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Cause-and-effect in Mediterranean erosion

Roberts, Neil; Allcock, Samantha L.; Barnett, Hannah; Mather, Anne; Eastwood, Warren; Jones, Matthew; Primmer, Nick; Yiğitbaşıoğlu, Hakan; Vannière, Boris

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- 1 Cause-and-effect in Mediterranean erosion: The role of humans and climate upon
- 2 Holocene sediment flux into a central Anatolian lake catchment
- 3
- 4 Neil Roberts¹, Samantha L. Allcock², Hannah Barnett¹, Anne Mather¹, Warren J.
- 5 Eastwood³, Matthew Jones⁴, Nick Primmer⁴, Hakan Yiğitbaşıoğlu⁵ and Boris Vannière⁶
- 6
- ⁷ ¹ School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Plymouth,
- 8 Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA, UK
- 9 ² Next Steps South West, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA,
- 10 UK
- ³ School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham,
- 12 B15 2TT, UK
- 13 ⁴ School of Geography, University of Nottingham, NG7 2RD, UK
- 14 ⁵ Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, Ankara University, Turkey
- 15 ⁶ CNRS, CHRONO-ENVIRONNEMENT UMR 6249, MSHE USR 3124, Université
- 16 Bourgogne Franche-Comté, F-25000 Besançon, France
- 17
- 18 Corresponding author: email: cnroberts@plymouth.ac.uk
- 19
- 20 Abstract
- 21
- 22 The debate in historical geomorphological studies about the causes of erosion in
- 23 regions such as the Mediterranean has been long-standing. The relative roles of
- 24 climate change and human impacts can be difficult to disentangle in the absence of
- 25 highly resolved chronologies. Here we reconstruct the erosion history of a small lake
- 26 catchment in central Anatolia, located on the edge of one of the Mediterranean's most
- 27 iconic badland landscapes in Cappadocia. Because these lake sediments are annually
- 28 laminated, precisely dating clastic inwash layers and calculating recurrence intervals
- and flux rates is possible. Lake cores have been analysed for μ XRF elemental
- 30 geochemistry and via thin sections, along with proxies for hydroclimate (oxygen
- 31 isotopes) and land cover (pollen). Peaks in titanium, along with other detrital
- 32 elements, and changes in clastic layers indicate increased sediment influx into Nar
- 33 Lake between 9300 and 8000 cal BP (ceramic Neolithic, when obsidian mining took

34 place nearby) and again, more importantly, during the last 2500 years (Iron Age to

35 modern), the latter exhibiting three phases of enhanced catchment erosion.

- 36 Multiproxy comparisons show that these phases were related primarily to periods of
- 37 increased human impact on vegetation and soils around the lake. Most sediment
- influx has been in the form of turbidites, linked to the presence of a fan delta at the
- 39 lake edge, although this store does not appear to have significantly delayed sediment
- 40 delivery from eroding hillslopes to the lake bed. The marked increase in detrital
- 41 influx during the late Holocene implies that badland development in the lake
- 42 catchment is recent and largely anthropogenic, rather than ancient and of climatic
- 43 causation, and probably involving stream capture. The record also shows that
- 44 sediment influx diminished markedly at times when human land use disintensified,
- 45 which in turn indicates that hillslope degradation is reversible with appropriate land
- 46 management.
- 47
- 48 Keywords: Cappadocia; turbidites; lake; badland; erosion; Holocene;
- 49 varves
- 50

51 **1. Introduction**

52

53 Human mismanagement has long been argued to have progressively pushed 54 geomorphic landscapes towards an increasingly unsustainable disequilibrium (Marsh, 1864; Sherlock, 1922). This is most obviously manifest in badland terrain 55 56 that is thought to provide visible testimony to landscapes *ruined* by deforestation and 57 overgrazing. It applies especially in regions of long-standing human occupation, such 58 as the Mediterranean, and it underpins the idea that there is a geomorphological 59 expression to a human-dominated earth system, viz. the Anthropocene (Brown et al., 60 2017). On the other hand, debate is long-standing in historical geomorphological 61 studies about the relative importance of natural drivers of erosion, such as climate change, versus human-induced land cover change (e.g., Wagstaff, 1981; Grove and 62 Rackham, 2001). Karl Butzer made seminal contributions to these debates; for 63 64 example, in highlighting how human-induced landscape degradation could be ancient 65 (e.g., in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica) and how the effects of land conversion and

climate change were often synergistic and consequently required cross-disciplinaryinvestigation (Butzer, 1974, 2005).

68

Some of the most widely studied field evidence for past changes in soil erosion and 69 sediment flux comes from downstream records of alluviation and incision in 70 71 Mediterranean river valleys (e.g., Vita-Finzi, 1969; van Andel et al., 1990; Macklin and 72 Woodward, 2009; Dusar et al., 2011). Dating and sedimentological analyses have 73 enabled the creation of regional alluvial chronologies, and this led to the recognition 74 that significant geomorphological changes have taken place during historical times. Among them is the Younger Fill of Vita-Finzi (1969), found in many Mediterranean 75 76 valleys, and which formed during post-Roman times. While these studies highlight the 77 widespread nature of historical slope destabilisation and soil loss, they have been less 78 informative about their underlying causes. Vita-Finzi, for example, attributed his 79 Younger Fill primarily to historic variations in climate (e.g., Medieval Climate Anomaly) rather than to post-Classical abandonment and subsequent lack of 80 maintenance of agricultural terrace systems. In practice, alluvial records do not 81 82 easily permit the kind of controlled field experiment conditions needed to establish 83 clear causal relations. Fortunately, chronological precision and accuracy may be far better in some lake sediment records (Ojala et al., 2012; Vannière et al., 2013), and 84 85 these also offer the possibility of testing different causal mechanisms via a multiproxy 86 approach.

87

88 In the study presented here we reconstruct the erosion history of a small lake 89 catchment in central Anatolia, located on the edge of one of the Mediterranean's most 90 iconic badland landscapes in Cappadocia. Nar Lake has been monitored since 1998 91 (Jones et al., 2005; Woodbridge and Roberts, 2010; Dean et al., 2015a) and its 92 Holocene hydroclimatic and vegetational history have been reconstructed from 93 lacustrine sediment cores (Jones et al., 2006; England et al., 2008; Dean et al., 2015b; 94 Roberts et al., 2016). Because the lake sediment cores are mostly laminated, it is 95 possible to date clastic "flood" layers that are present in its sedimentary record and to 96 calculate their recurrence intervals and sediment volumes rather precisely. In this 97 paper, we present the results of µXRF geochemical core scanning, notably for detrital 98 elements indicative of catchment erosion, along with analysis of clastic layers via thin

99 sections, granulometry, and other methods. These new data allow us to evaluate
100 critically the long-term relationship between catchment erosion with (i) past climate
101 variations and (ii) land cover change, as reconstructed using previously published
102 proxy evidence from the same sedimentary archive. Finally, we compare our results
103 to documented historical and archaeological records from the same region to ask
104 'how old are Cappadocia's badlands?'

105

106 2. Study area

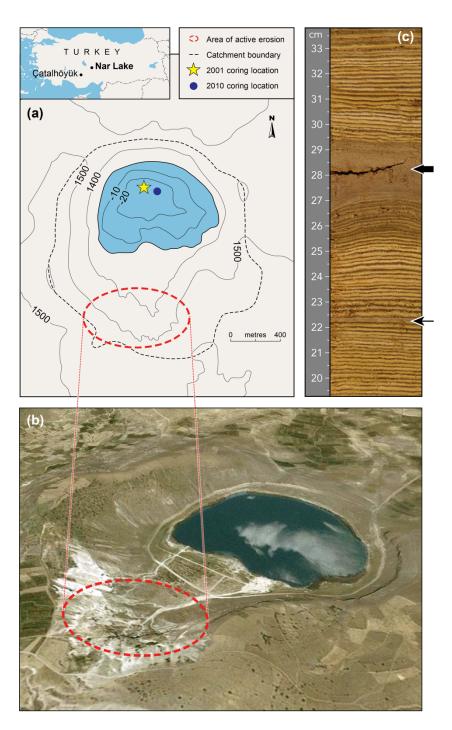
107

108 Nar Gölü (Göl = Lake in Turkish; 38°20'25" N, 34°27'24" E; elevation 1363 m asl) is a 109 >20 m deep oligosaline volcanic maar lake, ~ 0.5 km in diameter (Fig, 1). There is no 110 surface outflow and the modern lake water is slightly saline (EC of 2.5-3.1 mS cm⁻¹ 111 and pH of 7.1-7.4; Dean et al., 2015a). The lake water is stratified, with low dissolved oxygen levels below ~ 8 m depth, except during the winter months. The lake 112 113 catchment is small (\sim 4 km² including the lake surface) but with \sim 240 m of relative 114 relief in the drainage basin over a horizontal distance of <1 km, and upper catchment 115 slopes steeper than 20°. The southernmost rim of the catchment has been eroded to 116 form hoodoos (fairy chimneys) and the eroded sediments have created an alluvial fan 117 delta on the southern side of the lake that extends deep into the lake waters (Fig. 1). 118 There are no permanent surface water inflows but several ephemeral streams and 119 also a number of geothermal and coldwater springs around the lake. Nar Lake is 120 situated within the Central Anatolian Volcanic Province, and the faulting process that 121 created the maar probably began in the middle-late Pleistocene (Gevrek and Kazancı, 122 2000).

123

The lake is located in the oak parkland zone that covers much of the Anatolian
Plateau, and the region has a continental Mediterranean climate (see Dean et al.,
2015a, for details). Agricultural activity in the catchment is minimal at the present
day, with no permanent settlement inside the watershed, although there are
abandoned fields on the northern side slopes, and also livestock grazing. Evidence of
historical settlement within the lake catchment includes rock-cut dwellings that were
likely occupied between the tenth and thirteenth centuries CE. Rock-cut churches and

- 131 *underground cities* are a characteristic feature of Byzantine Cappadocia, and one of
- 132 the reasons for the region's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- 133
- 134 Figure 1: (a) Location map of Nar Lake and catchment, showing coring sites and area
- 135 of badland; (b) oblique satellite image of lake and catchment (Google Earth); (c)
- 136 representative core section from unit 1, showing varves interrupted by clastic layers
- 137 (arrowed), one thick, the other thin.
- 138



140

141 Central Anatolia contains an exceptionally rich and well-studied archaeological 142 record (Table 1). The oldest excavated archaeological sites in Cappadocia date to the Aceramic Neolithic, notably at the protoagricultural settlement at Asıklı Höyük (later 143 144 ninth and early eighth millennia BCE). During this and the subsequent Ceramic 145 Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, Cappadocia provided the principal source of 146 obsidian for central Anatolia and beyond, and several obsidian factories have been 147 identified. One of them is on Nenezi Dağ, a hill located 3 km north of Nar Lake, just 148 outside its catchment. Lithic artefacts and débitage are common in the vicinity of the 149 lake, although no distinct occupation site has so far been found.

150

151 After a period of apparent demographic decline during the middle Chalcolithic, 152 evidence from regional archaeological site surveys and excavations indicates a 153 renewed increase in settlement during the third millennium BCE, corresponding to 154 the Early Bronze Age (Allcock and Roberts, 2014). During the Middle and Late Bronze 155 Age, central Anatolia lay at the heart of the expanding Hittite Empire that came to an 156 end in the late second millennium BCE, when there was a major rupture in the 157 regional socioecological system (Allcock, 2017). A new demographic cycle began 158 during the first millennium BCE at the end of which Cappadocia became a Roman 159 province (17 CE), with its capital at Caesarea (modern Kayseri). Two subsequent 160 periods are especially well represented archaeologically, the first being the early and mid-Byzantine, and the second being the Selçuk period. A major episode of early 161 162 Byzantine church building took place in the fifth and sixth centuries CE. However, this 163 was followed by a period of increasing insecurity linked to Arab invasions between 164 the mid-seventh and tenth centuries CE. A mid-Byzantine revival in the tenth and 165 early eleventh centuries saw the creation of a series of remarkable mural paintings 166 inside rock-cut churches (Ousterhout, 1999, 2005; Thierry, 2002). After this Golden 167 Age, Byzantine rule in Cappadocia came to an end around 1080 CE, although Christian 168 communities continued under Islamic Selçuk domination. The early Turkish Selçuk 169 state was geographically centered in south-central Anatolia; after its collapse in 1299 170 following the Mongol invasion, Cappadocia eventually became part of the Ottoman 171 Empire until the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923. 172

- 173 Table 1: Major historical and archaeological periods in central Anatolia
- 174

Period	Date	Further details
Turkish Republic	since 1923 CE	
Ottoman	~1450 to 1923 CE	
Medieval Turkic	1071 to ~1450 CE	principally Selçuk, 1071-1299 CE,
		Mongol invasions 1260s
Byzantine	330 to 1071 CE	early and middle periods separated
		by Arab wars (\sim 640 to \sim 950 CE)
Hellenistic-Roman	331 BCE - 330 CE	
Iron Age	1200 - 331 BCE	includes Dark Age (1200-900 BCE)
		and Achaemenid Persian Empire
		(after 585 BCE)
Bronze Age	3000 - 1200 BCE	includes Early, Middle and Late
		Bronze Ages
Chalcolithic	6000 - 3000 BCE	
Neolithic	>8500 - 6000 BCE	includes Aceramic (pre-7000 BC)
		and Ceramic (post-7000 BC)
		phases

175

176

177 **3. Methods**

178

179 The late Holocene sedimentary record from Nar Lake was initially cored in 2001 and 180 2002 using a Livingstone type stationary piston corer. These cores (NAR01/02) span 181 the last \sim 1700 years and were analyzed at high temporal resolution for stable 182 isotopes (Jones et al., 2006; Dean et al., 2013), pollen (England et al., 2008), and other 183 proxies. In 2010, deeper lake coring took place at 21.5 m water depth from a platform 184 using a UWITEC stationary piston corer. At the main core site, triple overlapping 185 parallel cores were recovered in close proximity. These cores were opened, split in 186 two lengthways, described, and photographed, with half being kept as an archive. The 187 three core sequences were correlated visually at tie-points, and the best sections

- 188 from three parallel cores were spliced together to create a master sequence 21.69 m
- 189 long (NAR10) that extends back to Late Glacial times.
- 190

A seismic survey of the lake bed and its underlying sediments was carried out in 2010
using a Boomer system, coupled to a high precision GPS. Fifty-three transect lines
were made across the lake with an interval spacing of 30 m, east-west and northsouth, to create a detailed bathymetric map and cross section profiles of the upper
~20 m of the lake sediments (Smith, 2010; Roberts et al., 2016). These highlight the
morphology and internal sedimentary structures of the subaqueous fan delta on the
south side of the lake.

198

199 The majority of the Nar Lake sediment cores are laminated, and most (if not all) of the 200 laminations appear to be annual (i.e, varves), based on 20 years of lake monitoring 201 (Dean et al., 2015a) and comparison with ¹³⁷Cs, ²¹⁰Pb, and other dating methods. For 202 laminated parts of the core sequence, chronologies were established by layer 203 counting by eye and in thin sections. Because some parts of the core sequence were 204 not laminated (see Fig. 2), additional age estimates were required. These were 205 provided by U-Th dating from two aragonite-rich layers at 1949 cm (11.82 ±0.52 ka) 206 and 1021 cm (4.41 +0.16/-0.17 ka) using a total dissolution isochron approach (see 207 Dean et al., 2015b, for further details; see Roberts et al., 2016 for age-depth curve). 208 The first of these U-Th ages lies close to, and agrees well with, the stratigraphically 209 inferred Pleistocene-Holocene boundary in the cores. The second U-Th date provides 210 a fixed datum for the mid-Holocene part of the core record. These ages have been 211 used to pin floating laminae counts for the early-mid Holocene. For nonlaminated 212 parts, linear sedimentation has been assumed (note that ages are quoted in years 213 before 1950). Lake waters have a modern 14 C age of ~15,000 years because of 214 volcanic out-gassing, making this dating method inapplicable. 215 216 Sequential thin sections have captured an almost continuous record of *in situ*

sediment deposition over the last 2.6 ka (unit 1) and during Neolithic times (sub-unit

- 5a). The methodology for thin section preparation largely follows Boës and Fagel
- 219 (2005). For each thin section, 6 cm by 1 cm blocks of unconsolidated sediment were
- 220 cut from the NAR10 split core and freeze-dried. Once dry, sediment blocks were

221 impregnated with epoxy resin (Araldite 2-component resin) under a gentle vacuum 222 to minimise sediment disturbance of resin uptake. These resin-embedded sections 223 were cut perpendicular to the varves' bedding plane, fixed to a microscope slide, and 224 lapped down to a thickness of 20 µm. All thin sections were finished with a cover slip. 225 The thicknesses of varve sublayers were determined using a microscope reticule on 226 thin sections (e.g., Swierczynski et al., 2013). Measurements were made 227 perpendicular to the laminae bedding plane, along a linear transect that bisects the 228 core's width (Lamoureux, 2000), only deviating from the transect when the 229 sediments' structure was significantly disrupted or damaged (Francus et al., 2002). 230 The use of a petrographic microscope also enabled the composition and structure of

sublayers to be determined.

232

233 The elemental geochemistry of the NAR10 cores was measured using Itrax X-ray 234 fluorescence (µXRF) core scanning (Croudace et al., 2006; Rothwell and Rack, 2006). 235 Scanning was carried out on cut half-cores at Aberystwyth University in November 236 2010, using a Cox Analytical Systems scanner at a 200-µm sampling interval 237 resolution (400 µm for nonlaminated sections; for details see Allcock, 2013). One 238 drawback of Itrax scanning is that accurate analysis of lighter elements is difficult to 239 achieve (e.g., Mg). They can, however, be detected with handheld XRF analysers 240 (Kylander et al., 2011). The cut NAR10 core master sequence, along with 241 soil/sediment samples from the lake catchment, were therefore also analysed using a 242 Thermo Scientific Niton XL3t GOLDD series XRF hand held scanner with helium purge 243 at Plymouth University. A sampling resolution of every 8 cm was used for the core 244 scanning with the 3 mm small spot selected (Allcock, 2013). The catchment samples 245 were analysed in sample pots using the handheld instrument in its countertop test 246 stand. By using the two XRF techniques together, a broader array of elements was 247 determined and cross-correlations could be made to ensure that ITRAX readings are 248 an accurate reflection of geochemical variations in the Nar Lake sequence. 249

250 Varve deposition in the lake is driven by seasonal changes (Jones et al., 2005;

251 Primmer, 2018). Following winter when the lake is thermally mixed, the onset of lake

stratification in early spring is associated with enhanced autochthonous productivity

and an algal bloom, often of diatoms. This increases lakewater pH, via the

254 photosynthetic consumption of CO₂, and combines with an increased 255 evaporation/precipitation ratio to cause carbonate supersaturation and authigenic 256 precipitation of calcite and/or aragonite in late spring or early summer (Dean et al., 257 2015a). The resulting white carbonate layer is succeeded by a dark-coloured mix of 258 organic matter, diatom frustules, and some diffuse clastic material, representing late 259 summer, autumn, and winter deposition. This regular seasonal cycle of mainly 260 authigenic sedimentation is periodically interrupted by discrete and distinct clastic 261 layers of variable thickness, notably in the upper ~ 6 m (unit 1). These clastic layers 262 have been dated by varve counting, measured and sampled in the NAR01/02 and 263 NAR10 core series. The clastic layers are also identifiable (in the NAR10 series only) 264 via Itrax data. The Itrax XRF log shows that clastic layers are well identified by K and 265 Ti increases, while Ca concentration remains low. Thus, to separate the clastic layers 266 from the background, we selected the K/kcps and Ti/Ca signal.

267

268 In order to create a time series of individual clastic layers we have processed the data 269 statistically, following the principles used for reconstruction of fire-event frequency 270 (Vannière et al., 2008) and flood frequency (Vannière et al., 2013). The low-frequency 271 trend, estimated by calculating the moving first quartile with a running window of 272 1000 values, was removed in order to normalise the signals. The normalisation 273 corresponds to the reduced value (raw value minus the mobile quartile) divided by 274 the mobile standard deviation: (Kkcps) normalised = (((Kkcps) raw - (Kkcps) mobile 275 quartile1) / (Kkcps) mobile standard-deviation). This normalised signal has two 276 components: first, the background, which oscillates around zero; and second, the 277 peak component, with the latter being significantly different from the background. 278 Two populations of values are usually present with the lowest ones interpreted as 279 analytical noise, while the highest positive ones above the threshold value (TV) are 280 assumed to represent intrusive events. A Gaussian mixture model was used to 281 decompose the peak component: that is, to analyse the histogram plot of the peak-282 component frequency distribution and to choose the TV (MIXMOD Software; 283 Biernacki et al., 2006). By using this model two overlapping subdistributions can be 284 disentangled and the upper limit of the main distribution identified, which may 285 potentially be the upper limit of the analytical noise-related variation. Time-series 286 analysis of the peak components then allows reconstruction of event frequencies. We

- evaluated the distribution of peaks along the sequence by smoothing the sum of
 episodes with a 50-year moving time window. Variations in average and total clastic
 layer thickness are also presented per 50 years.
- 290

291 Particle size analysis of clastic layer sediments was carried using a Mastersizer 2000

laser diffraction system, after sieving to remove any particles >1 mm in diameter. The

293 methods used for stable isotope analysis of endogenic carbonate and pollen have

been described in previous publications (Jones et al., 2006; England et al., 2008; Dean
et al., 2015b).

296

297 **4. Results**

298

The combined NAR01/02 and NAR10 core record covers the last 13,800 years (13.8
ka) from the Late Glacial Interstadial to the present day (Dean et al., 2015b; Roberts
et al., 2016), although U-Th dating and varve counting suggest a gap in sedimentation
between 6500 and 5000/4500 cal BP, at 1139 - 1161 cm (the unit 3/unit 4
boundary). The NAR10 cores have been subdivided into seven lithostratigraphic
units as described in Table 2.

305

306 Negative δ^{18} O values on endogenic carbonate, high Ca/Sr ratios, and the presence of 307 laminated (i.e., deepwater) sediments indicate climatically wet phases during the 308 early-mid Holocene (especially 11,700-9500 and 8000-7000 cal BP) and again from 309 1500 to 600 cal BP (Fig. 2). By contrast, peaks in Mg, positive δ^{18} O values, elevated 310 diatom-inferred salinity, and an absence of laminated sediments indicate markedly 311 dry hydroclimatic conditions during the Late glacial Younger Dryas stadial (~12,900-312 11,800 BP), and again at times between 4300 and 2600 cal BP. Pollen evidence 313 indicates a gradual increase in woodland at the start of the Holocene, to create an oak 314 parkland vegetation that persisted until Bronze Age times, when there was a sharp 315 decline in woodland cover, probably a combined result of human deforestation and a 316 trend toward climatic desiccation. During the last 2500 years (NAR10 unit 1), pollen 317 evidence clearly indicates agricultural land use in the surrounding region, including 318 the so-called Beyşehir Occupation phase, with tree crops, ruderal plants, and cereal-319 type pollen (England et al., 2008; Roberts, 2018; Woodbridge et al., 2018).

320

321 Table 2: NAR10 lithostratigraphic units

322

Unit	Depth cm	Inferred age	Summary description
		(yr BP)	
1	0 - 592.7	-60 to 2520	mm thick laminated silts, with
			frequent grey clastic layers
2	592.7 - 753.7	2520 to 3700	Mostly non-laminated with
			occasional thin laminations.
			Frequent hard nodular layers
3	753.7 - 1138.7	3700 to	Thick laminations, some massively
		>4500	deformed. Probable hiatus at base
			of unit
4	1161.2 - 1428.2	6541 to 8190	Very finely laminated, pale beige
			marl
5	1428.2 - 1974	8190 to	mm thick olive-beige laminations,
		11,830	some clastic layers in sub-unit 5a
6	1974 - 2013	11,830 to	Homogenous non-laminated grey
		~12,840	marl. Equivalent to Younger Dryas
7	2013 - 2169	~12,840 to	Laminated silts with some abrupt
		~13,800	colour changes

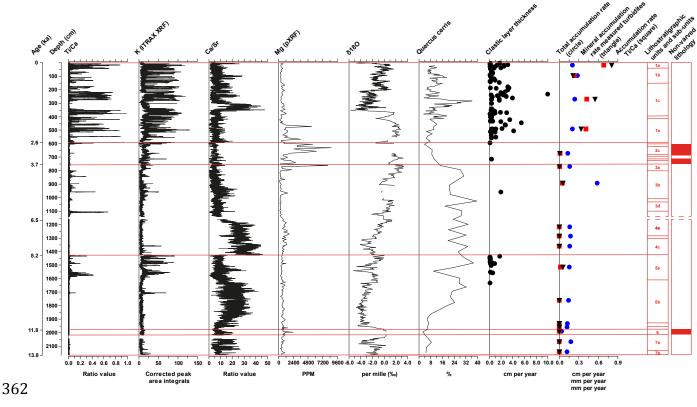
323

324 The overall rate of sedimentation in the NAR10 cores has been relatively constant for 325 most of the Holocene at 1.5 mm y⁻¹, although it increased to 2.3 mm y⁻¹ in unit 1 (Fig. 326 2). Compression loading and dewatering may account for some of the apparent 327 increase in sedimentation rate in the last ~100 years. The main exception to the long-328 term trend occurs in unit 3, dating to the second millennium BCE (fourth millennium 329 BP). Laminations between 798 and 1100 cm are much thicker than in the rest of the 330 cores; if these are annual, as laminae counts and U-Th age estimates suggest, then this 331 implies a fourfold increase in gross sedimentation rate for this interval to 5.8 mm y⁻¹ 332 (see section 5 for further discussion). The sedimentation rate appears to have been lowest during NAR10 unit 6 (0.4 mm y⁻¹), corresponding to the Younger Dryas stadial 333 334 when the climate was cold and dry.

335

336 Aside from the relatively constant overall rate of sedimentation, Itrax data show 337 significant downcore changes in the influx of detrital clastic elements such as Ti, Fe, K, 338 and Rb into Nar Lake. These elements show very similar patterns and close 339 correlations to each other in the NAR10 cores (Allcock, 2013). Modern soil/sediment 340 samples from the lake catchment are dominated by Si along with Fe and Al (Allcock, 341 2013, p. 127), elements that exist predominantly in detrital (i.e., minerogenic) 342 sediments. In the core, however, there is a very significant component of biogenic Si, notably in the form of diatom frustules, which makes Si less useful as a direct erosion 343 indicator than the ratio between Ti and Ca along with K/Kcps concentrations. 344 345 Titanium (Ti) rather than Al is used for normalization of terrigenous input because Al 346 is a relatively light element that is less accurately detected by Itrax. The Ti/Ca ratio 347 has been shown to be a good indicator because it is little affected by core variability 348 and water content under scanning film (Hennekam and de Lange, 2012). Elevated 349 Ti/Ca ratios and K values occur during two main times during the Holocene, namely 350 during unit 5a (9.3-8.0 ka cal BP; ceramic Neolithic) and again – more importantly – 351 during unit 1, dating to the last 2600 years (Fig. 2). In unit 1, there are large 352 amplitudinal fluctuations in K/Kcps values and the Ti/Ca ratio, associated with the 353 presence of discrete clastic layers. Itrax erosion proxies are lowest during unit 4, 354 dating to the early-mid Chalcolithic period (8.0-6.5 ka), at which time almost no input 355 of detrital sediment entering Nar Lake from its catchment is detectable. 356

- 358 Figure 2: Stratigraphy of the full NAR10 core sequence, sedimentation rate (overall
- 359 rate and clastic input alone), Itrax profiles for detrital indices (Ti/Ca and K),
- hydroclimate proxies (Ca-Sr, Mg, and δ^{18} O), and deciduous oak pollen percent (data
- 361 partly from Roberts et al., 2016).



363

364 For clastic layers in the NAR10 cores, we can compare Itrax data with visual 365 measurements of layer thickness and age. As Table 3 shows, there are some 366 differences between these different measurement techniques in the number and 367 thickness of layers recorded. Itrax scanning had a 200-µm measurement resolution, 368 allowing the identification of layers as thin as 0.2 mm. By contrast, visible 369 measurements were restricted to layers at least 1.0 mm thick. This resolution was 370 increased by the use of thin section microscopy that has revealed the typical 371 composition of nonseasonal clastic layers: a well-mixed mass of terrigenous clasts, 372 inwashed obsidian, along with some organic detritus and calcareous material. Clastic 373 sublayers characteristically display abrupt stratigraphic boundaries, indicative of a 374 rapid transition to the dominant depositional process, typically associated with an 375 individual depositional event (Mangili et al., 2005). With their high concentration of allogenic sediment, these inwash sublayers are visually distinct from the varves' sub-376

377 layers of carbonate and organic material. Thin section analysis indicates that while 378 these non-seasonal sublayers can be located at any position within the varve cycle, 379 the majority (67%) were deposited between the organic and carbonate sublayers. 380 Given that the seasonal deposition endogenic carbonate typically occurs during the 381 early summer (Dean et al., 2015a), these clastic layers may have been deposited 382 during the preceding months (March-May). These months reflect the wettest period 383 of the year, accounting for \sim 35% of the site's annual precipitation and much of the 384 seasonal snowmelt.

385

The difference in measurement resolution means that Itrax- and thin section-derived data show substantially more layers during unit 1 and with a mean layer thickness only about half that for visible measurements; analysis also shows some differences between K/Kcps and Ti/Ca. Nonetheless there is good agreement in the timing of layer events between the two Itrax indices and also between these and the visible and thin section measurements. Almost all of the main clastic layers can therefore be recognised across the different measurement techniques.

393

394 Replicate records of the clastic layers in two independent core sequences (NAR01/02 395 and NAR10), both located in the deepest part of the lake (Fig. 1), make it possible to 396 assess their spatial extent and variability for the last 1500 years. There is good 397 accordance in the overall timing and magnitude of clastic layers in the two core 398 sequences (Fig. 3), with a concentration of events in three time intervals, namely (i) 399 prior to 1340 cal BP (before 610 CE; phase 3), (ii) between 1036 and 664 cal BP (914-400 1286 CE; phase 2) and (iii) since 1920 CE (phase 1). Minor differences (typically ± 10 401 years or less) exist in the age of individual layers between the two cores, primarily 402 the result of dating imprecision by varve counting. The biggest difference between 403 the two core sequences is that clastic layers are $\sim 60\%$ thicker on average in the 404 NAR10 than the NAR01/02 cores, implying lateral variation in the thickness of 405 individual layers within the lake.

406

- 408 Table 3: Summary measurements of clastic layers for the last 1500 years in two Nar
- 409 Lake sediment core records using different methods. Total sediment thickness for
- 410 this time interval is 383 cm (NAR10) and 336 cm (NAR01/02)
- 411

			NA	R10			NAR01/02
	All laye	rs	Layers	≥1mm	All la	iyers	
	K/Kcps	Ti/Ca	K/Kcps	Ti/Ca	Thin	Visual	
	(Low)	(Low)			section	measur	ement
total thickness cm	106.94	57.18	66.62	50.58	116.75	79.0	45.4
mean thickness cm	0.55	0.67	2.38	2.11	0.83	1.16	0.73
number of layers	196	85	28	24	141	68	62
identified							

412

413 Particle size analysis of the clastic layers shows that they are primarily silt sized, and

414 analysis of subdivided samples from six layers from the NAR01/02 indicates that

their lower part contains more sand (12.3%) and less clay (7.9%) than the upper part

416 (5.2% sand, 11.9% clay); i.e., they display a fining-upward sequence. A similar trend

417 was found in 22 of the thickest clastic layers in the NAR10 cores (Barnett, 2016),

418 which also revealed that most of the change in granulometry within each clastic layer

419 occurred in the basal 1 cm. Upward fining of grain sizes, indicative of gravitational

420 sorting (Mangili et al., 2005), was also visible in thin sections of the thicker clastic

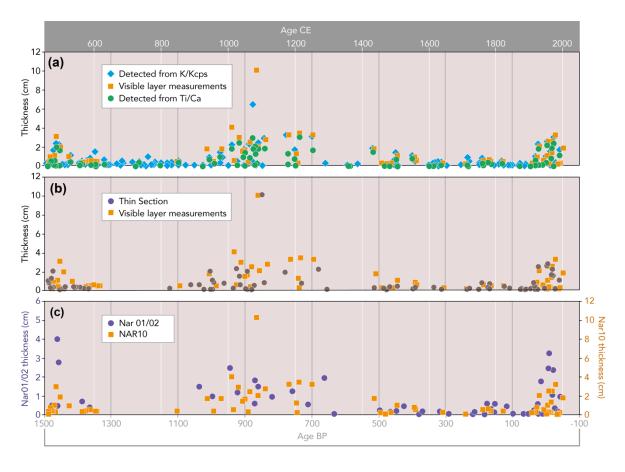
421 layers. This would be consistent with higher-energy deposition and significant lateral

422 sediment movement during the initial phase of event deposition, followed by lower-

423 energy fine-grained sedimentation from the overlying water column.

- 424
- 425

- 426 Figure 3: Clastic layer thickness and age, last 1500 years; (a) NAR10 cores comparing
- 427 measurement by Itrax scanning and visual recording; (b) comparison of visual and thin-
- 428 section measurements, (c) visual measurements for NAR10 vs. NAR01/02 cores (note
- 429 difference in vertical scale). Timescale in years before 1950 CE.
- 430



- 431 432
- 433 **5. Discussion and analysis**
- 434

435 5.1. Origin of clastic layers

436

Clastic sedimentation, aside from that at the margins, is deposited by two main
mechanisms in lakes: first, dispersal as plumes of suspended sediment and thus
suspension fall out, typically following an episode of particulate inwash; and second,
transportation of material via density currents (Sturm and Matter, 1978). This
transportation of material in a subaqueous environment occurs via turbidity currents,
turbulent mixtures of sediment and water that deposit graded beds, or turbidites
(Mulder et al., 2003). Turbidites comprise a fining upward sequence that represents a

444 waning of discharge as it spreads out farther away from the source of the current

- 445 (Gilli et al., 2013). They occur anywhere that has a supply of sediment and a slope,
- and they are particularly common in deep lakes (Nichols, 2009).
- 447

448 Turbidites found in lake sediments can be initiated by failure of sediments on slopes creating turbidity currents, or alternatively, sediment-rich hyperpycnal flows driven 449 450 by high volume runoff from inflowing rivers and streams (Osleger et al., 2007). 451 Hyperpycnal flows occur when the density of subaerial discharge is higher than the 452 density of the water in the lake or sea that they enter (Mulder et al., 2003). The result 453 of these sediment-laden flows is deposition of a particular type of turbidite termed 454 hyperpycnites. Turbidites can also form as a result of mass movements of a large 455 buildup of sediment on slopes of a delta front that can fail as a result of earthquakes 456 or delta collapse linked to lake-level fluctuations (Gilli et al., 2013). Challenges exist in 457 differentiating between hyperpycnites and normal turbidites as they both display a 458 similar facies succession and ultimately form as the result of high volumes of 459 sediment entering the lake catchment.

460

461 Most of the thicker (>5 mm) clastic layers in the Nar sediment cores display a fining-462 upward succession, with a general trend of decreasing grain size through the layers. 463 This and other characteristics suggest that the thicker layers originated via episodic 464 turbidity flows within the lake, and we therefore interpret them as turbidites. What 465 is less clear is whether they were triggered by high runoff during major flood events 466 following storm events or rapid melting of winter snow cover, or whether they were 467 initiated by nonclimatic factors, such as earthquakes. Cappadocia is located in a 468 region of Anatolia with relatively low seismicity, although any volcanic activity would 469 have the potential to cause harmonic earth tremors.

470

The internal structure and the presence of clay in the Nar turbidites indicates a
degree of homogeneity that is more typically associated with mass movement
processes associated with deltaic collapse rather than hyperpycnal flows caused by
high intensity floods (Blass et al., 2005; Gilli et al., 2013). This would have potentially
involved an autocyclic process of sediment buildup on the fan delta, overloading of
the delta front, followed by slope failure. Similar conditions for turbidite formation

- are seen in Lake El'gygytgn in Siberia (Juschus et al., 2009; Sauerbrey et al., 2013).
- 478 Whatever their precise causal mechanism, the existence of an alluvial fan delta has
- 479 created a temporary sediment store within the lake catchment, with the possibility of
- 480 a temporal-spatial decoupling in sediment delivery between the point of slope
- 481 erosion and deposition on the lake bed.
- 482

The thinner (<1 mm) clastic layers may represent flood inwash events rather than
turbidites, while those between 1 and 5 mm are likely to be a combination of the two
processes. Based on Itrax data for unit 1 (last 2500 years), normal palaeo-flood layers
account for at least 30-40% of all depositional events. On the other hand turbidites,
although probably less numerous (i.e., frequent), account for the majority of the

- 488 clastic layers in terms of total thickness and sediment volume (table 4).
- 489

490 In addition to climate and land cover, sediment delivery to the lake has been

influenced by the interaction between lithology, base level, and stream capture. Most

492 of the active headwall gullies have eroded into fine-grained volcanic sediments, white

in colour (and hence clearly visible on satellite imagery), and transported to the lake

494 as suspended sediment. Slope breaks in the catchment reflect lithological changes

and once any headcutting gullies breached the contact with the fine-grained volcanics

there would potentially be a stronger clastic sediment signal in the lake. The streams

497 feeding the fan delta would have incised their channels at times of falling lake levels,

and these incisions would have then progressively worked headwards. The last major

499 period of lake-level drawdown occurred between 4200 and 2600 BP, when the water

depth was insufficient to maintain lake stratification and allow varve formation (Fig.2). In turn this may have prompted an increase in headwall gully erosion. With rising

502 lake levels (as occurred around 2600 BP, when varve formation recommenced), more

sediment would have been stored in the fan delta, but also with potential for slope

504 failure on the delta front.

505

There is evidence of expansion of the Nar Lake catchment by stream capture (see Fig.
4), which must have taken place during the late Holocene. Nar base level is currently
70 m lower than the tributary base level (in the adjacent river valley), so providing
the framework for the capture. As the upper gullies captured drainage, they would

- 510 have increased water yield and sediment discharge to Nar Lake. As more of the
- 511 captured catchment is in the weaker lithology, the sediment-to-water ratio would
- 512 have increased leading to peak floodwater discharges being not only larger but more
- 513 sediment-laden (Stokes et al., 2002).
- 514
- 515 Table 4: Frequency and importance of different types of clastic layers,
- 516 based on thickness class, using Itrax data for unit 1

	K/K	cps (High)	Ti/Ca (High)		
thickness	n	total	n	total	
class	n	thickness cm	n	thickness cm	
≥5mm	94	140.74	57	86.62	
	19%	68%	22%	75%	
1mm-5mm	252	55.1	116	23.16	
	51%	27%	45%	20%	
<1mm	146	9.56	87	5.68	
	30%	5%	33%	5%	
total	492	205.4	260	115.46	

517

518

- 519 Figure 4: 2018 Google Earth CNES/Airbus image highlighting (yellow) the area of
- 520 probable stream capture.



522

523 5.2. Neolithic erosion

524

525 Between ~13,800 and 9300 cal BP (1584 cm) influx of clastic matter into Nar Lake was minimal, notwithstanding major changes in hydroclimate and vegetation during 526 527 the Late Glacial-Holocene transition. The Younger Dryas period was characterised by 528 particularly slow sedimentation and very low values for Ti/Ca and K. The time period 529 between 9300 and 8000 cal BP saw the first evidence of significant catchment 530 erosion, indicated by the presence of visible turbidite layers and in Itrax profiles (Fig. 2). This period can be subdivided into an early phase (1584-1550 cm; 9300-9165 cal 531 BP), with only three turbidites but elevated values of K and, especially, Ti/Ca, and a 532 533 later phase in which turbidite layers are more common (1506-1426 cm; 8830 to 8200 534 cal BP). The earlier phase was therefore characterised by catchment disturbance but 535 only rare turbidity flows. This was possibly because the alluvial fan delta had not yet 536 fully formed, so that eroded sediment could pass directly from the catchment into the 537 lake, without intermediate storage. By the later period, the presence of clear 538 turbidites and sharp peaks in detrital indicators indicate that a fan delta must have 539 been in existence. In this scenario, the current fan delta would have formed during 540 the early Holocene, and the initial lack of turbidites may signal the absence of a 541 sublacustrine delta front where these would be generated.

542

543 In terms of causal mechanisms, three potential explanations suggest themselves for 544 the period of early Holocene enhanced hydrogeomorphic instability. First, there is 545 evidence of a major eruption of one of Cappadocia's stratovolcanoes at around 8600 cal BP (Mouralis et al., 2002; Zanchetta et al., 2011; Schmitt et al., 2014), which may 546 547 have caused an influx of atmosphere-derived tephra. This would equate to \sim 1490 cm depth in the NAR10 core sequence. Because the lake lies in a volcanic maar, it is not 548 549 easy to distinguish distal (extracatchment) from proximal (intracatchment) sources 550 of pyroclastic sediment in terms of their geochemistry. However, any volcanic input 551 would have been short-lived, and it did not disturb lake stratification or varve 552 formation, although co-seismic activity may have been responsible for microfaulting 553 of the sediments in unit 5a. Volcanic activity therefore cannot explain the longer-554 term (~1300 year) increase in clastic influx.

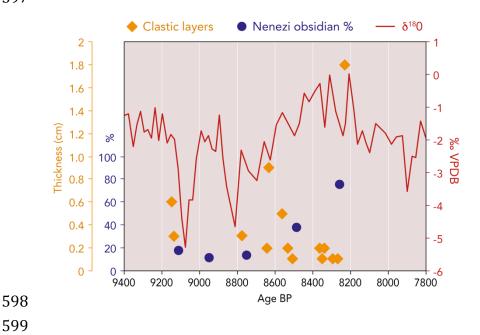
555

556 A second, and more likely, potential cause is climatic. While the early Holocene as a 557 whole was a period of favourable climate and lake water balance, this was 558 interrupted by drier phases, initially around 9300 cal BP and then, more importantly, 559 after 8600 cal BP, culminating in the 8200 cal BP arid event. These hydroclimatic 560 changes are recorded in stable isotope and Ca/Sr data from the NAR10 cores and also 561 in δ^2 H values of lipid biomarkers preserved in pottery from the Neolithic site of 562 Çatalhöyük (Roffet-Salque et al., 2018). The earlier phase of enhanced erosion also 563 saw a sharp, but short-lived, decline in oak pollen and a corresponding increase in the 564 pollen of ruderal plants such as *Rumex* (dock; see also Roberts et al., 2016). However, 565 this evidence is currently based on a single pollen sample and could have been 566 anthropogenic as well as climatic in origin. Aridification trends seem likely to have 567 contributed to Neolithic landscape instability, especially around 8.2 ka, which 568 coincides with the thickest early Holocene turbidite layer. On the other hand, climate 569 alone seems unlikely to be a sufficient explanation, as other climatic transitions 570 toward aridity during the Late Quaternary record from Nar (e.g., onset of the Younger Dryas and of the megadrought at \sim 3.2 ka cal BP) are not accompanied by any 571 572 increase in erosion.

573

574 Third, human-induced disturbance may have contributed to Neolithic erosion in the 575 Nar Lake catchment. The period between 9300 and 8000 cal BP coincides with the 576 Neolithic occupation at Çatalhöyük East Mound, the largest known settlement of this 577 period in Anatolia (Hodder, 2014). One of the main sources of the obsidian found at 578 Çatalhöyük is Nenezi Dağ, a hill located 3 km from Nar Lake, just outside its 579 catchment (Carter, 2011). This obsidian workshop was active throughout the 580 ceramic Neolithic period, especially from 8600 to 8200 cal BP, probably on a seasonal 581 basis. Nar Lake would have provided an obvious base for people mining the black 582 volcanic glass, with freshwater springs around the lake providing a year-round water 583 source for livestock as well as human use. One of the principal freshwater springs lies 584 at the base of what is today eroding badlands. Nenezi obsidian was also used at the slightly earlier, but geographically closer, aceramic Neolithic settlement sites of 585 586 Musalar and Aşıklı Höyük (Kayacan and Özbaşaran, 2007; Balcı, 2010). A comparison 587 of proxies for climate, erosion, and obsidian mining (Fig. 5) shows that the period

- 588 8600-8200 cal BP was marked by an increase in the share of Nenezi Dağ obsidian
- used at Çatalhöyük, corresponding to the main phase of Neolithic turbidite
- 590 deposition. The same period was also characterised by a trend toward climatic
- aridity. Hence, it seems probable that this period of landscape instability resulted
- 592 from climatic and anthropogenic factors operating in combination.
- 593
- 594 Figure 5: NAR10 Neolithic changes in erosion (clastic layer thickness in cm, left
- axis scale) and climate (right axis), along with proportion of Nenezi obsidian
- 596 found at Çatalhöyük (left axis scale; data from Carter, 2011).
- 597



- ----
- 600 5.3. Late Holocene erosion history
- 601

Apart from a single turbidite layer at the time of the 4.2 ka cal BP drought event (962) 602 603 cm) and another around 3.5 ka cal BP (718 cm), no other post-Neolithic clastic layers 604 are recorded in the NAR10 core sequence until sedimentary unit 1. This implies 605 geomorphologically stable terrain with only limited erosion in the lake catchment for 606 most of the mid-Holocene, notwithstanding the fact that this period saw major 607 changes in climate, vegetation cover, and lake level, along with the development of 608 complex societies. Itrax detrital indices indicate minimum levels of clastic input into 609 the lake in unit 4 (8000-6500 cal BP, early-to-mid Chalcolithic), showing that any 610 badland development initiated in the preceding Neolithic period had been arrested

and the landscape had healed. Units 3 and 2 (~4500-2600 cal BP) included periods of 611 612 drought and low lake levels, and also a major decline in woodland cover, attested by 613 lower oak pollen percentages. Even so, the increase in clastic input to the lake, 614 according to Ti/Ca ratios and K concentrations, was modest until 2500 cal BP (unit 1). 615 During the time period before this, the Nar sequence stands in contrast to some other 616 records of erosion history in central Anatolia. In tributary valleys of the middle 617 Sakarya River near Gordion, for example, soil erosion rates started to rise in Late 618 Chalcolithic or Early Bronze Age times (i.e., 5500-4000 cal BP; Marsh and Kealhofer, 619 2014). Similarly, topsoil-derived alluvium (the Upper Alluvial Complex) began to be 620 deposited on the Carsamba alluvial fan in the Konya basin during Bronze Age times 621 (Boyer et al., 2006; Ayala et al., 2017). On the other hand, the increase in inferred 622 hillslope erosion at Nar after 2500 cal BP is similar in date to that recorded from the 623 Gravgaz depression (Dusar et al., 2012). An increase in minerogenic sediment influx 624 is also recorded during the first millennium BCE at Gölhisar, similarly located in 625 southwest Anatolia (Eastwood et al., 1999).

626

During unit 1, influx of clastic sediment increased markedly, rising from <1% to >39%
of the total accumulated sediment (Fig. 2). A total of 97 clastic layers were recorded
visually in unit 1 of the NAR10 cores, representing one event per 27 years, while Itrax
and thin-section data record a larger number of mainly thin (typically <2 mm) layers.
Clastic layers occur throughout the ~6 m of unit 1 in the Itrax data, with the only
significant multidecadal periods of nondeposition being at 1893-1838, 842-775 and
~700-600 cal BP.

634

635 The results of signal processing to generate flood event frequencies and magnitudes 636 per 50 years are shown in Fig. 6. Event frequencies reached a maximum at 1800 cal 637 BP and then declined to reach a minimum at 750 cal BP before gradually rising again 638 toward the present day (Fig. 6a). The thicker (≥ 5 mm) turbidite layers were much 639 less evenly distributed through time than the thin flood layers, with distinct event 640 clusters and intervening time gaps (Fig. 3). This uneven temporal distribution is 641 significant, as it shows that the main turbidite layers were not simply the 642 consequence of an autocyclic process of sediment buildup and fan slope failure. 643 Instead, they must have been controlled primarily by exogenous (catchment) rather

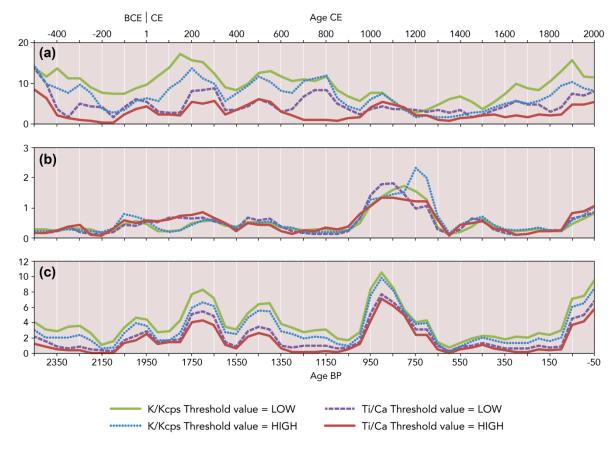
- 644 than endogenous (within-lake) processes. Average layer thickness per 50 years 645 peaked between 1050 and 650 cal BP (Fig. 6b), including the single thickest turbidite 646 layer in the whole core sequence (\sim 10 cm), which dates to 878/868 cal BP (1077±5 CE). This is coeval with dates for the rockcut features in the Nar catchment during the 647 mid-Byzantine Golden Age. By combining layer frequency and thickness, temporal 648 649 changes in total volume of clastic influx into Nar Lake can be calculated (Fig. 6c). This 650 shows three main periods of elevated detrital input from the lake catchment during 651 the last 2500 years, namely 2050-1350 cal BP (phase 3), 1000-700 cal BP (phase 2), 652 and since 50 BP (i.e., since the beginning of the twentieth century, phase 1). The first 653 of these phases displays a cyclical pattern, with three influx peaks separated by 654 intervening troughs (i.e., phases 3a, 3b, and 3c).
- 655

Figure 6 (a) Clastic layer frequency, (b) individual clastic layer thickness, and (c)

total clastic layer thickness per 50 years, since 2500 cal BP in the NAR10 core

658 sequence.





662 Multiproxy comparison can be used to investigate the causal mechanisms behind 663 deposition of clastic layers in Nar Lake during the last 2500 years. As these different 664 proxies derive from the same lake sediment cores analysed for clastic layers, there is 665 no risk of temporal miscorrelation between them. For climate we use δ^{18} O on 666 authigenic carbonate, with more negative isotopic values indicating wetter 667 hydroclimatic conditions (Jones et al., 2006; Dean et al., 2015b). The δ^{18} O data 668 indicate drier conditions before 1500 cal BP, followed by a period of overall wetter 669 climate from 1500 to 600 cal BP, including the Medieval Climate Anomaly. During the 670 Little Ice Age (after 600 cal BP/1400 CE), regional hydroclimate was once again drier, 671 before a shift to wetter conditions during the mid-twentieth century (Fig. 7). Because 672 the mean residence time of water in this nonoutlet lake is around 11 years (Dean et 673 al., 2015a), δ^{18} O data provide decadal-average, not annual, conditions, and they are 674 unlikely to sense individual hydroclimatic events, such as high-intensity storms. 675 676 Land cover can be inferred from pollen analysis (England et al., 2008), with 677 agricultural land use indicated by the proportion of Cerealia-type and olive tree 678 pollen. There was an important phase of olive (Olea) cultivation between ~1900 and 679 1300 cal BP, during Imperial Roman and early Byzantine times. Forest cover is 680 recorded by the percent pollen of deciduous oak (*Quercus*), which peaked between 681 1300 and 1000 cal BP (Fig. 7). This period of reforestation and rewilding coincides historically with the period of the Byzantine-Arab wars, when central Anatolia 682

683 became a frontier zone and was depopulated. Pollen recruitment was not restricted

to the lake catchment but captured regional to extraregional as well as local pollen.

The presence of cereal-type pollen in the sediment cores, for example, does not

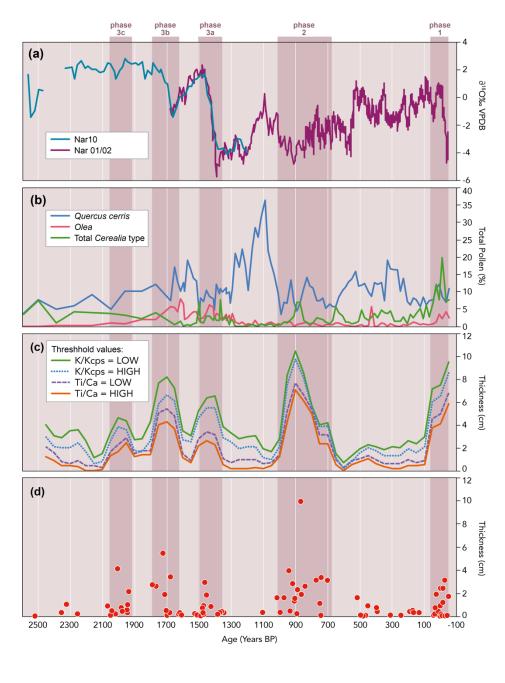
686 necessarily mean that cereal crops were being cultivated within the lake watershed,

- although they must have been grown close by.
- 688
- 689

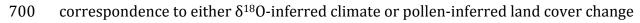
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- $\label{eq:Figure 7: Clastic layers in NAR10 vs. proxies for hydroclimate (\delta^{18} 0), human land$
- 692 cover change (pollen), total and individual clastic layer event thickness. Stable
- isotope data from Jones et al. (2006) and Dean et al. (2015); pollen data partly from
- 694 England et al. (2008). Shaded bands show the main periods of enhanced erosional
- 695 influx into Nar Lake.
- 696

697



699 Long-term trends in the frequency of clastic layers (Fig. 6) show no obvious



701 (Fig. 7). This suggests that runoff- or snowmelt-generated flood frequencies at Nar 702 Lake were controlled neither by the mean climate state nor by catchment land use. 703 Variations in clastic layer thickness show a very different trend from frequency with a 704 notable peak (i.e., thick turbidites) between 1000 and 700 cal BP (950-1250 CE), 705 preceded and followed by phases when the clastic layers were much thinner and 706 therefore unlikely to be true turbidites (Fig. 6). However, the clearest pattern 707 emerges when frequency and magnitude are combined to calculate trends in total 708 thickness of clastic sediment deposited on the lake bed (Figs. 6 and 7). When 709 compared to δ^{18} O-inferred climate, no clear correlation is apparent during the last 710 2500 years. There are peaks in total sediment influx during periods of both dry (e.g., 2000 cal BP) and wet climates (e.g., 900 cal BP). Some, but not all, periods of 711 712 enhanced clastic layer deposition correspond to transitions from drier to wetter 713 hydroclimatic conditions.

714

715 By contrast, an obvious match is seen between most of the clastic sedimentation 716 maxima and pollen-inferred changes in land cover, especially forested land (Fig. 7). 717 The times of maximum clastic influx occurred when forest cover was low and 718 agricultural land use intensity was high in the area around Nar Lake. Similarly, 719 minimum clastic influx corresponds to periods when forest cover expanded, notably 720 between 1300 and 1000 cal BP. In a comparable study of flood layers in laminated 721 lake sediments from northern Iberia, Corella et al. (2016) inferred that major 722 sediment-transporting flood events increased during times of dry climate. However, 723 here too, the main period of increased erosion corresponded to a period of expansion 724 of population and agricultural land use into upland regions, in this case in Medieval 725 times (Rull and Vegas-Vilarubia, 2015).

726

The close historical relationship between land cover and clastic sediment flux at Nar
Lake allows further conclusions to be drawn. First, while runoff-generated flood or
snowmelt events were clearly required in order to detach and transport sediment
from the eroding catchment headslopes, the amount of sediment generated was
greatly amplified by intensified human land use. Prior to 1300 cal BP, pollen evidence
implies the presence of olive groves and vineyards close to Nar Lake. After 1000 cal
BP, the dominant regional land use was agropastoralism (England et al., 2008), and

734 grazing animals (sheep/goat) probably played a significant part in vegetation 735 removal and exposure of bare ground to rain-splash erosion at Nar. Second, while the 736 fan delta at the southern edge of the lake changed the style of clastic sedimentation 737 (i.e., by causing turbidite deposition), there is no evidence for a lagged response in the 738 lake sediment record to external forcing. Nor is the event sequence an autocyclical 739 one, with sediment buildup in the fan delta leading to criticality and delta-front 740 failure. Hence this sediment store does not appear to have significantly delayed 741 transfer of sediment from the catchment to the lake bed. Consequently, clastic layers 742 in the lake can be used as a direct indicator of catchment erosion. Third, these results 743 imply that the most or all of the badland terrain currently existing on the Nar 744 catchment upper slopes formed during the late Holocene as a result of human 745 activity, rather than being ancient and of natural origin. Because some of these 746 badlands were excavated to form cave dwellings during Byzantine periods (primarily 747 1000-850 cal BP), then badland initiation clearly had to precede this time, most likely 748 between 2300 and 1300 cal BP.

749

750 The link between human activity and catchment erosion at Nar extends beyond the 751 lake sediment record to include historically attested changes in the rural economy 752 (e.g., Izdebski, 2013). For example, phase 2 of increased erosion and sediment influx 753 after 1000 cal BP (950 CE) corresponds to a time when a number of Anatolian 754 aristocratic landlords began to invest in expanding their estates after years of warfare 755 and insecurity, as testified in Byzantine documentary sources (Haldon et al., 2014). 756 Similarly the termination of this phase at 1250-1300 CE coincides with the Mongol 757 devastation of the Anatolian countryside during the 1260s, which in turn led to the 758 demise of the regional Selcuk polity in 1299. Significantly, the transfer of political 759 power from Byzantine to Selcuk rule after the battle of Manzikert/Malazgirt in 1071 760 CE did not lead to any diminution of erosion in the Nar catchment, suggesting 761 minimal economic-demographic rupture at this time. The correspondence between 762 these and other historically attested societal changes and the Nar Lake erosion record 763 is remarkable and reinforces the important role that human impact has played for 764 this geomorphic system.

- 765
- 766

767 **6. Conclusions**

768

769 The age of Cappadocia's hoodoos cannot be determined from a single site located at 770 the periphery of the main area of badland terrain. Evidently, most of Cappadocia's 771 badlands must be ancient and/or natural in origin, similar to other Mediterranean 772 badlands in regions such as Almeria in Spain and Kokkinopolis in Greece (Thornes, 773 1987). The sequence of river terraces along the middle reach of the Kızılırmak 774 implies a supply of sediment eroded from Cappadocia throughout the Quaternary 775 (Doğan, 2010, 2011). Equally, no major alluvial-colluvial fill of late Holocene age has 776 been reported at this potential depocentre. Nonetheless, our study from Nar Lake 777 suggests that Cappadocia's badland terrain has become more extensive during the 778 late Holocene and that the primary cause of this extension has been anthropogenic, 779 via deforestation, cultivation of cereals and tree crops, and livestock grazing. Climate 780 change may have played a synergistic role in accelerating erosion, notably during 781 wet-dry or dry-wet transitional phases, and perhaps especially during an initial 782 precocious phase of Neolithic landscape instability. However, on its own, climate 783 change cannot explain the pattern in sediment flux into Nar Lake during the last ~ 14 784 ka. Lithogenic element concentrations or ratios (e.g., Ti/Ca) have sometimes been 785 used as a proxy for runoff and rainfall in Mediterranean sedimentary records (e.g., 786 Ülgen et al., 2012; Heymann et al., 2013), but in Nar Lake their explanation relates at 787 least as much to human-induced land cover change as to palaeoclimate. For example, 788 erosion rates remained low during the major climatic and vegetation transition of the 789 Late Glacial to early Holocene, as they did during most times of extreme climatic 790 aridity during the Bronze Age. The low rate of sediment flux during the Bronze Age is 791 doubly surprising given regional archaeological evidence for demographic increase 792 (Allcock and Roberts, 2014; Woodbridge et al., 2018, in press) and pollen and 793 charcoal evidence of forest decline. Not all periods of regional demographic increase 794 may have affected the immediate vicinity of Nar Lake, whose erosion history 795 represents a signal of local land use. However, a similar trend characterised small 796 stream catchments draining into the lower Orontes River at the northern end of the 797 Levant near Antioch/Antakya (Casana, 2008). Here too, the major increase in 798 sediment yield occurred with land use intensification during Classical rather than 799 Bronze or Iron Age times. More widely across the Mediterranean, economic

intensification by complex societies during the second and third millennia BP led to
major landscape changes and increased soil degradation (Walsh et al., in review).

803 During the last 2600 years, the varved nature of Nar Lake sediments has allowed an 804 unusually detailed and well-dated record of clastic event pulses. Because of the 805 existence of an alluvial fan delta on the lake edge, the most important of these 806 depositional events were as turbidites rather than normal flood layers. Even so, 807 pollen data show clearly that catchment erosion increased when there was more 808 intense human land use (arable and grazing), notably during Classical, Medieval, and 809 modern times. Similarly, erosion decreased when forest cover expanded, for 810 example, between 1300 and 1000 cal BP. The evidence for landscape recovery at this 811 and other times of reduced human pressure shows that even actively eroding badland 812 terrain can heal itself if the *environmental footprint* of humans is reduced and 813 sustained for sufficient time. The sedimentary record indicates that the current 814 phase of accelerated erosion at Nar only started in ~1920 and that it was preceded by 815 more than four centuries when erosion rates were substantially lower and apparently 816 more sustainable. While not the natural baseline that existed during the early 817 Holocene, the Ottoman period of moderate-intensity agropastoral land use could offer 818 a realistic potential target state for geomorphological landscape restoration at this 819 site. The Nar Lake catchment record thus appears to offer a historical 820 geomorphological example of a scenario described by Butzer (1974, p. 73) showing 821 how, 'with careful cultivation or pasturing of limited numbers of suitable livestock, 822 soil erosion can be kept to an acceptable minimum'.

823

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