

BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Lerwick Observatory

Monthly Magnetic Bulletin

December 2010

10/12/LE



SHETLAND ISLANDS



British Geological Survey

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

LERWICK OBSERVATORY MAGNETIC DATA

1. Introduction

Lerwick observatory is one of three geomagnetic observatories in the UK operated and maintained by the British Geological Survey (BGS).

This bulletin is published to provide rapid access to the provisional geomagnetic observatory results. The information is freely available for personal, academic, educational and non-commercial research or use. Magnetic observatory data are presented as a series of plots of one-minute, hourly and daily values, followed by tabulations of monthly values, reports of rapid variations and geomagnetic activity indices. The operation of the observatory and presentation of data are described in the rest of this section.

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Internet: www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk

2. Position

The observatory is situated on a ridge of high ground about 2.5 km to the SW of the port of Lerwick in Shetland. The observatory co-ordinates are:

Geographic: 60.133°N 358.816°E
Geomagnetic: 61.891°N 88.887°E
Height above mean sea level: 85 m

The geomagnetic co-ordinates are approximations, calculated using the 11th generation International Geomagnetic Reference Field (IGRF) at epoch 2010.5. On-line access to models (including IGRF), charts and navigational data are available at www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/navigation.html

3. The Observatory Operation

3.1 GDAS

The observatory operates under the control of the Geomagnetic Data Acquisition System (GDAS), which was developed by BGS staff, installed in 2002, and became fully operational in January

2003. The data acquisition software, running on QNX operated computers, controls the data logging and the communications.

There are two sets of sensors used for making magnetic measurements. A tri-axial linear-core fluxgate magnetometer, manufactured by the Danish Meteorological Institute, is used to measure the variations in the horizontal (*H*) and vertical (*Z*) components of the field. The third sensor is oriented perpendicular to these, and measures variations, which are proportional to the changes in declination (*D*). Measurements are made at a rate of 1 Hz.

In addition to the fluxgate sensors there is a proton precession magnetometer (PPM) making measurements of the absolute total field intensity (*F*) at a rate of 0.1Hz.

The raw unfiltered data are retrieved automatically via Internet connections to the BGS office in Edinburgh in near real-time. The fluxgate data are filtered to produce one-minute values using a 61-point cosine filter and the total field intensity samples are filtered using a 7-point cosine filter. The one-minute values provide input for various data products in the Geomagnetism Information and Forecast Service (GIFS), available on-line at www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/on_line_gifs.html

3.2 Back-up Systems

There are two other fully independent identical systems, GDAS 2 and GDAS 3, operating at the observatory. The data from these are also processed in near real-time and used for quality control purposes. They are also used to fill any gaps or replace any corrupt values in the primary system, GDAS 1.

3.3 Absolute Observations

The GDAS fluxgate magnetometers accurately measure variations in the components of the geomagnetic field, but not the absolute magnitudes. Two sets of absolute measurements of the field are made manually once per week. A fluxgate sensor mounted on a theodolite is used to determine *D* and inclination (*I*); the GDAS PPM measurements, with a site difference correction applied, are used for *F*. The absolute observations are used in conjunction with the GDAS variometer measurements to produce a continuous record of the absolute values of the geomagnetic field elements as if they had been measured at the observatory reference pillar.

4. Observatory Results

The data presented in the bulletin are in the form of plots and tabulations described in the following sections.

4.1 Absolute Observations

The absolute observation measurements made during the month are tabulated. Also included are the corresponding baseline values, which are the differences between the absolute measurements and the variometer measurements of D , H and Z (in the sense absolute–variometer). These are also plotted (markers) along with the derived preliminary daily baseline values (line) throughout the year. Daily mean differences between the measured absolute F and the F computed from the baseline corrected H and Z values are plotted in the fourth panel (in the sense measured–derived). The bottom panel shows the daily mean temperature in the fluxgate chamber.

4.2 Summary magnetograms

Small-scale magnetograms are plotted which allow the month's data to be viewed at a glance. They are plotted 16 days to a page and show the one-minute variations in D , H and Z . The scales are shown on the right-hand side of the page. On disturbed days the scales are multiplied by a factor, which is indicated above the panel for that day. The variations are centred on the monthly mean value, shown on the left side of the page.

4.3 Magnetograms

The daily magnetograms are plotted using one-minute values of D , H and Z from the fluxgate sensors, with any gaps filled using back-up data. The magnetograms are plotted to a variable scale; scale bars are shown to the right of each plot. The absolute level (the monthly mean value) is indicated on the left side of the plots.

4.4 Hourly Mean Value Plots

Hourly mean values of D , H and Z for the past 12 months are plotted in 27-day segments corresponding to the Bartels solar rotation number. Magnetic disturbances associated with active regions and/or coronal holes on the Sun may recur after 27 days: the same is true for geomagnetically quiet intervals. Plotting the data in this way highlights this recurrence. Diurnal variations are also clear in these plots and the amplitude changes throughout the year highlight the seasonal changes. Longer term secular variation is also illustrated.

Full lists of the UK observatory hourly mean values from 1983 to the present day are available at www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/gifs/hourly_means.html.

4.5 Daily and Monthly Mean Values

Daily mean values of D , H , Z and F are plotted throughout the year. In addition, a table of monthly mean values of all the geomagnetic elements is provided. These values depend on accurate specification of the fluxgate sensor baselines. It is anticipated that these provisional values will not be altered by more than a few nT or tenths of arcminutes before being made definitive at the end of the year.

4.6 Rapid Variations

Charged particles stream from the Sun in the solar wind. The solar wind interacts with the geomagnetic field to create a cavity, the magnetosphere, in which the field is confined. When a region of enhanced velocity and/or density in the solar wind arrives at the dayside boundary of the magnetosphere (at about 10 earth radii) the boundary is pushed towards the Earth. Currents set up on the boundary of the magnetosphere can cause an abrupt change in the geomagnetic field measured on the ground and this is recorded on observatory magnetograms as a sudden impulse (*si*). If, following an *si*, there is a change in the rhythm of activity, the *si* is termed a storm sudden commencement (*ssc*). A classical magnetic storm exhibiting initial, main and recovery phases (shown by, for instance, the *Dst* ring current index) can often occur after a *ssc*, in which case the start of the storm is taken as the time of the *ssc*.

Solar flares, seen at optical wavelengths as a sudden brightening of a small region of the Sun's surface, are also responsible for increased X-ray emissions. These X-rays cause increased ionisation in the ionosphere, which leads to absorption of short-wave radio signals. A solar flare effect (*sfe*), or "crochet", may be observed on a magnetogram during geomagnetically quiet times. It is a relatively short-term change (tens of minutes) to the normal diurnal variation and can vary in size (tens of nT) depending on local time (LT), geomagnetic latitude and solar zenith angle.

4.7 Local geomagnetic activity indices

The Observatory K index. This summarises geomagnetic activity at an observatory by assigning a code, an integer in the range 0 to 9, to each 3-hour Universal Time (UT) interval. The index for each 3-hour UT interval is determined from the maximum range in H or D (scaled in nT), with allowance made for the regular (undisturbed) diurnal variation. The conversion from range to an index value is made using a quasi-logarithmic scale, with the scale values dependent on the geomagnetic latitude of the observatory. The lower bounds (in nT) for the classification of each period at Lerwick are:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	10	20	40	80	140	240	400	660	1000

The K index retains the LT and seasonal dependence of activity associated with the position of the observatory. The 3-hourly K indices for the month are tabulated and also plotted as a histogram. All UK observatory K indices are available at www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/gifs/k_indices.html

4.8 Global geomagnetic activity indices

The aa index. A number of 3-hour geomagnetic indices are computed by combining K indices from networks of observatories to characterise global activity levels and to eliminate LT and seasonal effects. The simplest of these is the aa index, computed using the K indices from two approximately antipodal observatories: Hartland in the UK and Canberra in Australia. The aa index is calculated from linearisations of the Hartland and Canberra K indices, and has units of nT. The 3-hourly aa indices are tabulated along with the daily mean value of aa (denoted Aa), the mean values of aa for the intervals 00-12UT (Aa_{am}) and 12-24UT (Aa_{pm}) and the monthly mean value. The 3-hourly aa indices for the month are also plotted as a histogram.

Although the aa index is based on data from only two observatories, provided averages over 12 hours or longer are used, the index is strongly correlated with the ap and am indices, which are derived using data from more extensive observatory networks.

The aa indices listed in this bulletin are available at www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/gifs/aaindex.html as well as the full data set from 1868.

Definitive aa are published by the International Service for Geomagnetic Indices, LATMOS, 4 Avenue de Neptune, F-94107 Saint Maur Cedex, France.

5. Conditions of Use

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Commercial users can contact the geomagnetism team for information on the range of applications and services offered. Full contact details are available at www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/staff.html.

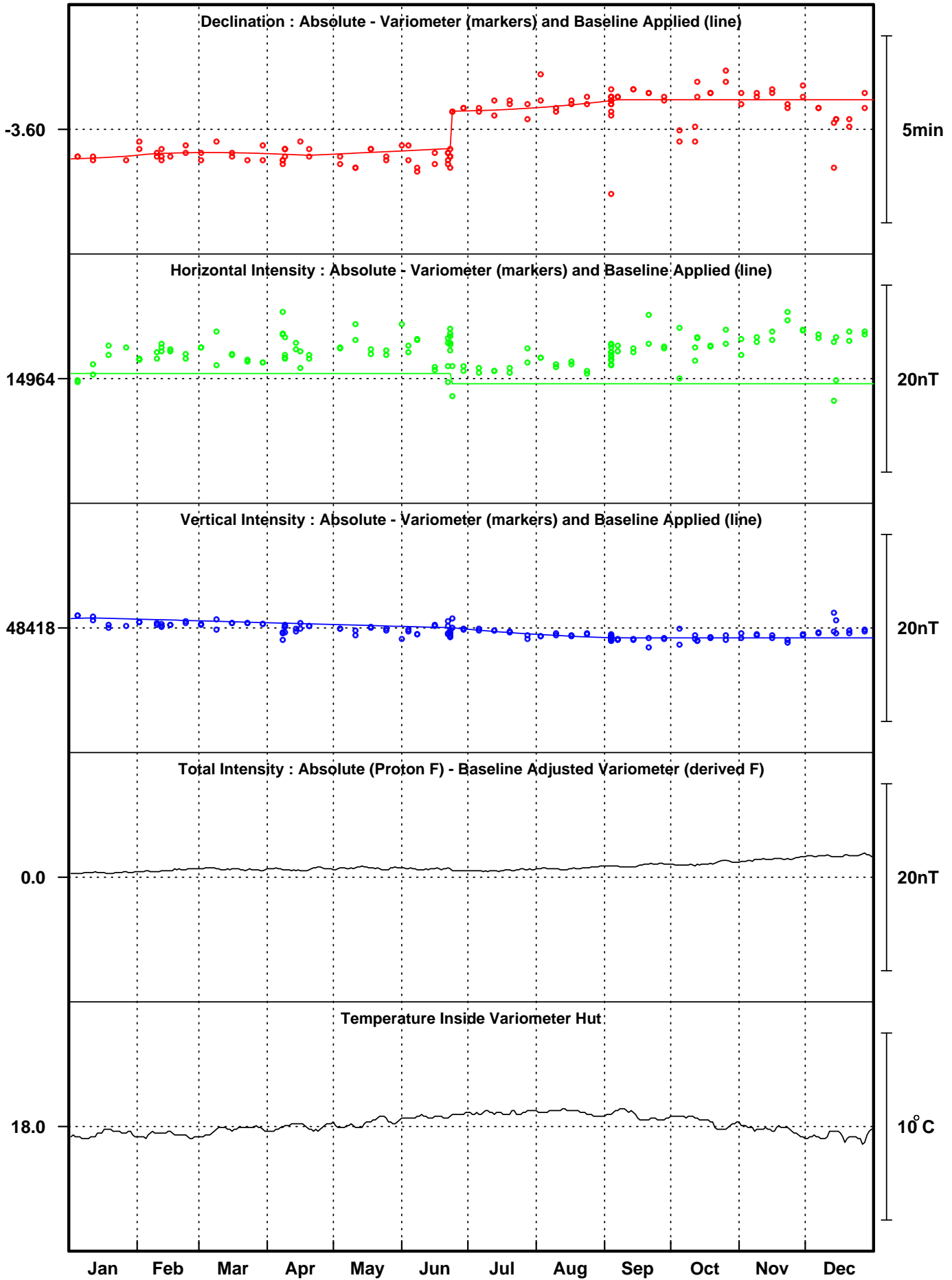
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LERWICK OBSERVATORY

ABSOLUTE OBSERVATIONS

Date	Day Number	Declination			Inclination		Total Field		Horizontal Intensity		Vertical Intensity		Observer
		Time (UT)	Absolute (°)	Baseline (°)	Time (UT)	Absolute (°)	Site difference (nT)	Absolute corrected (nT)	Absolute (nT)	Baseline (nT)	Absolute (nT)	Baseline (nT)	
06-Dec-10	340	09:38	-2.8097	-3.0283	10:07	72.8022	-0.2	50772.9	15012.1	14968.2	48502.8	48417.7	OB
06-Dec-10	340	10:28	-2.8291	-3.0283	10:43	72.8042	-0.2	50772.0	15010.1	14968.6	48502.5	48417.6	OB
13-Dec-10	347	09:34	-2.8178	-3.0350	09:48	72.8138	-0.2	50782.0	15005.0	14967.8	48514.6	48417.8	MB
13-Dec-10	347	09:59	-2.8399	-3.0550	10:10	72.8240	-0.2	50781.8	14996.2	14961.5	48517.0	48419.8	MB
14-Dec-10	348	09:27	-2.8265	-3.0333	09:43	72.8206	-0.2	50780.7	14998.9	14968.3	48515.1	48417.6	MB
14-Dec-10	348	09:54	-2.8149	-3.0333	10:06	72.8351	-0.2	50779.9	14986.3	14963.7	48518.2	48419.0	MB
20-Dec-10	354	09:25	-2.8485	-3.0367	09:38	72.8086	-0.2	50769.8	15005.7	14968.9	48501.5	48417.6	MB
20-Dec-10	354	09:47	-2.8563	-3.0333	09:59	72.8098	-0.2	50769.7	15004.7	14967.9	48501.7	48417.9	MB
27-Dec-10	361	09:25	-2.7944	-3.0217	09:48	72.8123	-0.2	50778.3	15005.1	14968.6	48510.6	48418.0	OB
27-Dec-10	361	10:04	-2.8089	-3.0283	10:29	72.8105	-0.2	50776.9	15006.3	14968.9	48508.8	48417.8	OB

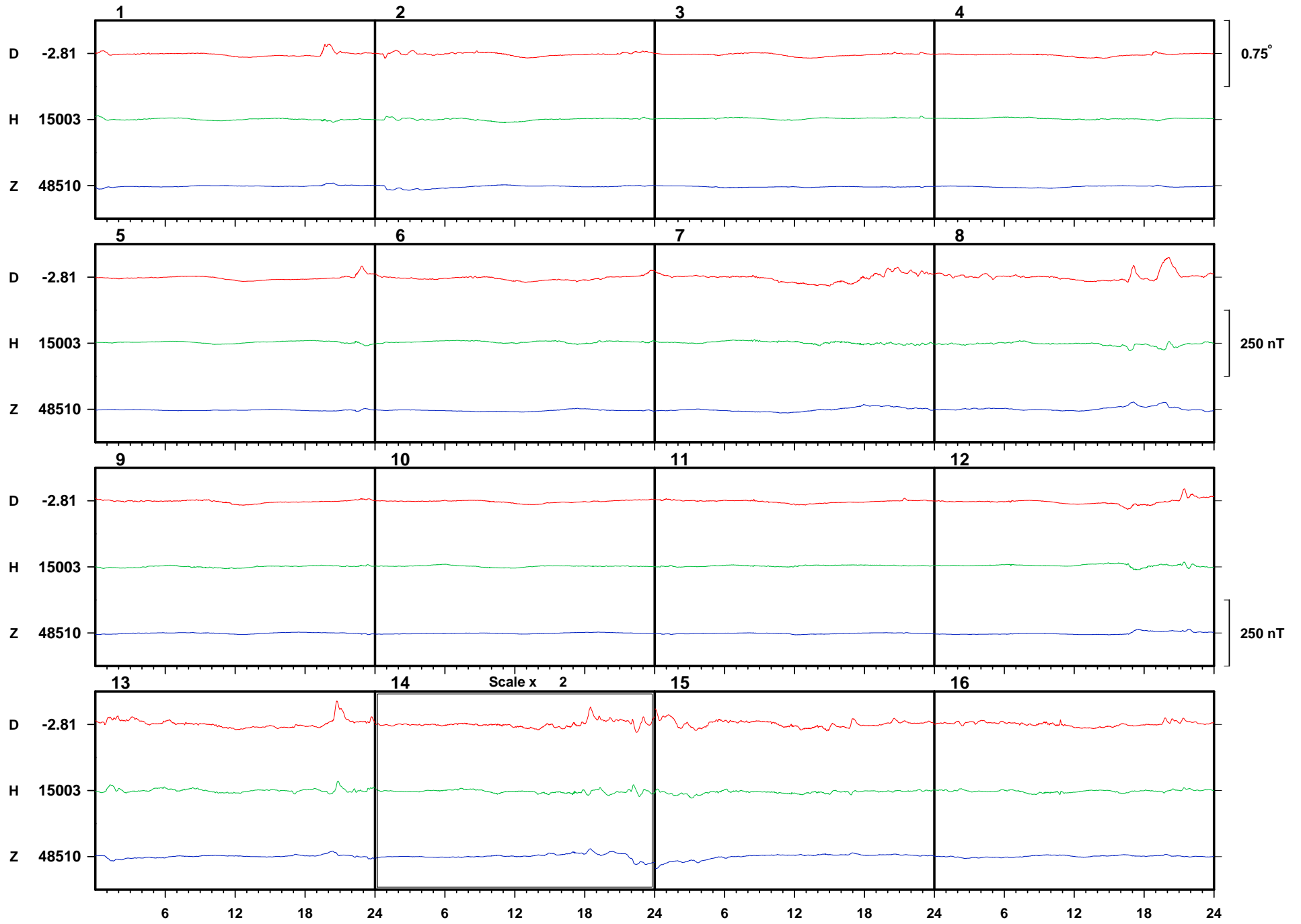
Lerwick 2010

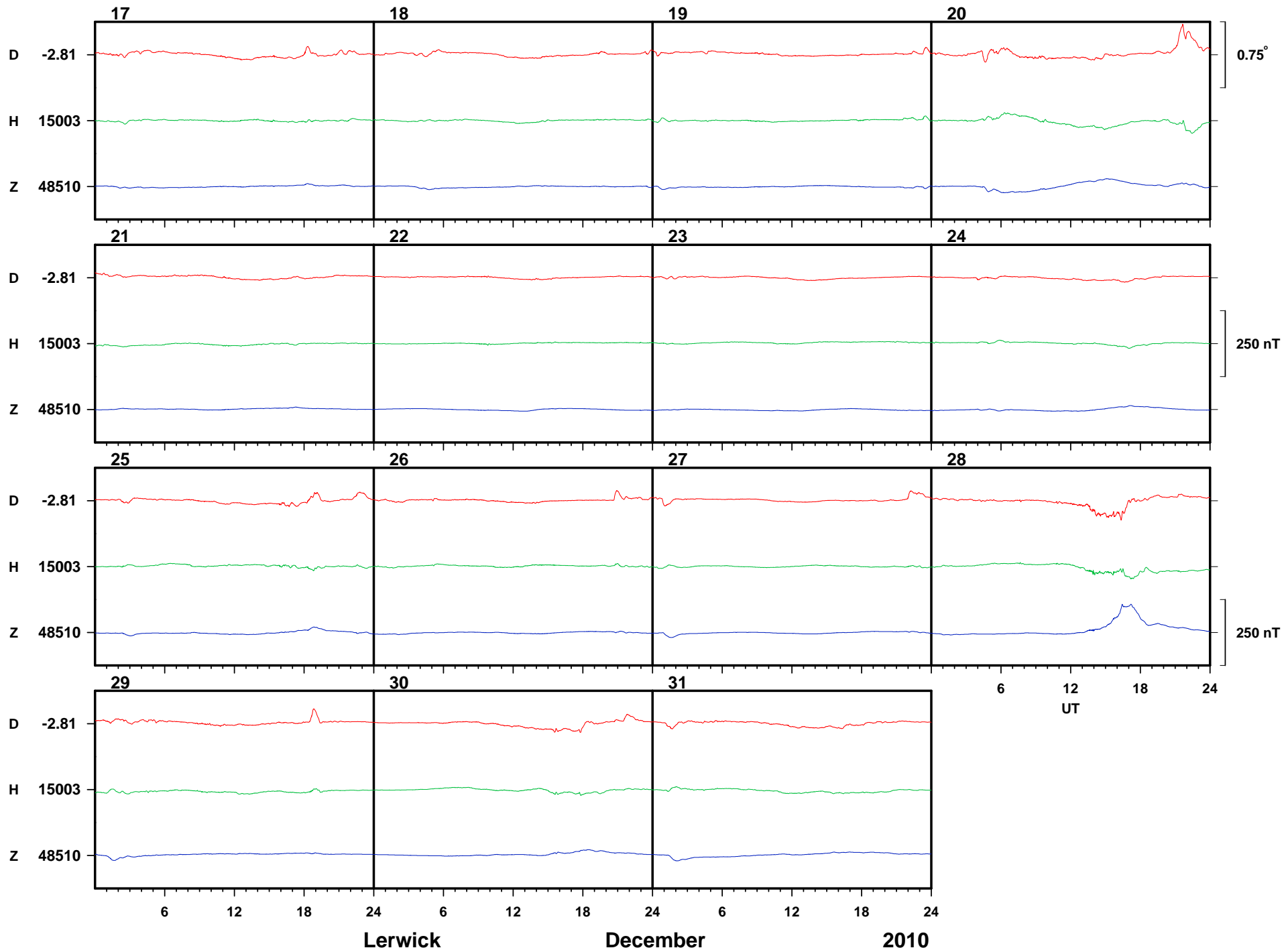


Lerwick

December

2010

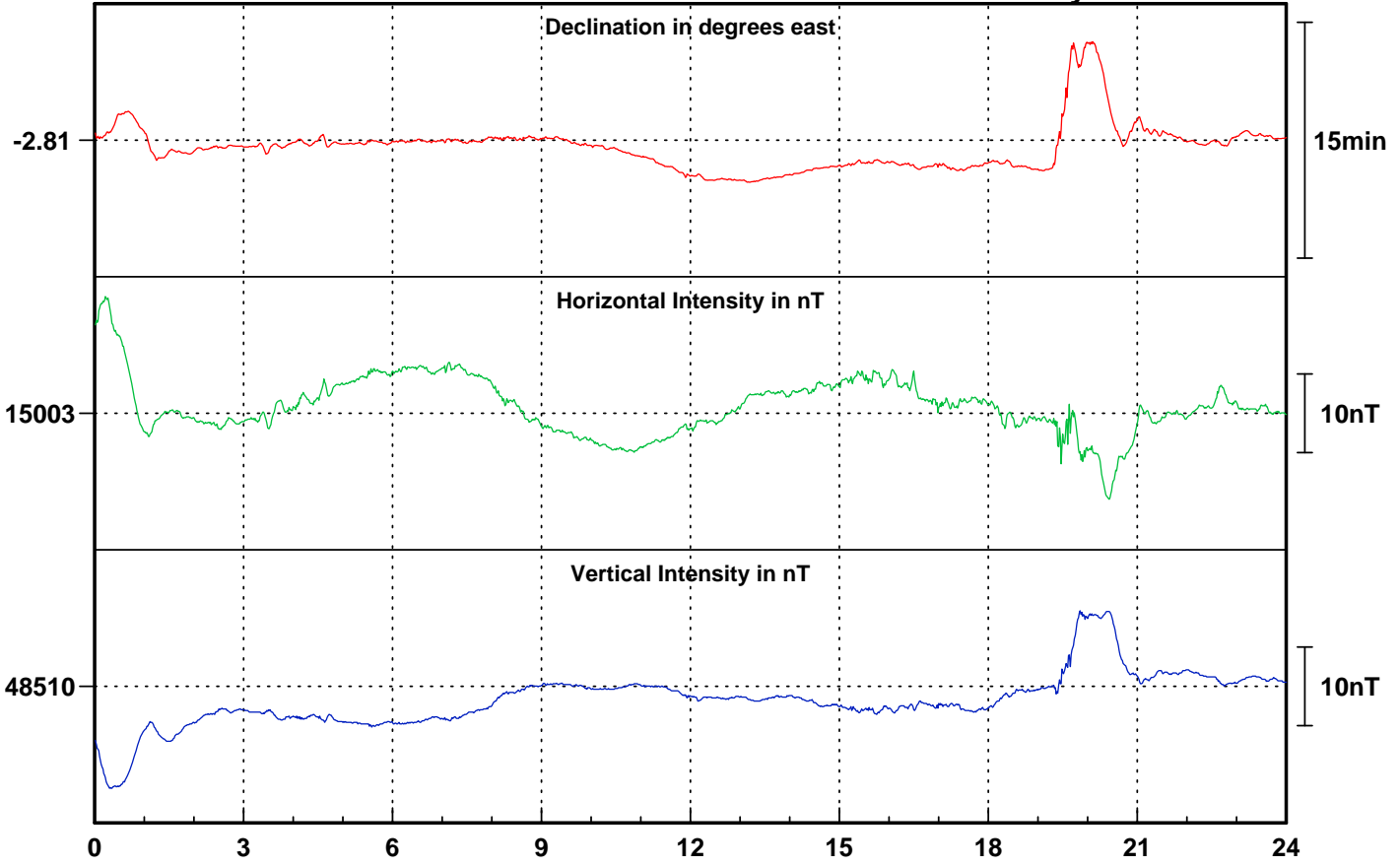




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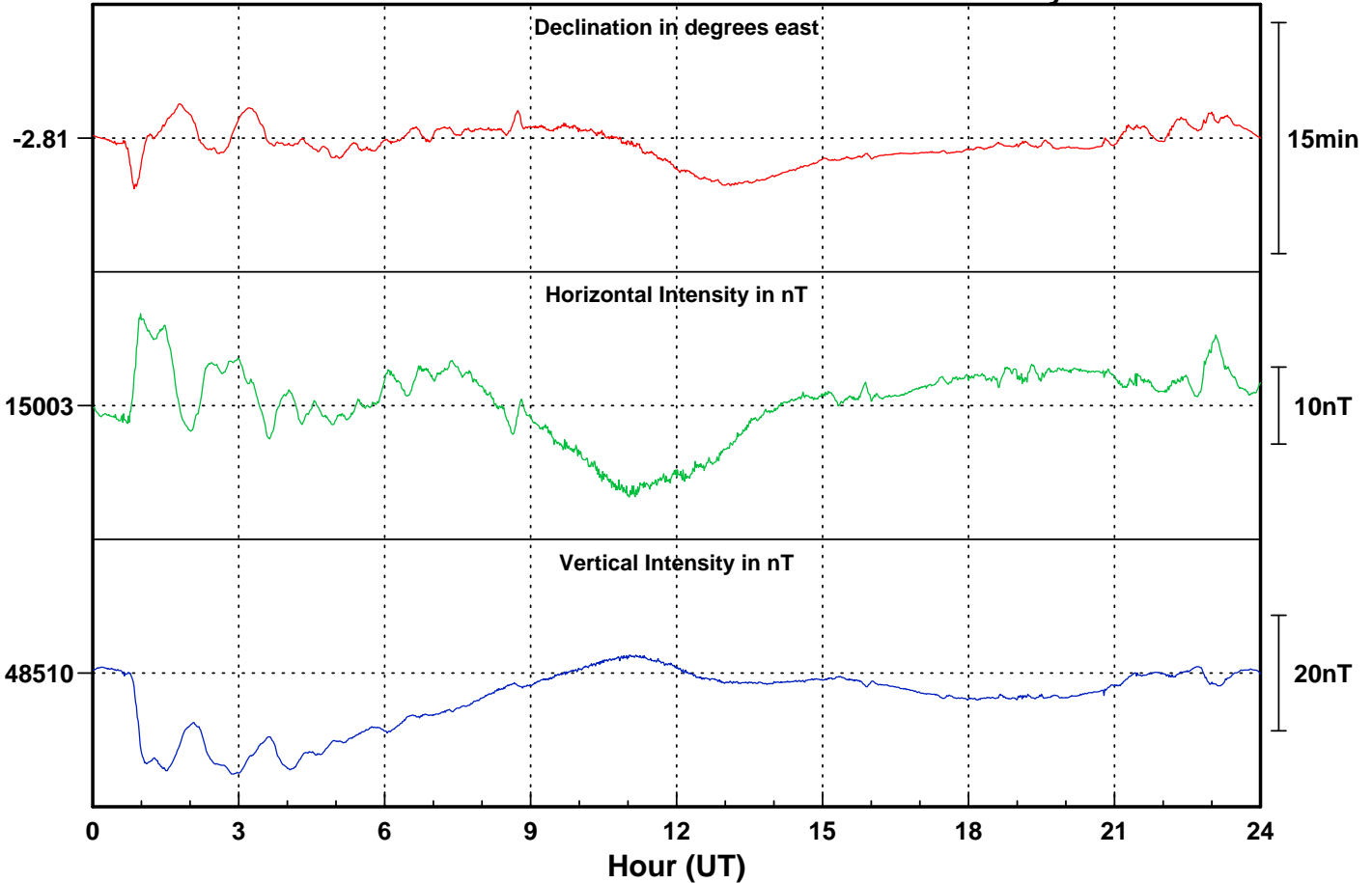
Lerwick

Day number: 335



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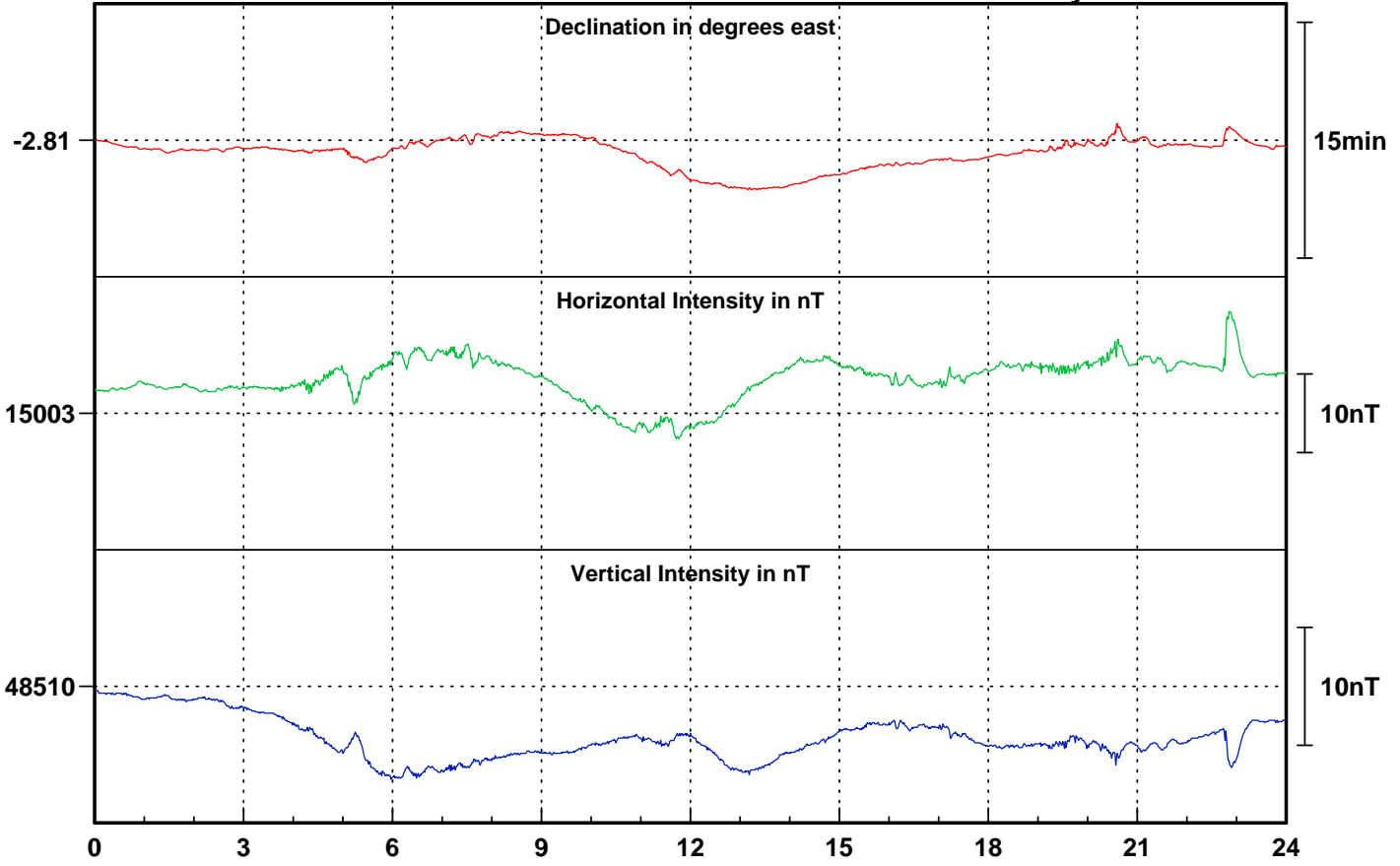
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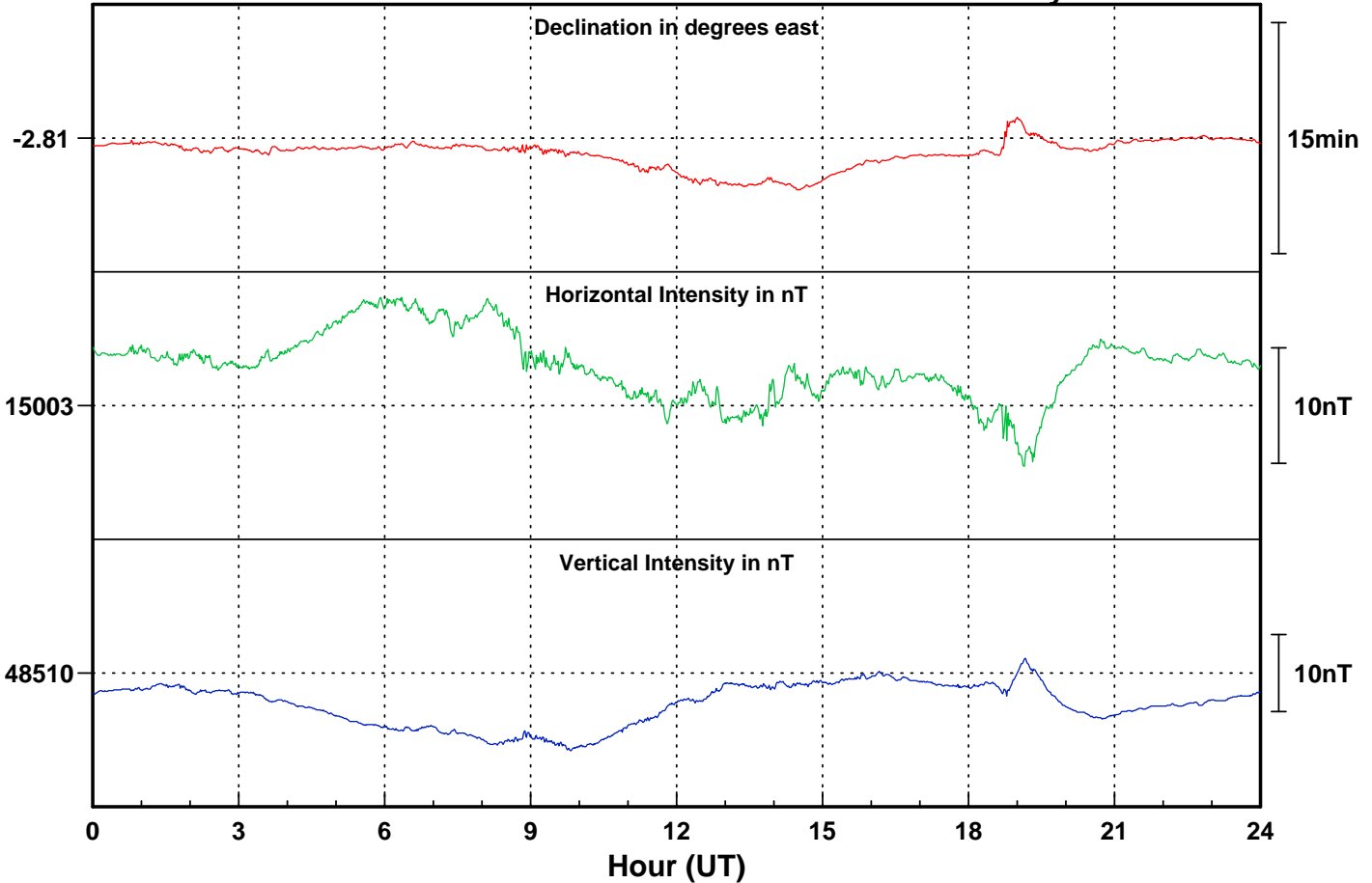
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Day number: 337



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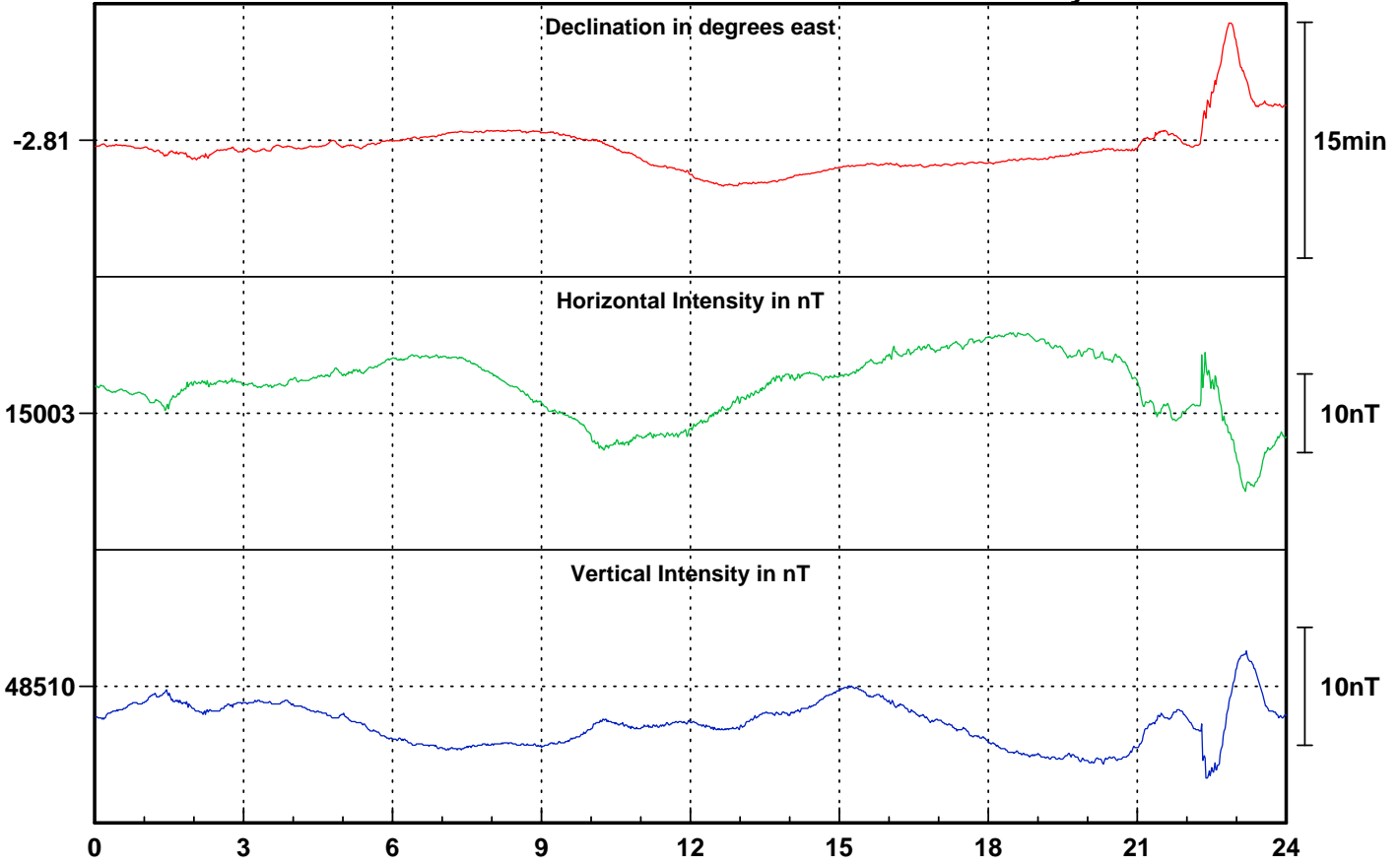
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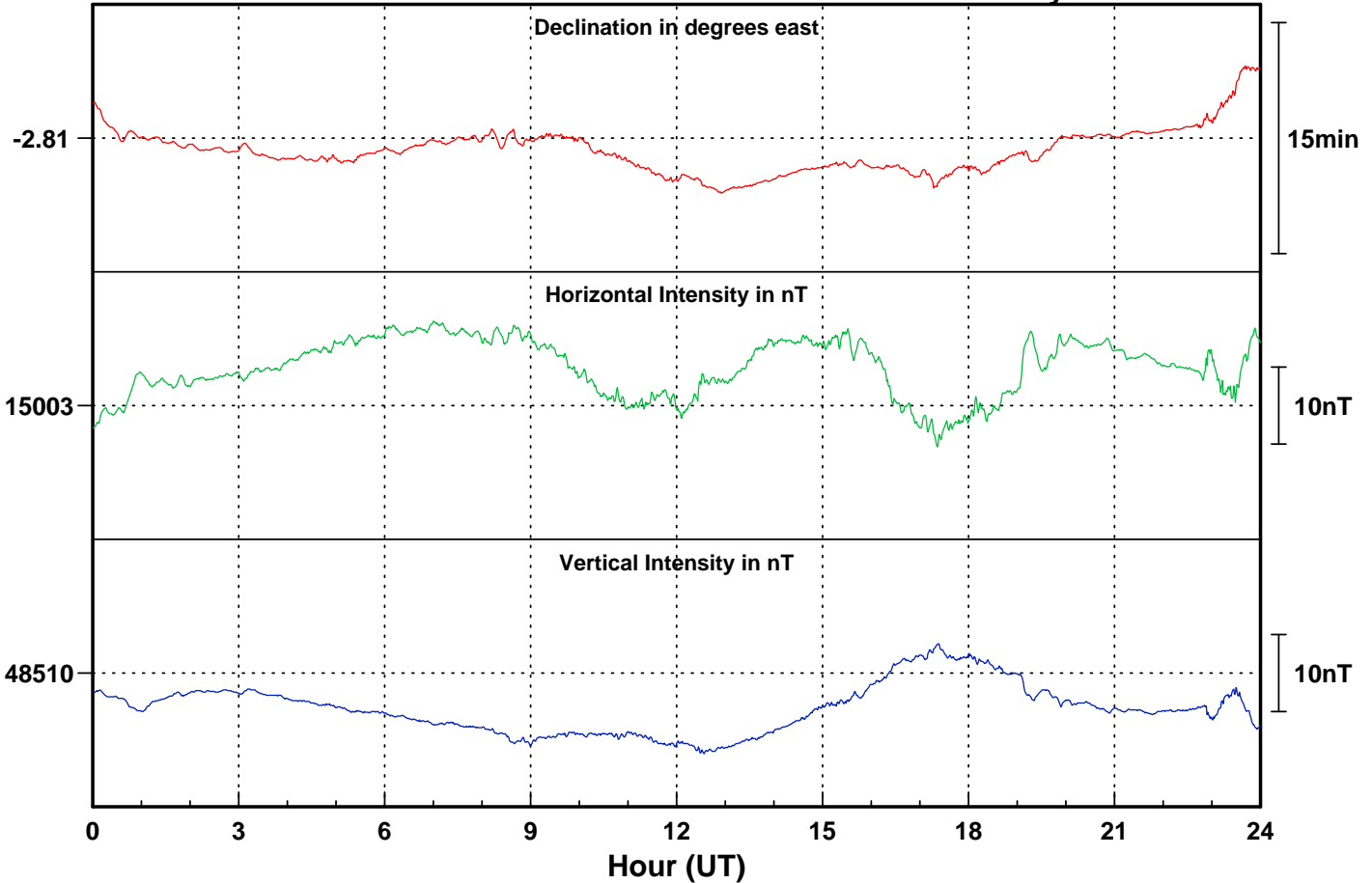
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Day number: 339



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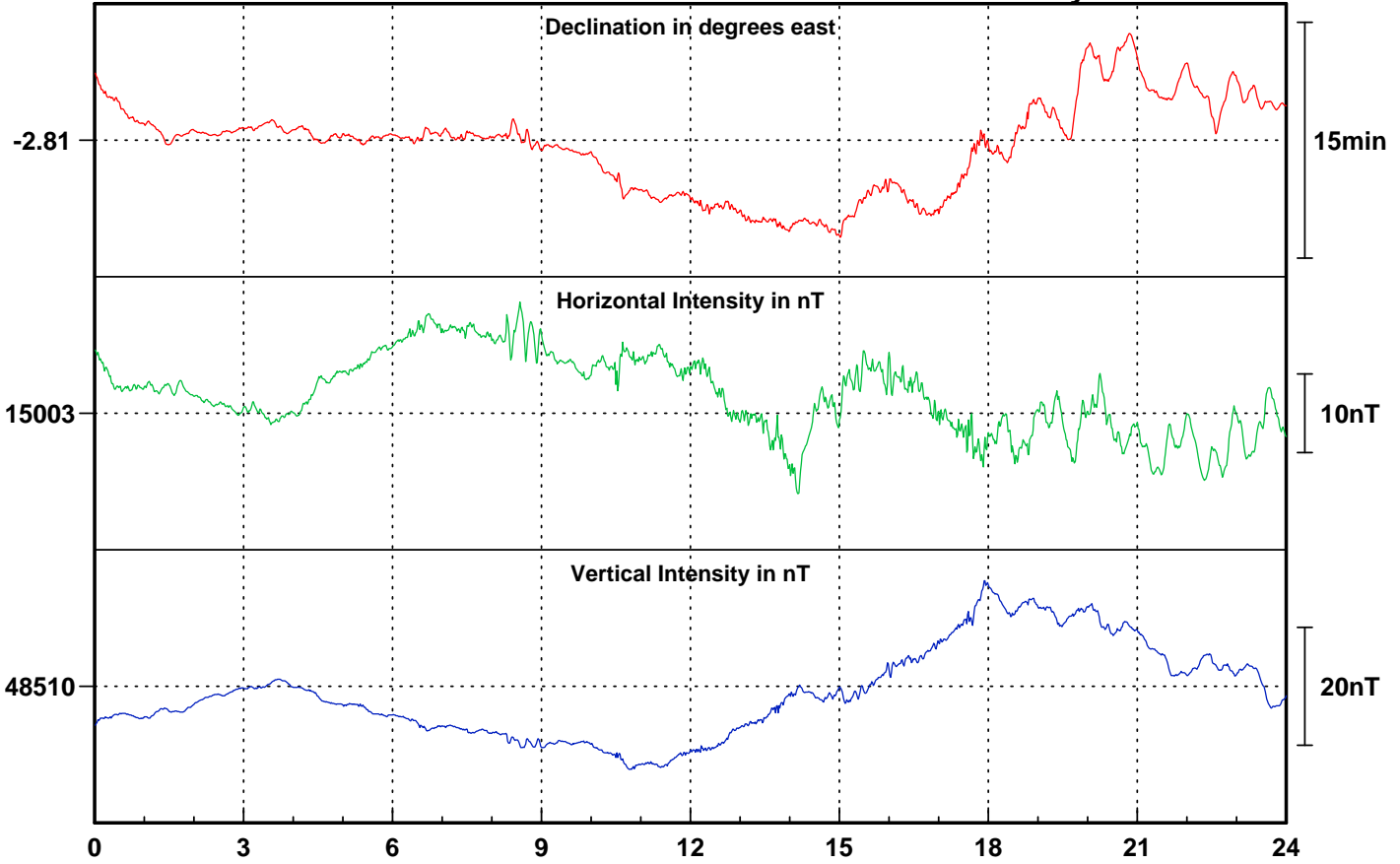
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Date: 07-12-2010

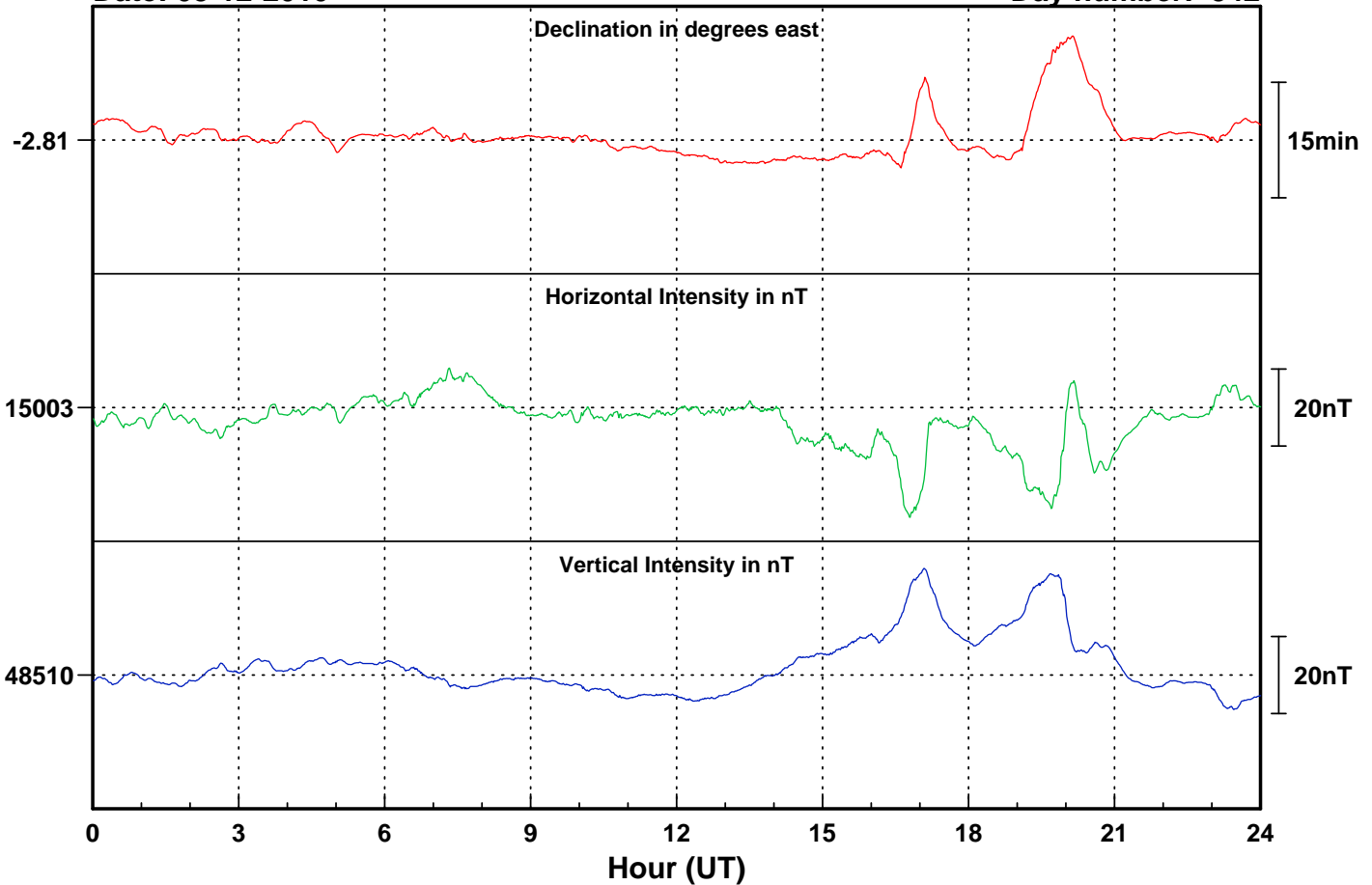
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Day number: 341



Date: 08-12-2010

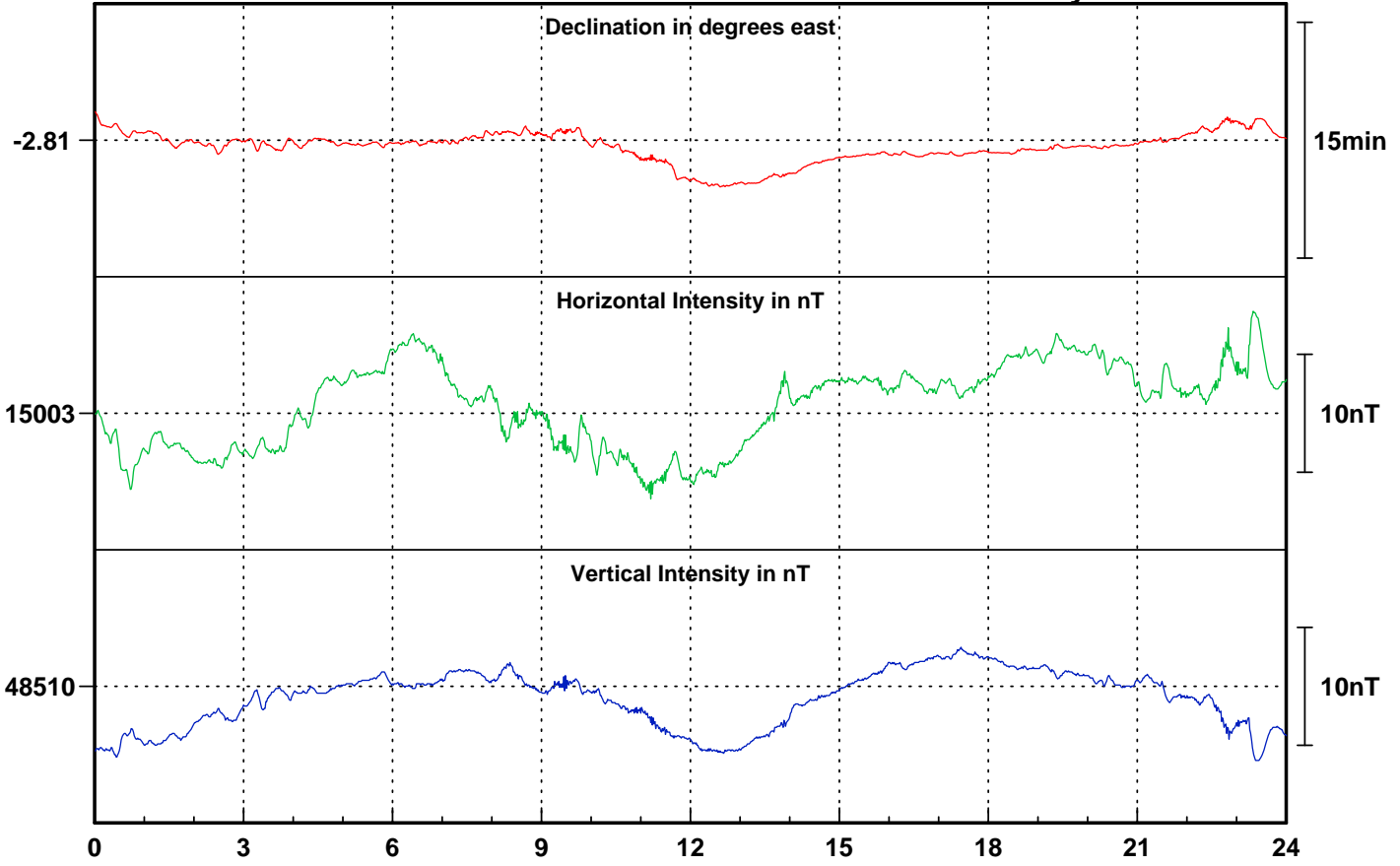
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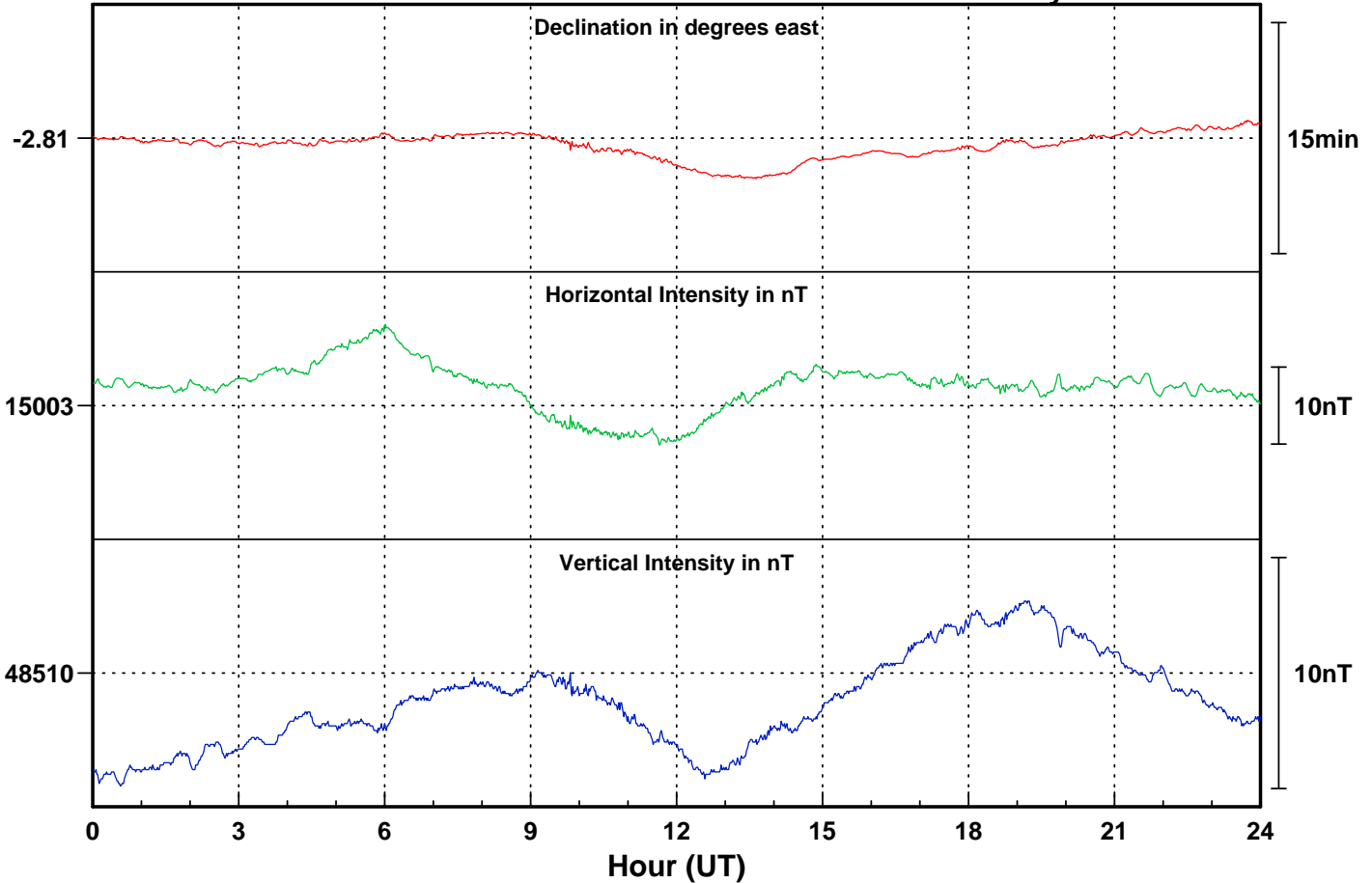
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Day number: 343



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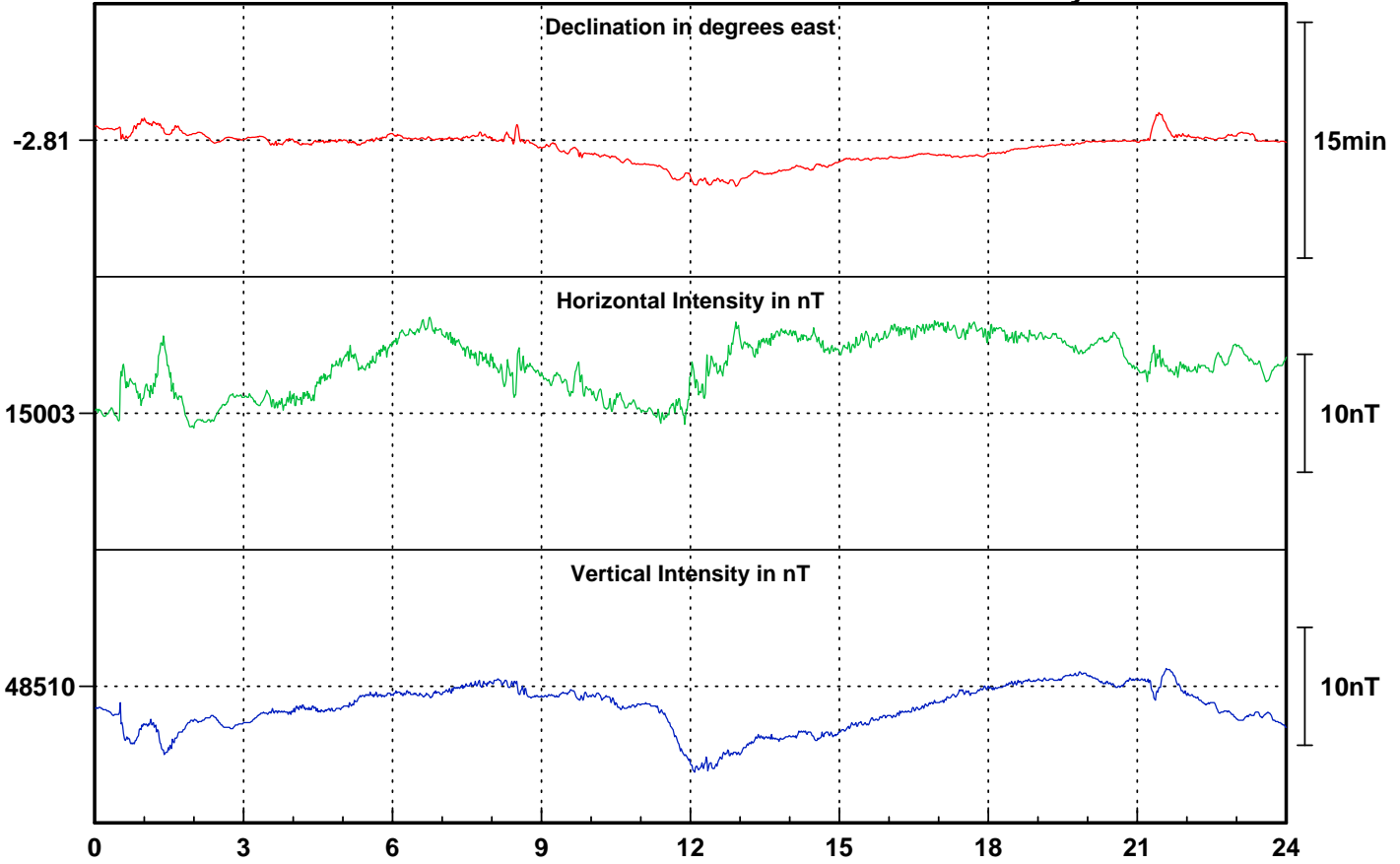
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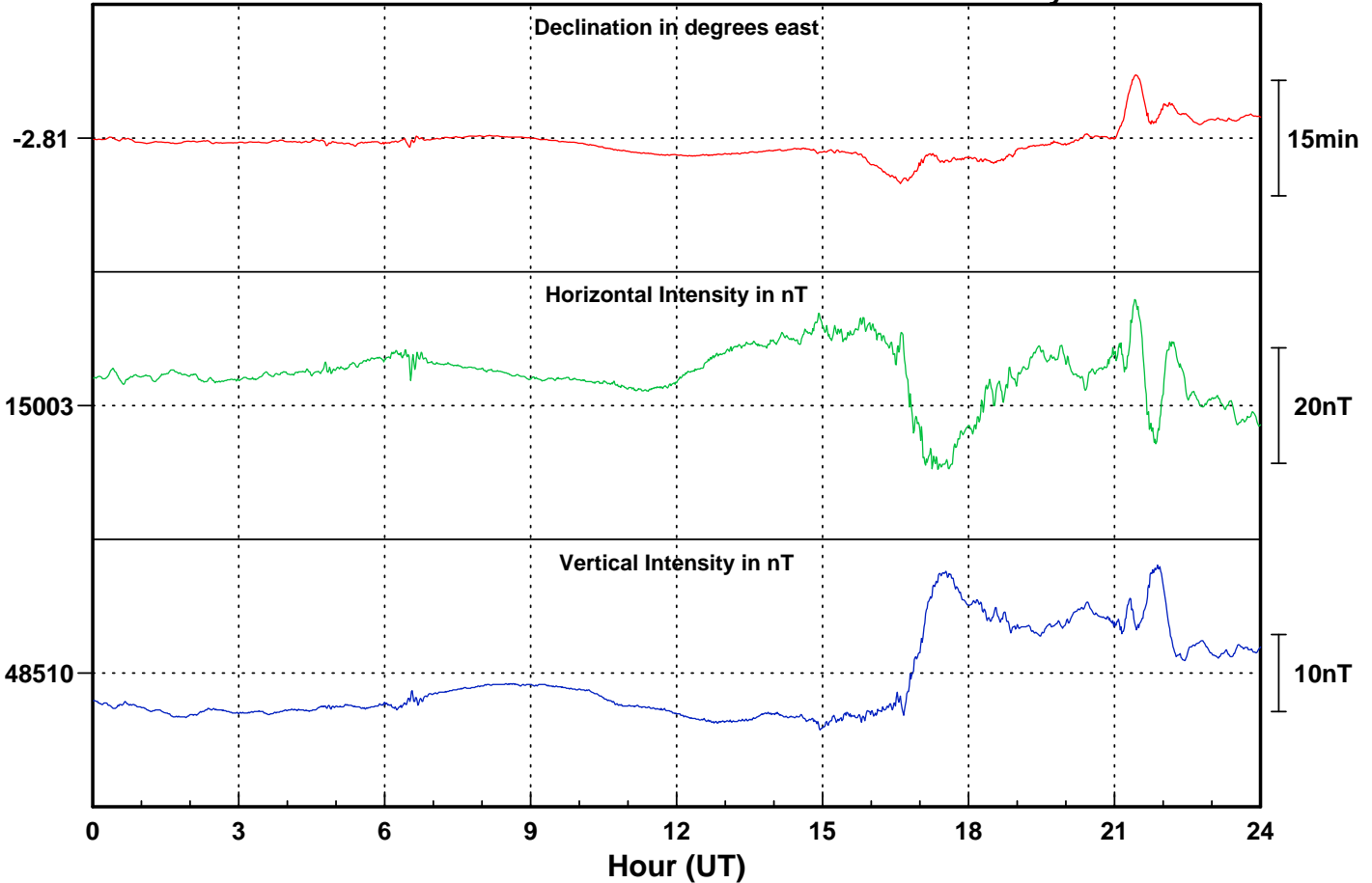
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Day number: 345



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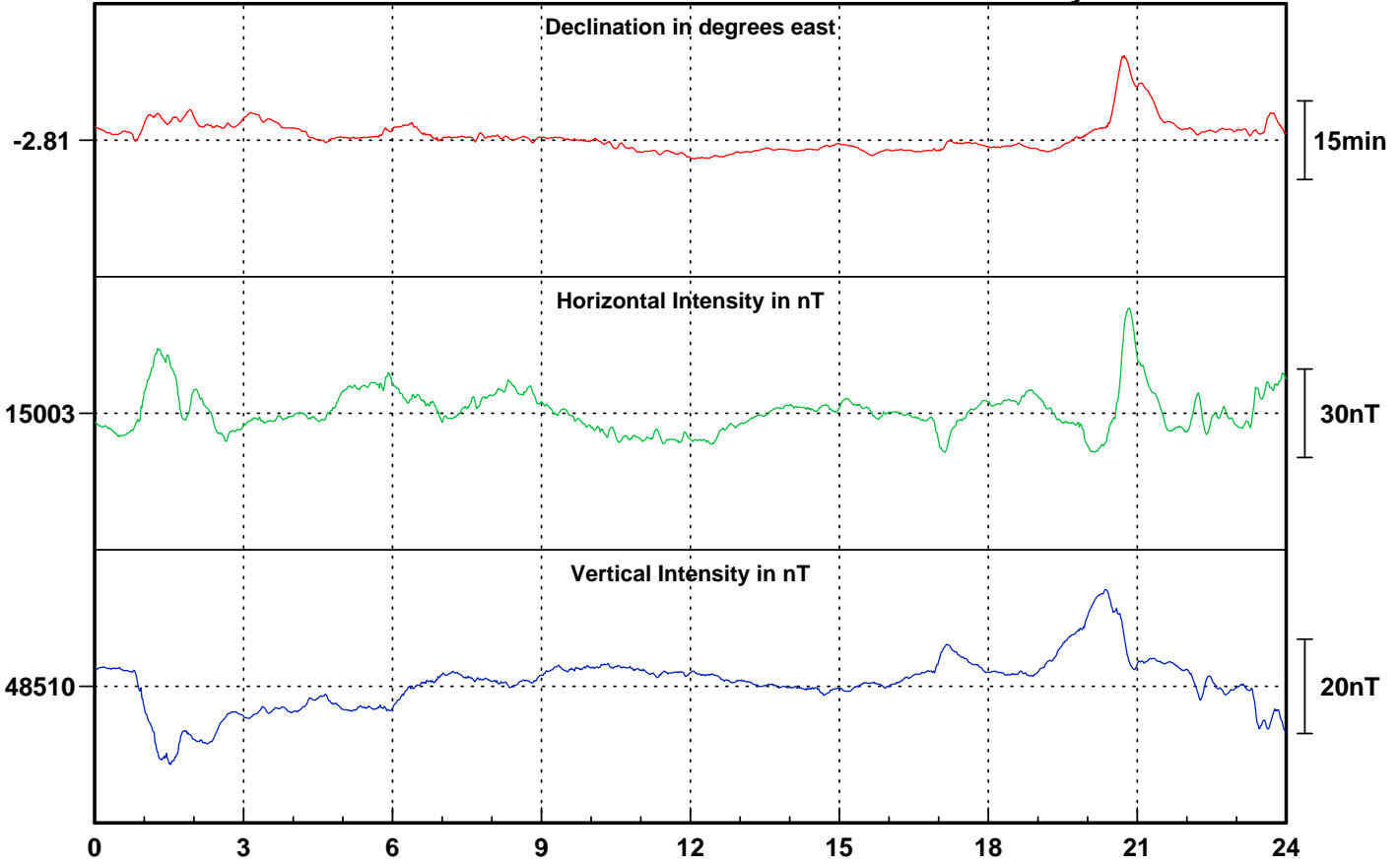
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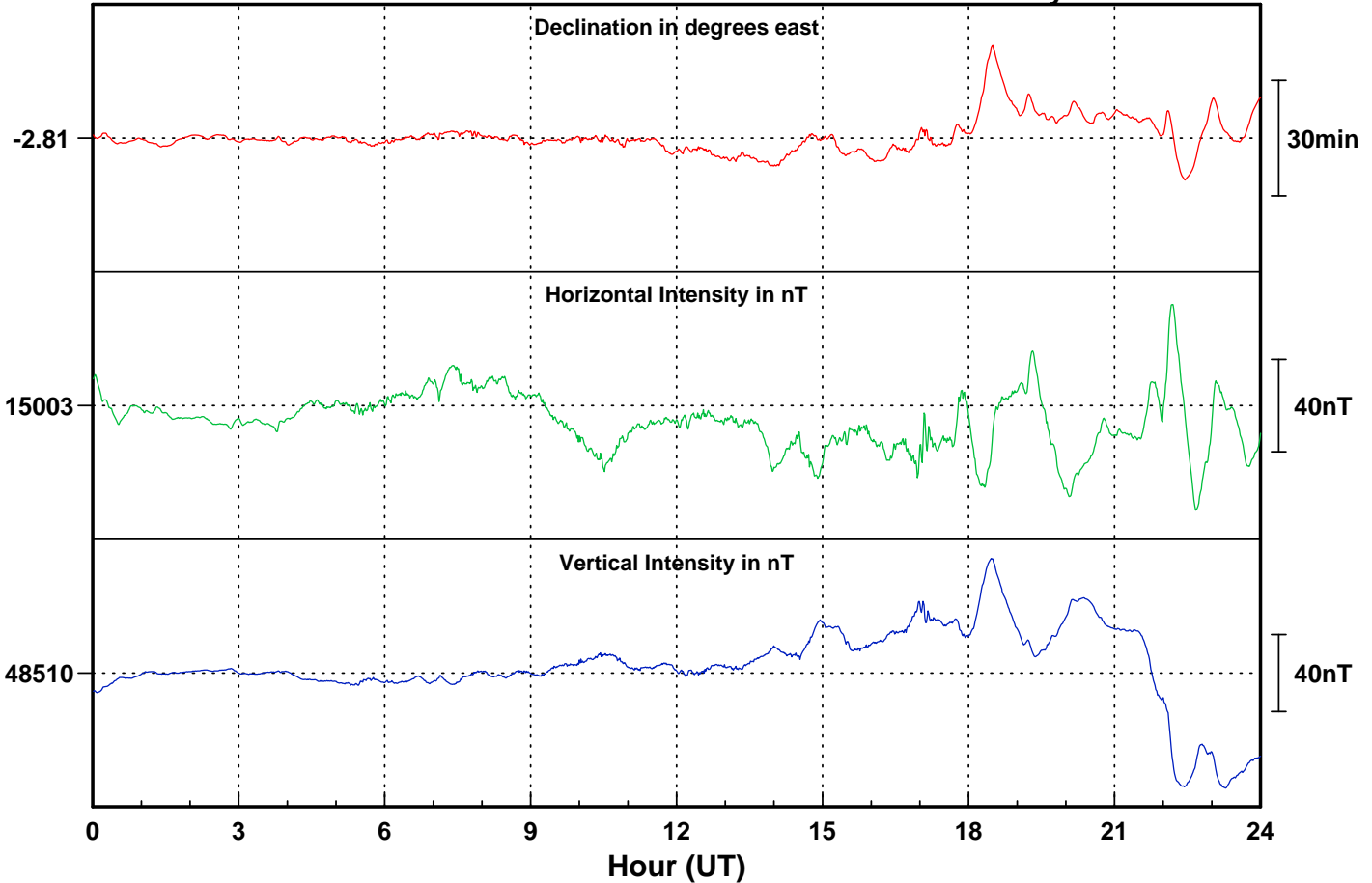
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Day number: 347



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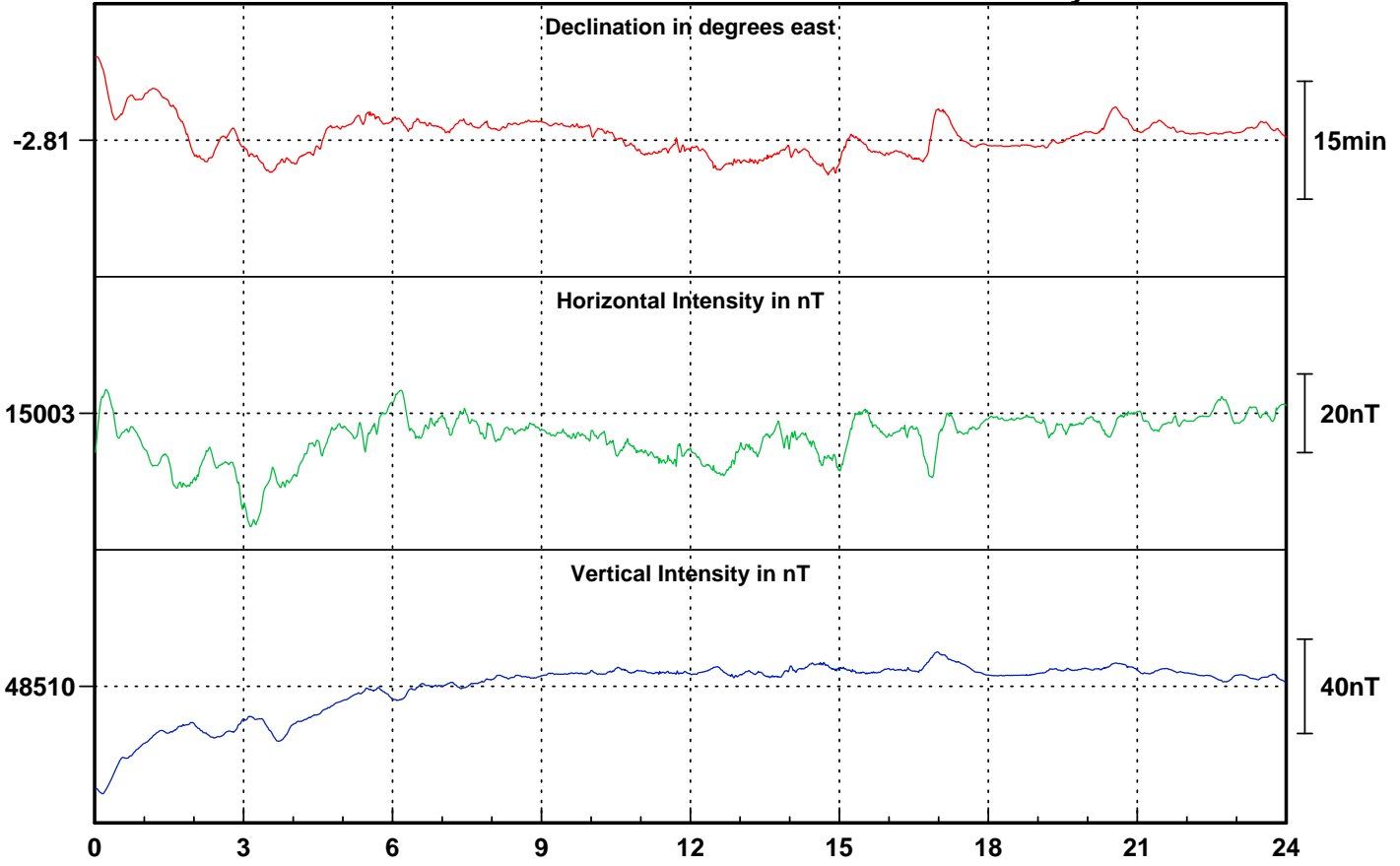
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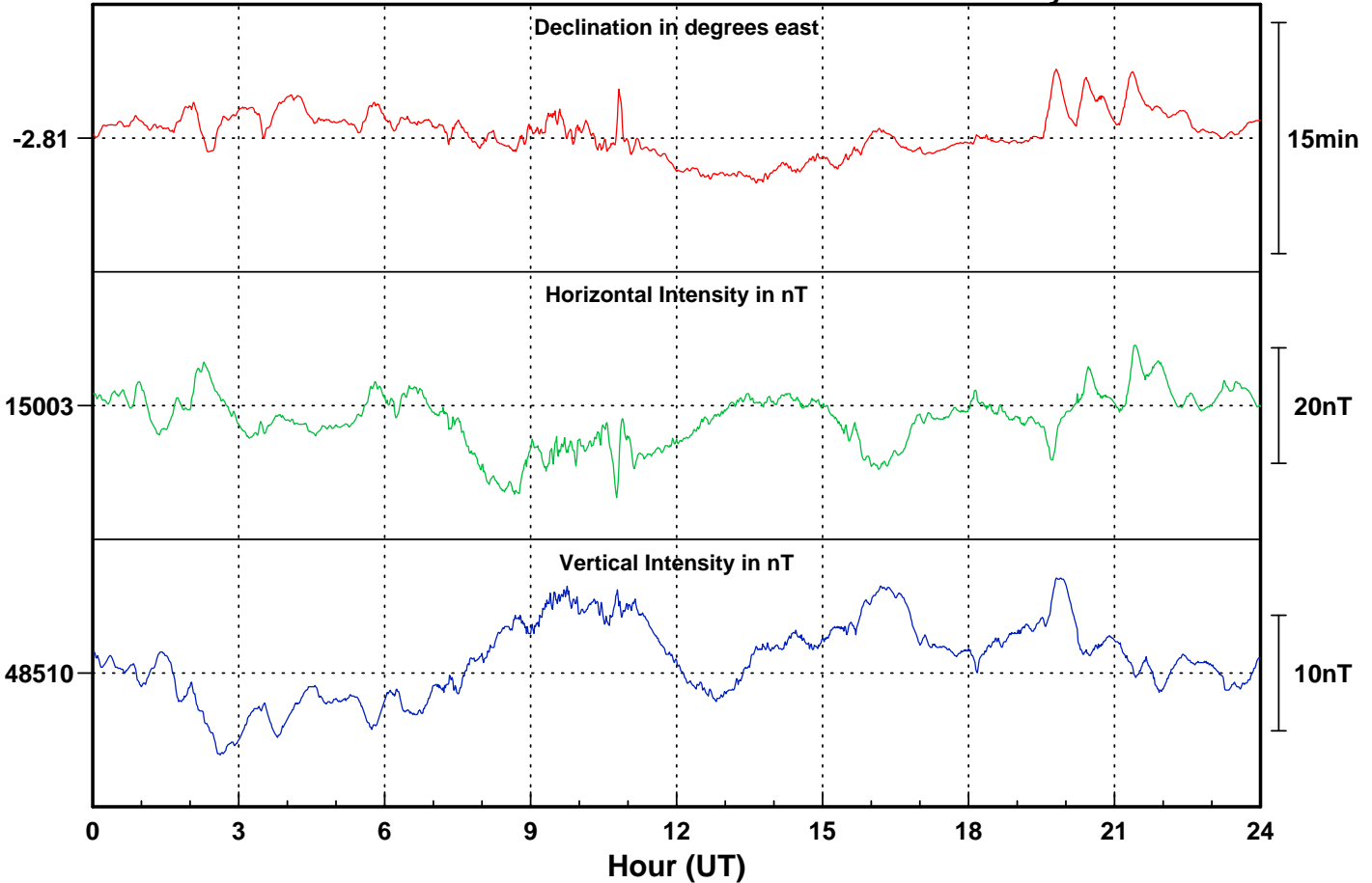
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Day number: 349



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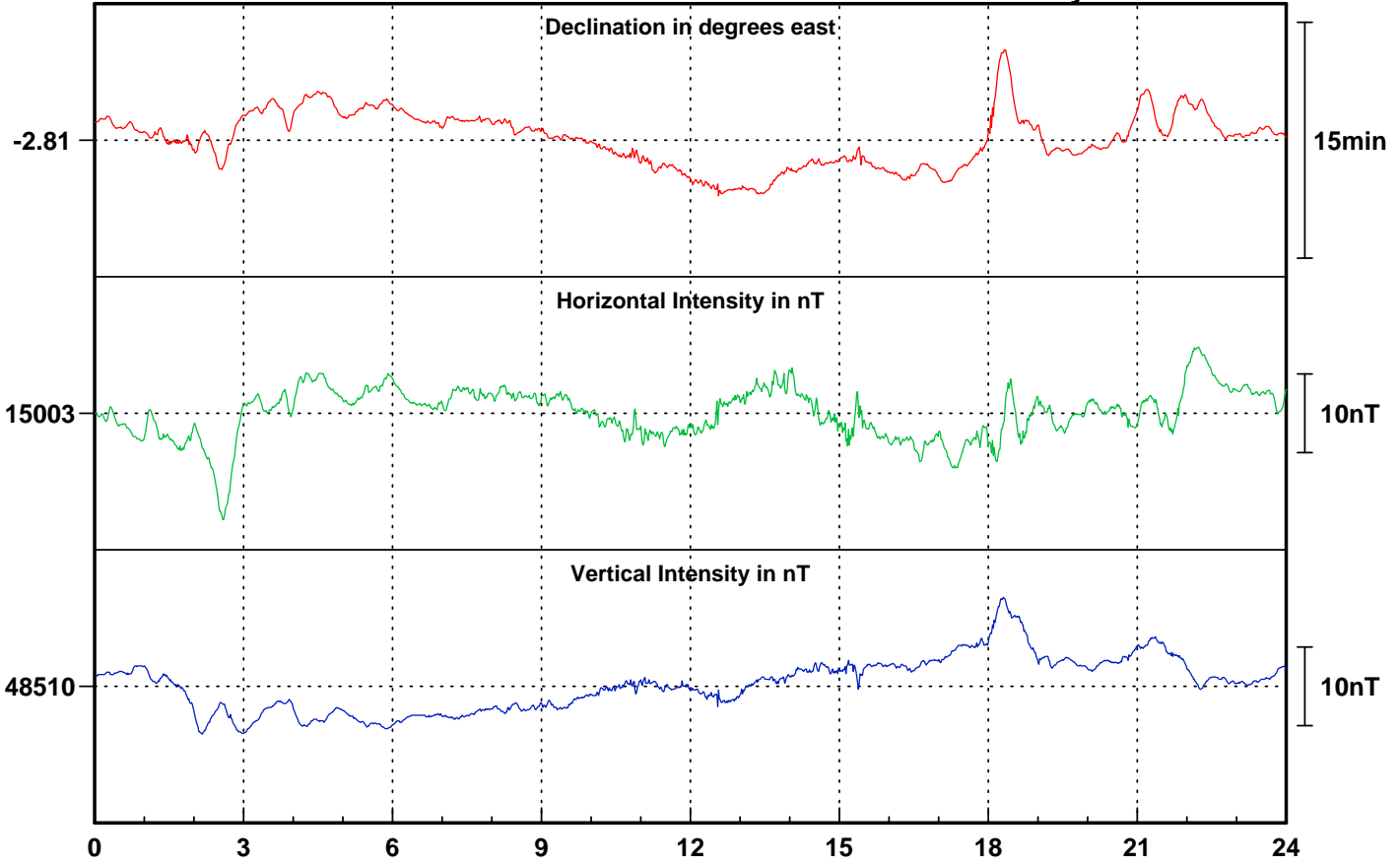
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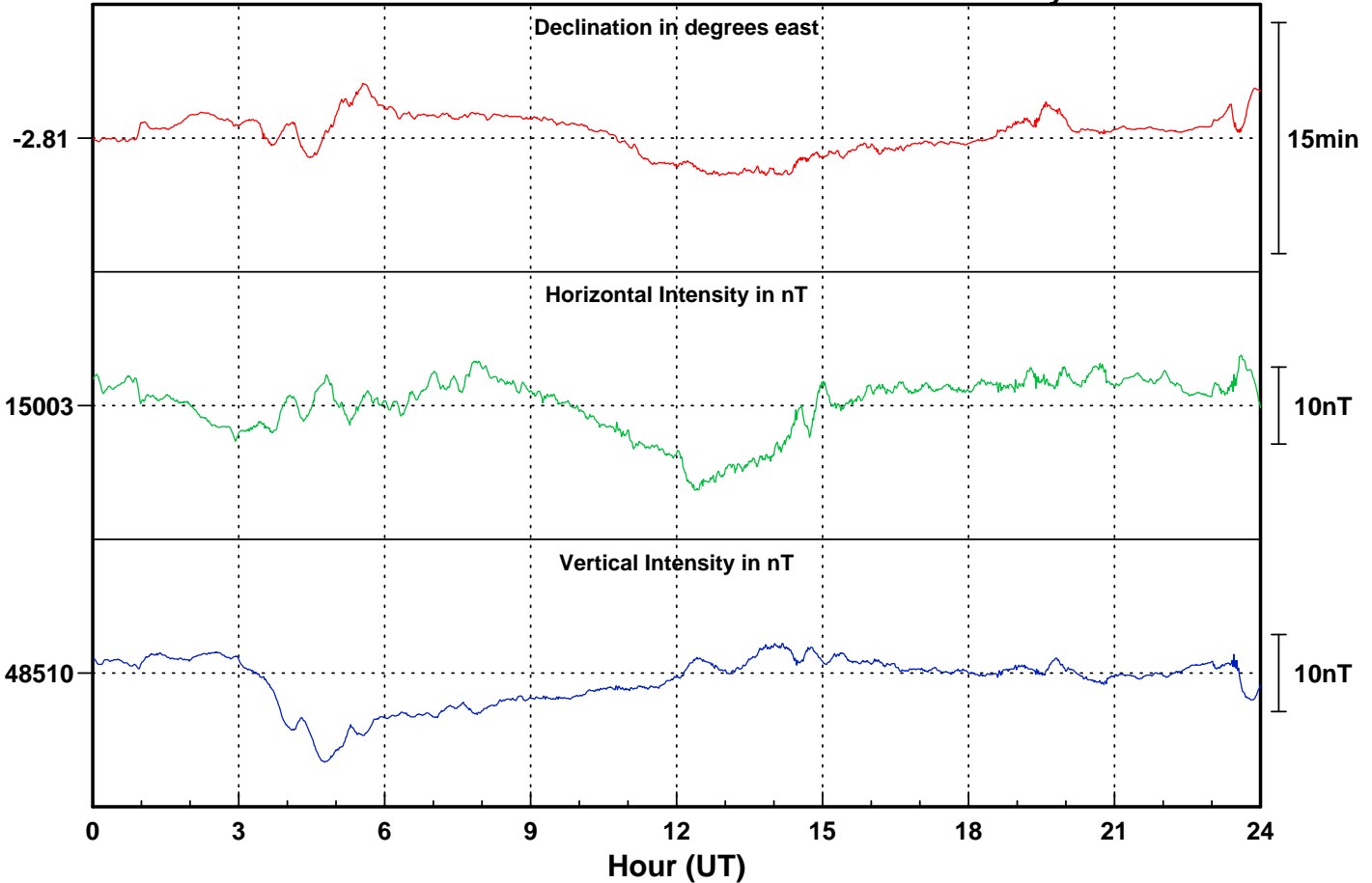
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Day number: 351



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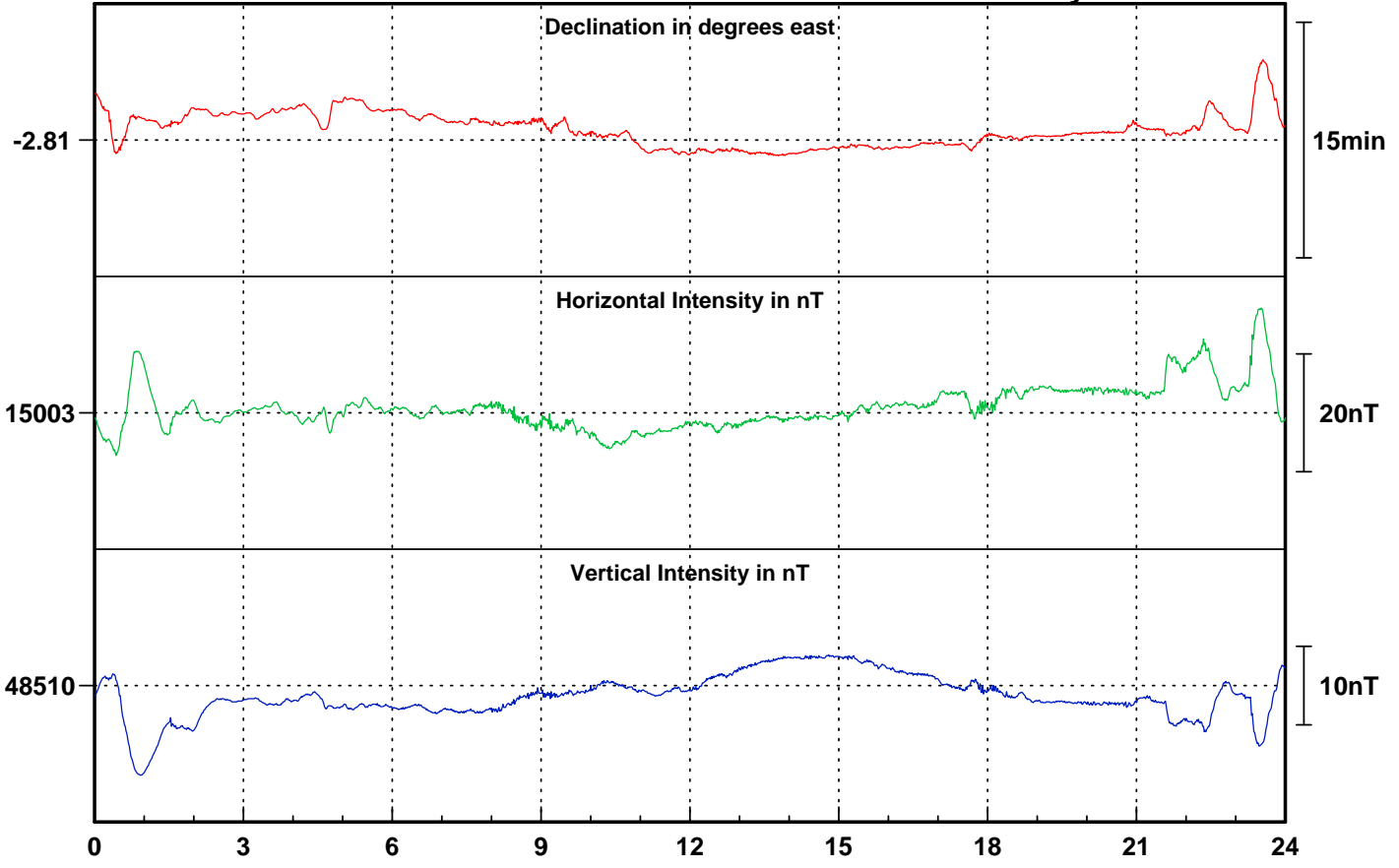
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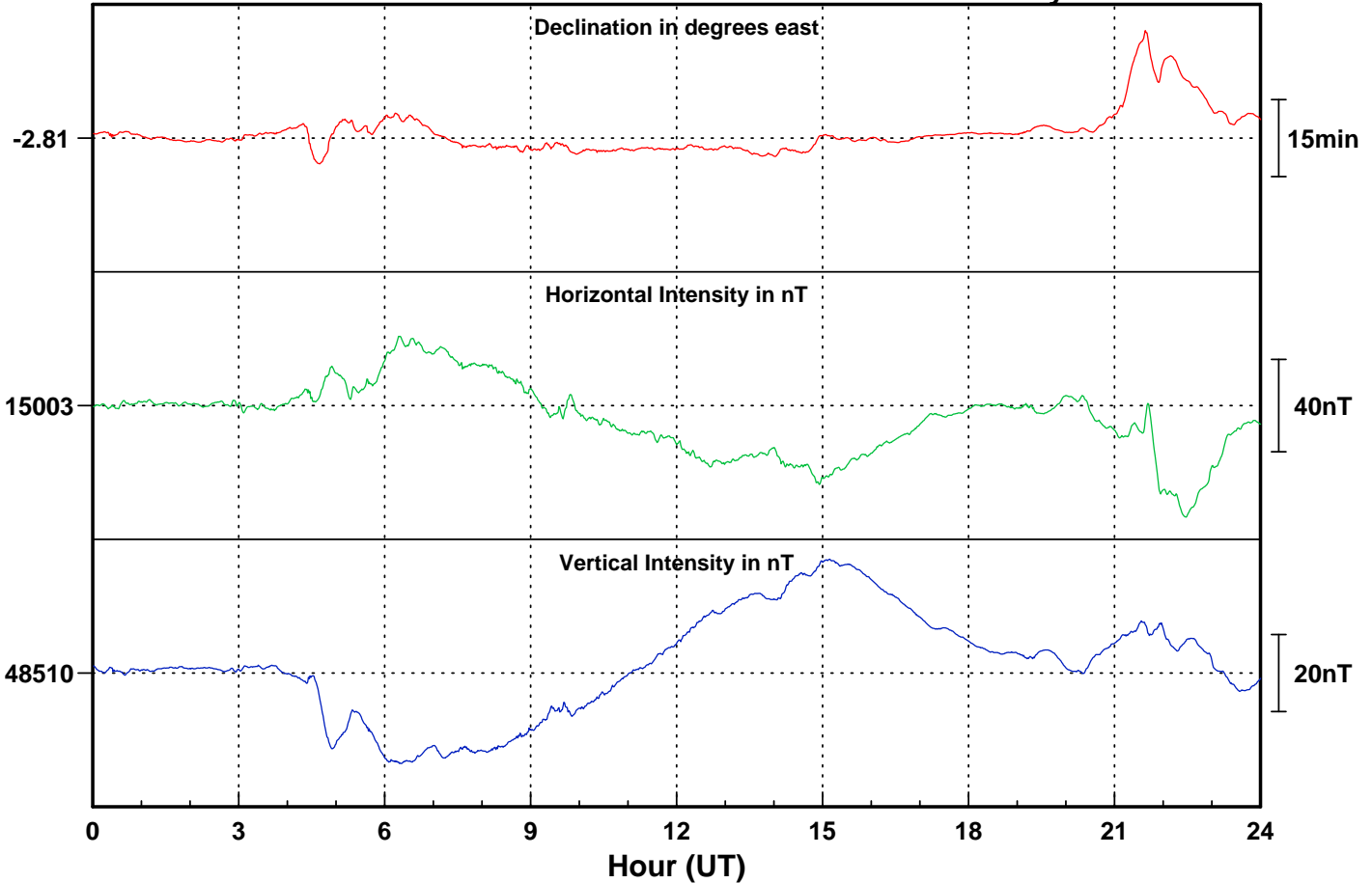
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Day number: 353



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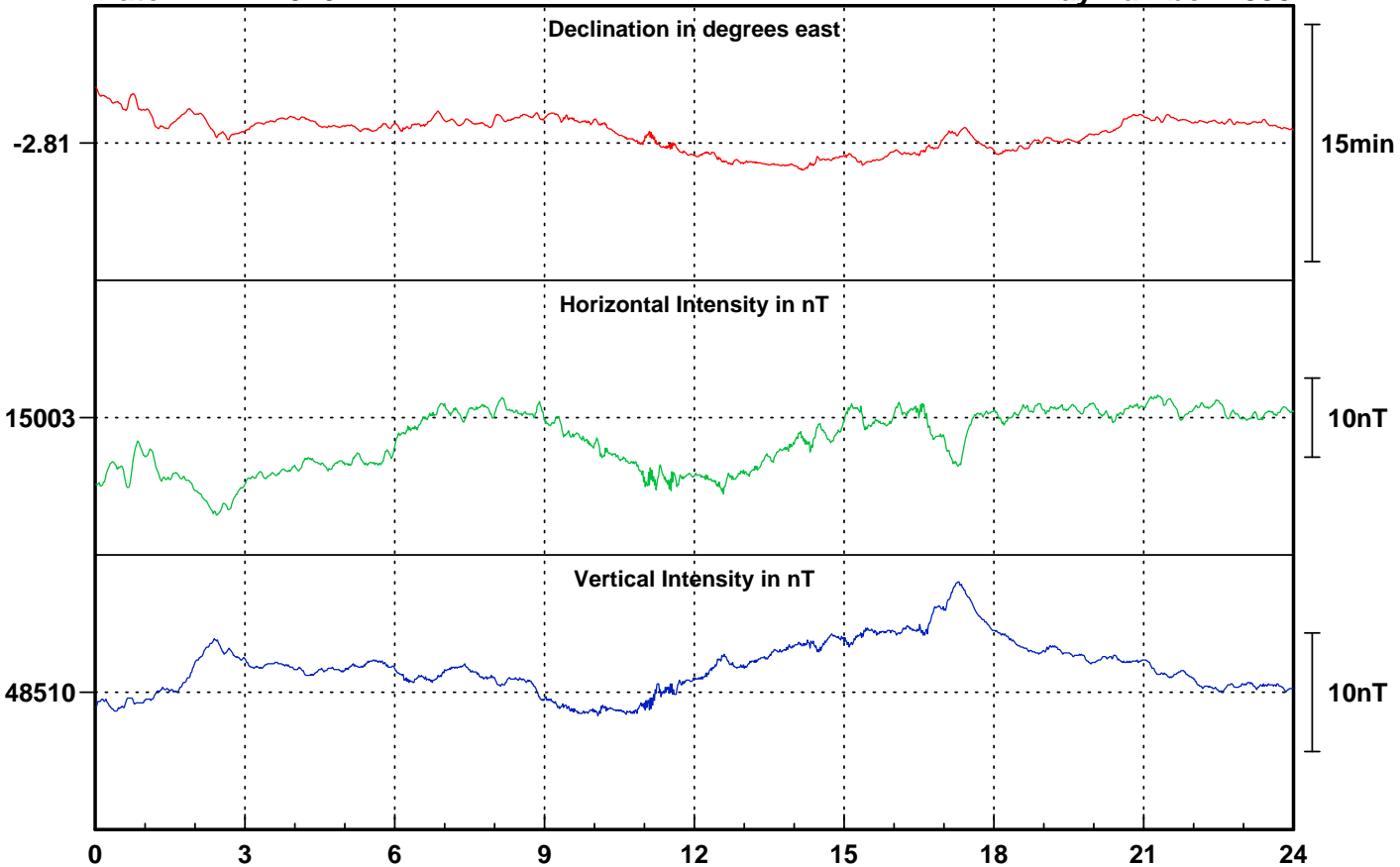
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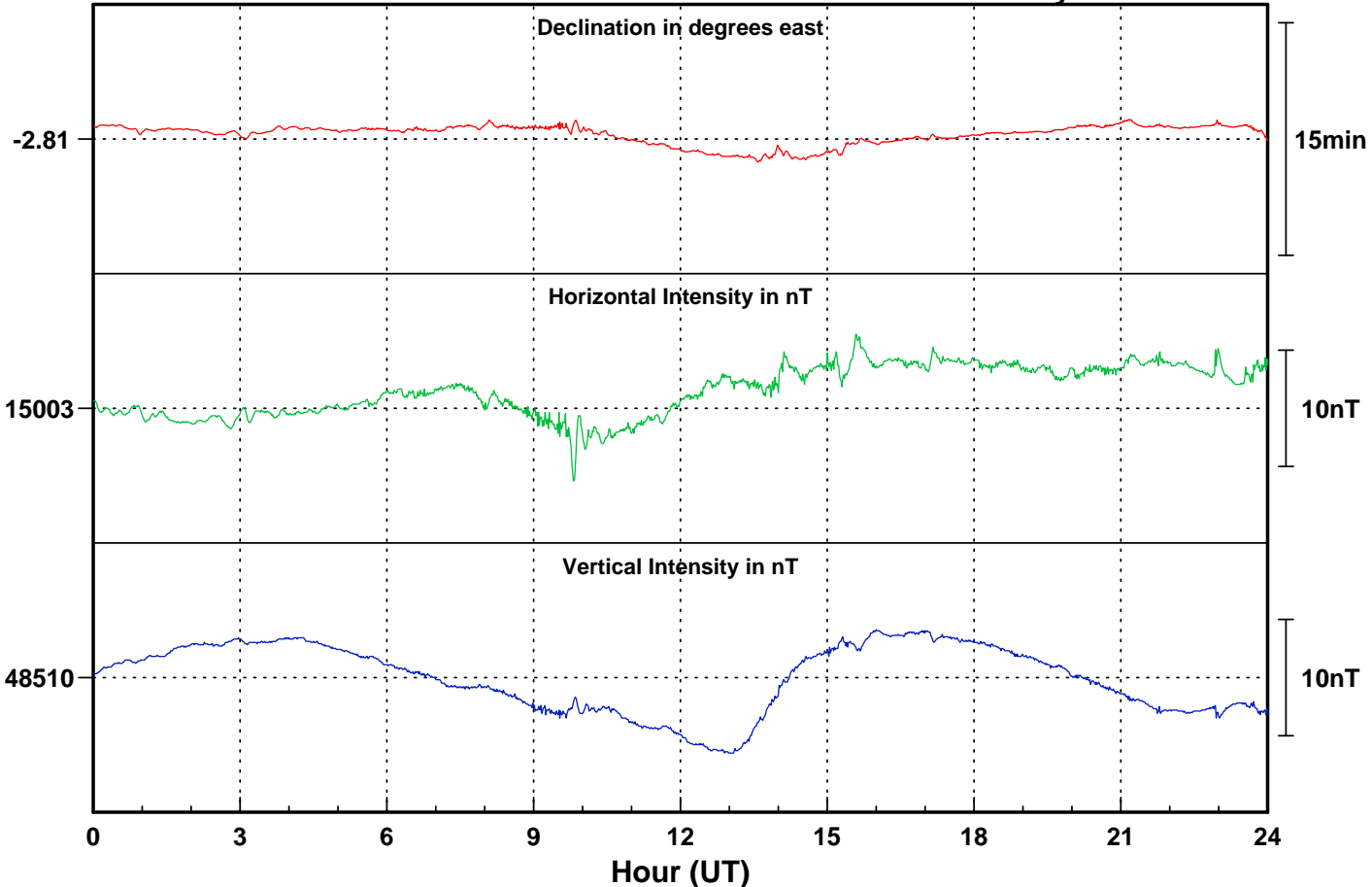
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Day number: 355



Date: 22-12-2010

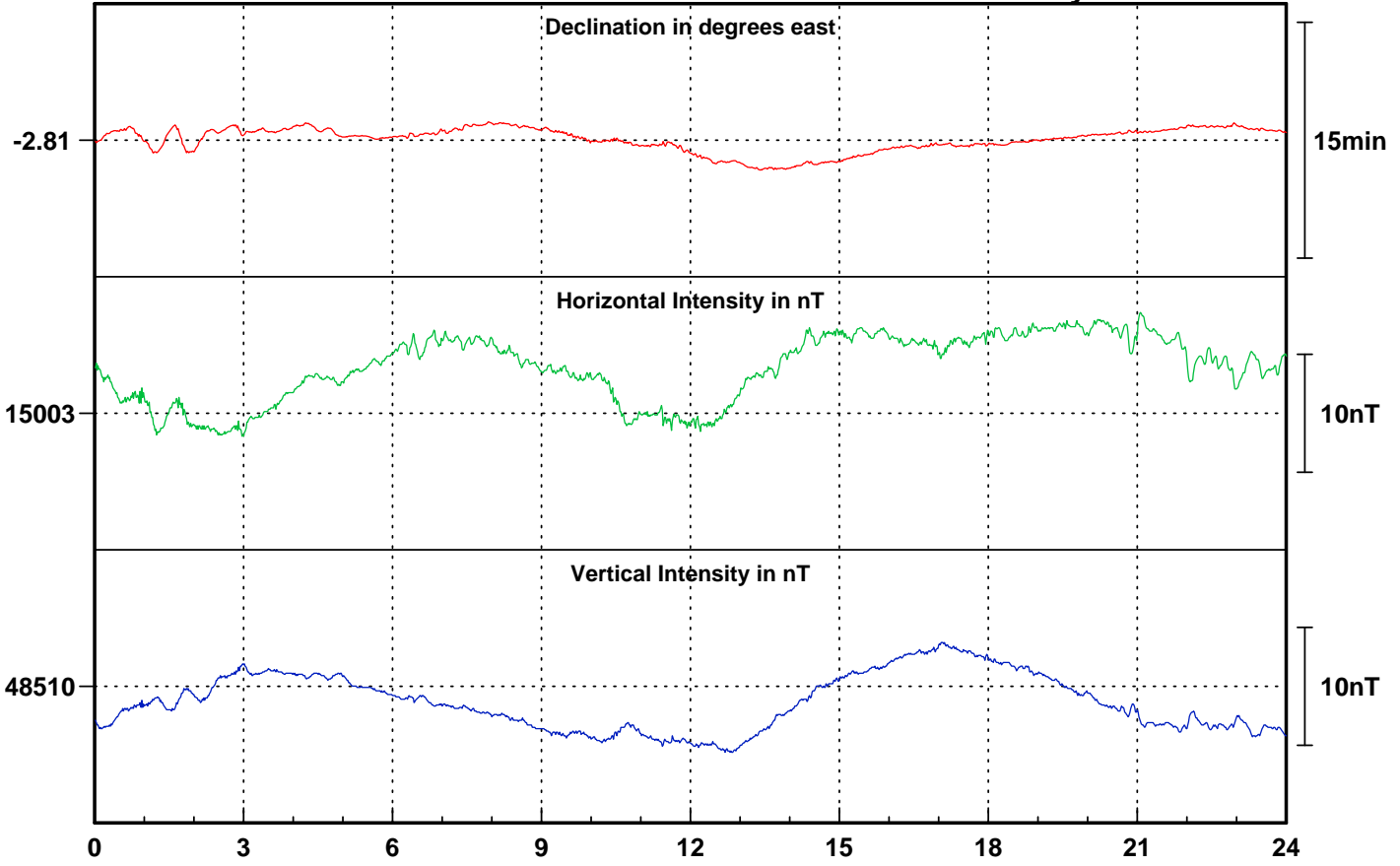
Day number: 356



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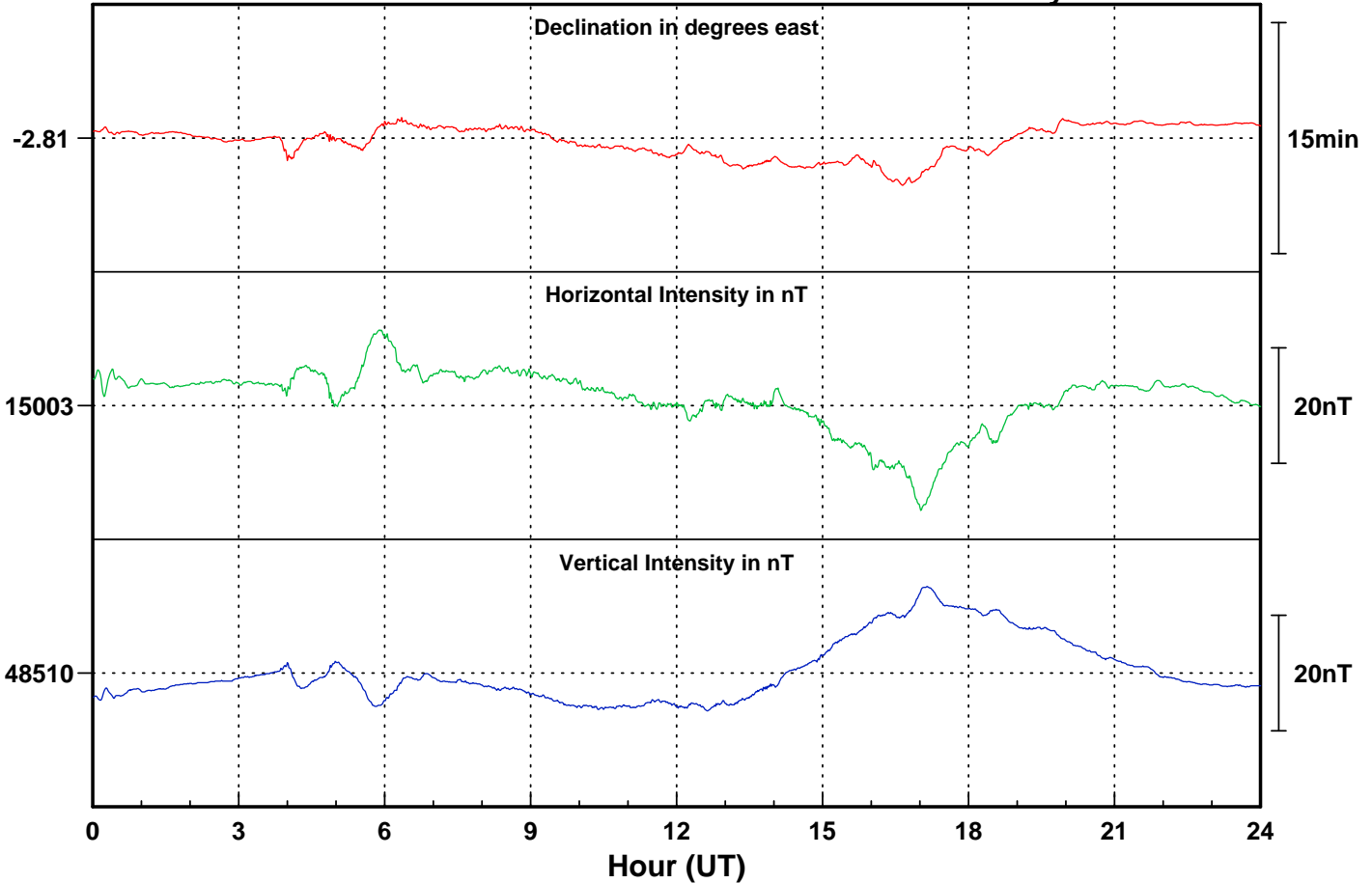
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Day number: 357



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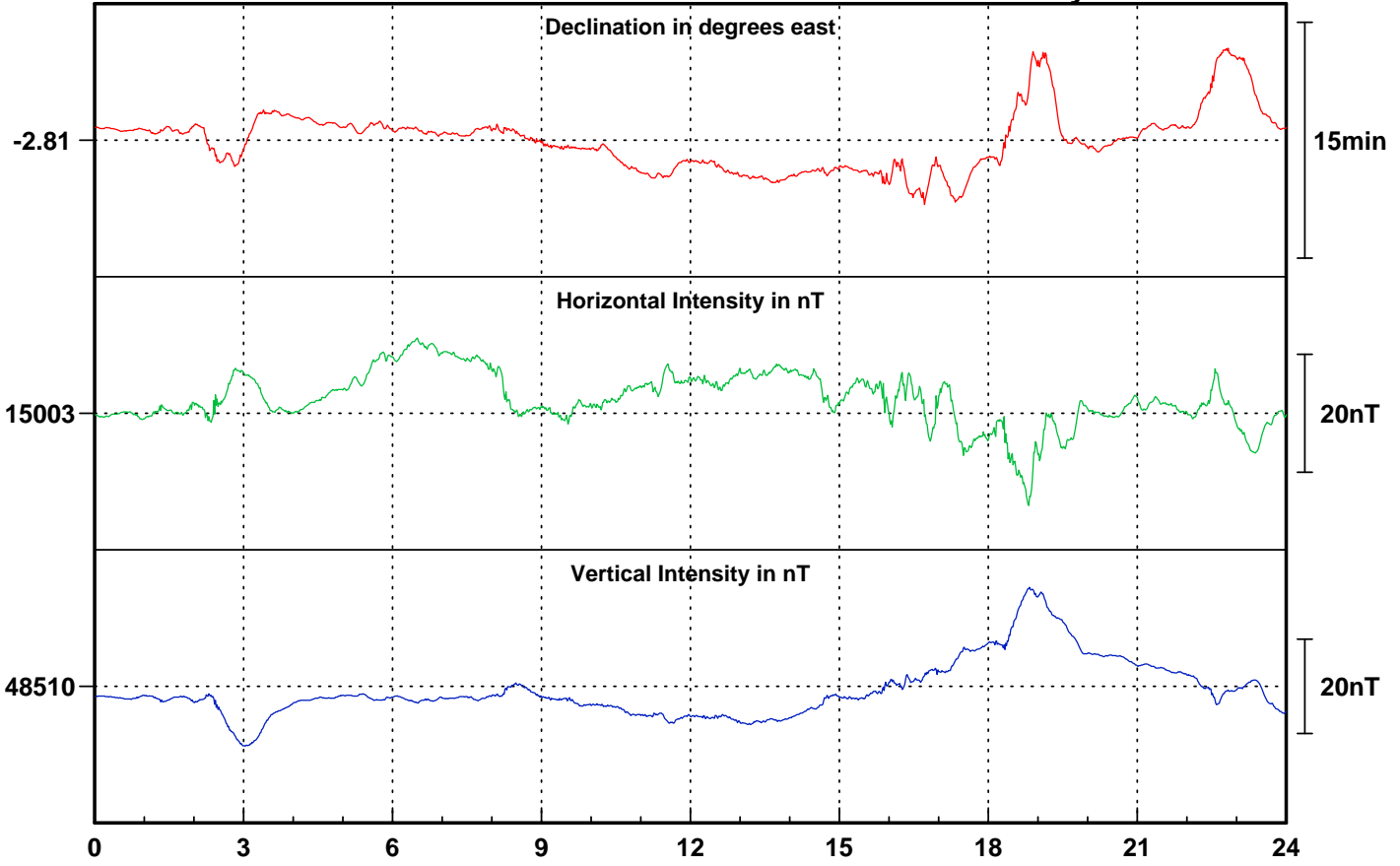
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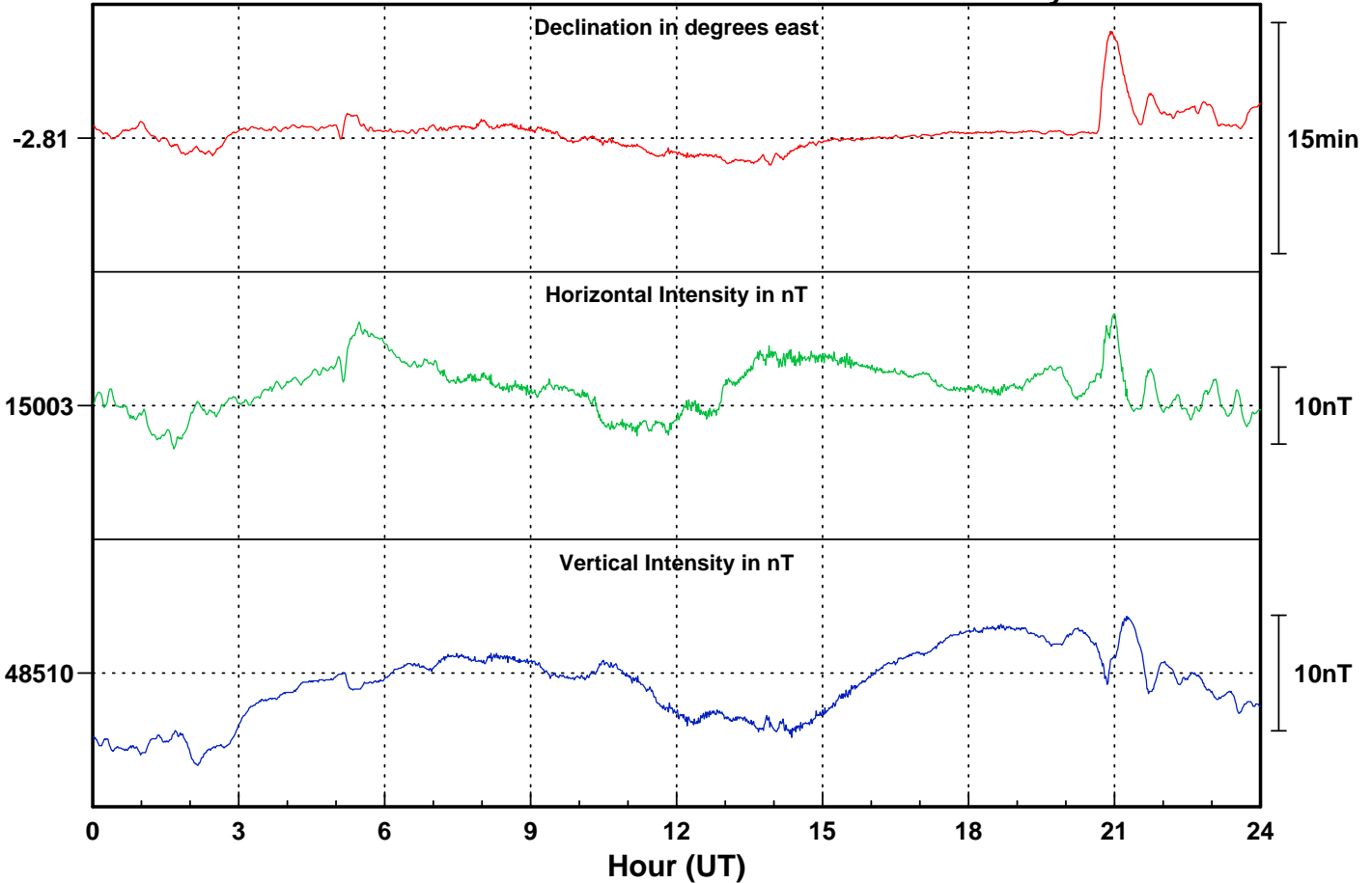
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Day number: 359



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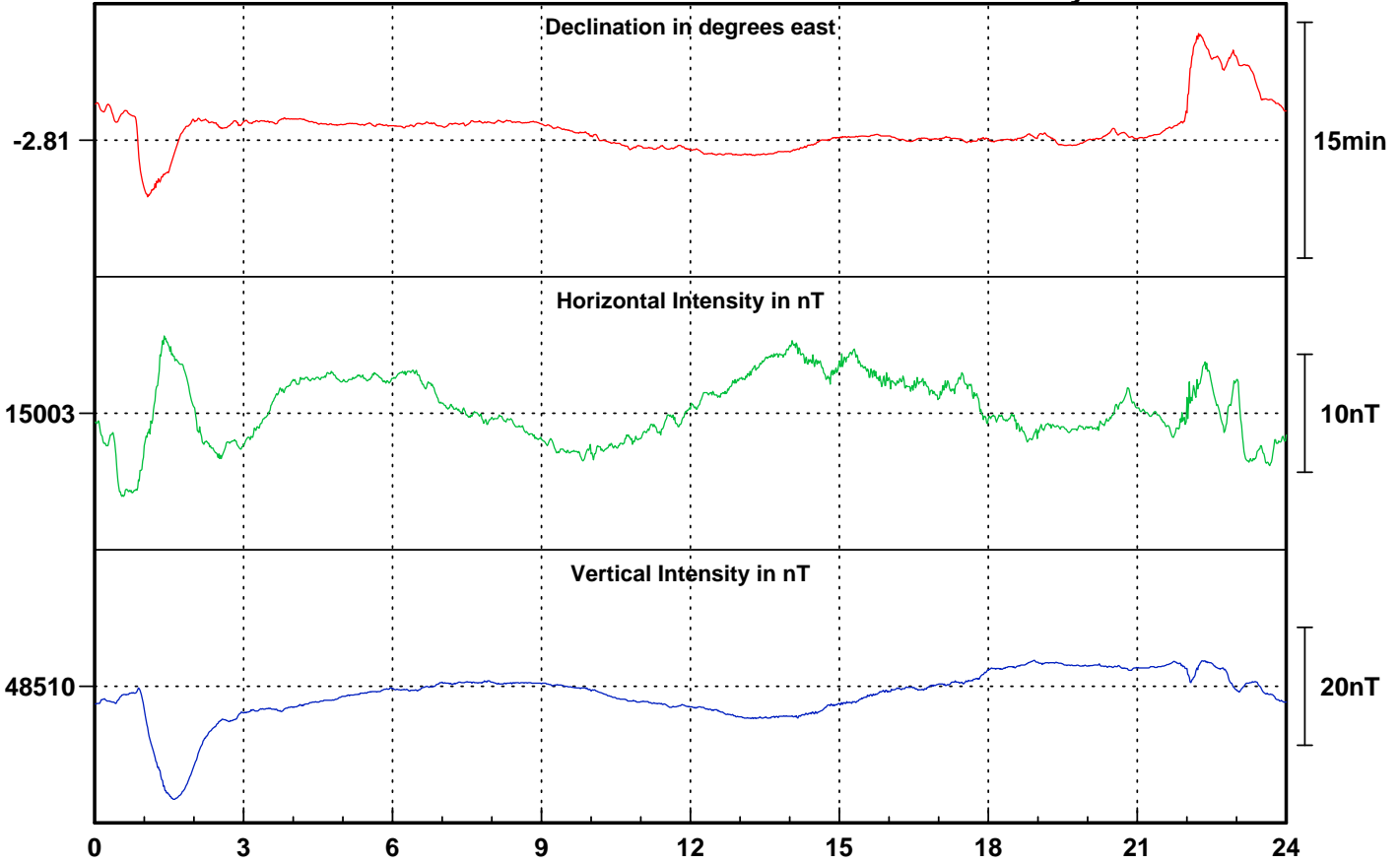
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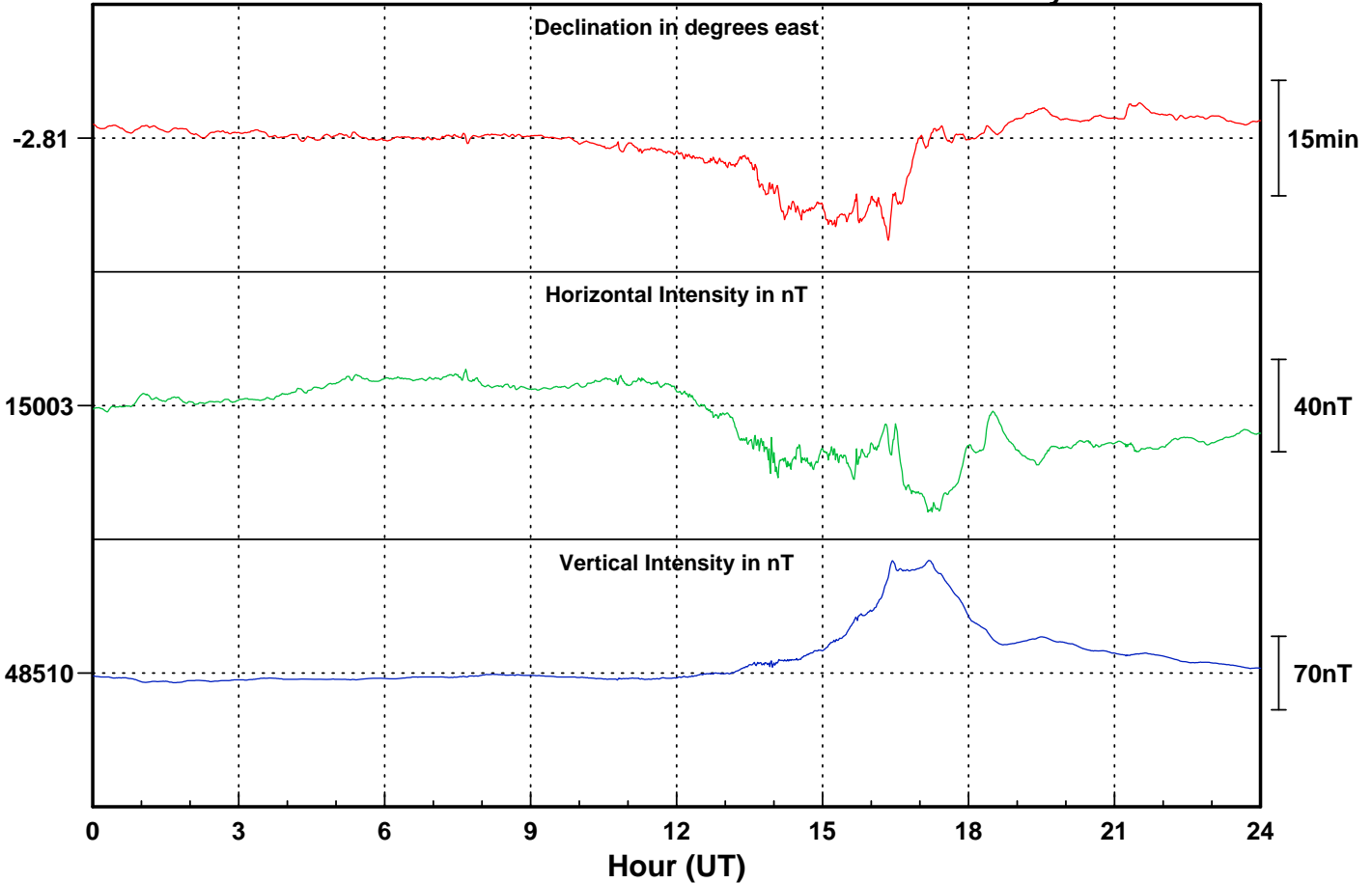
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Day number: 361



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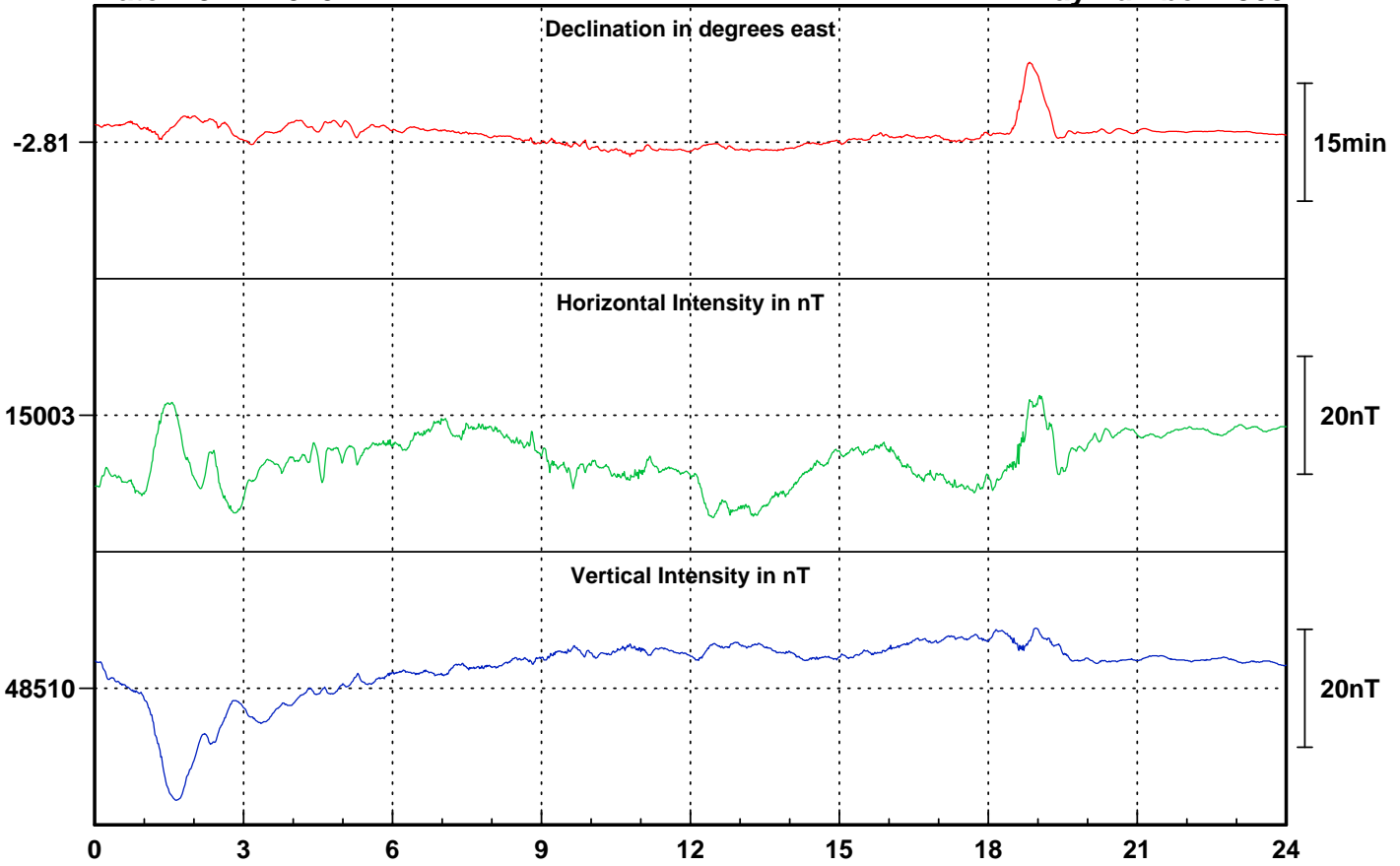
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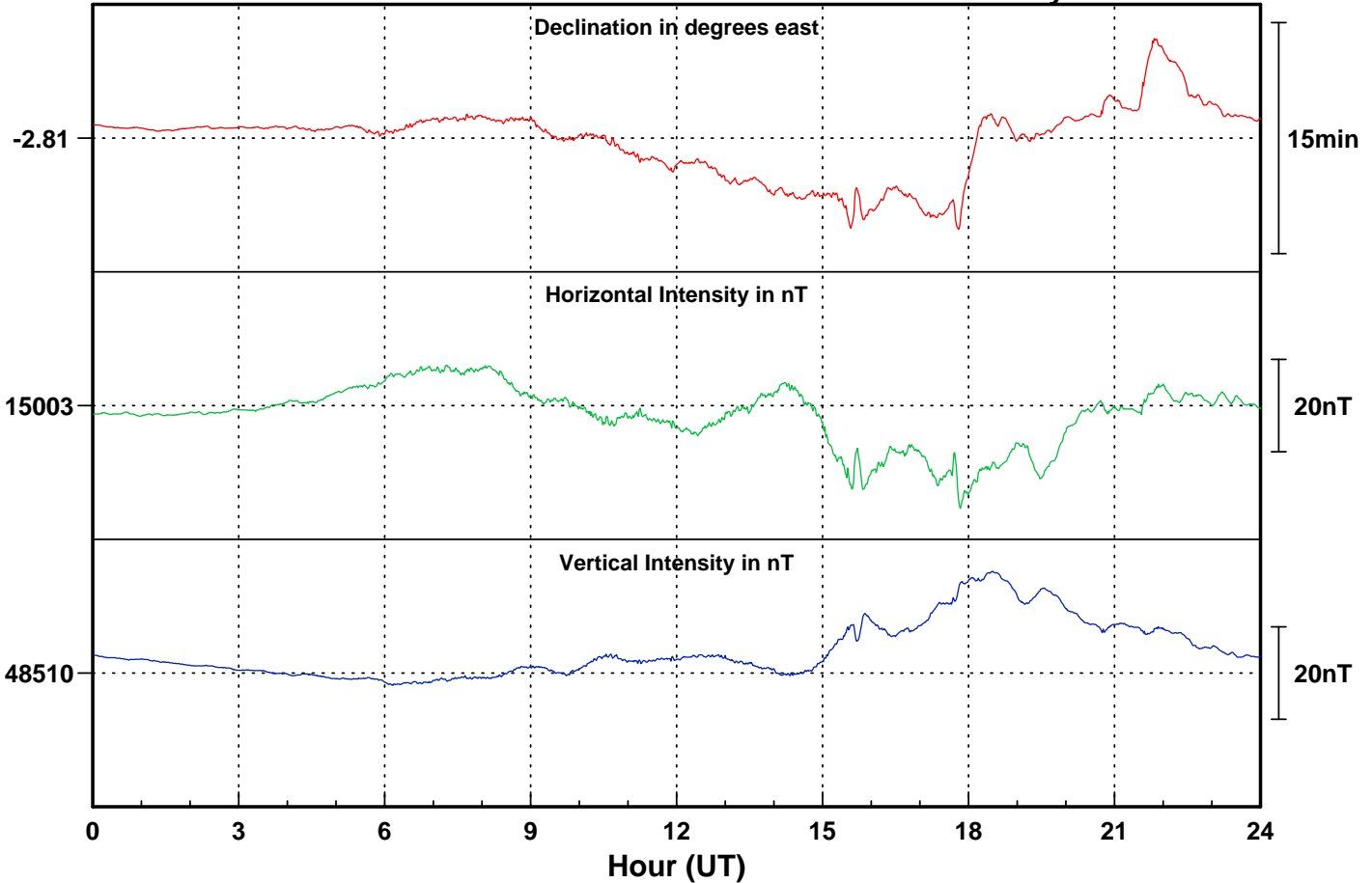
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Day number: 363



Date: 30-12-2010

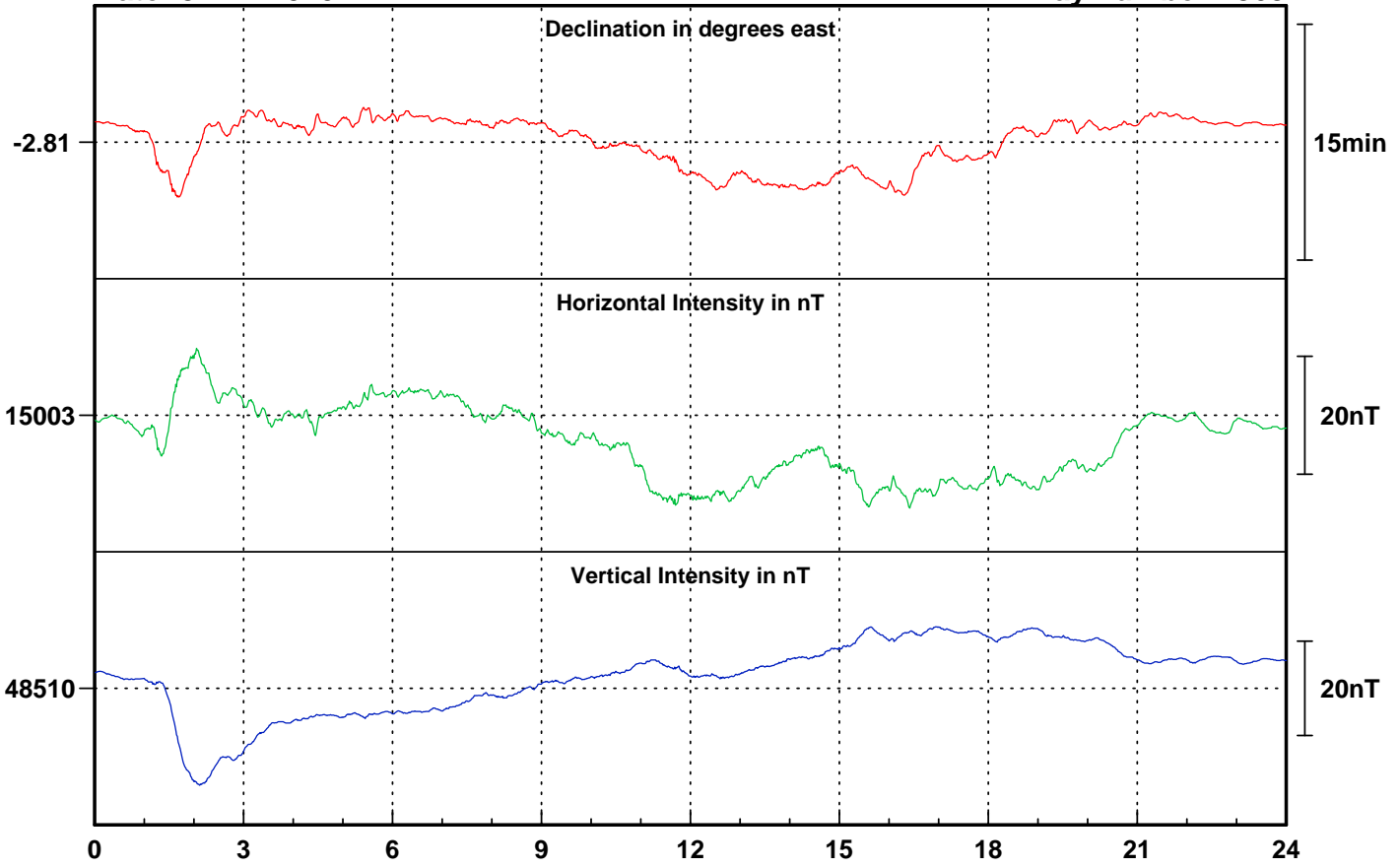
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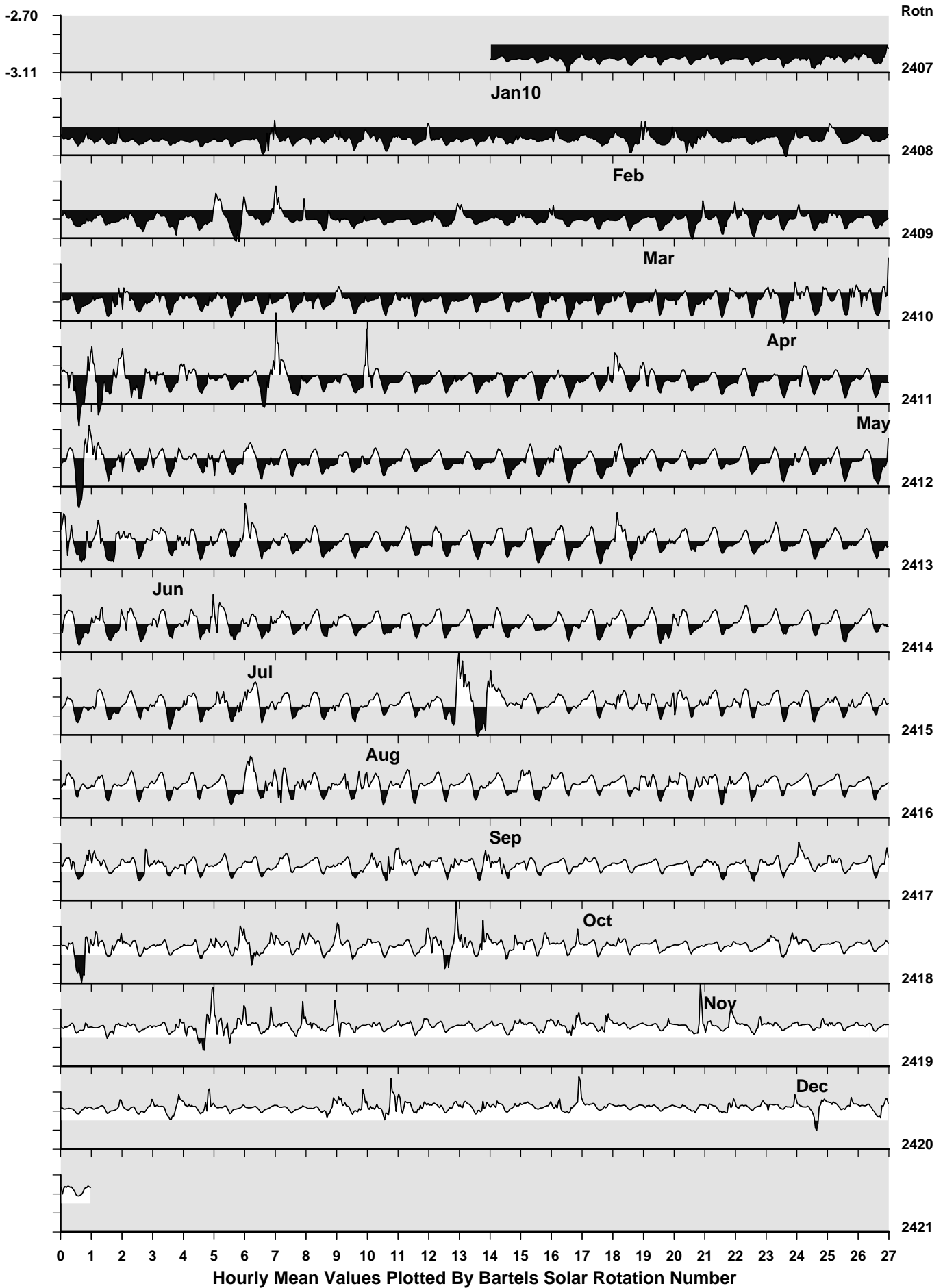
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Lerwick

Day number: 365

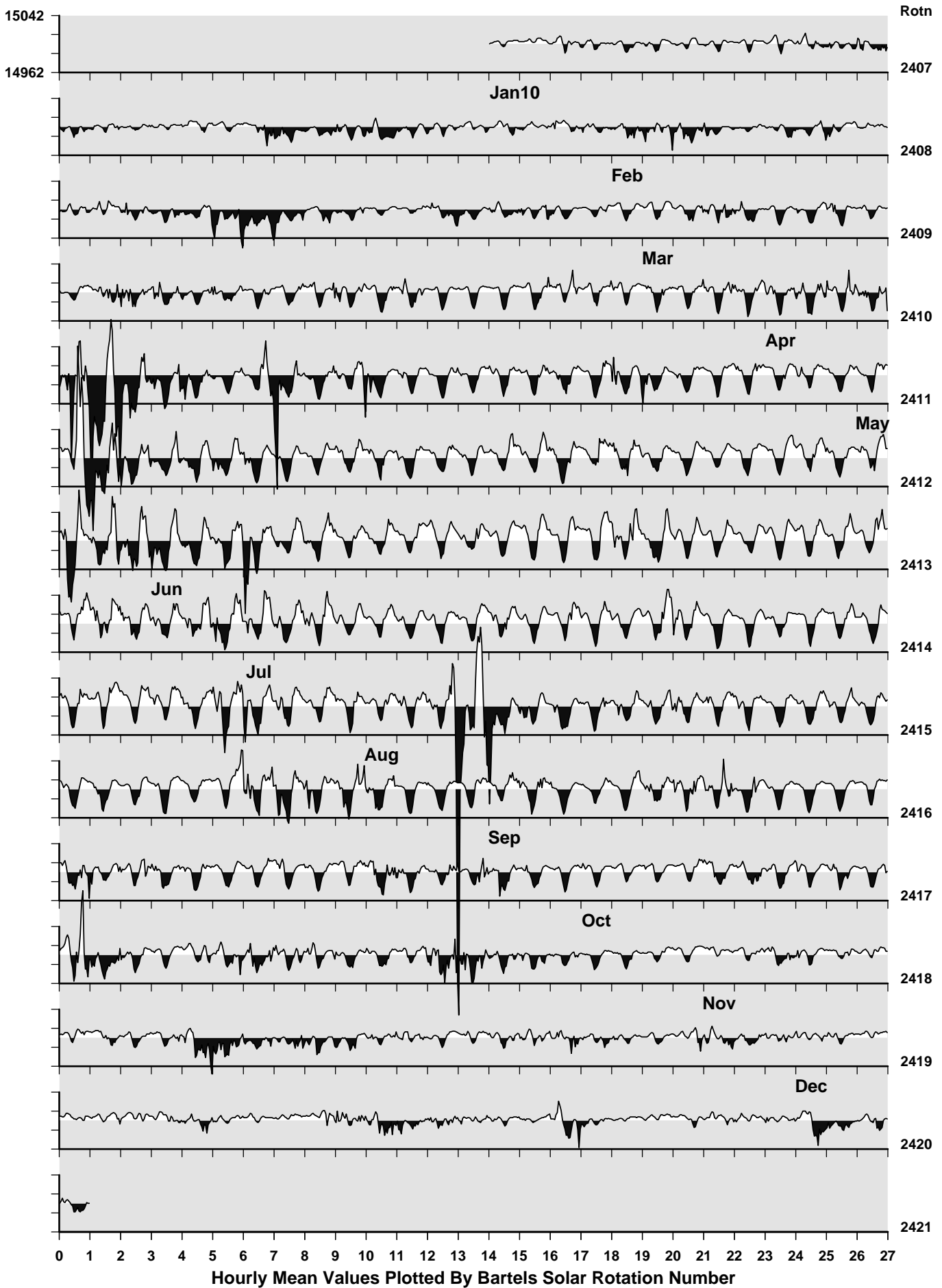


Lerwick Observatory: Declination (degrees)

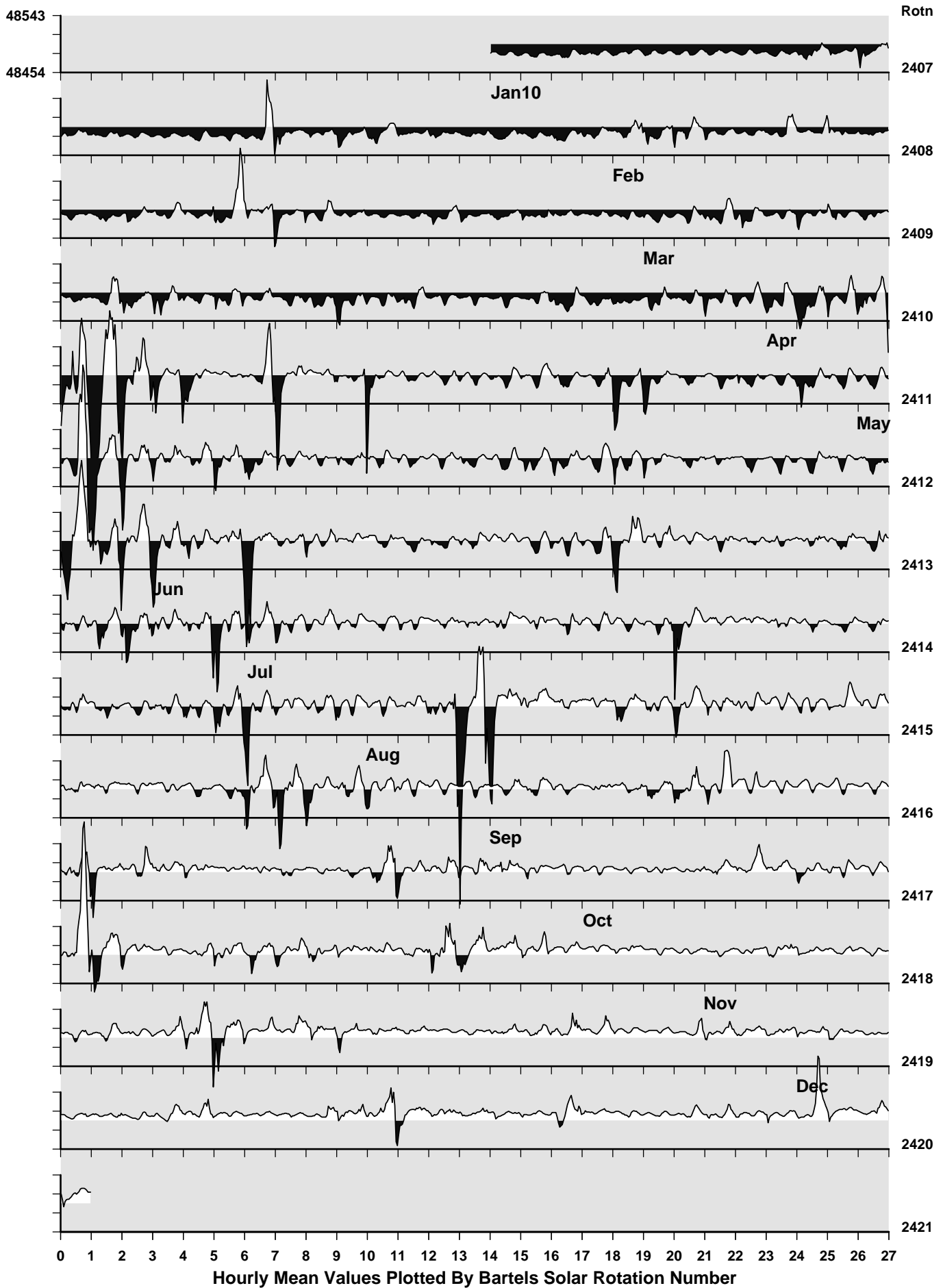


Hourly Mean Values Plotted By Bartels Solar Rotation Number

Lerwick Observatory: Horizontal Intensity (nT)

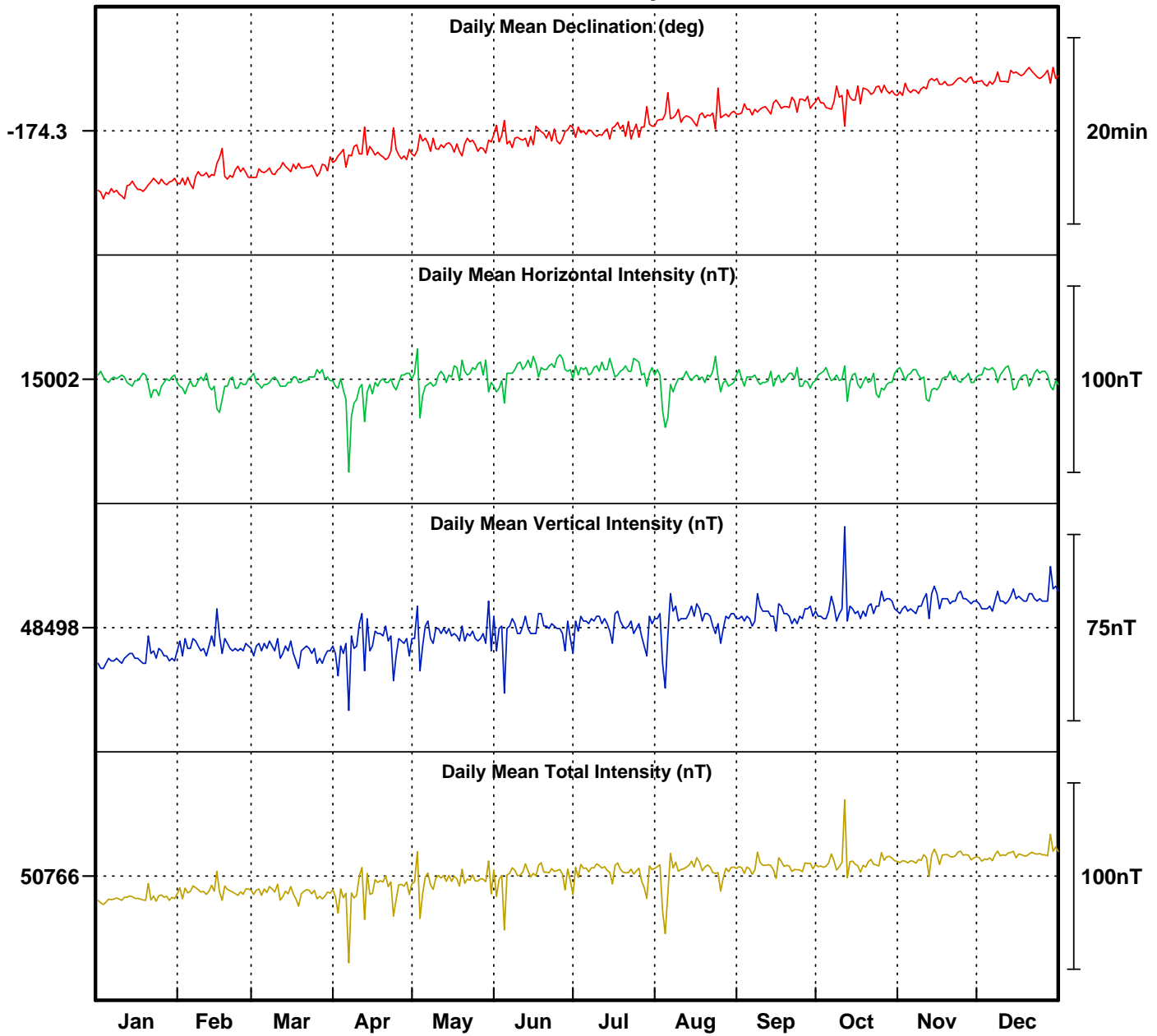


Lerwick Observatory: Vertical Intensity (nT)



Hourly Mean Values Plotted By Bartels Solar Rotation Number

Lerwick Observatory 2010



Monthly Mean Values for Lerwick Observatory 2010

Month	<i>D</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>F</i>
January	-3° 0.4′	15001 nT	72° 48.5′	14980 nT	-787 nT	48486 nT	50754 nT
February	-2° 59.0′	14998 nT	72° 48.8′	14978 nT	-780 nT	48491 nT	50758 nT
March	-2° 58.4′	15001 nT	72° 48.5′	14981 nT	-778 nT	48489 nT	50756 nT
April	-2° 56.6′	14996 nT	72° 48.9′	14976 nT	-770 nT	48491 nT	50757 nT
May	-2° 55.9′	15003 nT	72° 48.6′	14984 nT	-767 nT	48496 nT	50764 nT
June	-2° 54.8′	15007 nT	72° 48.4′	14987 nT	-763 nT	48497 nT	50766 nT
July	-2° 54.2′	15007 nT	72° 48.4′	14988 nT	-760 nT	48499 nT	50768 nT
August	-2° 52.6′	15000 nT	72° 48.9′	14981 nT	-753 nT	48501 nT	50768 nT
September	-2° 51.7′	15002 nT	72° 48.8′	14983 nT	-749 nT	48504 nT	50771 nT
October	-2° 50.6′	15001 nT	72° 48.9′	14983 nT	-744 nT	48507 nT	50774 nT
November	-2° 49.3′	15002 nT	72° 48.9′	14983 nT	-739 nT	48509 nT	50775 nT
December	-2° 48.5′	15003 nT	72° 48.8′	14985 nT	-735 nT	48510 nT	50777 nT

Note

i. The values shown here are provisional.

LERWICK RAPID VARIATIONS

SI and SSCs

Date	Time (UT)	Type	Quality	H (nT)	D (min)	Z (nT)
28-12-10	10 43	SSC*	B	-2.7	-1.30	1.8

Notes:

An asterisk (*) indicates that the principal impulse was preceded by a smaller reversed impulse.

The quality of the event is classified as follows:

A = very distinct

B = fair, ordinary, but unmistakable

C = doubtful

The amplitudes given are for the first chief movement of the event.

SFEs

Date	Universal Time			H (nT)	D (min)	Z (nT)
	Start	Maximum	End			

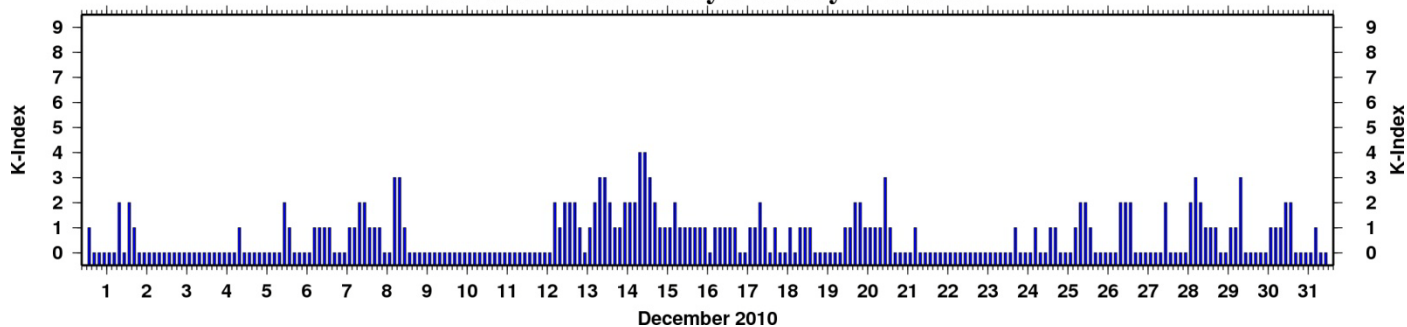
Note:

The amplitudes given are for the first chief movement of the event.

INDICES OF GEOMAGNETIC ACTIVITY

Day	K - INDICES FOR THREE-HOUR INTERVAL							
	00-03	03-06	06-09	09-12	12-15	15-18	18-21	21-24
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
6	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
7	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
8	1	1	1	0	0	3	3	1
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2
13	2	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
14	2	1	1	2	2	2	4	4
15	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
16	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
17	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	1
18	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
20	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	3
21	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
25	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	2
26	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
27	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
28	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	1
29	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
30	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
31	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Lerwick Observatory 3-hourly K-Indices



The *aa* Index

Date	Day	3-hourly <i>aa</i> -indices								<i>Aa_{am}</i>	<i>Aa_{pm}</i>	<i>Aa</i>
01-12-2010	335	9	2	2	2	2	5	12	5	4.1	6.2	5.2
02-12-2010	336	9	5	5	2	5	2	2	8	5.5	4.5	5
03-12-2010	337	2	2	2	5	2	2	2	2	3.1	2.5	2.8
04-12-2010	338	2	5	9	5	5	2	8	2	5.5	4.5	5
05-12-2010	339	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	12	2.5	4.8	3.6
06-12-2010	340	5	5	5	5	8	12	12	5	5.2	9.2	7.2
07-12-2010	341	9	2	20	12	16	16	12	8	10.9	13	12
08-12-2010	342	12	16	12	8	8	24	37	8	12	19.2	15.6
09-12-2010	343	5	5	2	5	5	2	2	8	4.5	4.5	4.5
10-12-2010	344	5	5	5	5	5	2	5	2	5.2	3.8	4.5
11-12-2010	345	5	5	5	2	8	2	2	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
12-12-2010	346	2	2	5	2	12	32	16	16	3.1	19.1	11.1
13-12-2010	347	24	24	16	8	12	16	37	32	18	24.3	21.2
14-12-2010	348	20	24	16	24	46	32	37	45	21	40.1	30.6
15-12-2010	349	24	16	12	8	16	16	12	8	15	13	14
16-12-2010	350	16	12	12	16	5	12	12	5	14	8.5	11.3
17-12-2010	351	16	8	5	2	8	12	16	8	7.9	10.9	9.4
18-12-2010	352	5	16	9	2	12	8	8	8	8.2	8.9	8.6
19-12-2010	353	9	8	5	5	2	8	2	16	6.8	7.2	7
20-12-2010	354	12	46	24	16	24	24	16	37	24.5	25.4	24.9
21-12-2010	355	5	2	2	5	5	8	2	5	3.8	5.2	4.5
22-12-2010	356	2	2	2	5	2	5	2	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
23-12-2010	357	5	2	5	5	5	2	5	12	4.5	6.2	5.3
24-12-2010	358	12	12	5	5	5	12	5	2	8.5	6.2	7.4
25-12-2010	359	12	8	8	12	12	24	16	12	9.9	16	13
26-12-2010	360	8	8	5	5	5	5	16	16	6.5	10.6	8.5
27-12-2010	361	12	5	5	2	2	2	8	12	6.2	6.2	6.2
28-12-2010	362	5	12	12	12	46	81	32	8	10.3	41.6	25.9
29-12-2010	363	12	8	8	8	12	8	20	2	8.8	10.5	9.7
30-12-2010	364	5	5	9	12	8	24	16	12	7.9	15	11.5
31-12-2010	365	12	8	5	12	5	12	8	8	9.2	8.2	8.7
Monthly Mean Value												10.1

Notes

- i. The units of the *aa* index are nT.
- ii. The 3-hour *aa* values are rounded to the nearest integer. Where $aa = *.5$, *aa* is rounded down.
- iii. Daily values (*Aa_{am}*, *Aa_{pm}* and *Aa*) are computed from *aa* values of original resolution.
- iv. The monthly mean value is computed from the daily mean values, *Aa*.
- v. Definitive *aa* indices are derived and published by the International Service for Geomagnetic Indices.

3-hourly *aa*-indices

