

1 **Insights into the Major Processes Driving the Global**
2 **Distribution of Copper in the Ocean from a Global**
3 **Model**

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6 **Key Points:**

- 7 • Phytoplankton uptake of ligand-bound copper is necessary to meet phytoplankton
8 copper requirements
- 9 • Reversible scavenging is responsible for the linear profile of dissolved copper
- 10 • Ligands are important drivers of the surface Cu cycling

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Abstract

Copper (Cu) is an unusual micronutrient as it can limit primary production, but can also become toxic for growth and cellular functioning under high concentrations. Cu also displays an atypical linear profile, which will modulate its availability to marine microbes across the ocean. Multiple chemical forms of Cu coexist in seawater as dissolved species and understanding the main processes shaping the Cu biogeochemical cycling is hampered by key knowledge gaps. For instance, the drivers of its specific linear profile in seawater are unknown and the bioavailable form of Cu for marine phytoplankton is debated. Here, we developed a global 3D biogeochemical model of oceanic Cu within the NEMO/PISCES global model, which represents the global distribution of dissolved copper well. Using our model, we find that reversible scavenging of Cu by organic particles drives the dissolved Cu vertical profile and its distribution in the deep ocean. The low modeled inorganic copper (Cu') in the surface ocean means that Cu' cannot maintain phytoplankton cellular copper requirements within observed ranges. The global budget of oceanic Cu from our model suggests that its residence time may be shorter than previously estimated, and provides a global perspective on Cu cycling and the main drivers of Cu biogeochemistry in different regions. Cu scavenging within particle microenvironments and uptake by denitrifying bacteria could be a significant component of Cu cycling in oxygen minimum zones.

1 Introduction

Copper (Cu) has a specific place among micronutrients; it is involved in many cellular reactions such as oxygen and iron acquisition (La Fontaine et al., 2002; Maldonado et al., 2006; Merchant & Helmann, 2012), but also denitrification (Granger & Ward, 2003), which results in bacteria and phytoplankton having an essential Cu requirement. However, high concentrations of copper in seawater can also induce toxic effects (Brand et al., 1986; Debelius et al., 2011; Moffett et al., 1997), with a deleterious impact on growth. For this reason, copper is often referred to as a 'Goldilocks' element, whereby there is a balance between enough Cu to avoid growth limitation, but not too much as to induce toxicity. Understanding the role of copper as an essential micronutrient or toxin requires knowledge of the major processes shaping the availability of copper in space and time, most notably encompassed in the vertical profile. Uptake of Cu will be affected by its bioavailability, which is also affected by the chemical speciation of Cu. Cu is also of interest because of its emerging linkages to iron cycling and acquisition (e.g. Maldonado et al., 2006; Peers

43 & Price, 2006; Wood, 1978). Newly available datasets concerning the large scale distribution
44 of Cu in the ocean are emerging as part of the GEOTRACES program (e.g. Schlitzer
45 et al., 2018) and reveal the key features of its oceanic distribution. For instance, Cu concentrations
46 are higher in the surface coastal Pacific and Atlantic oceans, potentially due to a combination
47 of river discharge and aerosol deposition (Boiteau et al., 2016; Jacquot & Moffett, 2015;
48 Roshan & Wu, 2015). In the Southern Ocean, surface Cu concentrations are high in winter
49 and the major driving processes its variability in the surface layer are suggested to be
50 phytoplankton uptake and mixed layer depth variations (Cloete et al., 2018; Ellwood,
51 2008). A key unknown remains the unusual linear profile of Cu with respect to depth,
52 which typifies profiles across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (Heller & Croot, 2015; Jacquot
53 & Moffett, 2015; Roshan & Wu, 2015). Specifically, the relative role played by regeneration
54 of organic material, interior sources, scavenging and the role of organic complexation of
55 Cu with ligands in shaping the linear Cu profile remain poorly constrained globally.

56 The vertical distribution of Cu shows a notable difference to 'nutrient-like' or 'scavenged'
57 elements, being typified by a linear increase with depth (Tagliabue, 2019). To explain
58 the widespread linear increase of dissolved Cu concentrations with depth, Hines et al.
59 (1984) and Biller and Bruland (2013) hypothesized the presence of deep water sources
60 of dissolved Cu from sediments or hydrothermal vents. However, it has been suggested
61 that Cu from these sources would be associated with high particle loads which would likely
62 scavenge Cu back to the sea floor, having very little impact on the wider water column
63 (German et al., 1991; Jacquot & Moffett, 2015; Roshan & Wu, 2015). Moreover, if hydrothermal
64 and sedimentary sources were the only driver of Cu vertical profiles, the linearity might
65 be expected to only occur in specific areas of the ocean due to the noted regionality in
66 hydrothermal signals (Tagliabue & Resing, 2016). Alternatively, Little et al. (2013) hypothesized
67 the existence of reversible scavenging of Cu onto particles as an explanation for the Cu
68 vertical profile. As also suggested for zinc (Weber et al., 2018), high particle concentrations
69 in surface seawater lead to high scavenging of dissolved phases onto particles and the decreasing
70 particle concentrations with depth then promotes the release from particle phases. Although
71 a reversible scavenging model brings a theoretical solution to the linear Cu profile, it has
72 not been tested globally.

73 The chemical speciation of Cu in seawater is a key component of its oceanic cycling
74 with more than 99 % of dissolved Cu (DCu) in the surface being organically bound with
75 ligands (Coale & Bruland, 2003; Jacquot & Moffett, 2015), and inorganic copper (Cu')

76 is only a very small fraction. Many different compounds form the ligand pool in seawater,
77 and Cu ligands are usually grouped into two categories. Strong ligands (with conditional
78 stability constants, K_L for the reaction $Cu' + L = CuL$, over $10^{13.5}$) usually produced
79 by bacteria and plankton (Moffett & Brand, 1996), and weak ligands (K_L lower than $10^{13.5}$)
80 that are usually derived from organic matter originated from sea or from land (Whitby
81 et al., 2018). Strong ligands are often thiol groups (among which glutathione is the most
82 represented) and are produced by micro organisms, in particular diatoms, in response
83 to elevated Cu' concentrations to detoxify copper (Leal et al., 1999; Whitby et al., 2018).
84 Because of the complexity of the chemical identification of ligands, their role in oceanic
85 Cu biogeochemical cycling is difficult to characterize.

86 The organic speciation of Cu may control its bioavailability to phytoplankton. Because
87 of its important physiological role (e.g. for iron, oxygen and nitrogen cycling; Granger
88 & Ward, 2003; La Fontaine et al., 2002; Maldonado et al., 2006; Merchant & Helmann,
89 2012), Cu is required in phytoplankton cells in proportions varying on average between
90 0.4 and 2 mmol:mol relative to P, and up to 3 mmolCu:molP (Twining & Baines, 2013;
91 Twining et al., 2019). The most bioavailable form of copper for phytoplankton is Cu' ,
92 but the very low concentrations in surface seawater may indicate that insufficient Cu'
93 is available to meet phytoplankton requirements. Semeniuk et al. (2009) suggest that
94 ligand-bound copper can be at least partly available to phytoplankton and bacteria. Whether
95 dissolved Cu distributions and cellular quotas can be reconciled with Cu' as the only bioavailable
96 form remains untested.

97 In this study, we present a global 3D coupled physical-biogeochemical ocean model
98 of copper, implemented in the state-of-the-art NEMO/PISCES platform that simulates
99 global biogeochemical cycling (Aumont et al., 2015; Tagliabue et al., 2018) to examine
100 the role of different external sources and internal cycling in regulating the distribution
101 of Cu and its bioavailability. We describe the model main equations, physical and biogeochemical
102 forcings, initial conditions and the different experiments in section 2. Section 3 presents
103 an evaluation of the model results with available measurements. This section also provides
104 evidence that reversible scavenging is the main driver of the dissolved Cu linear profile
105 in the global ocean and that ligand-bound Cu is at least partially bioavailable for phytoplankton.
106 Section 3.4 presents a global budget of oceanic Cu including all biogeochemical reactions
107 and fluxes. Section 4 puts forward a holistic view of Cu cycling based on our model, which
108 highlights the major processes and sources impacting Cu in all ocean regions. Finally,

section 5 provides an analysis of Cu cycling in the Pacific oxygen minimum zone (OMZ), and tries to identify the key processes responsible for the [DCu] observed in the region.

2 Methods

2.1 Model description

We embedded a 3D model of Cu biogeochemistry within the widely used PISCES model (Aumont et al., 2015), coupled to the dynamical model NEMO (Madec, 2006). PISCES reproduces the biogeochemical cycling of various macronutrients (namely phosphate PO_4 , nitrate NO_3 , ammonium NH_4 and silicate Si), plankton (nanophytoplankton, diatoms, microzooplankton and mesozooplankton), and one trace element (iron, Fe). Recent developments allowed representing new trace elements such as manganese (Mn) and cobalt (Co) (Hulten et al., 2017; Tagliabue et al., 2018), and gave new insights on the processes governing Fe distributions in the ocean (Tagliabue & Resing, 2016). Seven new tracers were implemented in PISCES in order to represent copper biogeochemical cycling: dissolved copper (DCu), scavenged copper, which represents copper adsorbed on the surface of particles (SCu, divided into small and large scavenged particles, SCup and SCug) this copper can be desorbed to the dissolved phase at depth, copper associated with biogenic particles (CuPart, divided into small and large copper particles, pCuPart and gCuPart) that can only be resupplied via bacterial activity, and copper in phytoplankton cells (Cu^ϕ , with $\phi = \text{N}$ for nanophytoplankton or $\phi = \text{D}$ for diatoms). All parameter values are summarized in Table 1. Other biogeochemical parameters of PISCES are found in Aumont et al. (2015).

2.1.1 General equations

The general equation for DCu cycling is equation 1:

$$\frac{\delta \text{DCu}}{\delta t} = \text{Riv}_{\text{Cu}} + \text{Aero}_{\text{Cu}} - \text{Up}_{\text{Cu}} - \text{Scav}_{\text{Cu}} + \text{Remin}_{\text{Cu}} + \text{Recycling}_{\text{Cu}} \quad (1)$$

DCu is the sum of the dissolved forms of copper in seawater: Cu' and ligand-bound copper (CuL). Ligands can represent a variety of compounds with a wide range of Cu affinity.

As a first approach, we use a simple ligand model with one type of ligand (L), uniformly distributed over the ocean ($[\text{L}] = 1 \text{ nM}$) and a fixed complexation constant (K_L) of $10^{13.5}$, representing a bulk average of all ligand types for the entire water column.

Riv_{Cu} and Aero_{Cu} represent Cu from external sources (rivers and aerosols respectively). Up_{Cu} is Cu uptake by phytoplankton, $\text{Recycling}_{\text{Cu}}$, is recycling of dissolved Cu by zooplankton,

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Table 1. Summary of the Cu model parameters. When two values are given, the first is for nanophytoplankton, the second is for diatoms.

Name	Description (units)	Value	Reference
Sol_{Cu}	Solubility of aerosol Cu	0.40	Paytan et al. (2009)
curat	Cu:C in zooplankton ($\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$)	10	This study
ks_{Cu_ϕ}	Half saturation constant for DCu uptake (nmolCu L^{-1})	4,12	This study, Guo et al. (2010)
θ_{max}	Maximum Cu:P in phytoplankton ($\text{molCu}:\text{molP}$)	2E-3	Twining and Baines (2013)
KDCug	Partition coefficient for Cu scavenging on big particles (1/mmol)	5E-3	This study
KDCup	Partition coefficient for Cu scavenging on small particles (1/mmol)	100E-3	This study
KL	Cu ligand binding strength	$10^{13.5}$	Whitby et al. (2018)

138 $Scav_{Cu}$ represents the scavenging flux, and $Remin_{Cu}$ is bacterial remineralization from
 139 particulate material.

140 The general equation for scavenged Cu is equation 2:

$$\frac{\delta SCu}{\delta t} = Scav_{Cu} - sinking \quad (2)$$

141 With $Scav_{Cu}$ copper scavenging and $sinking$ SCu sinking rate, increasing with depth
 142 following the same equations as C, Fe and Co (Tagliabue et al., 2018).

143 The general equation for Cu^ϕ is equation 3:

$$\frac{\delta Cu^\phi}{\delta t} = Up_{Cu} - m^\phi - Graz_\rho^\phi \quad (3)$$

144 With m^ϕ phytoplankton mortality, $Graz_\rho^\phi$ grazing of zooplankton species ρ on phytoplankton
 145 species ϕ (with $\rho = Z$ for microzooplankton and $\rho = M$ for mesozooplankton). Calculation
 146 of these terms are described in Aumont et al. (2015).

147 The general equation for CuPart is equation 4:

$$\frac{\delta CuPart}{\delta t} = Scav_{Cu} + Excr_{Cu} + Agg_{Cu} - Remin_{Cu} \quad (4)$$

148 With Agg_{Cu} the aggregation term which is a positive function of particulate organic matter
 149 (see Aumont et al., 2015), and $Excr_{Cu}$ the excretion of Cu via zooplankton faecal pellets.

150 The biogeochemical parameter values are based on the PISCES general equations
 151 valid for macronutrients (Aumont et al., 2015), Fe (Tagliabue & Resing, 2016) and Co
 152 (Tagliabue et al., 2018).

153 **2.1.2 External Sources of Copper**

154 We derive riverine inputs of DCu from the Fe:Cu ratio in rivers based on Gaillardet
 155 et al. (2014). Cu flux is computed in PISCES similarly to the other nutrient fluxes (see
 156 Aumont et al., 2015).

157 Atmospheric deposition of natural and anthropogenic Cu is derived from the modeled
 158 deposition fluxes of Paytan et al. (2009). Solubility of Cu from atmospheric deposition
 159 is fixed to 40% as an average for all aerosol types represented in the atmospheric model
 160 (see also Sholkovitz et al., 2010, for a discussion on aerosol Cu solubility), and dissolution
 161 is considered instantaneous upon deposition on the surface ocean. Atmospheric Cu deposition
 162 is added to the DCu pool according to the following equation:

$$[DCu] = [DCu] + \mu_{Cu} \times Sol_{Cu} \quad (5)$$

163 With μ_{Cu} the total (dry + wet) atmospheric Cu flux and Sol_{Cu} the solubility. Atmospheric
 164 Cu fluxes show a satisfying correlation with measurements (see Mahowald et al., 2018,
 165 Figures 4e and 4f). No Cu input from hydrothermal vents or from sediments are considered
 166 in this model.

167 **2.1.3 Reversible scavenging model**

168 We simulate reversible Cu scavenging onto organic particles, similar to zinc (Weber
 169 et al., 2018). This model assumes a continuous exchange between the inorganic copper
 170 (Cu') and organic particles, instead of the irreversible uptake of trace metals onto particles,
 171 which is used to represent most trace metals (see Bacon & Anderson, 1982). We assume
 172 a fast equilibrium between adsorption and desorption, allowing us to describe Cu scavenging
 173 as a function of the organic particles concentration ($Part_C$) and a partition coefficient
 174 ($KDCu$). The equation for scavenging is equation 6.

$$175 \quad Scav_{Cu} = \frac{ztrc}{(ztrc + 1) \times Cu'} - SCu \quad (6)$$

$$176 \quad ztrc = Part_C * KDCu \quad (7)$$

177 The strong KL for copper-ligand complexation keeps [Cu'] low in the water column.
 178 Therefore, the term on the right hand side of equation 6 is positively correlated with $Part_C$.
 179 When this term is greater than 0, net scavenging is occurring. On the contrary, if the
 180 particle load ($Part_C$) is low, resolubilization is occurring (Cu' release from the scavenged
 pool).

181 **2.1.4 Copper biological uptake**

182 Cu uptake by phytoplankton is modelled following the Co model from Tagliabue
 183 et al. (2018) and is represented using an evolving Cu:P ratio in the planktonic cells (equation
 184 8).

$$185 \quad Up_{Cu} = \mu_{max}^{\phi} \times \theta_{max}^{\phi} \times \frac{bCu}{bCu + ksCu_{\phi}} \times \frac{1 - \theta^{\phi}/\theta_{max}^{\phi}}{1.05 - \theta^{\phi}/\theta_{max}^{\phi}} \quad (8)$$

186 In this equation, μ_{max}^{ϕ} is the maximum phytoplankton growth rate and is fixed to 1.05
 187 day⁻¹ for both nanophytoplankton and diatoms (Aumont et al., 2015). θ^{ϕ} is the Cu:P
 188 ratio and θ_{max}^{ϕ} the maximum ratio (see table 1 and Twining & Baines, 2013). bCu is the
 189 bioavailable Cu concentration (bioavailable Cu can be all DCu or Cu' alone) and $ksCu_{\phi}$
 the half saturation constant (expressed for DCu in nmolCu L⁻¹ for Cu uptake) for phytoplankton

group ϕ . Following equation 8, Cu uptake is down-regulated when Cu:P gets close to the maximum value.

2.2 Experimental design

After a 500-year spin-up, all simulations ran for 600 years starting from the same initial conditions. The reference simulation is called REF and two sets of experiments were performed (SCAV and INORGANIC-CU). SCAV is designed to quantify the effects of different partition coefficients (KDCu) on copper vertical distribution (LOWSCAV and HIGHSCAV). FESCAV serves as a control to show that reversible scavenging is responsible for the linear [DCu] profile over the ocean. In this simulation, Cu scavenging is similar to iron scavenging: once Cu' is adsorbed onto particles, it can only be remobilized by bacterial activity or recycled after grazing by zooplankton. The aim of the INORGANIC-CU and INORGANIC-CU2 simulations is to observe whether phytoplankton can maintain their Cu:P quotas if they were only using Cu' as a Cu source instead of using Cu' and CuL as in REF. INORGANIC-CU2 aims at maximizing the uptake of Cu' by phytoplankton by lowering phytoplankton half saturation constants for Cu' uptake. All simulations and their specific parametrizations are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of all simulations. KDCup and KDCug are units are 1/mmol, ksCu_N and ksCu_D units are nmolCu L⁻¹. Rev. Scav. stands for reversible scavenging.

Name	KDCup	KDCug	Rev. Scav.	ksCu _N	ksCu _D	bCu
REF	100E-3	5E-3	Yes	4	12	DCu
LOWSCAV	50E-3	1E-3	Yes	4	12	DCu
HIGHSCAV	200E-3	10E-3	Yes	4	12	DCu
FESCAV	100E-3	5E-3	No	4	12	DCu
INORGANIC-CU	100E-3	5E-3	Yes	4	12	Cu'
INORGANIC-CU2	100E-3	5E-3	Yes	0.01	0.03	Cu'

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Dissolved Copper Distribution

The modelled DCu distribution in our reference simulation (REF) is able to closely reproduce measurements from different campaigns and experiments (A. Gourain pers. comm. compiled data from e.g. the GEOTRACES database (Schlitzer et al., 2018), line P transect in the North Pacific (Posacka et al., 2017; Semeniuk et al., 2016) and PINTS expedition in the Tasman Sea (Hassler et al., 2014) see Figures 1a, d and g). Average [DCu] in the first 50 m is $0.83 \text{ nmolCu L}^{-1}$, with minimal concentrations (below $0.20 \text{ nmolCu L}^{-1}$) in the subtropical Pacific along the Indonesian coasts and in the subtropical oligotrophic gyres, and maximal concentrations (over $1.5 \text{ nmolCu L}^{-1}$) in the Southern Ocean where modelled [DCu] slightly overestimates the measurements. However, most of the measurements in this region are obtained during summer, which may explain the lower annual mean in our model. An assessment of the seasonal variability in our model showed that surface [DCu] can vary by up to 1 nmolCu L^{-1} in this region (see Figure B.1). In the intermediate layer (400-500m), the model overestimates [DCu] by around 40 % in the Pacific OMZ. In the deep ocean, concentrations in the North Pacific are measured between 2 and 3 nmolCu L^{-1} and the model values are over 3 to 4 nmolCu L^{-1} .

Overall, modeled [DCu] is coherent with the measurements of the vertical DCu distribution along the GA03 (Roshan & Wu, 2015), GA10 (Little et al., 2018) and GP16 (Boiteau et al., 2016) GEOTRACES sections as represented in Figure 2. The REF simulation reproduces the general feature of a linear increase of [DCu] with depth for all sections. [DCu] in the Pacific OMZ is overestimated (section GP16, between 400 and 700m depth, figure 1d). Along GP16, the [DCu] increase with depth is too strong, leading to overestimated concentrations between 500 and 3000 m. In the deep waters of the North Atlantic (section GA03, Figure 2a), [DCu] is well represented in the western sector (between 20 and 40°W), but overestimated by around 0.6 to $0.8 \text{ nmolCu L}^{-1}$ in the eastern sector.

When evaluated statistically, the REF model reproduces the observations well across different depth ranges (Figure 3a) with a global correlation of 0.86 and the model - data regression line (slope=0.92) is very close to the 1:1 line. The weaker model performances between 200 and 500m ($R=0.42$) highlight the model deficiencies in the eastern Pacific OMZ in particular. Concerning the vertical profile, when the model is compared to the data at the same vertical co-ordinates, it remains within the observation variability and reproduces the progressive DCu increase with depth well (Figure 3b). Overall, the REF

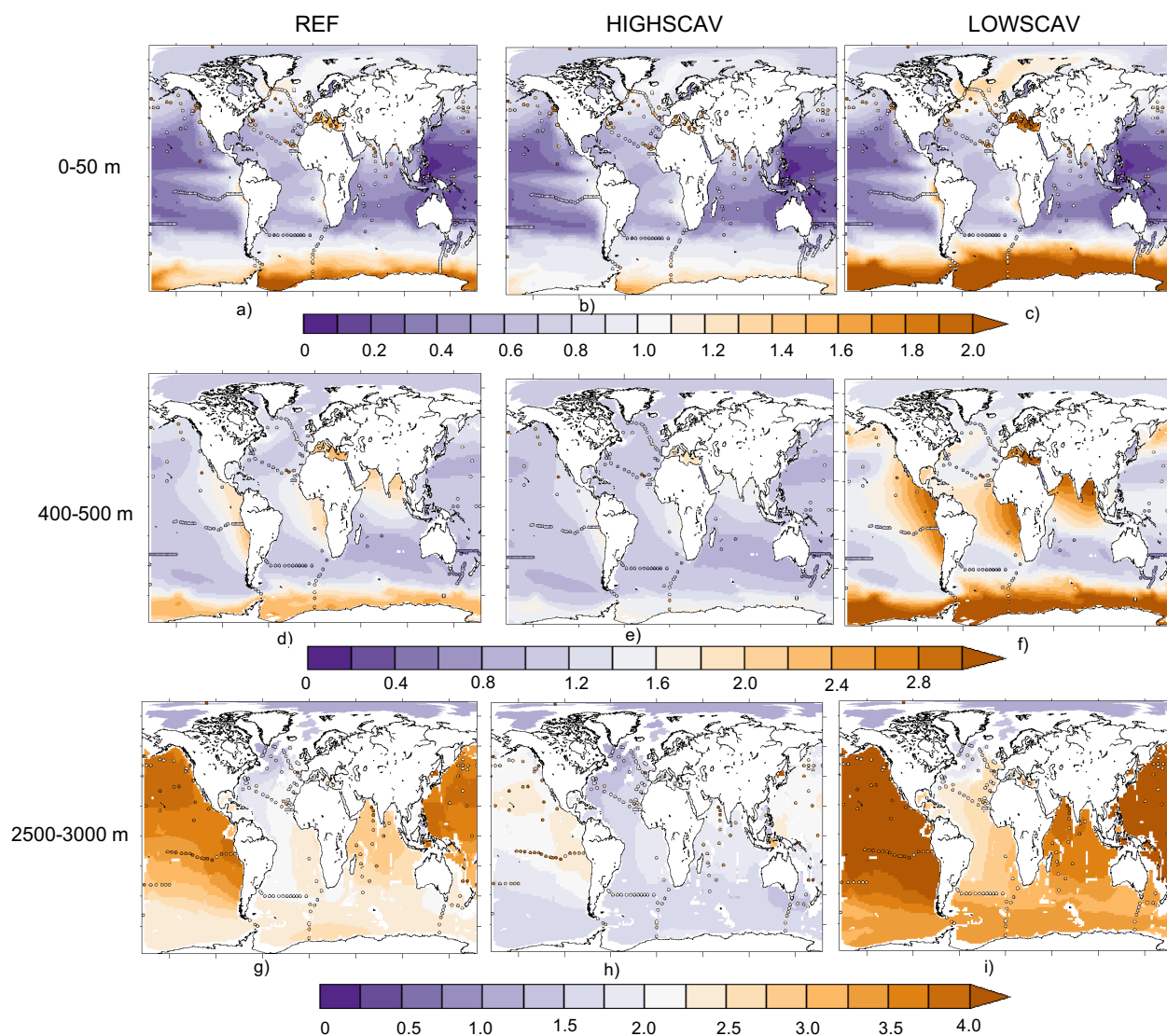


Figure 1. Average DCu concentration (nmol L^{-1}) from the REF (a, d, g), HIGHSCAV (b, e, h) and LOWSCAV (c, f, i) simulations in the 0-50 m (a, b, c), 400-500 m (d, e, f) and 2500-3000 m (g, h, i) depth layers. Dots represent data points.

simulation is a solid foundation from which to assess the main processes driving the bioavailability and distribution of Cu in the ocean.

3.2 The Role of Reversible Scavenging

The simulations LOWSCAV, HIGHSCAV and FESCAV examine the effects of different scavenging modes and partition coefficients on [DCu] vertical distribution. Figure 4a shows

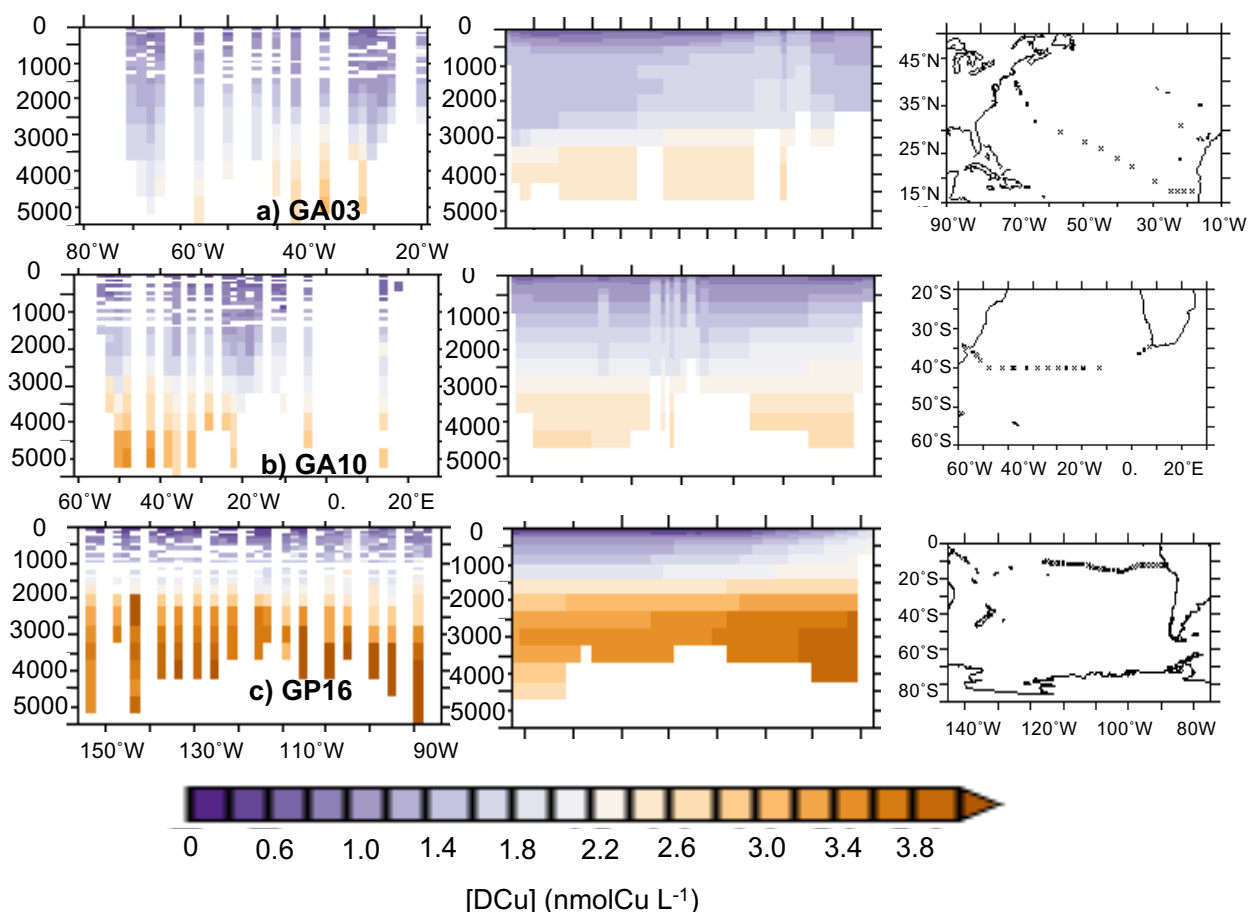


Figure 2. Average [DCu] (nmol L^{-1}) along the GA03 (a, top), GP10 (b, middle) and GP16 (c, bottom) GEOTRACES cruises. Left panels represent the data, middle panels the REF simulation and right panels cruise tracks.

244 how reversible scavenging (simulations REF, HIGHSCAV and LOWSCAV) is responsible
 245 for the linear profile of [DCu]. The average vertical DCu profile in REF can be modeled
 246 by a linear regression with $R=0.62$ and $p\text{-value} < 1\%$. Reducing or enhancing the scavenging
 247 partition coefficient as in HIGHSCAV or LOWSCAV modifies the slope of the regression
 248 accordingly and systematically degrades the regression coefficient (R) in comparison to
 249 REF. The high partition coefficients in HIGHSCAV results in Cu' being quickly adsorbed
 250 onto particles and removed from the water column via sinking, leading to underestimated
 251 [DCu] over the water column by about 1 nmolCu L^{-1} (see Figures 1b, e, h and 4b, e and
 252 h). On the other hand, the low partition coefficients in LOWSCAV leads to overestimated
 253 [DCu] (see Figures 1c, f, i and 4c, f and i) and increases the average deep [DCu] by about
 254 $0.6 \text{ nmolCu L}^{-1}$. The iron-like scavenging represented in FESCAV is the most common

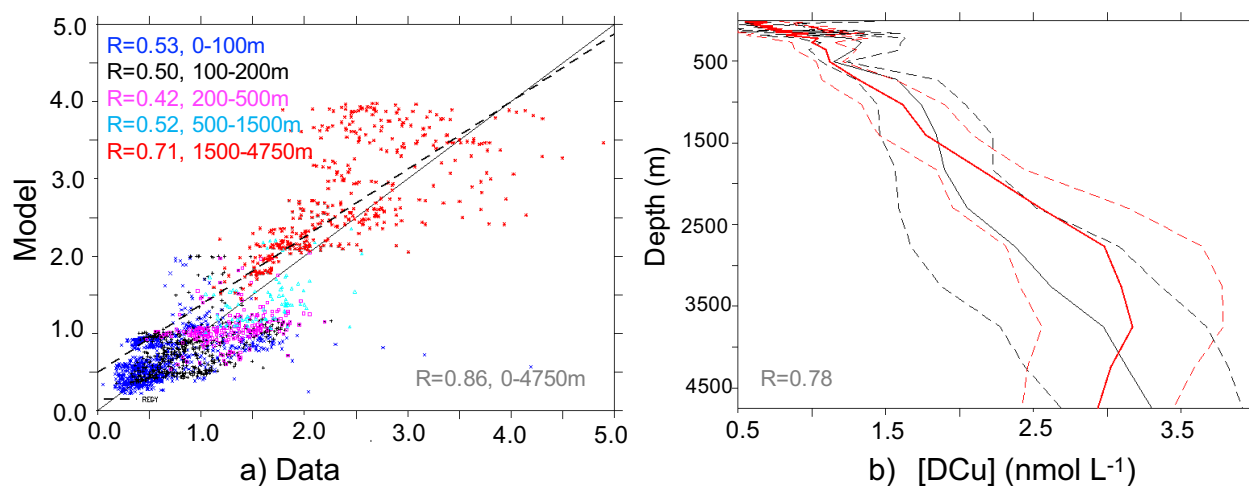


Figure 3. (a) Scatter plot of DCu concentration (nmol L^{-1}) in the model versus measured concentrations, the black line represents the 1:1 line, the dotted line represents the slope of the model versus data regression. Numbers in the left corner represent the correlation coefficient (R , log-log regression) and the depth range, numbers in the left corner represent values for the entire water column. Statistics are calculated on the log of values. Colored dots represent different depth ranges. The number of observations per depth range is: 0-100m: 924, 100-200m: 532, 200-500m: 222, 500-1500m: 180, 1500-4750m: 497. (b) Average [DCu] profiles from the data (black line) and from the model (red line). Dashed lines represent the standard deviation, number on the left corner represents correlation coefficient between the model and data.

form of trace metal scavenging and leads to a nutrient-like [DCu] profile across the global ocean, with uniform concentrations around 1 nmolCu L^{-1} below the euphotic layer.

Overall, [DCu] in the surface ocean is not highly impacted by the scavenging partition coefficient (see Figure 1a, b and c), however, the partition coefficient impacts [DCu] in the OMZ regions and the anomalies propagate to the deep ocean layers, affecting the entire water column (see Figure 1d, to i).

3.3 Bioavailable form of Copper

We conducted a set of simulations to assess how different assumptions regarding phytoplankton uptake impacts DCu distribution in the ocean. The total Cu' pool in the global ocean is 83 times smaller than total DCu in the REF simulation. In agreement, Coale and Bruland (2003) and Moffett et al. (1997) observed that over 99 % of DCu is

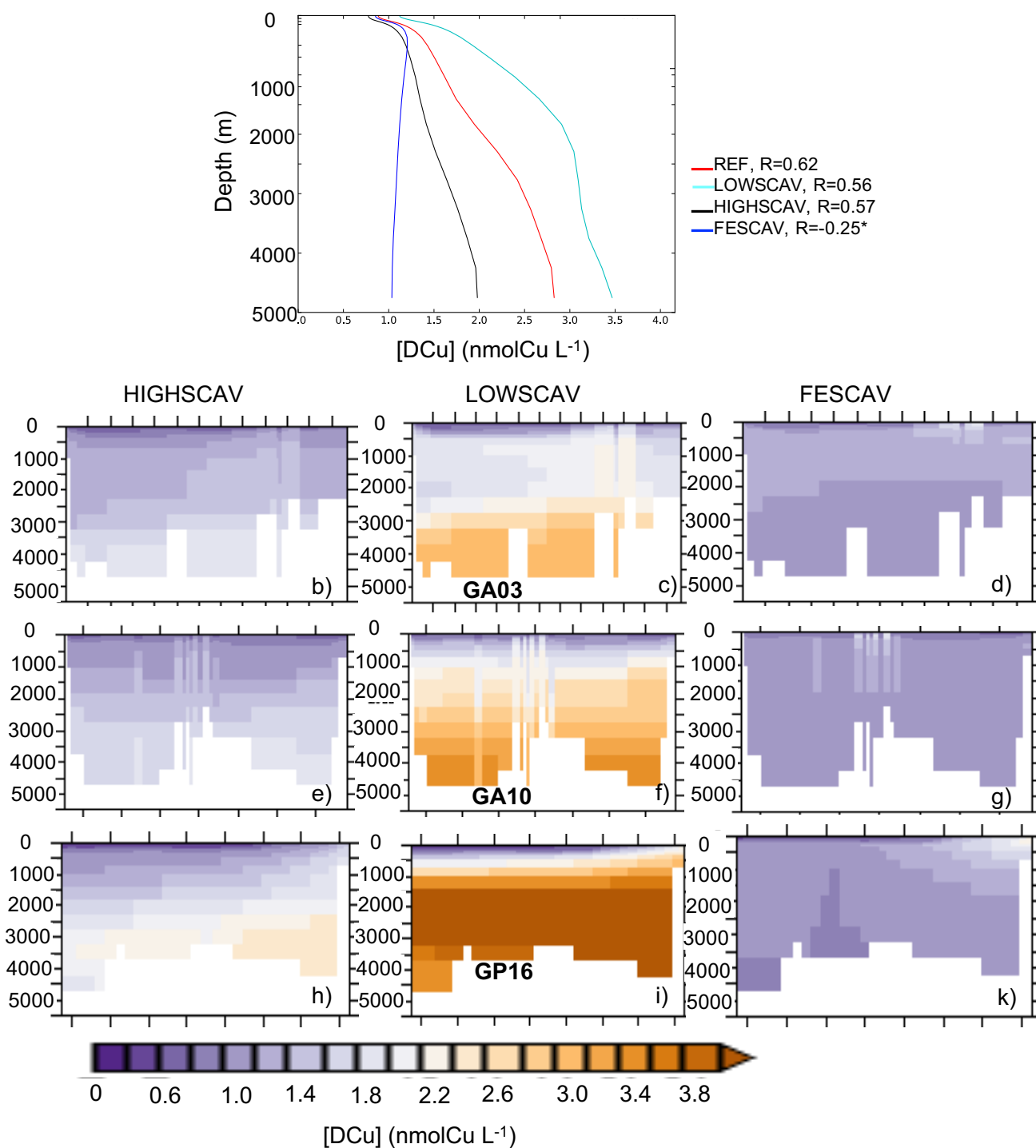


Figure 4. Average profiles of [DCu] in the global ocean from REF and all the SCAV simulations. Numbers represent the regression fit (R) between [DCu] and depth, the star indicates that the statistical regression is not significant (p -value > 1%). The panels b to k represent [DCu] in HIGHSCAV (b, e and h), LOWSCAV (c, f and i) and FESCAV (d, g and k) along the GA03, GA10 and GP16 cruise sections. See Figure 2 for the data and REF concentrations).

266 bound with organic ligands. Map 5d shows that, in REF, equatorial and high latitudes
 267 Cu:P quotas are around 1.2 to 1.5 mmolCu:molP. Around the East Asian coasts, the Baltic
 268 Sea, the Bering Strait and the Drake Passage, the cellular Cu:P ratio is below 1 mmolCu:molP.
 269 Phytoplankton Cu:P in REF is close to the maximal value of 2 mmolCu:molP in most
 270 oceanic regions, indicating that phytoplankton is able to satisfy its copper demand. We
 271 also calculated the total Cu uptake in the first 100 meters of the global ocean and found
 272 a total uptake of 31 GmolCu year⁻¹. Converted into pmolCu day⁻¹ L⁻¹, results from
 273 REF give 2.4 pmolCu day⁻¹ L⁻¹, which is on the lower end of Semeniuk et al. (2009)
 274 and Semeniuk et al. (2016). These authors also found variability in uptake rates in the
 275 northwestern Pacific (between 3 and 125 pmolCu day⁻¹ L⁻¹).

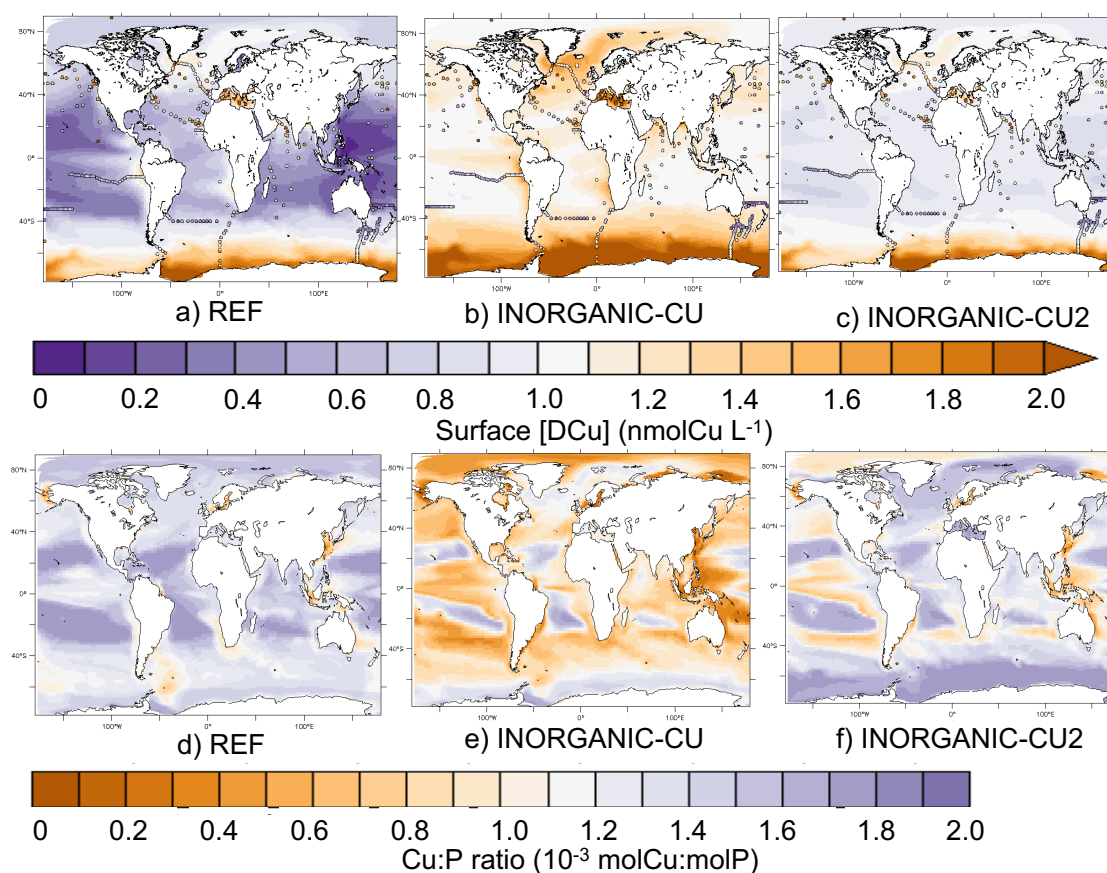


Figure 5. Top row: maps of [DCu] in surface (0-100m) in REF and in the INORGANIC-CU and INORGANIC-CU2 simulations (background) and in the GEOTRACES data (circles). Bottom row: maps of the average Cu:P ratio (mmolCu molP) in phytoplankton cells (0-100m)

276 In INORGANIC-CU, reducing the bioavailable Cu pool to only Cu' leads to only
 277 50 to 80 % ligand-bound copper and high surface [DCu] in all oceanic regions, including

278 the oligotrophic gyres where it is close to the ligands concentration (around 1 nmol L^{-1} ,
279 Figure 5). Improving the ability of phytoplankton to acquire Cu' at low concentrations
280 by reducing the ksCu_ϕ to 0.01 nmol L^{-1} and 0.03 nmol L^{-1} in the INORGANIC-CU2
281 simulation brings the proportion of ligand-bound copper over 95 % in most parts of the
282 ocean. However, there is, to our knowledge, no published value of phytoplankton half
283 saturation constant for Cu. However, Figure 5c shows that reducing ksCu_ϕ still leads
284 to up to 50% overestimation in surface $[\text{DCu}]$ and low spatial variability as high levels
285 of CuL remain unused in the surface ocean. Figures 5e and f show that relying on Cu'
286 as the only Cu source decreases the Cu:P ratio in the phytoplankton cells below that of
287 REF, even with a very high phytoplankton affinity for Cu (INORGANIC-CU2). In the
288 equatorial and high latitudes regions, Cu:P quotas are around 0.5 to 1.5 mmolCu:molP
289 in INORGANIC-CU2 and below 0.5-1 mmolCu:molP in INORGANIC-CU. Around the
290 East Asian coasts, the Baltic Sea, the Bering Strait and the Drake Passage, the cellular
291 Cu:P ratio is below 0.5 mmolCu:molP in INORGANIC-CU2 and is close to 0 in INORGANIC-
292 CU. These results indicate that the surface ocean Cu' pool is too small to fuel phytoplankton
293 cells to their maximal Cu:P quota, even with very low ksCu_ϕ . Therefore, at least a fraction
294 of CuL has to be bioavailable to phytoplankton in order to avoid sub-maximal quotas
295 in phytoplankton cells that may have consequences on cellular functions (see Annett et
296 al., 2008). Finally, Cu uptake rate decreases in INORGANIC-CU2 to $27 \text{ GmolCu year}^{-1}$
297 ($2.0 \text{ pmolCu day}^{-1} \text{ L}^{-1}$), which is below Semeniuk's estimates, indicating that Cu' is
298 a too small pool to maintain Cu biogeochemical cycling in the surface ocean.

299 Accurately representing Cu bioavailability and uptake in our model affects the Cu
300 distribution and phytoplankton cellular ratios (Figure 5). Neither limiting, nor toxic effects
301 of Cu on phytoplankton and zooplankton growth are included in the present model configurations.
302 Laboratory assessments of Lowest Observed Effect Concentration (LOEC) and No Observed
303 Effect Concentration (NOEC), which are necessary to assess toxic Cu concentrations,
304 are rare (see e.g. Suratno et al., 2015). Representing both the limitation and toxicity effects
305 of Cu on plankton growth in PISCES relies on deeper knowledge on physiological effects
306 of Cu and on estimations of concentration thresholds for limiting and toxic effects (Prosnier
307 et al., 2015). However, such developments should be the next step towards modelling the
308 potential impacts of Cu and other metal contamination in the ocean food webs.

3.4 Global Budget and Residence Time of Oceanic Copper

Cu supply to the ocean is dominated by rivers, with aerosols playing a minor role, leading to a residence time of 400-500 years (Figure 6). Natural aerosols are the dominant aerosol Cu source at the global scale (respectively 0.08 and 0.19 GmolCu year⁻¹ of anthropogenic and natural Cu aerosols, see Figure 6). However, our estimates of aerosol Cu deposition based Paytan et al. (2009) modelling study are 50 % higher than Little et al. (2014) estimate of 0.054 GmolCu year⁻¹ based on a global average Cu deposition flux and average solubility.

The global Cu riverine flux from our model is estimated at about 6.7 GmolCu year⁻¹, which is about 10 times higher than Little et al. (2014) estimate of 0.6-0.8 GmolCu year⁻¹, based river isotopic composition from Vance et al. (2008) with few sampling points. Our Cu river flux estimation is based on a fixed Cu:Fe ratio in rivers from Gaillardet et al. (2014) who considered a greater number of samples, but used only measurements in rivers, far from anthropogenic activities and may therefore underestimate the total Cu river flux. Moreover, river catchment basins are often rich in organic matter, humics and ligands that may bind copper and modify its bioavailability, but there is no global estimate of ligand fluxes from rivers. In spite of these potential caveats, our estimation agrees with Little et al. (2014) that rivers are the main external Cu source to the global ocean. However, our greater input fluxes of Cu result in a much shorter residence time for Cu of between 400 and 500 years.

Upon arrival in the surface ocean, a fraction of Cu is scavenged by particles and sinks into deeper water, representing a loss of 1.2 GmolCu year⁻¹ from the top 100 m of the global ocean. In contrast, phytoplankton uptake represents a sink of DCu of 31 GmolCu year⁻¹, with approximately half of the uptake flux being recycled by zooplankton (17 GmolCu year⁻¹), and 9 GmolCu year⁻¹ is remineralized by bacteria. The model suggests a residence time of 3 years for the top 100m, which agrees with estimates of 2.5-8 years from the North Pacific (Semeniuk et al., 2016). The remainder 5.8 GmolCu year⁻¹ sinks into deeper water as particulate organic Cu.

The average Cu:C ratio decreases progressively from 15 to 10 to 8 $\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$ for phytoplankton uptake, zooplankton recycling and particule remineralization respectively, and the ensuing modelled export ratio of 16 $\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$ agrees with Semeniuk et al. (2016) estimations between 1.5 and 15 for the North Pacific region. We calculated the Cu:C ratio in the dissolved phase from the total organic and inorganic dissolved Cu and P, and used the Redfield ratio of 106:1 molC:molP. We found 10 $\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$ in the

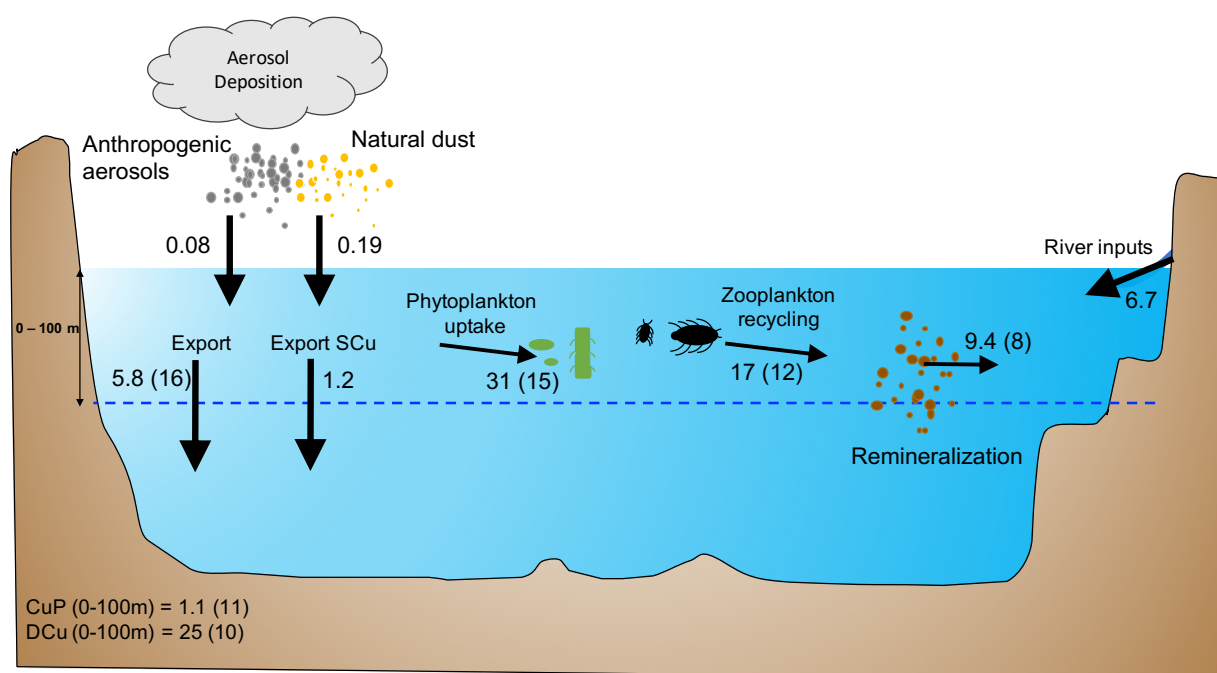


Figure 6. Cu budgets in the first 100 meters of the global ocean. Numbers represent Cu fluxes between (in GmolCu year⁻¹) numbers in the left corner represent total inorganic particulate and dissolved Cu (CuPart and DCu) in the first 100 meters (GmolCu). Numbers in parenthesis represent the Cu:C ratio of each process and compartment ($\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$)

dissolved phase on average over the surface ocean. Regional Cu budgets and ratios are available in appendix (see Figure A.1).

4 Towards a General View of Copper Biogeochemical Cycling

We can also use our model to highlight the most important processes driving Cu cycling in each ocean region (Figure 7). The impacts of the different anthropogenic and natural Cu external sources on the surface ocean are not evenly distributed, with the northern hemisphere oceans receiving more external inputs of Cu from rivers and aerosols than the southern hemisphere. In particular, the North and Equatorial Atlantic regions receive over 2.5 GmolCu year⁻¹ from rivers and 0.003 GmolCu year⁻¹ from aerosol deposition, mostly from the Amazon river and Saharan dust deposition (see Figure A.1). The surface Pacific, on the other hand, receives less copper from external sources but is characterized by the dominance of anthropogenic aerosols, mainly industrialized cities around the Pacific coasts of Asia (see e.g. Uematsu et al., 1983; Wang et al., 2016). Finally, the southern

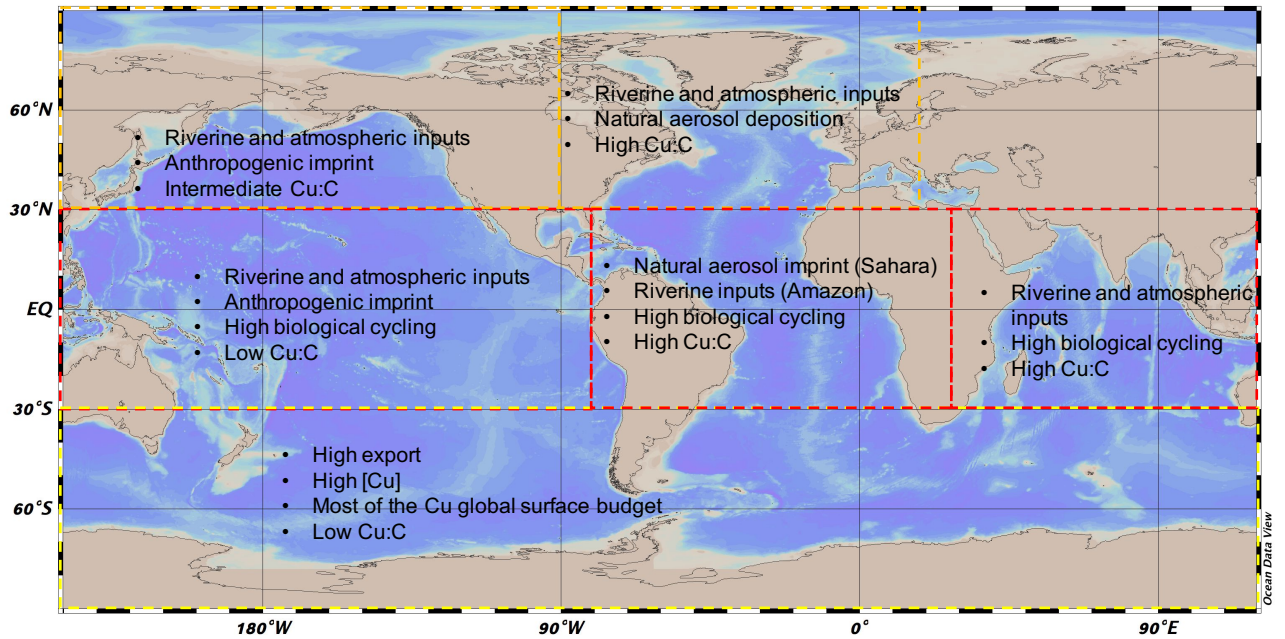


Figure 7. Map of the main processes affecting copper cycling and budgets in the surface ocean.

hemisphere oceans are more isolated from external sources, and accordingly receive very low Cu external fluxes.

The equatorial regions host most of the surface ocean biological activity, and most of the Cu uptake, recycling and remineralization take place here. As most of the surface DCu in the equatorial Pacific is consumed by phytoplankton, the dissolved Cu:C ratio in the water column remains relatively low ($7.4 \mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$, see Figure A.1). Surface Cu:C ratios in the Atlantic and Indian oceans are higher (between 15 and $20 \mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$) than in the Pacific and Southern Ocean (between 7 and $11 \mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$) due to the higher Cu fluxes from rivers and aerosols.

Despite the reduced external Cu supply rates, about 11 GmolCu are found in the top 100 m of the southern hemisphere oceans, representing approximately 50 % of the global surface Cu budget (see Figure A.1). This high [DCu] is driven by the intense seasonally variable vertical transport of nutrient-rich water to the surface (Toggweiler & Samuels, 1995). The Southern Ocean is the main particulate organic carbon export region in the global ocean (Schlitzer, 2002) and the Cu export rate per square meter is 5 to 12 times higher in this region than elsewhere. Once exported below the euphotic layer, Cu slowly sinks to the bottom and a fraction will be buried into sediments.

372 Thanks to recent developments, PISCES is the first global biogeochemical model
373 to represent a range of trace metals (Co, Zn, Fe, Mn see e.g. Hulthen et al., 2017; Tagliabue
74 et al., 2018), and now Cu. The next developments should include relations between these
375 different elements in phytoplankton cells in order to observe the response of phytoplankton
76 communities to the different elemental ratios in external nutrient sources (Hirose, 2007;
377 Wang et al., 2017). These modelling developments should also be paired with sampling
378 efforts in order to obtain reliable estimates of the trace metal concentrations and elemental
79 ratios in aerosols, rivers and planktonic cells in various regions of the global ocean.

380 5 Copper Cycling in the Oxygen Minimum Zones

381 Figures 1 and 2 show that [DCu] in the Pacific OMZ seems overestimated in our
382 model. To evaluate the representation of the Pacific OMZ in PISCES, we use the GEOTRACES
383 GP16 section (Moffett & German, 2018) and compare our model results with the oxygen
384 and nutrients concentrations measured in situ (Figure 8). The modelled oxygen concentration
385 is too high below 200 m and the expansion of the Pacific OMZ is not well represented:
386 the very low oxygen concentrations (below 50 mmol m^{-3}) are constrained between 100
387 and 300 m in the model whereas they are observed until 800 m in the measurements (Figure 8a).
388 This feature was already observed by Aumont et al. (2015) who hypothesized that it may
389 be linked with too intense ventilation of oxygen rich waters from the Southern Ocean.
390 However, the macronutrients nitrate and phosphate from PISCES match the GP16 data
391 well, suggesting that their distribution is not being affected by incorrect rates of remineralization
392 (Figures 8b and c).

393 Modelled [DCu] in the Pacific OMZ is at least $0.5 \text{ nmolCu L}^{-1}$ higher than the measurements
394 across all our simulations (Figure 8d). Only the increased scavenging in HIGHSCAV leads
395 to a decrease of [DCu] in the OMZ and brings the simulated concentrations closer to the
396 measurements. However, the deeper [DCu] becomes underestimated in this simulation
397 (see Figure 2).

398 Ultimately, our model either contains a too strong Cu source, or is missing a Cu
399 sink specific to low oxygen waters. However, there is no sediment source of Cu in the model
400 that could explain the high [DCu] close to the continental shelf, and there is no major
401 river flow or atmospheric deposition flux in this region. It thus appears likely that there
402 is a Cu specific sink operating in low oxygen waters. One candidate may be sulfides, which
403 are very strong scavenging particles (Dyrssen, 1988), and have been measured in the Arabian

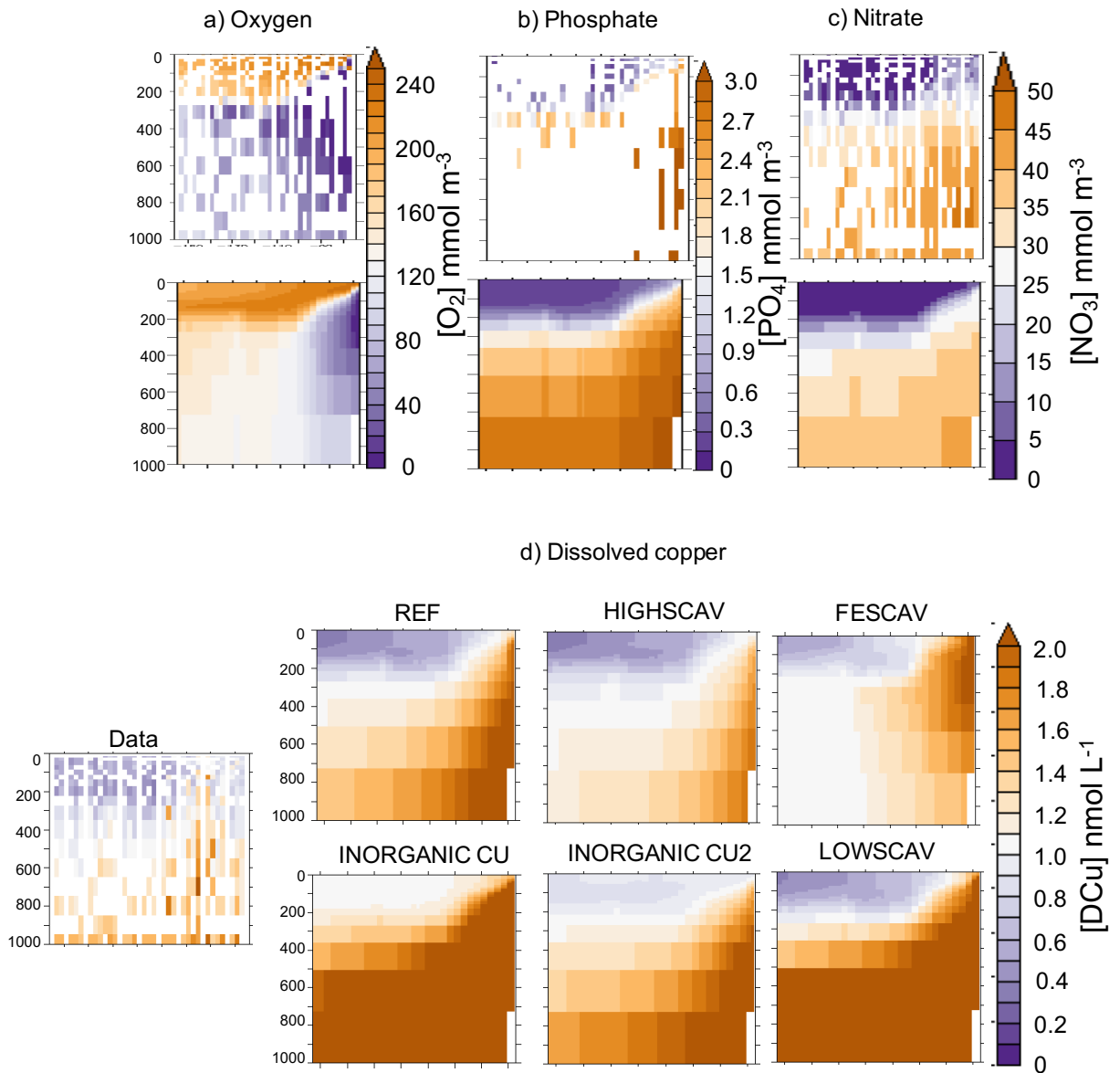


Figure 8. Measured (top) and modelled (bottom) oxygen (a), phosphate (b), nitrate (c) in the Pacific OMZ (GP16 section) in mmol m^{-3} . d) presents $[\text{DCu}]$ in the data and in each of the simulations (in nmolCu L^{-1}). The cruise transect is shown on figure 2.

34 Sea OMZ (Theberge et al., 1997). Even though there is no evidence of high sulfide concentrations
 405 in the Pacific OMZ, Janssen et al. (2014) demonstrated that nutrient-sulfide precipitation
 06 may occur in particles micro-environment. Bianchi et al. (2018) calculated that, in the
 407 Pacific OMZ, it could be responsible for the scavenging of 1.4 and 9.7 Gmol year^{-1} of
 08 Cd and Zn respectively.

409 In addition to abiotic sinks, it is possible that high rates of denitrification in OMZs,
410 catalyzed by the Cu-containing enzyme nitrous oxide reductase (Codispoti et al., 2001;
11 Granger & Ward, 2003) may be a component of Cu removal. Also, denitrification and
412 ammonia oxidation by archaea requires Cu as well as Fe (Glass & Orphan, 2012). Our
13 model includes explicit representation of denitrification, but does not account for Cu consumption
414 by denitrifying bacteria, which will require two Cu atoms per nitrous oxide reductase.
415 Also, Posacka et al. (2019) hypothesized that up to 50% of biogenic Cu in the ocean could
16 be consumed by bacteria. Therefore, Cu scavenging by sulfides in particle microenvironments
417 as well as Cu uptake by denitrifying bacteria could be a significant component of Cu cycling
418 in OMZs. These processes could be incorporated in future developments of the PISCES
419 model in order to assess their importance.

420 6 Conclusions

421 This study presents a global 3D coupled physical-biogeochemical model of oceanic
422 Cu cycling, developed within the widely-used NEMO/PISCES model. The model captures
423 correctly the main features of Cu distribution in the ocean: low surface concentrations
424 and linear increase with depth. This study brings confirmation that reversible scavenging
425 is the main driver of [DCu] vertical distribution and the scavenging rate determines the
426 slope of the linear profile of [DCu] over the global ocean. Moreover, our simulations support
427 the hypothesis that ligand-bound copper has to be at least partly bioavailable for phytoplankton
428 to maintain their cellular Cu ratio.

429 We present a global budget of surface Cu including biogeochemical processes such
430 as uptake, recycling, remineralization and export, finding that external Cu sources deliver
431 about 7 GmolCu year⁻¹ to the surface oceans and that phytoplankton uptake represents
432 31 GmolCu year⁻¹. These new estimates provide a shorter residence time than previously
433 calculated (approximately 10 times shorter). Moreover, this new value may be underestimated
434 as some external Cu sources are likely missing in our budget. Equatorial regions are responsible
435 for the majority of the global Cu uptake and biological cycling whereas the mid and high
436 latitudes (in particular the southern ocean) are responsible for most of the Cu export
437 below 100m. The southern part of the ocean also gathers 50% of the global surface Cu
438 budget. Finally, the high Cu:C ratios in the surface Atlantic and Indian oceans seem to
439 be linked with the important Cu fluxes from natural and anthropogenic external sources.

440 Although our model overestimates [DCu] in the OMZ, this points to the potential
441 role for additional processes associated with particle microenvironments or bacterial cycling
442 in driving the Cu distribution in low oxygen systems. Further developments in the NEMO/PISCES
443 model should also include explicit effects of Cu on phytoplankton growth (fertilizing and
444 toxic effects), interaction effects with other trace metals such as Fe and a better representation
445 of ligands cycling. These developments should be paired with measurements and experiments
446 to better constrain the model hypotheses.

47 **A Regional Copper Budgets**

448 The northern Pacific and Atlantic regions receive more Cu from rivers than their
449 southern counterparts, but receive a similar amount of natural Cu aerosols (Figure A.1).
450 Also, the equatorial regions receive most of the riverine Cu (about 2 Gmol year⁻¹ for
451 both the equatorial Pacific and the equatorial Atlantic). The northern Pacific region receives
452 more Cu from anthropogenic aerosols, mainly because of the north Asian sources. The
453 equatorial Atlantic also receives most of the global natural aerosol load from the Sahara
454 (1 Gmol year⁻¹). Also, Cu export is 2 to 5 times more important in the southern regions
455 than in the northern regions, which is mainly linked to physical processes. Moreover, the
456 export values of SCu per unit area are an order of magnitude higher in the southern regions
457 than in the northern ones, making the southern region a more important Cu sink than
458 the equatorial and northern regions. Most of the biological activity is found in the equatorial
459 regions, therefore, most of the Cu uptake, remineralization and recycling is occurring in
460 the equatorial Pacific and Atlantic. Overall, the southern oceanic regions hold most of
461 the global Cu content. There is in total 8 GmolCu in the top 100 m in the southern Atlantic
462 and Pacific whereas there is 7 GmolCu in the top 100 m of the equatorial Pacific and
463 Atlantic. However, the average Cu concentrations are higher in the equatorial regions.

464 The Cu:C of particulate and dissolved Cu is higher in the Atlantic. This is probably
465 linked to the higher Cu fluxes from external sources. Likewise, the Cu:C ratio in particulate
466 export is higher in the Atlantic (19 $\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$). Also, there is a strong gradient in
467 the Cu:C ratios from the equatorial regions toward the mid and high latitudes. In particular
468 for dissolved elements, the Cu:C ratio in the northern regions is between 98 and 117 $\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$,
469 it is around 20 to 30 $\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$ in the equatorial regions and around 150 to 250 $\mu\text{molCu}:\text{molC}$
470 in the southern regions. Likewise, the Cu:C ratio for phytoplankton uptake follows the
471 same increasing trend from equatorial regions to the higher latitudes, showing that phytoplankton

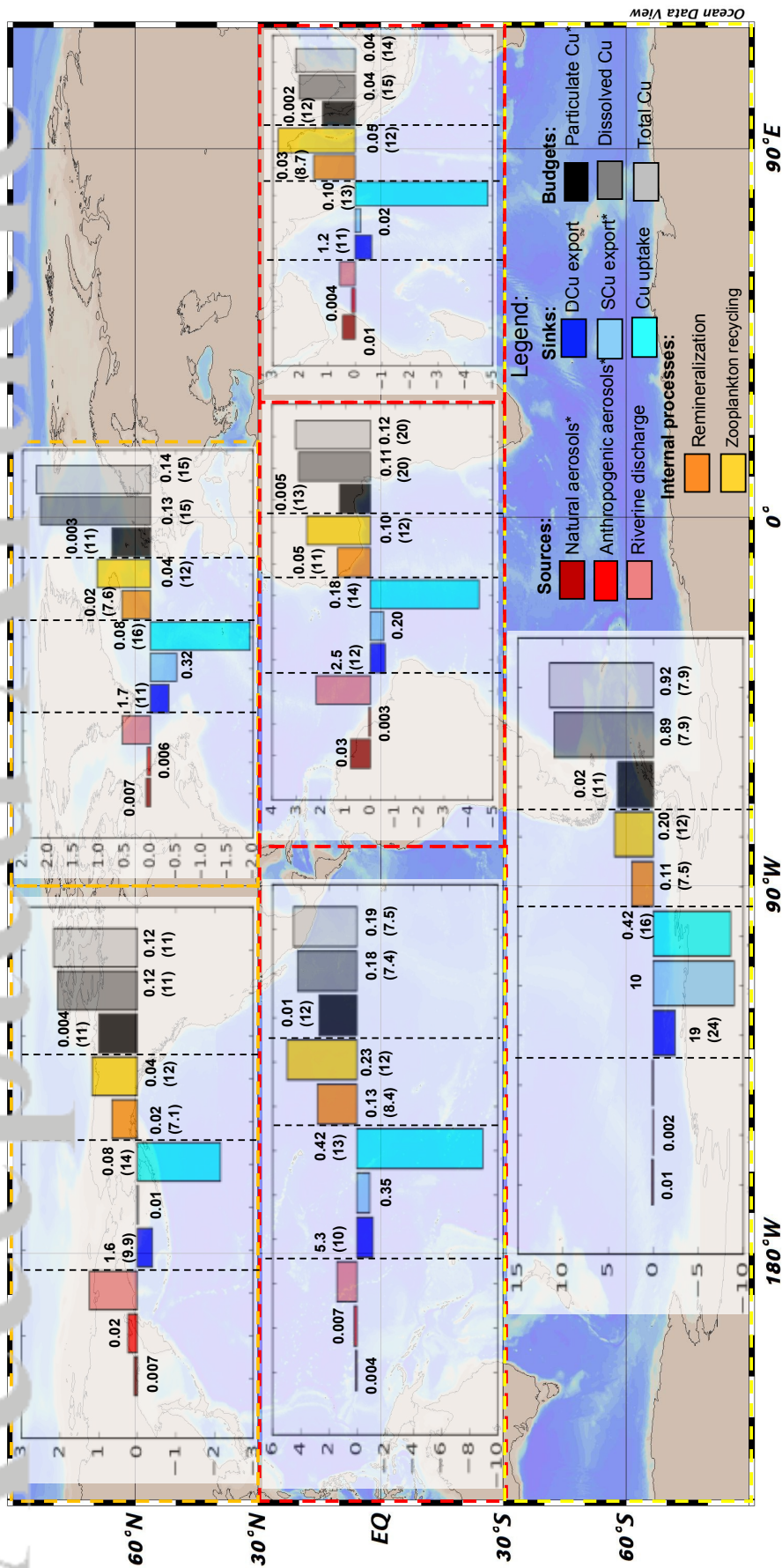


Figure A.1. Barplot of total Cu budgets and fluxes in the first 100 meters (in Gmol year^{-1}) in different oceanic regions. High latitudes: $> 60^\circ\text{N}$ or $< 60^\circ\text{S}$, Mid latitudes: between 30°N or 30°S and 30°N . The numbers above the bars represent the average fluxes or concentrations. Numbers in parenthesis are the Cu:C ratio of the component ($10^{-6} \text{ molCu:molC}$). Aerosol deposition and export fluxes are given in $10^{-6} \text{ molCu m}^{-2} \text{ year}^{-1}$, phytoplankton uptake, remineralisation and zooplankton recycling are given in $10^{-6} \text{ molCu m}^{-3} \text{ year}^{-1}$, particulate, dissolved and total copper are the average concentrations in the first 100 meters (in $10^{-6} \text{ molCu m}^{-3}$). Total copper represents copper in the dissolved and particulate phase. Legends with a star (*) indicate that the value has been multiplied by 10 in the plot for visualization.

472 adapt to the high Cu ratio in their environment by increasing the Cu:C of their nutrient
 473 uptake. However, the Cu:C ratio in remineralization processes decreases towards the poles
 74 from respectively 8.3 and 11 in the equatorial Pacific and Atlantic, it decreases to about
 475 7.3 and 7.7 in the northern and southern Pacific and Atlantic respectively.

76 B Seasonal Cycling of DCu

77 The Southern Ocean and the Mediterranean are the regions experience the most
 78 intense seasonal variations in surface [DCu] (Figure B.1a). In the Southern Ocean, this
 479 is probably linked with the very intense changes in surface physical and biogeochemical
 480 conditions. In the Mediterranean, the important impacts of external nutrient sources on
 481 the surface biogeochemistry may also concur to the important variability we observe. Regions
 82 of high productivity and upwelling regions such as the western coasts of Africa and America
 483 also have a marked seasonal amplitude of [DCu] between 0.3 and 0.5 nmolCu L⁻¹.

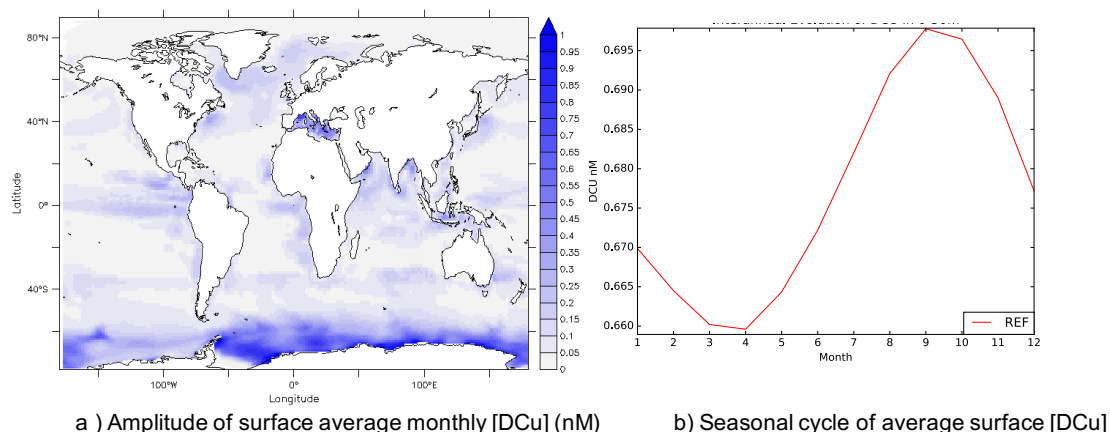


Figure B.1. a) Amplitude of average monthly [DCu] in surface (0-50m). b) Seasonal cycle of average surface (0-50m) [DCu] over the global ocean.

84 Figure B.1b shows the global seasonal cycle of surface [DCu]. This figure shows that
 485 the seasonal cycling has a weak amplitude on the global scale. However, global [DCu]
 86 seems higher during Austral spring (between September and November).

C Seasonal Variability of Atmospheric Deposition

The most important variability in aerosol Cu deposition is located in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic, downwind of the Sahara, and in the North Indian Ocean downwind of the Sahara and Middle East deserts (Figure C.1a).

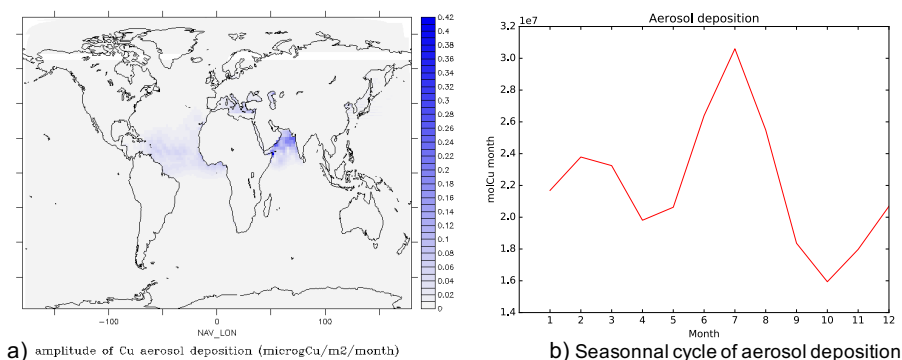


Figure C.1. a) Amplitude of average monthly Cu aerosol deposition ($\mu\text{gCu}/\text{m}^2/\text{month}$). b) Seasonal cycle of average Cu deposition ($\text{molCu}/\text{month}$) over the global ocean.

Figure C.1b shows that Cu deposition from aerosols is highly variable over a year. The difference between the lowest deposition flux in October and the highest deposition flux in July is over $0.015 \text{ GmolCu}/\text{month}$. Aerosol deposition is a highly dynamic process that varies greatly in space and time. Our model accounts for such variability thanks to the state-of-the-art Cu deposition model from Paytan et al. (2009).

Acknowledgments

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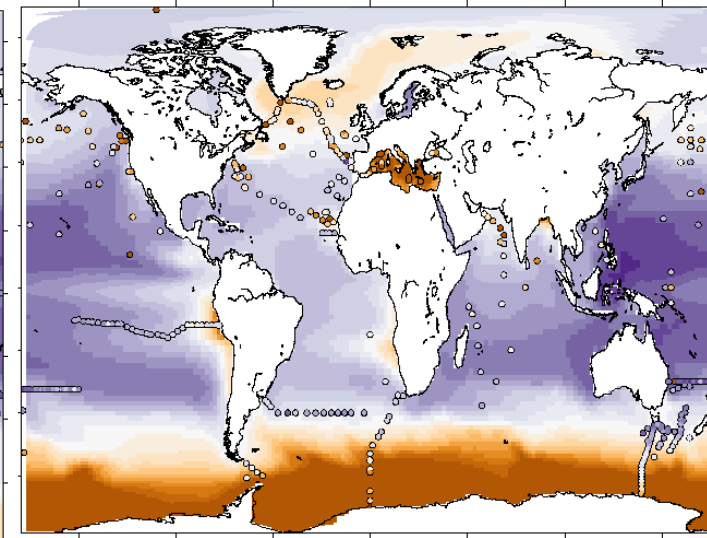
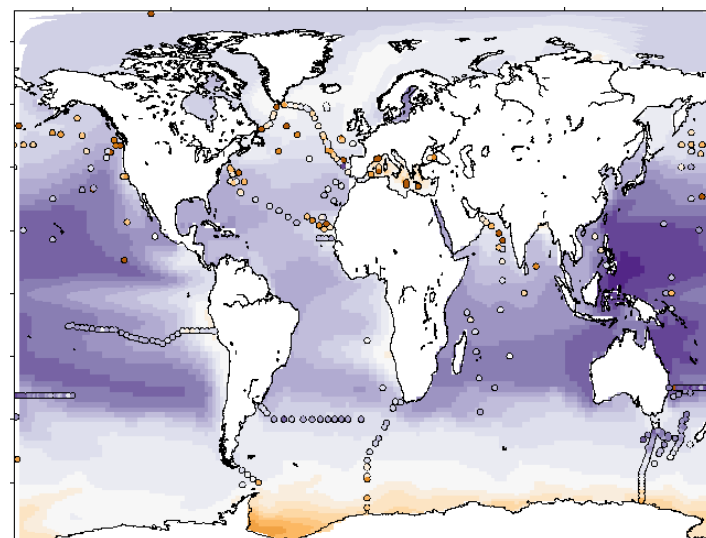
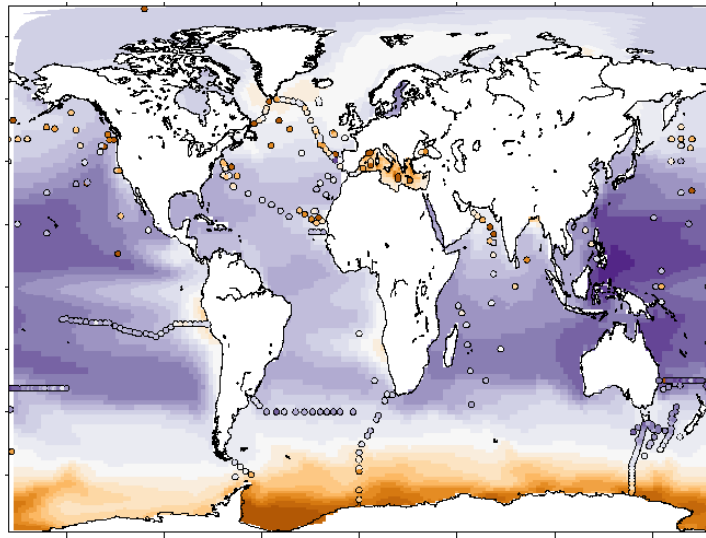
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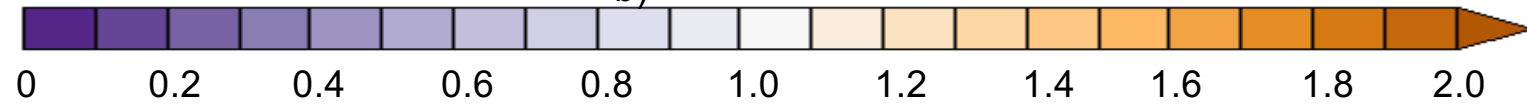
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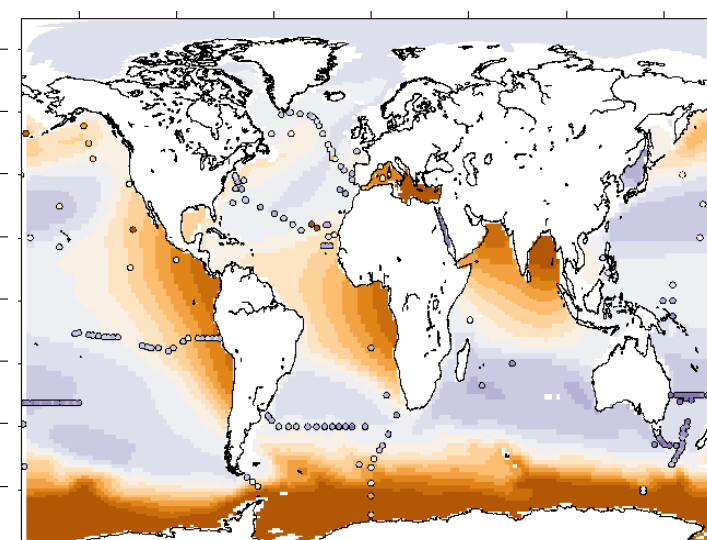
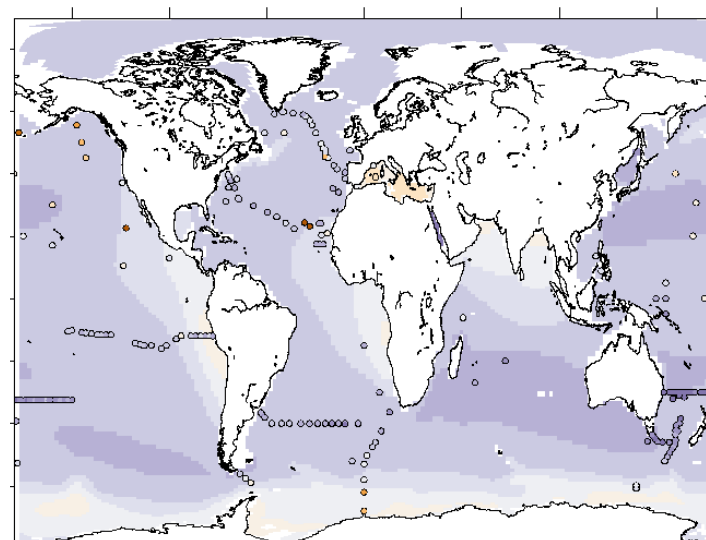
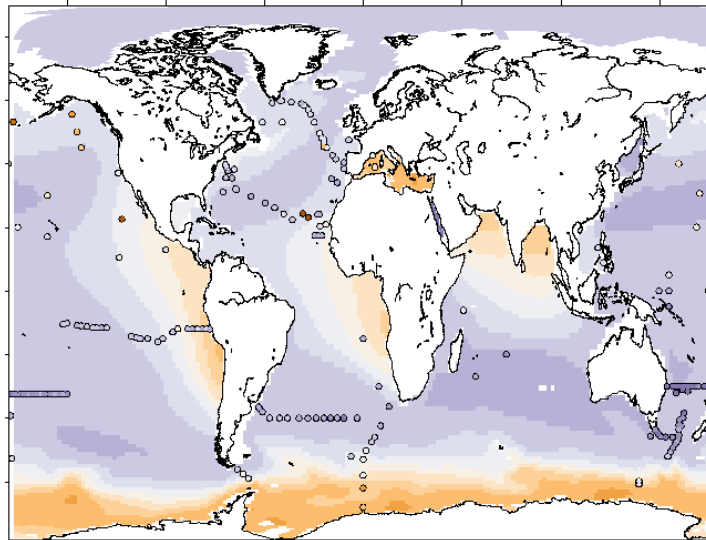
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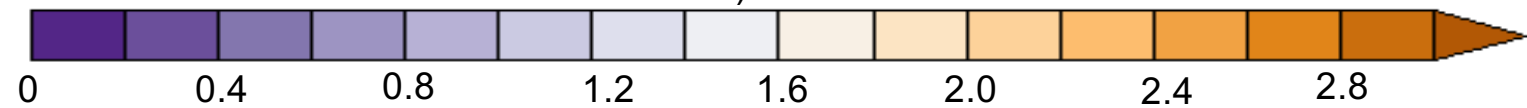
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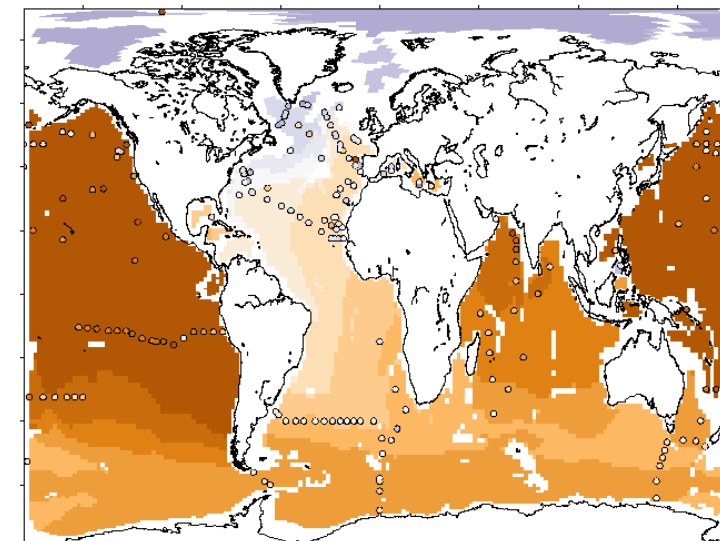
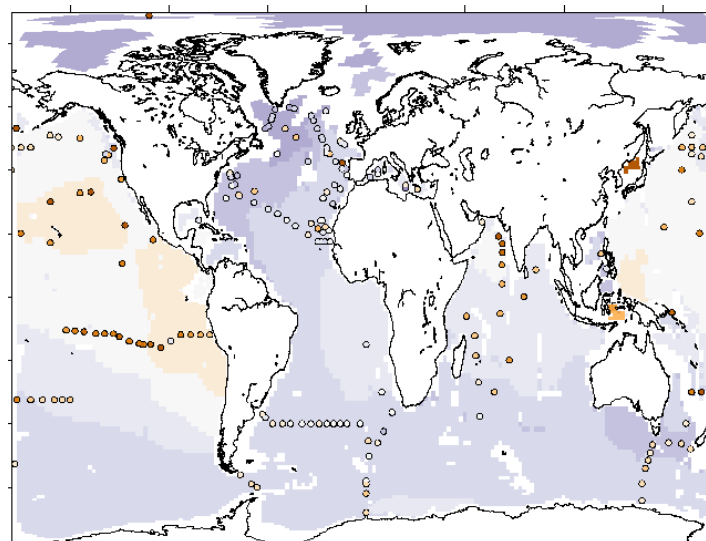
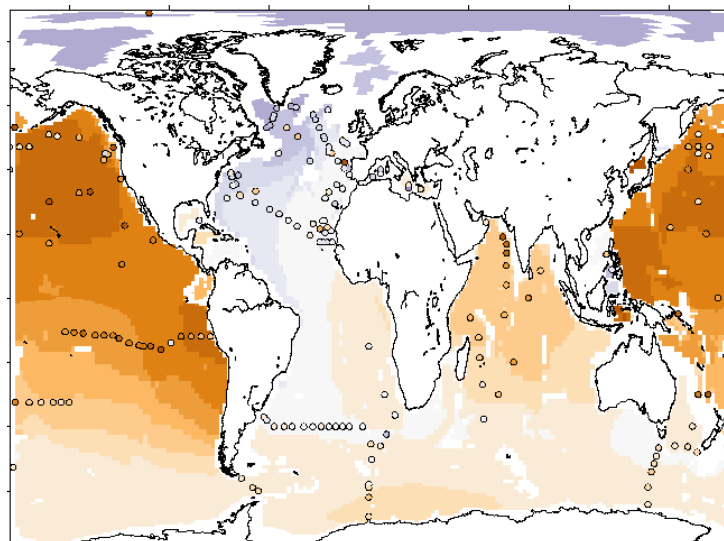
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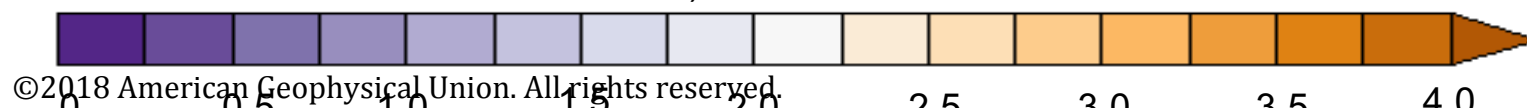
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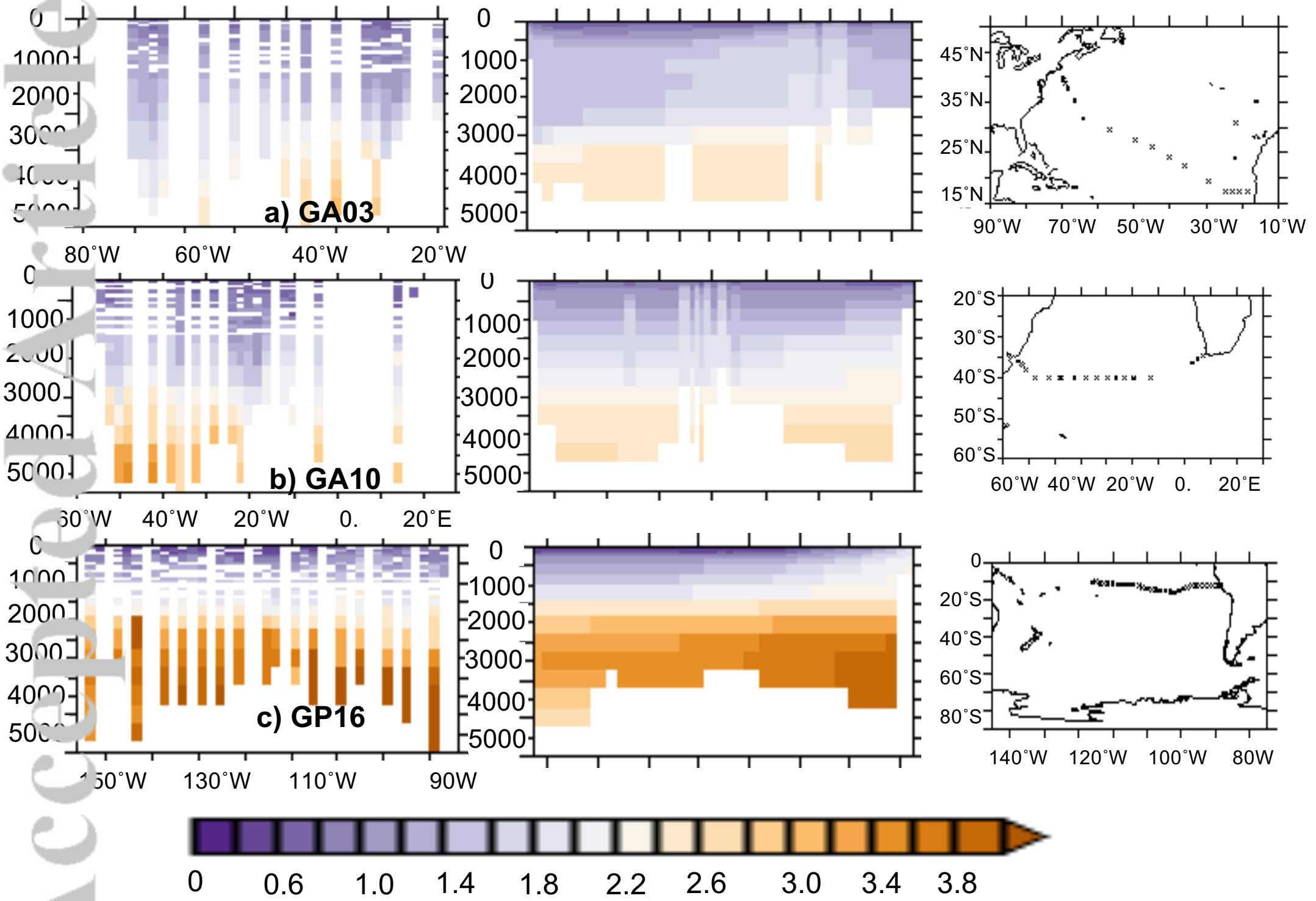


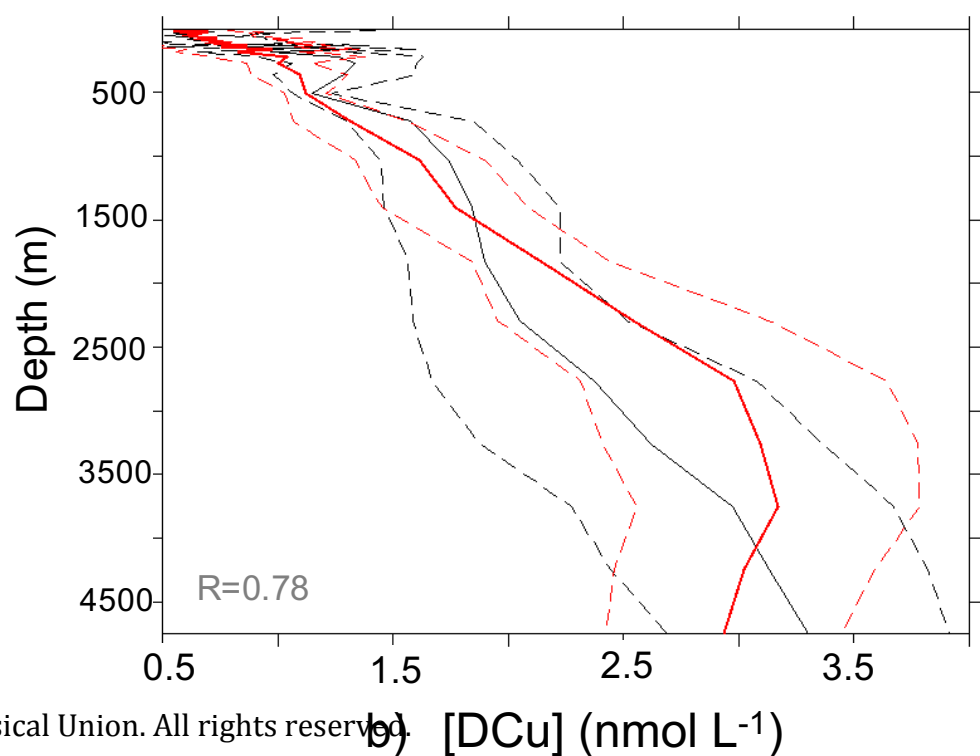
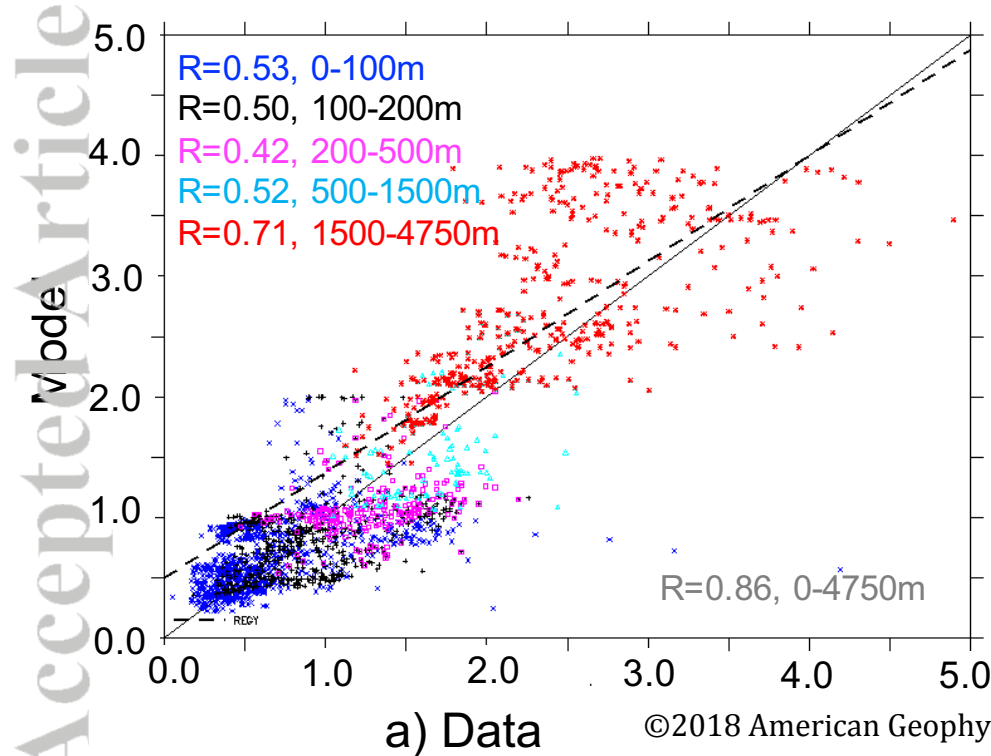
g)

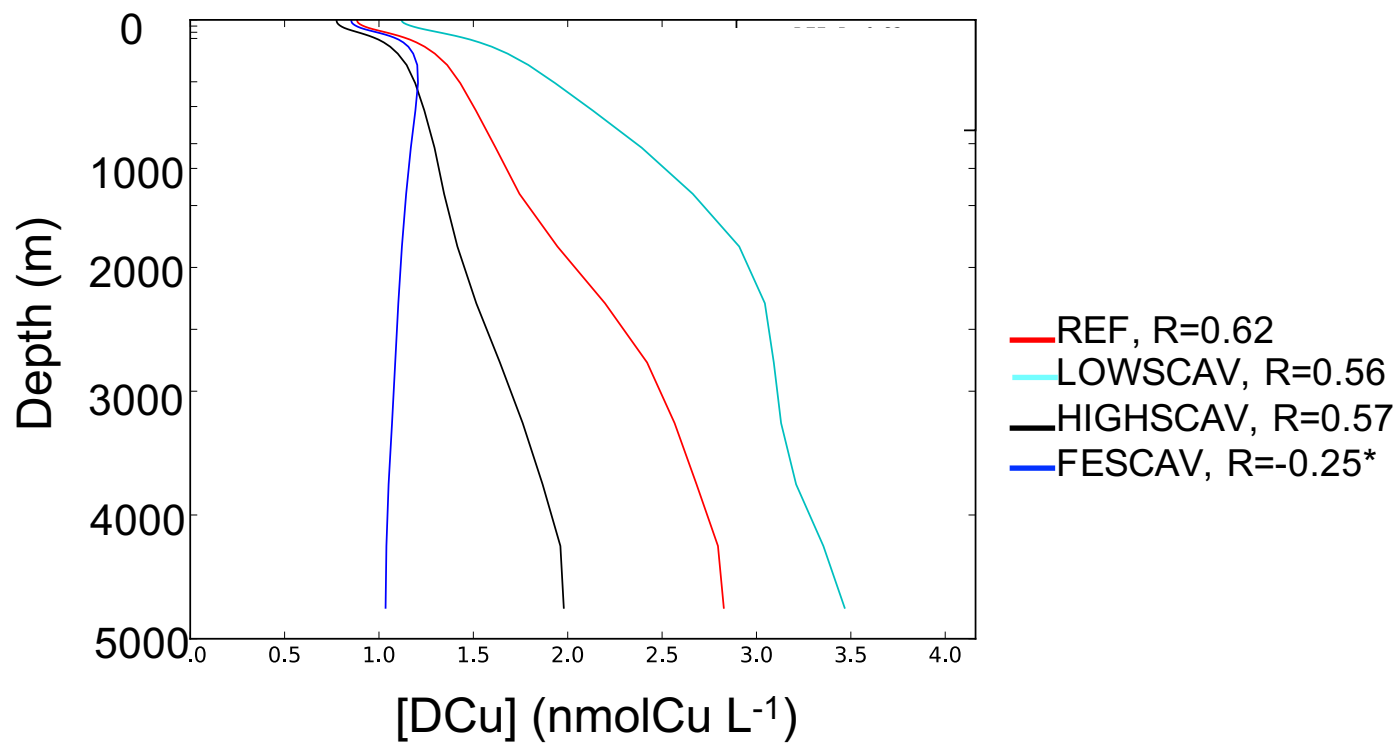
h)

i)





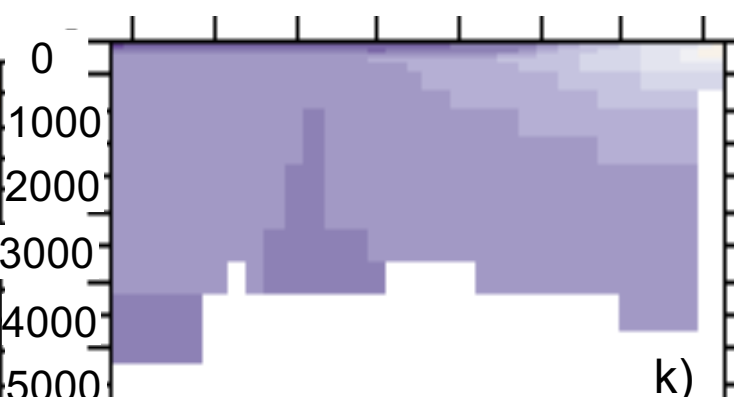
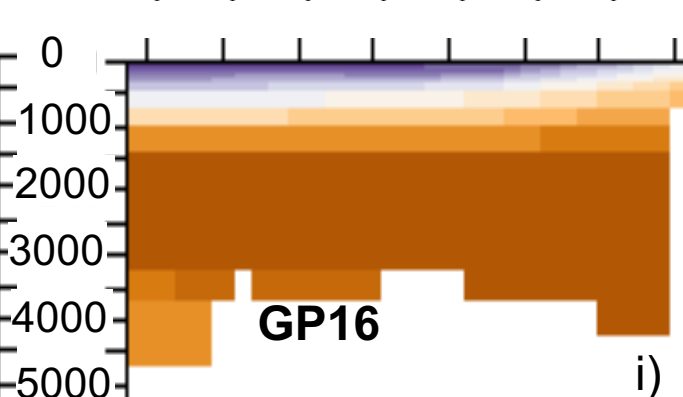
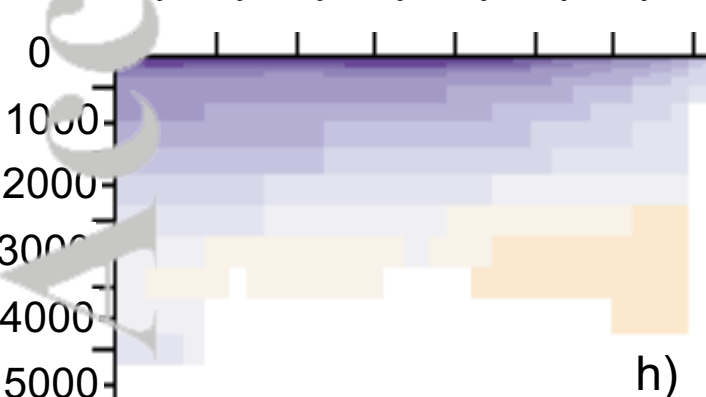
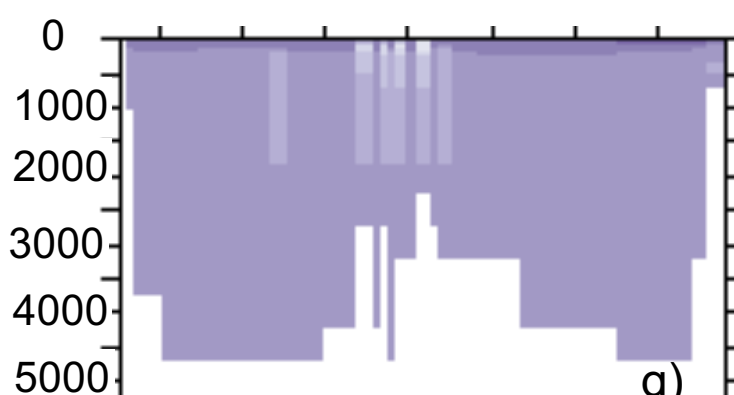
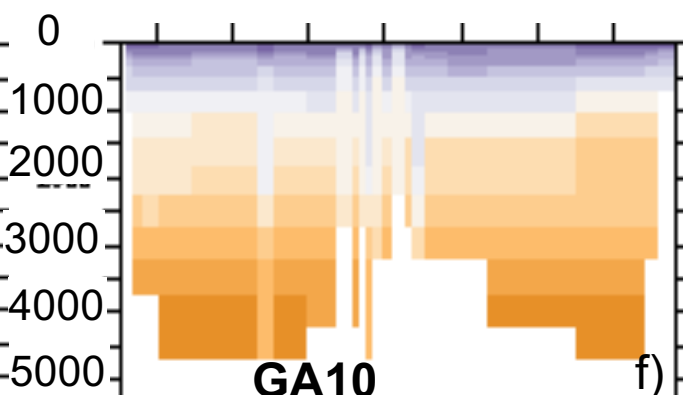
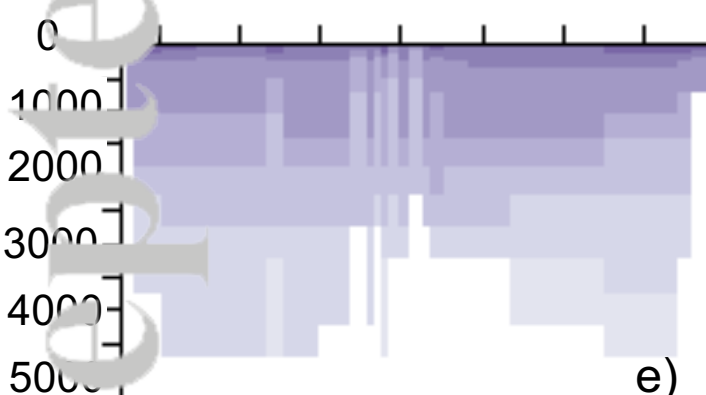
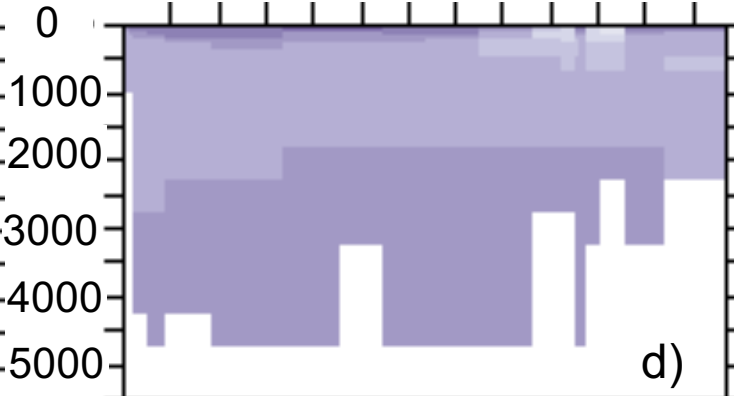
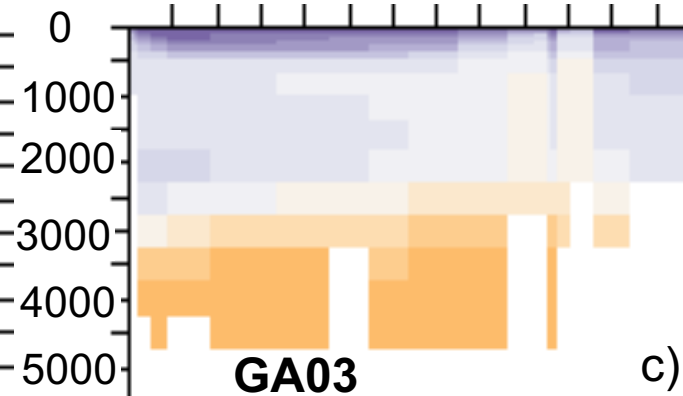
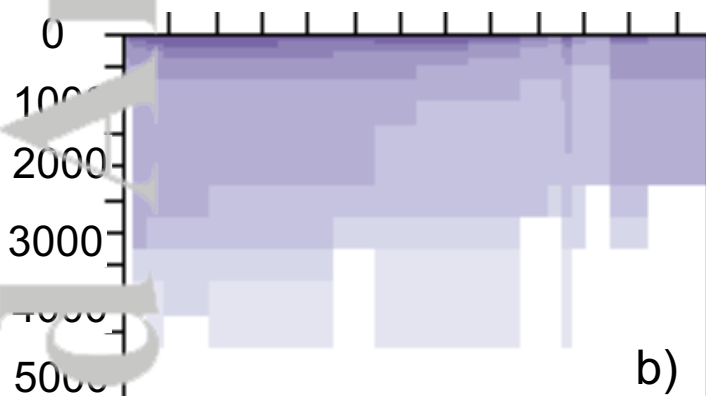




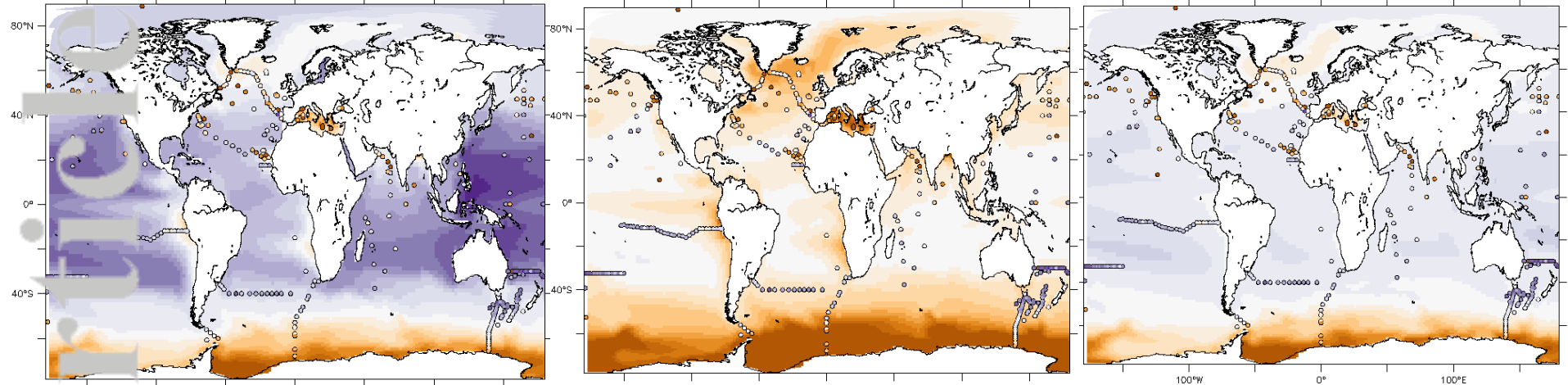
HIGHSCAV

LOWSCAV

FESCAV



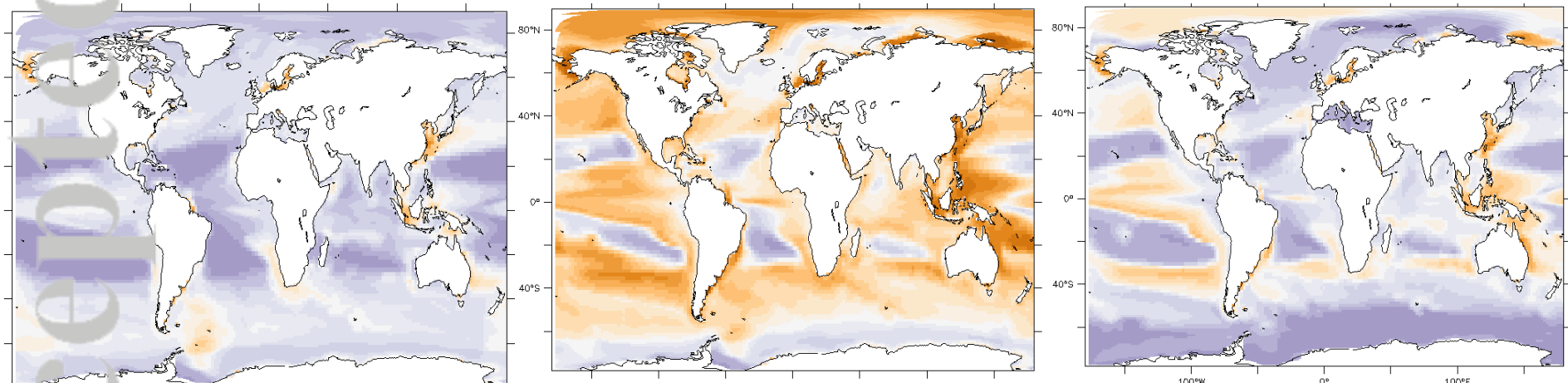
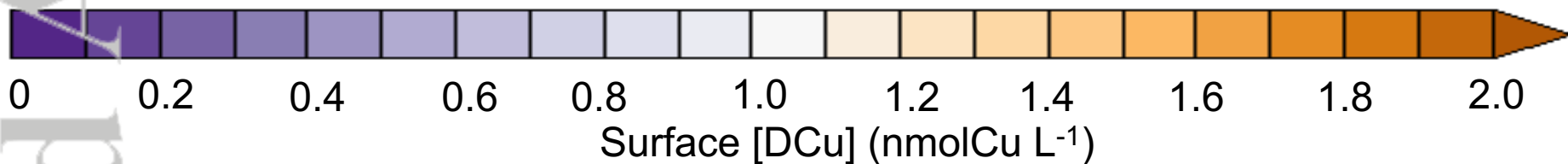
0 0.6 1.0 1.4 1.8 2.2 2.6 3.0 3.4 3.8



a) REF

b) INORGANIC-CU

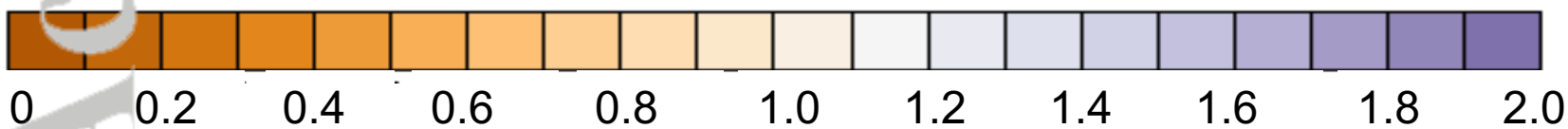
c) INORGANIC-CU2

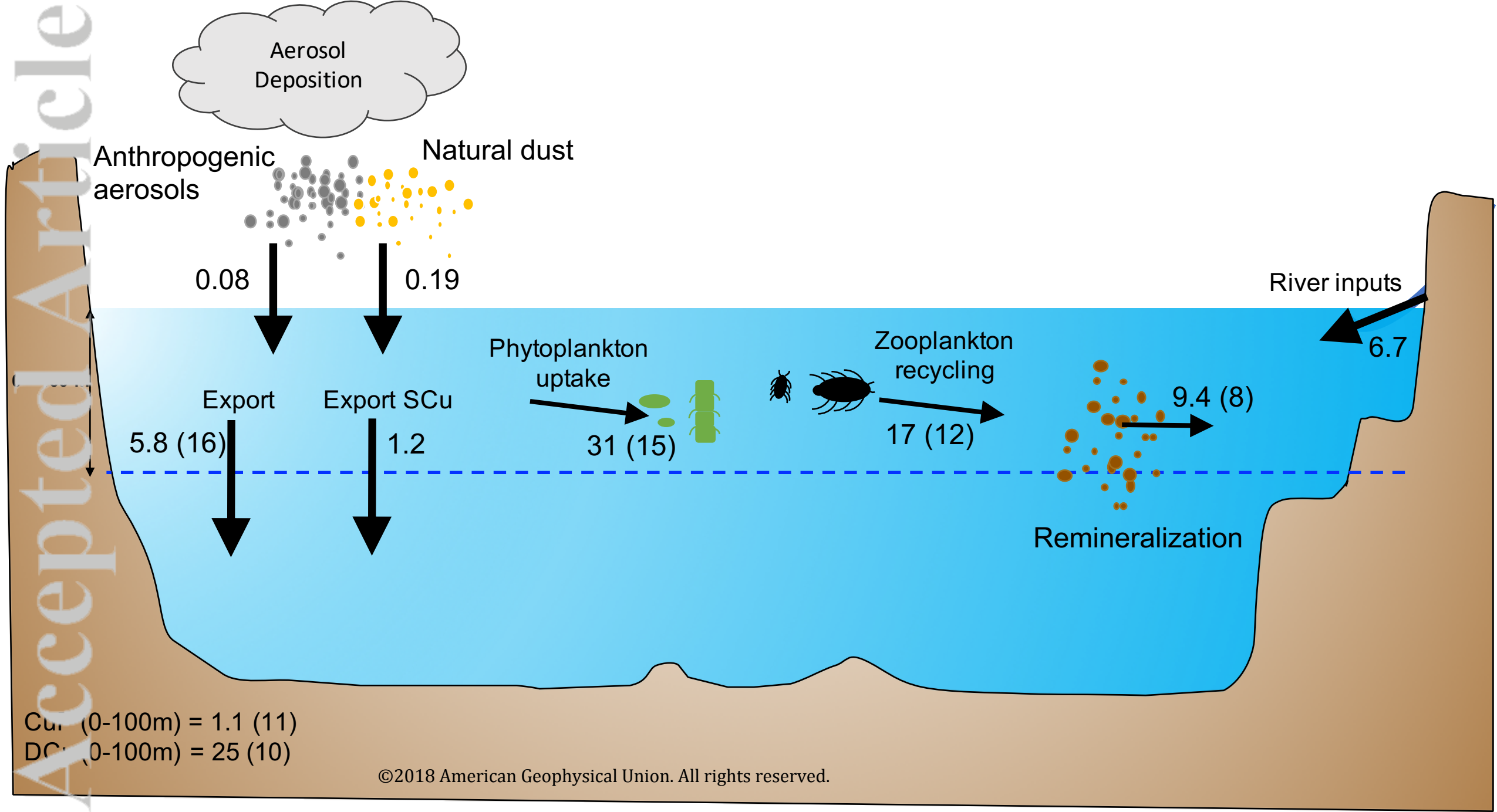


d) REF

e) INORGANIC-CU

f) INORGANIC-CU2





Aerosol
Deposition

Anthropogenic
aerosols

Natural dust

0.08

0.19

River inputs

6.7

Export

Export SCu

Phytoplankton
uptake

Zooplankton
recycling

9.4 (8)

5.8 (16)

1.2

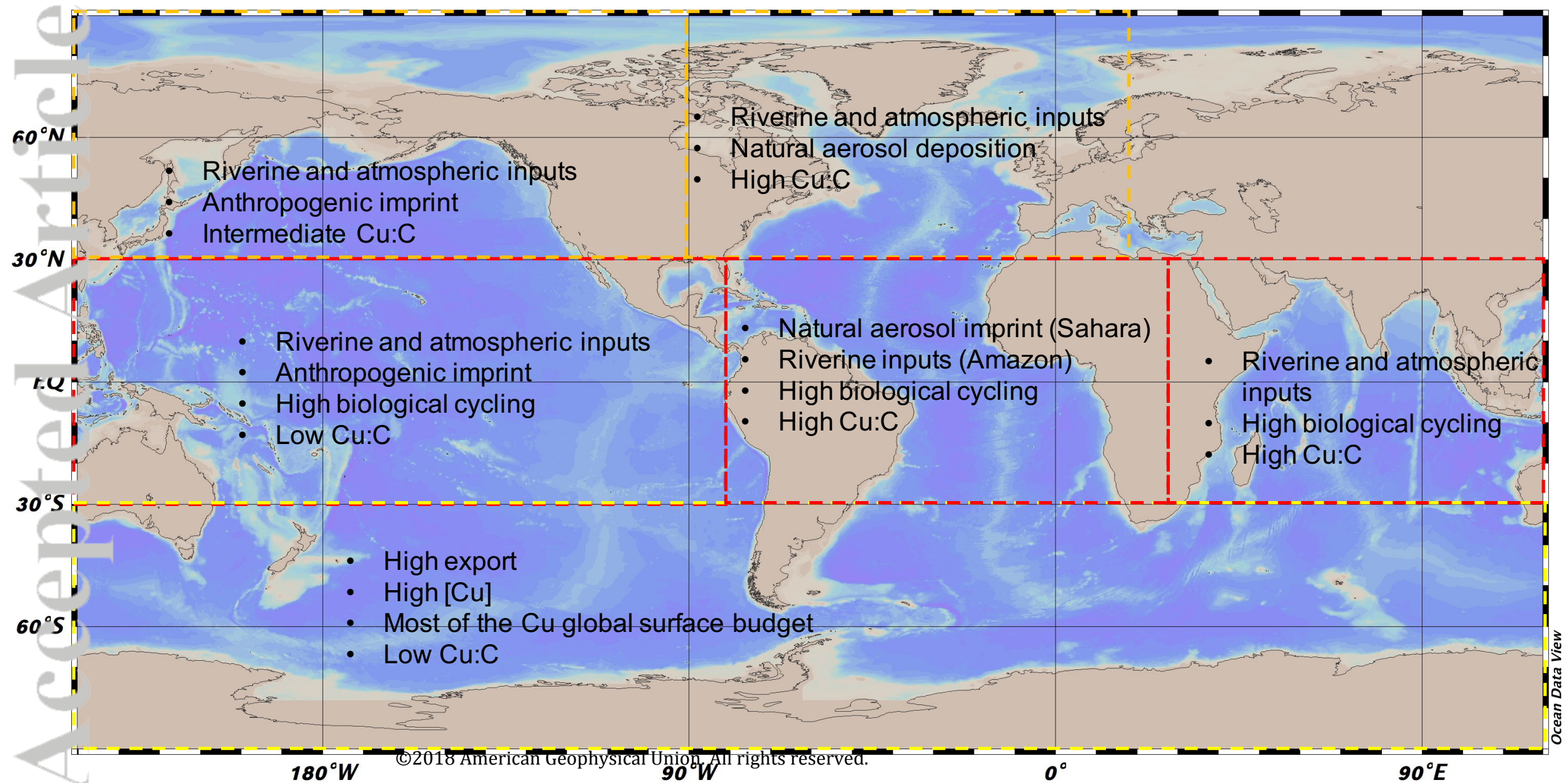
31 (15)

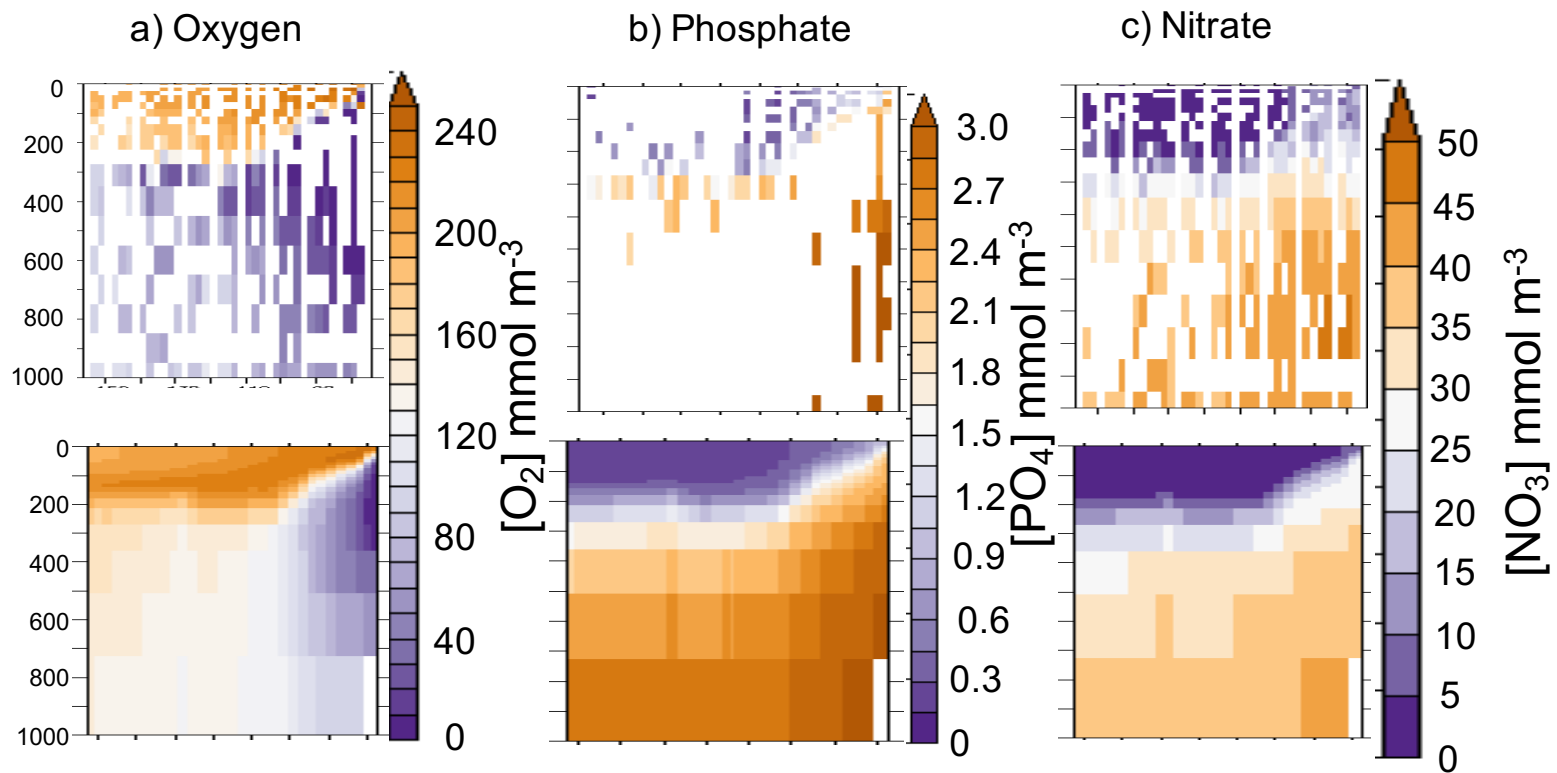
17 (12)

Remineralization

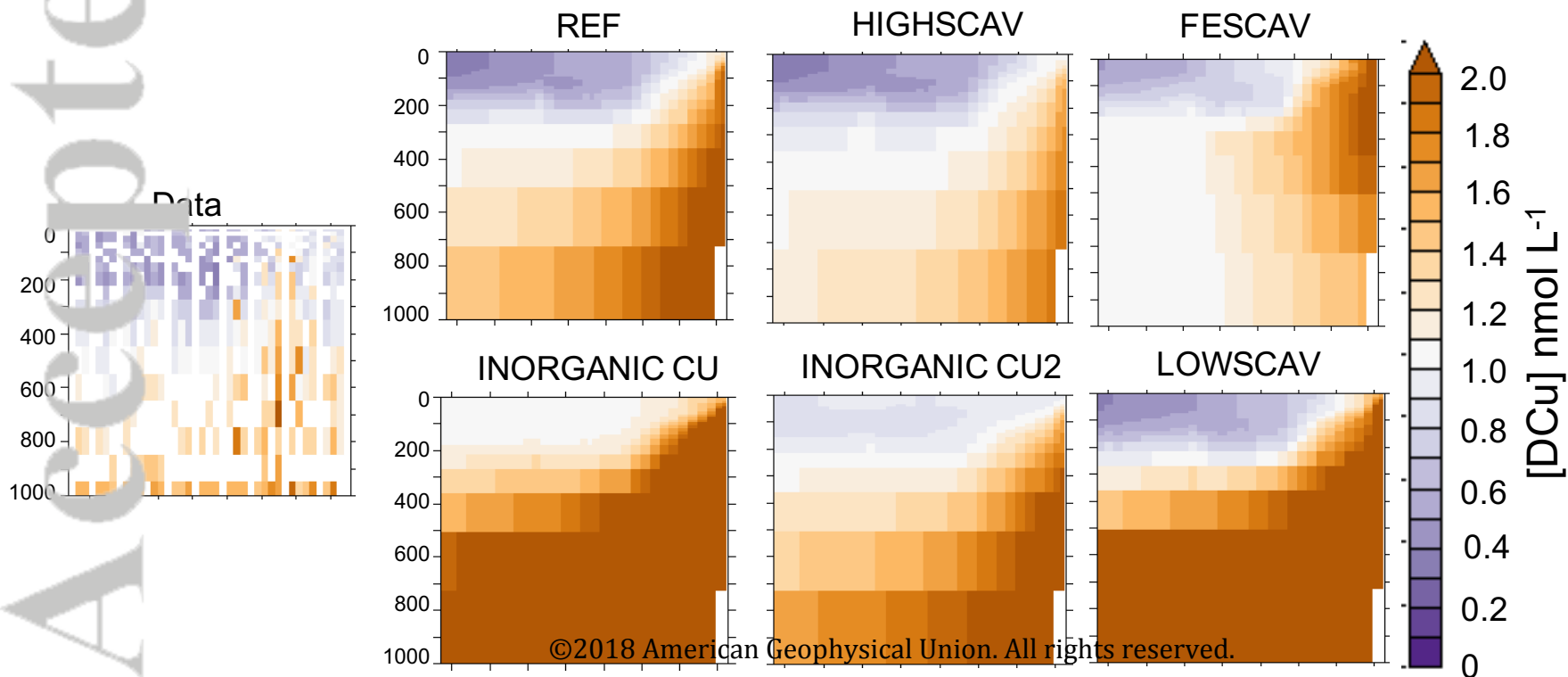
Cu_r (0-100m) = 1.1 (11)

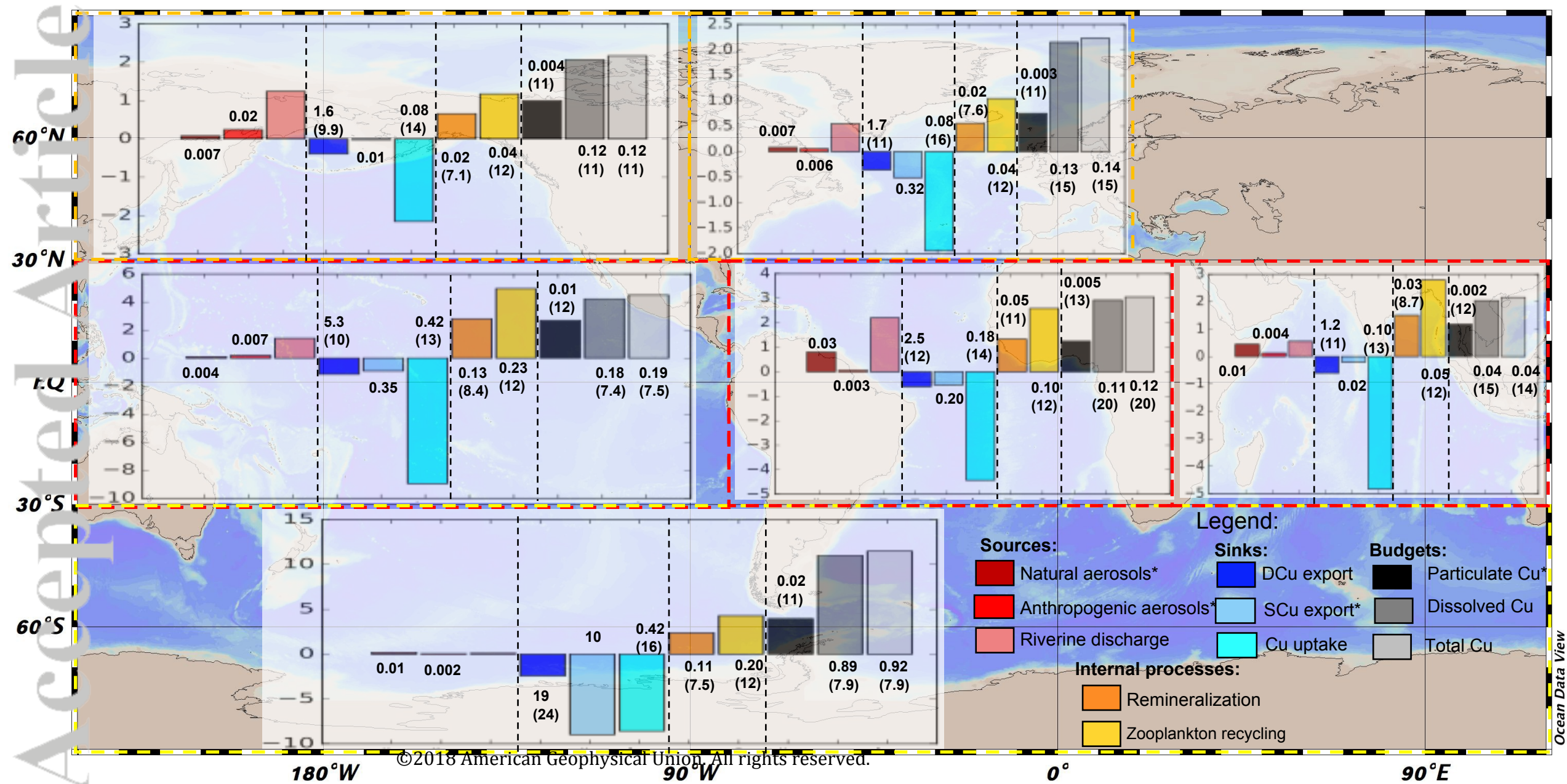
DC_r (0-100m) = 25 (10)

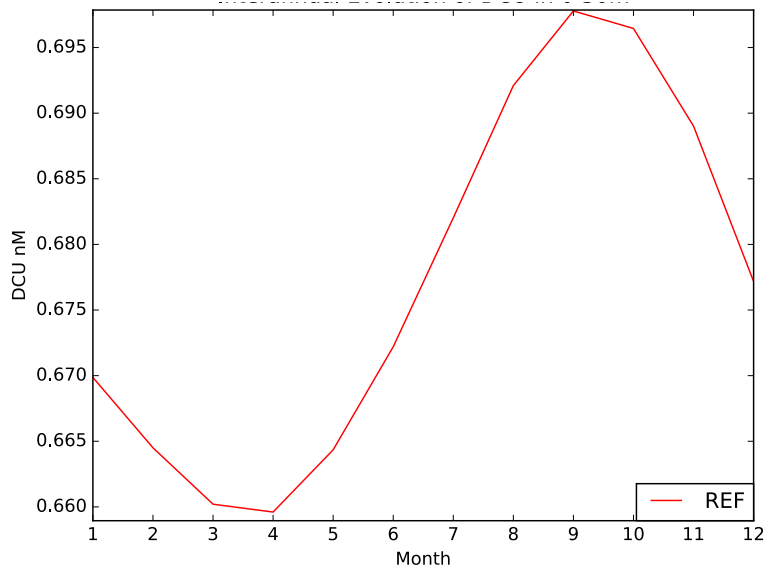
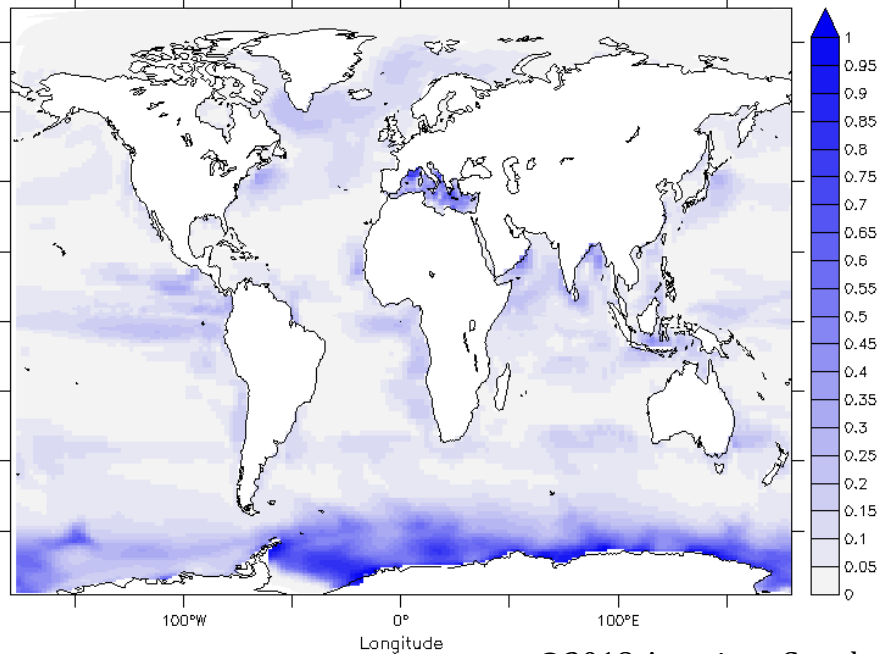




d) Dissolved copper

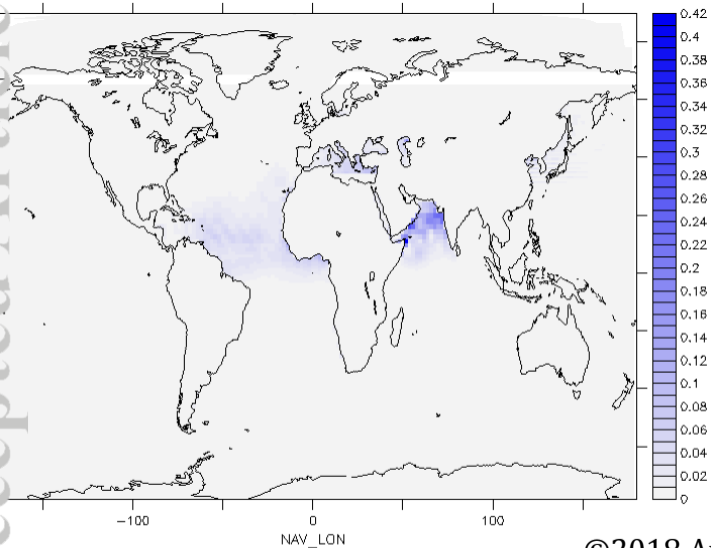
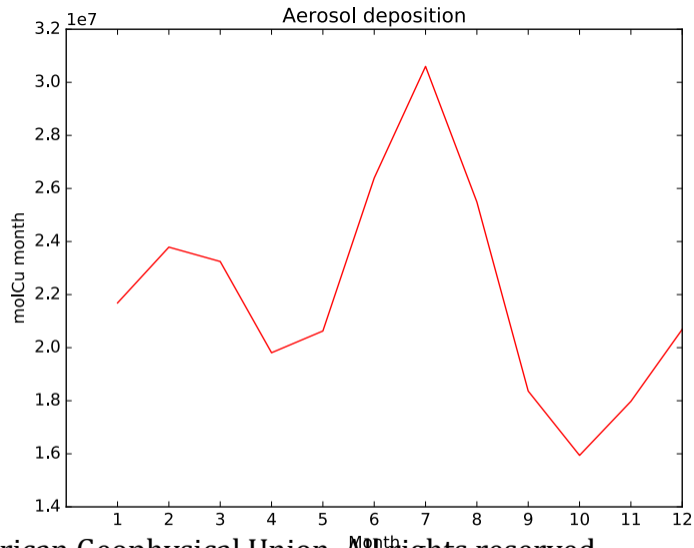






a) Amplitude of surface average monthly [DCu] (nM)

b) Seasonal cycle of average surface [DCu]

a) amplitude of Cu aerosol deposition ($\mu\text{gCu}/\text{m}^2/\text{month}$)

b) Seasonal cycle of aerosol deposition