the Midwestern United States.

## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to -

Subir Banerjee for being a great advisor, the Department of Geology and Geophysics and the Research Training Group for their hospitality and support, and my thesis committee for encouragement, research support and, finally, reading through 265 pages of my thesis: Emi Ito, Bruce Moskowitz, Rama Murthy, Ed Nater, David Williamson.

Jim Marvin, Peat Solheid and Chris Hunt for fixing all the things I broke, discussing experimental setups, interpreting “weird” results and their daily help in the lab. Mike “Moron” Jackson for carefully rejecting my manuscript chapter by chapter. David Williamson and Taras Pokhil for being great office mates and friends.

Brandon Curry, Kerry Kelts, and Herb-Wright-Jr. for many fruitful discussions and advice.

Rebecca Teed, Emi Ito, Brandon Curry and Sanda Balecsu for sharing their data and interpretations with me.

Jeff Dorale, Doro Gaus, Mark Shapley, Lensyl Urbano, Bill Zanner for going coring, hauling equipment, sharing lunch....

In no particular order: Doug, Kirsten, Till, Kristen, Rachel I, Rachel II (I won't say which is which), Nick, Dyanna, Les, Ben, Carrie, Lensyl, David, Mark, Jeff, Pam, Paul, Bill, Stefan, Fritz, Britt, Scott, Andy and Brian for being great friends, throwing even greater parties, helping me out whenever necessary, beating me up at hockey and soccer and much more.

Lynn “when are you finally going to finish” Hettinger for putting up with me all the time.

My parents and family in Germany, who put me through college, got me interested in Earth sciences, supported me all the way through, who always want to know what I am doing “over there” and pay a good part of the phone bills.

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