



Achieving and Validating the 1-centimeter Orbit: Jason-1 Precision Orbit Determination Using GPS, SLR, DORIS and Altimeter data



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ABSTRACT

Jason-1, launched on December 7, 2001, is continuing the time series of centimeter level ocean topography observations as the follow-on to the highly successful TOPEX/POSEIDON (T/P) radar altimeter satellite. The precision orbit determination (POD) is a critical component to meeting the ocean topography goals of the mission. Jason-1 is no exception and a 1 cm radial orbit accuracy goal has been set. This represents a factor of two improvement over what is currently being achieved for T/P. The challenge to precision orbit determination (POD) is both achieving the 1 cm radial orbit accuracy and evaluating and validating the performance of the 1 cm orbit. Fortunately, Jason-1 POD can rely on four independent tracking data types including near continuous tracking data from the dual frequency codeless BlackJack GPS receiver. In addition, to the enhanced GPS receiver, Jason-1 carries significantly improved SLR and DORIS tracking systems along with the altimeter itself.

We demonstrate the 1 cm radial orbit accuracy goal is being achieved using GPS data in a reduced dynamic solution. It is also shown that adding SLR data to the GPS-based solutions improves the orbits even further. In order to assess the performance of these orbits it is necessary to process all of the available tracking data (GPS, SLR, DORIS and altimeter crossover differences) as either part or independent of the orbit solutions. It was also necessary to compute orbit solutions using various combinations of the four available tracking data in order to independently assess the orbit performance. Towards this end, we have greatly improved orbits determined solely from SLR+DORIS data by applying the reduced dynamic solution strategy. In addition, we have computed reduced dynamic orbits based on SLR, DORIS and crossover data that are a significant improvement over the SLR and DORIS based dynamic solutions. These solutions provide the best performing orbits for independent validation of the GPS-based reduced dynamic orbits.

POD Overview and Details

Overview: In selecting orbit solution strategies, we sought to determine the best orbit and then characterize the orbit error. In order to properly characterize orbit error, it is important to compare two orbits of near equal performance determined from independent tracking. In this poster we summarize our analysis from five candidate orbit solution strategies that run the spectrum of data combination and parameterization: (1) SLR and DORIS reduced dynamic (SLR+DORIS Dyn.), (2) SLR and DORIS reduced dynamic (SLR+DORIS+Xover RD), (3) SLR, DORIS and altimeter crossover reduced dynamic (SLR+DORIS+Xover RD), (4) GPS reduced dynamic (GPS RD), and (5) GPS and SLR reduced dynamic (GPS+SLR RD). The analysis uses data from cycles 8-24 as the test data set over which all solution strategies are compared. Further details can be found in Luthcke et al. 2003.

Table 1: POD Summary (1) Models, Data and Parameters	
Geophysical Models and Parameters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravity: IERS95, GGM01S, GGM01C Altimeter: IERS95, GGM01S, GGM01C Station Coordinates: IERS95 Earth Orientation: IERS95 Phase: IERS95
Tracking Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual-frequency, codeless GPS SLR: 10 stations (near continuous) DORIS: 3 stations (near continuous) Altimeter: 1 station (near continuous)
Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPS antenna LC phase correction (APC) map GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCO) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCV) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCF) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCD) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCW) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCX) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCY) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCZ) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCV) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCW) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCX) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCY) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCZ) model
GPS Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPS antenna LC phase correction (APC) map GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCO) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCV) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCF) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCD) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCW) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCX) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCY) model GPS antenna LC phase center offset (PCZ) model
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Table 2: POD Summary (2) Data Weighting, Estimated Parameters and Arc Length	
Data Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPS: 10 cm SLR, 20 mm DORIS SLR+DORIS Reduced Dynamic: 10 cm SLR, 10 mm DORIS SLR+DORIS+Xover Reduced Dynamic: 10 cm SLR, 10 mm DORIS, 10 cm Crossover SLR+DORIS+Xover RD: 10 cm SLR, 10 cm GPS
Estimated Parameters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPS center phase ambiguity per epoch GPS ionosphere scale factor every 60 min / station DORIS measurement bias and ionosphere scale factor per epoch SLR+DORIS based solution Dynamic Parameterization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr SLR+DORIS+Xover RD solution Dynamic Parameterization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr Start (pos and vel) C_{10} 24 hr; Alg and Cn 1-ep acceleration / 24 hr
Short Arc	GPS orbit solutions computed in 30-day arcs with 10-day overlapping time periods. The arcs do not necessarily start on days of day, but are constructed such that 10 short arcs are contained within each 30-day arc.
Long Arc	A long arc covers a Jason-1 10-day repeat cycle. SLR+DORIS+Xover RD solutions are computed over 10-day arcs. GPS data are assumed available from the entire 10-day arc.

Measurement Model Details: Proper modeling of the GPS antenna phase center is extremely important to the overall performance of the GPS based solutions. An antenna phase center map (APC map) has been developed both first at JPL (Haines et al. 2003) and then at GSFC (Luthcke et al. 2003) (Figure 1). Despite the fact these maps determined at the two centers were developed using very different solution techniques, data and editing, they show generally good agreement both capturing the same general features (Figure 1). Significant improvement in POD is obtained when using these maps (Table 3 and Figure 2). Additionally, to ensure precise modeling of the SLR observations, the LRA tracking point offset was adjusted in a formal least-squares solution using data from cycles 1-20. The new LRA offset improves the SLR model and the POD (Table 4).

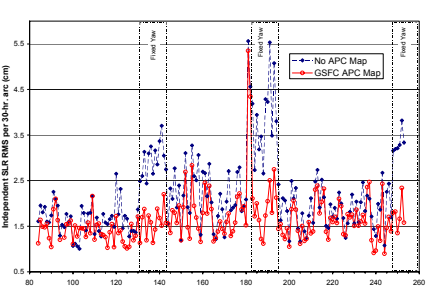


Figure 2: 2SLR residual test performance of GPS APC map. Accurate modeling of the GPS antenna phase center is required for POD. The time series of independent SLR residuals RMS / 30-hour arc, cycles 8-24, show the benefit of using the GSFC APC map correction. This is especially evident over the free-dynamic regime. The "No APC Map" phase center offsets had been adjusted from the pre-launch values and represent our best solution short of using the APC map.

Table 3: APC Map Performance in GPS RD Solutions: Residual Summary for Cycles 8-24			
APC Map	GPS DDLC RMS (cm)	Independent SLR RMS (cm)	Independent Xover RMS (cm)
No APC Map	0.942	2.308	5.843
JPL APC Map	0.758	1.704	5.767
GSFC APC Map	0.752	1.701	5.766

Table 4: Summary of LRA Offset Analysis							
Description	LRA offset (cm) over cycles 1-20		SLR residuals (cm) over cycles 21-25		SLR residuals (cm) over cycles 21-25		
	Mean	RMS	Mean	RMS	Mean	RMS	
X	117.1	59.8	68.28	-0.066	1.897	-0.214	1.799
Y	115.8	59.8	68.58	+0.049	1.835	-0.130	1.721
Formal sigma	0.10	0.10	0.06				

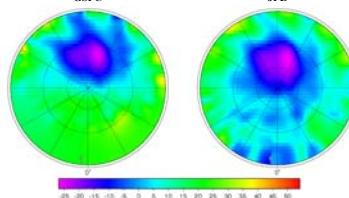


Figure 3: GPS antenna phase center maps (APC maps) showing radial orbit error. The APC map centered post-launch with GPS tracking data, is very important to POD. The 5°x5° arc-length elevation GSFC map was estimated in a formal solution using twelve 30-hr arcs sampled over a 10-day arc, and for which low elevation GPS double-difference phase data was edited. The JPL map (Haines et al. 2003) was computed averaging one year of undifferenced GPS phase residuals into 5°x2° arc-length elevation bins.

POD Performance

Quantifying and Characterizing Orbit Error: Although the challenge of centimeter level POD is to quantify and characterize the orbit error, no direct measure of absolute orbit error exists. Therefore, we must use several different performance tests to help us gauge and understand the orbit error contained in the POD solutions. These orbit tests rely on the processing and analysis of all tracking data types available along with multiple solution techniques. In the analysis presented here we have investigated the POD performance using five candidate orbit solutions computed at GSFC. For a detailed comparison of the GSFC orbits to orbits computed at other centers see our poster: "Jason-1 POD Evaluation and Orbit Comparison", Zelenky et al.

Tracking Data Residual Analysis: The results shown in Table 5 demonstrate the GPS-based reduced dynamic solutions represent a significant improvement over any orbit solution relying solely on SLR and DORIS tracking data. The GPS RD solution improvement in crossover RMS over SLR+DORIS Dyn represents 1.38 cm RMS in radial orbit accuracy improvement and 1.09 cm RMS radial orbit improvement over the SLR+DORIS RD solution. Adding SLR data to our GPS RD solutions results in a further 0.4 cm RMS radial orbit improvement as indicated by the independent altimeter crossover residual statistics. The GPS-based orbits yield an excellent fit to the SLR data even though these data are withheld from the solutions. Furthermore, although the SLR data is not independent to the GPS+SLR RD solutions, we observe a stunning improvement in the SLR fits over any other solution that does not use GPS data indicating very good consistency between the GPS and SLR data. The results show the GPS-based solutions represent a significant improvement over SLR+DORIS Dyn. orbits considered to be accurate at the ~20m radial RMS level. Further orbit improvement is obtained by using the GRACE derived GGM01S gravity model.

Table 5: Independent and Dependent Data Residual Summary for Cycles 8-24					
Solution Type	GPS DDLC RMS (cm)	DORIS RMS (mm/s)	SLR RMS (cm)	Xover RMS (cm)	Xover mean (cm)
<i>Below with JGM3</i>					
SLR+DORIS Dyn.	0.421	1.710	5.926	0.229	
SLR+DORIS RD	0.418	1.665	5.867	0.219	
SLR+DORIS+Xover RD	0.418	1.914	5.780	0.048	
GPS RD	0.75	0.419	1.698	5.766	-0.026
GPS+SLR RD	0.77	0.419	1.341	5.750	-0.029
<i>Below with GGM01S</i>					
SLR+DORIS Dyn.	0.419	1.524	5.859	0.129	
GPS RD	0.74	0.419	1.596	5.754	0.024
GPS+SLR RD	0.76	0.419	1.249	5.735	0.012

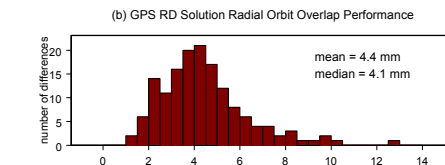
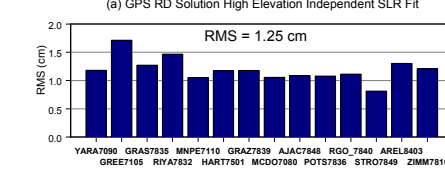


Figure 3: GPS RD (a) high elevation independent SLR fit and (b) radial orbit overlap performance. (a) Measurement biases estimated from high elevation pass SLR residuals offer the best single metric to gauge radial orbit accuracy. The RMS of the estimated biases indicates orbit error does not exceed 1.3 cm. The actual radial orbit error is less because the statistic contains other error sources as well. SLR data above 60 degrees are selected for the high elevation test. (b) Histogram of the radial orbit overlap difference RMS for each 6-hr overlapping time period between GPS RD 30-hr arcs from cycle 8-24. The result indicates the GPS reduced dynamic solutions are consistent to 4 mm.

Force modeling errors, such as mean geographically correlated gravity error and measurement modeling errors, such as realizations of the Terrestrial Reference Frame (TRF) can impart mean offsets in the ECF frame which can then adversely affect altimeter derived estimates of sea surface topography (Christensen et al. 1994 and Rowlands et al. 1996). For each cycle we have computed the mean orbit difference in the equatorial plane (RMS of the ECF X and Y mean) and in the Z direction. Table 6 shows the average and standard deviation of these statistics over cycles 8-24. The equatorial plane statistics show the reduced dynamic technique can be successfully applied in SLR+DORIS solutions to accommodate part of the known mean geographically correlated JGM3 gravity error. For the comparisons of the GPS RD solutions with SLR+DORIS based solutions (based on JGM3) the average of the mean Z ECF offset is less than 1 mm with standard deviation of less than 4 mm with a ~120-day periodicity (Figure 4). The dynamic SLR+DORIS solutions have traditionally served to monitor orbit consistency along the Z axis with an expected resolution of 5-6 mm. However, at the current level of agreement shown here it is not clear whether the SLR+DORIS or GPS-based orbits are dominating the remaining Z difference signal. Finally, we observe a ~4 mm mean Z offset between SLR+DORIS Dyn. and GPS RD solutions employing the GGM01S gravity model as compared to less than 1 mm observed using the JGM3 model. The results indicate the GGM01S gravity model imparts a mean Z offset that is better accommodated by the GPS RD solutions than the SLR+DORIS Dyn. solutions (Figure 4).

Table 6: Orbit Difference Statistics Computed per Cycle and Summarized over Cycles 8-24				
Solutions Differenced	Avg. Radial RMS (cm)	Avg. 3D RMS (cm)	Avg. / Stdev of RSS [mean XY] per cycle (cm)	Avg. / Stdev of mean Z per cycle (cm)
<i>Below with JGM3</i>				
GPS RD - SLR+DORIS Dyn	1.365	6.053	0.479 / 0.586	0.071 / 0.362
GPS RD - SLR+DORIS RD	1.141	4.809	0.376 / 0.437	0.069 / 0.380
GPS RD - SLR+DORIS+Xover RD	1.063	5.375	0.412 / 0.425	0.109 / 0.500
GPS RD - GPS+SLR RD	0.405	1.226	0.067 / 0.125	0.075 / 0.119
SLR+DORIS+Xover RD - SLR+DORIS Dyn.	0.946	5.396	0.591 / 0.271	-0.044 / 0.299
<i>Below with GGM01S</i>				
GPS RD - SLR+DORIS Dyn	1.178	5.015	0.144 / 0.570	0.422 / 0.327
GPS RD - GPS+SLR RD	0.370	1.122	0.089 / 0.113	0.131 / 0.112

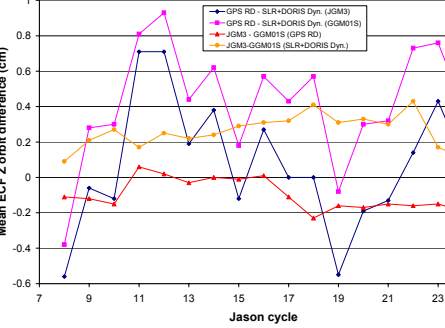


Figure 4: Mean ECF Z orbit difference per cycle. The figure shows orbit consistency in the ECF Z axis between the GPS RD and SLR+DORIS Dyn. solutions. The dynamic SLR+DORIS orbit has traditionally served to monitor orbit consistency along the ECF Z axis with an expected resolution of 5-6 mm. The JGM3 based orbit differences demonstrate less than 1 mm mean and less than 4 mm standard deviation of the ECF Z per cycle mean orbit difference. Employing the GGM01S gravity model imparts a mean Z offset which is better accommodated in the GPS RD solutions.

In addition to the statistics presented in Table 6, Figure 5 illustrates the improvements gained when employing the reduced dynamic technique in a SLR+DORIS based solution. Figure 6 illustrates the characteristics of the radial orbit differences between our GPS+SLR RD and SLR+DORIS Dyn solutions employing the GGM01S gravity model. Figure 6 illustrates the worst case errors expected in our best performing orbits (GPS+SLR RD) because the orbit difference is dominated by the errors in the SLR+DORIS Dyn. orbit. Nevertheless, the agreement between these orbits computed from different POD strategies and independent data is quite good.

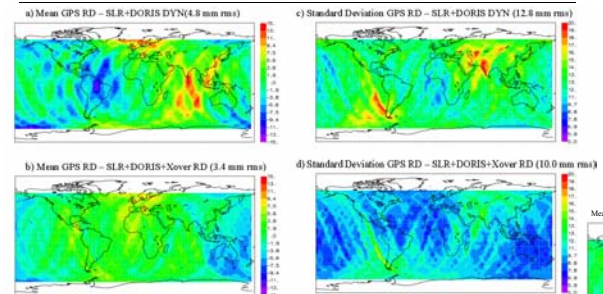


Figure 5: Radial orbit difference maps. Radial orbit differences averaged over 5°x5° bins for cycles 8-24, show that the geographically correlated JGM3 gravity error of about 5 mm observed in the SLR+DORIS dynamic solutions is significantly diminished in the SLR+DORIS+Xover reduced-dynamic orbit comparison (figures 5a, 5b). The figure shows the geographically correlated JGM3 gravity error is significantly decreased when using the reduced dynamic technique even in a solution not computed from GPS data. The reduction in the standard deviation about the mean shown between the same two sets of orbit differences indicates the significant removal of geographically anti-correlated gravity error and possibly tide and nonconservative force modeling error when using the reduced-dynamic technique (figures 5c, 5d).

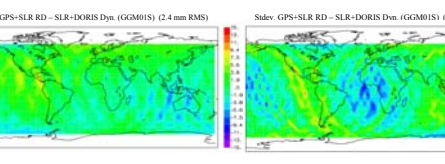


Figure 6: Radial orbit difference maps (GGM01S). Radial orbit differences (GPS RD - SLR+DORIS Dyn) averaged over 5°x5° bins for cycles 8-24 using GGM01S. Comparison to Figure 5 shows significant reduction in geographically correlated and anti-correlated gravity error has been obtained using GGM01S. The differences are dominated by errors in the SLR+DORIS solutions and therefore illustrate the worst case errors expected in our best performing solutions (GPS+SLR RD).

Crossover Residual Analysis: Unlike orbit difference analysis, crossovers offer an important independent measure of orbit error such as the anti-correlated gravity error (Rowborough et al., 1988 and Scharoo and Visser, 1998). Figure 7 shows altimeter crossover residuals from cycles 8-24 averaged over 5°x5° bins for three different types of orbit solutions. The three maps show a progressive and significant reduction of the radial orbit error from the SLR+DORIS Dyn, to the GPS+SLR RD solution to the GPS+SLR RD using the GGM01C gravity model. It should be noted that the crossover data contain non-orbit signal including altimeter measurement error and oceanographic signal. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting these results as an absolute measure of radial orbit error. Nevertheless, this analysis can be used as a relative gauge of orbit error and clearly demonstrates the GPS RD solutions are accommodating a significant part of the JGM3 anti-correlated gravity error. Although the crossover variance is dominated by oceanographic signal and altimeter modeling error, we have also observed a significant reduction in crossover variance using the GPS-based RD solutions, as previously shown in Table 5.

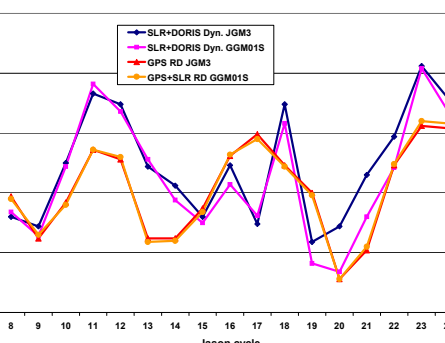
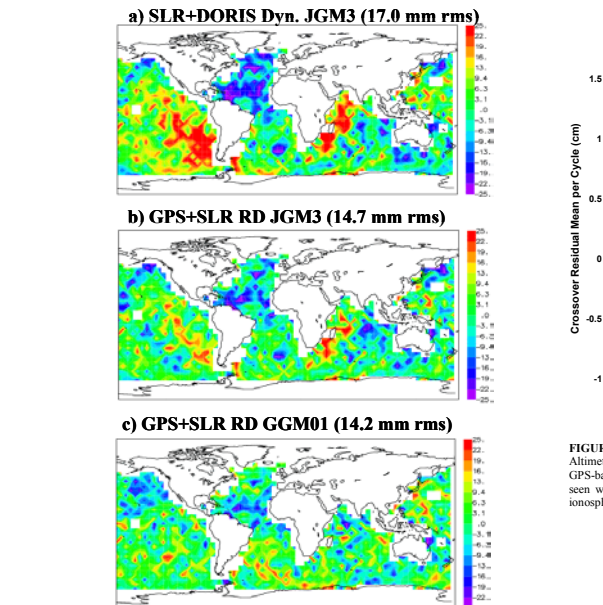


Figure 8: Crossover residual mean time series. Altimeter crossover residuals averaged over 5°x5° bins for cycles 8-24 show that the least variation and mean are observed using the GPS-based orbits. The interesting, approximately 60-day signature, observed using all of the orbits and best seen with the GPS-based orbits, may be due to a non-orbit effect such as mis-modeling of surface tides, ionosphere or atmospheric pressure corrections.

Figure 8 presents a time series of altimeter crossover means computed globally per cycle. The SLR+DORIS Dyn solutions show a larger variation and mean than the GPS-based RD orbits (also see Table 6). Of particular interest in Figure 8, is the 60-day signature in the mean altimeter crossover residual time series clearly observed by the GPS-based orbit solutions. Orbit solutions based on SLR+DORIS data also show this 60-day signature but are much noisier or have an additional signal superimposed. The data in Figure 8 also show that employing a reduced dynamic technique or the GGM01S gravity model does not significantly change this signal lending input to the notion that this signal is not likely a force modeling error. Furthermore, because this signal is observed in both SLR+DORIS and GPS-based solutions and because of its 60-day periodicity it is not likely due to mean offsets of the orbit in the inertial frame. This signal may be due to a non-orbit effect such as mis-modeling of surface tides, ionosphere or atmospheric pressure corrections. This analysis demonstrates that the significant improvement in orbit accuracy achieved with the GPS+SLR-based RD solutions will enable the resolution of new signals and features within the altimetry.

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