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## Contribution of glacial-isostatic adjustment to the geocenter motion

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### Abstract

The geocenter motion describes the surface net-displacement of the entire solid Earth with respect to the center of mass of the entire Earth including surface masses. Therefore, it resembles an integrative quantity of surface displacement and mass redistribution inside the Earth as well as at its surface. Seasonal variations of this quantity are understood to originate mainly from mass redistribution in the water cycle. In contrast, a secular trend of the geocenter motion is possible to result also from the dynamics of the Earth's interior. One mechanism inducing a secular geocenter motion is the glacial-isostatic adjustment, describing the deformation and mass redistribution in the Earth's interior due to glaciations during the Pleistocene. Focusing on this contribution, we compute the geocenter motion from the displacement and gravity-potential fields calculated for a spherical, self-gravitating, incompressible and viscoelastic Earth model loaded by the last Pleistocene glacial cycle. We discuss the fluid-core approximation usually adopted and assess the influence of a list of modelling parameters which are the upper- and lower-mantle viscosity, lithosphere thickness, and glaciation history. We find a rather robust geocenter motion with respect to parameter variations, which is directed towards Northeast Canada and shows velocities that vary between 0.1 and 1 mm/yr depending on the adopted Earth-model and glaciation-history parameterisations.

## 25 **1 Introduction**

26 Due to increasing accuracy in determining the Earth-orientation parameters, the geocenter (GC)  
27 motion becomes more important. We define it here according to [Blewitt \(2003\)](#) as the motion  
28 of the center of figure (CF), i.e. the ‘frame defined geometrically as though the Earth’s surface  
29 were covered by a uniform, infinitely dense array of points’, against the center of mass (CM) of  
30 the entire Earth system including surface masses. Whereas the variations of surface masses in  
31 ocean, atmosphere, cryosphere and continental hydrology contribute the largest seasonal signal  
32 (e.g. [Chen et al., 1999](#)) long term variations can also be explained by mass redistributions in the  
33 Earth’s interior.

34 The GC motion can be determined from combination of observations like DORIS and LAGEOS  
35 (e.g. [Bouillé et al., 2000](#)), using GRACE tracking data ([Kang et al., 2009](#)), VLBI or GPS. A prob-  
36 lem of this combination of ground-based and satellite data is the unequal distribution of observa-  
37 tion points at the Earth’s surface. As discussed in [Blewitt \(2003\)](#), a fiducial-free network displace-  
38 ment of GPS-stations should be possible to use for geodynamic constraints, if all non-gravitational  
39 forces contaminating the motion of the satellites would be known ([Heflin et al., 1992](#)). The sea-  
40 sonal signal is determined rather accurately ([Dong et al., 2003](#); [Blewitt et al., 2001](#); [Lavallée et al.,](#)  
41 [2006](#)) and its origin from the redistribution of surface masses is understood ([Chen et al., 1999](#);  
42 [Wu et al., 2006](#)). The secular trend of the GC motion can also result from mass redistribution in  
43 the Earth’s interior. As already suggested by [Greff-Lefftz \(2000\)](#), one candidate is the glacial-  
44 isostatic adjustment (GIA) which describes the adjustment of the Earth’s interior after the last  
45 glacial cycle which terminated 8,000 yr before present.

46 Recently, [Argus \(2007\)](#) assessed the contribution of GIA to this motion to be not larger  
47 than 0.1 mm/yr. He considered the main effect of GIA on the GC motion to be the mass  
48 change due to the uplift in Laurentide, determined this as a motion of the solid-Earth system  
49 (CE) against the CM according to [Blewitt et al. \(2001\)](#) and got a velocity of 0.034 mm/yr for

50 the Earth-model/glaciation-history combination VM2/ICE-5G (Peltier, 2004). Determining the  
51 GIA-induced GC motion from the global surface displacement field, Greff-Lefftz (2000) stud-  
52 ied the dependence of GC motion on the viscosity contrast between upper and lower mantle  
53 and predicted values of up to 0.4 mm/yr, where she considered the glaciation history ICE3G  
54 (Tushingham & Peltier, 1991). Further more, applying a formal inversion, Wu *et al.* (2009) as-  
55 sessed a value of 0.7 mm/yr for the contribution of GIA.

56 Based on the numerical technique of Martinec (2000), we revisit the calculation of the GC  
57 motion for a viscoelastic non-rotating planet and present the uniqueness conditions for determining  
58 the GIA-induced deformation.

59 Furthermore, we discuss the influence of the fluid-core approximation, often applied in mod-  
60 elling of GIA. This approximation considers the influence of the fluid core as a boundary con-  
61 dition at the core-mantle boundary assuming the core as a self-gravitating fluid persisting to re-  
62 main in a hydrostatic state (Crossley & Gubbins, 1975). The presented model is applied to Earth-  
63 model/glaciation-history combinations, the influence of lower- and upper-mantle viscosity on GC  
64 motion is discussed and the influence of the chosen glaciation history is shown.

65 The study is based on the solution strategy of solving the field equations with a spectral finite  
66 element method (SFEM) suggested by Martinec (2000). There, the radial dependence of the fields  
67 are solved by finite elements whereas the lateral dependence is set up in spherical harmonics.  
68 The time dependence of the viscous flow is solved directly in the time domain omitting the usually  
69 considered normal mode theory in the Laplace domain (Wu & Peltier, 1982). Due to the chosen set  
70 up of the system of equations and in addition to boundary conditions which resemble the loading  
71 process, six uniqueness conditions have to be specified. In order to prohibit a net translation, the  
72 usual choice is to consider the CM or, alternatively, to consider the CF to be invariant with respect  
73 to the loading process. A second set of uniqueness conditions is related to the rotation of the body.  
74 Here we consider the ITRF convention of no surface net rotation (e.g. Kreemer *et al.*, 2006).

75 In this study, we aim at emphasizing a significant influence of lower-mantle viscosity on a GC

76 motion. The Earth-model/glaciation-history combination VM2/ICE-5G of [Peltier \(2004\)](#) results  
77 in a GC motion of about 0.1 mm/yr ([Argus, 2007](#)), which can partly be explained by a small  
78 lower-mantle viscosity considered in VM2. Predictions of the  $\dot{J}_2$ -term by GIA and comparison  
79 to true polar wander suggest a significant viscosity contrast between upper and lower mantle of  
80 at least one order of magnitude ([Vermeersen \*et al.\*, 1998](#)). Furthermore, [Greff-Lefftz \(2000\)](#) al-  
81 ready showed that considering the glaciation history ICE3G ([Tushingham & Peltier, 1991](#)) and a  
82 viscosity contrast of 10 between lower and upper mantle amplifies the GC motion to 0.5 mm/yr.

## 83 2 Theoretical background

84 Since the viscoelastic response of the Earth induced by glacial loading has a global feature, it is  
85 convenient to treat it in spherical coordinates and parameterize field variables in terms of surface  
86 spherical harmonics. Such a parameterization is used, for instance, in [Peltier \(1974\)](#), [Wu & Peltier](#)  
87 [\(1982\)](#) and [Martinec \(2000\)](#). Here, we introduce the representation of the Eulerian gravitational-  
88 potential increment,  $\phi^E$ , and the displacement vector,  $\mathbf{u}$ , and refer to [Martinec \(2000\)](#) for paramer-  
89 ization of other field variables. For a fixed time,  $\phi^E$  and  $\mathbf{u}$  depending on co-latitude and longitude,  
90  $\Omega = (\theta, \varphi)$ , are expanded in a series of scalar and vector spherical harmonics, respectively:

$$\begin{aligned} \phi^E(r, \Omega) &= \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \sum_{m=-j}^{m=j} F_{jm}(r) Y_{jm}(\Omega) , \\ \mathbf{u}(r, \Omega) &= \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \sum_{m=-j}^{m=j} \left[ U_{jm}(r) \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(-1)}(\Omega) + V_{jm}(r) \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(1)}(\Omega) + W_{jm}(r) \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(0)}(\Omega) \right] , \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

92 where  $0 \leq r \leq a$  with  $a$  the radius of the Earth and  $r$  the radial distance. The quantities  
93  $[F, U, V, W]_{jm}$  represent the spectral components, and  $Y_{jm}$  and  $\mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(\lambda)}$  are the respective scalar  
94 and vector spherical harmonics, see App. A. The summations spread over the angular degree  $j$   
95 and azimuthal order  $m$ . The potential is defined according to

$$96 \quad \nabla^2 \phi^E + 4\pi G \operatorname{div}(\rho_0 \mathbf{u}) = 0 . \quad (2)$$

97 The representation of  $\phi^E$  and  $\mathbf{u}$  in fully normalised spherical harmonics enables easy derivation  
98 of the equations for GC motion by applying the formalisms outlined in the theory of angular  
99 momentum (Varshalovich *et al.*, 1988). We solve the field equations directly in the time domain  
100 and do not apply any Love-number approach.

101 The degree-1 terms of the surface displacement,  $U_{1m}$  and  $V_{1m}$ , describe net translations relative  
102 to the considered reference system. Among them, the center-of-figure (CF) motion is of most  
103 interest which describes the integral motion of the surface, as if it would be equally covered by  
104 an infinite dense array of points (Blewitt, 2003). In contrast, the degree-1 term of the surface  
105 displacement,  $W_{1m}$ , describes a surface net rotation and is set to zero as one uniqueness condition.  
106 The center-of-mass (CM) motion is defined by the first moment of the mass redistribution of the  
107 whole Earth (Blewitt, 2003). The difference between CF and CM motions, the geocenter (GC)  
108 motion, is of special interest due to its invariance with respect to the chosen reference frame.

## 109 2.1 Center-of-figure motion

110 In the dynamic modelling of the motions due a surface loading, we define a reference-state con-  
111 figuration of the Earth and define a reference system describing the position of mass points in this  
112 configuration. Here, the reference state describes the equilibrium state of a hydrostatically pre-  
113 stressed Earth where the reference system coincides with the reference configuration. Therefore,  
114 CF and CM coincide with the origin of the reference system. The variation of CF with respect to  
115 the origin of the reference system is defined by the net displacement of the surface. Considering  
116 (Eq. 1), this results in

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbf{u}_{\text{cf}} &:= \frac{1}{A} \int_{\partial V} \mathbf{u} dS \\
 &= \frac{1}{4\pi} \int_{\Omega_0} \sum_{jm} \left[ U_{jm} \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(-1)} + V_{jm} \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(1)} + W_{jm} \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(0)} \right] d\Omega,
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{3}$$

118 where  $\partial V$  is the surface of the Earth and  $\Omega_0 = 4\pi$  is the full solid angle.

119 Solving the integral, the Cartesian components of this motion are

$$\begin{aligned}
 u_{\text{cf}}^x &= -\frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{3\pi}} \operatorname{Re}\{U_{11} + 2V_{11}\}, \\
 u_{\text{cf}}^y &= \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{3\pi}} \operatorname{Im}\{U_{11} + 2V_{11}\}, \\
 u_{\text{cf}}^z &= \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{1}{3\pi}} (U_{10} + 2V_{10}),
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{4}$$

121 where  $e_x$ ,  $e_y$  and  $e_z$  are the Cartesian base vectors (see App. A). Here, one has to bear in mind  
 122 that only these linear combinations describe a surface displacement, whereas the remaining parts,  
 123  $\mathbf{u}(U_{1m}, V_{1m}) - \mathbf{u}_{\text{cf}}$ , describe a deformation.

## 124 2.2 Center-of-mass motion

125 The CM motion represents the motion of the first moment. Due to MacCullagh theorem  
 126 (Munk & Macdonald, 1960), we define it here as the translation necessary to achieve the con-  
 127 figuration where the degree-1 components of the gravitational potential,  $\phi^{\text{E}}$  in (Eq. 1) vanish.  
 128 Representing the displacement vector of the center of mass,  $\mathbf{u}_{\text{cm}}$ , in Cartesian coordinates, we  
 129 obtain as outlined in App. B.1

$$\begin{aligned}
 u_{\text{cm}}^x &= \frac{3}{2g_0} \sqrt{\frac{2}{3\pi}} \operatorname{Re}\{F_{11}\} = \frac{1}{g_0} \sqrt{\frac{3}{2\pi}} \operatorname{Re}\{F_{11}\} \\
 u_{\text{cm}}^y &= -\frac{3}{2g_0} \sqrt{\frac{2}{3\pi}} \operatorname{Im}\{F_{11}\} = -\frac{1}{g_0} \sqrt{\frac{3}{2\pi}} \operatorname{Im}\{F_{11}\} \\
 u_{\text{cm}}^z &= -\frac{3}{2g_0} \sqrt{\frac{1}{3\pi}} F_{10} = -\frac{1}{2g_0} \sqrt{\frac{3}{\pi}} F_{10}
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{5}$$

131 where  $g_0$  is the surface gravity and  $F_{1m}$  are the degree-1 components of the potential increment  
 132  $\phi^{\text{E}}$  due to internal- and surface-mass redistribution.

## 133 2.3 Geocenter motion

134 The difference of CF and CM motions define the GC motion

$$\mathbf{u}_{\text{gc}} = \mathbf{u}_{\text{cf}} - \mathbf{u}_{\text{cm}}, \tag{6}$$

136 which is invariant to the chosen reference system according to the assumption made at the be-  
137 ginning of Sec. 2.1. By considering Eq.s 4 and 5, the Cartesian components of GC motion are

$$\begin{aligned}
 138 \quad u_{\text{gc}}^x &= -\frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{3\pi}} \operatorname{Re}\{U_{11} + 2V_{11} + 3F_{11}/g_0\}, \\
 139 \quad u_{\text{gc}}^y &= \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{3\pi}} \operatorname{Im}\{U_{11} + 2V_{11} + 3F_{11}/g_0\}, \\
 u_{\text{gc}}^z &= \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{1}{3\pi}} (U_{10} + 2V_{10} + 3F_{10}/g_0).
 \end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

140 Figure 1 shows the pattern of GC motion induced by GIA. The horizontal motion is directed  
141 towards Hudson Bay, the region of maximum glaciation during the last glacial cycle, causing  
142 the largest horizontal motion in the equatorial region which is directed to the north. The vertical  
143 component is directed upward in the north and downward in the south.

Fig. 1

### 144 3 Realizations of uniqueness condition

145 The field equations describing GIA induced deformations require specific uniqueness conditions  
146 (Martinec, 2000). We thus have a certain degree of freedom for choosing these conditions. In the  
147 following we discuss some possible uniqueness conditions on translation which we call realization  
148 of GIA-induced deformation.

#### 149 3.1 Center-of-mass realization

150 In this realization, we assume that the CM is fixed to the reference system for all time steps.  
151 This means, all motions determined are expressed relative to CM. Considering in addition to the  
152 volumetric density,  $\rho$ , the surface-mass load change,  $\sigma$ , the first moment which we require to  
153 vanish consists of two parts:

$$154 \quad M_\sigma + M_\rho = \int_{\partial V} \sigma \mathbf{r} dS + \int_V \rho \mathbf{u} dV = 0. \tag{8}$$

155 In this approximation,  $\sigma(\mathbf{r} + \mathbf{u}) \simeq \sigma \mathbf{r}$  is assumed, which means that the displacement of the  
156 surface mass is not considered in  $M_\sigma$ . This is acceptable because the displacement is rather small



157 in comparison to the Earth's radius.

158 Considering material incompressibility, this integral can be represented by the spectral compo-  
159 nents of displacement and the spectral components of the load,  $\Sigma_{1m}$ , for degree 1:

$$160 \quad \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{3}} a^3 \Sigma_{1m} + \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{3}} \int_R \rho(r) r^2 [U_{1m}(r) + 2V_{1m}(r)] dr = 0, \quad (9)$$

161 where  $\rho(r)$  is the density distribution in the reference state and the integral covers the Earth's  
162 interior.

### 163 3.2 Center-of-figure realization

164 In this realization, the integral over the surface displacement has to vanish:

$$165 \quad \int_{\partial V} \mathbf{u} dS = 0 \quad (10)$$

166 Solving this integral, the condition is fulfilled if

$$167 \quad U_{1m}(a) + 2V_{1m}(a) = 0 \quad (11)$$

168 for all time steps.

### 169 3.3 Center-of-deformation realization

170 A further uniqueness condition is realised if only mass transport inside the Earth's body is consid-  
171 ered, which is called the center of internal Earth, CE (Blewitt, 2003). Here, the integral over the  
172 mass displacement inside the Earth has to vanish. This means, only  $M_\rho$  in (Eq. 8) is considered  
173 to vanish,

$$174 \quad M_\rho = \int_V \rho \mathbf{u} dV = 0, \quad (12)$$

175 which results in

$$176 \quad \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{3}} \int_R \rho(r) r^2 [U_{1m}(r) + 2V_{1m}(r)] dr = 0. \quad (13)$$

177 In this case, the CM and the CF motions do not vanish.

178 Figure 2 shows  $\mathbf{u}_{cf}$ ,  $\mathbf{u}_{cm}$  and  $\mathbf{u}_{gc}$  for the CE realization during the whole last glacial cycle. We  
 179 considered the LM+ model, which consists of a low viscous upper mantle,  $\eta_{UM} = 5 \times 10^{20}$  Pa s,  
 180 and a high viscous lower mantle,  $\eta_{LM} = 1 \times 10^{22}$  Pa s. The advantage of this realization is, that we Fig. 2  
 181 are able to distinguish between the contribution of surface-mass changes, which are represented  
 182 by the CM motion and that due to the change of the Earth's shape represented by the CF motion. It  
 183 becomes evident that, after deglaciation, the component of CM is rather small which was already  
 184 discussed by Argus (2007). The contributions to the present time velocity of the GC motion are  
 185 presented in Tab. 1 and show that the oceanic water redistribution following the GIA-induced  
 186 changing geoid contributes less than 0.05 mm/yr (2nd row in table). Its direction points towards  
 187 the north Atlantic for the considered model. The predicted GC motion at present day is of the Tab. 1  
 188 order of 1 mm/yr and, therefore, should be considered in kinematics of the Earth's surface.

### 189 3.4 Invariance of geocenter motion

190 The geocenter (GC) motion is a relative motion which is invariant against a coordinate trans-  
 191 formation. This invariance is proofed numerically by running the same loading scenario in the  
 192 different realizations. We analyse the difference between the surface velocity field in the CM and  
 193 CF realization considering the same loading scenario. The velocity field

$$194 \quad \mathbf{u}_{gc}(\Omega) = \mathbf{u}^{CM}(\Omega) - \mathbf{u}^{CF}(\Omega) \quad (14)$$

195 describes the geocenter motion. Here,  $\mathbf{u}^{CM}$  is the surface velocity field determined in the CM  
 196 realization and  $\mathbf{u}^{CF}$  is the surface velocity field determined in the CF realization by applying (Eq.  
 197 1), respectively. This motion should be the same as the motion defined by applying (Eq. 7) in  
 198 any realization. Fig. 3 shows the differences which are, as expected, negligible with respect to the  
 199 motion itself. Fig. 3

### 200 3.5 Liquid-core approximation

201 In an often considered approximation, the solution domain is restricted to the viscoelastic litho-  
202 sphere and mantle, and the core is considered as an inviscid sphere with a uniform density, deter-  
203 mined such that it gives the same gravity as the real Earth's core.

204 According to [Tromp & Mitrovica \(1999\)](#), the interaction between core and mantle results in  
205 a specified relation between the gravity potential at the core–mantle boundary (CMB) and the  
206 pressure perturbation due to the normal displacement of the CMB. Then, the solution domain,  $V$ ,  
207 can be restricted to the Earth's crust and mantle, and the influence of the core is considered as  
208 boundary condition.

209 To consider this approximation in the CM realization, (Eq. 8) is replaced by the respective first  
210 moments of the surface mass, the mass displacements inside  $V$  and the first moment of the liquid  
211 core:

$$212 \quad M_{\sigma} + M_{\rho} + M_{lq} = 0 \quad (15)$$

213 The first moment of the liquid core motion is according to App. B.2

$$214 \quad M_{lq} = \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{3}} r_C^3 \bar{\rho}_C \sum_{m=-1}^{+1} U_{1m}(r_C^+) e_m, \quad (16)$$

215 where  $r_C$  is the core radius,  $\bar{\rho}_C$  is the average core density,  $U_{1m}(r_C^+)$  are the displacements above  
216 the CMB and  $e_m$  are the spherical contravariant base vectors.

217 In order to keep the reference gravity at the surface,  $\bar{\rho}_C$  has to be the volume average of the  
218 density stratification inside the core. This means that the buoyancy force at the CMB, which is  
219 determined from  $[\bar{\rho}_C - \rho(r_C^+)] (\mathbf{u}^+ \cdot \mathbf{e}_r)$ , is systematically increased by 20 %, if we compare  
220  $\bar{\rho}_C = 10952 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ , the density below the CMB inferred from PREM,  $\rho(r_C^-) = 9903 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ ,  
221 and that above the CMB,  $\rho(r_C^+) = 5550 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ .

222 The consequences for GIA should be small, but a systematic deviation can be expected. We  
223 analysed the effect on the displacement rates and gravity change at present day by comparing a

224 model with viscoelastic core structure, VVE, with a model where the core is included as a liquid-  
 225 core boundary condition, VLQ. For VVE, we considered a standard viscosity stratification LM+,  
 226 the ICE-5G glaciation history and, for the viscoelastic core, the PREM density structure. For  
 227 numerical reasons, we cannot model a purely Newtonian fluid and assume the outer-core shear  
 228 modulus to be the same as the inner-core shear modulus,  $\mu_{OC} = 7.036 \times 10^{10}$  N/m<sup>2</sup>. Based on  
 229 the analysis of the free-core nutation, the inner-core viscosity lies in between  $10^{12}$  and  $10^{17}$  Pa s  
 230 [Greff-Lefftz \*et al.\* \(2000\)](#). Again for numerical reasons and for our main interest in the influence  
 231 of the density contrast at the CMB, we assume the viscosity in the whole core to be constant with  
 232  $\eta_C = 5 \times 10^{19}$  Pa s. The resulting Maxwell time,  $\eta_{OC}/\mu_{OC} = 22$  yr, is rather small and we expect  
 233 the deviation from an inviscid fluid to be negligible.

234 Figure 4 shows the relative deviation between a model assuming a viscoelastic stratified core  
 235 and a model assuming a homogeneous fluid core, where the effect on vertical, horizontal and grav-  
 236 ity displacement rates at present time are plotted as function of degree and order. The considered  
 237 realization of these models is the CF system. The relative difference is calculated according to

$$238 \quad \delta = \frac{|A_{jm} - B_{jm}|}{\frac{1}{2}|A_{jm} + B_{jm}|}, \quad (17)$$

239 where  $A_{jm}$ ,  $B_{jm}$  are the respective spectral amplitudes of the two models.

Fig. 4

240 For low degrees, the largest deviation of almost 5 % in the vertical displacement rate appears at  
 241 the term  $(j, m) = (3, 0)$ . In contrast, the horizontal displacement rate shows its largest deviation  
 242 at the term  $(4, 3)$ . For higher degrees, the deviation is about 0.2 to 0.6 % with further peaks of  
 243 more than 1 % deviation at the terms  $(6, 6)$  and  $(9, 7)$ . The differences at degree 1 are about 3 to  
 244 4 %.

245 In a further run, we verify that a low-viscous core mimics the behaviour of a fluid core. We  
 246 assume a viscoelastic homogeneous core with  $\eta_C = 5 \times 10^{19}$  Pa s and the average density of  $\bar{\rho}_C$  and  
 247 compare the present day spectral rates with those of the model run with a fluid core approximation.

248 The analysis presented in Fig. 5 shows that the fluid core approximation accounts for an error of Fig. 5

249 less than 1 % for all spectral degrees and surface components.

250 This enables us to use Fig. 4 to determine the accuracy if a fluid core approximation, where a  
251 homogeneous core density has to be assumed, replaces a realistically stratified core. The error of  
252 the GIA induced geocenter motion determined with a fluid core approximation is less than 5 %.

## 253 4 Influence of mantle viscosity

254 Now, the influence of material parameters in the Earth's interior on the induced geocenter motion  
255 is discussed. We concentrate on the upper- and lower-mantle viscosity as well as the lithosphere  
256 thickness and vary one parameter at a time keeping the others constant at the reference values of  
257 90 km thick lithosphere,  $5 \times 10^{20}$  Pa s upper-mantle viscosity and  $1 \times 10^{22}$  Pa s lower-mantle  
258 viscosity (e.g. [Wolf et al., 2006](#)). The loading model ICE-5G is considered unchanged for all the  
259 model runs.

Fig. 6

260 In the first experiment, we vary the lower-mantle viscosity between  $5 \times 10^{19}$  Pa s and  $10^{25}$  Pa s.  
261 This range is much wider than the expected average viscosity of the lower mantle which varies  
262 between  $10^{21}$  Pa s and  $10^{23}$  Pa s (e.g. [Steinberger & Holme, 2008](#)). The consideration of a broader  
263 range of lower-mantle viscosity enables a better discussion of the physical behaviour. Fig. 6a  
264 shows the variation of the geocenter motion with lower-mantle viscosity, where, on the left, the  
265 geographical position of the direction of the velocity vector is plotted and, on the right, the absolute  
266 rate as a function of lower mantle viscosity. At  $10^{21}$  Pa s, we find a minimum value of about  
267 0.1 mm/yr. A maximum value of 0.9 mm/yr is reached at  $10^{22}$  Pa s. If the lower-mantle viscosity is  
268 further increased, the velocity reduces and reaches an asymptotic value of 0.5 mm/yr for viscosities  
269 larger than  $10^{23}$  Pa s. This asymptote is placed at the geographical point 65 °N/72 °W. For these  
270 values of lower-mantle viscosities, the total viscous flow is confined to the upper mantle and the  
271 lower mantle behaves like an elastic continuum. In contrast to the strongly varying amplitude of  
272 the velocity vector by almost one order in magnitude, which was already discussed by [Greff-Lefitz](#)

273 (2000), the direction is rather stable and varies by 2000 km. Only for unrealistically small viscosity  
274 values of less than  $10^{20}$  Pa s, the direction changes drastically. Here, we found a turning of the  
275 direction to the southern hemisphere (not shown).

276 The influence of upper mantle viscosity is discussed in the second numerical experiment shown  
277 in Fig. 6b, where the upper-mantle viscosity varies between  $10^{20}$  Pa s and  $10^{22}$  Pa s. As a result,  
278 the influence is smaller than for the lower-mantle viscosity. Again, we find a first minimum at  
279  $2 \times 10^{20}$  Pa s at 0.6 mm/yr and a maximum at  $6 \times 10^{20}$  Pa s which resembles the reference value.  
280 For higher viscosities, we observe a linear reduction with the logarithm of the viscosity, where at  
281  $10^{22}$  Pa s a value of 0.5 mm/yr is reached. Concerning the direction variations of the velocity, we  
282 find a much smaller variability than for the lower-mantle viscosity at  $65^\circ\text{N}/69^\circ\text{W}$ . With increasing  
283 upper-mantle viscosity, we observe a slight movement of the velocity vector to the East.

284 The smallest influence on the position and magnitude of the velocity shows the lithosphere  
285 thickness (Fig. 6c) where almost no variation of the direction is observable. The absolute velocity  
286 decreases linearly from 1.05 mm/yr at 50 km thickness to 0.75 mm/yr at 130 km thickness.

287 Summarising, we find, that due to the long spatial wavelength of the degree-1 deformation, the  
288 influence of lower-mantle viscosity is largest, whereas the upper-mantle viscosity and lithosphere  
289 thickness are only of minor influence on the velocity magnitude of the geocenter motion, and the  
290 influence on the direction of the velocity is negligible. Likewise, lower-mantle viscosity larger  
291 than  $10^{23}$  Pa s shows a strong influence on the magnitude of velocity, but only moderate effect on  
292 its direction.

## 293 **5 Influence of glaciation history**

294 A further factor influencing the glacially induced geocenter motion is the history of the three main  
295 ice sheets during the Pleistocene glaciations, which are Laurentide, Fennoscandia and Antarctica.  
296 We use the reference viscosity model, LM+, discussed in the previous section. The glaciation

297 history ICE-5G will be rescaled by different weighting of the individual areas of glaciation.

298 We perform two tests. First, we keep the total mass of ice constant, but vary the mass of one of  
299 the main areas, Laurentia, Fennoscandia and Antarctica, between fraction  $x = 0.85$  and 1.15 in  
300 steps of 5 %. To do this, the load thicknesses are multiplied pointwise with  $x$ , and the thicknesses  
301 of all other areas are multiplied by  $y$ , chosen such that the total ice mass is conserved:

$$M_{\text{Laur}} + M_{\text{rest}} = M_{\text{total}} ,$$

$$302 \quad M'_{\text{Laur}} = x M_{\text{Laur}} , \quad (18)$$

$$\Rightarrow y = \frac{M_{\text{total}} - x M_{\text{Laur}}}{M_{\text{rest}}} .$$

303 Figure 7a shows the geocenter motion for variations in ice mass of Laurentia, Fennoscandia and Fig. 7  
304 Antarctica which is rather stable located north of Hudson Strait. The influence of Laurentia is  
305 largest and varies between 0.75 and 1 mm/yr if the fraction,  $x$ , varies between 0.85 and 1.15.  
306 The influence of Fennoscandia is smaller and that of Antarctica is of opposite sign and of similar  
307 magnitude like Laurentia. The opposite sign is due to the location of the ice sheet on the southern  
308 hemisphere. Therefore, a larger rebound signal on the southern hemisphere reduces the geocenter  
309 velocity, whereas the vector direction is less influenced.

310 In a second experiment (Fig. 7b), the total mass of the ice is not conserved when varying the  
311 thicknesses of the individual areas of Pleistocene glaciation. But, the surface mass of ocean and  
312 ice remains conserved by applying the sea-level equation in all calculations (e.g. Farrell & Clark,  
313 1976). Here, the direction varies much less for varying  $x$  of Laurentide due to the fact, that the  
314 mass loss or gain of this dominating ice sheet is not distributed to the remaining ice sheets.

315 In order to investigate the sensitivity to the considered glaciation history we replace the Antarc-  
316 tic glaciation part in in ICE-5G by the glaciation history IJ05 (Ivins & James, 2005). To discuss  
317 this feature, we also increase the range of load fraction for ICE-5G Antarctica from 0.5 to 2. For  
318 the IJ05 scenario, we get a geocenter motion shifted 10 °S with a velocity of 0.75 mm/yr as in-  
319 dicated by the yellow diamond in Fig. 7b. This value is similar to the scenario, where the load  
320 fraction of Antarctica is increased by a factor of 1.5 or for the direction an increase of the load

321 by a factor of 2. This result is contradicting, because the maximum mass of IJ05 is by a factor of  
322 2 smaller than the mass of ICE-5G. Considering the history of deglaciation (Fig. 8), it becomes  
323 evident, that the uplift signal due to IJ05 is more pronounced because the melting terminated much  
324 later in history and so, at present time the relaxation process is much stronger than for ICE-5G.

325 So, the influence of the loading history is of same importance as that of the viscosity structure. Fig. 8

326 Repeating this study with the viscosity model VM2, which shows an average viscosity in the  
327 lower mantle of  $2 \times 10^{21}$  Pa s, we find a similar variability like for viscosity model LM+ (Fig. 9).

328 The pattern are similar, but the absolute velocity is reduced to 0.2 mm/yr and the velocity direction  
329 is shifted to the south as expected from Fig. 6a.

## 330 6 Conclusion

331 We discussed the influence of Earth and loading parameters for the glacially induced geocenter  
332 motion which is defined in accordance with Blewitt (2003) as the motion of the center of figure  
333 relative to the center of mass. We revisited the theoretical background, which we had to reformulate  
334 slightly for the solution method adopted and verified numerically the invariance of the  
335 geocenter motion with respect to the chosen uniqueness conditions in our numerical formulation.  
336 The consideration of the fluid-core as a boundary condition resulting from the static approximation  
337 was checked to be acceptable for the degree-1 component in the solutions showing a systematic  
338 deviation of less than 5 %.

339 The second focus was to assess the variability of the geocenter motion with respect to Earth-  
340 model parameters. We showed that the lower-mantle viscosity has the strongest influence resulting  
341 in a variation of the velocity amplitude of almost one order in magnitude which confirms the results  
342 of Greff-Lefitz (2000). The influence of the upper-mantle viscosity and lithosphere thickness  
343 was comparable small. For all parameterizations, we found a rather robust direction of the GIA-  
344 induced geocenter motion pointing towards east of Hudson Bay.



345 The assumption that the glaciation history is of similar importance was investigated. We found  
346 that by only weighting the areas of glaciation differently, the variability of the velocity is moderate  
347 and largest for the Laurentide ice sheet.

348 A much stronger influence was found when changing the time evolution of the deglaciation.  
349 We showed that for the glaciation history IJ05 for Antarctica, the geocenter motion is larger than  
350 due to the Antarctic part of ICE-5G, because the former model shows later deglaciation, and thus  
351 a stronger GIA signal at present time although its mass at last glacial maximum is half of that for  
352 ICE-5G.

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359 (Wessel & Smith, 1991) were employed for preparation of the figures.

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## 435 **A Generalization of spherical harmonics**

436 Due to the weak formulation of glacial-isostatic adjustment in the theory of [Martinec \(1999\)](#), the  
437 spectral base functions follow the quantum mechanic norm, e.g. outlined in [Varshalovich \*et al.\*](#)  
438 [\(1988\)](#) [in the following abbreviated by *Varsh. Sect. (Eq.)*]. Their main features are the normalisa-  
439 tion, (Varsh. 5.1.3 (6)),

$$440 \int_{\Omega_0} Y_{j m} Y_{k n} d\Omega = \delta_{jk} \delta_{mn} , \quad (19)$$

441 where  $\delta_{jk}$  is the Kronecker-delta, and the Condon-Shortley phase, meaning that  $Y_{j 0}$  are real and,  
442 for the conjugate complex holds  $Y_{j m}^*(\vartheta, \varphi) = Y_{j m}(\vartheta, -\varphi) = (-1)^m Y_{j -m}(\vartheta, \varphi)$  (Varsh. 5.1.3  
443 (11)).

444 The transformation from complex coefficients,  $A_{j m}$ , for the representation of a scalar field in  
445 fully normalized spherical harmonics considered here, into real Stokes' coefficients,  $C_{j m}$  and  $S_{j m}$ ,  
446 widely used in geodesy (e.g. [Heiskanen & Moritz, 1967](#)), follows according to [Pěč & Martinec](#)  
447 [\(1982\)](#)

$$448 \begin{aligned} A_{j 0} &= \sqrt{4\pi} C_{j m} , \\ A_{j m} &= (-1)^m \sqrt{2\pi} [C_{j m} - i S_{j m}] , \quad m > 0 , \\ A_{j -m} &= (-1)^m A_{j m}^* , \quad m > 0 . \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

449 The generalization of the scalar spherical harmonics to their vector forms follows [Martinec](#)  
450 [\(2000, Eq. b3\)](#),

$$451 \begin{aligned} \mathbf{S}_{j m}^{(-1)} &:= e_r Y_{j m} , \\ \mathbf{S}_{j m}^{(+1)} &:= \nabla_{\Omega} Y_{j m} , \\ \mathbf{S}_{j m}^{(0)} &:= (e_r \times \nabla_{\Omega}) Y_{j m} , \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

452 which slightly differ from the definitions in Varsh. 7.3.1 (6). Conversion into the latter follows

453 according to

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbf{Y}_{jm}^{(-1)} &= \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(-1)}, \\
 \mathbf{Y}_{jm}^{(+1)} &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{j(j+1)}} \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(+1)}, \\
 \mathbf{Y}_{jm}^{(0)} &= \frac{-i}{\sqrt{j(j+1)}} \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(0)}.
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{22}$$

455 The advantage of (Eq. 21) is that all three vector spherical harmonics transform according to

$$\mathbf{S}_{j-m}^{(\mu)} = (-1)^m [\mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(\mu)}]^*, \quad \mu = -1, 0, 1,
 \tag{23}$$

457 and therefore the components,  $F, U, V, W$ , of (Eq. 1) in the same way.

458 The covariant base vectors,  $e_\mu, \mu = \{-1, 0, 1\}$ , of these functions are defined like in Varsh.

459 1.1.3 (20), and the contravariant spherical coordinates,  $x^\mu$ , are transformed into Cartesian coordi-

460 nates according to

$$\begin{aligned}
 x &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (x^{-1} - x^{+1}), \\
 y &= \frac{-i}{\sqrt{2}} (x^{-1} + x^{+1}), \\
 z &= x^0.
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{24}$$

## 462 B Proofs

463 In this appendix some derivations are presented.

### 464 B.1 Proof of Eq. 5

465 The CM motion describes the shift of the coordinate system such that the degree-1 component of

466 the gravitational potential  $\phi = \phi_0 + \phi_1$  vanishes in the shifted coordinate system. In other words,

467 the center-of-mass coincides with the origin of the shifted coordinate system.

468 *Proof.* Representing the external gravitational potential by

$$\phi(r, \Omega) = \sum_{jm} F_{jm}^{\text{ext}} \left(\frac{a}{r}\right)^{j+1} Y_{jm}(\Omega)
 \tag{25}$$

470 and considering the continuity of the potential at the Earth's surface,

$$471 \quad F_{jm}^{\text{ext}} = F_{jm}(a^-), \quad (26)$$

472 the potential in a shifted coordinate system described by a pure translation,  $(d, \Omega_d)$ , can be ex-  
473 pressed by

$$474 \quad \phi(r_2, \Omega_2) = \sum_{jm} F_{jm}(a^-) a^{j+1} \frac{1}{r_2^{j+1}} Y_{jm}(\Omega_2), \quad (27)$$

475 where, Varsh. 5.17.6 (36),

$$476 \quad \frac{1}{r_2^{j+1}} Y_{jm}(\Omega_2) = \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{(2j)!}} \sum_{\substack{j_1, j_2=0 \\ j_1-j_2=j}} \sqrt{\frac{(2j_1)!}{(2j_2+1)!}} \frac{d^{j_2}}{r_1^{j_1+1}} \\ \times \sum_{m_1, m_2} C_{j_1 m_1 j_2 m_2}^{jm} Y_{j_1 m_1}(\Omega_1) Y_{j_2 m_2}(\Omega_d). \quad (28)$$

477  $d$  is the amplitude of shift and  $\Omega_d$  is the angle of shift. Rearranging Eq.s 27 and 28, we find

$$478 \quad \phi(r_2, \Omega_2) = \sum_{j_1 m_1} V_{j_1 m_1} Y_{j_1 m_1}(\Omega_1), \quad (29)$$

479 where

$$480 \quad V_{j_1 m_1} = \sum_{jm} F_{jm} \frac{a^{j+1}}{r_2^{j+1}} \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{(2j)!}} \sum_{\substack{j_2=0 \\ j_2=j_1-j}} \sqrt{\frac{(2j_1)!}{(2j_2+1)!}} d^{j_2} \sum_{m_2} C_{j_1 m_1 j_2 m_2}^{jm} Y_{j_2 m_2}(\Omega_d). \quad (30)$$

481 The CM motion is determined by vanishing  $V_{1m_1}$ . Since  $j_1 = 1$  and  $j_2$  is non-negative,  $j$  equals  
482 0 or 1. Hence

$$\begin{aligned} V_{1m_1} &= \sum_{jm} F_{jm} a^{j-1} \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{(2j)!}} \sum_{\substack{j_2=0 \\ j_2=1-j}} \sqrt{\frac{2!}{(2j_2+1)!}} d^{j_2} \sum_{m_2} C_{j_1 m_1 1-j m_2}^{jm} Y_{j_2 m_2}(\Omega_d) \\ &= F_{00} \frac{1}{a} \sqrt{4\pi} \sqrt{\frac{2!}{3!}} d^1 \sum_{m_2} C_{1 m_1 1 m_2}^{00} Y_{1 m_2}(\Omega_d) \\ &\quad + \sum_m F_{1m} \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{1!}} \sqrt{\frac{2!}{1!}} C_{1 m_1 00}^{1m} Y_{00}(\Omega_d) \\ &= F_{00} \frac{d}{a} \frac{\sqrt{4\pi}}{3} (-1)^{m_1+1} Y_{1-m_1}(\Omega_d) + F_{1m_1}. \end{aligned}$$

483 (31)

In the last expression, we replaced the Clebsch–Gordan coefficients

$$C_{1m_1 1m_2}^{00} = (-1)^{m_1+1} \frac{\delta_{m_1-m_2}}{\sqrt{3}} \quad (\text{Varsh. 8.5.1 (1)}), \quad (32)$$

$$C_{1m_1 00}^{1m} = \delta_{m_1 m} \quad (\text{Varsh. 8.5.1 (2)}), \quad (33)$$

484 and  $Y_{00} = 1/\sqrt{4\pi}$ . In view of Eqs. 31 and the reference potential of the Earth,  $F_{00} = \sqrt{4\pi} g_0 a$ ,  
485 the condition  $V_{1m_1} = 0$  reads as

$$486 \quad \frac{F_{1m_1}}{g_0} = \frac{4\pi}{3} d (-1)^{m_1} Y_{1-m_1}(\Omega_d), \quad (34)$$

487 where  $m_1 = +1, 0, -1$ . Moreover considering the explicit forms of  $Y_{1m}$ , Varsh. 5.13.1 (2), the  
488 contravariant spherical coordinates, Varsh. 1.1.3 (18), of the CM motion have the form

$$\begin{aligned} u_{\text{cm}}^{+1} &= -\sqrt{\frac{1}{2}} d \sin \theta e^{-i\phi} = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{3}{\pi}} \frac{F_{1-1}}{g_0}, \\ 489 \quad u_{\text{cm}}^0 &= d \cos \theta = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{3}{\pi}} \frac{F_{10}}{g_0}, \\ u_{\text{cm}}^{-1} &= \sqrt{\frac{1}{2}} d \sin \theta e^{i\phi} = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{3}{\pi}} \frac{F_{11}}{g_0}, \end{aligned} \quad (35)$$

490 where the second equalities follow from the condition (Eq. 34). With  $F_{1-1} = -F_{11}^*$  and the  
491 relation between the Cartesian and contravariant spherical coordinates (Eq. 24), the expressions  
492 (Eq. 5) are obtained.

493 □

## 494 B.2 Proof of Eq. 16

495 The derivation for the first moment of a deformable, incompressible and homogeneous fluid fol-  
496 lows Martinec & Hagedoorn (2005):

497 *Proof.* The first moment of the core is considered in the Eulerian domain and is split into the  
498 integral over the reference volume and the additional part due to the undulation of the CMB:

$$499 \quad \mathbf{M}_{1q} = \int_{V^0} \rho^E(t) \mathbf{r} dV + \int_{V(t)-V^0} \rho^E(t) \mathbf{r} dV \quad (36)$$



500 The second integral is approximated by a surface integral,  $\int_{V(t)-V^0} dV = \int_{\partial V^0} (\mathbf{n}^0 \cdot \mathbf{u}) dS$ , which  
 501 is correct in first order of  $\|\mathbf{n}^0 \cdot \mathbf{u}\|$ . Considering material incompressibility,  $\rho^E(t) = \rho_C$ ,  $\mathbf{n}^0 = \mathbf{e}_r$   
 502 and  $V^0 = V^C$  we get

$$503 \quad \mathbf{M}_{lq} = \int_{V^C} \rho_C \mathbf{r} dV + \int_{\partial V^C} \rho_C (\mathbf{e}_r \cdot \mathbf{u}) \mathbf{r} dS . \quad (37)$$

504 The first term describes the momentum in the reference state and is zero for a homogeneous fluid.

505 In the second term, we identify

$$506 \quad (\mathbf{e}_r \cdot \mathbf{u}) \mathbf{r} = r \sum_{jm} U_{jm} \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(-1)} , \quad (38)$$

507 consider  $dS = r_C^2 d\Omega$  and apply the solution of  $\int_{\Omega_0} \mathbf{S}_{jm}^{(-1)} d\Omega$ , Varsh. 7.3.12 (118), in order to  
 508 achieve Eq. 16. □

Model	Cartesian comp. (mm/yr)			Geogr. components		
	$u_x$	$u_y$	$u_z$	Lon. (°E)	Lat. (°N)	$ \dot{\mathbf{u}} $ (mm/yr)
CF	0.157472	-0.346818	0.840379	-65.5797	65.618	0.922668
CM	0.0242489	-0.0121181	0.0346408	-26.5531	51.9549	0.0439868
GC	0.133173	-0.334511	0.805666	-68.2919	65.9205	0.882457

Table 1: Present day center-of-figure (CF) velocity, center-of-mass (CM) velocity and geocenter (GC) velocity in the CE realization.

Figure 1: Surface-displacement velocities due to a center-of-figure motion of 0.8 mm/yr towards Hudson Bay.

Figure 2: Evolution of geocenter, center-of-figure and center-of-mass motion in the CE realization as function of time before present (BP).

Figure 3: Difference in determining the geocenter motion using the velocity fields in the two realizations by applying Eq. 14, and calculating directly from degree 1 by applying Eq. 7. In left panel, colors indicate the vertical component and, in right panel, colors indicate the horizontal amplitude. The maximum deviation is  $-0.0013$  mm/yr in the vertical velocity and  $0.0002$  mm/yr in the horizontal amplitude.

Figure 4: Relative difference,  $\delta$ , of rates in vertical (black), horizontal (red), potential (blue) amplitude between model VVE and model VLQ. Abscissa is multi-index of  $(j, m)$ . Associated Legendre coefficients are denoted by numbers and vertical lines: The numbers from 1 to 10 denote the respective Legendre degree,  $j$ . The order increases from  $m = 0$  to  $j$  starting at the vertical bar to the left of the respective  $j$ .

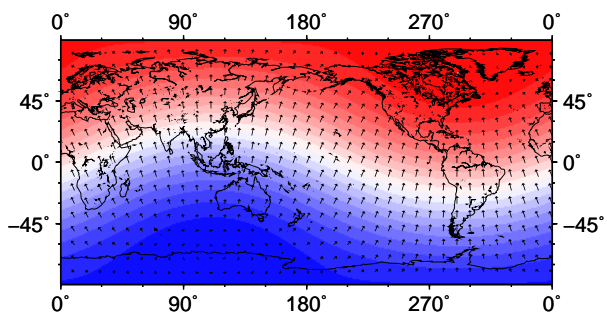
Figure 5: Relative difference,  $\delta$ , of rates between the model considering the core as a homogeneous viscoelastic continuum and model VLQ. For details see Fig. 4.

Figure 6: Dependence of geocenter motion on earth-model parameters: a) motion for different lower-mantle viscosities, b) motion for different upper-mantle viscosities, c) motion for different lithosphere thicknesses. Left panels show the direction of the velocity vector projected on the Earth's surface and right panels show their amplitude, respectively.

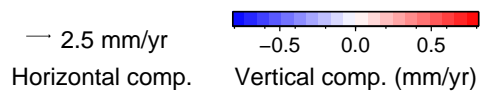
Figure 7: Dependence of geocenter motion on different loading scenarios: a) motion for different load fractions of ICE-5G where the total mass is conserved, b) motion for different load fractions where the total mass is not conserved. Left and right panels are like in Fig. 6. In b), dashed green denotes motions due to the extended variations of ICE-5G to 0.5 to 2 for Antarctica and the yellow diamond indicates the geocenter motion where ICE5G in Antarctica is replaced by IJ05 (Ivins & James, 2005).

Figure 8: Loading history for Antarctica due to IJ05 expressed as equivalent sea level and ice mass relative to present-day ice coverage. Dashed line shows Antarctic contribution due to ICE-5G.

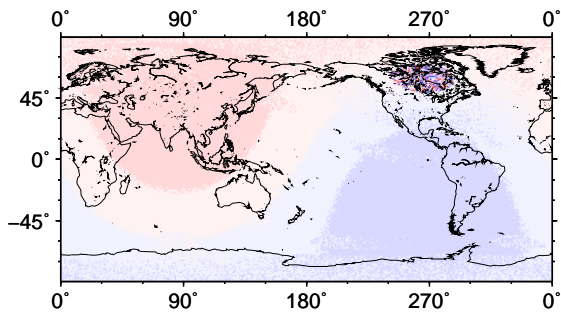
Figure 9: Dependence of geocenter motion on different loading scenarios but for the viscosity model VM2 with the lower mantle viscosity of  $2 \times 10^{21}$  Pa s. For details see Fig. 7.



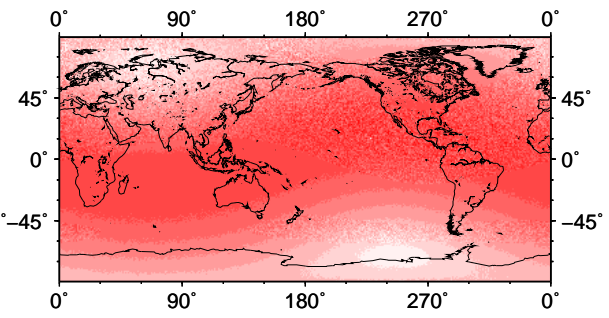
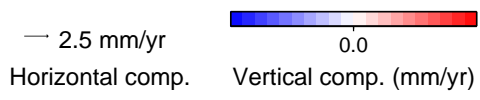
Present-day velocities:







Present-day velocities:



Present-day horizontal velocity:

