Early Soviet satellite magnetic field measurements over 1964 and 1970

Roman Krasnoperov[1], Dmitry Peregoudov[1], Renata Lukianova[1], Anatoly Soloviev[1,2] and Boris Dzeboev[1]

[1]Geophysical Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 119296, Russia
[2]Schmidt Institute of Physics of the Earth of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 123242, Russia

Correspondence to: Dmitry Peregoudov (d.peregoudov@gcras.ru)

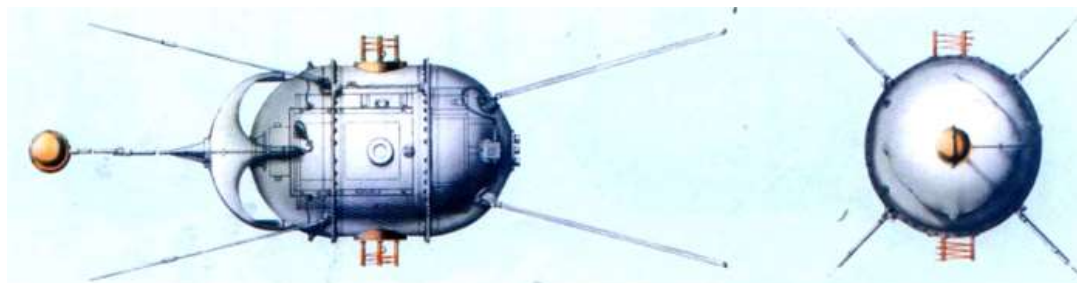
Abstract. We present the collection of magnetic field absolute measurements performed by early Soviet magnetic satellite missions Kosmos-49 (1964) and Kosmos-321 (1970). Totally 17300 measured values are available for Kosmos-49 mission, covering homogeneously 75% of the Earth's surface between 49° north and south latitude. About 5000 measured values are available for Kosmos-321 mission, covering homogeneously 94% of the Earth's surface between 71° north and south latitude. The data are available at PANGAEA (Lukianova et al., 2019, https://doi.pangaea.de/10.1594/PANGAEA.907927).

1 Introduction

Since 1954, the Soviet Union was an active participant in the preparation of the International Geophysical Year (IGY), organized in 1957–1958. Right from the beginning, the program of this unprecedent international scientific event included the launch of an artificial satellite with a payload for conducting geophysical experiments on the Earth's orbit. The first Soviet missiles of the 1950-s allowed to perform solely suborbital flights. And only by 1957, the R-7 ballistic missile, capable of launching an object into a circular orbit, had been developed. The first Soviet spacecraft, widely known as Sputnik-1, was launched on 04.10.1957. Its payload consisted only of two radio transmitters that continuously emitted signals on two frequencies. Receiving signals on different frequencies allowed to analyze the radiowave propagation in the ionosphere. The second artificial satellite Sputnik-2 that was launched on 3.11.1957 had a more sophisticated scientific payload including instruments for registration of cosmic rays' and solar radiation parameters and an air-tight container for a biological experiment with a dog. In accordance with the program of the IGY the third Soviet spacecraft – Sputnik-3 – was launched on 15.05.1958. Its payload weighed 968 kg and included equipment for 12 scientific experiments. Amongst other instruments was a unique self-orienting fluxgate magnetometer that performed first orbital measurements of the Earth's magnetic field total intensity (Petrukovich, 2009; Skuridin, 1975).

1 Satellite missions for magnetic field measurements

Since 1960-s the Soviet design office OKB-586 (currently – M.K. Yangel Yuzhnoye Design Office, Ukraine) initiated the
30 development of a new experimental series of small-scale spacecraft, designated as DS (Dnepropetrovsk Satellite). The DS-
series satellites had a unified platform with a standard on-board control system suite. In 1962 the launch of the first DS
spacecraft started the Soviet space research program "Kosmos" under which a large number, totally over 2500, of various
satellite missions have been performed. The payload of the spacecraft varied and, depending on the purpose, provided a wide
range of scientific experiments: astronomical, astrophysical, geophysical, ionospheric, atmospheric, meteorite, radiation, etc.
35 (Konyukhov, 2000).

The satellite mission aimed at obtaining the direct data on the spatial distribution of the Earth's magnetic field in the course
of the global geomagnetic survey consisted of two spacecraft of DS-MG (MG – MaGnetic) type that were designated
Kosmos-26 and Kosmos-49 and launched on 18.03.1964 and 24.10.1964 respectively from Kapustin Yar cosmodrome
(Astrakhan region). The design and payload of both spacecraft was identical and included a set of two absolute proton
40 precession magnetometers developed by the Institute of Terrestrial Magnetism, Ionosphere and Radio Wave Propagation of
the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (IZMIRAN) and manufactured by the Special Design Bureau "Geophysics" of the
Ministry of Geodesy of the USSR. The instrumental accuracy of the magnetometers was estimated at the level of 2–3 nT
(Cain, 1971; Dolginov et al.,1965). Considering all the external effects and internal sources of errors the characteristic of the
total error with which Kosmos-49 surveyed the magnetic field was estimated at the level of 25–30 nT (Benkova and
45 Dolginov, 1971). The sensors of two devices were oriented at the right angle to each other. The devices were switched on
and off alternately for 32 seconds intervals. Approximately 62% of the measured values were recorded and are available in
the catalogue, published by IZMIRAN (Dolginov et al., 1967). The external view of the DS-MG type spacecraft is given in
Fig. 1.

50 **Figure 1: External view of the DS-MG type spacecraft (Kosmos-26 and Kosmos-49), 1964 (Konyukhov, 2000).**

The mission of Kosmos-26 and Kosmos-49 confirmed the possibility of using Earth's magnetic field data for determination of spacecraft orientation. The obtained geomagnetic data justified the evidence of propagation of magnetic anomalies, associated with the structure and tectonics of the Earth's crust, to the heights of low-orbiting satellites.

The success of the first mission with experimental DS-series spacecraft also confirmed the feasibility of remote sensing
55 methods for solving a great variety of scientific problems. The Academy of Sciences of the USSR developed technical specifications for a new series of unified spacecraft that included three standard platforms: DS-U1 (with chemical energy source), DS-U2 (with solar panels without self-orientation), DS-U3 (with solar panels and self-orientation). The on-board control and supply systems' segment had standardized construction and was independent from the specific mission payload segment. This allowed to organize serial production of spacecraft and their components reducing financial and time
60 expenditure. The follow-on mission aimed at global geomagnetic survey of the Earth also consisted of two spacecraft of a new DS-U2-MG type designated as Kosmos-321 and Kosmos-356 and launched on 20.01.1970 and 10.08.1970 respectively from Plesetsk cosmodrome (Arkhangelsk region). The design of both spacecraft was identical: cylindrical body with the diameter of 0.8 m and length of 1.46 m, consisting of a cylindrical shell and two hemispherical bottoms. The spacecraft had three separate compartments for scientific equipment, support systems and power supply systems.

65 The mission payload included a self-generated quantum magnetometer with optical pumping in cesium vapor. Cesium has been chosen as the working medium since the frequency change effect of the center of the magnetic resonance line with the field sign change, inherent for alkali metals, has the lowest value for cesium and is about 1–2 nT for this magnetometer. The magnetometer design provided measurements with an arbitrary orientation of the spacecraft. To avoid any possible dead areas the magnetometer had two absorption chambers oriented at 135° angle to each other. The instrumental accuracy of the
70 magnetometer was estimated at the level of 1.7 nT. The correspondence of the quantum-cesium magnetometer readings to the absolute values in the range of measured fields was verified by comparison with the proton magnetometer. Correspondence was within 2 nT. The magnetometer sensors were placed in a special unpressurized container mounted on a deployable boom of 3.6 m length. The magnetometer was designed and manufactured by IZMIRAN and its experimental design bureau (Dolginov et al., 1970). The external view of the DS-U2-MG type spacecraft is given in Fig. 2.

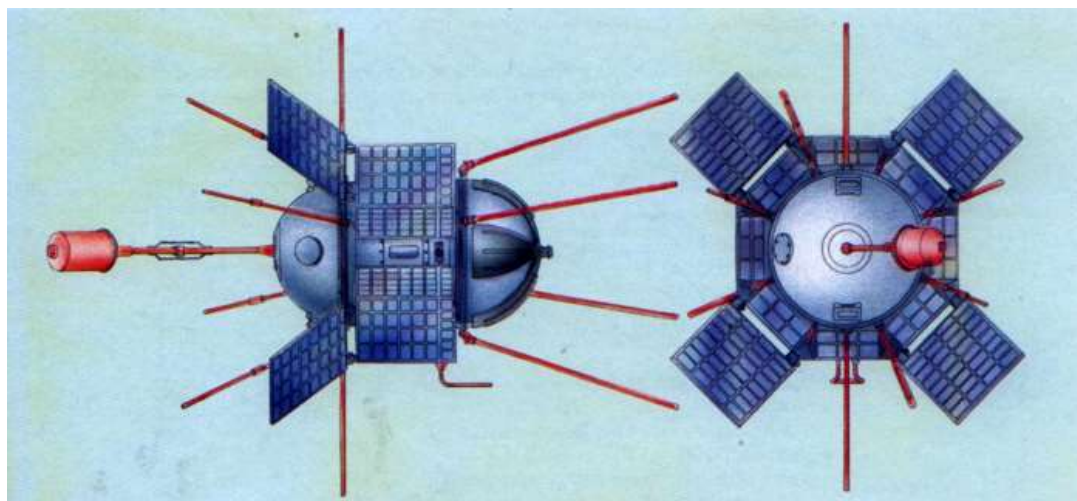



Figure 2: External view of the DS-U2-MG type spacecraft (Kosmos-321 and Kosmos-356), 1970 (Konyukhov, 2000).

2   Data description

Geomagnetic measurements by Kosmos-49 satellite were carried out in the framework of the international program of the World Magnetic Survey (Benkova and Dolginov, 1971). The Kosmos-49 mission objectives were as follows: global survey of the Earth's magnetic field and compilation of a map of its spatial distribution; refinement of Gaussian coefficients of magnetic potential decomposition; investigation of the Earth's magnetic field secular variation and temporal changes at the altitudes of the spacecraft flight in the magnetoactive periods. Kosmos-49 operated from October 24 to November 3, 1964, totally 11 days. It performed 162 orbits around the Earth and made 17300 measurements covering 75% of the Earth's surface almost homogeneously. It had an orbit with inclination of 49°, nodal period of 91.83 min, apogee of 484 km and perigee of 265 km.

Homogenous survey, performed within a short period of time, provided the general image of the Earth's magnetic field free of secular variations and allowed to map its distribution on the date of the experiment. The collected data were used for obtaining the international analytical model of the Earth's magnetic field. These results were presented and obtained a wide scientific recognition at the 7th General Assembly of the ICSU Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) in Florence (Italy) in 1964 (Konyukhov, 2000).

The sample page of the catalogue (Dolginov et al., 1967) can be seen in Fig. 3. It contains 8 columns with the following data: 1) number of measurement; 2) Moscow time (hours and minutes, rounded to 2 min); 3) altitude, km; 4) latitude (north

positive), degrees; 5) longitude (positive, from Greenwich eastward), degrees; 6) measured magnetic field absolute value, nT; 7) magnetic field value calculated according to global model presented in (Adam, 1964), nT; 8) the difference between measured and calculated values, nT.

The spatial coverage of data is shown in Fig. 4. The projection of approximately every 20th orbit on the Earth's surface is shown. Dots indicate the locations of measurements. The gaps correspond to areas in which the data were not recorded due to technical failures.

Figure 3: A sample page of Kosmos-49 catalogue (Dolginov et al., 1967).

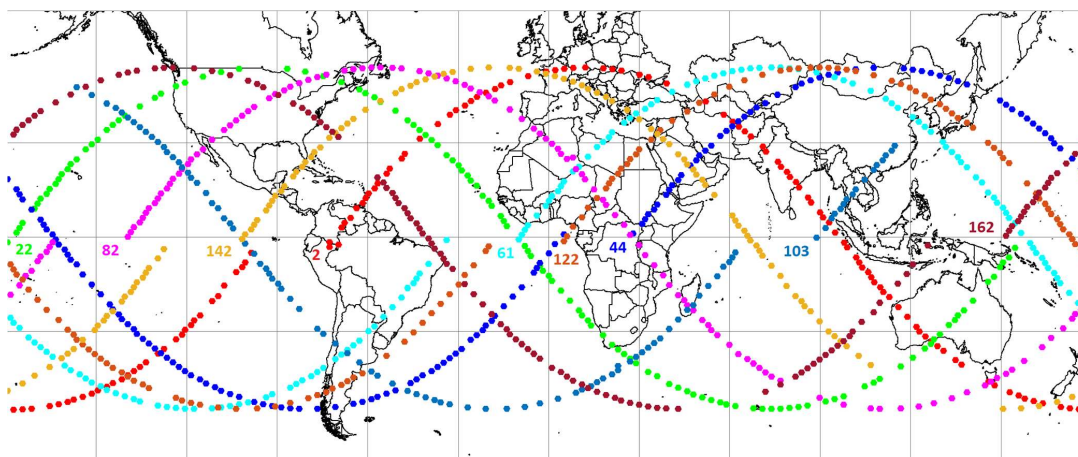



Figure 4: Spatial coverage of Kosmos-49 data.

The Kosmos-321 mission main objectives were the same as for Kosmos-49, but also included some specific tasks, such as confirming the possibility of using magnetometers with optical pumping as a service system for nuclear test explosion control in outer space and a series of atmospheric experiments. The mission experimental program was developed by IZMIRAN and Space Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Kosmos-321 operated from January 20 to March 13, 1970, totally 52 days. It performed 823 orbits around the Earth and made over 600000 measurements covering 94% of the Earth's surface. It had an orbit with inclination of 71°, nodal period of 92 min, apogee of 507 km and perigee of 280 km.

Measurements were performed with 2 s sampling. Due to numerous technical failures, only about 5000 measured values are available in the catalogue. Another disadvantage of Kosmos-321 data is that it contains strong interference (up to 20 nT) presumably from thermocurrents in sensor fixing device. This interference exhibits itself as a gap in measured magnetic field absolute values every time the sensor used for measurement was changed. The interference had approximately sinusoidal form and was eliminated from data upon data processing at IZMIRAN. Both raw data and corrected data are presented in the catalogue (Dolginov et al., 1976).

The sample page of the catalogue can be seen in Fig. 5. It contains 9 columns with the following data: 1) Moscow time (hours, minutes, and seconds); 2) local time; 3) latitude (north positive), degrees; 4) longitude (positive, from Greenwich eastward), degrees; 5) altitude, km; 6) measured magnetic field absolute value, nT; 7) corrected magnetic field absolute value, nT; 8) the difference between corrected value and the value calculated according to global model presented in (Cain, 1970), nT; 9) calculated magnetic inclination, degrees.

Figure 5: A sample page of Kosmos-321 catalogue (Dolginov et al., 1976).

The Kosmos-49 mission data tables occupied 648 pages (three volumes) (Dolginov et al., 1967), and the Kosmos-321 mission data tables occupied 173 pages (Dolginov et al., 1976). The data were digitized by the Laboratory of Geophysical Data of Geophysical Center of RAS within the three summer months of 2019. For the convenience of users, in the digital version of the catalogues the table structure has been slightly changed as follows.

Kosmos-49 (columns):

1. Number of measurement.

2–4. Date (year, month and day).

5–6. Moscow time (hours and minutes).

7. Altitude at which the measurement was made (km).

8–9. Geographical coordinates. Latitude (north and south differ by the sign), longitude (positive, from Greenwich eastward).

10. T measured in nT.

11. T calculated in nT.

135   12. Difference between measured and calculated values $\Delta T = T_{meas} - T_{calc}$ in nT.

13. Instrument number.

Kosmos-321 (columns):

1. Number of the coil.

2–4. Date (year, month and day).

140   5–7. Moscow time (hours, minutes and seconds).

8–10. Local time (hours, minutes and seconds).

11–12. Geographical coordinates (latitude and longitude in degrees).

13. Altitude (km).

14. T measured in nT.

145   15. T corrected $T_{corr} = T_{meas} - \Delta T_{modulation}$ in nT.

16. Difference between measured and calculated values $\Delta T = T_{meas} - T_{corr}$ in nT.

17. Calculated inclination (in degrees).

Empty lines in the data of Kosmos-321 satellite are added for the purpose of visualization of the instrument coil change.

It is obvious that digitization of the data set of such a volume could have led to errors and misprints made by the digitizing
150   personnel. To prevent such a situation all the data arrays were automatically checked after the digitization. It was done by
means of specially developed software that for each orbit revolution of the spacecraft controlled the time intervals, allowed
to plot the graphs for the spacecraft orbital motion and for the measured and calculated geomagnetic data. The consistency,
monotony, smoothness, extremal points, etc. of the digitized data were checked. In case of discrepancies within the software
calculation results, manual check with the printed versions of catalogues was carried out. These operations minimized all
155   possible errors of the personnel during digitization. The digitized catalogues are publicly available in ASCII tab separated
text format (Lukianova, R., Peregoudov, D., Dzeboev, B., Soloviev, A., Krasnoperov, R.: Early soviet satellite magnetic
field measurements from 1964 and 1970. PANGAEA, https://doi.pangaea.de/10.1594/PANGAEA.907927, 2019).

4 Conclusions

The success of satellite missions of Kosmos-49 and Kosmos-321 spacecraft allowed to obtain unique data on the spatial
160   distribution of the total intensity of the Earth's magnetic field over almost the whole surface of the planet. This data being
the part of the international program of the World Magnetic Survey were submitted to the main World Data Centers in
Moscow (USSR), Maryland (USA), Charlottenlund (Denmark), Kyoto (Japan) and were used as initial data for analysis of
the structure of the Earth's magnetic field sources and for compilation of a series of its analytical models. The most notable
model that employed Kosmos-49 data was the first generation of the International Geomagnetic Reference Field (for epoch
165   1965.0) (Zmuda, 1971). The model was agreed by a working group on October 24, 1968 in Washington, D.C. (USA),
approved by a special committee of the International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy in February 1969 and
officially introduced at the XVth General Assembly of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics in 1971 in
Moscow (Blagonravov, 1978).

Comparison of the data collected by Kosmos-49 and Kosmos-321 spacecraft allowed to determine the Earth's magnetic field
170   secular variation with high accuracy for the period of 1965–1970. Another important topic was the study of temporal
changes in the geomagnetic field at the altitudes of the flight of spacecraft during magnetoactive periods. Kosmos-321
encountered a strong magnetic storm of March 8–10, 1970. As a result, very interesting and important data on the magnetic
storm mechanisms in polar regions were obtained. However, the data registered during this period was not included in
publicly available catalogue. Only a few footprints of these data may be found in paper (Dolginov et al., 1972). Kosmos-321
175   for the first time measured the effects of the equatorial electrojet (Vanian et al., 1975). In addition to the traditional known
magnetic storm current systems detected by ground based magnetic observatory records, magnetic effects of currents along
power lines that were not detected by the nearest magnetic observatories were also revealed.

The results of the Kosmos-49 and Kosmos-321 missions became the sound base for further fundamental studies of the
Earth's magnetic field from space. The uniqueness of the presented data is emphasized by the fact that there are practically
180   no older and publicly available global satellite data on the Earth's magnetic field.

6 Data availability

The data from the paper catalogues were digitized at Geophysical Center of RAS in 2019. Digital data are available at
PANGAEA (Lukianova et al., 2019, https://doi.pangaea.de/10.1594/PANGAEA.907927).

Author contributions. RK, RL and AS – preparation of the manuscript. DP – description and preliminary analysis of initial
185   data, publication of the digitized catalogues. BD – data digitalization management, data validation, description of digitized
data, and preparation of figures.

Competing interests. The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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