## Contents

6

Preface	xi
Acknowledgements	xiii

I	ΑI	Framework for Understanding Environmental Change	1
	1.1	Introduction	1
		Subdividing geological time	3
	1.2	The evolution of ideas	5
		The 'Ice Age' discovery	5
		Lower latitudes	7
		Glacial and interglacial sequences	8
		The Holocene and the Late Glacial	8
		Sea level change	11
	1.3	Early climate history of the Earth	13
	1.4	The Cainozoic climatic decline	14
		Environments of the Tertiary	14
		Explaining Tertiary climates	16
	1.5	The Tertiary/Quaternary transition	19
	1.6	Reconstructing and interpreting past environments: key concepts	22
		The law of superposition	22
		Diagenesis, equifinality, provenance, and taphonomy	23
		Uniformitarianism and neo-catastrophism	24
		Environmental systems	26
		Timescales, stratigraphic correlation, and dating	27
		Contributions of stable isotope analyses	29
		Environmental modelling	31
	Sel	ected reading	33
	Rev	view questions	34
2	Sou	urces of Evidence for Reconstructing Past Environments	35
	2.1	Introduction	35
	2.2	Terrestrial evidence	36
		Glacial evidence on land	36
		Evidence of periglaciation	39
		Palaeosols and wind-blown deposits	40
		Lake, peat, and fluvial deposits	41

		Pollen analysis	45
		Other forms of terrestrially-based biological evidence	46
		Geochemical and other sediment analyses	48
		Cave deposits	49
		Tree rings	50
		Geomorphic evidence	51
		Palaeoecological transfer functions	51
	2.3	Evidence from oceans	53
		Marine depositional environments	53
		Physical characteristics	54
		Biological data	55
		Geochemical data	56
	2.4	Evidence from ice sheets	58
		Ice sheet accumulation	58
		Stable isotope evidence	59
		Other ice core proxies	59
	2.5	Chronologies and correlation	60
		Radiocarbon dating and other radioactive isotopes	61
		Luminescence dating	65
		Fission track, ESR, and CN dating	66
		Incremental methods	67
		Age-equivalent markers	67
		Relative methods	69
	Sum	nmary	70
		ected reading	70
		view questions	71
		the factor of the started at the sta	
3	Plei	istocene Climatic Change and Environments of Mid to High Latitudes	72
	3.1	Introduction	72
	3.2	The Pleistocene record	73
		Deep-sea sediments	73
		Loess sequences	76
		Ice cores	77
		Relation between land-based subdivisions and MIS	79
	3.3	The changing extent of glaciers and ice caps	81
		North America	82
		The British Isles	84
		Europe and Asia	86
		The southern continents	87
	3.4	Permafrost and its extent in the Pleistocene	90
	3.5	Loess formation, distribution, and accumulation rates	92
		Loess distribution	93
		Loess in China and east Asia	95
		Loess accumulation rates	96
	3.6	The nature of glacial/interglacial cycles	96
		The degree of climatic change in glacials	96

Contents

		Rapid climatic change events (RCCEs)	100
		The vegetational conditions of full glacials in Europe	108
		The glacial vegetation of North America	110
		The interstadials of the Last Glacial	110
		The nature of interglacials	115
		Variations in the British and European interglacials	118
		Faunal and floral fluctuations	120
	Sele	ected reading	121
		view questions	122
4	Ple	istocene Environments of Lower Latitudes	124
	4.1	The antiquity of deserts	124
		Pleistocene intensification of aridity	125
	4.3	Dust in the Pleistocene	126
		Evidence from ocean sediment cores	127
		Dust deposition as recorded in ice cores	127
	4.4	Ancient sand seas	129
		The fossil dunes of northern India	132
		The fossil dunes of Africa	132
		The fossil dunes of North and South America	133
		The fossil dunes of Australia	133
	4.5	Pluvial lakes	134
		Pluvial lakes of the Americas	134
		Pluvial lakes of Africa	139
		Pluvial lakes of the Near East and Arabia	143
		Pluvial lakes of Central Asia and elsewhere	145
		Summary	145
	4.6	The Nile	146
	4.7	Faunal and floral changes in the tropics	149
	Sele	ected reading	152
	Rev	view questions	152
F	Em	incomental Change in Past clasial Times	154
5		/ironmental Change in Post-glacial Times A stable Holocene?	154 155
		The transition from Late Glacial times	155
	5.2	The traditional Late Glacial subdivisions	155
		Dating events of the Late Glacial	157
		Late Glacial climates	158
		The Younger Dryas: global expression and causes	159
	5.2	Late Glacial environments	163
	5.3	The onset of the Holocene	165
		Subdividing the Holocene	166
		Early Holocene climate	166
		Post-glacial spread of vegetation in Europe	168
		The 8200 cal yr BP event	172
	5.5	Mid- to late Holocene vegetation in Europe	174

vii

	5.6	The North American Holocene sequence		174
	5.7	Russia, Asia, and Australia in the Holocene		177
	5.8	Humans and the Holocene sequence		179
	5.9	Post-glacial climatic optima and neoglaciations		182
		Neoglacials		184
		The Little Optimum, AD 800–1300		185
		The Little Ice Age (LIA)		187
	5.10	Post-glacial times in the Sahara and adjacent regions		190
	5.11	Concluding points		194
	Selec	ted reading		195
	Revie	ew questions		195
6	Seal	Level Changes of the Quaternary		197
	6.1	The importance of sea level changes		198
	6.2	Evidence of sea level change		198
	6.3	Causes of sea level change		199
	6.4	Eustatic factors		199
		Glacio-eustasy		200
		Orogenic eustasy		202
		Geoidal eustasy		203
	6.5	Isostasy		203
		Glacio-isostasy		205
	6.6	Miscellaneous causes of local changes in sea level		209
	6.7	The nature of pre-Holocene sea levels		212
	6.8	The post-glacial rise in sea level or Flandrian transgression		213
		Sea level change in the later Holocene		217
	6.9	Post-glacial sea level changes in northern Europe: the combined effects		
		of eustasy and isostasy		220
	6.10	Future sea level rise		223
	6.11	Conclusions		227
	Selec	ted reading		227
	Revie	ew questions		228
7	Fnvi	ronmental Changes During the Period of Meteorological Records	*	229
/	7.1	Introduction		230
				230
	7.2	Temperature changes during the period of instrumental record		230
		Warming in the early twentieth century		233
		A cooling episode at mid century		233
	7 2	The warming episode of the late twentieth century		236
	7.3	Precipitation changes during the period of instrumental record		236
		Records of precipitation change for Britain and other mid-latitude areas		230
	7.4	Precipitation change in lower latitudes		244
	7.4	The various scales of climatic fluctuation		244
		The El Niño–Southern Oscillation		2 <del>44</del> 247
		The Pacific Decadal Oscillation		
		The Arctic and Antarctic Oscillations		247

Contents

		North Atlantic Oscillation	247
		The Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation	247
	7.5	River discharge fluctuations	247
	7.6	Changing lake levels	250
	7.7	Changing dust-storm frequencies	253
	7.8	Glacier and sea ice fluctuations in the twentieth century	256
	7.9	The future	260
	Sele	ected reading	265
	Rev	view questions	266
8	Lin	ks between Environmental Change and Human Evolution and Society	267
	8.1	Earliest hominins	267
	8.2	Pleistocene environments and hominin speciation	270
		Africa *	272
		Asia	272
		Europe	273
	8.3	Modern human origins and dispersals	274
		Africa	275
		Out of Africa: Arabia and the Near East	275
		Europe	276
		Asia and Australia	276
		Colonization of the Americas	279
	8.4	Mesolithic advances	280
	8.5	Origins and spread of agriculture	281
		The rise of civilization	284
	8.6	Climate impacts on human society	288
		Post-glacial shifts in aridity	288
		The Medieval Warm Period (Little Optimum) and the Little Ice Age	291
	8.7	Pre-industrial human impacts on the environment	294
	Sele	ected reading	296
	Rev	iew questions	297
9	The	e Causes of Climatic Change	298
	9.1	Introduction	299
		Solar radiation hypotheses	300
		Cycles of variation and effects on climate	300
	9.3	Atmospheric transparency hypotheses	303
		Correlations between volcanism and climatic change	303
		Effects of non-volcanic dust	305
		Dust and atmospheric CO <sub>2</sub>	306
		Dust and clouds	307
	9.4	Earth geometry theories: the Croll–Milankovitch hypothesis	307
		Explaining the 'mid-Pleistocene revolution'	311
	9.5	Hypotheses involving changes in terrestrial geography	312
		The role of the greenhouse gases	313
		Feedback hypotheses involving land, oceans, atmosphere, and ice	316

ix

X

	Albedo-based hypotheses	316
	Causes of abrupt climate changes	317
	Ocean-ice-atmosphere connections in the North Atlantic	317
	Northern and Southern Hemisphere connections	320
	Connections between AMOC and low-latitude climate	321
	Holocene variation in ocean circulation	322
9.8	Conclusion	322
Sel	ected reading	324
Rev	view questions	325

Glossary	326
References	334
Index	396