

Report from the 14th Annual Meeting of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), Perugia, Italy (2007)

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I am grateful to the Geochemistry Group for their financial assistance toward my attending the 14th Annual Meeting of the IUGG in Perugia, Italy, in early July 2007.

At the IUGG 2007 I presented a poster and a talk on part of my research work. The title of both presentations was: '*Changes in Dust Flux to the East Mediterranean since the Last Glacial Maximum*' and both were presented in the sessions directed by the International Association of Meteorology & Atmospheric Sciences (IAMAS). The work is part of my research project examining climate change in the River Nile catchment through the use of strontium isotope analysis on sediment from the East Mediterranean Sea.

The presented work was an attempt to estimate the flux of Saharan dust to the Eastern Mediterranean Sea over the past 25 ky BP using Sr isotope data from marine detritus and ratio-concentration *mixing equations*. The Eastern Mediterranean lies under the dust plume from the Saharan Desert to Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. Estimates on Saharan dust flux are important as they enable palaeoclimatologists to interpret temporal changes in the aridity of dust source areas as well as qualitative estimates on the dust flux reaching higher latitudes. Such information can be used in conjunction with previously published data to understand more fully changes in climate dynamics that have occurred since the end of the last glacial period. These data also enable climate modellers to check their predictions against real data thus providing an opportunity to validate or improve current climate-model algorithms.

The talk and poster were well received and it was very nice to have to spend a long weekend in Italy talking to people who showed an interest in my work. Conferences are an invaluable part of a researchers training as they not only provide opportunity to network with an international body of scientists but expose the work of a researcher to the rigours of a probing examination from the inquisitive and questioning minds of experts in ones field of study.