

Water vapor vertical profiles on Mars: Results from the first year of TGO/NOMAD science operations

Shohei Aoki (1), Ann Carine Vandaele (1), Frank Daerden (1), Geronimo L. Villanueva (2), Giuliano Liuzzi (2), Ian R. Thomas (1), Justin T. Erwin (1), Loïc Trompet (1), Séverine Robert (1), Lori Neary (1), Sébastien Viscardy (1), Arianna Piccialli (1), Valérie Wilquet (1), Arnaud Mahieux (1), Brittany Hill (3), Miguel Angel Lopez-Valverde (3) Bojan Ristic (1), Manish R. Patel (4), Giancarlo Bellucci (5), Jose Juan Lopez-Moreno (3), and the NOMAD team

(1) Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy, Belgium, (2) NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, USA, (3) Instituto de Astrofísica de Andalucía, Spain, (4) Open University, UK, (5) Istituto di Astrofisica e Planetologia, Italy.
(e-mail : shohei.aoki@aeronomie.be)

Abstract

Nadir and Occultation for Mars Discovery (NOMAD) onboard ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) started the science measurements on 21 April, 2018. We present results on the retrievals of water vapor vertical profiles in the Martian atmosphere from the first year measurements of the TGO/NOMAD.

1. NOMAD instrument

NOMAD is a spectrometer operating in the spectral ranges between 0.2 and 4.3 μm onboard ExoMars TGO [1]. NOMAD has 3 spectral channels: a solar occultation channel (SO – Solar Occultation; 2.3–4.3 μm), a second infrared channel capable of nadir, solar occultation, and limb sounding (LNO – Limb Nadir and solar Occultation; 2.3–3.8 μm), and an ultraviolet/visible channel (UVIS – UV visible, 200–650 nm). The infrared channels (SO and LNO) have high spectral resolution ($\lambda/d\lambda \sim 10,000$ –20,000) provided by echelle grating in combination with an Acousto Optic Tunable Filter (AOTF) which selects diffraction orders [2]. The concept of the infrared channels is derived from the Solar Occultation in the IR (SOIR) instrument [3] onboard Venus Express. The sampling rate for the solar occultation measurement is 1 second, which provides unprecedented vertical resolution (less than 1 km) spanning altitudes from the surface to 200 km. Thanks to the instantaneous change of the observing diffraction orders achieved by AOTF, the SO channel is able to measure five or six different diffraction orders per second in solar occultation mode.

In this study, we analyze the solar occultation measurements at diffraction order 134 (3011.44 - 3035.44 cm^{-1}) and 168 (3775.53 - 3805.63 cm^{-1}) acquired by the SO channel in order to investigate H_2O vertical profiles.

2. Water vapor vertical profiles

Measurements of water vapor vertical profiles are key diagnostic to the escape processes acting on water on Mars. Since its first scientific operation started on 21/April 2018, the TGO/NOMAD has regularly conducted solar occultation measurements that are able to provide water vapor vertical profile with unprecedented vertical resolution (< 1 km). So far, more than 2000 occultation have been acquired.

Interestingly, in 2018, for the first time after the previous one in 2007, a very strong global dust storm occurred on Mars and it lasted for two months (from June to August). The NOMAD observations therefore completely cover the period before/during/after the global dust storm, so that the NOMAD datasets offer a unique opportunity to study the state of trace gases during a global dust storm. We have analyzed those datasets and published two water vapor vertical profiles - one before the global dust storm and the other one during the storm, which present a significant conspicuous increase of water vapor during the global dust storm (see Figure 1), in [4]. This study presents the results with the extended datasets. In the presentation, we will discuss the H_2O vertical profiles retrieved from the first year measurements of the TGO/NOMAD, including the period of the global dust storm.

Figure

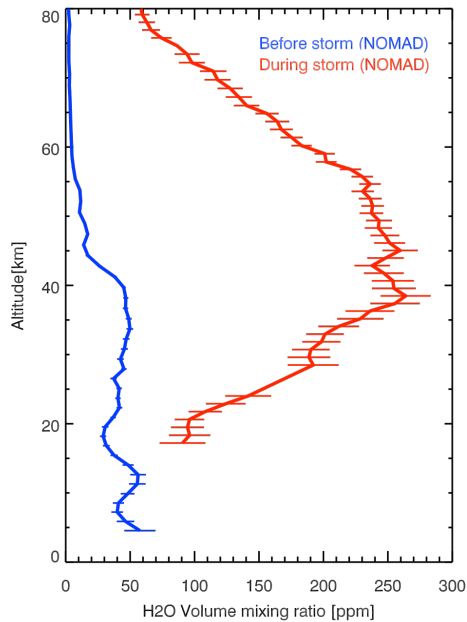


Figure 1: H₂O vertical profiles retrieved from the NOMAD-SO data before the global dust storm in 2018 (blue, $L_s = 171.45^\circ$ and latitude 43°N – 68°N) and during the storm (red, $L_s = 196.64^\circ$ and latitude 51°N – 59°N) [4].

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The NOMAD Team

Scientific team: Ann Carine Vandaele, Jose-Juan López-Moreno, Giancarlo Bellucci, Manish R. Patel, Gustavo Alonso-Rodrigo, Shohei Aoki, Francesca Altieri, Sophie Bauduin, David Bolsée, Giacomo Carrozzo, R. Todd Clancy, Edward Cloutis, Matteo Crismani, Frank Daerden, Fabiana Da Pieve, Emiliano D’Aversa, Cédric Depiesse, Justin T. Erwin, Giuseppe Etiope, Anna A. Fedorova, Bernd Funke, Didier Fussen, Maia Garcia-Comas, Anna Geminale, Jean-Claude Gérard, Marco Giuranna, Leo Gkouvelis, Francisco Gonzalez-Galindo, James Holmes, Benoît Hubert, Nicolay I. Ignatiev, Jacek Kaminski, Ozgur Karatekin, Yasumasa Kasaba, David Kass, Armin Kleinböhl, Orietta Lanciano, Franck Lefèvre, Stephen Lewis, Giuliano Liuzzi, Manuel López-Puertas, Miguel López-Valverde, Arnaud Mahieux, Jon Mason, Michael J. Mumma, Hiromu Nakagawa, Lori Neary, Eddy Neefs, Robert E. Novak, Fabrizio Oliva, Arianna Piccialli, Etienne Renotte, Birgit Ritter, Séverine Robert, Frédéric Schmidt, Nick Schneider, Giuseppe Sindoni, Michael D. Smith, Nicholas A. Teanby, Ed Thiemann, Ian R. Thomas, Alexander Trokhimovskiy, Loïc Trompet, Jean Vander Auwera, Geronimo L. Villanueva, Sébastien Viscardy, James Whiteway, Valerie Wilquet, Yannick Willame, Michael J. Wolff, Paulina Wolkenberg, Roger Yelle.

Tech team: Aparicio del Moral, Beatriz; Barzin, Pascal; Beeckman, Bram; BenMoussa, Ali; Berkenbosch, Sophie; Biondi, David; Bonnewijn, Sabrina; Candini, Gian Paolo; Clairquin, Roland; Cubas, Javier; Giordanengo, Boris; Gissot, Samuel; Gomez, Alejandro; Hathi, Brijen; Jeronimo Zafra, Jose; Leese, Mark; Maes, Jeroen; Mazy, Emmanuel; Mazzoli, Alexandra; Meseguer, Jose; Morales, Rafael; Orban, Anne; Pastor-Morales, M; Perez-grande, Isabel; Queirolo, Claudio; Ristic, Bojan; Rodriguez Gomez, Julio; Saggin, Bortolino; Samain, Valérie; Sanz Andres, Angel; Sanz, Rosario; Simar, Juan-Felipe; Thibert, Tanguy