

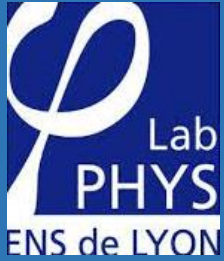
# Subglacial Hydrodynamics & Ice-Water Interactions



**Louis-Alexandre Couston**

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[louis.couston@ens-lyon.fr](mailto:louis.couston@ens-lyon.fr)



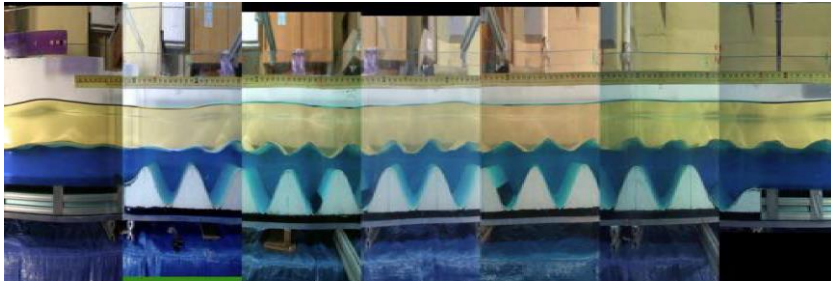
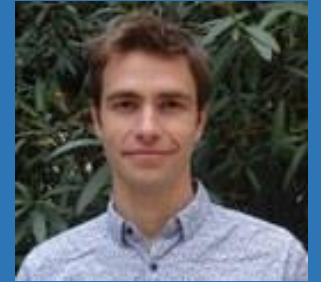


# Fluid Mechanics Research

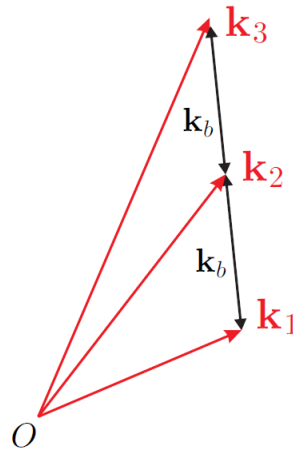
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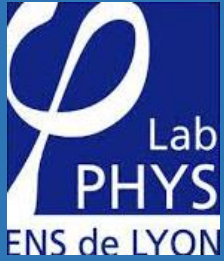
Postdoc @ IRPHE (Marseille) & British Antarctic Survey (Cambridge)

MC @ Lyon 1 & ENS



*Wave Resonance*



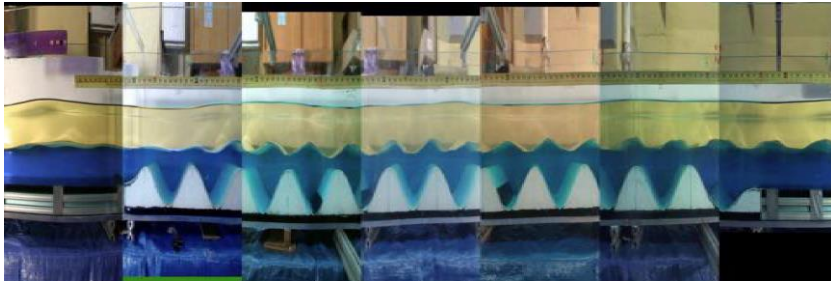


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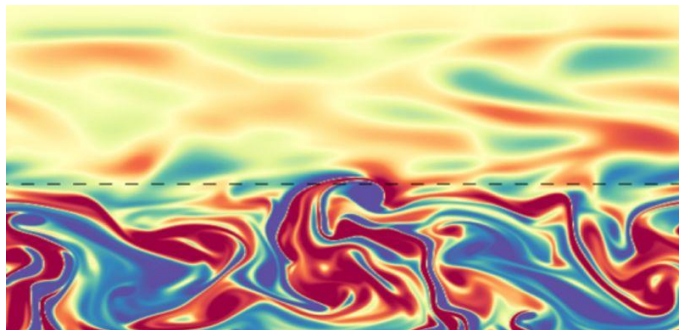
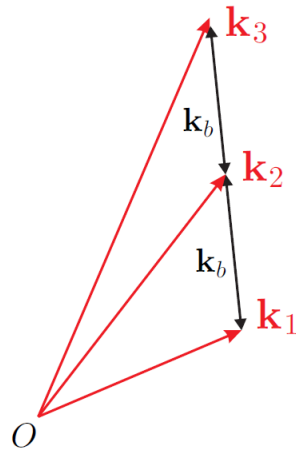
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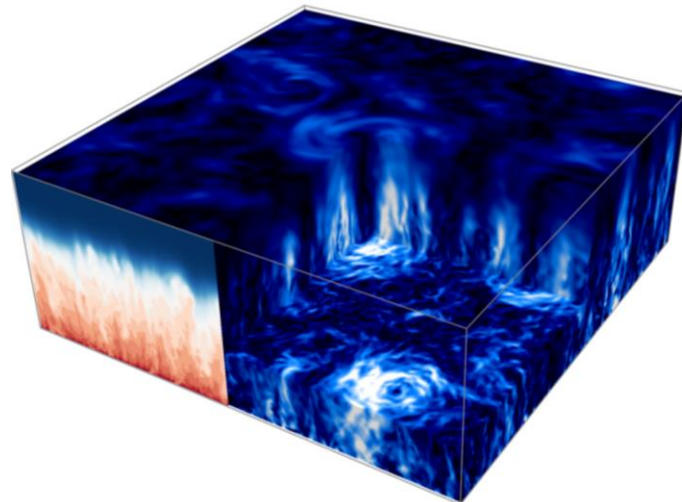
MC @ Lyon 1 & ENS



*Wave Resonance*



*Turbulence & HPC*

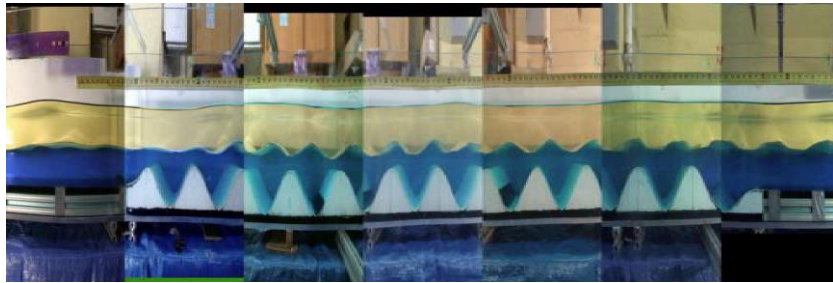


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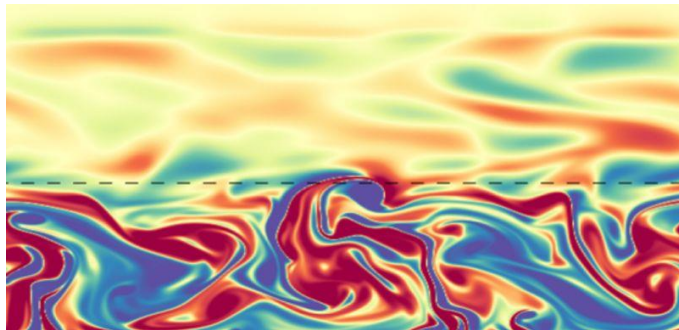
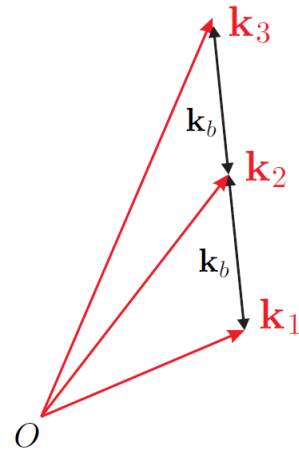
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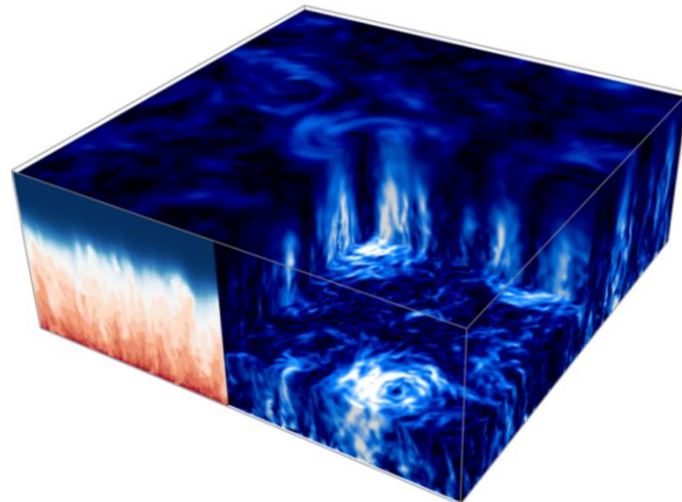
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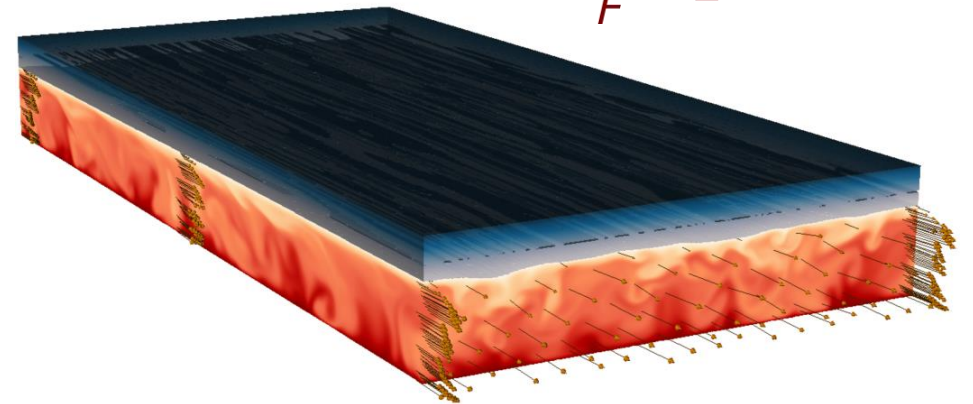
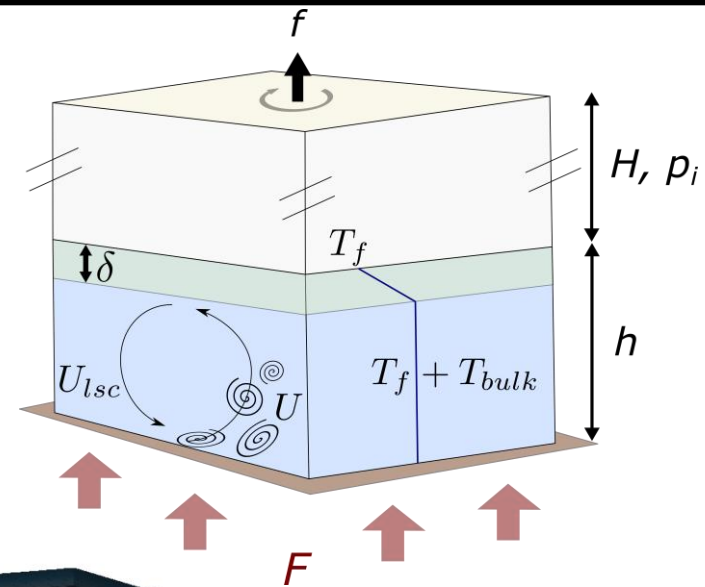
*Wave Resonance*



*Turbulence & HPC*



*Ice-Water  
Systems*



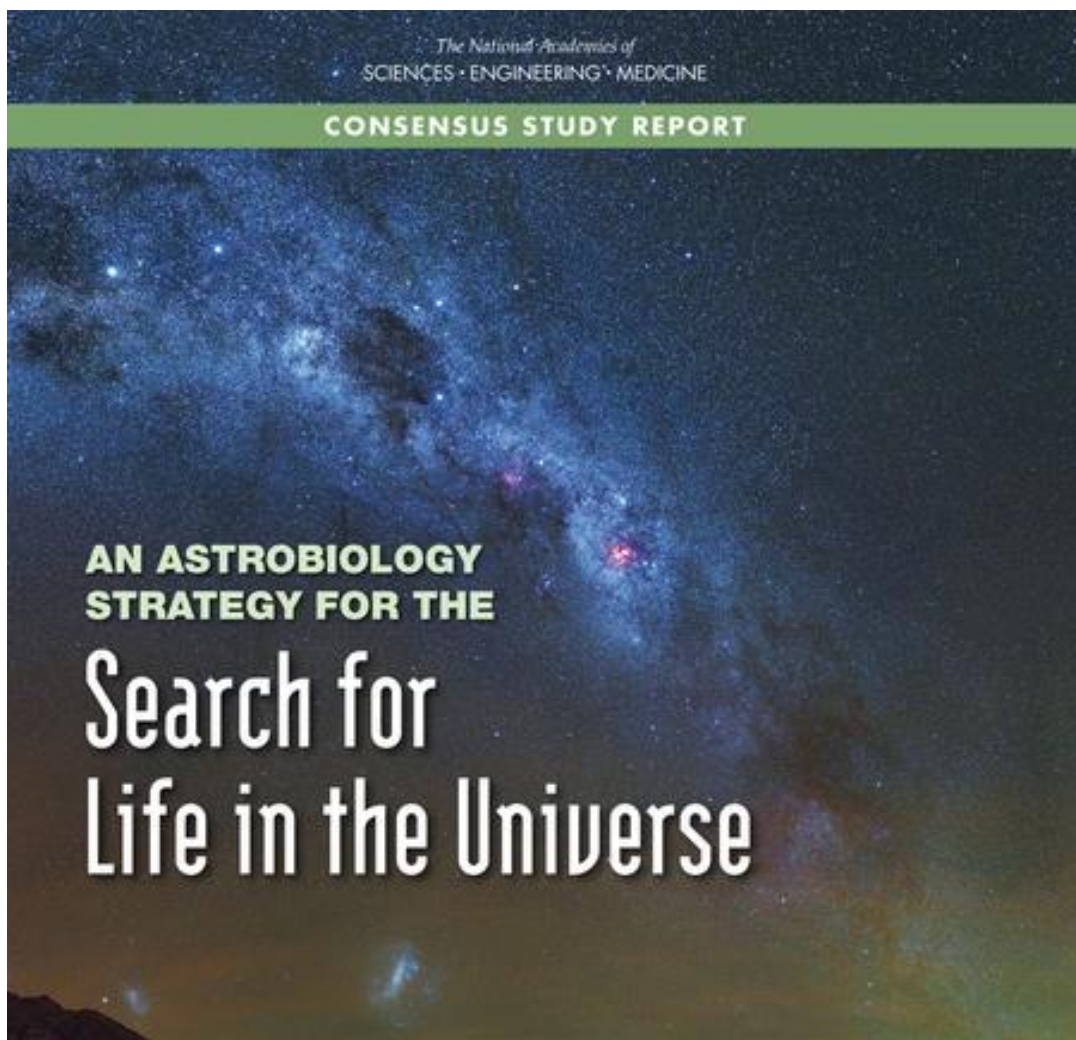
AN ASTROBIOLOGY  
STRATEGY FOR THE

# Search for Life in the Universe

## I. Astrobiology

### *Subglacial hydrodynamics*

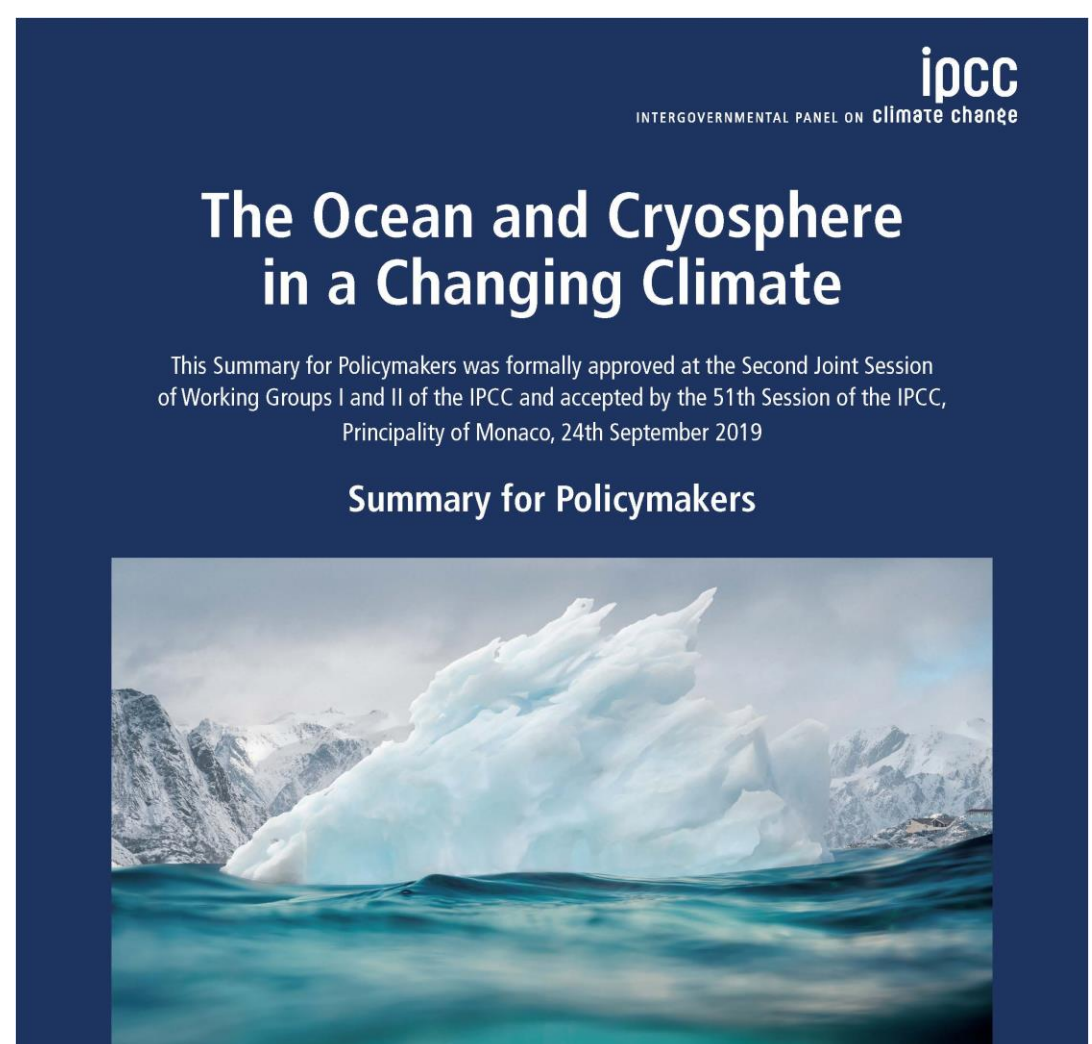
- A. On Earth
- B. On Icy Moons



## I. Astrobiology

### *Subglacial hydrodynamics*

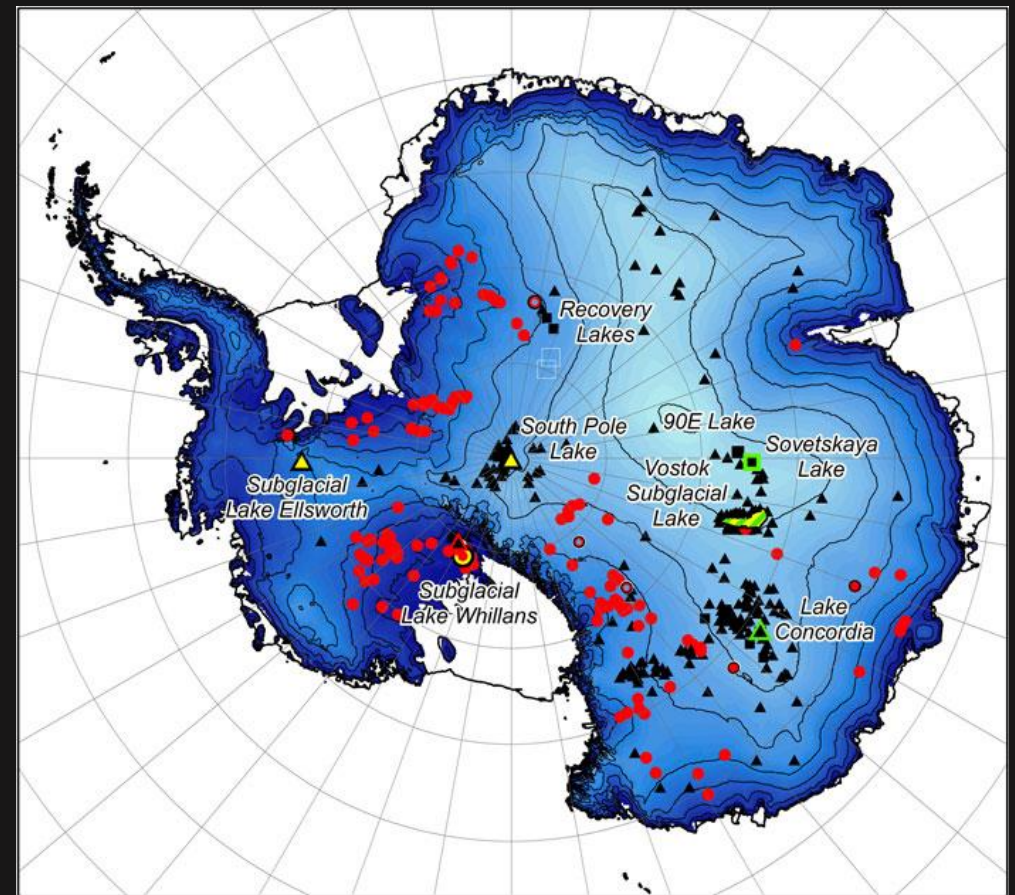
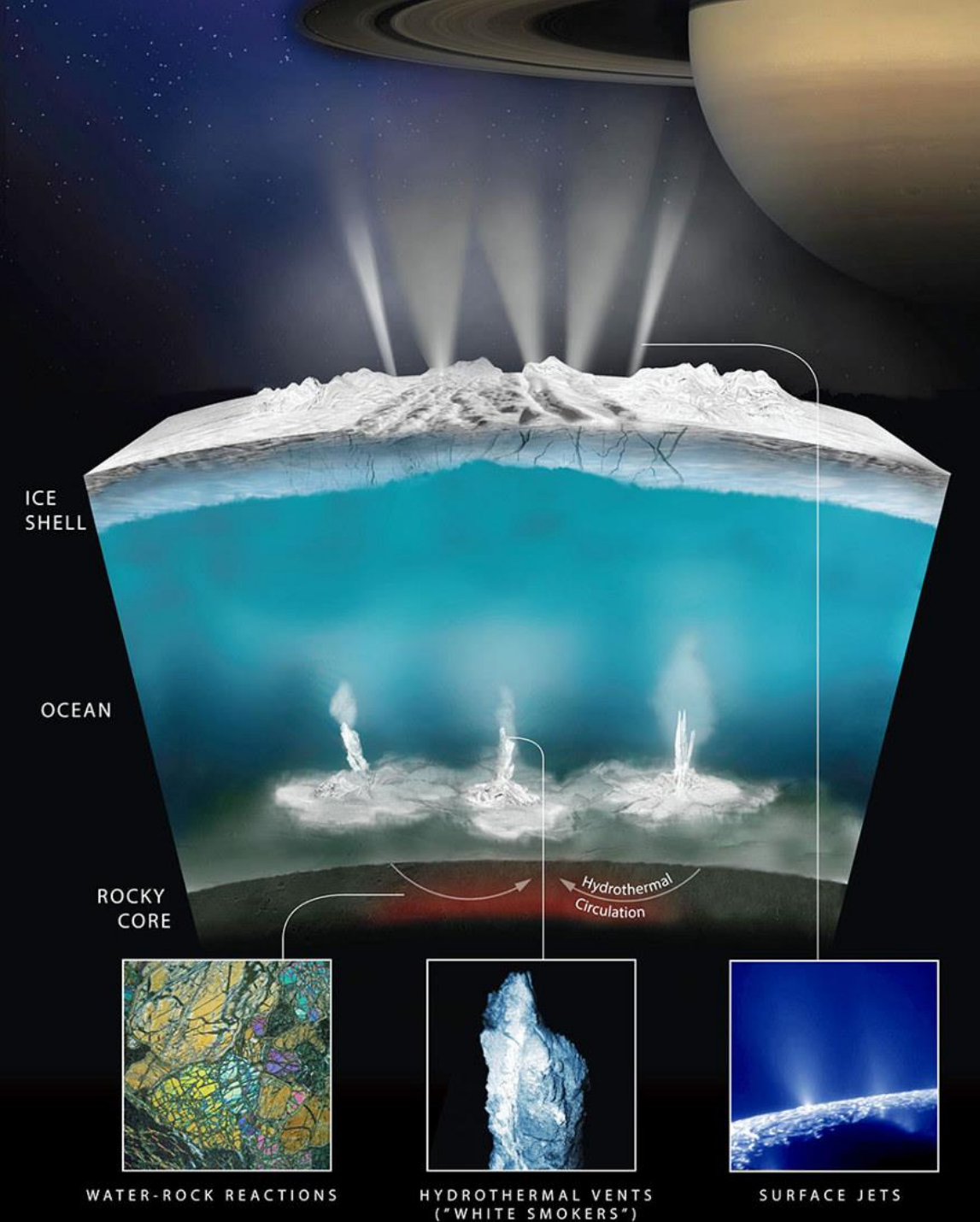
- A. On Earth
- B. On Icy Moons



## II. Climate change

### *Ice melting in polar oceans*

- A. Antarctica
- B. Greenland



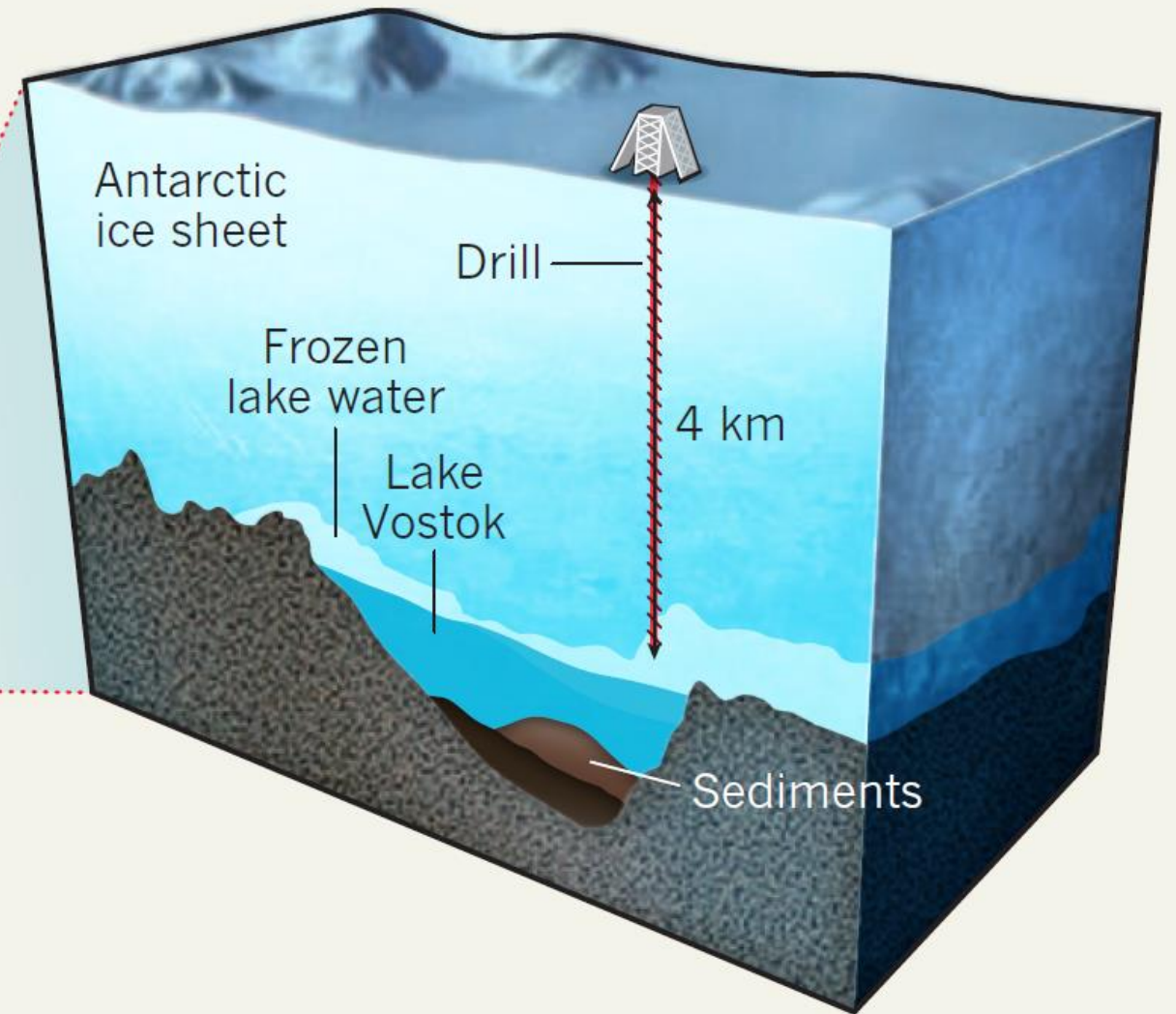
## I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth...

- Life in extreme conditions...
- Subglacial lakes as analogues of icy moons

# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Subglacial lakes are within reach.

## DRILL FOR VICTORY

After boring through almost 4 kilometres of ice, researchers are on the verge of reaching Lake Vostok.





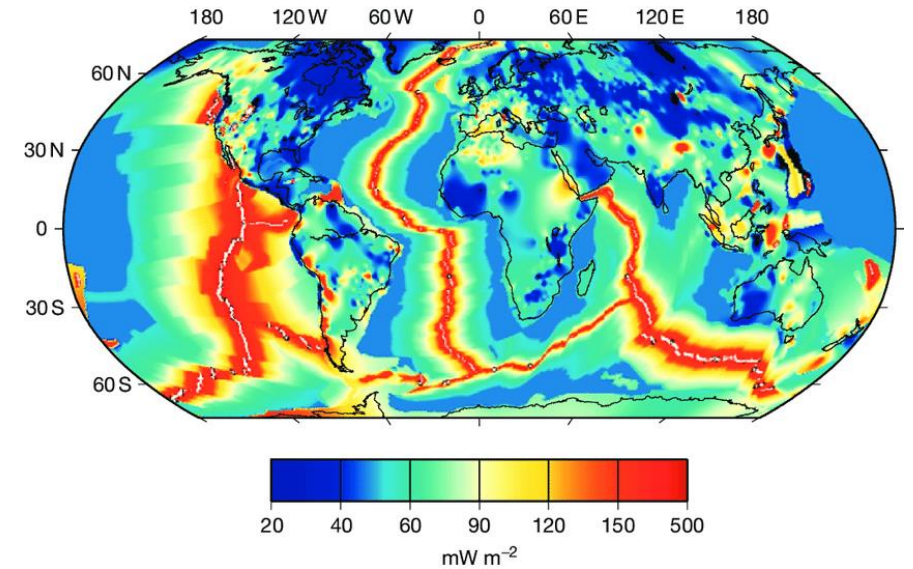
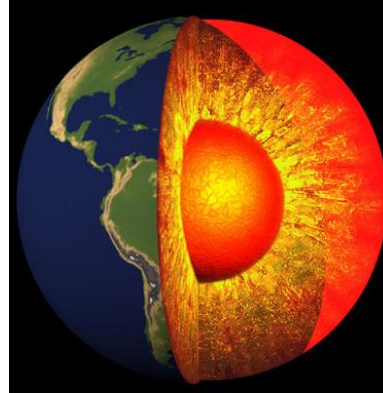
## I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Are subglacial lakes dynamic environments?

- No wind, nor solar radiations...

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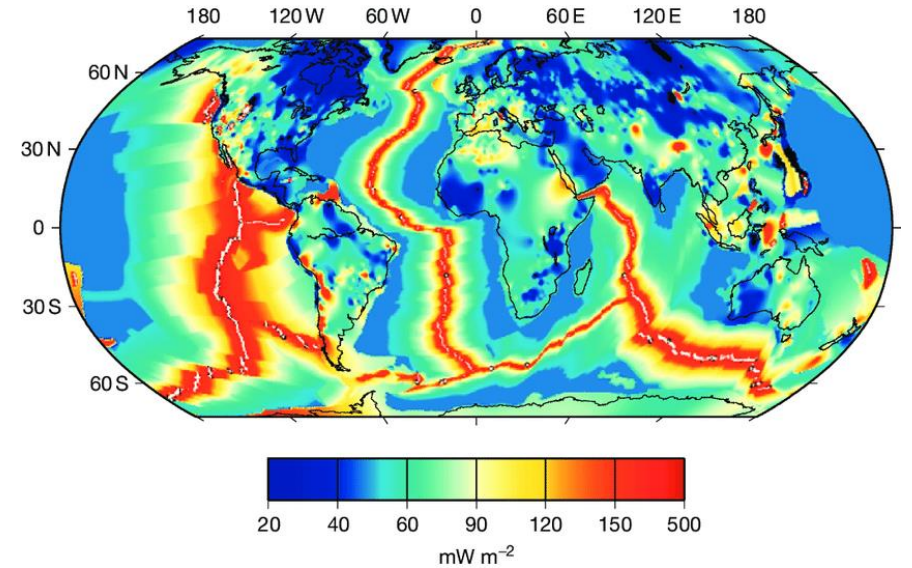
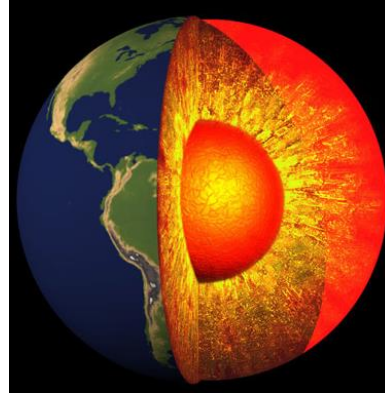
- But geothermal heating !



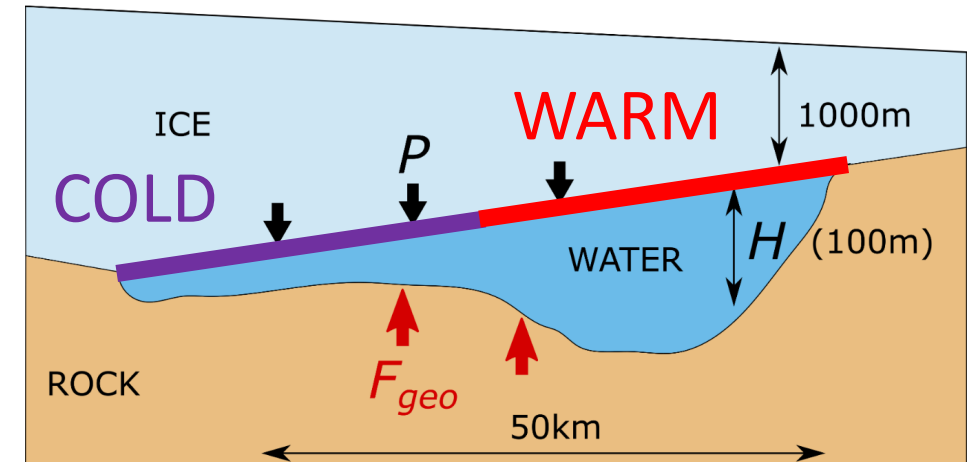
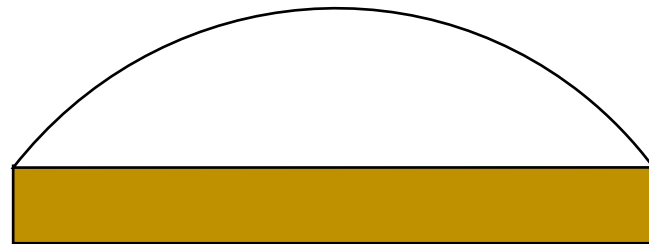
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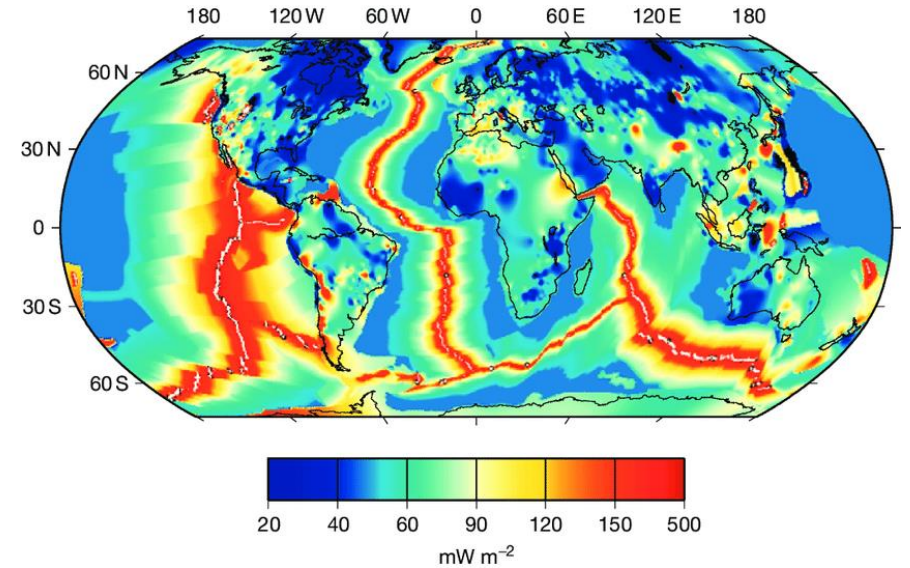
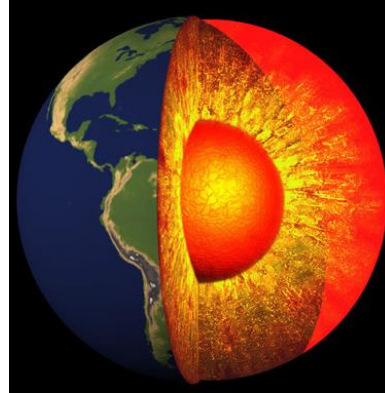
- And heterogeneous ice sheet... ⇒ horizontal temperature gradient !



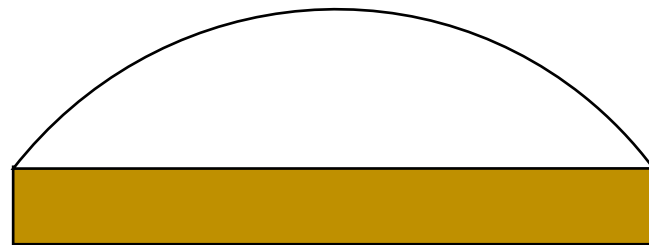
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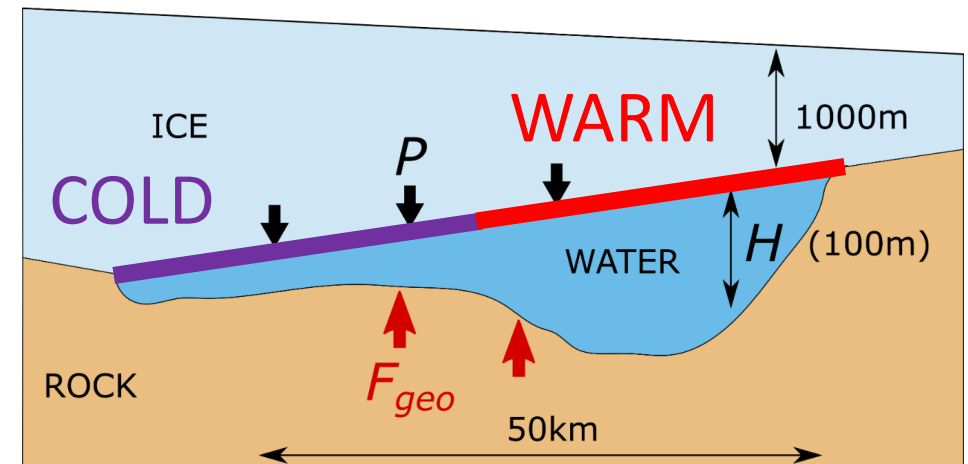


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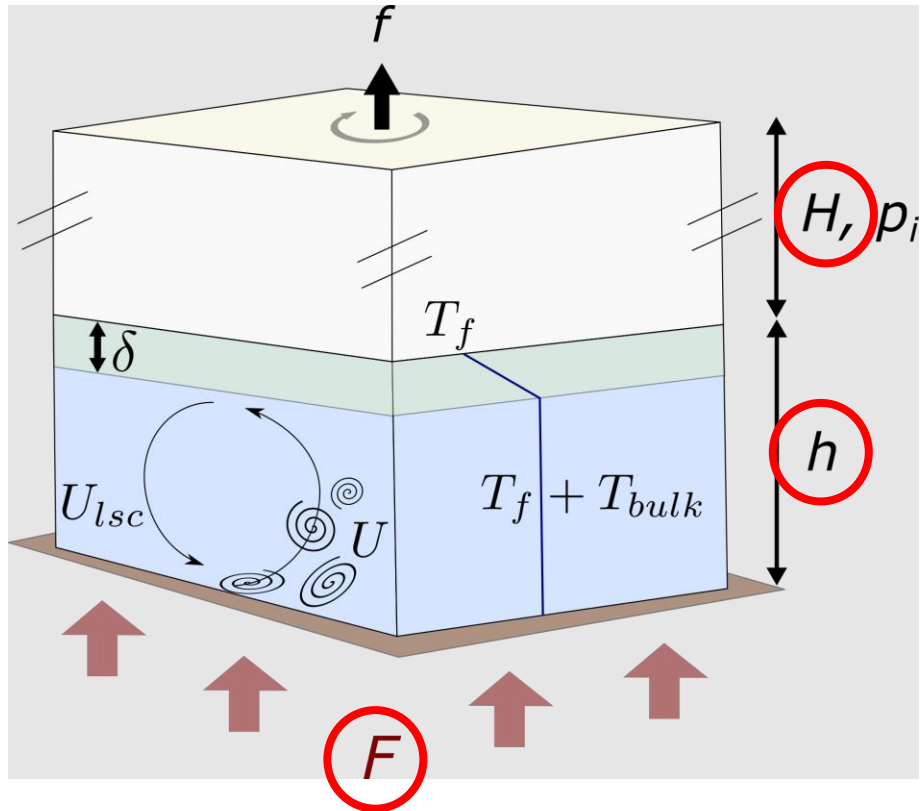


$$T_f \approx -10^{-3} (\text{°C/dbar}) P$$

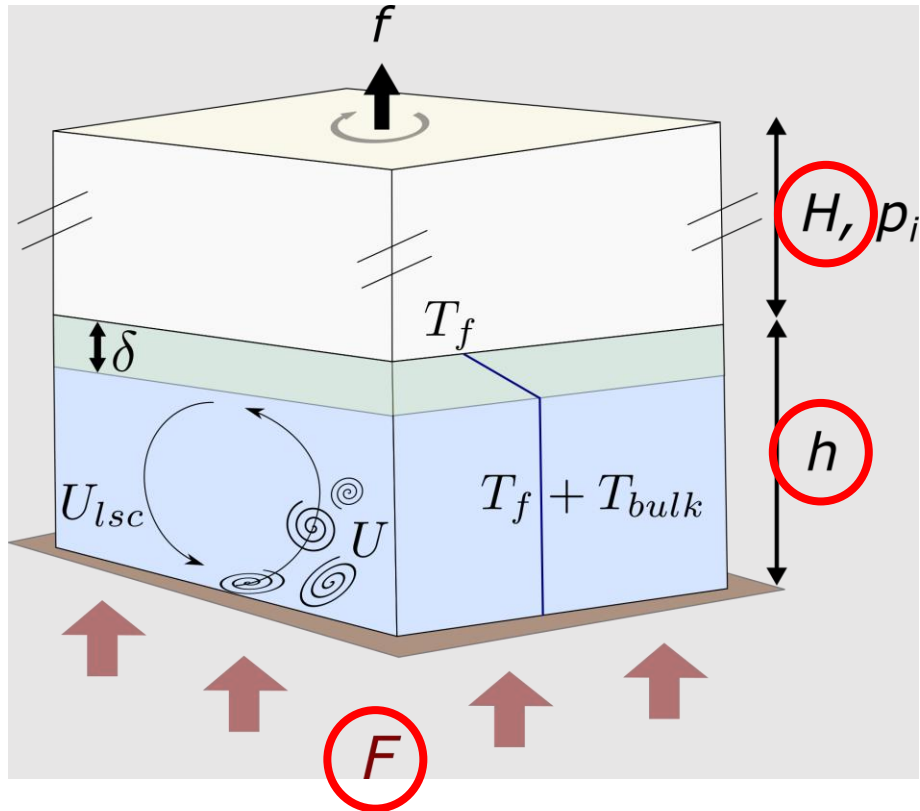
→ 1°C/km vertical drop



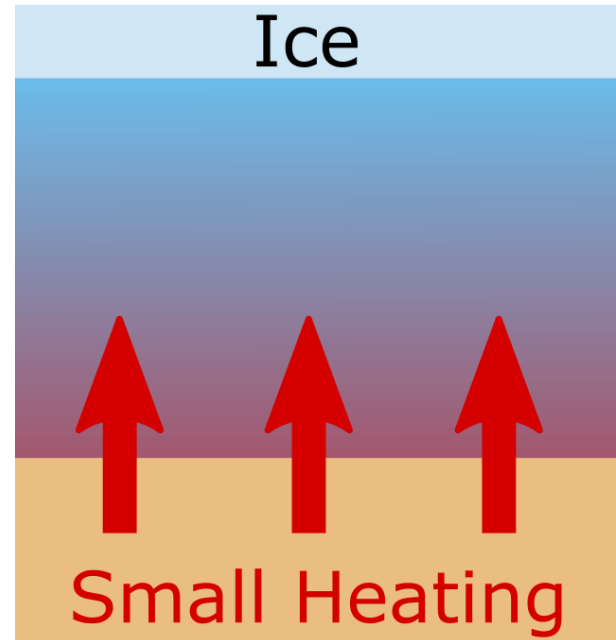
# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Circulation due to geothermal heating.



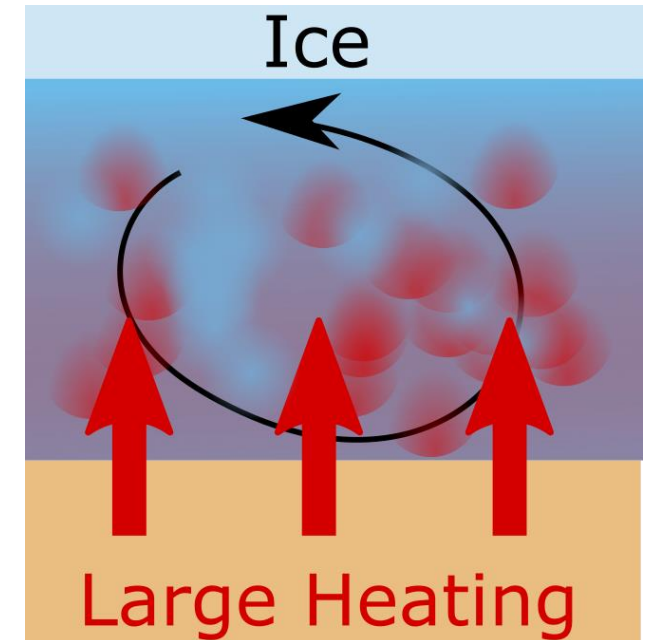
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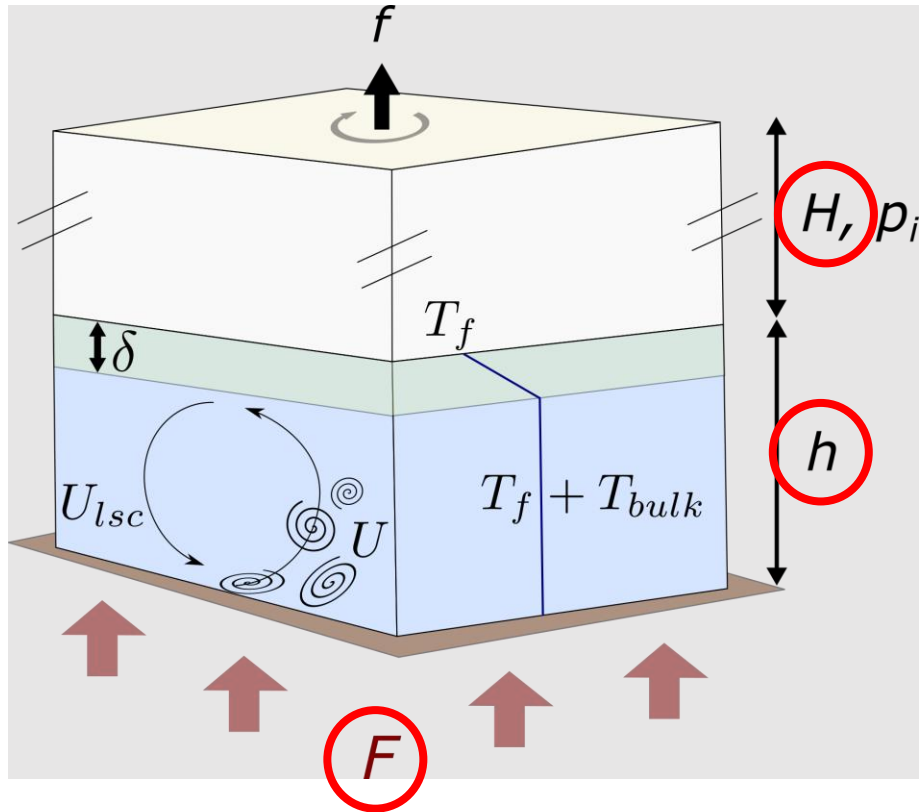
Stable diffusive state.  
No motion.



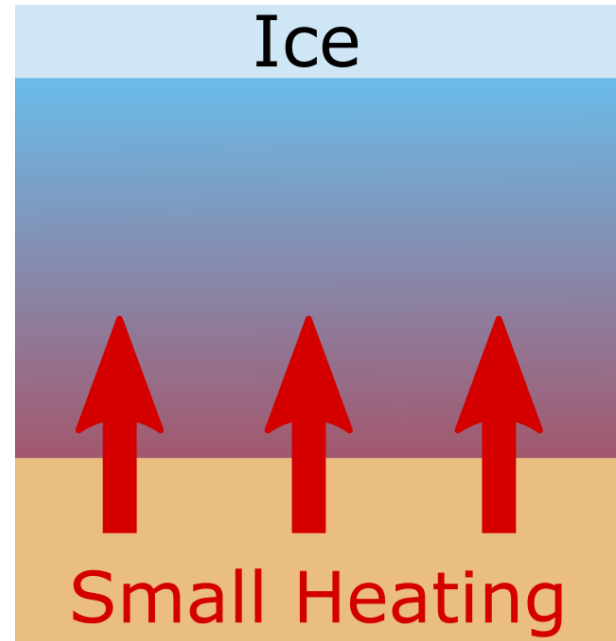
Unstable diffusive state. Circulation.



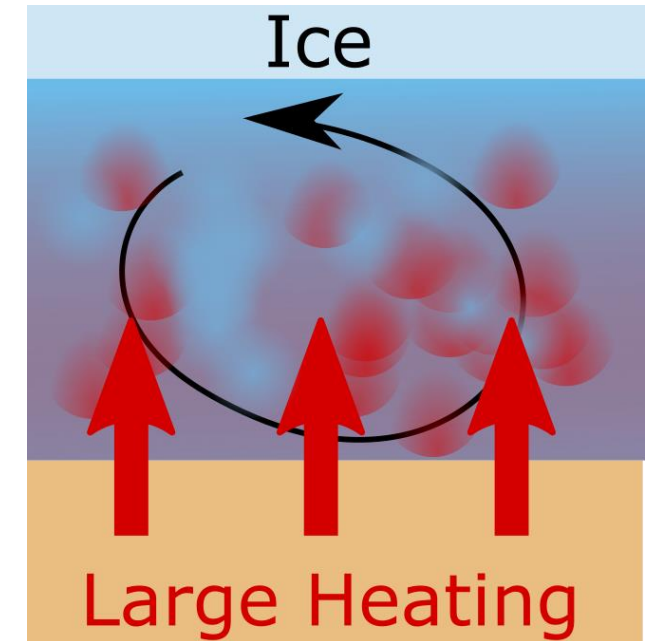
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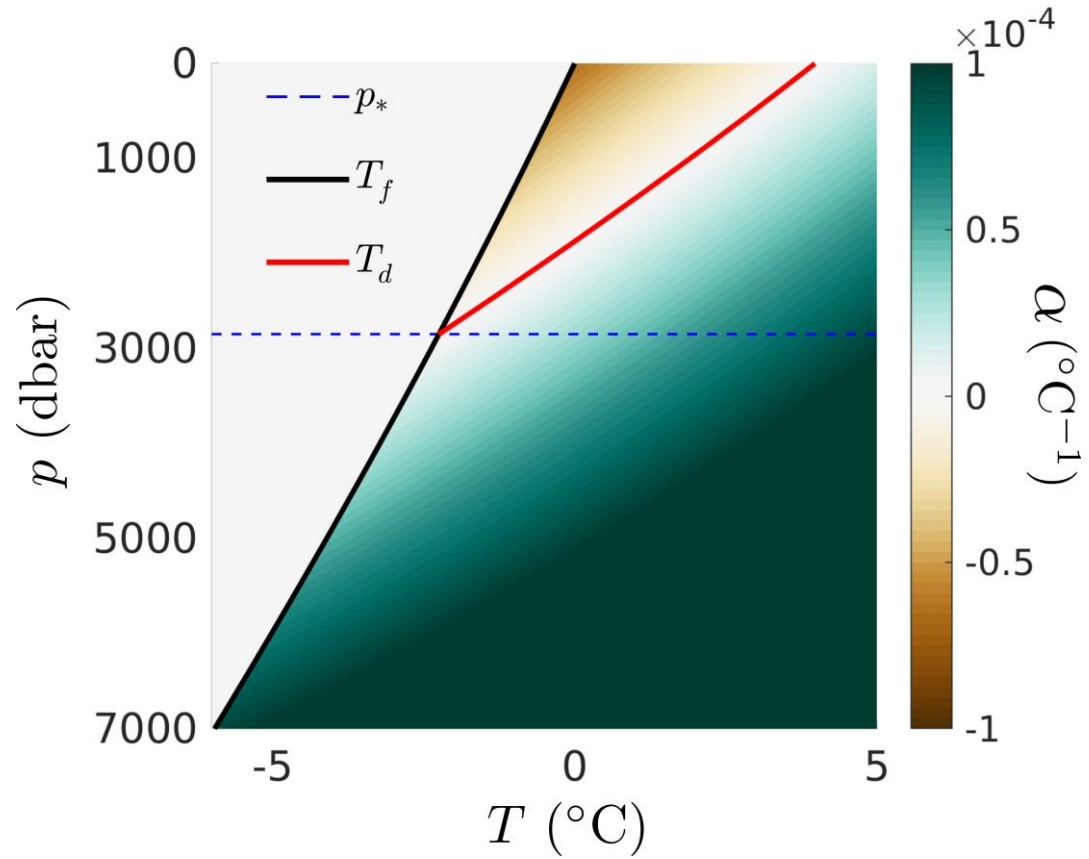


Control Parameter  
Rayleigh Number

$$Ra = \frac{g\alpha h^4 F}{\nu\kappa k}$$

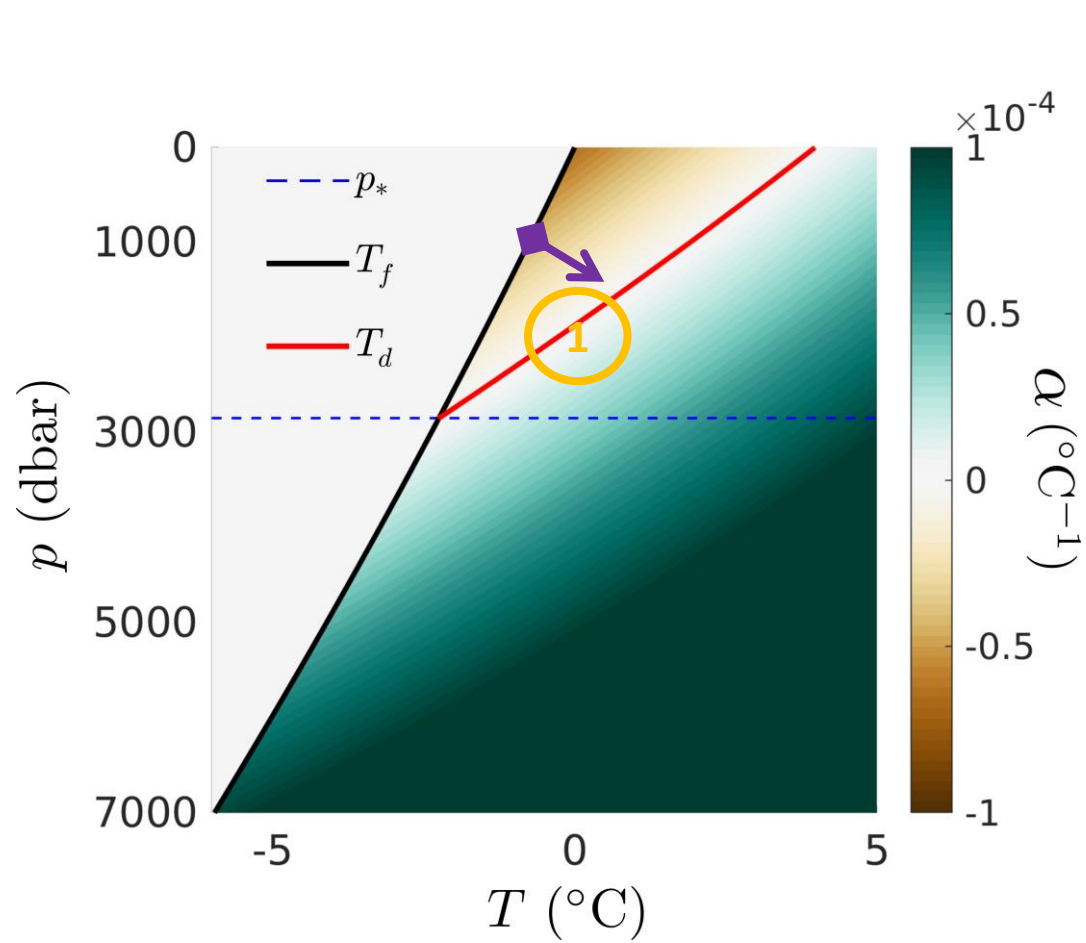
Unstable when  $Ra > Ra_c = O(1000)$

# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Stability ? Water has a nonlinear equation of state.

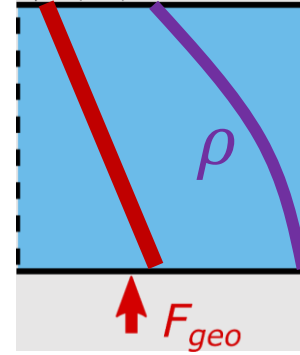




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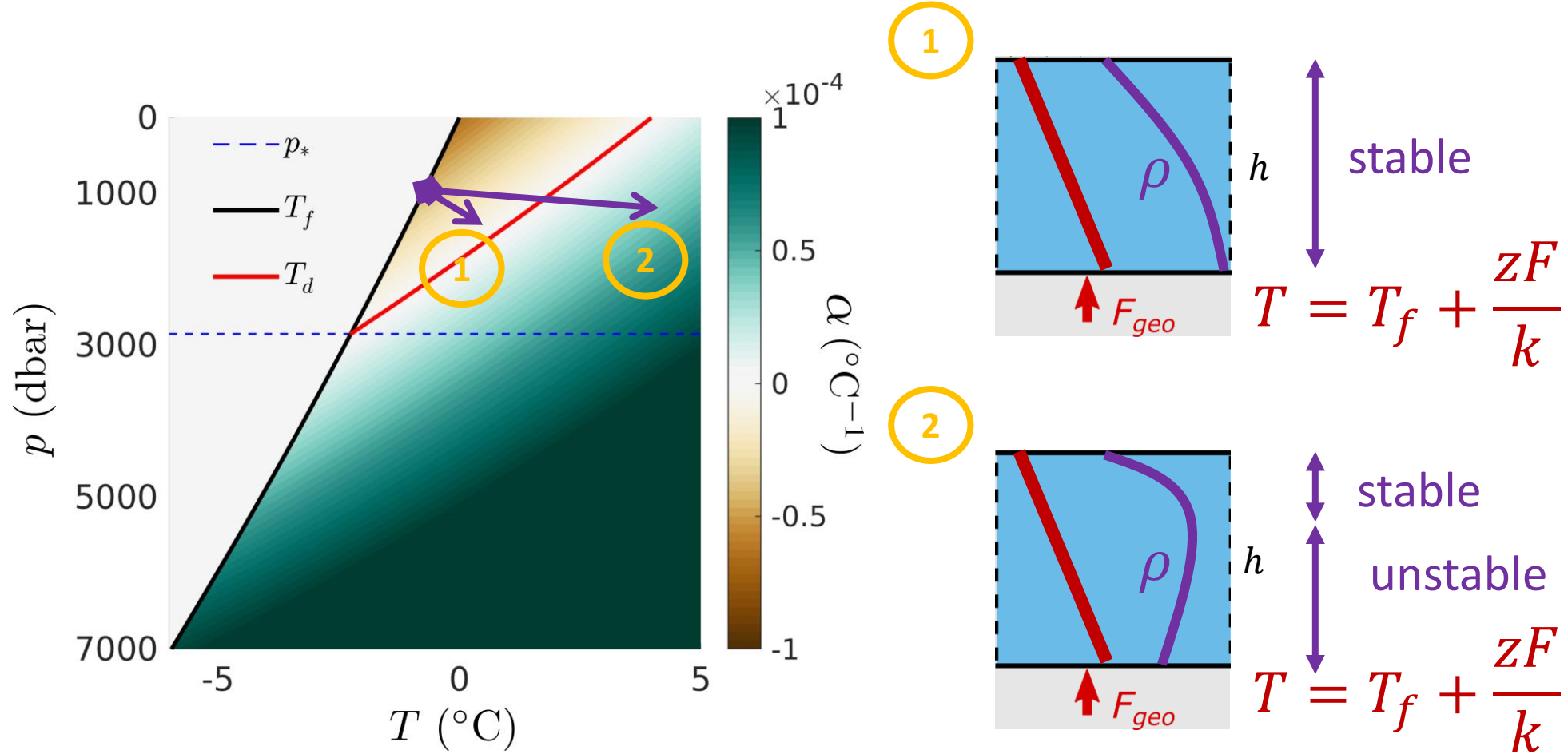
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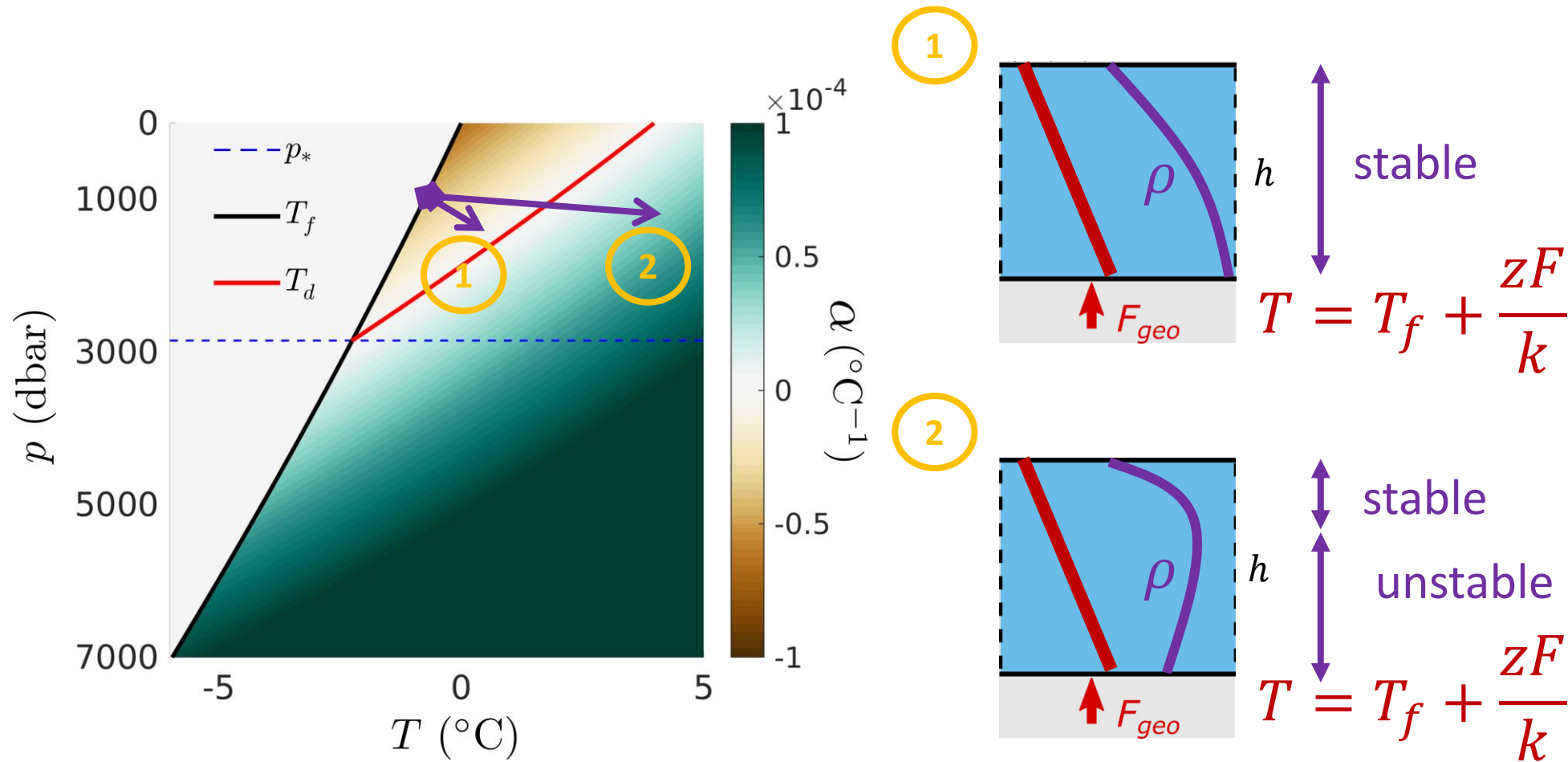
stable

$$T = T_f + \frac{zF}{k}$$

# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Stability ? Water has a nonlinear equation of state.

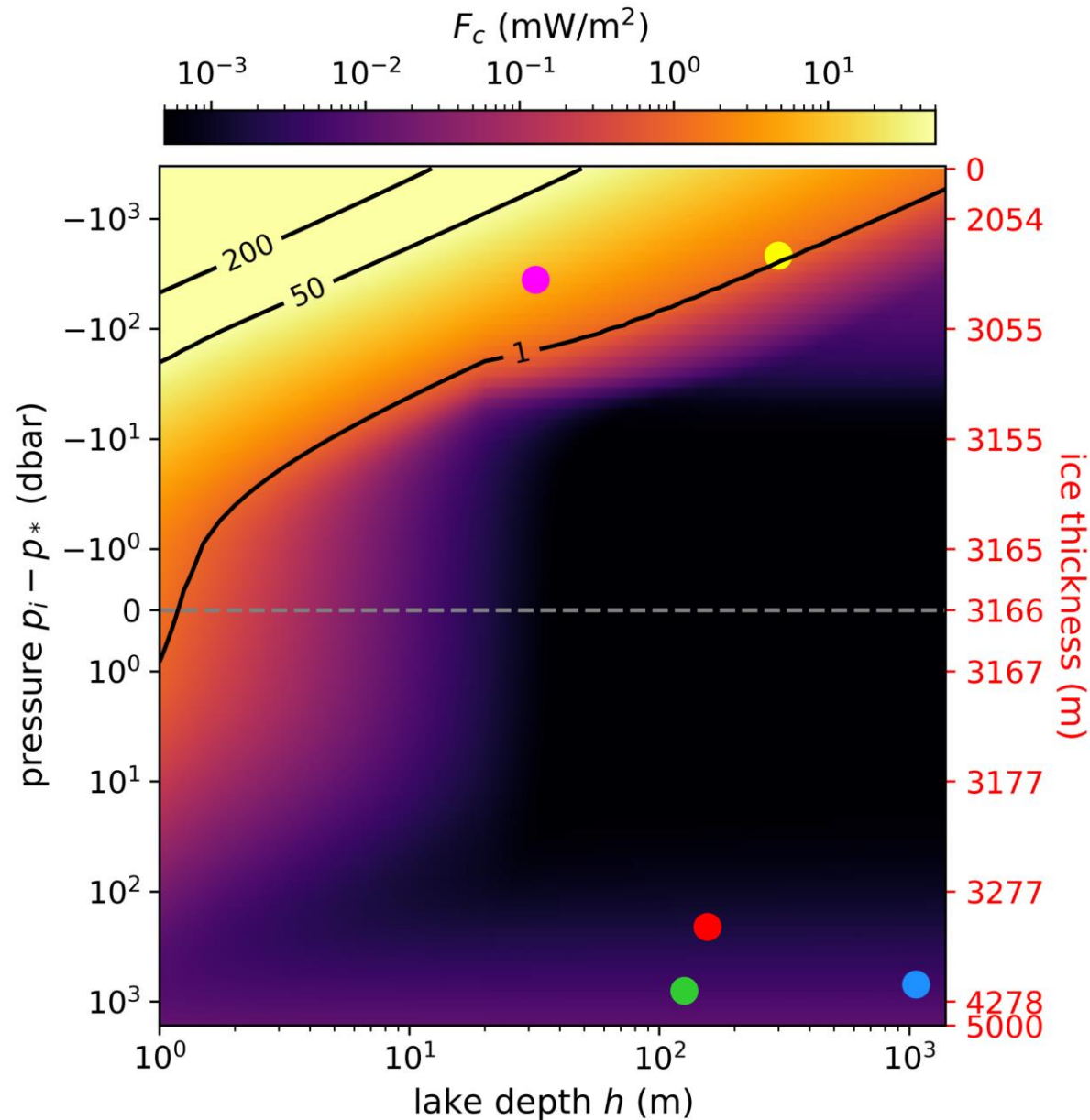


# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Stability ? Water has a nonlinear equation of state.



Instability:  $\alpha_{bot} > 0 + Ra$  large (forcing overcomes dissipation)  
 $+ F > F_{ad}$  (compressibility effects)

# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Critical geothermal heat flux.



- CECS
- SPL
- Ellsworth
- Vostok
- Concordia

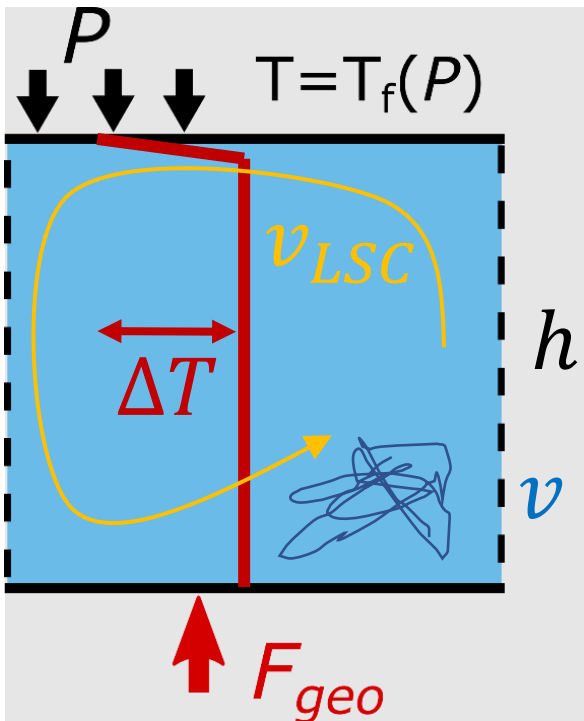
## Take home

We solved an EVP to find  $F_c \leq 50 \text{ mW/m}^2$  for most lakes.

# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Circulation due to geothermal heating.

We want to know...

- Turbulence
- Circulation
- Mean temperature



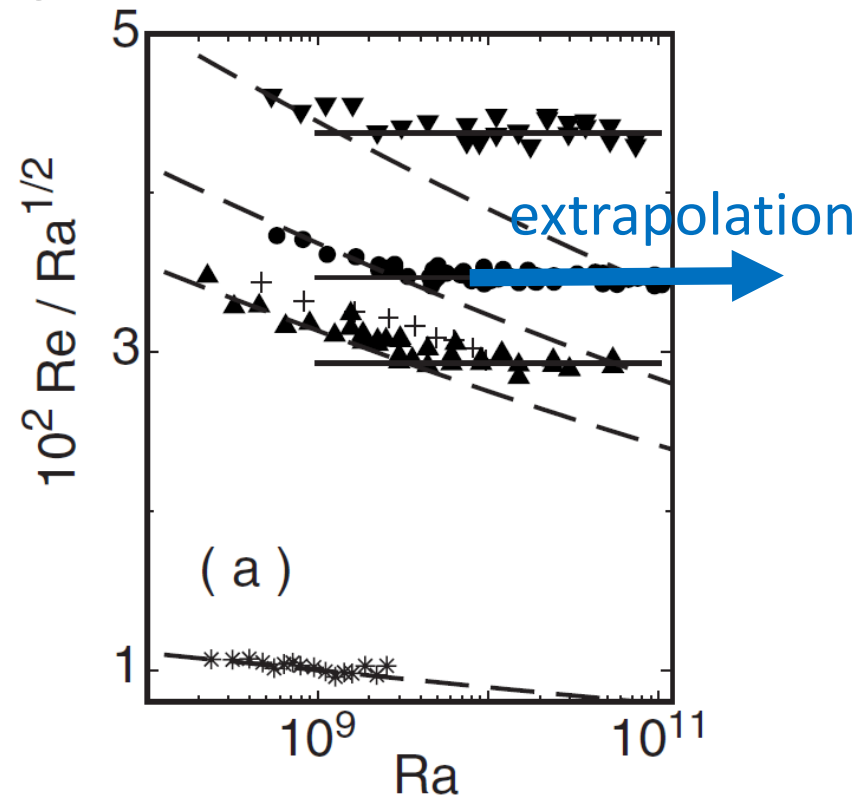
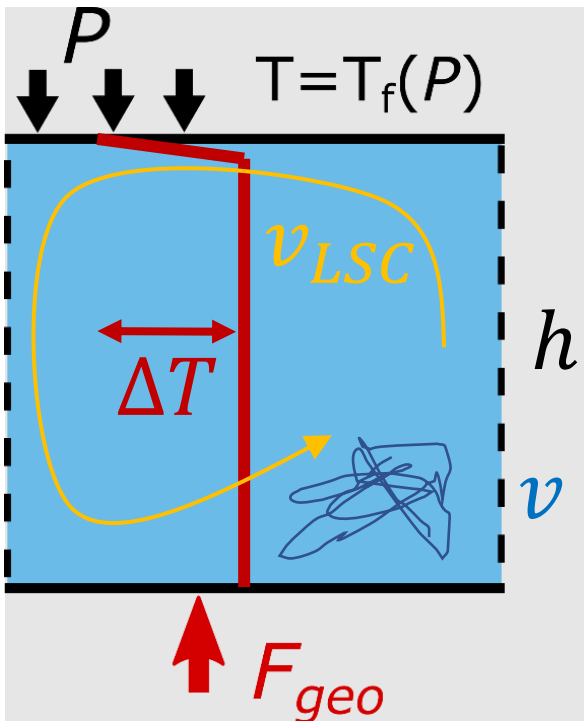
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Reynolds number

$$Re = \frac{vh}{\nu} \approx 0.03Ra^{\frac{1}{2}}$$



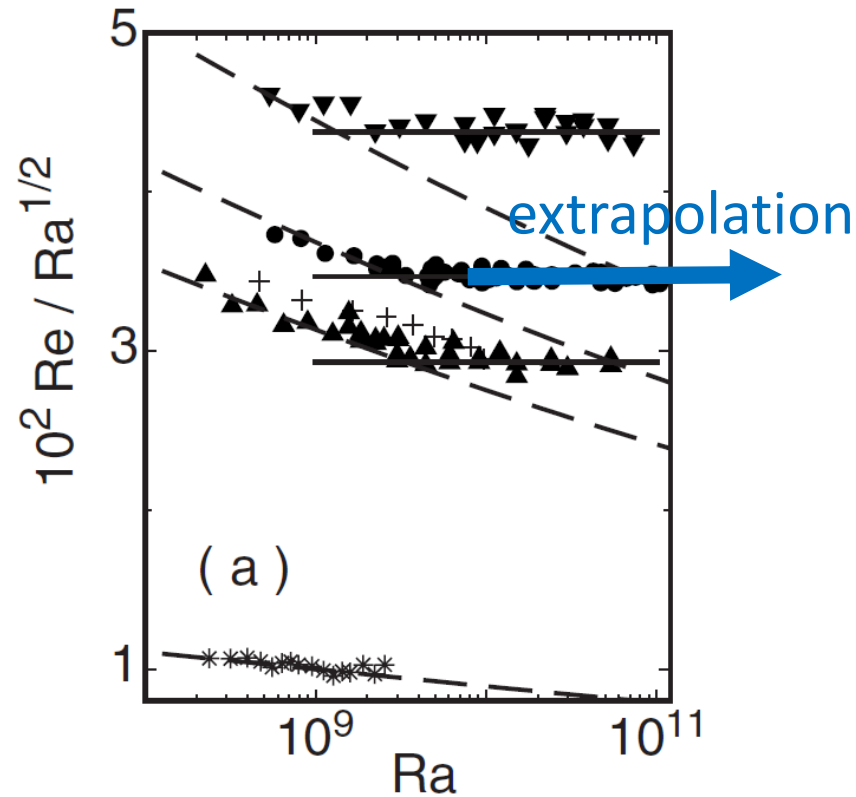
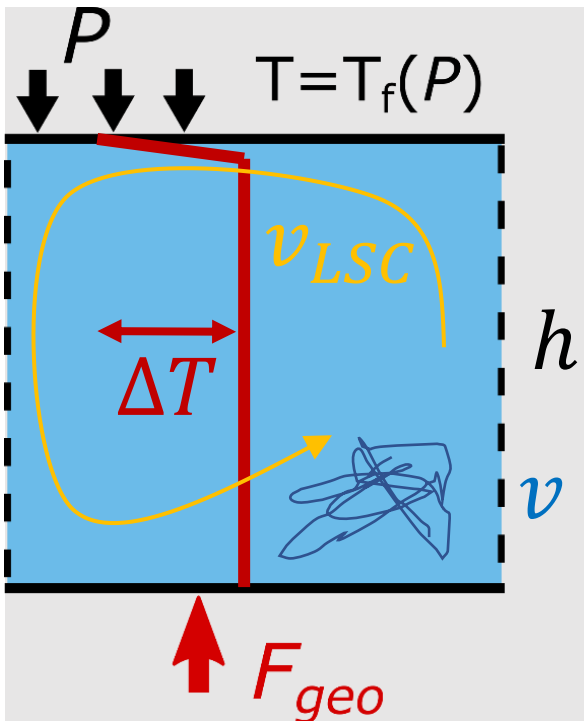
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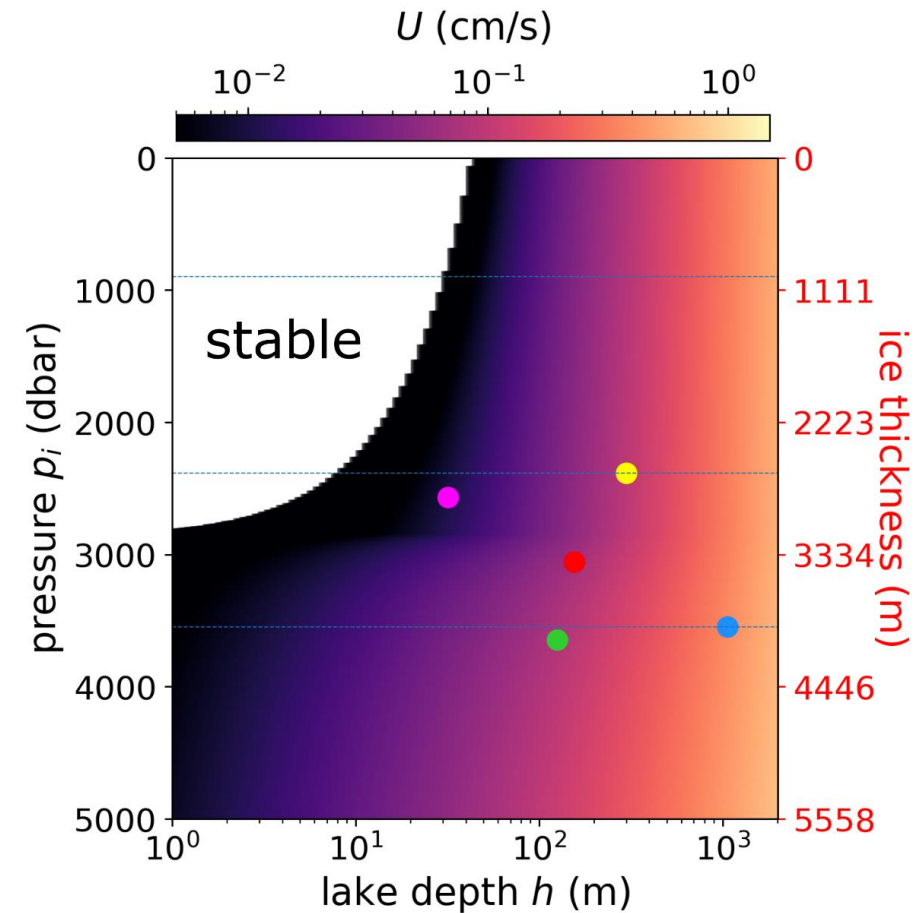
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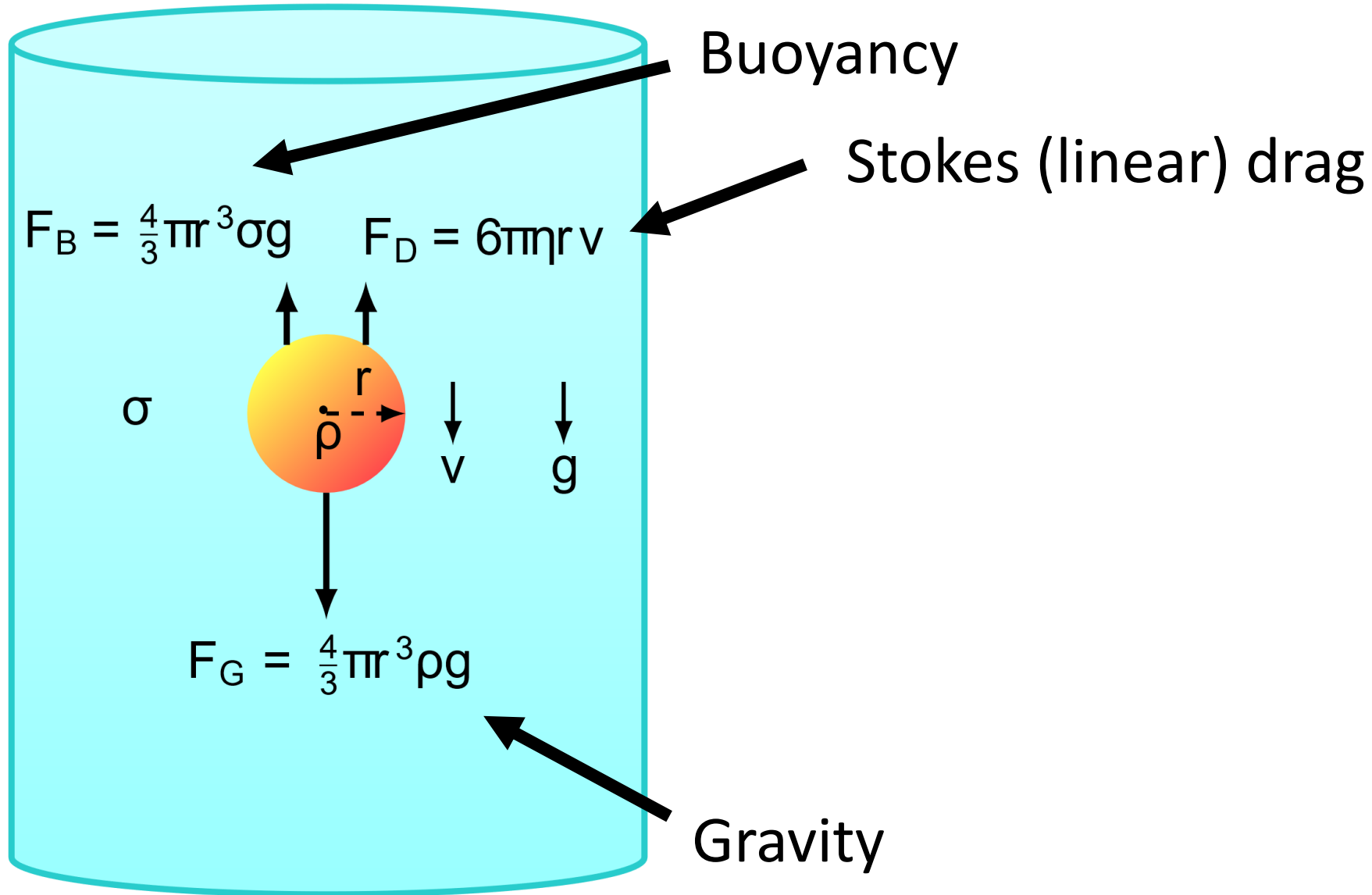


Take home

$v$  up to few mm/s  
 $v$  increases with  $h$

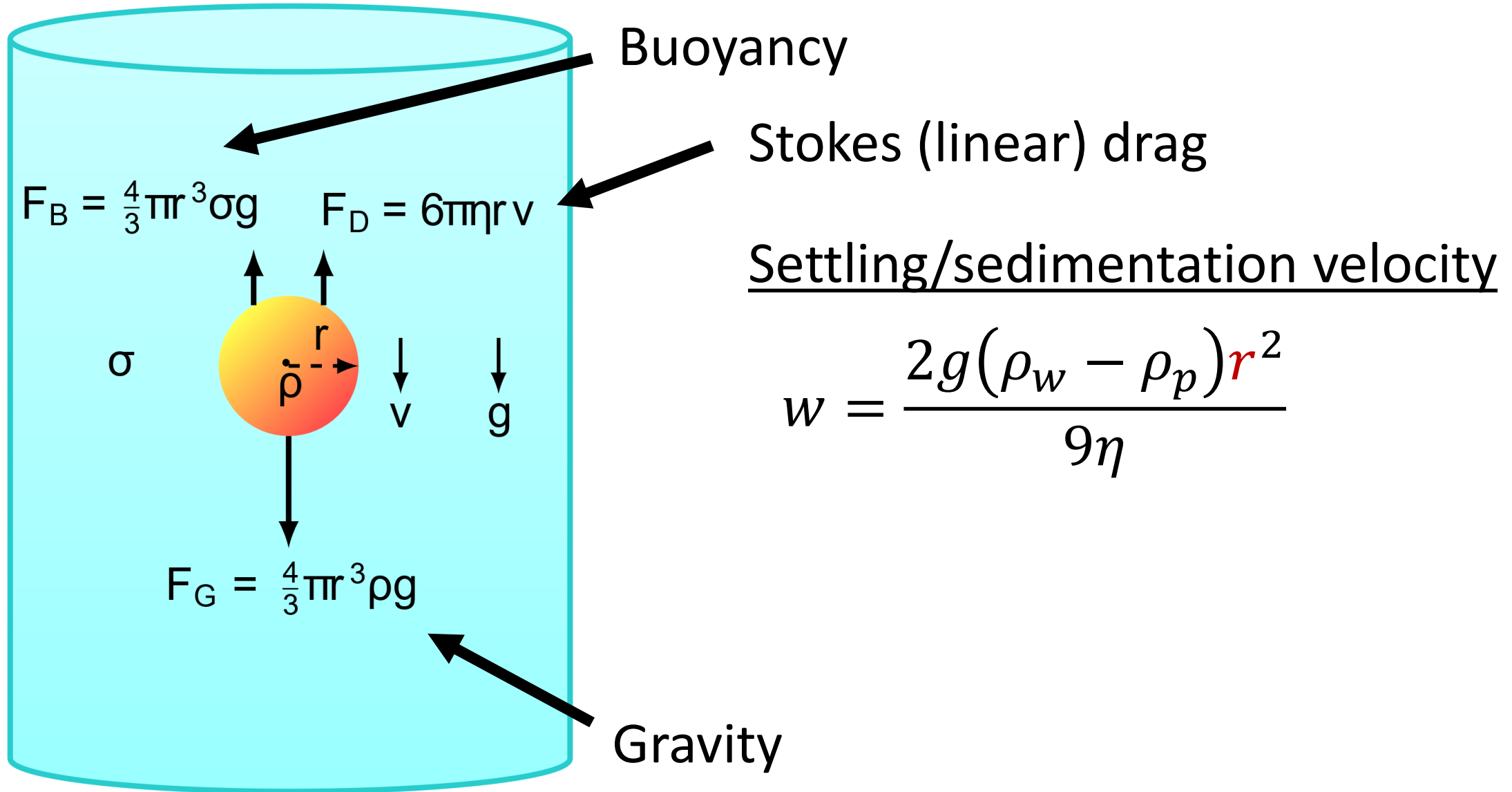


# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Convective transport of particles.

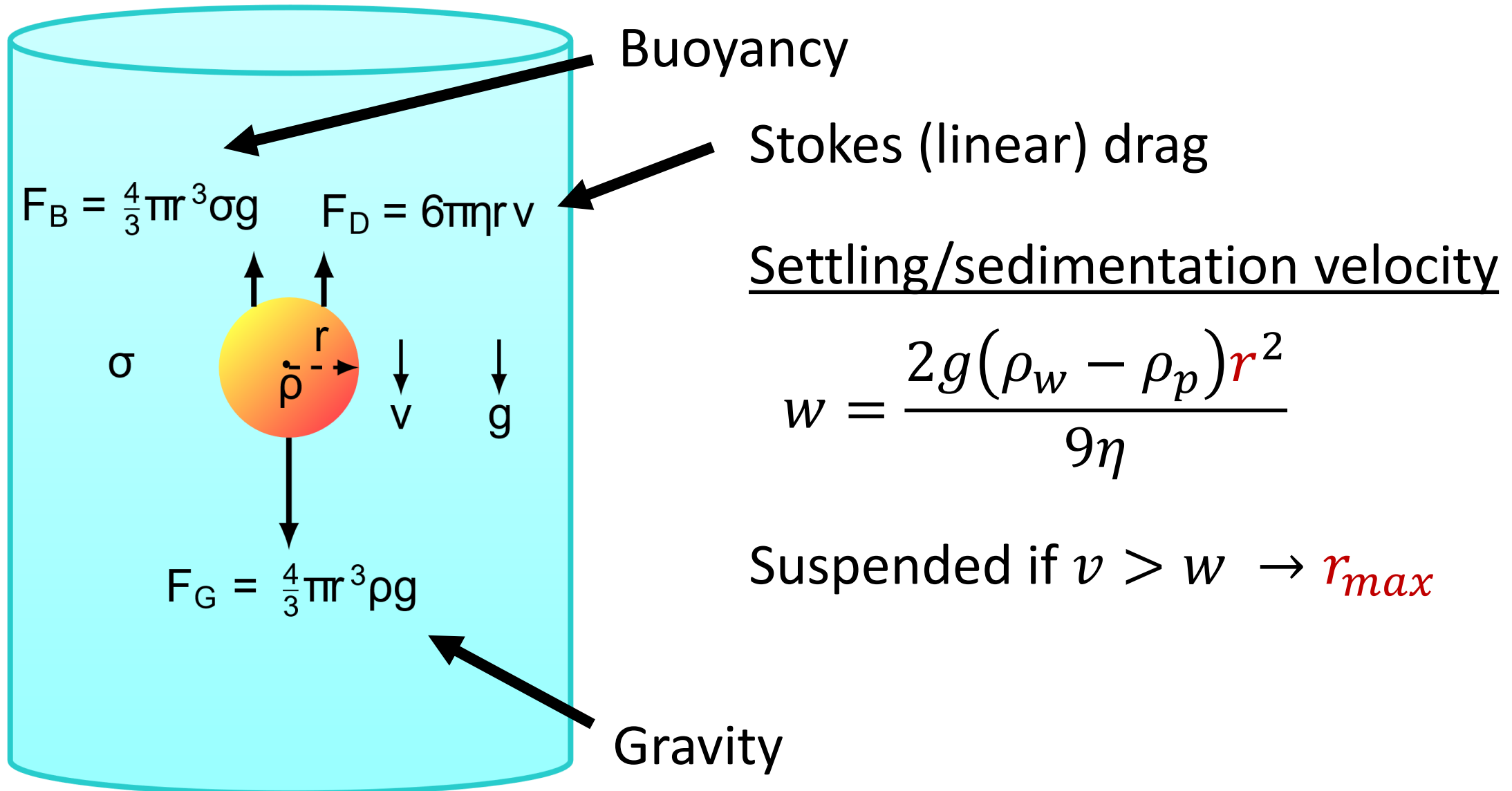




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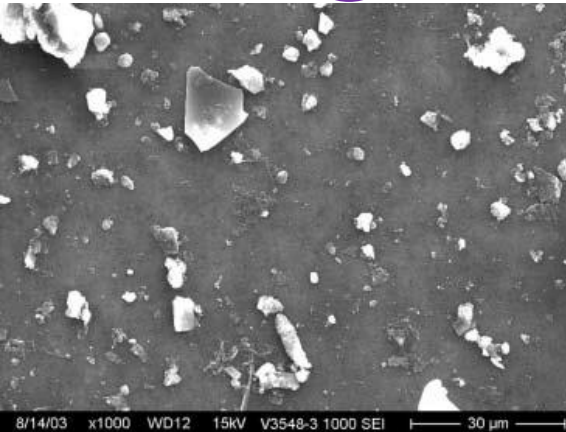
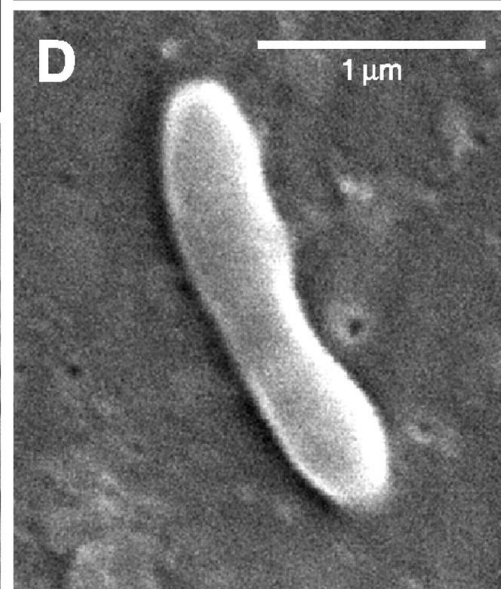
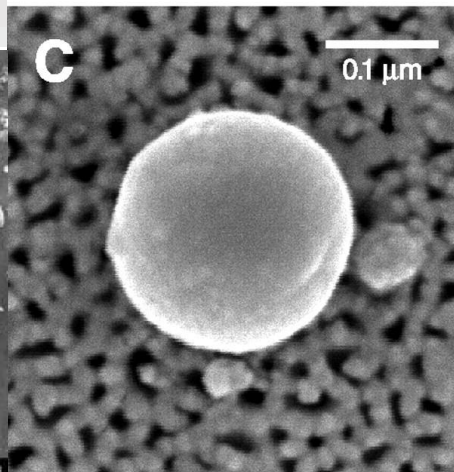
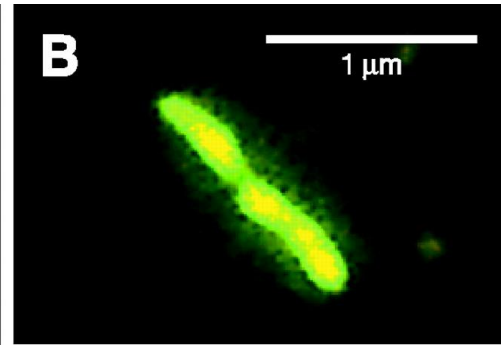
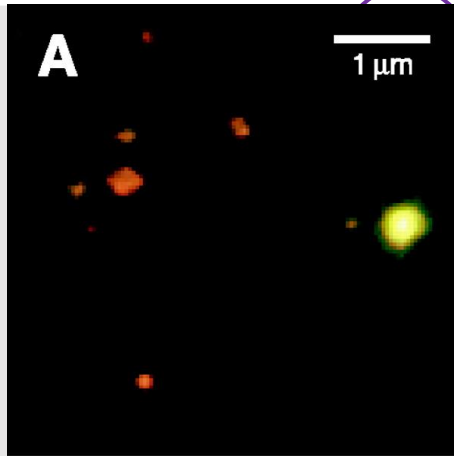


# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Convective transport of particles.

	Ice thickness (m)	Water depth (m)	$U$ (mm/s)	$U_{isc}$ (mm/s)	$2r_{max}$ ( $\mu\text{m}$ )
CECs	2653	300	0.97	0.32	22
SPL	2857	32	0.10	0.04	7.8
Ellsworth	3400	156	0.69	0.26	20
Vostok	3945	1067	3.80	0.85	36
Concordia	4055	126	0.83	0.31	22

# I.A. Sub. Hydro.: On Earth. Convective transport of particles.

	Ice thickness (m)
CECs	2653
SPL	2857
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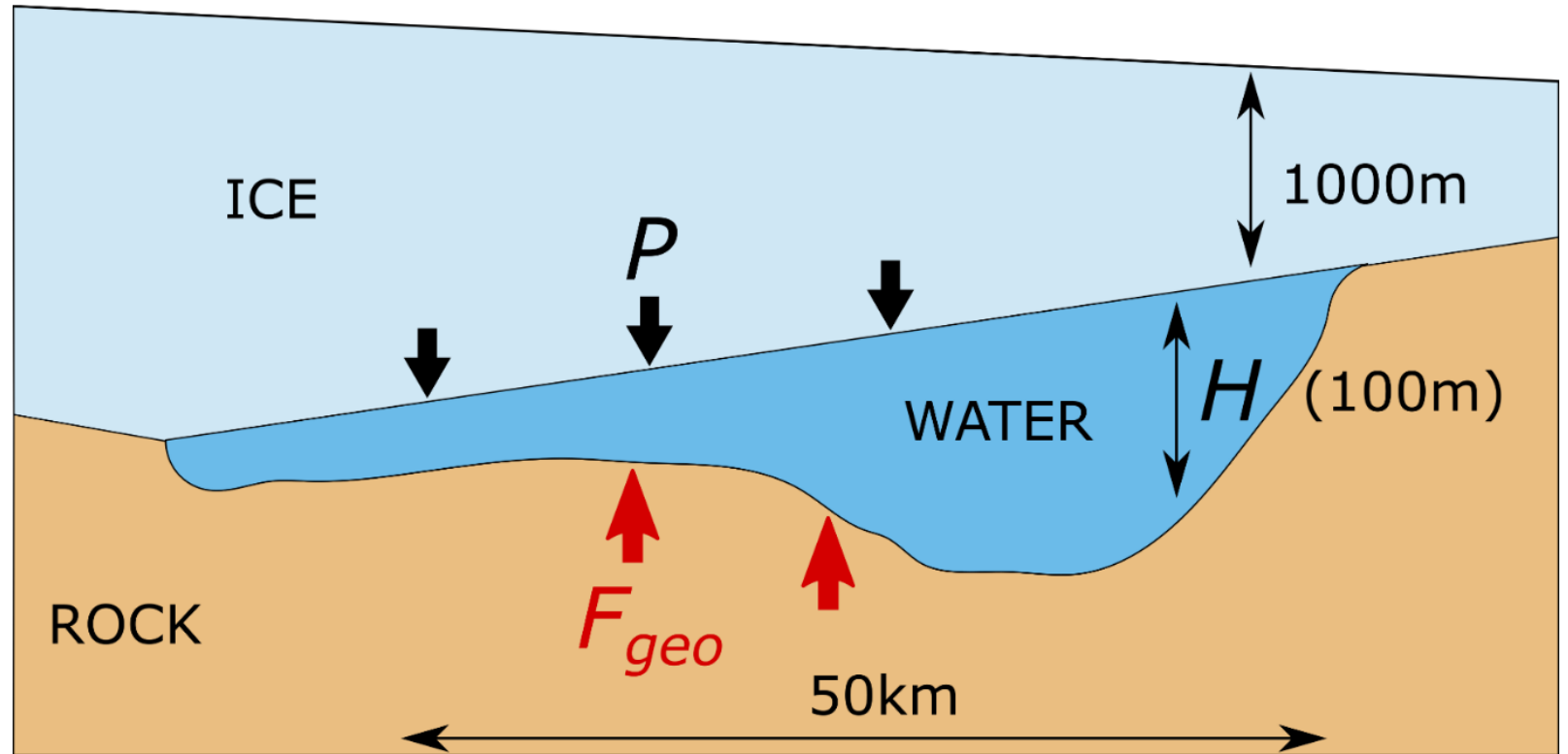


$U$ (mm/s)	$U_{isc}$ (mm/s)	$2r_{max}$ (μm)
0.97	0.32	22
0.10	0.04	7.8
0.69	0.26	20
3.80	0.85	36
0.83	0.31	22

## Take home

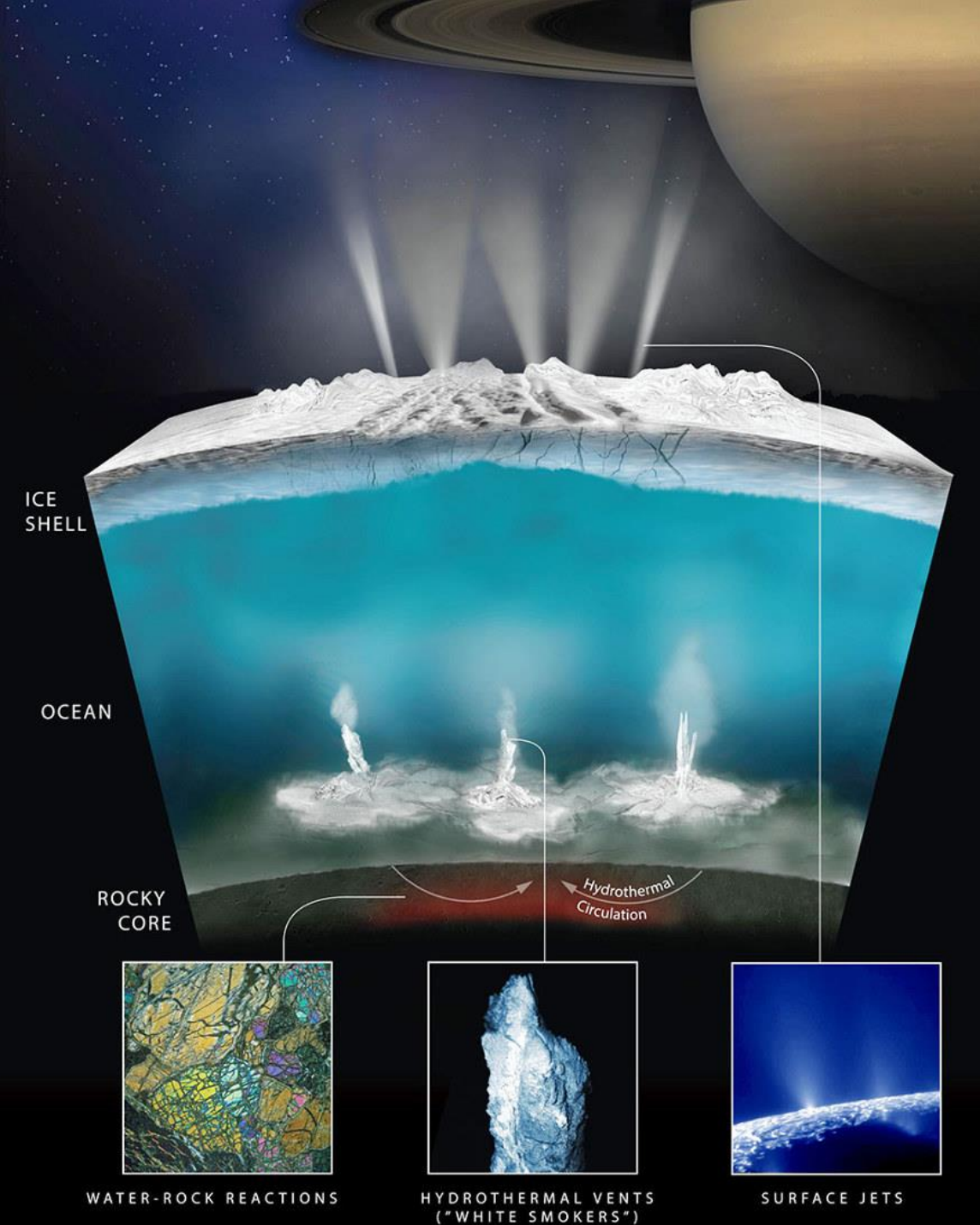
Microorganisms & dust aggregates can be suspended and encapsulated within the ice through freezing → good news for accreted ice analysis.

- Horizontal temperature gradient\*
- Advanced particle transport model
- Lake CECs\*\*



\*ongoing project (J. Nandaha M2 internship)

\*\*in collaboration with CECs (Chile) and BAS (UK)

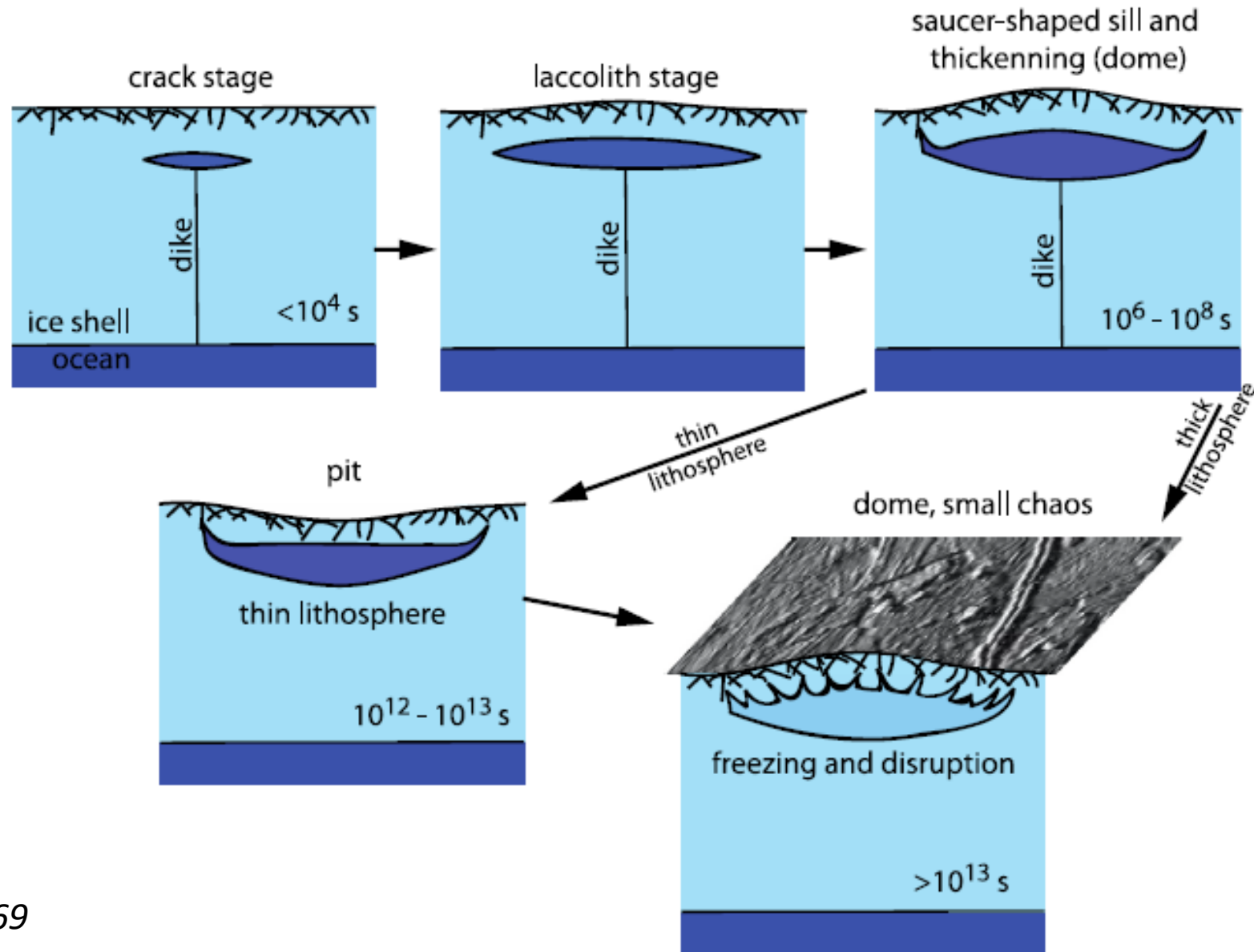


credit ©C. Michaut *J.Geophys. Res. Planets*, 119, 550–573, 2014

## I.B. Sub. Hydro.: On Icy Moons

- ~~Global oceans~~; near-surface, small-scale water pockets lurking beneath crustal topography.

# I.B. Sub. Hydro.: On Icy Moons. Crustal dynamics following intrusion.



What about the water dynamics?

*Icarus* 286 (2017) 261–269

**Fig. 3.** Schematic illustration of the evolution of a saucer-shaped sill and its surface expression to create pits, domes or small chaos. The upward-pointing parts of the frozen sill represent intrusions produced by freezing and lead to surface disruption, or extrusion to make spots. Not to scale.

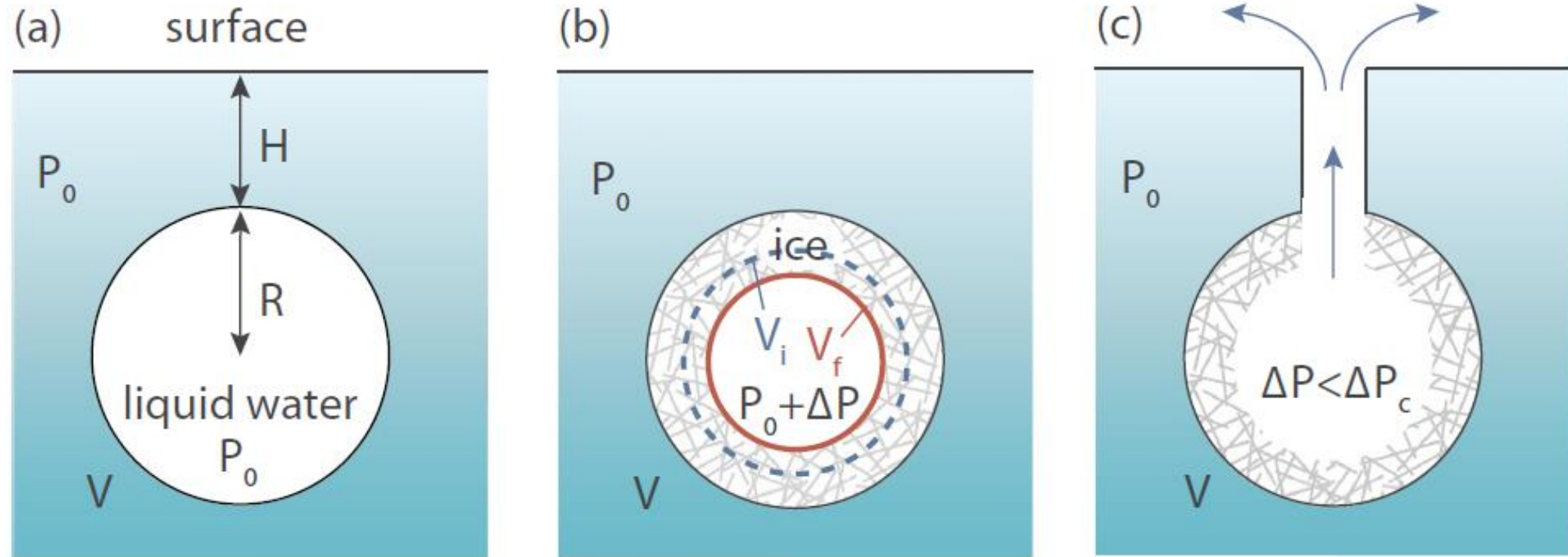
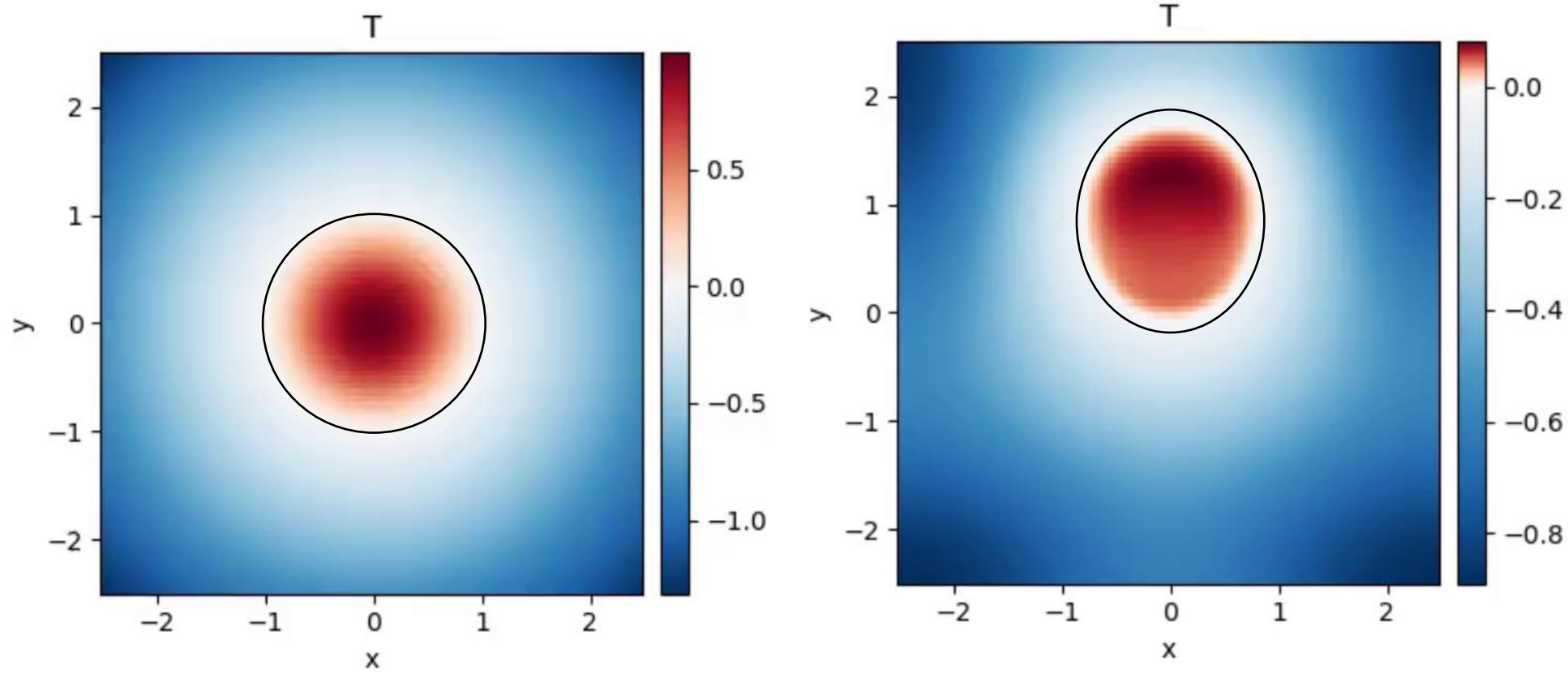


Fig. 2. Schematic representation of a cryomagma reservoir of volume  $V$  and radius  $R$ , located at depth  $H$  under the surface. Liquid cryomagma is represented in white whereas frozen cryomagma is hatched in grey. (a) The reservoir is filled with pure or briny liquid water at isostatic pressure  $P_0$ . (b) An initial liquid volume  $V_i$  freezes and becomes a volume  $V_f$  of ice, inducing an overpressure  $\Delta P$  in the reservoir (see Section 2.2). (c) When the pressure reaches a critical value  $\Delta P_c$ , the wall fractures and the pressurized liquid rises to the surface through a  $H$  long fracture (see Section 2.3).

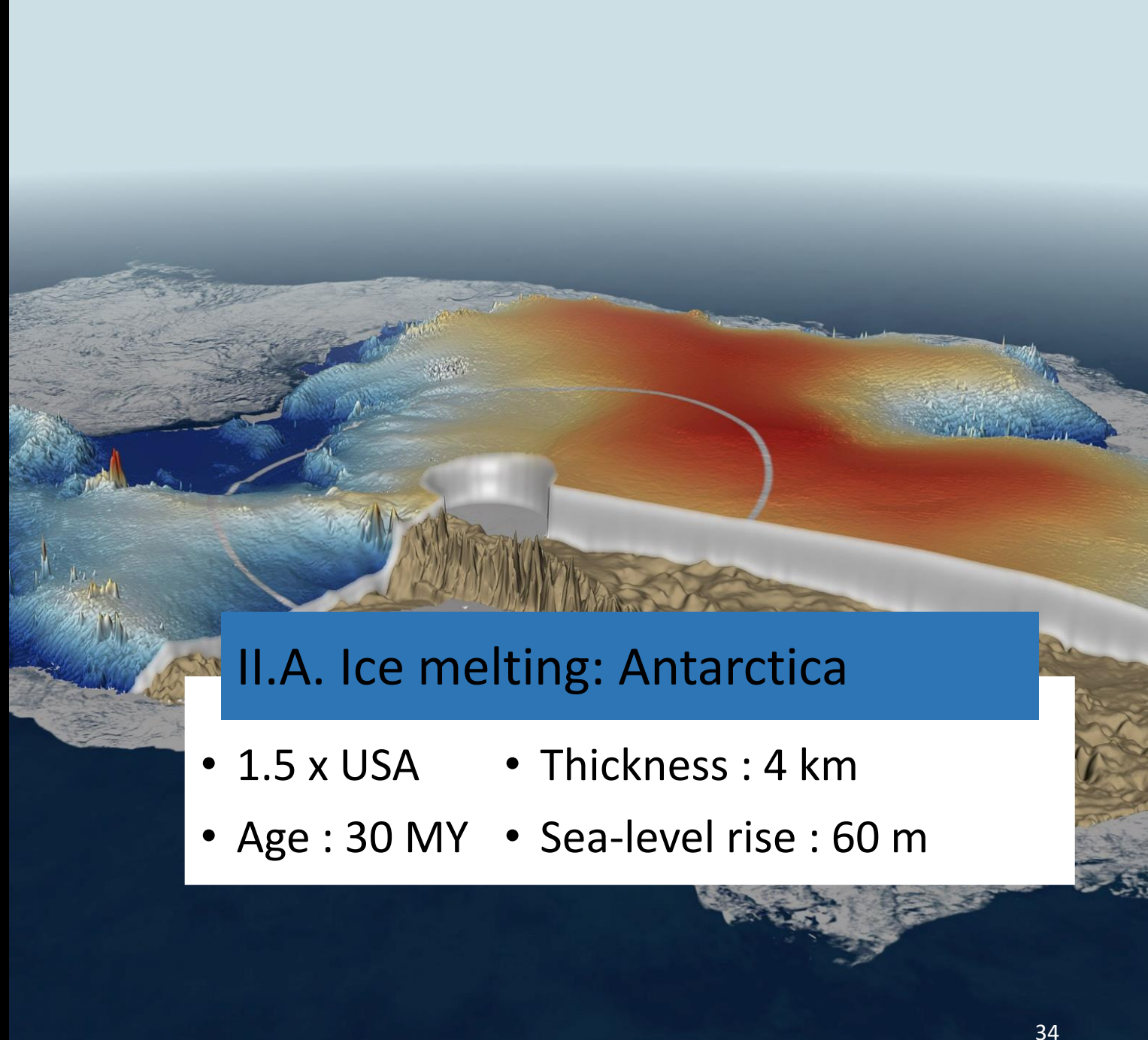


# I.B. Sub. Hydro.: On Icy Moons. Preliminary results (C. De La Salle M2 internship).



*Stronger melting  
in the cavity  
upper half.*

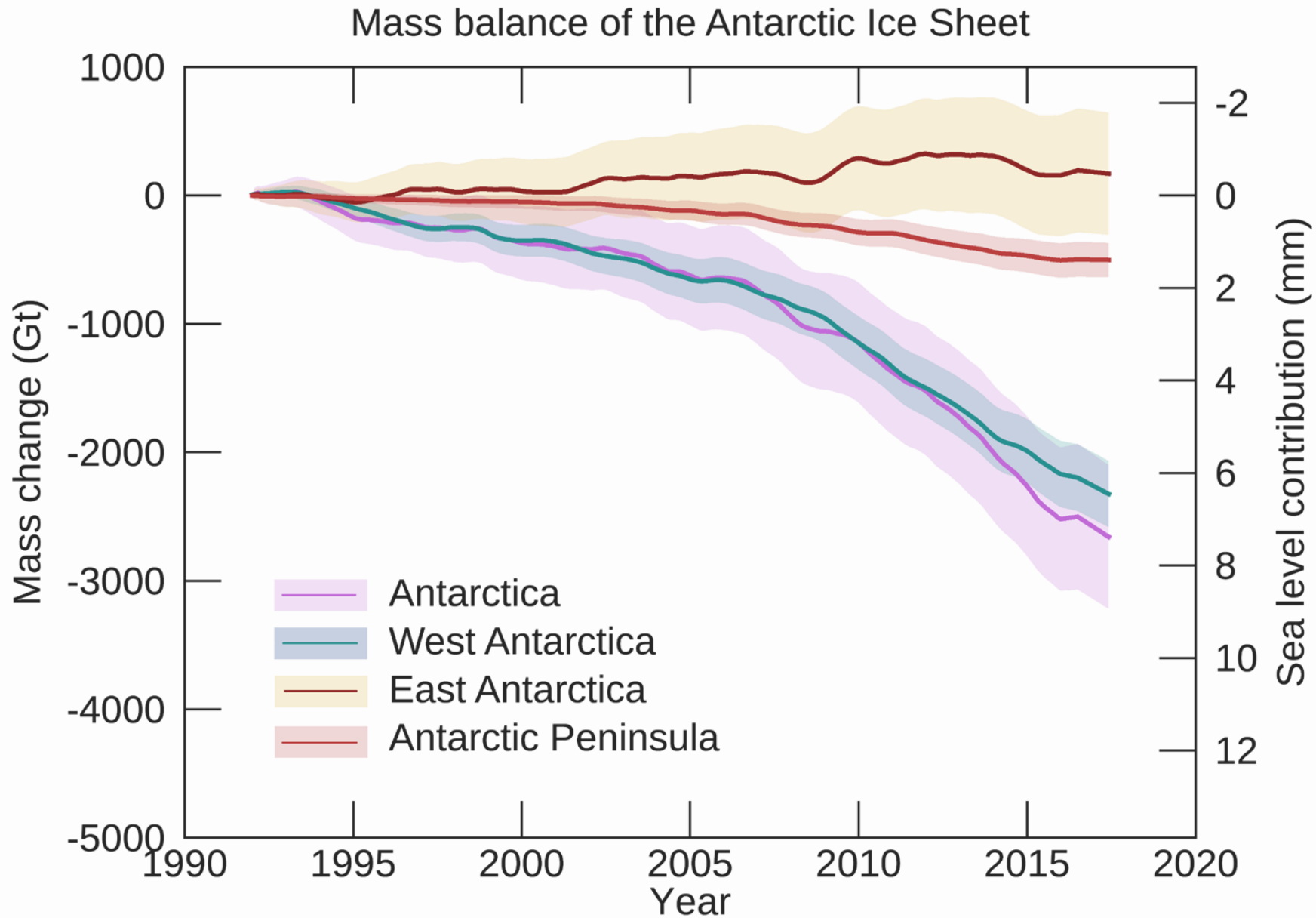
- Heterogeneous melting drives translation and deforms the initial shape.
- How does this affect longevity and crustal stability/fracturing ?



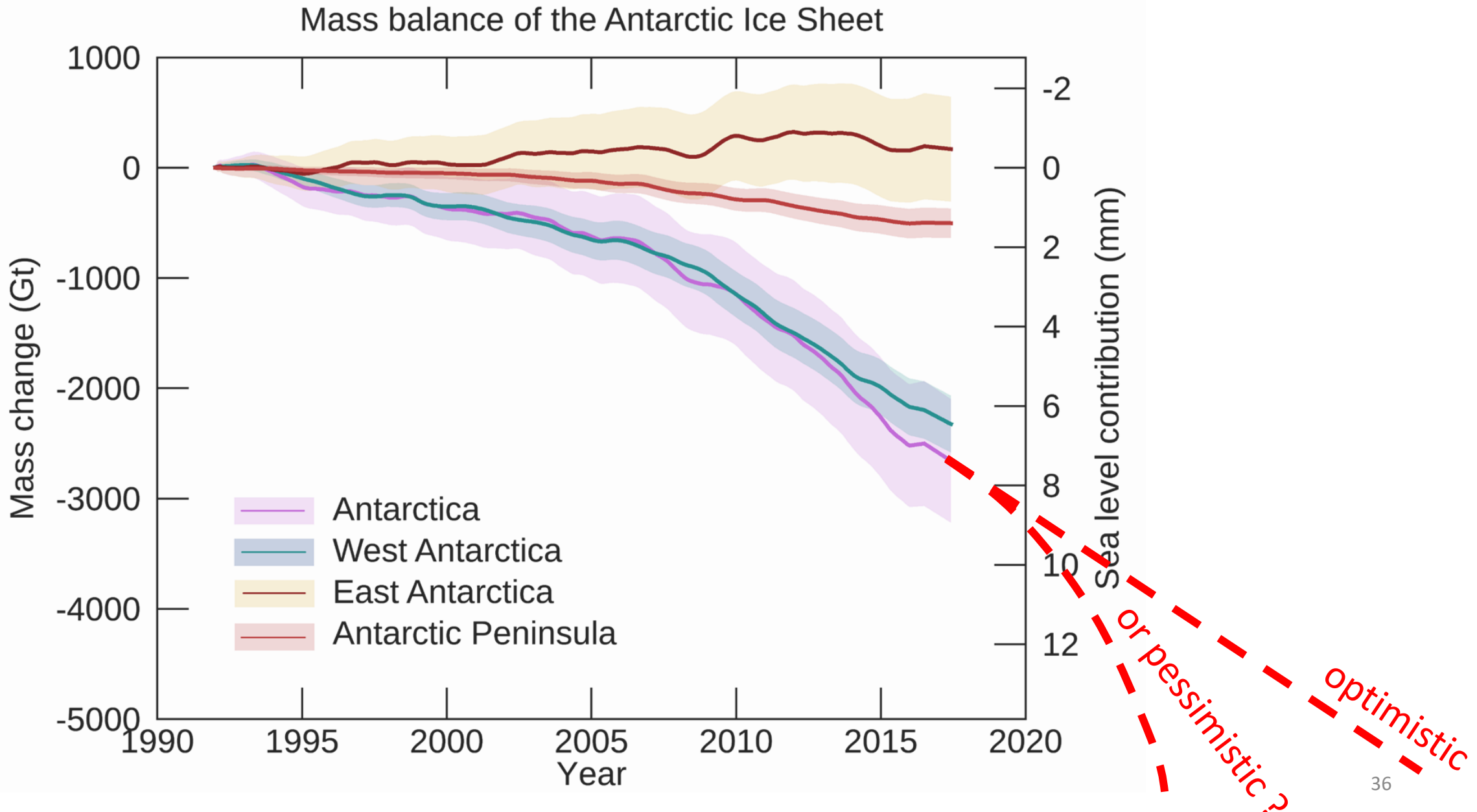
## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica

- 1.5 x USA
- Thickness : 4 km
- Age : 30 MY
- Sea-level rise : 60 m

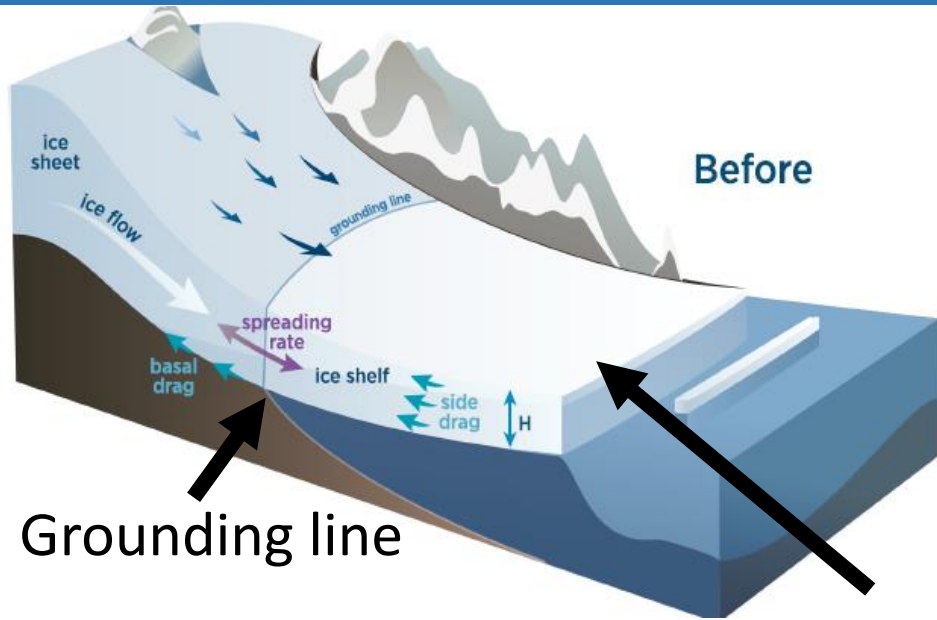
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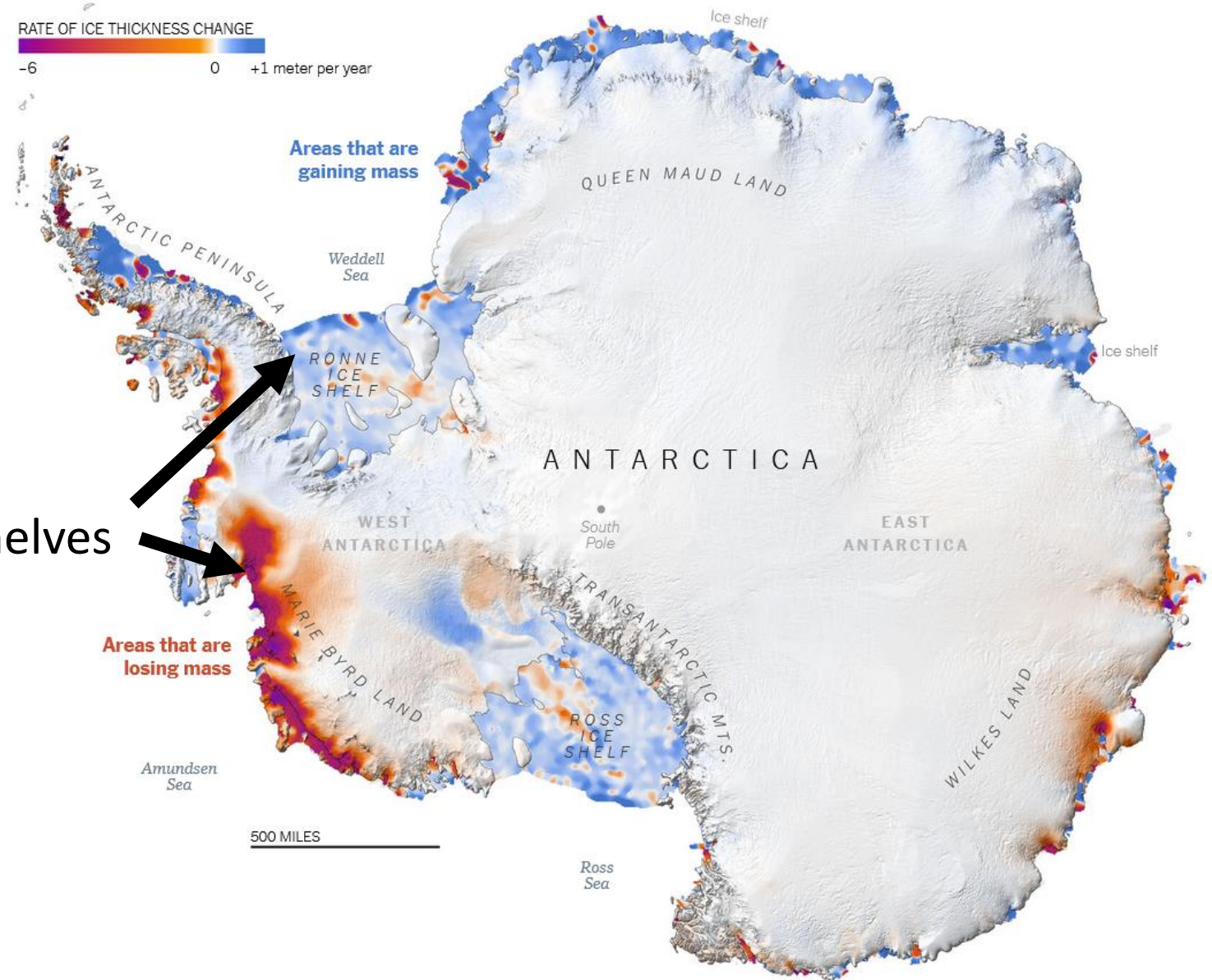


# II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Observations; large-scale mechanism.

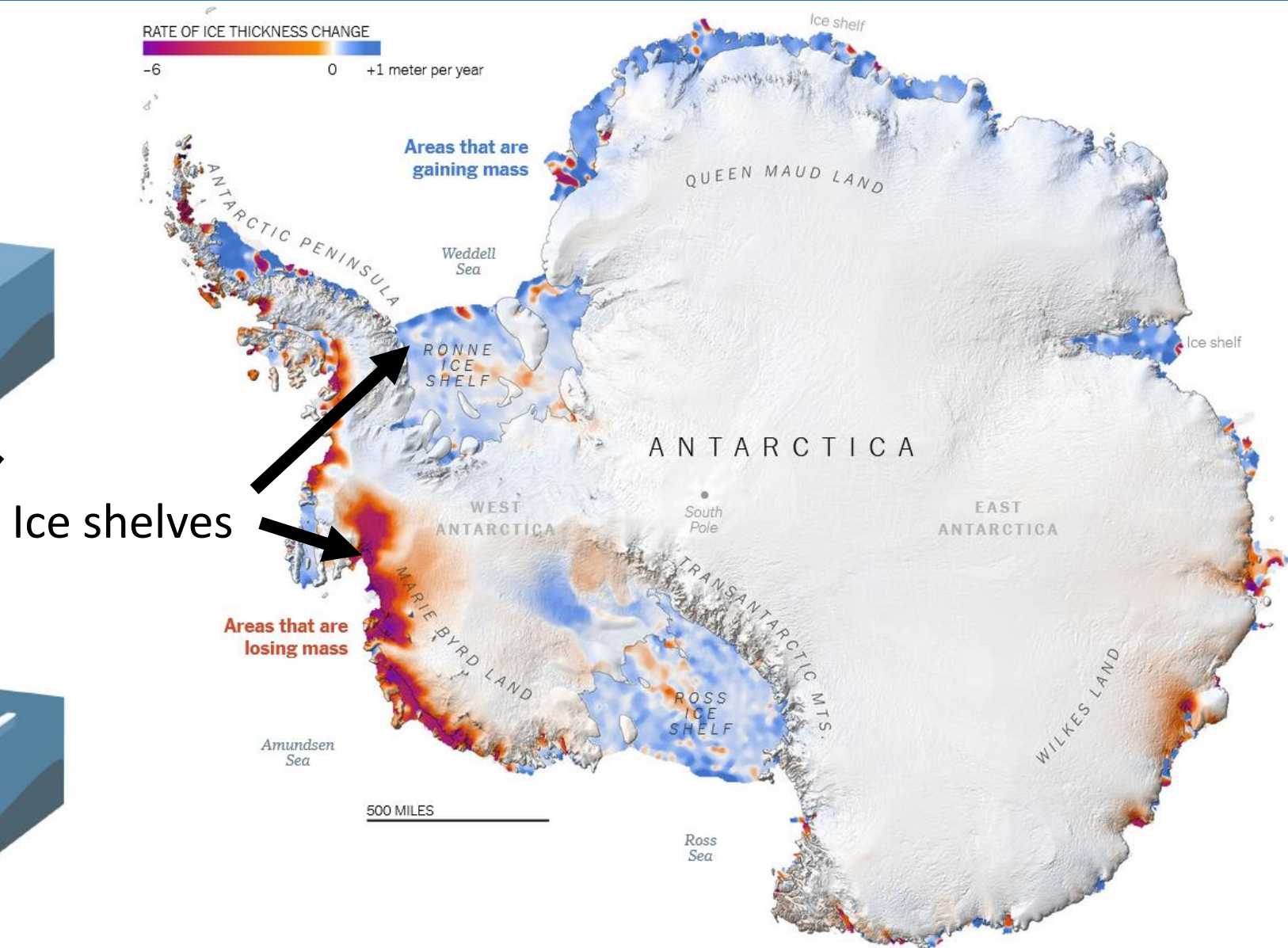
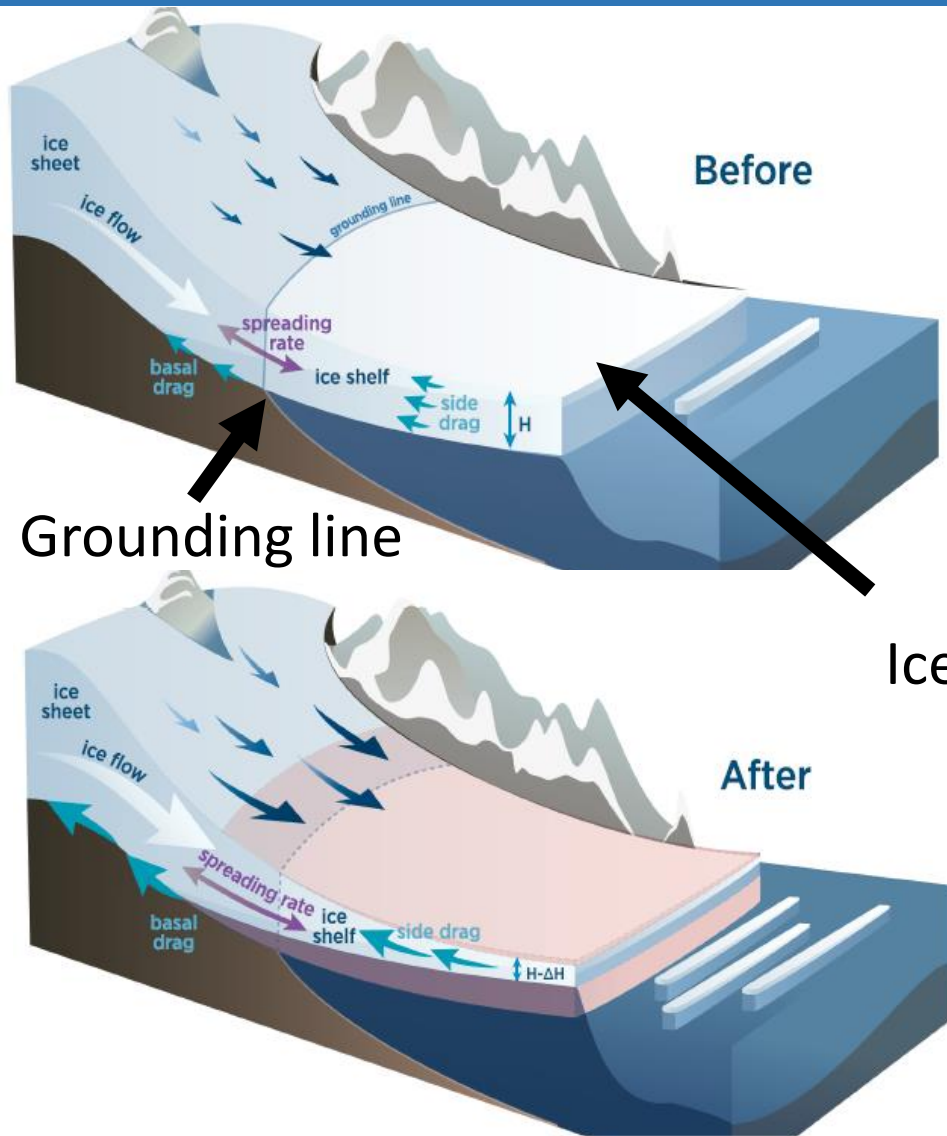


Grounding line

Ice shelves

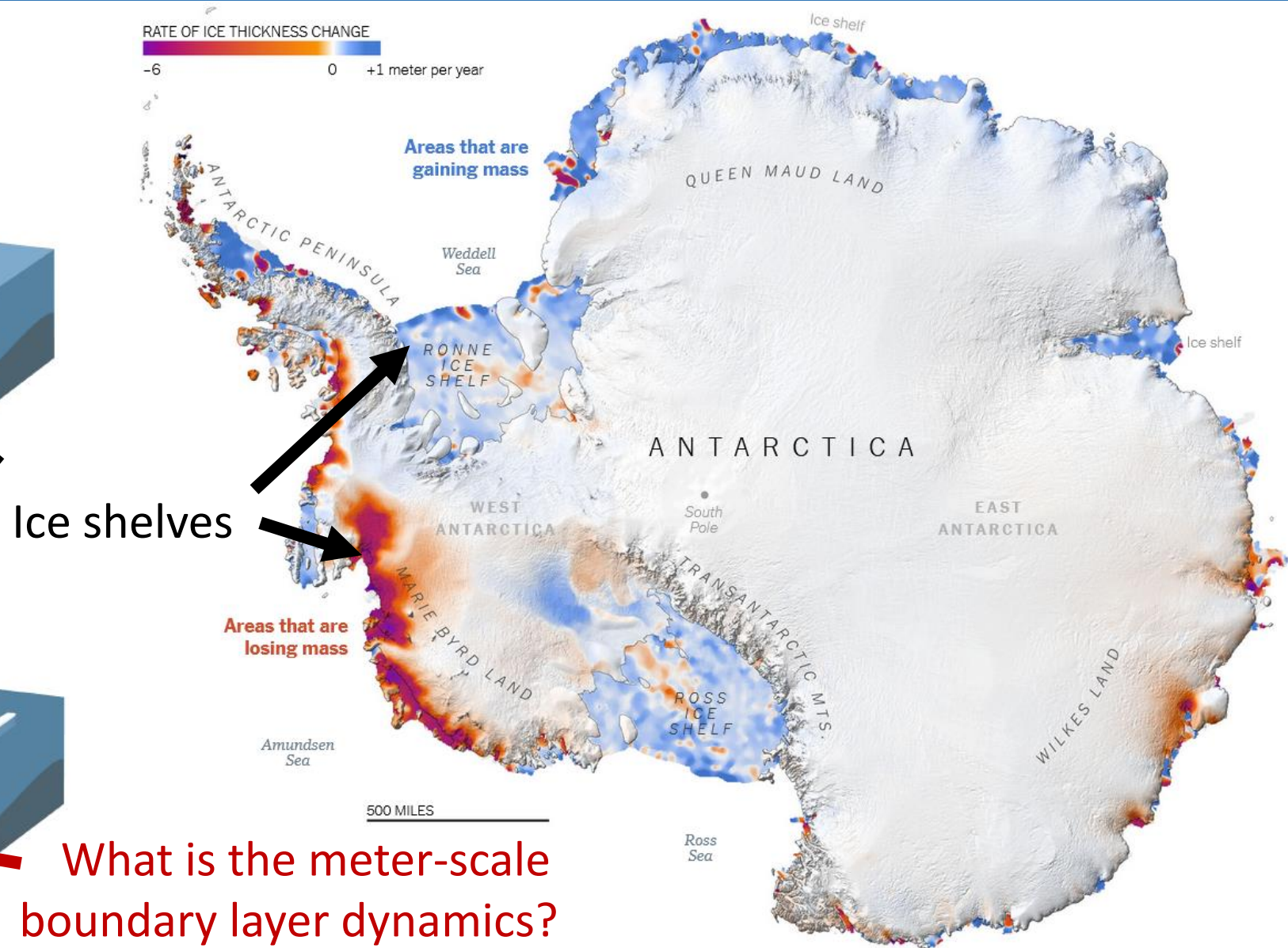
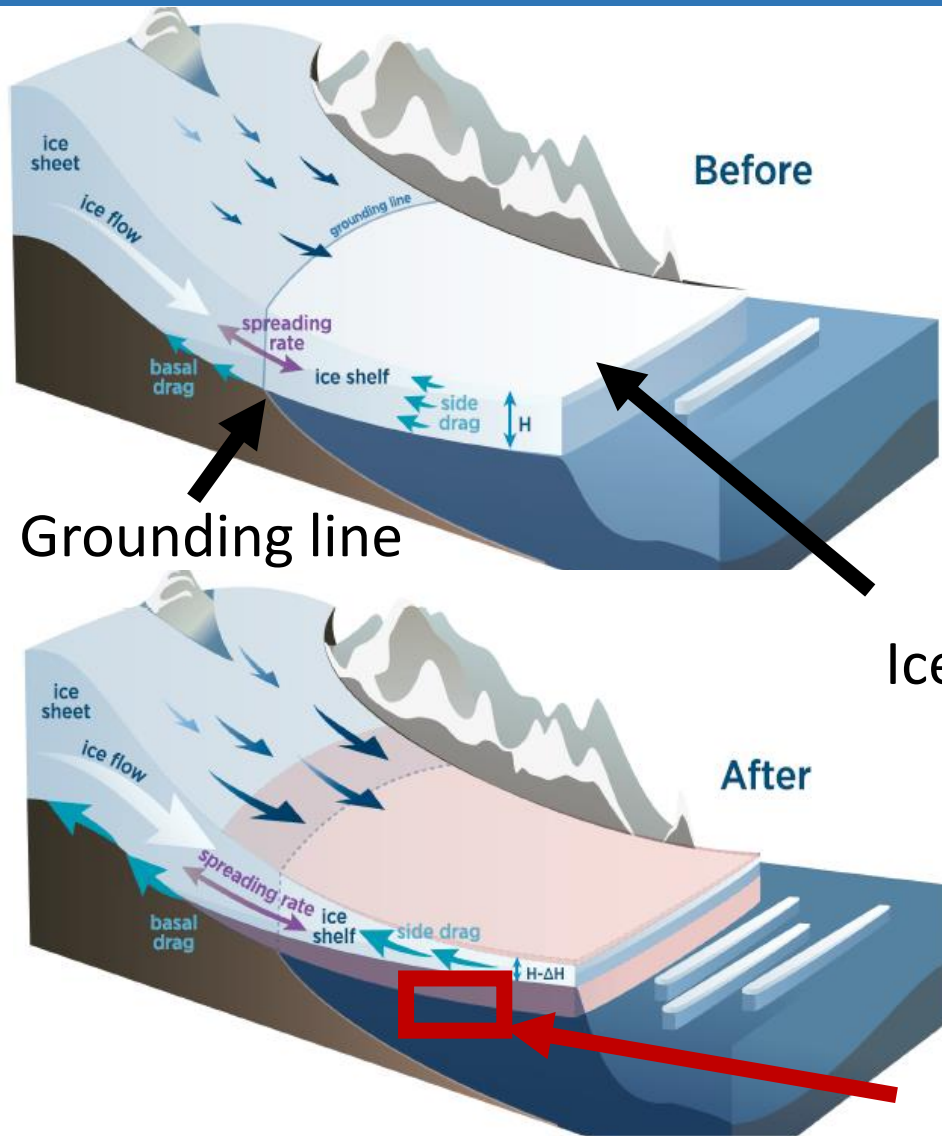


# II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Observations; large-scale mechanism.



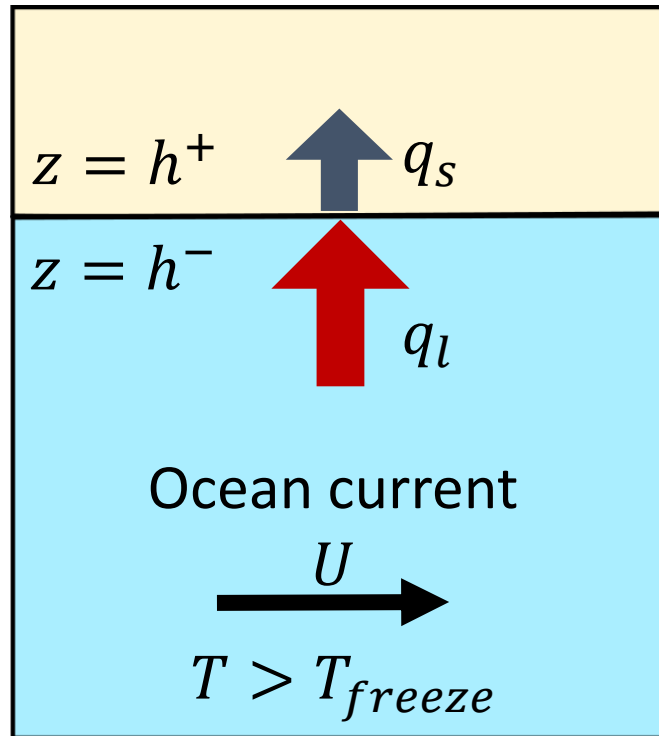
⇒ Basal melting is key

# II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Observations; large-scale mechanism.



What is the meter-scale boundary layer dynamics?

## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Boundary layer thermodynamics.



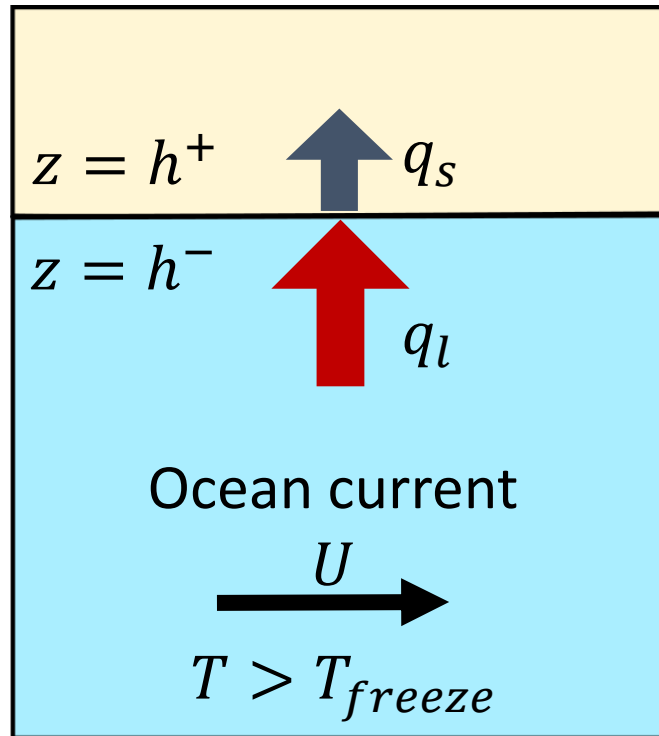
Stefan Problem  
 $St \partial_t h = q_l - q_s$

$$\begin{cases} q_l = -\partial_z T, & z = h^-, \\ q_s = -\partial_z T, & z = h^+, \\ St = \frac{L}{c_p(T - T_{freeze})} \end{cases}$$

Latent heat  
Sensible heat



## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Boundary layer thermodynamics.



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Latent heat  
Sensible heat

Observation

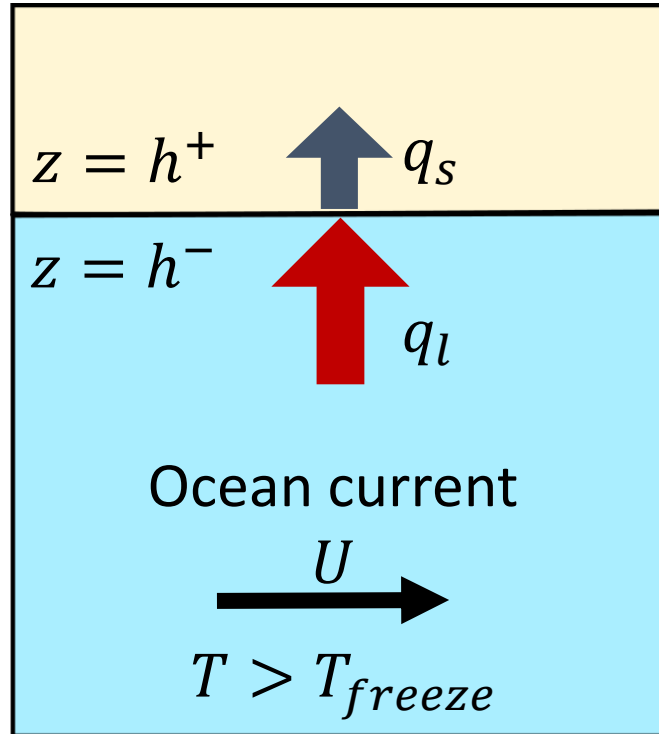
$q_l, q_s \equiv$  fluxes within a turbulent boundary layer  $\sim O(1)cm$

Conclusion

$\rightarrow$  parametrized in ocean models  $\sim O(10)m$

$$q_s = 0, \quad q_l = C_d^{1/2} \Gamma_T U (T - T_{freeze}) \quad (\text{eq 1})$$

## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Boundary layer thermodynamics.



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Questions

Is (eq 1) reasonable ?

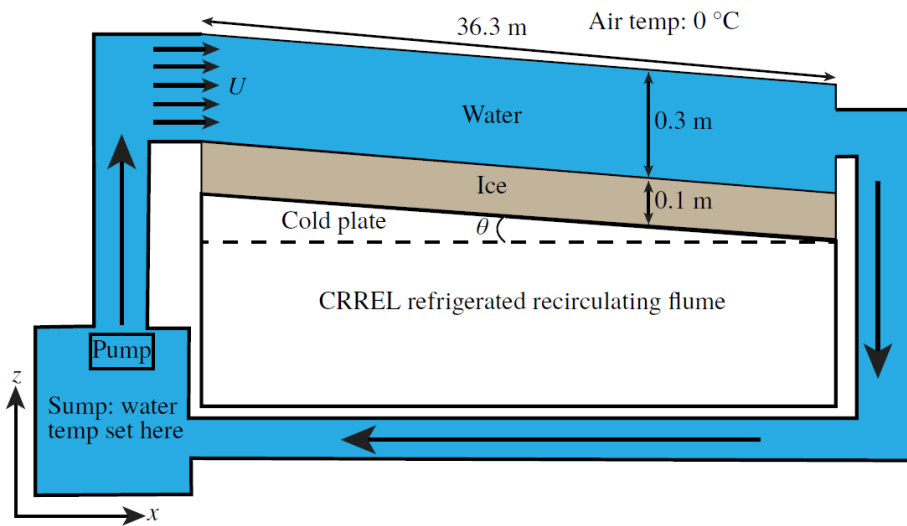
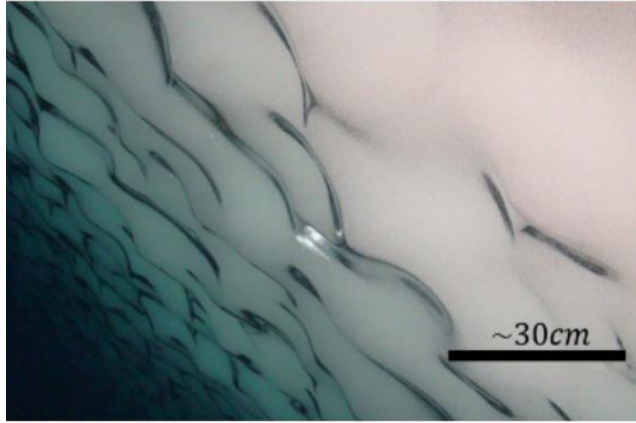
How do the problem parameters influence  $C_d$  et  $\Gamma_T$ ?

$U, T$ , local slope, ...

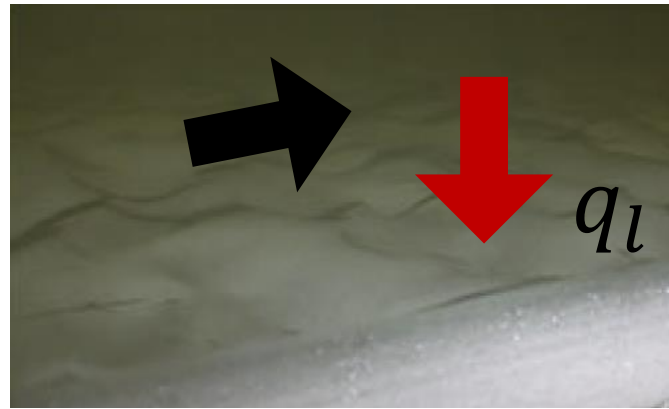
Are hydraulically-smooth ice surfaces morphologically stable ?

# II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Smooth to rough ice surfaces.

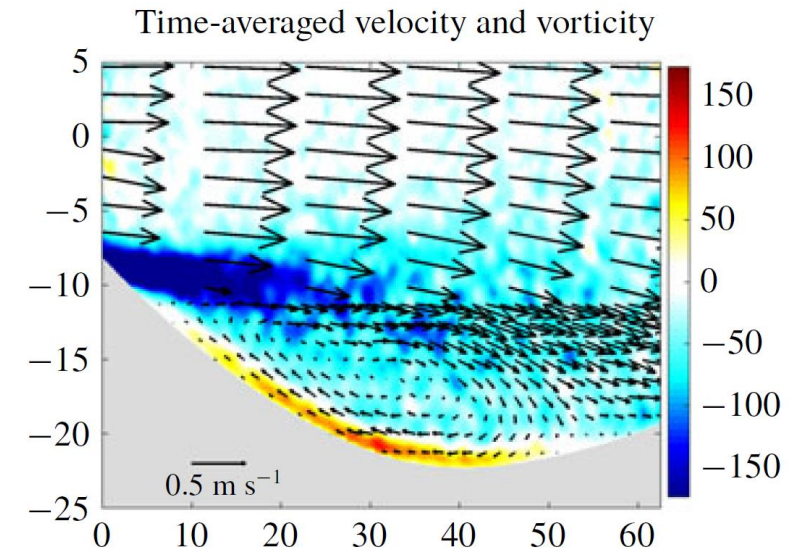
“Scallops”



Bushuk et al. (2019)

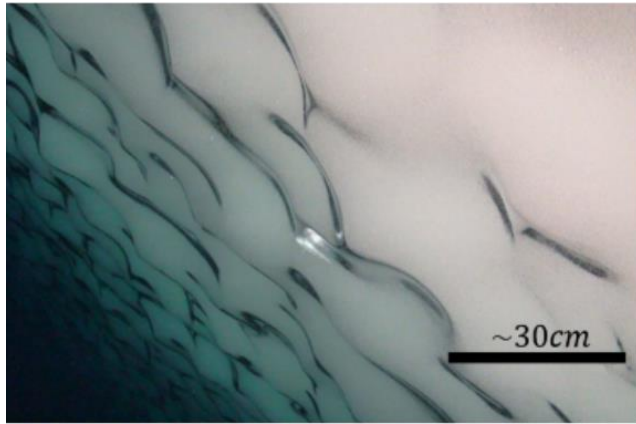


Melting  $\leftarrow \times 2$

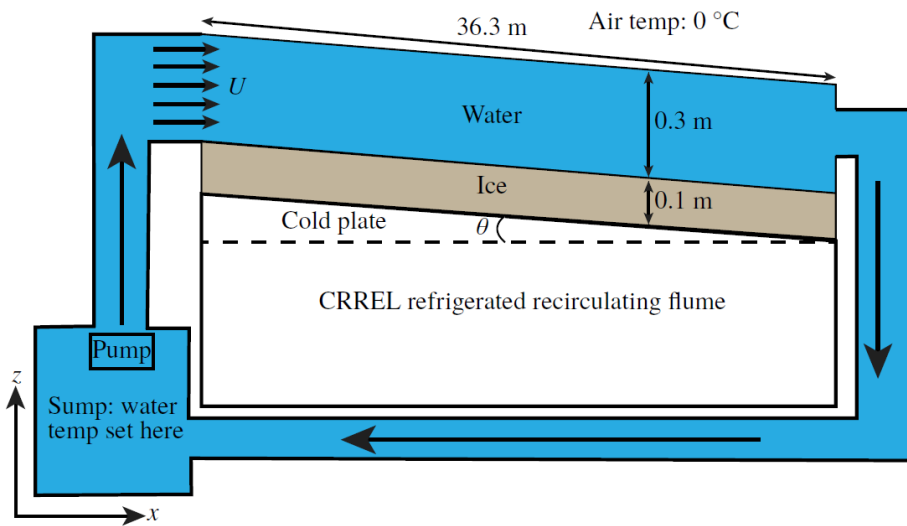
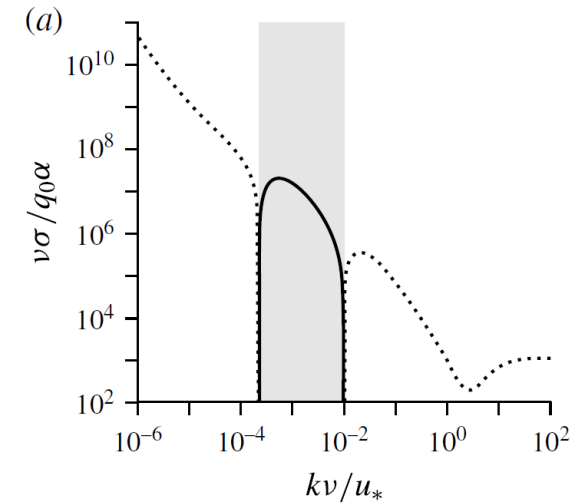


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“Scallops”



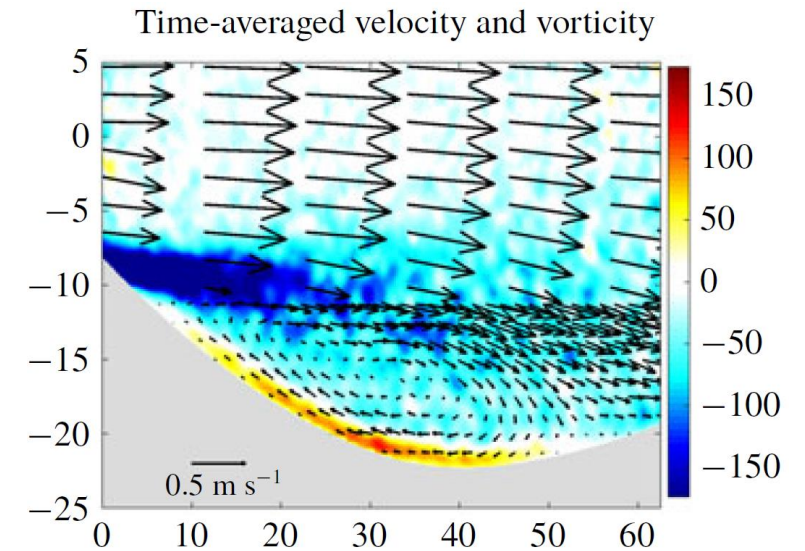
Statistical approach:  
 $q_l$  and  $h$  out-of-phase  
 such that  $\max(q_l)$  lies  
 within a trough.  
 Claudin et al. (2017)



Bushuk et al. (2019)



Melting  $\leftarrow \times 2$



# II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Modelling strategy; first objectives.

## 2 discontinuous domains

$$\partial_t T_s = \nabla^2 T_s \quad \text{solid}$$

$$D_t T_l = \nabla^2 T_l$$

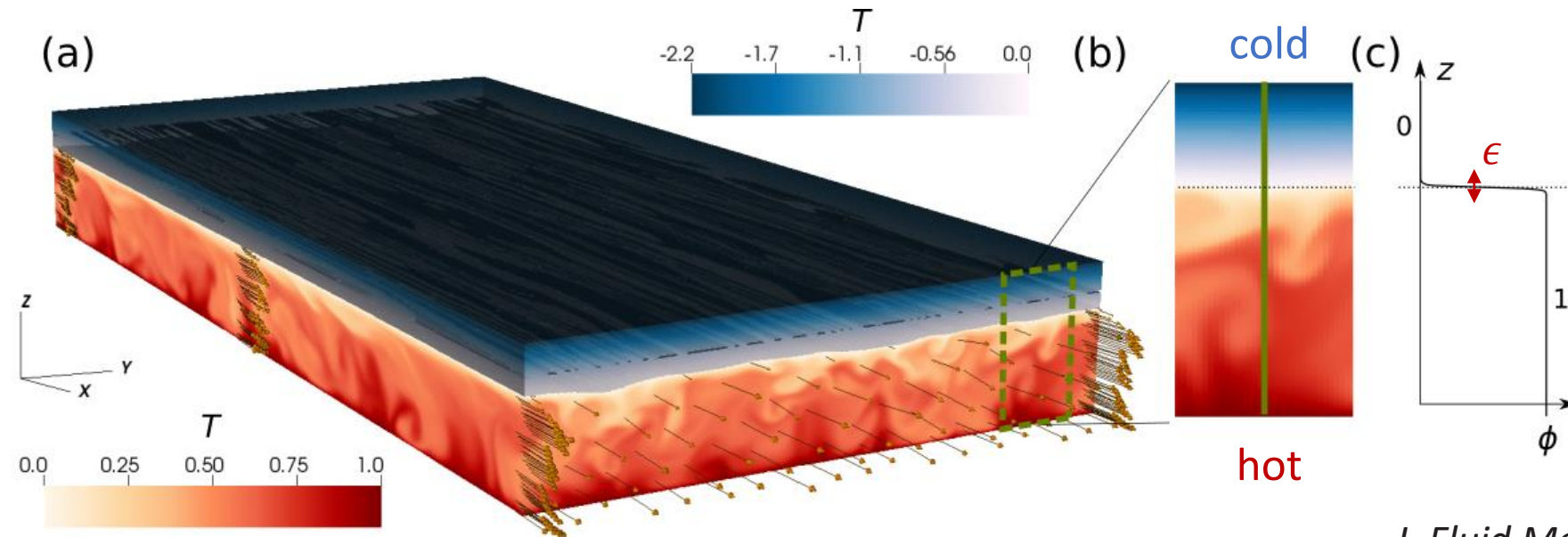
$$\nabla \cdot \vec{u}_l = 0$$

$$D_t \vec{u}_l = Pr \nabla^2 \vec{u}_l - \nabla p_l - Pr Ri T_l \hat{z} + 2 Pr^2 Re \hat{x}$$

$$T_l = T_s = T_{freeze}$$

$$St \partial_t h = \partial_z T_s - \partial_z T_l$$

interface



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interface

## 1 diffuse 2-phase (porous) domain

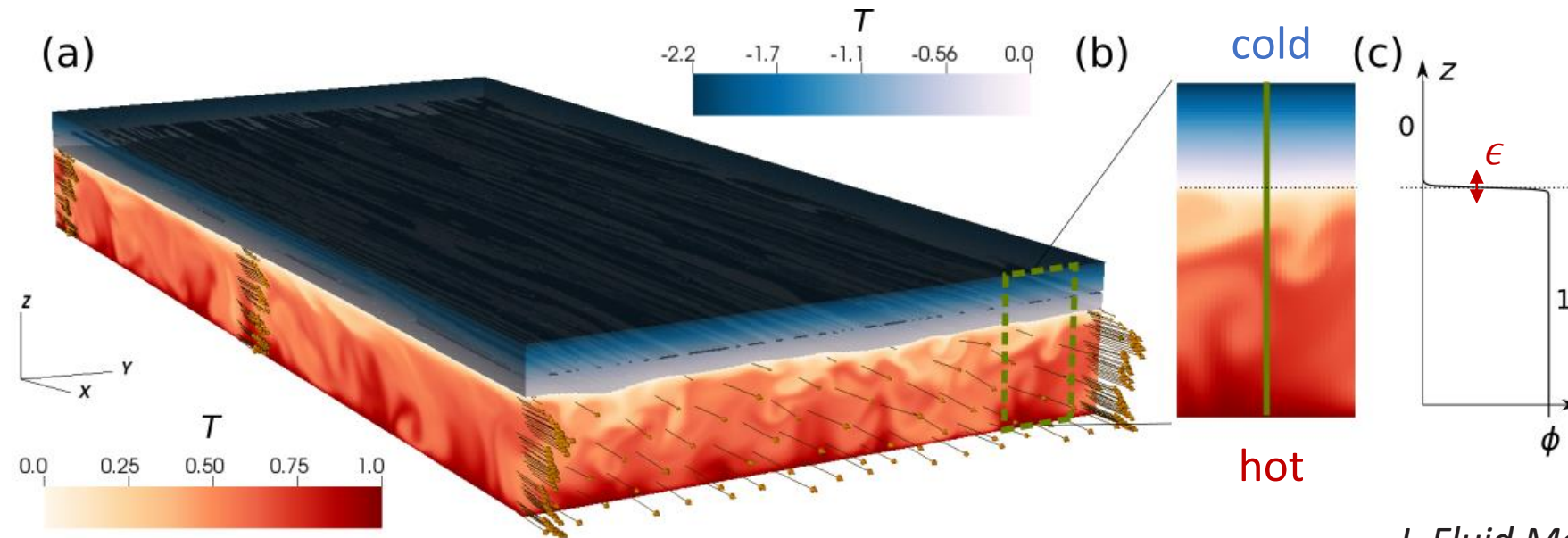
solid & liquid

$$D_t T = \nabla^2 T - St \partial_t \phi$$

$$\nabla \cdot \vec{u} = 0$$

$$D_t \vec{u} = Pr \nabla^2 \vec{u} - \nabla p - Pr Ri T \hat{z} + 2 Pr^2 Re \hat{x} - Pr \frac{(1-\phi)}{\Gamma(\epsilon)} \vec{u}$$

$$\partial_t \phi = A(\epsilon) \nabla^2 \phi + g(\phi) \quad \text{Gov. eq. for phase var. } \phi$$



# II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Modelling strategy; first objectives.

## 2 discontinuous domains

$$\partial_t T_s = \nabla^2 T_s \quad \text{solid}$$

$$D_t T_l = \nabla^2 T_l$$

$$\nabla \cdot \vec{u}_l = 0$$

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$$T_l = T_s = T_{freeze}$$

$$St \partial_t h = \partial_z T_s - \partial_z T_l$$

interface

## 1 diffuse 2-phase (porous) domain

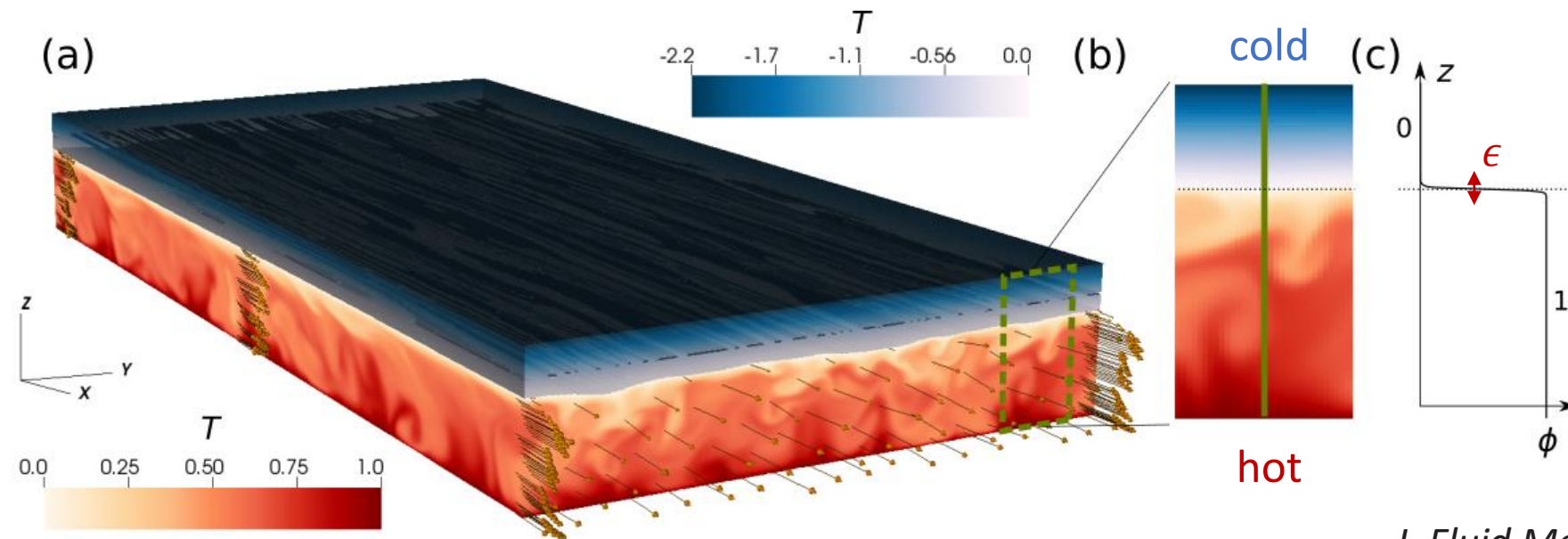
solid & liquid

$$D_t T = \nabla^2 T - St \partial_t \phi$$

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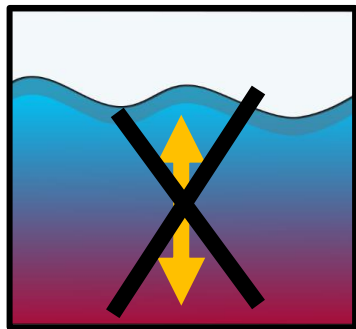


Obj.: Effect of current and stratification

## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Modelling strategy; first objectives.

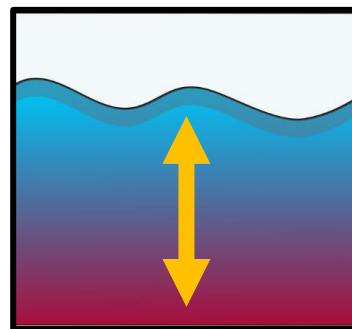
### Stratification effects

$$Ri = 4.5 \cdot 10^5$$
$$(Ri_* = 40)$$



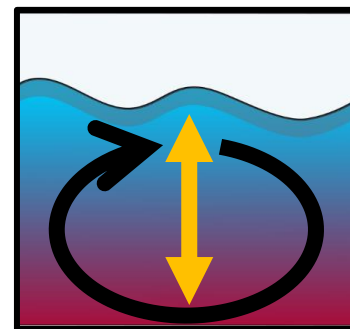
stable

$$Ri = 0$$



neutral

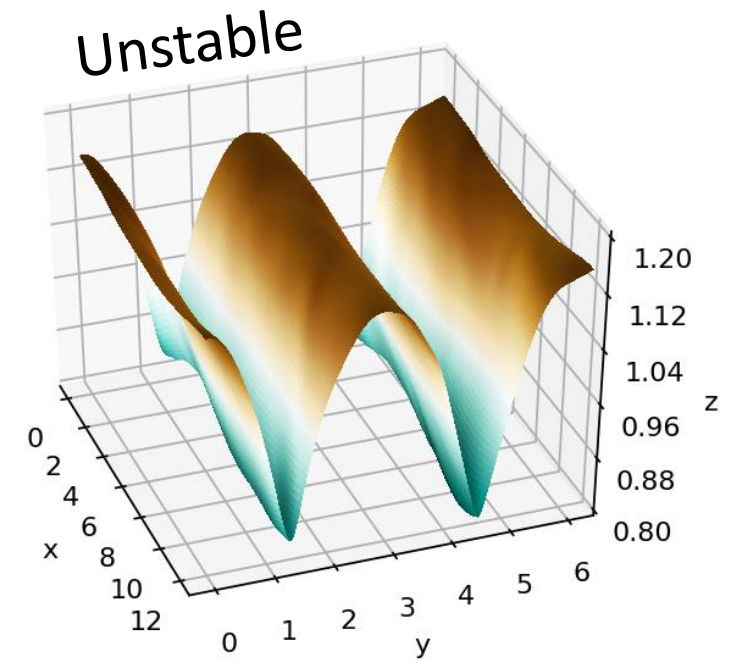
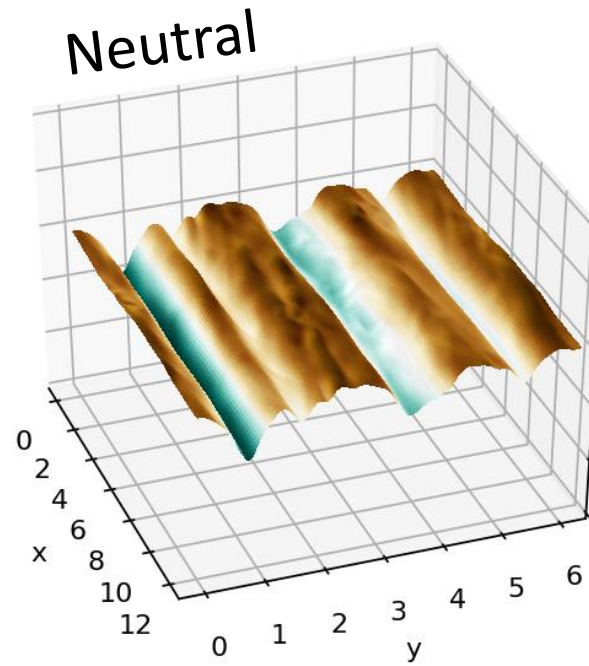
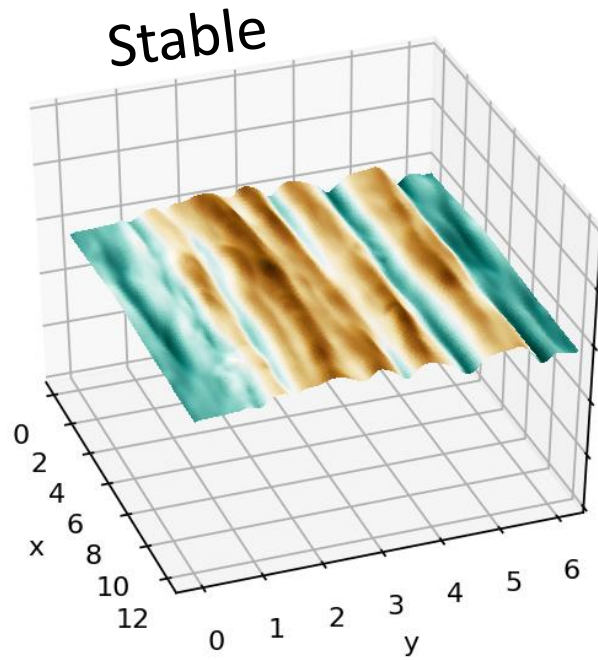
$$Ri = -4.5 \cdot 10^5$$
$$(Ra = 4.5 \cdot 10^5)$$



unstable

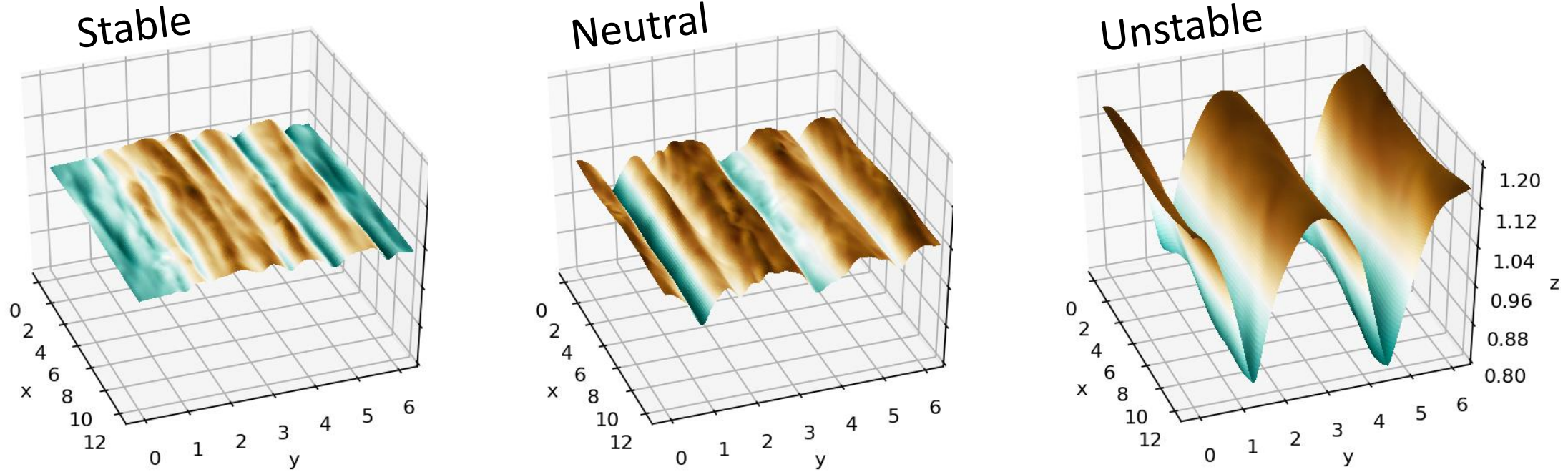


## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. First results: streamwise channels and keels.

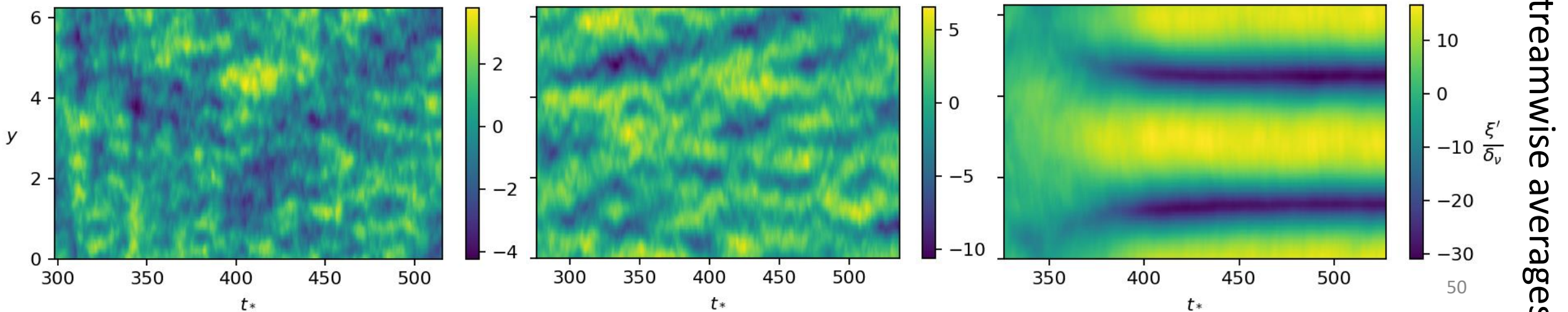


Carving from BL-attached streamwise vortices to domain-scale Rayleigh-Benard rolls.

## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. First results: streamwise channels and keels.

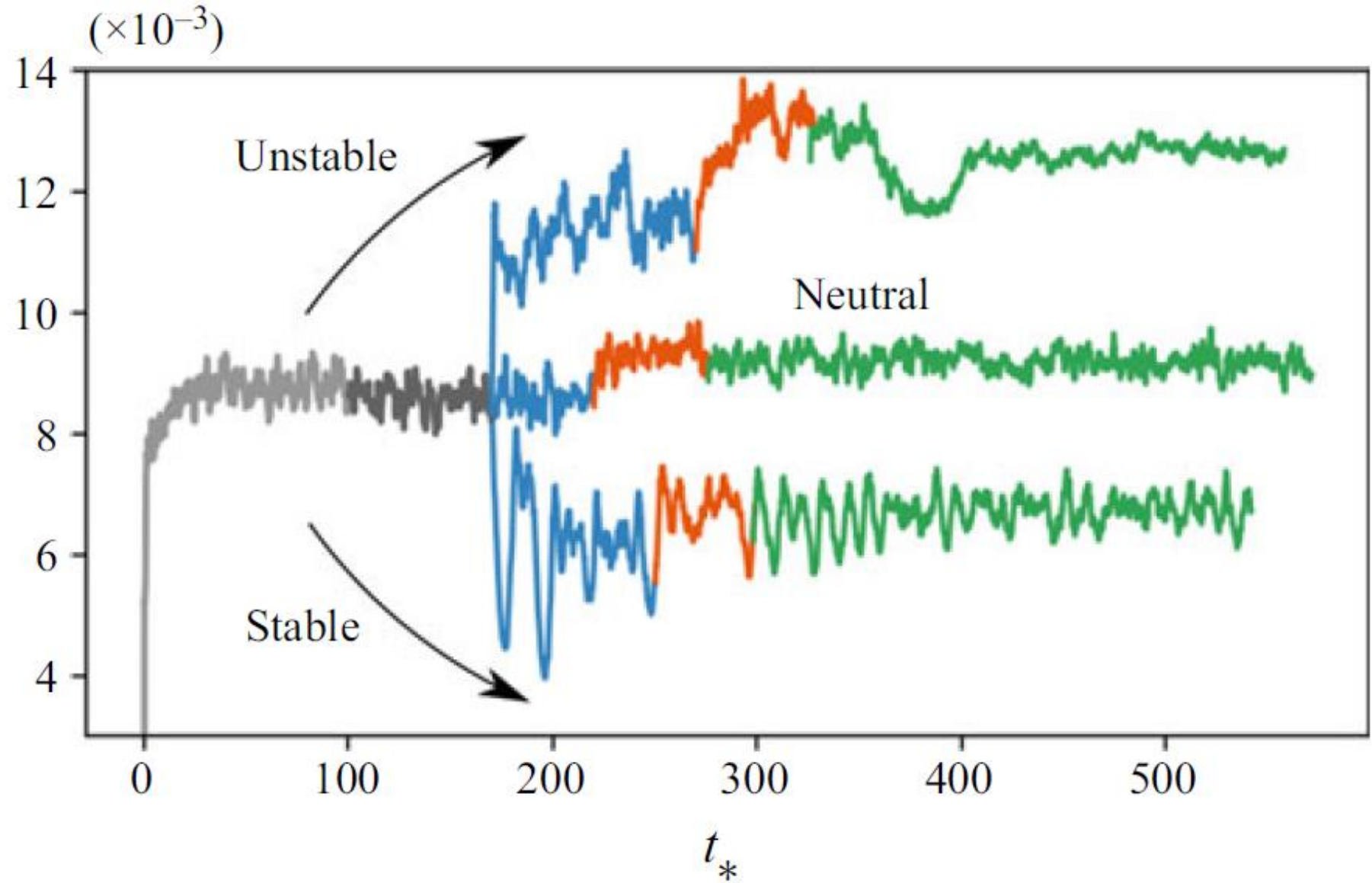


Carving from BL-attached streamwise vortices to domain-scale Rayleigh-Benard rolls.



## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. First results: no clear effect on $C_d$ .

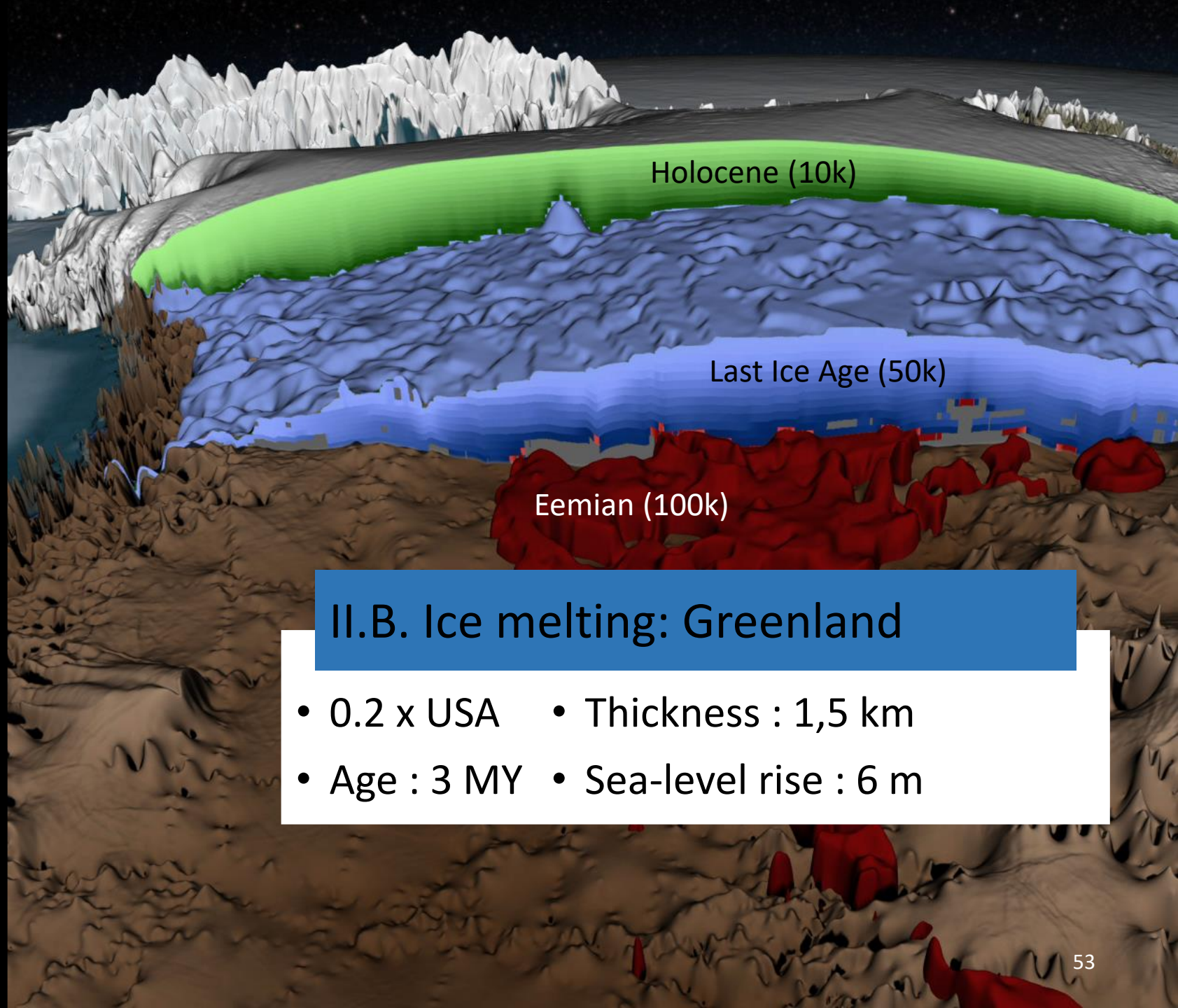
$$C_d = 2 \left( \frac{u_*}{u_b} \right)^2$$



## II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Perspectives.

→ consider stronger currents to *get* to « scallops ».

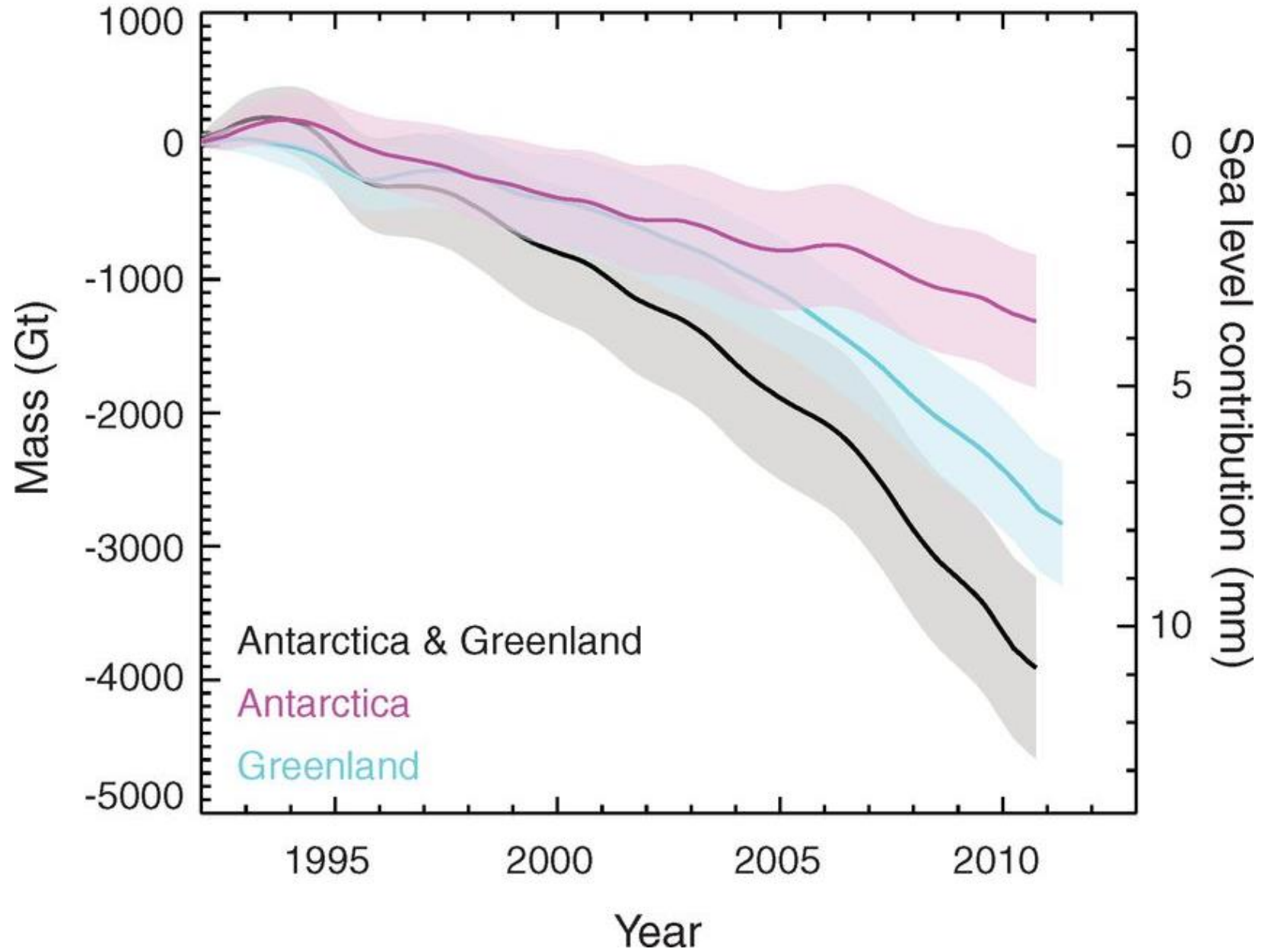
→ consider ice melting in saltwater (numerical and experimental work possible).



## II.B. Ice melting: Greenland

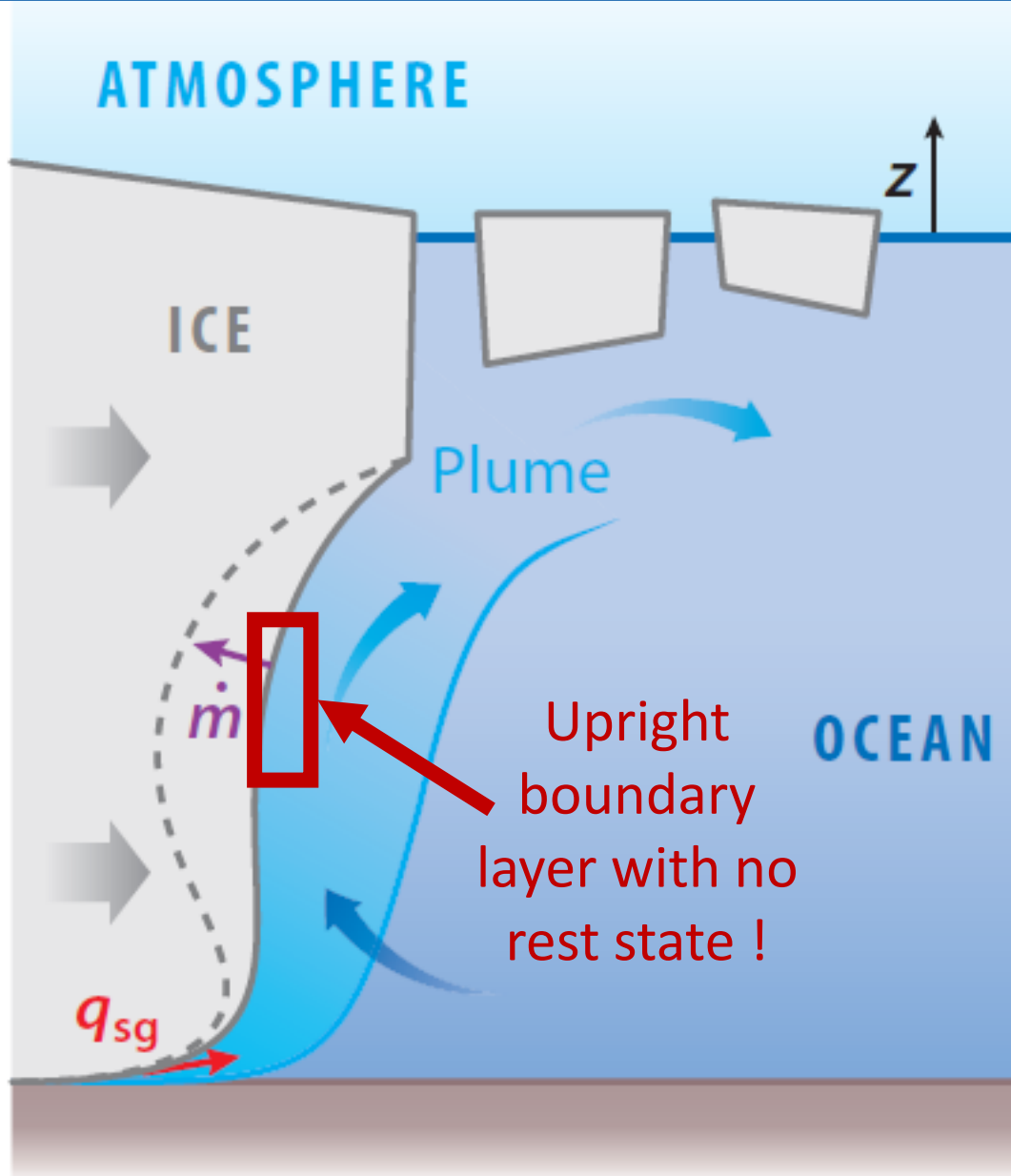
- 0.2 x USA
- Thickness : 1,5 km
- Age : 3 MY
- Sea-level rise : 6 m

## II.B. Ice melting: Greenland.





## II.B. Ice melting: Greenland. New set-up, similar questions.



### The need for a grand parameterization.

→ current parameterization predicts only 1% observed melt rate!

→ because buoyancy-controlled melting (not shear)

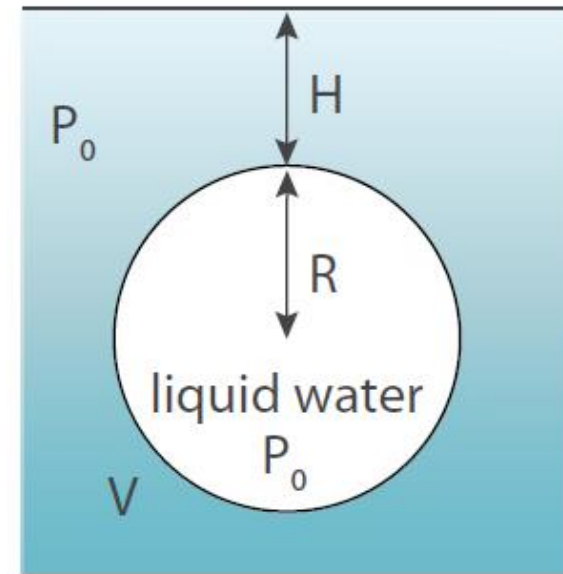
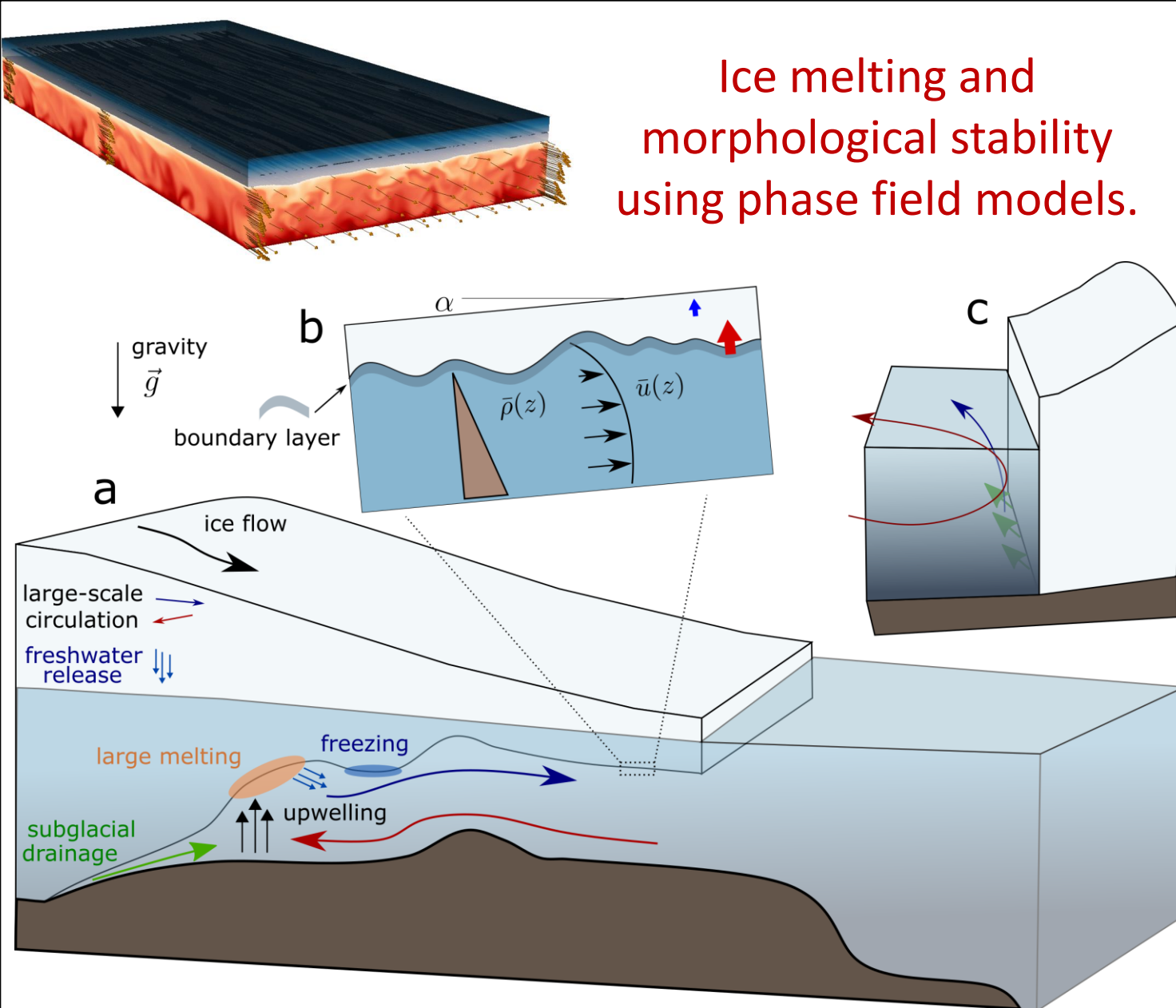
→ horizontal circulation in the “fjord” could play an important role.

Combined sims & experiments approach with R. Volk and S. Joubaud in preparation!

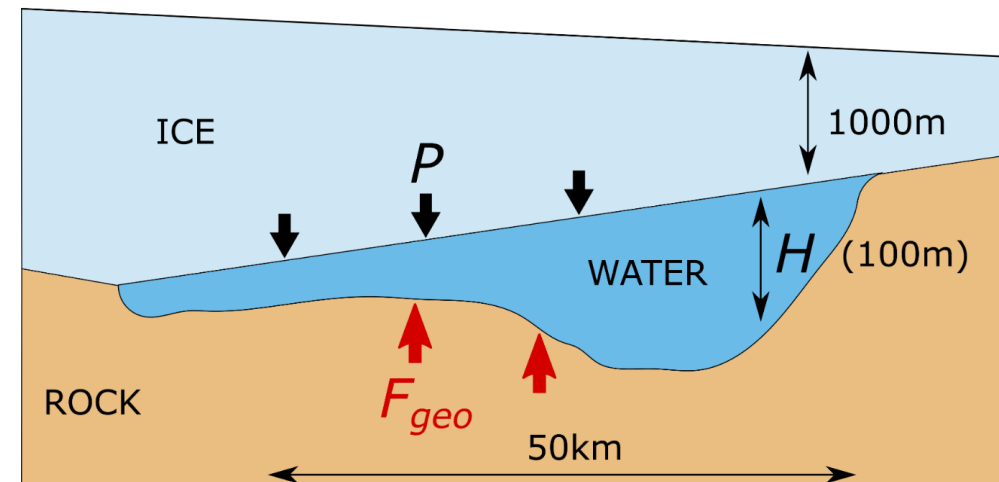


# Conclusions

Ice melting and morphological stability using phase field models.

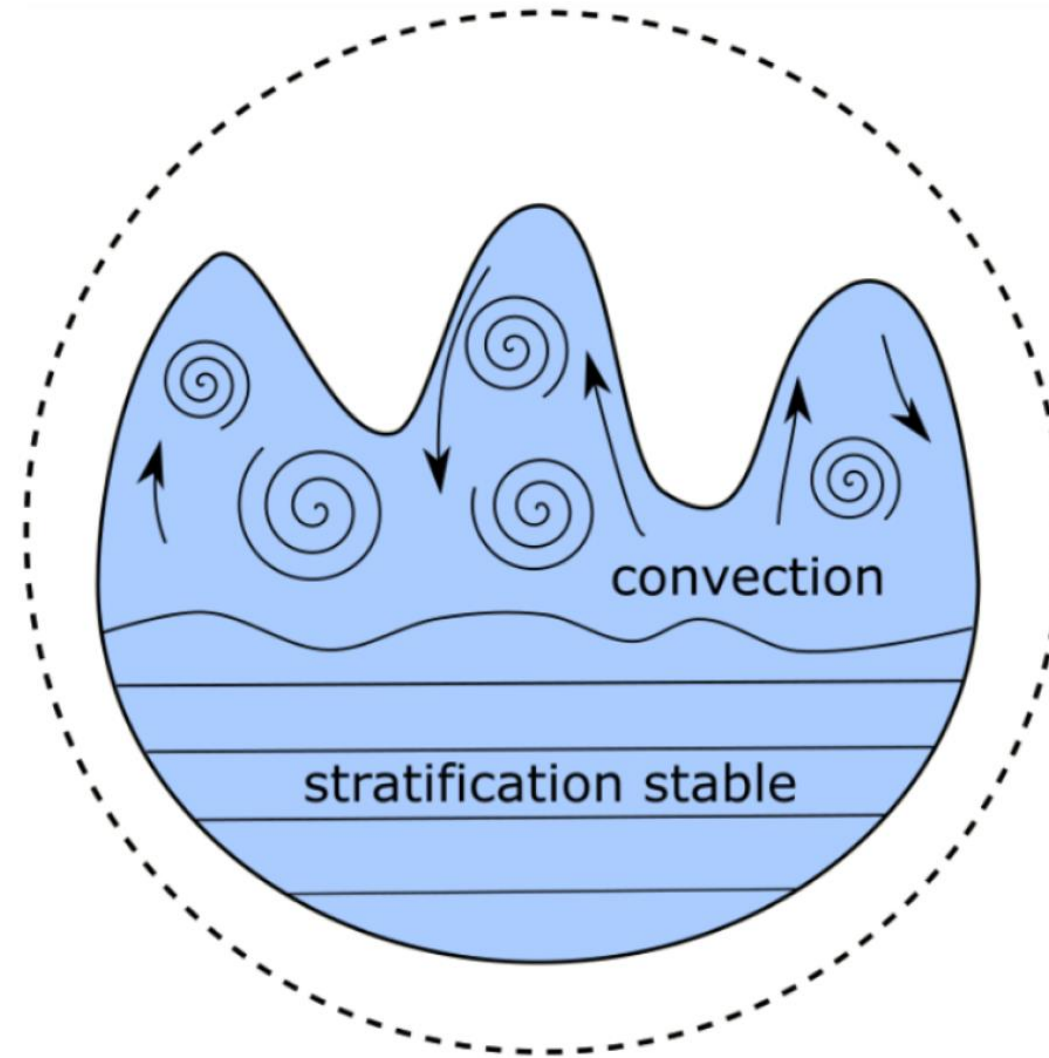


Subglacial hydrodynamics (buoyancy driven) on Earth and Icy Moons.



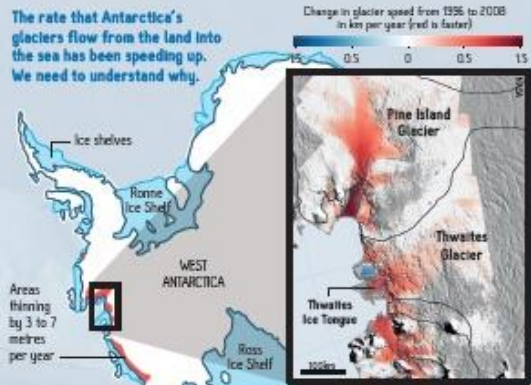
# APPENDICES

I.B. Sub. Hydro.: On Icy Moons. Expected dynamics is heterogeneous.



# II.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Observation of Thwaites glacier and cavity.

The rate that Antarctica's glaciers flow from the land into the sea has been speeding up. We need to understand why.

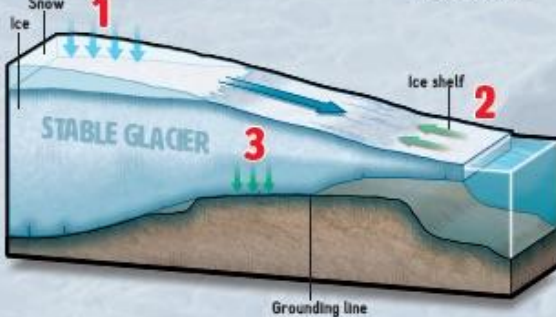


Thwaites Glacier and Pine Island Glacier are two of the biggest and fastest-retreating in Antarctica. If both collapsed, global sea levels could rise by over a metre. Without them, the entire West Antarctic Ice Sheet could be more likely to collapse, leading global sea levels to rise by over three metres.

A five-year collaboration is investigating what's causing ice loss at Thwaites Glacier and how it will impact global sea levels. This is a joint venture between the U.S. National Science Foundation and the UK's Natural Environment Research Council. The eight projects use a suite of technologies.

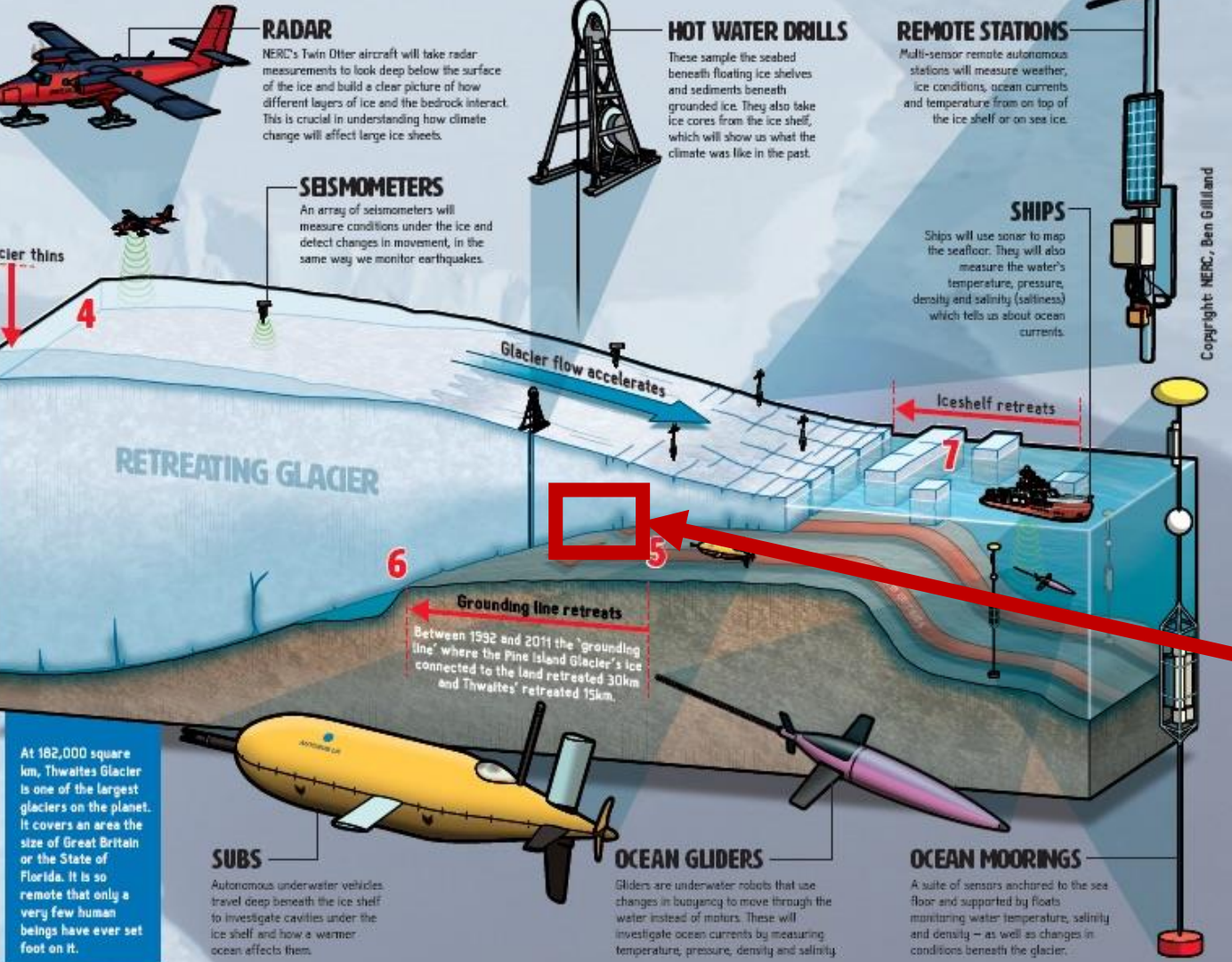
## FROM STABLE GLACIER...

- 1 A stable glacier is in rough equilibrium. Annually, the snow falling on the glacier replaces the ice flowing into the ocean.
- 2 The floating part of a glacier, the ice shelf, acts like a cork or dam, holding back the ice upstream.
- 3 Sediments and water beneath the ice affect its speed – as does how much of the glacier is in contact with the land at the 'grounding line'.



## ...TO RETREATING GLACIER

- 4 The equilibrium of the stable glacier is lost. There is no longer enough snowfall to replace the increasing ice flow into the ocean. All the lost ice ends up in the ocean, raising global sea level.
- 5 Warm currents under the ice increase, melting the floating ice shelf and causing more icebergs.
- 6 The thinning reduces its effectiveness in damming ice flow.
- 7 As more of the glacier begins to float the glacier flows faster.



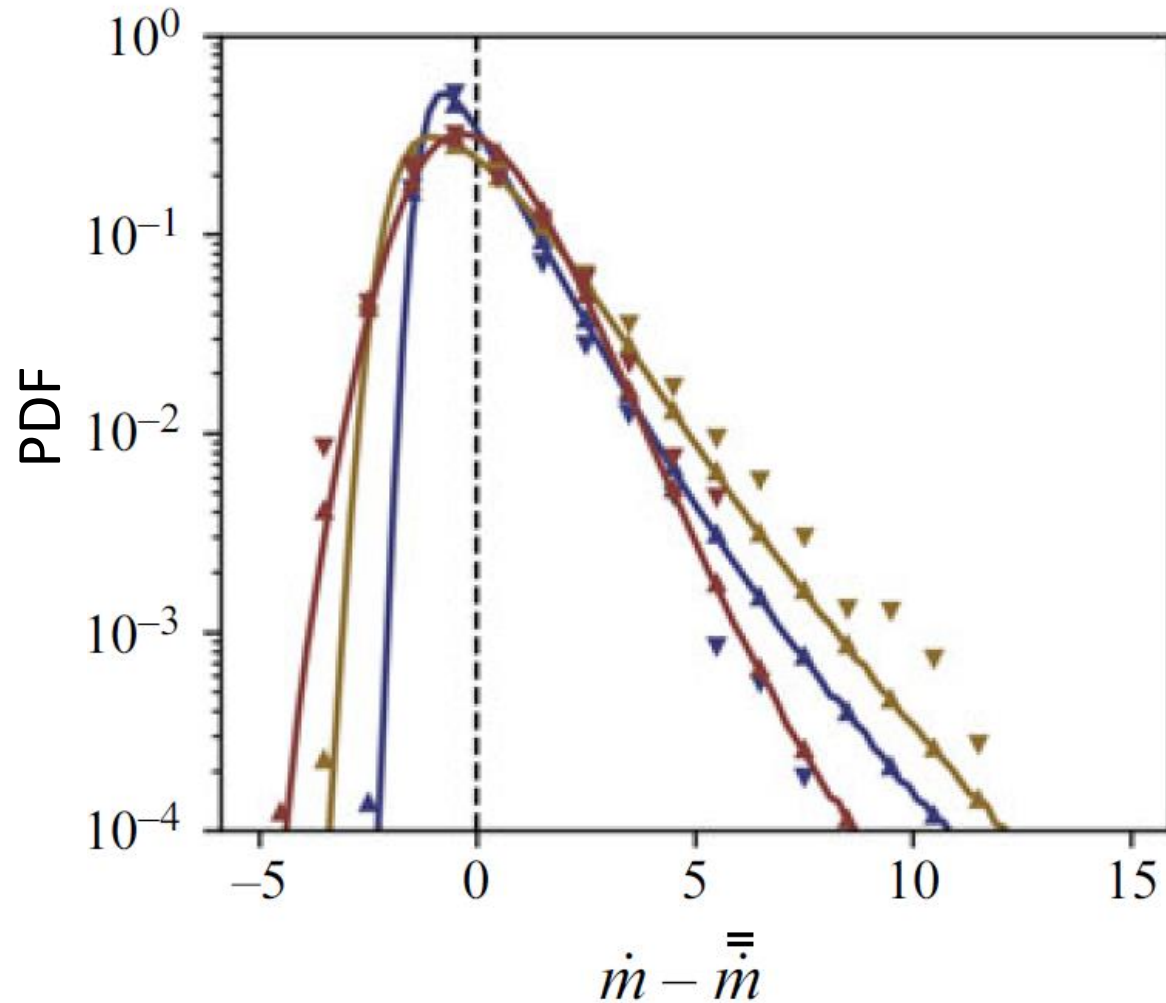
At 182,000 square km, Thwaites Glacier is one of the largest glaciers on the planet. It covers an area the size of Great Britain or the State of Florida. It is so remote that only a very few human beings have ever set foot on it.

+ simulations with  $O(1)km$  horizontal --  $O(10)m$  vertical resolution

What is the  $O(1)cm$  boundary layer dynamic ???



# I.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. First results: asymmetric melt-rate PDF!



However, no phase-change origin...  
Same asymmetry exists for the heat flux at a smooth boundary.

→ Not due to coupling... but an intrinsic property of wall-bounded flows.

**Upwellings (hot) have a high probability of being intense, while downwellings (cold) are always weak.**

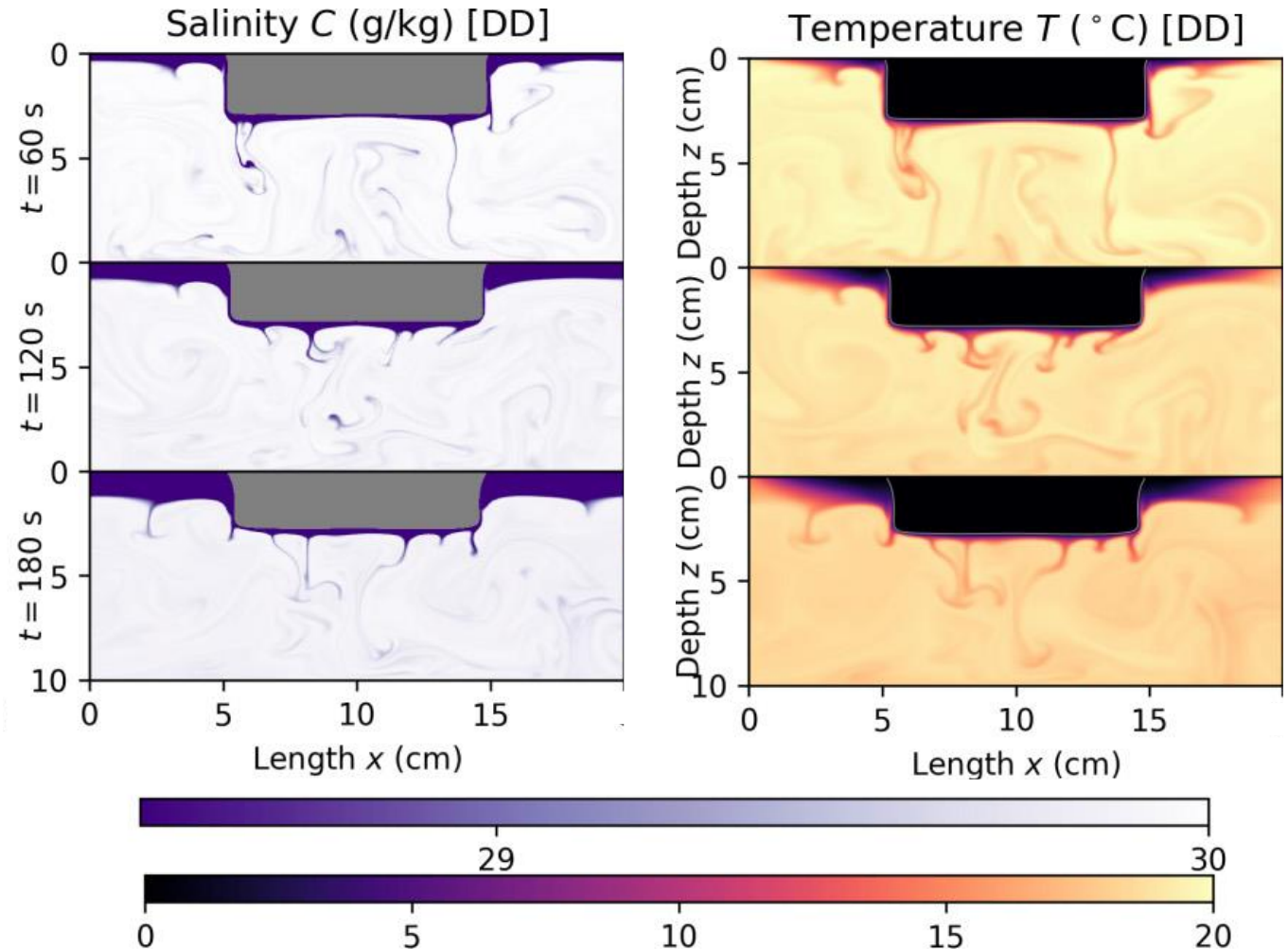
# I.A. Ice melting: Antarctica. Perspectives.

→ consider stronger currents to *get* to « scallops ».

→ consider ice melting in an ambient at rest but stratified in temperature and salt.

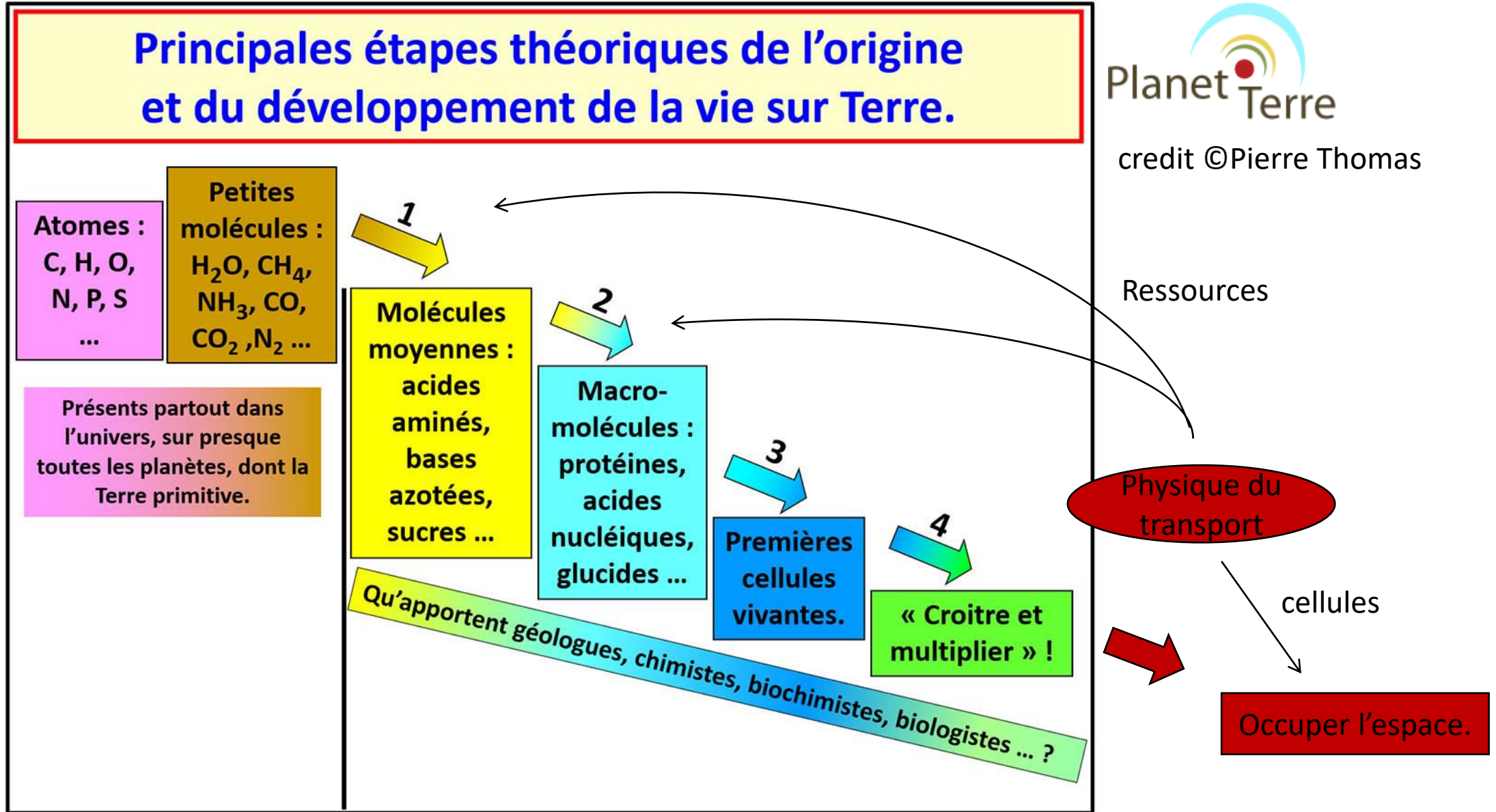
→ go back to 2-domain approach.

\*interested? Send me an email! [louis.couston@ens-lyon.fr](mailto:louis.couston@ens-lyon.fr)

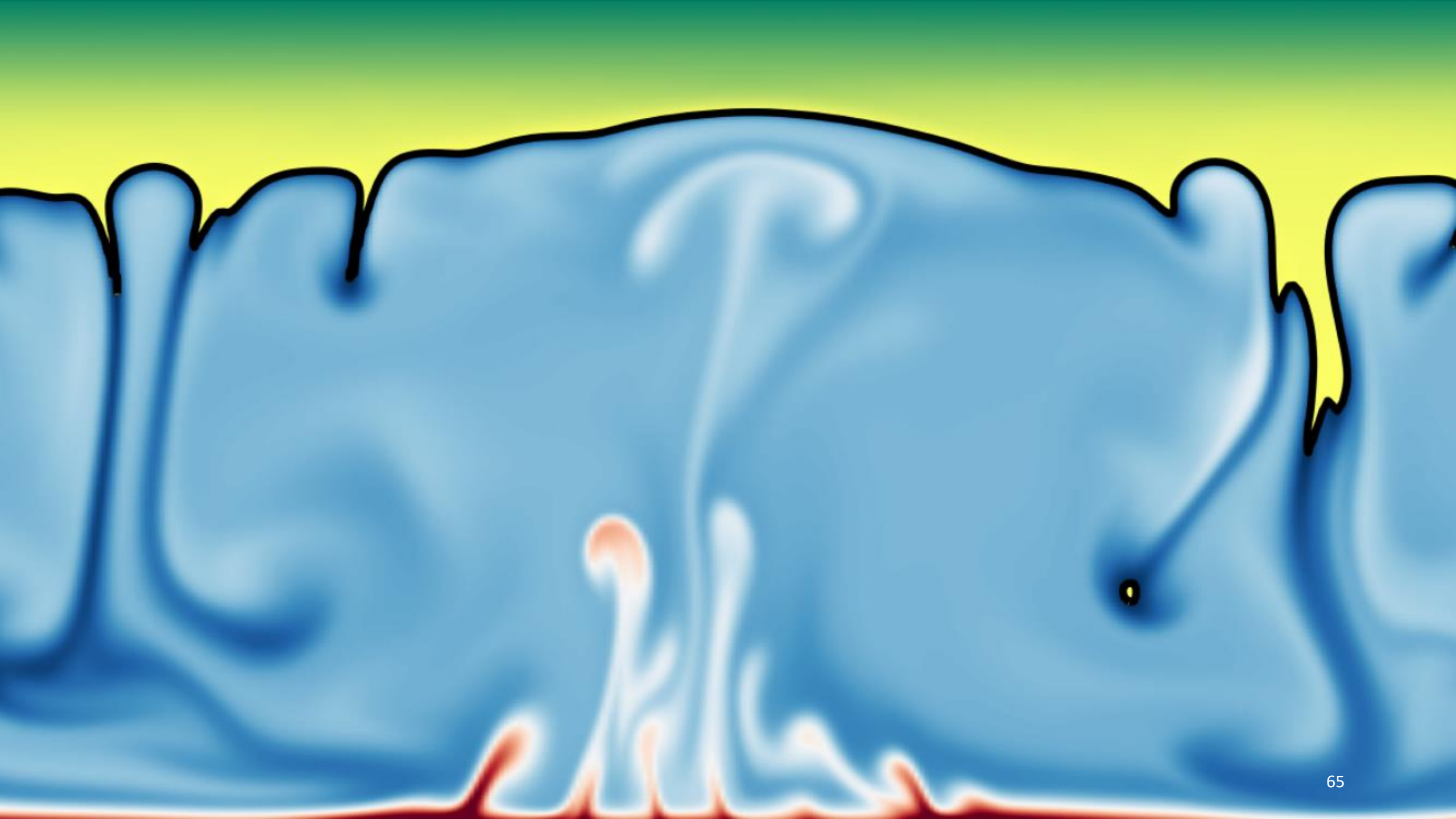




credit ©Pierre Thomas



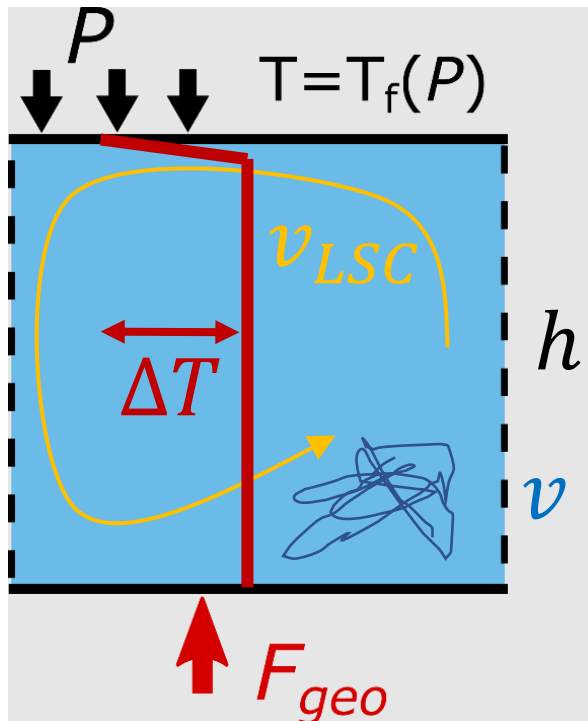




# II.A. Astrobiologie: Sur Terre. Propriétés de la circulation due au flux géothermique.

On aimerait savoir...

- Intensité de la turbulence
- Vitesses grandes échelles
- Température moyenne

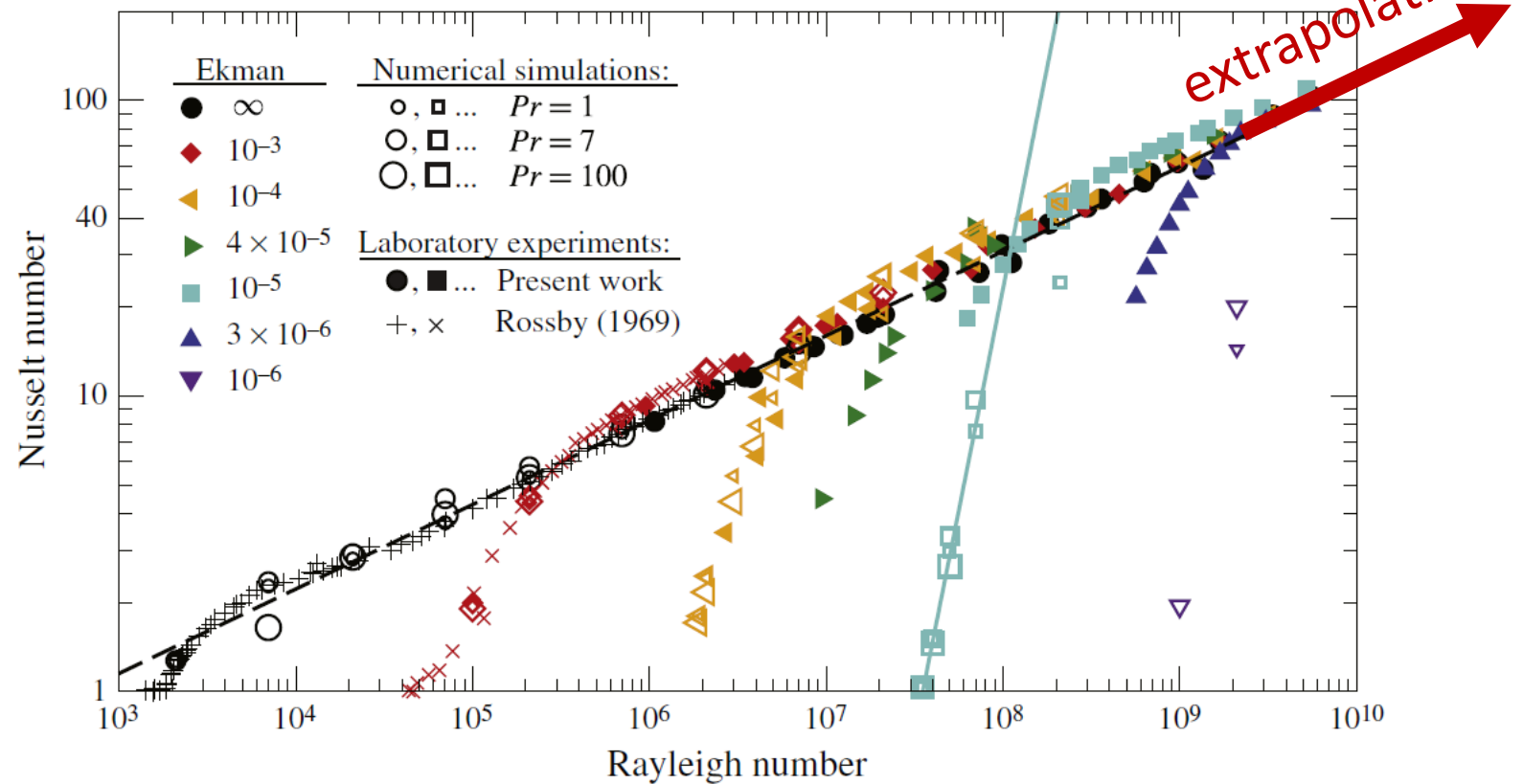


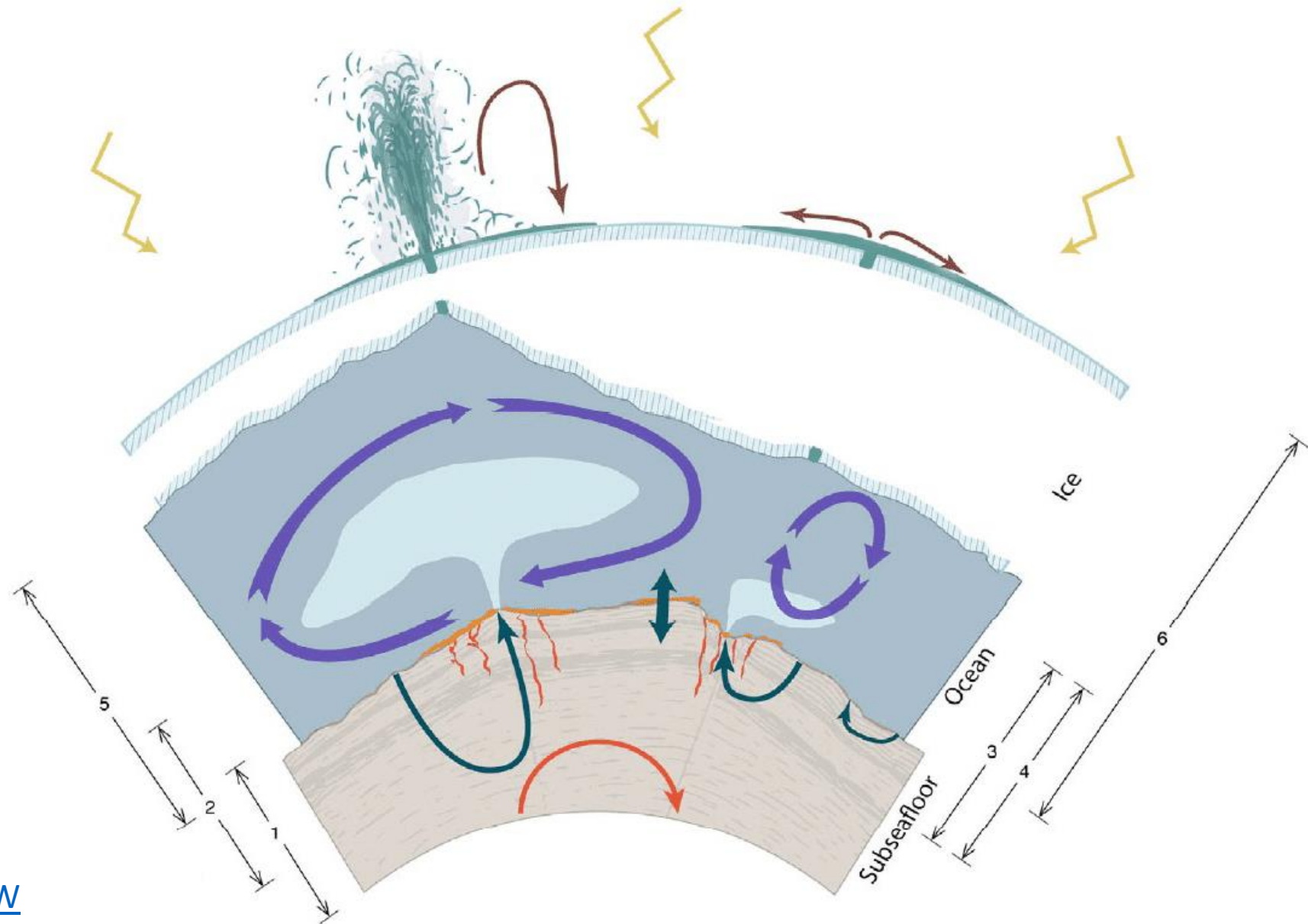
Nombre de Reynolds

$$Re = \frac{vh}{\nu} \approx 0.03Ra^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

Nombre de Nusselt

$$Nu = \frac{Fh}{k\Delta T} \approx 0.2Ra^{\frac{2}{7}}$$





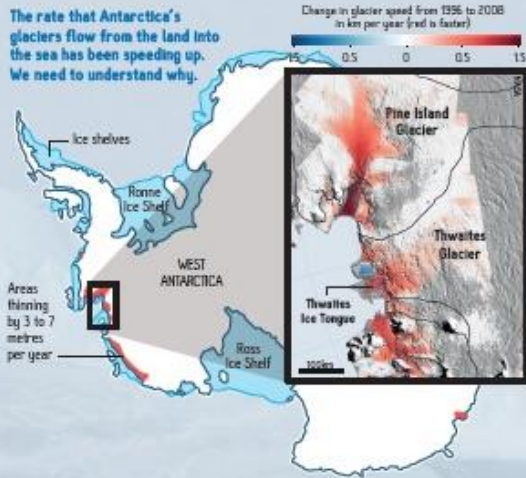
credit [ExOW](#)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> Ocean Circulation      | <span style="color: brown;">■</span> Transport to Ice Surface | <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Radiation             |
| <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Geophysical Activity | <span style="color: tan;">■</span> Sedimentation              | <span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> Seafloor Fluid Flow |

# INVESTIGATING THWAITES GLACIER



The rate that Antarctica's glaciers flow from the land into the sea has been speeding up. We need to understand why.

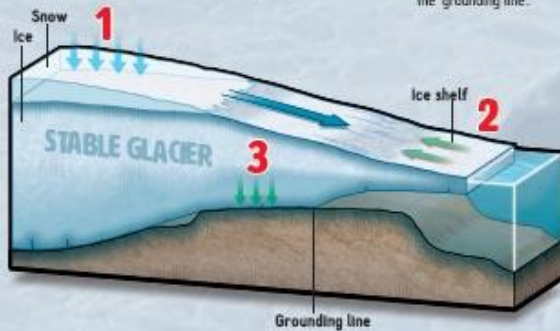


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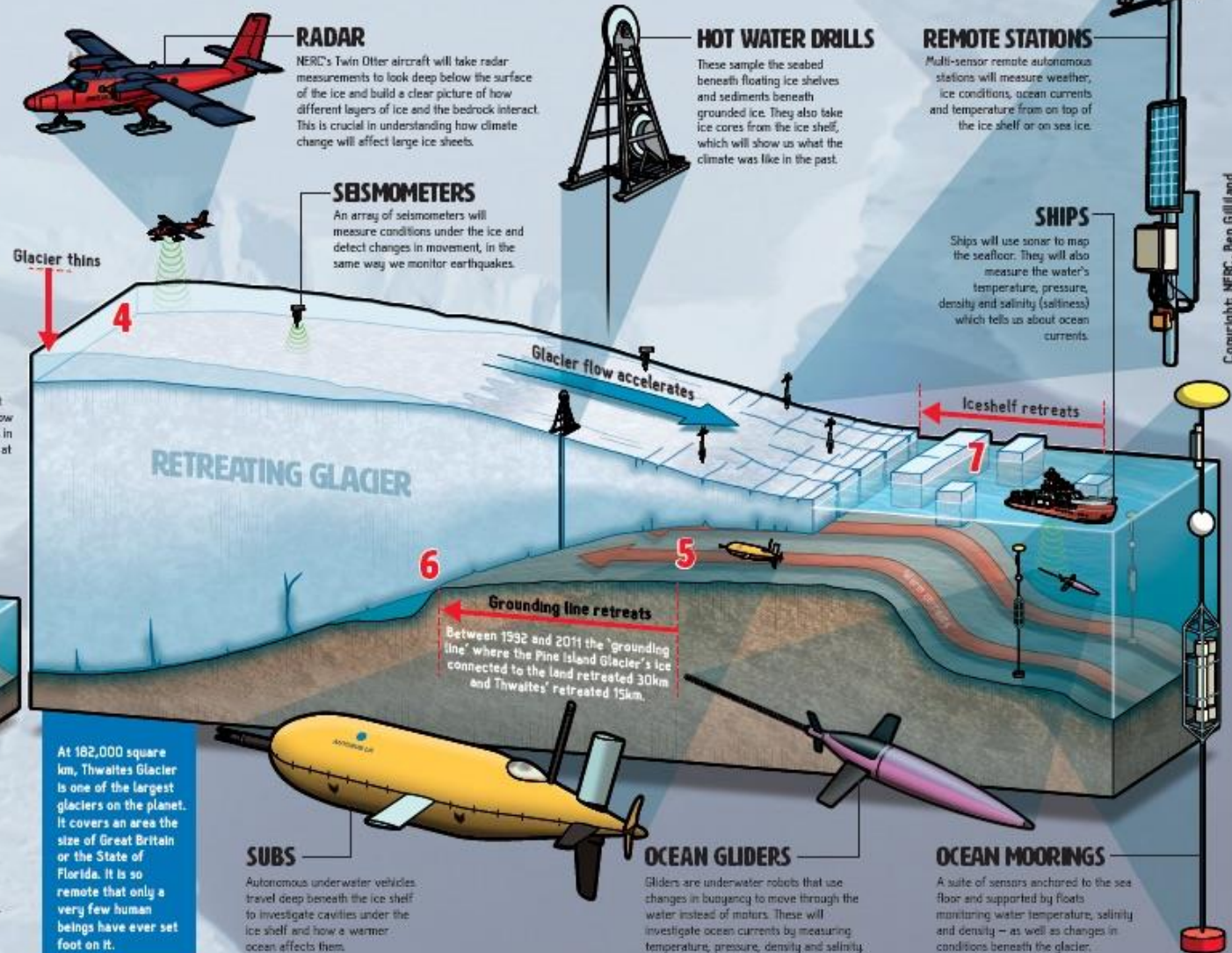
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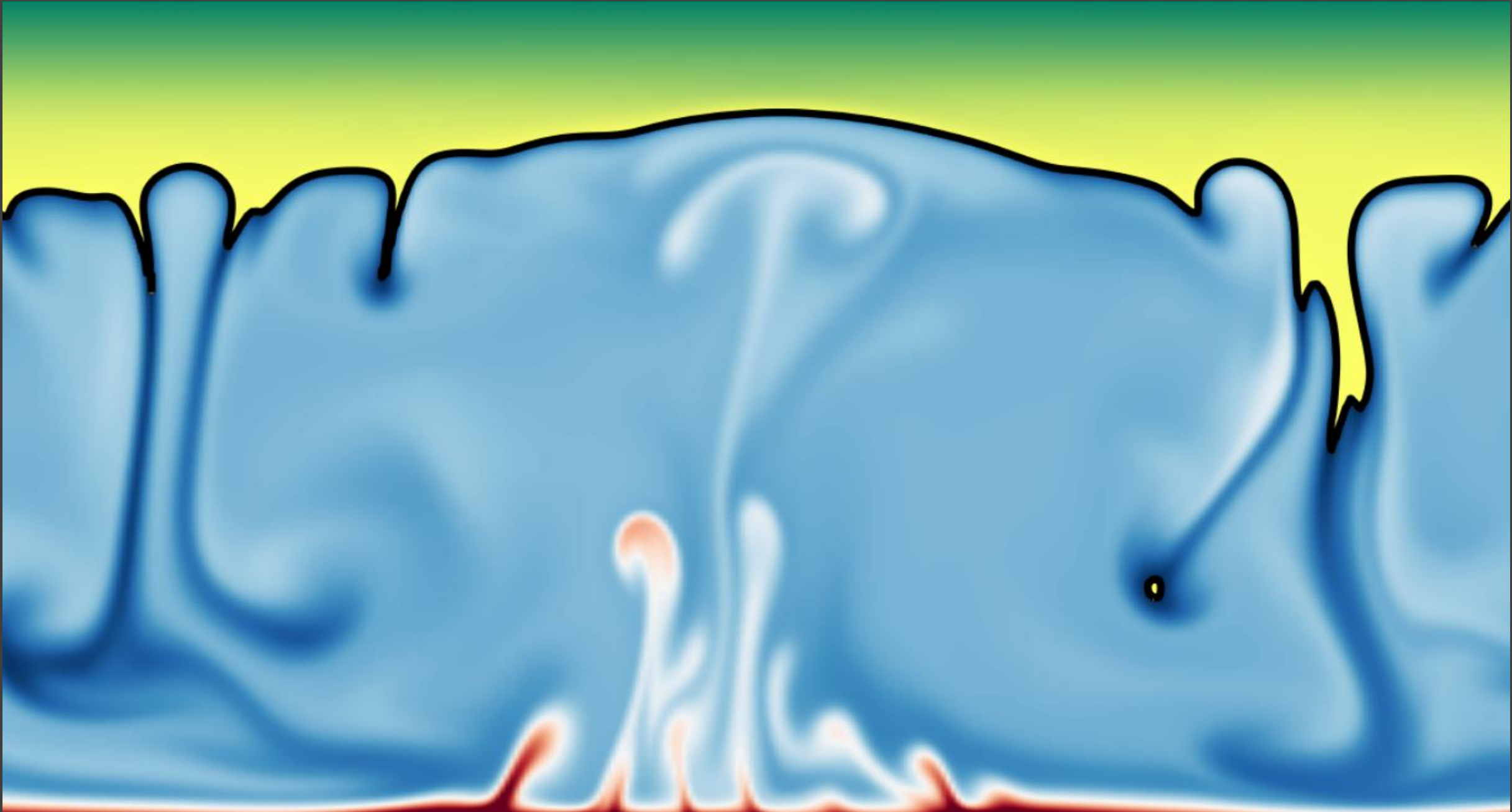


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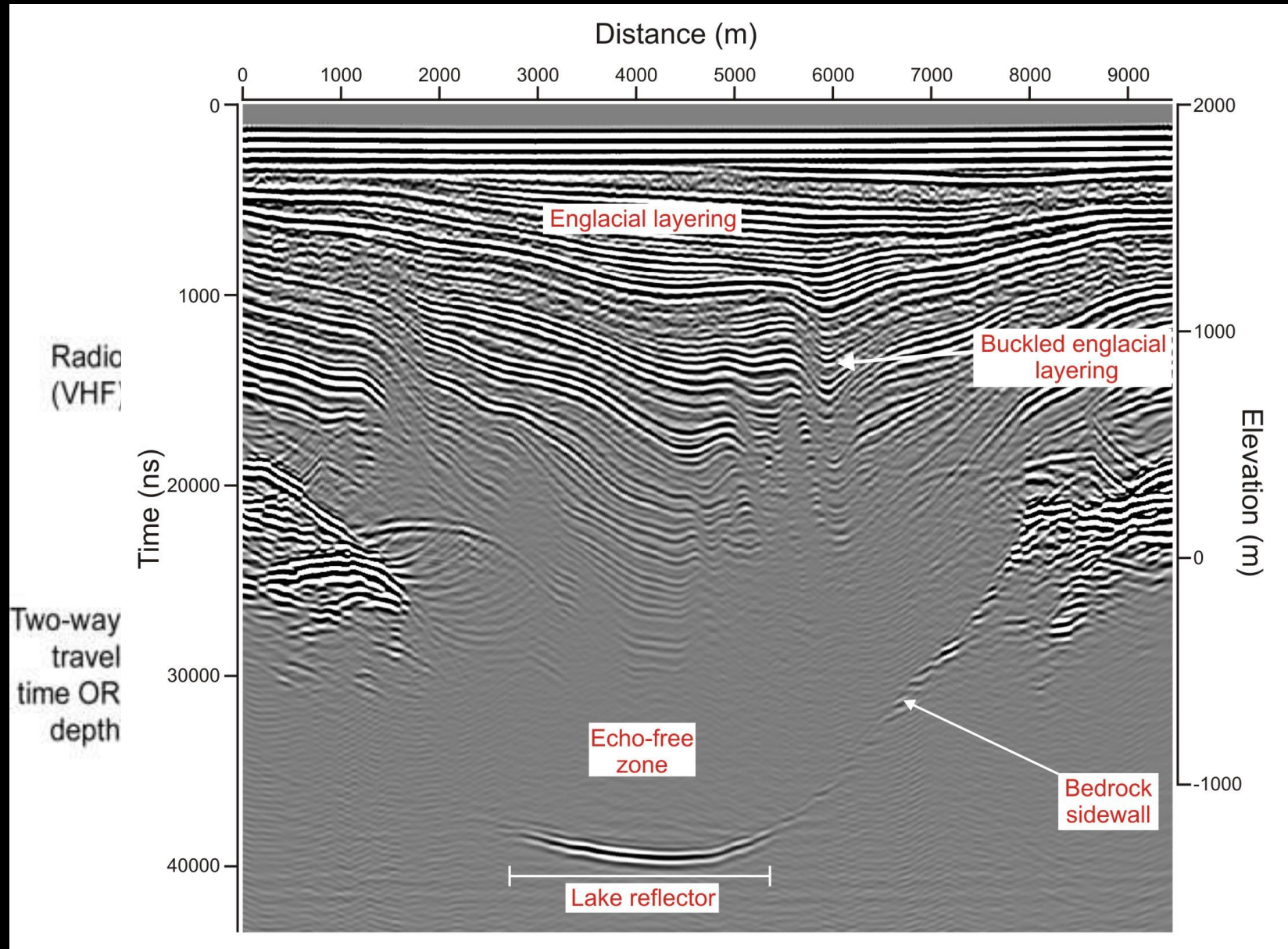
Copyright: NERC, Ben Gilliland

- The Astrobiology Primer v2
- NASA roadmap to astrobiology
- IPCC's special report on The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate

- Christopher German [Exploring Ocean Worlds](#) (ExOW) project at WHOI
- Thwaites



# Motivation: Extreme Antarctic subglacial lakes (ASL)



Seismic sounding  
50s

Radar  
Vehicles, then planes  
60s

First detection  
1970

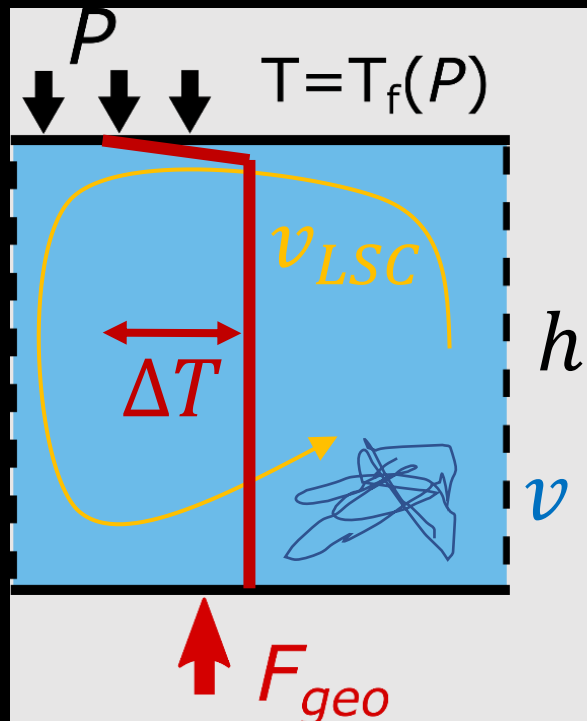
unusually flat & bright  
subglacial radio-echo surface



# State-of-the-art: Heating or Rayleigh-Bénard convection

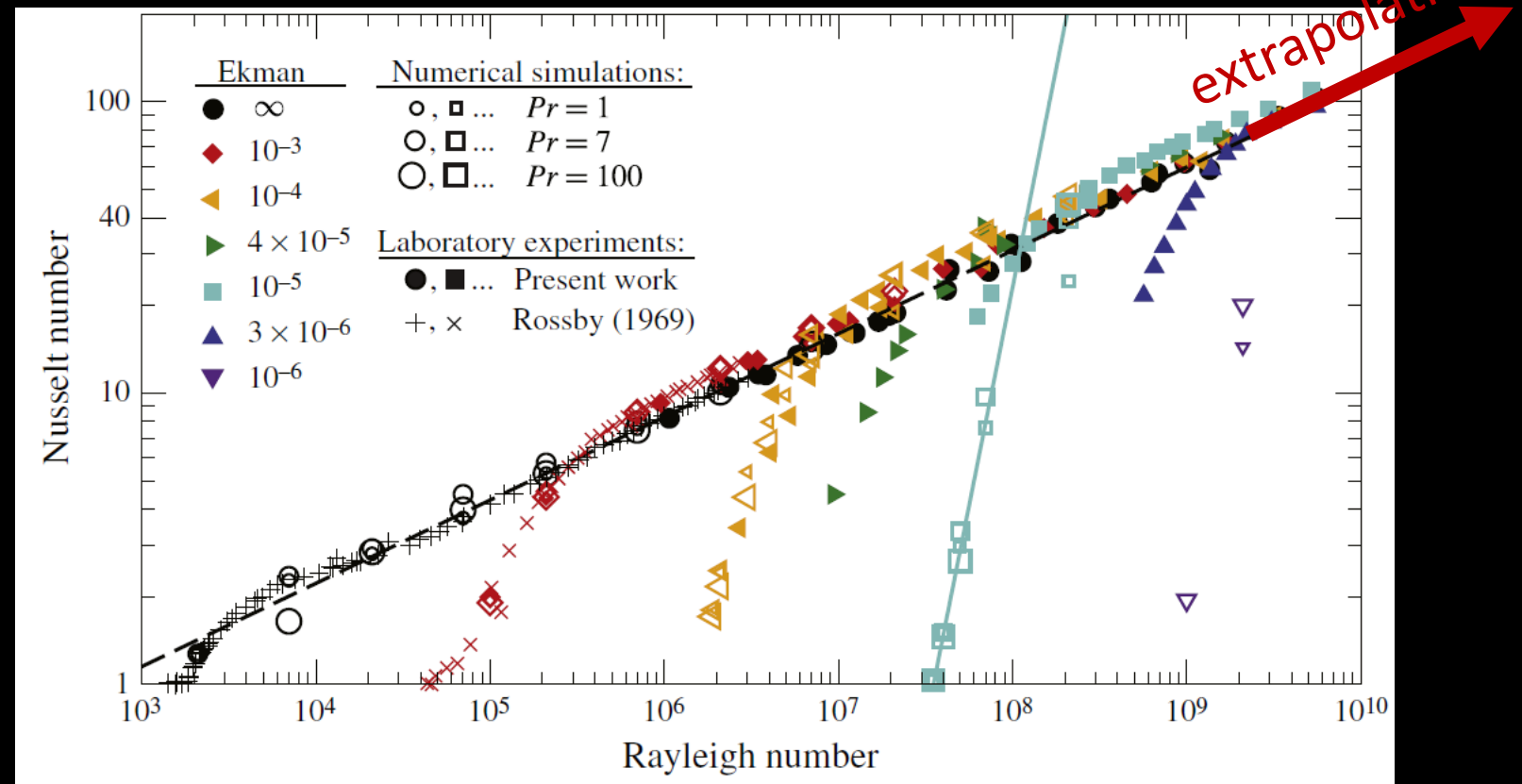
## What we want to know

- Thermal structure
- Turbulence intensity
- Speed of overturning



Nusselt number

$$Nu = \frac{Fh}{k\Delta T} \approx 0.2Ra^{\frac{2}{7}}$$



# Result #1: Are ASL stable, or unstable?

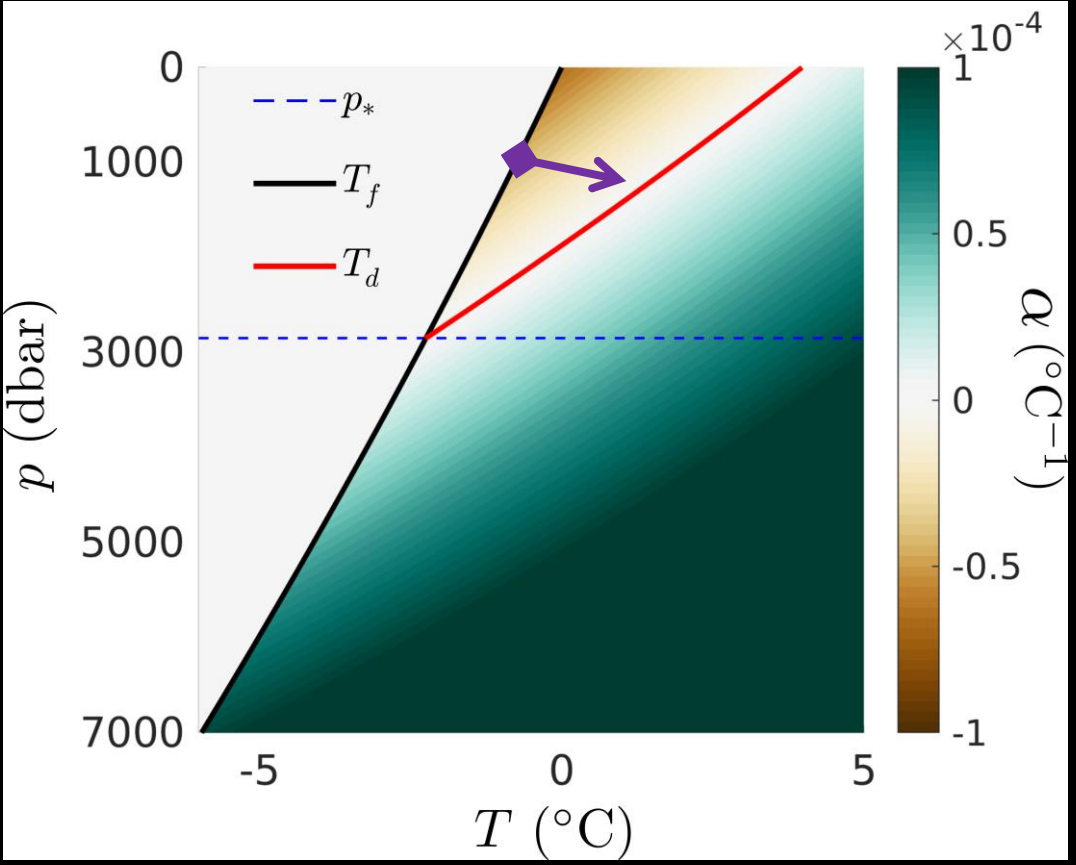
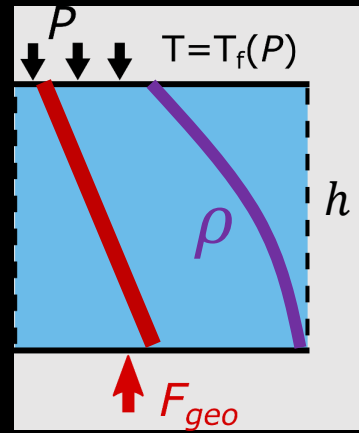
RB instability for a simple fluid:  
(overcome viscous/thermal dissipation)

$$Ra = \frac{g\alpha h^4 F}{\nu\kappa k} > O(1000)$$

But...

- The equation of state for water is nonlinear

$$T = T_f + \frac{zF}{k}$$



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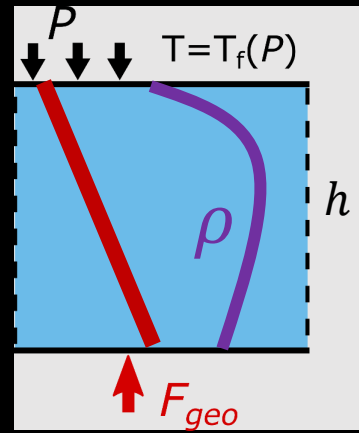
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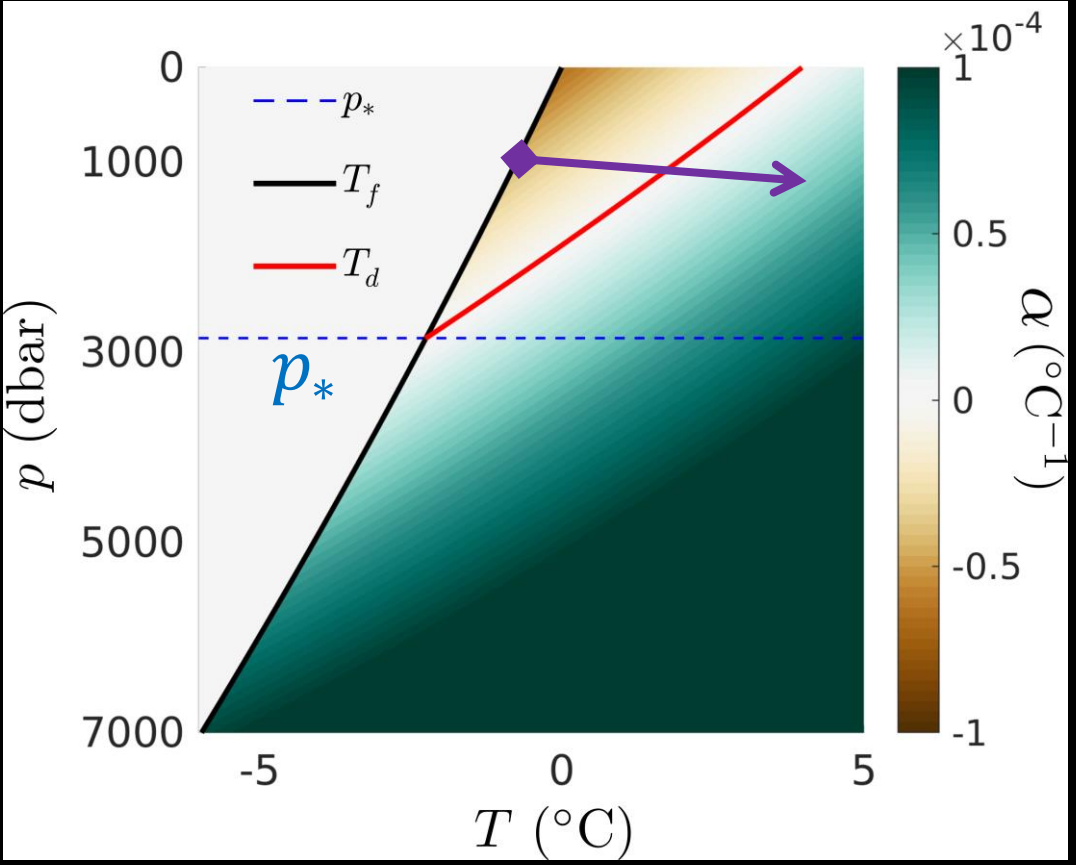
- The equation of state for water is nonlinear

$$\oplus \alpha_{bot} > 0 \text{ (thin ice)}$$

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stable  
unstable

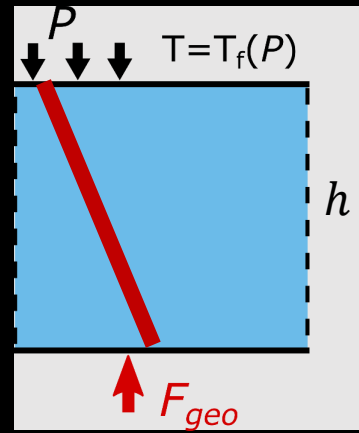


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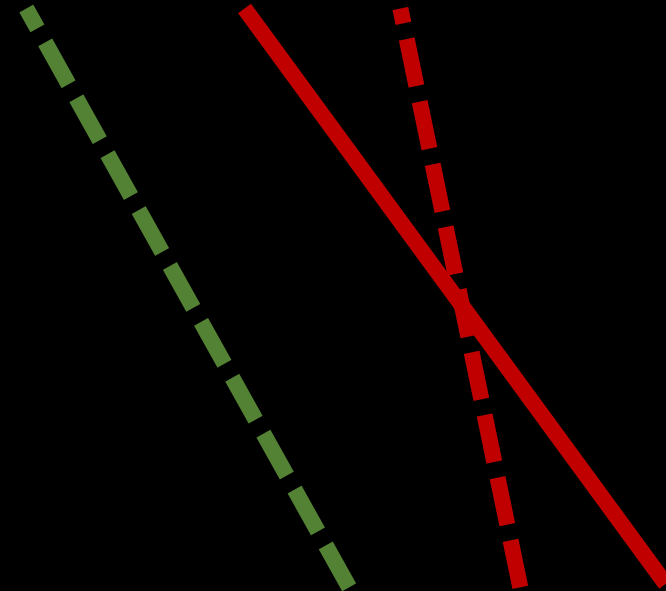
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- ASL can be 1km deep and experience compressibility

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$$\oplus F > F_{ad} \text{ (thick ice)}$$

Hydrostatic pressure  $P$



Adiabatic temp. gradient  $F_{ad}$

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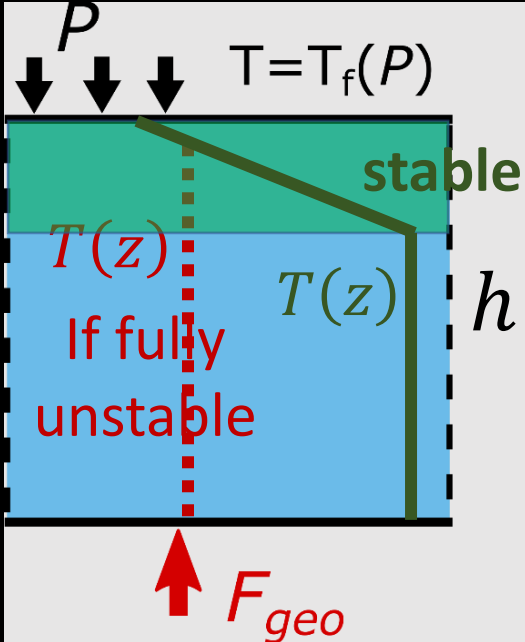
## Recipe

- ❑ Compressible rotating Boussinesq equations
- ❑ Linear perturbations around the base hydrostatic/diffusive state
- ❑ Growth rate  $\sigma$  from the eigenvalue problem
- We search for  $F_c$  such that  $\sigma > 0$  for a bunch of ice pressures and water depths.
- ❖ We use the open-source pseudo-spectral code Dedalus with the eigentools package.

# Implications for future lake exploration

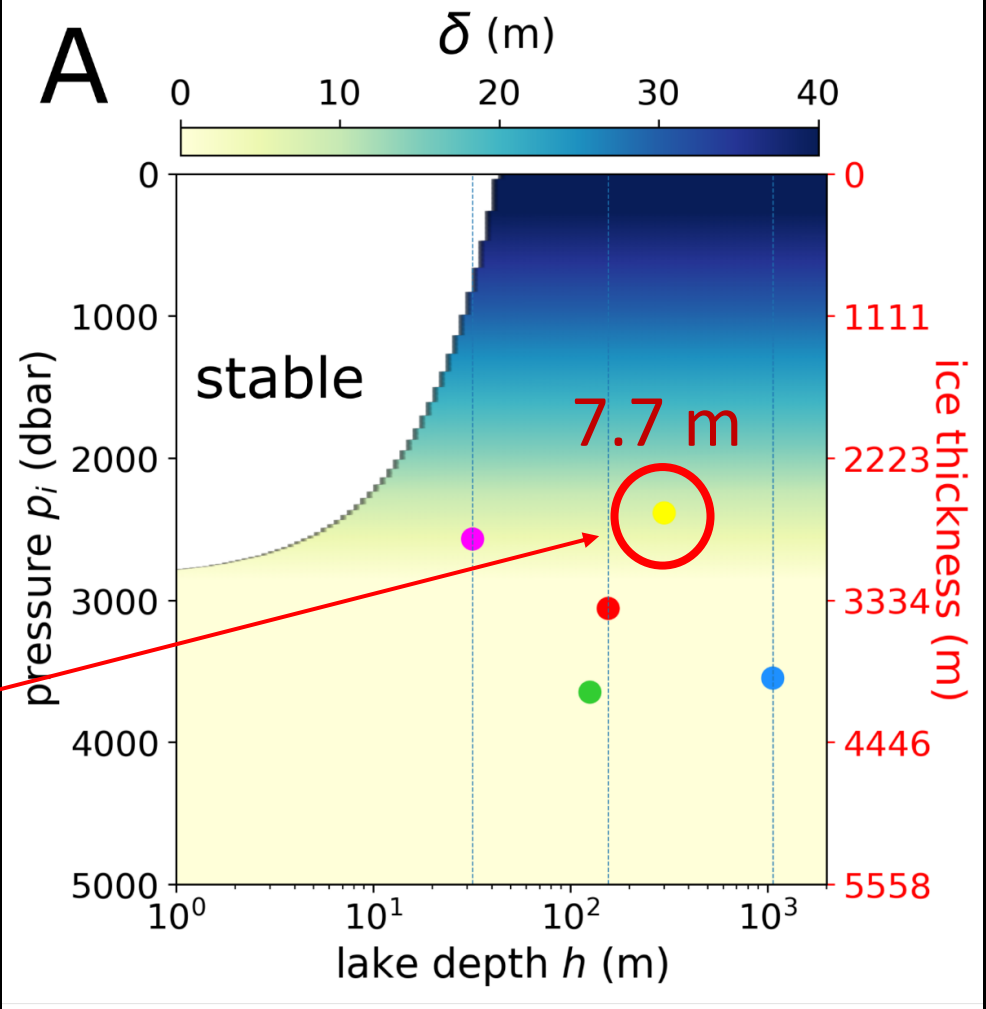
- ❖ Go for large water depth
- ❖ Upwelling is where there is melting
- ❖ Don't use accreted ice if you're sampling a lake with a thin ice cover

Remember the nonlinear equation of state...

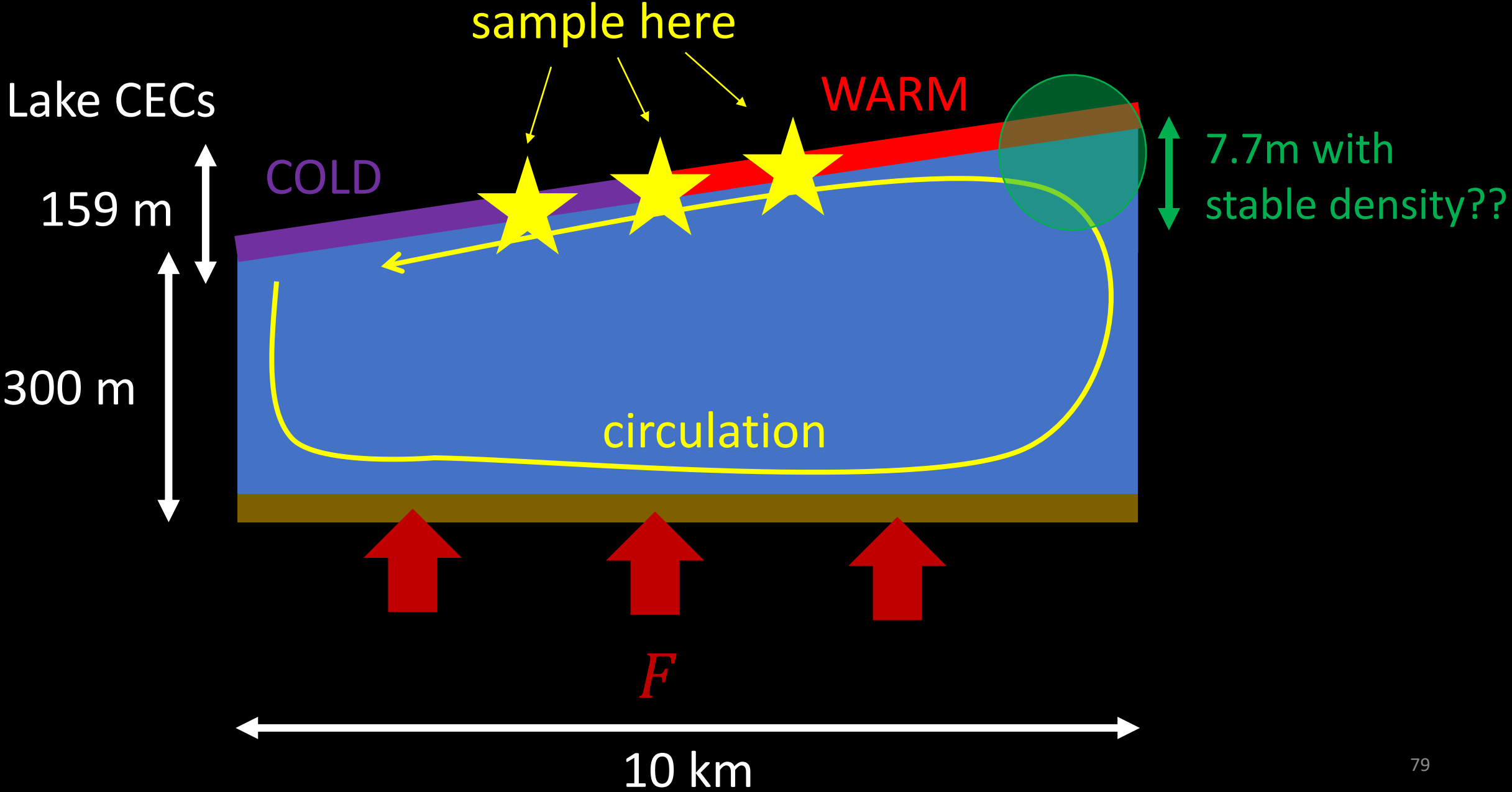


Lake CECs will be explored in 2023!  
 → sample at least over 10 m (300 m deep)

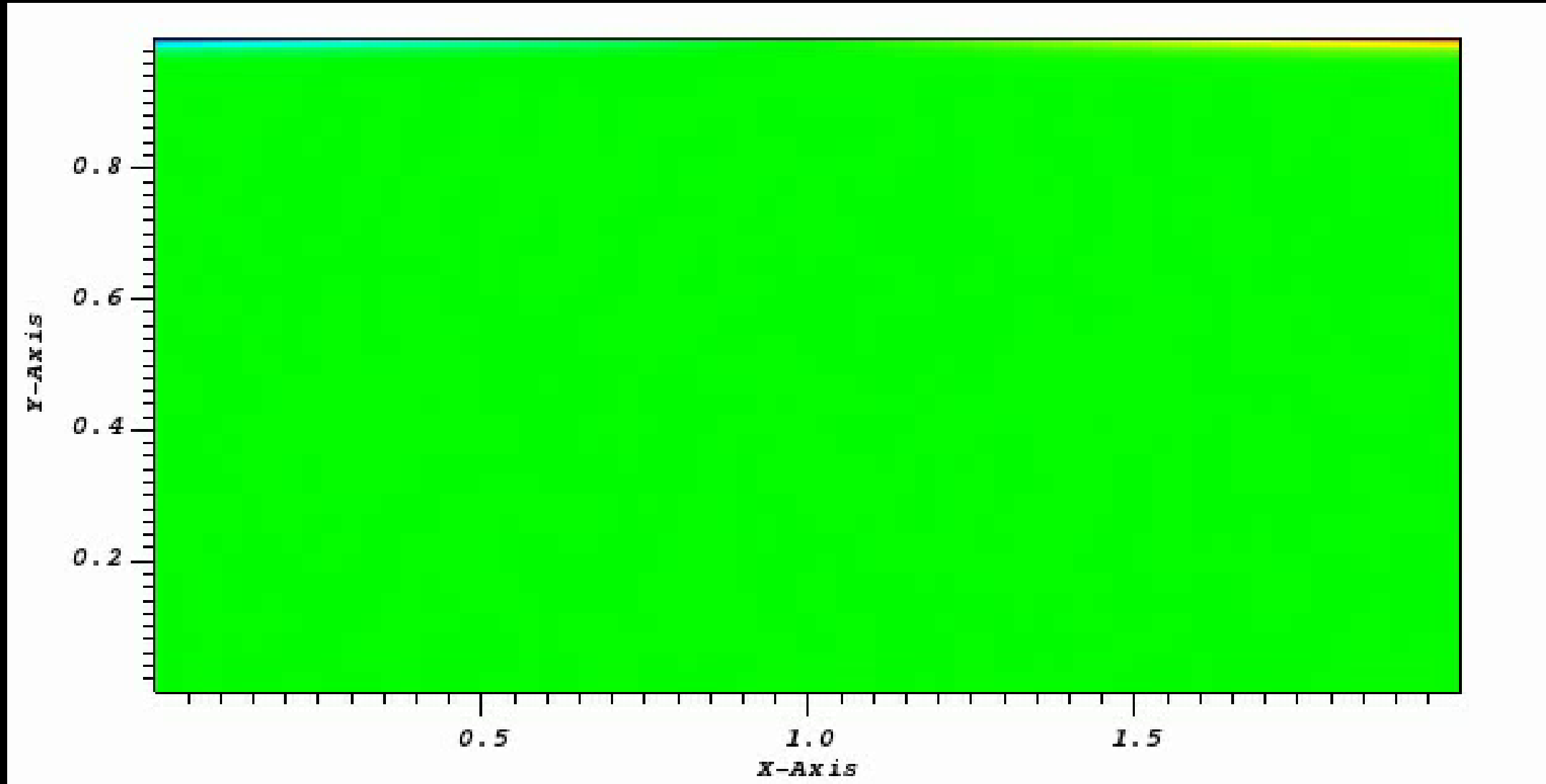
Thickness of the stable layer



# What's next...



What's next...





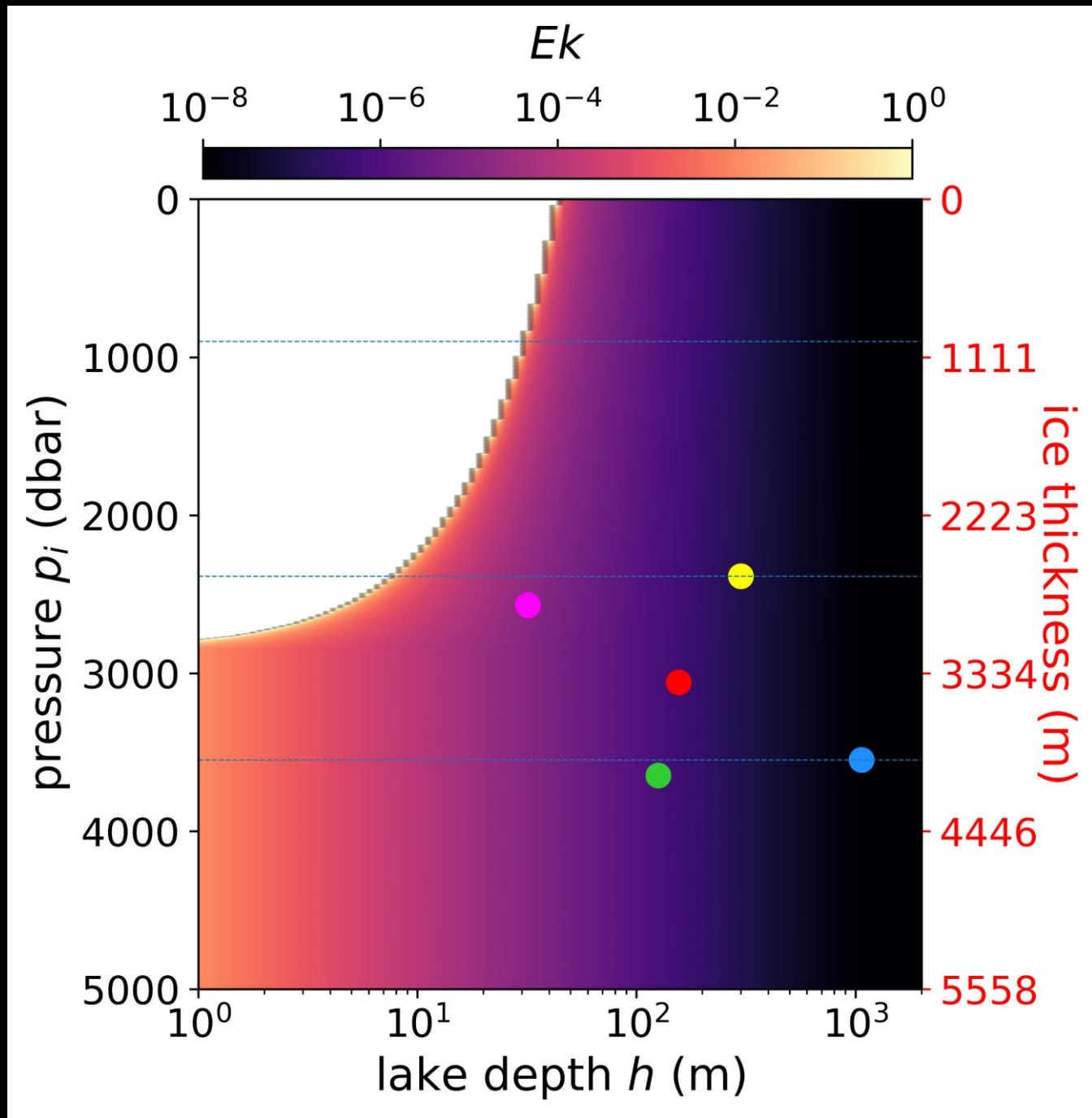
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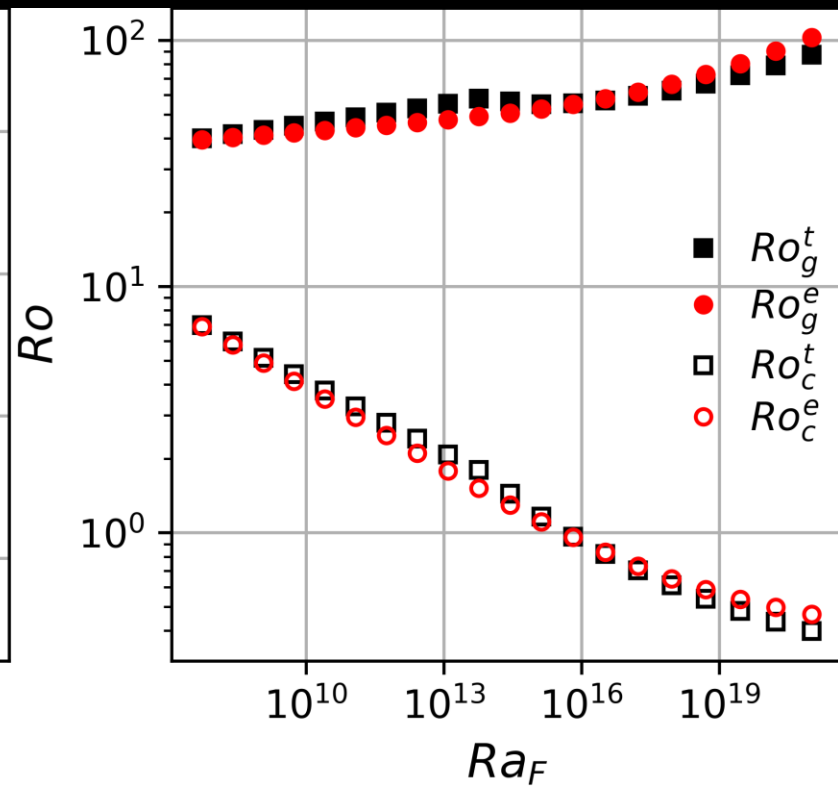
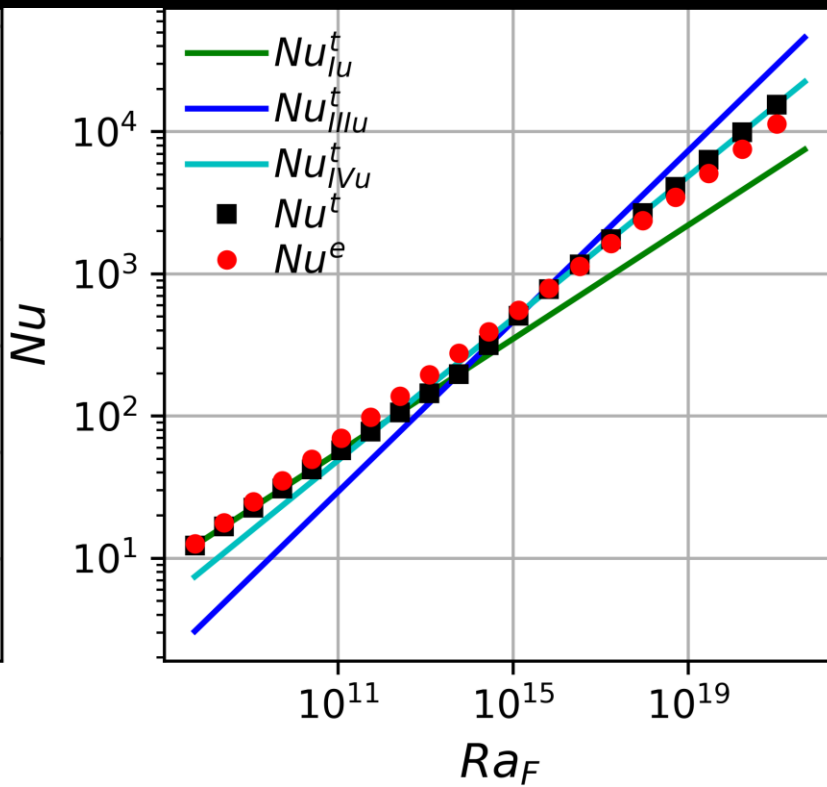
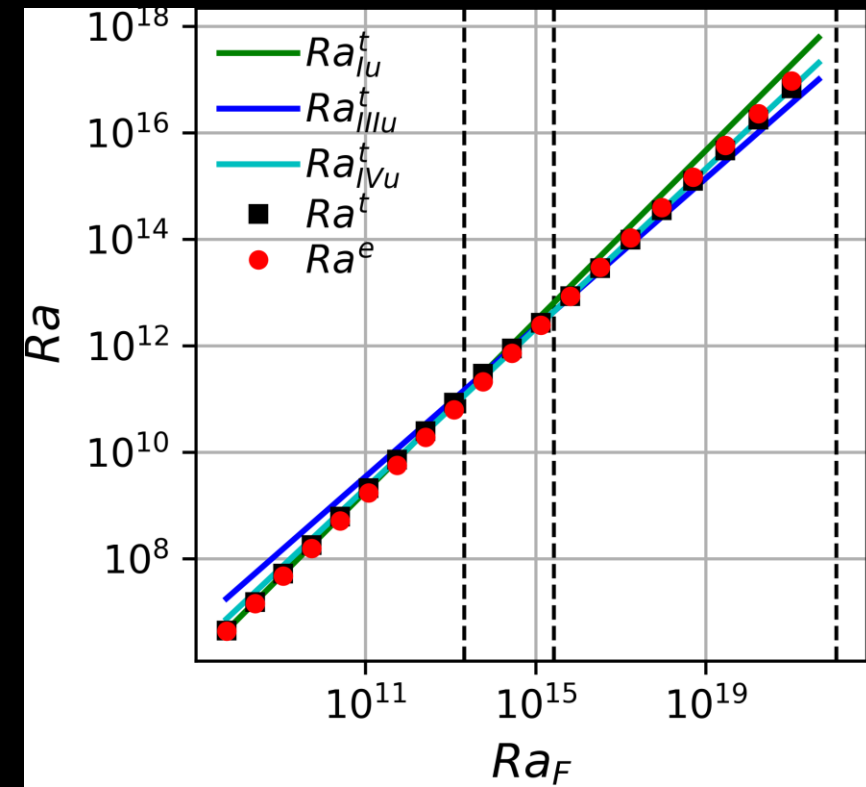
	Ice thickness (m)	Ice drop (m)	Lake length (km)	Water depth (m)	$\delta$ (m)	$T_{\text{bulk}}$ (K)	$\ell$ (m)	$U$ (mm/s)	$U_{\text{isc}}$ (mm/s)	$V_{\text{hc}}$ (mm/s)	$2r_{\text{max}}$ ( $\mu\text{m}$ )
CECs	2653	159	10.35	300	7.7	0.69	1.6	0.97	0.32	0.041	22
SPL	2857	30	10	32	4.7	0.42	0.8	0.10	0.04	0.010	7.8
Ellsworth	3400	300	10	156	0.077	0.0069	1.2	0.69	0.26	0.066	20
Vostok	3945	600	280	1067	0.066	0.0059	2.3	3.80	0.85	0.066	36
Concordia	4055	168	45	126	0.063	0.0056	1.0	0.83	0.31	0.044	22

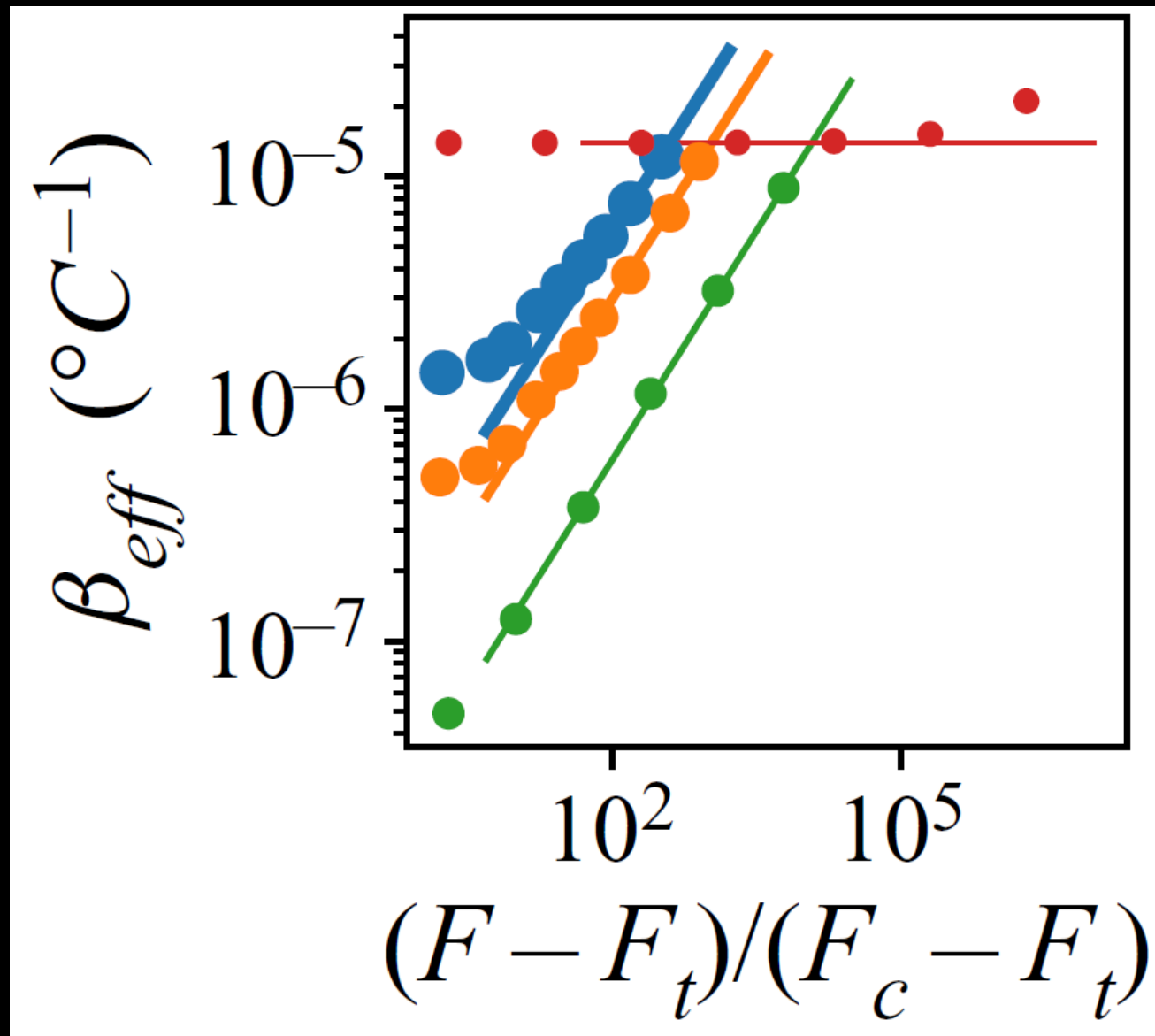
## Take home

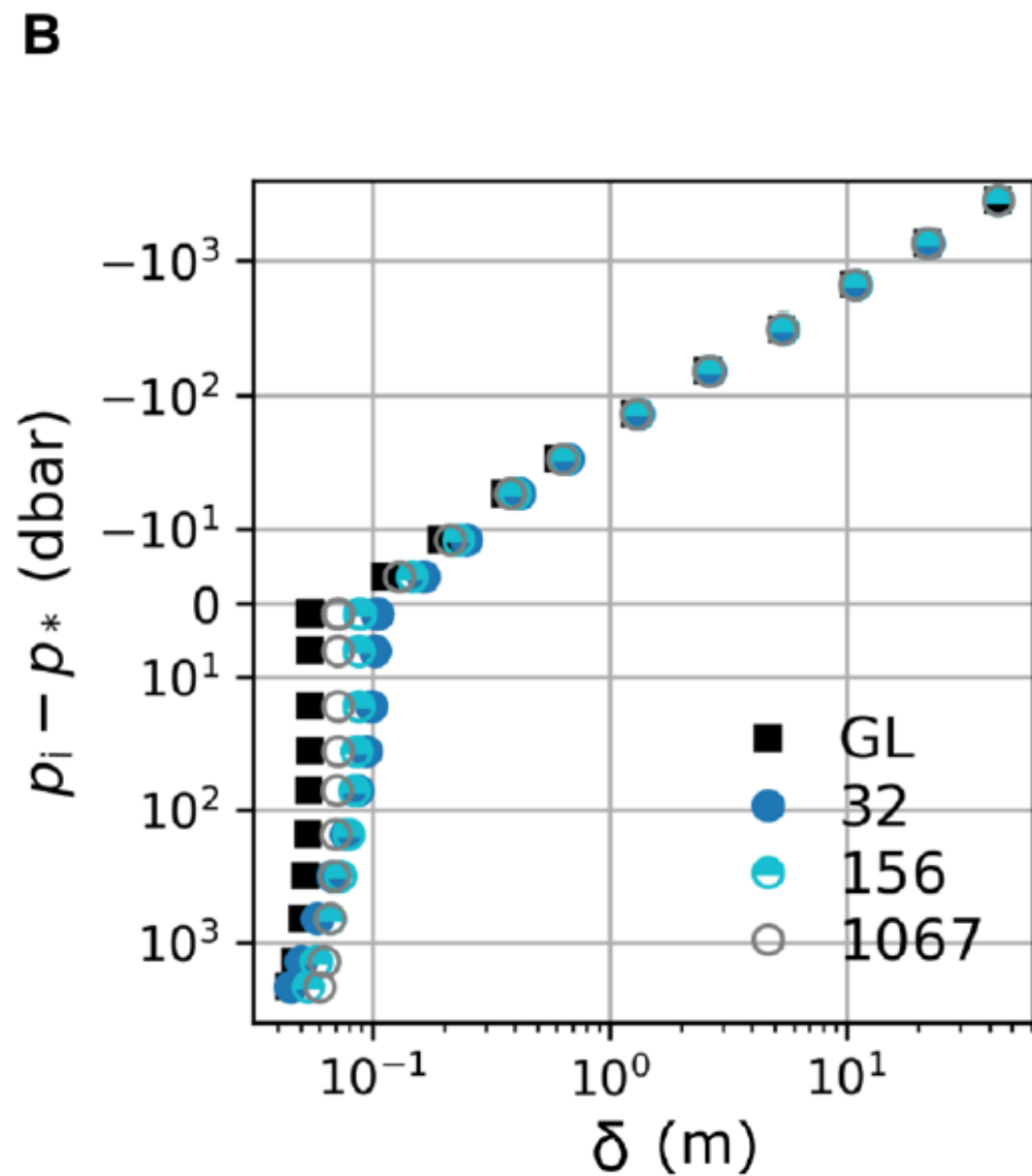
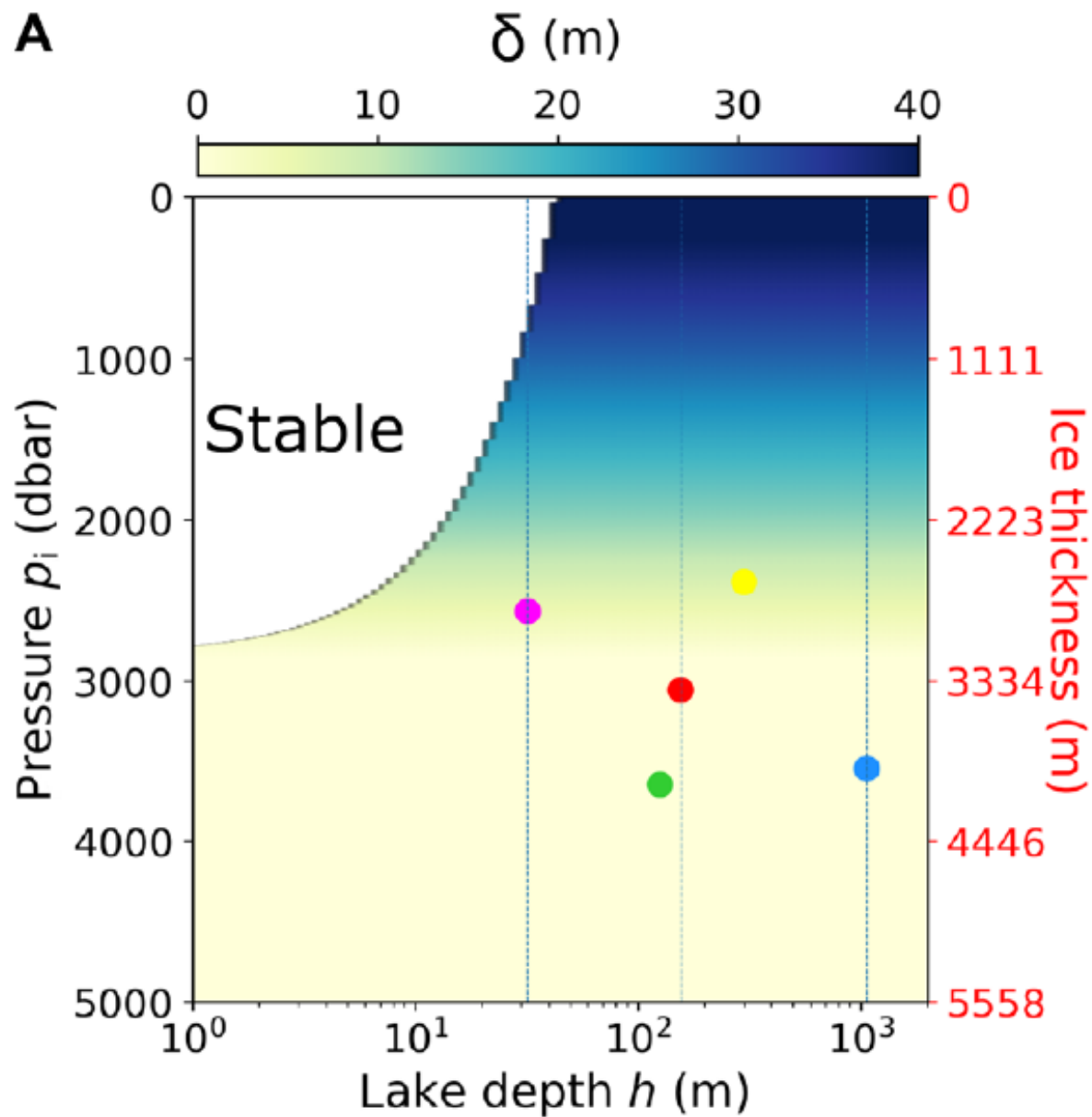
- Definitely worth considering variable freezing point for tilted roofs.
- However, the horizontal flow is likely weaker than the heat-flux induced vertical circulation.

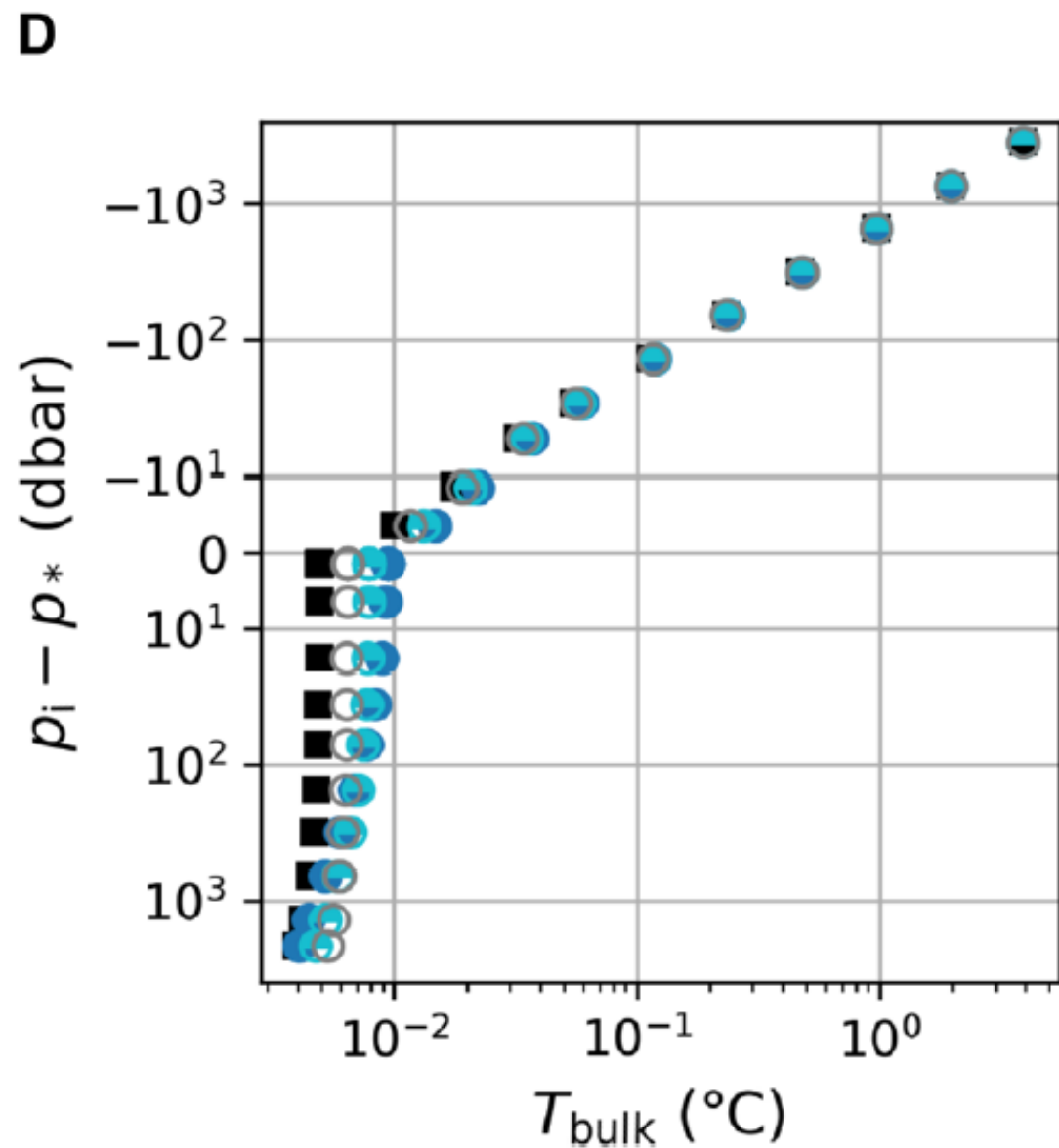
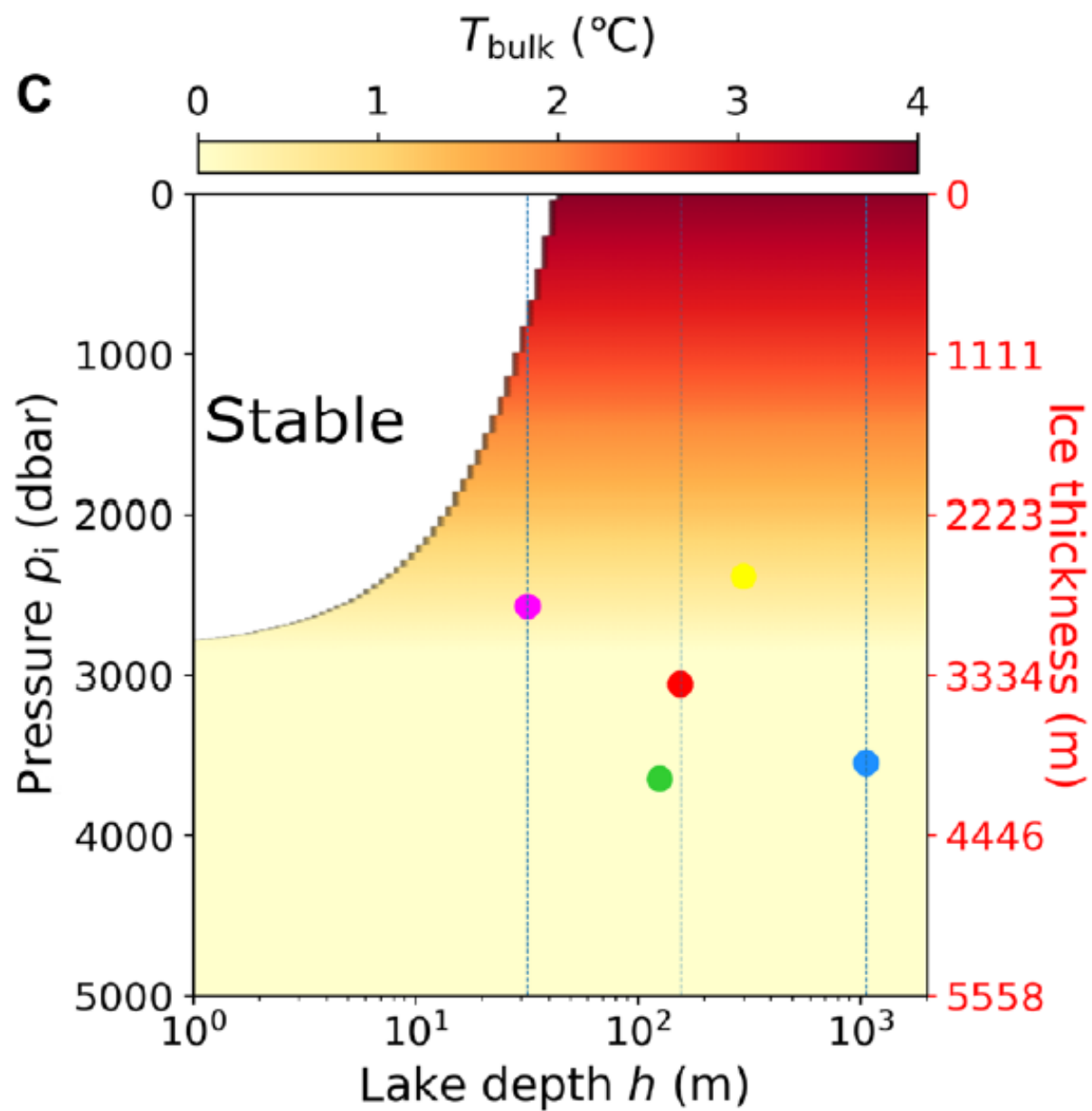
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$$Ro_c^e = \sqrt{RaEk^2/Pr}$$

$$Ro_g^e = \sqrt{RaEk^{1.5}/Pr^{0.5}}$$

