

Internal tides responsible for lithogenic inputs along the Iberian continental slope

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Key Points:

- Sites of high bottom tidal velocity along the Iberian continental slope were identified using a semi-realistic internal tides model.
- Sediment resuspension was confirmed on five sites based on earlier sediment surveys and Shields criterion threshold.
- Particle trajectories were proposed based on circulation modeling to improve the interpretation of geochemical tracers measurements.

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Abstract

This study details sediment resuspension due to internal tides (ITs) and the subsequent propagation of suspended particles along and off the Iberian continental slope. Five resuspension sites are identified along the western Iberian shelf slope using a tidal regional model of the Bay of Biscay and Iberian continental shelf. Two sites are sources of lithogenic material, one is a source of biogenic matter, and two are sources of a mixture of both. The potential pathways for particles from the resuspension sites toward the GEOVIDE stations are identified using IBIRYS reanalysis to infer their transport by the ocean circulation. It appears that each station is influenced by a specific pathway and mixed particles from several resuspension sites.

This methodology enables us to establish more realistic interpretations of the geochemical in situ observations combining distinct modeling of ITs and oceanic circulation as well as in situ sediment properties. It also reveals that the criticality of the bathymetry slope, commonly used to track the potential occurrence of ITs, is not sufficient to investigate their role in sediment resuspension. An explicit resolution of ITs using a numerical tidal model is required for an exhaustive identification of the resuspension sites.

Plain Language Summary

Internal tides are waves with a tidal period generated when tides cross a steep slope of the sea floor. Internal tides then propagate in every stratified layer of the open ocean over hundreds to thousands of kilometers. The encounter of internal tides with underwater relief, either at the generation site or after propagation, results in high bottom friction that enhances sediment resuspension. Evidence of lithogenic particles was found at various depths during the GEOVIDE cruise, from the Iberian continental slope to thousands of kilometers away. The present study identifies the sites where internal tides are responsible for sediment resuspension. Additionally, the oceanic circulation is investigated to establish the trajectories of the resuspended sediment that could explain the GEOVIDE measurements.

Keywords

Internal tides, sediment resuspension, lithogenic particle transport, geochemical tracer, modeling, GEOTRACES

1 Introduction

The GEOVIDE cruise took place in May/June 2014 onboard the R/V *Pourquoi Pas ?* between Lisbon, Greenland, and Newfoundland. This cruise was part of the GEOTRACES program, an international cooperation that aims to study trace elements and their isotopes distributions and cycles in the global ocean. Suspended particles were sampled between the surface and 1000 *m* at several stations by *in situ* seawater filtration. They were found to have higher Rare Earth Elements (REEs) and iron concentrations closer to the Iberian margin and to contain 40-100% of lithogenic material Gourain et al. (2019), Lagarde et al. (2020). Additionally, a continuous propagation of intermediate nepheloid layers was observed as far as 2000 *km* away, following isopycnal layers at the following depths: 180, 220, 500 and 800 *m* (corresponding to potential density anomalies $\sigma = 27.00, 27.05, 27.18$ and 27.39 kg.m^{-3} respectively, Fig. 1b, Lagarde et al., 2020). These results suggest intense resuspension along the Iberian continental slope, followed by a transport mechanism allowing the sediment to reach the middle of the Atlantic Ocean as hypothesized by Lagarde et al. (2020). Furthermore, the significant resuspension of particles of strict lithogenic origin leads to the formation of intermediate nepheloid layers when the sediment propagates off-shelf (McCave & Hall, 2002). The presence of neph-

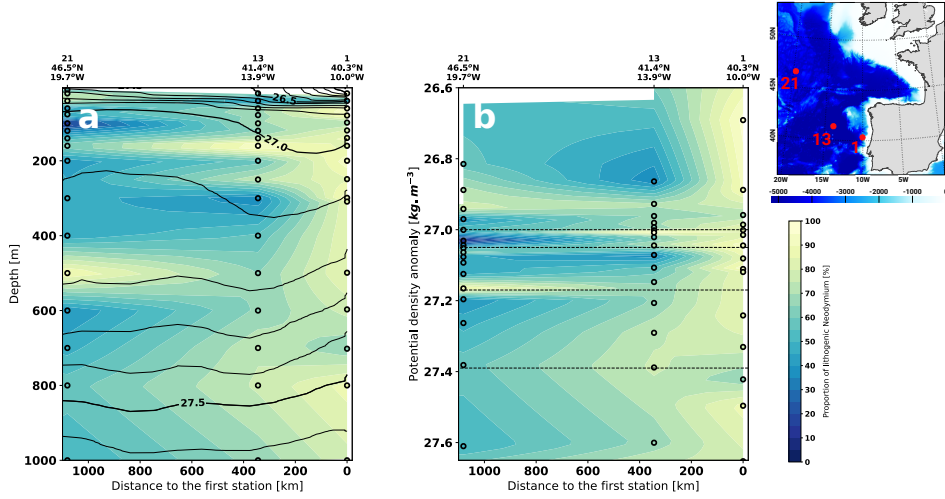


Figure 1. Proportion of lithogenic neodymium in suspended particles (in %) along the 3 first stations over (a) depth and (b) isopycnals. Data from GEOVIDE measurements (black circles) were linearly interpolated with depth (a) and density (b). The solid black lines represent the isopycnals of potential density anomaly. The horizontal dashed lines correspond to the isopycnals of the observed nepheloid layers. Station numbers and locations are shown on top of section plots and on the map at the top-right. Data from Lagarde et al. (2020).

eloid layers is effectively observed at all depths along the GEOVIDE section, except at 700 m at station 1 (nearest station to the shelf).

The contribution of internal tides (ITs) and internal solitary waves (ISWs) to sediment resuspension at the margins was demonstrated by lab experiments (Cacchione, 1970), *in situ* measurements (Huthnance, 1989, Jia et al., 2019) and more recently by numerical modeling (Masunaga et al., 2020). Boegman & Stastna (2019) illustrated all the observations of sediment resuspension and transport due to ISWs measurements until then and explained the mechanisms of sediment resuspension by internal waves. Contrasting with the oceanic circulation that transports particles along isopycnals, the turbulence associated with the shoaling of internal waves over the topography enables particles to be transported across isopycnals (Masunaga et al., 2017). ITs and ISWs are generated by distinct forcing that develops a perturbation of the stratification of the water column. They propagate with strong vertical displacements of the isopycnals and enhanced currents.

ISWs have been proposed to explain sediment resuspension along the Iberian shelf (McCave & Hall, 2002, Van Weering et al., 2002, Oliveira et al., 2002, Schmidt et al., 2002, Dias et al., 2002, Quaresma et al., 2007). ISWs are generated by the wind over a stratified upper ocean or by the tides in a shallow stratified ocean such as a river plume. They can have a large vertical amplitude (< 200 m) and enhanced currents (< 2 m.s⁻¹) but mainly propagate in the first 300 m along the pycnocline (Marin, 2011); therefore, they cannot fully explain the GEOVIDE observations (Fig. 1).

ITs have been observed along the Nazaré canyon without direct evidence of sediment resuspension (Huthnance et al., 2002). Contrary to barotropic tidal currents, which affect the entire water column with a quasi-uniform amplitude, ITs propagate across every stratified layer and the associated currents show a highly variable 3D pattern. Their internal oscillation amplitude is generally weaker than that of ISWs (< 100 m and < 1 m.s⁻¹) but they are highly energetic and constantly generated with a tidal period (de

Lavergne et al., 2019). IT energy propagates from IT generation sites in a specific pathway called the wave beam. Effective bottom friction effects are expected where the IT energy flux reaches the seabed, possibly in close vicinity of the generation sites (Garrett & Kunze, 2007, their figure 8). Ribbe & Holloway (2001) showed that IT energy is most efficiently dissipated by friction when the bathymetry slope is parallel to the IT wave beam, a situation called the critical slope which leads to sediment resuspension. The criticality of a bathymetric slope depends on stratification and the tidal period. Its temporal variability is only controlled by the temporal variability of the stratification. This simple criterion is widely used in the geochemical community to identify potential resuspension sites due to the presence of ITs or ISWs at those sites (de Madron et al., 1999, Caccione et al., 2002, Puig et al., 2004, Lam et al., 2020). ISWs are more randomly generated than ITs, so such a criterion is still valid. However, this approach gives no information on the occurrence of ITs crossing the slope.

The full signal of ITs off-shelf is not easily observed because of their short periods, 3D propagation pattern, and wavelengths of several tens of kilometers. Considering both barotropic and baroclinic tides in circulation models is likely to raise numerical difficulties, such as stability or spurious long-term erosion of the stratification due to strong currents. To date, these processes have been simulated at shelf-scale (tens to hundreds of kilometers) focusing on shallow waters but rarely at wider scales to focus on intermediate sediment resuspension and transport. Molinas et al. (2020) used a tidal regional model to investigate the IT residual currents influencing particle transport over the Amazon shelf but applied their calculation to the shelf only and did not consider the slope and the area further offshore. Masunaga et al. (2020) used a tidal regional model with idealized bathymetry coupled with a sediment model to quantify sediment resuspension and the transport of particles associated with ITs. However, their study did not compare the transport of particles due to ITs to that due to oceanic circulation.

In this context, our purpose is to investigate how ITs trigger sediment resuspension and subsequent transport, as observed along the Iberian margin. First, the 3D model SYMPHONIE¹ (Marsaleix et al., 2006, 2008), forced solely by tides, is used to numerically investigate the bottom current speed and energy budget of ITs. This model was previously deployed in the northeast Atlantic region to study IT dynamics (Paireaud et al., 2008, 2010) and the tidal influences on river plume (Toublanc et al., 2018). The present configuration is based on a high-resolution grid (1 km in the region of interest) and a density field coherent with the GEOVIDE cruise hydrographic conditions. Second, sediment resuspension is investigated using simulated bottom friction and published measurements of local sediment dry bulk densities and particle diameters. Finally, the consecutive transport of the nepheloid layers is investigated using IBIRYS12² (Iberian-Biscay-Irish ocean Reanalysis, hereafter IBIRYS), an operational reanalysis from 3D NEMO simulations (Maraldi et al., 2013). By exploring these processes, this study proposes for the first time a mechanistic link between the observed geochemical tracer distributions and the activity of ITs.

2 Internal tide simulation

2.1 SYMPHONIE model configuration

A regional configuration of the SYMPHONIE model, called BOBIBE (Bay of Biscay/Iberian shelf), was set up and 3D tidal simulations were carried out to quantify IT bottom currents and energy dissipation. The BOBIBE configuration uses a realistic bathymetry

¹ <https://sites.google.com/view/symphonieoceanmodel/home>

² https://resources.marine.copernicus.eu/?option=com_csw&view=details&product_id=IBI

over a structured C-grid of 1 *km* horizontal resolution with 60 vanishing quasi-sigma vertical levels (Estournel et al., 2021). Tides are forced as boundary conditions using both the tidal velocity and the tidal surface height. The barotropic tidal forcing uses the atlas FES2014b (Lyard et al., 2021) or the M2, S2, N2, K1 and O1 tidal harmonics. These tidal harmonics are selected because they have the largest amplitudes in the studied area and can be separated by harmonic analysis after only a month of simulation. A one-dimensional vertical density profile, representative of the GEOVIDE cruise section, is uniformly prescribed over the domain. The ocean atmosphere fluxes are disabled preventing any density-driven or wind-driven circulation in the simulation. This IT-dedicated configuration allows the development of a stable IT regime and thus provides a more precise harmonic solution of ITs. The spectral properties (amplitude and phase lag) are extracted from the simulation using harmonic analysis over one month of simulation after 15 days of spinup. To separate the barotropic tides from ITs, the results are projected over the first ten vertical modes based on the mean stratification after spinup. The diagnostics of IT generation and energy flux calculations are based on this modal separation of the results.

2.2 Validation of the simulation

The validation of the BOBIBE simulation focused on the stratification, barotropic velocity, and surface elevation due to ITs. The stratification is compared to that observed during GEOVIDE over the simulation area (average from the first 11 stations). Figure 2a shows that the pycnocline is located at the same depth (~ 30 m) and despite slight differences at the surface, the stratifications match.

The amplitude of the barotropic velocity was compared to the FES2014b tidal atlas. The major harmonic, M2, is presented in Figure 2b,c; the remaining tidal harmonics can be found in the Supporting Information (Fig. S2). The difference is presented in proportion and the white color represents a difference within $\pm 1\%$. The difference between BOBIBE and FES2014b only exceeds 10% at the shelf break and over the Iberian shelf. The barotropic tide is highly sensitive to the bathymetry and energy consumption from IT generation (mostly happening at the shelf break in this area). The bathymetry is better resolved and the IT generation is better constrained in BOBIBE than in FES2014b; therefore, the differences appear reasonable and demonstrate that the overall barotropic tides are well captured.

As explained in the introduction, the measurement of ITs is difficult, making the validation delicate. HRET, one of the best global IT dataset, analyzes 20 years of altimetric surface elevation measurements in order to extract the stationary state of ITs globally over different tidal harmonics (Zaron, 2019). The spatial sampling of long-term altimetry (1 *Hz* data) cannot resolve the IT higher modes, so we choose to compare HRET to the first mode of the BOBIBE simulation. The comparison with M2 is presented in Figure 2d,e; the remaining tidal harmonics can be found in the Supporting Information (Fig. S3). The overall amplitude of the ITs is similar in the Bay of Biscay but stronger over the Galicia Bank and weaker at the southwest of the domain. HRET uses the hypothesis that ITs are propagating like plane waves to better constrain IT mapping. Such hypothesis appears relevant for large shelf breaks or ridges but is inappropriate for an isolated seamount like the Galicia Bank, where IT propagation is more concentric. At the southwest of the domain, HRET seems to capture the northward ITs generated at the Gorringe Bank, which are not included in the BOBIBE domain.

2.3 Internal tide generation and propagation

Based on the method described in Buijsman et al. (2017), IT energetics are investigated using two quantities: the energy flux (F_{BC}) and the conversion rate (CRV). CRV corresponds to the energy of barotropic tide (BT) converted to baroclinic tide (BC) at the sea floor. Positive CVR values refer to IT generation zones, while negative values

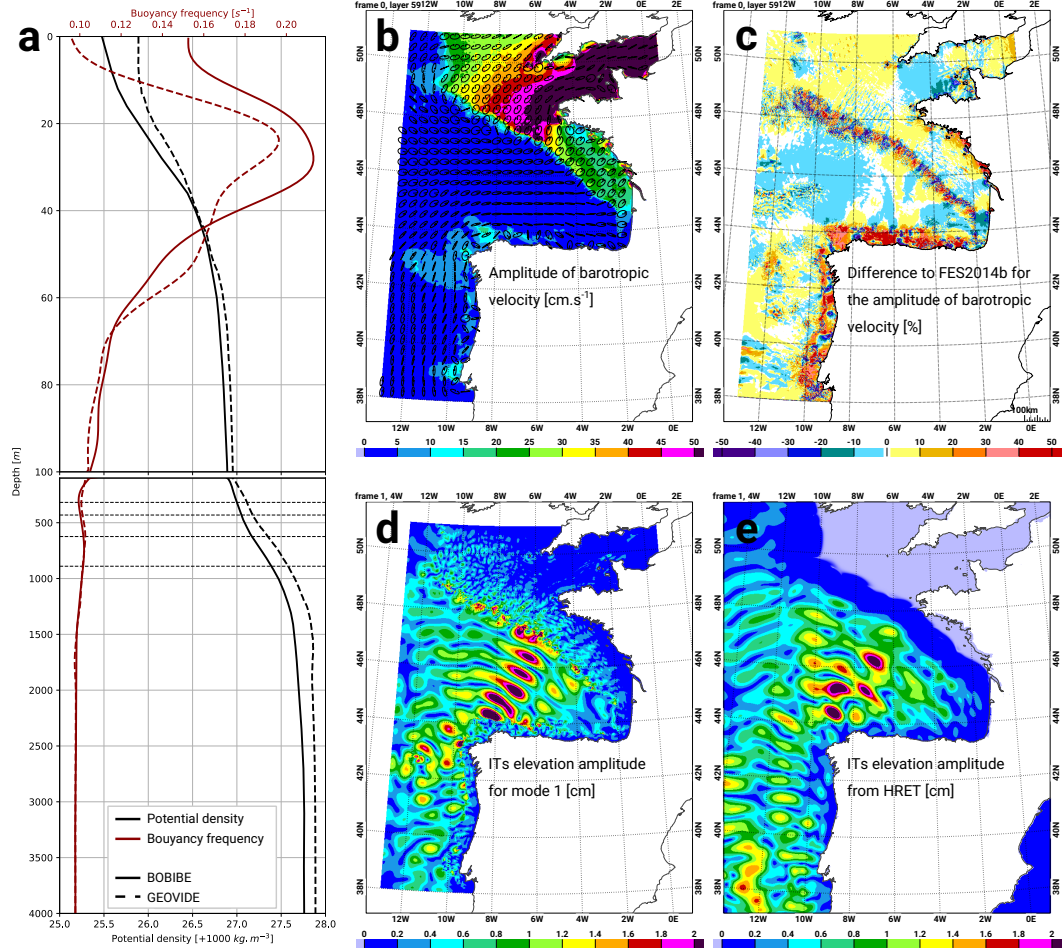


Figure 2. (a) Comparison of the stratification used in BOBIBE and that measured during GEOVIDE (average from the first 11 stations). (b) Amplitude of barotropic velocity for M2 in BOBIBE; and (c) difference to FES2014b atlas in proportion, the white color represents a difference within $\pm 1\%$. (d) Elevation amplitude of the first baroclinic mode for M2 in BOBIBE; and (e) stationary signal of ITs from HRET. The horizontal dashed lines in (a) correspond to the depths of the observed nepheloid layers.

refer to a sink of IT energy. Sink zones may correspond to the shoaling of ITs over the bathymetry and could be associated with sediment resuspension. In addition, IT energy fluxes enable the tracking of IT propagation from their generation site to their sink.

F_{BC} and CRV are defined by the following equations:

$$F_{BC} = \int_b^0 \nabla_h \cdot \langle p_{BC} V_{BC} \rangle dz \quad (1)$$

$$CVR = \nabla_h \cdot \langle p_{BC}^b V_{BT}^b \rangle \quad (2)$$

with p is the pressure and V is the current velocity, $\langle \rangle$ indicates that the quantities are averaged along the considered tidal period, ∇_h refers to the horizontal gradient and b refers to the sea floor.

Figure 3a shows the IT energy budget and identifies several generation sites with a complex energy propagation. Along the Iberian peninsula, the major generation sites are La Coruña shelf and the Galicia Bank. However, the ITs coming from the Bay of Biscay are not negligible and seem to mostly head toward the Galicia Bank. In some areas, the ITs do not propagate and sink locally (shading arrows).

As explained in the introduction, the criticality of the bathymetric slope is widely used to investigate the potential of sediment resuspension from internal waves. The criticality is expressed by the ratio of bathymetric slope over IT wave beam angle (Supporting Information Text S1), whose values of ~ 1 indicate critical slopes (Fig. 3a). We observe that most shelf breaks present critical slopes (from 400 m to 2000 m).

Finally, Figure 3 highlights that the tidal resuspension sites (TRS) investigated in this study are generally close to critical slopes although not always (*e.g.* La Coruña and Nazaré Canyon). Moreover, TRS are not directly linked to IT sink zones.

3 Sediment resuspension triggered by internal tides

3.1 Internal tide bottom friction

IT bottom friction, and thus potential sediment resuspension, is not necessarily observed in the area of IT generation. ITs coming from a distant source and encountering a bathymetric slope increase bottom friction over the slope. The Iberian slope is highly influenced by ITs coming from the Bay of Biscay (Fig. 3b).

The bottom shear stress τ_b (or bottom friction) is calculated from the harmonic solutions of the simulation using the same equation coded in the model:

$$\tau_b = \rho V_*^2 = \rho C_D V^2 \quad (3)$$

where ρ is the sea water density, V_* is the friction velocity, C_D is the quadratic friction coefficient and V is the velocity at the vertical mid-position of the bottom layer. C_D is calculated in BOBIBE simulation using the following equation:

$$C_D = \left(\frac{\kappa}{\ln \left(\frac{1}{z_0} \frac{h_b}{2} \right)} \right)^2 \quad (4)$$

where κ is the Von Karman constant ($\kappa = 0.4$), z_0 is the bottom roughness and h_b is the thickness of the bottom layer. The bottom roughness is the scale of unresolved topography at the sea floor, such as sand waves, ripples, or grain size. In the BOBIBE simulation, $z_0 = 1 \times 10^{-3}$ m uniformly over the domain and corresponds to the order of roughness for continental slopes and abyssal plains.

Based on the spectral velocity fields of M2, S2, N2, K1 and O1, a prediction of \mathbf{V} is made over two months with a time resolution of 30 min, and the maximum of V is

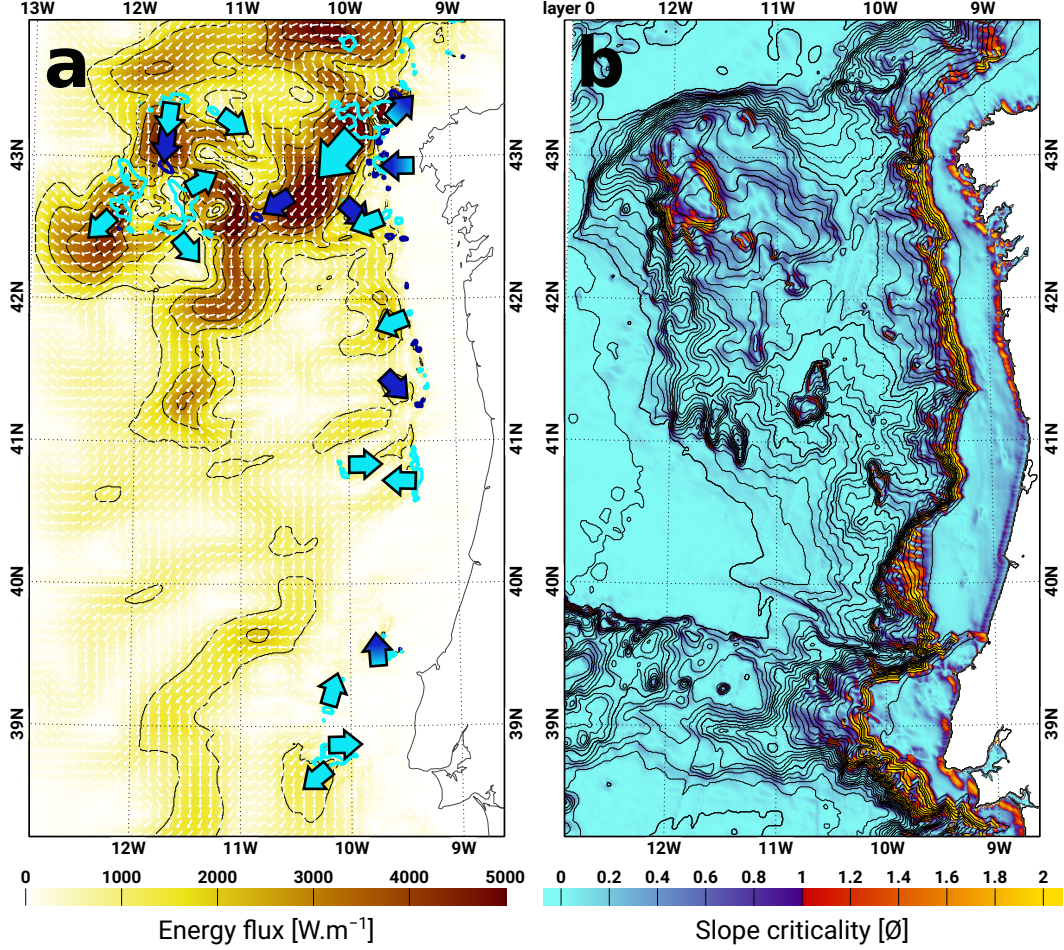


Figure 3. (a) Internal tide energy flux vertically integrated ($W.m^{-1}$) and conversion rate (cyan contours for generation and dark blue contours for sink). The cyan arrows refer to IT generation; the dark blue arrows refer to IT sinks, shading arrows refers to generated and locally dissipated ITs. (b) Ratio between the topography slope and the angle of the IT wave beam for diurnal tidal harmonics (based on M2). Values equal to 1 indicate critical slope areas; values < 1 refer to transmissive slopes (subcritical); and values > 1 refer to reflective slopes (supercritical).

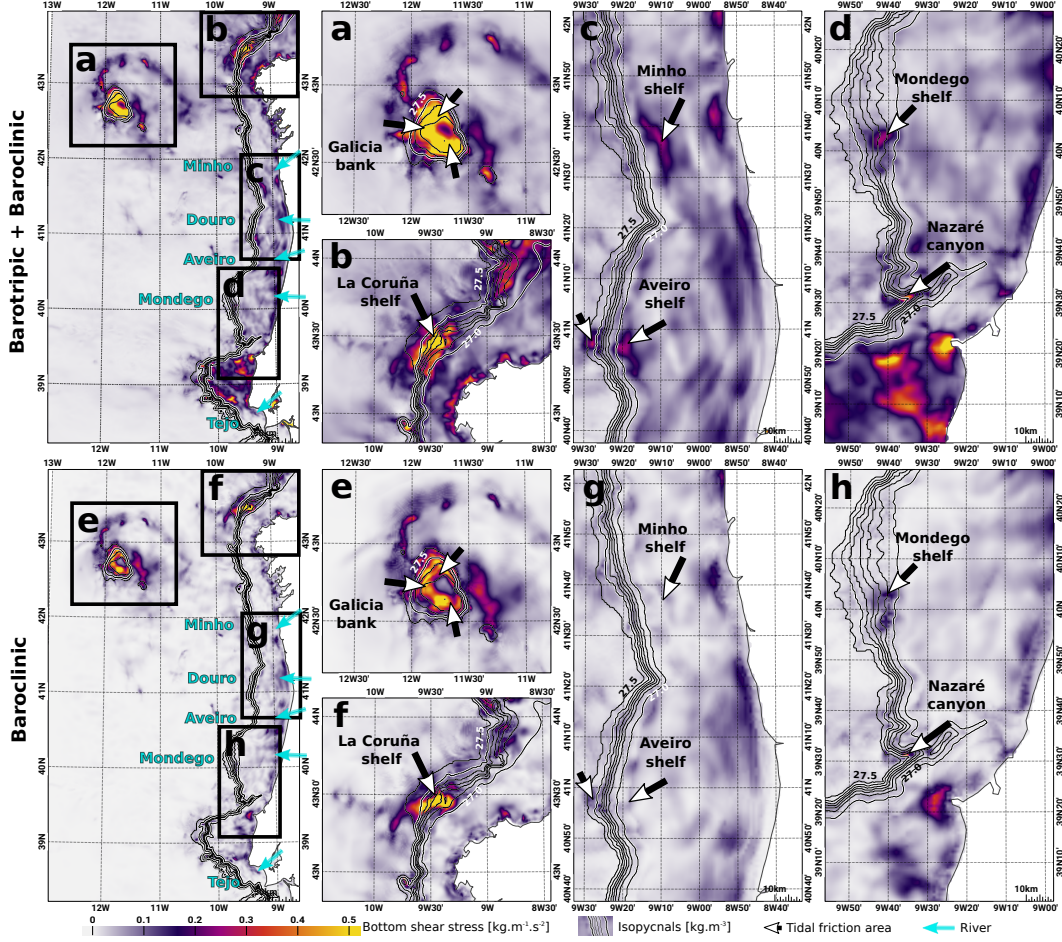


Figure 4. Total (top) and baroclinic (bottom) maximum tidal bottom shear stress from M2, S2, N2, K1 and O1 tidal harmonics over the Iberian continental shelf: (a,e) the Galicia Bank, (b,f) La Coruña shelf, (c,g) the Minho and Aveiro shelves and (d,h) the Mondego shelf and the Nazaré canyon. The isopycnals reflect the potential density at the bottom and highlight the range of the GEOVIDE particle measurements (Fig. 1). The black and white arrows highlight the potential areas of high bottom friction within the isopycnals range considered. The cyan arrows show the rivers bringing lithogenic particles and sediment.

extracted. This method was performed under two scenarios: the total tidal contribution (barotropic and baroclinic) and the baroclinic contribution only (Fig. 4). Six areas where bottom friction may be strong enough to lead to sediment resuspension are selected as they present a total tidal bottom velocity (barotropic and baroclinic) $> 20 \text{ cm.s}^{-1}$ within the range of isopycnals observed during the GEOVIDE cruise (Fig. 1). Hereafter, the areas located over the slope are named after the shelf on top.

The Galicia Bank (Fig. 4a,e) is a sea mount with a summit at 800 *m* depth. Because of its steep topography, this seamount is a major source of ITs in the region. The maximum bottom velocities cover a large area around the main summit of the sea mount. These locations correspond to critical slopes on the flanks of the sea mount but not over its top (Fig. 3b).

La Coruña shelf (Fig. 4b,f) presents a narrow area of strong bottom friction over the continental slope. The slope partially corresponds to a critical slope. However, a major IT generation zone is located nearby to the southwest (43.2N-9.8W, Fig. 3a); ITs originating from this area may be responsible for strong bottom friction. ITs originating from the Bay of Biscay could also break there, enhancing bottom friction. Although this area presents few critical slopes, strong sediment resuspension is likely to occur here due to ITs.

The Minho and Aveiro shelves are very similar (Fig. 4c,g), with barotropic tidal currents coming across steep slopes. The maximum bottom friction over these areas is weaker than that over the Galicia Bank or La Coruña. The Minho and Aveiro shelves present medium bottom friction at the top of the slope mainly due to barotropic tidal currents and does not present a critical slope. The Aveiro shelf presents a second location of medium bottom friction mid-slope associated with local IT generation, which corresponds to a critical slope.

The Mondego shelf (Fig. 4d,h) is less steep than the Minho and Aveiro shelves. A medium bottom friction is observed close to the top of the continental slope, partially due to ITs but without any major IT generation site around. This location corresponds to a critical slope, with ITs coming from another site and breaking there.

The Nazaré canyon (Fig. 4d,h) is one of the longest canyons of the Iberian peninsula, with significant barotropic tidal current across its flanks associated with IT generation. Strong bottom friction occurs at the bottom of the canyon. This location does not correspond to a critical slope but is many around.

South of the Nazaré canyon, the Estremadura Spur shelf is highly influenced by barotropic tides, as well as by ITs at specific locations. This results from the barotropic tide crossing the Estremadura Spur shelf and increasing the barotropic tidal currents amplitude over the shelf (Fig. 2b). These areas of strong bottom friction are located above the isopycnals sampled during GEOVIDE; therefore, they are not considered in this study.

To summarize, the simulation of ITs reveals six areas with strong bottom friction that could generate sediment resuspension. Among them, two are not over critical slopes and two others spread over both critical and not critical slopes. In this study, the criterion for sediment resuspension was the maximum tidal bottom friction therefore, the resuspension could occur following the spring-neap tide cycle. The fact that these areas do not strictly correspond to critical slopes increases the number of potential resuspension locations over shelves, offering new perspectives for worldwide sediment tidal resuspension investigations. Hereafter, all these selected areas will be referred to as TRS.

3.2 Sediment resuspension threshold

After identifying the potential TRS, we investigated whether bottom friction was strong enough to generate sediment resuspension at those sites. The threshold of sed-

iment resuspension can be estimated using the static approach of the Shields criterion. Shields (1936) was one of the first to propose an empirical threshold of sediment resuspension in an adimensional space based on a lab experiment using multiple fluids and sediment. This adimensional space uses the Shields parameter (ϑ) to compare bottom friction to sediment properties, and the boundary Reynolds number (Re_*) to describe the turbulence of the flow at the scale of the sediment:

$$\vartheta = \frac{\tau_b}{gd(\rho_S - \rho)} \quad (5)$$

$$Re_* = V_* \frac{d}{\nu} = \sqrt{C_D} \frac{VD}{\nu} \quad (6)$$

where d is the grain diameter of the sediment, ρ is the density of the fluid, ρ_S is the dry bulk density of the sediment and $\nu = 1.41 \times 10^{-6} \text{ m}^2.\text{s}^{-1}$ is the kinematic viscosity for sea water.

More recently, analytical Shields curves were formulated for various motion thresholds (motion, rolling, resuspension) and cohesive sediments (silts; Miedema, 2012a,b, 2013). The curve for cohesive sediments has been chosen for the smallest grain size observed to be the most restrictive. Because the parameters needed to properly generate these curves are missing, custom curves that fit the Shields curves were used.

The sediment properties at each potential TRS are found in the literature, from the closest *in situ* samples (Table 1). Biogenic sediment dominates the Galicia Bank and is present along the Iberian slope near the Minho, Aveiro and Mondego resuspension sites. Most of the sediment along the Iberian slope is lithogenic. Then, ϑ and Re_* are calculated for the range of sediment diameter observed.

Figure 5 compares the values of ϑ and Re_* at the potential TRS (in color) to the Shields curves (in black): Cases falling below the motion curve correspond to steady sediment. Cases falling above the motion curve but below the rolling curve correspond to sediment slowly sliding over the seabed. Cases falling above the rolling curve but below the suspension curve correspond to sediment moving along the seabed. Cases falling above every curve are favorable to sediment resuspension, because the sediment is light enough, thin enough or the flow is strong enough.

The Galicia Bank and La Coruña shelf are well above the threshold curve. This suggests that sediment resuspension not only occurs during spring tides, but also during the common tidal cycle. The Nazaré canyon is just above the silt threshold curve, suggesting that sediment resuspension there only happens during spring tides. On the Aveiro and Mondego shelves, only the thinner sediment, of both lithogenic and biogenic origin, can be resuspended. On the Minho shelf, the sediment size is too large and the flow too slow to generate sediment resuspension.

This method gives us a first order estimation of the TRS along the Iberian peninsula. The Table 1 summarizes the isopycnals, the nature of the sediment (dry bulk density), and the intensity of the resuspension at the investigated TRS.

4 Sediment transport

As reported in the introduction, the suspended particles seem to be transported as far as 2000 *km* offshore. However, IT transport of sediment only occurs over smaller scales (Masunaga et al., 2020, Molinas et al., 2020). In addition, ITs generated in the area do not present a significant propagation pattern northwestward (Fig. 3a) that would allow them reaching station 13 or 21. Thus, we suggest that although ITs clearly trigger bottom friction and sediment resuspension, they are not responsible for the transport of suspended particles between the GEOVIDE stations; however, advection by the oceanic circulation may be. The IBIRYS operational reanalysis current field is used to

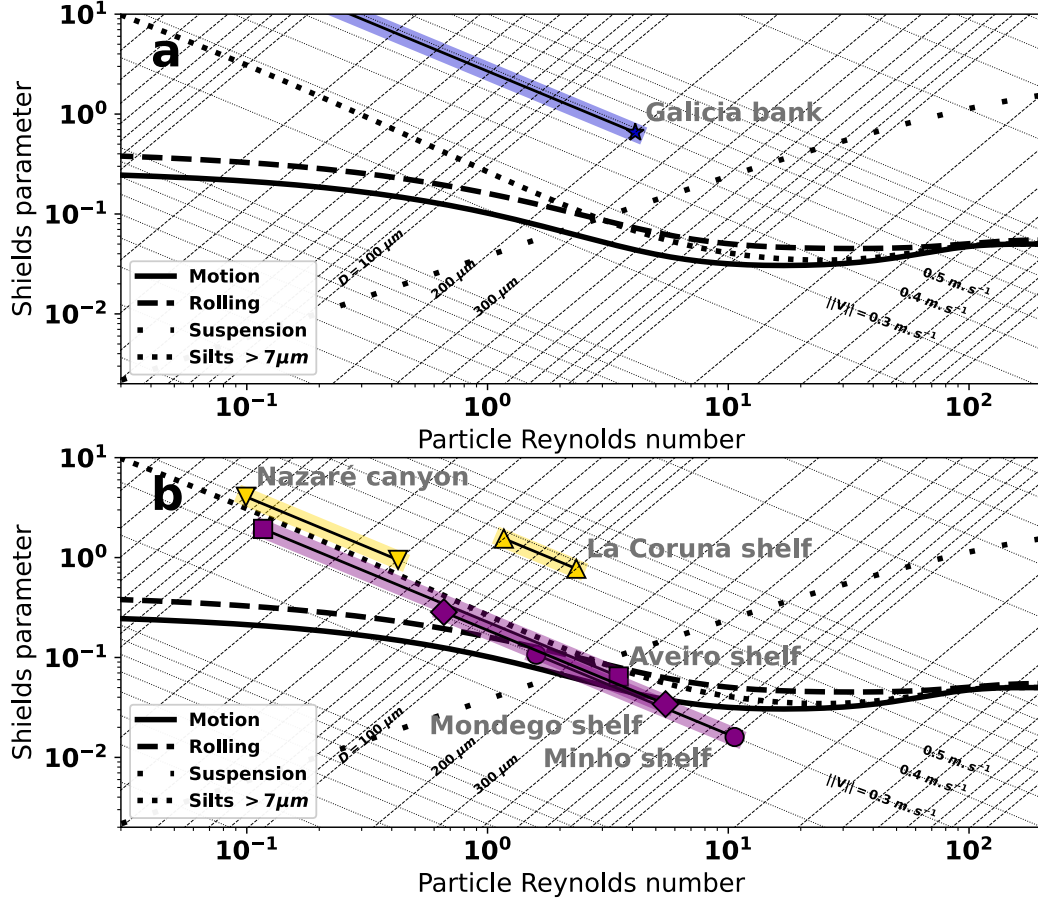


Figure 5. Shields curves using dimensionless Reynolds number and Shields parameter for (a) light sediment (e.g. chalk: $\rho_S = 1.7 \text{ g.cm}^{-3}$) and (b) heavy sediment (e.g. quartz, calcite: $\rho_S = 2.5 \text{ g.cm}^{-3}$). The colors denote the nature of the sediment: blue for biogenic, yellow for lithogenic, and purple for a mix of both. Above the black curves, the sediment is eroded; below the black curves, the sediment is deposited. The scales $\|V\|$ versus D in the background are computed for sea water properties ($\nu = 1.10^{-3} \text{ m}^2.\text{s}^{-1}$, $\sigma = 27 \text{ kg.m}^{-3}$) for both ρ_S .

Table 1. Characteristics of the potential tidal resuspension sites (TRS). The flow dynamics at the bottom come from the IT simulation and the sediment properties come from the cited literature. The intensity of the sediment resuspension is symbolized by ++, + and 0 when the flow-sediment situation is far above, close to and below the resuspension threshold (Fig. 5).

Area	Criticality	Isopycnals $kg.m^{-3}$	τ_b $kg.m^{-1}.s^{-2}$	ρ_s $g.cm^{-3}$	D μm	References	TRS
Galicia	Yes/No	27.2-27.5	0.86	1.7	10-200	Flach et al. (2002) Yenes et al. (2019)	++
La Coruña	Yes/No	27.0-27.5	1.12	2.5	50-100	Flach et al. (2002)	++
Minho	No	26.9	0.23	2.3/1.7	150-1000	Dias & Nittrouer (1984)	0
Aveiro top	No	27.1	0.28	2.3/1.7	10-300	Dias & Nittrouer (1984)	+
Aveiro mid	Yes	27.5	0.28	2.3/1.7	10-300	Dias & Nittrouer (1984)	+
Mondego	Yes	27.1-27.2	0.25	2.3/1.7	60-500	Dias & Nittrouer (1984) Duarte & Taborda (2007)	+
Nazaré	No	27.4-27.5	0.41	2.5	7-30	de Stigter et al. (2007) Ribeiro (2008)	+

simulate this transport. This product is a reanalysis from a 3D NEMO simulation at 1/12 that was assimilated with temperature and salinity profiles, sea surface height and sea surface temperature (further description and validation are provided by Maraldi et al., 2013). This simulation only extends to 19W and therefore, does not include station 21 of the GEOVIDE cruise. The daily averaged currents of IBIRYS are collocated with GEOVIDE measurements for comparison. The measurements and simulation results have been found to be in agreement, asserting the use of this simulation to investigate the regional circulation (Supporting Information Fig. S4).

Three depths are investigated: 180, 500, and 800 *m*, corresponding approximately to the nepheloid layers observed along $\sigma = 27.0, 27.2$ and $27.4 kg.m^{-3}$ (Fig. 1). This simulation describes the dynamics next to the TRS. We are aware that the usage of vertical z -coordinate depth for the simulation is different than that of the vertical ρ -coordinate. However, the large vertical resolution of the reanalysis ($\sim 100 m$ at these depths) leads to relatively smoothed vertical structures. Thus, the vertical coordinate approximation will not affect the interpretation of the simulation results regarding particle transport.

With a velocity range of $3-10 cm.s^{-1}$ and a distance between the TRS and the GEOVIDE stations of $\sim 500 km$, the timescale involved ranges of 50-200 days. The monthly mean current field is averaged over 3 different time periods (2 years, 6 months and 3 months). For each period, the flow is considered steady and the streamlines are calculated to describe the potential pathways of the particles. When the shorter period is selected, a stronger mesoscale activity is observed with faster currents ($\sim 10 cm.s^{-1}$), whereas slower currents ($\sim 3 cm.s^{-1}$) are associated with the longer period. The sediment pathways from the TRS to the GEOVIDE stations slightly differ depending on the selected period; however, the general transport is clear. We choose to describe the sediment pathways using the 2-year average (from June 2012-June 2014) as it better shows a long-term mean state of the sediment transport (results based on the other periods are available in the Supplementary Information, Fig. S5).

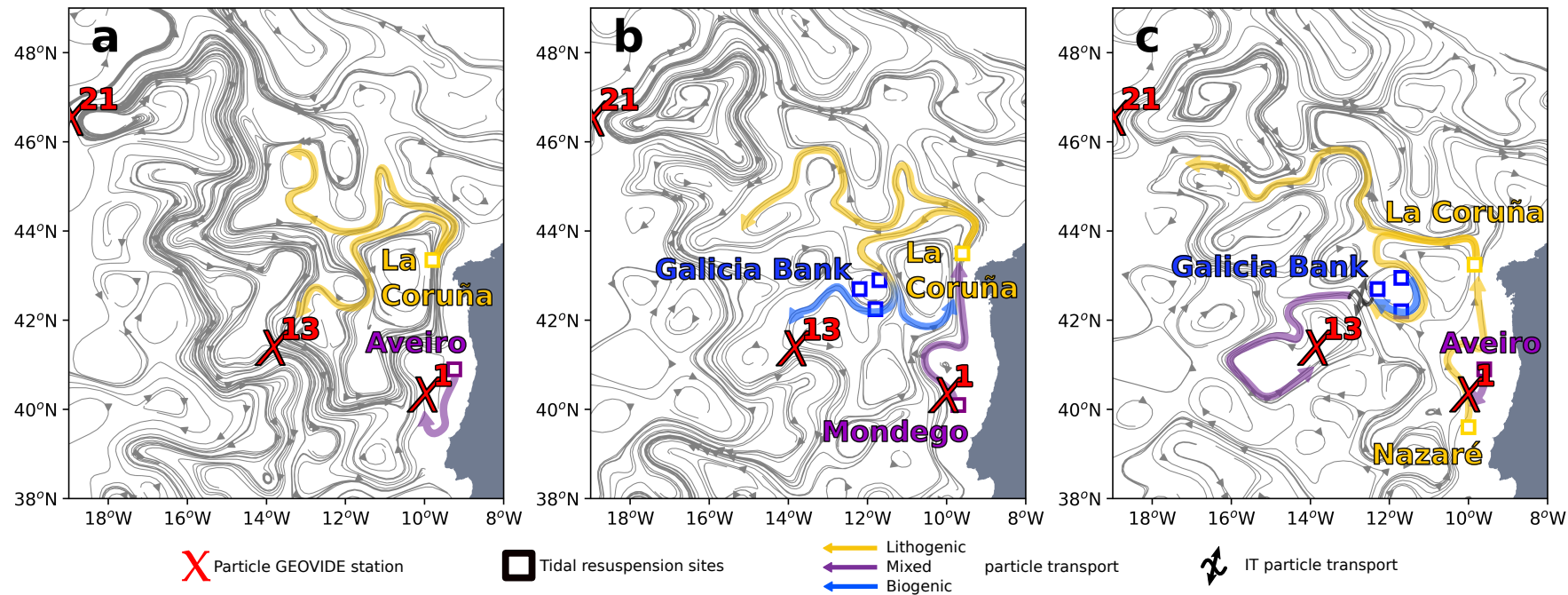


Figure 6. Streamline based on the mean velocity from June 2012 to June 2014 at (a) 180 m - $\sigma \sim 27.0 \text{ kg.m}^{-3}$ and (b) 500 m - $\sigma \sim 27.2 \text{ kg.m}^{-3}$ and (c) 800 m - $\sigma \sim 27.4 \text{ kg.m}^{-3}$. The red crosses show the GEOVIDE stations. The squares show the location of tidal resuspension sites. The arrows describe the potential pathways of the particles from the tidal resuspension sites to the GEOVIDE stations. The colors define the nature of the particles transported: yellow for lithogenic, blue for biogenic, and purple for both lithogenic and biogenic.

Figure 6 resents the horizontal streamlines from velocity fields. Note that the current structures at 180 *m* are consistent with the surface circulation during the cruise (Zunino et al., 2017, their figure 5, derived from altimetry sea level anomalies). Potential pathways from the TRS to the three GEOVIDE stations are inferred from the streamlines that connect them (colored arrows). The most striking feature is that no pathway directly connecting the three GEOVIDE stations is observed, at any depth. A strong northward current along the shelf slope washes all the Iberian slope, then splits up in different directions at La Coruña shelf. The potential pathways between each station are described and discussed below.

Station 1 Station 1 is influenced by two eddies: in front of the Aveiro shelf, the eddy structure is found down to 800 *m*, whereas in front of the Nazaré canyon, the eddy does not reach 500 *m*. The TRS potentially affecting station 1 vary depending on depth: at 180 *m*, Aveiro (purple arrow); at 500 *m*, Mondego (purple arrow); and at 800 *m*, Nazaré (yellow arrow). The Aveiro and Mondego TRS are both composed of mixed sediment (biogenic and lithogenic); therefore, they can partially explain the lithogenic signature of the GEOVIDE observations. Note that some variations in the relative composition of the resuspended sediment cannot be excluded.

Station 13 is mostly influenced by southward and northeastward currents; thus, the lithogenic particles observed at this station are transported following a circuitous pathway. This pathway is the same at every depth, starting from the La Coruña TRS and circumventing the Galicia Bank. At 180 *m*, this pathway transports particles from the La Coruña resuspension site only, the particles being mainly lithogenic (yellow arrow). At 500 *m* however, the resuspension of mixed sediment at the Mondego shelf and biogenic sediment at the Galicia Bank can completely invert the ratio of lithogenic/biogenic particle within the suspended particles (shading color arrows). At 800 *m*, the additional lithogenic sediment from the Nazaré canyon could balance the the ratio of lithogenic/biogenic particle. Thus, we suggest that station 13 is affected by lithogenic particles at 180 *m*, mostly biogenic particles at 500 *m*, and both at 800 *m*. This is in good agreement with the GEOVIDE observations of lithogenic REEs (Fig. 1).

The streamlines at 800 *m* seem to hardly connect the Galicia Bank to station 13; therefore, the circulation cannot fully explain this pathway. The ITs are very energetic over the Galicia Bank (Fig. 3a) and the currents are quite slow at such depth ($\sim 2 \text{ cm.s}^{-1}$). Thus, it may be that ITs transport the sediment through the streamline over 70 km. This distance is comparable to that from the simulation of Masunaga et al. (2020), where the sediment is transported over 50 *km* by an IT flux of $\sim 5 \text{ kW.m}^{-1}$ (their figures 5 and 13). Alternatively, the currents transporting Mediterranean waters may bring sediment from areas further south than the area considered in this study.

Station 21 does not seem to connect with the TRS at any depth. Long and meandering pathways could approach station 21 from La Coruña but no further than 17W (Fig. 6c, yellow arrow).

Moreover, a large northeastward current highly influences station 21: at 180 *m*, current velocities are $\sim 12 \text{ cm.s}^{-1}$ then decrease with depth to 6 cm.s^{-1} at 800 *m*. This current is one of the southern branches of the North Atlantic Current (SNAC, Zunino et al., 2017). The authors show that station 21 is under the influence of a large anticyclonic eddy during the cruise. This station displays very different temperature and salinity than the nearby stations (Supporting Information Fig. S1), with Subpolar Mode Water below 180 *m* and Subarctic Intermediate Water at 500 *m* (Garcia-Ibanez et al., 2018). Current velocity across the GEOVIDE transect highlights a strong shear current centered on station 21. It cannot be excluded that this complex circulation could bring water masses from other coastal/shelf margin locations than the Iberian coast. For example, the East North Atlantic Central Waters are highly represented at this depth (Garcia-Ibanez et al., 2018) and may have been influenced by ITs from the Gulf of Maine (Duda

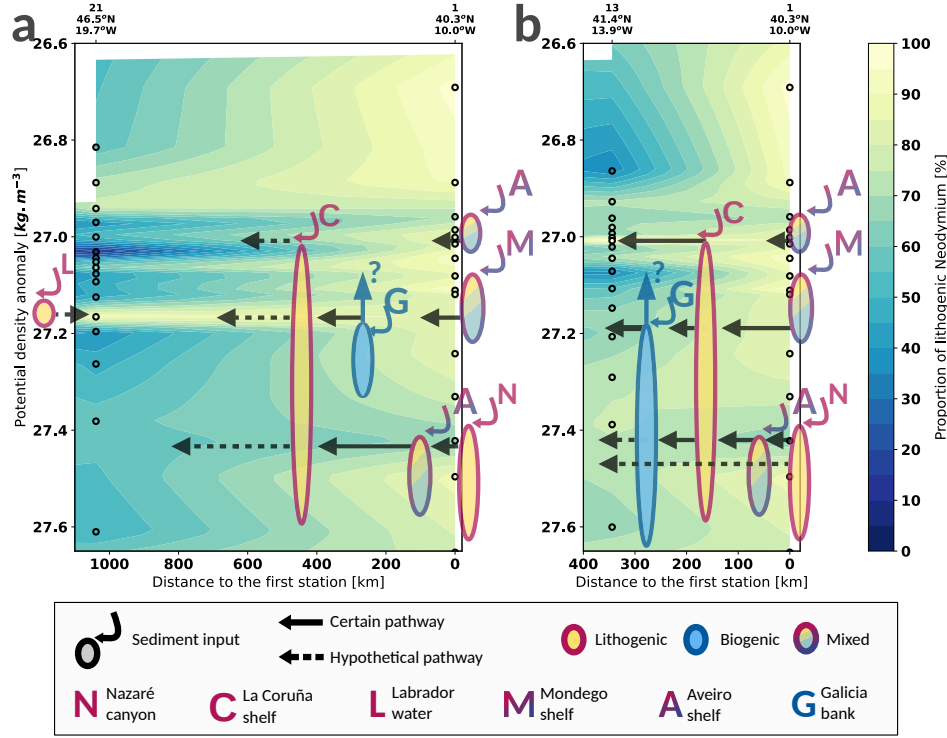


Figure 7. Proportion of lithogenic neodymium in particulate matter along isopycnals (a) between station 1 and 21 and (b) between station 1 and 13) using linear interpolation. The color inside the black rings refers to the GEOVIDE measurements. The other symbols refer to the tidal resuspension sites and the transport of the particles. On top of each station there is the station number and its localization. Data from Lagarde et al. (2020).

et al., 2018). The present choice of such regional model reanalysis does not enable us to reach a conclusion on the origins of the highly lithogenic particles observed at station 21. This will require further investigations based on a Lagrangian methodology (Maes & Blanke, 2015, Artigue et al., 2020) applied to a simulation of the North Atlantic basin reproducing the mixing of the various water masses in the North Atlantic. The ongoing study of neodymium isotopic composition (ϵNd) of the GEOVIDE samples could help to determine the exact origin of the particles (Grenier et al., 2018).

The simulation of the oceanic circulation provides a better understanding of the transport of the suspended particles over the area. Distinct pathways are highlighted for each station. Because stations 13 and 21 are not connected, the interpolation of the particulate lithogenic fraction between these two stations is not relevant and hampers the interpretation of the results. Distinct interpolations of the GEOVIDE measurements are proposed in Figure 7. The results shown in Table 1 and Figure 6 were added to the Figure 7 in order to propose a clear summary of our study.

5 Conclusion and perspectives

This study proposes the first interdisciplinary approach to explain the resuspension and transport of lithogenic particles from the Iberian coast to the middle of the North Atlantic basin. Based on a semi-realistic 3D tidal model and sediment properties, we establish that ITs generated in the Bay of Biscay and along the Iberian slope participate

to sediment resuspension and could be the major mechanism for the resuspension occurring below 300 *m*. Five TRS are identified: La Coruña shelf and Nazaré canyon are sources of lithogenic sediment, the Aviero and Mondego shelves are likely providing both lithogenic and biogenic sediments, and the Galicia Bank is a source of biogenic sediment. Most of these sites are under strong IT influence, except the Aveiro TRS, which is the only location of strong barotropic tidal currents at the top of the shelf slope. Using a regional model reanalysis, the mean state of the oceanic circulation in the area is investigated within the first 1000 *m*. Associated with the TRS, this approach explains most of the GEOVIDE observations (Lagarde et al., 2020). However, we demonstrate that stations 13 and 21 are not connected. More specifically, the significant lithogenic fraction and the water masses observed at station 21 at 500 *m* could reflect transport of sediment originating from the North American margins rather than from the Iberian margin.

More broadly, questions raised by the geochemical results lead to the development of this method associating dedicated IT simulation to regional circulation one. This strategy helped to improve the first interpretations of the geochemical data (Gourain et al., 2019, Lagarde et al., 2020). Not all TRS from this study are located on critical slopes, and many critical slopes of the Iberian peninsula are not associated with a TRS. Thus, we suggest that the slope criticality is not sufficient to properly identify TRS and should be reserved to internal solitary waves (in the upper 300 *m*). An explicit modeling of the ITs with a thin grid resolution (< 3 *km*) and a good knowledge of the sediment properties (nature and size) are required to simulate and identify TRSs. Further work on sediment resuspension and large distance particle transport should consider applying Lagrangian tracking to the oceanic circulation simulations as well as performing a complete tidal-circulation model coupled with a sediment model.

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