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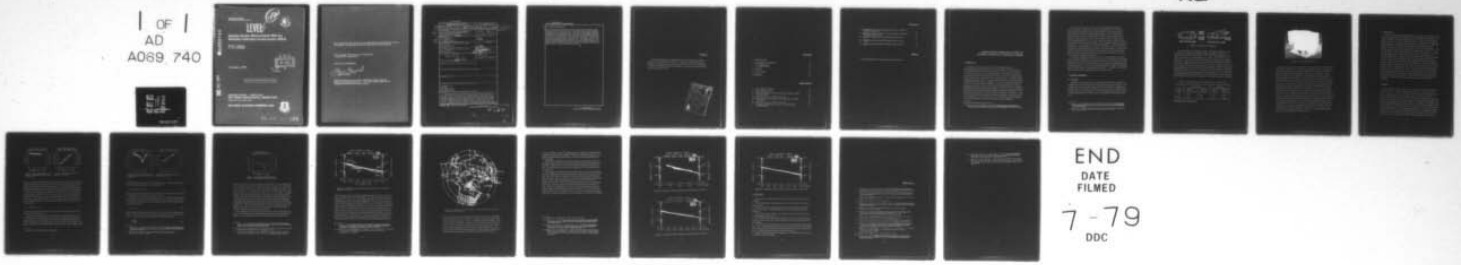
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SATELLITE DENSITY MEASUREMENTS WITH THE ROTATABLE CALIBRATION A--ETC(U)  
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LEVEL II

# Satellite Density Measurements With the Rotatable Calibration Accelerometer (ROCA)

FRANK A. MARCOS  
K. S. W. CHAMPION

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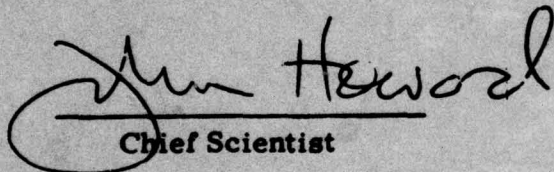


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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS REFLECTING CHANGING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER AFGL-TR-79-0005	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. AFGL-IP-274	3. REPORT TYPE AND CATALOG NUMBER 9 Instrumentation papers
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) SATELLITE DENSITY MEASUREMENTS WITH THE ROTATABLE CALIBRATION ACCELEROMETER (ROCA)	5. DATE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Scientific. Interim.	6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER IP No. 274
7. AUTHOR(s) Frank A. Marcos K. S. W. Champion	8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s) 62101F 66900401	9. PROGRAM ELEMENT PROJECT, TASK AND REPORT UNIT NUMBERS 62101F 66900401
10. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Air Force Geophysics Laboratory (LKB) Hanscom AFB Massachusetts 01731	11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Air Force Geophysics Laboratory (LKB) Hanscom AFB Massachusetts 01731	12. REPORT DATE 4 January 1979
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office) 6690	13. NUMBER OF PAGES 22	15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Accelerometers Satellites Atmospheric density Aerodynamic drag		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Satellite accelerometer measurements of atmospheric density have provided significant improvement in our understanding of the structure and dynamics of the lower thermosphere. Derivation of accurate data with this technique requires removal of instrument bias from the total sensor output. The ROCA (ROTatable Calibration Accelerometer) experiment was flown to provide an orbital calibration capability on the three-axis stabilized S3-4 satellite. The ROCA sensitive axis could be operated in either of two orientations selectable by ground command. For density measurement (normal		

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20. Abstract (Continued)

operating mode) the sensitive axis was aligned with the satellite velocity vector. For direct measurement of bias, the sensitive axis was aligned perpendicular to the velocity vector. Utilization of the inflight calibration technique showed a dependence of the bias upon the instrument operating temperature. Removal of the bias-temperature component from the total acceleration signal obtained in the normal operating mode permits derivation of accurate density data. Measurements of atmospheric density were obtained during approximately 600 orbits over a five month period. The resulting ROCA data will be utilized for improved satellite ephemeris computations and for detailed studies of the lower thermosphere, particularly those related to energy inputs at high latitudes.

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## Preface

The ROCA experiment was manufactured by Bell Aerospace Textron under Air Force Contract F19628-76-C-0120. W. Lange was principal investigator. Reduction of the ROCA data was carried out under Air Force Contract F19628-76-C-0244. R. Fioretti was principal investigator. Ephemeris data were provided by E. Robinson, AFGL/SUA.

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## Satellite Density Measurements With the Rotatable Calibration Accelerometer (ROCA)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Atmospheric density measurements have been obtained using the ROCA (ROtatable Calibration Accelerometer) experiment on the S3-4 satellite. To accurately determine the atmospheric density the bias must be eliminated from the total sensor output. On spinning satellites this can be accomplished in a relatively straightforward manner since the bias is essentially constant and the density information is modulated at the spacecraft spin rate. On despun satellites in sufficiently elliptical orbits bias can be determined from the instrument output at altitudes where the density is negligible. For accelerometer density measurements on low eccentricity despun satellites an alternate technique is required. An analysis of the bias characteristics exhibited by accelerometers on the Atmosphere Explorer satellites showed that ground based values could not be extrapolated to orbital conditions and that the bias exhibited a temperature dependence.<sup>1</sup> The ROCA experiment provided a means to measure the bias and its variations in orbit. This was accomplished successfully in flight by periodically rotating the sensitive axis perpendicular to the velocity vector. In this configuration the contribution of air drag (or density) to the total acceleration signal was negligible.

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(Received for publication 2 January 1979)

1. Marcos, F.A., and Fioretti, R.W. (1977) Orbital Bias Determination for Accelerometers on the Atmosphere Explorer Satellites, AFGL-TR-77-0147.

S3-4 was launched into a near polar orbit with perigee and apogee near 165 km and 270 km, respectively. In this low eccentricity orbit an extensive amount of data were obtained in high latitude regions at low satellite altitudes. Considerable new data from the Atmosphere Explorer and S3-1 satellites have become available in the lower thermosphere.<sup>2</sup> However, due to either their inclinations or the perigee precession, about 90 percent of these measurements were at latitudes below 70°. As a result, model improvements using these data are largely limited in latitudinal coverage. The high latitude region is particularly important since it is the source of heating due to ionospheric currents and particle precipitation. Another advantage of the S3-4 orbit is that it permits more accurate examination of the latitudinal characteristics of structural features. Previous low altitude satellites were in considerably more elliptical orbits and measurements made on a specific orbit below 200 km spanned about 30° in latitude. With S3-4, 130° in latitude is spanned below 200 km.

This report describes the orbital performance of the experiment and utilization of the rotation capability in the derivation of accurate atmospheric density data. Typical density profiles are examined and compared to recent atmospheric models. Wave-like structure is observed and appears to be related to localized heating and to propagating waves. Due to data processing difficulties at SAMTEC, Vandenberg, AFB, only a few orbits are presently available. Extensive analyses of the results from this experiment will be described in forthcoming reports.

## 2. EXPERIMENT DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Accelerometer

The ROCA experiment consists of a single axis accelerometer mounted on a rotatable table. The instrument was fabricated by Bell Aerospace Textron.<sup>3</sup> The rotatable base indexes the sensitive axis in either of two positions selectable by ground command. For density measurement, the sensitive axis is aligned with the satellite velocity vector (Position X). For bias determination, the sensitive axis is rotated 90° (Position Y). These modes are represented schematically in Figure 1.

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2. Marcos, F. A., McInerney, R. E., and Fioretti, R. W. (1978) Variability of the Lower Thermosphere Determined from Satellite Accelerometer Data, AFGL-TR-78-0134.

3. Lange, W. G. (1977) Accelerometer System for S77-2 Satellite, Final Report, AFGL-TR-77-0179.

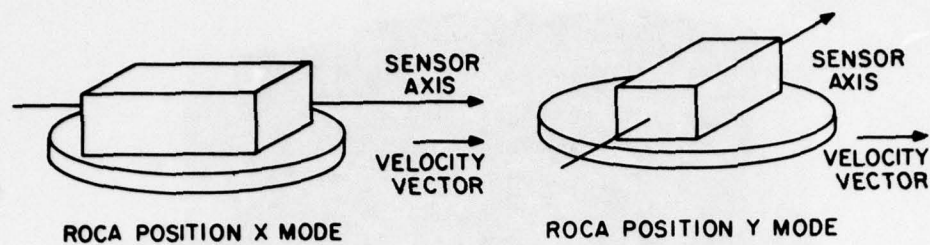


Figure 1. ROCA Flight Orientations

The instrument has two sensitivity ranges, selectable by ground command, for orbital acceleration measurements. Ranges A and B had sensitivities of approximately  $8 \times 10^{-3}$  g full scale and  $1 \times 10^{-3}$  g full scale respectively. Full scale corresponded to an output frequency of 8.8 KHz. Table 1 gives values of scale factor, bias and their temperature dependence as determined from ground calibration. Range B was used for air drag measurement throughout the flight. In this mode, Range A automatically came on for the first 25 sec after power turn-on was applied. This feature was incorporated to provide sufficient force to initially suspend the proof mass. The cross-axes suspension scaling associated with Ranges A and B was 1 g and  $10^{-3}$  g, respectively. Sample time of the instrument was one-quarter second. Maximum power consumption was 6.5 watts. Figure 2 shows the assembled ROCA experiment. The complete experiment assembly has the dimensions 6.4 in. high, 6 in. wide and 9 in. long and a weight of 11.0 pounds.

Table 1. Ground Calibration for ROCA Scale Factor and Null Bias

Temp.	Scale Factor		Null Bias	
	Range A	Range B	Range A	Range B*
30°F	1.0622 pps/ $\mu$ g	8.525 pps/ $\mu$ g	+20.4 $\mu$ g	+0.051 $\mu$ g
70°	1.1002	8.824	+30.8	+0.077
120°	1.1541	9.251	+36.4	+0.091

\* Extrapolated from Range A data.

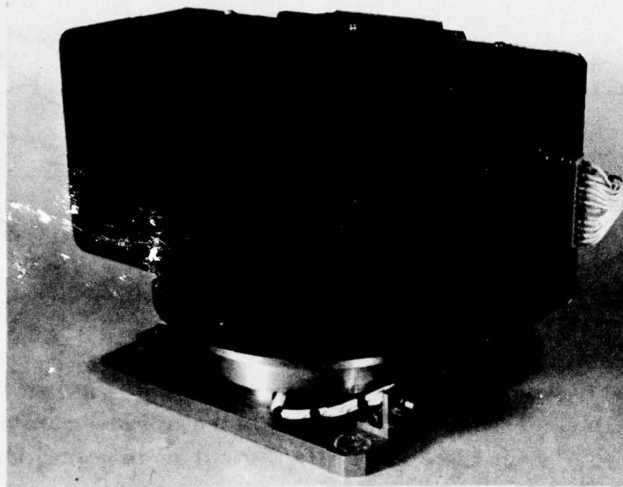


Figure 2. ROCA Flight Hardware

Rotation of the base is accomplished with a reversing dc motor and gear train. The contractor selected a dc motor which was available within the required delivery time. The motor was modified to operate in a hard vacuum environment by the use of special lubricants and brush material. The manufacturer, Clifton Precision Division of Litton Industries, stated that this would ensure reliable space operation for at least 200 hr. This would allow a nominal 24,000 X to Y position operations. Upon receipt of a position command 28 volts dc is applied to the motor. This causes it to rotate until it reaches its new position  $90^{\circ}$  from the previous one. Limit switches interrupt the power after the base has been driven against a spring loaded mechanical stop. Receipt of another position command energizes a relay which reverses the 28 volt polarity. The motor then rotates the base back to its original position. Problems were encountered in preflight tests of this motor. During thermal vacuum tests at the spacecraft integration facility, an increase in the rotation time from a nominal 30 sec to over 70 sec was observed. During electromagnetic interference tests at the spacecraft integration facility noise spikes exceeding specifications were encountered. These had not occurred in pre-delivery tests. The problem was identified as the hard brush creating debris and excessive wear of the commutator segments. Selection of a replacement motor was not feasible because of the launch schedule. Bell Aerospace Textron estimated a useful life of only about 10 hr. of operation. It was possible to circumvent this problem by a revision in the flight operation plan. This revision is discussed in the next section.

## 2.2 Flight Summary

The S3-4 satellite was launched during March 1978 into a  $98^\circ$  inclination orbit. The initial perigee and apogee heights were 165 km and 270 km respectively. Latitude of perigee was  $30^\circ\text{N}$  and perigee local time was 1130 hr. An orbit-adjust propulsion system was used to maintain orbit for a 6 month period. Routine data taking scheduled for S3-4 experiments consisted of a 20-day cycle of 17 days with either full orbit (90 min) passes or half orbit (45 min) passes depending on whether a high data rate mode was selected for one of the other experiments, and three days with 20 min of data centered near perigee collected each orbit. It was initially planned to rotate the instrument from Position X to Position Y twice each day, near apogee, and to collect one full data orbit per week in Position Y to obtain calibration data. Evaluation of the potential for motor malfunction caused revision of the calibration procedure. Data were scheduled for acquisition in Position X only for the first month of flight. Subsequent to this period the calibration procedure consisted of one full day in Position Y each week. The instrument was turned on during March 1978. Instrument operation was normal for the next five months. In August 1978, during orbit 2472, the instrument power fuse blew following a rotation command. The most probable cause of failure appears to be a short circuit in the motor. The most likely cause of motor failure was excessive brush wear and/or buildup of brush material debris which shorted the 28 volt input power line. During its 5 months of operation, ROCA acquired over 600 orbits of valuable information concerning atmospheric density and its variations.

## 3. RESULTS

Data obtained in the bias calibration mode (Position Y) during orbit 1348 are shown in Figure 3. The top curve (Figure 3a) gives the acceleration output, in units of micro-g's, vs. GMT. If the bias were constant, a constant output would be expected (neglecting short term variations due to instrument or spacecraft noise). The data show an average bias of about  $37 \mu\text{g}$  with a linear decrease from  $38 \mu\text{g}$  to  $36.5 \mu\text{g}$ . The measured bias average value is about 700 times higher than the essentially negligible value shown in Table 1. The change in bias appears to be a bias temperature effect similar to that observed in the Atmosphere Explorer (AE) accelerometer data. Figure 3b shows a linear increase of  $11^\circ\text{F}$  in the instrument operating temperature. A bias temperature coefficient  $T_c = 0.14 \mu\text{g}/^\circ\text{F}$  is derived for this orbit. This value is about 300 times larger than the prelaunch data given in Table 1, but of the order of the orbitally determined values of  $T_c$  for the AE accelerometers. The large values of bias and bias-temperature coefficient are

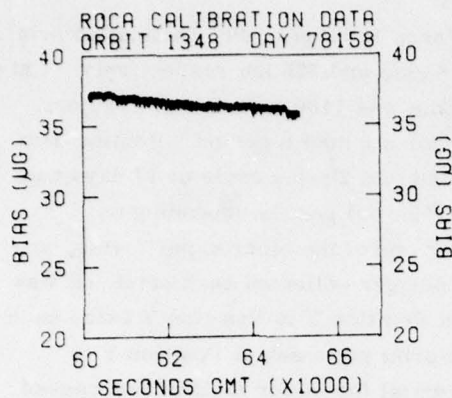


Figure 3a. Measured Orbital Accelerations in Calibration Mode vs GMT for Orbit 1348

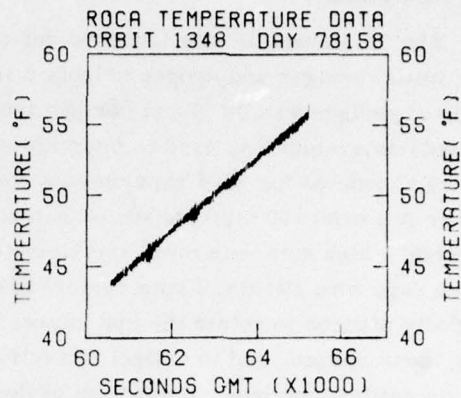


Figure 3b. ROCA Temperature vs GMT for Orbit 1348

similar to those derived for Range A data, although the instrument was in Range B throughout the flight, except for the first 25 sec of each turn on. There is no possibility that the instrument remained in Range A. The instrument manufacturer believes that the Range A bias calibration data are reasonably accurate but that the bias does not scale down with the suspension voltage. Hence, their extrapolation of the data to obtain Range B bias values are incorrect. The scale factor values for both ranges are believed to be extremely accurate.<sup>4</sup> It can be concluded that although the orbital bias characteristics differed significantly from the ground-based values, the ROCA provided a successful inflight measurement which can be used for inflight calibration. The output of the ROCA in the Y-mode ( $a_y$ ) can be represented by:

$$a_y = B(1 + T_c) + N_y \quad (1)$$

where  $N_y$  represents both vehicle-induced accelerations sensed along the Y-axis and internal instrument noise.

Figure 4 shows data for orbit 1351 with ROCA in the Position X mode. Figure 4a shows measured acceleration values vs time. Apogee and perigee values are also indicated. The data show a characteristic drag profile with maximum drag accelerations occurring near perigee. The first apogee value is about  $1.5 \mu g$  higher than the second, consistent with the data of Figure 3. Figure 4b again shows

4. Lange, W.G. (1978) Private Communication.

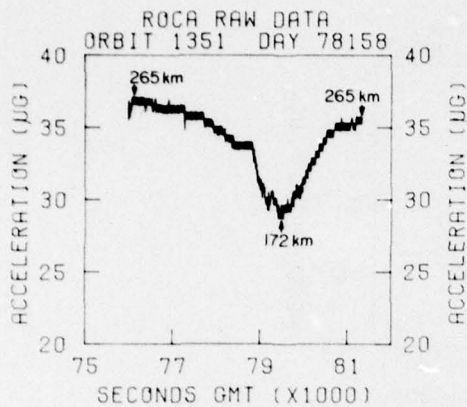


Figure 4a. Measured Orbital Accelerations in Density Mode vs GMT for Orbit 1351

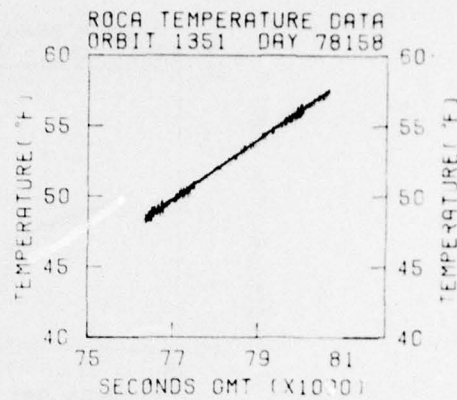


Figure 4b. ROCA Temperature vs GMT for Orbit 1351

an 11°F instrument temperature rise during this orbit. For Position X data the total acceleration output ( $a_x$ ) can be represented by:

$$a_x = a_D + B(1 + T_c) + N_x \quad (2)$$

where  $a_D$  is drag acceleration and  $N_x$  represents both vehicle induced accelerations sensed along the x-axis and internal instrument noise.

In the derivation of atmospheric density values from measured drag accelerations obtained in the X-mode, the accelerations due to instrument and vehicle noise are largely removed using numerical filtering techniques.<sup>5</sup> Drag is determined from Eqs. (1) and (2):

$$a_x - a_y = a_D \quad (3)$$

Figure 5 shows the drag profile derived from orbit 1351 using the calibration data from orbit 1348. The maximum deflection due to drag is 7 µg. Atmospheric density ( $\rho$ ) is calculated from the drag, using the classical expression<sup>6</sup>:

$$\rho = \frac{2Ma_D}{C_D AV^2} \quad (4)$$

5. Noonan, J. P., Fioretti, R. W., and Hass, B. (1975) Digital Filtering Analysis Applied to the Atmosphere Explorer-C Satellite MESA Accelerometer Data, AFGL-TR-75-0295.

6. King-Hele, D. (1964) Theory of Satellite Orbits in an Atmosphere, Butterworth and Co., London.

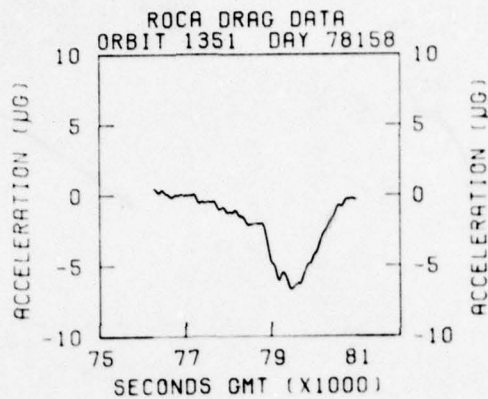


Figure 5. Aerodynamic Drag Profile for Orbit 1351 Using Inflight Calibration Data

where  $C_D$ ,  $A$ ,  $M$  and  $V$  are the satellite's drag coefficient, cross-sectional area, mass and velocity respectively. Assuming a value of  $M/C_D A = 41.7 \text{ cm}^2/\text{gm}$  the density profile of Figure 6 was derived. Downleg and upleg data are indicated by circles and crosses, respectively. Perigee values of altitude, geographic coordinates and time are shown in the upper right hand corner of the figure. Geographic latitude is also noted at selected points. Density values from the Jacchia 1971<sup>7</sup> models are shown as solid lines terminated by either a triangle (downleg data) or an asterisk (upleg data). The measured data, taken during a period when  $K_p = 3$  reveal highly structured features not incorporated into the models. Horizontal wavelengths of about 400 km are observed for the peaks at 210 and 230 km. Wavelengths of this order at low satellite altitudes have been previously detected, for example, by accelerometers on the OV1-15 satellite.<sup>8</sup> These features were related to enhancements in the auroral electrojet.<sup>9</sup>

The advantages of the S3-4 orbital characteristics and the accelerometer accuracy for the elucidation of high latitude heating processes are demonstrated in Figure 7. This plot examines the orbit 1351 density data in relation to the

7. Jacchia, L. G. (1971) Revised Static Models of the Thermosphere and Exosphere with Empirical Temperature Profiles, Spec. Rept. 332, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, MA.
8. Marcos, F. A., and Champion, K. S. W. (1972) Gravity waves observed in high latitude neutral density profiles, *Space Res.* 12:791.
9. Forbes, J. M., and Marcos, F. A. (1973) Thermospheric density variations associated with auroral electrojet activity. *J. Geophys. Res.* 78:3841.

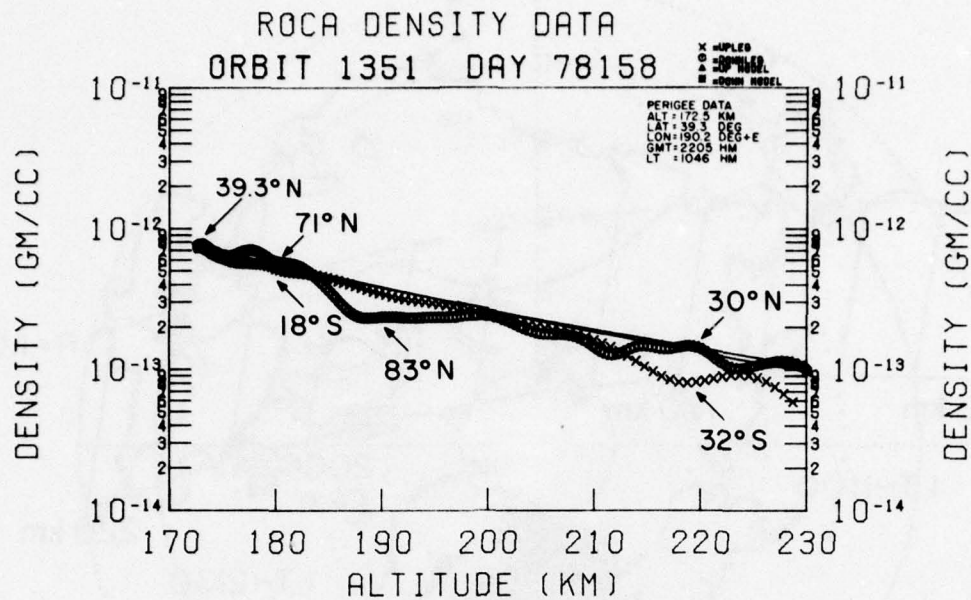


Figure 6. Atmospheric Density Profile and Model Values as a Function of Altitude for Orbit 1351

Northern auroral zone. The ratio of measured density to the model is given on a polar coordinate plot between  $90^{\circ}\text{N}$  and  $40^{\circ}\text{N}$ . The orbit trajectory (solid line terminated by an arrow) crosses the nightside auroral zone between  $65$  and  $70^{\circ}\text{N}$  and the dayside auroral zone between  $81$  and  $83^{\circ}\text{N}$ . The auroral zone boundaries are determined using the data of Whalen.<sup>10</sup> The orbit permits near simultaneous measurement in the nightside and dayside auroral zones at altitudes below  $200$  km. Also, the region of the dayside auroral zone traversed by the satellite corresponds to the cusp region. Recent evidence has indicated that particle precipitation is centered near magnetic noon at latitudes that are essentially the same as the daytime part of the auroral oval.<sup>11</sup> The northern hemisphere density profile shows a 10 percent enhancement between  $204.2$  km and  $201.3$  km followed by a maximum decrease of about 25 percent near the pole and subsequent increase in

10. Whalen, J.A. (1970) Auroral Oval Plotter and Nomograph for Determining Corrected Geomagnetic Local Time, Latitude and Longitude for High Latitudes in the Northern Hemisphere, AFCRL-70-0422.
11. Heikkila, W.J., Winningham, J.D., Eather, R.H., and Akasofu, S.I. (1972) Auroral emissions and particle precipitation in the noon sector, J. Geophys. Res. 77:4100.

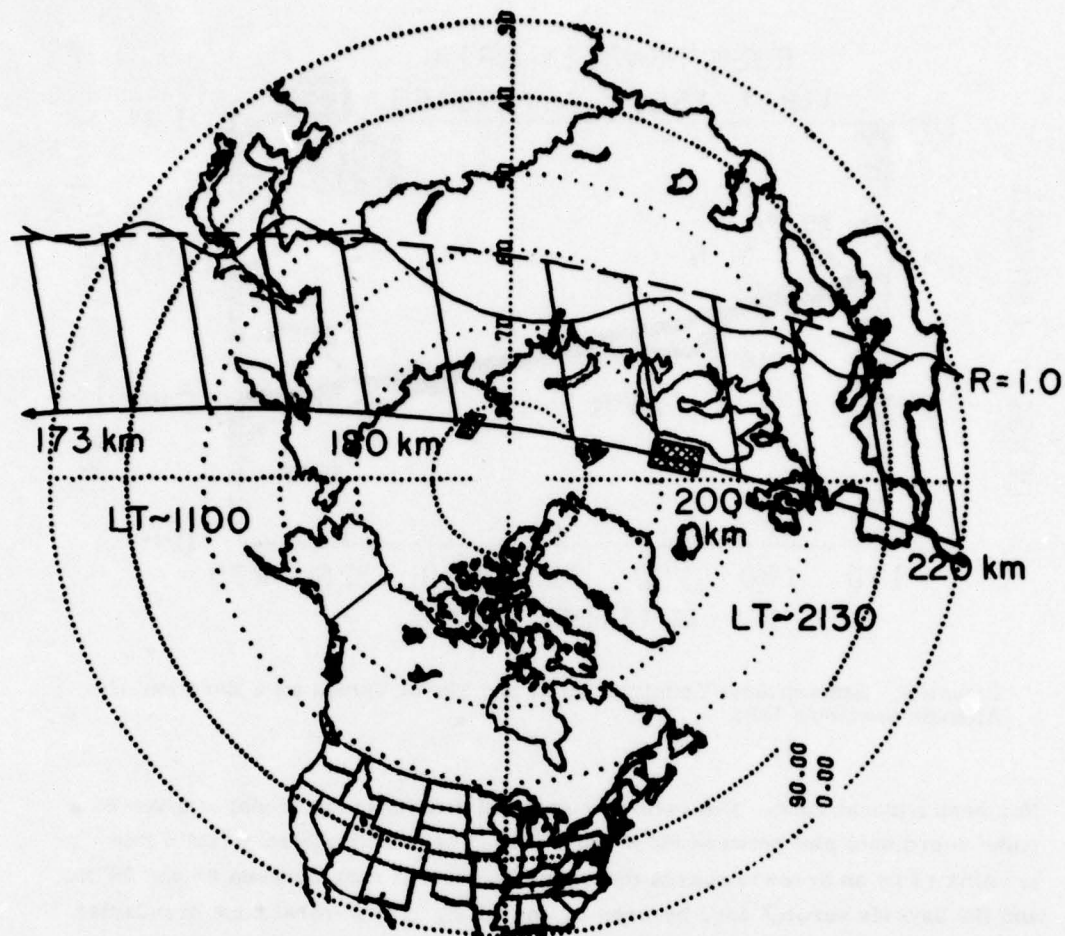


Figure 7. Geographic Location of Orbit 1351 Data in Relation to Northern Hemisphere Auroral Zone

density on the dayside of the orbit beginning near the auroral zone. Although not shown on this plot, the orbit also passes through the southern hemisphere nighttime auroral zone near apogee. Hence, considerable new understanding of high latitude heating is anticipated. In addition to the advantageous orbital characteristics, analysis of the ROCA data may be enhanced by correlation with complementary S3-4 measurements of the auroral zone as determined by CRI-246 Vacuum Ultraviolet Background measurements. These radiation measurements were obtained with a spectrometer and photometer under the direction of

Dr. R. E. Huffman, AFGL.<sup>12</sup> Photographs of the visible aurora obtained from the DMSP satellite are also available. Utilization of these data will permit correlation of density features with the actual, rather than statistically determined, auroral region.

Figures 8a-c show density profiles determined from three orbits earlier in the flight. These plots are shown to demonstrate typical results obtained to date. The orbit 374 and 383 data show fairly little structure while the orbit 255 data show a marked density decrease at 175 km downleg similar to that observed during orbit 1351.

There appear to have been few other measurements of the neutral atmosphere with the simultaneous low altitude and near pole-to-pole latitude coverage of S3-4. The LOGACS accelerometer experiment obtained continuous data for a period of about four days. These measurements covered a severe geomagnetic disturbance, however, and provided considerable insight into atmospheric processes.<sup>13</sup> Results from 90 orbits of neutral density measurements over a two month period made with an ionization gauge on the 1972-32A satellite have been reported.<sup>14</sup> Also, six days of accelerometer measurements obtained at the single altitude of 143 km with the 1970-48A satellite have been analyzed.<sup>15</sup> The successful ROCA flight with 600 orbits of data gathered over a five month period provides a unique opportunity to study the heating, structure and dynamics of the lower thermosphere.

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12. Huffman, R. E. (1978) AFGL, Private Communication.

13. Devries, L. L. (1971) Experimental Evidence in Support of Joule Heating Associated with Geomagnetic Activity, Marshall Space Flight Center, NASA TMX-64568.

14. Ching, B. K., Palmer, J., and Carter, V. L. (1974) Upper Atmospheric Density Inferred from Magnetron Data from the Satellite 1972-32A, Aerospace Corp. Report No. TR-0074(4260-10)-7.

15. Rugge, H. R., and Ching, B. K. (1975) Atmospheric density from the low altitude satellite 1970-48A: comparison of orbital decay measurements, Accelerometer Measurements and Atmospheric Models, Planet. Space Sci. 23:323.





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3. Lange, W.G. (1977) Accelerometer System for S77-2 Satellite, Final Report, AFGL-TR-77-0179.
4. Lange, W.G. (1978) Private Communication.
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