St. Patrick's Day Storm: an analysis of the magnetic field fluctuations

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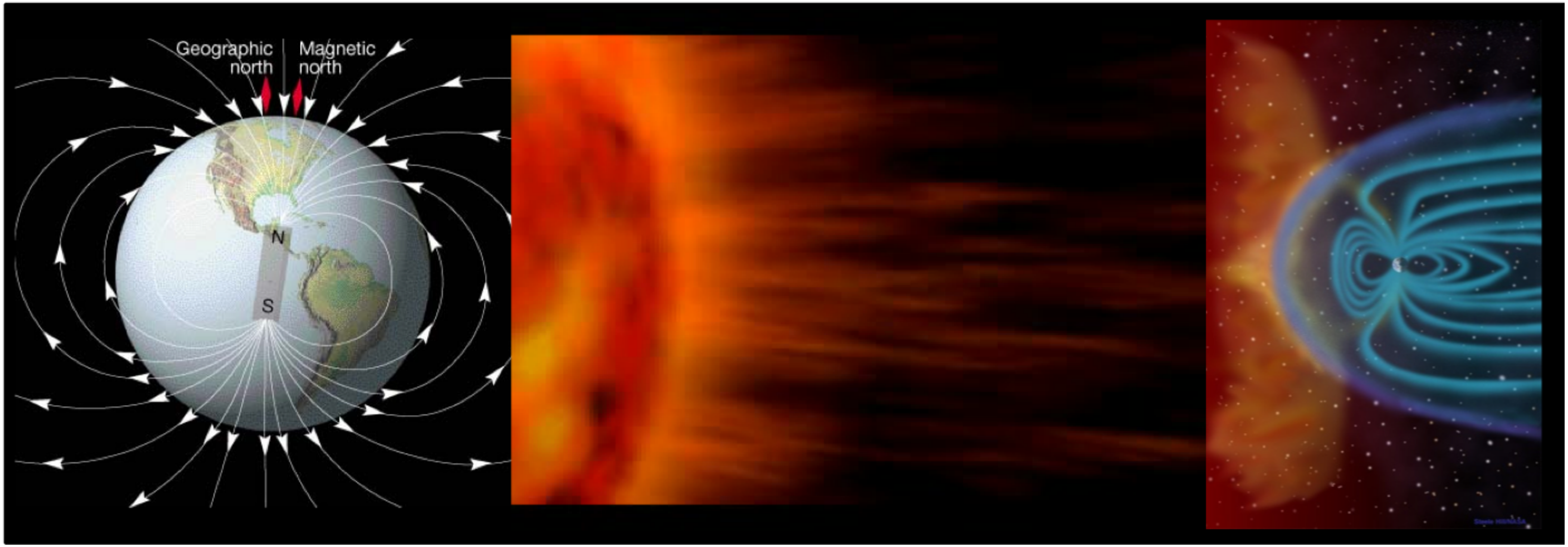
AIM

To characterize the spatial distribution of the **short-timescale/fast** ($\tau <$ 200 min) and **long-timescale/slow** ($\tau >$ 200 min) magnetic field fluctuations recorded on the ground during the St Patrick's day geomagnetic storm occurred on 17 March 2015.



Context – Recent studies

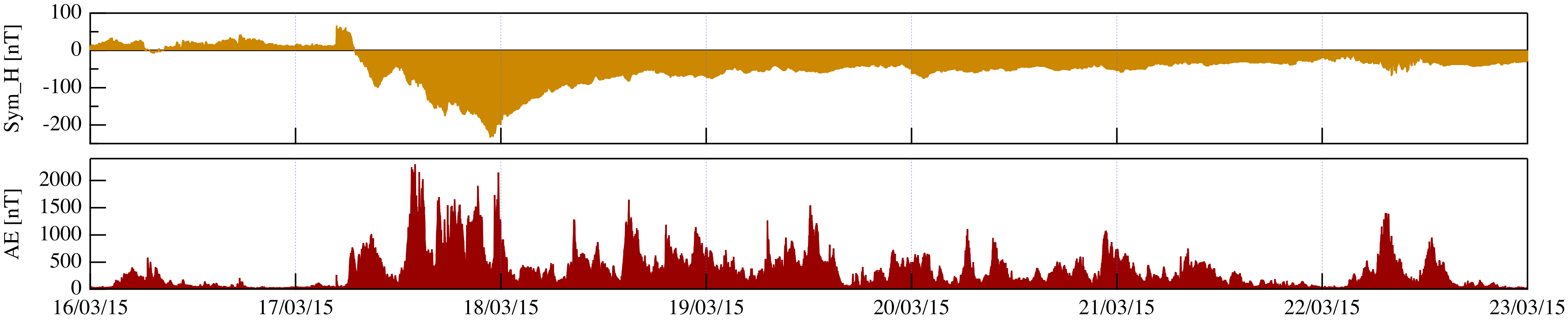
The dynamics of the Earth's magnetosphere in response to interplanetary medium condition changes is the result of both externally driven processes and internal processes. Recently Alberti et al. (2017) have highlighted the existence of a separation of timescales in the solar wind-magnetosphere coupling occurring at approx. 200 minutes:

- ➢Long timescale fluctuations (T > 200 min) show a high degree of correlation with the parameters of solar wind and magnetospheric dynamics

- ➢Fluctuations with time-scale T < 200 min, although triggered by changes in interplanetary conditions, are mainly dominated by internal processes.

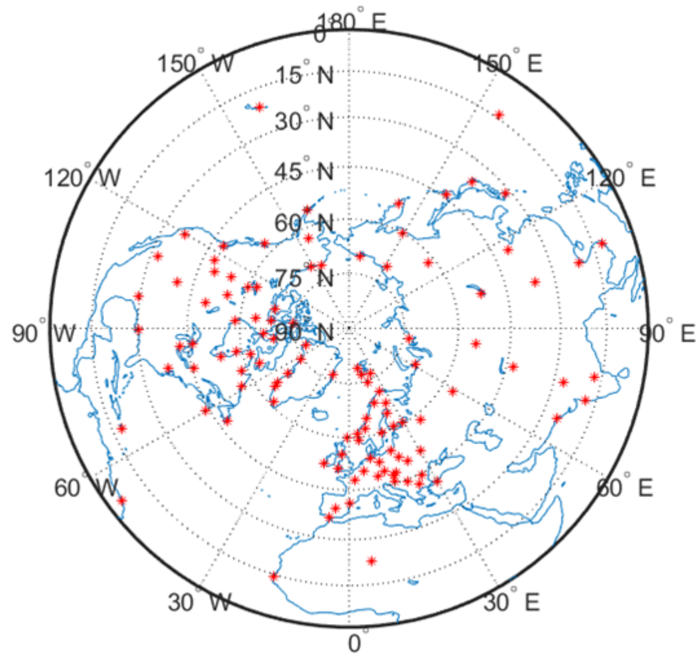
The identification in a magnetic field record of the mainly external and internal contributions is important in the framework of Space Weather.

DATASET

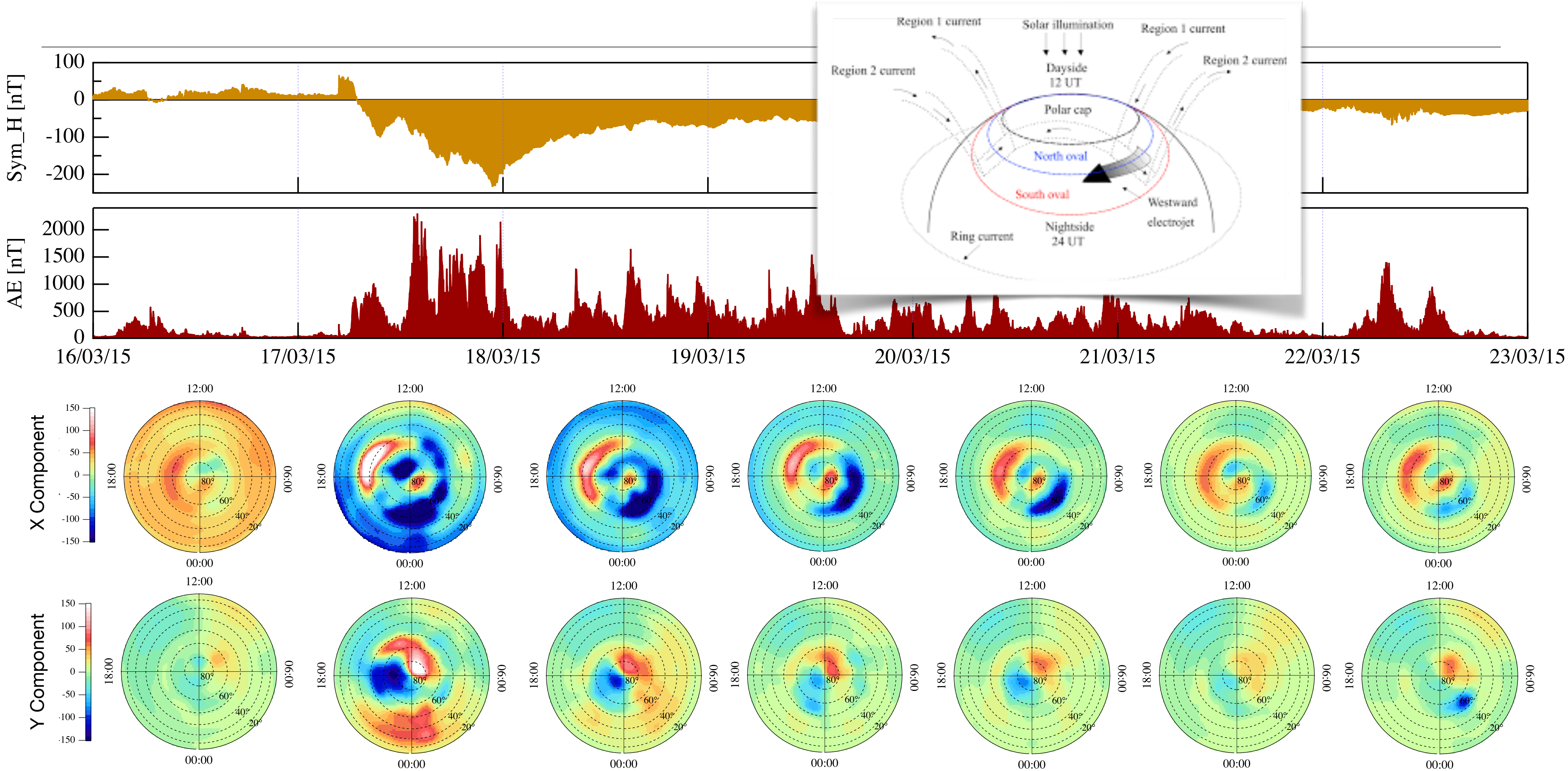


We used the **X** and **Y component** of the Earth's magnetic field recorded at 60 geomagnetic observatories located in the Northern Hemisphere. They are part of the worldwide network of observatories known as INTERMAGNET.

We consider a period of some days around the 2015 St. Patrick's magnetic event.

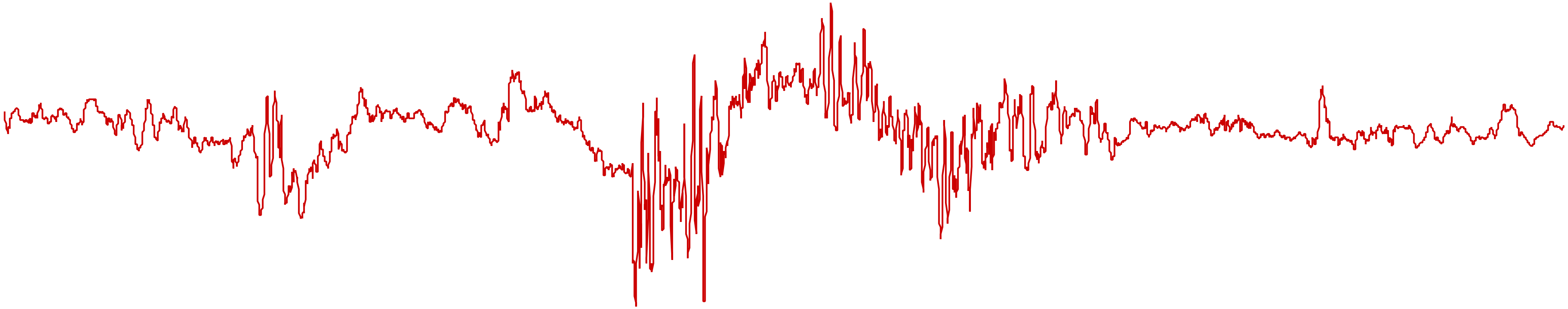


DATASET



Daily distributions of X and Y magnetic field components describing the magnetic field perturbations due to external sources. The main contributions to this external fields that produce relevant signatures in magnetic field observations are the polar ionospheric currents, such as the polar electrojets, and the magnetospheric currents such as the Chapman-Ferraro currents and in particular the magnetospheric ring current.

Method: Empirical Mode Decomposition (EMD)

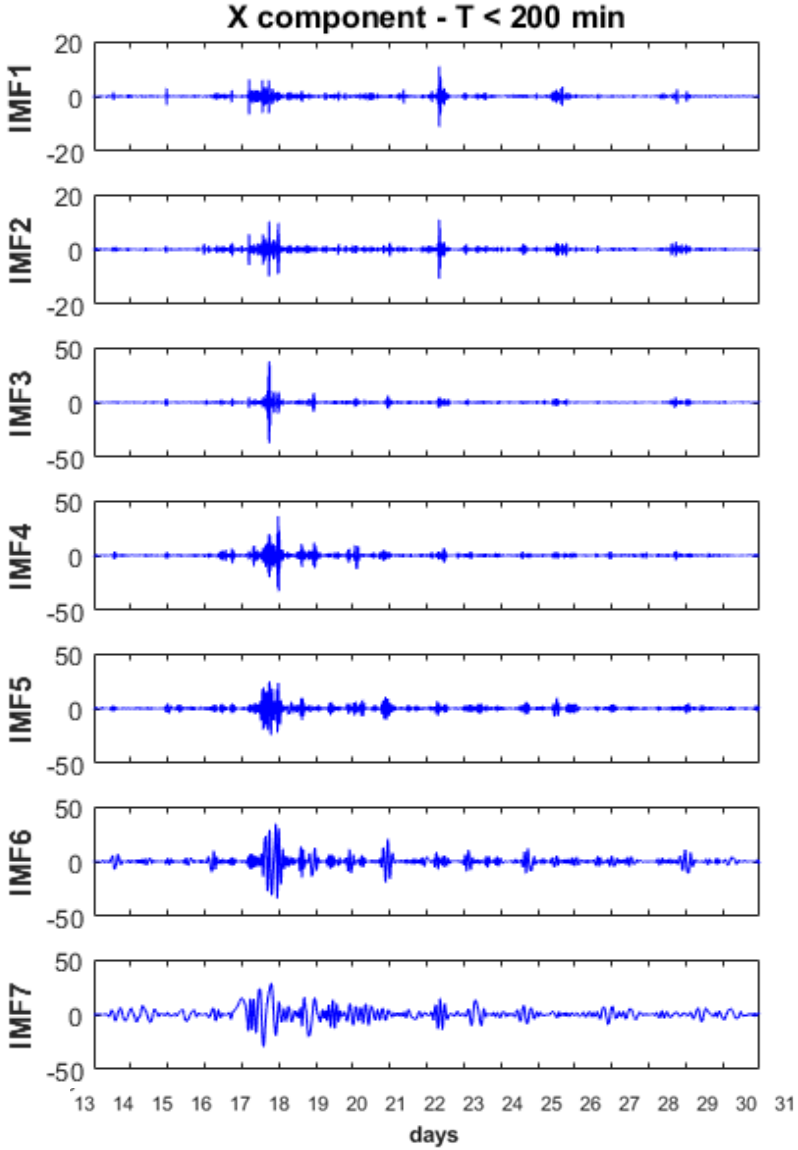


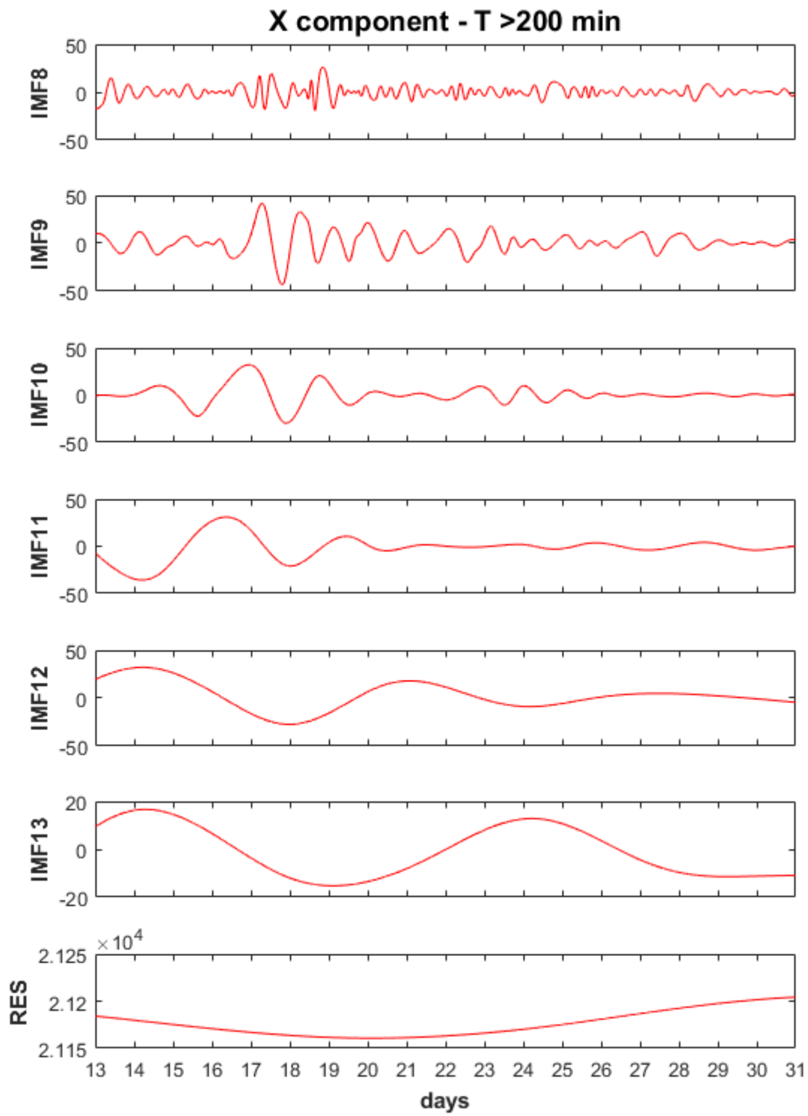
The fundamental part of the method consists in the decomposition of the signal in empirical modes based on the assumption that any signal can be decomposed into a finite and limited number of intrinsic modes (IMF) of oscillation characterized by significantly different frequency values.

$$x(t) = \sum_{i=0}^{n} IMF_i(t) + residue$$

EMD: an example

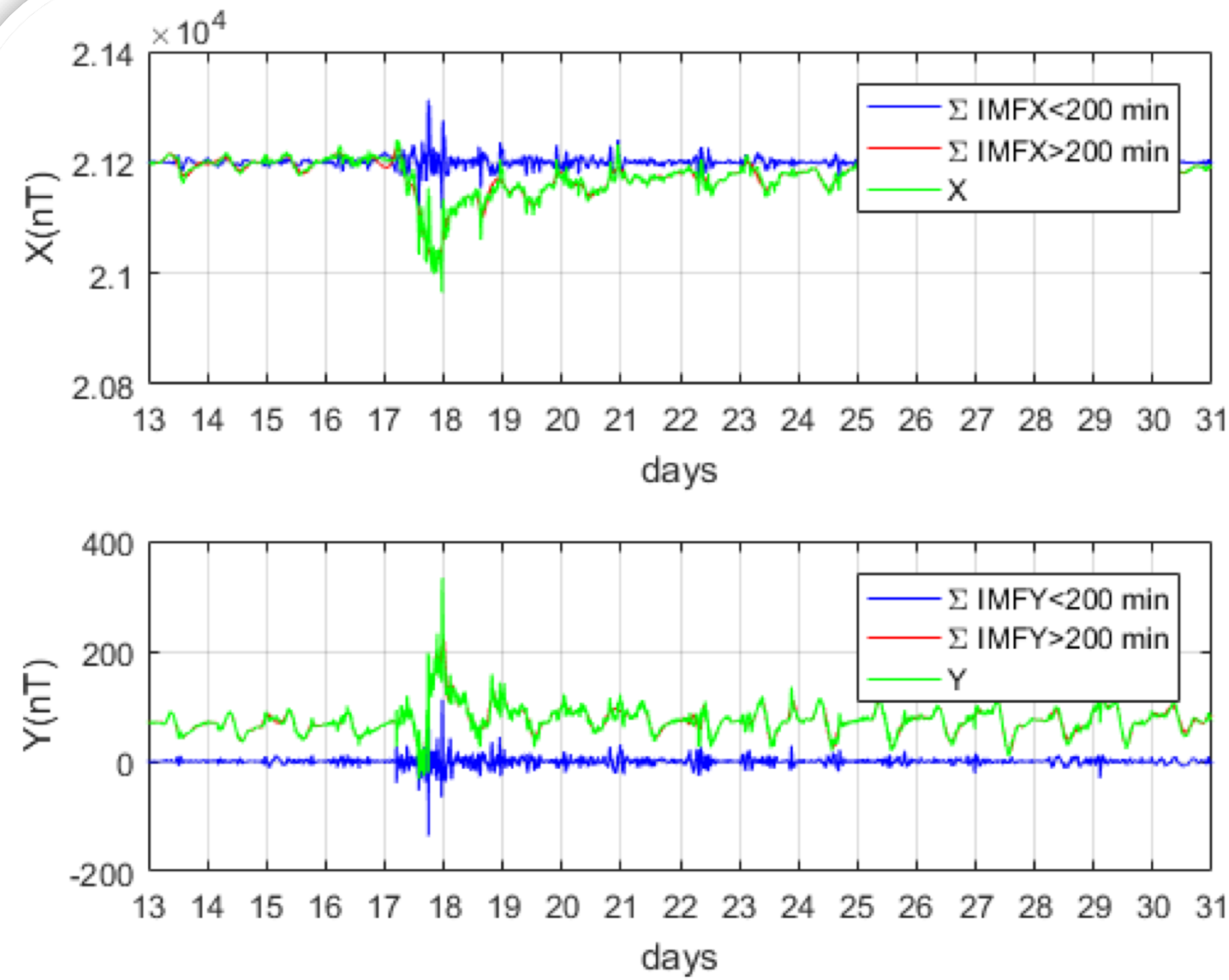
$$x(t) = \sum_{i=0}^{n} IMF_i(t) + res$$



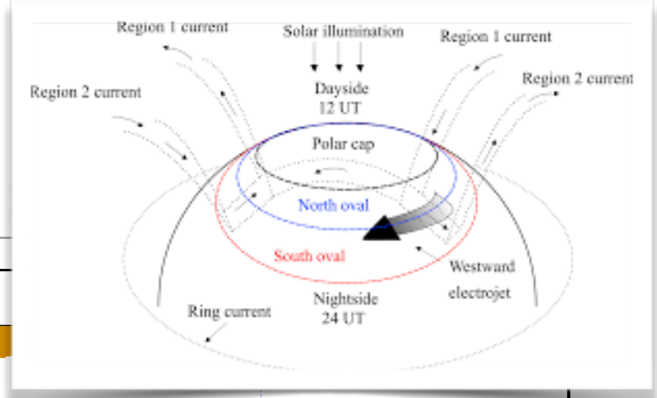


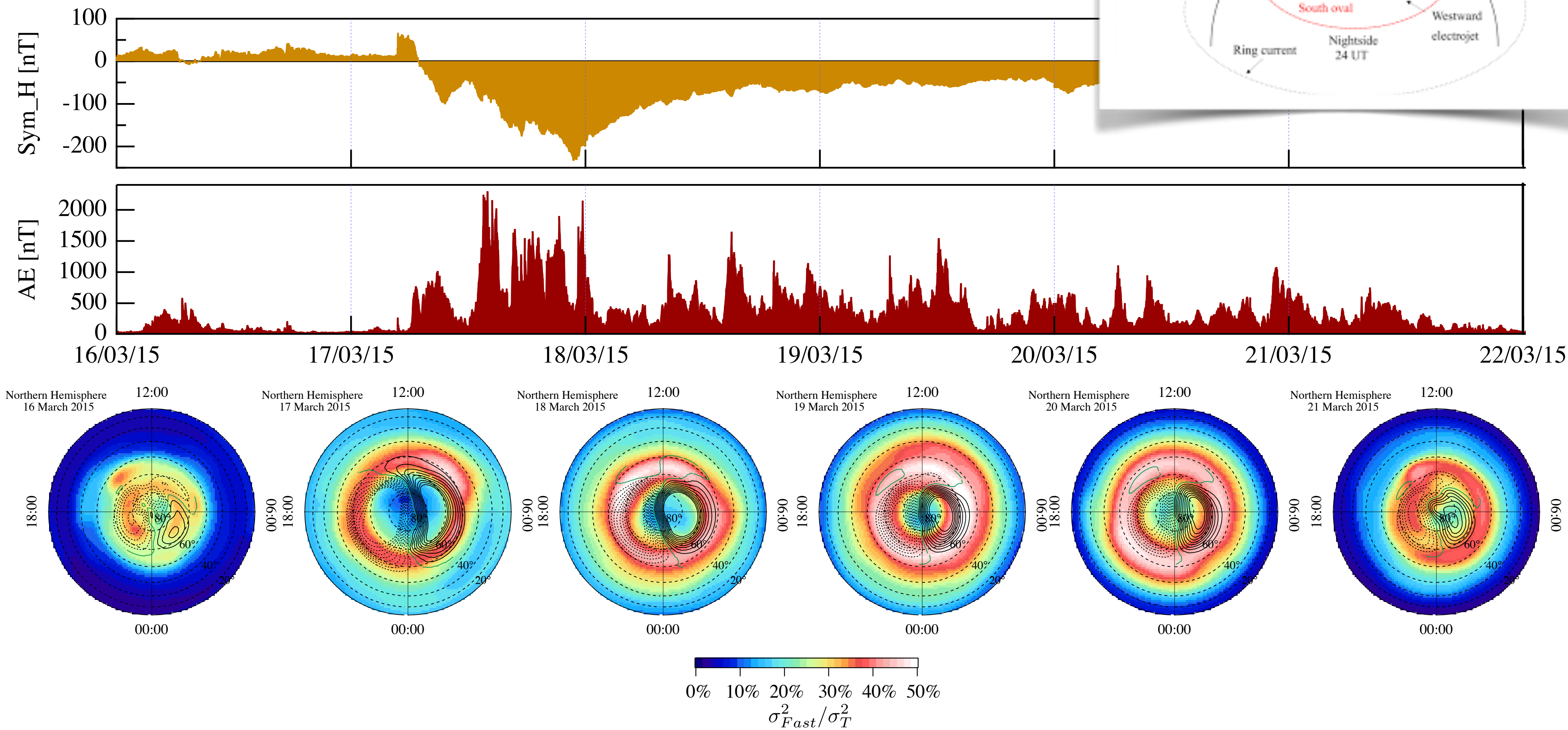
EMD: an example

Example of decomposition of the measured signal at the CLF observatory in two components that describe the fluctuations with **T> 200 min** and **T <200 min**. The decompositions refer to the X and Y components of the field, respectively.



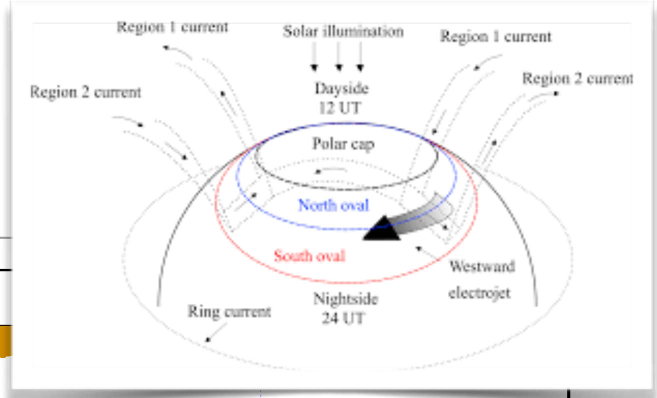
RESULTS: Y component for T<200 min

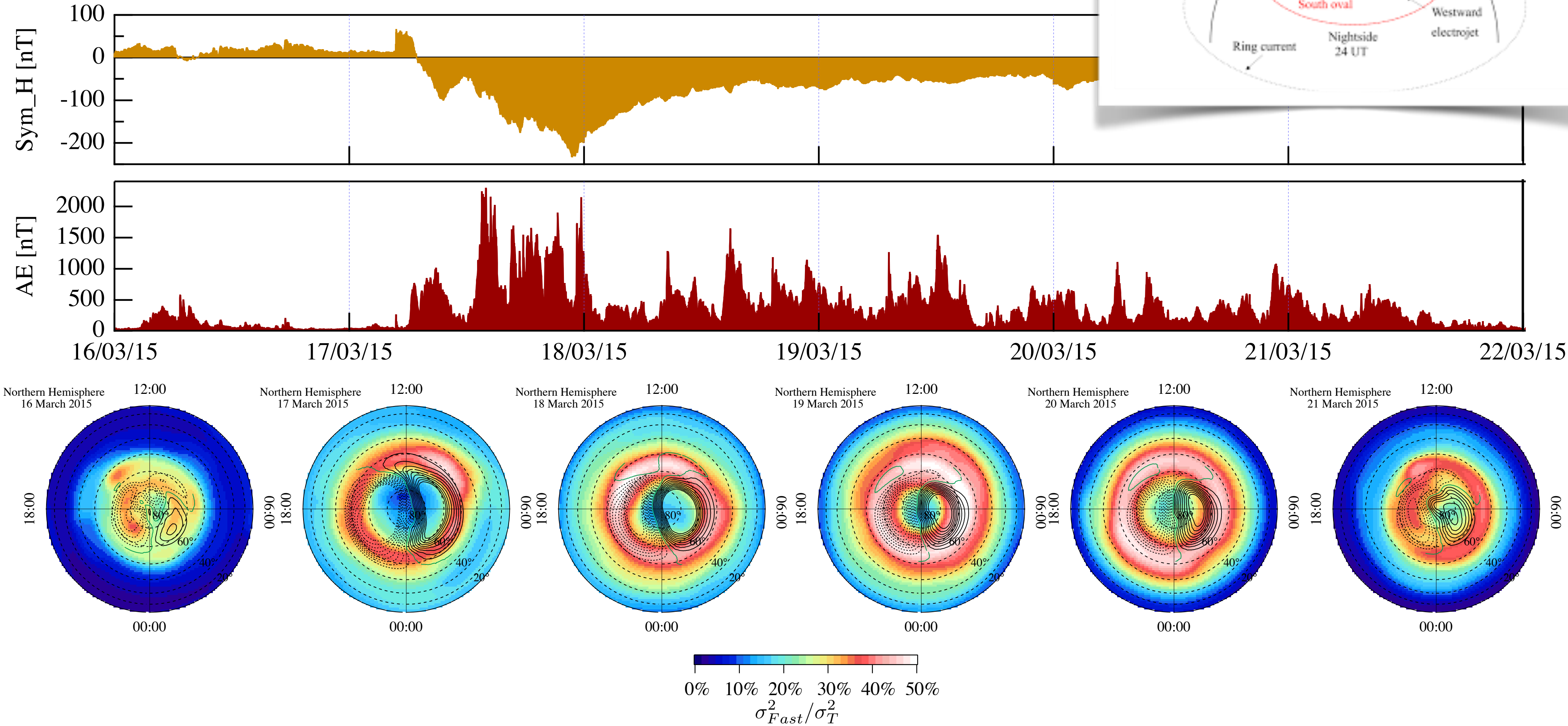




Daily maps of the ratio between the variance of magnetic fluctuations below 200 minutes and that of the overall signal. The weight of the signal relative to fluctuations on a short time scale shows a dependence on latitude and geomagnetic activity level.

RESULTS: Y component for T<200 min





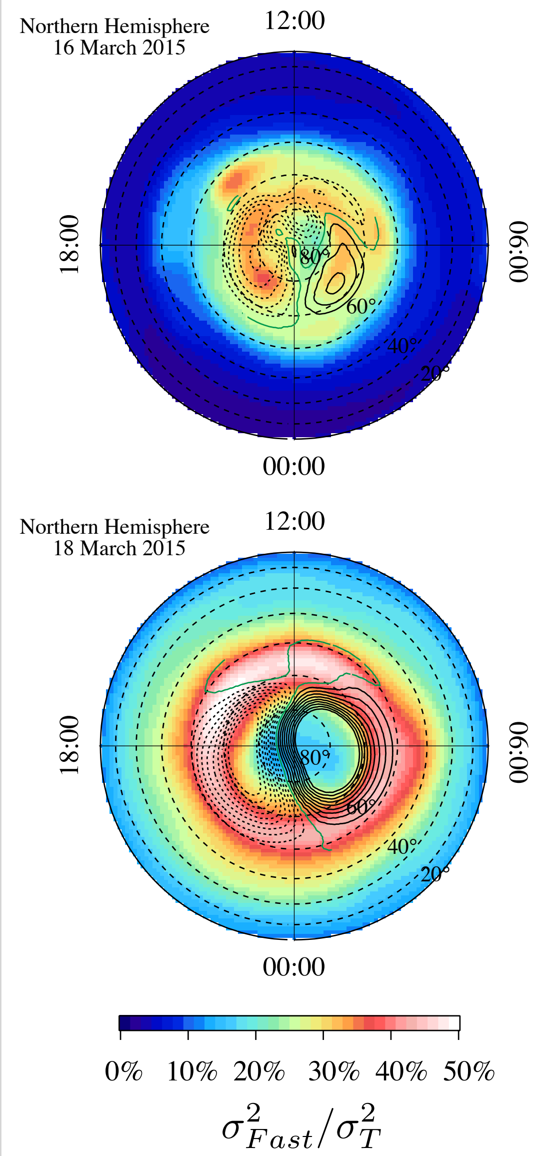
At high-latitude the fluctuations on short-time scale have a weight, in terms of energy, important on the total magnetic signal. During the disturbed periods (both characterized by the main phase of the geomagnetic storms and by the occurrence of magnetospheric substorms) the fast fluctuations have the highest values in the auroral oval. This region is mainly dominated by internal processes and is not directly driven (correlated) by the SW/IMF

Summary

We focus on the **properties of shot-timescale magnetic field fluctuations** during the 2015 St. Patrick's Day geomagnetic storm.

We apply the **EMD method to the X and Y components of the geomagnetic field recorded on the ground** during a period (13 - 30 March 2015) covering the whole duration of the storm. It permits us to separate fast (τ<200 min) and slow (τ>200 min) magnetic fluctuations, which are related to different magnetospheric processes.

The different energy contribution of the short-timescale fluctuations is investigated as a function of latitude during the selected period. The **weight** of the signal related to the **fluctuations on a short-timescale** (that although triggered by changes in interplanetary conditions, are mainly dominated by internal processes) **shows a dependence on the latitude and geomagnetic activity level.**



Summary

Impact on Space Weather

During the disturbed periods the magnetic field fluctuations on short-timescale can play an important role in the total magnetic signal. These fluctuations are mainly dominated by internal processes, although triggered by changes in interplanetary conditions.

In order **to forecast the magnetic signals** it is necessary to develop model that take into account both **the changes in interplanetary conditions and in the magnetospheric dynamics.**