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**Low sedimentary accumulation of lead caused by weak downward export of organic matter  
in Hudson Bay, northern Canada**

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**Abstract**

Atmospheric input of anthropogenic lead increased globally over the last centuries. The present study shows that the concentrations of lead in sediment cores from low-productivity Hudson Bay, northern Canada, remained relatively constant over the last centuries. The lack of imprint of the increased anthropogenic lead input in this marine environment is not consistent with the increased lead concentrations in nearby lakes over the same period. In addition, the observed trend in lead isotopic composition in our cores suggests an apparent progressive overprint of anthropogenic lead during the 1900's. In other words, isotopes clearly registered the increasingly anthropogenic nature of lead in the sedimentary record, but total lead concentrations remained constant, indicating that some process limited the export of lead to the sediment. These observations point to a long-term limitation of the downward export of particles in Hudson Bay. Given that the source of lead was the same for both Hudson Bay and neighboring high-productivity lakes, we hypothesize that the very low primary productivity of Hudson Bay waters was responsible for the low vertical export of lead to marine sediments. We further propose that primary productivity is the most important factor that generally drives the vertical export of particulate matter, and thus hydrophobic contaminants, in near-oligotrophic marine environments.

## 1. Introduction

Atmospheric transportation of anthropogenic contaminants over thousands of kilometers was reported in the late 1970s as the main mechanism explaining the presence of contaminants at high latitude (Rahn et al. 1977; Barrie et al. 1981). However, the precise mechanisms by which insoluble contaminants deposited at the water surface are exported to depth are still not completely resolved. The settling velocity of individual atmospheric particles with a diameter  $<5\ \mu\text{m}$  (e.g. dust, sea spray, volcanic ash, anthropogenic material (De Angelis and Gaudichet 1991)) is null or very low in seawater, based on Stokes's law (Buat-Ménard et al. 1989), and their removal from the surface ocean depends on their aggregation with larger particulate biogenic material. The adsorption/aggregation of lithogenic atmospheric material (mostly dust) on/with organic particles are likely to increase the density, and thus the settling velocity of the resulting aggregates (Deuser et al. 1983; Fowler et al. 1987; Alldredge and Silver 1988; Jackson and Burd 1998; Armstrong et al. 2002; Francois et al. 2002; Turner 2002; Burd and Jackson 2009). However, recent studies indicate that, even if this 'ballast effect' probably increases the settling velocity of the sinking material, it may not be the main determinant of the downward export flux (Passow 2004; Heimbürger et al. 2014).

Tight coupling between primary productivity and downward fluxes of particulate organic carbon (POC) has been observed in various marine regions (Gačić et al. 2002; Migon et al. 2002; Boyce et al. 2010; Passow and Carlson 2012; Yool et al. 2013; Turner 2015). This indicates that biological productivity can lead to efficient export of atmospheric material to the sediment by inclusion of biogenic material in mineral-organic aggregates. Given that phytoplankton dynamics is controlled by nutrient availability, the environmental conditions that control limiting nutrients ultimately control the downward export of POC (Lampitt et al. 2010; Heimbürger et al. 2013).

Climate in the Arctic and more generally at high latitudes underwent dramatic changes during the past decades (Macdonald et al. 2005). The 20<sup>th</sup> century was the warmest period in the Arctic in at least 44,000 years (Miller et al. 2013), and environmental changes included increases in precipitation and river discharge as well as declines in snow cover and sea-ice extent (ACIA 2004). While the effects of such changes on primary productivity could be variable over Arctic shelves (Michel et al. 2015), they may have important consequences on the rates of contaminant scavenging and export from surface to deep water. For example, Outridge et al. (2007) suggested

that the 20<sup>th</sup> century increase in the accumulation of Hg in the sediment of a Canadian high Arctic lake had largely been driven by an increase in autochthonous primary productivity since 1854.

In the present study, we hypothesized that low primary productivity was the main forcing factor that determined the sedimentation of atmospherically-deposited matter in Hudson Bay during the last centuries. To test this hypothesis, we investigated the concentration and isotopic signature of Pb in two sediment cores from Hudson Bay, and compared these values with already published sedimentary records from nearby high-productivity lakes (Outridge et al. 2002). We used Pb because its multiple isotopes allow the identification of sources. Moreover, the pollution history of Pb is well documented, especially around Hudson Bay where Pb was measured in lake sediments. Our hypothesis would be rejected if (1) the sedimentary accumulation of Pb during the last century were the same in the sedimentary records of both low-productivity Hudson Bay and high-productivity nearby lakes, thus indicating that primary productivity did not play a key role in the vertical export of Pb, or (2) the recent isotopic composition of records from Hudson Bay and surrounding lakes were not recording the same anthropogenic signal.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### *2.1. Study area*

Hudson Bay has an area of about 841,000 km<sup>2</sup>, an average depth of 125 m (maximum depth of 250 m), and slopes generally less than 2 degrees (Prinsenbergh 1986). Dense cold saline water enters the Bay from the northwest (Hudson Strait and Foxe Basin, located in the north of Hudson Bay; Fig. 1). Circulation inside the Bay is cyclonic, with surface currents averaging 5 cm s<sup>-1</sup> in summer, and 2-3 cm s<sup>-1</sup> in winter when the Bay is ice-covered (Saucier and Dionne 1998). There is a surface outflow of relatively warm and fresh water to the northeast of the Bay towards Hudson Strait. Estimates of the residence time of surface (fresh) water are quite variable in the literature, i.e. they range from the order of one month to more than 6 years (Prinsenbergh 1984; Jones and Anderson 1994; Granskog et al. 2009). Many rivers discharge freshwater in the southern part of Hudson Bay, causing a strong latitudinal surface salinity gradient. The annual discharge (710 km<sup>3</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>) is equivalent to an annual freshwater yield of about 65 cm over the whole bay (Prinsenbergh 1986). This freshwater inflow has a profound influence on the physical, chemical and biological properties of the Bay because it fosters stratification of the water column, which usually reduces vertical mixing and thus upward transport of nutrients (Prinsenbergh 1986).

Although the intense stratification may suggest that Hudson Bay is oligotrophic, a recent study indicates that even if the riverine inputs are relatively minor sources of nitrate, the inputs of freshwater favor rather than impede primary productivity inshore by indirectly fostering the entrainment and upwelling of deeper water to the surface (Kuzyk et al. 2010a). Because Hudson Bay is semi-enclosed within the Canadian Shield, its geochemical characteristics are strongly influenced by local factors such as the geological substrates that are drained by river runoff, wet and dry atmospheric depositions, and seasonal sea-ice formation and melt.

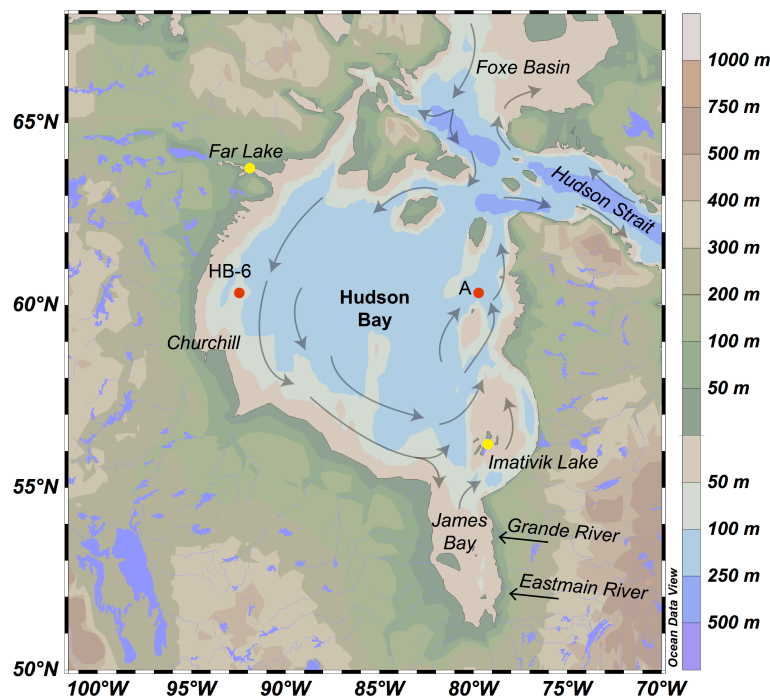


Fig. 1: Map of Hudson Bay with major currents. The two red dots indicate the locations of our two sediment cores at about 60°N (Stations HB-6 and A), the yellow dots indicate the locations of the two lakes to which our data are compared in the discussion and the two straight arrows on the eastern side of James Bay represent major river inputs.

Despite its remote location, Hudson Bay is subject to anthropogenic contamination through medium to long-range atmospheric transport, as is most of Northern Canada (Barrie et al. 1992; Outridge et al. 2002; Outridge et al. 2007; Kuzyk et al. 2010a; Outridge et al. 2011). The different potential sources of anthropogenic lead contamination in the Arctic were traced using lead isotopes, as each source is characterized by a specific isotopic signature linked essentially to

the mined ore deposits (Sturges and Barrie 1987; Sturges et al. 1993). The sources thus identified were located in Canada, the USA, Europe and Russia (Sturges and Barrie 1987; Sturges and Barrie 1989).

## 2.2. Sediment cores

The two sediment cores used for this study (Table 1) were chosen to capture the characteristics of water masses that enter Hudson Bay (station HB-6), and those that are at the end of the cyclonic gyre (station A). The two cores were collected using a box-corer during the MERICA cruise (étude des MERs Intérieures du Canada) in summers 2003 (station A) and 2004 (station HB-6). The sediment cores were collected and provided to us by Michel Starr (Maurice Lamontagne Institute, Fisheries and Oceans Canada). Cores were stored in a cold room at 4°C until 2006, when sub-samples were dried, crushed and stored at room temperature in the laboratory. Analyses reported in this paper were performed in 2007 and 2010. Due to the respective geographic locations of the two coring stations, the allochthonous material that reached stations HB-6 and A originated from the western and eastern coasts of the Bay, respectively. The proportion of marine organic carbon in the surface sediment in the vicinity of cores A and HB-6 was 80 to 85% of the total organic carbon, respectively (Kuzyk et al. 2009), stressing the importance of autochthonous organic matter in the total organic sediment load of the two areas.

Station	Lat. (°N)	Long. (°W)	Depth (m)	Core length (cm)
HB-6	60.94°	91.78°	120	24
A	60.17°	79.00°	130	30

Table 1: Characteristics of the two coring stations and cores.

## 2.3. Chronostratigraphy

The activity of  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  of dried and ground sediment samples was obtained indirectly by measuring the decay rate of its daughter isotope  $^{210}\text{Po}$  ( $t_{1/2} = 138.4$  days;  $\alpha = 5.30$  MeV) by alpha spectrometry. Measurements were carried out more than 2 years after sampling to ensure that secular equilibrium was reached. A  $^{209}\text{Po}$  spike was added to the samples to determine the extraction efficiency. Polonium was extracted and purified by chemical treatments (reacted

sequentially with HCl, HNO<sub>3</sub>, HF and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) and deposited on a silver disk (Flynn 1968). The <sup>209</sup>Po and <sup>210</sup>Po activities were measured with a silicon surface barrier  $\alpha$ -spectrometer (EGG&ORTEC type 576A).

Cesium-137 was measured on dried and ground sediment samples (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) by  $\gamma$ -ray spectrometry at 661.6 keV ( $\gamma$ -ray yield = 85 %) using a low-background high-purity Ge well detector (Canberra). Standard sediment (IAEA-300) was used to calibrate the yield of the detector. Uncertainties were estimated for counting errors following the protocol of Not et al. (2008).

Sedimentation accumulation rates (SAR) were calculated using the radioactive decay constant ( $\lambda = 0.03114 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ ) of <sup>210</sup>Pb and the slope of the linear regression of the logarithm of excess <sup>210</sup>Pb (i.e. <sup>210</sup>Pb scavenged from the water column) following the constant flux and constant sedimentation model (CFCS), previously described by Sanchez-Cabeza and Ruiz-Fernández (2012). Excess <sup>210</sup>Pb was estimated from the <sup>210</sup>Pb activity (Fig 2; data in the online supplement) minus the supported <sup>210</sup>Pb (i.e. the <sup>210</sup>Pb produced locally from <sup>226</sup>Ra disintegration) over depth. The supported <sup>210</sup>Pb was estimated using the asymptotic value of <sup>210</sup>Pb data at the bottom of the core. The linear regression for sedimentation rates was applied to the middle part of the core to avoid potential modern disturbance by bioturbation in the upper part of the core. We considered that the topmost part of the core corresponded to the present time, as no sediment had been lost during sampling. For the bottom part of the core, where no excess <sup>210</sup>Pb was measured, we assumed a constant sedimentation rate.

#### *2.4. Isotope geochemistry*

In a clean-room (class 100) environment, about 50 mg of dry sedimentary material were dissolved in a Teflon bomb with a mixture of HF–HNO<sub>3</sub> (10:1 ratio) on a hot plate at 110°C for 48 h, and then evaporated to dryness with a drop of HBr to help conversion to PbBr<sub>2</sub>. In order to ensure high purity of the separated Pb, double-pass ion chromatography was performed on AG1-X8 resin in dilute HBr medium to remove matrix elements, followed by elution of Pb phase in 6M HCl (similar to Manhès et al., 1978). The procedural blank value was negligible (i.e. average value of 42 pg Pb for 1,250,000 pg Pb of sample). Mass spectrometry was done on an IsoProbe multi-collector ICP-MS, with an Aridus desolvating membrane as the introduction system. A transmission of 480 V/ppm was achieved using this set-up. All isotopes of Pb were measured on



Faraday detectors with  $10^{11} \Omega$  resistors, with amplifiers cross-calibrated in the morning during the plasma warm-up time. Mass bias of samples was obtained using the NBS-991 Tl doping technique (with a Pb/Tl = 10 to 12), and the correlation between Pb and Tl mass biases was calculated from the repeated analysis of NBS-981 (Belshaw et al. 1998). Long-term reproducibility of the internal standard was better than 0.03% on isotopic ratios normalized to  $^{204}\text{Pb}$ . The external analytical uncertainty on the isotopic ratios normalized to  $^{204}\text{Pb}$  is on the third digit (4<sup>th</sup> digit for the  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{207}\text{Pb}$  ratio). Any larger change in isotopic composition was thus considered as significant. All reagents used were distilled in sub-boiling stills, and subsequently diluted with Milli-Q water.

## *2.5. Lead and aluminium analysis*

Lead concentrations were measured on sediment core samples, and aluminum (Al) concentrations were used to normalize Pb. Aluminum was considered to be a purely lithogenic element representative of the input of the detrital component into the sediment. Indeed, very little or no Al of anthropogenic origin is thought to reach the study region, as the Hudson Bay is extremely remote and there is no significant industrial release of Al in these water. Moreover, aluminum is commonly used to normalize various elements because its natural sources highly exceed its anthropogenic sources (Daskalakis and O'Connor 1995; Heimbürger et al. 2012; Heimbürger et al. 2014; St. Pierre et al. 2015). All reagents were certified Suprapur® and provided by Merck (Darmstadt, Germany). All samples were handled under laminar airflow in a class-100 clean room. Dry bulk sediments were ground using an agate mortar. Thirty milligrams of ground sediment were weighted using a precision balance (Sartorius MC 1, accuracy 0.01 mg), and transferred to a Teflon flask. The organic and carbonate matrices were destroyed as follows: 2 mL HCl 37% and 1 mL HNO<sub>3</sub> 65% were added to the flask and heated at 130°C for 4 h. Next, 1 mL of HF 40% and 2 mL HNO<sub>3</sub> 65% were added to the flask to dissolve the silicate material, which was then heated at 130°C for 4 h or until complete evaporation. The residue was ultrasonically dissolved in 1 mL HNO<sub>3</sub> 1N, and made up to 9 mL with Milli-Q water. Trace metal concentrations were measured using an Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectrometer (SPECTRO ARCOS™) equipped with an autosampler (CETAC ASX-260™) and an ultrasonic nebulizer (CETAC U5000AT™). Analytical procedures were validated using international certified reference material (CRM) for sediment (NCS DC 75305 and IAEA-433),

aerosol (B3-0562). Replicates of CRM were always within the quoted confidence intervals (values corresponding to "Certified" in Table 2). Detection limits ( $0.05 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  for Al,  $0.01 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  for Pb) were defined as three times the standard deviation of blank measurements for each metal, and relative standard deviations were always  $<10\%$  (results of the validation procedure are given in Table 2). The anthropogenic enrichment of samples was estimated based on the Pb/Al ratio of each sample divided by the Pb/Al ratio of the oldest samples in each core, which represent the closest to natural background value available for our region. As Al indicates terrestrial input, this index was used as a qualitative index of the sedimentary accumulation trend of non-terrestrial Pb.

	NCS-DC 75305 ( $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ )	IAEA 433 ( $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ )	B3-0562 ( $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ )
<b>Aluminium</b>			
Measured (mean)	$4.03 \pm 0.297$	$80.39 \pm 3.030$	$108.56 \pm 1.37$
Certified	$4.08 \pm 0.16$	$78.30 \pm 4.30$	$107.91 \pm 0.98$
<b>Lead</b>			
Measured (mean)	$22.2 \pm 0.622$	$26.5 \pm 0.329$	$16.94 \pm 0.334$
Certified	$22.0 \pm 1.1$	$26.0 \pm 0.6$	$17.055 \pm 0.195$

Table 2: Certified reference material (CRM) validation results. Measurements were averaged from 3 replicates.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Chronostratigraphy

The chronology of all cores was based on  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  (Fig. 2, blue curves). At station A, the surface sample was lost, and the first sample was thus at 2 cm. The  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  values decreased almost linearly from  $523 \text{ Bq g}^{-1}$  at 2 cm to  $88 \text{ Bq g}^{-1}$  at 8 cm, after which they decreased slowly until they reached the supported value of  $\sim 50 \text{ Bq g}^{-1}$  at 27.5 cm. At station HB-6,  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  was about  $123 \text{ Bq g}^{-1}$  at the surface of the core, and progressively increased to  $176 \text{ Bq g}^{-1}$  at 6 cm, after which it decreased linearly to reach the supported value of  $\sim 73 \text{ Bq g}^{-1}$  at 15 cm.

We estimated the SAR using two approaches. Firstly, the CFCS model estimate yielded sedimentation rates between  $0.141 \pm 0.032 \text{ cm yr}^{-1}$  ( $r^2 = 0.86$ ) and  $0.114 \pm 0.024 \text{ cm yr}^{-1}$

( $r^2 = 0.92$ ) for cores A and HB-6, respectively. Secondly,  $^{137}\text{Cs}$  values peaked at 4.5 and 5.5 cm for cores A and HB-6, respectively (Fig. 2). We calculated the SAR by dividing the depth of the peak depth (4.5 and 5.5 cm) by the number of years between the time of sampling and 1963. These  $^{137}\text{Cs}$ -derived sedimentation rates were consistent with the CFCS-derived rate (0.113 and 0.134  $\text{cm yr}^{-1}$  for cores A and HB-6 respectively).

We hypothesized that the sedimentation rate was constant over the whole period covered by each core, and estimated the age of the sediment by dividing its depth in the core (cm) using constant sedimentation rates of 0.094 to 0.141 and 0.115 to 0.192  $\text{cm yr}^{-1}$  for cores HB-6 and A, respectively. The estimated years corresponding to different depths in each core are indicated in Fig. 2 (dashed horizontal lines, corresponding to the range of sedimentation rate estimates for each core).

Our estimated sedimentation rates are based on the assumptions that the topmost part of the cores corresponded to the present time, and we used a constant sedimentation rate for the bottom part. Despite the resulting uncertainties, our estimates of 0.094 to 0.141 and 0.115 to 0.192  $\text{cm yr}^{-1}$  for cores HB-6 and A, respectively are consistent with values previously estimated for these marine areas of Hudson Bay, i.e. 0.05 to 0.17  $\text{cm yr}^{-1}$  (Kuzyk et al. 2009; Hare et al. 2010). We also observed a  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{207}\text{Pb}$  profile shift from the natural background to anthropogenic value in the 1800's, a sharper shift during the 1900's, and a strong dominance of anthropogenic lead in the late 1900's (Fig. 3). However, because the resulting age estimates must be taken with caution, we do not discuss here the precise timing of past events, but we examine instead the general temporal trends of the lead concentrations and the isotope signature.

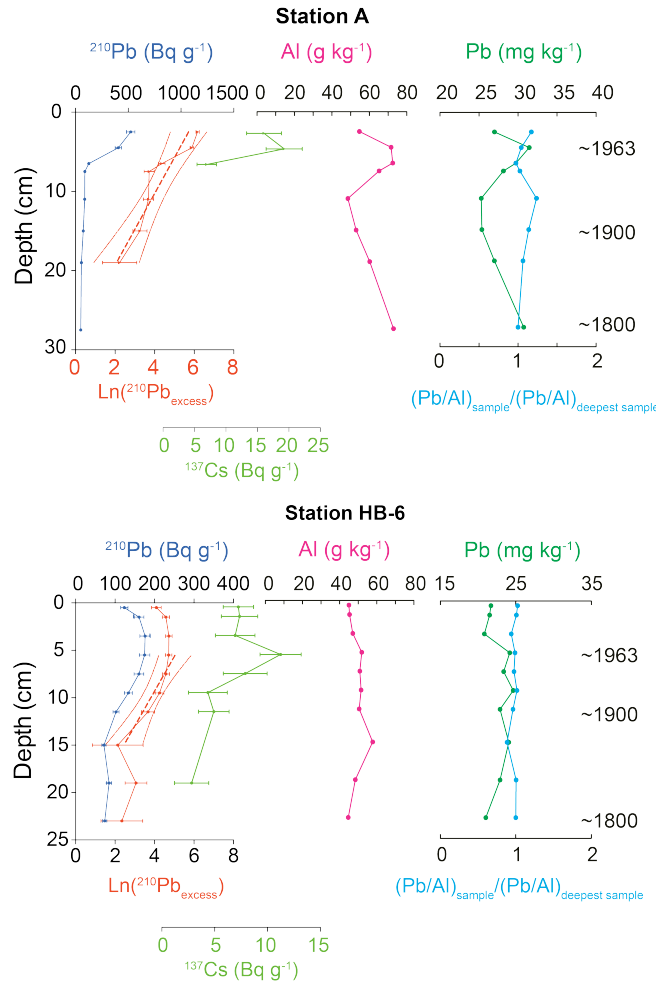


Fig. 2: Vertical profiles of  $^{210}\text{Pb}$ ,  $^{137}\text{Cs}$ , Al and Pb in cores A (top) and HB-6 (bottom). Left panels.  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  (Bq g $^{-1}$ ; blue, upper scale) and natural log of excess lead-210 (red, lower scale); different scales are used for the two stations. Red dashed lines: linear regressions of natural log of excess lead-210 on depth and their 95% confidence intervals. Middle panels. Profiles of Al (pink, mg kg $^{-1}$ ). Right panels. Pb concentration (green, mg kg $^{-1}$ , upper scale), and enrichment ratio of Pb normalized to Al (blue, bottom scale). The dashed horizontal lines correspond to increasing age with depth (years are indicated), and the intervals indicate the uncertainties in our estimates. In the right panel, the enrichment ratio of Pb normalized to Al is provided on a 0-to-2 scale, where 1 indicates no enrichment compared to the oldest value recorded at the site, 2 represents a 2-time enrichment, and a value between 0 and 1 represents a decrease of Pb/Al compared to the oldest recorded value.

### 3.2. Lead geochemistry

Bottom-to-top variations in concentrations of Al and Pb were different in the two cores (Fig. 2, left and middle panels). At station A, Al and Pb increased by ~30% from 10 to 4 cm (i.e.

from the 1800's to the early 1900's), after which they both decreased in the topmost samples. At station HB-6, there was no strong vertical variation in either the Al or Pb profile. In both cores, variations in the enrichment ratio normalized to Al were small (Fig. 2, right panel). There was a strong positive correlation between Pb and Al in the two cores (station A:  $r = 0.95$ , Prob  $< 0.0005$ ; station HB-6:  $r = 0.83$ , Prob  $< 0.005$ ).

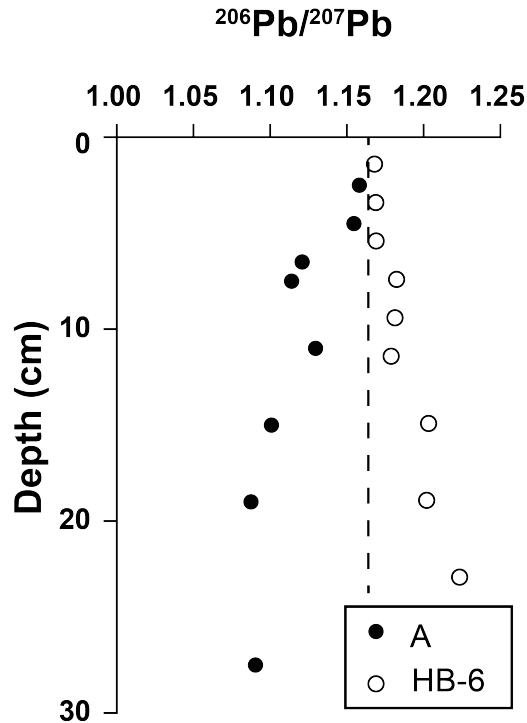
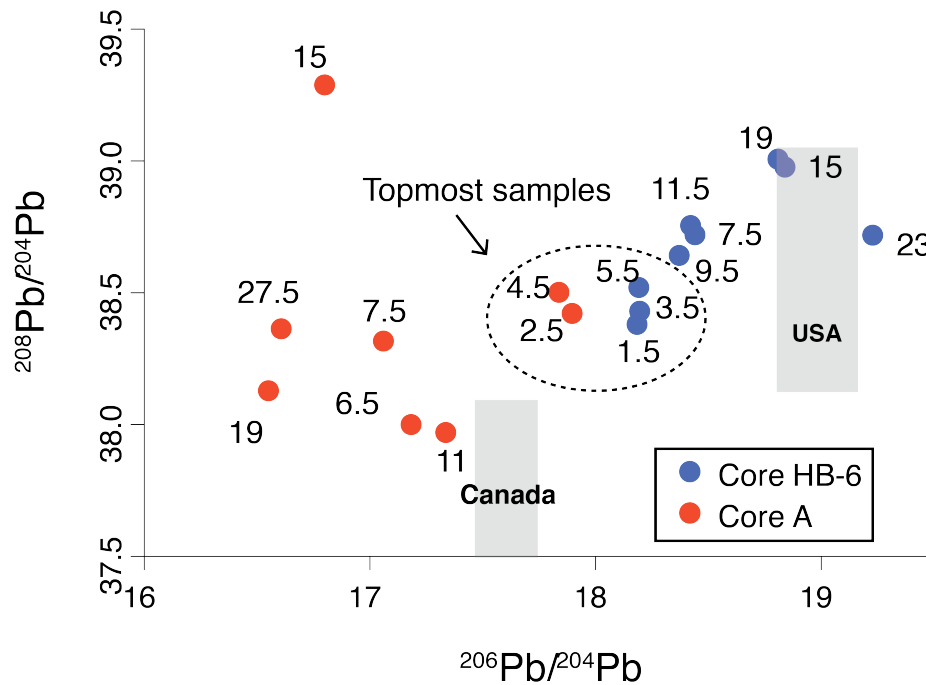


Fig. 3:  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{207}\text{Pb}$  ratio in cores HB-6 and A. The dashed vertical line represents the isotopic value of the Arctic anthropogenic Pb (1.16; Sturges et al. 1993). The error bars are smaller than the dots (see text for details).

Concerning the isotopes, there was a shift in  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{207}\text{Pb}$  in core A from 1.09 at the bottom to about 1.16 in the topmost centimeters (Fig. 3). In core HB-6, the pattern was opposite, with the bottom-to-top ratio shifting from 1.22 to 1.17. The isotopic values of the two cores converged at the top. We also investigated the variations in  $^{204}\text{Pb}$ ,  $^{206}\text{Pb}$  and  $^{208}\text{Pb}$  as it had been suggested that normalizing  $^{206}\text{Pb}$  and  $^{208}\text{Pb}$  to  $^{204}\text{Pb}$  generally allows to distinguish between three mixed end-members (Ellam 2010). In the scatter diagram of  $^{208}/^{204}\text{Pb}$  vs  $^{206}/^{204}\text{Pb}$  (Fig. 4; values in the supplemental material), the ratios from the two cores are very far apart for the oldest samples and progressively converge toward similar values for the most recent samples.

292



293

294 Fig. 4. Plot of the isotopic ratios  $^{208}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$  on  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$ , along with national aerosol averaged values for two  
 295 different potential source regions (grey boxes), i.e. Canada and the USA in the 1980's (Sturges and Barrie  
 296 1987; Graney et al. 1995; Poirier 2006). Each sample is labelled with its depth (in cm) in its core to  
 297 highlight the temporal convergence of the isotope ratios from the two cores toward the same values.

298

## 299 4. Discussion

### 300 4.1. Historical variations in the sources of Pb

301 The Hudson Bay is characterized by intense sediment resuspension due to postglacial  
 302 isostatic rebound (Hare et al. 2008; Kuzyk et al. 2009), which can dilute anthropogenic inputs in  
 303 surface sediments (Hare et al. 2010). This could partly mask the sedimentary record of  
 304 anthropogenic Pb, and thus prevent the use of our sediment records to investigate the vertical  
 305 export of Pb during the last centuries. However, our cores clearly recorded Pb of anthropogenic  
 306 origin, as shown by the convergent trend toward the anthropogenic value of 1.16 (Sturges and  
 307 Barrie 1987) in Figure 3, and are thus suitable for investigating the vertical export dynamics of  
 308 anthropogenic Pb as shown by the  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  chronology, which was corroborated by a secondary  
 309 stratigraphic marker ( $^{137}\text{Cs}$ ).

310 Because Al in sediments traces the terrestrial inputs, the correlation between Pb and Al  
 311 provides information on the importance of lithogenic inputs in the accumulation of Pb (Brumsack

2006). The strong positive correlations of Pb and Al in the two cores (Section 3.2) indicate that the historical Pb accumulation was strongly controlled by terrestrial inputs. In addition, the vertical export of terrestrial or atmospheric Pb from surface waters to the sediment would have different effects on Pb concentration normalized to Al, i.e. terrestrial Pb would be deposited together with terrestrial Al, hence constant Pb normalized to Al, whereas atmospheric Pb would not be deposited together with terrestrial Al, hence higher Pb normalized to Al (Daskalakis and O'Connor 1995; Heimbürger et al. 2012; Heimbürger et al. 2014). Moreover, enrichment factors of mercury relative to aluminium have been similarly used to identify the source of mercury (atmosphere against underlying soils) by St. Pierre et al. (2015). At our two stations, there were no strong variations in the enrichment ratio of Pb normalized to Al along the cores, indicating that the sedimentary accumulation of airborne Pb remained constant during the last 200 years in the two cores.

Irrespective of the isotope considered, the two cores were characterized by a trend (i.e. older to recent) that converged toward a value half way between typical historical Canadian and USA lead emissions (Figs. 3 and 4). The oldest samples in the two cores were characterized by opposite  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{207}\text{Pb}$ ,  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$  and  $^{208}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$  isotopic signatures (Figs. 3 and 4), meaning that early-industrial Pb inputs (i.e. between 1800 and 1900) originated from different sources in the western and eastern parts of Hudson Bay. The temporal trends of  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$  and  $^{208}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$  in core HB-6 are similar to those observed in two Hudson Bay lakes (Outridge et al. 2002), suggesting similar early-industrial sources of lead on the western side of the Bay. The early-industrial  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{207}\text{Pb}$  isotopic signature was different in cores A and HB-6 (1.10 and 1.22, respectively), on the eastern and western sides of the Bay, respectively. This probably reflected the spatial heterogeneity that exists in the different potential sources of Pb (with different isotopic signatures) in the Canadian shield, which surrounds most of Hudson Bay (GEOROC 2003). The isotopic ratio values toward which the two cores converged were the same as in surrounding lakes on the two sides of Hudson Bay (Fig. 3 in this study, and Figs. 6 and 7 in Outridge et al. 2002). Irrespective of the early-industrial sources, the fact that the isotopic composition in the two cores started with different values and converged toward a single value indicates that both cores recorded the imprint of medium to long-range anthropogenic Pb deposition during the last century.

#### 4.2. *Effect of primary productivity on the sedimentary Pb record*

Local anthropogenic inputs of metals are low in the Hudson Bay area because of its remote location and the scarcity of industries. Hence, medium to long-range atmospheric transport was presumably the main source of anthropogenic contaminants. A small increase from 25 to 30 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> in Pb concentration was observed in sediment core A around 6 and 7 cm (Fig. 2). However, because a similar increase was also observed in Al, Pb normalized to Al was mostly constant, which suggested that Pb was of terrestrial origin. This is consistent with the slight reduction in <sup>206</sup>Pb/<sup>207</sup>Pb near 6 and 7 cm in core A indicating a transient return to more terrestrial (background) values. This transient increase in terrestrial input could be related to increased precipitation due to the climatic variability of Hudson Bay (Guiot 1987). In core HB-6, the record showed no sign of increase in either Pb concentration or Pb/Al, suggesting relatively constant Pb input (terrestrial and atmospheric) during the last two centuries in this part of the bay. The ~20% increase in Pb concentration in core A is much smaller than the three- to five-fold increase in Pb concentration in the recent sediments (last century) of two lakes in the Hudson Bay (Outridge et al. 2002). The observed increase in Pb in lake sediments was attributed by Outridge et al. (2002) to medium to long-range atmospheric inputs of anthropogenic Pb originating from Eurasia and North America. Because waters of the lakes and Hudson Bay should have been both exposed to similar inputs of atmospheric materials, the difference in Pb accumulation between the two environments indicates that the transfer mechanisms of Pb to the sediment were different in the two environments, assuming no diagenetic or post-sampling effect on Pb concentrations. The <sup>206</sup>Pb/<sup>207</sup>Pb isotopic values (Fig. 3) show, for the cores on the two sides of the Hudson Bay, an apparent progressive overprint of anthropogenic lead (from bottom to top of cores) during the 1900's, whose isotopic ratio reflects a mixed Canada-USA aerosol origin (<sup>206</sup>Pb/<sup>207</sup>Pb = 1.16-1.17; Sturges and Barrie 1987). In other words, despite a globally increased atmospheric import of anthropogenic lead (Nriagu 1996), the amount of Pb deposited in Hudson Bay's sediment did not change dramatically during the last century, but the sources of emission changed as shown by changes in the isotope ratios. This indicates that sedimentary accumulation of anthropogenic Pb was limited in Hudson Bay by a factor that acted differently in the bay than in surrounding lakes.

Assuming a typical sinking velocity of 20 to 200 m d<sup>-1</sup> for Pb when packaged within biogenic aggregates (Alldredge and Gotschalk 1988; Armstrong et al. 2009; McDonnell and Buesseler 2010), i.e. when sedimentation is driven by biological productivity, surface Pb would



reach 250 m (i.e. the maximum depth of Hudson Bay) within less than 15 days (the depths of coring sites HB-6 and A were 120 and 130 m, respectively). Hence even if the estimates of the residence time of Hudson surface waters vary over a wide range in the literature (i.e. from one month to 6 years, Section 2.1), Pb packaged within biogenic aggregates should sediment within the Bay. As a result, the only ways by which Pb would have not reached the sediment should have been either a lack of aggregation due to very low biological productivity, and/or a very low sinking velocity of the Pb-containing aggregates, i.e.  $\ll 20 \text{ m d}^{-1}$ . These two conditions would have led Pb to be flushed out of the bay.

Our results and previously published data show that the sedimentary accumulation of Pb in the last century was not the same in the records of low-productivity Hudson Bay as in the high-productivity nearby lakes, whereas the recent isotopic composition was the same in sediments from both Hudson Bay and the surrounding lakes (Outridge et al. 2002). Hence, we cannot reject our initial hypothesis that primary productivity was the main forcing factor determining the sedimentation of airborne matter. This hypothesis is consistent with the suggestion from previous studies that sedimentary sequences in Hudson Bay did not always record directly the atmospheric deposition of allochthonous matter, but could be affected by low primary productivity. For example and similarly to our Pb observations, it was recently suggested that the sedimentation of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) was exceptionally low in Hudson Bay, because the very low productivity in the Bay and the resulting weak downward flux of organic matter inhibited the transfer of PCBs from surface to depth and, therefore, their sedimentation (Kuzyk et al. 2010a). Such a relationship between primary productivity and the downward flux of aggregates may be a typical feature of many environments in the world ocean (Passow 2004; Heimbürger et al. 2014).

The conceptual model in Fig. 5 summarizes the above ideas, illustrating the early-industrial and post-industrial situations in Hudson Bay. In the early-industrial model, atmospheric inputs of Pb were low, and this Pb was characterized by the local isotopic signature  $\alpha$ . Most Pb, perhaps all, was exported downwards and accumulated in the sediment after being scavenged by organic particles, thus transferring the isotopic signature of Pb from surface waters to the sediment. The post-industrialization model is characterized by a higher rate of Pb input from the atmosphere to the surface water due to the enhanced medium to long-range transport of anthropogenic Pb (Outridge et al. 2002). This Pb is characterized by the different isotopic signature  $\beta$ , which reflects its mixed local and anthropogenic origins. The similar concentration

of Pb accumulated in the sediment is explained by a limitation of its export by the low primary productivity of Hudson Bay, which restricts the availability of organic particles to scavenge Pb and export it to the sediment. As a consequence, despite a likely increase in atmospheric deposition of Pb with increased industrialization, its accumulation was similar after and before industrialization, but its isotopic signature was different in the two periods.

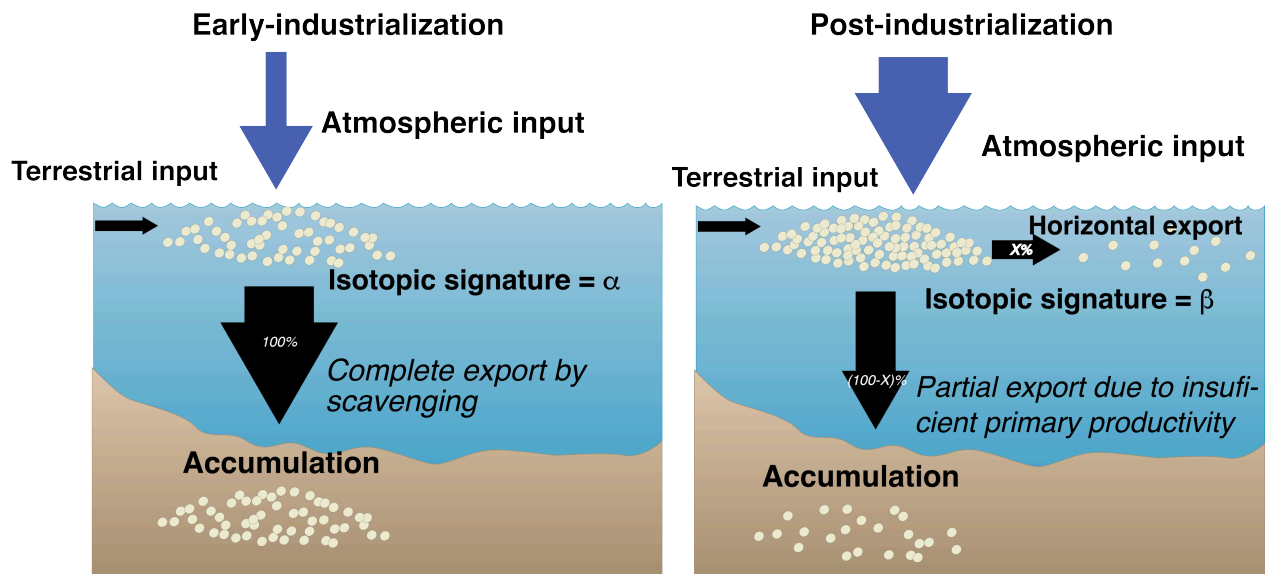


Fig. 5. Schematic representation of our hypothesis on the atmospheric and water-column fluxes of contaminants before and after industrialization in Hudson Bay. The illustrated mechanisms explain both the absence of difference in Pb sedimentary accumulation, and the change in the isotopic signatures of sediments from the early-industrial to the post-industrial period.

Enhanced atmospheric inputs of contaminants in the last century were not significantly recorded in Hudson Bay sediments, presumably because of the exceptionally low productivity of the Bay (Kuzyk et al. 2009), which prevented the efficient transfer of chemical elements from the water column to the sediment. However, the signature of the Pb isotopes suggests a shift from local input to medium to long-range anthropogenic inputs during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which thus recorded the signature of the last century. This is consistent with our hypothesis that low primary productivity was the main forcing factor that determined the sedimentation of atmospherically-deposited matter in Hudson Bay during the last century. This observation is globally significant as Hudson Bay is extremely sensitive to warming, with an increase of 0.47°C per decade over the last 50 years (Mulder et al. 2016). Warming will lead to increased river discharge, which could

enhance primary productivity in the Hudson Bay because river discharge promotes the upwelling of deep waters (Kuzyk et al. 2010a; Kuzyk et al. 2010b). If Arctic regions are currently warming up, one may expect increasing fluxes of nutrients to Hudson Bay, in the northern part of Canada. It may therefore also be expected that the magnitude of primary productivity in Hudson Bay will increase as well, which would lead to an increase in export fluxes of atmospherically-deposited contaminants, once packaged with particulate biogenic matter.

#### *4.3. Possible effect of transparent exopolymer particles (TEP)*

It was mentioned above that one of the possible explanations to our observations was that the Pb-containing aggregates sank at very low velocity. This could have occurred if the aggregates formed in Hudson Bay had been neutrally buoyant, and had thus remained in surface waters long enough to be flushed out of the Bay. While there are multiple factors that can influence the particle settling velocity (Maggi 2013), the accumulation of positively buoyant transparent exopolymer particles (TEP) in oligotrophic surface waters is hypothesized to contribute to slowing down the downward export flux (Azetsu-Scott and Passow 2004, Mari et al. 2017).

The increase of TEP volume concentration in surface waters is a significant feature in some oligotrophic waters, e.g. the Mediterranean Sea (Mari et al. 2001; Bar-Zeev et al. 2011), the Pacific Ocean (Wurl et al. 2011; Kodama et al. 2014), and Hudson Bay (Michel et al. 2006). The limited TEP dataset for Hudson Bay is characterized by a sub-surface maximum around 50 m where it co-occurs with the chlorophyll *a* maximum, suggesting a link between the two (Michel et al. 2006). Nutrient limitation increases the production of TEP by phytoplankton and lowers their bacterial degradation, and the two processes contribute to TEP accumulation in surface waters (Mari et al. 2001, 2017). Owing to their high stickiness, TEP are often seen as a catalyst of aggregation, and thus a key component for the formation of fast-sinking aggregates (Passow et al. 2001), but (Mari et al. 2017) proposed that a system with high volume concentration of low-density TEP and low concentration of dense particles in surface waters should be characterized by low downward POC export (Mari et al. 2017). The latter conditions are those observed during periods of severe oligotrophy in Hudson Bay, where the accumulation of TEP in surface waters could have enhanced the residence time of TEP-associated elements (e.g. Pb) and particles

(e.g. mineral dust) in surface, thus favoring their horizontal export out of the bay instead of downward export.

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