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1 Satellite Gravity Gradiometry: Secular Gravity Field Change over Polar Regions

2

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7

8 **Abstract**

9

10 The ESA Gravity and steady state Ocean and Circulation Explorer, GOCE, mission
11 will utilise the principle of satellite gravity gradiometry to measure the long to
12 medium wavelengths in the static gravity field. Previous studies have demonstrated
13 the low sensitivity of GOCE to ocean tides and to temporal gravity field variations at
14 the seasonal scale. In this study we investigate the sensitivity of satellite gradiometry
15 missions such as GOCE to secular signals due to ice-mass change observed in
16 Greenland and Antarctica. We show that unaccounted ice mass change signal is likely
17 to increase GOCE-related noise but that the expected present-day polar ice mass
18 change is below the GOCE sensitivity for an 18 month mission. Furthermore, 2-3
19 orders of magnitude improvement in the gradiometry in future gradiometer missions
20 is necessary to detect ice mass change with sufficient accuracy at the spatial resolution
21 of interest.

22

23 **Keywords** GOCE, gravity field, temporal variations, gradiometry

24

25 **1. Introduction**

1

2 Mass redistribution within and on the Earth's surface cause temporal changes to the
3 Earth's gravity field. These temporal signatures are measurable by geodetic
4 techniques including space-borne instrumentation. Over the last decade the scientific
5 community has had access to data from the Gravity Recovery and Climate
6 Experiment (GRACE) mission (Tapley et al., 2004) using precise inter-satellite
7 measurements between a tandem pair of near polar satellites. GRACE has provided
8 the static gravity field to degree and order 100-150 and monthly snapshots of the
9 temporal gravity field for mass redistribution studies. Investigation of these signatures
10 has provided a wealth of knowledge particularly in the areas of hydrology (e.g.
11 Ramillien et al., 2008) and cryospheric science including insight into the changing ice
12 mass over Greenland (e.g. Velicogna et al., 2005) and Antarctica (e.g. Velicogna and
13 Wahr, 2006; Chen et al., 2008).

14

15 The ESA Gravity and steady state Ocean and Circulation Explorer, GOCE, mission
16 (Muzi and Allasio, 2004) will utilise the principle of satellite gravity gradiometry to
17 measure the long to medium wavelengths in the static gravity field. While the
18 GRACE mission is based on sensing the differential gravitational forces acting on two
19 point masses orbiting some 220km apart satellite gradiometry carries an array of
20 accelerometers on a single spacecraft to measure the differential accelerations. With
21 GOCE the distance between the point masses, namely the accelerometers, is reduced
22 to 0.5m with the differential accelerations providing the components of the satellite
23 gradient tensor. GOCE was launched into a near polar orbit at an altitude of about
24 270km on 17 March 2009.

25

1 The requirements of the GOCE gradiometry mission have advanced the technological
2 development of satellites. Apart from the highly advanced accelerometers, which are
3 two orders of magnitude more precise than those carried on GRACE, the satellite is a
4 first in both the design of the satellite to ensure a highly stable flight through the
5 Earth's atmosphere and the drag-free control system (e.g. Canuto, 2008) to near-
6 eliminate the effects of the atmosphere. A feedback mechanism from the
7 accelerometers will control firing of ion thrusters to compensate for the drag and other
8 surface force effects. GOCE will carry six accelerometers to measure the gravity
9 gradients along three orthogonal axes. The scientific drivers behind the GOCE
10 mission are described in ESA (1999) for example. Given the band-width limitation of
11 the accelerometers, gradiometry will not be able to measure gravity field signatures at
12 the longest wavelengths. The harmonics causing these long wavelength signatures
13 will instead be recoverable from orbital perturbations utilising precise positioning
14 from the GPS/GLONASS receiver which also provides the necessary orbital
15 positioning. The actual orbit and operational procedure for GOCE will be finalised
16 once in orbit. The pre-launch scenario envisages two six-month measurement phases
17 either side of a six-month period of hibernation during which passage through the
18 Earth's umbra limits power from the solar cells. However, given the low level of solar
19 activity in 2009 other scenarios may be feasible including the potential for continuous
20 measurements over an 18 month period.

21

22 Although designed to measure the static gravity field several authors have
23 investigated the sensitivity of the GOCE mission to the temporal field. For example
24 Han et al. (2004), Jarecki et al. (2005) and Han et al. (2006) investigated the effects of
25 the atmosphere, oceans and hydrology in terms of the geoid and gravity gradients.

1 These studies have shown GOCE to be insensitive to ocean tides and other mass
2 redistributions at the seasonal scale. Others such as Vermeersen (2003) and
3 Vermeersen and Schotman (2008) have investigated the possibility of using GOCE
4 for glacial isostatic adjustment (GIA) studies. In particular, these have identified the
5 possibility of using GOCE measurements to better constrain ice history. In this study
6 we investigate the sensitivity of satellite gradiometry missions such as GOCE to
7 secular ice-mass change observed in Greenland and Antarctica. We utilise rates
8 estimated from the GRACE mission as well as from ERS and ENVISAT radar
9 altimetry and elsewhere. Satellite derived results need to be corrected for GIA for true
10 ice-mass studies but for our purposes it is the total signal over these areas that has
11 been used as the appropriate temporal change affecting space missions. Ice mass loss
12 over Greenland has been observed in several studies and here we use results pertinent
13 to the whole area and to Eastern Greenland which has been shown to be the area of
14 rapid change. Similarly, over West Antarctica the total GRACE mass change is
15 utilised. We also investigate one of the areas of most rapid change in Antarctica
16 namely the Pine Island Glacier with the rates taken from Shepherd et al. (2001).

17

18 In practice, the GOCE gradiometry will be accompanied by a non-tidal mass
19 correction computed from an atmospheric and ocean model. In addition the correction
20 will include large scale mass redistribution corrections for the very long wavelengths.
21 These corrections, to be computed from the annual variations of the GRACE
22 spherical harmonic coefficients up to degree and order 20, will effectively account for
23 the ice mass variation within the GOCE gradiometry at spatial scales of 1000km or
24 larger. However, contributions at smaller spatial scales will be excluded from the
25 correction fields. This study is thus motivated by the question to what extent is GOCE

1 or a GOCE satellite gravity gradiometry (SGG) follow-on mission sensitive to ice
2 mass change over Antarctica/Arctic over an 18 months or longer lifetime at long to
3 medium spatial scales.

4

5 The study simulates the expected gradiometer signals due to the ice mass change and
6 quantifies the sensitivity in terms of the magnitude of the signal and its spectral power
7 density. In addition, we investigate sensitivity of potential recovery of localized
8 signals over an extended period by using band-width limited windowing functions
9 (Wieczorek and Simons, 2005). By utilising the distinct spatio-temporal spectra of the
10 signal and error (e.g. Han and Simons, 2008; Han and Ditmar, 2008; and Migliaccio
11 et al., 2008) the signal-to-noise ratio over the polar regions can be enhanced. In this
12 study we follow the approach of Han and Simons (2008) and Han and Ditmar (2008)
13 where spatio-spectral localization around the epicentre of the 2004 Sumatra-Andaman
14 earthquake facilitated recovery of the geophysical signal even though the signature
15 was unobservable in the original GRACE fields. The methodology takes advantage of
16 the distinct spatiotemporal characteristics of the signal and measurements error to
17 enhance the signal-to-noise ratio of the locally intense signal to the more globally
18 uniform errors in the measurements.

19

20 In the final section we consider an idealised future gradiometer mission where the
21 gradiometry is either noise-free or affected by white noise over the band-width of the
22 local signal to investigate potential recovery using 30 day snapshots of data as the
23 mission overflies the Pine Island Glacier.

24

25 **2. GOCE Gradiometry**

1

2 The nominal initial GOCE orbit is taken to be at an initial altitude of 270km with
3 semi-major axis of 6648.1363km. The orbit was assumed to be circular with
4 inclination $i = 96.65475^\circ$. Positioning was computed for a 180 day period with the
5 orbit subject to gravitational effects from the Earth and third bodies. Surface forces
6 were set to zero to mirror the drag-free environment. The altitude of the satellite was
7 seen to oscillate around 265 km. The orbital computations for this period provided the
8 positioning to derive the simulated SGG data. For long-term studies over the lifetime
9 of GOCE the orbit was assumed to repeat after the 6 month hibernation to give a total
10 of 360 days of observations from a 540 day lifetime.

11

12 Based on the computed positioning a data set of radial gravity gradients, T_{rr} , was
13 derived at 1 s intervals, the GOCE sampling interval. Noise was subsequently added
14 utilising a characterisation (e.g. Abrikosov and Schwintzer, 2004) of the GOCE power
15 spectral density (PSD) in the radial direction. The noise corresponded to a PSD of 1
16 $\text{mE}/\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$ over the measurement band width (MBW) of $5 \cdot 10^{-3} - 1 \cdot 10^{-1} \text{ Hz}$ with a PSD
17 proportional to the inverse of the frequency at frequencies below $5 \cdot 10^{-3} \text{ Hz}$. The
18 upper frequency is the Nyquist limit of twice the sampling rate. To illustrate the noise
19 threshold on the sensitivity of GOCE gravity field recovery T_{rr} was simulated for the
20 differences between EGM08 (Pavlis et al., 2008) and EGM96 (Lemoine et al., 1998)
21 to degree and order 360. The PSD for this data set is given in Figure 1. Also plotted is
22 the assumed PSD for the gradiometer noise, with the constant value over the MBW.
23 With these noise considerations and altitude near 270km satellite gradiometry cannot
24 determine the longer wavelengths in the gravity field while some shorter-wavelengths
25 are also below the GOCE sensitivity.

1

2 **3. Secular ice mass change over Greenland.**

3

4 Ice mass loss from Greenland has been confirmed from both in situ measurements and
5 from GRACE studies. For example Luthcke et al. (2006) employed a mass
6 concentration approach with GRACE data to deduce the rate of change for Greenland
7 divided into six interior regions above 2000m and a further 6 coastal areas below
8 2000m for July 2003 to July 2005. The interior regions were inferred to have an
9 accumulation of ice of about 40Gton p.a. whilst the coastal areas had a net loss of 140
10 Gton p.a. East Greenland evidenced the greater loss of ice. The total loss over
11 Greenland of 100 Gton p.a. is considerably less than the ice mass loss of -224 ± 41
12 Gton from the 2005 mass balance reported by Rignot and Kanagaratnam (2006). On
13 taking the area of Greenland as $1,819,739 \text{ km}^2$ the Rignot and Kanagaratnam value
14 equates to $\approx 0.12\text{m/yr}$ loss in terms of equivalent water height over the entire area.
15 Luthcke et al. (2006) identify South-east and East Greenland (their areas 3b, 4a and
16 4b) to be the region of high ice loss amounting to 146 Gton per year over an area of
17 279166 km^2 (see Figure 2). This is equivalent to an ice loss of 0.5 m/yr over the
18 region in equivalent water height. The largest loss of ice per unit area is identified as
19 75 Gton p.a. in South-East Greenland (their area 3b) of area of about 56109 km^2
20 equivalent to an ice mass loss of $\approx 1.3\text{m/yr}$. These rates provide us, in the worst case,
21 with an order of magnitude estimate of likely ice mass change in these regions to be
22 used in our simulations.

23

24 To quantify the corresponding impact on the GOCE gradiometry the spatial
25 distribution of the surface ice mass change over the selected area was converted to

1 spherical harmonics rates using the surface load Love number approach of Wahr et al,
2 (1998). Changes from the rates were converted to gravity harmonics up to deg/order
3 360 at each epoch. These harmonics were subsequently used to generate a global data
4 set of simulated gradiometer observations in the radial direction, T_{rr} , for the mission.
5 The observations can be considered as the temporal change to the static base model.
6 In this analysis it is assumed that the temporal field represents the anomalous potential
7 to be estimated from GOCE.

8
9 Figure 3 shows the radial gravity gradient signal of a secular rate of 0.2 m/yr of ice
10 mass over the entire Greenland land mass exhibiting a quasi-secular increase over the
11 two observation periods. For an 18 month period the signal is less than 0.15 mE (1
12 mE is equivalent to $10^{-12}\text{Gal cm}^{-1}$ or 10^{-12}s^{-2}). The PSD of the radial gradiometry is
13 shown in Figure 4 for the first 30 days and last 30 days of the 18 month period. It
14 shows that the power, with maximum value 1.9 mE/ $\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$, is however always below
15 the GOCE measurement noise level of 1 mE/ $\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$ over the frequency range (Figure 1).
16 Although GOCE is insensitive to the Greenland change it is apparent that neglect of
17 the ice mass loss may increase the PSD noise in the signal to over 1 mE/ $\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$ at some
18 frequencies.

19
20 A similar analysis for an assumed ice mass change of 0.5 m/yr over the area of East
21 and South-East Greenland in Figure 2 is summarised in Figures 5 and 6. The increase
22 in ice mass loss over the area has now yielded a larger signal but the smaller area
23 results in a reduced PSD compared with the whole of Greenland.

24

1 Consideration of the gravity gradient signal and the associated PSD gives some
2 insight into the observability but does not necessarily indicate the sensitivity of the
3 gravity field solution to ice mass change. A complementary measure is the degree
4 variance of the gravity field solution in the presence of realistic noise. As the signals
5 originate from a relatively small geographical region it is necessary to localise the
6 signal and noise (Han and Simons, 2008; Han and Ditmar, 2008). In the terminology
7 of Han and Ditmar (2008) the signal is non-stationary while the noise is more likely to
8 be stationary. Techniques of spatio-spectral localization (Wieczorek and Simons,
9 2005) can enhance the signal as the effect decays rapidly outside the region of interest
10 while the measurement errors are relatively uniform over the Earth. Thus, the signal
11 to noise ratio (SNR) of the localized signal is a better measure of the observability of
12 the event. In this way, the 2004 Sumatra-Andaman earthquake was detected by
13 localized analysis of the monthly GRACE gravity field solutions (Han and Simons,
14 2008). Utilising the localized zonal window function $h(\theta)$ (Eq. 8 of Wieczorek and
15 Simons, 2005) of spherical cap size θ_0 and expanded up to degree $L_h = 2\pi/\theta_0 - 1$ the
16 SNR of the degree variances of the global gravity field solution and the localized
17 solution are presented in Eq. 3-8 of Han and Ditmar (2008). In this study we utilise
18 both the SNR of the signal, where both measurement noise and signal are expanded in
19 spherical harmonics, and the SNR on using a localized window centred on the source
20 of the signal. The spherical harmonic expansion of the measurement noise was taken
21 from Ditmar et al. (2003). The localized SNR is defined for degrees $L_h \leq l \leq L_s - L_h$
22 where L_s is the maximum degree of the solution field. For Greenland a spherical cap
23 of $\theta_0=40^\circ$ gives $L_h = 8$. Figure 7 shows the SNR for the signal in terms of spherical
24 harmonics and localized by the window function for the ice mass change after 18
25 months for Greenland and East and South-East Greenland. After application of the

1 spatiospectral localization the SNR has improved but is below unity for all degrees
2 with a maximum SNR of less than 0.3 for all Greenland and 0.25 for East and South
3 East Greenland. Even for a GOCE-like gradiometer an order more accurate than
4 GOCE the signal is only observable for $8 \leq l \leq 18$. A gradiometer three orders more
5 accurate than GOCE will be necessary for recovery of ice-mass change over
6 Greenland within an 18 month mission.

7

8 **4. Secular ice mass change over Antarctica.**

9

10 To quantify the signature on GOCE gradiometry from ice mass change over
11 Antarctica we used the secular rates as given by the GRACE mission. Figure 8 is a
12 replot of the figure given in Moore and King (2008) which shows the rate of change
13 of equivalent water height for Aug 2002 – Jan 2006 in mm/yr over Antarctica. This is
14 the spatially averaged mass change and thus includes GIA as well as ice mass rates.
15 The signal over Antarctica is dominated by a negative rate over the West Antarctic Ice
16 Sheet (WAIS), including over Pine Island Glacier. Also evident is an apparent
17 accumulation of mass over the Filchner Ronne Ice Shelf. To investigate the WAIS we
18 have taken an ice mass change of 0.06 m/yr for the region 72° - 78° S and 225° - 270° E.
19 The corresponding T_{rr} contribution is less than 0.05 mE over the 18month period
20 while the resultant PSD is below the measurement noise by an order of magnitude
21 with a maximum value of ≈ 0.1 mE/ $\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$. Equivalently, data from a mission lifetime
22 of a factor of 10 larger than the 18 month assumed here would still just approach the
23 noise level in the MBW. Such a conclusion is not unexpected as the GRACE data
24 underpinning the WAIS analysis is derived from spatial averaging to the extent that
25 the resultant mass change is at large spatial scales whilst satellite gradiometry is more

1 sensitive to medium-short wavelengths in the Earth's gravity field. Analogous to
2 Figure 7 the SNR for WAIS is plotted as Figure 9. For WAIS a spherical cap of $\theta_0=40$
3 was used. Once again the localized SNR shows an enhancement over the global
4 equivalent but three orders of magnitude below the GOCE measurement sensitivity
5 for degrees $l \geq 40$.

6

7 **5. Regional Solution**

8

9 The previous analyses considered the magnitude of the radial gravity gradient and the
10 associated PSD in a sensitivity analysis of ice mass change over Greenland and WAIS
11 on GOCE. In this section, we now contemplate the possibility of an idealised
12 gradiometry mission and seek to recover the observed change in a simulation based on
13 a localized study. For this aspect we have chosen Pine Island Glacier in the WAIS.
14 Pine Island Glacier is one of the areas of most rapid change in Antarctica. Figure 10,
15 replotted from Shepherd et al. (2001), shows the measured rate of change of ice as
16 inferred from ERS altimetry (1992-1999). As an extreme characterisation of potential
17 ice mass change the area of 23660km^2 bounded by $74.5^\circ\text{S} - 76^\circ\text{S}$ and $261^\circ\text{E} - 266^\circ\text{E}$
18 was considered to be experiencing a change of 0.5m/yr of ice. As for the whole
19 Antarctica study a set of radial gravity gradient measurements were simulated and the
20 PSD deduced. Although the maximum T_{rr} signal after 18 months of 0.1 mE is a
21 factor of two larger than for the WAIS the PSD is lower than that of the WAIS with a
22 maximum value of $3 \cdot 10^{-2}\text{ mE}/\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$. The sensitivity of gradiometry to shorter
23 wavelengths is however evident in the less rapid reduction in the PSD amplitudes with
24 signatures close to the maximum being measured at frequencies from 10^{-3} Hz to 10^{-2}

1 Hz. The SNR for Pine Island is plotted in Figure 9. The rapid ice-mass change is
 2 evident in the increased sensitivity compared to WAIS at degrees $l \geq 30$.

3

4 Given the regional nature of the analysis a localized base function methodology based
 5 on that proposed by Ilk et al. (2003) and Mayer-Gürr et al. (2005, 2006) is adopted.

6 Accordingly, the anomalous potential, T , at satellite point position r , is represented as

7

$$8 \quad T = \sum_{i=1}^{I_{\max}} \alpha_i \Phi(r, r_{Q_i})$$

9

10 where r_{Q_i} is the surface point corresponding to node Q_i , I_{\max} the total number of

11 nodes and α_i the coefficients to be estimated from the gradiometry. The localized base

12 function Φ is given by

13

$$14 \quad \Phi(r, r_{Q_i}) = \frac{GM}{R_e} \sum_{n=1}^{N_{\max}} k_n \left(\frac{R_e}{r} \right)^{n+1} P_n(\cos \psi_{r, r_{Q_i}})$$

15

16 where G is Newton's gravitational constant, M the mass of the Earth of radius R_e , P_n

17 the Legendre polynomial of degree n , $\psi_{r, r_{Q_i}}$ the geocentric angle between the

18 satellite position and the i th surface node Q_i (\vec{r}_{Q_i}) and

$$19 \quad k_n = \sum_{m=0}^n \Delta C_{l,m}^2 + \Delta S_{l,m}^2$$

20

21 the expected covariances of degree n based on the covariances $\Delta C_{l,m}^2, \Delta S_{l,m}^2$ in the

22 spherical harmonics. Rather than risk possible aliasing due to tuning the covariances

1 to the expected signal we utilised general values for k_n taken from the differences
2 between EGM08 and EGM96. Figure 11 shows that the local base functions rapidly
3 decay to zero with geocentric angle.

4

5 For the localized analysis the nodes were restricted to latitudes 60°S to 90°S. The
6 nodes were spaced on $N_{lat}=60$ circles of latitude formed using $N_{tri} = 5$ equal triangles
7 with common apex at the South Pole, each spanning 72° of longitude. Over each
8 triangle a total of j nodes were equally distributed along the j th circle of latitude
9 counting away from the pole. The total number of nodes was thus $I_{max}=N_{tri} * N_{lat} * (N_{lat}+1)/2$. Of these nodes those between 84°S and 90°S were removed given the
10 polar gap due to the GOCE inclination. With $I_{max}= 9150$ this left a total of 8760
11 nodes and coefficients α_i to be estimated. A subset of the nodes across Antarctica and
12 Pine Island Glacier is shown as Figure 12. The simulated T_{rr} data was taken for
13 separate 30 day periods utilising short arcs across the pole of ≈ 16 min duration. Each
14 30 day period involved 84265 from 518400 observations in the global set. In the
15 analysis the data was assumed to be noise free with no restriction due to band-width
16 whilst the satellite positioning was assumed exact. The application of white-noise at a
17 level significantly below the PSD across the band-width of the measurements will
18 lead to similar results. Thus, it is assumed that coloured noise as seen with GOCE is
19 not significant in any future gradiometer mission. At the GOCE altitude the maximum
20 T_{rr} over the 18 months never exceeded 0.1 mE whilst the PSD was always below 0.04
21 mE/ $\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$. In practice, a gradiometer with reduction in noise by 2-3 orders of
22 magnitude compared with GOCE is necessary. To illustrate the enhancement due to a
23 decrease in altitude an alternative data set at initial altitude of 230km (mean altitude
24 225km) was derived. The radial gravity gradients for the two altitudes are shown in
25

1 Figure 13 for the final month of the 18 month time span considered in the study. The
2 decrease from 265 to 235 km in mean altitude effectively doubles the magnitude of
3 the largest signal.

4

5 The true geoid height rates for the Pine Island Glacier are plotted as Figure 14a. There
6 is some spatial distortion of the constant signal over the area $74.5^{\circ}\text{S} - 76^{\circ}\text{S}$ and 261° -
7 266°E due to the restriction to degree and order 360 in the gravity field. The
8 maximum rate of change is 2.89 mm over the 18 months. Figures 14b and 14c plot the
9 corresponding rates for the regional solution from gradiometry at mean altitude of 265
10 km (max change 2.70 mm) and 225 km (max 3.06 mm) respectively. Note that as the
11 effective rates corresponded to the midpoint of month 17 the rates were multiplied by
12 $18/17.5$ for consistency with Figure 14a. The lower altitude is preferable in terms of
13 gravity field recovery but the higher altitude also supports recovery to a high level.
14 The analysis shows that the local base function approach is capable of measuring
15 changes over a region such as Pine Island Glacier and that gradiometry can, in theory,
16 support solutions recovered from 30 days of data as for GRACE.

17

18 **6. Conclusions:**

19

20 Studies across Arctic/Antarctic establish insensitivity of GOCE to ice mass change at
21 nominal noise PSD over the expected 18 month lifetime. In fact only a uniform ice-
22 mass change of 0.2m across all of Greenland approached the GOCE noise PSD. Areas
23 of greatest ice mass change such as East and South-East Greenland and Pine Island
24 Glacier in the West Antarctica ice shelf are too small spatially with signatures orders
25 of magnitude below the GOCE noise PSD. Thus, observed rates of ice mass change

1 will have negligible impact on static gravity field recovery from GOCE. Alternatively,
2 for the WAIS, a mission lifetime of a factor of 10 larger than the 18 month assumed
3 for GOCE would still yield signals less than the noise level in the MBW. This was
4 expected as the GRACE signal that underpinned the WAIS analysis was derived using
5 spatial averaging with the resultant mass change at a relatively large spatial scale.
6 Satellite gradiometry is more sensitive to medium-short wavelengths in the Earth's
7 gravity field.

8
9 The use of localized windowing enhances the ice mass change signal as the effect
10 decays rapidly outside the region of interest while the measurement errors are
11 relatively uniform over the Earth. This methodology has been shown to increase the
12 signal-to-noise ratio of the effects of ice-mass change but the recovery signal is still 2-
13 3 orders of magnitude below the GOCE sensitivity in the MBW.

14
15 Analysis of data over Pine Island Glacier utilising a local base function methodology
16 demonstrated the potential of gradiometry for temporal gravity field studies. The
17 results showed that in the idealised case of error free gradiometry without any band-
18 width limitations the local base function approach was capable of recovering the
19 expected change over areas such as Pine Island Glacier (23660 km²). In practice, this
20 would require a future SGG mission some 3 orders of magnitude more precise than
21 GOCE.

22

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2 financial support and the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments
3 and suggestions.

4

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- 20

1 **Figure Captions**

2

3 Figure 1: Power spectral density of the differences between EGM08 and EGM96 to
4 degree and order 360. The black line shows the adopted noise threshold.

5 Figure 2. $1^\circ \times 1^\circ$ latitude/longitude block diagram of Greenland (grey), showing the
6 East and South East regions (black).

7 Figure 3. Radial gravity gradient signal over a 540 day period resulting from 0.2 m/yr
8 ice mass change over Greenland.

9 Figure 4. PSD of radial gravity gradient signal resulting from 0.2 m/yr ice mass
10 change over Greenland. Days 0-30 (grey) and 510-540 (black).

11 Figure 5. Radial gravity gradient signal resulting from 0.5 m/yr ice mass change over
12 East and South-East Greenland.

13 Figure 6. PSD of radial gravity gradient signal resulting from 0.5 m/yr ice mass
14 change over East and South-East Greenland. Days 0-30 (grey) and 510-540 (black).

15 Figure 7. GOCE degree variance signal-to-noise ratio (SNR). Global spherical
16 harmonics: Greenland (circles) and SE Greenland (crosses). Localized harmonics
17 (Lh): Greenland (solid line) and SE Greenland (stippled line).

18 Figure 8. Mass change rates in mm/yr of equivalent water heights for the period 2002-
19 2006 estimated from GRACE (replotted from Moore and King, 2008).

20 Figure 9. GOCE degree variance signal-to-noise ratio (SNR). Global spherical
21 harmonics: Western Antarctic Ice shelf (WAIS) (circles) and Pine Island (PI)
22 (crosses). Localized harmonics (Lh): WAIS (solid line) and PI (stippled line).

23 Figure 10. The rate of elevation change of the lower 200 km of Pine Island Glacier
24 between 1992 and 1999 (coloured scale) registered with a map of the ice surface

1 speed (gray scale) from Shepherd et al. (2001). Reprinted with permission from

2 AAAS.

3 Figure 11. Normalised local base function

4 Figure 12. Distribution of nodes across Antarctica with Pine Island Glacier shaded

5 grey.

6 Figure 13. Simulated Pine Island Glacier radial gravity gradiometry signal from

7 mission at 230 km (black) and 270km (red).

8 Figure 14. Change in geoid height (mm) over 18 months. Top: (a) true signal (max

9 2.89 mm); middle: (b) regional solution from gradiometry at 265 km (max 2.70 mm);

10 lower: (c) regional solution from gradiometry at 225 km (max 3.06 mm).

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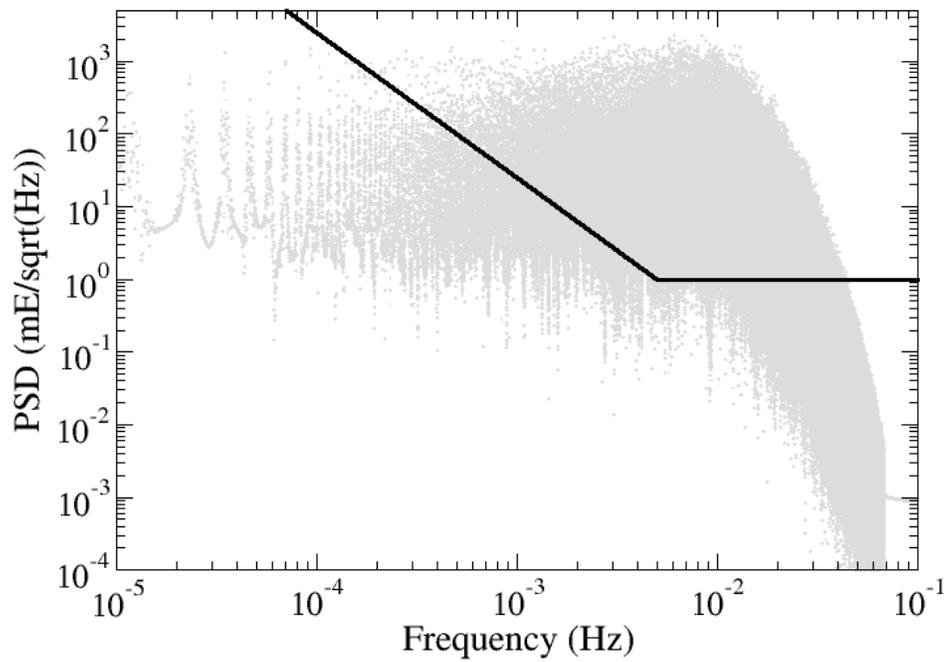


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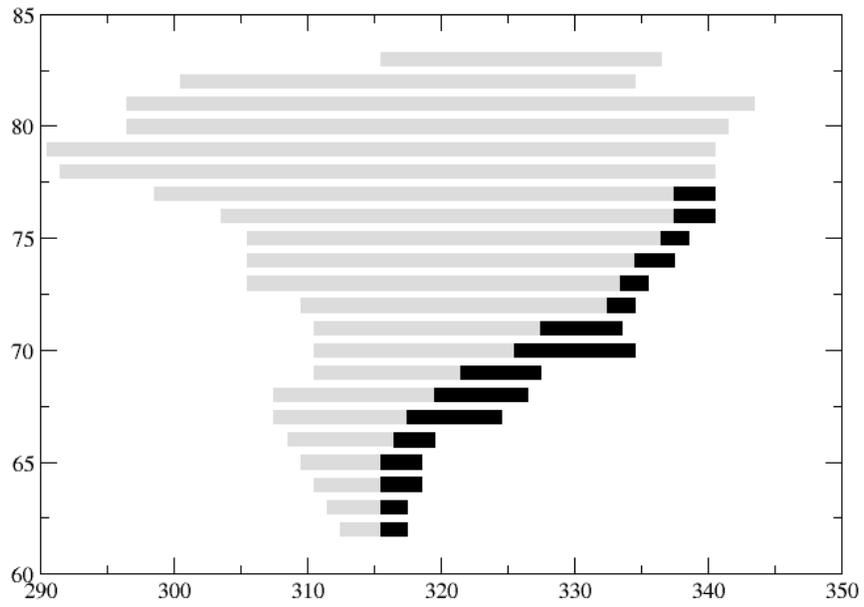


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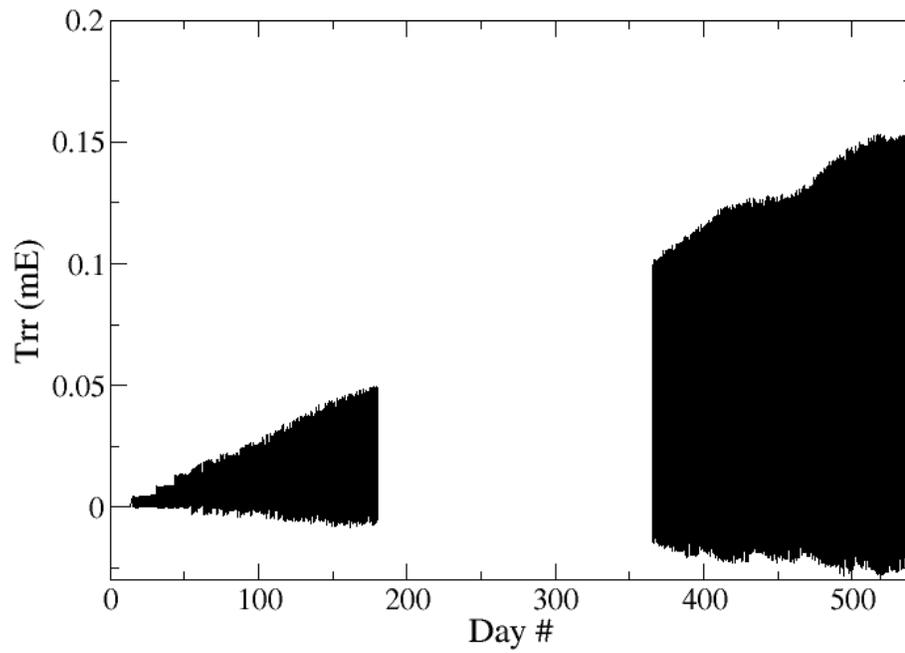


Figure 3. Radial gravity gradient signal resulting from 0.2 m/yr ice mass change over Greenland.

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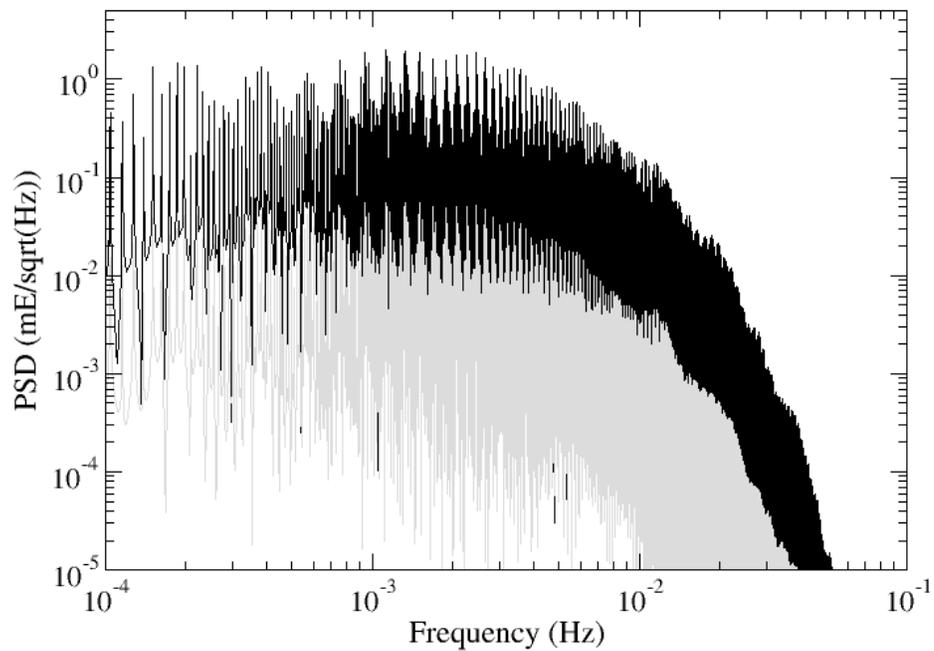


Figure 4. PSD of radial gravity gradient signal resulting from 0.2 m/yr ice mass change over Greenland. Days 0-30 (grey) and 510-540 (black).

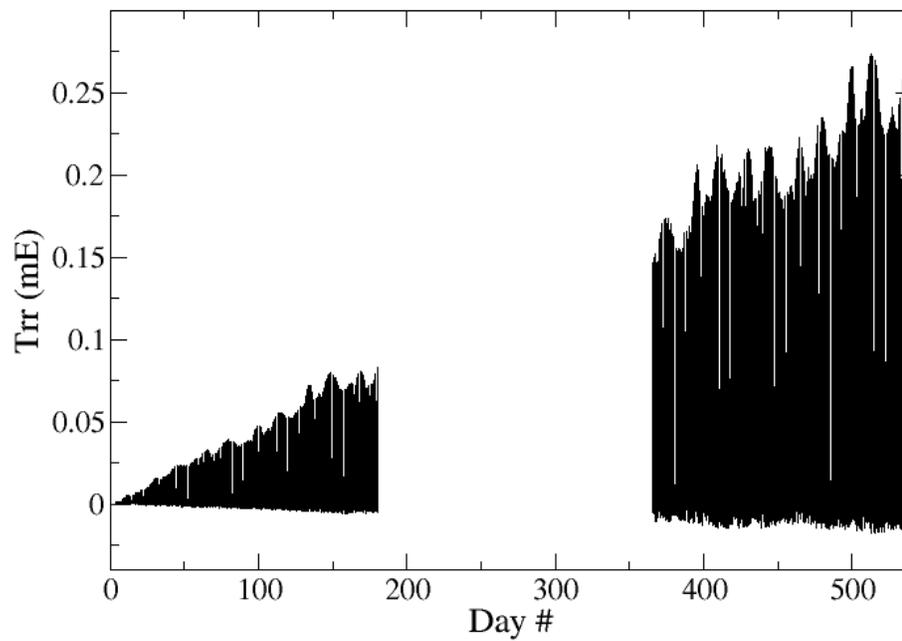


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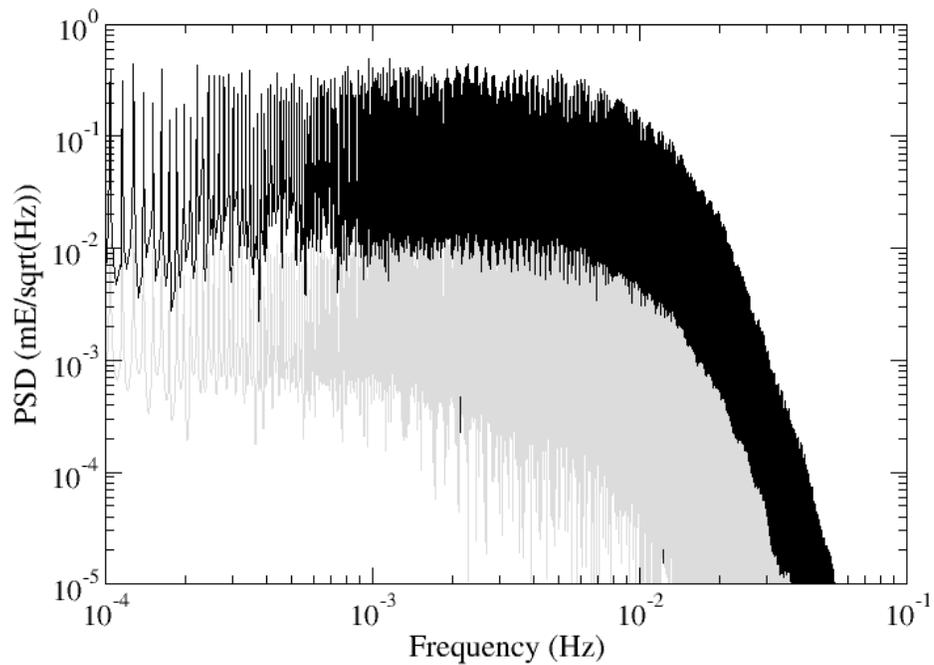


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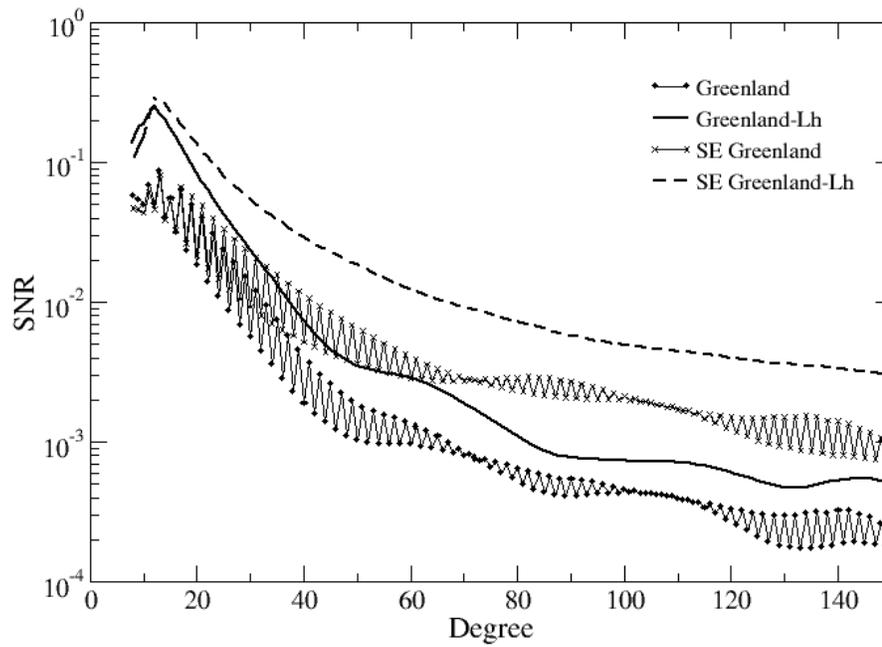


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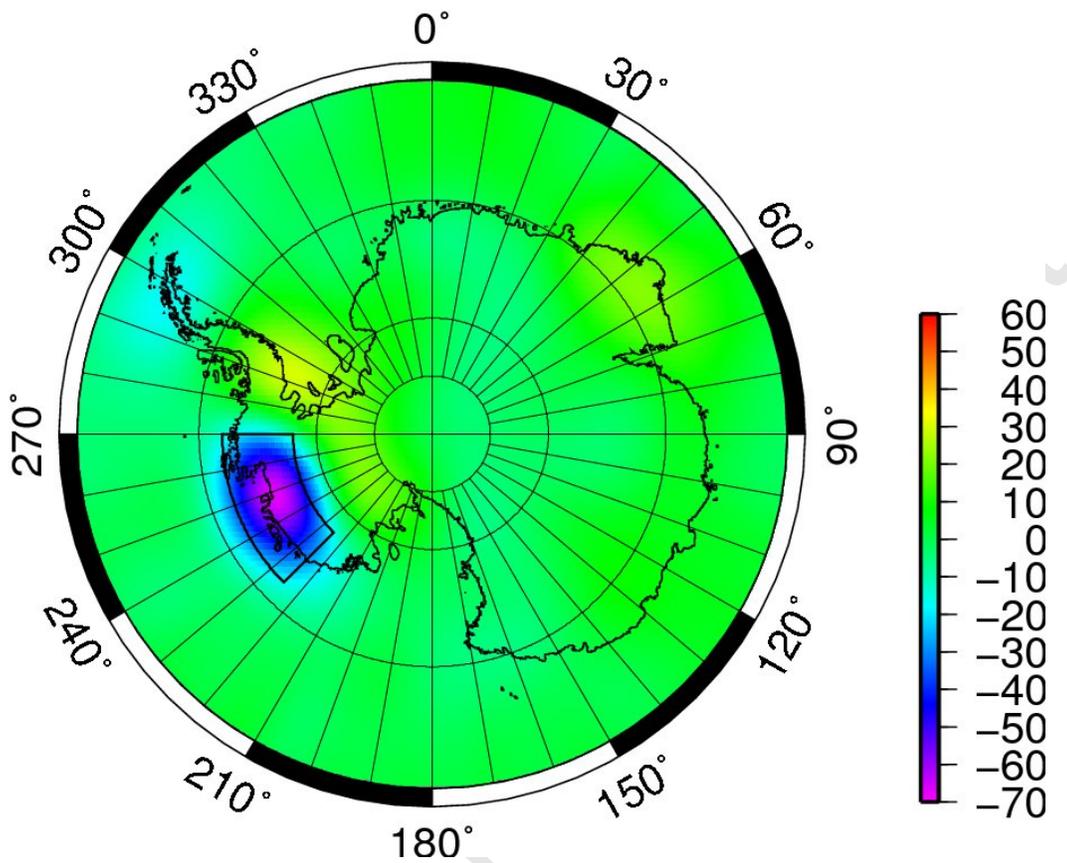


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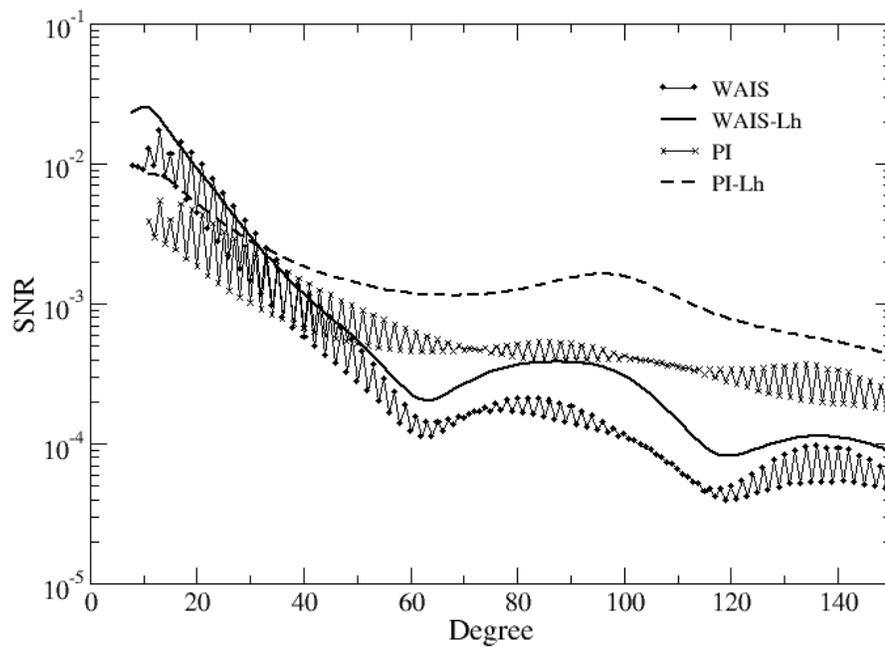


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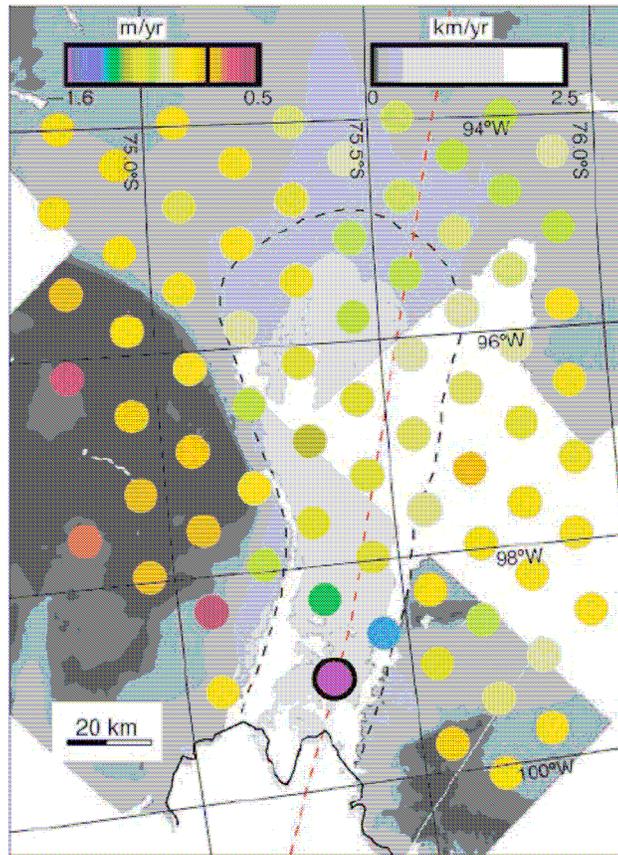


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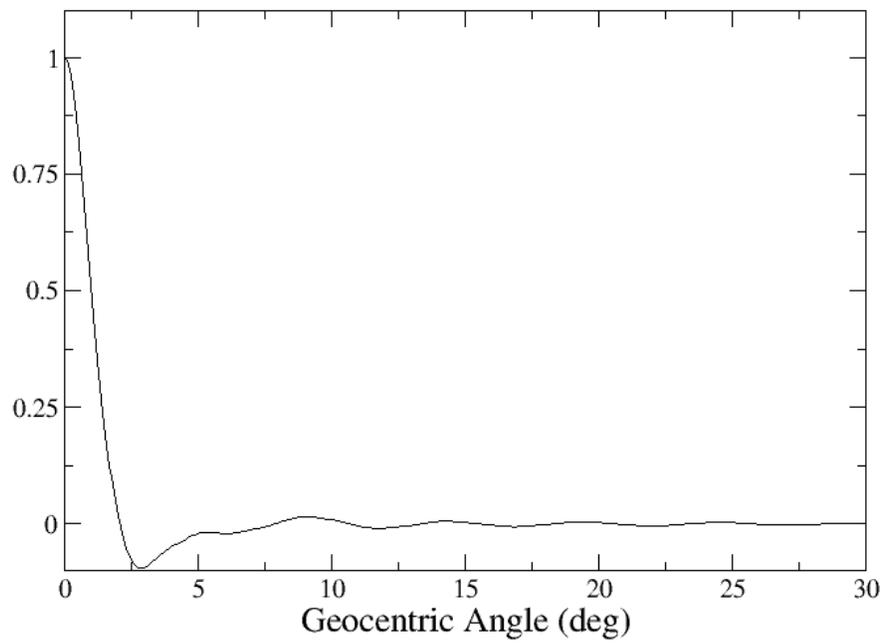


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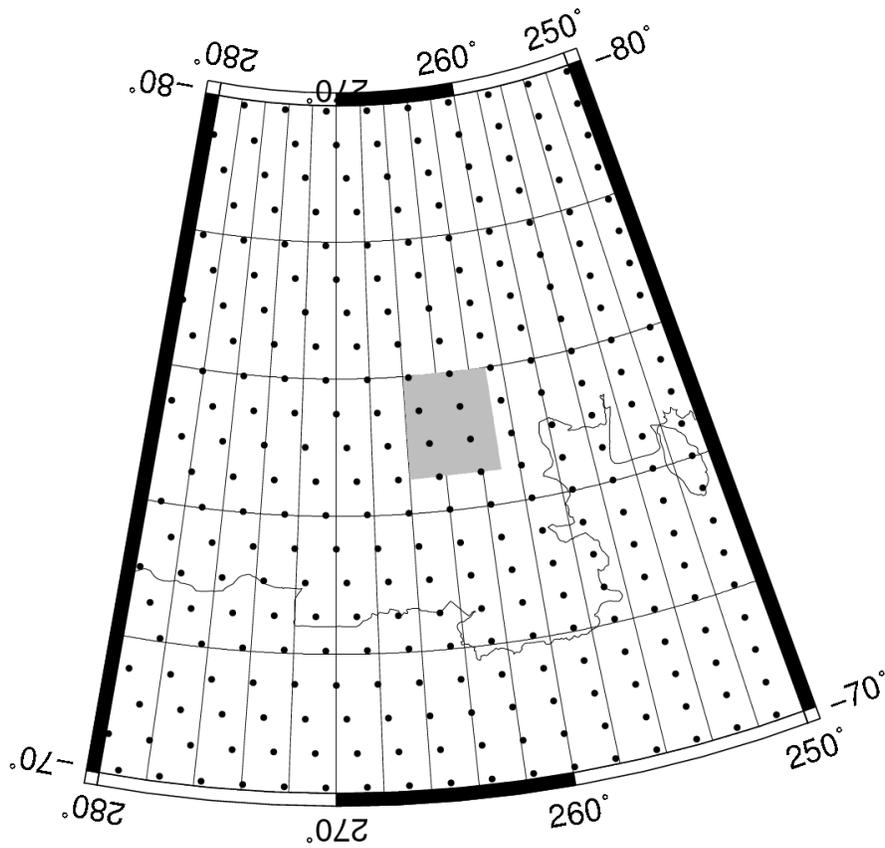


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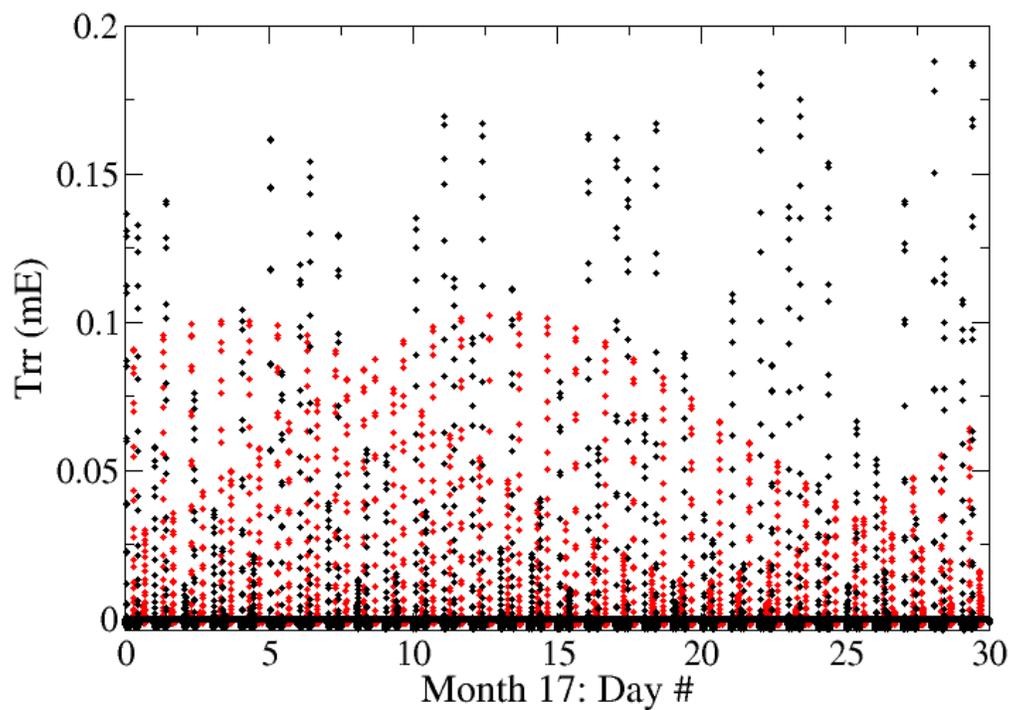
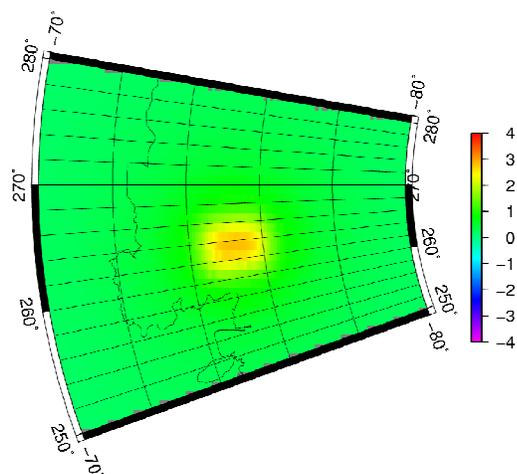
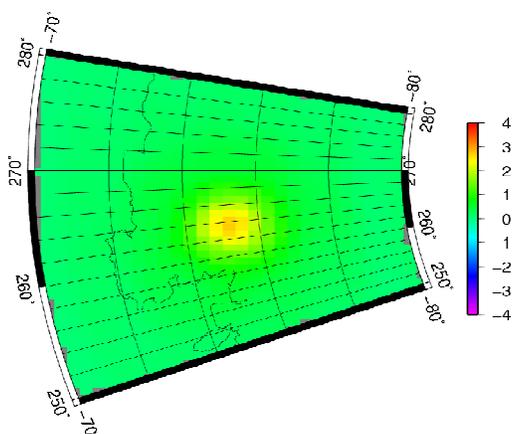


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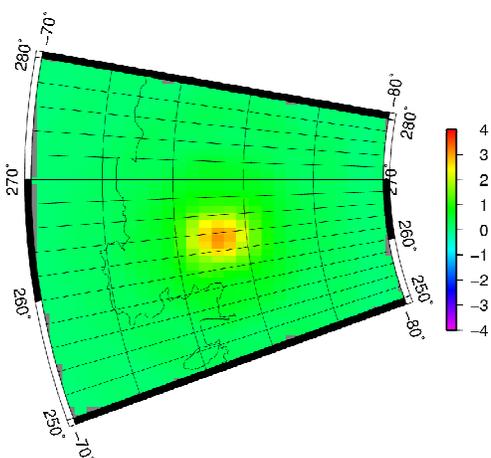
(a)



(b)



(c)



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