

Anomalously high heat flow regions beneath the Transantarctic Mountains and Wilkes Subglacial Basin in East Antarctica inferred from Curie depth

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Key Points:

- New Curie Depth Point and geothermal heat flow maps for the Transantarctic Mountains and Wilkes Subglacial Basin in East Antarctica
- High heat flow beneath the Transantarctic Mountains reinforces the idea of thermal support of the topography of the mountain range
- Heat flow estimates agree with recent active volcanoes and topographic feature in the Wilkes Subglacial Basin

Abstract

The Transantarctic Mountains (TAM) separate the warmer lithosphere of the West Antarctic rift system and the colder East Antarctic craton. Low velocity zones beneath the TAM imaged in recent seismological studies have been interpreted as warm low-density mantle material, suggesting a strong contribution of thermal support to the uplift of the TAM. We present new Curie Depth Point (CDP) and geothermal heat flow (GHF) maps of the northern TAM and adjacent Wilkes Subglacial Basin (WSB) based on high resolution magnetic airborne measurements. We find shallow CDP and high GHF, beneath the northern TAM reinforcing the idea of thermal support of the topography of the mountain range. Additionally, locally high GHF is observed in the Central Basin of the WSB and the Rennick Graben, which has not been resolved previously, while the broader WSB show lower GHF. Across the study area the GHF values range from 30 to 110 mW/m². Lastly, we compare our CDP estimates to recent Moho depth estimates and our GHF estimates to sparse in situ GHF measurements as well

as to existing continent-wide GHF estimates, which shows closed agreement to previous seismic estimates.

Plain language summary

The Transantarctic Mountains are a long mountain range separating the ancient East Antarctic region from the younger West Antarctic region. Recent studies estimated the speed of acoustic waves generated from earthquakes found a region where the waves moved slowly beneath the Transantarctic Mountains. Slow wave speeds are believed to be caused by warmer rocks in the area, which provide thermal support for the mountain range.

We present heat flow maps, which describe the heat transfer from the interior of the earth to the surface. The estimated heat flow is based on “Curie depth points”, which describes the depth at which magnetic rocks lose their ability to generate a magnetic field due to increasing temperature. This temperature is called the Curie temperature, which is around 580 °C for magnetite, the most common magnetic mineral in the Earth’s crust. The heat flow at the surface is estimated from depth at which this temperature is reached.

We find elevated heat flow beneath the Transantarctic Mountains, which supports the idea of warmer rocks that provide thermal support for the Transantarctic Mountains. Additionally, we found high heat flow in deep topographic valleys of the adjacent Wilkes Subglacial Basin and Rennick Graben.

1 Introduction

The evolution of both the Transantarctic Mountains (TAM) and Wilkes Subglacial Basin (WSB) (Figure 1) as well as their coupling are not fully resolved, despite their crucial role to potential future sea level rise [*DeConto and Pollard*, 2016; *Ferraccioli et al.*, 2009b; *Hansen et al.*, 2016; *Jordan et al.*, 2013; *Paxman et al.*, 2019].

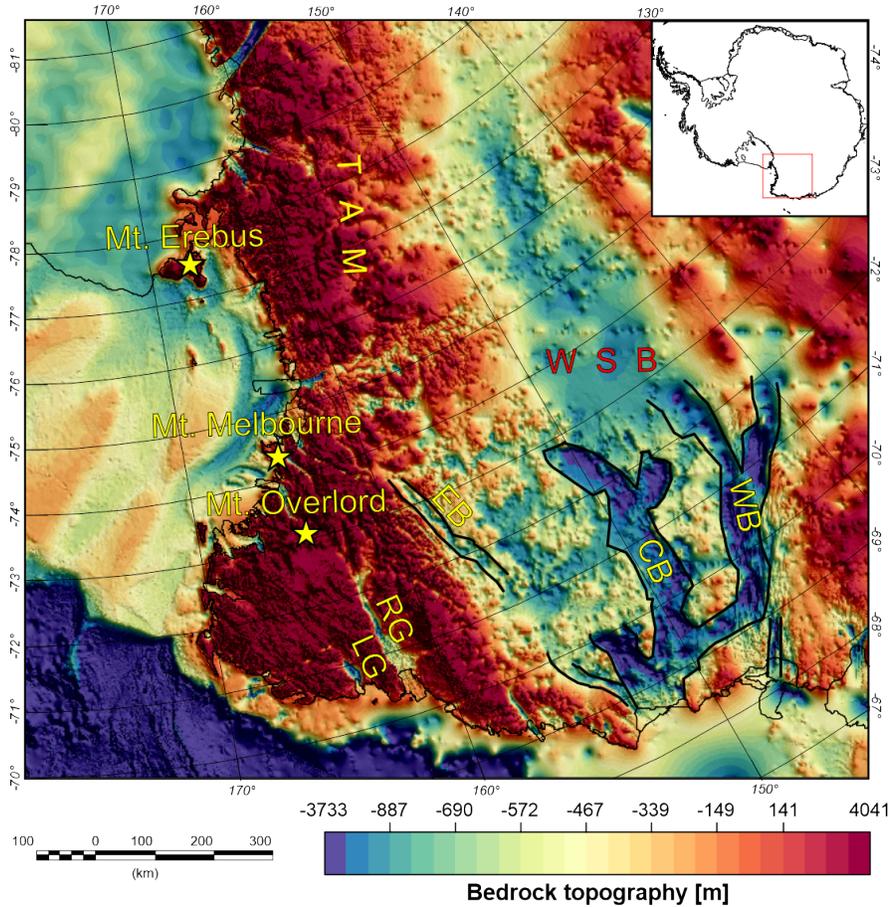


Figure 1: Bedrock topography of the Transantarctic mountains and Wilkes subglacial basin from the Bedmachine model version 2 [Morlighem et al., 2020]. Black lines delimit more deeply incised sub-basins within the wider Wilkes Subglacial Basin region. Yellow stars indicate the location of recently active volcanoes. LG, Lillie Graben; RG, Rennick Graben; EB, Eastern Basin, CB, Central Basin; WB, Western Basin; WBS, Wilkes Subglacial Basin; TAM, Transantarctic Mountains.

The Transantarctic Mountains (TAM) are the largest non-contractional mountain range on Earth (Figure 1), which divide East Antarctica from the West Antarctic Rift System [Morelli and Danesi, 2004; Robinson and Splettstoesser, 1986; ten Brink and Stern, 1992]. The approximately 4000 km long and up to 400 km wide mountain range, with a peak elevation of 4000 m [Morlighem et al., 2020], has a complex tectonic history with numerous proposed uplift mechanisms. Uplift models include flexural uplift [Paxman et al., 2019; ten Brink et al., 1997; Wannamaker et al., 2017; Yamasaki et al., 2008], thermal mantle support [Brenn et al., 2017; Lawrence et al., 2006; Smith and Drewry, 1984]

as well as density variation and crustal thickening [Bialas *et al.*, 2007; Huerta, 2007]. A local study investigating crustal structures beneath the northern TAM based on receiver function data concluded that the crust beneath the TAM is up to ~46 km thick, which is significant less than the required 57 km to support the mountains isostatically [Hansen *et al.*, 2016]. They instead suggest broad flexure of the East Antarctic lithosphere and uplift along the western edge as a result of lateral heat conduction from the hotter West Antarctic mantle in line with the uplift model by [Stern and ten Brink, 1989; ten Brink *et al.*, 1997; ten Brink and Stern, 1992]. Recent studies based on new seismic tomography models [Brenn *et al.*, 2017; Graw *et al.*, 2016; Lloyd *et al.*, 2020; Shen *et al.*, 2018; Wiens *et al.*, 2021] show large low velocity zones beneath the northern TAM, which are interpreted as warm and less dense mantle material. This observation suggests that the warmer mantle beneath the highest topographic features in Northern Victoria Land, provides a strong contribution of thermal support to the uplift of this region [Wiens *et al.*, 2021].

The Wilkes Subglacial Basin (WSB) located in the hinterland of the TAM, is a major below sea level topographic feature, buried 2-3 km beneath the East Antarctic Ice Sheet (EAIS) (Figure 1). The WSB was first described from radar data in the 1970s [Drewry, 1976] and stretches approximately 1600 km from the George V Coast towards South Pole. The WSB comprises one of the largest marine-based sectors of the EAIS [Ferraccioli *et al.*, 2009a; Ferraccioli *et al.*, 2009b]. The bedrock elevation reaches depths of more than 2000 m below sea level within the locally more deeply incised sub-basins [Ferraccioli *et al.*, 2009a; Morlighem *et al.*, 2020]. The WSB is about 600 km wide close to the George V coast [Ferraccioli *et al.*, 2009b], decreasing to <100 km towards South Pole [Studiver *et al.*, 2004]. The modern landscape formation of the WSB is interpreted as being associated with flexural process of the TAM uplift and glacial erosion [Ferraccioli *et al.*, 2009a; Jordan *et al.*, 2013; Paxman *et al.*, 2018; Paxman *et al.*, 2019]. The WSB is bounded by the Terre Adélie Craton, West of the Mertz shear zone [Finn *et al.*, 2006] and by the TAM on the East.

Submarine basins like the WSB pose a potentially high, but poorly constrained risk for future sea level rise, as they are more vulnerable to melting by warming of the surrounding ocean. Such melting could potentially trigger mechanisms of unstable retreat [Pollard *et al.*, 2015; Schoof, 2007]. Significant long-term contribution is predicted from the WSB region to future sea-level rise over the next two centuries and eventual retreat of the ice sheet into the northern WSB by the year 2500 [DeConto and Pollard, 2016; Stokes *et al.*, 2022]. Geothermal heat flow (GHF) is identified as a crucial contribution from the solid Earth which interacts with the cryosphere [Davies, 2013; Fahnestock *et al.*, 2001]. GHF influences the rheology of the ice and can lead to basal melting, factors which can both facilitate enhanced ice flow and consequently influence ice sheet stability [Larour *et al.*, 2012; Llubes *et al.*, 2006; Pittard *et al.*, 2016; Winsborrow *et al.*, 2010]. GHF is therefore a crucial parameter for modelling ice sheets and future sea-level rise [Matsuoka *et al.*, 2012; Pattyn, 2010; Pattyn *et al.*, 2016; Pittard *et al.*, 2016; Van Liefferinge *et al.*, 2018; Whitehouse *et al.*, 2019; Winkelmann

et al., 2011]. GHF also has the potential to shed light on the region’s long-term tectonic evolution. Areas of elevated heat flow are often associated with regions of shallow warm mantle, and provide a test for the hypothesis that incursion of warmer West Antarctic mantle beneath the TAM provides thermal support to the mountain range, as suggested by [Hansen *et al.*, 2016; Smith and Drewry, 1984]

Although in-situ GHF measurements would be very significant, they are almost non-existent [Burton-Johnson *et al.*, 2020]. Consequently, GHF models are inferred from different geophysical techniques. Those techniques can be subdivided into two broad categories: modelling of geophysical data and machine learning or statistical correlation. Modelling approaches include determining the depth of the 580 °C isotherm from magnetic data and subsequently calculating GHF from this isotherm [Martos *et al.*, 2017] as well as calculating GHF based on seismologically derived upper mantle temperature [An *et al.*, 2015]. Statistical models include correlating seismic velocity structures in Antarctica to those in areas with good constraints on GHF [Shen *et al.*, 2020], machine learning techniques where the model is trained in areas where the GHF is well understood [Lösing and Ebbing, 2021; Lösing *et al.*, 2020] and statistical similarity of multiple datasets which are compared to global GHF catalogues [Stål *et al.*, 2021]. The large-scale distinction between East and West Antarctica is recognised in most GHF models [An *et al.*, 2015; Lösing and Ebbing, 2021; Martos *et al.*, 2017; Shen *et al.*, 2020; Stål *et al.*, 2021]. However, existing continental scale GHF models for Antarctica show remarkable inconsistency on a more local scale (Figure 2).

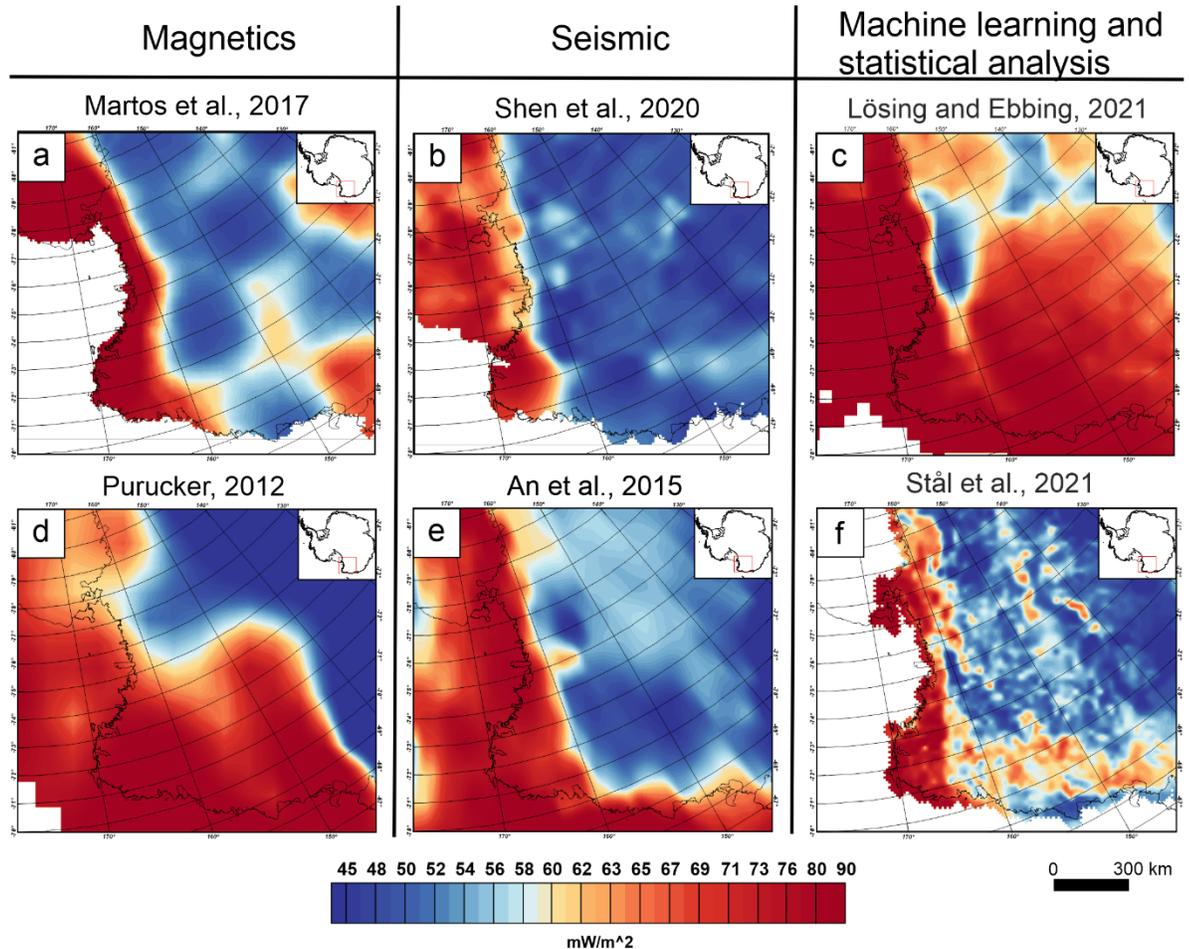


Figure 2: Continent-wide geothermal heat flow models derived from various geophysical approaches. a) magnetic derived GHF model [Martos et al., 2017]. b) seismological derived GHF model [Shen et al., 2020]. c) GHF model derived from multiple data sets via Machine Learning [Losing and Ebbing, 2021]. d) GHF map derived from satellite magnetic data [Purucker, 2012 an update of Fox Maule et al., 2005] e) Seismologically inferred GHF model [An et al., 2015]. f) GHF estimates derived by statistical analyses of multiple data sets [Stål et al., 2021].

In this study high resolution airborne magnetic data and spectral analysis are used to improve existing GHF models in the TAM and WSB area. We test if elevated geothermal heat flow is imaged beneath the northern most part of the TAM to verify independent seismological findings of proposed thermal support for uplift in northern Victoria Land [Hansen et al., 2016; Lloyd et al., 2020; Wiens et al., 2021]. In addition, our study reveals spatial variation of GHF in the WSB which previous models were not able to image.

2 Data

The ADMAP-2 compilation includes 3.5 million line-km of aeromagnetic and marine magnetic data in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean south of 60 °S [Golynsky *et al.*, 2018]. The gridded ADMAP-2 product (Figure 3a) has a grid spacing of 1.5 km and its production included correction for the International Geomagnetic Reference Field, diurnal effects correction, high-frequency error correction, levelling, regional gridding, and merging of regional grids into a continent-wide compilation [Golynsky *et al.*, 2018].

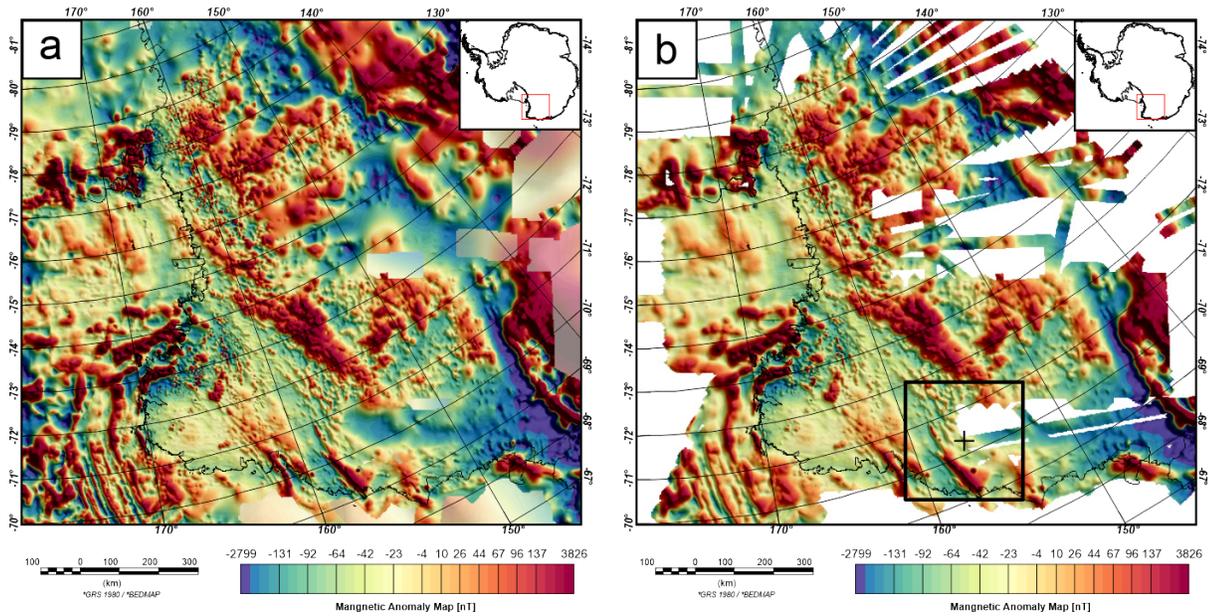


Figure 3: a) ADMAP-2 with a grid spacing of 1.5 km [Golynsky *et al.*, 2018] superimposed on Satellite Magnetic Anomaly Map from the LCS 1 model [Olsen *et al.*, 2017]. b) Selected recent ADMAP-2 magnetic data, which was re-gridded and upward continued to a constant height of 4 km. Black cross and black rectangle indicate the centroid and extension of window 645 with a window size of 300 km.

For this study only recent (~2000 - present) aeromagnetic data was selected from ADMAP-2 and a blanking distance of 15 km from flight lines was applied (Figure 3b). This was done for two reasons: a) To ensure that only flight lines with high precision positioning tracing (GPS) are used and b) interpolation between widely-spaced flight line spacing is removed. Data was re-interpolated onto a 1.5 by 1.5 km mesh using a minimum curvature technique. The resulting magnetic grid was then upward continued to a constant height of 4 km above the ellipsoid (Figure 3b), based on the flight elevation data available in the ADMAP-2 compilation (See supplementary section S1).

3 Method

Magnetic materials typically lose their susceptibility (ability to generate a strong magnetic field) with increasing temperature [Langel and Hinze, 1998]. For magnetite, thought to be the most significant magnetic mineral in the crust, this so-called Curie temperature is ~ 580 °C [Telford et al., 1990]. The depth at which the crust reaches this temperature, and most rocks lose their magnetic properties, is the Curie Depth Point (CDP) and defines the Curie isotherm within the crust [Haggerty, 1978; Núñez Demarco et al., 2020]. Estimating the depth of magnetic sources using the power spectrum of magnetic data was first established as a method in 1970 [Spector and Grant, 1970]. Since then, numerous methods were developed to estimate the bottom of all magnetic sources in an area, and hence the CDP. Established methods to estimate the CDP include the centroid method [Bhattacharyya and Leu, 1975a; b; Blakely, 1996; Okubo et al., 1985; Tanaka et al., 1999; Treitel et al., 1971] spectral peak method [Blakely, 1996; Connard et al., 1983] and fractal methods [A.R. Bansal and Dimri, 2005; A. R. Bansal et al., 2011; Bouligand et al., 2009; Kumar et al., 2021; Li et al., 2019; Mather and Fullea, 2019; Maus and Dimri, 1995; Maus et al., 1997; Salem et al., 2014; Todoschuck et al., 1992] for a more detailed discussion of those methods the reader is referred to [Núñez Demarco et al., 2020; Ravat et al., 2007].

In our study the centroid method after [Tanaka et al., 1999] is used to calculate the CDP. This approach assumes a random distribution of magnetic sources in the crust. The radially averaged power spectrum was calculated using the python library Pycurious [Mather and Delhaye, 2019].

The radially averaged power spectrum $\Phi_{\Delta}(\cdot)$ is defined as:

$$\Phi_{\Delta T}(|k|) = Ae^{-2|k|Z_t} (1 - e^{-|k|(Z_b - Z_t)})^2 \quad (1)$$

Where A is a constant, k is the spatial wavenumber defined as $k = 2/\lambda$, where λ is the wavelength), Z_t is the top of assumed magnetic source and Z_b is bottom of assumed magnetic source and therefore $Z_b - Z_t$ describes the thickness of the magnetic source [Mather and Delhaye, 2019; Tanaka et al., 1999].

For shorter wavelengths (generally less than twice the source thickness), this approximates to:

$$\ln[\Phi_{\Delta T}(|k|)^{\frac{1}{2}}] = \ln B - |k|Z_t \quad (2)$$

Where B is constant [Mather and Delhaye, 2019; Tanaka et al., 1999].

Equation (1) can be rewritten, with Z_0 as the centroid depth of the magnetic source [Mather and Delhaye, 2019; Tanaka et al., 1999].

$$\Phi_{\Delta T}(|k|)^{\frac{1}{2}} = Ce^{-|k|Z_0} (e^{-|k|(Z_t-Z_0)} - e^{-|k|(Z_b-Z_0)}) \quad (3)$$

Where C is a constant.

For long wavelengths, where 2 is the magnetic source thickness we obtain equation 4 and 5 [Mather and Delhaye, 2019; Tanaka et al., 1999].

$$\Phi_{\Delta T}(|k|)^{\frac{1}{2}} = Ce^{-|k|Z_0} (e^{-|k|(-d)} - e^{-|k|(d)}) \approx Ce^{-|k|Z_0} 2|k|d \quad (4)$$

$$\ln \left\{ \frac{\Phi_{\Delta T}(|k|)^{\frac{1}{2}}}{|k|} \right\} = \ln D - |k|Z_0 \quad (5)$$

The depth to the top () and centroid () of the magnetic source are recovered by fitting a linear regression through the high-wavenumber and low-wavenumber part of the radially averaged spectrum of $\ln[\Phi_{\Delta T}(|k|)^{\frac{1}{2}}]$ and $\ln \left\{ \frac{\Phi_{\Delta T}(|k|)^{\frac{1}{2}}}{|k|} \right\}$ in equation 2 and 5 respectively (Tanaka et al., 1999). With Z_t and Z_0 the base of the magnetic source (Z_b) can be estimated applying equation 6 [Mather and Delhaye, 2019; Tanaka et al., 1999].

$$Z_b = Z_0 - (Z_t - Z_0) = 2Z_0 - Z_t \quad (6)$$

3.1. Data preparation and window size

The window size is an influential parameter in spectral methods because it ultimately determines the maximum wavelength which will be captured in the sub-grid and therefore controls the maximum depth that can be recovered [Núñez Demarco et al., 2020].

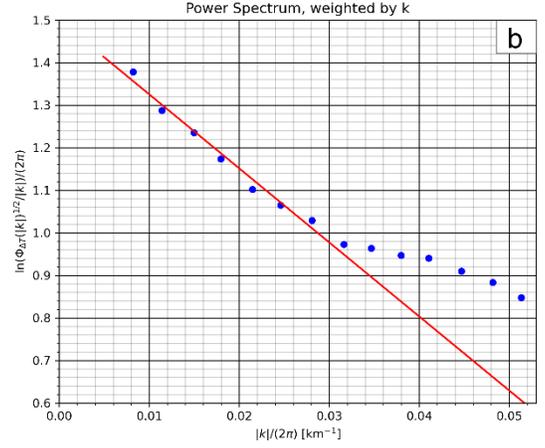
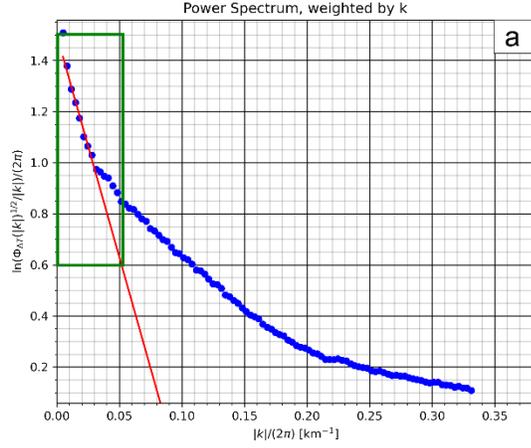
Various authors make conflicting suggestions regarding appropriate window sizes [Núñez Demarco et al., 2020] ranging from 3 times the depth of the magnetic layer [Hussein et al., 2013] to 10 times the recovered depth of the magnetic layer [Ravat et al., 2007]. In contrast [Li et al., 2017] use several window sizes, where the recovered depths are averaged into the final CDP grid. [Bouligand et al., 2009] use an iterative approach, where they expand the window around a given grid point until a depth of the bottom of the magnetic layer Z_b smaller than a tenth of the window size is recovered. In this study, we test recovery of the CDP beneath the TAM and WSB using analysis window sizes of 200 km by 200 km, 300 km by 300 km and 400 km by 400 km following the recommendation for a window size of 5 to 10 times the recovered CDP [Ravat et al., 2007]. We discuss the differences in absolute value, resolution and accuracy of recovered CDP, and justify our choice of a 300 km preferred window size later (section 5).

The Fourier transformation requires the windowed data to have no data gaps. However, Antarctica is not fully covered by magnetic airborne surveys. Previous studies in Antarctica have bypassed this problem by merging the airborne data with satellite magnetic data [Dziadek *et al.*, 2021; Martos *et al.*, 2017]. Satellite magnetic data for estimating CDP should be used with caution because the analytical window functions as a high pass filter removing all wavelengths longer than the window size. However, satellite derived magnetic models only contain longer wavelengths, similar in length to the typical analysis window, for example the satellite derived magnetic model MF7 [Maus *et al.*, 2007] contains only wavelength larger than 300 km. It is therefore questionable whether merged satellite and airborne magnetic data can provide a representative CDP estimation due to the limited wavelengths in the power spectrum. This issue was recently discussed by Pappa and Ebbing, [2021]. In our study the problem regarding data gaps within the airborne data is overcome by interpolation of the airborne data to ensure only direct observations contribute to the spectral content in the window. Subsequently, we estimate the data coverage of every window and discard windows with less than 80% data coverage to ensure that the recovered CDP estimates are not dominated by interpolation effects.

It is common for spectral methods that the study area is subdivided into windows which have a large overlap between them [Audet and Gosselin, 2019; Blakely, 1988; Bouligand *et al.*, 2009; Idárraga-García and Vargas, 2018; Leseane *et al.*, 2015; Okubo *et al.*, 1985]. The overlap increases the number of depth estimates and is expected to increase resolution up to a point, which allows the investigation of lateral variations in Curie point depths through the study area. It also allows smoothing of the more closely spaced CTD values (see supplementary information section s2). In this study we use a step size of 20 km between the analytic window, which results in a large overlap between the windows. A Hanning taper is applied to the windowed subgrid in the space domain to remove edge discrepancies. No further modification, corrections or filters have been applied to the magnetic grid and power spectrum in line with recommendations from previous authors [Audet and Gosselin, 2019; Núñez Demarco *et al.*, 2020; Ravat *et al.*, 2007].

Applying this approach, with a threshold of 80% data coverage, we obtain 2161 valid windows for a window size of 200 km, 1933 windows for a window size of 300 km and 1685 windows for the window size of 400 km. Our approach is limited to regions with relatively good airborne data coverage and therefore cannot be applied to the entire Antarctic continent.

Z0: 17.40



Zt: 2.70

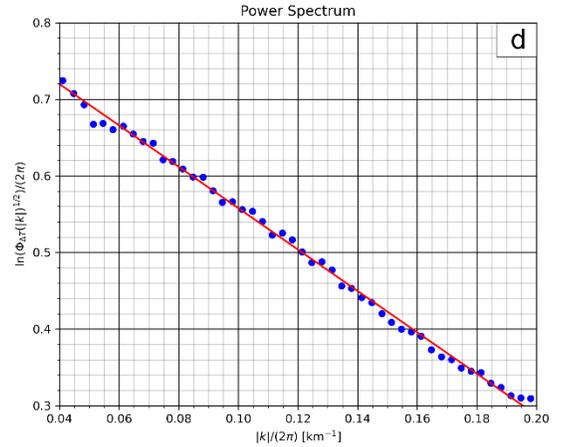
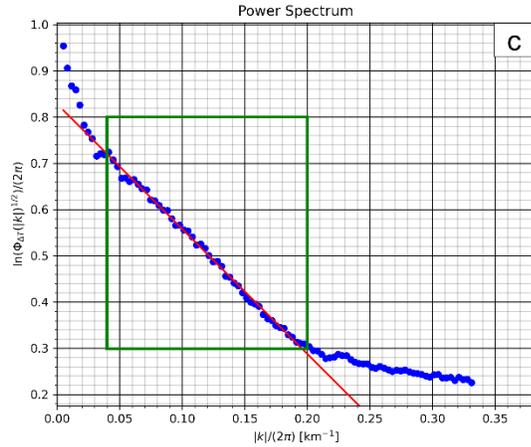


Figure 4: Power spectrum from window 645, centroid location and extension of the window is given in Figure 3b. a) Power spectrum weighted by k to estimate Z_0 . Red line represents the fitted line through the low wavenumber part of the power spectrum. Green rectangle illustrates zoom in range for b). b) zoomed in power spectrum weighted by k . c) Power spectrum to estimate Z_t . Red line represents the fitted line through the high wavenumber part of the power spectrum. Green rectangle illustrates zoom in range for d). d) zoomed in power spectrum.

A fixed wavenumber range is used to estimate the CDP in each window. Z_0 is calculated in the wavenumber range $0.006 - 0.033 k/2$ (167-30 km wavelength) and Z_t is calculated in range $0.04 - 0.2 k/2$ (25-5 km wavelength) respectively.

The ideal wavenumber range for Z_0 is defined as the first linear segment after the spectral peak in the low wavenumber part of the power spectrum, while the ideal range for Z_t is defined as the second linear segment in the power spectrum. The linear regression (Figure 4) to estimate Z_t and Z_0 is carried out using the function *curve fit* from the python library SciPy learn [Virtanen *et al.*, 2020]. The uncertainty of the fitted slope is calculated by estimating the standard deviations from the covariance matrix by taking the square root of the diagonals (equation 6) and propagating the uncertainty (equation. 7).

$$\sigma_{\text{slope}} = \sqrt{\text{Cov}_{\text{diag}}} \quad (6)$$

$$\sigma_{\text{CDP}} = \sqrt{\sigma_{\text{slope}[Z_t]}^2 + 2(\sigma_{\text{slope}[Z_0]}^2)} \quad (7)$$

We note that the estimated uncertainty is a formal error, which describes how well the linear regression fits the radially averaged power for the predefined wavenumber range. The absolute uncertainty of the CDP estimation may surpass this formal error (see section 5.2).

CDP estimations, which are an approximation for the 580 °C Curie isotherm can be used as a proxy for geothermal heat flow. Where CDPs are shallow a higher geothermal heat flow is expected and vice versa. A first order approximation of GHF from CDP estimates can be inferred from Fourier’s Law (equation 8) [Núñez Demarco *et al.*, 2020; Turcotte and Schubert, 2002].

$$Q = -K \frac{\partial T}{\partial z} = -K \frac{T_c - T_{\text{surface}}}{Z_b} \quad (8)$$

Where Q is the heat flux at the bedrock interface, T_c is the Curie temperature (580 °C), T_{Surface} is the surface temperature, Z_b is the Curie depth point and K is the thermal conductivity. Here, a thermal conductivity of 2.5 W/mK is used, which is the average thermal conductivity of igneous rocks [Clauser and Huenges, 1995; Goes *et al.*, 2020; Hasterok *et al.*, 2018; Jennings *et al.*, 2019]. Temperature at the bedrock surface (T_{surface}) is set to 0 °C in line with previous spectral analysis studies in Antarctica [Dziadek *et al.*, 2021; Martos *et al.*, 2017]. Assuming 0 °C at the bedrock interface is sufficient since most of the bottom of the ice sheet has been calculated to be at the pressure melting point around -2 °C with a variation of a few °C, which results in a “wet base” of the icesheet [Pattyn, 2010]. This assumption breaks for areas with dry base ice sheet and areas with no ice cover. Over most of this region annual mean surface temperatures are -20 to -50 °C [Wang and Hou, 2009]. We performed a sensitivity test for the dry base ice sheet and ice-free scenario assuming an annual surface temperature of -30 °C (Figure S3). The GHF increases by a maximum of 6 mW/m² and by a mean value of 4 mW/m², which is below the error estimation and therefore is a negligible effect; using an ice surface temperature is also problematic due to the potential for melting/freezing in the ice as well as fluid flow. Equation 8 is a strong simplification of the real world

since it neglects spatial variation of thermal conductivity caused by e.g., geology as well as any heat production in the area due to e.g., radiative heat production in crustal rocks. Those parameters are strongly influenced by the composition of the present crustal rocks, which are poorly constrained in Antarctica due to the thick overlaying ice sheet [Burton-Johnson *et al.*, 2020]. [Martos *et al.*, 2017] accounted for crustal heat production by using a constant value for the entire Antarctic continent, which does not help the conversation on spatial GHF variation caused by heterogeneity within the crust.

4 Results

The CDP estimates range between 15 and 35 km (Figure 5 a-c). A low CDP value indicates a shallow Curie isotherm of 580 °C and therefore implies a higher heat flow and vice versa. A prominent shallow CDP province is present beneath the TAM between -78° and -72 ° latitude for all three window size configurations. In the area of the Rennick Graben a linear shallow feature is visible in the 200 and 300 km windows (Figure 5 a-b) but is much subdued in the 400 km window (Figure 5 c). Another linear feature is observed in the Central Basin (Figure 5 a-b).

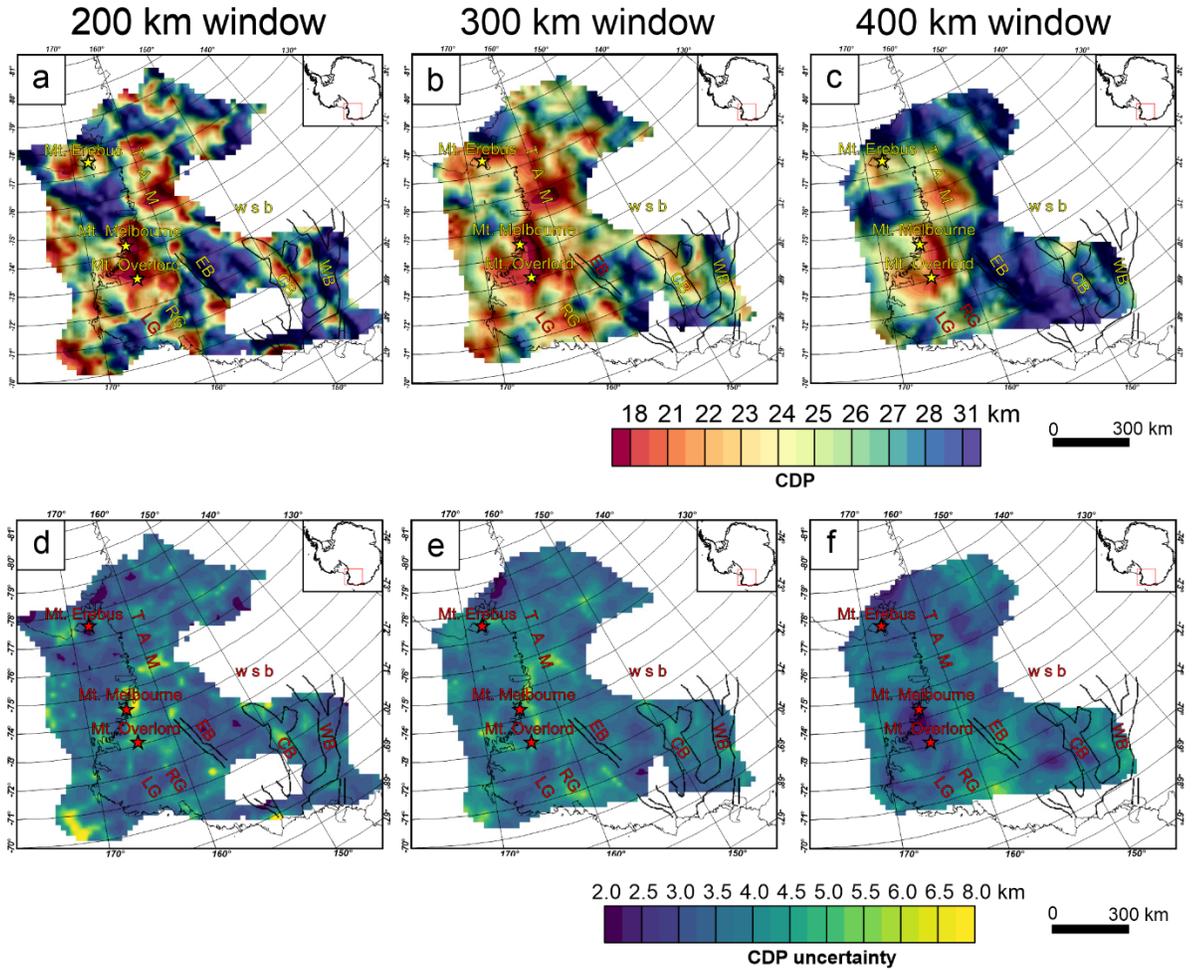


Figure 5: Upper row gives CDP estimates for different window sizes. Lower row illustrates the corresponding uncertainty. a) CDP based on a 200 by 200 km window. b) CDP estimates obtained with a 300 by 300 km window. c) Calculated CDP with a 400 by 400 km window. d) uncertainty for CDP estimates based on a 200 by 200 km window. e) uncertainty for CDP estimates obtained with a 300 by 300 km window. f) uncertainty for CDP estimates with a window size of 400 by 400 km. LG, Lillie Graben; RG, Rennick Graben; EB, Eastern Basin; CB, Central Basin; WB, Western Basin; WSB, Wilkes Subglacial Basin; TAM, Transantarctic Mountains.

Again, this feature is subdued in the 400 km window (Figure 5c). West of the Central Basin, deeper CDP values are observed, indicating an overall colder thermal structure. CDP estimates from the 200 km window have a higher frequency in their spatial pattern compared to window size configurations of 300 km and 400 km (Figure 5a-c). With increasing window size, the range of

recovered CDP decreases, while the mean depths become deeper (Figure 5a-c, Figure 7 a-c). Moreover, the estimated uncertainties decrease with increasing window size (Figure 5 a-f). Linear transformation of CDP to GHF maps (see equation. 8) yielded estimates ranging from 38 to 110 mW/m². The spatial patterns in the GHF maps (Figure 6 a-c) are identical to those observed in the CDP map (Figure 6a-c) due to the linear relationship between both maps. Again, the range of GHF values decreases with increasing window size while the error decreases also with increasing window size (Figure 6 a-f).

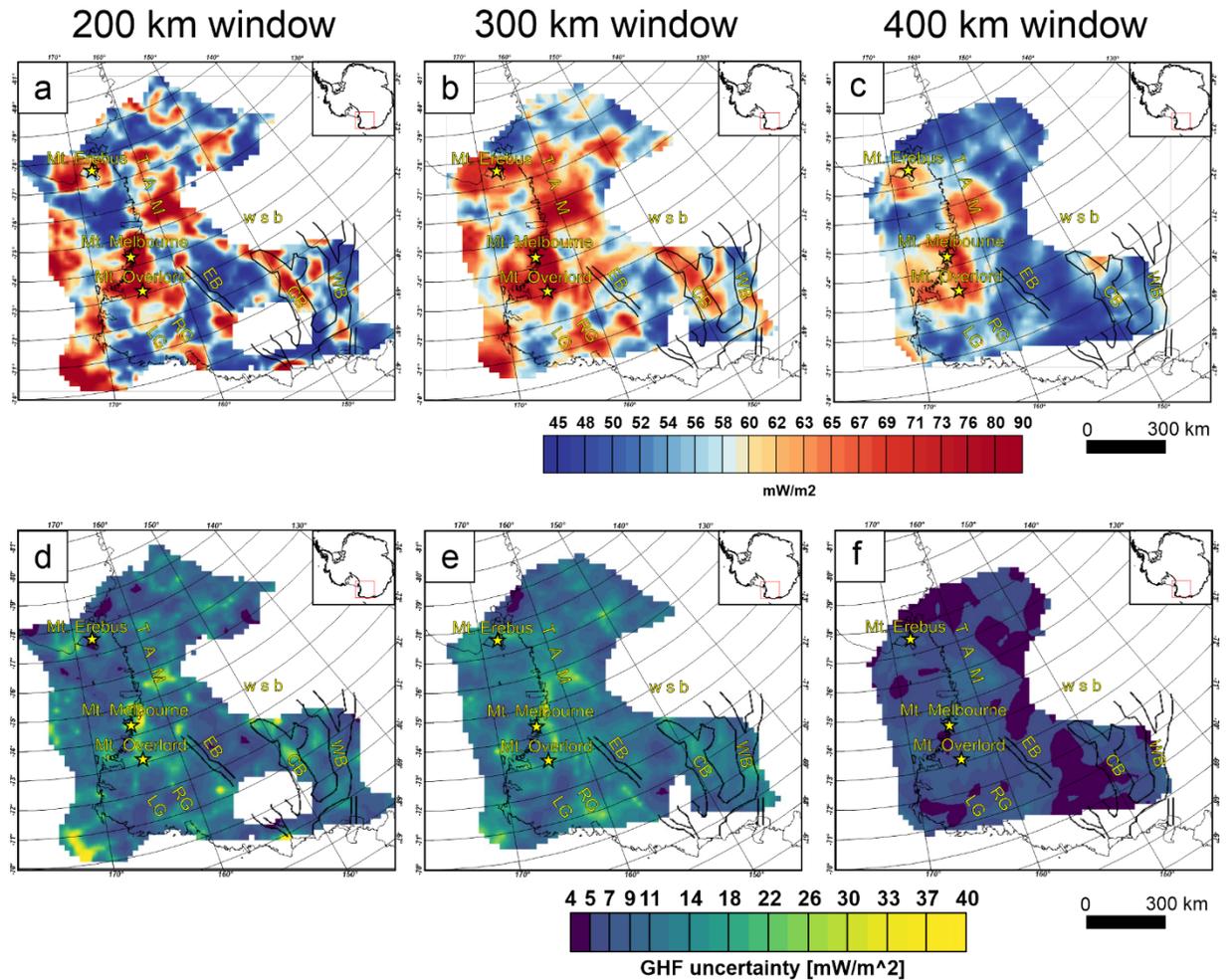


Figure 6: Upper row gives GHF estimates for different window sizes. Lower row illustrates the corresponding uncertainty. a) GHF based on a 200 by 200 km window. b) GHF estimates obtained with a 300 by 300 km window. c) Calculated GHF with a 400 by 400 km window. d) uncertainty for GHF estimates based on a 200 by 200 km window. e) uncertainty for GHF estimates obtained with a

300 by 300km window. f) uncertainty based on GHF estimates with a window size of 400 by 400km. LG, Lillie Graben; RG, Rennick Graben; EB, Eastern Basin, CB, Central Basin; WB, Western Basin; WSB, Wilkes Subglacial Basin; TAM, Transantarctic Mountains.

5 Discussion

Results recovered from a window size of 300 km and 400 km are preferred for multiple reasons: First, the recommendation for an optimal window size is 5 – 10 times the recovered CDP [Ravat *et al.*, 2007] (see section 3.1). The largest portion of recovered CDP across all window sizes is between 25 and 30 km (Figure 7). Aiming for a window size which is 10 times the recovered CDP the preferred windows size must be larger than 250 km and thus the 300 km window size in our study is best suited to satisfy this recommendation. In addition, a window size of 300 km recovers a larger number of valid CDP estimates for the study area in comparison to the 400 km window size (Figure 7 a-c).

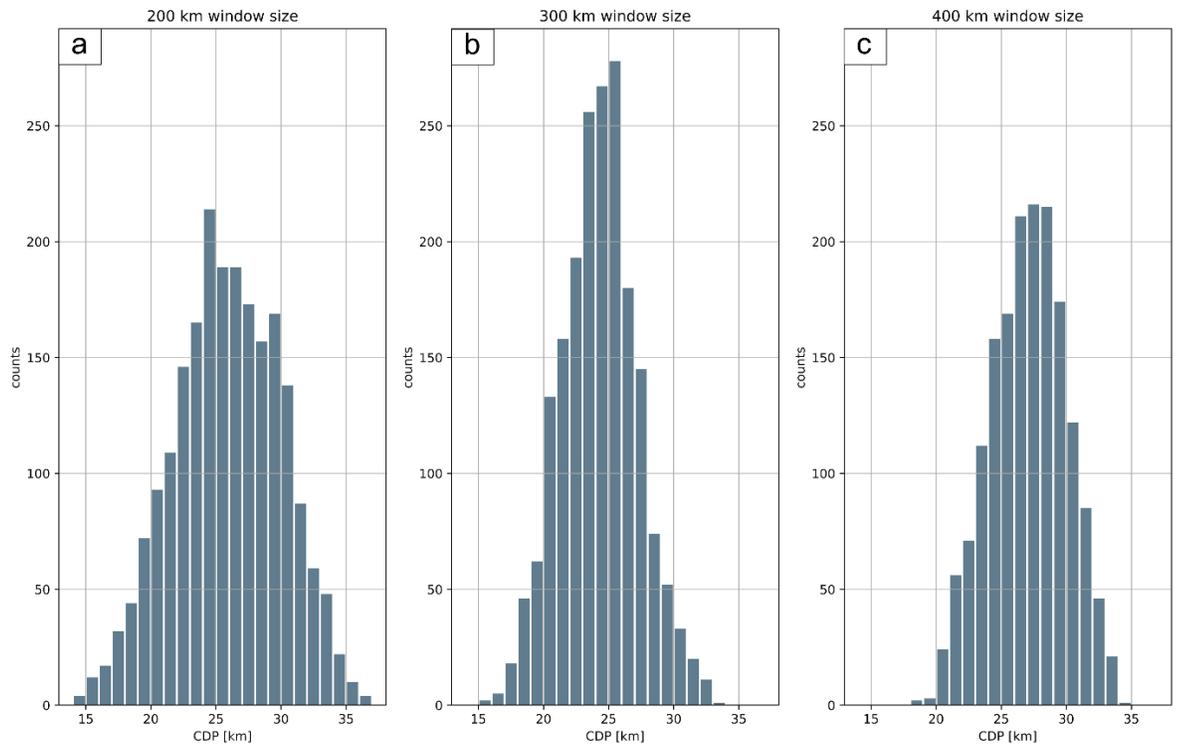


Figure 7: Histogram of recovered CDP depth for different window sizes with a bin size of 1km. a) CDP estimates recovered from 200 by 200 km windows. b) CDP estimates obtained using 300 by 300 km windows. c) Recovered CDP based on 400 by 400 km windows.

The estimated error for the CDP estimates based on the fitting of the radially averaged power spectrum decreases with increasing window size (Figure 5 d-f), which points in the direction of missing low wavenumber content in the 200 km window, while larger window sizes are stabilised due to capturing a wider bandwidth. Moreover, high frequency of spatial variation in the CDP is observed in the 200 km window (Figure 5 a), while CDP from a larger window size (Figure 5 b-c) shows less spatial variation. A large change between the results obtained from a 200 to 300 km window is observed, although many key features persist. A much smaller change is observed between the result obtained from a 300 and 400 km window, suggesting the recovered CDP values stabilise for windows larger than 200 km. Lastly, CDP resulting from a 300 km window recovered spatial patterns, which are consistent with geological and topographic features like the Rennick Graben and the Central Basin. Based on the arguments above we prefer results obtained from a window size of 300 km.

CDP estimates are the result of the average Curie depth within the analysing window, although a strong depth variation within the window may bias the estimation to deeper or shallower values. Moho depth maps are a good control mechanism since Curie depths deeper than the Moho interface would imply that the upper mantle is magnetic (although this possibility has been suggested [Ferré *et al.*, 2014]). CDP estimations of this study are above the Moho interface onshore with a few exceptions near the edge of the magnetic data coverage (Figure 8). CDP estimate offshore in the Ross Sea show isolated areas with deeper CDP estimates compared to the Moho map from Pappa *et al.*, [2019].

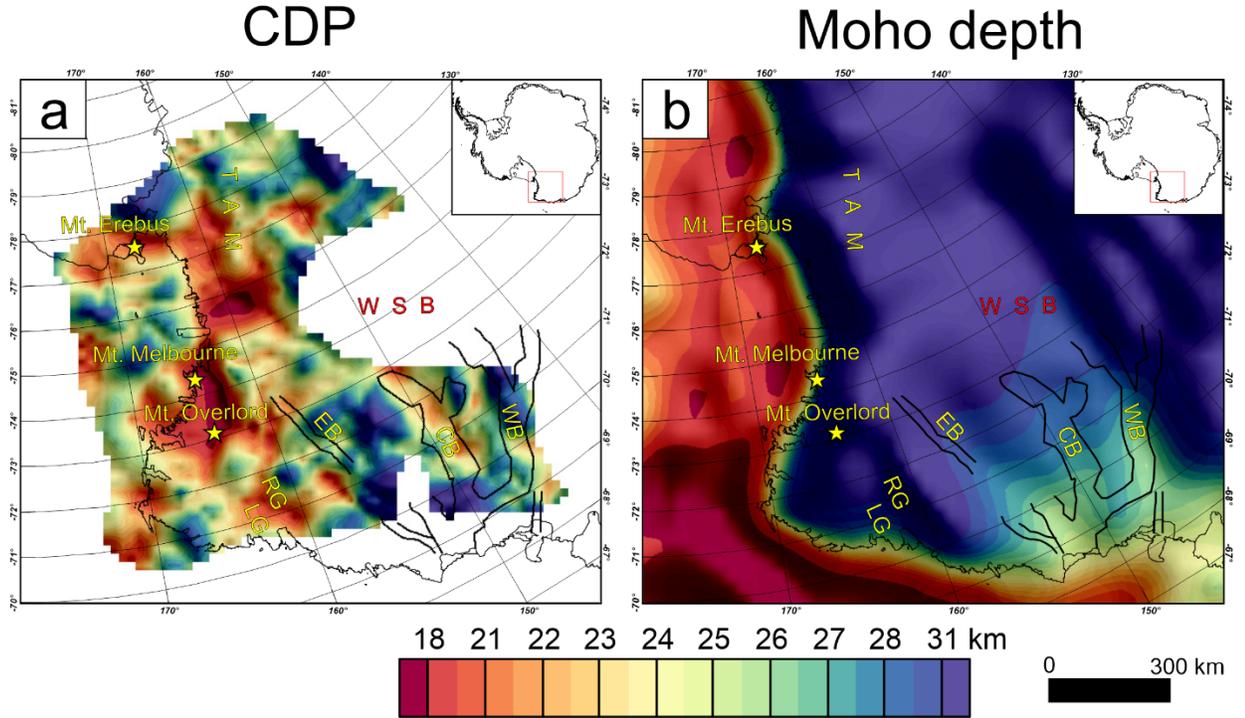


Figure 8: a) CDP estimates recovered with a 300 km window size. b) Moho depth map inferred from satellite gravity inversion [Pappa et al., 2019]. Yellow stars indicate the location of recent active volcanoes. LG, Lillie Graben; RG, Rennick Graben; EB, Eastern Basin, CB, Central Basin; WB, Western Basin; WSB, Wilkes Subglacial Basin; TAM, Transantarctic Mountains.

5.1 Uncertainty of CDP and GHF estimation

Uncertainty arising from fitting the slope of the predefined wavenumber range varies between 2 and 8 km throughout the study area (Figure 5 d-f), which translate to an uncertainty of 2.9 mW/m² to 48.8 mW/m² for the GHF estimation. Uncertainty associated with choosing inappropriate size and range of the wavenumbers to calculate Z_0 and Z_t can lead to significantly different CDP results of the order of multiple km (See supplementary information section S4). Uncertainty from the chosen window size is in the order of a few km (Figure 5, Figure 7). With increasing window size, the average recovered depths increase, while fewer extreme CDP values are recovered (Figure 5, Figure 7). Moreover, the composition of the magnetic material itself induces uncertainty since the Curie temperature is not a universal 580 °C for all minerals [Blakely, 1988; Haggerty, 1978; Núñez Demarco et al., 2020]. However, the effect of the mineral composition is almost impossible to quantify. Lastly, the linear transformation of CDP to GHF (eq. 8) does not consider heat production within the crust and assumes a constant thermal conductivity, which is a strong simplification of the

crustal properties.

It is important to consider these effects when using absolute values of GHF estimates derived from bottom of the magnetic layer methods. However, many of the uncertainties discussed above relate to the absolute value of the CDP across the study. This method provides a robust tool to imaging relative variation in CDP.

5.2 comparison to in-situ GHF measurements and previous GHF models

The global GHF catalogue [Lucazeau, 2019] reports a few in situ measurements for the study area (Figure 9). These measurements use different techniques and equipment. Measurements in our study area have been conducted from boreholes, sediment and ice probes [Lucazeau, 2019]. The measurements in the database are rated from A to C based on the variation of heat with depths and Z for not specified. A rated GHF measurements (circles in Figure 9) are very sparse in the area. The three southernmost (longitude from 163° to 165° , latitude from -77° to -77.7°) A rated measurements are conducted in boreholes and consistent with our GHF estimates. A rated measurements offshore are aligned at the edge of a high heat flow pattern. However, the negative heat flow pattern offshore arises from CDP estimates, which are below the Moho interface and therefore are less trustworthy as discussed in section 5. B and Z rated GHF measurements are overall consistent with our GHF estimates. C rated measurements onshore (triangles Figure 9) are in strong disagreement with our findings. Previous GHF models based on machine learning and multi statistical similarity analysis [Lösing and Ebbing, 2021; Stål et al., 2021] use in situ measurements in their approach. However, [Stål et al., 2021] only used A rated GHF measurements, while [Lösing and Ebbing, 2021] did not discriminate the measurements. We categorise the three borehole measurements taken beneath the McMurdo ice Shelf (longitude from 163° to 165° , latitude from -77° to -77.7°) to be the most trustworthy and are more cautious in regard to measurements obtained using sediment and ice probes.

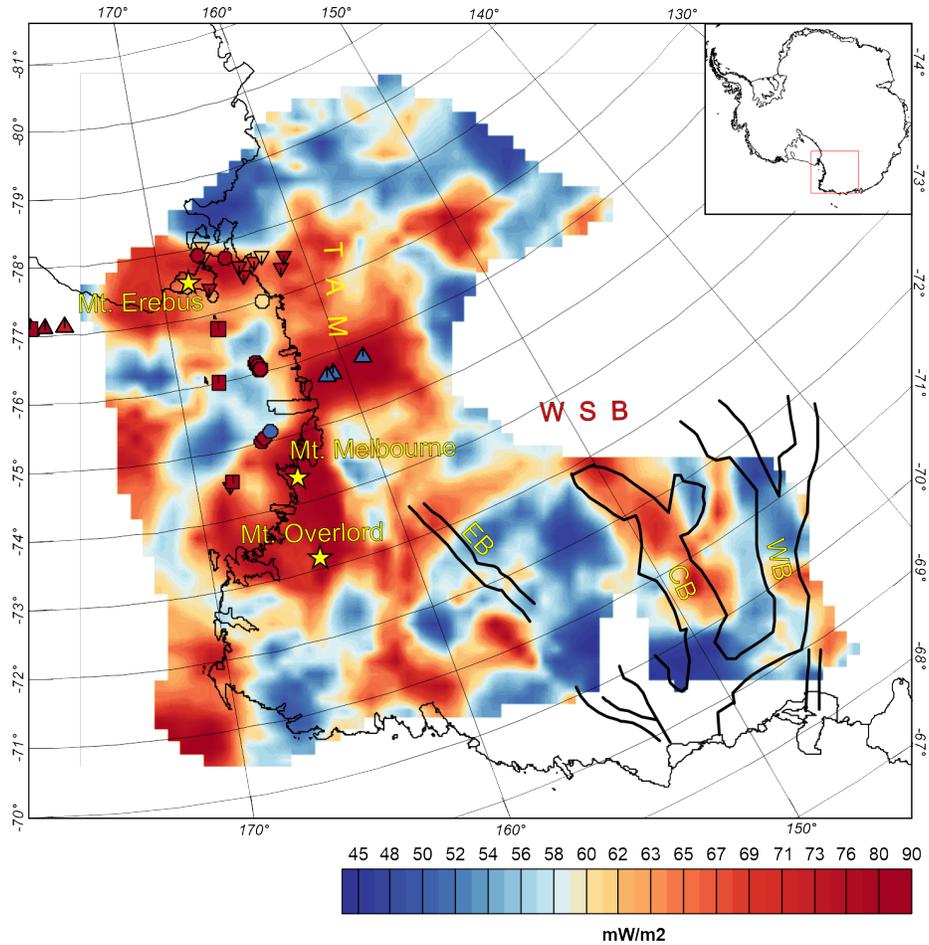


Figure 9: In situ GHF measurements [Lucazeau, 2019] superimposed on GHF estimates recovered based on an analytic window with a window size of 300 km. Circles represent A rated GHF measurements, Boxes represent B rated GHF measurements, regular triangles represent C rated GHF measurements and inverted triangles represent Z rated (not specified) rated GHF measurements. Yellow stars indicate the location of recent active volcanoes. LG, Lillie Graben; RG, Rennick Graben; EB, Eastern Basin, CB, Central Basin; WB, Western Basin; WSB, Wilkes Subglacial Basin; TAM, Transantarctic Mountains.

Difference-maps (Figure 10) between the GHF estimates based on a 300 by 300 km window to previous studies (Figure 2) show moderate differences in the order of ± 20 mW/m^2 between most models with isolated areas with stronger disagreement ± 50 mW/m^2 and more. All models predict a lower GHF beneath the southern TAM and a higher heat flow offshore. The seismic derived GHF estimates [An *et al.*, 2015; Shen *et al.*, 2020] show the least disagreement together with the statistically derived model from Stål *et al.*, [2021] to GHF estimates in

this study.

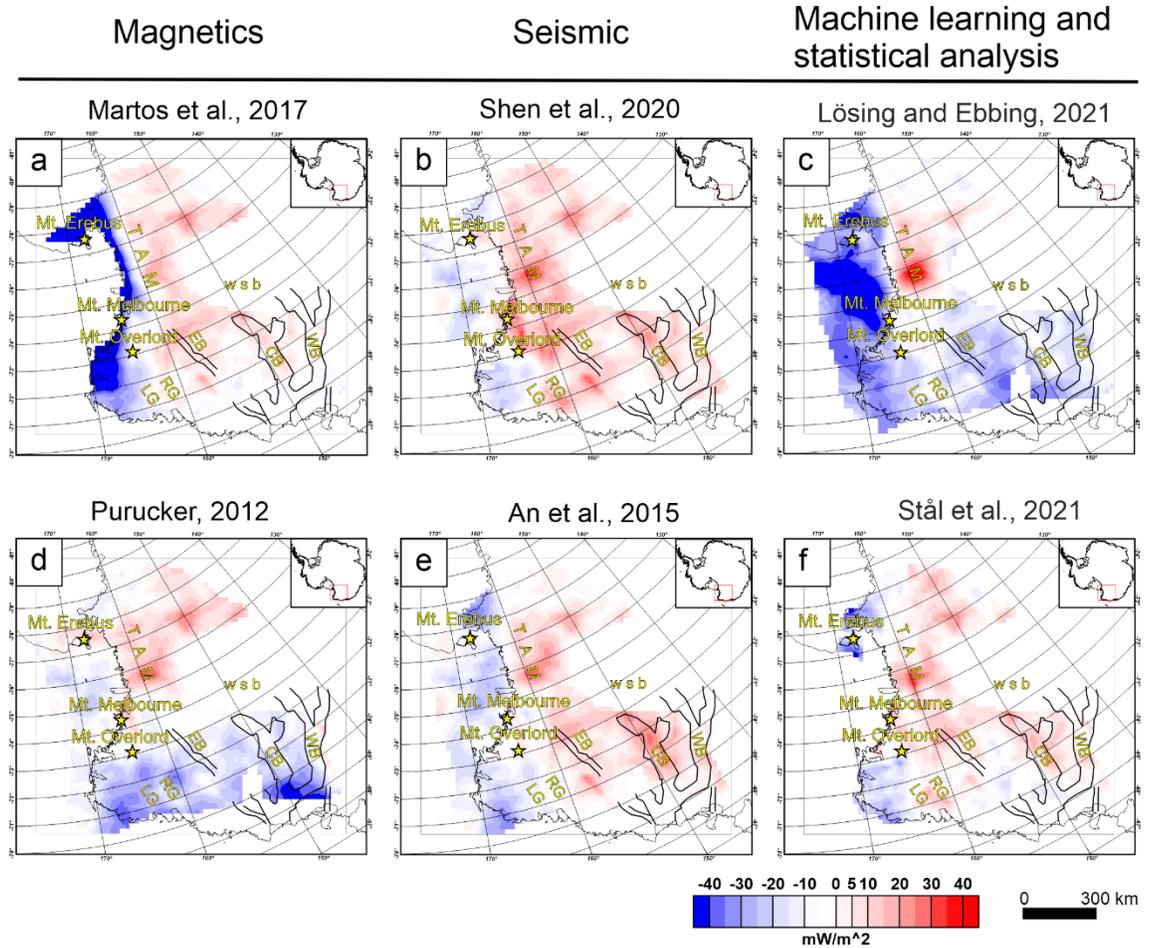


Figure 10: Difference-maps between GHF estimates of this study obtained with a window size of 300 by 300km and existing continent wide GHF models shown in Figure 2. Blue colours show lower GHF values in GHF estimates in this study, while red colours indicate higher GHF estimates in this study. a) Difference in estimated GHF values compared to [Martos et al., 2017] b) Difference in estimated GHF values compared to [Shen et al., 2020] c) Difference in estimated GHF values compared to [Lösing and Ebbing, 2021] d) Difference in estimated GHF values compared to [Purucker, 2012 an update of Fox Maule et al., 2005] e) Difference in estimated GHF values compared to [An et al., 2015] and f) Difference in estimated GHF values compared to [Stål et al., 2021].

Those three models predict GHF values in the same order of magnitude with stronger disagreements in the Rennick Graben, Central Basin and southern TAM. The GHF model derived from magnetically inferred CDP from *Martos et*

al., [2017] shows a strong disagreement at the divide to West Antarctica and a moderate disagreement in East Antarctica. The strong disagreement might be due to the fact that the *Martos et al.*, [2017] study applied different wavenumber ranges to the power spectrum to estimate the CDP for windows in West and East Antarctica, which systematically gives shallower CDP for West Antarctica and consequently results in higher heat flow. GHF prediction based on a machine learning approach by *Lösing and Ebbing*, [2021] shows strong disagreement onshore beneath the southern TAM and offshore in the Ross Sea. The much lower GHF predictions in the *Lösing and Ebbing*, [2021] model onshore beneath the TAM might be related to incorporating the three C rated GHF in situ measurements from the global GHF catalogue [*Lucazeau*, 2019]. The large difference in the Ross Sea to the *Lösing and Ebbing*, [2021] model is located where our CDP estimates exceed the Moho depth and therefore are less trustworthy.

5.3 Geological origins and implications of geothermal anomalies.

Curie depth point estimation and Geothermal heat flow predictions respectively reveal elevated heat flow beneath the northern TAM. Recently active volcanoes in the study area are: Mount Erebus, which is the southernmost active volcano on Earth [*Sims et al.*, 2021], Mount Melbourne, a quiescent volcano, which is believed to have the potential to produce major explosive events [*Gambino et al.*, 2021], and Mount Overlord, which was active during the Eocene [*Perinelli et al.*, 2017]. Those recently active volcanoes are consistent with thermal anomaly pattern of this study since each volcano is centrally located in areas of elevated heat flow (Figure 9).

The high in heat flow in the TAM region is in line with the idea of warmer West Antarctic mantle beneath the TAM providing thermal support for the mountain range as proposed by *Hansen et al.*, [2016] and the low velocity mantle imaged by recent seismic tomography models [*Lloyd et al.*, 2020; *Wiens et al.*, 2021].

A linear high heat flow anomaly is observed in the Rennick Graben. This high heat flow pattern leaks into the Lillie Graben. The opening of the Rennick Graben was previously linked to mid Cretaceous (~100 Ma) rifting and interpreted as a failed rift arm [*Fleming et al.*, 1993]. This idea is challenged by fission track data, which indicates that the Rennick Graben formed due to tectonic denudation (up to 5 km) combined with strike-slip deformation [*Rossetti et al.*, 2003]. A receiver function profile perpendicular to the Rennick Graben (Station BI01 – BI03) indicates shallow crustal thickness of 24 km [*Agostinetti et al.*, 2004]. Both mechanisms, mid Cretaceous rifting and large amount of denudation, could explain elevated heat flow in the Rennick Graben as seen in our results. Alternatively, small crustal thicknesses accompanied by a thin lithosphere can cause an elevation in heat flow. However, the thin crust imaged by receiver functions is not limited to the Rennick graben and would cause broader high heat flow patterns in contrast to the narrow heat flow pattern imaged by our results.

Another linear feature is imaged in the Central Basin (Figure 6b). Competing models of the WSB origin have been proposed in the past, including continental rifting [Steed, 1983], which was partially supported by airborne geophysical data [Ferraccioli *et al.*, 2001]. However, interpretation of recent aerogeophysical data suggested a rifting origin of the Central Basin is very unlikely [Ferraccioli *et al.*, 2009a; Jordan *et al.*, 2013]. Alternative models include flexural down-warp of the WSB in response to Cenozoic rift-flank uplift of the TAM caused by the neighbouring Ross Sea Rift [Stern and ten Brink, 1989; ten Brink *et al.*, 1997]. Similarly, a recent model proposes the WSB developed as a result of flexural processes coupled with deep glacial erosion [Paxman *et al.*, 2019]. Both mechanisms, continental Cenozoic rifting, even though unlikely, and large-scale erosion, can cause elevated heat flow and might be connected to the high heat flow pattern observed in the Central Basin. The similarity in amplitude and linear pattern of heat flow in the Rennick Graben and the Central Basin could be an indicator of a similar evolution mechanism. In the broader WSB area, except for the Rennick Graben and Central Basin the CDP and GHF maps show overall deeper and lower values, respectively, and therefore indicate a much colder thermal structure.

The CDP and consequently GHF maps from this study have a higher spatial resolution than previous continental scale GHF estimates inferred from magnetic data (Figure 2a and 2d), due to a combination of smaller distance between evaluated windows (20 km) and using only high-resolution airborne data without substituting satellite measurements. Consequently, the spatial coverage of our approach is strongly limited to the region with a dense coverage of airborne measurements.

6 Conclusion and future work

We present new CDP and GHF maps for the northern TAM and WSB area. Our spectral analysis of magnetic data provides a significant improvement over prior GHF maps of the region. We resolve elevated heat flow features in the Rennick Graben and Central Basin that have not been imaged before. However, the overall spatial coverage of this analysis is limited by the extent of airborne surveys with close flight line spacing. Filling data gaps with satellite magnetic data, as previous studies in Antarctica have done [Dziadek *et al.*, 2021; Martos *et al.*, 2017] is not an effective solution due to the wavelengths it provides for the analytic window [Pappa and Ebbing, 2021].

The shallow Curie depth values estimated beneath Northern Victoria Land and the TAM provide independent evidence favouring the hypothesis that warmer West Antarctica mantle provides thermal support for this part of the TAM, as imaged by seismological studies [Hansen *et al.*, 2016; Lloyd *et al.*, 2020; Wiens *et al.*, 2021]. High GHF values beneath the northern TAM and West Antarctica are also consistent with the presence of recently active volcanoes including Mount Erebus, Mount Melbourne and Mount Overlord.

Our GHF maps are a linear transformation from the CDP estimates and provide a good estimate of relative variations of the thermal structure. However, due to the high uncertainty of CDP estimates (section 5.2) and the simplified linear transformation to GHF (equation 8), absolute GHF values derived from spectral methods should be used with caution.

Despite the many assumptions and lack of onshore heat flow control data, the Curie depth and Geothermal heat flow results show convincing coherence and highlight interesting comparisons with known geological features. The approach of using exclusively high-resolution airborne data should be repeated in other areas of Antarctica with suitable magnetic data coverage to obtain relative variation in CDP.

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Open Research

CDP and GHF estimates from this study are available through the Polar data centre. In addition, power spectrum for each window and parameter of the linear regression are made publicly available for the purpose of reproducibility (link TBA). (The data is with the Polar data centre and the process of publishing the data started (providing a DOI and meta data). However, this process is delayed due to the holiday session and all the data that will be published through the Polar data centre can be accessed through this temporary link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/p2hkn0stoqs9u56/AAAR0nICI11mlG4D7ViPMDjga?dl=0>).

BedMachine Antarctica version 2 [Morlighem et al., 2020] is freely available at <https://nsidc.org/data/NSIDC-0756/versions/2>, ADMAP-2 magnetic data [Golynsky et al., 2018] is freely available at <https://doi.pangaea.de/10.1594/PANGAEA.892724>, The LCS-1 data [Olsen et

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Python code in form of a Jupyter notebook to reproduce the result of this study is available at https://github.com/MaximilianLowe/CDP_GHF_TAM_WSB_JGR_solid_earth_Lowe2022.

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