

# Fast 3D migration-velocity analysis by wavefield extrapolation using the prestack exploding-reflector model

Claudio Guerra\* and Biondo Biondi†

*\*Formerly Stanford Exploration Project, Geophysics Department, Stanford University,  
Stanford, CA 94305. Presently Petrobras, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*

*E-mail: claudio.guerra@petrobras.com.br*

*†Stanford Exploration Project, Geophysics Department, Stanford University, Stanford, CA  
94305. E-mail: biondo@sep.stanford.edu*

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## ABSTRACT

In areas of complex geology, migration-velocity estimation should use methods that describe the complexity of wavefield propagation, such as focusing and defocusing, multipathing, and frequency-dependent velocity sensitivity. Migration-velocity analysis by wavefield extrapolation has the ability to address these issues because it uses wavefields as carriers of information, contrasting with ray-based methods. However, its high cost and lack of flexibility with respect to model parametrization and target-oriented analysis have prevented its routine industrial use. We overcome those limitations by using new wavefields as carriers of information: the image-space generalized wavefields. These wavefields are synthesized from a prestack image computed with wavefield-extrapolation methods, using the pre-stack exploding-reflector model. Cost of migration-velocity analysis by wavefield extrapolation

is decreased because only a small number of image-space generalized wavefields are necessary to accurately describe the kinematics of velocity errors and because these wavefields can be easily used in a target-oriented way. Flexibility is naturally incorporated because modeling these wavefields have as the initial conditions selected reflectors, which allows using a horizon-based parametrization of the model space. In a 3D example of the North Sea, we show that using wavefields synthesized by the prestack exploding-reflector model greatly improves efficiency of migration-velocity analysis by wavefield-extrapolation, while yielding a final accurate migration-velocity model evidenced by good quality and reliable depth images.

## INTRODUCTION

Migration-velocity analysis (MVA) solves for earth models that explain, under some norm, a residual-moveout parameter measured in the post-migrated domain. Ray-based MVA is the most widely used method due its low cost and flexibility to parametrize the model space, which can improve convergence to a geologically reasonable velocity model. However, in the presence of high lateral velocity variation and irregular interfaces, ray-based MVA methods are prone to fail because they do not describe the entire complexity of wavefield propagation. Hence, in those situations it is desirable to use wavefields to define the velocity model.

The last decade has seen the development of MVA by wavefield extrapolation (Biondi and Sava, 1999; Sava, 2004; Shen, 2004; Shen and Symes, 2008), which promises to overcome the limitations imposed by the high-frequency approximation present in ray methods. MVA by wavefield extrapolation is solved in the image space, using wavefields as carriers of information. Despite its theoretical superiority to ray methods, this relatively new technology has been rarely used in 3D projects (Fei et al., 2009) because of its higher cost and because it is less flexible than its ray-based counterpart in parameterizing the velocity model and in solving velocity problems in a target-oriented fashion. We overcome these limitations by using image-space generalized wavefields (Tang et al., 2008a; Guerra et al., 2009; Guerra, 2010). These wavefields are initiated in the image space, having as the initial condition key reflectors selected from a prestack image obtained with a wavefield-extrapolation migration.

The image-space generalized wavefields are computed with the pre-stack exploding-reflector model (PERM) (Biondi, 2006), which is an extension of the exploding-reflector model (Loewenthal et al., 1976) in a sense that migration of PERM data can produce a

prestack image. The fundamental idea of PERM is to model downgoing and upgoing wavefields necessary to provide a prestack image of a single point on a reflector with kinematic information consistent to that of the original prestack image. Synthesizing data sets from a subset of the subsurface has been previously explored by Rietveld and Berkhout (1994) and further developed into the concept of Common-Focus Point (CFP) (Berkhout and Verschuur, 2001; Thorbecke and Berkhout, 2006). CFP technology aims at synthesizing data gathers that contain all the reflections that would have been recorded at the surface if we had placed a point source in the subsurface. A CFP gather is composed of traces resulting from the time convolution between the shot gather and a focusing operator plus stacking of the stationary phases. The focusing operator is computed by modeling the seismic response of one point at the subsurface. In contrast with CFP, PERM data result from the wave propagation of the prestack image at one point at the subsurface, without operating on the original shot gathers. In this sense, PERM data is more closely related to the CFP operator itself than to the CFP data.

To image the entire reflector or group of reflectors, several independent PERM experiments would have to be performed, which could potentially generate data even bigger than the original. However, because of the linearity of wavefield propagation, the modeling experiments can be combined, causing a dramatic data reduction, especially in 3D. When the wavefields are linearly combined after encoding with stochastic phase functions, the image-space phase-encoded wavefields (ISPEW) are generated. Since image-space generalized wavefields are initiated at selected reflectors, a horizon-based strategy to parametrize the velocity model can be naturally incorporated into MVA by wavefield extrapolation. Moreover, these wavefields can be generated for a small subset of the image cube and collected at any depth during their propagation, making a target-oriented approach also easily

integrated.

This paper is organized as follows. First, we describe PERM and how to synthesize ISPEW. Next, we introduce MVA by wavefield extrapolation in the image-space generalized-sources domain, illustrating with the Marmousi model. Finally, we run MVA by wavefield extrapolation, using only 30 pairs of ISPEW, to estimate the 3D-migration-velocity model in the North Sea with the occurrence of a salt body.

## THE PRESTACK EXPLODING-REFLECTOR MODEL

A prestack image computed by wavefield-extrapolation methods with an inaccurate velocity model presents energy departing from the zero subsurface offset. In conventional Born modeling, this entire prestack image is spatially convolved with the source wavefield, generating the receiver wavefield, whose back-propagation and collection at the surface create data. Source and receiver wavefields must be propagated with the same inaccurate velocity model used in the original migration to preserve the correct kinematics. Now, let us consider the modeling of data necessary to correctly image a reflector in a single subsurface-offset common-image gather (SODCIG). Since we do not know beforehand which shots contribute to forming the image at a point in the subsurface, we would have to perform several modeling experiments to guarantee illumination similar to that of the original SODCIG. However, ideally, we would like to synthesize a small amount of data with the condition that migration produces kinematics consistent to that of the initial prestack reflector. This is the fundamental idea of the prestack exploding-reflector model (PERM) (Biondi, 2006), whose primary objective is to accelerate migration-velocity analysis.

Areal data is generated by PERM, propagating energy of a prestack image. PERM

operates in a way similar to the exploding-reflector model. However, since migration of PERM data can produce a prestack image, PERM can be considered a generalization of the exploding-reflector model. The modeling of PERM wavefields can be carried out by any wavefield-extrapolation scheme. Here, we use the following one-way wave equations:

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} - i\sqrt{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) D(\mathbf{x}, \omega; \mathbf{x}_m) = I_D(\mathbf{x}_m, \mathbf{h}) \\ D(x, y, z = z_{\max}, \omega; \mathbf{x}_m) = 0 \end{cases}, \quad (1)$$

and

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} + i\sqrt{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) U(\mathbf{x}, \omega; \mathbf{x}_m) = I_U(\mathbf{x}_m, \mathbf{h}) \\ U(x, y, z = z_{\max}, \omega; \mathbf{x}_m) = 0 \end{cases}, \quad (2)$$

where  $\omega$  is the radial frequency,  $s_0$  is the same background velocity used to produce the initial prestack image,  $D$  and  $U$  represent the downgoing and the upgoing PERM wavefields, respectively,  $I_D$  and  $I_U$  are subsets of the prestack image centered at  $\mathbf{x}_m$  for a single reflector, suitable for the initial conditions for modeling downgoing and upgoing PERM wavefields, respectively. The information along the subsurface-offset  $\mathbf{h}$  dimension of the initial conditions is projected onto the  $\mathbf{x}$  dimension for the modeling. The subsurface offsets is parameterized as  $\mathbf{h} = (h_x, h_y)$ , where  $h_x$  and  $h_y$  are the inline- and the crossline-subsurface offsets, respectively. Notice that if the prestack image has energy focused at zero subsurface offset, the initial conditions can be parameterized only by the spatial coordinates, and PERM is equivalent to ERM.

The initial conditions are obtained by rotating the original unfocused SODCIGs according to the apparent geological dip of the reflector. This operation corrects for the image-point dispersal due to velocity inaccuracy and reflector dip, causing events with different reflection angles from the same reflection point to be imaged at different locations. This is a consequence of not shifting the wavefields along the apparent geological-dip di-

rection (Biondi and Symes, 2004) when applying the multi-offset image condition (Rickett and Sava, 2002). The 2D geometry that explains the rotation is depicted in Figure 1 for the cases of migration velocity which is slower (Figure 1a) and faster (Figure 1b) than the correct one.

The angles  $\gamma + \alpha$  and  $\gamma - \alpha$  are the source and receiver ray angles, respectively. They are the propagation directions of the wavefields locally at the image point. In 2D,  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  are related to slopes in the pre-stack image  $l_{hg}$  according to

$$\tan \alpha = -\frac{dz_m}{dx_m} \quad (3)$$

$$\tan \gamma = -\frac{dz}{dh_x}, \quad (4)$$

where the subscript  $m$  in equation 3 refers to the local nature of the relationship. The solutions of the differential equations 3 and 4 define slant-stack paths, which allow us to transform the 2D pre-stack image  $I(x, z, h_x)$  into  $I(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)$ . To align the initial conditions with the geological dip, the dip along the subsurface-offset axis is changed, yielding the new subsurface offset  $\widetilde{h_{x_d}}$  and  $\widetilde{h_{x_u}}$  for the initial conditions of the modeling of downgoing and upgoing PERM wavefields, respectively. This is accomplished by solving the following differential equations:

$$\tan(\gamma + \alpha) = -\frac{dz}{d\widetilde{h_{x_d}}}, \quad (5)$$

$$\tan(\gamma - \alpha) = \frac{dz}{d\widetilde{h_{x_u}}}. \quad (6)$$

The solutions of equations 5 and 6 define new slant-stack operations, which reduce the dimensionality of the decomposed pre-stack image by transforming  $I(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)$  into  $I_D(x, z, \widetilde{h_{x_d}})$  and  $I_U(x, z, \widetilde{h_{x_u}})$ . In 3D, the cross-line subsurface offsets also must be rotated. A complete description of the 3D rotation is given by Guerra (2010).

PERM as described by equations 1 and 2 generates sufficient data to image a single SODCIG. However, to fully image a reflector, we would have to model data that could potentially be even greater than the original data. Using the linearity of wavefield propagation, the modeling experiments can be combined in a way that PERM data size is decreased. Hence, a group of equally spaced SODCIGs is simultaneously injected into the modeling according to

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} - i\sqrt{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) \widehat{D}(\mathbf{x}, \omega) = \widehat{I}_D(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{h}) \\ \widehat{D}(x, y, z = z_{\max}, \omega) = 0 \end{cases}, \quad (7)$$

and

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} + i\sqrt{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) \widehat{U}(\mathbf{x}, \omega) = \widehat{I}_U(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h}) \\ \widehat{U}(x, y, z = z_{\max}, \omega) = 0 \end{cases}, \quad (8)$$

where  $\widehat{I}_D$  and  $\widehat{I}_U$  are the combination of SODCIGs for a single reflector to be used as the initial conditions for the modeling of combined downgoing and upgoing wavefields,  $\widehat{D}$  and  $\widehat{U}$ , respectively.

The selection of SODCIGs can be thought of as the multiplication of the pre-stack image by a 2D-comb function, which is shifted laterally to select new set of SODCIGs to initiate the modeling of another pair of combined wavefields. After shifting along one period of the sampling function in the  $x$  and  $y$  directions, all the points on the reflector are used in the modeling. Consequently, the number of modeling experiments equals the number of lateral shifts of the sampling function.

Depending on the spatial periods of the sampling function, crosstalk between wavefields modeled from different SODCIGs occurs during migration. If the periods of the 2D-comb function are chosen to be the decorrelation distances of twice the  $x$  and  $y$  subsurface-offset range, no crosstalk is generated. If more than one reflector is used, each reflector must

be separately injected into the modeling, so that wavefields from different reflectors do not cross-correlate during imaging, avoiding reflector crosstalk. These procedures to avoid crosstalk limit data size reduction with PERM. To overcome this limitation, two different strategies can be used.

One strategy mitigates the reflector crosstalk, benefiting from the fact that the image of a reflector is formed at the zero lag of the cross-correlation between source and receiver wavefields, which, when using PERM data, corresponds to the zero time of wavefield propagation when the migration velocity is accurate. When migration velocity is inaccurate, focusing of the image departs from the zero time. This can be potentially used to update the velocity model (Sava and Fomel, 2006; Yang and Sava, 2009). Depending on the magnitude of the velocity errors and the distance between reflectors, selecting events with propagation time close to zero can avoid cross-correlating unrelated events. This is the principle of the time-windowed imaging condition, which for a single pair of PERM wavefields reads

$$I_w(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{h}) = \sum_{-\frac{t_w}{2} \leq t \leq \frac{t_w}{2}} \mathcal{F}^{-1} \left[ \widehat{D}^*(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{h}) \right] \mathcal{F}^{-1} \left[ \widehat{U}(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h}) \right], \quad (9)$$

where  $t_w$  is the length of the time window. When using one-way propagators, the wavefields are inverse Fourier transformed to time by  $\mathcal{F}^{-1}$ .

Another strategy is to phase-encode the modeling experiments. Phase-encoding is a well established technique for decreasing the cost of seismic imaging by linearly combining the shot records (Schultz and Claerbout, 1978; Whitmore, 1995; Romero et al., 2000; Sun et al., 2002; Liu et al., 2006; Duquet and Lailly, 2006). In general, phase-encoding is performed in the data space. PERM wavefields can be phase-encoded in the image space, being called the image-space phase-encoded wavefields (ISPEW). We achieve this by phase-encoding the

initial conditions  $\tilde{I}$ , according to:

$$\tilde{I}(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{q}, \omega) = \sum_m \sum_j \delta(\hat{\mathbf{x}} - m\Delta\mathbf{x})\beta(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, j, \mathbf{q}, \omega)W_j(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \mathbf{h})I(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \mathbf{h}), \quad (10)$$

where  $W_j$  selects the reflector  $j$  by identifying and windowing it in the pre-stack image  $I$ , and  $\beta(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, j, \mathbf{q}, \omega)$  is a pseudo-random phase-encoding function defined as

$$\beta(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, j, \mathbf{q}, \omega) = e^{i\epsilon(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, j, \mathbf{q}, \omega)}, \quad (11)$$

with  $\epsilon(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, j, \mathbf{q}, \omega)$  usually being a uniformly distributed pseudo-random sequence with zero mean. Another sequences, Gold codes for instance, used in third- and fourth-generation cell-phones can also be used to phase-encode the modeling (Guerra and Biondi, 2008). Phase-encoding the modeling experiments mitigates not only crosstalk between wavefields modeled from different reflectors as well as crosstalk between wavefields modeled from different SOD-CIGs. Downgoing and upgoing ISPEW initiated at the same SODCIG and from the same reflector are equally encoded, whereas downgoing and upgoing ISPEW initiated at different SODCIGs and from the different reflectors have different codes assigned to them. Computing more realizations of ISPEW makes crosstalk attenuation more effective, according to the law of large numbers.

Image-space generalized wavefields can be collected at any depth, which can be the top of a region of inaccurate velocity, having key reflectors affected by the velocity inaccuracy as the initial conditions. By doing so, velocity update will be restricted to the inaccurate velocity region. The use of key reflectors characterizes a target-oriented strategy to perform MVA by wavefield extrapolation. These two features along with the decrease of data size drastically decreases the cost of MVA by wavefield extrapolation.

To illustrate the generation of PERM data and ISPEW, a prestack image computed with the inaccurate velocity model of Figure 2b is used as the initial conditions after rotation

according to the apparent geological dip. Data comprise 375 split-spread shots, with 6000 m maximum offset, computed by one-way Born modeling using the smooth Marmousi velocity model of Figure 2a along with the reflectivity derived from the true Marmousi model. The inaccurate velocity model is exactly the same as the correct velocity model up to the black horizon. From this horizon down, velocity is strongly smoothed and multiplied by 0.9. The curvature of the reflectors in the SODCIG and the pull-up of reflectors in the center of Figure 3a reflect the velocity inaccuracy. We use the four reflectors shown in Figure 3b to model 35 pairs of PERM data (Figure 4) and 11 pairs of ISPEW (Figure 5). Since 17 subsurface offsets are computed in migration, which is less than half of the spatial sampling period, no SODCIG crosstalk is expected to occur when using 35 pairs of PERM data. Migration of the 35 pairs of PERM data using the conventional imaging condition is shown in Figure 6a and using the time-windowed-imaging condition is shown in Figure 6b. Notice that this modified imaging condition almost completely avoids reflector crosstalk. Migration of the 11 pairs of ISPEW is shown in Figure 7. Reflectors are satisfactorily imaged and crosstalk is dispersed throughout the image.

Residual-moveout panels from images computed with the original shot records (Figure 8a), with 35 pairs of PERM data (Figure 8b), and with 11 ISPEW (Figure 8c) are used to analyze the quality of the moveout information. Notice that in the angle-domain common-image gathers (ADCIGs) corresponding to images computed with 35 pairs of PERM data and 11 pairs of ISPEW, less events are present since only four reflectors were selected to model these wavefields. The corresponding reflectors in the original shot-profile image are highlighted by green boxes in Figure 8a. The residual moveout information in the four panels is very similar. However, some crosstalk not entirely rejected by the time-windowed imaging condition causes the residual-moveout information lose vertical resolution in Figure

8b when compared to Figure 8c.

The cost for obtaining the images in Figure 8 widely varies. For instance, migrating 11 ISPEW is approximately 30 times faster than migrating all the 375 original shots. This difference in performance is even more dramatic in MVA by wavefield extrapolation when we consider several iterations of migrations and gradient computations.

### MVA BY WAVEFIELD-EXTRAPOLATION

Optimization of the migration velocity is a non-linear inverse problem. When using wavefield-extrapolation methods, we search for an optimal background velocity which minimizes an objective function defined in the image space. The residual that is used to compute the gradient of the objective function with respect to velocity is represented by the perturbed image  $\Delta\hat{I}$ , which, in turn, is derived from the background image  $\hat{I}_0$  computed with the background slowness  $s_0$ .

The perturbed image can be computed by the linearized-residual prestack-depth migration (Sava, 2003), and it is used in the wave-equation migration-velocity analysis (Biondi and Sava, 1999; Sava, 2004). Also, the perturbed image can be computed by the differential-semblance-optimization (DSO) operator (Symes and Carazzone, 1991), and it is used in the differential-semblance velocity optimization (DSVA) (Shen, 2004; Shen and Symes, 2008).

Under the  $\ell_2$  norm, the DSVA objective function  $J_{\text{DSO}}$  is

$$J_{\text{DSO}} = \frac{1}{2} \|\Delta\hat{I}\|_2 = \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{H}[\hat{I}_0]\|_2, \quad (12)$$

where  $\mathbf{H}$  is the DSO operator either in the subsurface-offset domain or in the angle domain. In the subsurface-offset domain, DSO penalizes energy departing from the zero offset, by weighting the background image with the absolute value of the subsurface offset. In the

angle domain, DSO penalizes the lack of flattening of reflectors, by taking the derivative of the background image along the aperture angle.

DSVA is solved by gradient-based optimization techniques, such as the nonlinear conjugate-gradient method, to which the gradient must be explicitly computed. The gradient  $\nabla J_{\text{DSO}}$  of the objective function of equation 12 with respect to the slowness  $\mathbf{s}$  is

$$\nabla J_{\text{DSO}} = \mathbf{T}'\mathbf{H}'\mathbf{H}I_0, \quad (13)$$

where  $\mathbf{T} = \frac{\partial I}{\partial s}|_{s=s_0}$  is the wave-equation tomographic operator (WETOM), evaluated at  $s = s_0$ , which is composed of several operators and linearly maps the slowness perturbation  $\Delta s$  into the perturbed image.

WETOM has been evaluated in the source-receiver domain (Sava, 2004), in the shot-profile domain (Shen, 2004), and in the generalized-sources domain (Tang et al., 2008b). We apply WETOM in the image-space generalized-sources domain. To illustrate the process we use 35 ISPEW modeled from 12 reflectors selected from the background image computed with the velocity model of Figure 10b. This velocity model is obtained by smoothing the Marmousi velocity model (Figure 10a) and multiplying it by 0.9 only below the black horizon. In Figure 9, is represented the initial conditions for the modeling of upgoing PERM wavefields.

In the areal-shot migration of image-space generalized wavefields, they are downward continued with the following one-way wave equations:

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} + i\sqrt{\omega^2 s^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) \widehat{D}_0(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = 0 \\ \widehat{D}_0(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = \widetilde{D}(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \end{cases}, \quad (14)$$

and

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} - i\sqrt{\omega^2 s^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) \widehat{U}_0(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = 0 \\ \widehat{U}_0(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = \widetilde{U}(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \end{cases}, \quad (15)$$

where  $\widehat{D}_0(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)$  is the image-space generalized background downgoing wavefield for a single frequency,  $\widehat{U}_0(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)$  is the image-space generalized background upgoing wavefield for a single frequency,  $\mathbf{p}$  is the index of the areal shot, and  $\widetilde{D}(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)$  and  $\widetilde{U}(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)$  are the data synthesized with PERM and collected at  $z = z_{min}$ , which denotes the top of a target zone. These data serve as the boundary conditions of equations 14 and 15, respectively. Snapshots of the background ISPEW are shown in Figure 11.

The crosscorrelation imaging condition produces the background image  $\widehat{I}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{h})$  (Figure 12)

$$\widehat{I}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{h}) = \sum_{\mathbf{p}} \sum_{\omega} \widehat{D}^*(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \widehat{U}(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega). \quad (16)$$

The perturbed image is derived by applying the differentiation-product rule to equation 16, which gives

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \widehat{I}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{h}) &= \sum_{\mathbf{p}} \sum_{\omega} \Delta \widehat{D}^*(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \widehat{U}_0(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) + \\ &\quad \widehat{D}_0^*(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \Delta \widehat{U}(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega), \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

where  $\Delta \widehat{D}(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)$  and  $\Delta \widehat{U}(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)$  are the image-space generalized perturbed downgoing wavefield and the image-space generalized perturbed upgoing wavefield, respectively. These image-space generalized perturbed wavefields are the response to a slowness perturbation. They satisfy the following one-way wave equations linearized with respect to

the slowness:

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} + i\sqrt{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) \Delta \widehat{D}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = \widehat{D}_{SC}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \\ \Delta \widehat{D}(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = 0 \end{cases}, \quad (18)$$

and

$$\begin{cases} \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial z} - i\sqrt{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x}) - |\mathbf{k}|^2} \right) \Delta \widehat{U}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = \widehat{U}_{SC}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \\ \Delta \widehat{U}(x, y, z = z_{min}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = 0 \end{cases}. \quad (19)$$

Snapshots of the image-space generalized perturbed wavefields are shown in Figure 13. No scattering occurs above the black horizon of Figure 10 because the initial conditions above it are null. The wavefields in the right-hand side of equations 18 and 19 are the image-space generalized scattered downgoing and upgoing wavefields, respectively, which result from the interaction of the image-space generalized background wavefields with a slowness perturbation according to

$$\widehat{D}_{SC}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = \frac{i\omega\Delta s(\mathbf{x})}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{|\mathbf{k}|^2}{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x})}}} \widehat{D}_0(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \quad (20)$$

and

$$\widehat{U}_{SC}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) = \frac{-i\omega\Delta s(\mathbf{x})}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{|\mathbf{k}|^2}{\omega^2 s_0^2(\mathbf{x})}}} \widehat{U}_0(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega). \quad (21)$$

These wavefields are injected at every depth level during the recursive downward propagation of the perturbed wavefields. The image-space generalized perturbed downgoing and upgoing wavefields are used along with the precomputed image-space generalized background downgoing and upgoing wavefields in equation 17 to generate the perturbed image (Figure 14).

The adjoint WETOM  $\mathbf{T}'$  is obtained by the following operations. First, the adjoint-imaging condition is applied to compute the image-space generalized perturbed downgoing

and upgoing wavefields according to the following convolutions:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta\widehat{D}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) &= \sum_{\mathbf{h}} \Delta\widehat{I}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{h})\widehat{U}_0(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) \\ \Delta\widehat{U}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) &= \sum_{\mathbf{h}} \Delta\widehat{I}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{h})\widehat{D}_0(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{h}, \mathbf{p}, \omega).\end{aligned}\quad (22)$$

The image-space generalized perturbed wavefields are upward propagated using the adjoint counterparts of equations 18 and 19. At every depth of their upward propagation, the image-space generalized perturbed downgoing wavefield is cross-correlated with the image-space generalized scattered downgoing wavefield, and the image-space generalized perturbed upgoing wavefield is cross-correlated with the image-space generalized scattered upgoing wavefield to generate the slowness perturbation according to

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta\widehat{s}(\mathbf{x}) &= \sum_{\mathbf{p}} \sum_{\omega} \widehat{D}_{SC}^*(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)\Delta\widehat{D}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega) + \\ &\quad \widehat{U}_{SC}^*(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega)\Delta\widehat{U}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}, \omega).\end{aligned}\quad (23)$$

The slowness perturbation for the Marmousi example computed in the image-space generalized sources domain using ISPEWs is shown in Figure 15.

When performing velocity optimization using DSVA, for instance, the perturbed image in equation 22 is computed with DSO at the beginning of every nonlinear iteration. DSO easily automates migration-velocity optimization. However, neither the phase nor the amplitudes of the DSO perturbed image are consistent with those of the perturbed image computed by the forward one-way WETOM (Vyas and Tang, 2010; Fei and Williamson, 2010). These differences prevent the use of linear conjugate-gradient methods, and therefore the objective function computed with DSO is typically minimized by nonlinear optimization methods.

The gradient of the MVA by wavefield extrapolation objective function is sensitive to amplitude variations of the prestack image caused by uneven illumination. Since these

amplitude variations are not related to velocity inaccuracy, we should ideally attenuate them using some sort of illumination compensation scheme (Valenciano et al., 2009; Tang, 2009). Instead, to prevent these amplitude variations we apply a B-spline smoothing to the gradient, which consists of representing the gradient as B-spline basis functions, using the adjoint operator  $\mathbf{B}'$ , and transforming it back to the Cartesian space, using the forward operator  $\mathbf{B}$ .

When using image-space generalized wavefields, a target-oriented strategy can be adopted if the velocity model is sufficiently accurate for shallower layers. A mask operator  $\mathbf{M}$  is applied to the gradient, zeroing out amplitudes in the accurate velocity region, preventing the velocity model from being updated.

Since the gradient is not properly scaled, we normalize it by the inverse of its maximum absolute value multiplied by the minimum slowness, which characterizes the diagonal operator  $\mathbf{F}$ . To improve convergence, we would like to limit the velocity update from one iteration with respect to its previous values. In other words, we would like the new velocity to vary within a range defined by a percentage of the velocity from the previous iteration. This can be implemented by applying to the gradient either a nonlinear (since it depends on the velocity) diagonal operator, or a diagonal operator  $\mathbf{W}$  linearized around the initial velocity. Therefore, in contrast with the gradient of equation 13, the one we use to update the velocity model is

$$\nabla J_{DSO} = \mathbf{W}\mathbf{F}\mathbf{M}\mathbf{B}\mathbf{B}' \mathbf{T}' \Big|_{s=s_0} \mathbf{H}'\mathbf{H} \tilde{I} \Big|_{s=s_0}. \quad (24)$$

### 3D EXAMPLE

We estimate the migration-velocity model with 3D ISPEW synthesized from prestack images of the North Sea. The challenges for defining the velocity model for this dataset are due to a possibly irregular salt body, the intense faulting, the amplitude variations caused by irregular acquisition, the short source-receiver offsets, and the limited source-receiver azimuths. Because of the narrow azimuthal configuration, the 3D dataset was transformed to common-azimuth data by azimuth-moveout (AMO), and common-azimuth migration (CAM) images are used as the initial conditions for the modeling of very few 3D ISPEW. Thirty nodes of Dual Nehalem 5520 with 24Gb RAM were used, accounting to 240 CPUs. To generate 30 pairs of 3D ISPEWs, using 196 frequencies, it took 10 minutes. On average, each iteration of the velocity optimization, consisting of one function evaluation, the gradient computation, and two additional function evaluations for the line search, took approximately two hours. The velocity estimation presented here could have been easily performed interactively if a larger, but commonly available in industrial setting, number of computer nodes have been used to perform the computations.

The 3D North Sea dataset spans over an area of approximately 55 km<sup>2</sup>, with 13.5 km in-lines and 4 km cross-lines. It was acquired using dual sources at intervals of 25 m in the in-line direction and 50 m in the cross-line direction, with three cables 100 m apart and a maximum offset 3600 m. The limited cross-line offsets resulting from this acquisition configuration impose limitations in the azimuthal distribution. The offset distribution is spatially quite irregular, as can be seen in the fold of coverage map (Figure 16a). The acquisition footprint is evident, with a wide low-fold region occurring for in-lines around 4000 m in the y direction. In spite of the regularization provided by AMO, amplitude

variations caused by the offset irregularity still persists as can be seen in Figure 18b. It shows a time slice at 2.8 s through the trace envelope for the stacked volume of the regularized data.

Although the fold irregularity and amplitude imbalance are in the data-space, we will see that the acquisition footprint is evident in the amplitudes of the gradient of the objective function at approximately the same spatial position.

The velocity model provided along with the data (Figure 17), herein called the original velocity model, presents a general layered structure with an overhanging salt dome connected to a deeper layer with the same velocity as that of the salt dome. The shallower layer with a domed structure is a chalk layer, herein called chalk layer. The final velocity model we derive shows remarkable differences when compared to the original velocity model.

To derive the initial velocity model, the sediment velocity above the chalk layer was refined using residual prestack depth-migration scans. Below the top of chalk, velocity was heavily smoothed using a 5000 m wide 2D median smoother. In addition, to increase the inaccuracy of the initial velocity model, velocity was scaled down by a factor of 0.9 (Figure 18).

A layer-stripping approach was used to define the velocity for the chalk layer, considering a sufficiently accurate velocity for the sediments above. Then, the top salt was interpreted, and a salt flooding procedure enabled the interpretation of the base of salt. The interpretation of the base of salt can be considered the main source of uncertainty of this example, since no previous geological information was available. Finally, a group of reflectors below the salt is used to define the velocity structure for the deeper part.

The initial velocity model produces the CAM image of Figure 19, which shows the volume for the zero subsurface offset, and Figure 20, which shows the zero subsurface offset on the top, and ADCIGs at the bottom for a central in-line. The effects of migrating with a too low velocity are evidenced by poorly collapsed diffractions close to the salt flank, poorly imaged faults, and reflectors curving up in the ADCIGs.

The base of chalk was interpreted in the 3D pre-stack volume and used as input for the modeling of 30 ISPEW. In-line and cross-line intervals of the CAM image were interpolated from 20 m to 30 m, which are the in-line and cross-line intervals used for optimizing the migration velocity.

Since no cross-line offset is computed, the CAM initial conditions can be continuously sampled in the cross-line direction, reducing by at least one order of magnitude the number of image-space generalized wavefields to be synthesized, following Guerra (2010). For the base of chalk, only 30 3D ISPEWs were modeled and collected at 600 m depth. A pair of 3D-ISPEW is shown in Figure 21. Since the number of subsurface offsets that will be used during velocity optimization is 25 and the spatial sampling in the x direction of 30 SODCIGs is used to model the 3D ISPEWs, crosstalk is expected to be sufficiently attenuated.

In the velocity optimization for the chalk layer, velocity update is constrained to a maximum of 10% variation between iterations. All the wavefield propagation is performed between the depth at which the 30 3D ISPEWs were collected (600 m) and a maximum depth of 3300 m. Velocity is updated up to the top of the chalk layer.

To illustrate the problem of amplitude variations in the raw gradient, we compute the slowness perturbation without applying smoothing (Figure 22a). The acquisition footprint is clear, specially around the y coordinate 4000 m, which is a region with low-fold of cov-

erage (Figure 16). The gradient of the objective function must be smooth to yield velocity updates consistent with the Born approximation. We apply a B-spline smoothing with node intervals of 420 X 420 X 160 m in the in-line, cross-line and depth directions, respectively. Applying B-spline smoothing on the DSO slowness perturbation of Figure 22a mitigates the amplitude-variation problems and yields consistent slowness perturbations (Figure 22b).

Two runs of velocity optimization were necessary to define the velocity model for the chalk layer. The first used wavefields modeled from all the extension of base of chalk. Figure 23 shows the evolution of the objective function for the first run. Since CAM with the resulting velocity revealed velocity inaccuracies close to the salt flanks, new wavefields were modeled having the initial conditions limited to an area approximately 2 km wide around the salt edge. By doing this, we explore the localized nature of these wavefields, so that this second run is targeted for updating velocity close to salt flanks. In both runs, two function evaluations were used in the line search.

The optimized velocity models for the first and second runs of velocity optimization is shown in Figure 24. Detailed views of CAM images computed with these velocity models are shown in Figure 25. Only slices through the zero subsurface offset are shown. Overall, the image computed with the velocity of the second run of velocity optimization is better focused.

Once a sufficiently accurate velocity for the chalk layer had been defined, salt flooding was used to delineate the salt body. The top salt was interpreted, and below it velocity was replaced by a constant value of 4500 m/s. CAM image computed with the salt-flooded velocity supported the interpretation of the base of the salt. Insufficient illumination due to the limited azimuthal coverage and irregular shape of the salt body caused the base of salt to

be discontinuous. In this situation, prior geological information would be extremely helpful to constrain the interpretation. The lack thereof is a source of uncertainty for defining the velocity model below the salt.

After the base of salt was interpreted, salt velocity was delineated and the initial velocity was inserted below the salt and the chalk layer (Figure 26). This new velocity model produced the CAM image in Figure 27 from which seven deeper reflectors are used to model new ISPEWs to optimize sub-salt and sub-chalk velocity. These wavefields were collected at a depth of 1650 m, which is the minimum depth used in the velocity optimization. The maximum depth is 4800 m.

In the sub-salt velocity optimization, the intervals between B-spline nodes is 1050 m in the  $x$  and  $y$  directions and 150 m in the  $z$  direction. A maximum of 5% local velocity variation is allowed between iterations, and two function evaluations are performed in the line search. The final objective function dropped only 10% with respect to its initial value. This decrease is small compared to the 40% decrease for the velocity optimization of the chalk layer. Apart from the poorer illumination in the sub-salt and sub-chalk case, which prevents the complete focusing at the zero subsurface offset, this difference can be explained by the different levels of crosstalk. For the chalk layer, only crosstalk from different SOD-CIGs occurs, whereas for the sub-salt case, crosstalk from different SODCIGs and reflector crosstalk were generated. To decrease the effect crosstalk has on the objective function for the sub-salt-velocity optimization, more random realizations could have been used as well as increasing the SODCIG sampling interval.

The evolution of the velocity model through iterations is shown in Figure 28. CAM with the optimized velocity model of Figure 28d can be seen in Figure 29. For comparison,

CAM with the initial velocity model and CAM with the original velocity model are shown in Figures 20 and 30. When compared with the results using the initial velocity model, the improvements obtained with the optimized velocity model are clear: flatter angle gathers, better focusing of the reflectors, and imaging of the faults. The improvements compared to the original (unmodified) velocity model are also clear: better focusing of reflectors and slightly flatter angle gathers below the salt as well as close to its flanks.

Figure 31 shows additional comparisons between the CAM images obtained with the initial, with the original, and with the final velocity models, for different in-lines and cross-lines. The images are displayed as vertical slices through the migrated cube and show the zero subsurface offset. The initial image is on the top, the original image in the middle, and the final image at the bottom. The left panel of each figure shows the in-line, and the right panel shows the cross-line. Ovals highlight the main differences. Overall, the final images present better quality than do the initial and original images, expressed by better focusing and continuity of reflectors in the chalk layer as well as in the sub-salt region. The optimized velocity model allowed imaging of a complex fault system on the right of the salt body, collapsing diffractions from the salt flank.

## CONCLUSIONS

We introduced the image-space generalized wavefields, which are synthesized with the prestack exploding-reflector model. When phase encoded, these wavefields originate the image-space phase-encoded wavefields. Using 3D ISPEW has proven to greatly accelerate 3D-MVA by wavefield extrapolation, thanks to the small number of wavefields needed to satisfactorily describe the kinematics of the prestack image and the fact that they can be computed in a target-oriented manner. Because of these computational efficiencies, we could

solve a 3D migration-velocity problem employing only limited computational resources. Considering the computational resources available in the industry, using 3D ISPEW can turn MVA by wavefield extrapolation an interactive process, which can yield more accurate and geologically reasonable solutions.

In a 3D example from the North Sea, with only 30 ISPEW we were able to determine an accurate migration-velocity model, using different strategies like layer stripping and based on horizons. We also used a target-oriented strategy, which allowed updating the velocity model not only within a limited depth range, but also within a limited lateral extent. This is achieved by selecting for synthesizing the wavefields a specific portion of a reflector or group of reflectors that still present residual moveout.

Besides the computational gain, 3D ISPEWs were able to provide reliable velocity updates. Using the final velocity model produces a CAM image with quality superior to that obtained with the initial velocity model, as expected. Moreover, the image computed with the final velocity model is more accurate than that computed with the original velocity model, with better focusing and continuity of the sub-salt reflectors and better fault imaging. The computational efficiency, flexibility, and velocity accuracy obtained with data computed by the prestack exploding-reflector model enables the use of MVA by wavefield extrapolation as a routine procedure to define migration velocity in areas of complex geology.

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## LIST OF FIGURES

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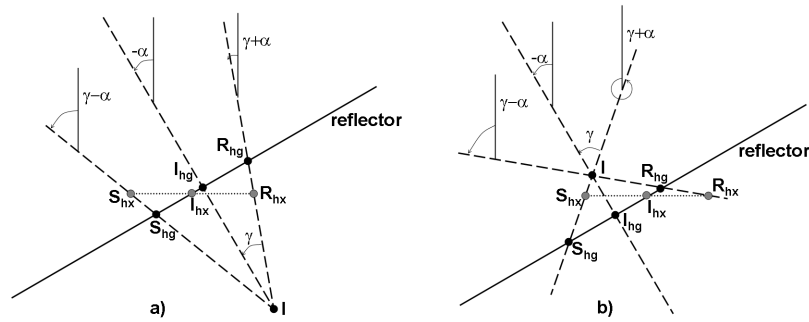


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**Guerra and Biondi –**

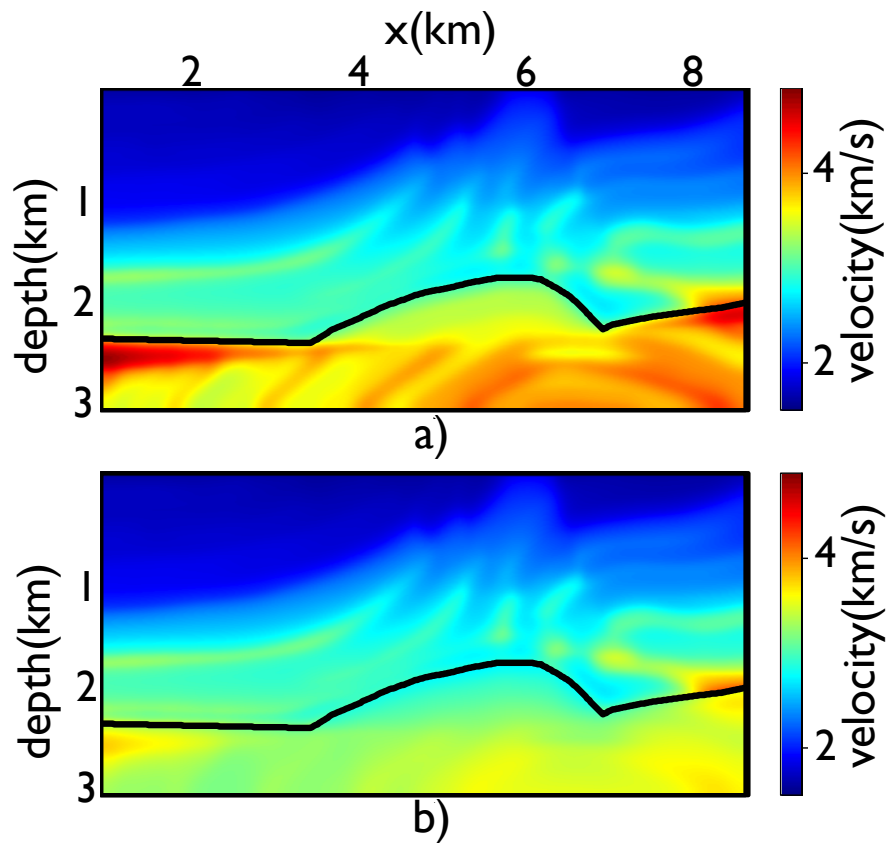


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Guerra and Biondi –

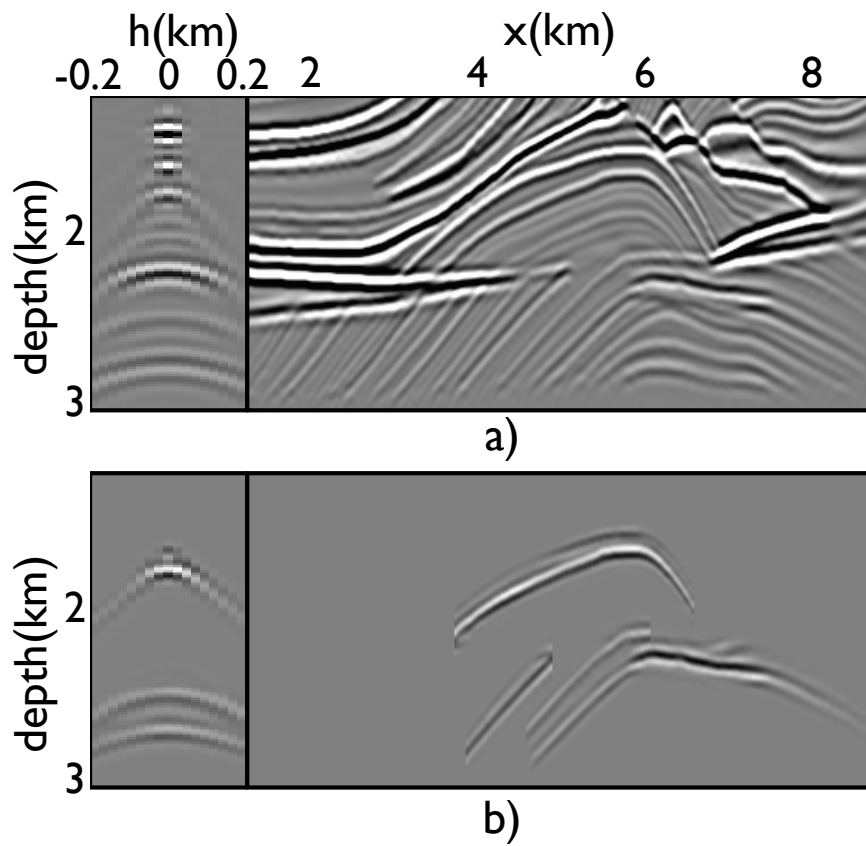


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Guerra and Biondi –

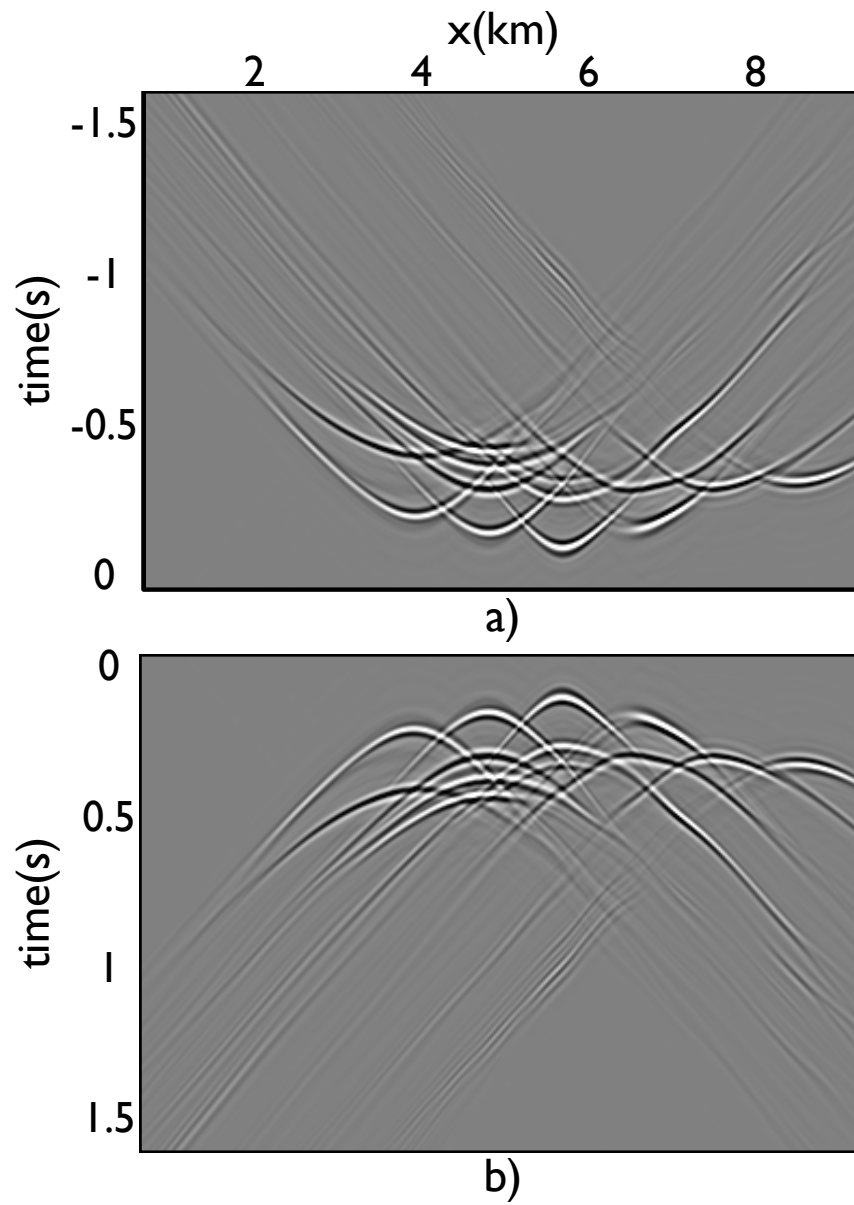


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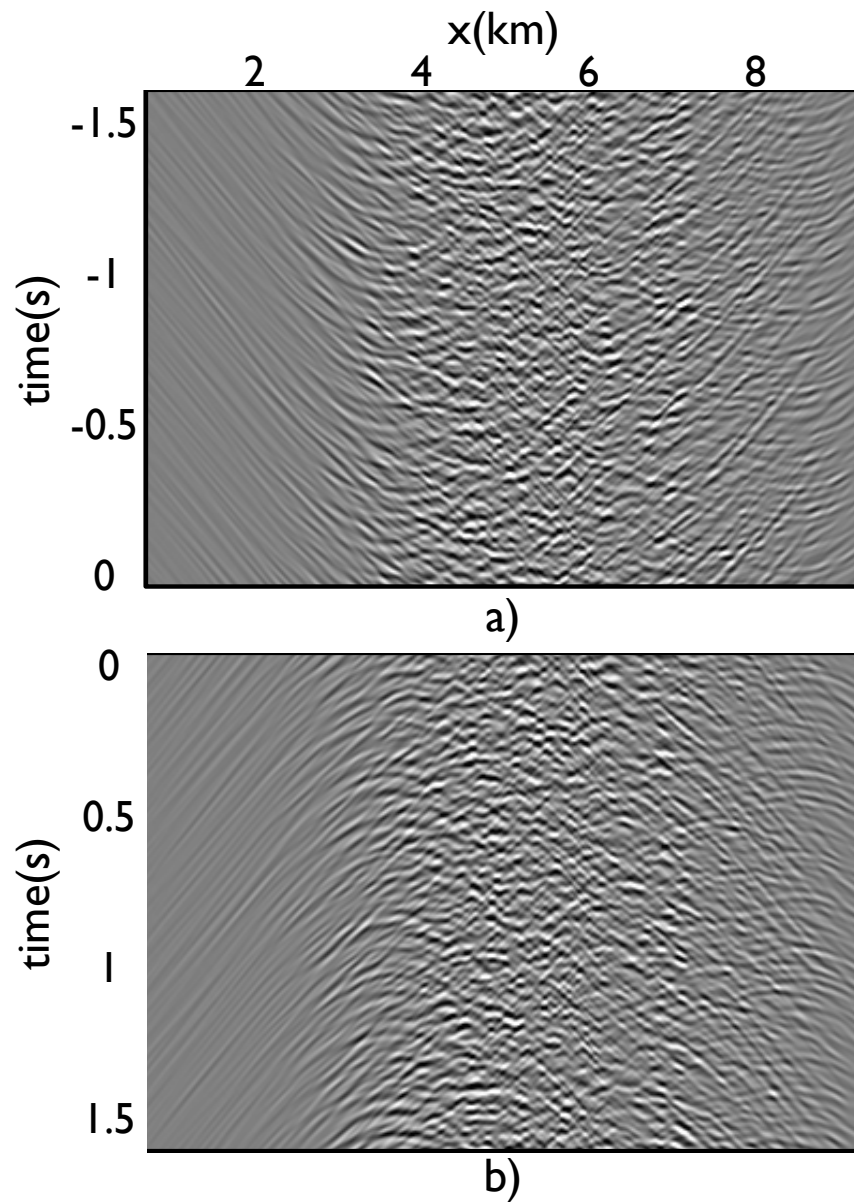


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Guerra and Biondi –

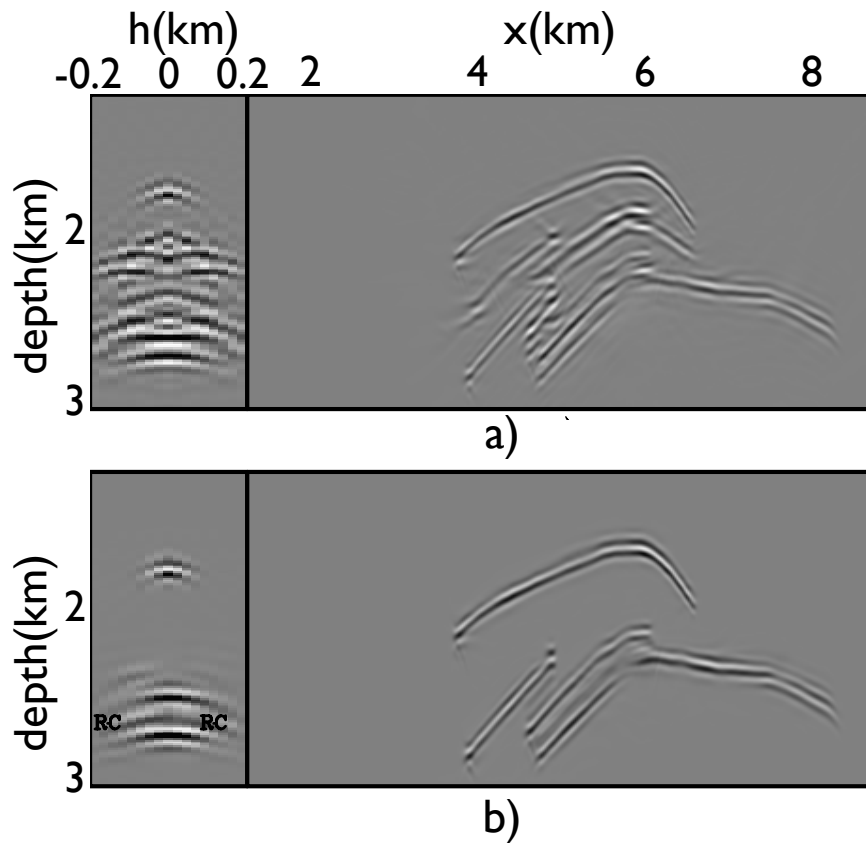


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**Guerra and Biondi –**

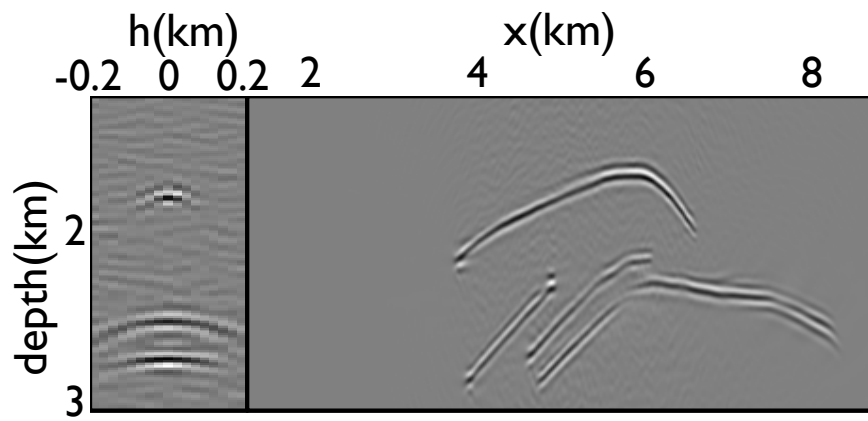


Figure 7: Pre-stack images computed with 11 ISPEW. **Guerra and Biondi** –

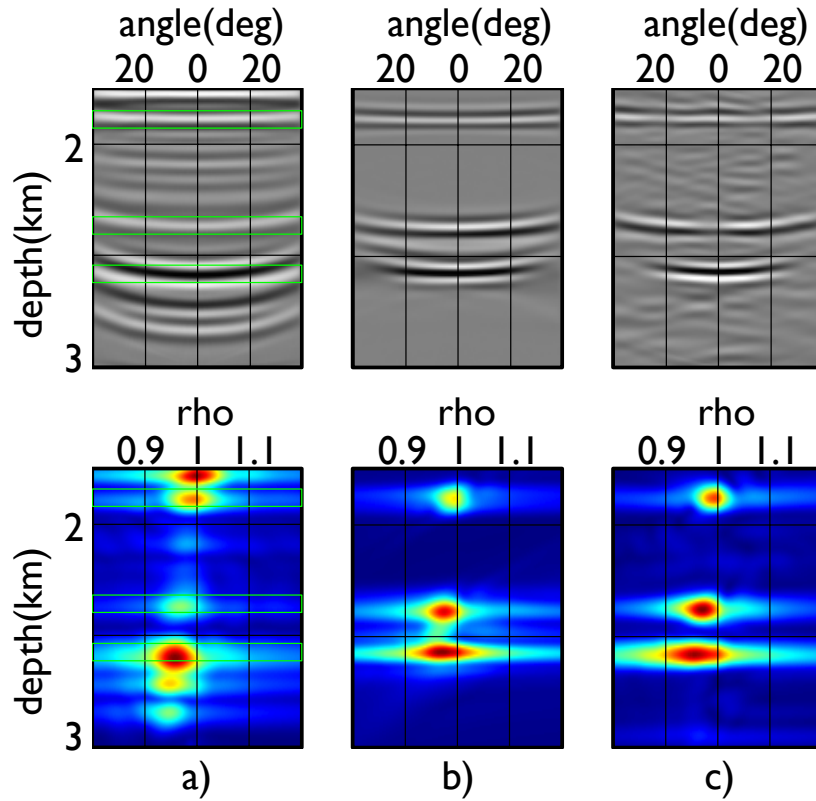


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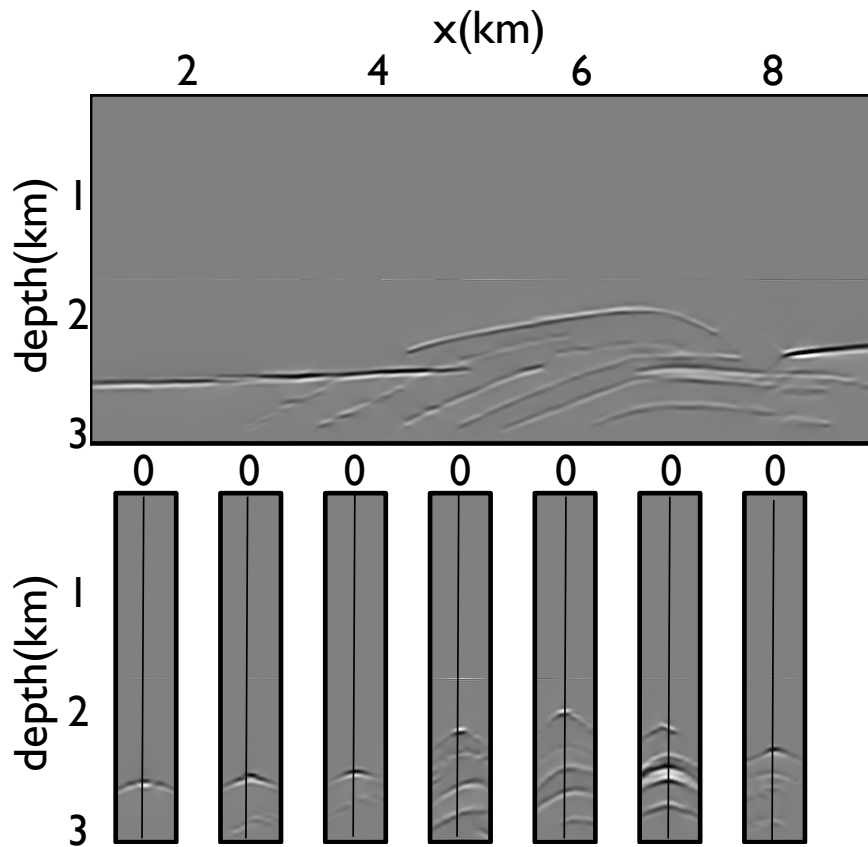


Figure 9: Selected reflectors used to model 35 pairs of ISPEW. **Guerra and Biondi** –

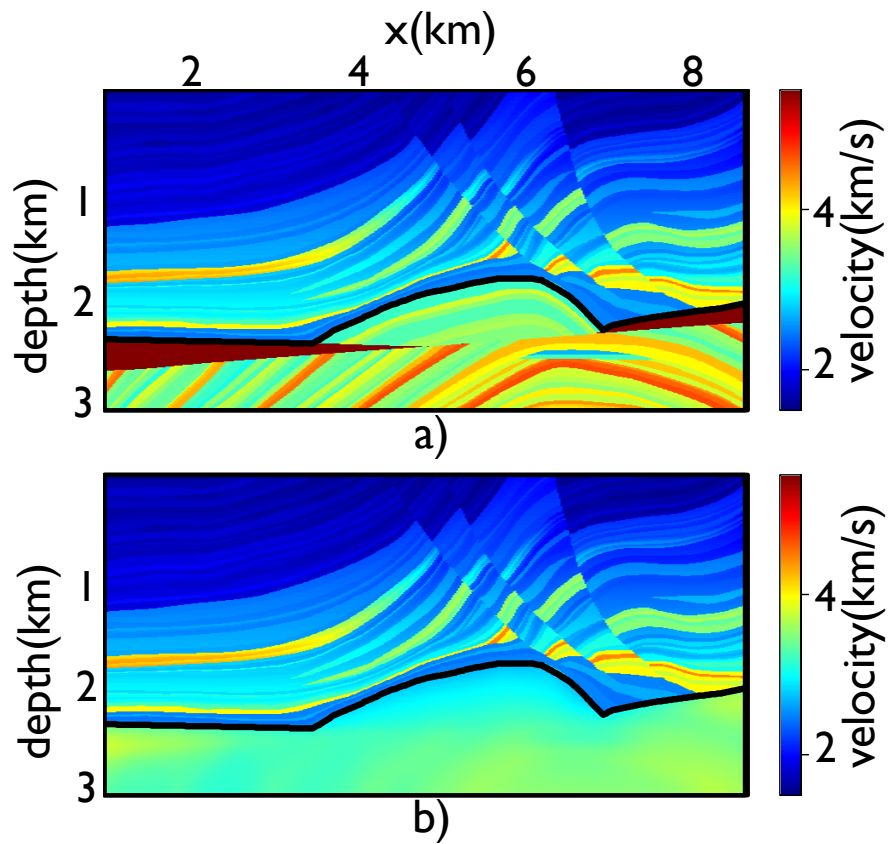


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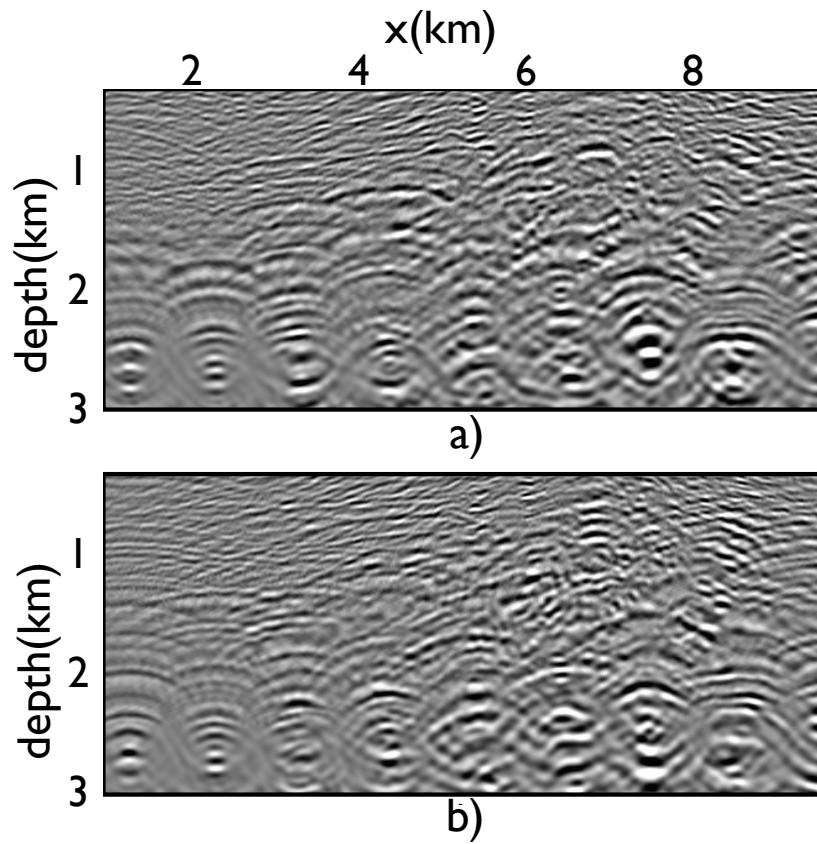


Figure 11: Snapshots of background ISPEW: a) downgoing, and b) upgoing wavefields.

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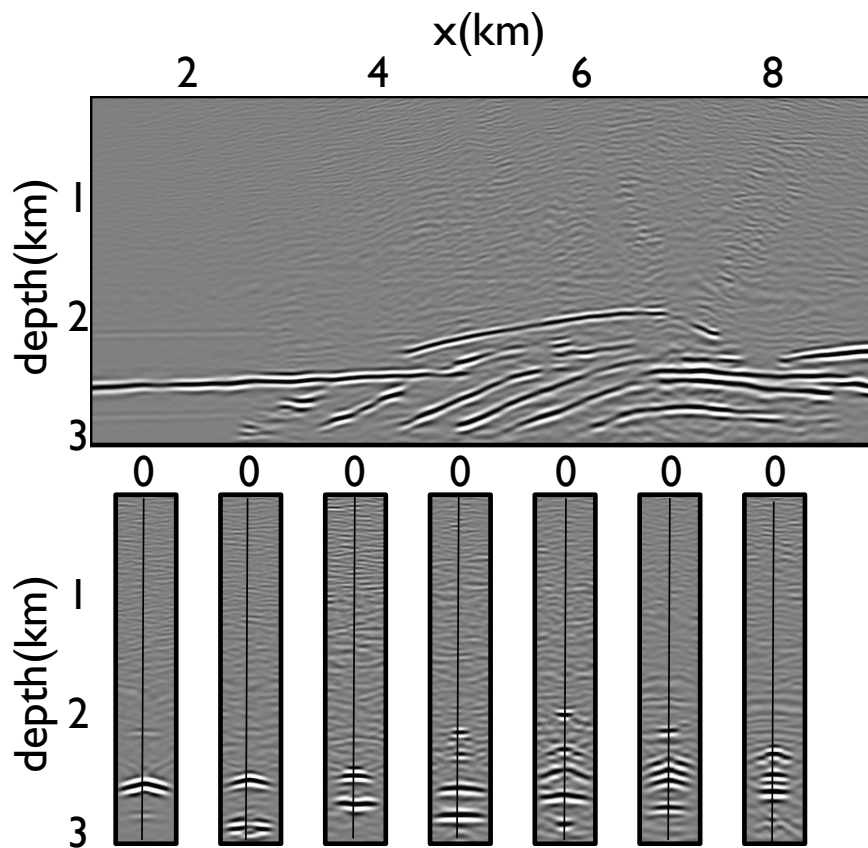


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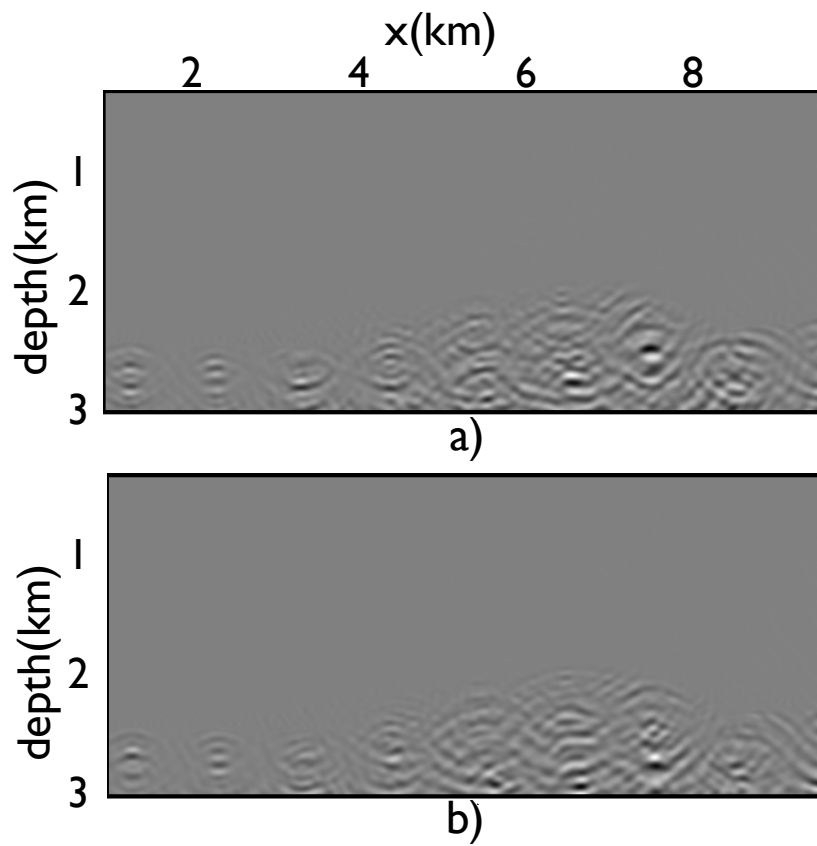


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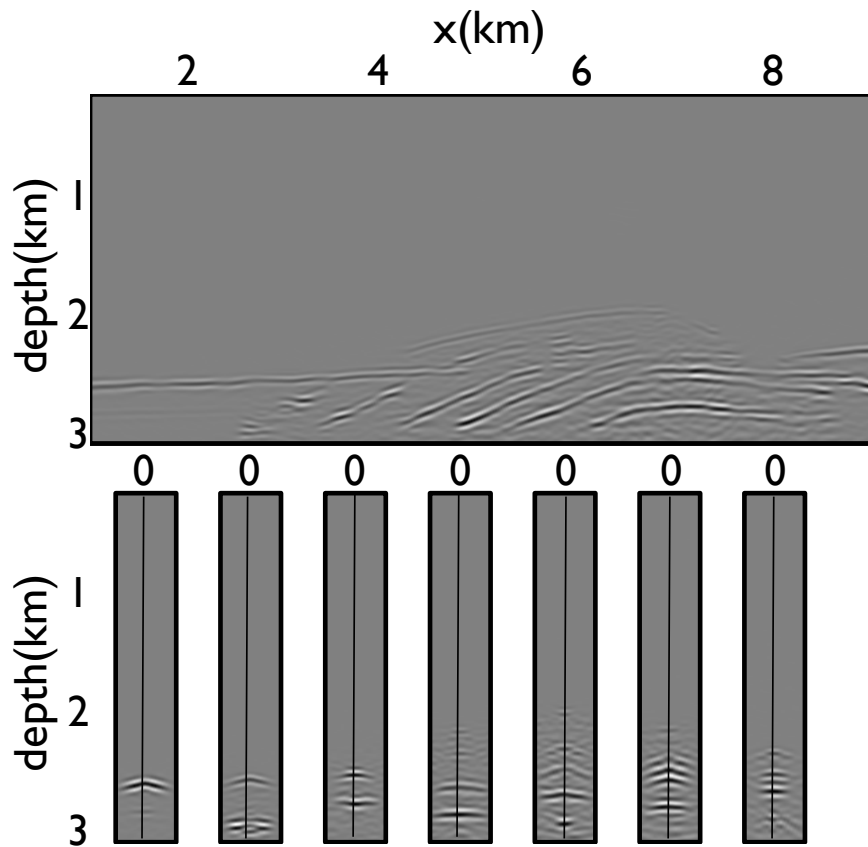


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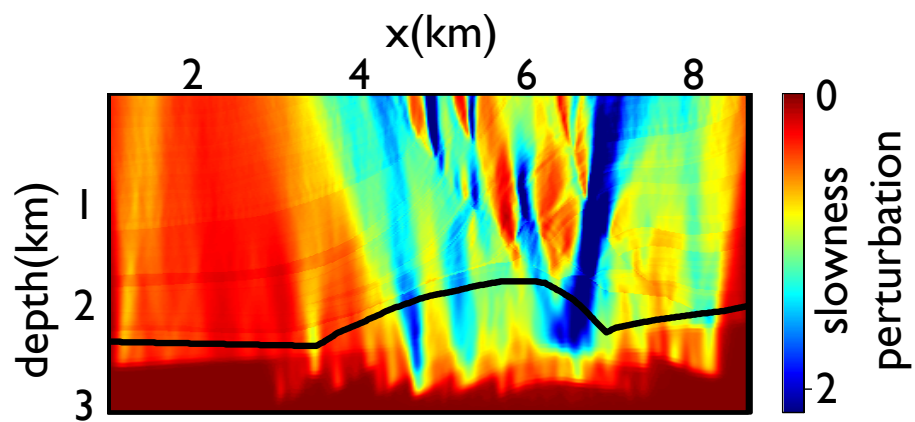


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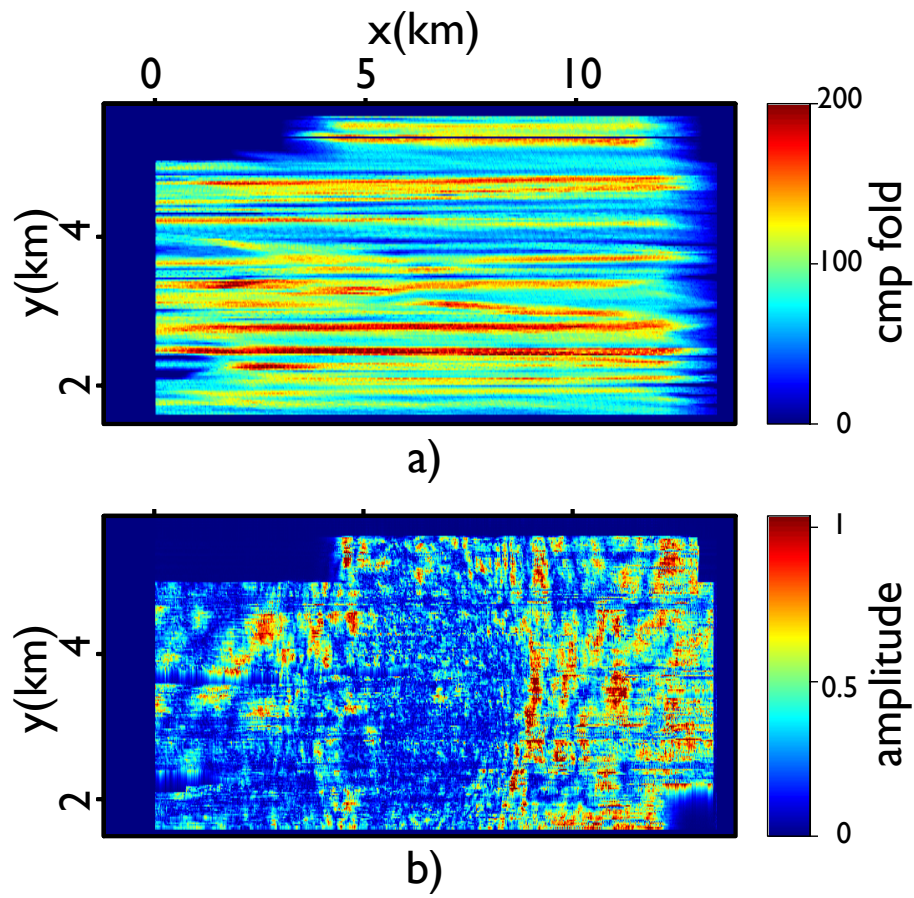


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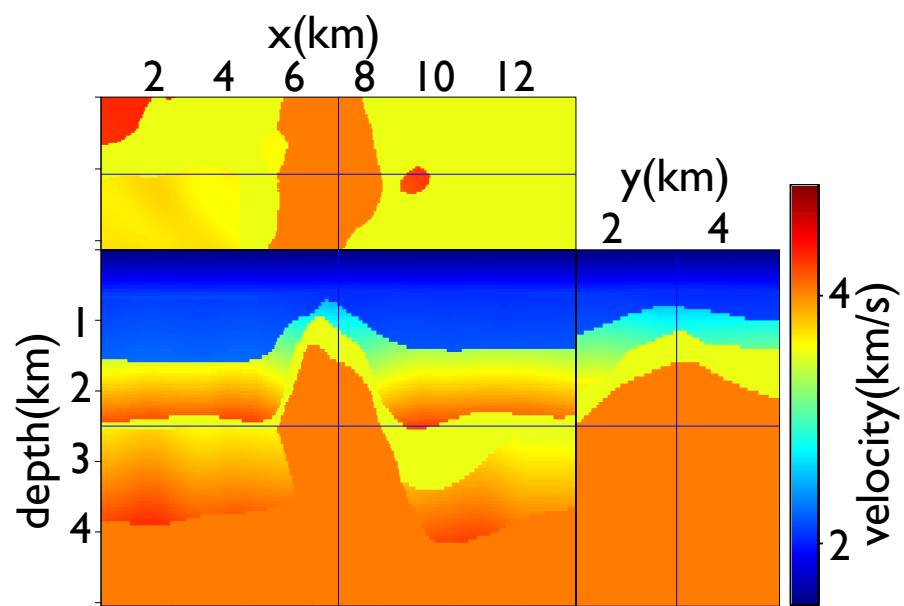


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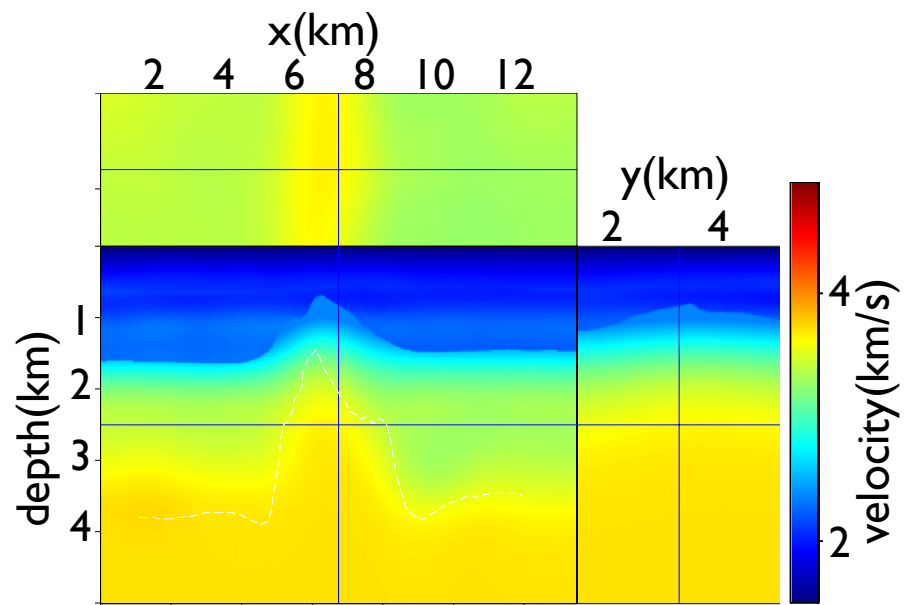


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Guerra and Biondi –

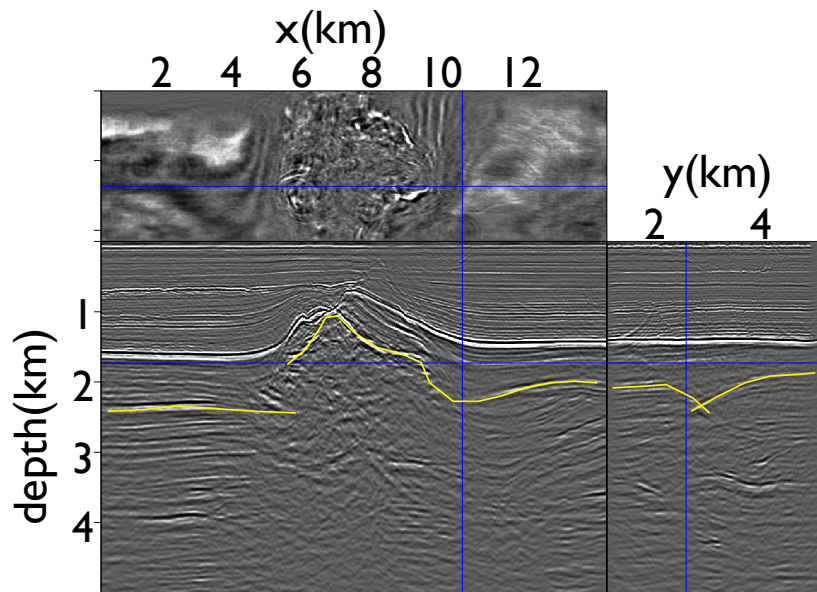


Figure 19: Slices through the CAM image computed with the initial velocity model of Figure 18, showing poorly collapsed diffractions close to the salt flank and poorly imaged faults.

**Guerra and Biondi –**

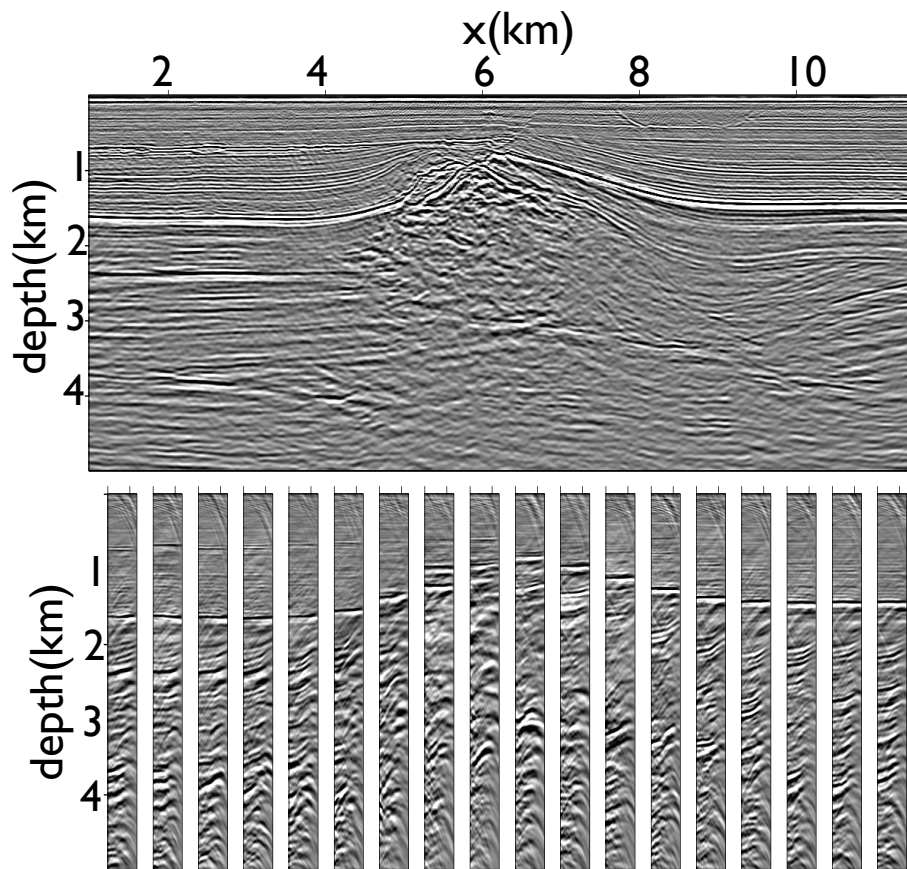


Figure 20: Central in-line of the CAM image computed with the initial velocity model. On the top is the zero-subsurface offset section, and ADCIGs at the bottom.

Guerra and Biondi –

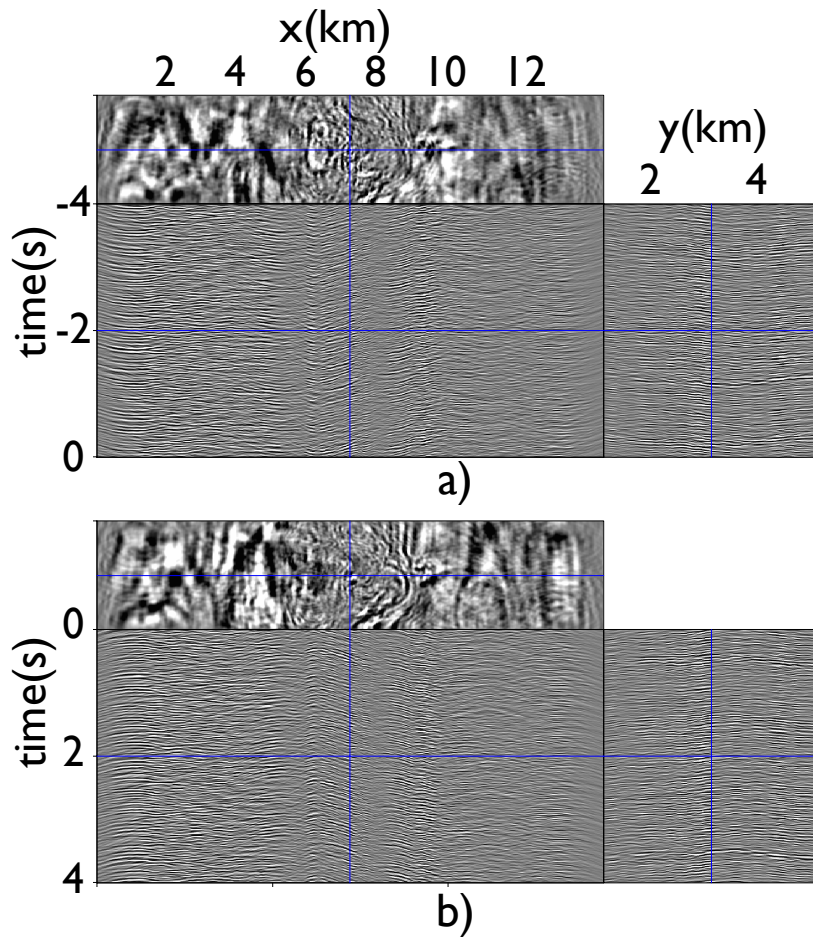


Figure 21: A pair of 3D downgoing (a) and upgoing (b) ISPEWs computed for the base of chalk.

Guerra and Biondi –

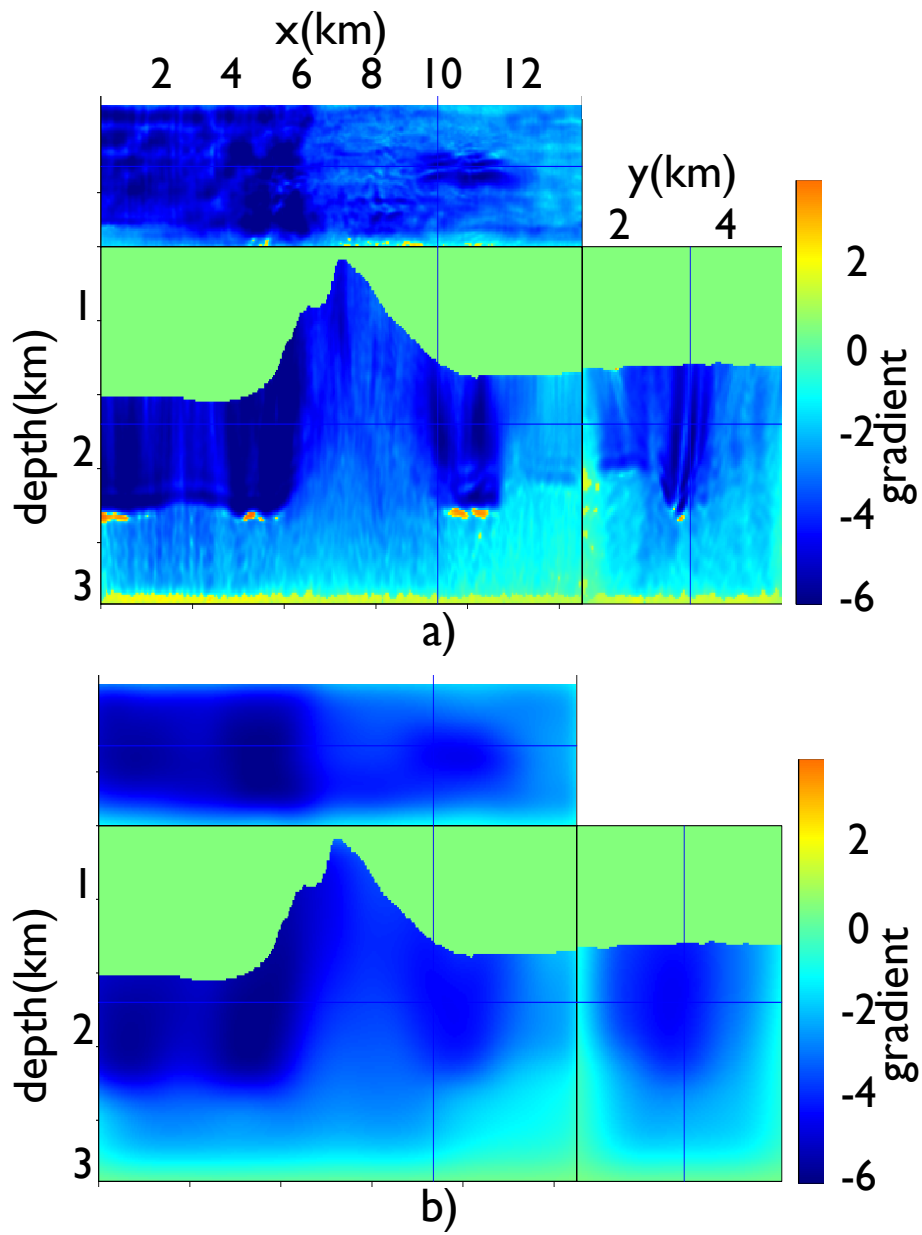


Figure 22: a) Slowness perturbation without smoothing, and b) Slowness perturbation after B-spline smoothing.

Guerra and Biondi –

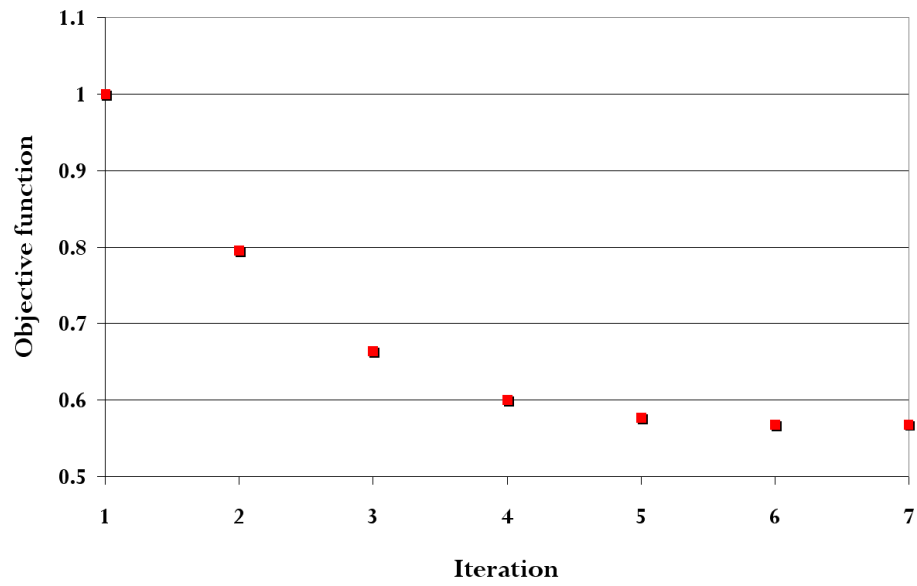


Figure 23: Evolution of the DSV objective function for the first run of velocity optimization for the base of chalk.

Guerra and Biondi –

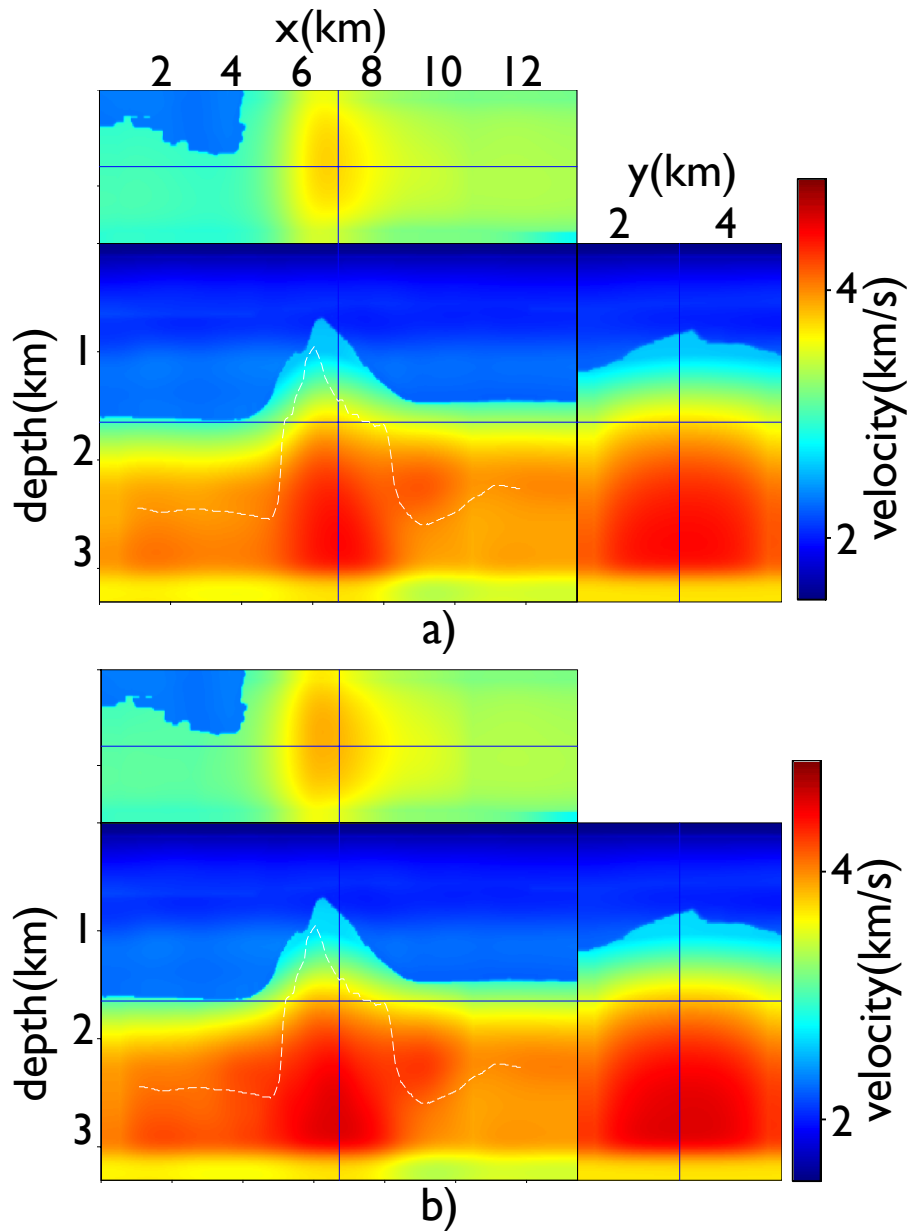
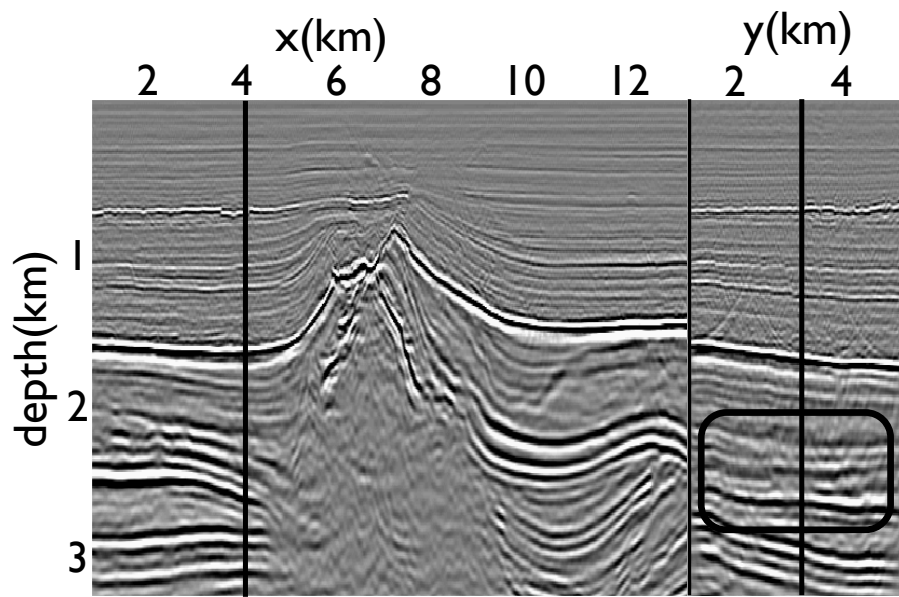
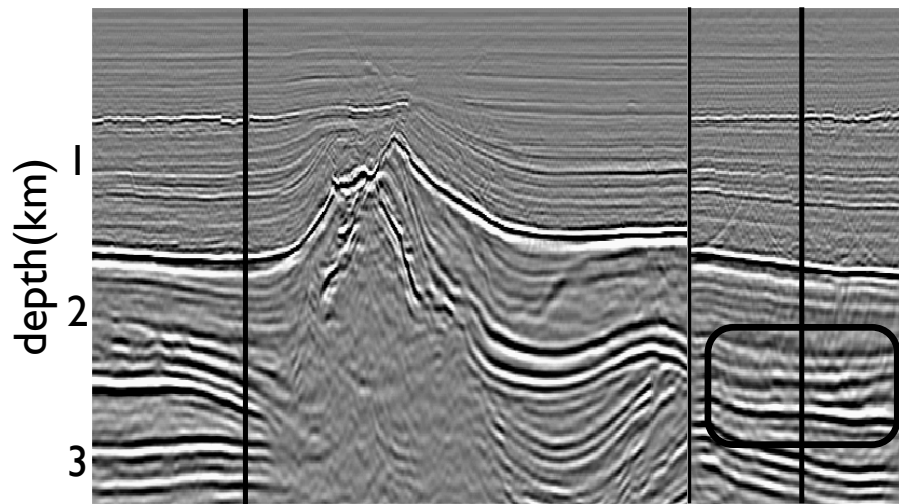


Figure 24: Slices through the optimized velocity for the chalk layer from: a) the first run of velocity optimization, and b) the second run of velocity optimization. The dashed white line approximately represents the base of chalk.

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a)



b)

Figure 25: Detailed view of slices through the zero subsurface offset of the CAM migrated images computed with velocity from the a) first run of velocity optimization, and b) second run of velocity optimization. On the left is an in-line and on the right, a cross-line.

Guerra and Biondi –

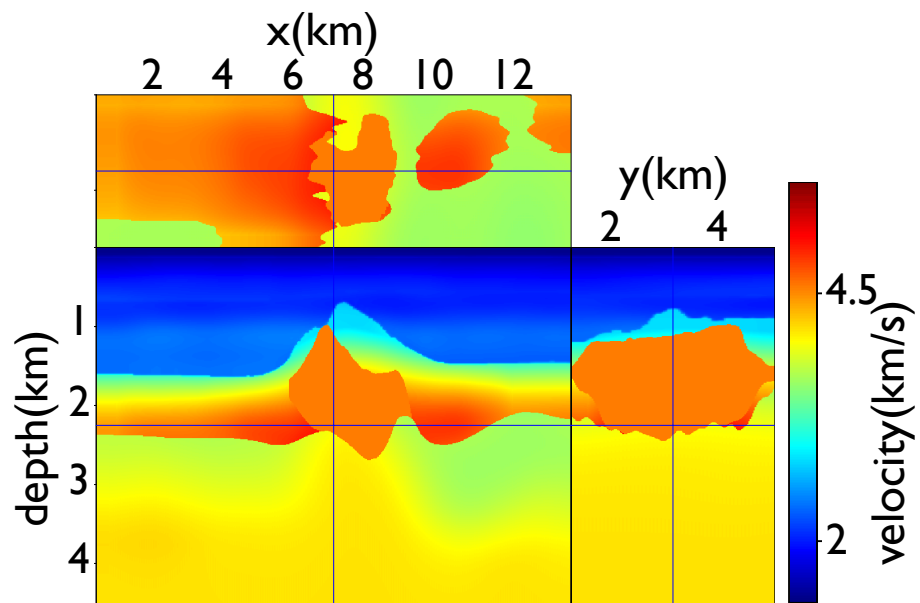


Figure 26: Slices through the velocity volume after interpretation of the base of salt.

Guerra and Biondi –

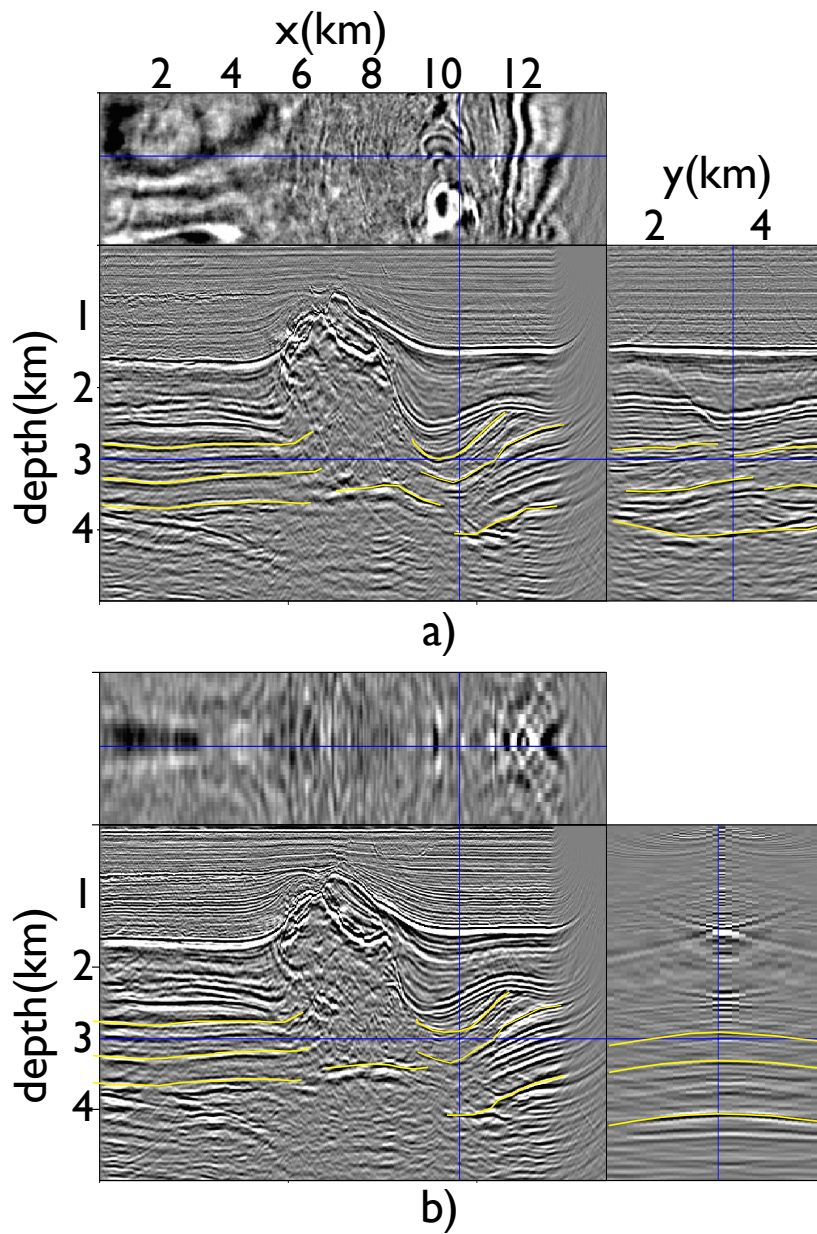


Figure 27: Slices through the CAM image computed with the migration velocity of Figure 26, showing in yellow the selected reflectors for the modeling of 30 3D ISPEWs to be used in the sub-salt velocity optimization: a) the zero subsurface offset, and b) a central in-line.

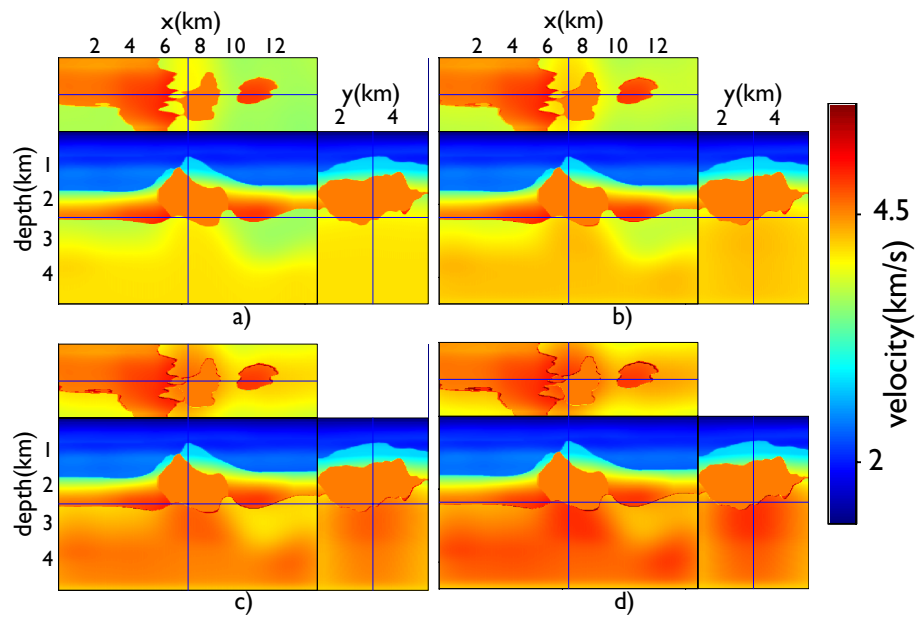


Figure 28: Slices through velocity models for: a) first iteration, b) third iteration, c) fifth iteration, and d) seventh iteration.

**Guerra and Biondi –**

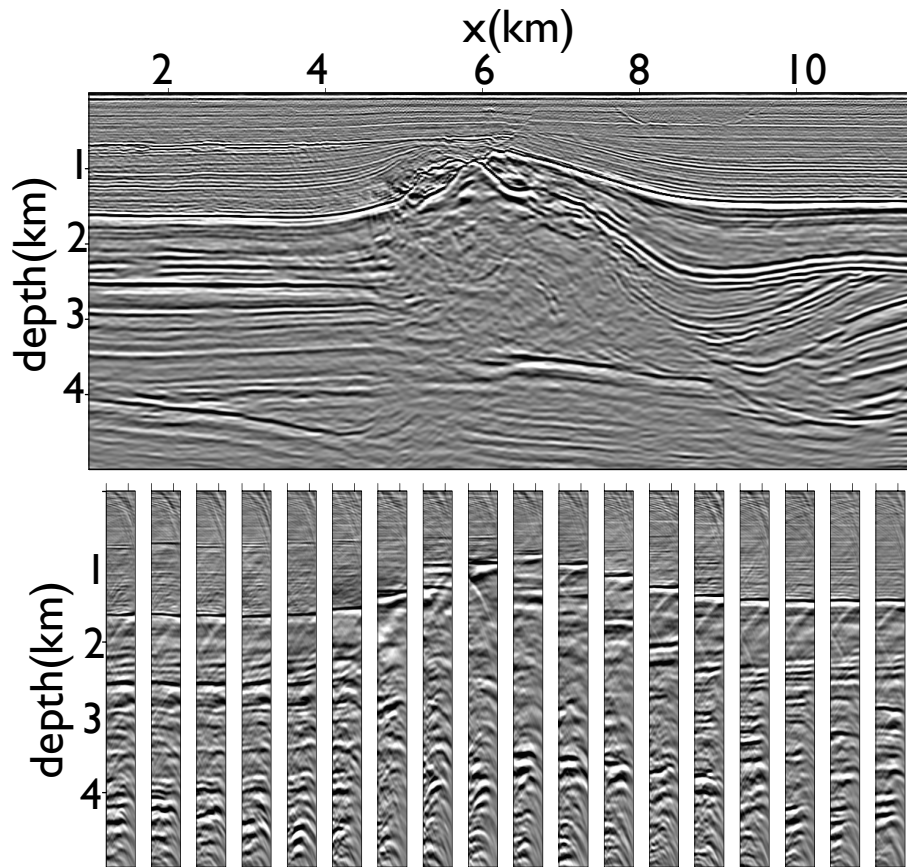


Figure 29: Central in-line of the CAM image with the final velocity model after optimization for the chalk layer, salt flooding, and sub-salt velocity optimization. On the top is the zero-subsurface offset section, and at the bottom ADCIGs.

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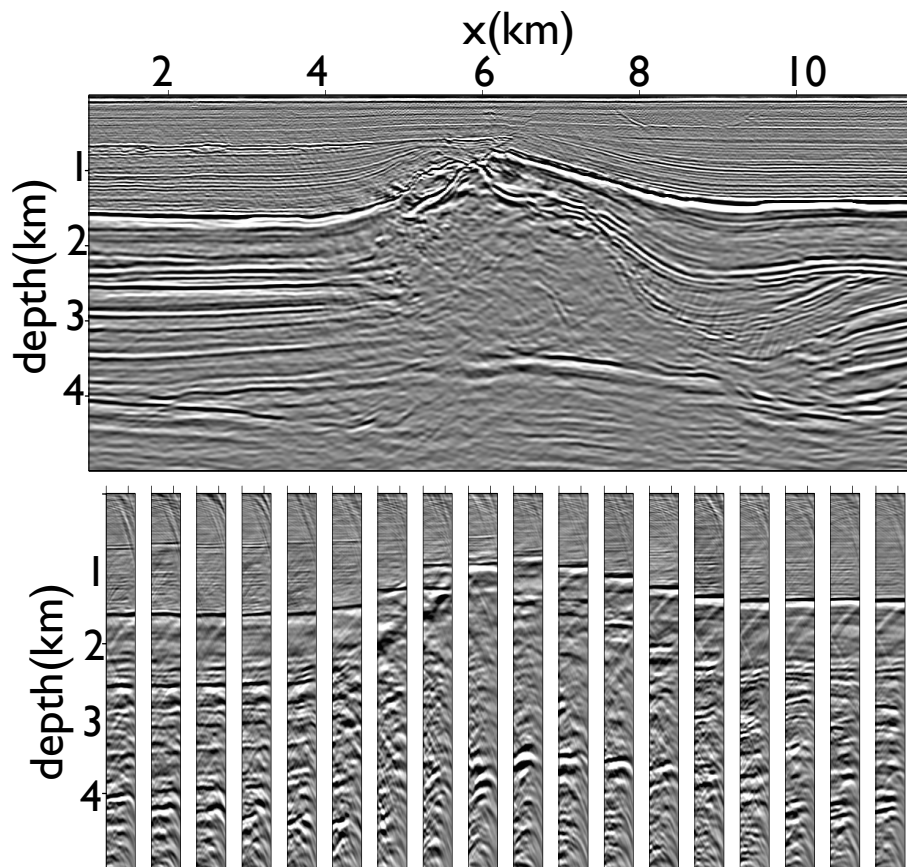


Figure 30: Central in-line of the CAM image with the original velocity model. On the top is the zero-subsurface offset section, and at the bottom ADCIGs.

Guerra and Biondi –

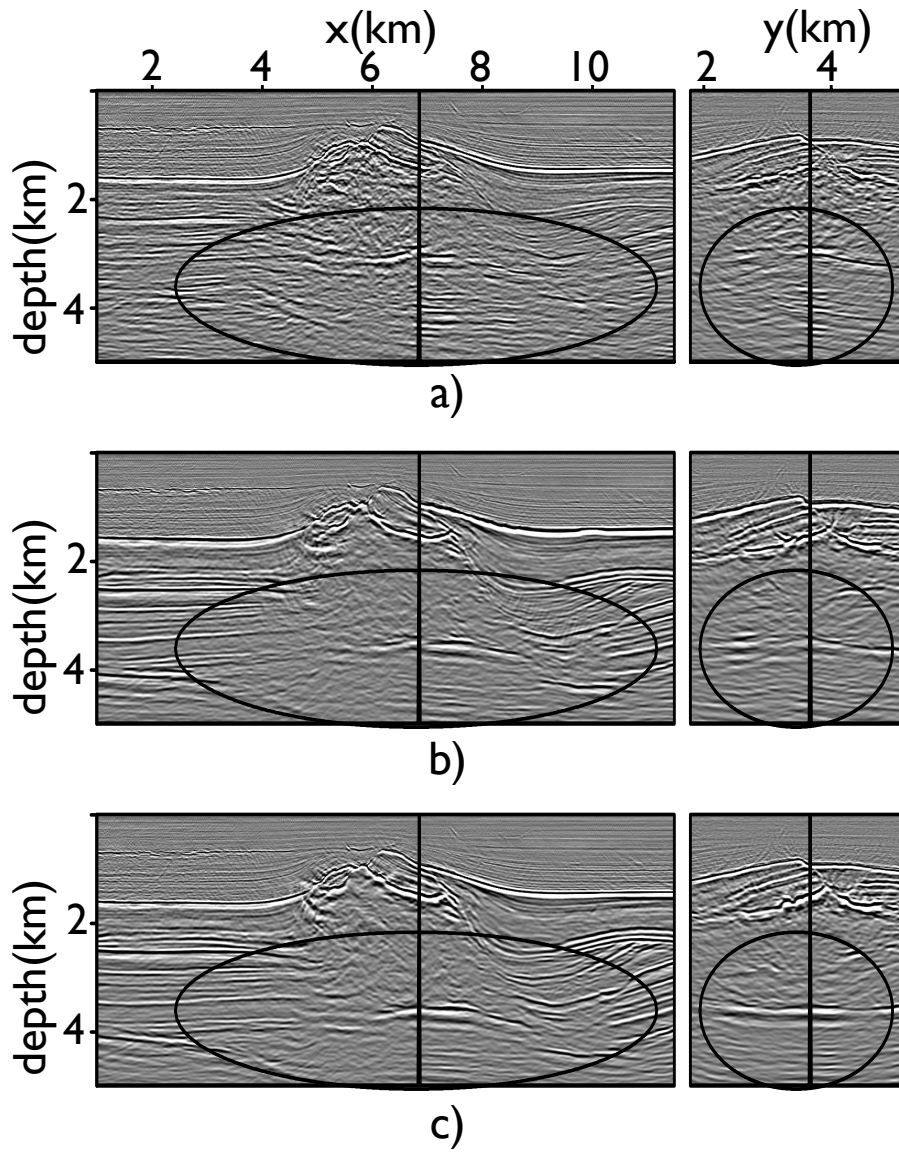


Figure 31: CAM images obtained with: a) the initial velocity model, b) the original velocity model, and c) the final velocity model. The final image shows better focusing and continuity for the sub-salt reflectors, better definition of subtle faults in the chalk layer.

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