Albedo-Ice regression method for determining ice water content of Polar Mesospheric Clouds using ultraviolet observations from space

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Abstract. High spatial-resolution images of Polar Mesospheric Clouds (PMC) from a camera array onboard the Aeronomy of Ice in the Mesosphere Satellite have been obtained since 2007. The Cloud Imaging and Particle Size Experiment (CIPS) detects scattered ultraviolet (UV) radiance at a variety of scattering angles, allowing the scattering phase function to be measured for every image pixel. With well-established scattering theory, the mean particle size and ice water content (IWC) are derived. In the nominal mode of operation, approximately seven scattering angles are measured per cloud pixel. However, because of a change in the orbital geometry in 2016, a new mode of operation was implemented such that one, or at most two, scattering angles per pixel are now available. Thus particle size and IWC can no longer be derived from the standard CIPS algorithm. The Albedo-Ice Regression (AIR) method was devised to overcome this obstacle. Using data from both a microphysical model and from CIPS in its normal mode, we show that the AIR method provides sufficiently accurate average IWC so that PMC IWC can be retrieved from CIPS data into the future, even when albedo is not measured at multiple scattering angles. We also show from the model that 265 nm UV scattering is sensitive only to ice particle sizes greater than about 20-25 nm in (effective) radius, and that the operational CIPS algorithm has an average error in retrieving IWC of -13±17%.

1 Introduction
Polar Mesospheric Clouds (known as noctilucent clouds in the ground-based literature) have been studied for over a century from high-latitude ground observations, but only since the space age have we understood their physical nature, as water-ice particles occurring in the extremely cold summertime mesopause region. Their seasonal and latitudinal variations have now been well documented (DeLand et al., 2006). Interest in these clouds ‘at the edge of space’ has been stimulated by suggestions that they are sensitive to global change in the mesosphere (Thomas et al., 1989). This expectation has been supported recently by a time series analysis of Solar Backscattered Ultraviolet measurements of PMC (Hervig et al., 2016) and by model calculations (Lübken et al., 2018).

The Aeronomy of Ice in the Mesosphere satellite (AIM) (Russell et al., 2009) was designed to provide a deeper understanding of the basic processes affecting PMC, through remote sensing of both the clouds and their physical environment (temperature, water vapor, and meteor smoke density, among other constituents). One of the two active experiments on board AIM is a camera array, the Cloud Imaging and Particle Size (CIPS) experiment, which provides high spatial resolution images of PMC (McClymont et al., 2009). CIPS measures scattered ultraviolet (UV) sunlight in the nadir in a spectral region centered at 265 nm, where ozone absorption allows the optically-thin ice particles to be visible above the Rayleigh scattering background.
issuing from the ~50-km region (Rusch et al., 2009; Bailey et al., 2009). Because of its wide field of view and 43-second image cadence, CIPS views a cloud element multiple times in its sun-synchronous orbital passage over the polar region, thus providing consecutive measurements of the same location at multiple (typically seven) scattering angles (SA). Together with scattering theory, the brightness of the cloud (albedo) at multiple angles provides constraints needed to estimate the mean ice particle size (Lumpe et al., 2013). From the particle size and albedo measurements, the ice water content is calculated for each cloud element ($7.5 \times 7.5$ km$^2$ in the most recent CIPS retrieval algorithm). However, over time, the AIM orbit plane has drifted from its nominal noon-midnight orientation to the point where the satellite is currently operating in a terminator orbit. Responding to this altered geometry and the desire to broaden the scope of AIM, new measurement sequences were implemented to provide observations of the entire sunlit hemisphere, rather than just the summertime high-latitude region. Because the total number of images per orbit is fixed by data storage limitations, a new mode (the ‘continuous imaging mode’) of observations, with a reduced three-minute image cadence, was implemented in February 2016. The present sampling in a single Level 2 pixel contains many fewer scattering angles (often only one). To maintain consistency in the study of inter-annual variations of PMC, this necessitates a revised method of retrieving ice water content (IWC) where only a single albedo measurement is available. IWC is a valuable measure of the physical properties of PMC since it largely removes the effects of scattering-angle geometry, is a convenient PMC climate variable when averaged over season, and can be used in comparing with contemporaneous measurements of PMC that use different observational techniques.

The Albedo-Ice Regression (AIR) method was developed to fill the need to retrieve PMC IWC with only a single measurement of albedo. Based on the simple notions that both albedo and IWC depend linearly upon the ice-particle column density, multiple linear relationships are established between IWC and cloud directional albedo, depending upon scattering angle. The regressions are derived from three data sources: (1) the Specified Dynamics version of the Whole Atmosphere Community Climate Model (SD-WACCM) combined with the Community Aerosol and Radiation Model for Atmospheres (CARMA); (2) CIPS data for the years 2007-2013, when multiple scattering angles were available to derive IWC; and (3) Solar Occultation For Ice Experiment (SOFIE), which provides IWC and particle sizes. These three sources provide many thousands of albedo-IWC-particle size combinations, from which the AIR regressions are derived. Although the AIR method may be inaccurate for a single retrieval of IWC, averages over many observations result in close agreement as the number of data points increases. The utility of AIR thus depends upon the availability
of large data sets that apply to roughly the same atmospheric conditions. For example, we will show CIPS results for July and January averages for ascending and descending portions of the orbit.

In this paper we first describe the theoretical framework relating the scattered radiance to mesospheric ice particles. It is desirable to use model data to test the AIR method, without the complications of cloud heterogeneity and viewing geometry. We utilized a first-principles microphysical model that accurately simulates large numbers of cloud properties (number density and particle size distribution). The processes treated by the model include meteor ‘smoke’ nucleation, growth, and sedimentation, occurring in a saturated environment at density and temperature conditions provided by the main global climate model (Bardeen et al., 2010). Several runs for one-day and multiple-day periods during summer solstice conditions for solar conditions applying to 1995 were analyzed. Cloud radiances (albedos) at 265 nm were calculated for the SA range encountered by the CIPS experiment. We chose a set of cloud simulations to derive a single set of two AIR coefficients through linear regression. The accuracy of the AIR approximation was then tested on the same data, and on other model runs, using averages as a function of SA, and increasing IWC threshold values. Thresholding is necessary to account for the fact that different measurement techniques have different detection sensitivities. This is not a signal/noise issue, rather the ability to discriminate PMC against a background that is usually larger than the PMC signal itself. We show in particular how seasonal means of IWC can be derived from Solar Backscatter Ultraviolet Spectrometer (SBUV) radiance data, without the need to derive particle size.

Having tested the technique for model data, we use the same approach with real-life PMC data collected from CIPS in the normal pre-2016 operating mode. This mode provided scattering angles needed to define an ice scattering phase function, from which mean particle size was derived based on assumed properties of the underlying size distribution (Lumpe et al., 2013). The regressions were run for a period of 40 days in each of four seasons, each comprising millions of separate cloud measurements, and from both summertime hemispheres. The results were combined into a single set of AIR coefficients, and again the AIR technique was tested on monthly averages. These averages were constructed over all years of nominal spacecraft operations (2007-2013 in the northern hemisphere, and 2007-8 through 2013-14 in the southern hemisphere). Note that testing the accuracy of the AIR technique during the nominal mission period allows the method to be used even during the ‘continuous imaging mode’ of CIPS operation.

We then employed highly-accurate data from SOFIE for ice column density and mean particle size. Since the SOFIE technique uses near-IR solar extinction, it is necessary to
derive scattered radiances from the same algorithm used by CIPS. This exercise was performed primarily to test whether the derived AIR results are broadly consistent with those derived from the model and CIPS.

After describing the AIR method, we discuss briefly the application of the method to a third contemporaneous experiment, the SBUV satellite experiment, which has in common the same limitations as CIPS in its continuous-imaging mode, namely that measurements of nadir albedo are made at a single scattering angle. This has already resulted in a publication (DeLand and Thomas, 2015) where we provided a time series of PMC IWC from the AIR method extending back to the first SBUV experiment in 1979.

2 Theoretical Basis

Here we provide a brief overview of the theoretical basis of the IWC retrieval technique, referring to previous publications for more detail (Thomas and McKay, 1985; Rusch et al., 2009; Bailey et al., 2009, Lumpe et al., 2013). The basic measurement is PMC cloud radiance \( I(\Phi, \theta) \) where \( \Phi \) is the scattering angle (angle between the sun and observation vectors) and \( \theta \) is the view angle, which is the angle subtended by the nadir and observation direction, measured from the point of scattering. Since the ice layer is optically thin, and secondary scattering is negligible, the albedo is described by first-order scattering. The ratio of scattered (detected) radiance to the incoming solar irradiance \( F_\lambda \) is the albedo \( A_\lambda \), where

\[
A_\lambda (\Phi, \theta) = \frac{I_\lambda (\Phi, \theta)}{F_\lambda} = \sec \theta \int_{z_b}^{z_t} \int_{r_{min}}^{r_{max}} dr' \sigma_\lambda (r', \Phi) n(r', z')
\]

Here \( z' \) and \( r' \) are the height and particle radius variables, and \( z_b \) and \( z_t \) define the height limits of the ice layer, with the majority of the integrand extending between 83 and 85 km. \( r_{min} \) and \( r_{max} \) are particle radii which span the particle size regime responsible for scattering (from \( \sim 20 \) nm to \( \sim 150 \) nm). \( \sigma_\lambda \) is the monochromatic scattering cross-section (cm\(^2\)-sr\(^{-1}\)) at wavelength \( \lambda \) and scattering angle \( \Phi \). \( n(r', z')dr'dz' \) is the number density of ice particles (cm\(^{-3}\)) in the ranges \( r', r'+dr' \) and \( z', z'+dz' \). For CIPS measurements, each camera has a finite bandpass, centered at 265 nm, and is characterized by a function \( R_\lambda \) with an effective width of 10 nm (McClintock et al., 2009). The albedo derived from this instrument is given by

\[
A_\lambda (\Phi, \theta) = \sec \theta \int d\lambda' R_\lambda \int_{z_b}^{z_t} \int_{r_{min}}^{r_{max}} dr' \sigma_\lambda (r', \Phi) n(r', z')
\]
In the model, the ice particles are assumed spherical, but the scattering theory should take account of the non-spherical nature of ice crystals. The best agreement of theory with near-IR mesospheric ice extinction occurs for a randomly rotating oblate-spheroid shape, of axial ratio two (Hervig and Gordley, 2010). This shape is assumed in the calculation of $\sigma_\lambda$, which is accomplished through a generalization of Mie-Debye scattering theory, the T-matrix method (Mishchenko and Travis, 1998). The radius in the T-matrix approach is defined as the radius of the volume-equivalent sphere. In the model calculations, we will ignore the view angle effect.

In the reported CIPS data, the $\sec \theta$ factor is applied to the reported albedos, so that $A$ always refers to the nadir albedo ($\theta = 0$).

The ice water content (IWC) is the integrated mass of ice particles over a vertical column through the ice layer. Its definition is

$$IWC = \rho \int_{z_i}^{z_f} \int_{r_{\text{min}}}^{r_{\text{max}}} (4\pi / 3) r^3 n(r',z') \, dr' \, dz'$$

$$\rho$$ denotes the density of water-ice at low temperature (0.92 g·cm$^{-3}$). Anticipating the results of this study that IWC is linearly related to the column density of ice particles, $N$, we explore the physical basis of this result. As first pointed out by Englert and Stevens (2007), such a relationship exists for certain SA values, for which $\sigma \sim r^3$, in which case it is easily seen that Eq. (2) is proportional to IWC. However, we find that a linear approximation is valid for a much wider range of scattering angles. To understand this result, we imagine that all particles have the same radius, so that $n = n_c \delta(r - r_c)$, where $\delta$ is the Dirac $\delta$-function. Then Eqs. (1) and (3) ‘collapse’ to simpler results,

$$A_\lambda(\Phi,0) = \sigma_\lambda(r_c,\Phi) N(r_c), \quad IWC(r_c) = \rho V(r_c) N(r_c)$$

Here $N(r_c) = n_c \Delta z$ where $\Delta z$ is the effective vertical thickness of the ice layer. Eliminating the column density $N(r_c)$, the ice water content is written

$$IWC(r_c) = \rho V(r_c) A(\Phi,0) / \sigma_\lambda(r_c,\Phi)$$

$V(r_c)$ denotes the particle volume. Thus in this special case, $IWC(r_c) \sim A_\lambda(\Phi,0)$. A superposition of the effects of all participating particle sizes will exhibit a similar proportionality. When $IWC(r)$ is integrated over all $r$, the contributions from each size are straight lines, each having different intercepts and slopes.
As previously discussed, the value of the AIR method is in evaluating *average* IWC (denoted by \(<\text{IWC}>\)) over many albedo observations made at numerous scattering angles. The accuracy of the method should be assessed on this basis, not on how well an individual albedo measurement yields the correct value of IWC. An important issue is the differing detection thresholds for IWC among the various experiments. In the case of the scattered-light experiments, the detection threshold depends upon how well the cloud radiance data can be separated from the bright Rayleigh-scattered background. The CIPS experiment retrieval method relies upon high spatial resolution over a large field of view, and the differing scattering-angle dependence of PMC and the Rayleigh-scattering background (Lumpe et al., 2013). The SBUV retrieval relies upon differing wavelength-dependence of PMC and background, but primarily on the PMC radiance residuals being higher (2 sigma) than fluctuations from a smoothly-varying sky background (Thomas et al., 1991; DeLand and Thomas, 2015). The AIM SOFIE method is very different, being a near-IR solar extinction measurement in multiple wavelength bands. SOFIE can detect much weaker clouds than either CIPS or SBUV. Particle radii values as small as 10 nm can be retrieved from the SOFIE data (Hervig et al., 2009). To compare the various experiments, it is necessary to ‘threshold’ the data from more sensitive experiments with a cutoff value of IWC.

In the next three sections, we present the AIR results from the model, CIPS and SOFIE, using averages over many cloud occurrences. It is not our intention to compare the different thresholded data sets to one another (this task will be relegated to a separate publication), but to illustrate how even measurements made at a single scattering angle (e.g., SBUV) can yield averaged IWC values that are sufficiently accurate to assess variations in daily and seasonal averages. These variations are of crucial value to determining solar cycle and long-term trends in the atmospheric variables (mainly temperature and water vapor) that control ice properties in the cold summertime PMC region. We examine the accuracy of AIR through simulations of scattered radiance from the model, and from CIPS and SOFIE data. Since these data sources yield particle radii, they can provide both the ‘actual’ and approximate values of IWC from the regression formulas. Hervig and Stevens (2014) used the spectral content of the SBUV data to provide limited information on particle size. Together with the albedos themselves, they used this information to derive seasonally-averaged ice water content. They showed that the variation of mean particle size over the 1979-2013 time period was relatively low (standard deviation of \(\pm 1\) nm). They also found a very small systematic increase with time, as discussed in Sect. 3.

### 2.1 Model Results

Using a microphysical model as a reference source of IWC ‘data’ is useful, in the following ways: (1) in contrast to the CIPS and SOFIE retrieval algorithms, no artificial
assumptions are needed concerning the size distribution of ice particles; (2) radiance and IWC may be calculated accurately, so that effects of cloud inhomogeneity are absent; and (3) limitations due to background removal are absent. In addition, to gain insight into the accuracy of the AIR approach, it is sufficient to work with monochromatic radiance at the central wavelength of the various passbands. The integrations of Eqs. (1) and (3) were approximated by sums over 1-nm increments of radius, and over all sub-layers within the model ice cloud (a typical ice layer is several km thick). The model height grid is variable, being highest in the saturated region where the smallest layer thickness is 0.26 km (see Bardeen et al., 2010 for more details). We then performed the linear regression for SA values over which CIPS observations are made.

Figure 1 displays the regressions for six scattering angles, and 2514 individual model clouds. The units of IWC are g-km⁻², or µg-m⁻², which are commonly used in the literature. Each plot is divided into two groups according to the effective radii \( r_{\text{eff}} \) for each cloud. \( r_{\text{eff}} \) is defined in the literature (Hansen and Travis (1974) as

\[
 r_{\text{eff}} = \frac{\int dr' n(r') r'^3}{\int dr' n(r') r'^2}
\]

Figure 1 clearly illustrates that particle size contributes to the ‘scatter’ from the linear fits. It also shows the existence of a non-zero intercept of IWC vs albedo. The non-zero intercept was at first surprising since we expected that for an albedo of zero, IWC should also be zero. In fact, we found that the linear relationship breaks down for very small albedo, and the points in the plot narrow down as \( A_{\lambda} \to 0 \) (not shown). In albedo units of \( 10^{-6} \text{ sr}^{-1} \) (hereafter referred to as 1 G) this departure from linearity occurs for \( A<1 \) G and IWC<10 g/km⁻², conditions which fortunately are below the sensitivity threshold of CIPS and SBUV, and therefore unimportant for our purposes. For more sensitive detection techniques, this limitation must be kept in mind. A limitation of the present model (not necessarily all models) is that it does not simulate the largest particles in PMC and the largest values of IWC, as seen in both AIM SOFIE and CIPS experiments. The largest model IWC value is 180 g-km⁻² and the largest effective radius is 66 nm, whereas CIPS and SOFIE find particle radii up to 100 nm and IWC up to 300 g-km⁻². This limitation is irrelevant for the AIR CIPS results (to be discussed), but could limit the application of the AIR technique to SBUV data. In Sect. 3 we will return to the issue of the AIR accuracy, as applied to SBUV data.

We chose to use averages for the entire model run, which includes different latitudes, longitudes, and UT, but the data can be subset in many different ways. It is certainly preferable in data sets to choose a small time and space interval over which temperature and water vapor are not expected to vary, but this is not necessary for
the model. All that we ask of the model is whether the AIR results provide an accurate estimate of \( <IWC> \), taken over the ensemble of model cloud albedos calculated at a variety of scattering angles.

As discussed above, we are also interested in the accuracy of AIR in the thresholded data, that is, how AIR represents \( <IWC> \) in comparisons of data sets with varying detection sensitivities to PMC. Figure 2 displays the error in the ensemble-average (2488 model clouds) as a function of the IWC threshold and scattering angle. Despite the large data scatter from the linear fit shown in Fig. 1, the averaging removes almost all the influence of the ‘random error’. In this case, the overall error is less than 3%. The influence of particle size is of course not a random error, but acts like one in the averaging process. However, the AIR coefficients also depend weakly upon the mean effective radius, defined in Eq. (6) for a single cloud, which varies from one latitude to another and from year to year. The effect of variable \( r^* \) on the AIR error is discussed in Section 3.

### 2.2 AIR Results from CIPS

A detailed description of the Version 4.20 CIPS algorithm, together with an error analysis of individual cloud observations, was presented in Lumpe et al. (2013). Here we describe only what is necessary to understand how IWC is derived from the data. Even though an accurate determination of the scattering-angle dependence of radiance (often called the scattering phase function) is obtained by seven independent measurements, this does not fully define the distribution of particle sizes. Instead, additional constraints need to be introduced to derive the mean particle size. The particles are assumed to be the same oblate-spheroidal shape as defined for the model calculations, and to have a Gaussian size distribution (see eq. 11 in Rapp and Thomas (2006). A relationship between the Gaussian width \( s \) and the mean particle radius \( r_m \) is derived from a relationship found in vertically-integrated lidar data (Baumgarten et al., 2010). The net result is that two parameters, the mean particle size and the Gaussian width, are retrieved from a given scattering phase function. However, there is only one independent variable, since the two are related by \( s(r_m) \). Thus Eq. (3) simplifies to

\[
IWC = \rho V(r_m)A(\Phi = 90^\circ,0) / \sigma_{\lambda}(r_m,\Phi)
\]

\( V \) denotes the mean ice particle volume evaluated at \( r_m \). \( A \) refers to the retrieved albedo, corrected to view angle \( \theta = 0 \) and interpolated to scattering angle \( \Phi = 90^\circ \). Note the resemblance of Eq. (7) to Eq. (5). \( A(\Phi = 90^\circ,0) \), along with \( r_m \) and \( IWC \) are products reported in the CIPS PMC data base, found at [http://lasp.colorado.edu/aim/]. \( \sigma_{\lambda}(r_m,\Phi = 90^\circ) \) is the mean scattering cross-
Before discussing the AIR results, we first apply the CIPS algorithm to the model data to test how well it works on a set of realistic particle sizes. As mentioned earlier, UV measurements of ice particles are not sensitive to particle radii < 20-25 nm. We applied the CIPS algorithm to 6672 model clouds, using seven scattering-angle points, spanning the range 50°-150° (the results are insensitive to the values chosen). We then calculated the % difference between the exact model calculation of IWC and the simulated CIPS retrieved IWC for every model cloud. Figure 3 shows the result as a function of $A(\Phi = 90^\circ)$. The mean difference and standard deviation for two model days is $-13\pm 17\%$. With the caveat that not all ice is retrieved, only a large subset of CIPS IWC data have an acceptable accuracy (an average of 84% of the modelled ice mass is contained in particles with radii exceeding 23 nm). We note that IWC in the model used to derive the AIR approximation refers to all particle sizes.

The procedure for deriving AIR coefficients from the CIPS data is as follows: (1) Regression coefficients were derived from data pertaining to 0-40 days from summer solstice (day from solstice, DFS=0 to 40) on every third orbit. This meant that ~200 orbits per season were used. The regression analysis was performed on four years of data (2010-2013). The data were binned in 5-degree SA bins and only the best quality pixels with six or more points in the phase function were used; (2) Data from each northern and southern summer season were treated separately. The coefficients and standard deviations of the fit were then interpolated to a finer SA grid from 22° to 180° in increments of 1°; (3) The coefficients from each hemisphere were averaged, and these coefficients were then used to create an AIR IWC data base, to accompany the normal CIPS products. As previously shown, the AIR data applies to the ice mass of ‘UV-visible’ clouds, not to their total ice mass.

We emphasize that using the AIR data is unnecessary for seasons prior to the northern summer season of 2016 – however the AIR data have great importance since that time because the observing mode was changed, resulting in measured phase functions that contain many fewer (and often only one) scattering angles. As illustrated in Fig. 4, it is trivial to infer both IWC and $A(90^\circ)$ from a single measurement of albedo. This alternative 90-deg albedo value, ALB_AIR, is now included along with IWC AIR in the CIPS Level 2 data files. Fig. 5 shows the AIR results for monthly-averaged IWC (July and January) compared to the same averages of the more accurate results from the operational (OP) retrieval described in Lumpe et al. (2013). The data have been separated into different hemispheres, and into ascending and descending nodes of the sun-synchronous orbit, and apply to the years of the nominal operating mode. The ALB_AIR results are systematically higher than the operationally retrieved 90-deg

section, integrated over the assumed Gaussian distribution with mean radius $r_m$ and distribution width, $s$.
albedo, whereas there is no consistent bias in the IWC (AIR) value compared to the operational product. However, for both quantities the interannual changes between the AIR and OP results agree very well. This is reflected in the very high correlation coefficients of the two sets of values. A more stringent test of the AIR method comes from daily values of CIPS IWC. Shown in Figs. 6 and 7 are polar projections of IWC (AIR) and the more accurate operational IWC data product. These ‘daily daisies’ are taken from overlapping orbit strips pertaining to 28 June of two different years. Figure 6 shows data from 2012, when CIPS was still in normal mode, and the AIR result shows remarkable agreement with the operational IWC data. By 2016 (see Figure 7) CIPS is in continuous imaging mode and the standard IWC retrieval is limited due to the scarcity of pixels with three or more scattering angles. Here the AIR approach is clearly superior and does a good job of filling in the polar region where CIPS detects high-albedo clouds. The differences in patterns are due primarily to variations of particle size, rather than errors in the AIR method.

AIR accuracy can also be tested in the study of latitudinal variations. Figure 8 compares daily-averaged IWC from the CIPS Level 3C data, for both the standard and AIR algorithms, for the Northern Hemisphere 2011 season. It is clear that AIR is adequate even for 24-h averages. For example, it is capable of defining the beginning and ending of the PMC season, a metric that has valuable scientific value (e.g., Benze et al., 2012)

2.2 Results from SOFIE

A third independent data set of IWC and particle size is available from the AIM SOFIE experiment. SOFIE provides very accurate values of IWC, through precise near-IR extinction measurements, independent of particle size. It assumes the same Gaussian distribution of particle sizes as CIPS, so that the reported value of mean particle radius \( r_m \) is consistently defined. SOFIE data are useful to investigate the extent to which the AIR approximation can be applied to an independent data set. To do so, it is necessary to calculate 265-nm albedo at various SA values, given the values of \( r_m \), ice column density \( N \) from the data base, and the mean cross-section \( \sigma_A (r_m, \Phi) \). The latter quantity is averaged over the assumed Gaussian distribution. The equation for the albedo is

\[
A_\lambda (\Phi, 0) = \sigma_A (r_m, \Phi) N
\]  (8)

Given \( A_\lambda (\Phi, 0) \) and IWC for each PMC measurement (one occultation per orbit), we can once again perform regressions and find AIR coefficients for the SOFIE data set. The comparison of AIR results from all three data sets is shown in Fig. 9, where the
constant term $C$ is the y-intercept and $S$ is the slope in the AIR regression

$$IWC(AIR) = C(\Phi) + S(\Phi) \cdot A(\Phi,0)$$

(9)

Figure 10 displays the results from the three data sets, expressed as contour plots of AIR-derived IWC as functions of SA and Albedo. This comparison shows that the three sets of IWC resemble one another far better than would be anticipated from the AIR coefficients in Fig. 9, where the constant coefficient differs significantly between data sets. Since the result of the regression in yielding IWC is more significant than the coefficients themselves, the comparisons of Fig. 10 are the more appropriate diagnostic. The fact that the IWC derived from AIR is more accurate than would be expected from the differing coefficients is due to the fact that the errors of the constant and slope coefficients are anti-correlated. The agreement between the three results will be even better when taken over a large data set with variable SA and albedo. The comparisons of IWC from different satellite experiments as a function of year and hemisphere will be the subject of a separate publication.

Figure 11 shows that the regressions with AIM SOFIE data obey a linear relationship between IWC and albedo for IWC <220 g-km$^{-2}$, but for SA values <90°, AIR overestimates IWC by up to 15%, depending upon the SA. For $SA=100^\circ$ the regressions are still linear up to 300 g-km$^{-2}$, values above which are seldom encountered in the data.

2.3 SBUV data

The AIR coefficients from the model have been used by DeLand and Thomas (2015) to derive mean IWC from SBUV data, which spans the largest time interval of any satellite data set (1979-present). The 273 nm wavelength used in the SBUV Version 3 analysis is sufficiently close to the effective wavelength of the broader passband of the CIPS cameras (Benze et al., 2009) that the same coefficients may be applied to both data sets. The accuracy of the average IWC results was estimated by removing half the data from an entire season and comparing the two results. For a highly-populated region (more than 1000 clouds per season at latitudes higher than 70°), the changes in IWC were $\pm 3 - 5$ g-km$^{-2}$. For a less populated region (50° – 64° latitude) where there were many fewer clouds (<50), the changes were larger, $\pm 5 - 10$ g-km$^{-2}$. Even the larger errors are sufficiently small for intercomparison of SBUV and contemporaneous PMC measurements. Figure 12 shows a comparison of SBUV IWC, using the model AIR coefficients, to the results of a more accurate determination of IWC derived from particle size determinations using SBUV spectral information (Hervig and Stevens, 2014). The comparison is for data residuals from July averages over the time series 1979-2017. Given the different assumptions underlying the two data sets, the agreement is very good (with an rms difference of 3% for the residuals, and 5% for the actual values of $<IWC>$).

3 Effects of Mean Ice Particle Size
The AIR approximation is based on the notion that particle size effects can be ignored. In fact, the particle size (or more accurately, \( r^3 \)) is a principal ‘driver’ of \(<IWC>\) itself, so it is not obvious that particle size effects may be neglected. Column density also drives IWC, and the dependence of albedo on density adequately captures this part of the variability (albedo is strictly linear in column density). The AIR slope term is proportional to \( \frac{r^3}{\sigma_j(r,\Phi)} \) averaged over a distribution of particle sizes, \( r \). Since \( \sigma_j(r,\Phi) \sim r^{3-5} \) (where the exponent depends upon \( \Phi \)) then averaging over many values of \( r \) results in a slope term that, in the limit of large number, depends predominantly on \( \Phi \). This is an example of “regression to the mean”, and illustrates how the approximation is designed to work for large numbers of clouds. In a fictitious case where the mean cloud particle size is larger in one year than another, but the cloud column number remains the same, the mean albedo would increase according to Eq. (8), resulting in an increase of \(<IWC>\). We might expect that the slope term would be different in the two cases. Our study with three different data sets shows that the regression slope itself remains almost the same among the three data sets, despite their differing in mean particle size.

In fact, Hervig and Stevens (2014) found from SBUV spectral data a small long-term trend in \(<IWC>\) and in addition a trend in the mean particle size (+0.23 ± 0.16 nm/decade). This contributed an additional 20% to the overall long-term trend in \(<IWC>\). The ignored dependence on mean particle size using the AIR method thus adds a systematic uncertainty in derived \(<IWC>\) trends, which can be as large as 20%, according to Hervig and Stevens (2014). This error undoubtedly varies inversely with the number of clouds in the averaging process. For example, the number of CIPS observations per PMC season greatly exceeds that of SBUV, so that the error in \(<IWC>\) should be correspondingly smaller.

4 Conclusions

We have described the theoretical basis and accuracy for an approximation for retrieving the average ice water content (IWC) of Polar Mesospheric Clouds (PMC) from measurements of UV albedo at a single scattering angle. This approach provides a continuous set of consistent CIPS measurements of IWC from year to year, regardless of the number of scattering angles for which albedo at a single location is measured. The consistent AIR IWC data base enables robust IWC comparisons throughout the AIM mission, from 2007 to the present. A comparison of IWC derived from the microphysical model and from the CIPS algorithm suggests that CIPS is capable of measuring 84% of the total ice content of PMC (for particle sizes exceeding ~23 nm). The accuracy for measuring the total (over all particle sizes) IWC is ±13 ±17%. The AIR approximation is less accurate for high IWC (>220 g-km\(^{-2}\)), but very-high mass clouds (IWC> 300 g-km\(^{-2}\)) are infrequent and do not influence seasonal averages of IWC. The accuracy of the AIR results for ensemble averages has a small systematic dependence on
mean particle size; the error depends inversely on the size of the ensemble. The inter-annual and hemispheric variations of IWC derived from CIPS and SBUV measurements throughout an entire 11-year period (2007-2018) will provide detailed information on PMC variability over the recent solar cycle 24.

**Figure captions**

- **Figure 1.** Linear regressions of model PMC albedo versus model PMC ice water content. The black points represent model clouds with \( r_{\text{eff}} < 40 \) nm. The red points apply to \( r_{\text{eff}} > 40 \) nm. The blue line is the linear least-squares fit to all points. (a) through (f) are for different scattering angles.

- **Figure 2.** Errors of ensemble averages, \( <\text{IWC}> \) using the AIR approximation, taken over all cloud model simulations for conditions of summer solstice. \( <\text{IWC}> \) is ‘thresholded’ by the variable IWC in the vertical axis, so that \( <\text{IWC}> \) applies to all values above IWC.

- **Figure 3.** Differences of IWC derived from the model cloud ‘data’ and the accurate IWC from the model, plotted against the 265-nm albedo (in G units, see text), evaluated at \( \text{SA}=90^\circ \). The error bars are the standard deviations in intervals of 2G.

- **Figure 4.** Illustration showing how IWC=98 g-km\(^{-2}\) (horizontal arrow) and \( A(90^\circ) = 16 \) G (thick downward arrow) are derived from the AIR method from a single measurement of cloud albedo at 60 G and \( \text{SA}=40^\circ \) (upward arrow). Each straight-line plot is calculated from Eq. (9).

- **Figure 5.** Comparison of CIPS \( A(90^\circ) \) (top) and \( <\text{IWC}> \) (bottom) calculated from the operational (OP) and AIR algorithms. Data points correspond to July northern hemisphere (NH) and January southern hemisphere (SH) averages in a 5-degree latitude bin centered at 70°. Left and right panels are for ascending and descending legs data, respectively.

- **Figure 6.** Polar projection map of IWC from CIPS, Day 180 (28 June 2012). Left and rights panels show the operational IWC product and the AIR result, respectively.

- **Figure 7.** Same as Fig. 6 except for 28 June 2016.

- **Figure 8.** Filled circles and dotted line: IWC (AIR) averaged over 1-deg latitude bins centered on 70° (green) and 80° (blue), and over 15 orbits (from which daily averages are derived). Solid line: standard L3C IWC averaged in the same way.

- **Figure 9.** AIR coefficients for three different sources of IWC and particle size: Model (solid line with open circles), CIPS (solid line), and SOFIE (dashed line).

- **Figure 10.** Contour plots of the AIR approximations for IWC versus cloud albedo (G) for the three data sources: (a) model, (b) SOFIE, and (c) CIPS.
Figure 11. Examples of SOFIE AIR regressions for two (specified) scattering angles, (a) 80° and (b) 110°.

Figure 12. Comparison of annually-averaged northern hemisphere July-averaged residuals (\langle IWC \rangle - \text{long-term mean}) derived by two independent methods from SBUV 273 nm albedo data. Black curve: \langle IWC \rangle derived from the AIR approximation. Blue curve: \langle IWC \rangle derived from the same SBUV albedo data, but including mean particle size variations (see text). A three-year smoothing has also been applied.

Data Availability

The CIPS operational PMC data, along with the AIR data, can be found at [http://lasp.colorado.edu/aim/](http://lasp.colorado.edu/aim/).

Author Contribution

Author G.T. formulated the AIR approximation, and derived the AIR coefficients from the microphysical model (provided by author C.B.), and from the AIM SOFIE data ([http://sofie.gats-inc.com/sofie/index.php](http://sofie.gats-inc.com/sofie/index.php)). Authors J.L. and C.R. calculated the AIR coefficients from the CIPS data.

Disclaimer

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Albedo-Ice Regression, SD-WACCM/CARMA microphysical model

Figure 1
Figure 2

AIR Error in IWC: Model

Scattering Angle (°)

IWC (g km⁻²)
CIPS−Model IWC Differences

% Difference

Albedo (Φ=90°, G)

Figure 3
AIR Retrieval of PMC IWC

IWC (g km$^{-2}$)

Albedo (G)

Figure 4
Comparison of OP retrieval to AIR: DFS=[10,40] ; Lat = 70°

Figure 5
Figure 6

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Figure 10

(a) PMC IWC from AIR:CIPS
(b) PMC IWC from AIR:SOFIE
(c) PMC IWC from AIR:Model

Scat Angle (°)
AIM SOFIE IWC vs 265 nm Albedo, sc angle = 80°

AIM SOFIE IWC vs 265 nm Albedo, sc angle = 110°

Figure 11
