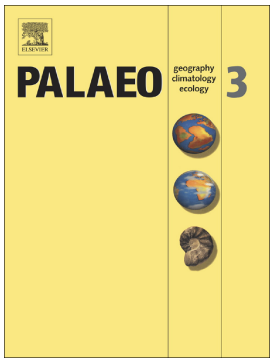

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Luminescence chronology and climatic implication of the late Quaternary glaciation in the Nubra valley, Karakoram Himalaya, India

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates moraines, outwash gravel terraces, relict lake deposits and alluvial fans to reconstruct the pattern of glacier advances and associated climate variability in the Nubra Valley, Karakoram Himalaya, India. Optical chronologies obtained on stratigraphically constrained lateral moraines indicate that the oldest preserved record of glacier advance (Tirith-II) is dated to 60.4±5.2 ka and corresponds to Marine Isotopic Stage-4 (MIS-4). During MIS-4, the Nubra valley was occupied by ~700 m thick ice cover that extended beyond the Nubra-Shyok confluence. It was followed by pulsating decrease in the ice-volume (vertical shrinking) with insignificant lateral recession that continued until around 42.0 ± 3.0 ka (mid- MIS-3). The second major glacial advance (Tirith-I) is dated to 30±2.5 ka (beginning of MIS-2) when the Siachen glacier reached up to the Nubra-Shyok confluence albeit, with lesser ice thickness (~300 m). The Tirith-I glacier advance continued to occupy the entire Nubra valley until around 18.2±1.8 ka (Last Glacial Maximum). A deglaciation followed after 15.8±1.6 ka and continued until the early Holocene (10.3±1.3 ka). The third minor glacial advance-Siachen Glacial Advance (SGA) is dated to the mid-Holocene