

# 1 First observations of CH<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> spatially-resolved 2 emission layers at Jupiter equator, as seen by 3 JIRAM/Juno

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## 15 Key Points:

- 16 • Detection of CH<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> emissions over Jupiter's disc, as two well separated lay-  
17 ers in the equatorial region at 200 km and 600 km.
- 18 • H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> spectral signatures can be reproduced by retrieving the temperature or its Vol-  
19 ume Mixing Ratio (VMR) and temperature simultaneously.
- 20 • The H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> temperature profile shows a peak of 600-800 K at about 600 km with some  
21 differences with respect to the Galileo's profile.
- 22 • The observed features point out the presence of localised variability with altitude,  
23 perhaps indicative of wave activities.

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**Abstract**

In this work we present the detection of  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  emissions in the equatorial atmosphere of Jupiter as two well separated layers, located, respectively, at tangent altitudes of about 200 km and 500-600 km above the 1-bar level using the observations of the Jovian InfraRed Auroral Mapper (JIRAM), on board Juno. This provides details of the vertical distribution of  $\text{H}_3^+$  retrieving its Volume Mixing Ratio (VMR), concentration and temperature. The thermal profile obtained from  $\text{H}_3^+$  shows a peak of 600-800 K at about 550 km, with lower values than the ones reported in Seiff et al. (1998) above 500 km using VMR and temperature as free parameters, and above 650 km when VMR is kept fixed with that model in the retrieval procedure. The observed deviations from the Galileo's profile could potentially point to significant variability in the exospheric temperature with time. We suggest that vertically propagating waves are the most likely explanation for the observed VMR and temperature variations in the JIRAM data. Other possible phenomena could explain the observed evidences, for example, dynamic activity driving chemical species from lower layers towards the upper atmosphere, like the advection-diffusion processes, or precipitation by soft electrons, although better modelling is required to test these hypothesis. The characterisation of  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  species, simultaneously observed by JIRAM, offers the opportunity for better constraining atmospheric models of Jupiter at equatorial latitudes.

**Plain Language Summary**

The Jovian Infrared Auroral Mapper (JIRAM) is the infrared (IR) imager and spectrometer on board the Juno mission, designed to investigate Jupiter's atmosphere. A key objective of JIRAM is the investigation of the minor species, like  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  that are very important to understanding the energy balance of the middle and upper atmosphere of Jupiter. These species have strong signatures in the 3.3-3.8  $\mu\text{m}$  spectral region, well within the nominal wavelength range of the instrument. We present the analysis of recent images and spectra obtained by JIRAM, in the period December 2018 to September 2020, plus additional measurements in March 2017, to study methane and  $\text{H}_3^+$  vertical distribution at equatorial latitudes. We find that  $\text{CH}_4$  is localised around 200 km above the 1-bar level, while a distinct layer of  $\text{H}_3^+$  is observed around 500-600 km (0.04-0.016 microbar). The observed vertical distribution and intensity variation of  $\text{H}_3^+$  is likely to be the result of vertically propagating waves. However, other possible phenomena can

56 be invoked to explain these findings, like for example an uplifting of chemical species from  
 57 lower layers towards the upper atmosphere, or soft electrons precipitation, although a  
 58 rigorous modelling is needed to confirm the latter hypothesis.

## 59 1 Introduction

60 The thermosphere/ionosphere and stratosphere of Jupiter are populated by atoms  
 61 and molecules, which include H, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> and CH<sub>4</sub>. Among the molecules, CH<sub>4</sub> has a strong  
 62 solar pumped non-local thermodynamic equilibrium (non-LTE) emission centred at 3.3  
 63 μm, while H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>, produced either via solar or impact ionization, is in quasi-thermal equi-  
 64 librium (q-LTE; (Miller et al., 1990)) emitting from a large number of lines in the band  
 65 2-5 μm. H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> infrared (IR) emission lines are used to evaluate the atmospheric and satel-  
 66 lite interaction with energetic particles, which deposit energy in the upper atmosphere  
 67 of Jupiter especially in the auroral region (Kim et al., 1985; Connerney et al., 1993; Clarke  
 68 et al., 2002; Mura et al., 2017, 2018; Gèrard et al., 2018) and are also known to have a  
 69 cooling effect on the atmosphere (Bougher et al., 2005; Koskinen et al., 2007; Stallard  
 70 et al., 2017). Several H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> emission lines, mainly due to the fundamental ν<sub>2</sub> band (Drossart  
 71 et al., 1989; Giles et al., 2016), have been identified in the auroral region as well as at  
 72 mid-equatorial latitudes (Miller et al., 1997; Ballester et al., 1994; Stallard et al., 2015;  
 73 Migliorini et al., 2019). In particular, the wavelength region around 3.4 μm can be ex-  
 74 ploited to study the auroral emissions due to H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>, because of its numerous and intense  
 75 emission lines that can be identified above a deep methane absorption band within the  
 76 underlying atmosphere. A thorough review of H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> observations and properties for the  
 77 giant planets can be found in Miller et al. (2020), while a new modelling interpretation  
 78 strategy is reported in Moore et al. (2019).

79 The intensity of the H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> emission at mid and equatorial latitudes is about 10 times  
 80 fainter than in the auroral region (Ballester et al., 1994; Marten et al., 1994; Stallard et  
 81 al., 2018) and it is produced in-situ by solar ionization of molecular hydrogen. An op-  
 82 tically thin layer of H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> at the equator was clearly identified in the images acquired by  
 83 the ProtoCAM infrared camera mounted on the Infrared Telescope Facility (IRTF), lo-  
 84 cated at 700-750 km above the 600 mbar-level (Satoh & Connerney, 1999). More recently,  
 85 a map of the H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> emission in the region between ±60° in latitude was obtained using the  
 86 data acquired at the NASA Infrared Telescope Facility, covering overall a period of 48

87 nights (Stallard et al., 2018). The same measurements revealed a dark ribbon within 15°  
88 of the jovigraphic equator, which is indicative of the magnetic equator of Jupiter.

89 Emissions at 3.3  $\mu\text{m}$  due to methane were identified for the first time using the NASA  
90 Infrared Telescope Facility (Kim et al., 1991) at the North polar region, while a bright  
91 small spot due to  $\text{CH}_4$  was detected near the South pole in the same spectral region by  
92 Kim et al. (2009). However, methane brightening in the polar regions was well studied  
93 in the 8- $\mu\text{m}$  band (Kim et al., 1985; Drossart et al., 1993), reporting different behaviours  
94 in the North (Caldwell et al., 1983; Sada et al., 2003) and the South (Caldwell et al., 1988).  
95 The methane bright spots have different morphologies at 3- and 8- $\mu\text{m}$ , and this could  
96 be explained by the different altitudes where the emissions occur (Lystrup et al., 2008).  
97 In addition, recent auroral observations reported that northern and southern emissions  
98 imaged at 8-micron vary independently (J. A. Sinclair et al., 2017). High-resolution mea-  
99 surements in the 3.3-3.4  $\mu\text{m}$  band pointed out that the observed methane molecules in  
100 the polar region are likely excited by energetic sources, possibly provided through au-  
101 roral particle precipitation or Joule heating above the 1- $\mu\text{bar}$  level (Kim et al., 2015),  
102 although further observations are required to discriminate between the two processes.

103 Faint emissions due to methane around 3.3  $\mu\text{m}$  have been observed by the spec-  
104 trometer embedded into the Jovian Infrared Auroral mapper (JIRAM) on board the Juno  
105 mission, in the polar regions, localized within the main auroral oval (Adriani et al., 2017b;  
106 Moriconi et al., 2017) and with the Near Infrared Mapping Spectrometer (NIMS) on the  
107 Galileo spacecraft (Altieri et al., 2016). In the ultraviolet (UV), few signatures due to  
108  $\text{CH}_4$  were identified using the Ultraviolet Spectrograph (UVS) instrument on Juno (Bonfond  
109 et al., 2017). Other complex hydrocarbons, such as  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4$ ,  $\text{C}_3\text{H}_4$  and  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_6$  have been  
110 observed in the auroral regions of Jupiter (Kim et al., 1985; J. Sinclair et al., 2019).

111 Models predict the intensities and vertical distribution of both  $\text{H}_3^+$  and methane  
112 (Grodent et al., 2001; Kim et al., 2014). Direct  $\text{H}_3^+$  vertical profile measurements have  
113 been reported for the Southern auroral region, using NIRSPEC spectrometer observa-  
114 tions on the Keck II telescope (Lystrup et al., 2008), showing a good agreement with mod-  
115 els for ion densities; however, the measured exospheric temperature of 1450 K was about  
116 150 K higher than predictions. More recent observations with the Infrared Camera and  
117 Spectrometer (IRCS) at the Subaru 8.2 m telescope allowed reconstructing the vertical  
118 profile of  $\text{H}_3^+$  overtone and hot overtone, located at different altitudes, at 700-900 km and

119 680-950 km above the 1-bar level, respectively (Uno et al., 2014). Further measurements  
 120 in L- and K- bands using the IRCS at Subaru allowed a comparison between the hor-  
 121 izontal and vertical profiles of  $\text{H}_3^+$  fundamental and overtone emission lines (Kita et al.,  
 122 2018). Observations confirmed the previous findings reported in Uno et al. (2014) and  
 123 also showed that the fundamental emission line has a peak altitude at  $650 \pm 100$  km, lower  
 124 than what obtained for the overtone lines, but overall consistent with theoretical mod-  
 125 els. While direct measurements have been reported for the  $\text{H}_3^+$  vertical profile, at auro-  
 126 ral and mid-equatorial latitudes (Miller et al., 1997; Ballester et al., 1994; Stallard et al.,  
 127 2015; Migliorini et al., 2019; Dinelli et al., 2019), information for the  $\text{CH}_4$  vertical dis-  
 128 tribution at equatorial latitudes is missing due to the emission faintness observed dur-  
 129 ing the reported observations. Recently, JIRAM, on board the Juno spacecraft, performed  
 130 a dedicated limb observation campaign, starting from 24 May 2018 (perijove passage 13,  
 131 PJ13). The high sensitivity of JIRAM and the capability to measure both images and  
 132 spectra in the 3-4  $\mu\text{m}$  spectral range allowed the detection of the infrared emissions due  
 133 to both  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  close to the equator. In the present paper, we discuss the results  
 134 obtained in the analysis of JIRAM limb observations, exploiting both images and spec-  
 135 tra acquired during the Juno mission period December 2018-September 2020 (i.e. per-  
 136 ijove passages 17 to 29), complemented with spectra, acquired over Jupiter limb in March  
 137 2017 (perijove passage 5), in the equatorial region. The paper is organised as follow: the  
 138 data are presented in section 2, the description of the results in section 3. Discussion is  
 139 provided in section 4, while conclusions are summarised in section 5.

## 140 2 Observations and data selection

### 141 2.1 Instrument description

142 JIRAM, onboard the Juno mission, combines an imager and a spectrometer in the  
 143 same instrument (Adriani et al., 2017a). The imager is composed of two broad-band fil-  
 144 ters, centred at 3.45  $\mu\text{m}$  (L-band, bandpass 3.3-3.6  $\mu\text{m}$ ) and 4.85  $\mu\text{m}$  (M-band, band-  
 145 pass 4.5-5.0  $\mu\text{m}$ ), respectively, located in the same detector, which has a total dimen-  
 146 sion of 256 x 432 pixels, 256 being the number of lines and 432 the number of samples.  
 147 The Instantaneous Field of View (IFOV) of each pixel is  $0.01^\circ$  which implies a FOV of  
 148  $5.87^\circ \times 1.74^\circ$  for each band of the imager. The spectrometer covers the 2-5  $\mu\text{m}$  spectral  
 149 region, with a spectral sampling of about 9 nm; it is composed of a 256-pixels slit, and  
 150 each pixel is expanded into 336 spectral channels, concurrently acquired. The spectral

151 slit is located within the M-band filter, and simultaneously commanded with the imager.  
 152 However, due to the spinning movement of the spacecraft Juno, the JIRAM spectrom-  
 153 eter is not able to acquire contiguous slit images of the target. This means that it is not  
 154 possible to reconstruct the full scene observed by the imager at the same time. However,  
 155 although with a sparse coverage, the observed spectra can be exploited to quantitatively  
 156 study the distribution of  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$ . In case of limb measurements, the spectrome-  
 157 ter enables the atmosphere to be sampled at different altitudes along the line of sight  
 158 above the 1-bar level, using the pixels located outside the disk of the planet. More de-  
 159 tails of the observations are provided in the following sections. The orbit attitude of the  
 160 Juno spacecraft allowed the routine observation of the equatorial region starting from  
 161 orbit 13, while only sparse measurements are available during the previous orbits. In the  
 162 present work, we include the analysis of images and spectra acquired during the peri-  
 163 jove (PJ) passages 17 to 29 (December 2018 to September 2020), and a spectral sequence  
 164 acquired during PJ 5 (March 2017). Details of the analyzed images and spectra are pro-  
 165 vided in the sections 2.2 and 2.3, respectively.

## 166 2.2 JIRAM imager data and their analysis

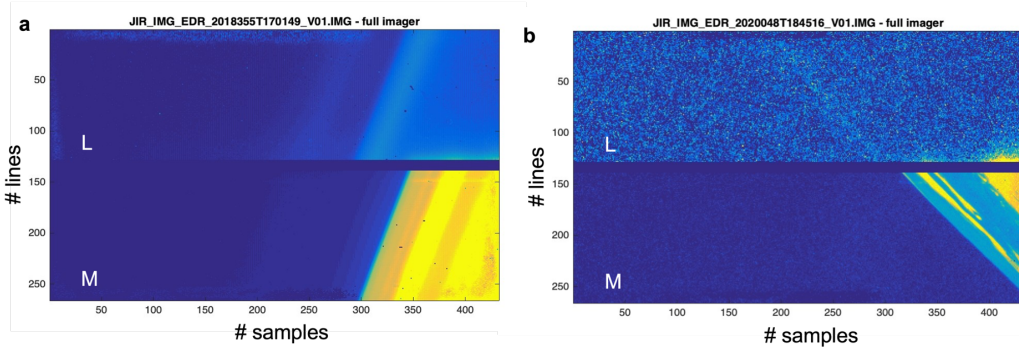
167 In the limb campaign started with the orbit 13 (May 2018), a total of 89 images  
 168 have been acquired by JIRAM. However, most of the data, especially during PJs 13, 14,  
 169 15, 16, and 19, were strongly contaminated by environmental radiation, and could not  
 170 be used in the analysis. Hence, in this work we use only data with a good signal-to-noise  
 171 ratio and minimally affected by radiations, visually selected among those including at  
 172 least partly the limb of the planet. The list of the images included in the present anal-  
 173 ysis is provided in Table A1. The ranges of System III planetocentric geographical lat-  
 174 itude and longitude covered with each image are reported.

175 Two examples of full JIRAM raw images are shown in Figure 1. It is possible to  
 176 see the environmental radiation distributed across the whole image in the form of dark  
 177 and bright pixels randomly distributed. This affects more the L-band image, while lower  
 178 radiation contamination is observed in the M-band image because in this part of the de-  
 179 tector the signal is several orders of magnitude larger than in the L-band part, making  
 180 the radiation induced signal much smaller compared to the signal. In the case shown in  
 181 Figure 1a, the radiation effect is not so strong as to conceal the underlying emission pat-  
 182 tern and therefore the image has been retained in the analysis. The radiation effect in

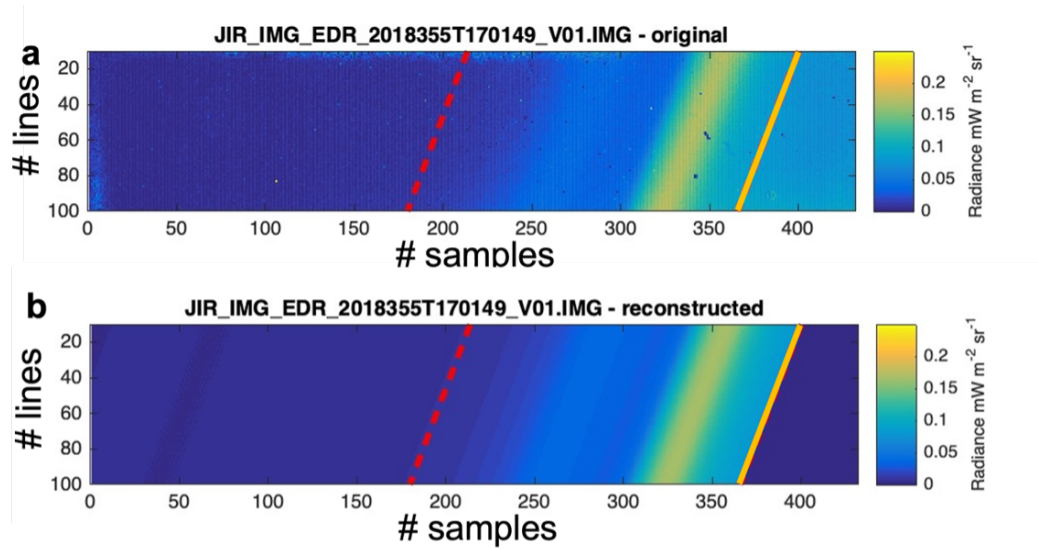
183 the image shown in Figure 1b is more dramatic, and hence JIRAM images like this one  
 184 are not included in the analysis. In Figure 2 we reconstruct the tangent altitude of the  
 185 L-band image shown in Figure 1a, which is defined as the minimum altitude reached by  
 186 the line of sight (LOS) of each pixel. The yellow line located at the right edge of the im-  
 187 age (see Figure 2) indicates the location of the 1-bar level of Jupiter’s atmosphere, while  
 188 the red dashed line on the left indicates the tangent altitude at 1000 km above that level.  
 189 Two layers are clearly visible in the image, the strongest one located closer to the 1-bar  
 190 level and a fainter diffuse layer above it. To infer the altitude of the two emission lay-  
 191 ers, a best-fit algorithm is applied. For each pixel of the data image (JIRAM-IMA), the  
 192 line of sight is derived from SPICE kernels (Acton, 1996), and its contribution from dif-  
 193 ferent altitudes is evaluated. The reconstructed image (Figure 2b) is then simulated by  
 194 integrating the vertical profile along the line of sight. The resulting image is compared  
 195 with the original data and the vertical profile is tuned until the best match is obtained  
 196 (Figure 3). The reconstructed image differs from the original data by less than 5% and,  
 197 considering that the pseudo-inverse matrix procedure is a linear operator, this percent-  
 198 age could be assumed as an upper limit for the uncertainty of the vertical profile. In Fig-  
 199 ure 3 we show the result of the above-described method: the vertical profile of the emis-  
 200 sions intensity shows two maxima, one at about 200 km, and one around 650 km. We  
 201 attribute the first maximum to the methane emission and the second one to the  $\text{H}_3^+$  emis-  
 202 sion. The error bars are calculated assuming a 5% uncertainty, as previously explained.  
 203 This procedure can only be applied to the JIRAM imager channel measurements, as the  
 204 best-fit algorithm requires a large number of pixels to converge to a physical solution.  
 205 For the spectrometer, only the tangent altitude can be used. When plotting the raw im-  
 206 ager data (Figure 2), the secondary peak is at about 550 km from the planetary limb (i.e.  
 207 the tangent altitude of the peak is 550 km), while we know that this emission is actu-  
 208 ally about 100 km higher, as obtained with the inversion method. This implies that us-  
 209 ing the tangent altitudes of the spectrometer data to calculate the vertical profile leads  
 210 to an underestimation of the altitude of up to 100 km, which must be taken in consid-  
 211 eration.

212 The images included in this analysis cover the planetocentric latitude region from  
 213 53°S to 42°N. Most of the images are acquired at longitudes 110-240 W, with few mea-  
 214 surements covering the ranges 30-70 W and 290-330 W (Table A1). Geometric informa-



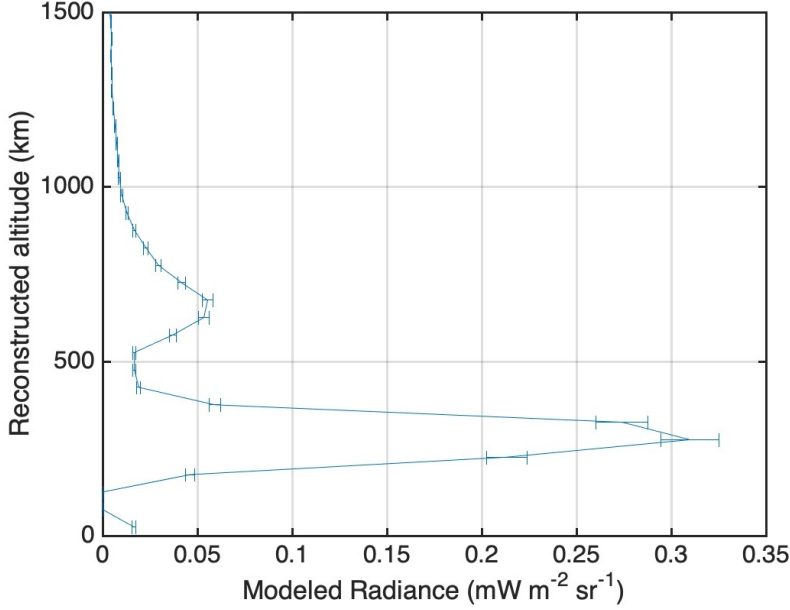


**Figure 1.** Example of JIRAM image (JIRAM-IMA) at limb. a: Full JIRAM-IMA, showing the L-band acquisition in the top and the M- one at the bottom, affected by a low radiation. This example refers to 6 S and 200 W. b: Another example of JIRAM-IMA at limb highly affected by radiation and not included in the analysis. This image refers to 38 S and 224 W.



**Figure 2.** a: Same L-band JIRAM-IMA shown in Figure 1a, where the color coding indicates radiance. The yellow and red lines indicate the 1-bar level and 1000 km above it, respectively. b: Simulated image from the reconstructed vertical profile. The dark blue region at the bottom right, beyond the yellow line, represents the Jupiter 1-bar level surface.



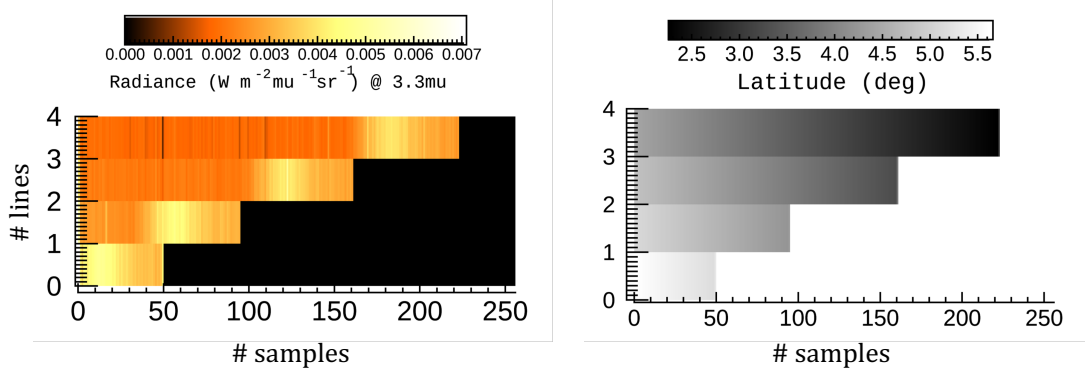


**Figure 3.** Reconstructed vertical profile for JIRAM-IMA shown in Figure 1a obtained using the inversion method. The y axis shows the reconstructed altitude, the x axis shows the modelled radiance. Uncertainty in the vertical profile is assumed to be the 5%, as explained in the text.

215 tion of each pixel in the images, including those pointing at the limb, have been calcu-  
 216 lated.

### 217 2.3 JIRAM spectral data and spectral radiance analysis

218 To confirm the findings obtained with the analysis of the JIRAM-IMAs and the  
 219 assignment of the intensity peaks to either  $\text{H}_3^+$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ , whose signatures are well re-  
 220 solved at JIRAM spectral resolution, spectra acquired simultaneously to the images have  
 221 also been examined. Spectral limb sequences have been selected following Migliorini et  
 222 al. (2019) and Dinelli et al. (2019). Each pixel of the spectrometer’s slit, located outside  
 223 the Jupiter’s disk, samples the atmosphere over a range of altitudes above the 1-bar level,  
 224 along the instrument LOS crossing the atmospheric shells, in which the atmosphere is  
 225 ideally divided. We refer to the set of spectra acquired by the spectrometer in a single  
 226 measurement session, relative to the pixels outside the Jupiter disk, as a limb sequence.  
 227 The spectral acquisition of 21 December 2018 is shown in Figure 4, with the latitude dis-  
 228 tribution as a reference. It was originally composed of seven slit images, three of which  
 229 pointing the deep space and hence not shown here.



**Figure 4.** Spectral sequence of 21 December 2018. Radiance at 3.32  $\mu\text{m}$ , expressed in  $\text{W m}^{-2} \mu\text{m}^{-1} \text{sr}^{-1}$ , is shown on the left for each slit image. The x-axis refers to the pixel along the slit, while the y-axis reports the temporal variation of the sequence (number of scans). The black region indicates the Jupiter’s body masked at 1-bar level, as obtained from the reconstructed geometry. On the right side, planetocentric latitude values for the same image are shown.

230 Although limb measurements aligned along the vertical to Jupiter’s 1-bar surface  
 231 are not possible with the JIRAM spectrometer, due to pointing constraints, we verified  
 232 that each pixel along the slit acquisition was scanning the atmosphere within 1 deg of  
 233 latitude and longitude. For the dataset used in this work, 1 deg in terms of latitude and  
 234 longitude corresponds to a box of about 1246 x 1244 km at a latitude of 4°. Since JI-  
 235 RAM spectra are affected by a sawtooth shape (odd-even pattern) due to the measure-  
 236 ment strategy, the faint emissions due to both  $\text{H}_3^+$  and  $\text{CH}_4$  were in some cases hidden  
 237 by the background noise. In practice, the radiance of an odd/even channel can be a lit-  
 238 tle bit higher or a little bit lower than the average of the neighbor even/odd channels.  
 239 For this reason, each spectrum has been corrected to attenuate, and in some cases re-  
 240 move, the odd-even pattern. The correction is based on the fact that the intensities of  
 241 the odd and even channels of the spectrometer are consistently shifted, and show a saw-  
 242 tooth pattern, more pronounced in case of a low signal. In order to take this effect into  
 243 account, two spline curves are fitted to the odd and even channels separately. Then the  
 244 two splines are interpolated onto the original grid of spectral bands, which results in two  
 245 separate spectra. These spectra are finally averaged to obtain the cleaned spectrum. This  
 246 correction has allowed to recover spectra that were not used in the first analysis of JI-  
 247 RAM limb spectra (see Migliorini et al., 2019).

**Table 1.** Geometric parameters of the analysed spectra

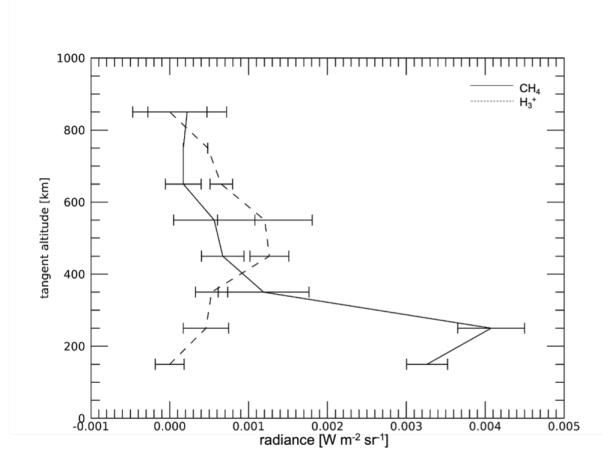
# JIRAM section	Latitude (deg)	Longitude (deg)	Solar Zenith Angle
Limb 1	6 N	183 W	90
Limb 2	4 N	184 W	90
Limb 3	1.5 N	185 W	90

248 To test our hypothesis on the altitude of the  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  emissions identified in  
 249 the imager data, we investigated the selected spectral limb sequences, to reconstruct the  
 250 vertical distribution of the two species separately in terms of radiance. Figure 5 shows  
 251 the vertical distribution of the intensity of the  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  emissions for the slit image  
 252 on 21 December 2018 (3.8 N and 184 W, limb 2 in Table 1). The profiles are obtained  
 253 considering the integrated intensity in the bands 3.29-3.34  $\mu\text{m}$  (for  $\text{CH}_4$ ) and 3.51-3.69  
 254  $\mu\text{m}$  (for  $\text{H}_3^+$ ), over altitude bins 100 km wide. The integrated radiances from the spec-  
 255 tra with tangent altitude within the limits of each bin have been averaged and plotted  
 256 with the standard deviation. The wavelength range for  $\text{H}_3^+$  has been chosen to include  
 257 the strongest  $\text{H}_3^+$  bands observed in the spectra and avoid any contamination from other  
 258 species or background noise. The averaged intensities have been corrected for the back-  
 259 ground (continuum) signal. It can be clearly seen in the figure that the JIRAM-IMA in-  
 260 tensity peak at 200 km belongs to methane, while the other peak at about 500-600 km  
 261 can be attributed to  $\text{H}_3^+$ .

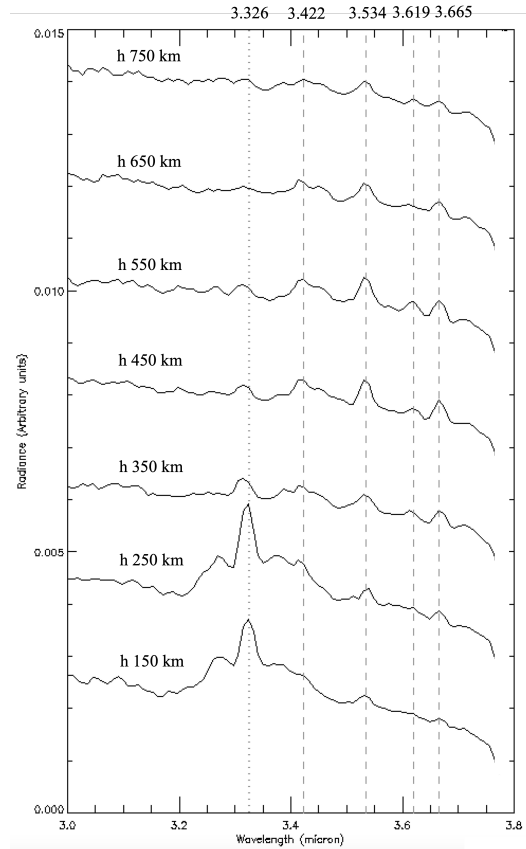
262 In Figure 6 the JIRAM spectral profiles at different altitudes are presented for the  
 263 case of data acquired on 21 December 2018. Each spectrum is obtained by averaging the  
 264 data falling in the 100 km wide bins, for each spectral band. Dashed lines indicate the  
 265 position of  $\text{H}_3^+$  bands while the dotted line shows the position of the  $\text{CH}_4$  band, at the  
 266 wavelengths indicate in the upper panel of the image. As it can be seen, for altitudes be-  
 267 low 350 km, the  $\text{CH}_4$  band at 3.3 $\mu\text{m}$  is the strongest feature, while above 450 km  $\text{H}_3^+$   
 268 becomes the dominant species.

#### 269 2.4 Quantitative analysis of the spectra

270 The selected limb sequences have been analysed to retrieve the vertical distribu-  
 271 tion and temperature of  $\text{H}_3^+$ . Methane was initially included in the retrieval process, but



**Figure 5.** Vertical profile of integrated radiances for JIRAM spectral bands 3.29-3.34  $\mu\text{m}$  and 3.51-3.69  $\mu\text{m}$ , for  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$ , respectively, in altitude bins 100 km wide. Data refer to JIRAM observation acquired on 21 December 2018.



**Figure 6.** JIRAM spectra at different altitudes, obtained as average of the radiance in altitude bins 100 km wide. The dashed lines show the position of  $\text{H}_3^+$  bands while the dotted line indicates the position of  $\text{CH}_4$  band. Data refer to the spectral acquisition acquired on 21 December 2018 and shown in Fig. 4.

272 we did not obtain reliable results because a full treatment of the non-local thermody-  
 273 namic equilibrium (non-LTE) is mandatory in case of this species, as demonstrated in  
 274 Drossart et al. (1989); Kim et al. (2014); Sánchez-López et al. (2022). The latter authors  
 275 demonstrated that the major contributors to the radiance at  $3.3\mu\text{m}$  are the  $\nu_3$  and  $\nu_3 +$   
 276  $\nu_4$  levels of  $\text{CH}_4$  which are in non-LTE at pressures lower than  $10^{-1}$  mbar. The observed  
 277 radiance, reported to be the result of  $\text{CH}_4$  levels in non-LTE excited by the solar pump-  
 278 ing action, is reproduced by using a full non-LTE model, which also takes into account  
 279 the effects of the kinetic temperature profile and the collisional relaxation rates on non-  
 280 LTE populations of the emitting states. In this way, the authors are able to obtain a bet-  
 281 ter fit of the ISO/SWR Nadir data than what previously reported in Drossart et al. (1989);  
 282 Kim et al. (2014). For this reason, the VMR and temperature values of  $\text{CH}_4$  from the  
 283 JIRAM data will be investigated in a future work, to include the non-LTE treatment.

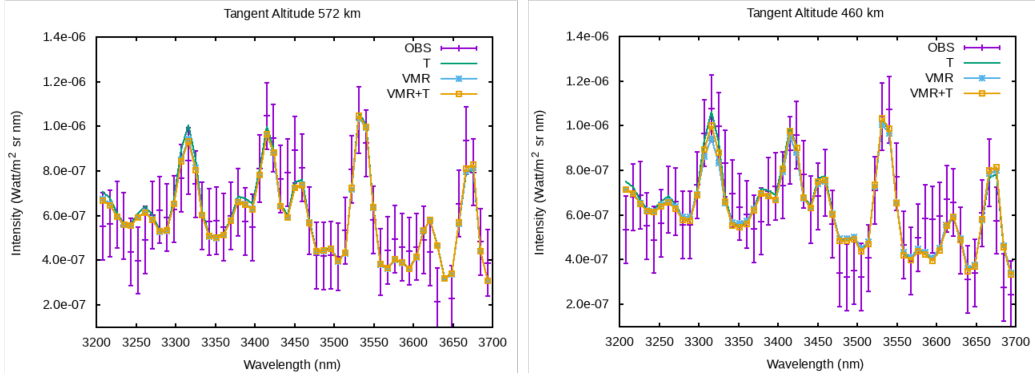
284 Details of the retrieval process are provided in the following subsections. We have  
 285 initially considered three limb scans, acquired during the sequence of observations on 21  
 286 Dec 2018, (shown in Figure 4), with the geometry parameters reported in Table 1. To  
 287 confirm the results obtained by this first analysis, we have then included in the retrieval  
 288 a set of 23 limb observations acquired on 27 March 2017 (PJ 5), originally used for the  
 289 derivation of the  $\text{H}_3^+$  distribution at equatorial and mid latitudes in Migliorini et al. (2019).  
 290 The 23 sequences covered the latitude region from  $5^\circ\text{S}$  to  $37^\circ\text{N}$ , and the longitude in-  
 291 terval from  $102^\circ\text{W}$  to  $70^\circ\text{W}$ . Even though the number of spectra and the vertical cov-  
 292 erage and resolution of these limb sequences are very different from the ones acquired  
 293 on 21 December 2018, a clear methane emission was visible at tangent altitudes below  
 294  $300\text{ km}$ . Since the focus of the original work was the distribution of  $\text{H}_3^+$  outside the au-  
 295 roral regions, the observations below  $300\text{ km}$  were not included in the analysis reported  
 296 in Migliorini et al. (2019). All the other limb observations used by Migliorini et al. (2019)  
 297 were covering higher latitudes and no methane emission was visible.

#### 298 *2.4.1 Retrieval code and limb measurement*

299 The measurements acquired with the spectrometer have been used to quantitatively  
 300 retrieve the  $\text{H}_3^+$  Volume Mixing Ratio (VMR) along with the temperature (T) and con-  
 301 centration. For the observations on 27 March 2017, only a few pixels sampled Jupiter’s  
 302 atmosphere above the limb. However, for the observations on 21 December 2018, more  
 303 than 100 pixels sampled Jupiter’s atmosphere above the limb, which resulted in a tan-

304 gent altitude separation of about 10 km. The retrieval code, which uses the global fit tech-  
 305 nique (Carlotti, 1988), and a Bayesian approach (optimal estimation Rodgers, 2000) with  
 306 an iterative Gauss-Newton procedure, is the same used in Migliorini et al. (2019) and  
 307 Dinelli et al. (2019). The Forward Model (FM), inside the retrieval code, numerically  
 308 solves the integral of the radiative transfer along the instrument LOS in a curved atmo-  
 309 sphere. The spectrum is computed with a line-by-line procedure. The simulation of more  
 310 than 100 spectra has been proven to be too expensive in terms of computing time and  
 311 memory allocation, therefore, we decided to divide the vertical extension of each slit mea-  
 312 sured in 2018 into bins of 50 km and to average all those spectra (typically 8) whose tan-  
 313 gent altitudes fell into the bin. This reduced the number of spectra to be analysed for  
 314 each slit and improved the S/N ratio of the observations. To avoid contamination of anoma-  
 315 lous signals (i.e. spikes due to radiation) in the final average, we used the median instead  
 316 of the mean value of the observed radiances at each wavelength. In the forward model  
 317 inside the retrieval code, Jupiter’s atmosphere is assumed vertically inhomogeneous and  
 318 composed of curved layers (equidistant from Jupiter 1-bar surface) homogeneous in the  
 319 horizontal direction only. This implies that its composition, pressure and temperature  
 320 are allowed to vary with altitude within each layer. The simulation of the spectra is per-  
 321 formed on a very fine frequency grid ( $0.0005 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ), to take correctly into account all  
 322 the emission and absorption processes of the single spectral lines. The high-resolution  
 323 spectra are then convolved with the JIRAM instrumental response function (IRF, a gaus-  
 324 sian) and the Field of View response function. The odd-even correction, implemented  
 325 in the same way as for the measurement treatment reported above, is finally applied to  
 326 the simulated spectra. The derivatives of the spectra with respect to the volume mix-  
 327 ing ratio (VMR Jacobians) are analytically computed at the same time of the spectrum  
 328 and convolved with the JIRAM IRF and corrected for the odd-even effect, while the tem-  
 329 perature Jacobians are numerically computed. In the simulations, we assume Jupiter’s  
 330 atmosphere is made of  $\text{H}_3^+$  and methane only, since all other molecules have small or neg-  
 331 ligible signal in the considered spectral region. The pressure values at the altitude above  
 332 the 1-bar level are taken from Seiff et al. (1998).

333 Even though the FM can represent deviations from the LTE conditions, in our anal-  
 334 yses,  $\text{H}_3^+$  is assumed in LTE at the considered altitudes (see for example Melin et al. (2005),  
 335 Grodent et al. (2001) and Tao et al. (2011)). Therefore, the retrieved temperatures re-  
 336 ported in this analysis must be considered as effective values.



**Figure 7.** Examples of the limb spectra measured by JIRAM in the altitude range where only  $\text{H}_3^+$  emissions are present. The purple lines represent the measurements with their noise, the simulated spectrum at the end of the retrievals is represented by the green line when only T is retrieved, by the light blue line when only the VMR is retrieved, and by the yellow line when both T and VMR are retrieved.

337 The retrieval process is applied to the spectral region from 3.2 to 3.8  $\mu\text{m}$ , because  
 338 in this range, above 450 km, the spectrum is dominated by the  $\text{H}_3^+$  alone, while solar scat-  
 339 tering is so weak that it can be safely neglected. On the other hand, the treatment of  
 340 the scattering by particles and molecules, which are important outside this range, is not  
 341 included in the FM internal to the retrieval code. In Figure 7 two spectra observed by  
 342 JIRAM in the altitude range dominated by the  $\text{H}_3^+$  emissions are shown. JIRAM obser-  
 343 vations are represented by the purple points and the associated error bars represent the  
 344 measurement noise of JIRAM. In the analyzed spectral region some of the lines of  $\text{H}_3^+$   
 345 are almost superimposed to the Q-branch of methane (from 3.28 to 3.35  $\mu\text{m}$ ). When at-  
 346 tempting the retrieval over the whole vertical coverage of the limb sequences, strong cor-  
 347 relations between the  $\text{H}_3^+$  and  $\text{CH}_4$  vertical distributions are found. To avoid them, we  
 348 restricted the retrieval of the vertical distributions of  $\text{H}_3^+$  temperature and VMR in the  
 349 vertical region from 450 to 800 km using the spectra with tangent altitudes above 400  
 350 km. Indeed, the behaviour of the spectral features at the different altitudes clearly showed  
 351 that the emission recorded in the region above 400 km was only due to  $\text{H}_3^+$ , as also demon-  
 352 strated in Figure 6, while the spectra at lower altitudes were dominated by the methane  
 353 emission (not included in the present analysis).

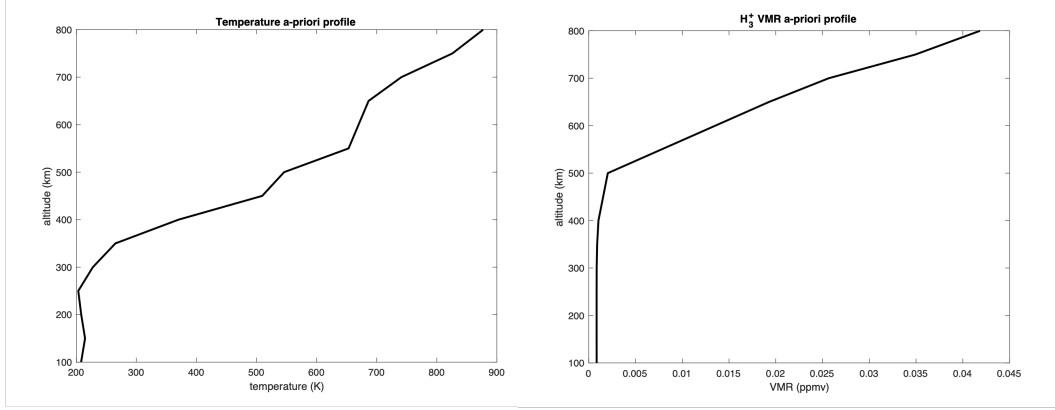
354 The vertical distributions of temperature and VMR of the  $\text{H}_3^+$  ions are free param-  
 355 eters that are obtained by our retrieval code, which works on a vertical grid with uni-



**Table 2.** A-priori profiles for the retrieved quantities

Altitude	H <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup> VMR (ppmv)	Temperature (K)
800	0.4184E-01	877.2
750	0.3493E-01	826.0
700	0.2566E-01	741.0
650	0.1927E-01	686.5
600	0.1353E-01	669.8
550	0.7785E-02	653.2
500	0.2042E-02	545.9
450	0.1541E-02	509.4
400	0.1040E-02	370.2
350	0.9012E-03	265.1
300	0.8501E-03	227.6
250	0.8447E-03	203.3
200	0.8447E-03	208.2
150	0.8447E-03	214.6
100	0.8477E-03	208.0

356 form resolution of 50 km. In addition, a constant wavelength shift, also a free param-  
 357 eter of the retrieval process, is applied to account for possible second order calibration  
 358 errors of the wavelength. Any other instrumental effect, which can contribute as an off-  
 359 set to the spectrum, was evaluated in the portions of the spectra which are free from molec-  
 360 ular emissions and just a scaling factor was retrieved. The same a-priori and initial guess  
 361 profiles were used for all the analyses, in order to ensure that the observed variability  
 362 was real and not related to a variable a-priori/initial guess information. The a-priori pro-  
 363 file for temperature was the one recorded by the Galileo probe and reported by Seiff et  
 364 al. (1998) and was also used as initial guess in the vertical range from 400 to 800 km.  
 365 H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> and temperature a-priori profiles are reported in Table 2 and in Figure 8 for a bet-  
 366 ter visualization. The a-priori errors for temperature and VMRs were assumed to be equal  
 367 to 100 K and 100%, respectively. H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> spectroscopic data are the ones available at the web  
 368 site <http://h3plus.uiuc.edu/database/> (Lindsay & McCall, 2001).



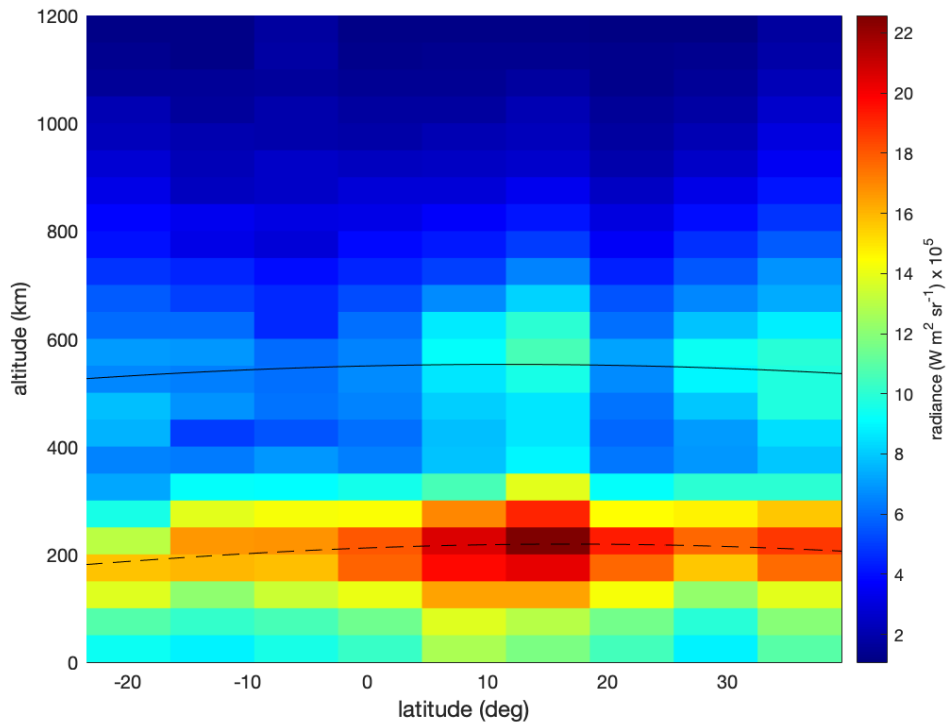
**Figure 8.** A-priori profiles of temperature (left panel) and  $\text{H}_3^+$  VMR (right panel), as from Table 2.

### 3 Results

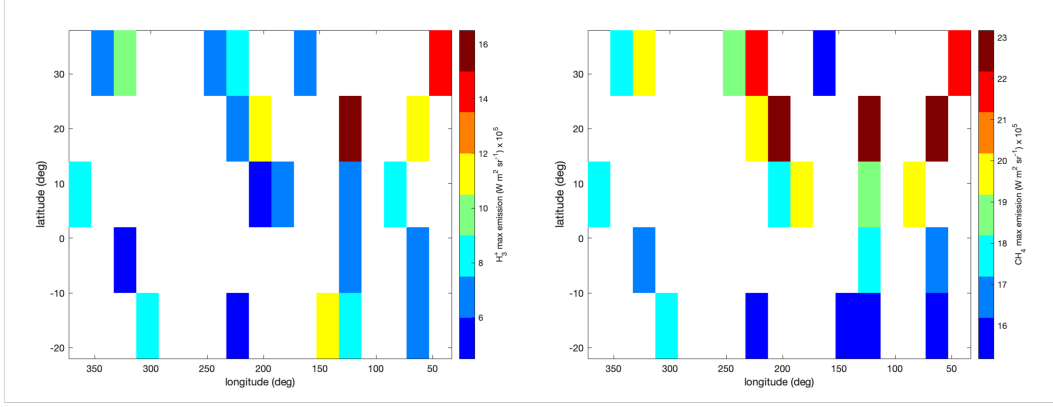
#### 3.1 Imager

The band width of the L-band of JIRAM imager covers both  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  emission lines, therefore their signals contribute to produce the observed images. The images clearly show that two well separated layers are present (see for example Figure 1a), one very bright at low altitudes and a fainter one at high altitudes.

Figure 9 shows the radiance map as a function of altitude, obtained by considering only the L-band JIRAM images not contaminated by radiation, listed in Table A1. In this map, each bin has a dimension of 7 deg in latitude and 50 km in altitude. Values falling within each bin are averaged, despite the longitude values. The resolution in altitude varies from a minimum of 4 km to a maximum of 75 km (due to the different resolution among different JIRAM intensity profiles) with an average resolution of 9 km. Errors in the determination of latitude and longitude are  $\pm 1$  deg. According to section 2.3, the relative maximum of intensity, located at about 200 km, is clearly due to the  $\text{CH}_4$  emission, while the one peaking at about 500 km, can be attributed to  $\text{H}_3^+$ .  $\text{CH}_4$  shows a clear maximum in radiance between  $6^\circ\text{N}$  and  $18^\circ\text{N}$ , with values decreasing with increasing latitude almost symmetrically with respect to the equator.  $\text{H}_3^+$  has a slightly fainter maximum, located at the same latitude. One additional  $\text{H}_3^+$  maximum is visible beyond  $25^\circ\text{N}$ . The peak altitudes of  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  are also shown as a function of latitude with



**Figure 9.** Map of  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  emissions obtained with the L-band images acquired with JIRAM from 21 December 2018 to 3 November 2019. The dashed line indicates the average altitude of the  $\text{CH}_4$  peak emission while the solid one provides the average altitude of  $\text{H}_3^+$ .



**Figure 10.** left: Map of  $\text{H}_3^+$  emission obtained by considering only the data with a tangent altitude greater than 400 km, acquired with JIRAM-IMA from 21 Dec 2018 to 3 Nov 2019, in terms of longitude and latitude. right: Latitude-longitude distributions of  $\text{CH}_4$  emission obtained using the same data, selected for tangent altitudes lower than 400 km.

dashed and solid lines, respectively, obtained as the peak altitude of the maximum of the emission in each latitude bin.

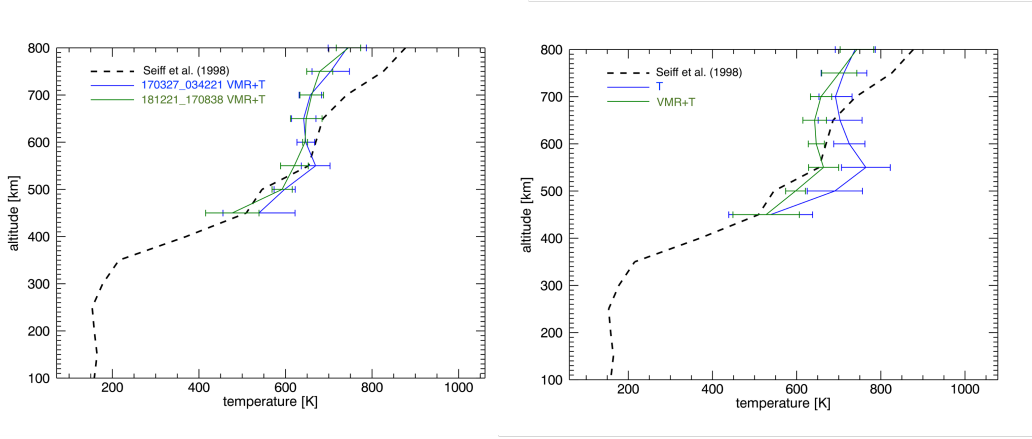
In Figure 10, we report the value of the average intensity measured by JIRAM-IMA in the L-band images listed in Table A1 over the altitude range of  $\text{H}_3^+$  (above 400 km, left panel) and of  $\text{CH}_4$  (below 400 km, right panel) plotted as a function of latitude and longitude. The maps are obtained by dividing the lat-lon plane in bins of  $10^\circ \times 20^\circ$  wide, and averaging the values falling within each bin. A different bin dimension is used for these maps with respect to the one in Figure 9 due to the low coverage in terms of longitude. Despite the sparse measurements, for both molecules we see an area of enhanced emission in the sector from  $0^\circ$  to  $160^\circ$  longitude W mainly concentrated from  $9^\circ$  to  $35^\circ$  latitude North. Higher emissions of  $\text{CH}_4$  are present at different locations around the planet, and particularly at about  $40\text{-}60^\circ$  W,  $120^\circ$  W and beyond  $200^\circ$  W. Few fainter emissions are observed at lower latitudes, located at about  $70^\circ$  W,  $130^\circ$  W and  $200^\circ$  W. At  $40\text{-}60^\circ$  W and  $120^\circ$  W relative maxima of  $\text{H}_3^+$ , shown in Figure 10 left panel, are observed as well, and one less evident at  $310^\circ$  W. However, since the longitudinal coverage of our measurements is very sparse, any consideration with this parameter is difficult to be explored.

### 3.2 Retrievals

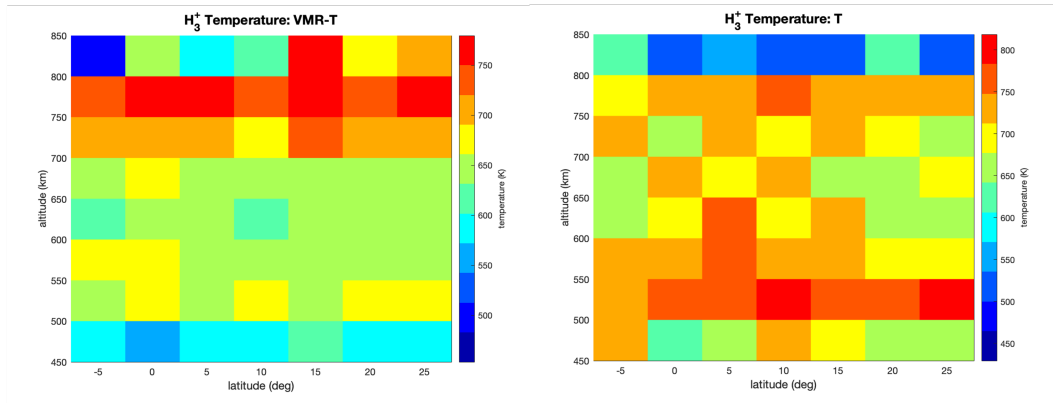
The results of the analysis of the selected limb spectra with the retrieval code described in section 2.4.1 are reported in Figures 11 to 14. The single limb sequences have been analysed separately, performing three different approaches: first both VMR and temperature were allowed to vary (configuration 1), then only temperature (keeping the VMR fixed at their a-priori values - configuration 2) or VMR (keeping the temperature at Seiff et al. (1998)'s values - configuration 3) have been retrieved. The average temperatures obtained in configuration 1 for the observations in the two separate orbits (21 December 2018 - green line and 27 March 2017 - blue line) are plotted in the left panel of Figure 11, along with the a-priori profile used. We can see in the figure (left panel) that the temperatures obtained from the observations acquired during the two orbits are very similar, therefore we feel that we can discuss the results of the different retrieval configurations merging all the retrieved values in a single plot.

The right panel of Figure 11 shows the comparison of the average temperature profiles obtained with the retrieval configurations 1 and 2. In the 400-800 km altitude range, where  $\text{H}_3^+$  peaks, the temperature profiles resulting from the two configurations are different, with a smaller standard deviation in the case of configuration 1. However, in both configurations we find a peak of the temperature at about 550 km, with lower values than the ones reported in Seiff et al. (1998) above 500 km in configuration 1 and above 650 km in configuration 2.

In Figure 12, we compare the maps of the retrieved temperatures for configurations 1 (left panel) and 2 (right panel). The maps have been obtained by merging the observations of the two orbits and averaging the retrieved profiles in bins of  $5^\circ$  in latitude and 150 km in altitude. When  $\text{H}_3^+$  VMR is not retrieved, the peak of the emission at 550-600 km is reproduced by an enhancement in the local temperature. In all the three configurations we can reproduce the  $\text{H}_3^+$  signal within the measurement error, as it can be seen in Figure 7. Therefore, just using JIRAM limb observations, we cannot conclude if the enhanced signal of  $\text{H}_3^+$  in the equatorial region is due to an enhancement of its concentration, of its temperature or both. The results of the retrieval of  $\text{H}_3^+$  VMR in configurations 1 and 3 are shown in Figure 13. In both configurations, an enhanced VMR is observed around  $10^\circ$ , but at different altitudes. In case of VMR and T can vary, the maximum of VMR is observed above 650 km, while in case of configuration 3 the maximum of VMR is shifted to lower altitudes.

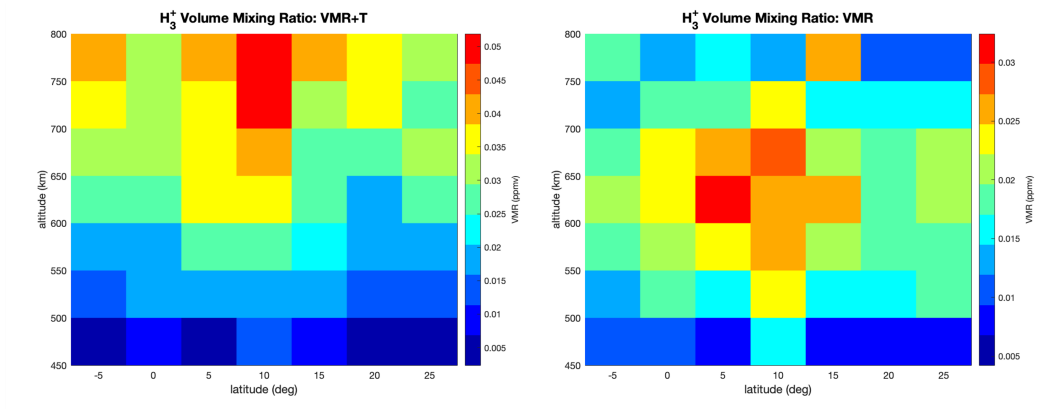


**Figure 11.** Comparison of the average temperature retrieved in the two considered orbits (left panel) and in retrieval configurations 1 and 2 (right panel). The dashed line represents the a-priori profile taken from Seiff et al. (1998). The error bars represent the standard deviation of the average.

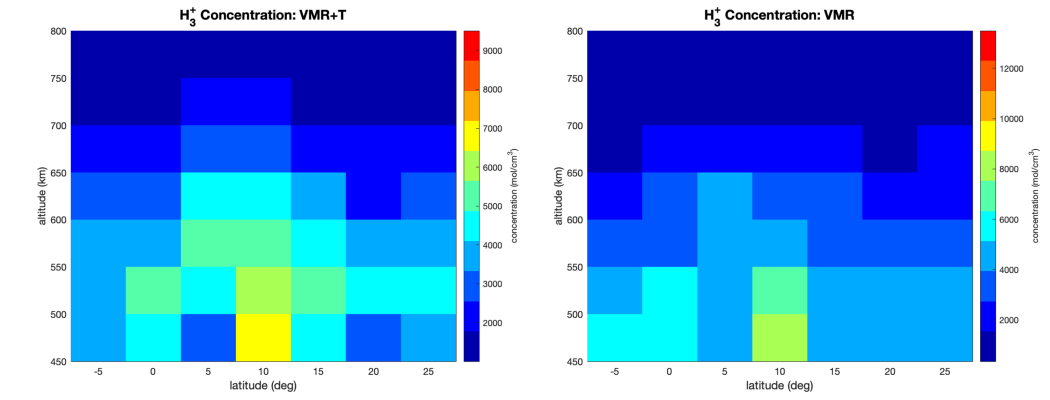


**Figure 12.** Map of the vertical distribution of  $H_3^+$  temperature as a function of latitude in configuration 1 (left panel) and 2 (right panel).

437  $H_3^+$  concentration is shown in Figure 14, for retrieval configurations 1 and 3 respec-  
 438 tively. Overall, the distribution of retrieved concentration is similar for the two confi-  
 439 gurations, and its value decreases with altitude. However, in case of configuration 1 in the  
 440 retrieval process, the concentration values are higher than in configuration 3 at altitudes  
 441 from 500 to 650 km.



**Figure 13.** Map of H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> VMR as a function of altitude and latitude, for retrieval configuration 1 (left) and configuration 3 (right).



**Figure 14.** Map of H<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> concentration (mol/cm<sup>3</sup>) as a function of altitude and latitude, for retrieval configuration 1 (left) and configuration 3 (right)



## 4 Discussion

The high spatial resolution of JIRAM during the limb observing campaign allowed the simultaneous identification of two emission layers for the first time. Located at about 250 and 600 km, these are compatible with  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  emissions respectively. The spectral capability of JIRAM was used to investigate the zonal and vertical distribution of  $\text{H}_3^+$  and the vertical distribution of methane. The maximum enhancements of both  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  are located at about the same latitude, at 6-18°N, as retrieved from the global map in Figure 9. Using only the information provided by the imager it is impossible to distinguish  $\text{H}_3^+$  and  $\text{CH}_4$  emissions in JIRAM L-band images. Using the information provided by the spectrometer we can conclude that the two species are vertically separated, as shown in Figures 5 and 6. Therefore, we can use the imager data above 400 km to study the  $\text{H}_3^+$  contribution, while the data below that altitude can be used to study the methane distribution. The maps in Figure 10 show the distribution of the radiances (in L-band, integrated over the considered altitude range) as a function of latitude and longitude (Figure 10 left panel for  $\text{H}_3^+$  and Figure 10 right panel for  $\text{CH}_4$ ). We see that the two molecules have a different distribution of maximum and minimum radiance values. In addition, despite the very patchy longitudinal coverage of JIRAM images, the  $\text{H}_3^+$  emission seems to be less intense along the magnetic equator (Connerney et al., 2022), a darkening previously observed in past ground-based observations (Stallard et al., 2018).

Concerning the vertical distribution, we know that the  $\text{CH}_4$  emission in the auroral region is expected to occur at 200-300 km, depending on the initial assumptions (Kim et al., 2014). The maximum of the  $\text{H}_3^+$  emission has been reported at about 700-900 km and 680-950 km for the  $\text{H}_3^+$  overtone and hot overtone in the Northern auroral region (Lystrup et al., 2008; Uno et al., 2014), while an altitude between 300 and 500 km above the 1-bar level has been inferred at mid latitudes from Cassini/VIMS data (Stallard et al., 2015). The radiative transfer code applied to our selected spectral measurements at equatorial latitudes in limb geometry permitted the exploration of VMR, temperature and concentration characteristics of  $\text{H}_3^+$ . The retrieval of VMR, temperature and concentration of methane deserves a modelling that takes into account the non-LTE condition, as shown in Sánchez-López et al. (2022). Being not implemented in our retrieval code at the present time, this will be the subject of a future work. The retrieved VMR of  $\text{H}_3^+$  has a peak value of about  $4.5 \times 10^{-2}$  ppmV, at about 4°N, located at 750 km when temperature and VMR are simultaneously retrieved (configuration 1), while it assumes

475 a lower value ( $3 \times 10^{-2}$  ppmV) and is located at lower altitude (550-600 km) if the tem-  
 476 perature profile is fixed to the Seiff's values (configuration 3, see Figure 13). In a pre-  
 477 vious analysis of JIRAM limb measurements, Migliorini et al. (2019) reported a  $\text{H}_3^+$  VMR  
 478 of about  $1.4 \times 10^{-3}$  ppmV at  $5^\circ\text{N}$ , located close to 600 km. The location of the peak is  
 479 compatible with the results presented in this work, while the difference in the  $\text{H}_3^+$  inten-  
 480 sity is due to the changes introduced in the retrieval code to perform this analysis. In  
 481 addition, values of about  $8 \times 10^{-4}$  ppmV at 500 km above the 1-bar level were obtained  
 482 at  $40^\circ\text{S}$  (Migliorini et al., 2019), values that are about 20 times lower than the measure-  
 483 ment reported in the equatorial region. Our analysis of JIRAM data indicates that there  
 484 is an enhancement either in the  $\text{H}_3^+$  concentration or in its temperature or in both of them  
 485 towards the equator, in agreement with the findings in Melin et al. (2014). A higher  $\text{H}_3^+$   
 486 concentration at the equator compared to mid-latitudes could be partly explained due  
 487 to smaller solar zenith angles at the equator, which generate more ions through the  $\text{H}_2$   
 488 solar photoionisation mechanism. However, this process cannot account for an increase  
 489 factor as high as 20 times. On the other hand, O'Donoghue et al. (2021) shows that the  
 490 equator is significantly cooler than mid-latitudes, as obtained from  $\text{H}_3^+$  temperature, hence  
 491 temperature effects might be excluded.

492 Our retrieved values of temperature and VMR are overall in agreement with the  
 493 revised models for the outer planets (Moore et al., 2019). In addition, an asymmetric  
 494 distribution of  $\text{H}_3^+$  VMR is reported in Migliorini et al. (2019), with higher concentra-  
 495 tions in the southern hemisphere above 500 km.

496 Similarly, oscillations are observed in the retrieved temperature values.  $\text{H}_3^+$  tem-  
 497 perature has a local maximum at about 600 km either when it is retrieved alone or when  
 498 also the  $\text{H}_3^+$  VMR is retrieved. Its peak value is in the range of 600-800 K, and it is lower  
 499 than Galileo's measurements above 700 km in both retrieval configurations. However,  
 500 with the JIRAM data it is not possible to firmly state if oscillations are due to variations  
 501 in the VMR, temperature or both.

502 It has been shown that stratospheric oscillations and quasi-quadrennial oscillation  
 503 occur in the Jovian atmosphere (Cosentino et al., 2017). Temperature anomalies, observed  
 504 with the Texas Echelon Cross Echelle Spectrograph (TEXES), are well reproduced by  
 505 the model assuming stochastic waves produced from convection. The observed anomaly  
 506 progresses also with time, showing a local maximum at the equator in the 2013 data, which

507 changes into a minimum in the data obtained in late 2014 and beginning of 2015. In O’Donoghue  
508 et al. (2016) it is hypothesised that the wavy activity is responsible of the  $H_3^+$  enhance-  
509 ment above the Great Red Spot (GRS). This emission enhancement was explained with  
510 acoustic waves resulting from the turbulent troposphere around the GRS, which, after  
511 breaking, deposited their energy in the form of heat. The same phenomenon could also  
512 be explained with Joule heating, resulting from the GRS vorticity (Ray et al., 2019). Sim-  
513 ilar effects could occur in the Jupiter’s atmosphere and be the cause of the observed fea-  
514 tures in the JIRAM data reported in our analysis. Recent ground-based observations with  
515 Keck II telescope showed a significant and monotonic temperature decrease from the au-  
516 roral polar regions to the equator that may be explained by redistribution of auroral en-  
517 ergy (O’Donoghue et al., 2021). This result comes from the observation of  $H_3^+$  emissions  
518 that cover the full disc of Jupiter, from the auroral region to the equator. In particular,  
519 observations show a high-temperature planetary-scale structure emanating from the au-  
520 rora, during a period of enhanced activity. Differently, in our case, local maxima at low  
521 latitudes are observed, more compatible with heating due to wavy activity (O’Donoghue  
522 et al., 2016).

523 The presence of an enhanced  $CH_4$  emission layer in the JIRAM data could be in  
524 agreement with some wave activity and heat deposition at discrete altitudes or linked  
525 to an upwelling mechanism, quite stable with time, although this effect would require  
526 a model to quantify and to confirm it. In Cosentino et al. (2017), it is proposed that con-  
527 vection is an important driver for oscillations in gas giant atmospheres. A similar mech-  
528 anism is observed for other chemical species, like  $NH_3$ , retrieved by the MicroWave Ra-  
529 diometer (MRW) onboard Juno (Li et al., 2017) although it sounds a much deeper pres-  
530 sure region (1-60 bars). Ammonia, as well as water, are found to be depleted in the lat-  
531 itudinal band from  $40^\circ$  north to  $40^\circ$  south, with an exception at the equatorial latitudes,  
532 where the two species are uniformly mixed (Li et al., 2017, 2020). However, as said, a  
533 direct comparison with ammonia cannot be performed because these species are observed  
534 at very different pressure levels.

535 If we explain the JIRAM observations with an enhanced atmospheric layer in the  
536 middle stratosphere, possibly at temperatures higher than expected, we require a dif-  
537 ferent disequilibrium process than photochemistry. The concept of soft electrons was  
538 introduced to explain Jupiter’s high exospheric temperature measured on Pioneer 10 and  
539 11 (Hunten, 1977), and may be an alternative to gravity waves or an additional source

540 of heating. Soft electrons have also been proposed for explaining the hydrogen electro-  
 541 glow in the non-auroral region of the giant planets (e.g. Atreya, 1987). The distribution  
 542 of soft electron energy deposition in the atmosphere and the excitation of  $\text{CH}_4$  would  
 543 depend on the origin, power spectrum and the angular dependence of the soft electrons,  
 544 which have been not yet detected. Detailed modelling of this idea is beyond the scope  
 545 of this paper and could be further tested in a future dedicated work. New observations  
 546 at limb, planned during the Juno nominal and extended mission, will help extend the  
 547 observed maps and shed further light on the possible Jovian atmospheric circulation and  
 548 origin of these detached emission layers.

## 549 5 Conclusions

550 Recent JIRAM measurements allowed the investigation of limb-view emissions of  
 551 Jupiter's atmosphere in the equatorial region. Limb measurements with the resolution  
 552 of few km per pixel, as those acquired with JIRAM during these dedicated campaigns,  
 553 are quite innovative and show a wealth of details never obtained for Jupiter by previ-  
 554 ous space missions. Dedicated observing campaigns in limb viewing geometry, during or-  
 555 bits 17 to 29 (covering the period December 2018 to September 2020), explored the lat-  
 556 itude range  $53^\circ\text{S}$ - $42^\circ\text{N}$ , and showed for the first time two separate layers due to  $\text{CH}_4$  and  
 557  $\text{H}_3^+$ , as seen at limb. We used the limb measurements made by the L-band JIRAM im-  
 558 ager to investigate the zonal and vertical distribution of  $\text{H}_3^+$  signal and the vertical dis-  
 559 tribution of  $\text{CH}_4$  at equatorial latitudes. The identification of the two layers, made pos-  
 560 sible by the unique view of JIRAM, represents an important piece of information to re-  
 561 fine circulation models. The measurements clearly show for the first time a  $\text{CH}_4$  emis-  
 562 sion layer, located at about 200-300 km above the 1-bar level, directly below the  $\text{H}_3^+$  layer  
 563 where emissions are observed at about 500-600 km.  $\text{H}_3^+$  spectral signatures can be re-  
 564 produced by retrieving either the temperature vertical profile or the vertical distribu-  
 565 tions of its VMR and temperature simultaneously, while  $\text{CH}_4$  will be studied in a future  
 566 work to include the non-LTE condition. In the vertical region above 400 km, the result-  
 567 ing T profile shows a peak at about 550 km that is higher in the case the VMRs are kept  
 568 fixed in the retrieval process. Our analysis indicates differences in the thermal structure  
 569 compared to the results obtained with the Galileo probe, potentially revealing signifi-  
 570 cant variability in the exospheric temperature with time. The  $\text{H}_3^+$  VMR distribution is  
 571 similar in the considered cases, but the peak shifts towards higher altitudes and has a

572 higher value in the configuration where VMR and T can vary in the retrieval process.  
573 From these results, it is not possible to firmly conclude if the observed  $\text{H}_3^+$  features are  
574 due to a real increase of their VMRs or rather to variation of temperature, because the  
575 retrieval procedure is able to reproduce JIRAM data in all retrieval configurations.

576 Here we speculate that vertically propagating waves are the most plausible expla-  
577 nation to describe the VMR and/or temperature variations of  $\text{H}_3^+$  at mid and equato-  
578 rial latitudes in the JIRAM data, in analogy with previous observations (Cosentino et  
579 al., 2017; O'Donoghue et al., 2016).

580 We can also speculate that soft electron precipitation might cause the observed  $\text{CH}_4$   
581 signal, in analogy with previous explanations to the Pioneer measurements of the high  
582 exosphere of Jupiter (Hunten, 1977), and the electroglow at the giant planets (e.g. Atreya,  
583 1987). However, more accurate modelling of magnetospheric and electronic precipita-  
584 tion is required to confirm this hypothesis. The characterisation of  $\text{CH}_4$  and  $\text{H}_3^+$  species,  
585 simultaneously observed with JIRAM, is finally important for better constraining the  
586 atmospheric models of Jupiter and a better comprehension of the circulation of these species.

## 587 **6 Open Research**

588 The calibrated JIRAM data used for this work are available at the NASA Plan-  
589 etary Data System website and described in (Noschese & Adriani, 2017; Adriani et al.,  
590 2017a). The Maps in Figure 4 was produced by using the commercial software ENVI ([https://](https://www.harrisgeospatial.com/Software-Technology)  
591 [www.harrisgeospatial.com/Software-Technology](https://www.harrisgeospatial.com/Software-Technology)). The analysis has been done us-  
592 ing homemade procedure based on IDL and Fortran languages. Data products of this  
593 work are reported in (Dinelli, 2021).

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**Appendix A List of JIRAM-IMA data used for this research**

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**Table A1.** List of JIRAM images (JIRAM-IMA) used in the present investigation. The column 'Observation' identifies the image name (as it is reported in the PDS archive), while the ranges of System III planetocentric geographical latitude (in deg) and longitude (in deg), are reported in columns 2 and 3.

Observation	Latitude range	Longitude range
JM0171		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2018355T165044-V01.IMG	15.0795N-25.6026N	223.3481-228.7901
JIR-IMG-EDR-2018355T165717-V01.IMG	4.1836N-13.2026N	209.3811-212.2929
JIR-IMG-EDR-2018355T170149-V01.IMG	6.2586S-2.3903S	199.7330-200.3485
JIR-IMG-EDR-2018355T170545-V01.IMG	0.7353N-2.5613N	174.7923-182.0536
JM0181		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019043T172119-V01.IMG	23.7105N-36.2755N	157.8081-165.5014
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019043T173748-V01.IMG	5.9681S-1.5688S	117.8844-119.2543
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019043T183143-V01.IMG	36.3001S-13.7663S	102.8070-115.5961
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019043T185147-V01.IMG	47.7705S-21.4223S	111.3855-128.1595
JM0201		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019149T081603-V01.IMG	14.0825N-23.2032N	325.8294-333.6507
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019149T085707-V01.IMG	20.7363S-1.6725S	308.6906-316.2082
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019149T091726-V01.IMG	32.2032S-8.9053S	306.1715-318.6140
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019149T092230-V01.IMG	34.6397S-10.7575S	305.5659-318.7391
JM0211		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019202T040443-V01.IMG	5.0535S-4.2361N	65.7260-71.9941
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019202T052644-V01.IMG	44.2991S-15.3318S	45.1409-60.6679
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019202T053415-V01.IMG	47.1793S-17.9849S	47.9021-66.7939
JM0221		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019255T033541-V01.IMG	8.0070N-17.2354N	50.3231-54.8906
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019255T033811-V01.IMG	2.9783N-12.6342N	43.6693-46.9465
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019255T043502-V01.IMG	16.4530S-1.0814S	342.7394-349.7376
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019255T044233-V01.IMG	27.5683S-4.1084S	345.8359-355.9748
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019255T045133-V01.IMG	33.6485S-9.6321S	0.0006-359.9998
JM0231		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019307T221639-V01.IMG	11.4622N-18.2561N	182.4169-187.4077
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019307T222207-V01.IMG	4.0851S-1.6180N	165.9429-167.4344
JM0241		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019360T172532-V01.IMG	23.2495N-33.2145N	321.2914-329.4380
JIR-IMG-EDR-2019360T173036-V01.IMG	17.4570N-25.5591N	306.7894-313.9234
JM0251		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020048T173525-V01.IMG	30.4268N-41.9685N	281.1528-290.2075
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020048T174458-V01.IMG	25.8754N-32.9970N	247.4178-257.9277
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020101T135904-V01.IMG	27.7355S-18.8677S	298.3254-302.1651
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020101T140337-V01.IMG	40.6497S-31.6756S	300.2135-308.8700
JM0271		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020154T100651-V01.IMG	35.4718N-45.4150N	70.6816-83.2845
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020154T101524-V01.IMG	31.3732N-34.7915N	39.4754-50.6786
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020154T102056-V01.IMG	25.4125N-24.6931N	26.1395-34.8305
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020154T111709-V01.IMG	50.3844S-32.9904S	33.7651-50.9187
JM0281		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020207T060208-V01.IMG	33.9678N-44.2826N	159.5375-170.6685
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020207T062041-V01.IMG	5.8582N-9.4193N	109.1268-118.0512
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020207T071052-V01.IMG	43.5353S-24.7151S	106.9207-127.4483
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020207T071553-V01.IMG	47.0992S-26.4510S	110.4395-130.2419
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020207T073125-V01.IMG	52.8392S-30.0824S	124.0210-139.2670
JM0291		
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020260T020248-V01.IMG	30.9891N-38.3766N	229.0602-239.6824
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020260T021220-V01.IMG	16.7883N-19.1789N	206.0570-213.1100
JIR-IMG-EDR-2020260T033207-V01.IMG	51.4122S-27.7863S	206.5596-222.2353



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