Patterns in recent and Holocene Pollen Accumulation Rates across Europe; the Pollen Monitoring Programme Database as a tool for vegetation reconstruction

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Abstract. The collection of modern, spatially extensive pollen data is important for the interpretation of fossil pollen ~~diagrams. Such~~ assemblages and the reconstruction of past vegetation communities in space and time. Modern datasets are readily available for percentage data but lacking for pollen accumulation rates (PAR). Filling this gap has been the motivation of the pollen monitoring network, whose contributors monitored pollen deposition in modified Tauber-traps for several years or decades across ~~European latitudes~~ Europe. Here we present this monitoring dataset consisting of 351 trap locations with a total of 2742 annual samples covering the period from 1981 to 2017. This dataset shows that total ~~PARs~~ PAR are influenced by forest cover and climate parameters, which determine pollen productivity and correlate with latitude. Regional forest cover >80% is indicated by >3200 tree pollen grains ~~grains~~ cm^{-2} y^{-1}. Pollen traps situated beyond 200 km of the distribution of a given tree species ~~are still collecting~~ still collect occasional pollen grains of that species. PAR's of up to 30 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} in fossil diagram should therefore be interpreted as long distance transport from beyond 200 km from the area of distribution. Comparisons between modern and fossil PAR from the same regions show ~~comparable~~ similar values. Comparisons for temperate taxa often demonstrate that similar ~~high values for temperate taxa in fossils sites~~ trap values are found further south or downhill. While we do not find modern situations comparable to ~~high~~ fossil PAR values of some taxa (e.g.~~,~~ Corylus)~~do not occur,~~. CO_2 fertilization and land use may cause high modern PAR ~~'s~~ that are not documented in the fossil record. The modern data is now ~~publically~~ publicly available in the Neotoma Paleoecology Database ~~(https://apps.neotomadb.org/explorer/) and serves improving~~ and aids interpretations of fossil PAR data.

1 Introduction

1.1 The need for a dataset of modern absolute pollen deposition

Pollen ~~analytical results are usually reported as percentages , which~~ analysis became the widely used method for the reconstruction of the Holocene vegetation. Pollen percentages are a simple ~~and robust representation of the data, while they~~ representation of pollen analytical results, but have a number of well-known ~~biases. The problem of~~ limitations and biases that are often

ignored. One of these is separating locally produced from long distance transported pollen ~~has received attention from the very beginning of modern pollen analysis (Davis, 2000). Particularly at the tree-line the interpretation~~ (Davis, 2000), which is paramount for mapping past changes in plant distributions. Also reconstructing the position of tree-lines from pollen percentage data may be misleading as local treeless vegetation (e.g. ~~tundra) is often low pollen procuring~~, tundra) produces few pollen grains, while distant woodlands (e.g.~~.~~, consisting of boreal trees) ~~may~~ produce much pollen. In such situations absolute pollen data are very informative as was already realized by Hesselman (1919) and Malmström (1923). Pollen accumulation rates (PAR) or the number of pollen grains deposited on the sediment surface over a set period of time~~is better suited~~, are in theory superior to pollen percentages as they do not suffer the closure effect of percentage data. Thus by using absolute data it is possible to differentiate between low amounts of long distance transported ~~and~~ versus high amounts of locally produced pollen~~as already realized by (Hesselman, 1919) and (Malmström, 1923)~~. In a seminal publication ~~(Davis and Deevey, 1964)~~ Davis et al. (1964) document the power of using absolute pollen deposition for the interpretation of ~~vegetation change~~ the spread of trees during the postglacial afforestation around Rogers Lake in Connecticut, USA. Another bias in percentage data is the interdependence of values obscuring the quantification in the amount of change of a single taxon. ~~PARs~~ PAR are therefore required when studying the population dynamics of individual trees (Bennett, 1983). While absolute pollen data do not share the artefacts of percentage data, they are often difficult to obtain and subject to a different set of limitations.

~~However, obtaining PAR from sediments cores requires~~ One limitation for obtaining reliable PAR from sediment cores is the requirement for accurate chronologies. ~~While sedimentation in lakes occurs generally without abrupt changes, lake~~ Lake internal processes such as re-deposition and sediment focusing and also catchment erosion may bias the resulting values ~~Davis and Brubaker (1973); (1984); Giesecke and Fontana (2008); (Bennett and Buck, 2016)~~(Davis and Brubaker, 1973; 1984; Giesecke a . These are some reasons why advances in interpreting PAR have been slow. The other reason is that collecting modern PAR values is not as simple as collecting mosses, soil litter or the top sediment of lakes for obtaining modern pollen percentages for a particular vegetation type. Modern rates of pollen accumulation can be obtained from monitoring pollen deposition using pollen traps (Hicks, 1994)~~,~~ as well as from carefully sampling the top ~~sediments~~ sediment of lakes that are either annually laminated or precisely dated (Matthias and Giesecke, 2014). Due to the high inter-annual variability in pollen production (Andersen, 1980; Haselhorst et al., 2020)~~,~~ it is necessary to conduct pollen monitoring over several years to enable comparisons with estimates from sediment cores (Hicks, 1974; Hicks and Hyvärinen, 1999).

For these reasons there are ~~numerable studies investigating~~ only a few investigations of the pollen vegetation relationship using ~~percentage data and comparably few using~~ absolute pollen deposition, while there are numerous studies using percentage data. Nevertheless, investigations using pollen traps yielded invaluable insights ~~in~~ into the mode of pollen transport (Tauber, 1967). Also the construction of representation factors for common Europe trees by Andersen (1970), which are still used, ~~were~~ was based on pollen monitoring data from pollen traps. In this way pollen monitoring studies have contributed to the development of models of pollen dispersal and deposition (Gaillard et al., 2008).

~~More recent~~ Several aspects of PAR data have not been exhaustively explored in modern comparison studies and here we will focus on the following three: 1) the influence of climate in combination with forest biomass; 2) the application of PAR to

indicate the local presence of trees versus long distance transport of pollen; using modern PAR values of single taxa to interpret fossil situations.

1.2 Climate and biomass

Recent investigations demonstrate the linear response of absolute pollen deposition to absolute tree abundance (Seppä et al., 2009, Sugita et al. (2009), Matthias and Giesecke (2014)), which may be used to reconstruct past standing tree biomass of different trees. However, at an annual time resolution, variability in PAR can be explained by weather conditions during the time of flowering as well as during the previous year (Hicks, 1999, van der Knaap et al. (2010), Nielsen et al. (2010)). Thus the question arises: If weather is determining annual pollen production, could climate in addition to determining biomass determine average PAR? Comparing *Pinus* PAR between two pine dominated forest regions in central Sweden and north east Germany shows much higher values in the south, suggesting that PAR may not correspond to tree biomass alone (Matthias and Giesecke, 2014). The relationship between pollen production and weather suggests that more pollen is produced when the primary productivity of the tree is higher. This is also true for fertilization with CO_2 (LaDeau and Clark, 2006). Therefore, climate and even the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere may determine the pollen productivity of a tree at a given site. Welten (1944) already interpreted the first fossil PAR in this way, suggesting that climate deteriorations may not immediately lead to a decline in forest cover but to the amount of pollen produced. This interpretation of changing PAR was however forgotten. If climate and CO_2 determine pollen productivity than the postglacial increase in PAR at Rodgers Lake could also be due to a change in these parameters. It is, therefore, important to investigate the possible relationship between climate and average PAR in more detail.

1.3 Local presence versus long distance transport

Also the initial question on the amount of pollen that may arrive at a site from long distance sources has not been addressed in a systematic way using modern absolute pollen deposition data. Occasional reports of PAR values for the first occurrence of a macrofossil indicating local presence exist (e.g. Giesecke, 2005a), but modern comparisons are lacking. While percentage data are not well suited for detecting distribution limits, a continental scale comparison (Lisitsyna et al., 2011a) provides some guidance on values that can be used for mapping past distribution changes (Giesecke et al., 2017). The PMP dataset presented here provides a continental scale dataset permitting such a comparison with PAR data.

1.4 Modern analogies

Spatially extensive modern pollen percentage datasets provide the possibility of searching for modern analogues for fossil pollen proportions and in this way reconstructing past vegetation and environmental conditions assemblages (Davis et al., 2013; Jackson and Williams, 2004; Overpeck et al., 1985). Modern datasets of absolute pollen deposition are hitherto rarely used to reconstruct past tree abundances or environmental conditions. By using a network of pollen traps

across the latitudinal tree-line in Finland, Hicks et al. (2001) ~~show~~ showed that average modern PAR values can be obtained representing the gradual transition from the boreal forest to tundra. These "modern analogues" were successfully applied to reconstructing Holocene shifts of the latitudinal tree line (Seppä and Hicks, 2006). This idea of building a modern dataset of absolute pollen deposition that can be used as a reference to interpret fossil PAR was the motivation for the establishment of the Pollen Monitoring Programme (PMP, Hicks et al., 1996; 1999; 2001).

1.5 The Pollen Monitoring ~~Program~~ Programme (PMP)

The ~~program~~ programme was launched in August 1996 at a meeting in Finland, bringing mainly European researchers together. Members of the network changed over the years and monitoring experiments were discontinued or newly started. Although pollen monitoring studies were and are carried out ~~on~~ in other continents (e.g. Jantz et al., 2013), the PMP had little success in attracting researchers working outside Europe. The standardisation of the monitoring protocol allowed for easy comparisons between the results in different regions, which were discussed at INQUA in 1999 and led to a special volume published in 2001 (Tinsley and Hicks, 2001) collecting results based on several initial time series (van der Knaap et al., 2001; Koff, 2001; Tinsley, 2001; Tonkov et al., 2001), as well as a first comparative study (Hicks et al., 2001). More individual results were published in the following years (e.g. Gerasimidis et al., 2006; Giesecke and Fontana, 2008; Hättestrand et al., 2008; Jensen et al., 2007; Kvavadze, 2001; Pidek, 2007) and comparative studies followed in a second special volume published in 2010 (Giesecke et al., 2010). The data produced by contributors to the PMP were analysed for different questions, including weather parameters determining the amount of pollen production (van der Knaap et al., 2010) and its correlation to masting years in *Fagus* (Pidek et al., 2010). The programme established a database collecting the original data for individual years, as well as general information on the pollen traps installed in the different regions (Fig. 1). The database was developed offline and was thus difficult to access by individual researchers. The paleoecology database Neotoma (Williams et al., 2018) offers a platform to store the PMP data and make it available to researchers worldwide, allowing them to interrogate the data and potentially identify modern analogues to interpret fossil pollen accumulation rates.

The overall purpose of this manuscript is to present an overview of the data in the PMP database and to interrogate this continental scale dataset of modern PAR with the following aims:

a) Examine the hypothesis that climate as well as regional forest cover explain the variability in PAR.

b) Study the absolute amount of long distance dispersed pollen encountered in pollen traps beyond the known distribution limits of the parent trees.

c) Compare modern and fossil pollen accumulation rates by collecting fossil datasets with estimates of PAR from the same regions where the pollen traps were installed. For the most abundant pollen types we explore how the modern situations can provide a reference for the interpretation of the fossil data.
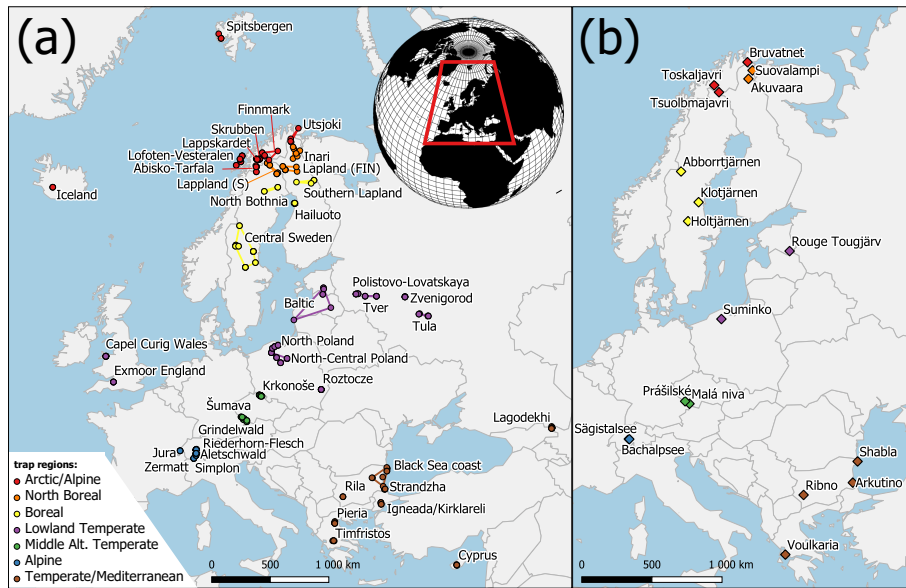
Figure 1. Map of the study area with trap areas (a) and Holocene pollen sites (b). Both datasets are divided into trap regions (colours). – Colours correspond to Fig. 5.

2 Methods

2.1 Study area

Sites in the PMP database were divided into 7 'trap regions' according to ~~the~~ their latitude and altitude. These regions were further divided into 'trap areas', by grouping 2-10 trap locations according to their spatial proximity. The ~~arctic~~Arctic/~~alpine~~
5   Alpine region includes distant trap areas in Spitsbergen and Iceland, northernmost traps in Finland (Utsjoki) and Norway (Lofoten-Vesterålen) and traps in the Scandinavian mountains above the local tree-line (Finnmark, Abisko-Tarfala, Skrubben and Lappskardet). The landscape around these traps is often treeless or covered by sparse birch shrubland with *Betula nana* and *B. pubescens* in some locations. The ~~north boreal~~ North Boreal region includes traps in Northern Lapland in Finland, Norway and Sweden with a vegetation dominated by *Betula* and *Pinus sylvestris*. The northern limit of *P. sylvestris* occurs between
10   traps from this region, which are situated at altitudes below 500 m a.s.l. The ~~boreal~~ Boreal region includes trap areas situated in Southern Lapland, around the Bay of Bothnia and in Central Sweden. The vegetation is dominated by *Picea abies*, *P. sylvestris* and *Betula* species, with the occurrence of *Alnus incana*. Northernmost populations of *Alnus glutinosa* occur near some sites and the southernmost traps in Central Sweden are situated near northern outpost populations of *Corylus avellana* and *Ulmus glabra*. Traps from the ~~temperate lowland~~ Temperate Lowland region have the widest longitudinal extent including the British
15   Isles, Poland, the Baltic countries and European Russia. Vegetation at trapping locations below 500 m a.s.l. is characterised by *Quercus* and *Fraxinus excelsior* in the ~~West~~ west and *P. sylvestris*, *P. abies* and *Betula* with an admixture of *Quercus*, *Tilia*, *Ulmus* and *C. avellana* in the ~~East~~east. *Fagus sylvatica* and *Carpinus betulus* occur in Poland, *Abies alba* only in south-eastern

Poland. Trapping locations in the ~~temperate region at elevations above 500 m (mid elevation)~~ Mid Altitude Temperate region were separated and include the Krkonoše and Šumava Mountains. Traps in both areas are placed on an elevation gradient from 500 m and 1200 m a.~~sl.~~s.l. The lower slopes of the mountains are dominated by ~~F.~~ *Fagus* sylvatica, while the traps are situated on a gradient from ~~P.~~ *Picea* abies-dominated forest to the onset of alpine vegetation in Krkonoše. In the Alps and Jura Mountains (Alpine region), traps were placed at even higher elevations, between 1200 m to 3000 m a.s.l., crossing the altitudinal treeline. Trapping locations in ~~the Southeast~~ Temperate/Mediterranean region in the southeastern Europe represent diverse landscapes and vegetation types including grasslands, evergreen and deciduous forests. Some traps are situated in high mountain regions around treeline situations or within the upper mountain forests including Rila (Bulgaria), Pieria (Greece), Timfristos (Greece), Lagodheki (Georgia) and Cyprus. Traps at lower elevations are situated near the Black Sea coast, within the low Strandzha Mountains and European Turkey.

2.2 Data collection

The pollen traps used in the PMP network generally consist of a bucket or bottle large enough to contain the annual surplus in precipitation on a surface of usually 19.6 cm^2 (5 cm diameter opening) or similar. Many traps had a sloping collar inspired by the design of pollen traps by Tauber (1974), although few collars were truly aerodynamic. The collection of the trap content was generally carried out annually and any special circumstances potentially affecting the annual pollen deposition were noted and stored in the database. For the analyses presented here and data overview, we excluded traps where the pollen record is 2 years or less, as averages may be affected by high inter-annual variability. The only exception is the trap situated in Spitsbergen where there is a two-year record. Pollen accumulation from the two-year record shows little variation and, being the only analogue for a truly arctic and treeless environment, provides important information on long distance pollen transport. We also excluded annual samples with records shorter than 8 months and, in addition, traps or years with spurious values due to particular events or local conditions (Table S1).

Most of the traps in the PMP network were placed in the open vegetation or in forest openings in order to avoid an unrepresentative contribution of individual trees e.g. due to anthers dropping into the traps. Traps were generally installed at ground level mimicking collection conditions relevant for sedimentary archives. ~~In consequence~~ Consequently, tall herbs or grasses might ~~overgrow or cover~~ have overgrown or covered some of the traps potentially leading to higher pollen deposition. Traps not equipped with a mesh occasionally trapped ~~pollen collecting~~ pollen-collecting insects, leading to enormous counts of insect pollinated taxa e.g. *Calluna, Erythranthe guttata*. The presence of insects in the traps is usually noted for the collection year so that careful evaluation of the information in the database can also inform on herbaceous pollen types (Jensen et al., 2007). Including this information in comprehensive database queries is currently not possible and a manual screening of datasets is required when analysing herbaceous pollen types. This problem does not seem to occur in tree pollen taxa. The occurrence of phytophagous insects in the traps were not accompanied by unusual peaks in tree pollen taxa, indicating that the insects inadvertently trapped were primarily collecting pollen from the herbaceous vegetation around the traps. Comprehensive database queries restricted to tree pollen, Poaceae and Cyperaceae should therefore not be affected by the occurrence of insects in the

trap and mainly represent pollen transport via wind, the rainout of pollen from the atmosphere and the gravity component (Tauber, 1967).

Concentrating the content of the traps was carried out either using filter paper or centrifugation and decanting the supernatant. In many cases the trap content was washed onto a paper filter, which was later digested using acetolysis. Pollen quantity was assessed by adding *Lycopodium* spore tablets (Stockmarr, 1971) to each trap before processing. Pollen concentration was obtained from the ratios between pollen grains counted to *Lycopodium* spike counted and *Lycopodium* spike added. Details about *Lycopodium* spike data, as well as details of the pollen trap such as the exact size of the opening are stored in the database. The PMP database was created in the PostgreSQL database system. Names of pollen taxa were unified using the accepted variable names from the European Pollen Database (Giesecke et al., 2019).

2.3 Investigated taxa, climate and ~~environmental parameters~~forest cover

We selected the common tree and shrub taxa of Europe. Pollen taxa generally refer to all the species within the genus. Pollen taxa allowing higher taxonomical resolution, which were consistently separated and excluded from the genus in the whole dataset are marked as "excl.". Pollen taxa potentially including pollen grains from another genus are indicated by "incl.": *Abies*, *Alnus* (excl. *A. viridis*), *Betula* (excl. *B. nana*-type), *Carpinus*-type (incl. *C. orientalis*/*Ostrya*-type), *Corylus*, *Fagus*, *Fraxinus* (incl. *F. ornus*), *Juniperus*-type (incl. *Cupressus*, *Tetraclinis*, *Thuja*), *Picea*, *Pinus* (excl. *P. cembra*-type), *Tilia*, *Quercus* (incl. *Q.robur*-type, *Q. cerris*-type and *Q. ilex*-type). Pollen accumulation rates of trees and shrubs were summed as arboreal pollen accumulation (hereafter as "tree PAR"). We also included pollen from the plant families Cyperaceae and Poaceae (excluding cereals). For the purpose of the analysis in this paper we refer to the sum of tree PAR plus Cyperaceae and Poaceae as "total PAR".

The climate parameters Mean Annual Temperature (MAT) and Annual Precipitation (APrecip) for the trapping locations were obtained from WorldClim 2 (Fick and Hijmans, 2017). For site altitude we used the information supplied by the individual investigator. Comparisons between PAR and forest cover were conducted using the data of the Forest Map of Europe (Kempeneers et al., 2012), which has a grid resolution of 1 km^2. Forest cover was extracted as a mean of all grid cells within a 10 km radius. We used regression analysis to explore whether individual or combinations of these environmental parameters describing the trapping location can explain the variance in average pollen accumulation of ~~the traps~~total and tree PAR. To balance the contribution of high and low pollen producers in the assessment of the ~~total PAR~~PAR, we applied correction factors (Table S2, Andersen, 1970). Average modern PAR have a large variance of values between traps of the same region, with the smaller numbers often being the focus of information. For this reason, we often log-transformed PAR values in the different analyses.

2.4 Distribution limits and PAR

Pollen deposition beyond the distribution area of the parent plant was studied by merging the distribution maps of the relevant species included in ~~the pollen type described~~ each of the pollen types listed above (Caudullo et al., 2017; San-Miguel-Ayanz et al., 2016). These comparisons were not ~~suitable~~ possible for *Alnus*, *Betula*, Cyperaceae, *Juniperus*, *Pinus* and Poaceae as

these taxa are widely distributed in Europe and few traps are located beyond their distribution area. ~~We compared the amount of pollen accumulating from these taxa in pollen traps~~

For each trap location and each pollen taxon we calculated the distance to the nearest area of distribution using GIS (GRASS Development Team, 2018). Initial observations showed that PAR dropped rapidly away from the distribution of the parent tree and did not decline at the same rate at larger distances. We therefore compared distance to the decadic logarithm of PAR, applying linear regression to explore thresholds of long-distance transport (hereafter also as "LDT") at 200 km from their mapped distribution limits. This distance was chosen as a compromise accounting for uncertainties in the information on distribution limits and available pollen trap data. Pollen traps in the UK are situated beyond the natural distribution limits of several of these trees but were excluded from the comparison as the ~~taxa considered~~ target taxa may be planted in the area.

~~For each trap location and each pollen taxon we calculated the distance to the nearest area of distribution using GIS (GRASS Development Team, 2018). Linear regression between this distance and the decadic logarithm of PAR was used to predict the threshold of long-distance transport (hereafter also as "LDT").~~ We compare LDT with the characteristic radius for the same taxa. Characteristic radius is a useful measure showing pollen transport predicted by pollen dispersal models. It represents the theoretical proportion of pollen loading at different distances from the source plants (Prentice, 1988) and can thus be easily compared with our empirical values. We used Gaussian Plume model with wind speed 3 m.s^{-1} (Prentice, 1985).

2.5   Comparison between modern and Holocene PAR

To enable the comparison of modern with fossil PAR values the pollen trap data was extracted from the PMP database with above described constraints and all annual samples were averaged within traps. ~~Per~~ For each trap region we selected at least one and a maximum of three Holocene PAR records (Table 1). This distance was chosen as a compromise accounting for uncertainties in the information on distribution limits and available pollen trap data. Holocene PAR estimates often show high variation between samples due to changes in the sedimentary environment. To reduce this effect in this comparison, Holocene data were averaged in 500-year bins. Site and sample compilation resulted in a fossil dataset containing 354 Holocene samples.

We compared trap and fossil PAR datasets in two ways. ~~First, we compared the distribution of logged PAR values and their mean for all taxa in all regions . Differences were measured by~~ For a general comparison of the distribution of fossil and modern values, we plotted the frequency of log-transformed PAR values over all regions and traps per taxon. Per region and taxon we compared the frequency distribution of fossil and modern PAR values using a t-test at 5% level of alpha ~~. Second, we searched for Holocene pollen records containing estimates of PAR in proximity to the locations of pollen traps, so we~~ to identify situations where modern and fossil values are comparable. Secondly, we compared trap and fossil PAR at the level of individual sites or trap areas. ~~Average~~ To facilitate this comparison average trap and fossil PAR values per taxon were submitted to one-dimensional clustering using the R-package Ckmeans.1d.dp (Song and Wang, 2011). ~~The classes produced were used to facilitate the comparison between~~ This method splits the univariate data in the way that the total of within-cluster sums of squares is always minimum. These classes helped us compare trap and fossil data and to ~~match the trap values with analogous situations in the past. The aim of this comparison was to find traps with similarly high values for individual taxa that compared to the highest average fossil PAR~~link the highest fossil PARs with the trap PARs. We dealt only with the highest

Table 1. Fossil sequences including type and size of the deposit.

country	region	site	deposit	latitude	longitude	(m) a.s.l.	area (ha)	reference
FIN	~~arctic~~Arctic/~~alpine~~ Alpine	Bruvatnet	lake	70.17933	28.39998	119	60	(Hyvärinen, 1975)
FIN	~~arctic~~Arctic/~~alpine~~ Alpine	Toskaljavri	lake	69.19177	21.44841	704	100	(Seppä et al., 2002)
FIN	~~arctic~~Arctic/~~alpine~~ Alpine	Tsuolbmajavri	lake	68.68915	22.05235	256	14	(Seppä and Weckst
FIN	~~north boreal~~ North Boreal	Suovalampi	lake	69.58333	28.83333	104	16	(Hyvärinen, 1975)
FIN	~~north boreal~~ North Boreal	Akuvaara	lake	69.125	27.68333	170	4	(Hyvärinen, 1975)
SWE	~~boreal~~ Boreal	Abborrtjärnen	lake	63.88333	14.45	387	3	(Giesecke, 2005c)
SWE	~~boreal~~ Boreal	Klotjärnen	lake	61.81667	16.53333	235	1	(Giesecke and Font
SWE	~~boreal~~ Boreal	Holtjärnen	lake	60.65	14.91667	232	1	(Giesecke, 2005a)
EST	~~lowland temp~~ Lowland Temp.	Rõuge Tõugjärv	lake	57.73904	26.90515	114	4.2	(Veski et al., 2012)
POL	~~lowland temp~~Lowland Temp.	Suminko	lake	53.72556	17.77278	115	0.12	(Pędziszewska et a
CZE	~~middle alt. temp~~Middle Alt. Temp.	Prášilské	lake	49.07551	13.40002	1079	3.7	(Carter et al., 2018
CZE	~~middle alt. temp~~Middle Alt. Temp.	Malá niva	peatbog	48.90789	13.81982	754	65	(Svobodová et al.,
CHE	~~mountain temp.~~ Alpine	Sägistalsee	lake	46.68139	7.9775	1935	7.2	(van der Knaap et a
CHE	~~mountain temp.~~ Alpine	Bachalpsee	lake	46.66944	8.020833	2265	8	(van der Knaap et a
BGR	~~temp~~Temp./~~medit~~Medit.	Shabla	lake	43.58333	28.55	1	1.51	(Filipova-Marinova
BGR	~~temp~~Temp./~~medit~~Medit.	Arkutino 2	lake	42.3299	27.72363	0	40	(Bozilova and Beug
BGR	~~temp~~Temp./~~medit~~Medit.	Ribno	lake	42.20682	23.32346	2184	3.5	(Tonkov et al., 200
GRC	~~temp~~Temp./~~medit~~Medit.	Voulkaria	lake	38.866667	20.833333	0	10000	(Jahns, 2004)

class in each fossil sequence because maximum abundance of several our target taxa was used as a stratigraphic marker of the Holocene period and thus their timing is well known. However, ~~averaging~~ time windows did not smooth out all spuriously high values variation~~, thus we need to ignore individual~~. In order to remove this remaining variation of individual time windows, we ignored some high fossil values (Table S3). Thus, we aimed to find modern analogues for fossil situations represented by

5   several bins (more than 500 years). We linked these periods ~~with high fossil PARs~~ containing high fossil PAR to the closest pollen trap, using a matrix of geographical distances between fossil sites and pollen traps. ~~We selected the comparisons for the 8 most abundant taxa to be presented in the main text and show the remaining 7 taxa in the supplementary.~~ All statistical analysis and data visualizations were produced in R (R Core Team, 2019).

3   Results and interpretations

10 ### 3.1   Overview of the PMP database and the environments sampled

The PMP database version 02.02.2020 contains data from 351 trap locations with a total of 2742 annual samples covering the period from 1981 to 2017. Considering the trap ~~record~~ records with 3 years and more we obtained 271 mean trap assemblages.

Trapping sites cover a range of altitudes from 0 to 3000 m a.s.l. with annual precipitation ranging from 402 to 1549 mm. Mean annual temperatures (MAT) for the sites fall between -5.7 to 14.1 °C. The forest cover within a 10 km radius of the trapping sites ranges from 0 to 98%. This range of environmental situations has yielded tree pollen accumulation rates from 5 to 86000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}, with a median value of 5400 grains cm^{-2} year^{-1} (Fig. 2). An overview of the taxonomic composition of the traps (Fig. S1) shows a dominance of pollen from *Pinus* and *Betula* in the traps from boreal and hemiboreal environments, with *Betula* as the taxon with the highest PAR overall. In most northern traps from open environments, Cyperaceae is the dominant NAP pollen type, while Poaceae are dominant in traps from open environments in the south, where they also contribute much higher absolute amounts. The diversity of landscapes and forest types in central and southern Europe is well represented in the pollen composition of traps from this area. Dominance of oak and hornbeam at Temperate/Mediterranean sites in the lowland and pine and birch at Arctic/Alpine and North Boreal sites show similar stability in the Holocene perspective. Vegetation history at the rest of the fossil sites shows a more dynamic development (Fig. S2).

3.2 Dependence of variation in PAR on regional forest cover and climate

Total PAR is generally lower at high latitudes, with the lowest values in the Arctic/Alpine region (trap area Spitsbergen), where no trees can grow. However, the highest absolute values of tree PAR are not from the southernmost traps but from the Lowland Temperate region (trap area Tver; Fig. 2). Latitude alone explains about 11% of the variance in log-transformed tree PAR, while MAT and forest cover within 10 km explain 21% and 19% respectively. In combination, these three variables explain 37% of the variation in log-transformed absolute tree pollen deposition. The addition of elevation increased the amount of variance explained to 50% (Table S4a).

Large differences in the pollen productivity between different trees affect this relationship. Adjusting the PAR from individual taxa by Andersen factors reduces the bias of differential pollen production between different plants and makes it possible to consider the total amount of pollen deposition including grasses. This adjustment increases the amount of variance explained by the regression model with all 4 explanatory variables to 56% (Table S4b). Due to the inclusion of grasses, the explanatory power of forest cover within 10 km is reduced, while latitude alone explains 37% of the Andersen adjusted log-transformed total PAR (Fig. 3a, Table S4b).

The regression models consider the full range of the data while, due to local factors, there is often a spread of average trap values for different traps in the same region. The traps with the highest regional values do not follow a latitudinal pattern, so the distribution of the minimum average trap values is more informative (Fig. 3a). These lower values closely follow a latitudinal trend. The average PAR south of 62° latitude and below the altitudinal treeline or close to forests is generally higher than 1000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. An area with low PAR in the south is the coastal grassland in northern Bulgaria. The generally low PAR in this area can be explained by the sparse vegetation cover on thin rendzina soils formed on limestone rock. Adjusting the PAR values by Andersen factors increases the values for this region so that they fit the general latitudinal trend (Fig. 3a). Traps with minimum average PAR values per region also correspond well to the forest cover within 10 km (Fig.
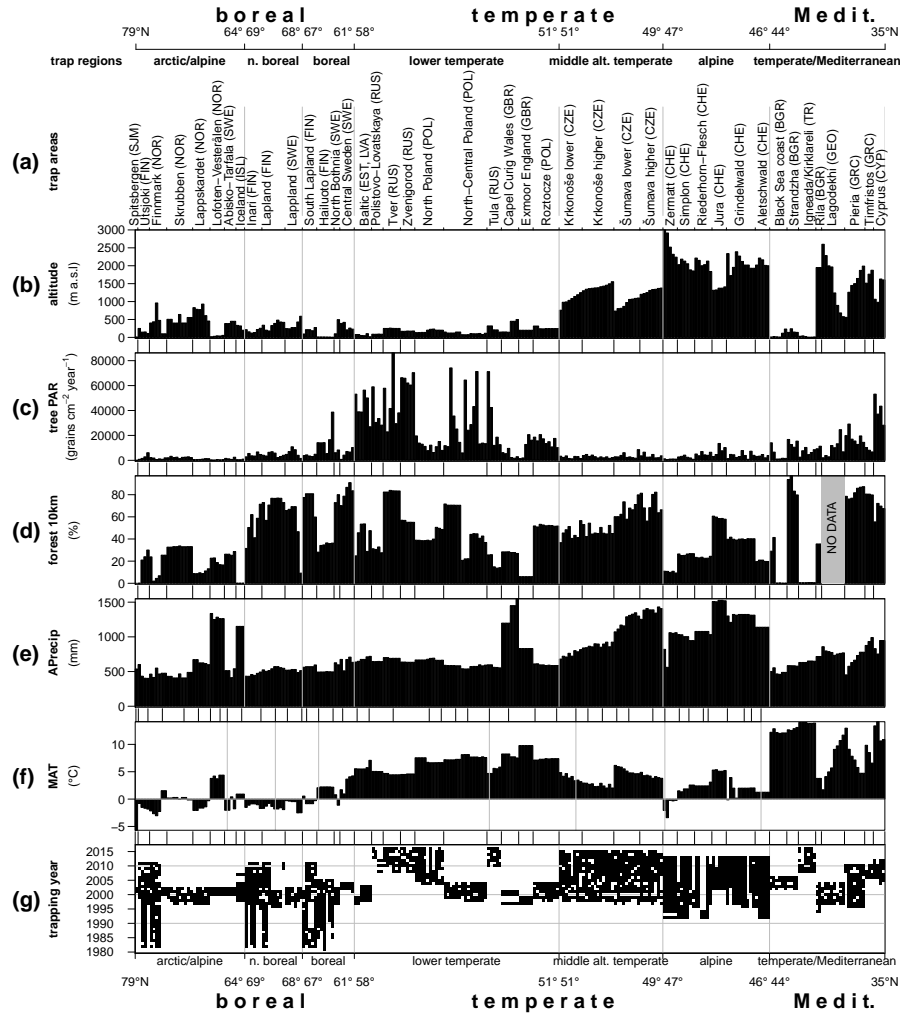
Figure 2. Environmental setting of the trap dataset. (a) trap areas ordered from north (left) to south (right), (b) altitude, (c) mean annual tree PAR, (d) forest cover within 10 km radius, (e) annual precipitation, (f) temperature: MAT - Mean Annual Temperature, (g) temporal coverage of the PMP database.
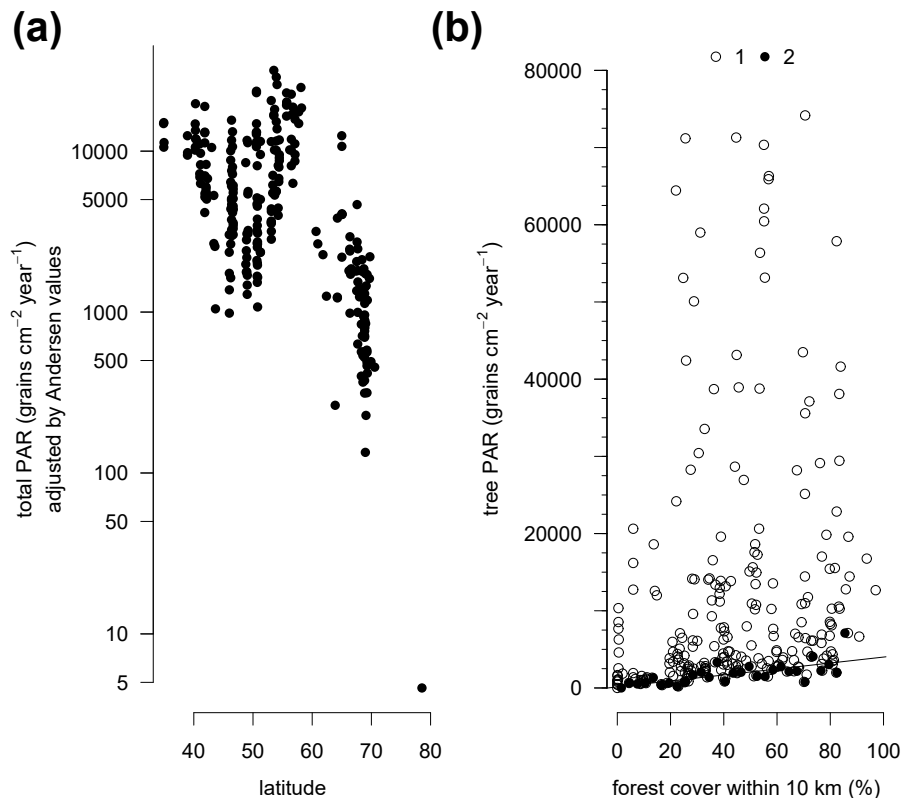
Figure 3. Latitudinal gradient in pollen accumulation rates of major tree taxa and Poaceae and Cyperaceae (total PAR) adjusted by Andersen values (see Tab S2) of pollen representation (a). Relationship between forest cover within 10 km radius and tree PAR (b). All trap sites (1) and minimum tree PAR per every 3 % of forest cover (2).

3b). ~~Considering~~ Exploring the data showed that a 3% wide bins of the forest cover, traps with the lowest PAR per each bin of the forest cover provide a regression model predicting a tree PAR of 3200 grains cm^{-2} year^{-1} at 80% forest cover within 10 km of the trap.

3.3 Long distance dispersed pollen

5 The comparison of PAR with the distribution limit of different tree taxa shows that PAR generally ~~decline~~ declines with distance (Fig. 4). A gradual decline is best documented for *Quercus* where ~~average values at the distribution limit scatter around 100 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}~~ traps cover different distances from the distribution area. This analysis also documents the long-distance transport of many tree pollen, including the heavy pollen of *Picea*. For better comparison of the absolute values between taxa ~~we used regression analysis to estimate~~ , we fitted a linear relationship, also to compare the amount of pollen

10 at 200 km from the distribution limit (Fig. 4b). This comparison indicates that less than ~~30~~ 80 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} of *Carpinus, Corylus, Fagus, Fraxinus, Quercus* and *Tilia* are deposited beyond 200 km of the distribution of the parent trees. Only *Picea*
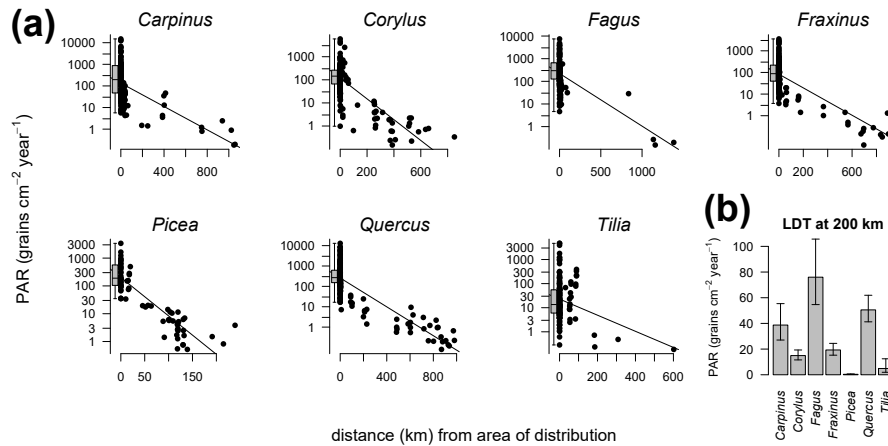
Figure 4. Relationship between the distance from the trap site to the nearest area of species distribution and PAR for selected trees. Zero distance represents edge of distribution area. Traps within the distribution area are aggregated in boxplots (a). ~~PARs~~ PAR of the long-distance transport (b) calculated from linear regression at 200 km (Fig. 4a).

shows less than 1 grain cm^{-2} y^{-1} at 200 km of the distribution range. In the case of *Fagus* it has to be noted that one trap beyond 200 km of the distribution of the tree recorded more than 30 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. The general threshold of 80 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} suggested here is near the detection limit and the PAR value may be biased by the size of the pollen count in cases where only one grain was encountered.

5 PAR at 200 km from the distribution area represent 0.002-36% of the median PAR within the distribution area (Fig. 4), which is 0.2% of pollen loading in average for those seven taxa (Table S5).

3.4 Ranges of modern and fossil PAR values

The ~~here presented~~ comparison of modern and fossil PAR values shows good agreement in tree PAR. The highest frequency of tree PAR values ranges between 2000 and 10000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} in both datasets (Fig. 5). Maximum ~~PARs~~ PAR of the trap

10 dataset are higher (often ten times) for all species compared to maximum ~~PARs~~ PAR in the fossil dataset, with the exception of *Corylus*. The frequency distribution of ~~PARs is log normal~~ PAR is log-normal for *Alnus*, *Tilia* and *Fraxinus*. A strong bimodal distribution of values ~~occurs for some taxa, which is particularly clearfor the fossil values~~ can be recognized for fossil samples of *Picea* and Poaceae (Fig. 5). Such a bimodality, but less clear, occurs for the modern samples of *Pinus* and for fossil samples of *Abies* and *Fagus*. The highest frequency of trap values for *Carpinus*, ~~*Picea* and Poaceae. In the modern~~

15 ~~samples such a bimodality can be recognized for~~ *Fagus* and *Tilia* is very close to the line of the LDT threshold. The LDT threshold for ~~*Pinus*~~ *Corylus* ~~with a trough at around 1000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. The~~ , *Fraxinus* and *Quercus* separates values of the three boreal regions from the rest of the regions. The trap values of *Picea* from the Arctic/Alpine region are above the LDT threshold. The frequency distribution of modern and fossil ~~PARs~~ PAR corresponds best for *Corylus*, with most values falling between 100 - 300 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} and recent and fossil maxima at around 3000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. The greatest difference in the

distribution of modern versus fossil ~~PARs~~ PAR occurs for *Juniperus*, where maximum values are around a hundred times larger in the traps. ~~Minimal PARs~~ Minimum PAR are about ten times higher in the traps for Poaceae and Cyperaceae~~in particular~~, in particular, and the right side of the distribution is shifted upwards. ~~For *Fagus, Quercus* and *Carpinus* the fossil PARs show a local maximum in the frequency of low values, which does not occur in the traps. These frequent low values range below the~~

5 ~~threshold indicating long distance transported pollen.~~

Using the 15 selected taxa in seven trap regions and the occurrence of the pollen types, we obtained 92 pairs ~~; of these~~ of trap and fossil data. The frequency distribution of PAR values is similar between modern and fossil samples in 31 ~~pairs are similar~~ of these pairs based on a t-test and a p-value > 0.05 (Fig. 5, Table ~~S5~~S6). In this regional comparison, *Betula* shows the best agreement between modern and fossil values. Values are similar in four regions across the gradient, with highest

10 values of 5400 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} in the ~~lowland temperate~~ Lowland Temperate region and the lowest values of 34 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} in the ~~temperate~~Temperate/Mediterranean region, where the parent trees are generally absent. Modern and fossil ~~PARs~~ PAR generally correspond well for the lowland ~~temperate~~ Temperate region where, in addition to *Betula*, *Alnus*, *Carpinus*, Cyperaceae, *Fraxinus*, *Picea*, *Pinus* and *Quercus* also have similar values. Although *Corylus* has a good overall agreement, the regions with similar modern to fossil data are shifted, with Holocene values in the ~~boreal~~ Boreal region corresponding to

15 modern ~~PARs in the lowland temperate~~ PAR in the Lowland Temperate region.

3.5 Taxa specific linkage of the highest average PAR at fossil sites with individual trap values

3.5.1 ~~Introductory notes~~

To facilitate the comparison of modern and fossil PAR, the combined taxa specific values were submitted to a one-dimensional cluster analysis, which resulted in between 5 and 9 classes of PAR values per taxon~~(Fig. S1-S2). Comparing the maximum~~

20 ~~averages of fossil PARs~~. Comparing the highest class of fossil PAR to modern trap data on a ~~site by site~~ site-by-site basis shows that it is possible to find modern comparisons for all fossil situations. We demonstrate the ~~linkage of the highest PAR clusters per each fossil site with individual trap records for the example of selected tree taxa (*Abies, Betula, Corylus, Fagus, Picea, Pinus, Quercus, Tilia*; Fig. 6). Detailed description of the remaining of taxa~~ main linkage. Detailed descriptions are presented in the ~~supplementary (*Alnus, Carpinus*, Cyperaceae, *Fraxinus, Juniperus*, Poaceae, arboreal pollen;~~ supplement (Fig. S3).

25 **3.5.1**

~~Modern PAR of 490-3900 grains cm~~*Abies* declined in most of the populations, thus Roztoce is the only analogous trap area with PAR for fossil sites in central Europe and similarly the Timfristos trap area is analogous for fossil sites in southern Europe (Fig. 6). *Alnus* retreated from Scandinavia, thus the fossil sites have the closest linkage southwards, on the island Hailuoto or in North Poland. *Corylus, Quercus* and *Tilia* (Fig. 7) also declined, thus modern values in North Poland provide analogues for fossil

30 situations in central and northern Europe. Poaceae and Cyperaceae exceed values from fossil examples thus analogous traps are close to the fossil site. Similarly, *Betula* and *Juniperus* have high PAR at only a few trap sites (11900-73900 and 870-8300 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} ~~are observed in Roztocze, Jura, Rila and Timfristos. These values are produced by the different species: *Abies*~~
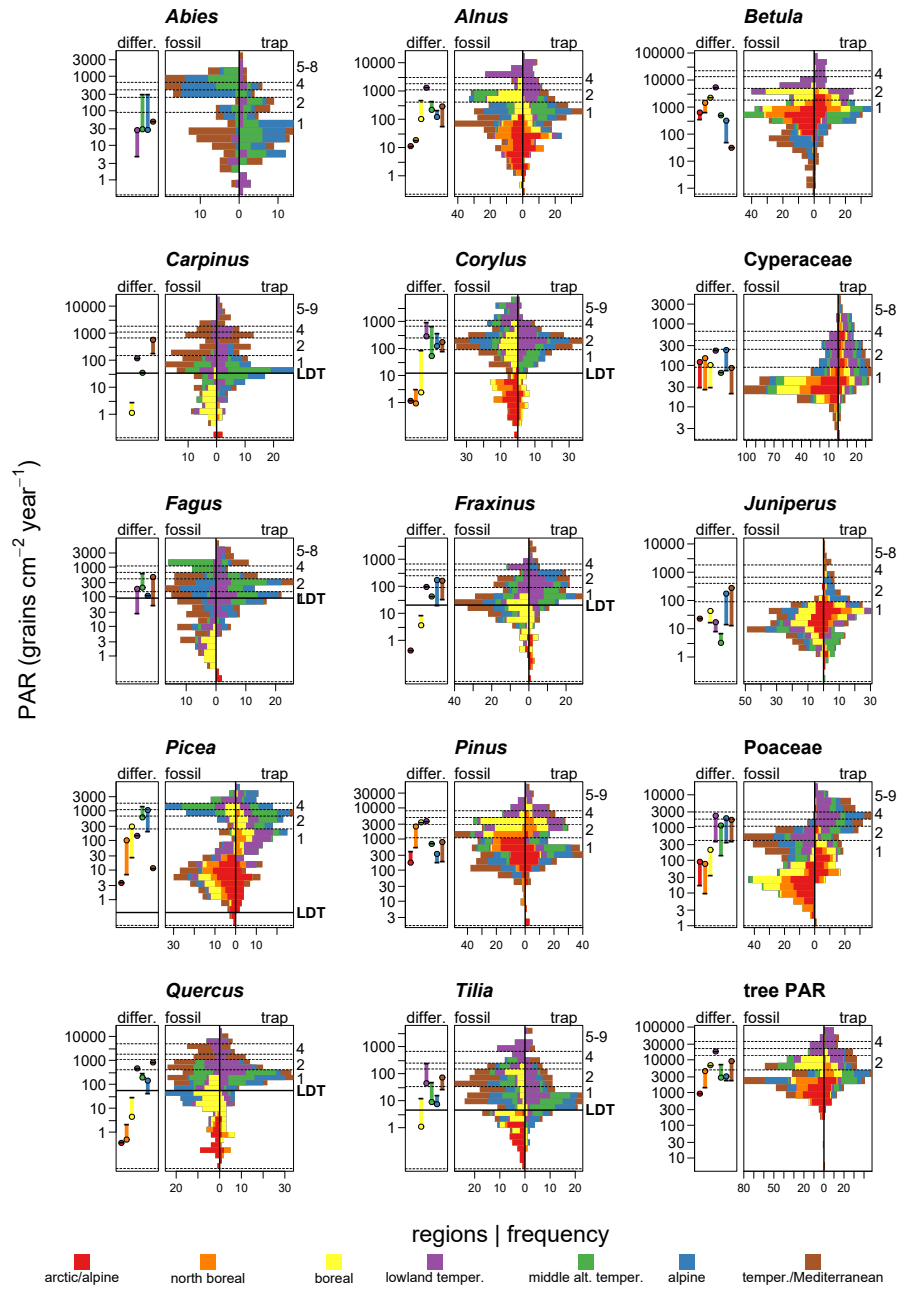
Figure 5. Difference (differ.) between the mean fossil (-) and the mean trap (o) PAR per trap region is shown by length of the vertical segment. Paired histograms of mean annual PAR from the fossil record (on the left) and from traps (on the right). Colours denote different trap regions and correspond to Fig. 1. Note logged log-transformed y-axis. Horizontal lines and numbering on the secondary y-axis denote classes of PAR, for more detail see Fig. 6b) and d) . LDT is threshold for long distance transport.

alba in Roztocze and the Jura mountains and *A. cephalonica* in the Rila mountains and on Timfristos. Generally high fossil values occur in the two Alpine lakes Sägistalsee and Bachalpsee around 7000 years, in Ribno in the Rila mountains around 5000 years and in the two sites in Šumava between 4000 and 1000 years. In all these regions with fossil evidence of high *Abies* populations the modern PAR values in pollen traps are comparably low documenting that the populations have much declined.

5 The *Abies alba* populations in Roztocze provide modern analogues for how dense *Abies* forests may have been in the Alps and Šumava although the forests in Roztocze occur at much lower elevations. Pollen traps on Timfristos mountain provide analogues of the density of Middle Holocene *Abies* forests in the Rila mountains. Pollen traps located far from the distribution limits of *Abies* in Wales, northern Poland, Georgia and Cyprus registered occasional *Abies* pollen grains with PARs of up to 80 grains cm, respectively), whereas the fossil PAR and the rest of the trap dataset are lower, fitting within the two or three

10 first classes. Both taxa find an analogous trap record within the same area, most of the distant links are for the lowest classes (0-5600 and 0-90 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} respectively). Fossil PAR of *Carpinus* in North Poland and the Black Sea coast fall within the range of trap records from the same area. Trap areas in the Baltics, Šumava and Central Sweden indicate higher fossil than trap PAR of *Carpinus*. All fossil sites within the recent distribution of *Fagus* and *Picea* have the closest analogous trap in the same or adjacent trap area and fossil-trap links are short. Fossil and trap PAR of arboreal pollen and *Pinus* are comparable within the

15 trap areas, except for the Baltics and Rila mountains, respectively, where the fossil is lower than the trap record. On the other hand their record from the Early Holocene at Prášilské Lake is higher than any trap record from the Šumava mountains.

3.5.1

Letting aside traps from the Caucasus and Turkey, trap sites cover the distribution of *Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens*. The highest modern values between 11900-73900 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are found in Estonia and Russia as well as in one pollen trap from

20 Hailuoto. These modern PARs exceed values from fossil examples. The highest fossil PAR of around 10000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} in this comparison come from northern Poland and Estonia and are thus consistent with the area of high modern values. Whether high abundance of *Betula* is a characteristic of the eastern European forests or a result of frequent disturbance at the forest ecotone or due to recent land-use change is difficult to evaluate based on the available data. Modern and fossil values agree for the sites in central Sweden at PARs between 1900-5600 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}.

25 ### 3.5.1

Modern PARs stay below 2800 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} except for two traps in north-central Poland. Values above 610 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are also found in pollen traps from the Baltic, Wales, Turkey and Georgia. The pollen type mainly comes from *Corylus avellana*, while *C. maxima* occurs in Greece, *C. colchica* in Georgia and *C. colurna* in Turkey and in plantations or as ornamental trees in the rest of the Europe. As discussed in the main text, the selection of fossil sites did not include studies from western and

30 lowland central Europe where values of 10000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are common for the Early Holocene. The highest fossil PARs from the chosen examples were estimated for the Early Holocene from Prášilské situated at 1000 m a.s.l. Thus the high modern values in north-central Poland provide analogues for several fossil situations . Occasional grains and small PARs of *Corylus* pollen are common in traps from boreal regions as well as two traps from the arctic region.

Abies

Mean modern PAR averaged for each trap area (a). b) Range of mean individual trap values classified by one-dimensional clustering. Crossed squares indicate that pollen of the taxon was not found in any trap from the area. c) Map of Europe with the distribution of the species (gray, Caudullo et al., 2017, San-Miguel-Ayanz et al. 2016) falling within the pollen taxa, size of symbols shows classes of PAR in recent and the highest PAR per each fossil record. Arrows show the closest trap with the same class of PAR. d) Fossil PAR values with the highest PAR class per each record (see Table 1 for full name) highlighted by the corresponding colour for the class (see b) Note the scale of the x-axis corresponds to the x-axis scale of graph a).

Figure 6. Mean modern PAR averaged for each trap area (a). b) Range of mean individual trap values classified by one-dimensional clustering. Crossed squares indicate that pollen of the taxon was not found in any trap from the area. c) Map of Europe with the distribution of the species (gray, Caudullo et al., 2017, San-Miguel-Ayanz et al. 2016) falling within the pollen taxa, size of symbols shows classes of PAR in recent and the highest PAR per each fossil record. Arrows show the closest trap with the same class of PAR. d) Fossil PAR values with the highest PAR class per each record (see Table 1 for full name) highlighted by the corresponding colour for the class (see b) Note the scale of the x-axis corresponds to the x-axis scale of graph a).

Figure 7. See caption Fig. 6
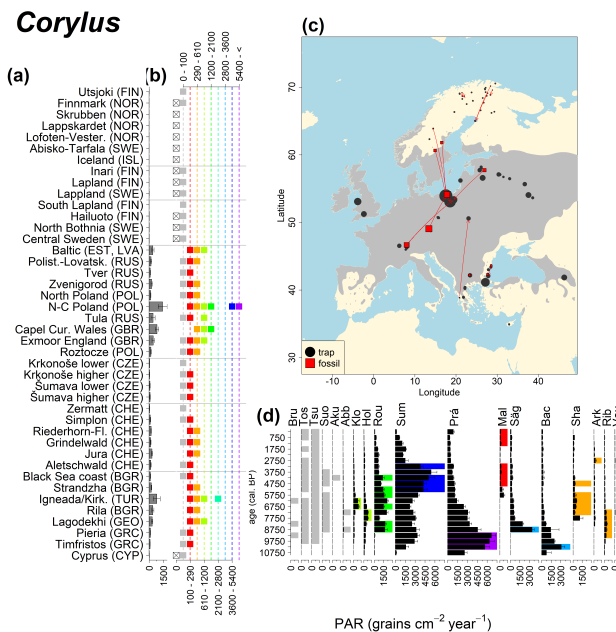
Figure 8. See caption Fig. 6
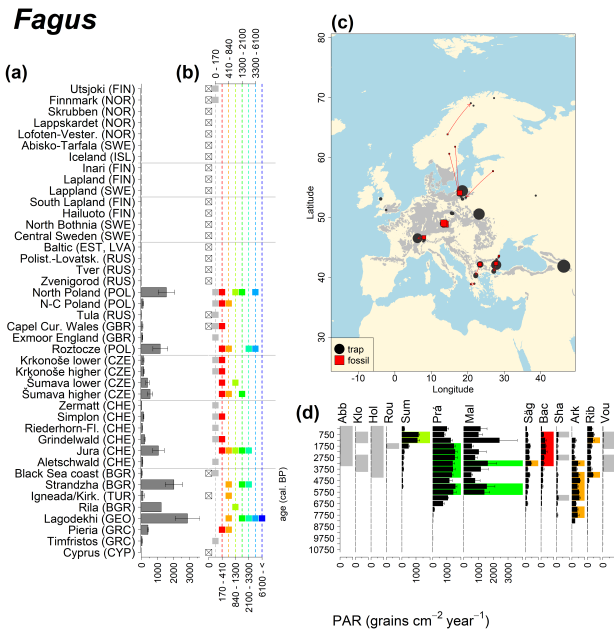
Figure 9. See caption Fig. 6

3.5.1

~~PARs of more than 3300 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are found in pollen traps in Poland and Georgia and values above 2100 occur in traps from the Strandza, Šumava and Jura mountains, in southern Bulgaria, Czechia and Switzerland respectively. Two species of *Fagus* contribute to the pollen type with *Fagus sylvatica* as the dominant tree across much of Europe and *F. orientalis* occurring in southern Bulgaria, Turkey and Georgia. Fossil PAR increase around 8000 cal. BP at the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, around 7000 in the Šumava Mountains and 1500 years ago in northern Poland. High values in Šumava and northern Poland match the values in adjacent traps. Hardly any *Fagus* pollen occurs in pollen traps outside its modern distribution except sporadic appearances in Tula and the two northernmost trap areas. However, *Fagus* pollen occurs regularly at fossil sites that were assumed to have never been within the distribution of the tree, such as the sites in central Sweden, where *Fagus* grains occurred regularly over the last 3000 years.~~

3.5.1

~~Modern *Picea* PARs above 2800 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are present in traps from Central Sweden, the Baltic region, Russia, Šumava mountains and the Alps. While some of the modern *Picea* pollen may be released by planted non-native *Picea sitchensis* and *P. pungens*, most of the pollen comes from Picea abies, which is also planted in many European regions outside its natural distribution. The highest fossil values in the selection of sites come from the Šumava mountains and are comparable to high trap values from the same region although at lower elevations. Noteworthy are also the generally low fossil *Picea* PARs for~~
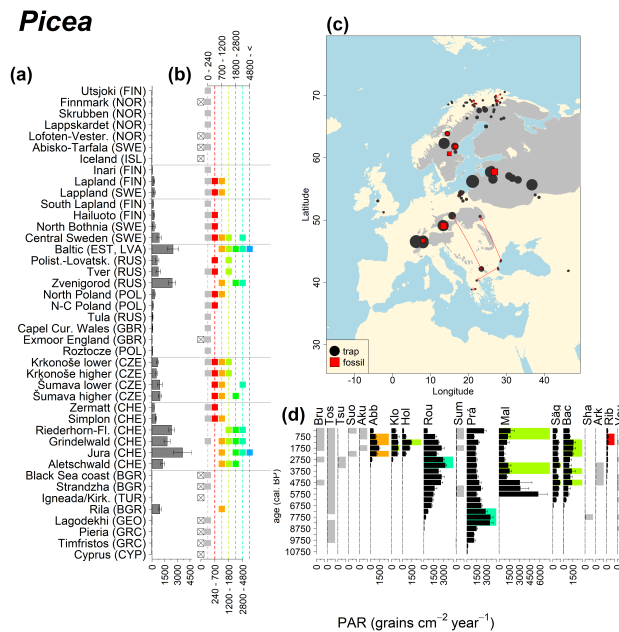
Figure 10. See caption Fig. 6

sites in Central Sweden and Tver region, where the tree is dominating or co-dominating the forest for the last 2000 years. Most pollen traps from beyond the distribution areaof *Picea* collect individual *Picea* pollen.

3.5.1

Highest modern PARs exceeding 43600 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are observed in traps on Cyprus, while the values in traps from the
5 northern boreal forest often stay below 5400 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. *Pinus* PAR values increase from Finnmark (2000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}) and central Sweden (5000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}) to the Baltic and north-central Poland with 35000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. In northern Europe nearly all *Pinus* pollen comes from *P. sylvestris*, while southern European trapping sites have a higher diversity of trees within the subgenus Diploxylon including P. mugo, *P. nigra*, *P. brutia* and *P. halapensis*. Pollen of both Haploxylon pines *P. cembra* in Alps and *P. peuce* in Rila was separated. High fossil *Pinus* PAR values are estimated for Suminko in northern
10 Poland , matching modern trap values from the same region. In the Šumava mountains *Pinus* was possibly the dominant forest tree during the Early Holocene and declined thereafter, so that modern values from north-central Poland provide the nearest analogue to the Early Holocene situation. The lowest *Pinus* PARs (<125 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}) are found in taps from Iceland (2-5 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}), Lagodheki and most of the traps from Lofoten-Vesterålen (38-125 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}) and single traps from Lappskardet, Exmoor England and Zermatt.

15 ### 3.5.1
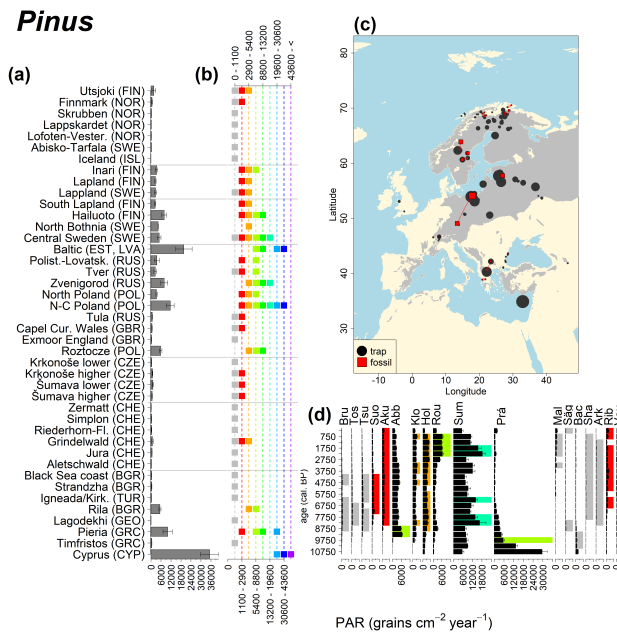
Figure 11. See caption Fig. 6

Modern PARs of *Quercus* within the area of distribution of a parent tree in the genus range between 620-15000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. Highest modern values (6000-15000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}) are found in the traps from the UK, Poland and the southern Balkan. The first two areas host only species belonging to the *Q. robur*-type, whereas the two latter also include species from *Q. cerris*-type and *Q. ilex*-type. The highest fossil values from Suminko seem too high for the region compared to other fossil samples, nevertheless modern values in pollen traps from the region provide comparable high PARs. Also, PARs in recent sediments from some lakes in north-eastern Germany show similar values (Matthias and Giesecke, 2014). PARs to about 1300 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are estimated for Rõuge Tõugjärv near the distribution limit of Quercus roburwhere the tree only became abundant after 7000 years ago. *Quercus robur* reached its maximum abundance even later in central Sweden where the PAR at Holtjärnen around 3200 years ago suggest its presence. The pollen seems to disperse well and is found in small amounts in most pollen traps beyond its distribution area and fossils samples far to the north of the distribution have also collected *Quercus* pollen during the Holocene, which may be partly due to the abundance of trees of this genus in Europe.

3.5.1

The highest modern PAR 1500-4700 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} was measured in Poland, European Russia (Tula) and Lagodheki in Georgia, however, this high range has no comparison in the fossil record. Lower values 120-1500 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} were found in traps from European Turkey and the Alps. Highest fossil PAR 270-1500 was measured in middle altitude and lowland temperate zone during the Middle Holocene . The closest trap analogues to them are in North Poland. Sites on the current edge of *Tilia* distribution and in the mountains(Central Sweden, Alps and Rila) show highest PAR range 120-270 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1},
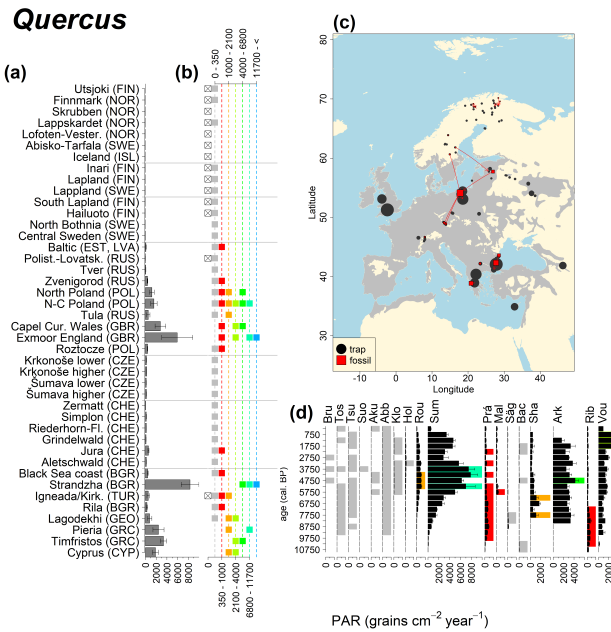
Figure 12. See caption Fig. 6

~~also during the Middle Holocene. Trap records corresponding to the lowest class and above the LDT (5-40 grains cm⁻² y⁻¹) appear in sites within distribution limit of *Tilia* (Baltic, European Russia, Poland), on its edge (Central Sweden, Wales, Black Sea Coast, Greece) or in the mountains (Šumava, Alps).~~

4   Discussion

4.1   Trap ~~PARs~~ PAR and environmental conditions

This overview of European pollen trap data collected by the PMP network demonstrates that modern ~~PARs~~ PAR provide comparable values to fossil records and can thus help in interpreting the fossil signal in spite of the different taphonomic processes that influence PAR values in pollen traps versus lake sediments (Lisitsyna et al., 2011b). The dataset extends across the European latitudinal and altitudinal range and documents general patterns. The latitudinal gradient in PAR is clearly visible in this dataset. Although data on plant biomass and primary productivity are not available for all trapping locations, the regression analysis indicates that mean annual temperature has an influence on the quantity of pollen deposition. The July temperature of the previous year determines the amount of pollen production in *Pinus* near the tree-line (Autio and Hicks, 2004; McCarroll et al., 2003). Evidence from other European regions (van der Knaap et al., 2010; Nielsen et al., 2010) suggests that ~~also~~ the growing season warmth and other climate variables also explain the interannual variability of pollen deposition. On ~~the regional scale~~ a regional scale, PAR corresponds to plant biomass of the parent tree (Matthias and Giesecke, 2014; Seppä et al., 2009).
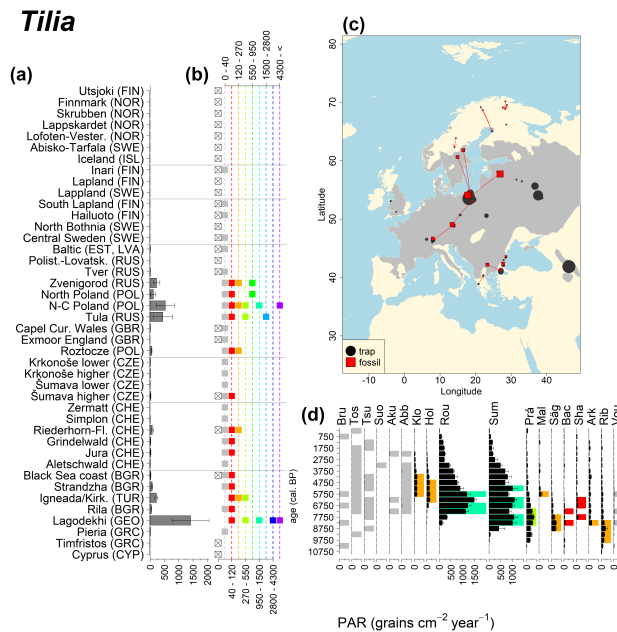
Figure 13. See caption Fig. 6

However, differences in forest cover cannot explain the latitudinal gradient in PAR described here, which may, at least in part, result from the latitudinal gradient in primary productivity of trees (Gillman et al., 2015). An increase in primary productivity and pollen production has been shown in a carbon dioxide fertilization experiment (Wayne et al., 2002), which supports the interpretation that average PAR of the same species may vary due to environmental parameters determining its productivity.

5 ## 4.2 Long Distance Transport

Modern ~~PARs~~ PAR from traps near the latitudinal limit of *Pinus* and *Betula* have been used previously to reconstruct past changes in the northern distribution limits of these trees (Seppä and Hicks, 2006). Our LDT result 80 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} is slightly lower than the range for *Pinus* and *Betula* in arctic-apline zone 100-200 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} (Seppä and Hicks, 2006). Here we evaluated ~~larger distances andtherefore~~ greater distances and, therefore, had to ignore *Pinus* ~~and *Betula*, while suggesting~~ both
10 species, while indicating some general thresholds for other dominant European trees. The ~~upper value of around 30~~ suggested threshold of 80 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} may be used to differentiate local from long distance transport for most wind pollinated trees. However, this value may still lead to false negatives as the absence of a plant cannot be proven by the absence of evidence for presence. The value of 80 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} for *Picea* agrees well with the fossil PAR value for the tree of 50 *Picea* grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} found in a sample at Klotjärnen just after the occurrence of the first *Picea* bud scale (Giesecke, 2005b). However, these modern
15 thresholds estimated here are likely to depend on the abundance of the parent tree in the larger region rather than properties of the pollen types. A ~~larger~~ higher threshold would be expected for *Corylus* compared to *Fagus*~~, based on the fall speed of pollen~~. *Corylus* has a lighter pollen grain than *Fagus*, which can travel more easily over large distances (Table S5). However,

Corylus ~~is not very abundant near its northern limit in these more continental areas, while~~ LDT for *Picea* results too low and *Fagus* ~~often dominates forests near its presumed limits~~too high. They do not cover the same distance ranges as the *Corylus* results. LDT estimate of *Fagus* is based on a few traps, very distant from the distribution area. Similarly, the occurrences of taxa outside the mapped natural distribution can bias this estimate.

5   ~~Characteristic radius is a useful measure showing pollen transport predicted by pollen dispersal models. It represents theoretical proportion of pollen loading at different distances from the source plants (Prentice, 1988) and thus can be easily compared with our empirical values. PAR of~~ Considering *Carpinus*, *Corylus*, ~~*Fraxinus* and~~ *Fagus, Fraxinus, Picea,* *Quercus* and *Tilia,* the proportion of pollen loading within the area of distribution and at 200 km from the ~~distribution area represent 5-10 % of the median PAR within the distribution area (Fig. 4) . Considering the range of standard terminal velocities of those~~
10 ~~taxa and~~ source plants measured empirically by our PAR results (0.002-36%, in average 0.2%) is wider and higher than the theoretical range (0.005-13%, in average 0.05%; Table S6). This mismatch can be caused by too leptokurtic character of the Gaussian Plume model with ~~wind speed~~ windspeed 3 m.s^{-1} ~~(Abraham et al., 2014), we get 2-13% of pollen loading at the characteristic radius 200 km (Table S6).~~ and fits with previous indication that it underestimates dispersal of pollen with a large grain (Abraham et al., 2014, Theuerkauf et al. (2016)).

15   Pollen rain beyond the area of distribution is analogous with high elevations with sparse vegetation. However, with the increasing altitude, PAR decreases independently from the actual growth density, because of the worse climatic conditions and low pollen productivity (Markgraf, 1980).

4.3   Analogues for vegetation reconstruction

~~While the dataset of modern PARs presented here provides analogues for the selection of fossil sites, reliable~~ The comparisons
20 of modern and fossil PAR values show that pollen traps can characterize the population density of particular taxa in modern situations and thus provide analogues aiding in the interpretation of fossil situations. One caveat of the comparisons conducted here is the lack of fossil sites in the oceanic climate of western Europe. Reliable fossil PAR records were not available from the areas of trapping locations in the UK and pollen trapping locations from northern France or Spain are not available. Moreover, no sites with fossil PAR from western Europe or from low elevations in the Alps are included in this comparison. ~~Consequently,~~
25 ~~the~~ This omission has consequences for some of the comparisons. A particular case where PAR could in theory aid in the interpretation of the fossil situation are the large quantities of *Corylus* pollen ~~deposited in many~~ in early Holocene samples of west European sites~~during the early Holocene was not considered. There are~~. However, there are no or limited modern analogues ~~for~~the highest early Holocene values~~of~~ for the highest Early Holocene values. Among the fossil sites considered here the highest values are around 7000 *Corylus* grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} at Prášilské. Average Early Holocene *Corylus* PAR at Soppensee
30 in northern Switzerland are 12000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} (Lotter, 1999) and at Meerfelder Maar (Kubitz, 2000) in western Germany 18000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. Judging from pollen percentages, even higher Early Holocene values should be found in more oceanic situations and the *Corylus* PAR at Hockham Mere in eastern England may be as high as 40000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} for the early Holocene (Bennett, 1983). Modern values in pollen traps from Wales at around 2000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} are far below these early Holocene figures and it is likely that modern analogues of sites with high *Corylus* ~~PARs~~ PAR no longer exist in Europe.

Conversely, the high modern PAR values for *Pinus* and *Betula* from Poland and Latvia are not found in the fossil examples. *Pinus* PAR values around 30000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} were also obtained from ^{210}Pb dated modern lake sediment samples in north eastern Brandenburg (Matthias and Giesecke, 2014). This study evaluated the ~~PARs~~ PAR for the years 1993 and 2009. The increase in *Pinus* PAR values between the first and the second sampling period corresponded with an increase in the amount of

5   standing pine volume in the region. Forestry practices aimed at increasing yield could account for the high *Pinus* values. *Pinus* was extensively planted after the 1950s, even on soils where trees with a lower pollen production would have grown naturally. The fertilization due to increased nitrogen deposition (Pers-Kamczyc et al., 2020), as well as increased atmospheric carbon dioxide, increase the pollen production not only of *Pinus*. A carbon dioxide enrichment experiment of 19-year old *Pinus taeda* resulted in a twofold probability of reproductive maturity after 3 years (LaDeau and Clark, 2001). The continued experiment

10   also showed that carbon dioxide fertilization increased the number of pollen cones and therefore pollen grains produced per tree (LaDeau and Clark, 2006).

In the case of *Pinus*, the modern dataset includes trap data from Cyprus, where *Pinus brutia* dominates at 1600 m a.s.l., resulting in even higher *Pinus* PAR values compared to those found in the Polish and Baltic regions. The highest *Betula* values come mainly from Russia, where values frequently exceed 30000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. We previously discussed such high fossil

15   PAR values for *Corylus*, which is assumed to produce a similar amount of pollen. However, fossil *Betula* ~~PARs~~ PAR in the examples considered here are consistently below 6000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} and published early Holocene values rarely exceed 6000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} (but see Theuerkauf et al., 2014). Pollen diagrams from the forest steppe ecotone in European Russia are often characterized by high *Betula* ~~percentage~~ percentages (Nosova et al., 2019; Shumilovskikh et al., 2018). However, there are no suitable diagrams with reliable PAR estimates from that region. It is thus difficult to judge whether high modern trap values are

20   associated with recent land-use change or are characteristic of eastern European forests.

The comparison of regional ~~PARs~~ PAR between traps and fossil estimates indicates higher fossil PAR of *Picea*, *Fagus* and *Abies* in middle altitudes of the temperate zone (Fig. 5), which, in the case of *Abies*, represents the Europe-wide decline in *A. alba* (Tinner et al., 2013). *Picea* and *Fagus* dominate central European forests today and *Picea* is planted ~~much~~ well beyond its natural range. However, both trees start flowering rather late in their lives and harvesting the trees at a young age may contribute

25   to lower modern PAR values. Fossil and modern ~~PARs~~ PAR for these trees in Šumava are similar, while only the highest trap values match the Holocene high values. On average there are lower modern PAR values; this may be explained by a lowering of the treeline over the last millennia. This interpretation agrees with REVEALS reconstructions for this region, indicating a decline in the cover abundance of *Picea* and *Fagus* (Abraham et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2018). Within a 60 km radius of the fossil sites, *Picea* decreased in abundance from 70% during the Middle Holocene to 43%, compared to modern abundance.

30   *Fagus* and *Abies* declined from Late Holocene values of 22% and 3% to currently 20% to 1% respectively (Abraham et al., 2016). The abundance of *Abies* in the Roztocze region (SE Poland; Fig. 6) provides a good analogue for the past abundance of the tree in Šumava with maximum PAR of 1000-3000 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1}. *Abies* disappeared from the Czech Republic during the Mediaeval Age due to forest management methods (Kozáková et al., 2011), which were not practiced in ~~SE~~ south-east Poland.

Linking the fossil to modern PAR values facilitates the interpretation of the fossil record of individual sites. Unfortunately,

35   the details cannot be discussed here. However, the central Swedish sites Holtjärnen and Klotjärnen provide excellent examples.

These sites are situated north of the modern distribution of *Tilia*, *Corylus*, *Quercus* and near the limit of *Alnus glutinosa*. The fossil PAR values are higher for these taxa than those found in pollen traps at or near these lakes (Giesecke, 2005a; Giesecke and Fontana, 2008). Modern reference values for the ~~PARs~~ PAR of these taxa can be found in northern Poland and Estonia. Moreover, this analogue matching indicates that 3000 years ago the PAR values for *Quercus* at Holtjärnen were sufficiently

5   high to indicate the occurrence of small populations near the lake. Those taxa at both sites also nicely illustrate the potential use of LDT for the interpretation of the fossil record. Fossil PAR values of *Tilia*, *Corylus* and *Quercus* in ~~boreal region result~~ Boreal region are above LDT threshold, whereas all trap PAR values ~~are~~ result below (Fig. 5).

4.4   Limitations and problems

~~There~~ Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the accumulation of pollen in traps and on peatlands and lakes

10 (Lisitsyna et al., 2011b; Pardoe et al., 2010). Differences in pollen trap design and placement in the landscape will influence the values. Trap values are also affected by modern processes that have no impact on the fossil signal, such as pollen from trapped insects. These biases appear minor as indicated by the large consistency of the data collected in the PMP database. Also the comparison of values over this large environmental gradient ~~result~~ results in the signal being ~~stringer~~ stronger than the noise. Nevertheless, some traps or individual years have unusual values and were removed from the comparison (Table

15 S1). Despite this, the uncertainty of fossil PAR values is much greater than pollen traps, which is primarily due to the added uncertainty coming from sampling a sediment core, combined with the uncertainty of the age model (Maher, 1981). PAR from lake ~~sediments~~ sediment has additional biases due to differential sedimentation of pollen grains in lakes (Davis and Brubaker, 1973), sediment re-deposition, focussing and catchment erosion (Davis et al., 1984; Pennington, 1979). Although we carefully selected the best available fossil sites, ~~PARs~~ PAR especially from lake Suminko and Rõuge Tõugjärv may be biased by lake

20 internal processes and the addition of stream borne pollen respectively. Nevertheless, their fossil PAR estimates are in the range of values found in pollen traps. Where detailed knowledge ~~on~~ of the sedimentation process is available, the bias of sediment focussing may be reduced, as in the example of Hockham Mere cited above (see also Bennett and Buck, 2016; Bennett, 1983). Peatlands may thus seem the better choice for obtaining fossil PAR, which may be the case in northern Scandinavia (Barnekow et al., 2007; Finsinger et al., 2013), but frequent changes in the rate of peat growth lead to difficulties assessing the time

25 represented in individual samples at many sites.

The problem of traps collecting ~~high~~ large amounts of herbaceous pollen brought by insects and small animals was discussed in the method section and for this reason ~~only~~ Poaceae and Cyperaceae are the only herbs selected for our analyses. However, pollen from these two families is also often overrepresented in the pollen traps (Lisitsyna et al., 2011b), as the plants may overhang the trap opening and their pollen may fall directly into the trap. Reduced ~~PARs~~ PAR in the trap may be caused by

30 overgrowth of the vegetation or leaves temporally blocking the opening, while proximity to the forest edge would increase values compared to large open peatlands or lakes. These effects have not been systematically evaluated so far.

Detailed comparisons of vegetation data to ~~PARs~~ PAR hold potential for a better understanding of the spatial representation and processes shaping the pollen signal (Matthias and Giesecke, 2014) and allow estimates of absolute pollen productivity (Sugita et al., 2009) or test pollen dispersal models. However, for this continental scale dataset, available vegetation data have

limited precision. Forest inventory data with the detail essential for this type of study ~~is~~ are not available for all traps. The forest cover data presented here has a resolution of 1 km^2, which is insufficient as the abundance of trees within hundreds of meters of the traps is important. Moreover, without information on standing volume or age structure, the percentage cover used here is a crude measure of the vegetation producing the pollen. Forestry practices like harvesting trees that start flowering at

5 a later age (e.g. *Picea* 30-40 years) reduce the number of trees producing pollen (Matthias et al., 2012) and bias the search for modern analogues. Also, the available mapped distribution limits of trees have large uncertainties precluding more detailed assessments of the quantity of long distance transported pollen using this continental dataset.

5   Conclusions

Comparison of the mean annual PAR from traps and fossil sites showed similar ranges for *Abies*, *Alnus*, *Betula*, *Carpinus*,

10 *Corylus*, *Fagus*, *Fraxinus*, *Picea*, *Pinus, Quercus* and *Tilia* at the continental scale. This indicates that there are no major biases hampering the application of the PMP Database data as a modern reference to interpret the fossil record. The dataset clearly shows that climate parameters ~~that~~ correlate with latitude ~~determine~~ in determining pollen productivity. The effect of regional forest cover is discernible. Minimum values suggest that an 80% forest cover within 10 km of the trap results in ~~PARs~~ PAR above 3200 tree pollen grains cm^{-2} year^{-1}.

15   Assessment of long-distance transport indicates that values below ~~30~~ 80 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} for *Carpinus*, *Corylus*, *Fagus*, *Fraxinus*, *Picea*, *Quercus* and *Tilia* may originate from beyond 200 km of a sampling site. This number of ~~30~~ 80 grains cm^{-2} y^{-1} may therefore be used as a general threshold indicating long distance origin of pollen. The application of these threshold values holds potential to refine and adjust reconstructions of tree distributions.

Code availability. Primary trap and fossil pollen data are availible in Neotoma Palaeoecology Database https://www.neotomadb.org/. Anal-

20 ysis are based on the WorldClim 2 dataset of Fick and Hijmans (2017), Chorological data for the main European woody species, version 2 by Caudullo et al. (2018), European atlas of forest tree species, 2016th ed. by San-Miguel-Ayanz et al. (2016), which are availible online: http://worldclim.org/version2 , https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/hr5h2hcgg4/2 and http://www.euforgen.org/, respectively. Forest Map of Europe of Kempeneers et al. (2012) is availible on request on authors.

Code for analysis, derived data and code for figures are available in the https://github.com/vojtechabraham/PMPdatabase.

25 *Author contributions.* Design of the analysis: TG and VA. Data analysis: VA, TG and MW. Manuscript draft: VA and TG. Manuscript comments: HP, SH, CEJ, HSS, HS, SV, SH, MN, MW, SP, ST, TK, AMN and JŚM. Data collection: all authors except VA and MW.

Competing interests. The authors declare no competing interests.

Acknowledgements. We thank ~~to all~~ all the collaborators of pollen trapping, especially ~~to~~ those who contributed to the PMP dataset: Pim van der Knaap, Jacqueline van Leeuwen, Karl-Dag Vorren, Heather Tinsley, Lena Barnekow, Małgorzata Latałowa, Enikő Magyari, Larissa Savelieva, Elena Pavlova, Heidi Hyyppä, Mari Kuoppamaa and Gunhild Rosqvist. We thank Simon Connor for his detailed review which helped to improve the manuscript, as well as two anonymous reviewers for their comments.

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