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Julien Serres, Stéphane Viollet

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SkyPole - A bio-inspired method to locate the north celestial pole

Thomas Kronland-Martinet^{1,2,*}, 2nd year PhD

Supervised by Stéphane Viollet¹ and David Duché², in collaboration with Julien R Serres^{1,3} and Marcel Pasquinelli²

¹Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, ISM, Marseille, France

²Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, IM2NP, Marseille, France

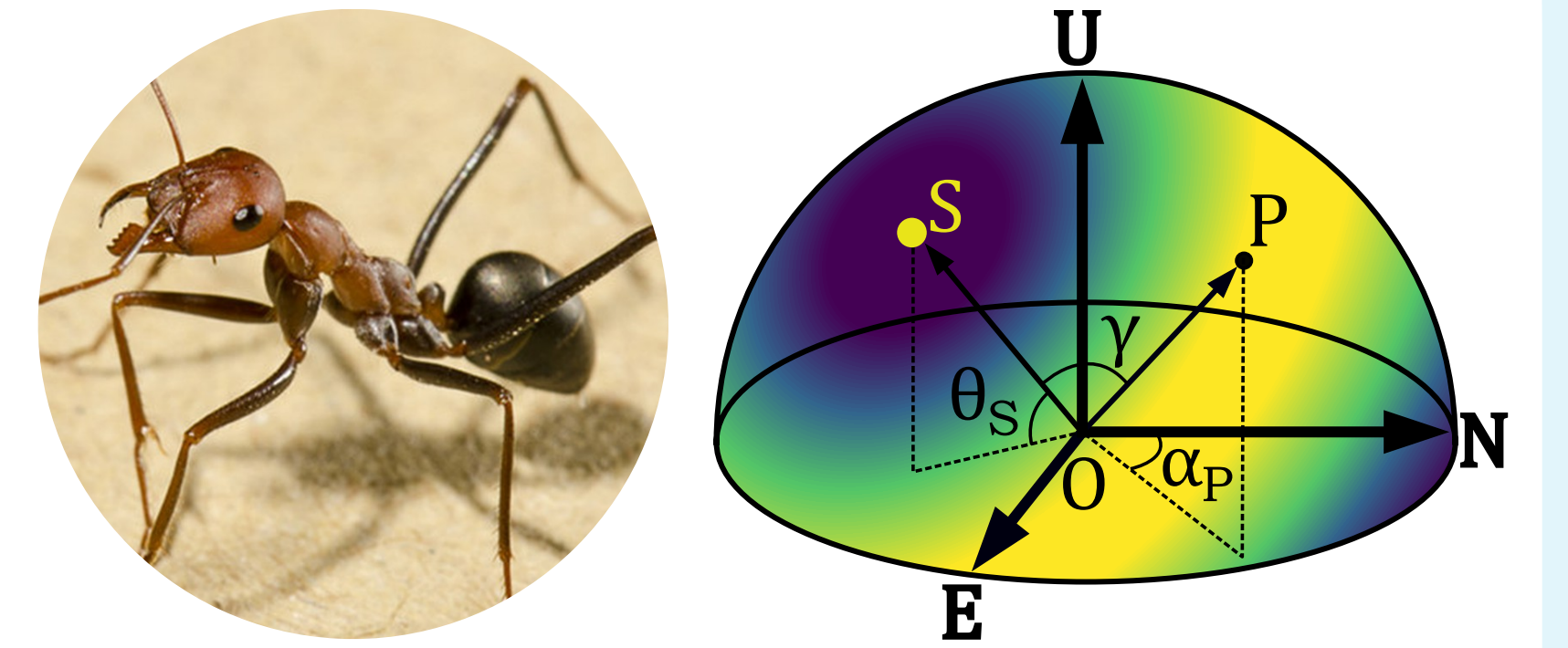
³Institut Universitaire de France (IUF), Paris, France

*thomas.kronland-martinet@univ-amu.fr



Polarization vision

- Insects such as *Cataglyphis* desert ants use **skylight polarization to navigate** [1]
- Skylight polarization can be described by its angle and degree of linear polarization (**AoLP** and **DoLP**), modeled from **Rayleigh single scattering model** [2]



Animal Navigation

Celestial rotation

- Migratory birds such as homing pigeons use the **celestial rotation as a reference for calibrating their magnetic compass** [3] [4]
- Celestial rotation helps finding the **north celestial pole**, giving access to **geographical north bearing and latitude** [5]
- Celestial rotation can be observed **during night or daytime** [6]

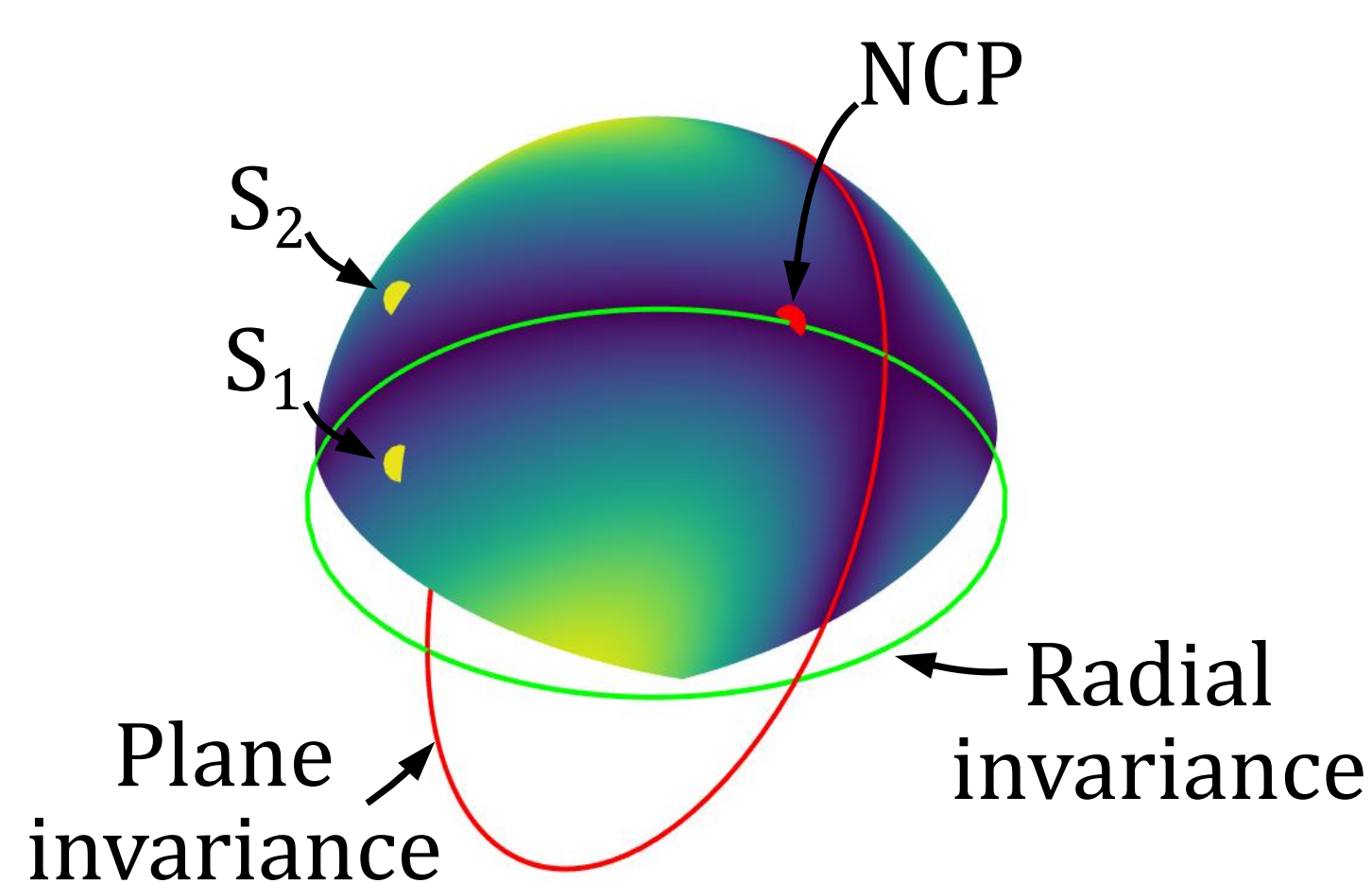


Question

How could the moving skylight polarization pattern be used to locate the north celestial pole?

Method

- DoLP has **plane and radial symmetries**
- Due to those symmetries, comparing DoLP at two moments leads to **radial and plane invariance axes**
- **North celestial pole (NCP) is always located on the radial invariance axis**

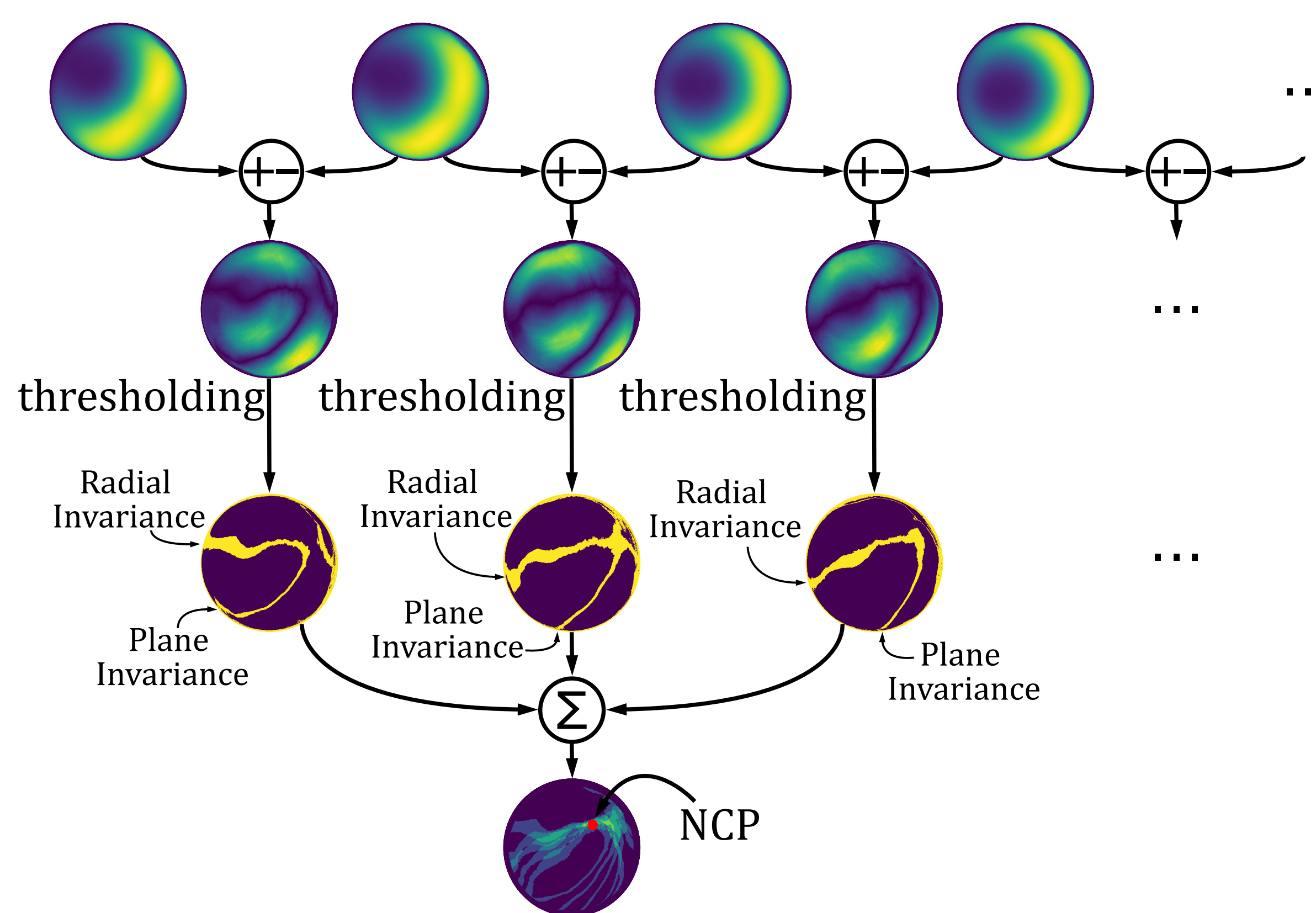


Results

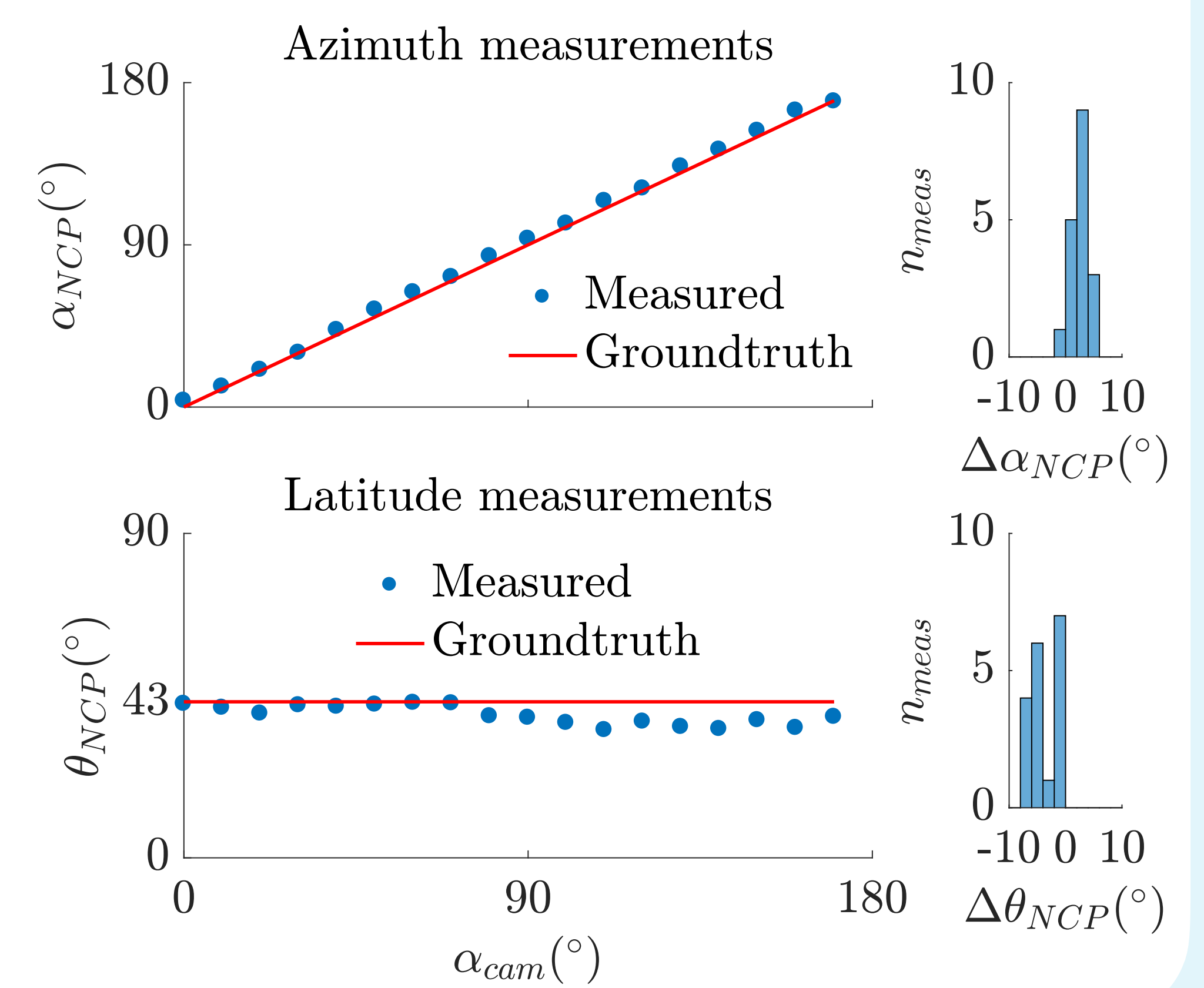
Measurement device



Method implemented on real polarimetric images



Measured north celestial pole's coordinates



Conclusion and Environmental Impact

The proposed method is, to our knowledge, the **only method providing global navigation cues based only on sky polarization images**. No ephemeris, time or GPS signal are required, and its simplicity results in **low computational cost and resources**.

References

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Image References

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 Homing Pigeon : © Tim Mossholder – Unsplash
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