

## *Space altimetry*

### **SCALE INTERACTIONS IN THE GLOBAL OCEAN: SYNERGIES BETWEEN ALTIMETRY, MODELLING, AND DYNAMICAL THEORIES**

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Thanks to

Mélanie Juza, Guillaume Sérazin, Sandy Grégorio  
Bernard Barnier, Jean-Marc Molines, and DRAKKAR colleagues



# Context

- ◆ Physical oceanography: studying the motions and physical properties of ocean waters
- ◆ Main sources of oceanographic information today :

Various quantities  
Global weekly  
(altimetry)  
**But mostly surface**

Satellite observations  
Altimeters  
& gravi-/radio-/scattero-meters,...)

« Realistic » simulations  
Regional/global,  
ocean+sea-ice/  
coupled to atm,...

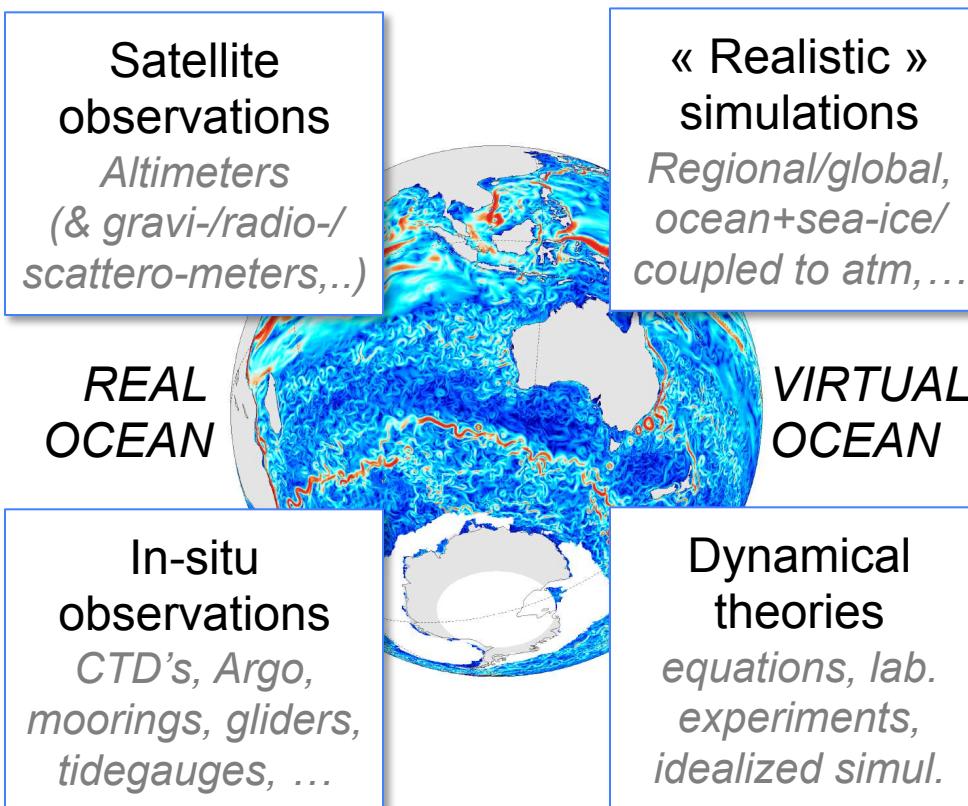
Comparable to real  
observations  
**But very complex**  
+ numerical biases

Various quantities  
( $x,y,z,t$ ) fields  
Vertical dimension  
**But uneven,**  
**irregular coverage**

In-situ observations  
CTD's, Argo,  
moorings, gliders,  
tidegauges, ...

Dynamical theories  
equations, lab.  
experiments,  
idealized simul.

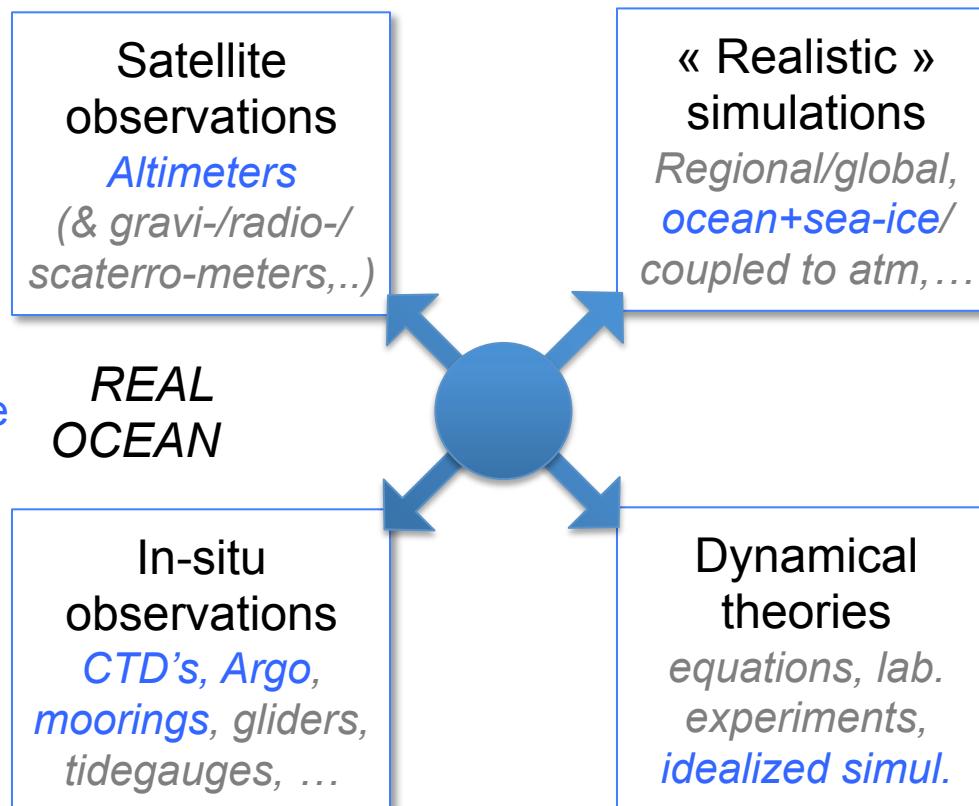
Rigorous maths  
→ Processes  
**But highly idealized**



# Context

- ◆ Physical oceanography: studying the motions and physical properties of ocean waters
- ◆ Main sources of oceanographic information today :

Understanding the



Example: impact of small-scale dynamics on the ocean variability at large spatiotemporal scales

# *Outline*

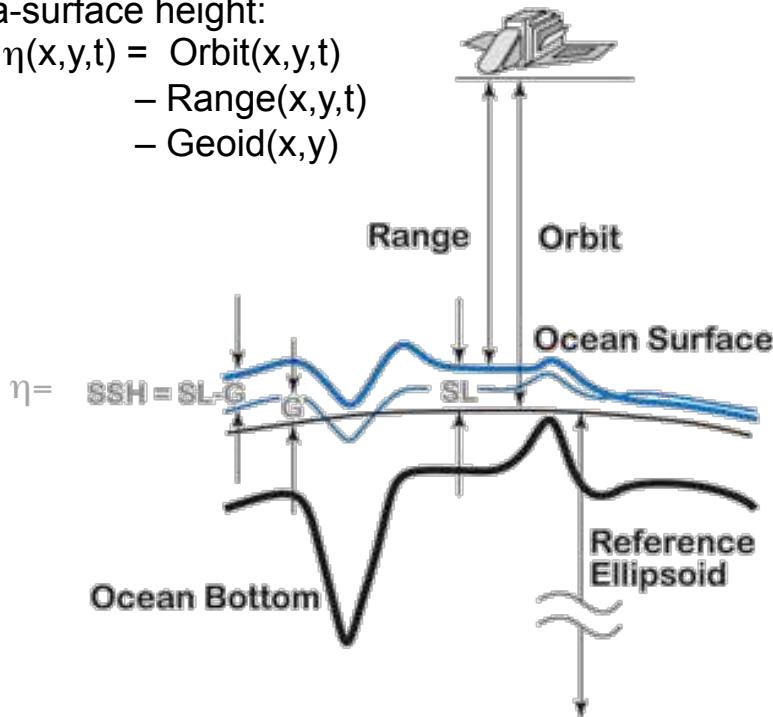
- ① Altimetry — Sea-level — Surface circulation
- ② Models — Resolution and processes
- ③ Variability — [2° vs 1/4°] models vs AVISO
- ④ North Atlantic scale interactions — Intrinsic variability
- ⑤ Conclusion — Perspectives

# ① Altimetry : Sea-level, geostrophic currents

Time delays → SSH

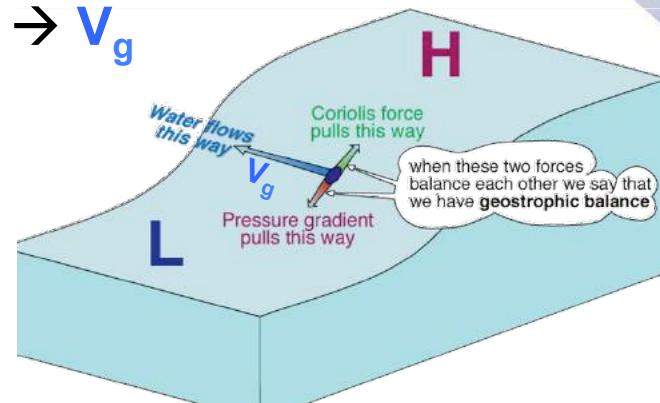
Sea-surface height:

$$\eta(x,y,t) = \text{Orbit}(x,y,t) - \text{Range}(x,y,t) - \text{Geoid}(x,y)$$

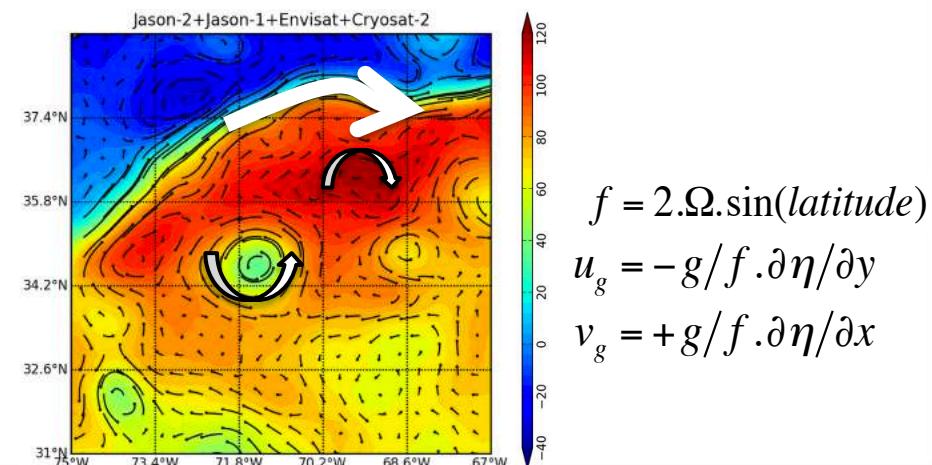


$SLA(x,y,t) = SSH(x,y,t) - \overline{SSH}(x,y)$  is provided (AVISO)  
it is associated with the variable part of the geostrophic circulation : geostrophic velocity anomalies  $V_g'$  are // to SLA contours.

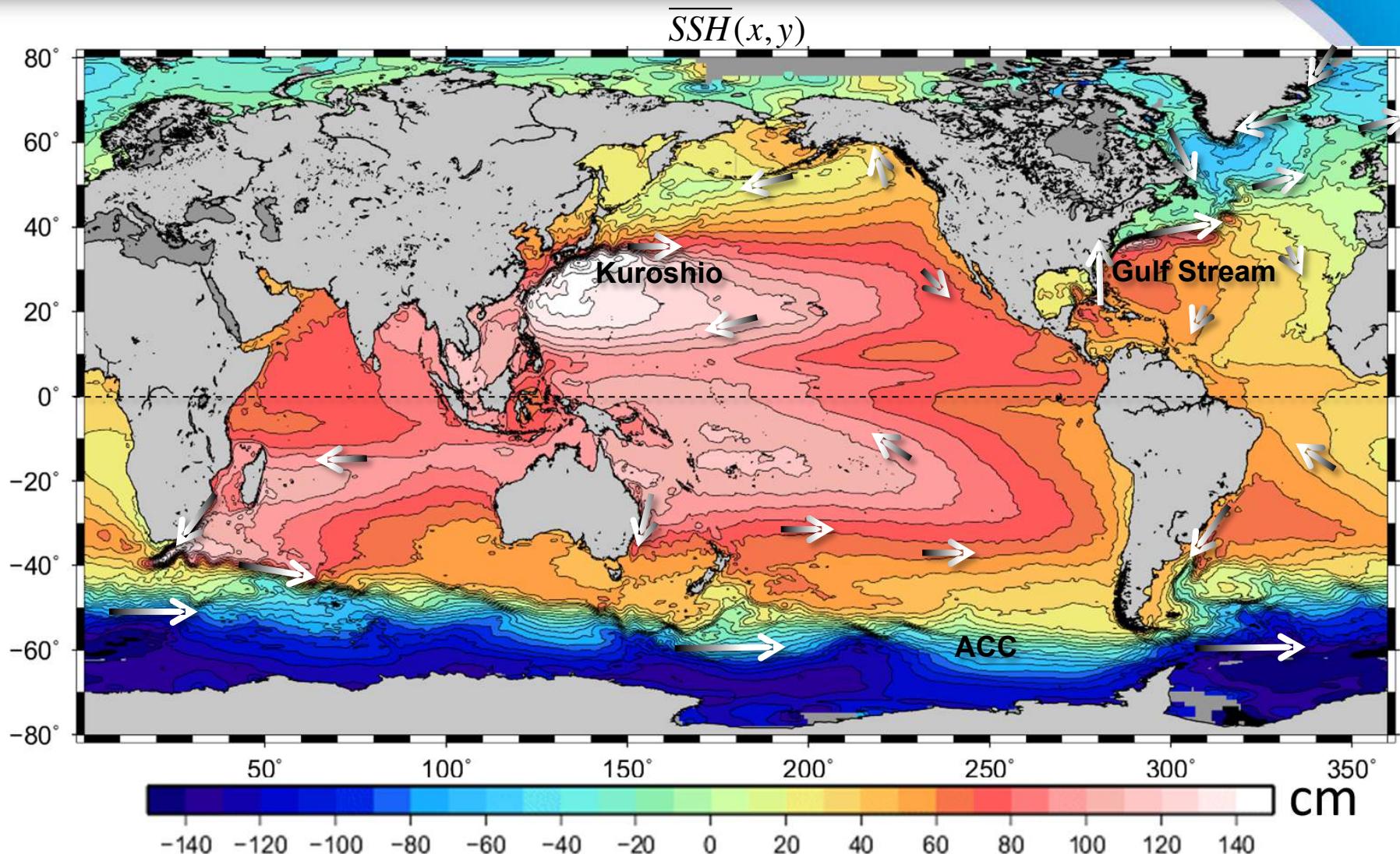
SSH →  $V_g$



Because of the Earth's rotation  $\Omega$ , ocean currents away from the equator are in *geostrophic balance* at scales larger than a few days and a few tens of km: **surface geostrophic velocity vectors  $V_g$  are parallel to SSH contours (iso-pressure).**



# ① Sea-level: mean SSH, mean geos. currents



Rio et al, JGR 2011. Based on altimetry, GRACE geoid, ERA-interim wind stress, drifting buoy velocities, T/S(z) profiles

# ① Sea-level: AVISO SLA( $x,y,t$ )

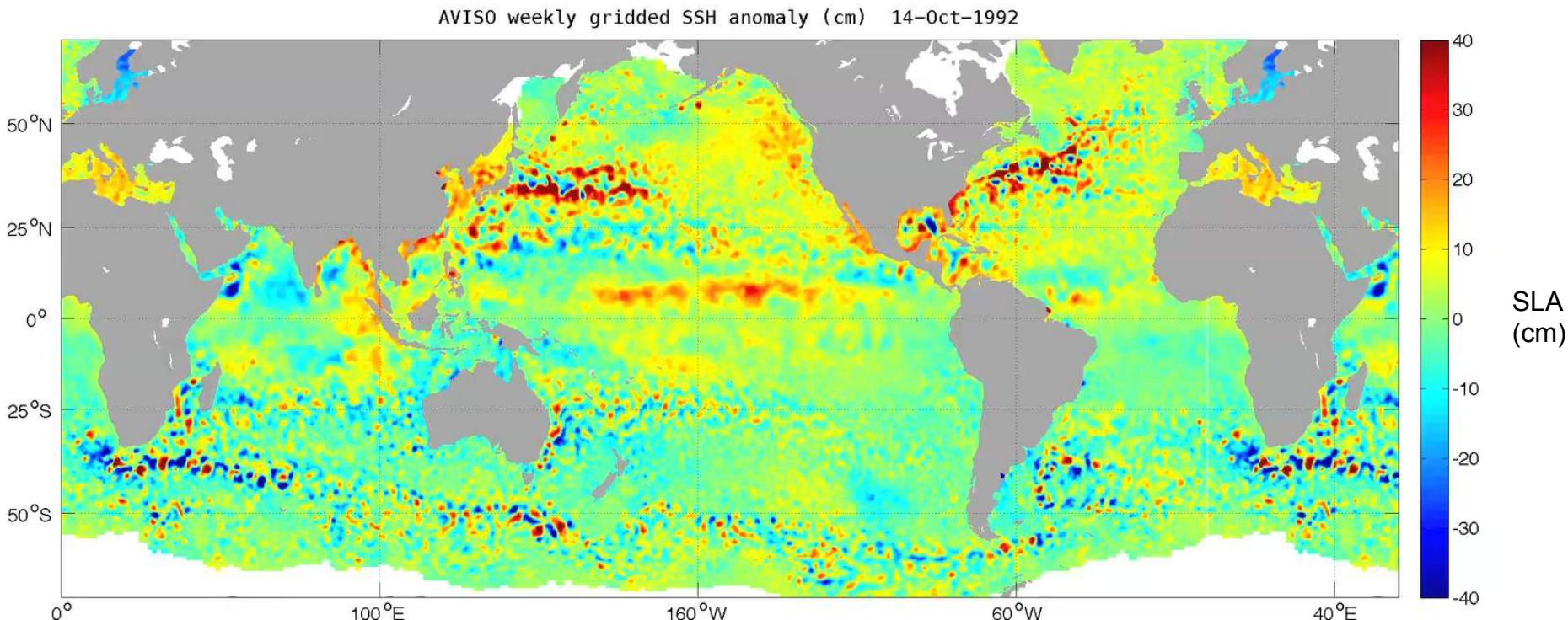
AVISO SLA( $x,y,t$ ) dataset

- every week since 1992
- ~100 km scales
- quasi-global

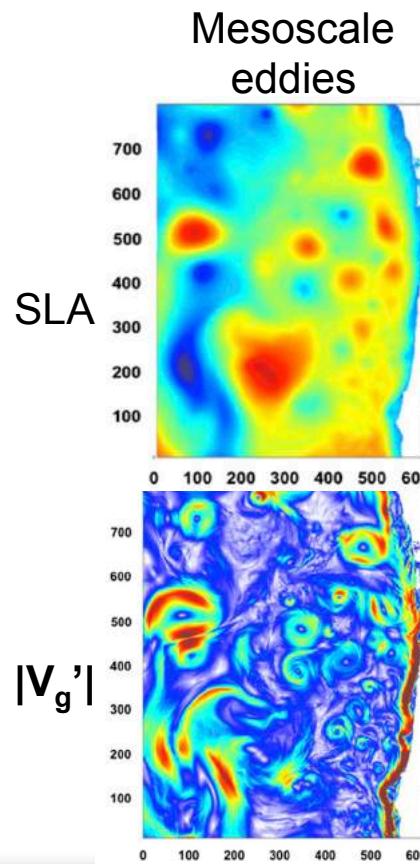
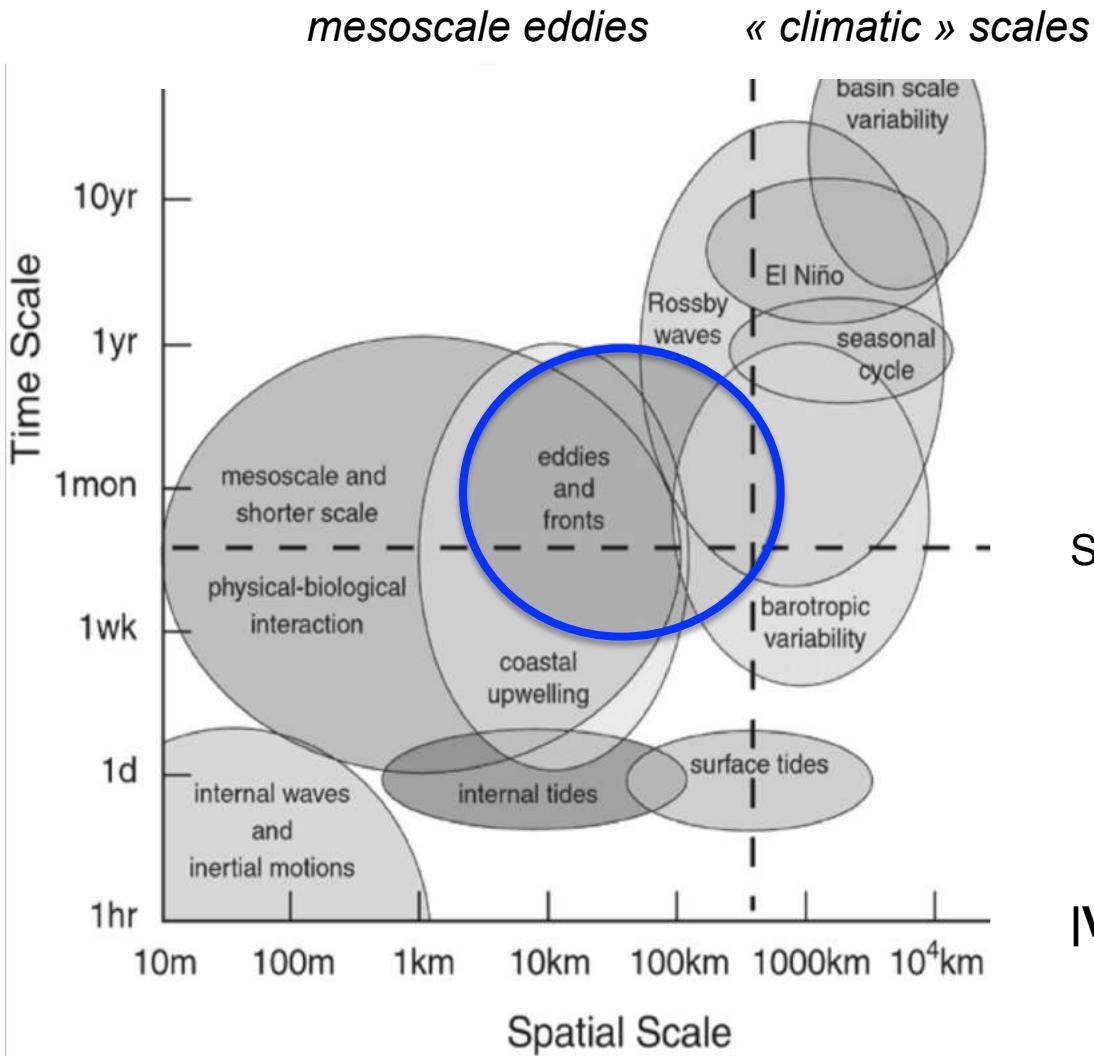
## Limitations

- No small scales
- Vertical integral
- No data under sea-ice

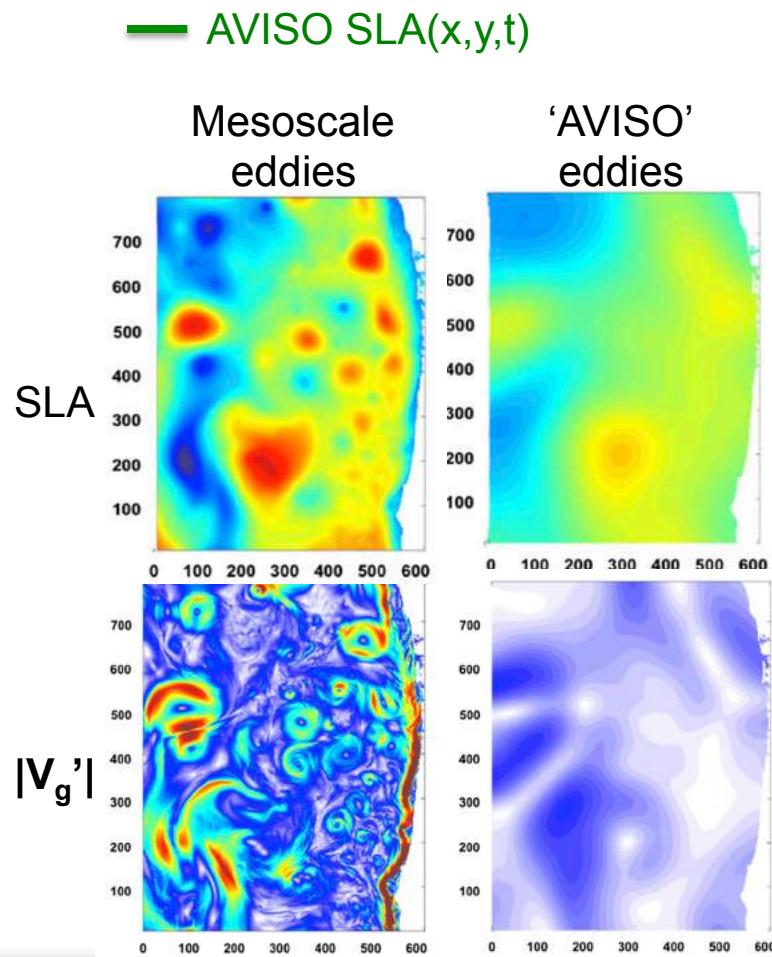
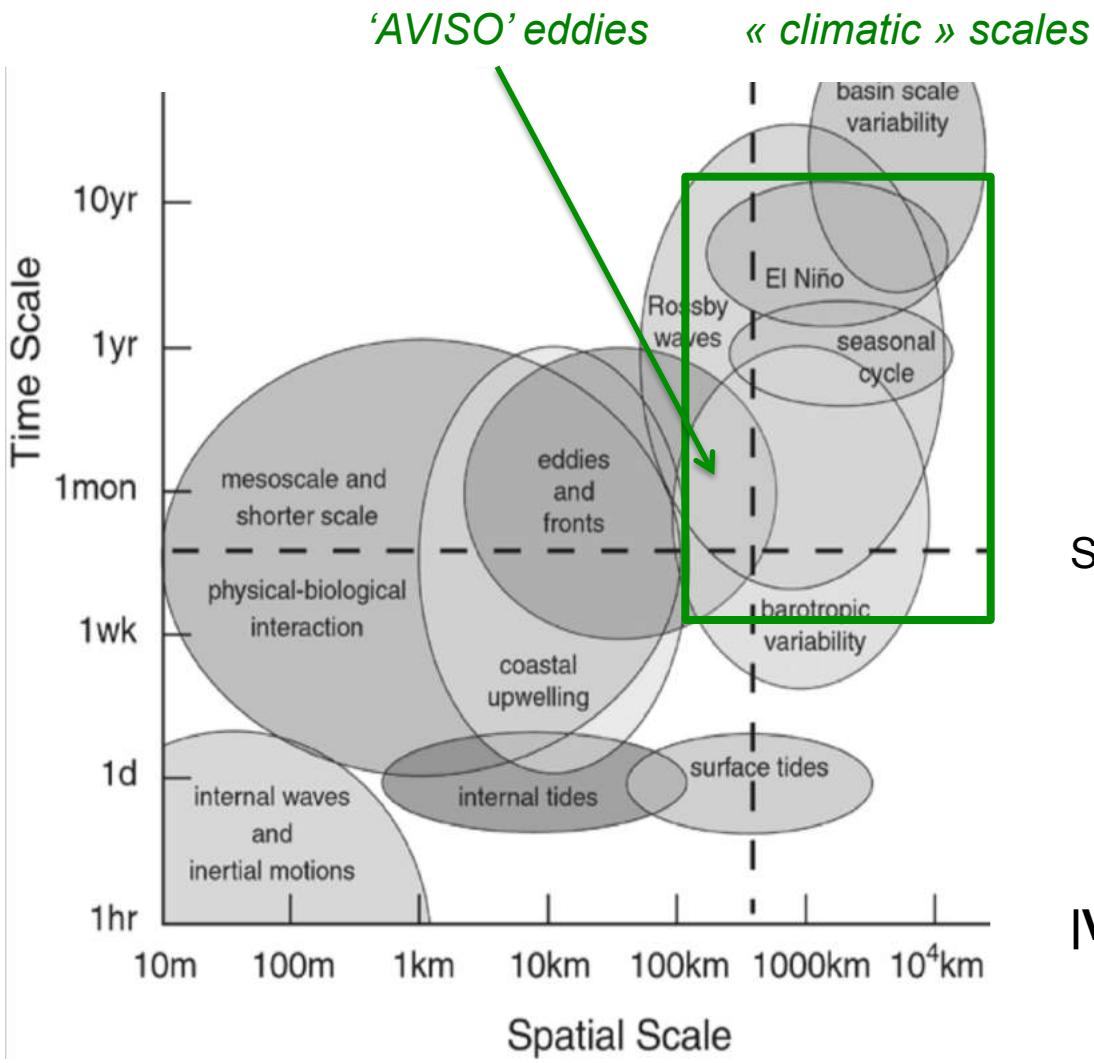
- Allows a **global** monitoring of the ocean variability **over a wide range of scales (from mesoscale to climate-relevant scales)**
- revolutionized oceanographic research, and gave birth to operational oceanography



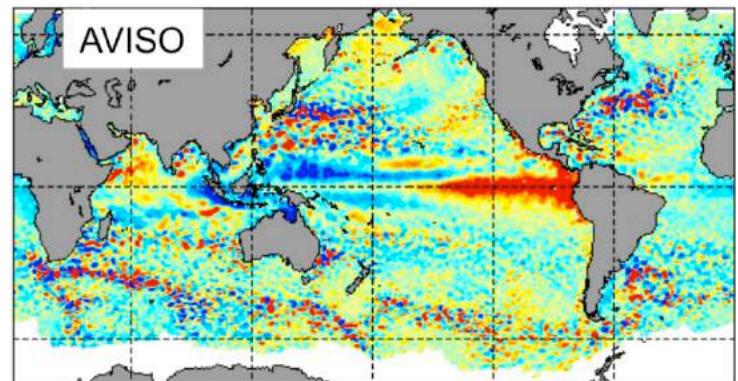
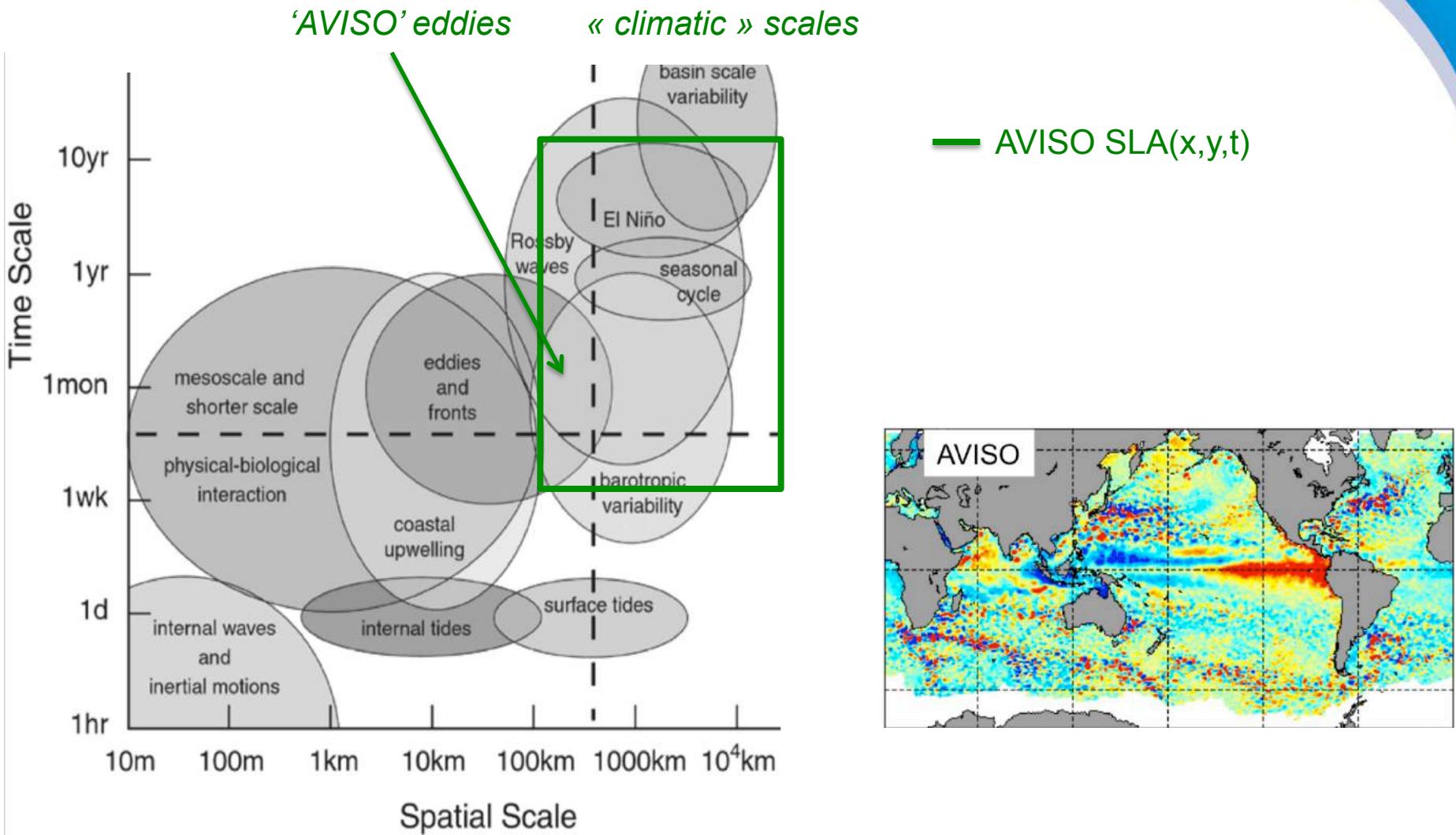
# ① Sea-level: observable processes



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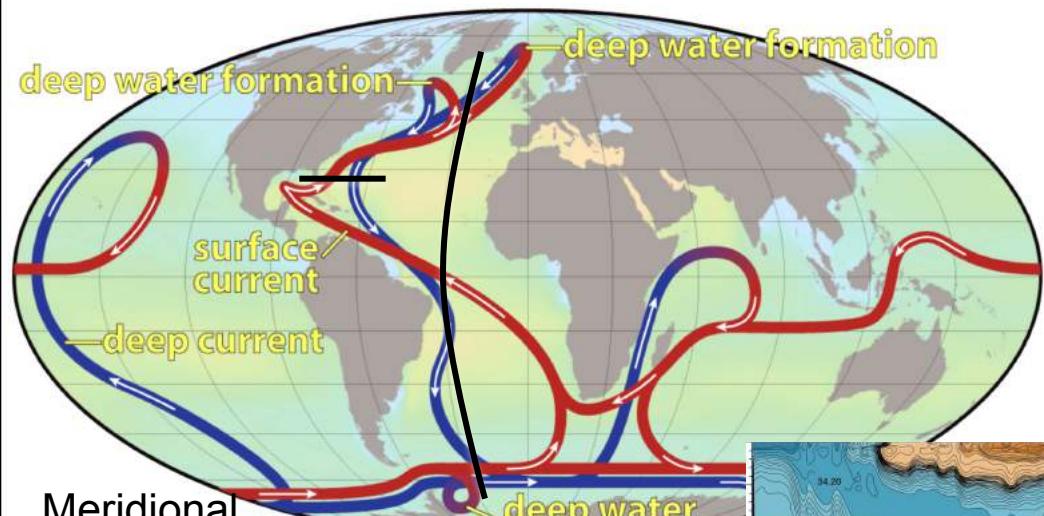


# ① Sea-level: observable processes



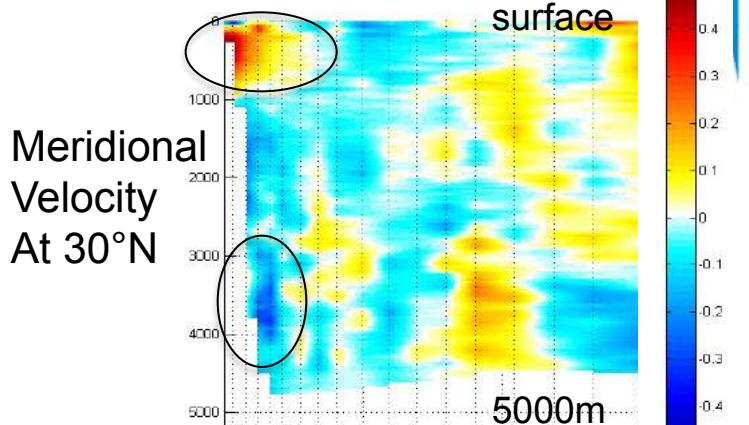
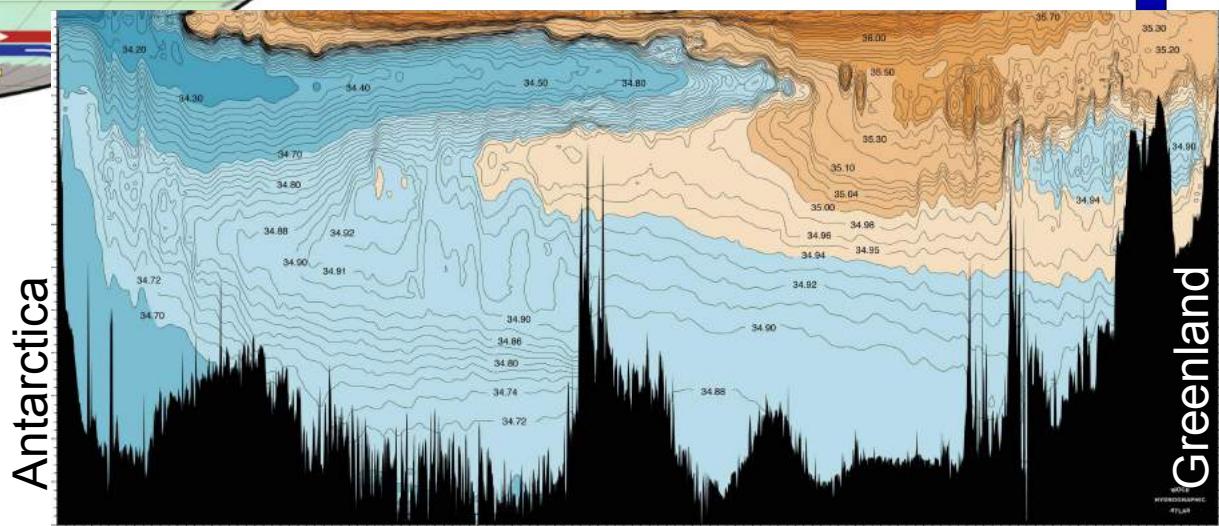
# ① Sea-level observations... and below?

The ocean circulation is generally strongest at the surface, but has a complex vertical structure, strongly coupled to the 3D temperature and salinity structures.



Meridional  
Overturning  
Circulation (MOC)

Salinity  
At 20°W



Meridional  
Velocity  
At 30°N

surface

5000m

# *Outline*

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## ② Ocean models

A model is a mathematical system that represents a physical process, or an ensemble of interacting processes.



### Conceptual models

- Simplified dynamics
- Idealized geometry, forcing, etc

To study a given ocean process in an idealized setting for an in-depth understanding of its dynamics



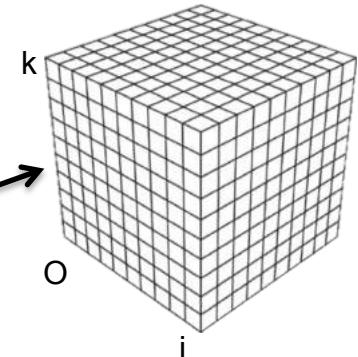
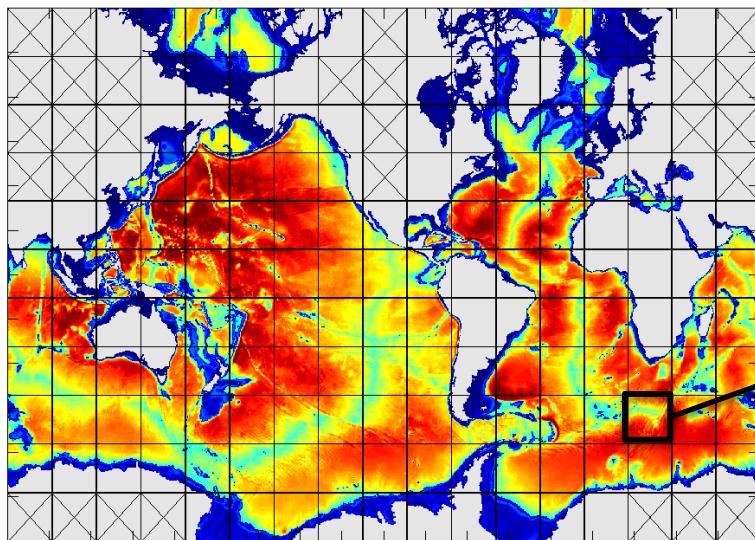
### Realistic Models ("virtual ocean")

- Most complete dynamics
- Most realistic geometry, forcing, etc

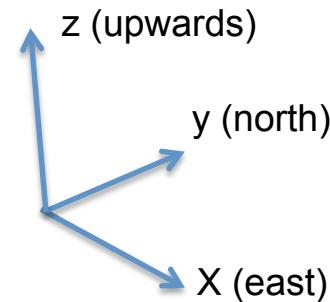
To represent many dynamical processes simultaneously, and the actual ocean circulation with maximum accuracy

Conceptual and realistic models fruitfully complement observations : quasi-continuous 4D multivariate description of the ocean state, dynamical scenarios, dominant processes, sensitivity experiments, multiple realizations...

## ② Ocean models



160 processors  
up to 4000  
For 1/12°



A « realistic » model (or Ocean General Circulation Model, OGCM) is a software that solves the primitive equations on a discrete mesh.

## ② Ocean models: primitive equations

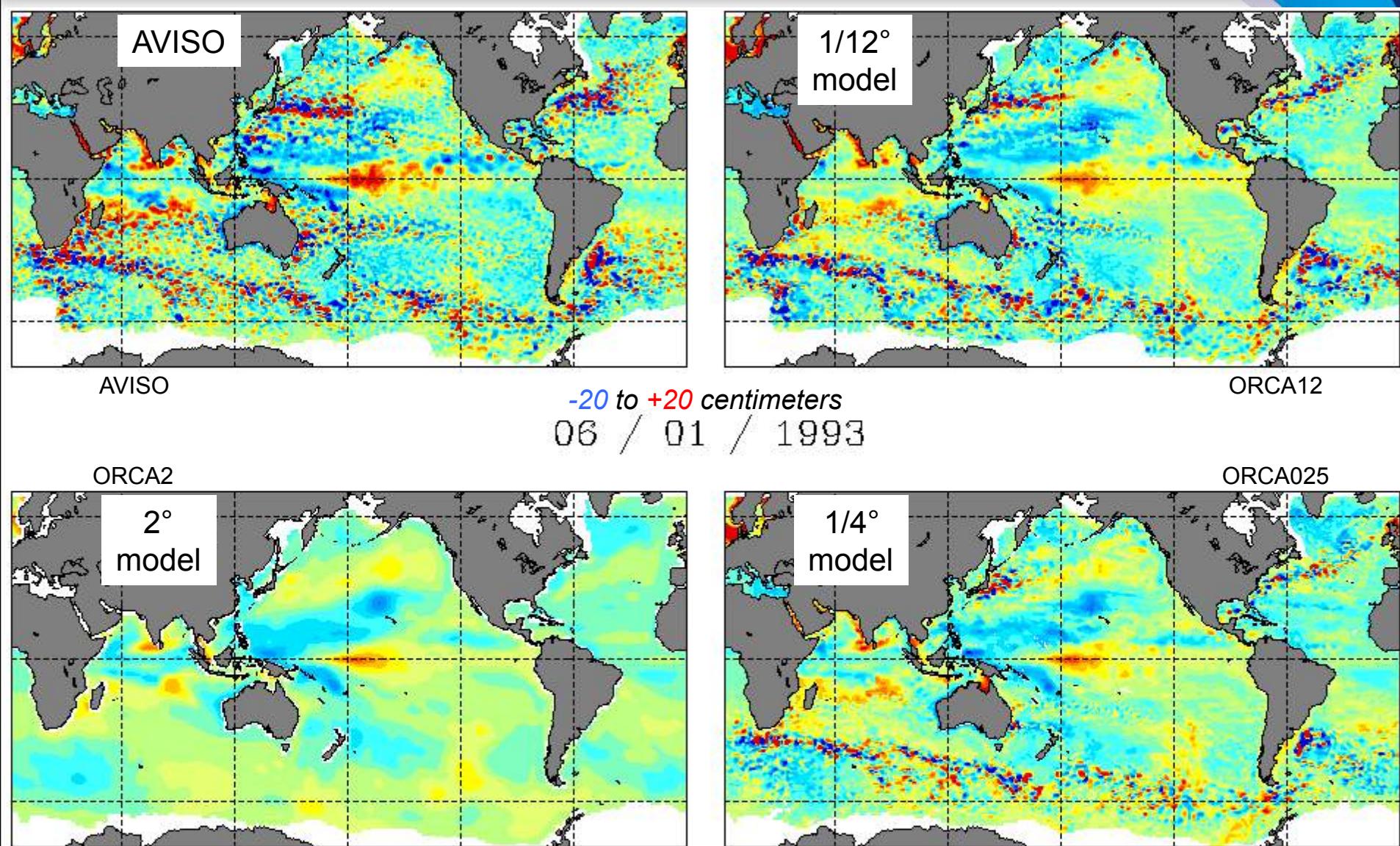
7 unknowns  $u, v, w, p, T, S, \rho$  depending on  $(x, y, z, t)$

<u>7 equations</u> :	<i>zonal</i>
<i>Momentum equations</i>	<i>meridional</i>
	<i>vertical</i>
<i>Mass conservation equation</i>	
<i>Temperature and salinity equations</i>	
	<i>Equation of state</i>

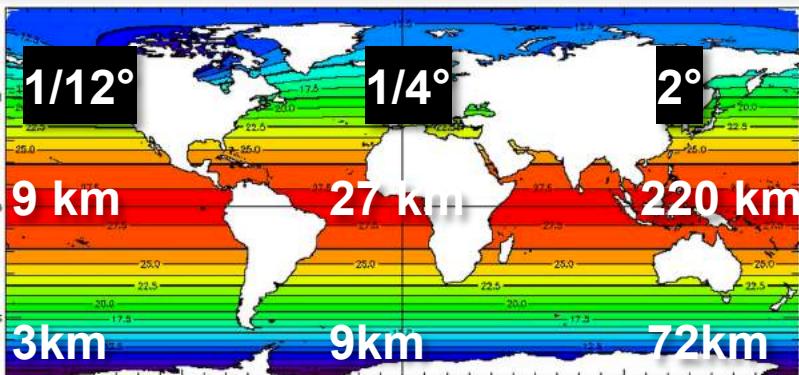
Advection	Geostrophy	Forcing, Dissip.	
$\partial u / \partial t = -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla u + fv - p_x / \rho_0 + F_u + D_u$			(1)
$\partial v / \partial t = -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla v - fu - p_y / \rho_0 + F_v + D_v$			(2)
$p_z = -\rho g$			(3) <i>(hydrostatic)</i>
$u_x + v_y + w_z = 0$			(4) <i>(continuity)</i>
$\partial T / \partial t = -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla T + F_T + D_T$			(5)
$\partial S / \partial t = -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla S + F_S + D_S$			(6)
$\rho = \rho(T, S, P)$			(7)

<u>Boundary conditions</u>	
<i>Bottom</i>	$w_{bot} = -\underline{u}_h \cdot \nabla_h H$
<i>Surface</i>	$\frac{\partial \eta}{\partial t} = -\nabla \cdot [(H + \eta) \underline{u}_h] + P + R - E$
<i>+ Initial Conditions</i>	<i>Surface heat flux, momentum flux (wind stress)</i>

## ② NEMO model: SLA (no data assimilation)

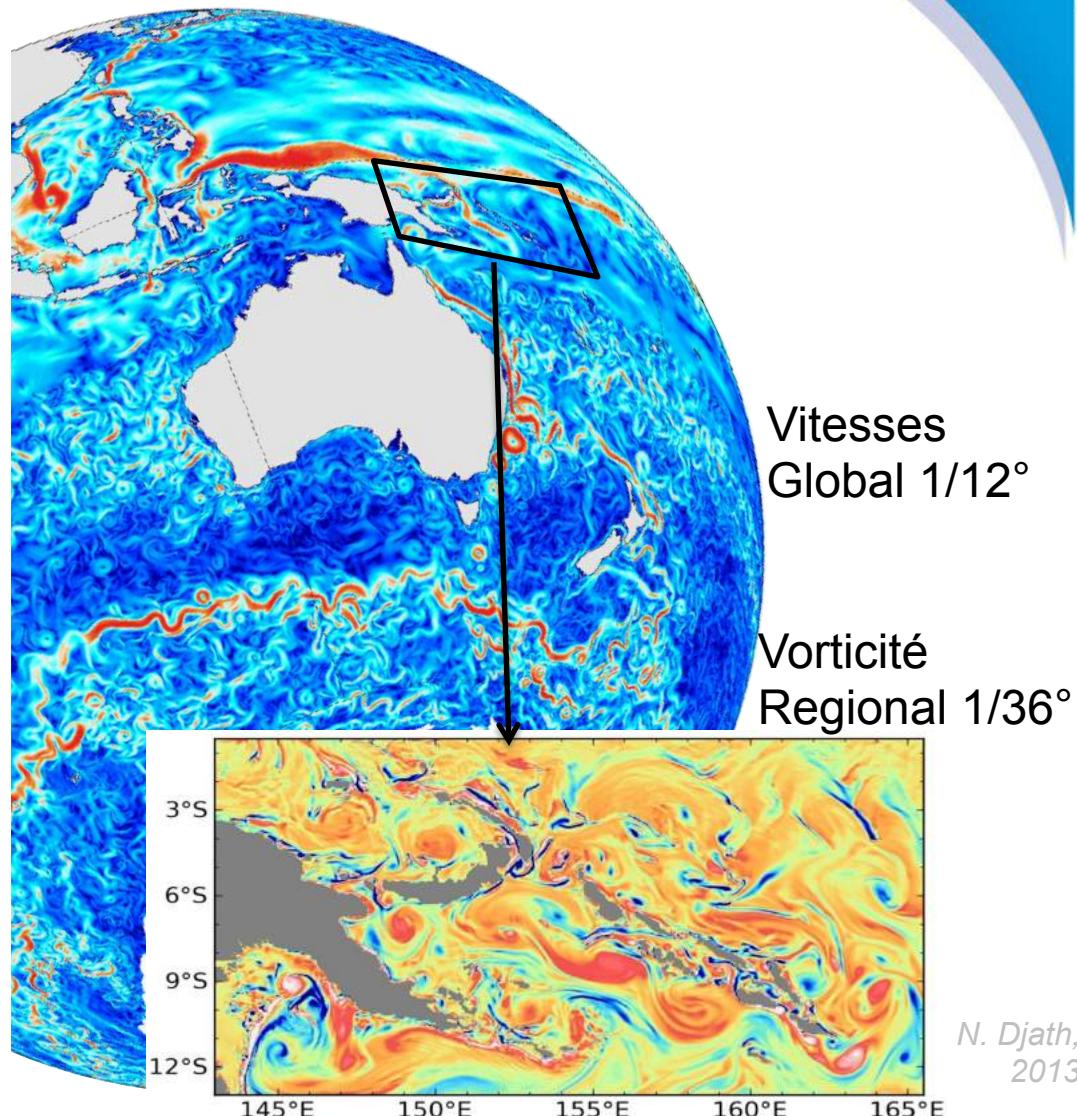


## ② Ocean models: resolution

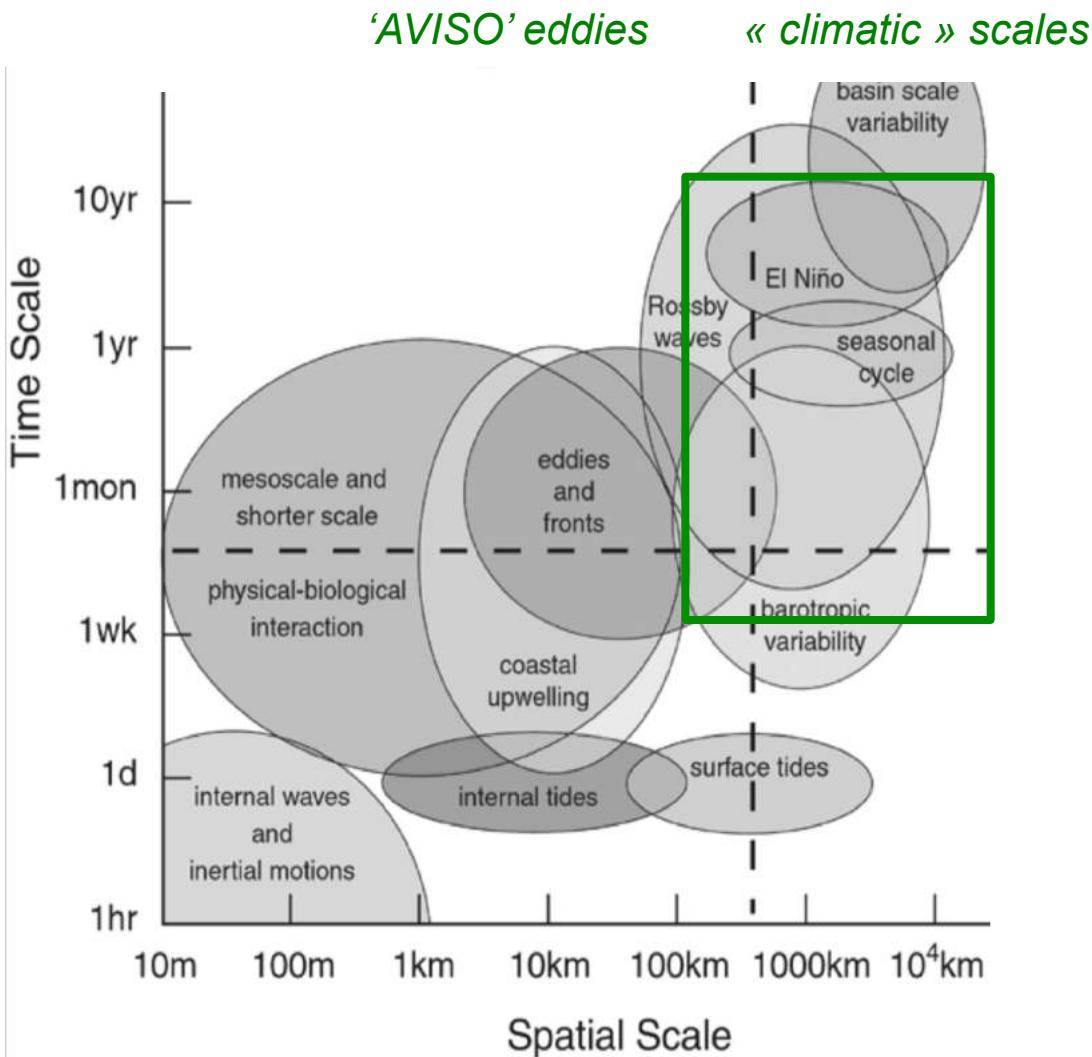


Fine resolution → more fine scales  
 → Weaker dissipation (**less viscosity**)  
 → Stronger **nonlinear** (advection) terms  
 → Larger Reynolds Number (**adv/visc**)  
 → Turbulence & scale interactions

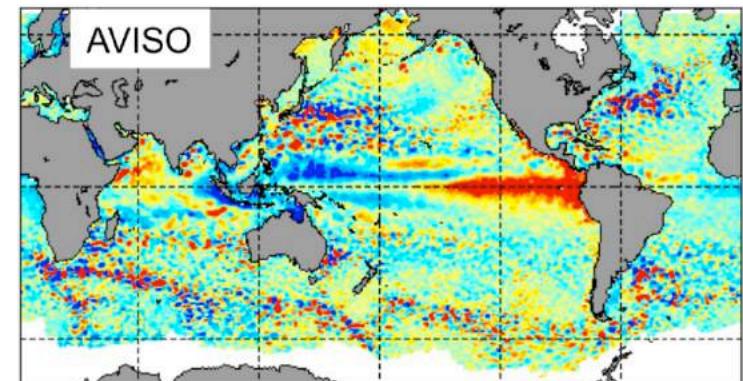
$$\begin{aligned}\partial u / \partial t &= -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla u + fv - p_x / \rho_0 + F_u + D_u \\ \partial v / \partial t &= -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla v - fu - p_y / \rho_0 + F_v + D_v \\ p_z &= -\rho g\end{aligned}$$



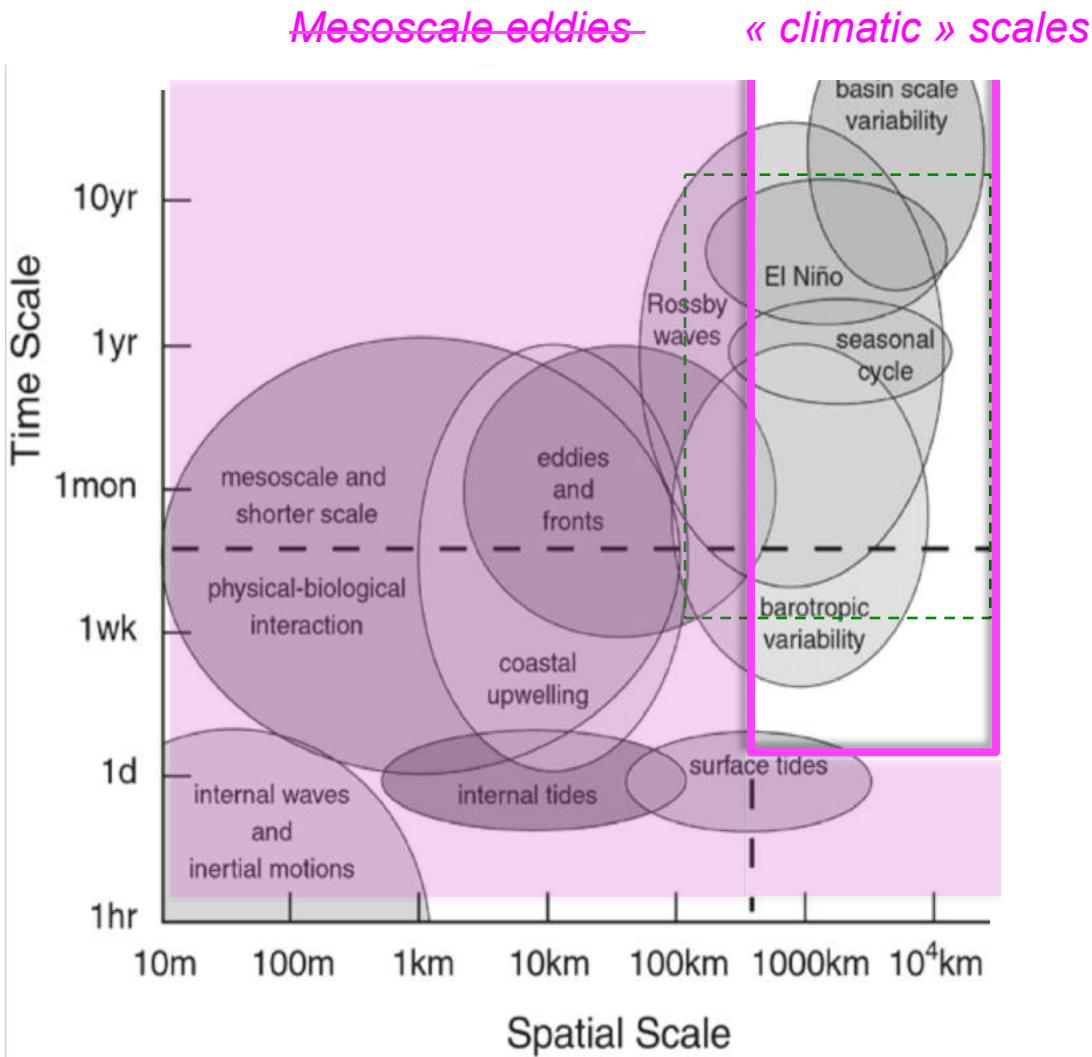
## ② Ocean models: resolution & processes



— AVISO SLA(x,y,t)

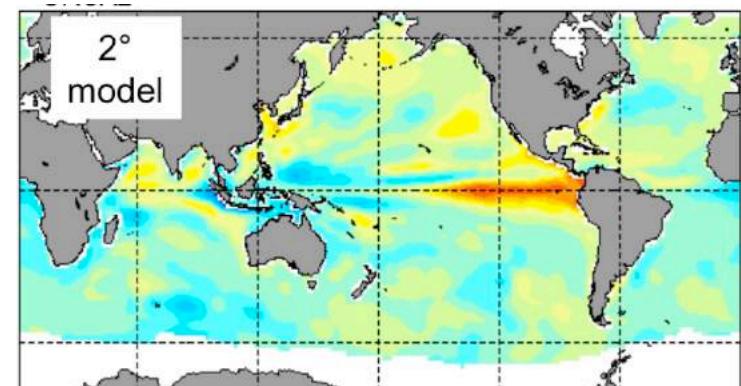


## ② Ocean models: resolution & processes



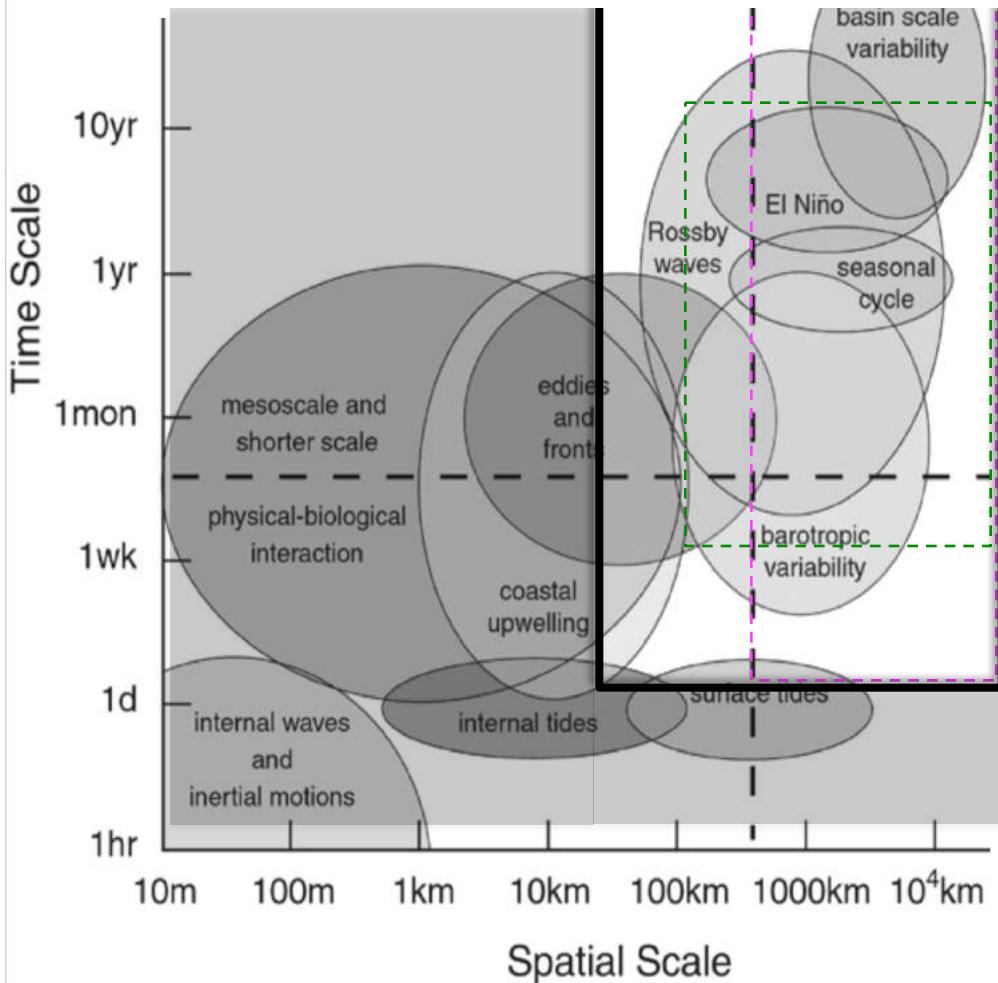
Inside boxes : resolved processes  
Outside \_\_\_\_\_ : parameterized \_\_\_\_\_

- AVISO SLA(x,y,t)
- 2° global ocean model



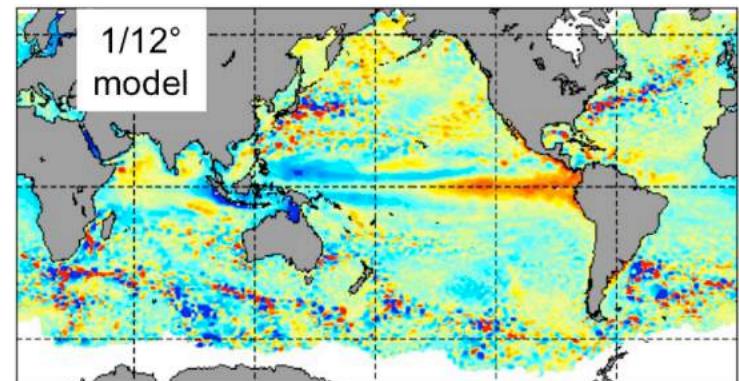
## ② Ocean models: resolution & processes

(some) Mesoscale eddies AND « climatic » scales



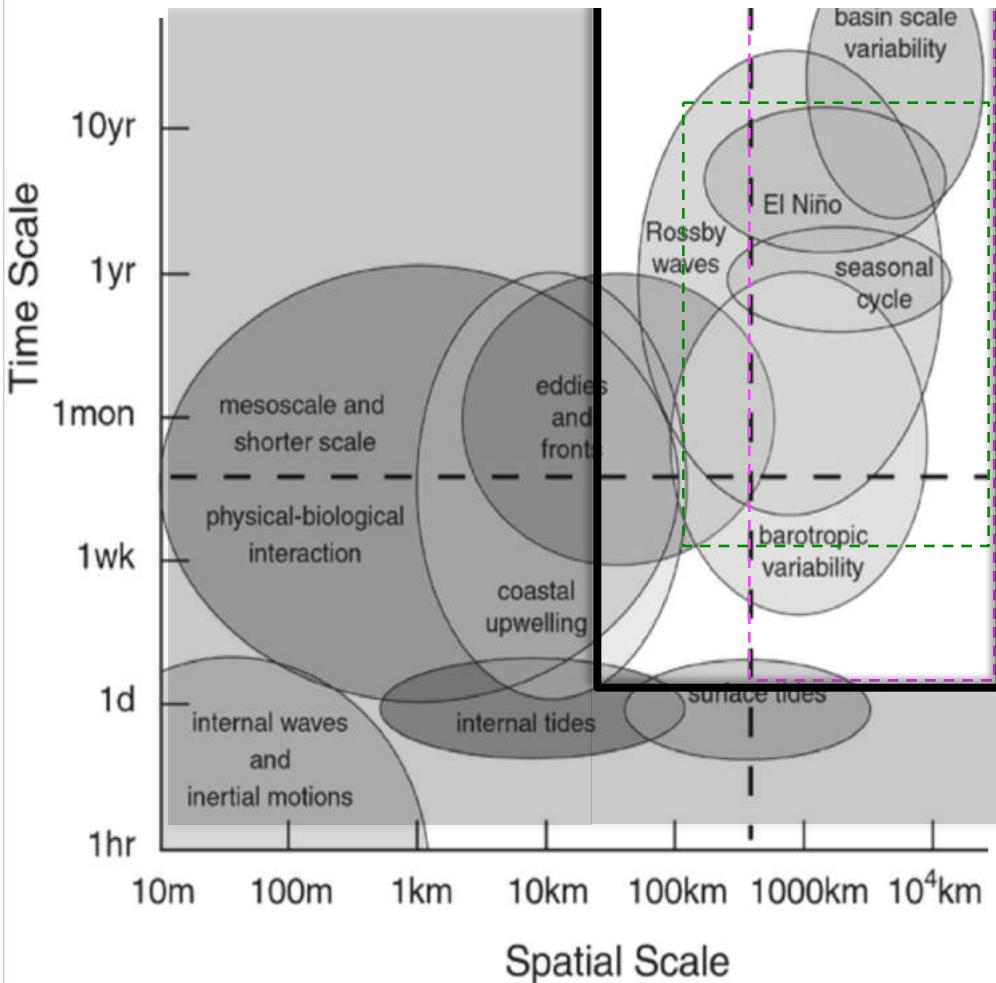
Inside boxes : resolved processes  
Outside \_\_\_\_\_ : parameterized \_\_\_\_\_

- AVISO SLA(x,y,t)
- 2° global ocean model
- 1/12° global ocean model



## ② Ocean models: resolution & processes

(some) Mesoscale eddies AND « climatic » scales



Inside boxes : resolved processes  
Outside \_\_\_\_\_ : parameterized \_\_\_\_\_

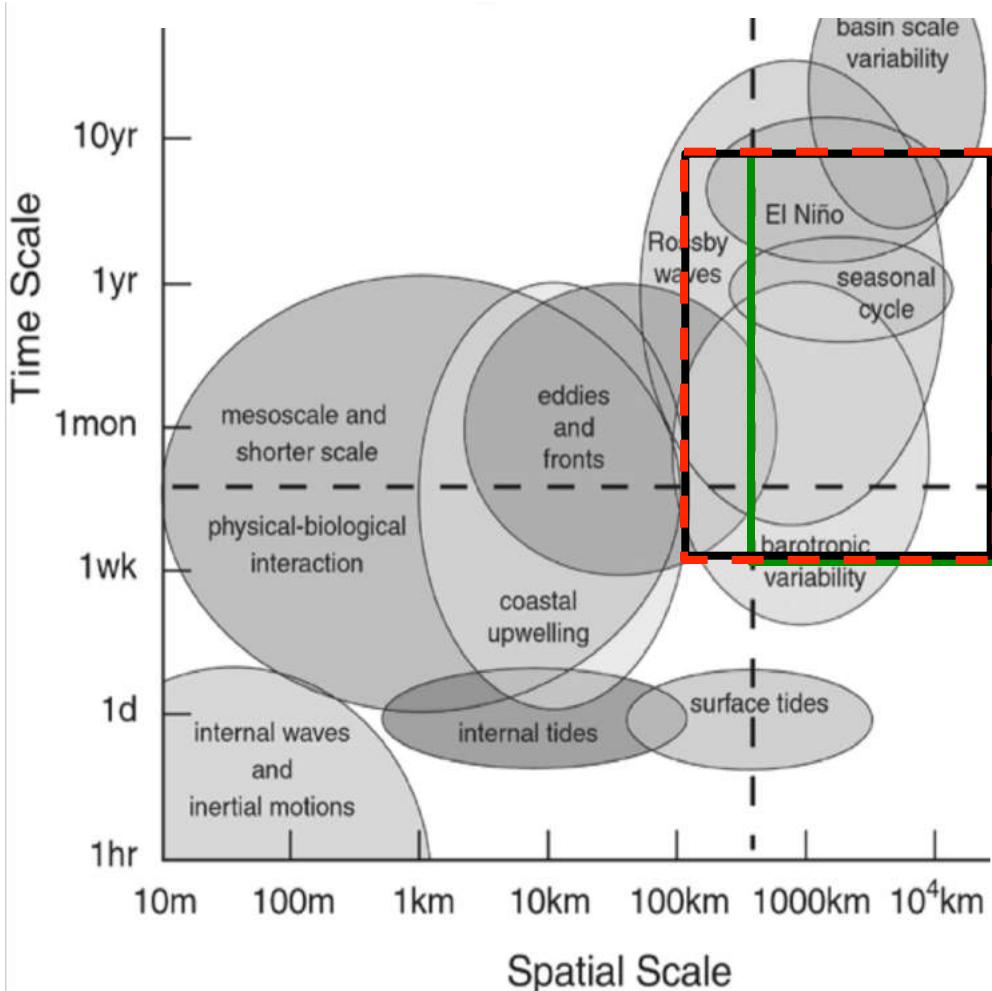
- AVISO SLA(x,y,t)
- 2° global ocean model
- 1/12° global ocean model

- Is the simulated « climatic » SLA variability more realistic, or different, when eddies are explicitly simulated ?  
→ [2° vs 1/4°] models vs AVISO
- What does this comparison tell us about the role of eddies in the real ocean climate ?

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### ③ Variability: [2° vs 1/4°] models vs AVISO



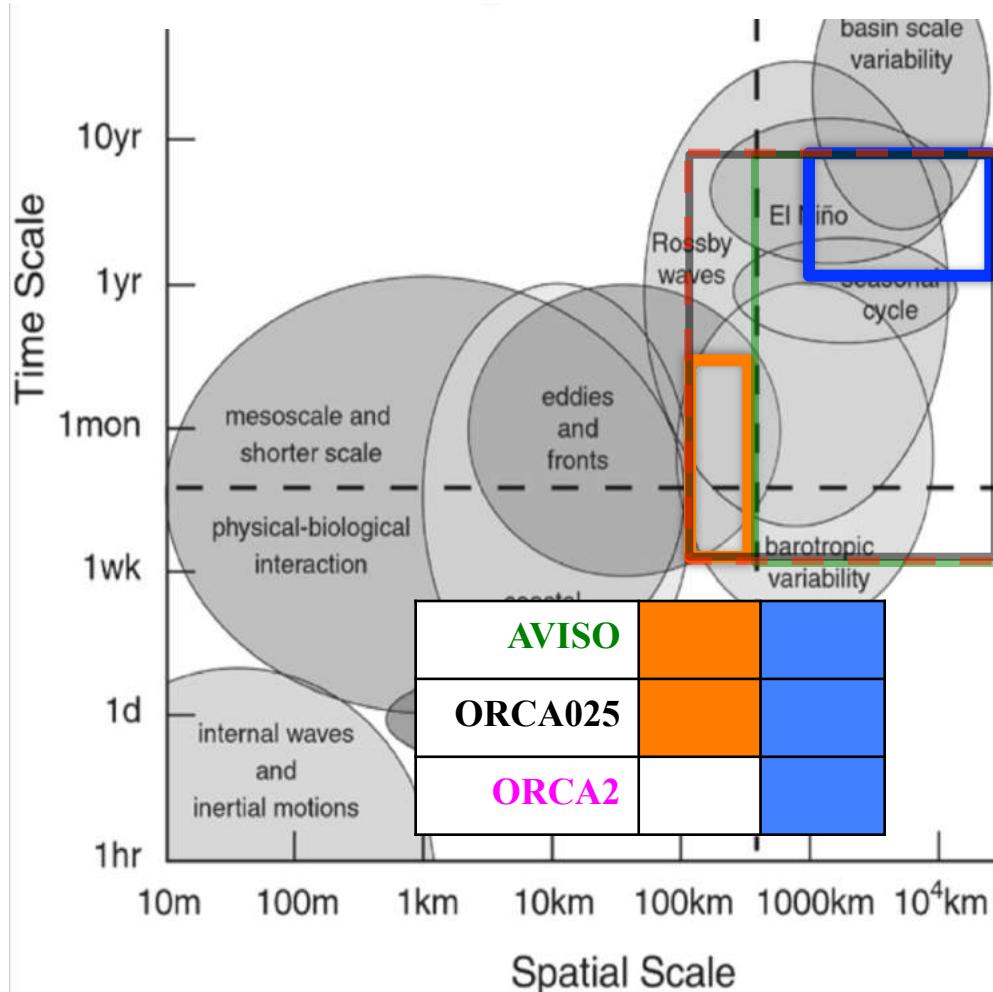
Comparing 3  
SLA(x,y,t) datasets  
over 1993-2007

<b>AVISO</b>	$1/3^\circ$	1993-2007
<b>ORCA2</b>	$2^\circ$	1958-2007
<b>ORCA025</b>	$1/4^\circ$	1958-2007

Atmospheric forcing:

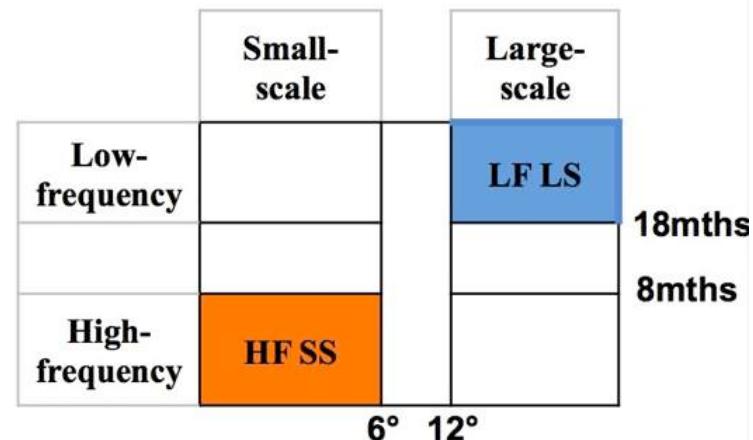
- Based on ERA-40 (all air-sea fluxes)
- Identical in both simulations

### ③ Variability: [2° vs 1/4°] models vs AVISO



Filtering the 3 SLA(x,y,t) datasets into « **climatic** » and « **eddy** » signals.

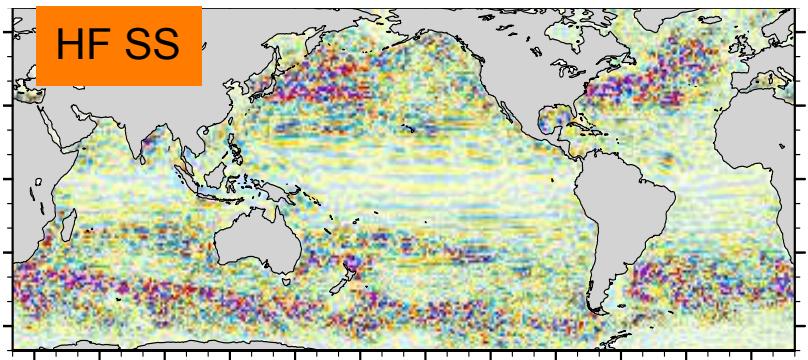
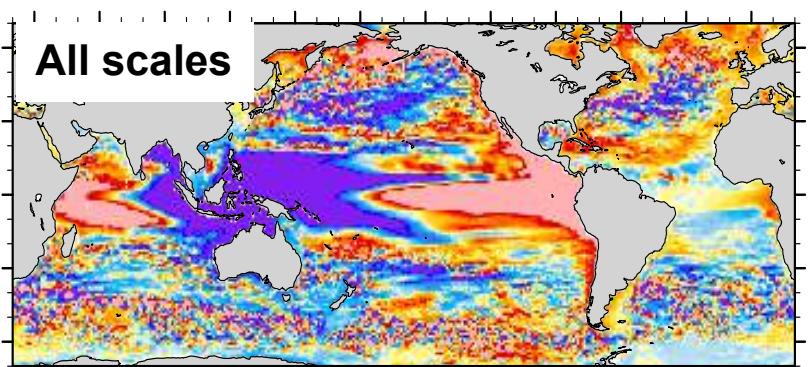
Using 1D and 2D Lanczos low-pass filters



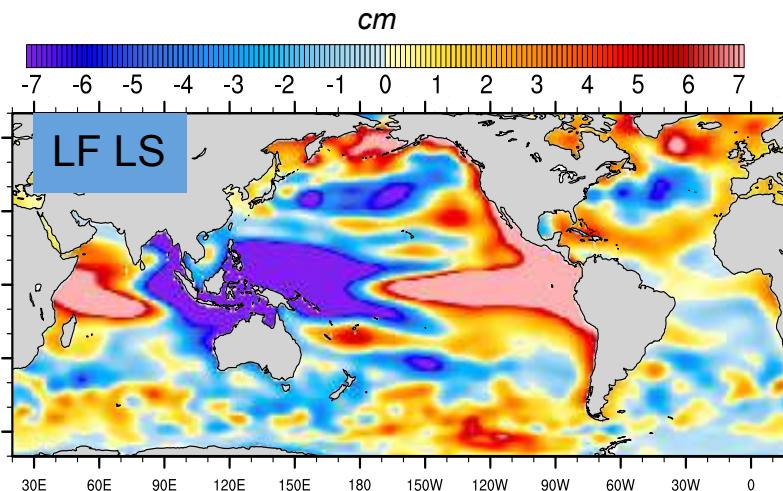
How do ORCA2 and ORCA025 represent the observed « **climatic** » variability ?

- Distribution
- Strength
- Phase agreement

### ③ Typical SLA scales in a turbulent model



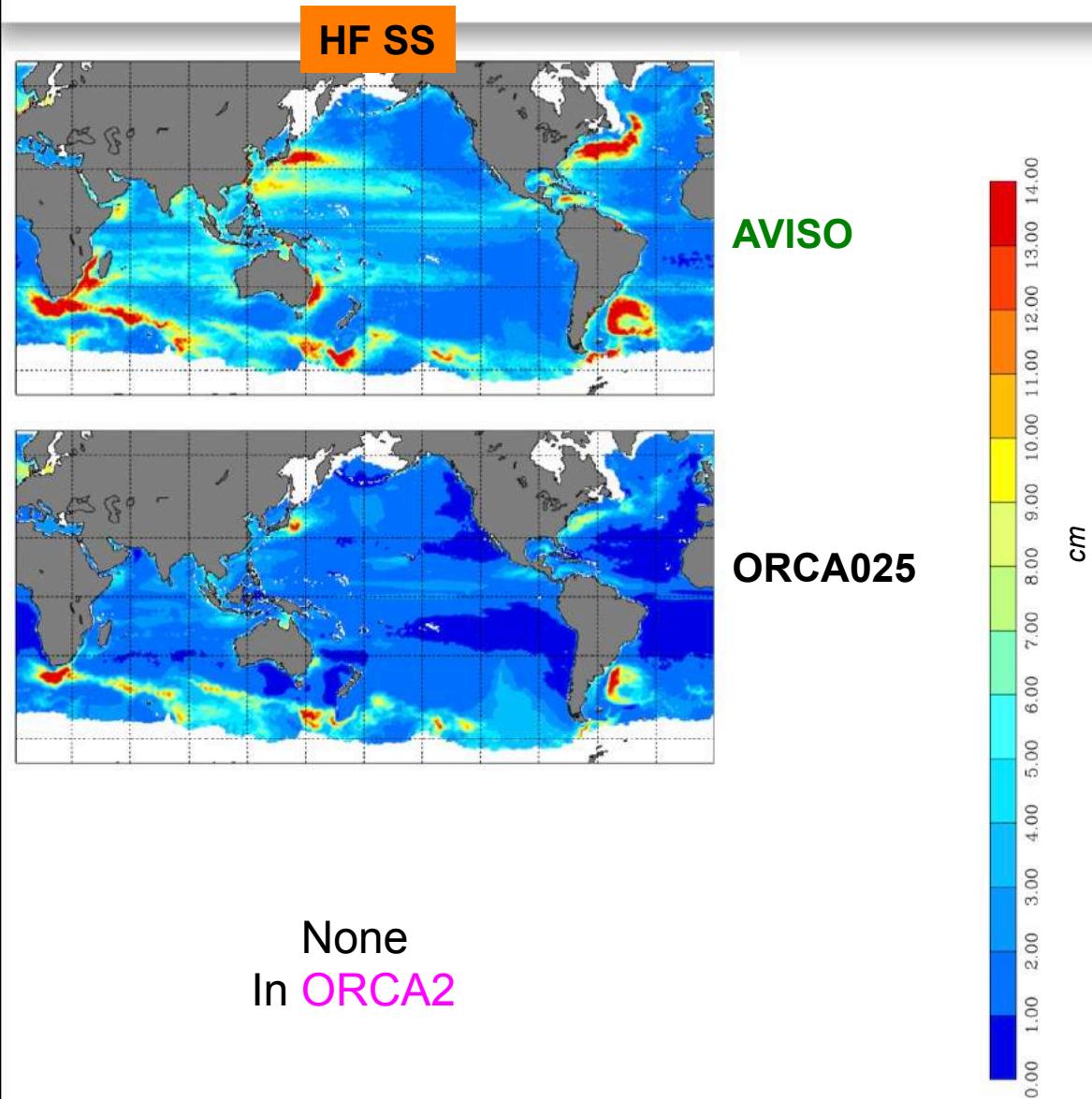
Raw and filtered SLA  
in december 1997



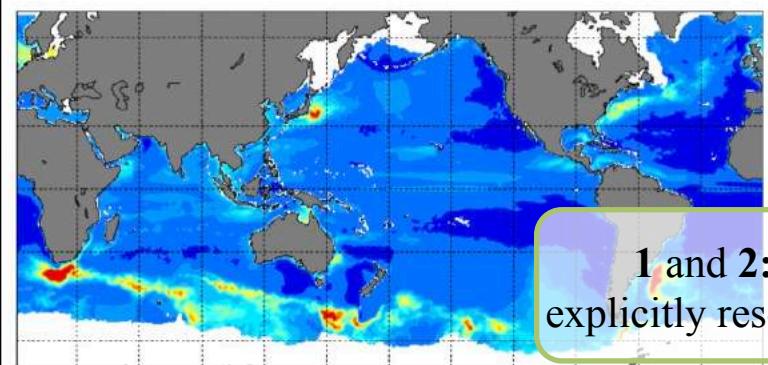
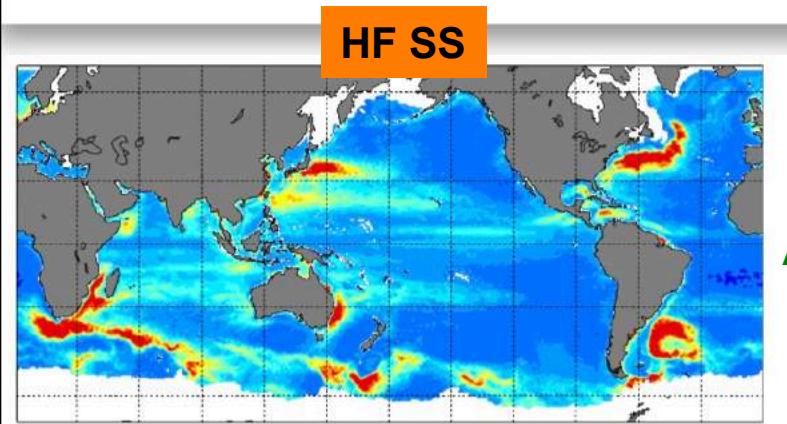
	Small-scale	Large-scale
Low-frequency		LF LS
High-frequency	HF SS	

.. Now computing the Standard deviation of SLA( $t$ ) from each dataset at each location.

### ③ Mesoscale variability: models vs AVISO



### ③ Mesoscale variability: scale interactions



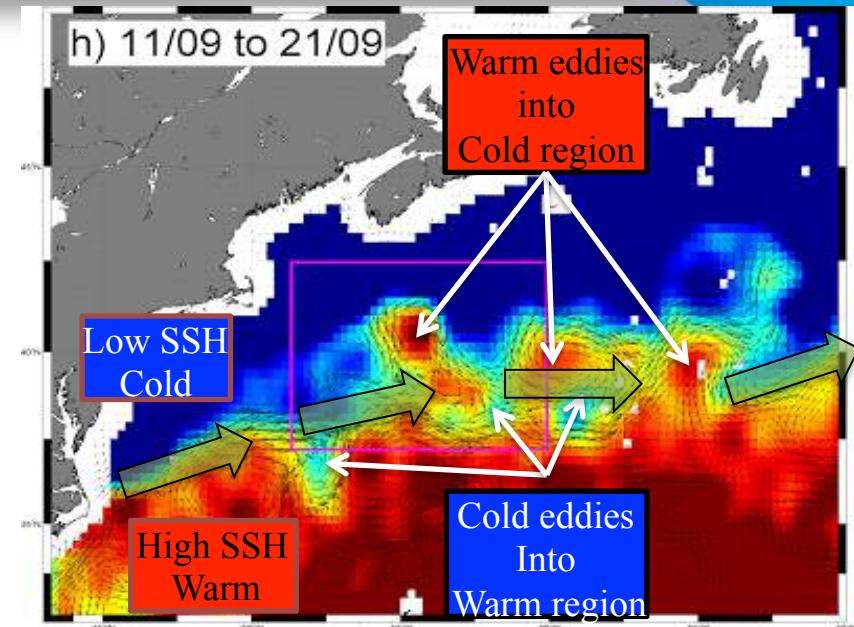
AVISO

ORCA025

1 and 2:  
explicitly resolved

None  
In ORCA2

1: absent  
2: parameterized



Scale interactions:

1) LS → SS: Baroclinic instability

Large-scale  $\nabla T, \nabla SSH$

→ Geostrophic current → gets unstable

→ Meanders → Mesoscale eddies

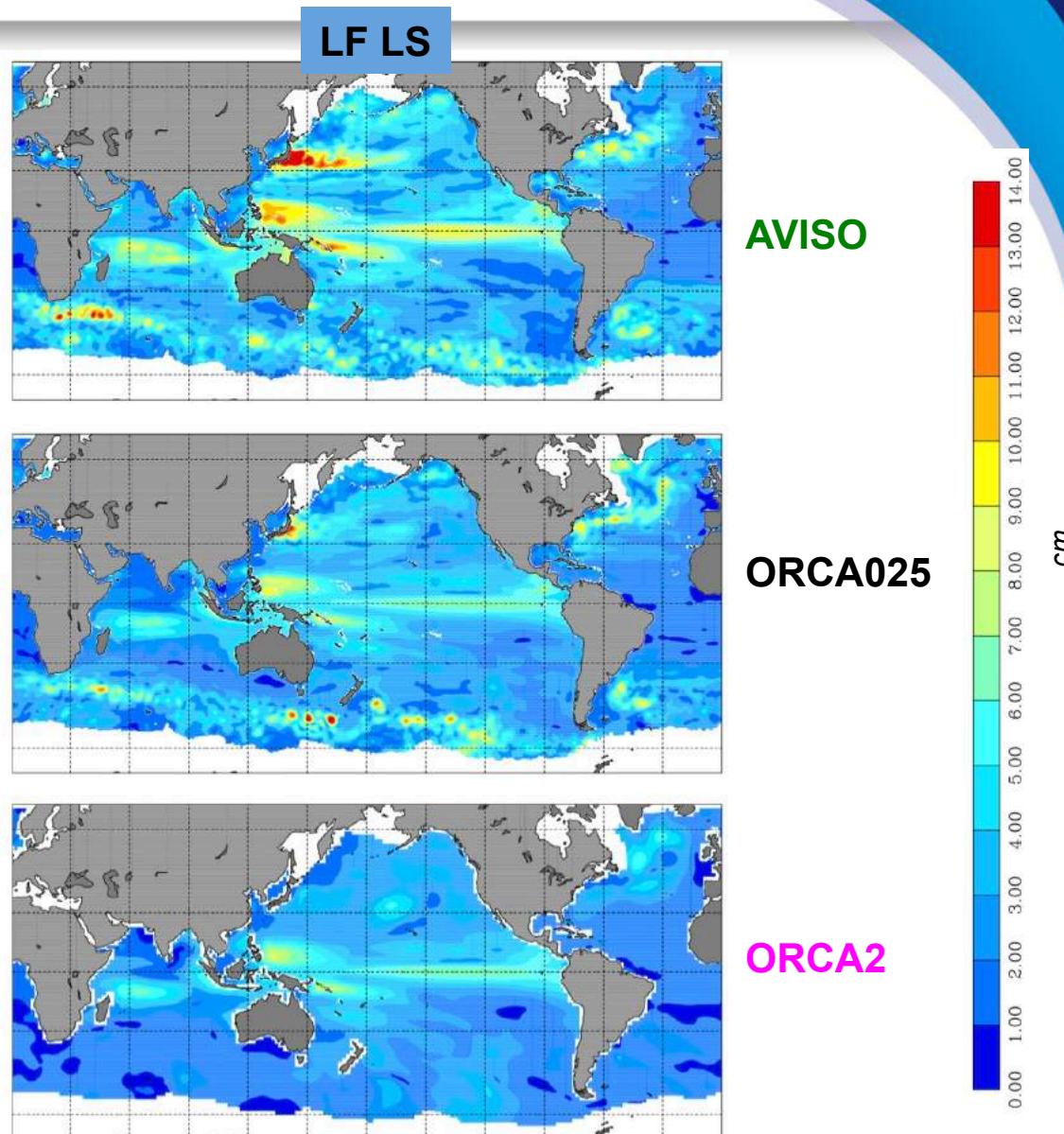
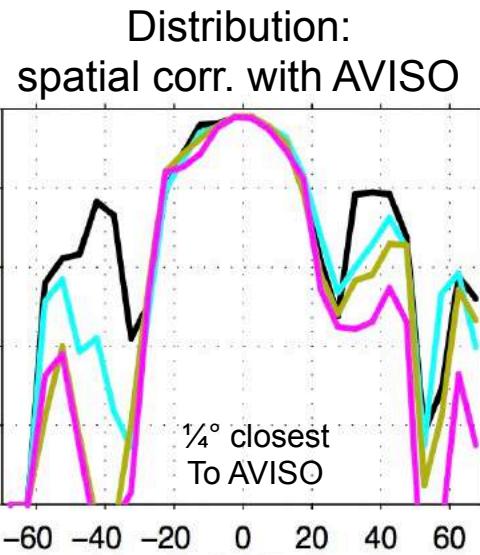
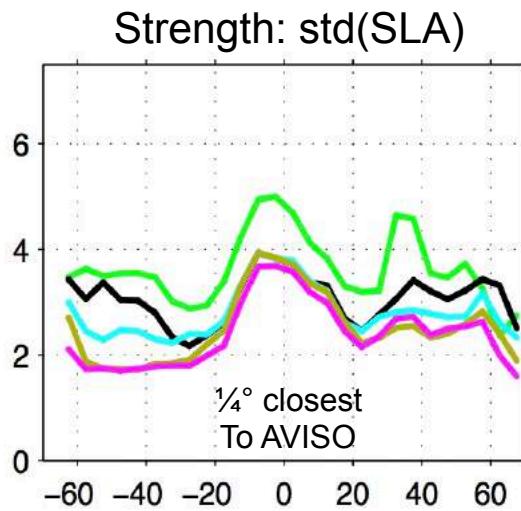
2) LS ← SS: Turbulent heat flux

Warm eddies into cold waters

Cold eddies into warm waters

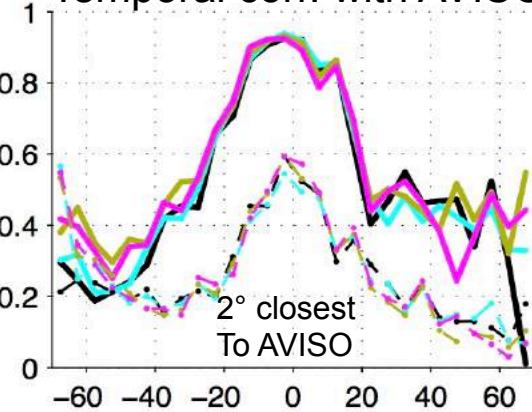
Large-scale  $\nabla T, \nabla SSH$  and current: reduced

### ③ « Climatic » variability: models vs AVISO



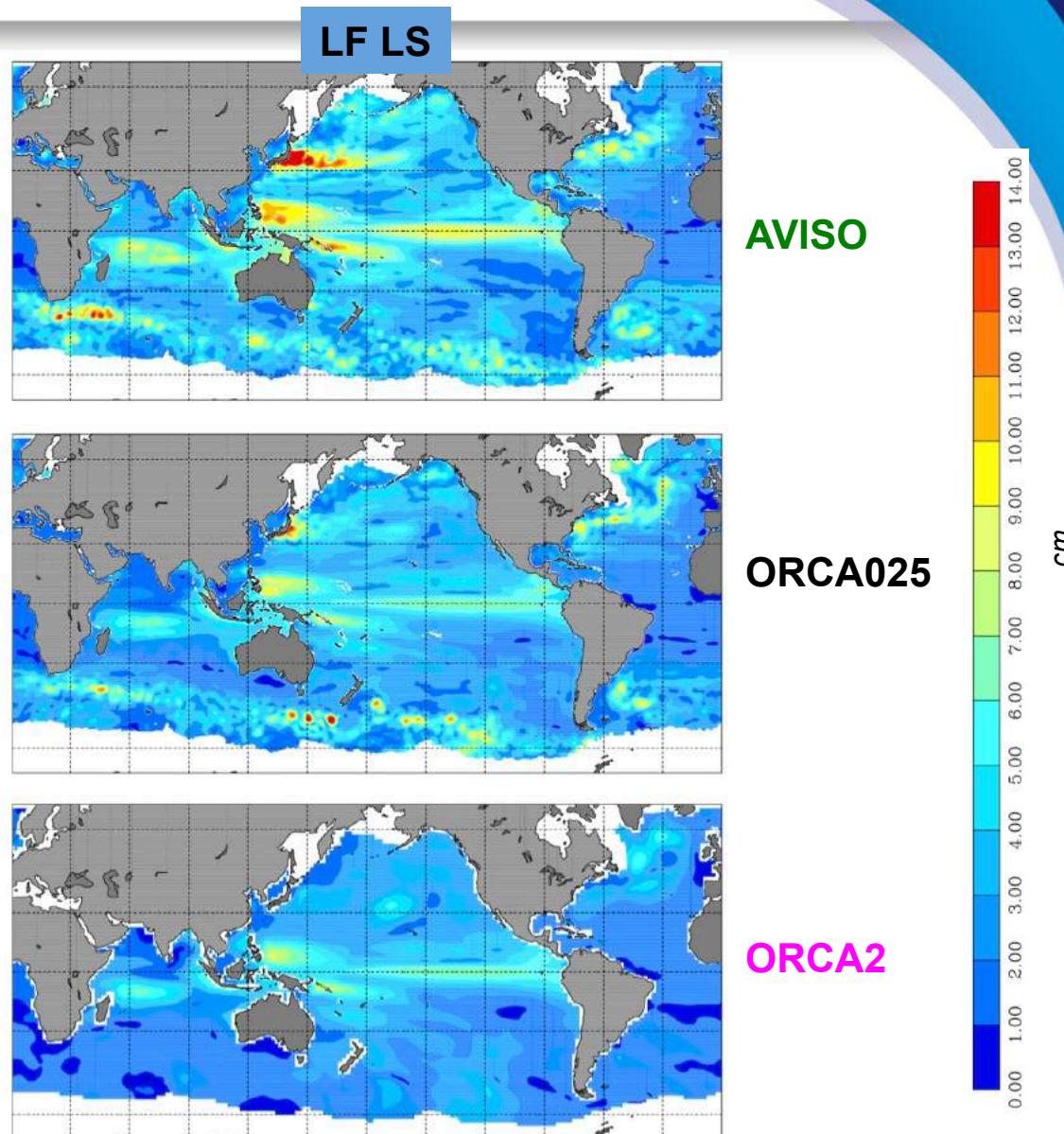
### ③ « Climatic » variability: models vs AVISO

Phase agreement  
Temporal corr. with AVISO



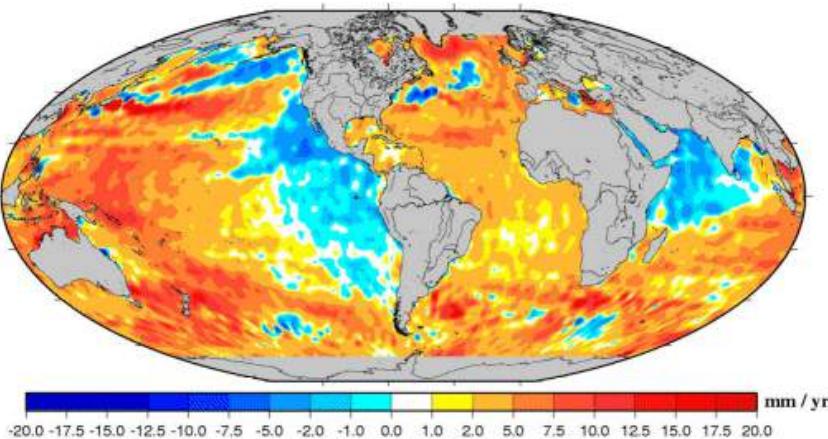
Despite largely improved dynamics and solution when mesoscale eddies are present, the « climatic » SLA variability is better correlated with AVISO at 2° resolution.

Is LFLS variability more « noisy » in ORCA025



### ③ (Regional) SLA trends: models vs AVISO

Trend  $T_{SLA}(x,y)$  is observed by altimetry.

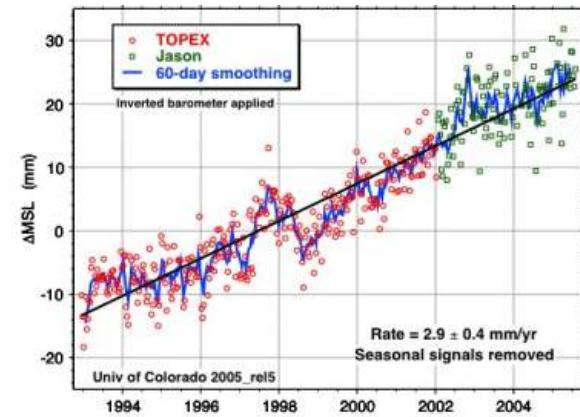


$$T_{SLA}(x, y) = \frac{\overline{SLA(x, y)}^{2001} - \overline{SLA(x, y)}^{1993}}{2001 - 1993}$$

Globally-averaged  
SLA trend  
(AVISO)

$$\overline{\overline{T}}^{x, y}$$

(~3mm/yr)



#### How well do numerical models ?

Greatbatch, 1994: ocean models conserve mass instead of volume (Boussinesq approximation)

- Globally-averaged SLA trends  $\overline{\overline{T}}^{x, y}$  are inexact in models
- $\overline{\overline{T}}^{x, y}$  must be computed and removed from AVISO and simulations
- AVISO and models are compared in terms of **Regional SLA trends** :

$$T'_{SLA}(x, y) = T_{SLA}(x, y) - \overline{\overline{T}}^{x, y}$$

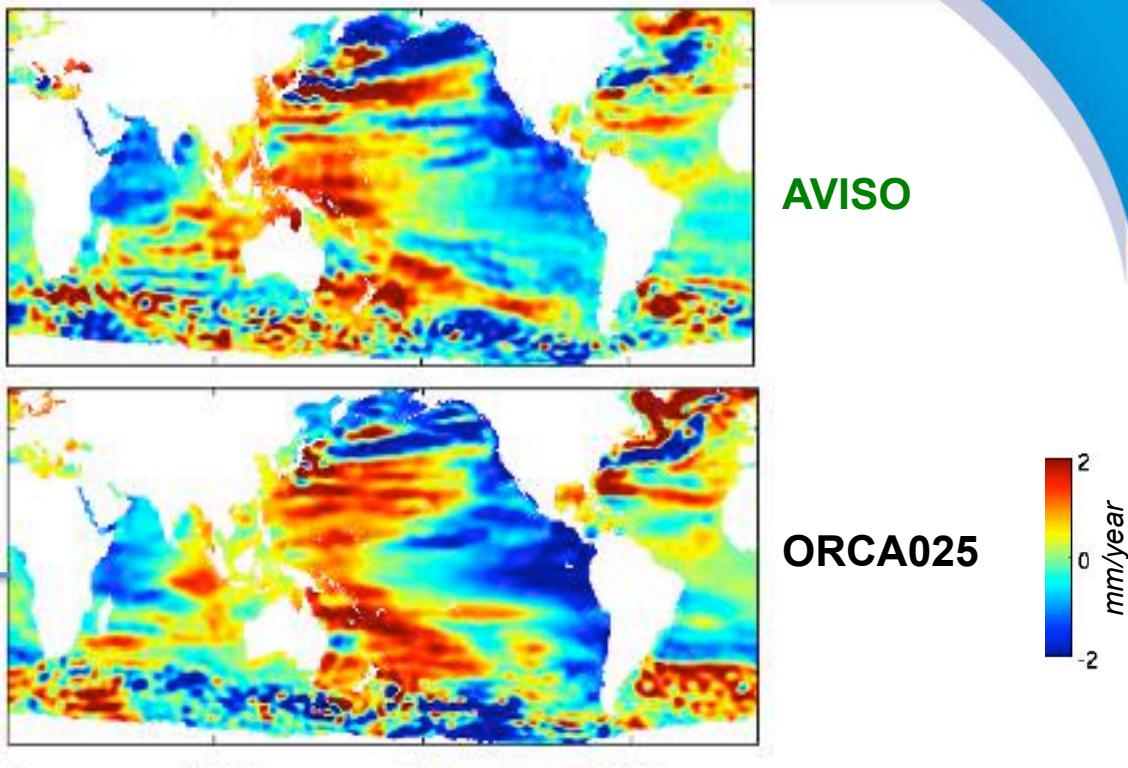
See Lombard et al, Ocean Dynamics (2009)

### ③ (Regional) SLA trends: models vs AVISO

$$T'_{SLA}(x, y) = T_{SLA}(x, y) - \bar{T}^{x, y}$$

Large-scale patterns:

AVISO ~ ORCA025



3D Model Fields : most of the regional SLA trend comes from

- ① Temperature changes 0-750m (most regions)
- ② Deep salinity changes (some regions)

See Lombard et al, Ocean Dynamics (2009)

### ③ (Regional) SLA trends: models vs AVISO

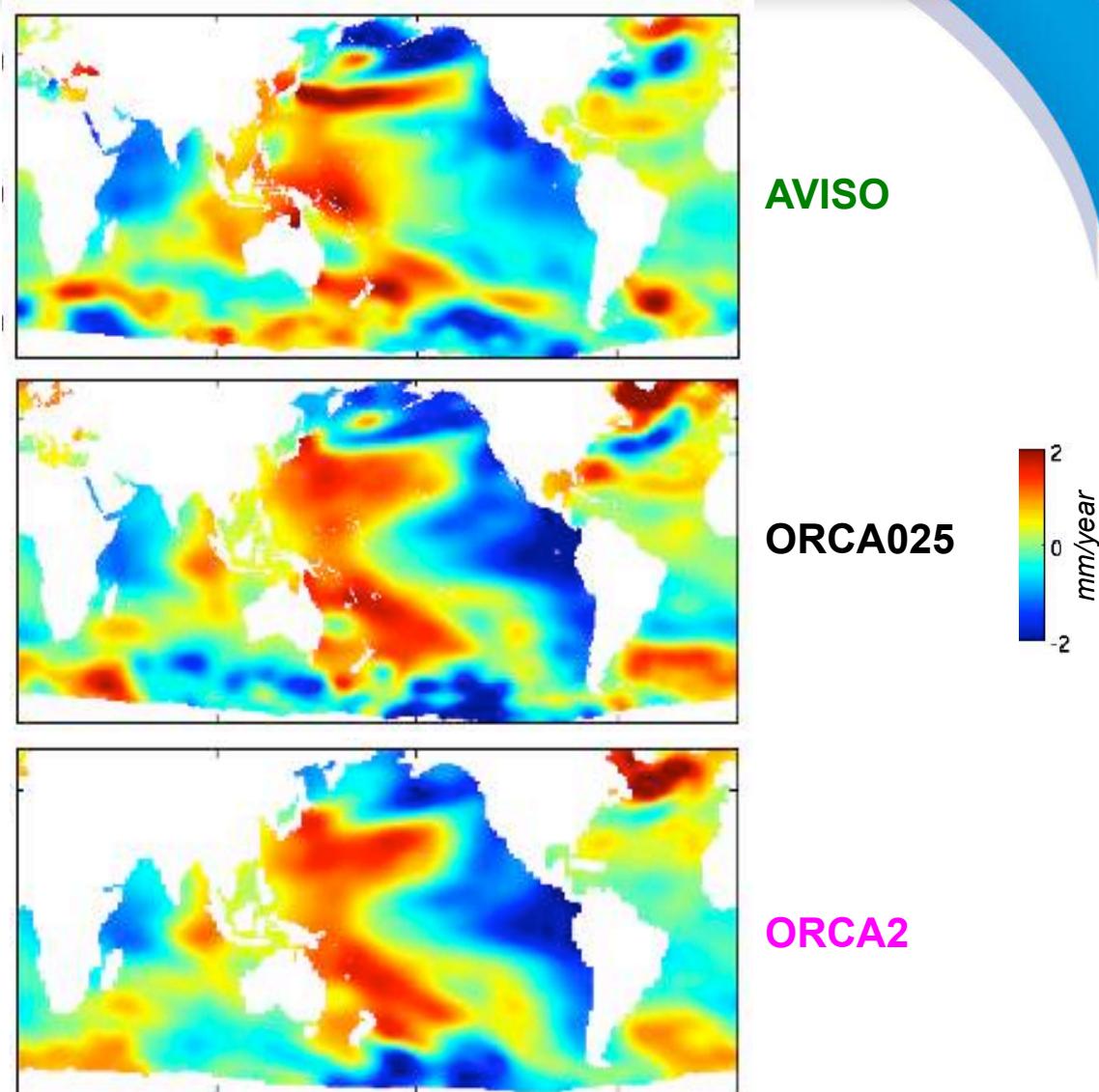
$$T'_{SLA}(x, y) = T_{SLA}(x, y) - \bar{T}^{x, y}$$

Large scales only

AVISO ~ ORCA025 ~ ORCA2

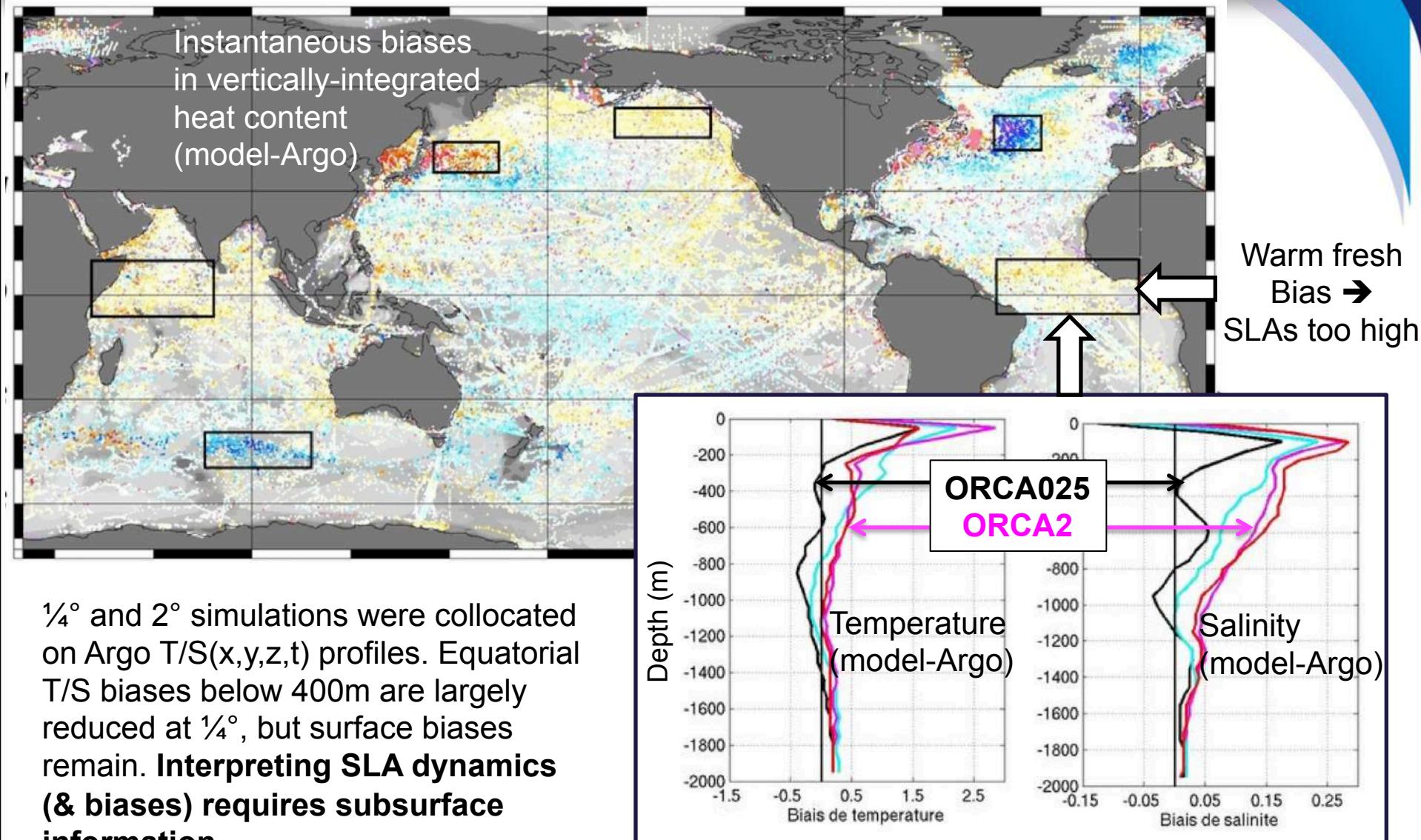
Increased resolution does not improve the large-scale patterns of SLA trends

- Consistent with their mainly steric (thermodynamic) origin
- Mostly controlled by surface heat / freshwater fluxes
- Eddies do not impact large scale trend



See Juza, (2011)

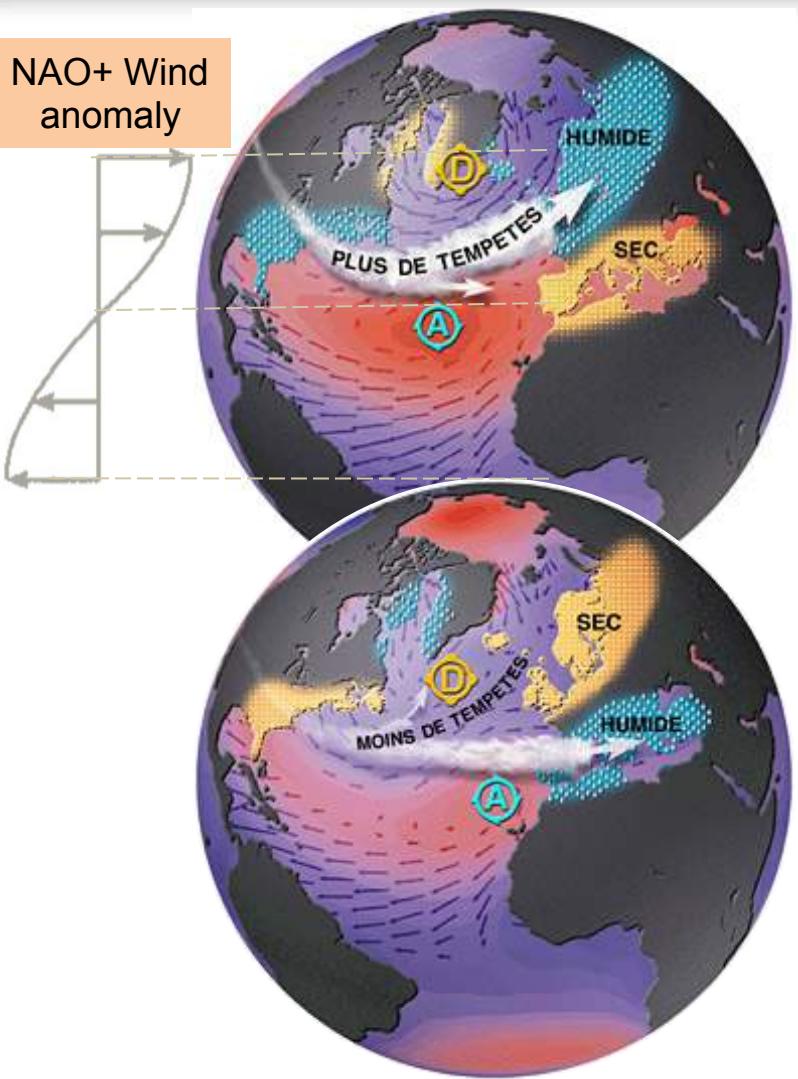
### ③ Below the surface: models vs Argo T/S(z)



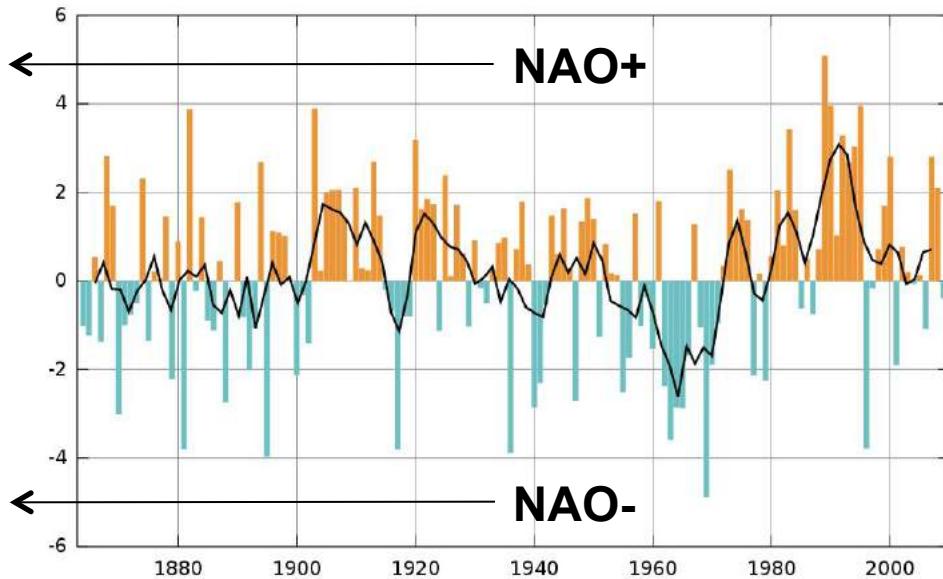
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# ④ North Atlantic Oscillation: atmosphere

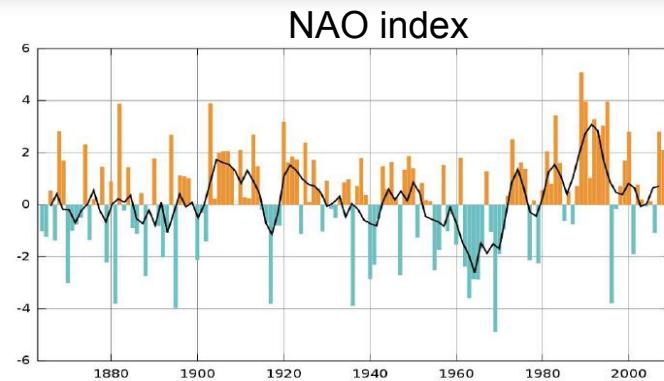
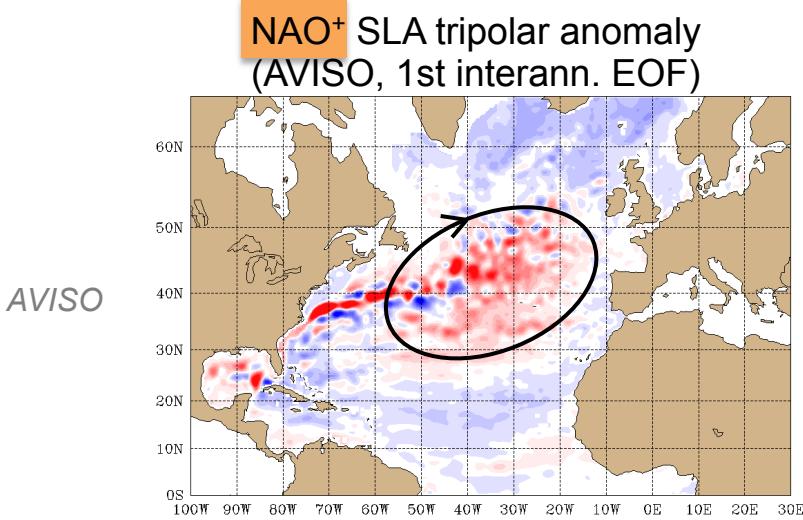
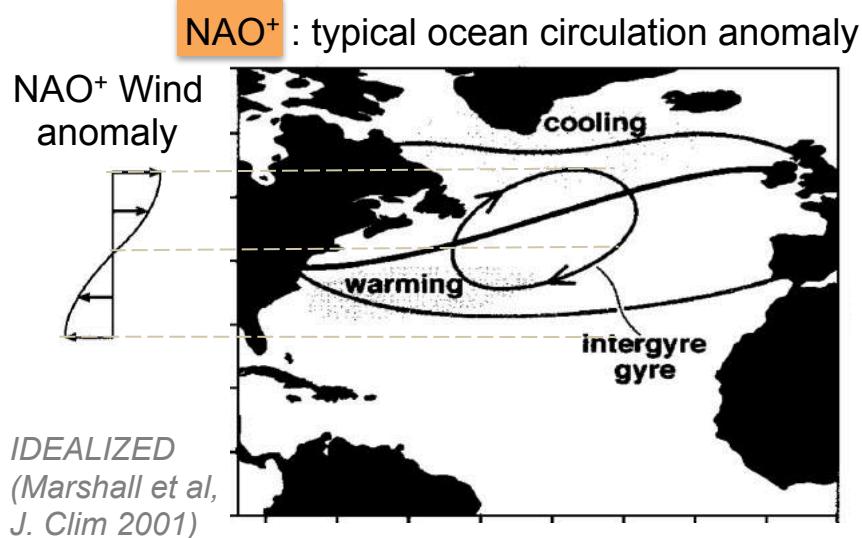


NAO index: normalized atm pressure difference (Portugal – Iceland)

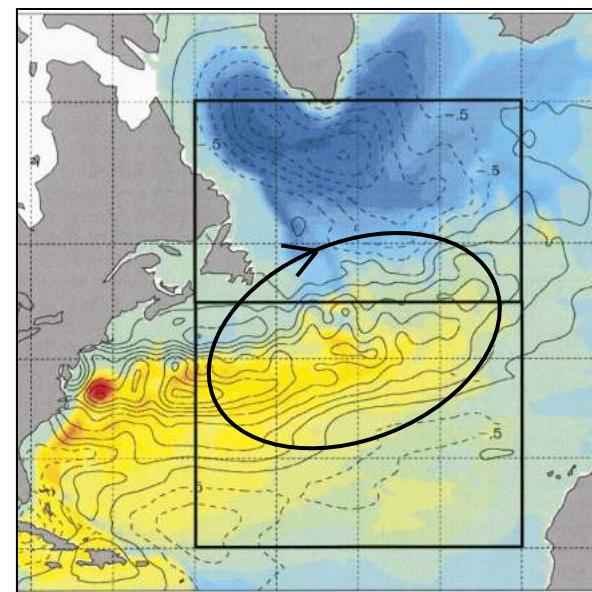


NAO captures a large part of the  
**Interannual atmospheric variability**  
over the North Atlantic.  
**Impact on SLA at LFLS & HFSS scales?**

# ④ North Atlantic Oscillation: LFLS SLA



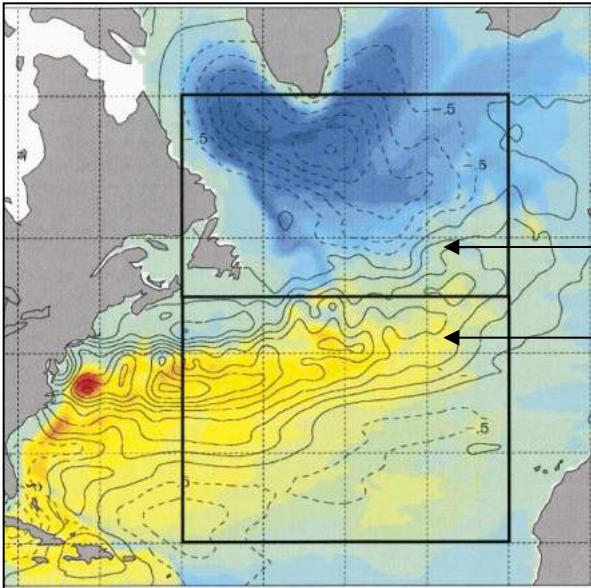
Colors : mean barotropic streamfunction  
Contours : NAO<sup>+</sup>-NAO<sup>-</sup> tripolar anomaly



# ④ North Atlantic Oscillation: HFSS SLA

1/6° CLIPPER model

Colors : mean barotropic streamfunction  
 Contours : NAO<sup>+</sup>-NAO<sup>-</sup> tripolar anomaly



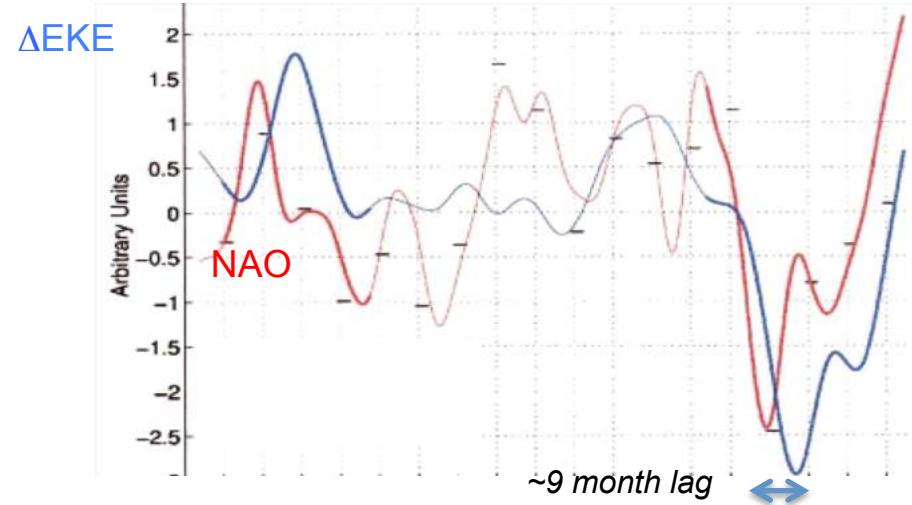
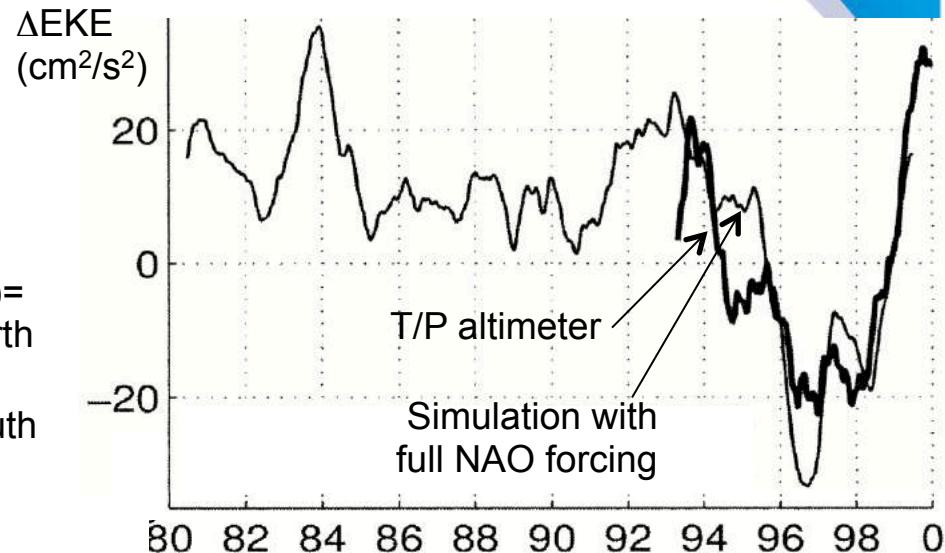
Surface  $\Delta EKE(t)$ =  
 Eddy activity North  
 Minus  
 Eddy activity South

Suggested processes:

**Interannual NAO changes**

Location/Strength of main currents (LFLS)

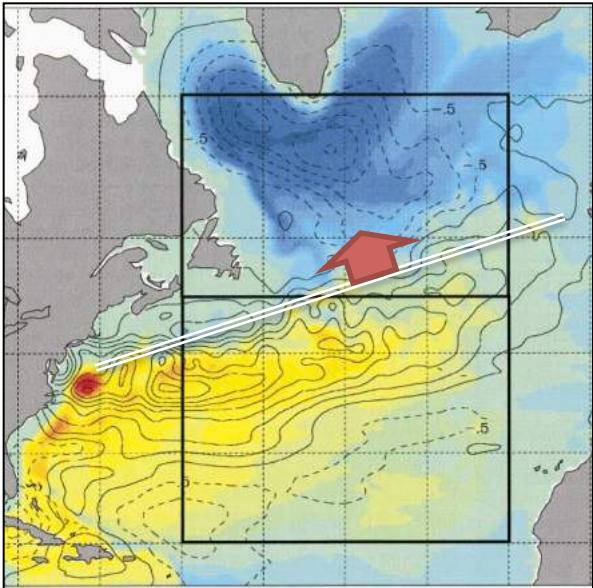
EKE contrast (HFSS)



# ④ North Atlantic Oscillation: not only cause

1/6° CLIPPER model

Colors : mean barotropic streamfunction  
 Contours : NAO<sup>+</sup>-NAO<sup>-</sup> tripolar anomaly

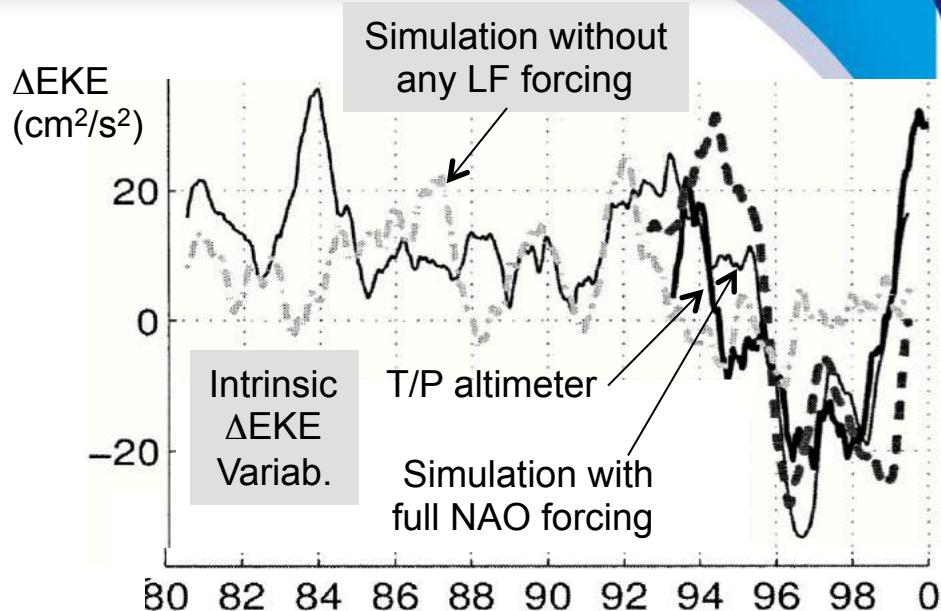


Suggested processes:

Interannual NAO changes

Location/Strength of main currents (LFLS)

EKE contrast (HFSS)



High resolution → LF intrinsic variability

- $\Delta EKE$  (this slide) Penduff et al 2004
- Intergyre heat flux Hall et al 2004
- SLA at all scales
- SST at all scales
- Atlantic overturning (MOC) Grégoire et al (submitted)

## ④ Intrinsic LF variability (eddyng models)

atmosphere

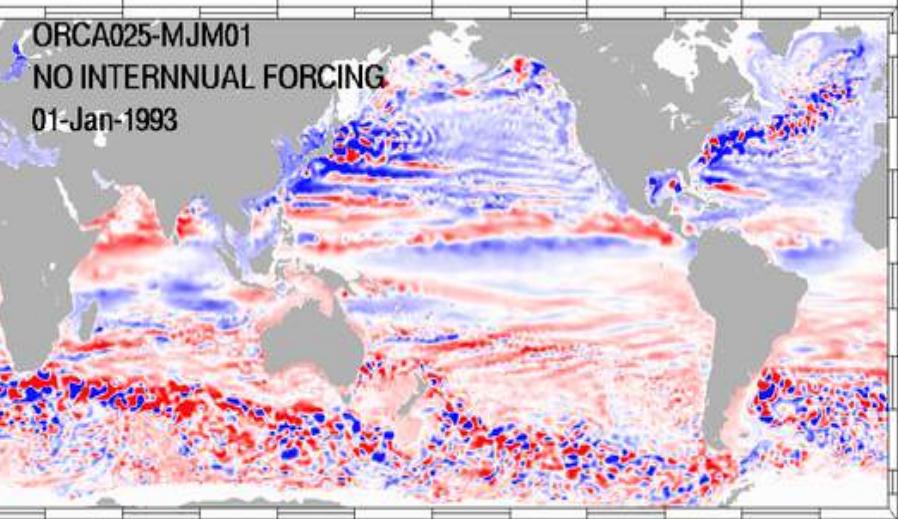
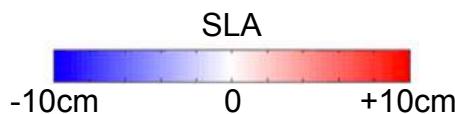
Seasonal cycle

Full forcing (50y)

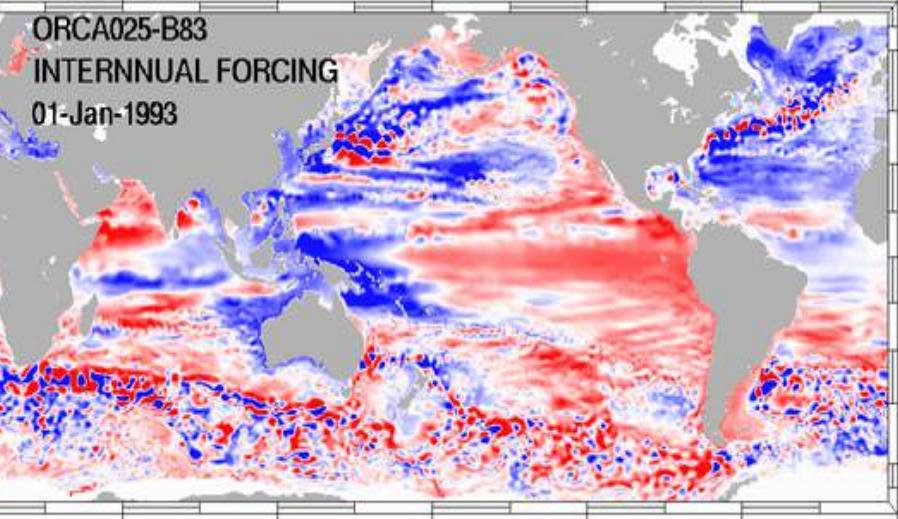
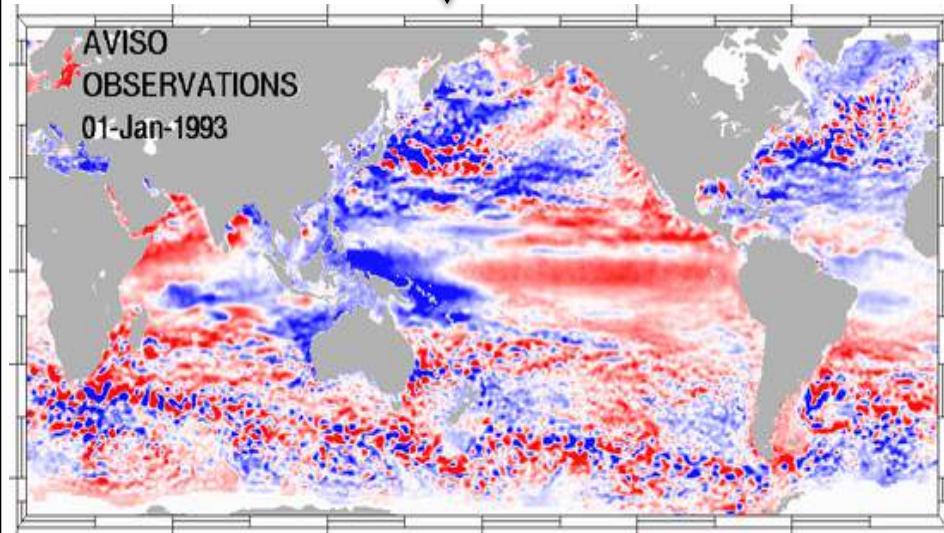
low-freq ocean

DRAKKAR ocean  
sea-ice model  
 $1/4^\circ$  or  $1/12^\circ$

Pure Intrinsic  
Forced Intrinsic



AVISO



# ④ Intrinsic LF variability (eddyng models)

atmosphere

Seasonal cycle

Full forcing (50y)

low-freq ocean

DRAKKAR ocean  
sea-ice model  
1/4° or 1/12°

Pure Intrinsic

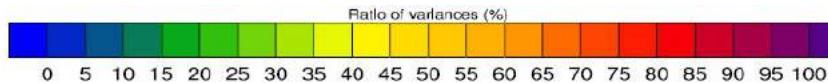
Forced Intrinsic

$$\sigma_I^2$$

$$\sigma_T^2$$

$$R = \sigma_I^2 / \sigma_T^2$$

Intrinsic fraction  
of low-freq variance



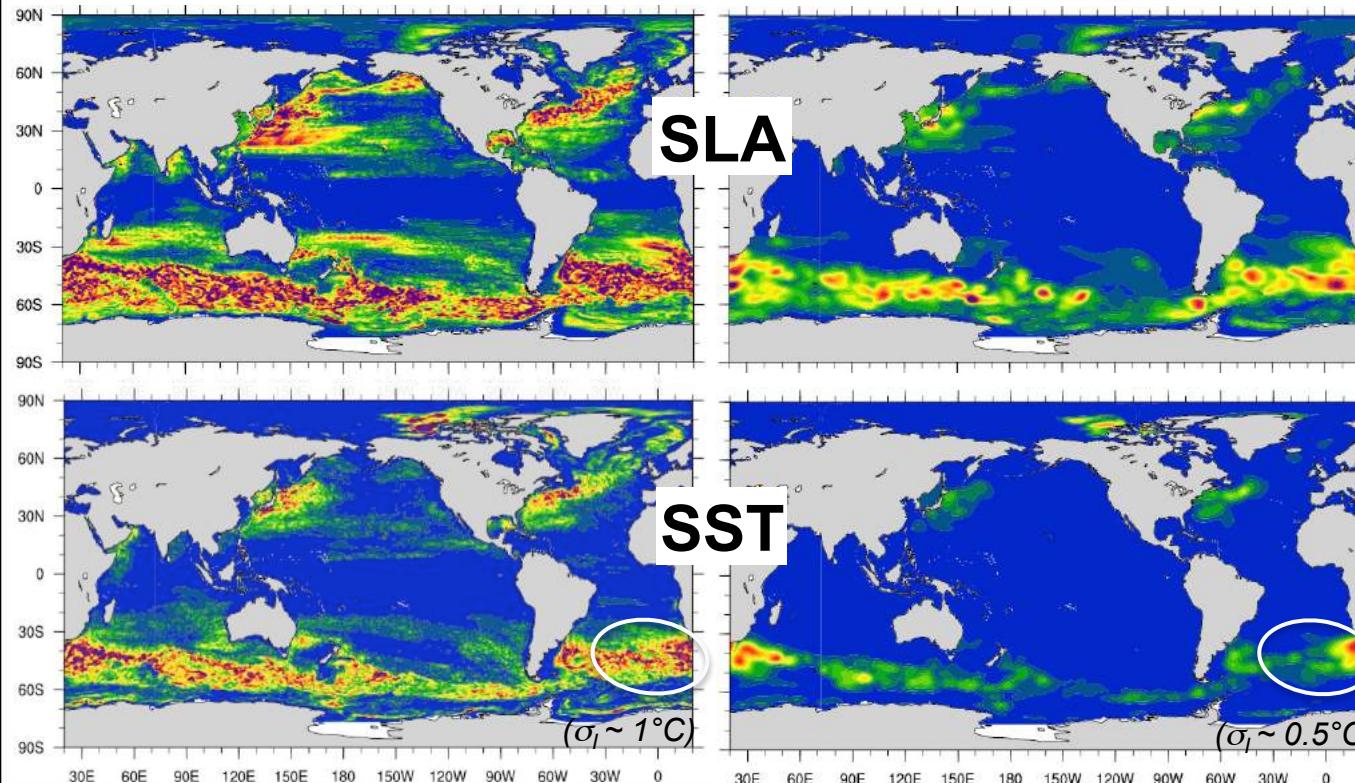
R (%)

LF

LFLS

SLA

SST



# ④ Intrinsic LF variability (eddyng models)

atmosphere

Seasonal cycle

Full forcing (50y)

low-freq ocean

DRAKKAR ocean  
sea-ice model  
1/4° or 1/12°

Pure Intrinsic

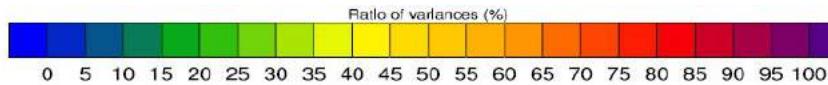
Forced Intrinsic

$$\sigma_I^2$$

$$\sigma_T^2$$

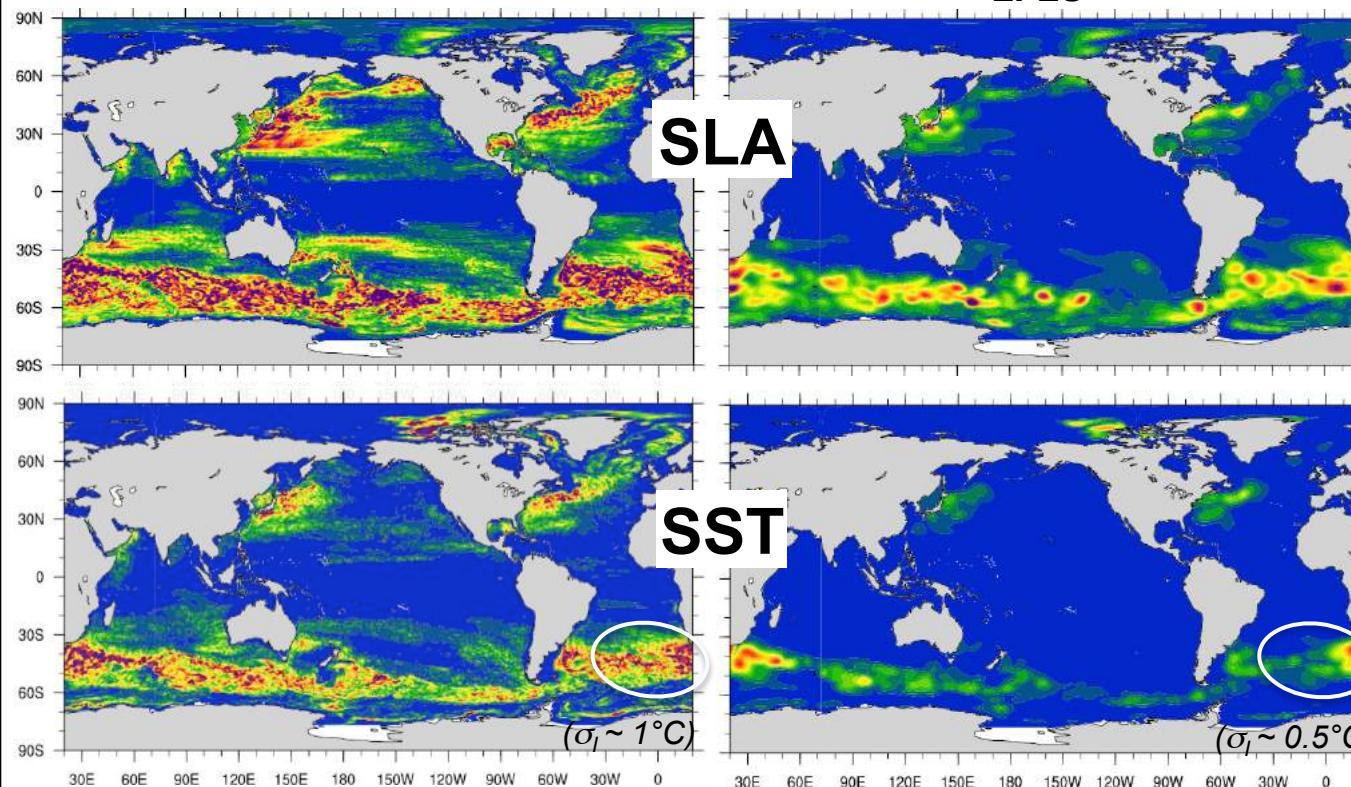
$$R = \sigma_I^2 / \sigma_T^2$$

Intrinsic fraction  
of low-freq variance

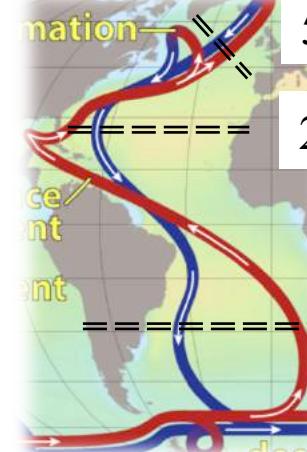


LF

LFLS



R (%)



Grégorio et al (submitted, JPO)

# ④ Intrinsic LF variability (eddyng models)

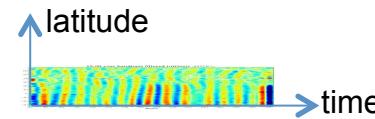
atmosphere

Seasonal cycle

low-freq ocean

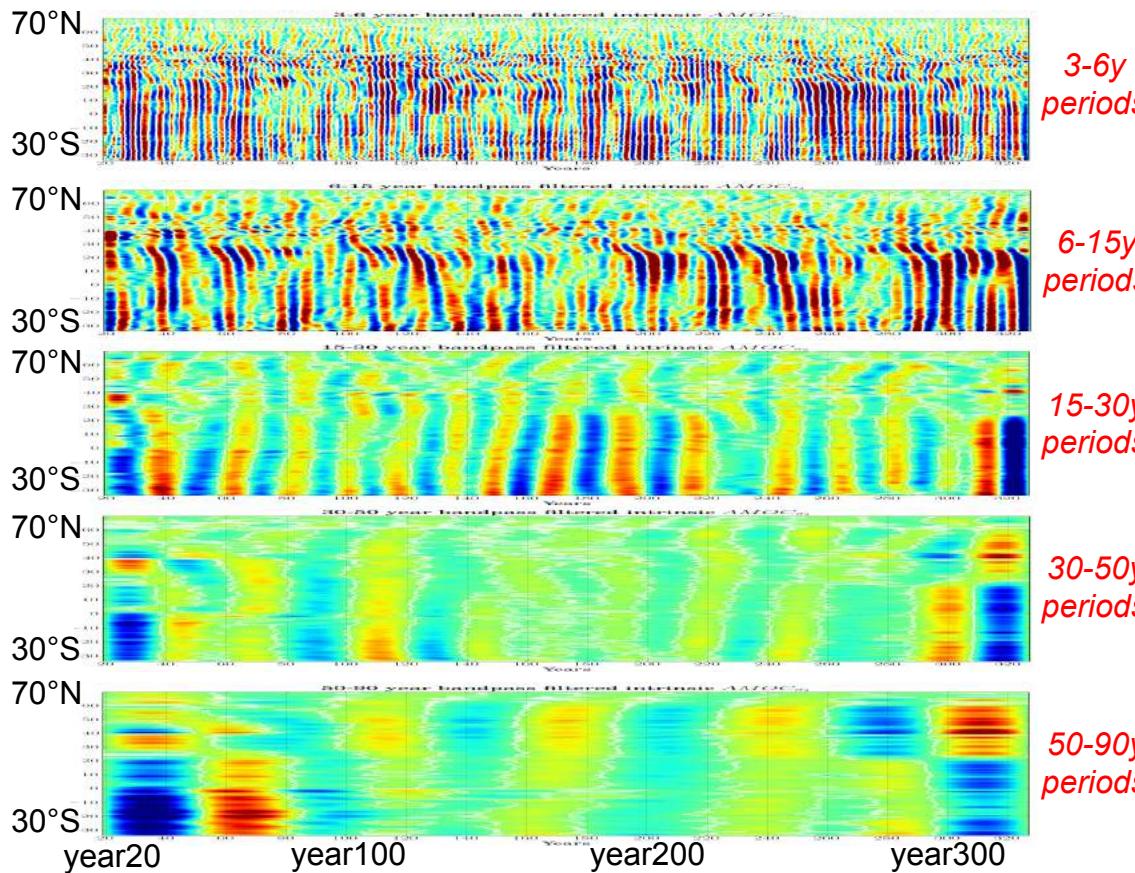
Pure Intrinsic

DRAKKAR ocean  
sea-ice model  
1/4° or 1/12°



Intrinsic MOC fluctuations

Sv



**Intrinsic MOC during 327-year seasonal simulation**

Variability timescales:  
1 → 80-90 years

Intermittent, chaotic character

Basin-wide patterns

Complex propagation features

...Correlated with certain SLA patterns

Grégorio et al (submitted, JPO)

# ④ Intrinsic LF variability : chaotic character

atmosphere

Seasonal cycle

Full forcing (50y)

low-freq ocean

DRAKKAR ocean  
sea-ice model  
1/4° or 1/12°

Pure Intrinsic

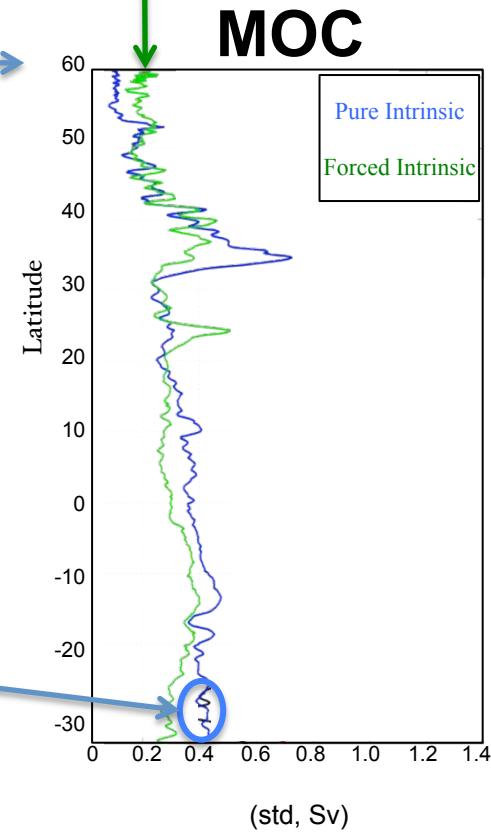
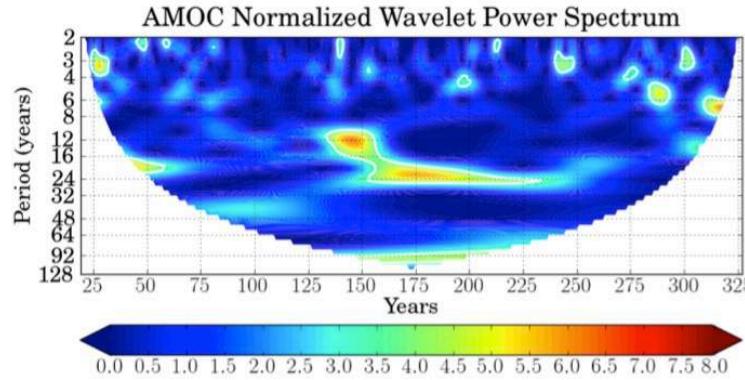
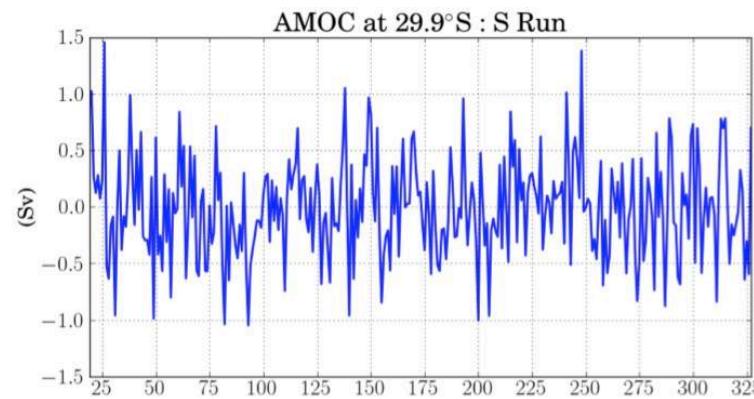
Forced Intrinsic

$$\sigma_I^* = \sigma(\text{diff}) / \sqrt{2}$$

(Hirschi et al 2013)

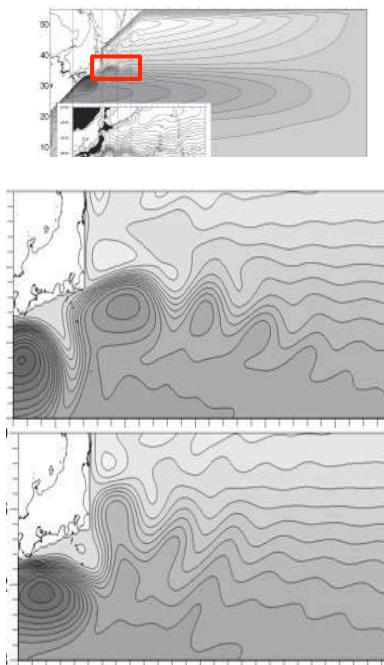
Pure intrinsic  
MOC variability:

is chaotic,  
intermittent,  
broadband



# ④ Intrinsic LF variability (idealized models)

North Pacific  
Pierini JPO 2006

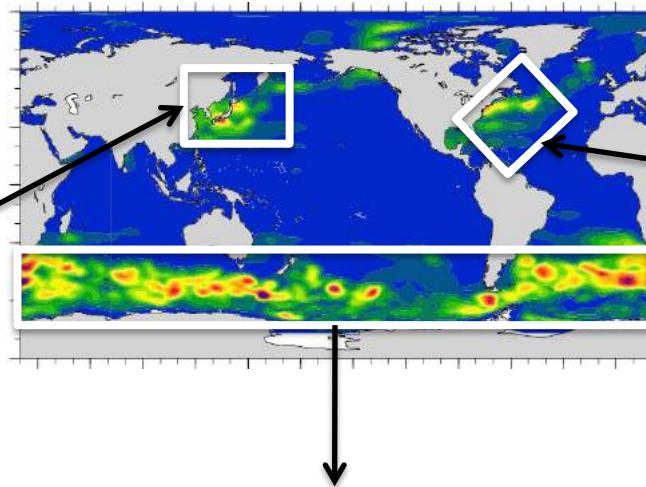


« Relaxation oscillation »

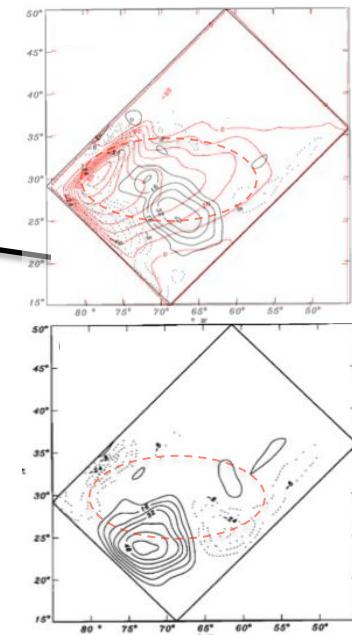
Crucial role of Reynolds number  
through nonlinear  
Scale interactions

$$\begin{aligned} & -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla u \\ & -\underline{u} \cdot \nabla v \end{aligned}$$

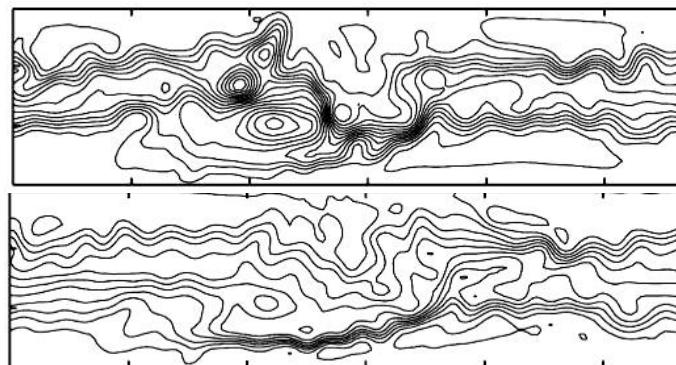
Global realistic model



North Atlantic  
Hazeleger & Drijfhout JGR 2000



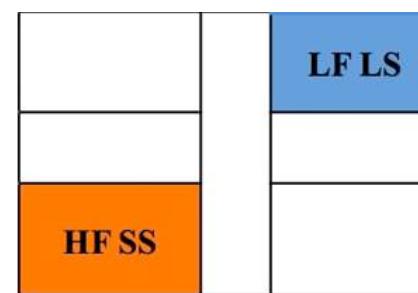
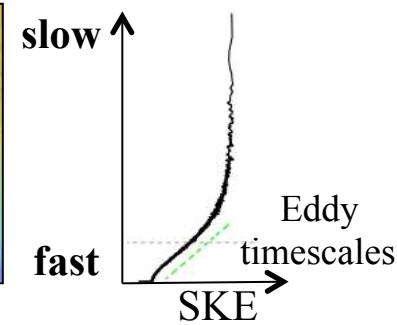
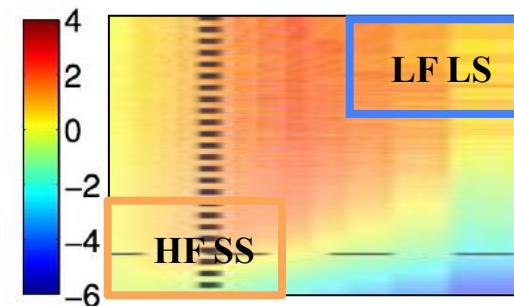
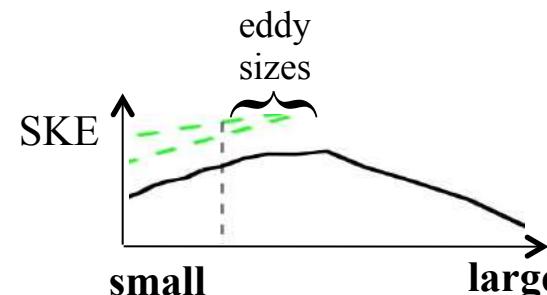
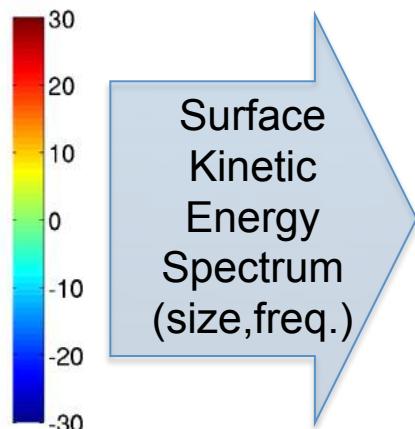
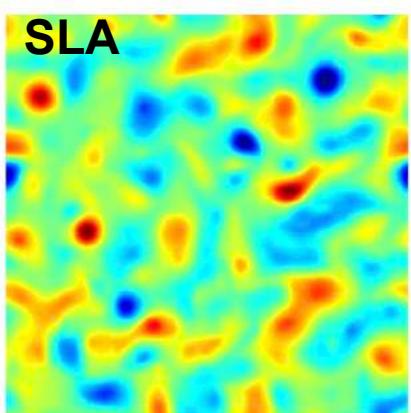
ACC: Hogg & Blundell JPO 2006



## ④ Inverse cascades of KE (space and time)

Idealized 2-layer QG simulation with **constant forcing** spontaneously generates **chaotic variability** at both **Mesoscale and « climatic » scales**

(Arbic et al, JPO 2014 )



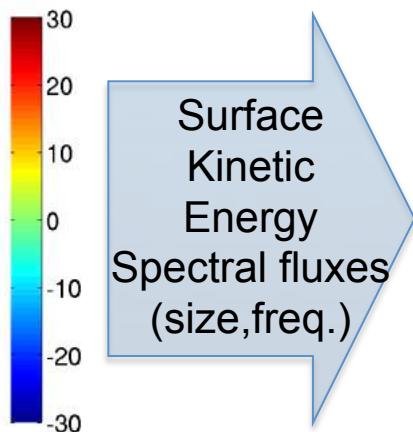
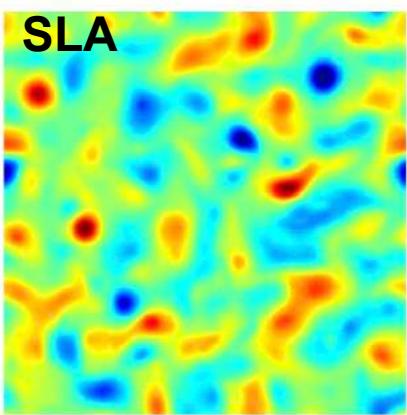
« Climatic »  
« Mesoscale »

## ④ Inverse cascades of KE (space and time)

Non-linear SKE exchanges across time and space scales reveal that:

- (1) Baroclinic instability: large-scale → HFSS eddies
- (2) Eddy SKE → larger & slower scales

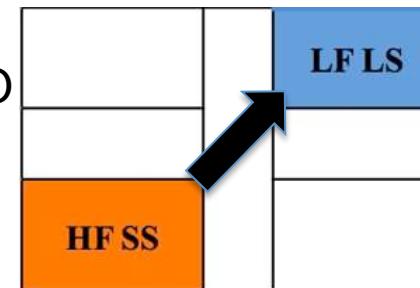
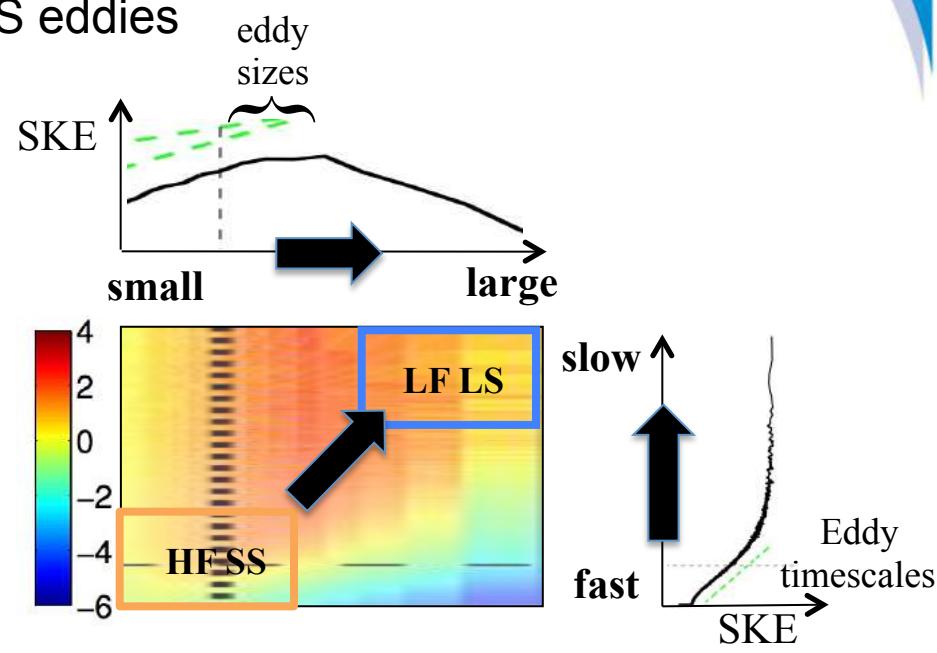
Intrinsic production of chaotic « climatic » ocean variability by mesoscale eddies?



Confirmed by theory, QG, 1/12° HYCOM,NEMO  
AVISO is too smooth for clear signal → SWOT  
Presently evaluating the longest timescales concerned by this effect

$$T_{KE,1}(k, l, \omega) = \text{Re} \left[ \frac{\delta}{1 + \delta} \widehat{\psi_1}^*(k, l, \omega) J(\psi_1, \widehat{\nabla^2} \psi_1)(k, l, \omega) \right]$$

(Arbic et al, JPO 2014 )

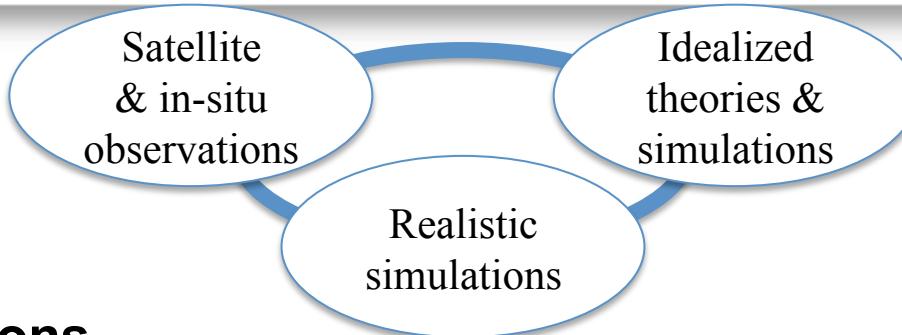


« Climatic »  
« Mesoscale »

# *Outline*

- ① Altimetry — Sea-level — Surface circulation
- ② Models — Resolution and processes
- ③ Variability — [2° vs 1/4°] models vs AVISO
- ④ North Atlantic scale interactions — Intrinsic variability
- ⑤ Conclusion — Perspectives

# Conclusion



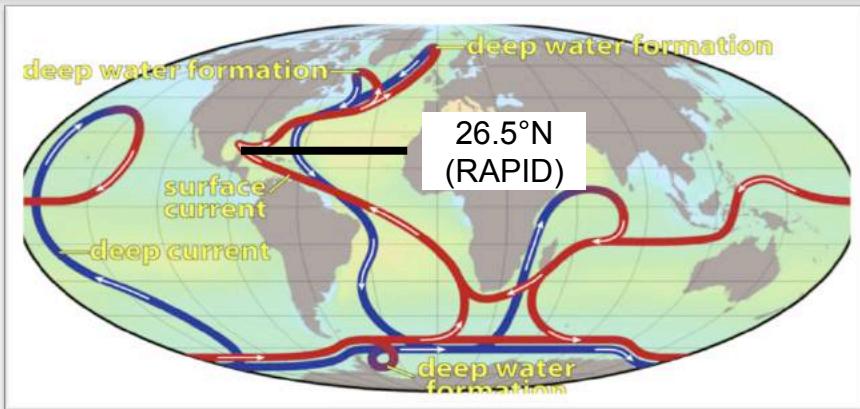
## Realistic simulations

- ◆ Are evaluated & improved using altimetry
- ◆ Tend toward altimetry as resolution increases (...but temporal decorrelation)
- ◆ Are virtual oceans → sensitivity experiments → understanding observations  
→ testing theories

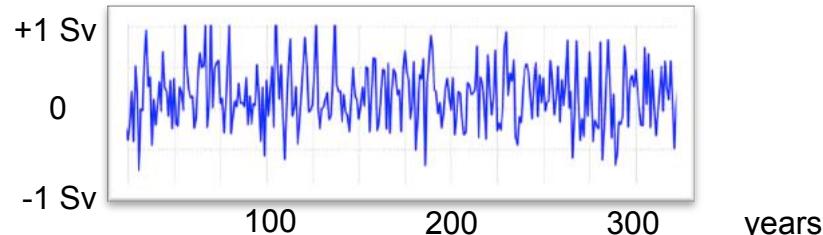
## Physics

- ◆ Scale interactions: instabilities, turbulent fluxes, LF intrinsic variability
- ◆ Mesoscale: LF oceanic variability is **Forced** \* **Intrinsic** (SLA, SST, MOC, ...)  
*Locally up to 100% 100% 50%*
- ◆ No mesoscale: **Forced** ~ Ø
- ◆ Strong LFLS intrinsic variability in eddying regions

# Perspectives



low-freq intrinsic MOC variability at 26.5°N  
is intermittent and chaotic ( $R \sim 25\%$ )



## 1. Chaotic character of the « climatic » ocean variability

- ◆ Processes ? 3D observational imprints ?
- ◆ Coupled models: Impact on atmosphere, climate ? biogeochemistry ?

## 2. Anticipating future satellite observations (SWOT2020, ocean color, etc)

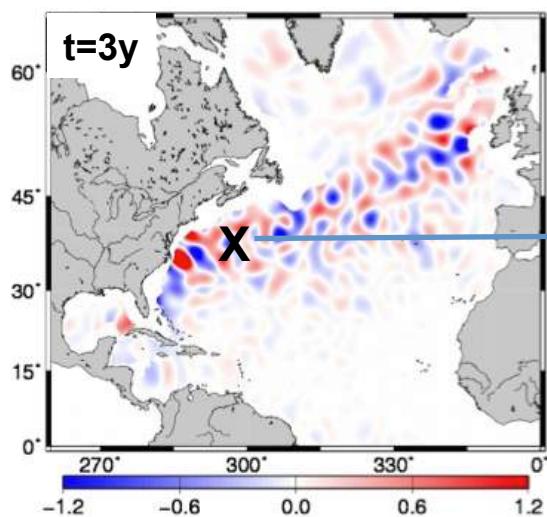
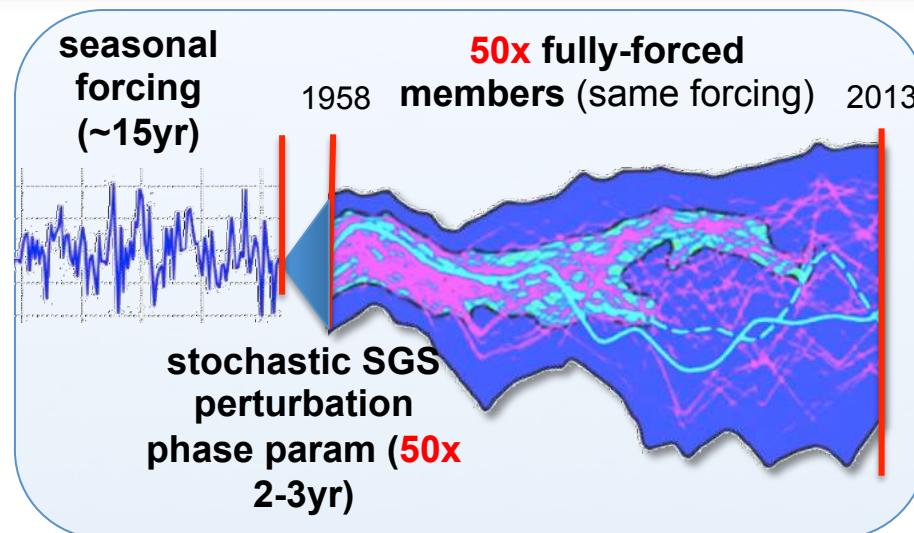
- ◆ Kilometric processes at work in 3D ? observable from space ?
- ◆ Interactions with « Climatic » time/space scales ?

Study OGCM runs **with dynamicists & observationalists** → CHAOCEAN project

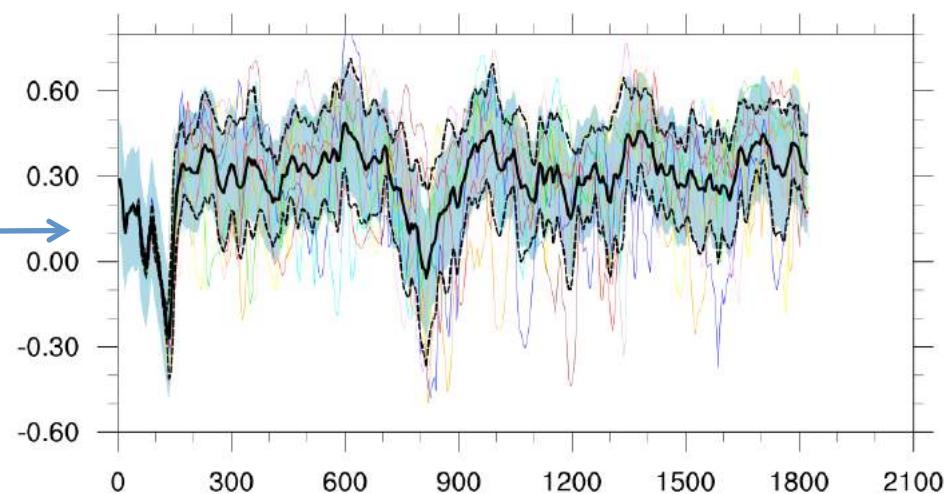
Probabilistic studies with **ensemble simulations** → OCCIPUT project

Towards **kilometric realistic simulations** → DRAKKAR consortium

# OCCIPUT: probabilistic ocean modelling



sossheig series during 1993 1997 in GS



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