

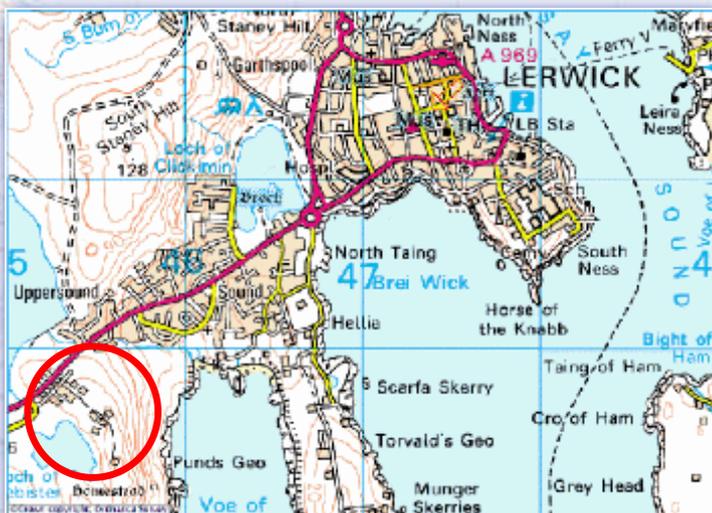
BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

# Lerwick Observatory

## Monthly Magnetic Bulletin

December 2017

17/12/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.

Enquiries about the data should be addressed to:

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E-mail: [enquiries@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@bgs.ac.uk)  
Internet: [www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk](http://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°08'16.8"N 358°49'01.2"E  
*Geomagnetic:* 61°47'24"N 088°39'00"E  
*Height above mean sea level:* 85 m

The geographical coordinates are measured by a handheld GPS device, which uses WGS84 as the reference coordinate system. The height above MSL is determined from the best available contour maps. The geomagnetic co-ordinates are approximations, calculated using the 12th generation International Geomagnetic Reference Field (IGRF) at epoch 2017.5. On-line access to models (including IGRF), charts and navigational data are available at

[www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data\\_service/models\\_compass/home](http://www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/models_compass/home)

## 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, available on-line at [www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data\\_service/home](http://www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/home)

### 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/data\\_service/data/obs\\_data/hourly\\_means](http://www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/data/obs_data/hourly_means)

##### 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/data\\_service/data/magnetic\\_indices/k\\_indices](http://www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/data/magnetic_indices/k_indices)

#### 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/data\\_service/data/magnetic\\_indices/aaindex](http://www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/data/magnetic_indices/aaindex) 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

The data presented in this bulletin are provided for personal, academic, educational, non-commercial research or other non-commercial use and are not for sale or distribution to third parties without written permission from BGS.

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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/contactus/staff](http://www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk/contactus/staff)

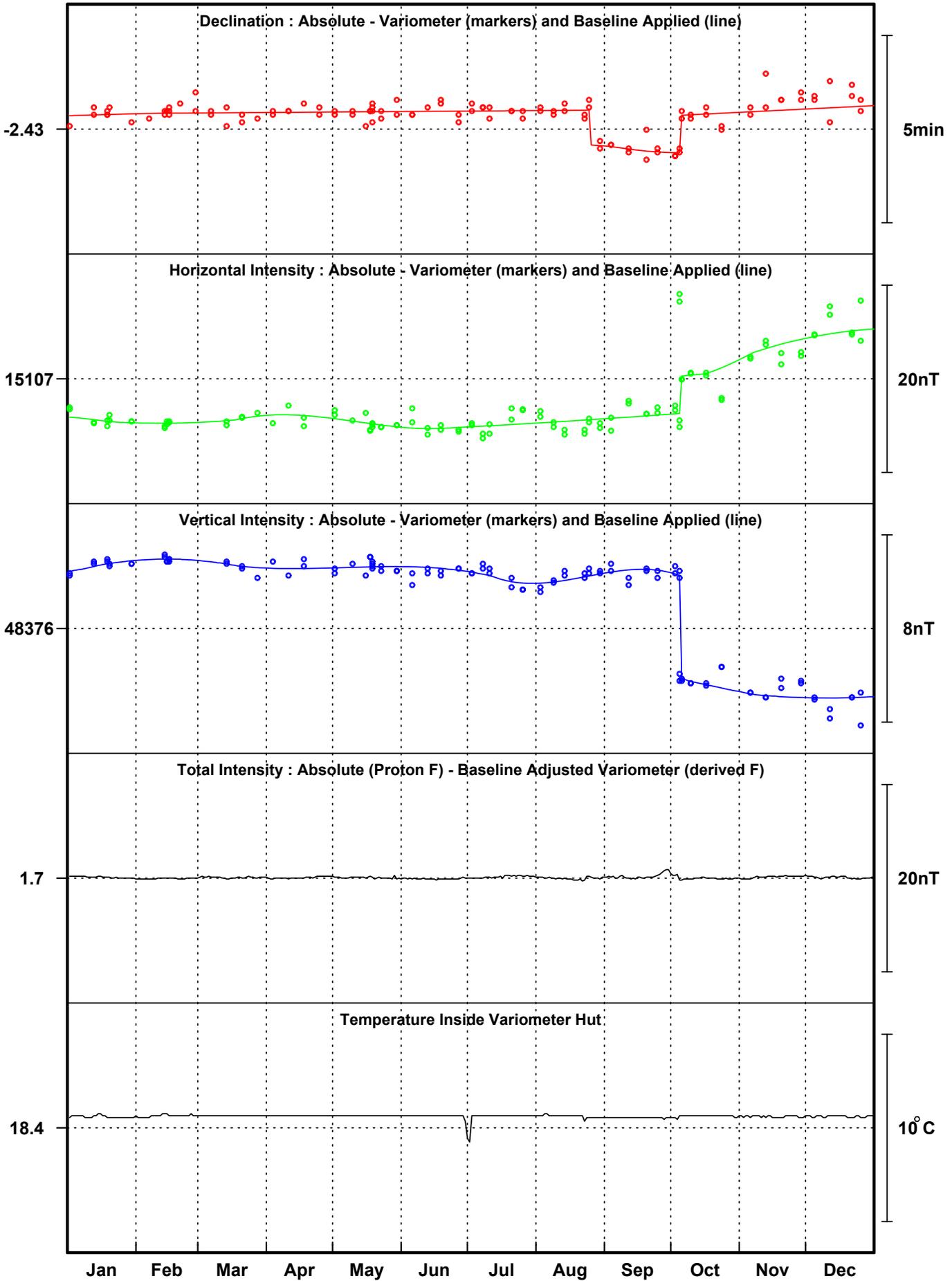
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# LERWICK OBSERVATORY

## 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)	
04-Dec-17	338	14:26	-1.3988	-1.4900	14:40	72.8324	-1.7	50974.1	15045.9	15121.3	48702.9	48372.9	WH
04-Dec-17	338	14:49	-1.4011	-1.4917	15:00	72.8313	-1.7	50975.0	15047.1	15121.4	48703.5	48372.8	WH
11-Dec-17	345	14:35	-1.3340	-1.5017	14:49	72.8226	-1.7	50972.8	15053.8	15124.4	48699.2	48372.0	IQ
11-Dec-17	345	15:03	-1.3293	-1.4833	15:14	72.8317	-1.7	50976.7	15047.3	15123.5	48705.2	48372.4	OB
21-Dec-17	355	10:14	-1.2792	-1.4900	10:28	72.8199	-1.7	50965.4	15054.0	15121.6	48691.4	48372.9	OB
21-Dec-17	355	10:40	-1.2863	-1.4850	10:58	72.8221	-1.7	50964.7	15051.9	15121.4	48691.3	48372.9	OB
25-Dec-17	359	15:10	-1.3188	-1.4917	15:21	72.8201	-1.7	50973.2	15056.1	15125.0	48698.8	48371.7	PK
25-Dec-17	359	15:28	-1.3254	-1.4967	15:37	72.8240	-1.7	50973.3	15052.9	15120.7	48700.0	48373.1	PK

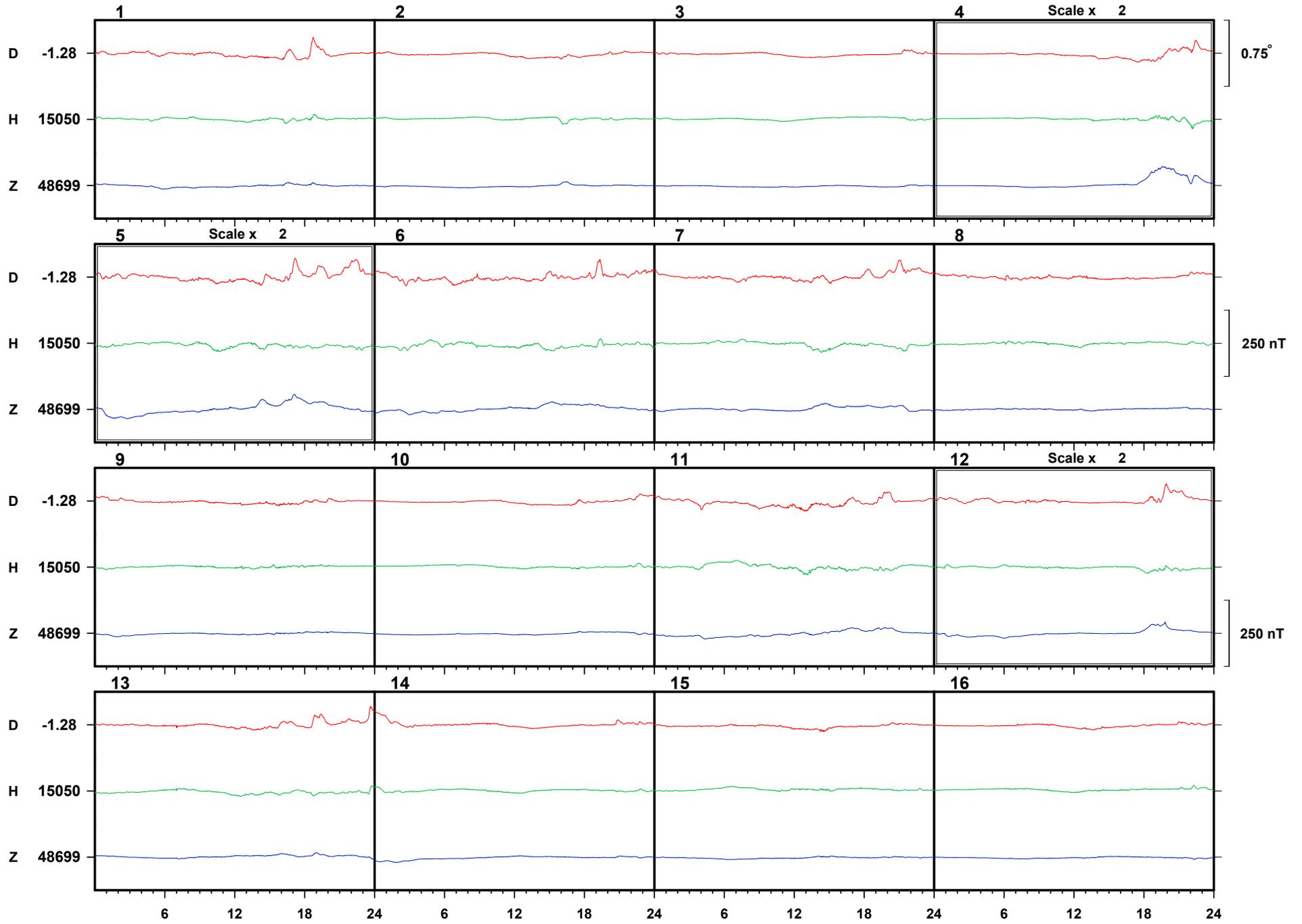
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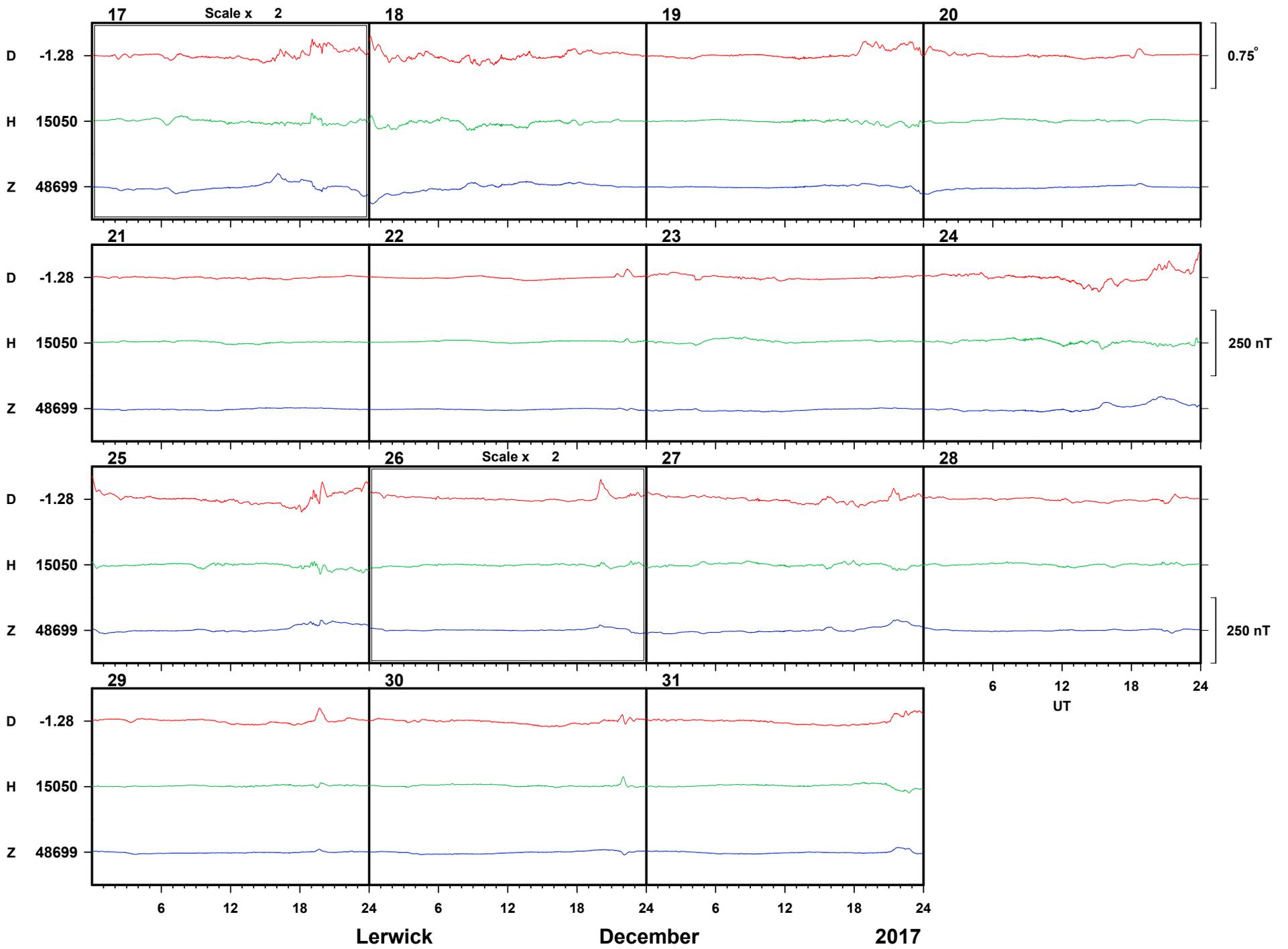


Lerwick

December

2017

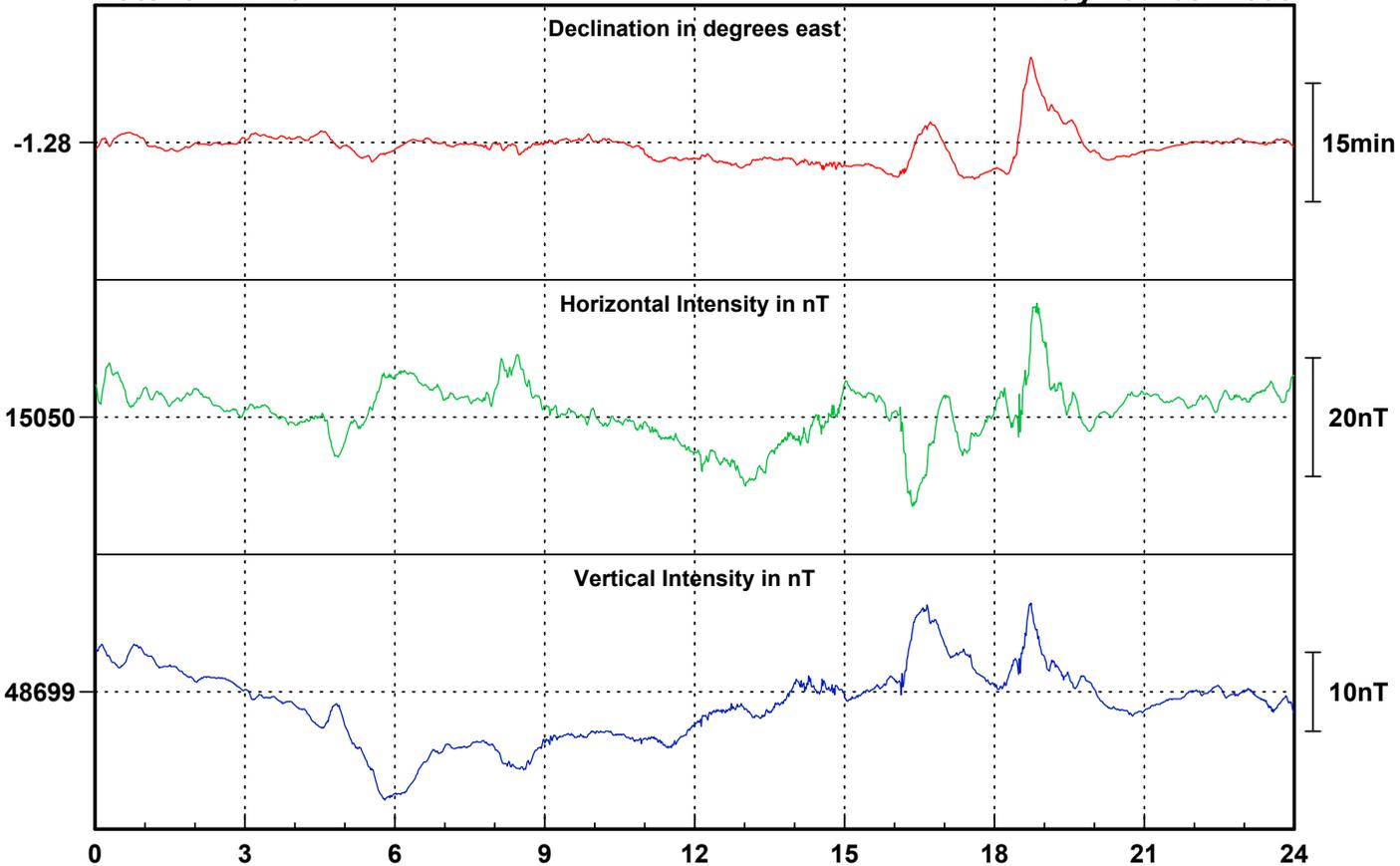




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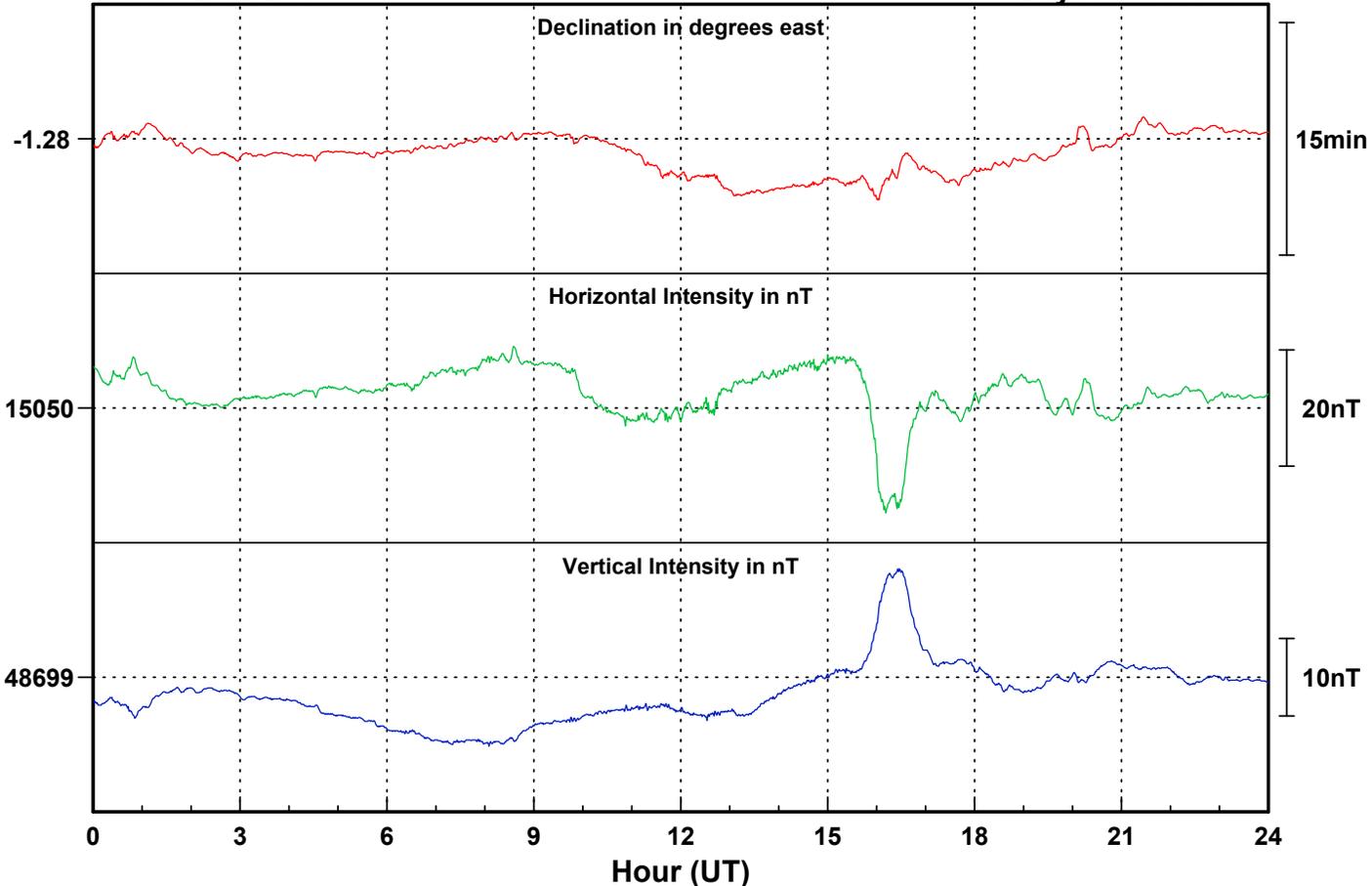
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Day number: 335



Date: 02-12-2017

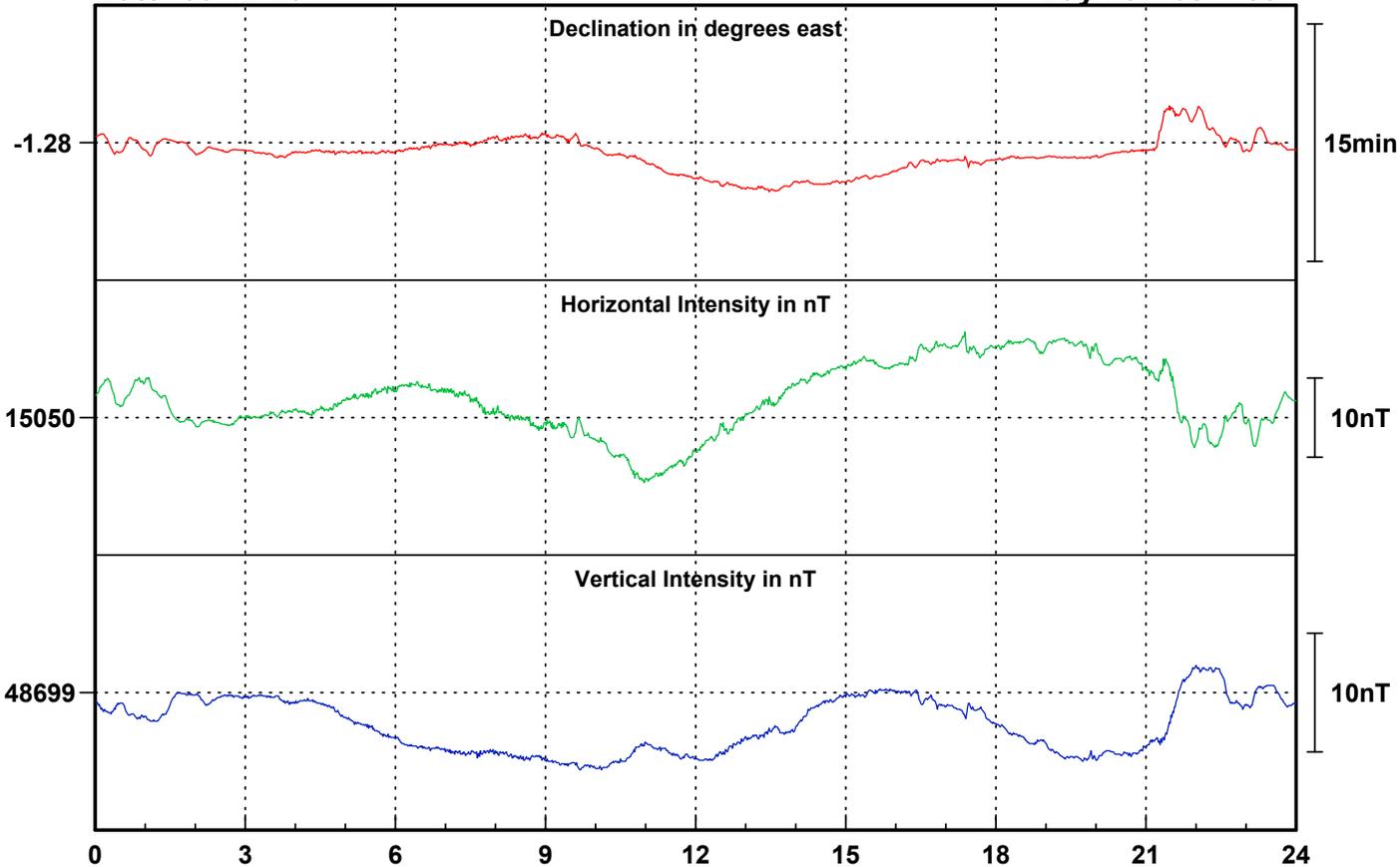
Day number: 336



Date: 03-12-2017

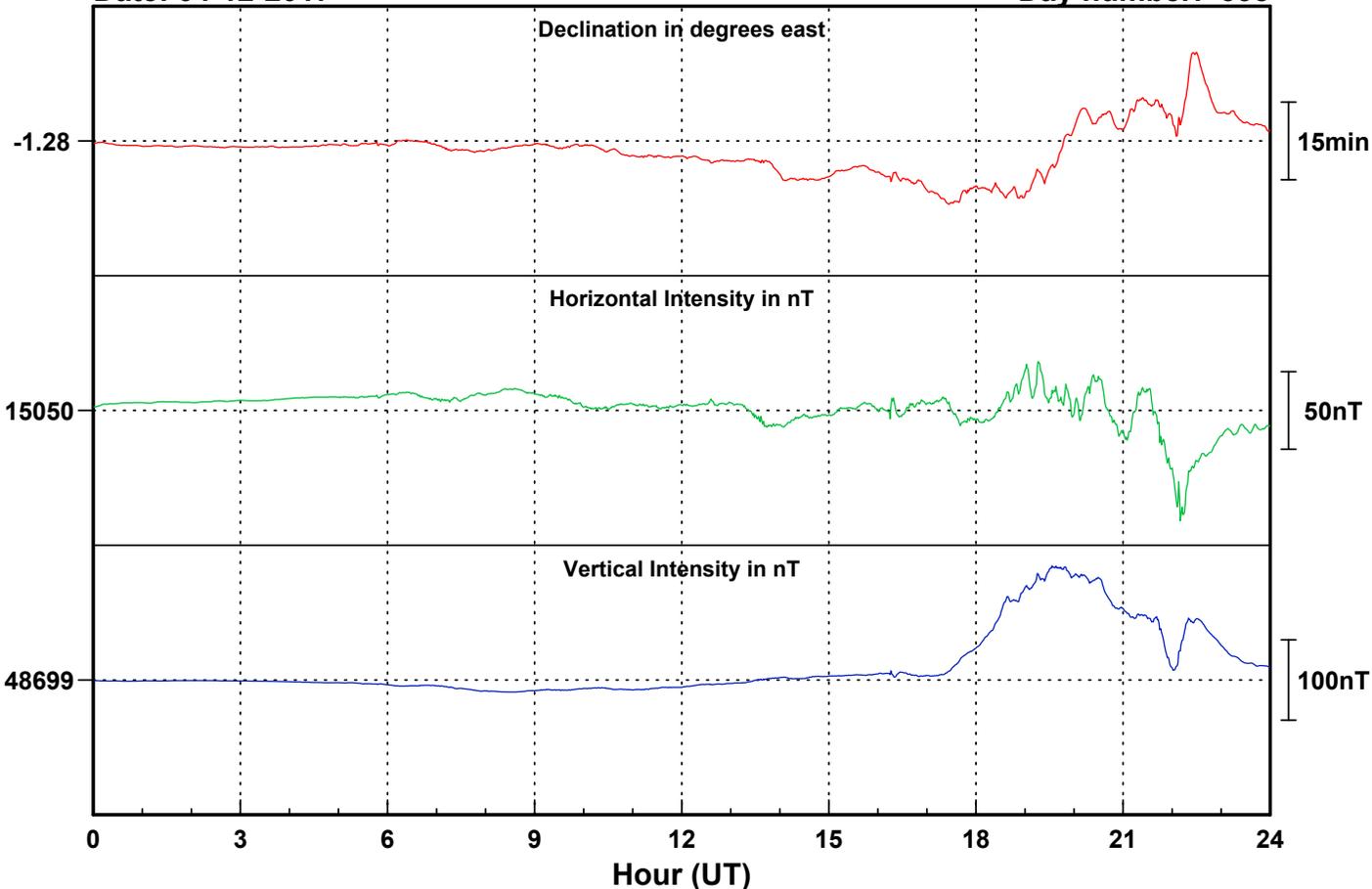
# Lerwick

Day number: 337



Date: 04-12-2017

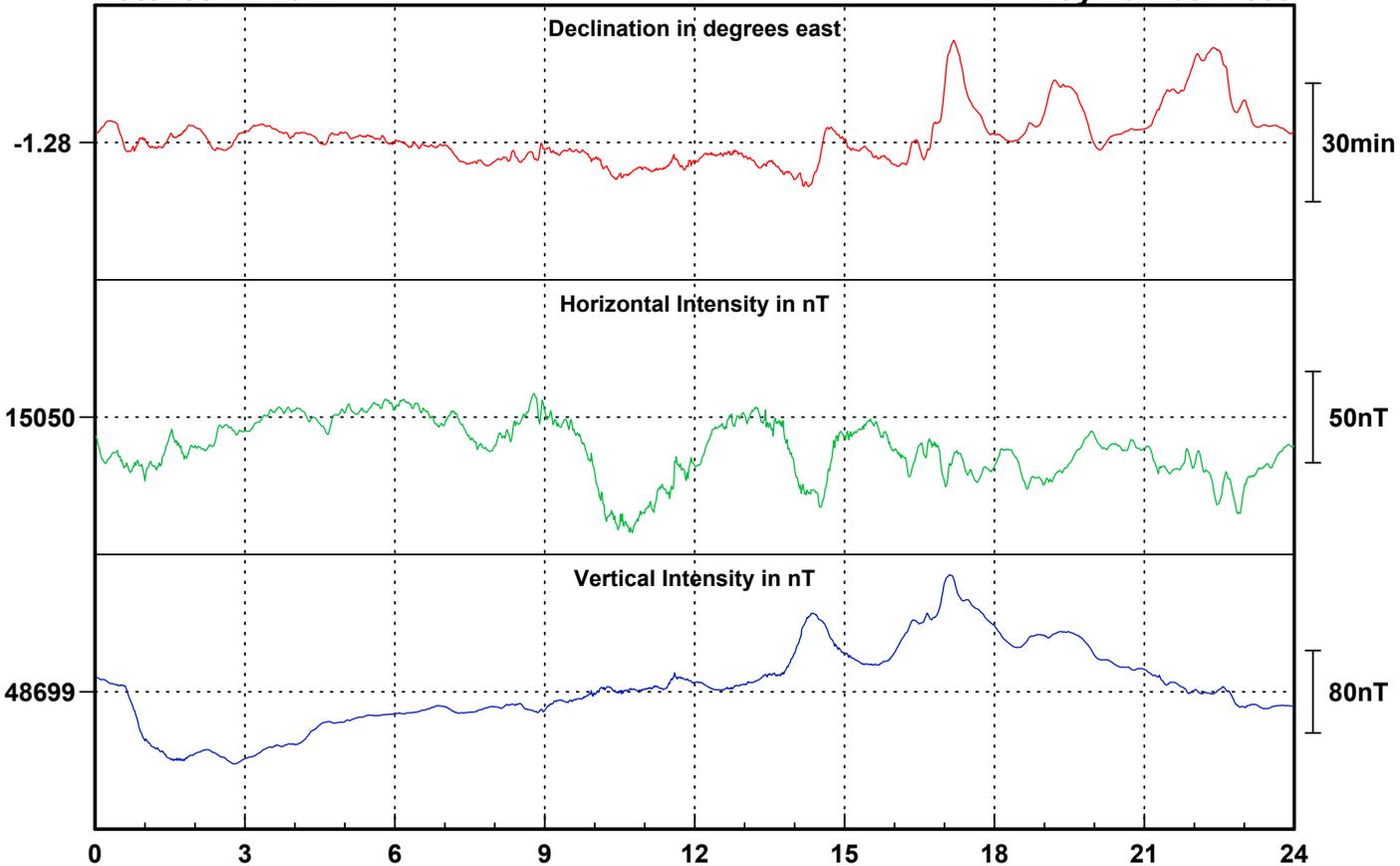
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Date: 05-12-2017

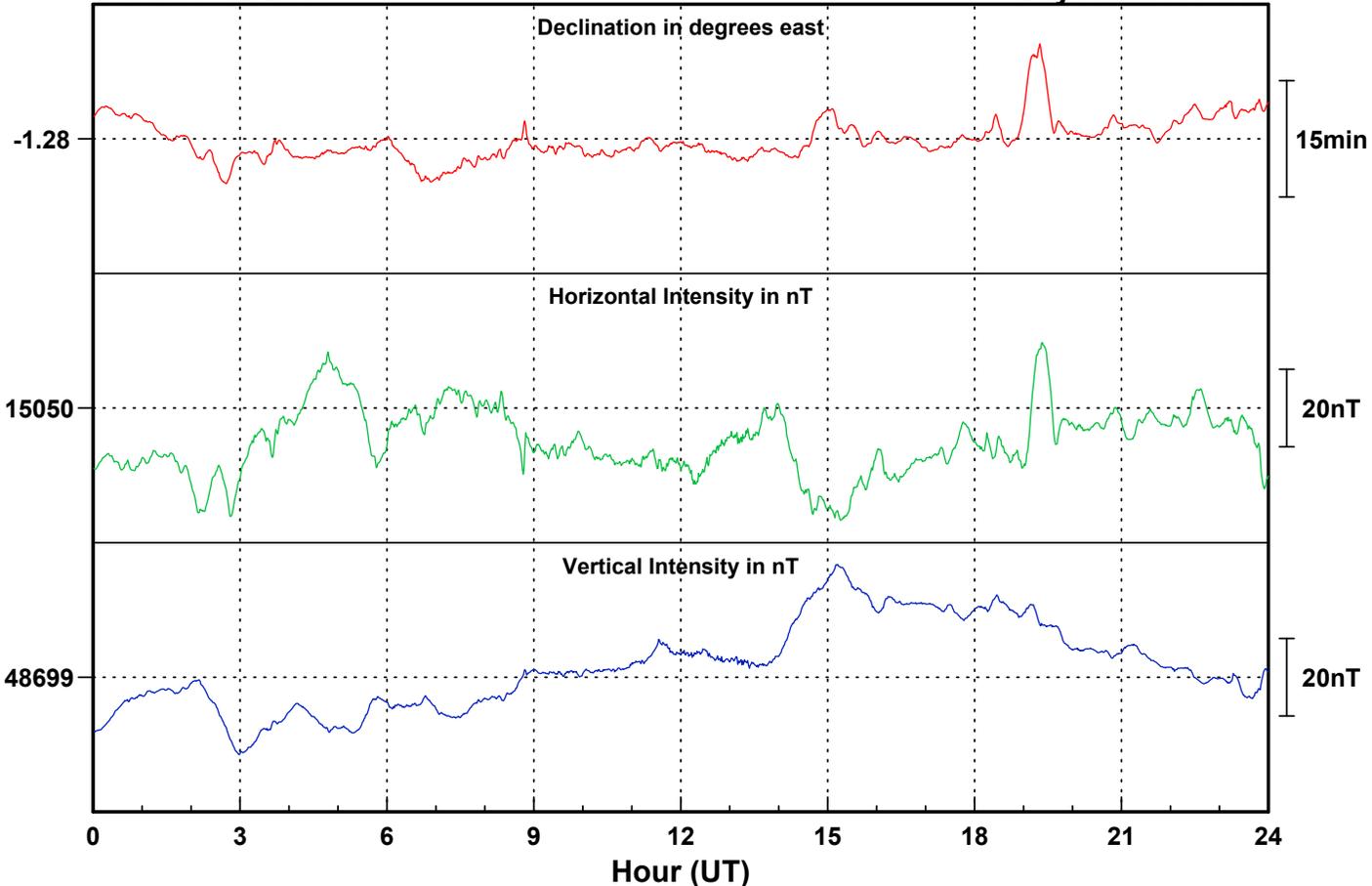
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Day number: 339



Date: 06-12-2017

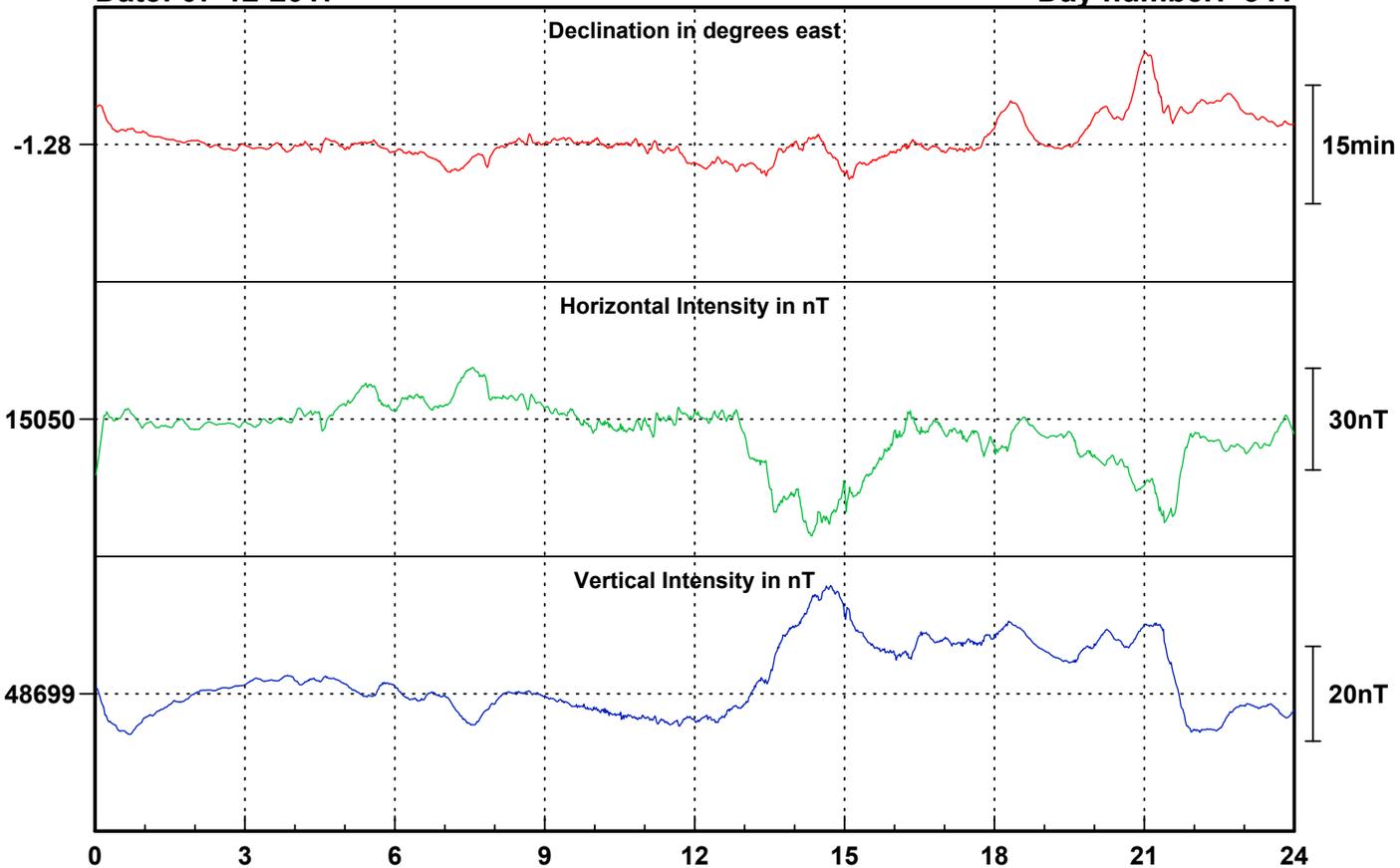
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Date: 07-12-2017

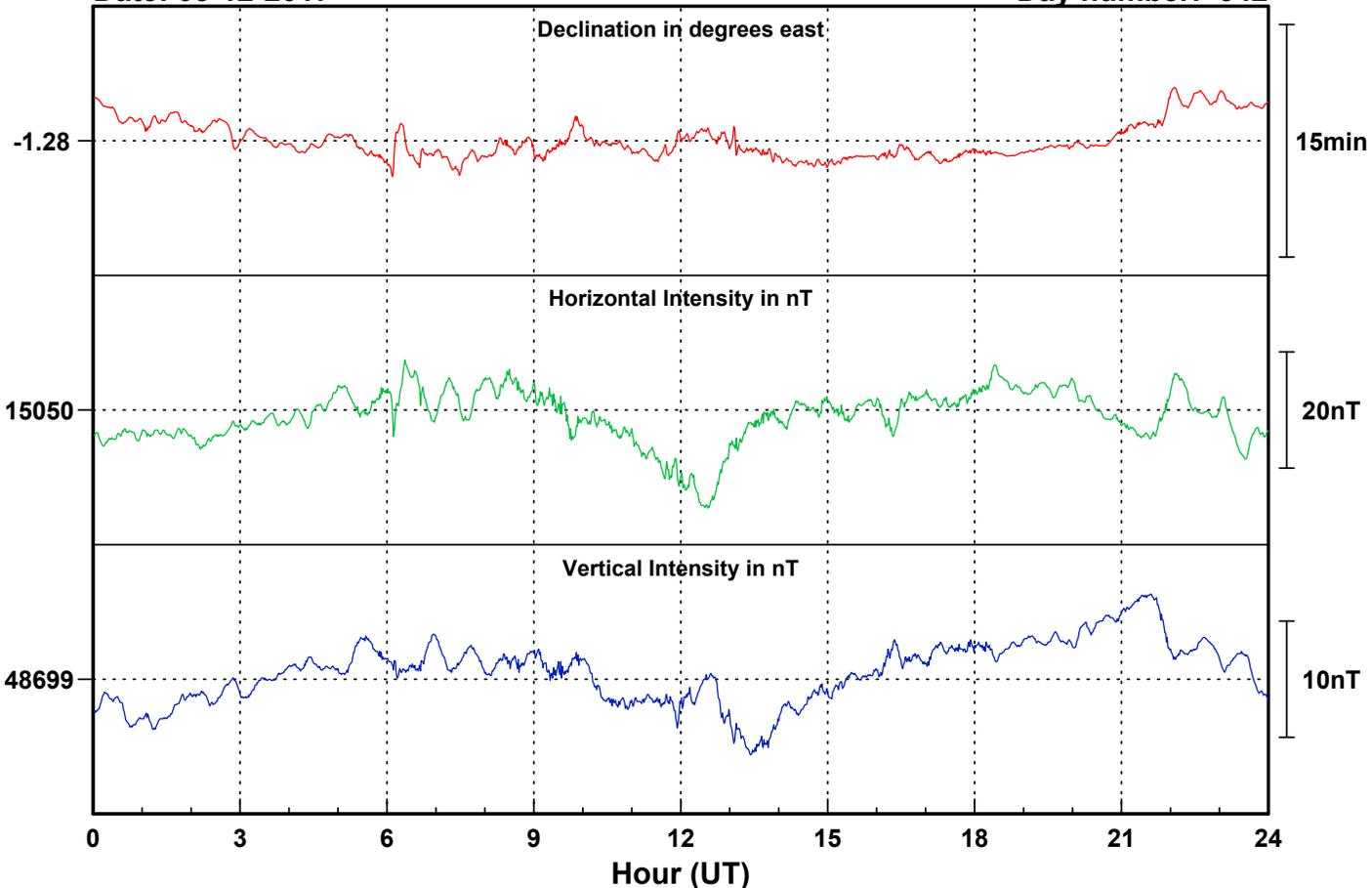
# Lerwick

Day number: 341



Date: 08-12-2017

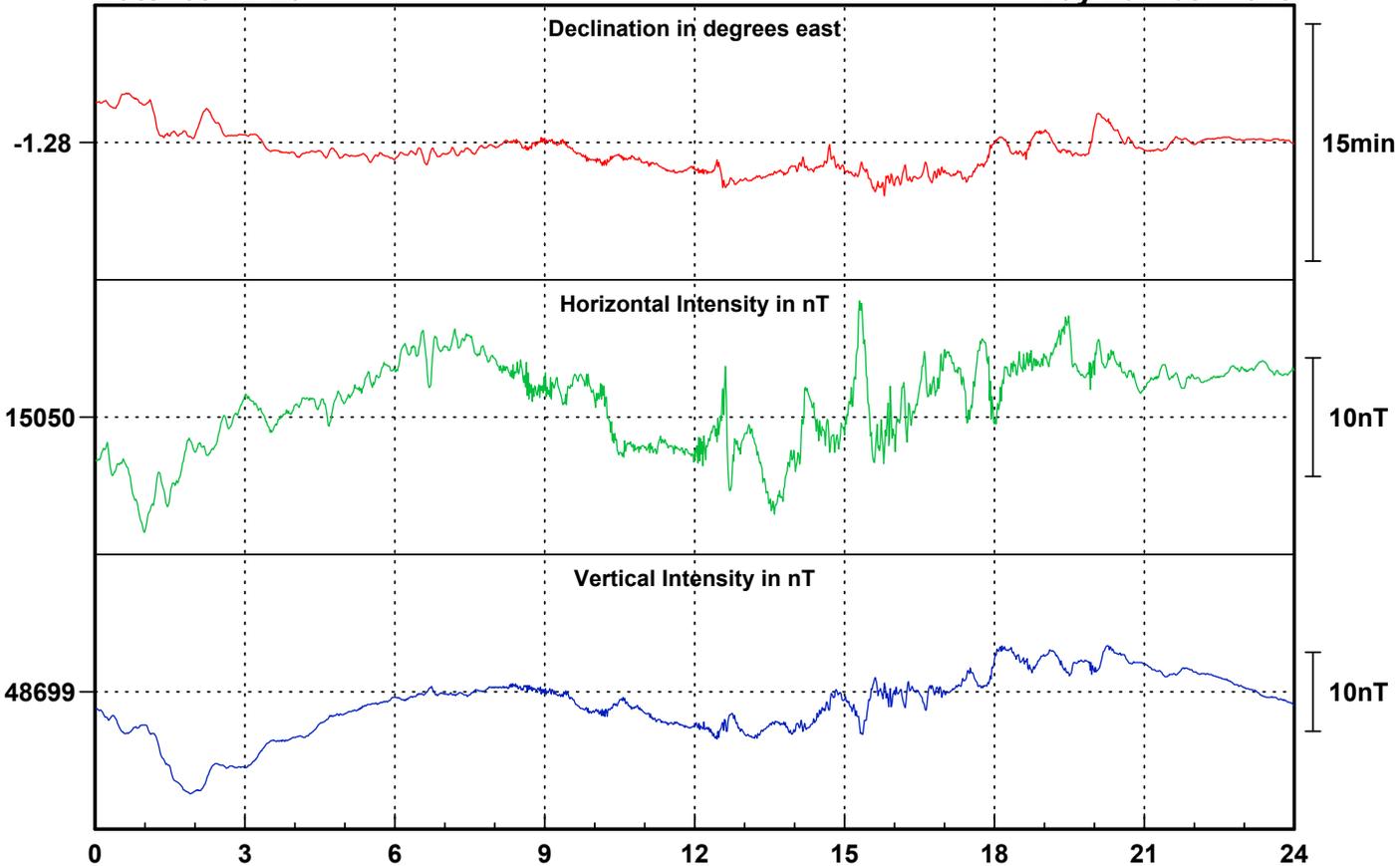
Day number: 342



Date: 09-12-2017

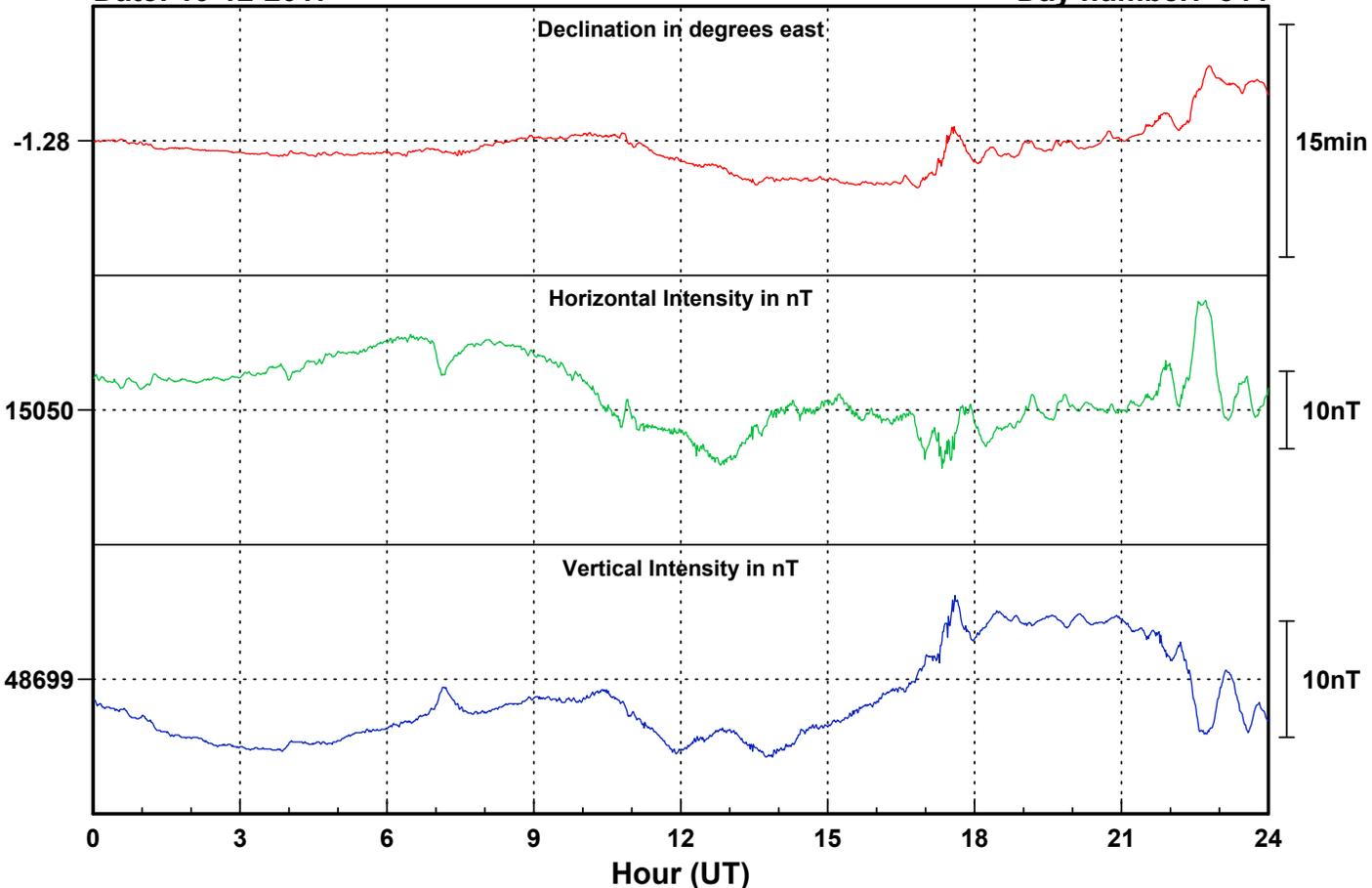
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Day number: 343



Date: 10-12-2017

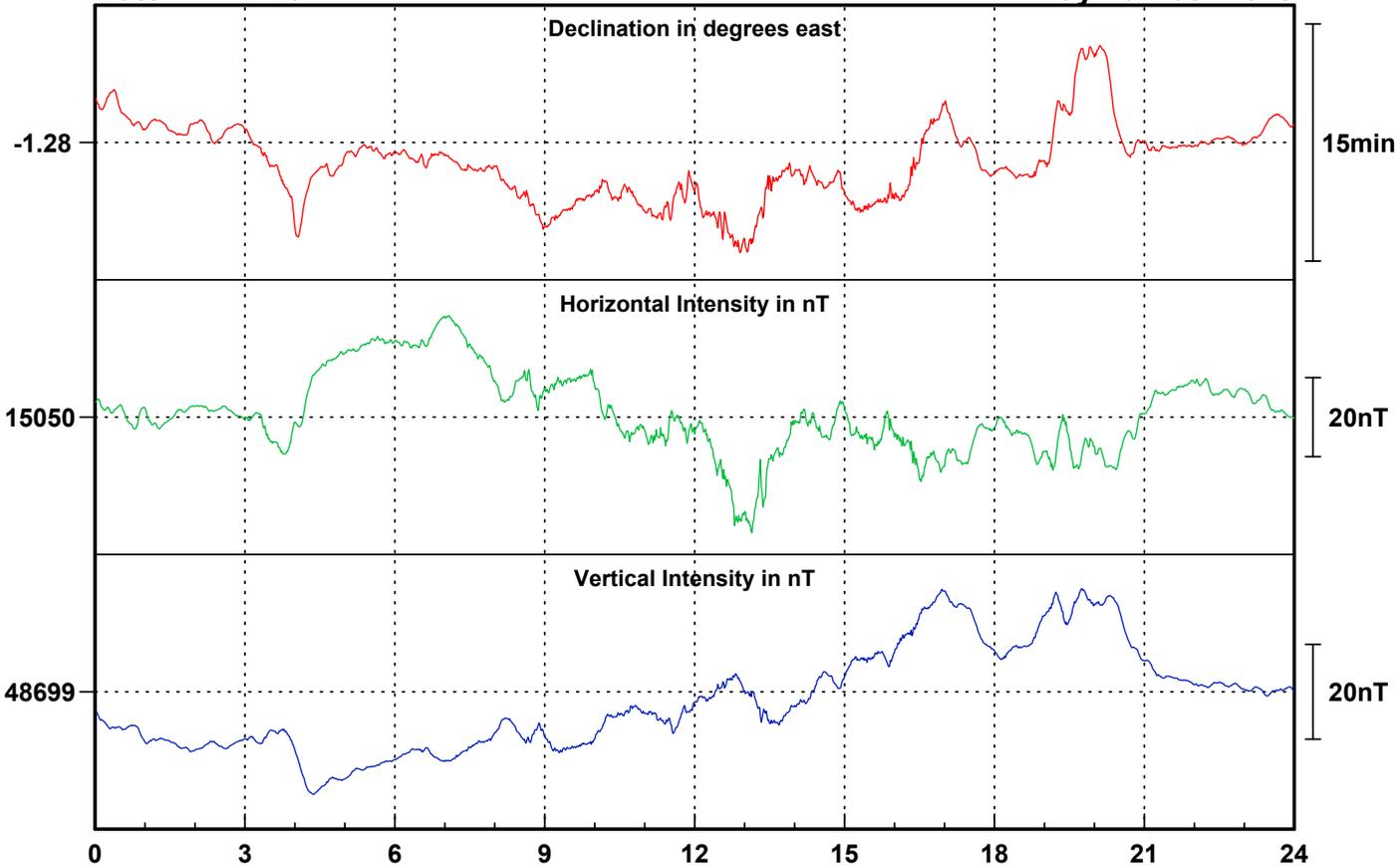
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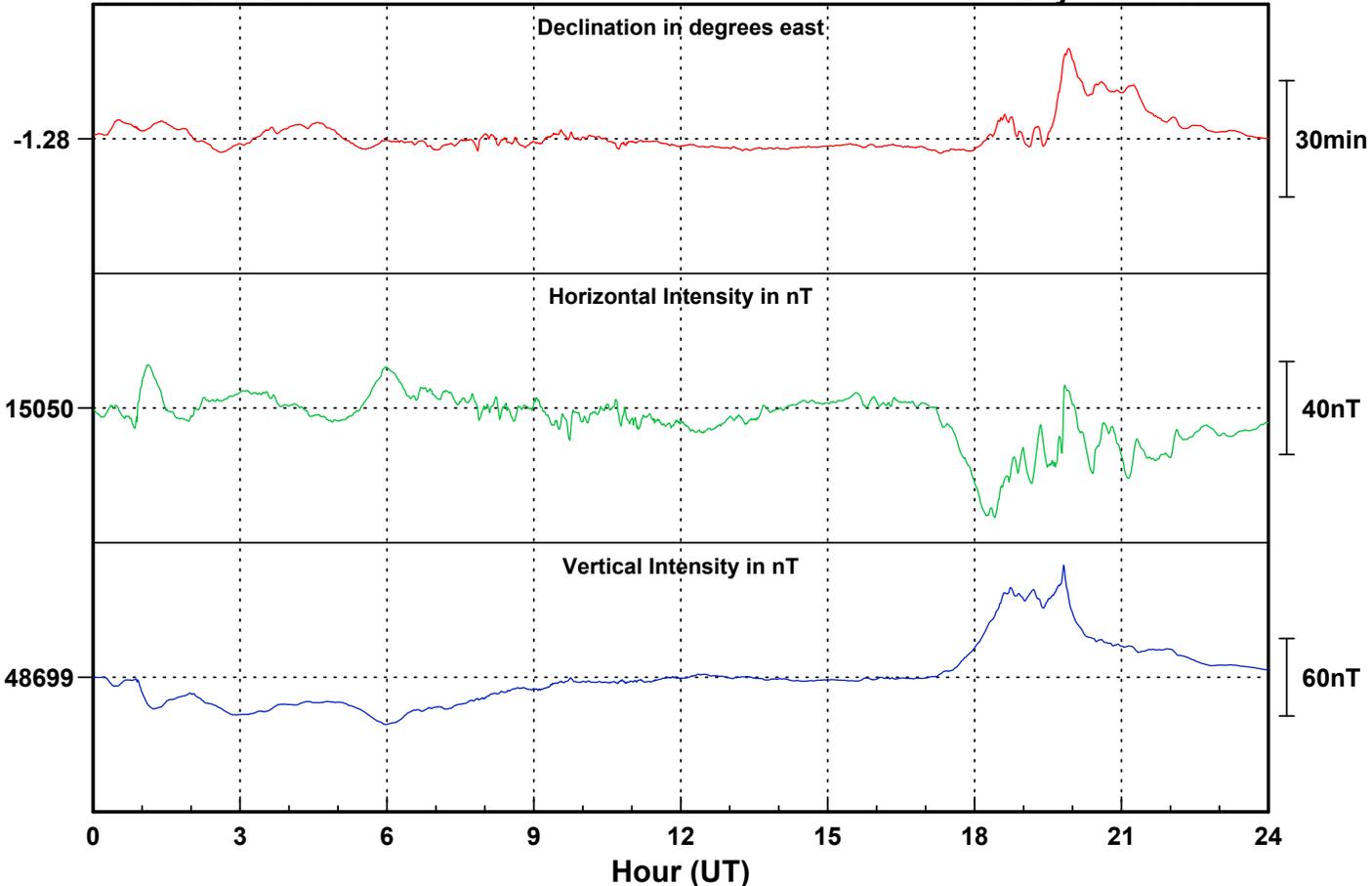
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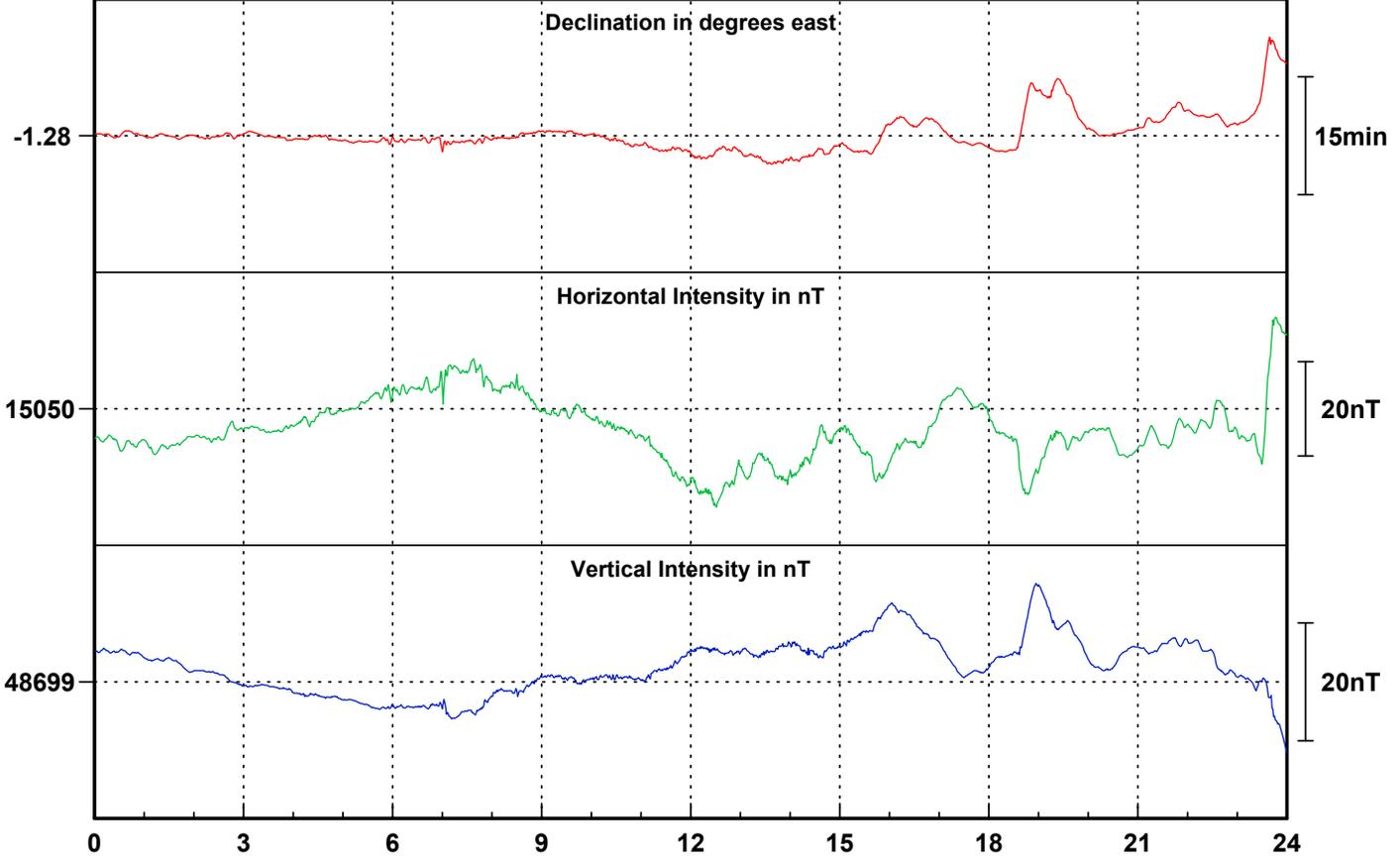
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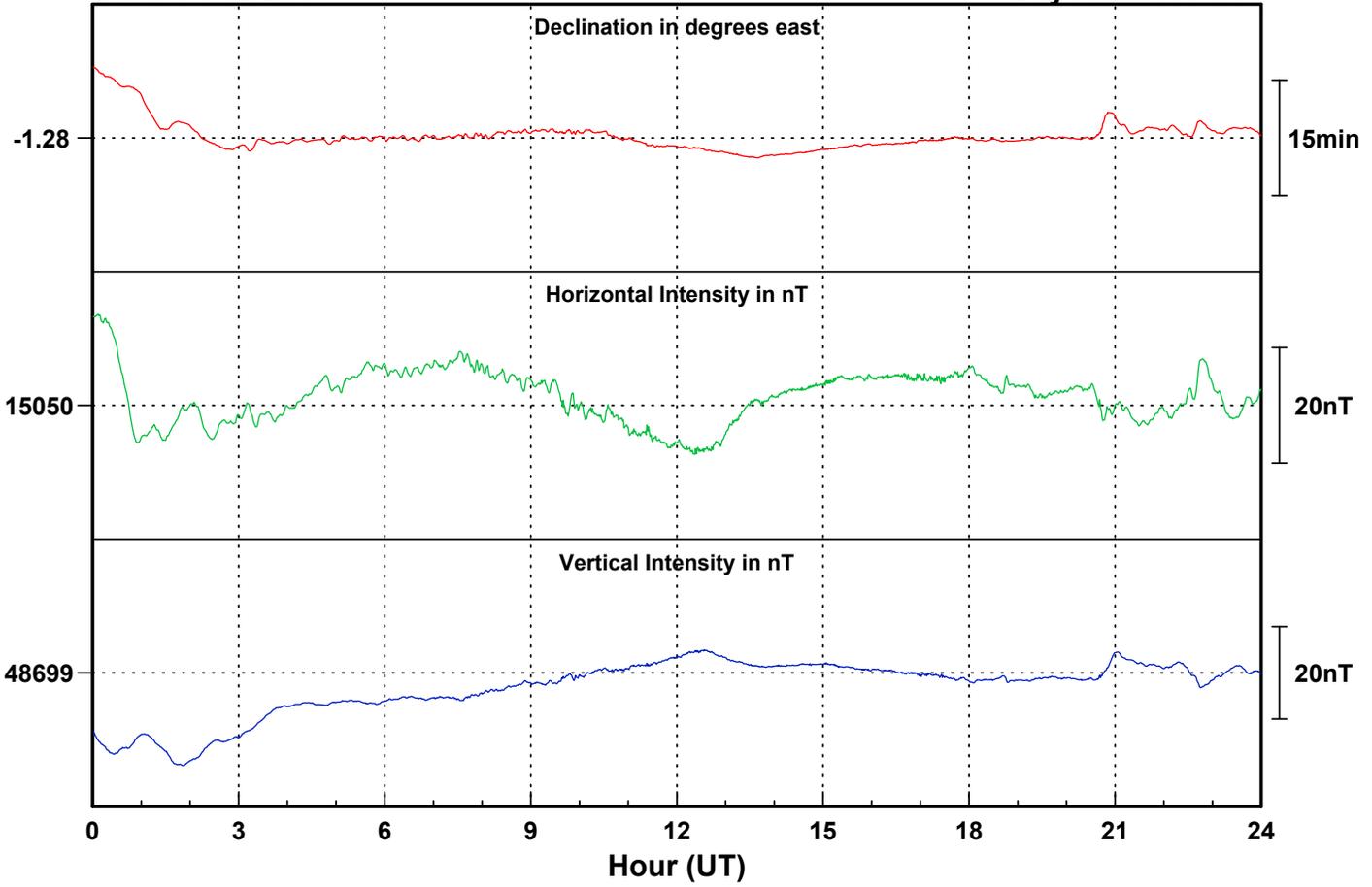
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Day number: 347



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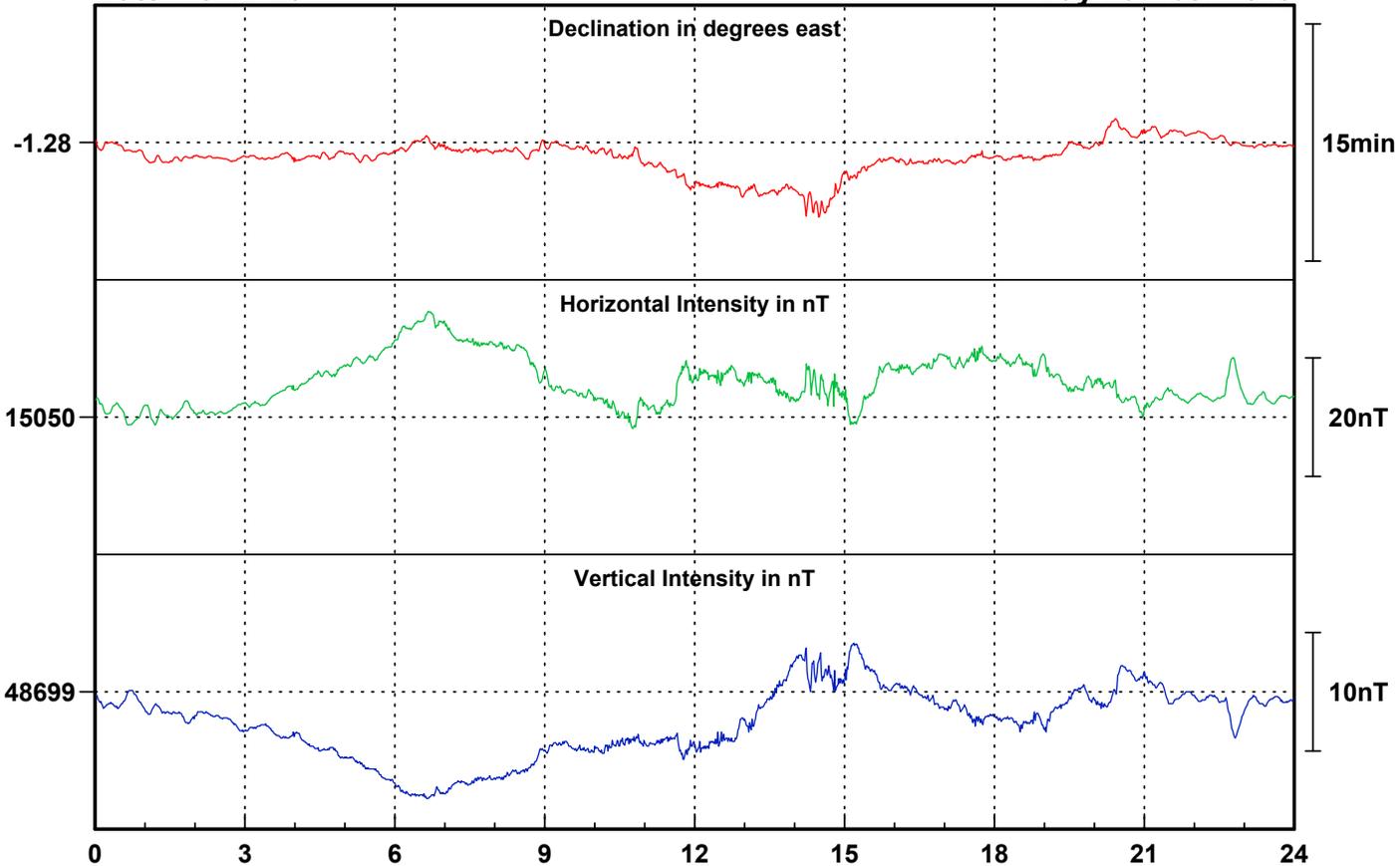
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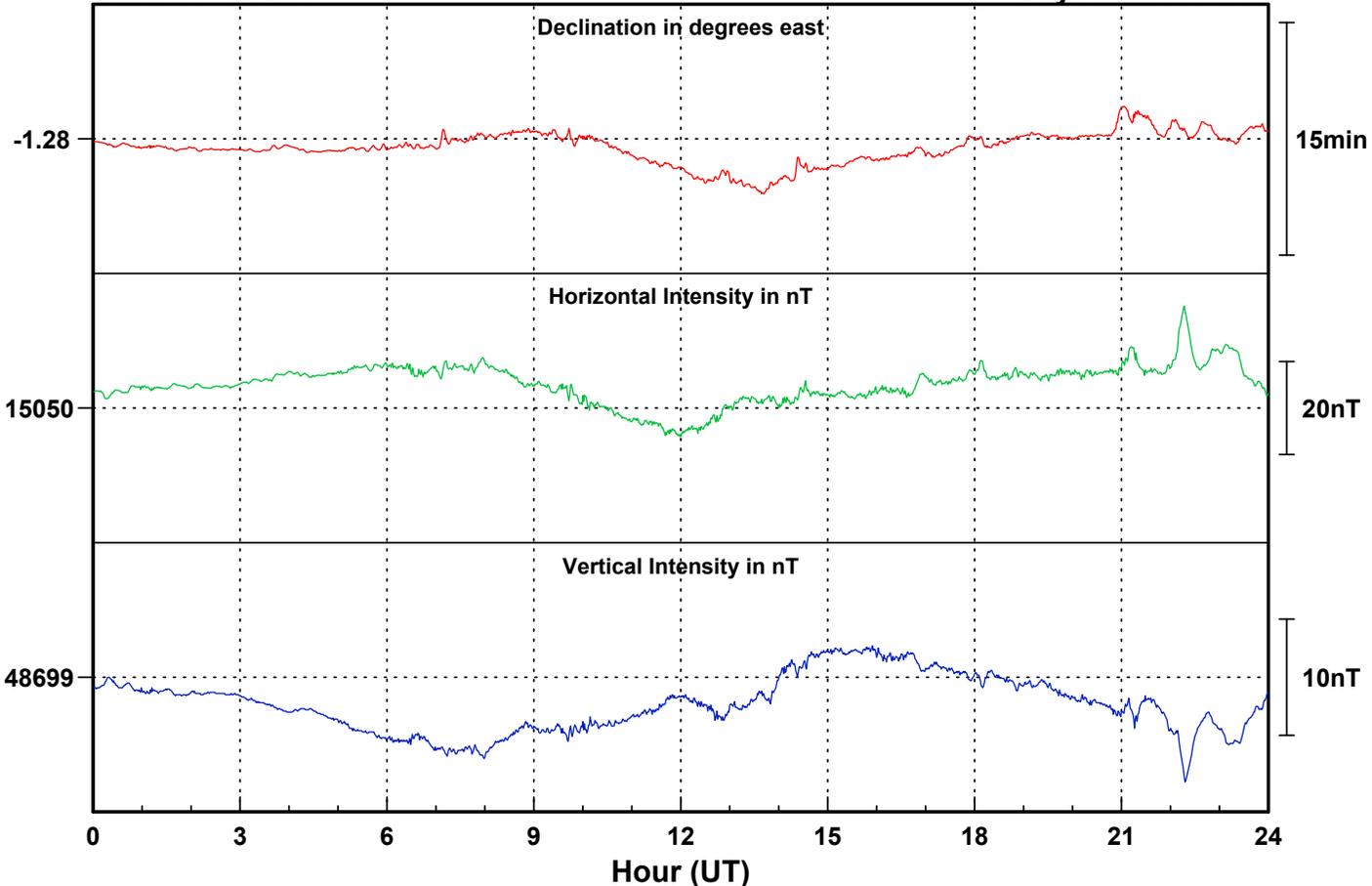
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Day number: 349



Date: 16-12-2017

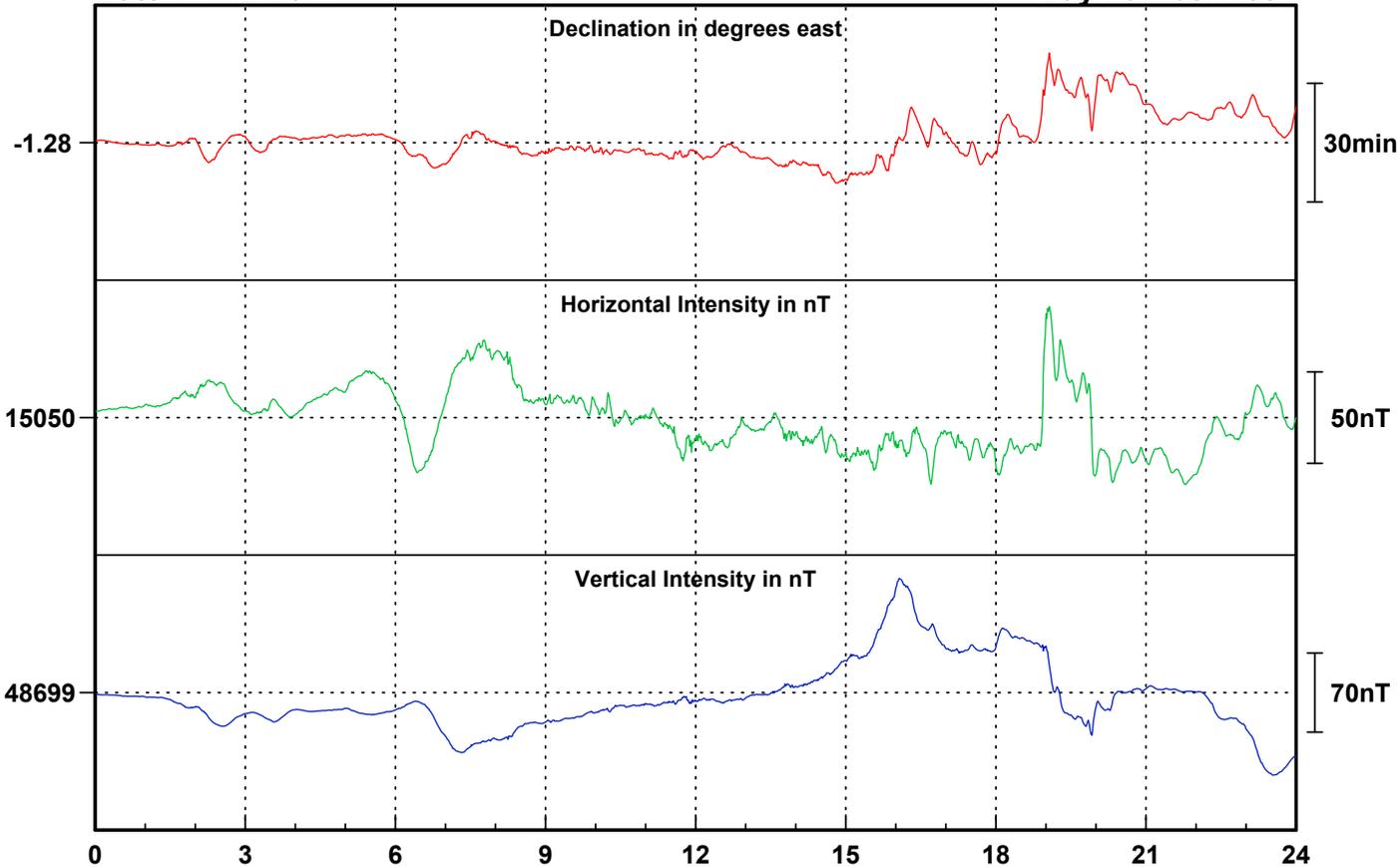
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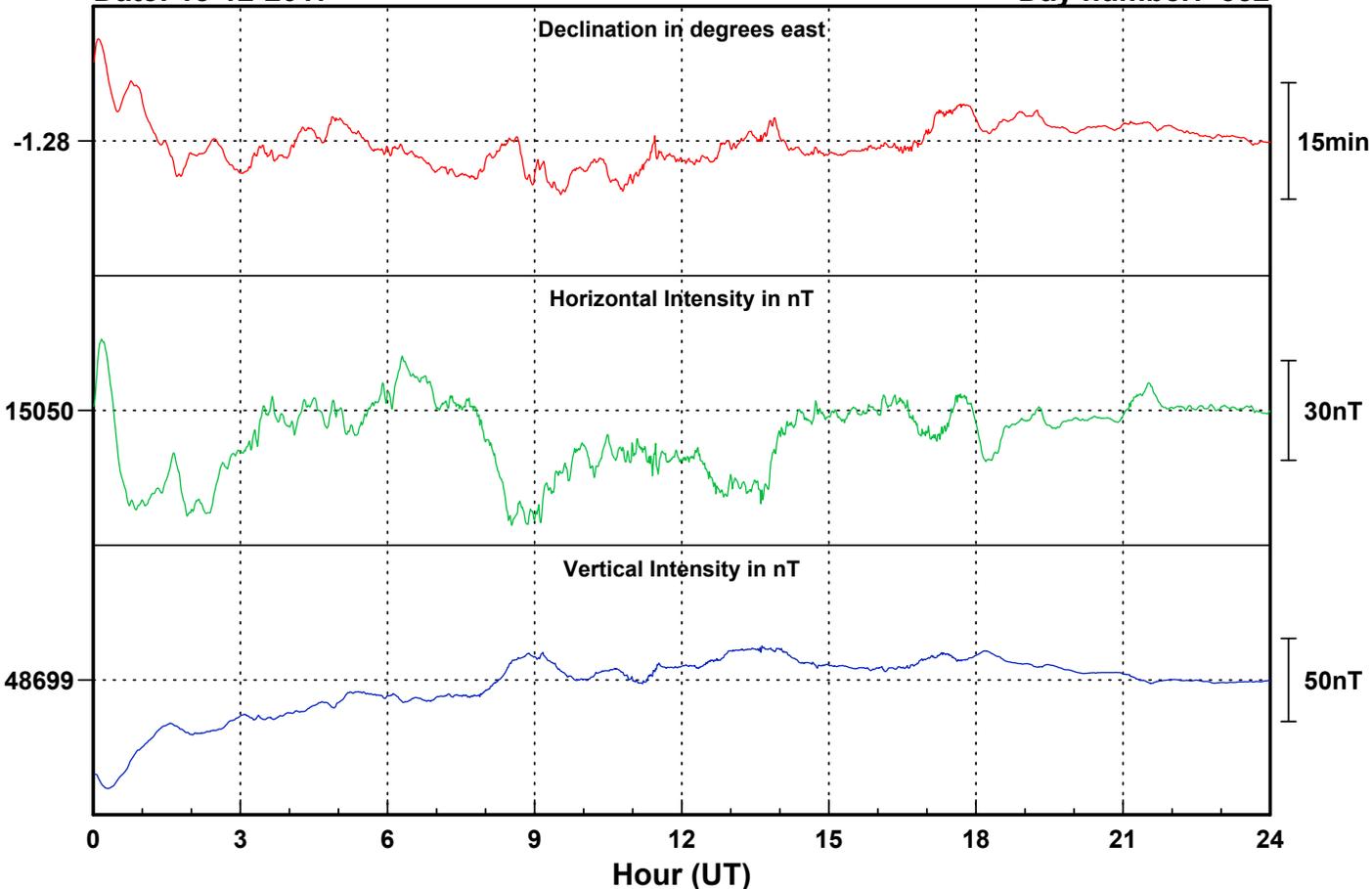
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Day number: 351



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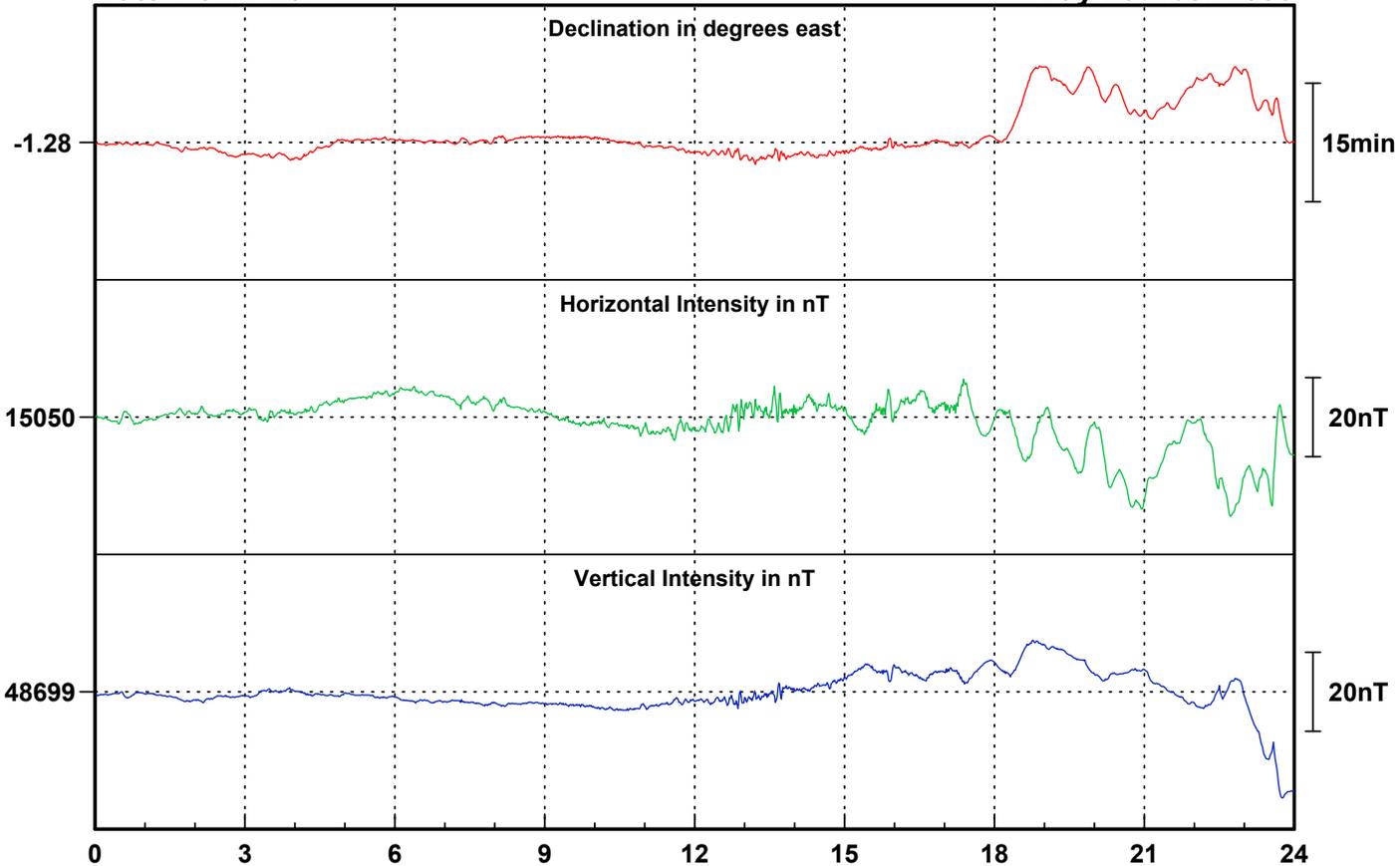
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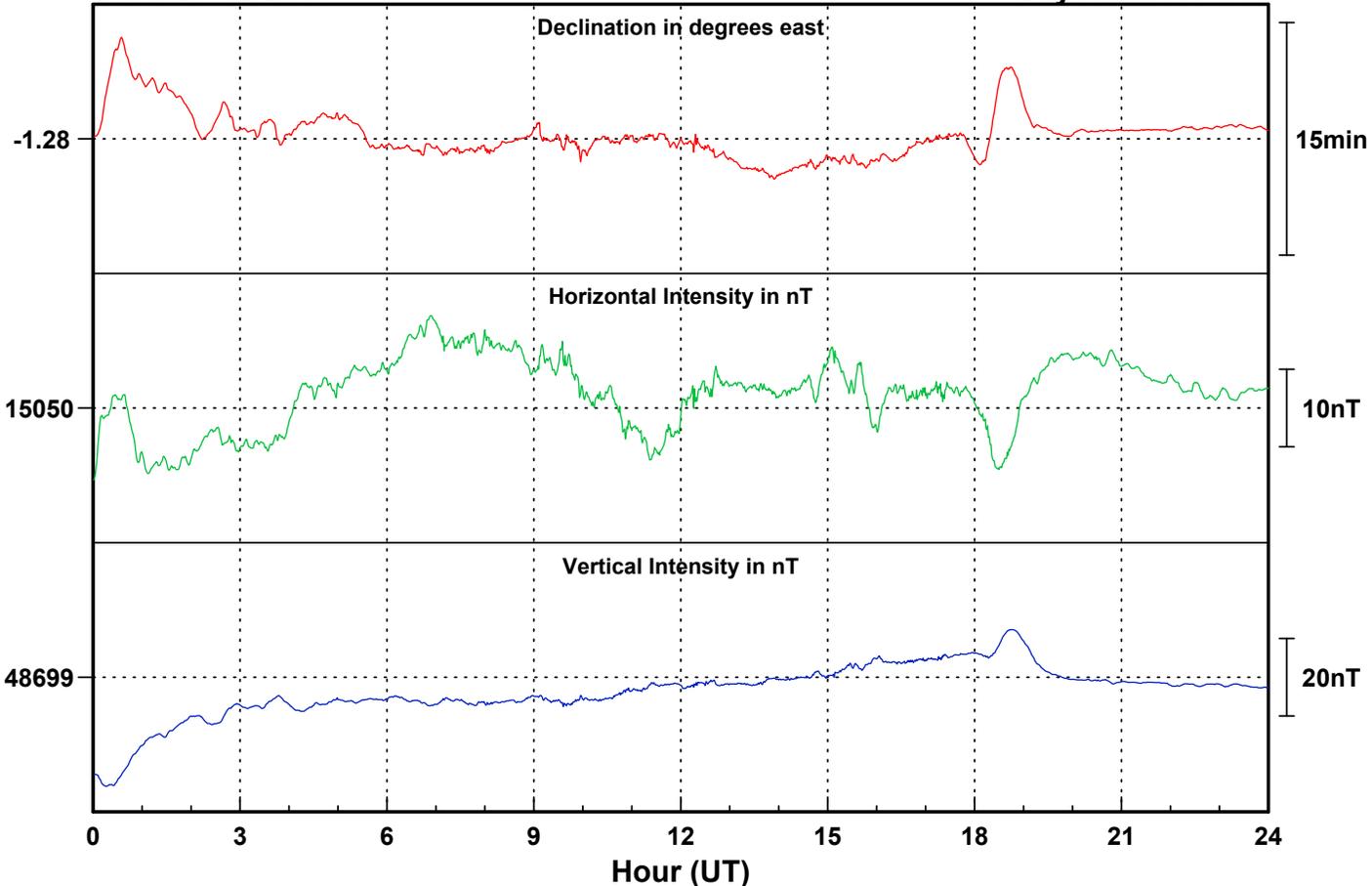
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Day number: 353



Date: 20-12-2017

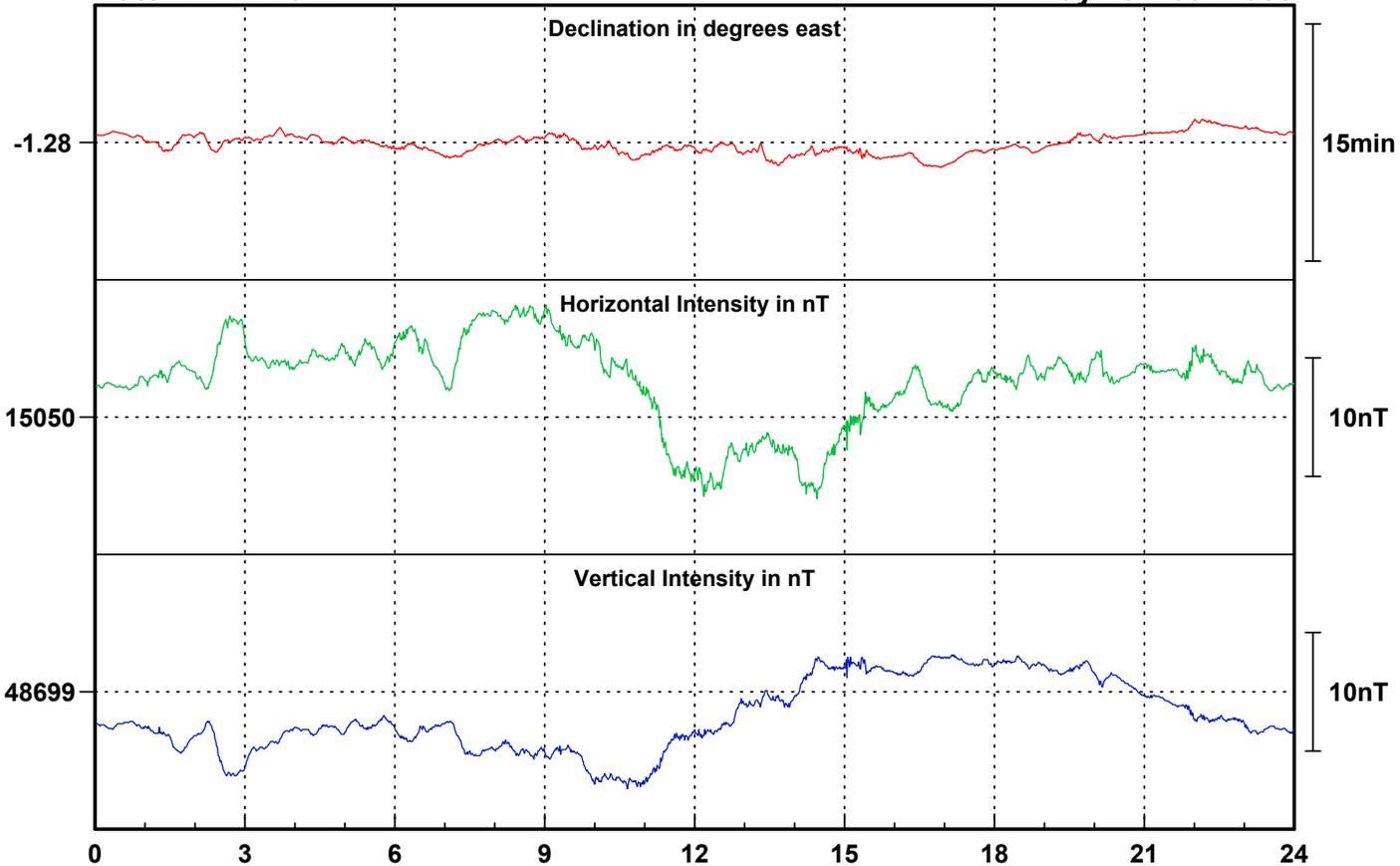
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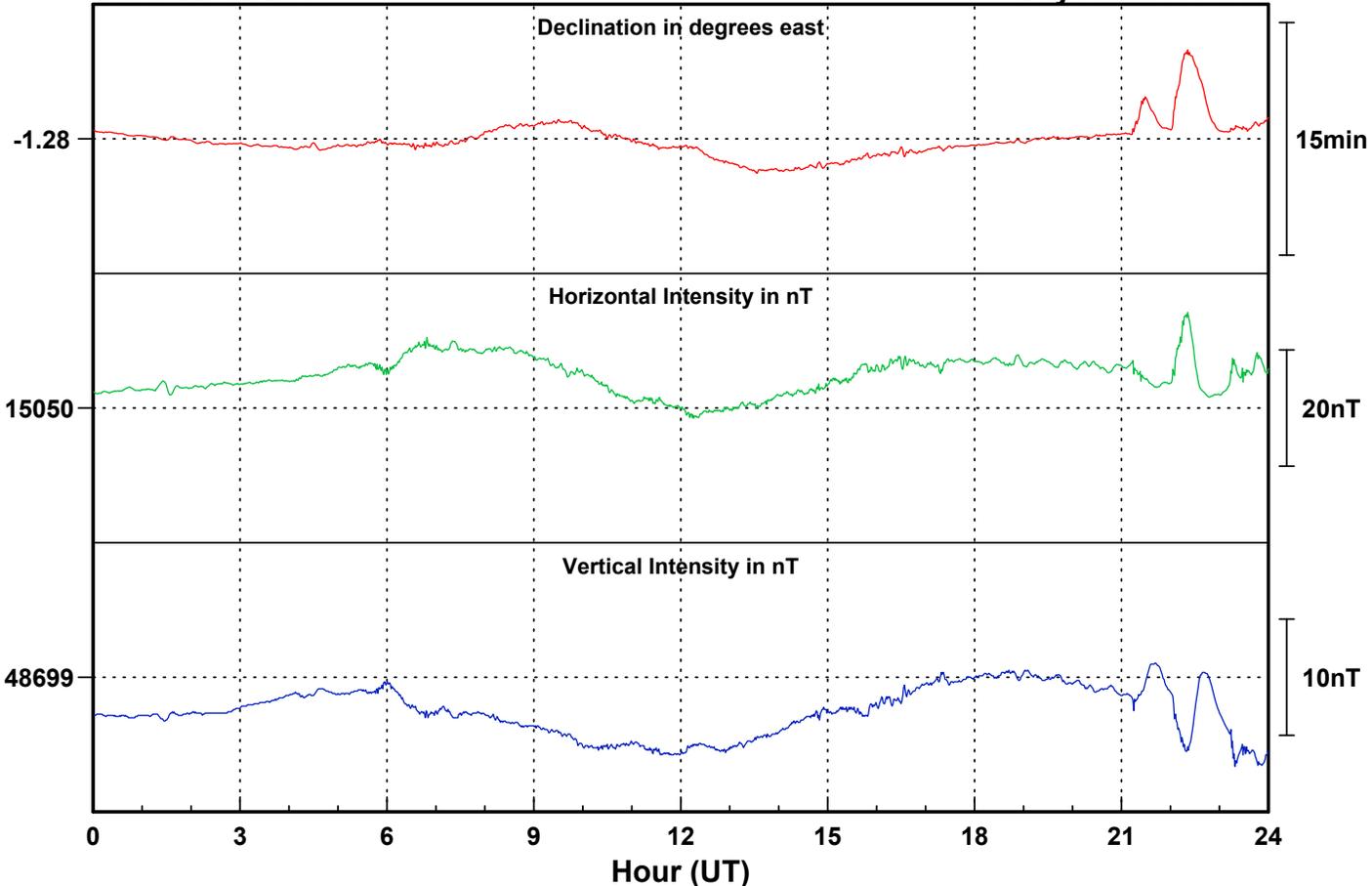
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Day number: 355



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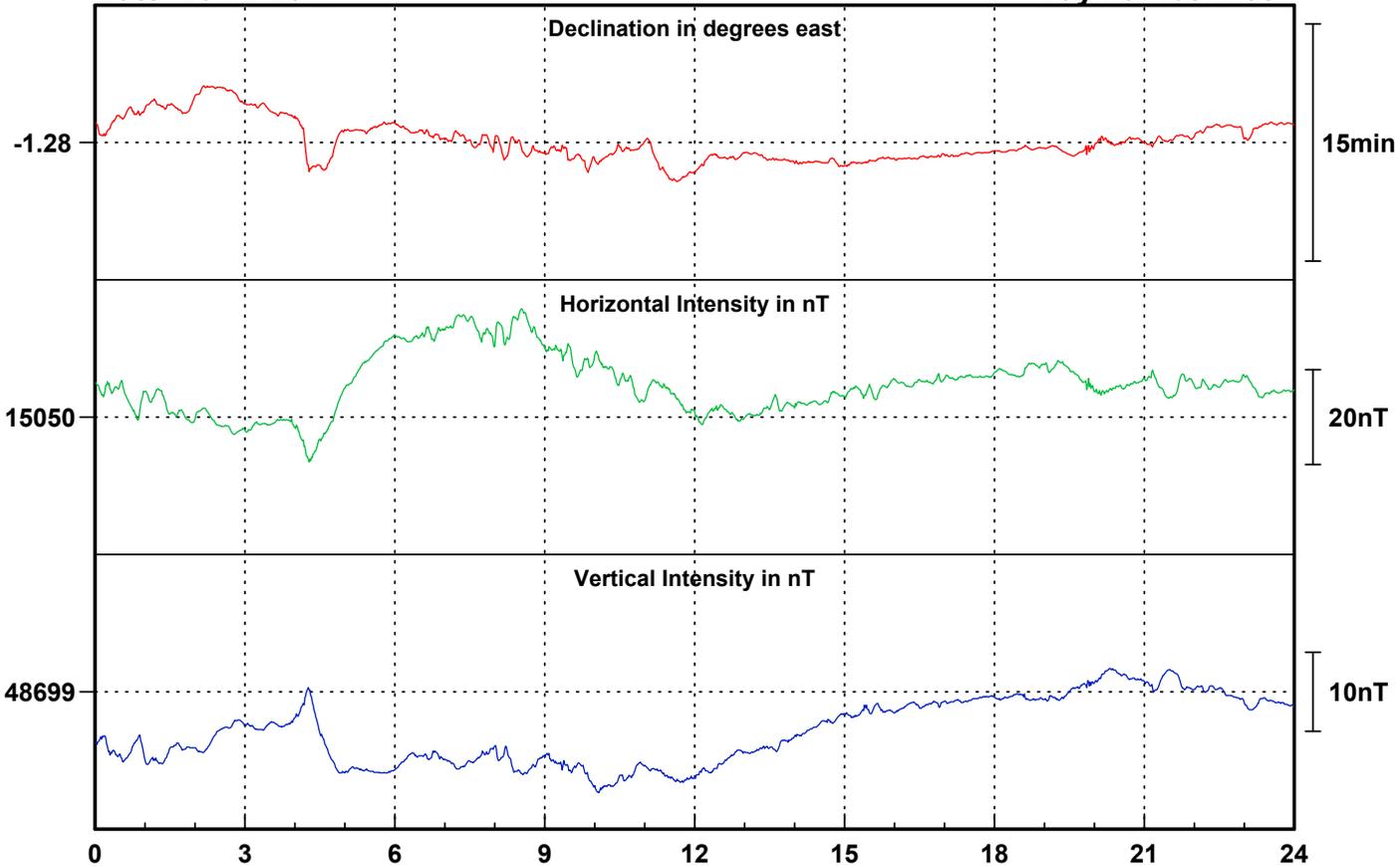
Day number: 356



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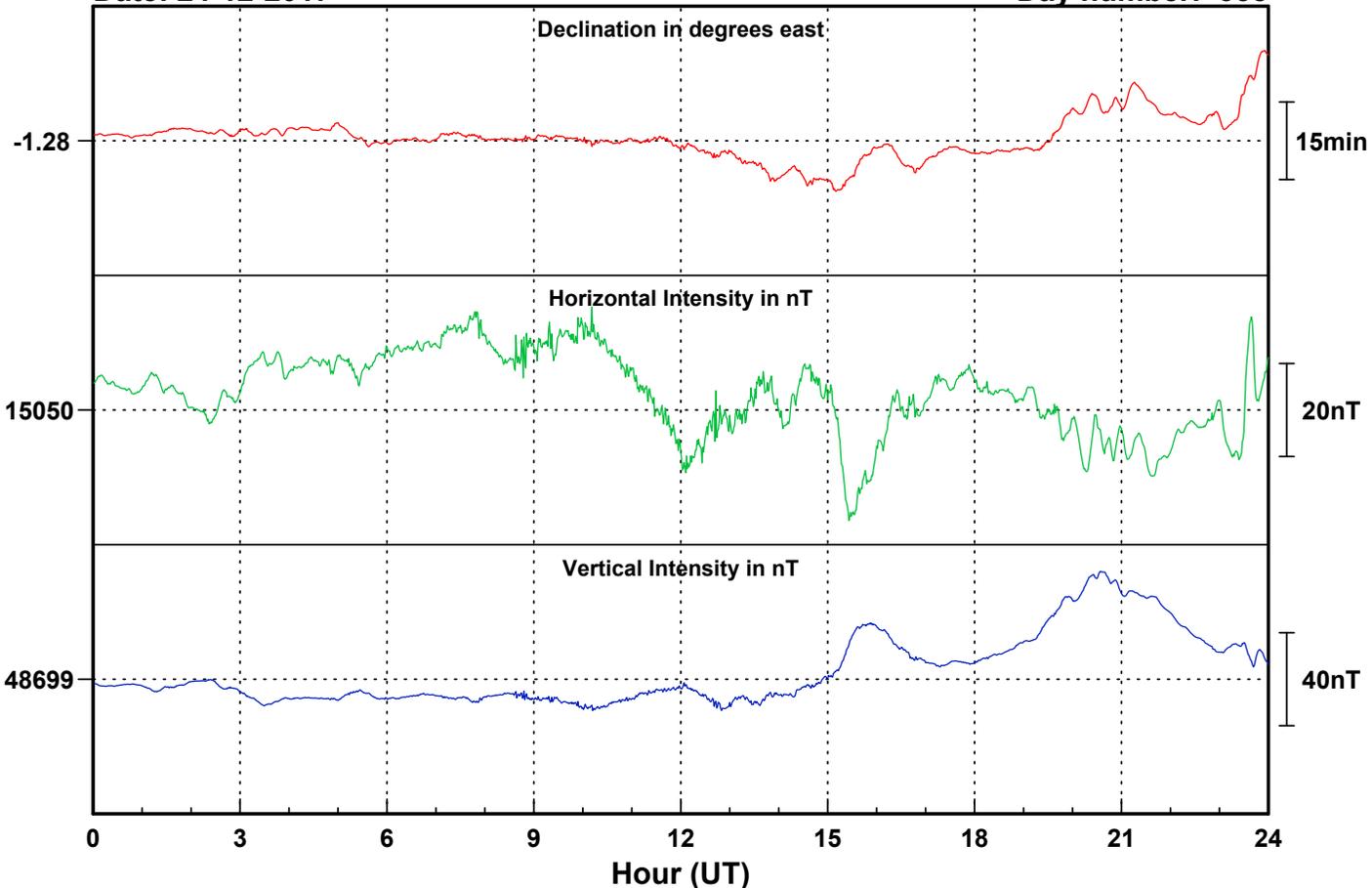
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Day number: 357



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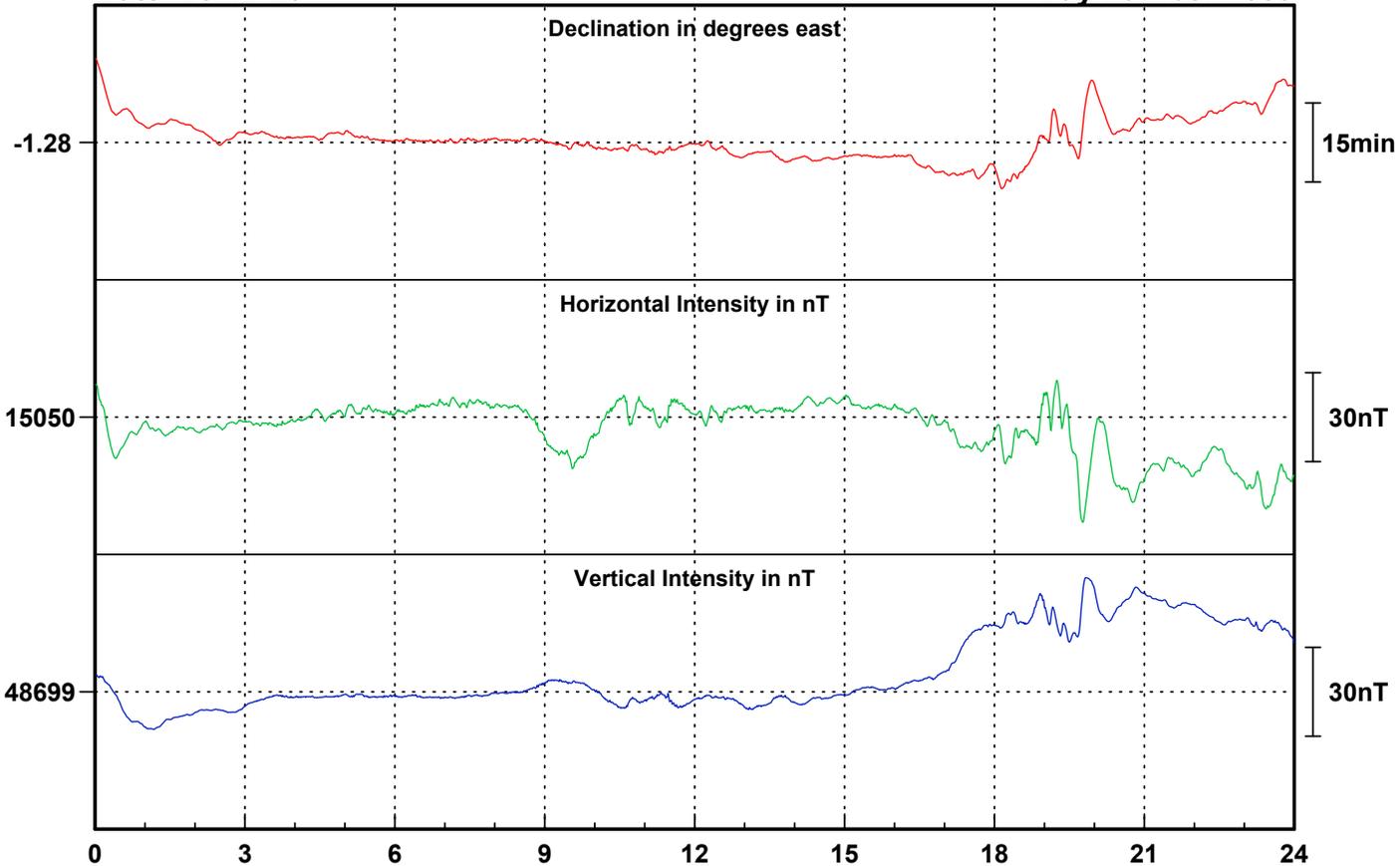
Day number: 358



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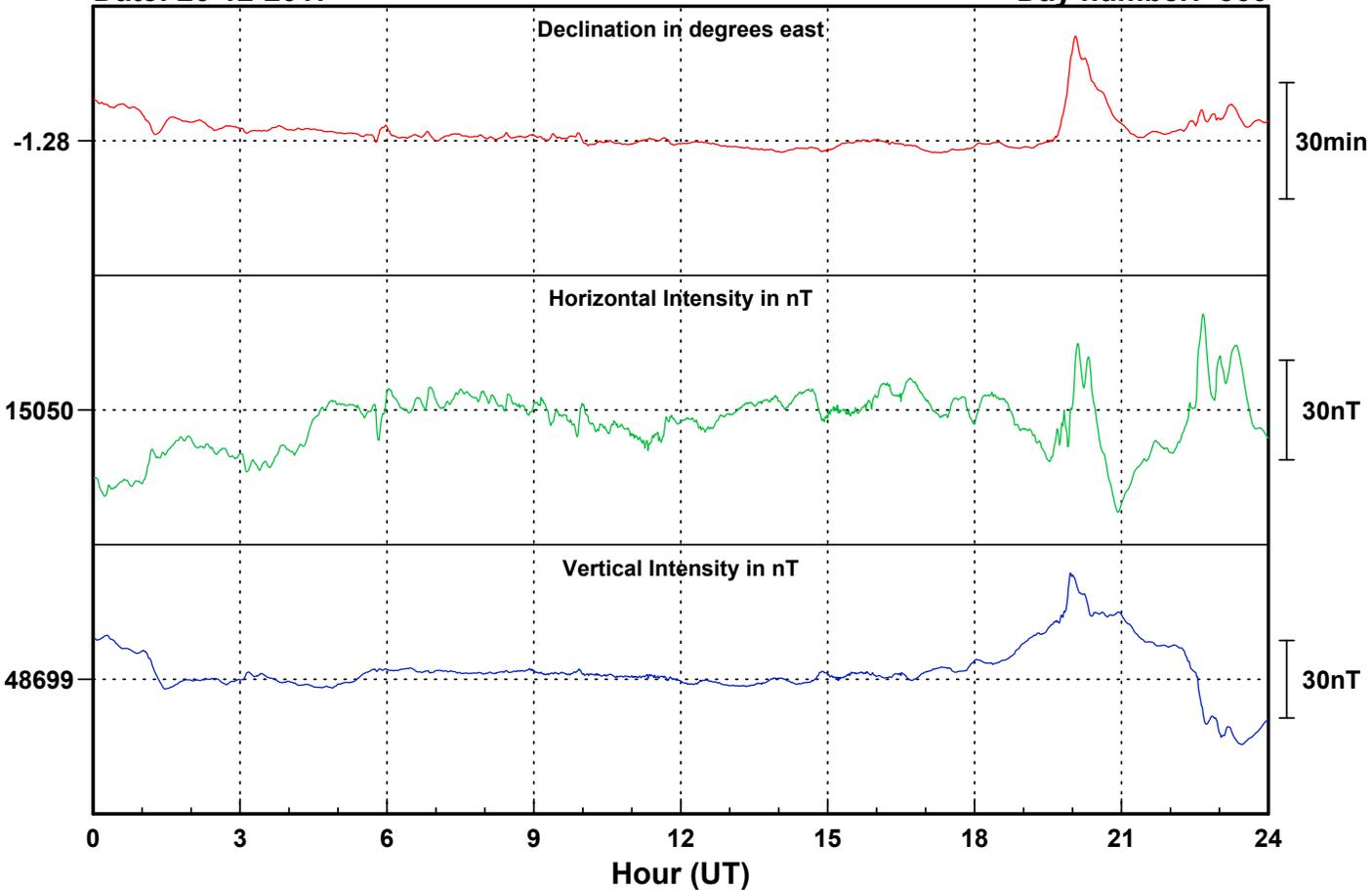
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Day number: 359



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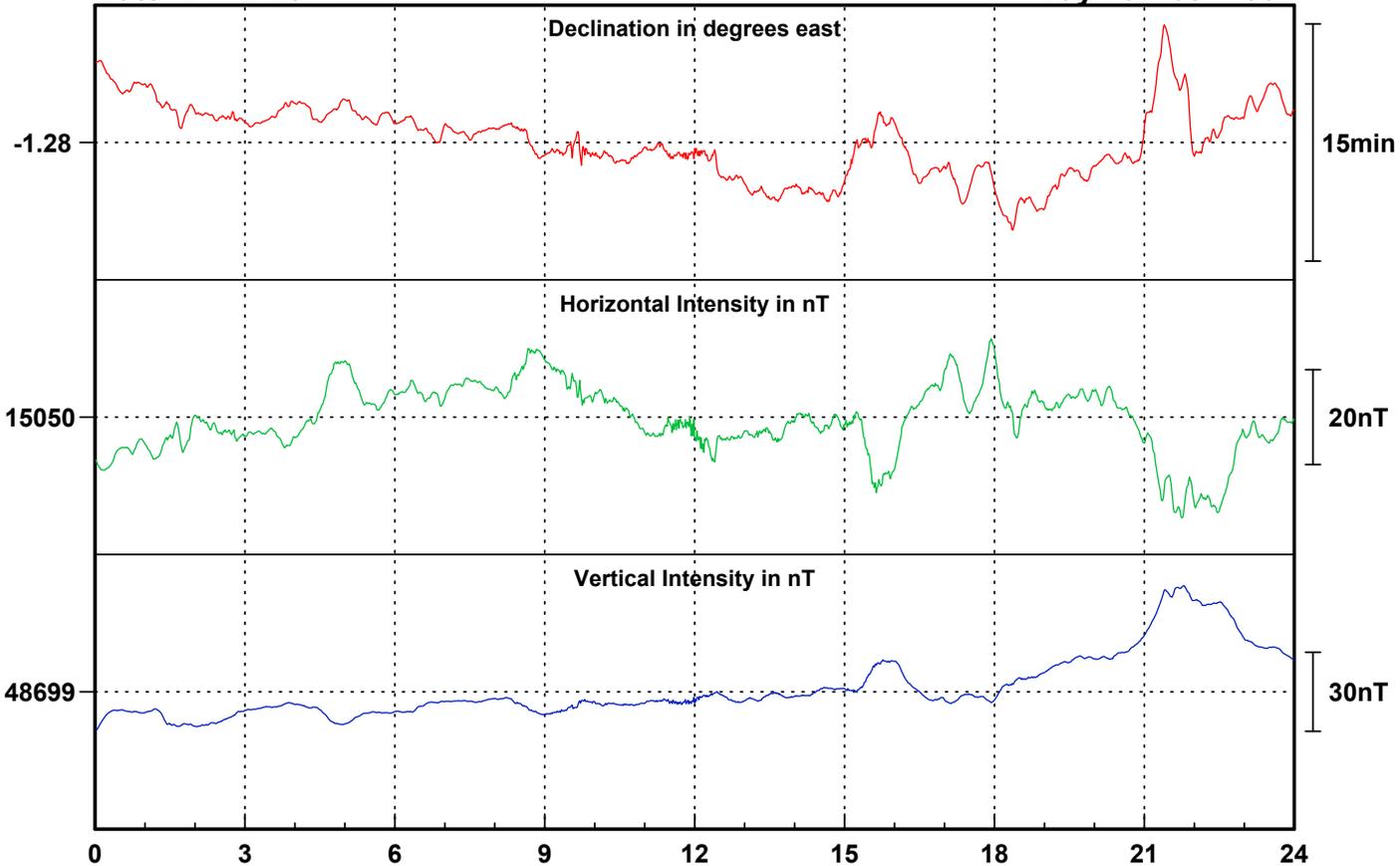
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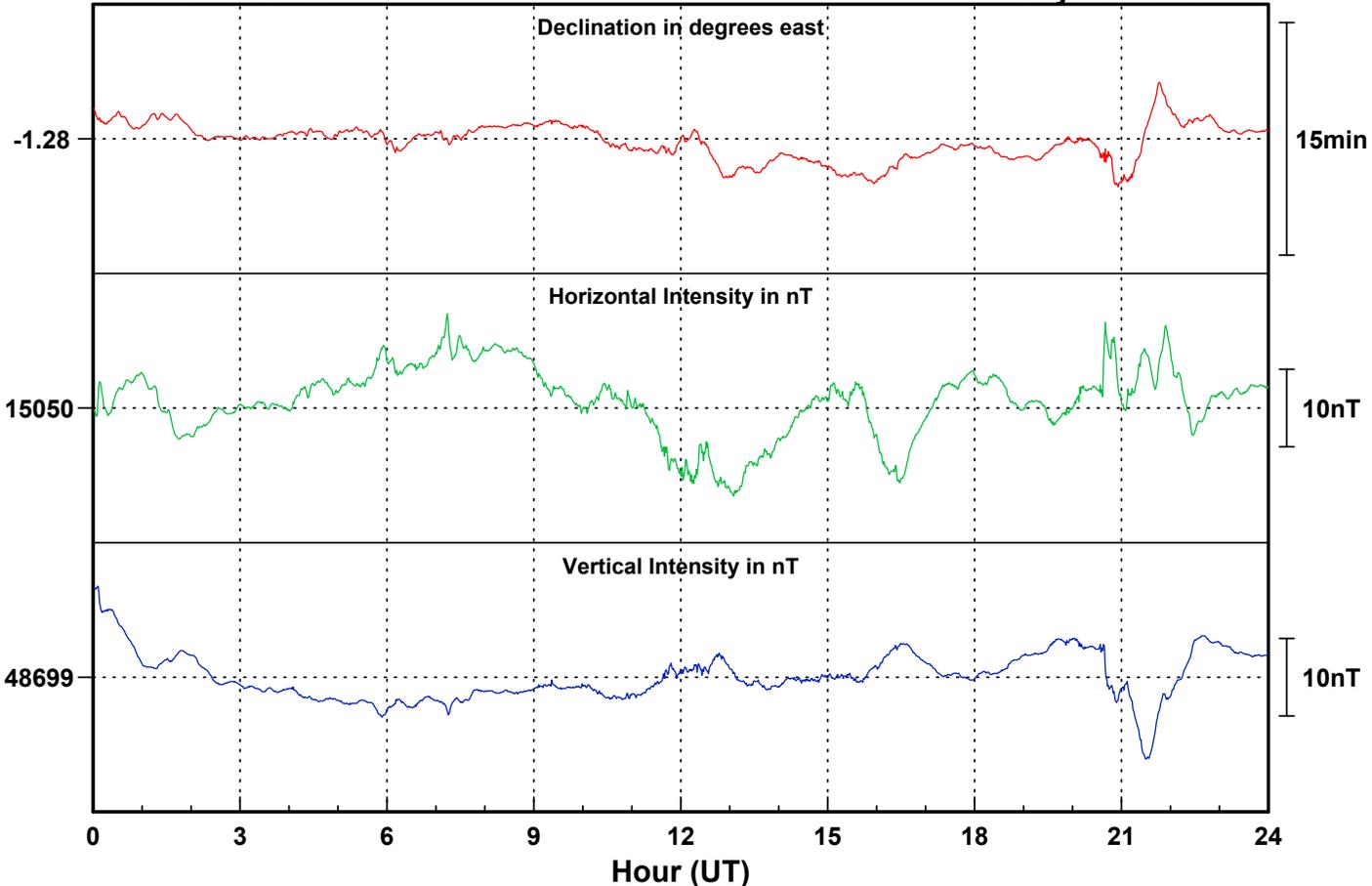
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Day number: 361



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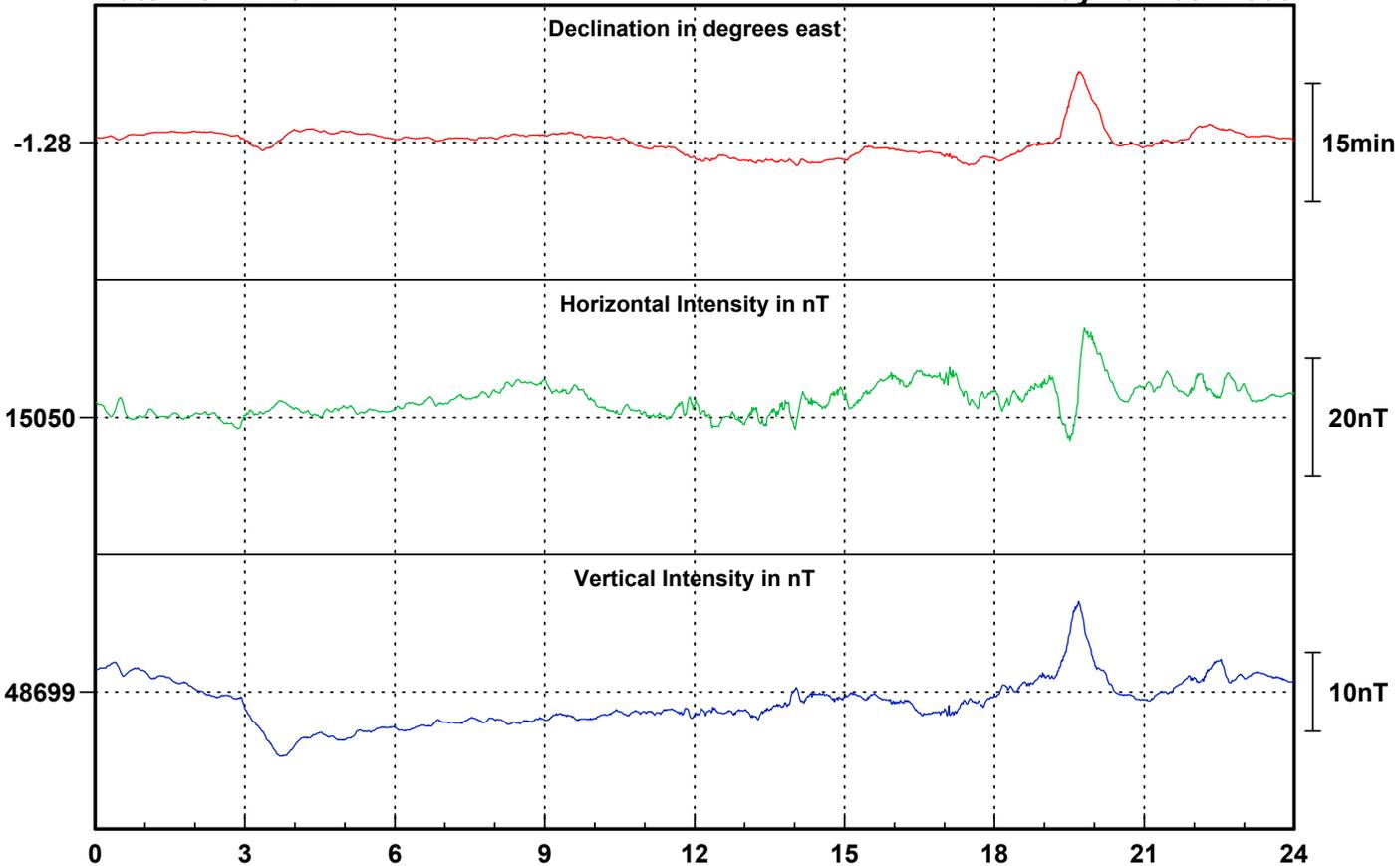
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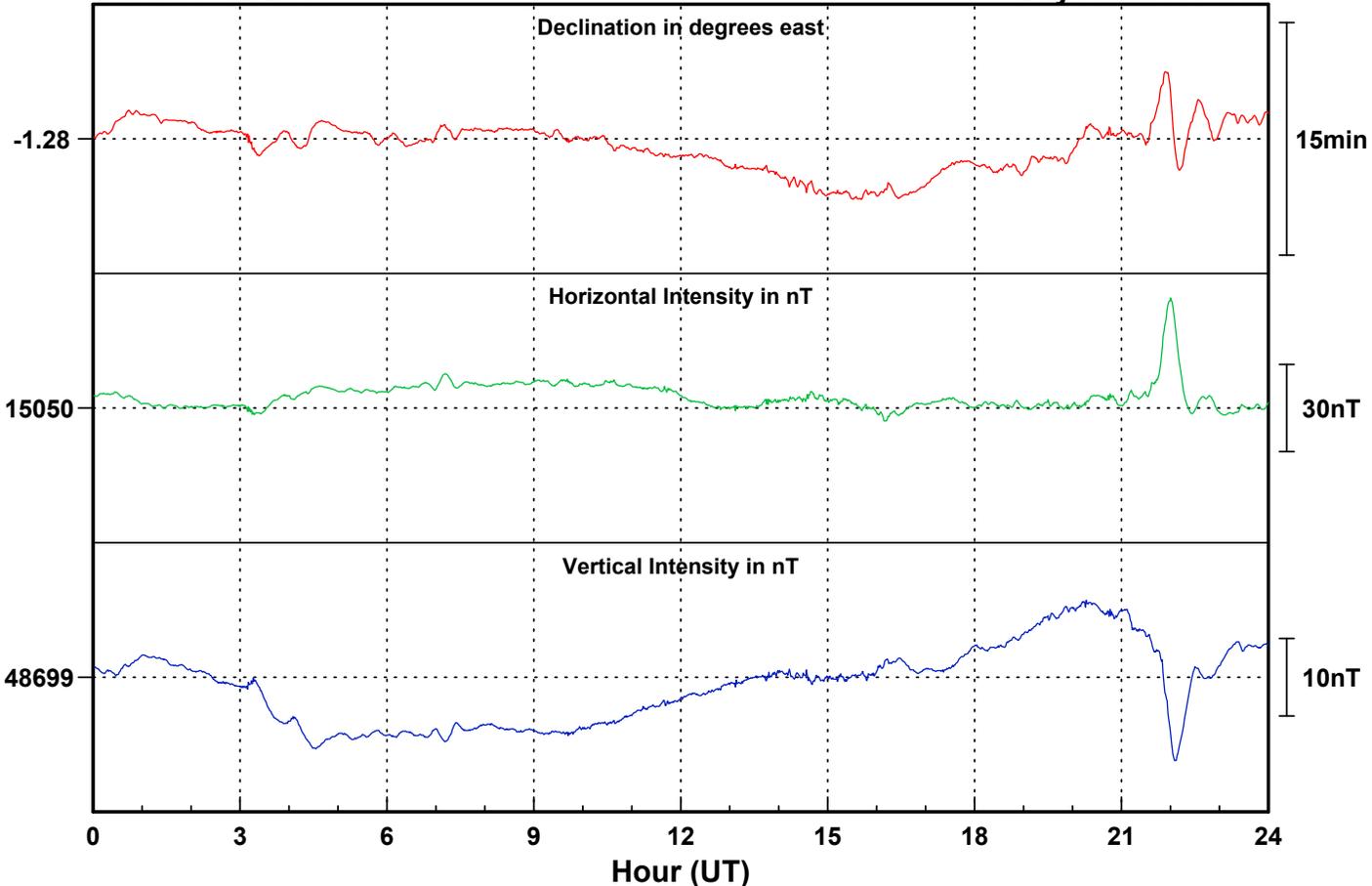
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Day number: 363



Date: 30-12-2017

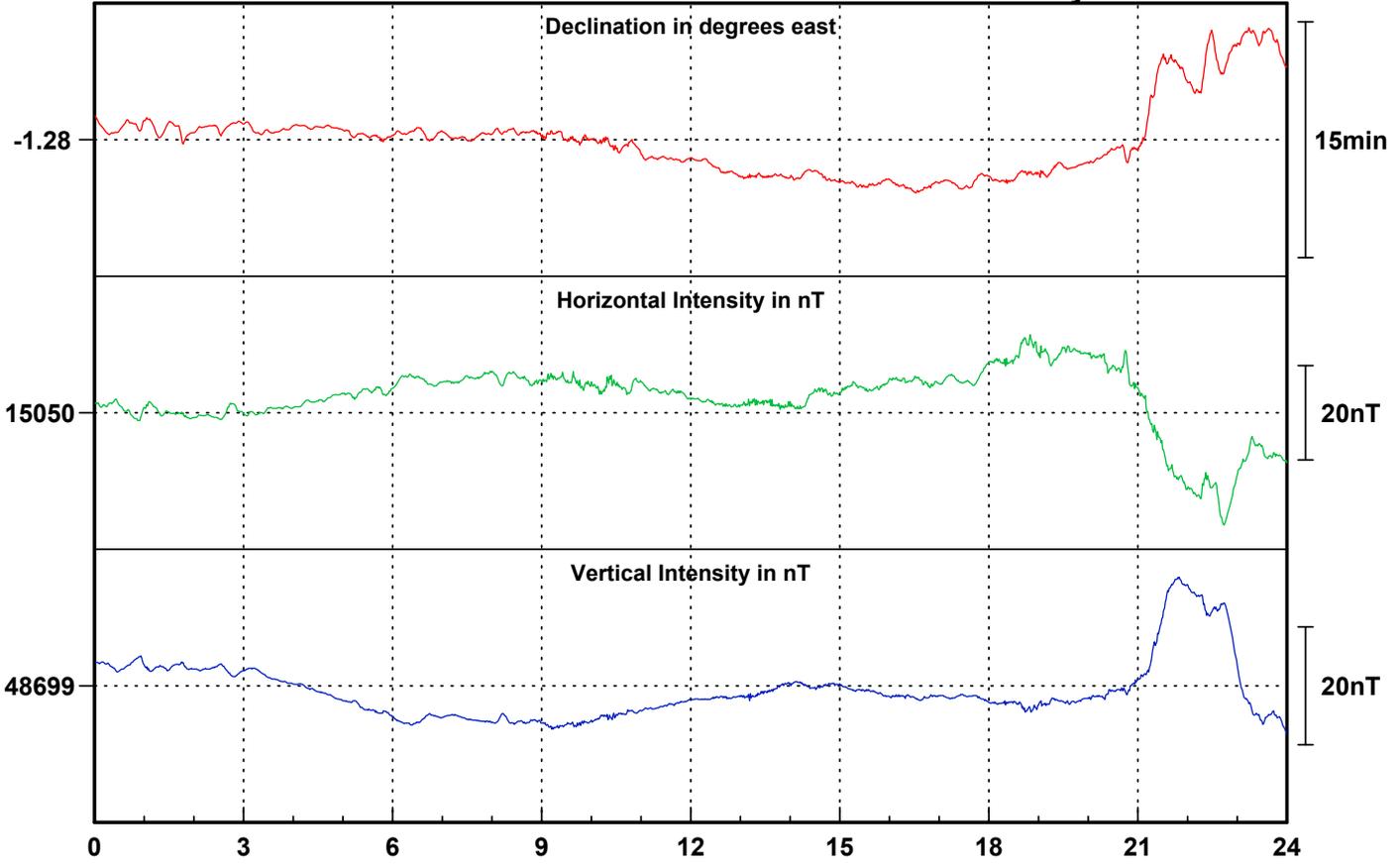
Day number: 364



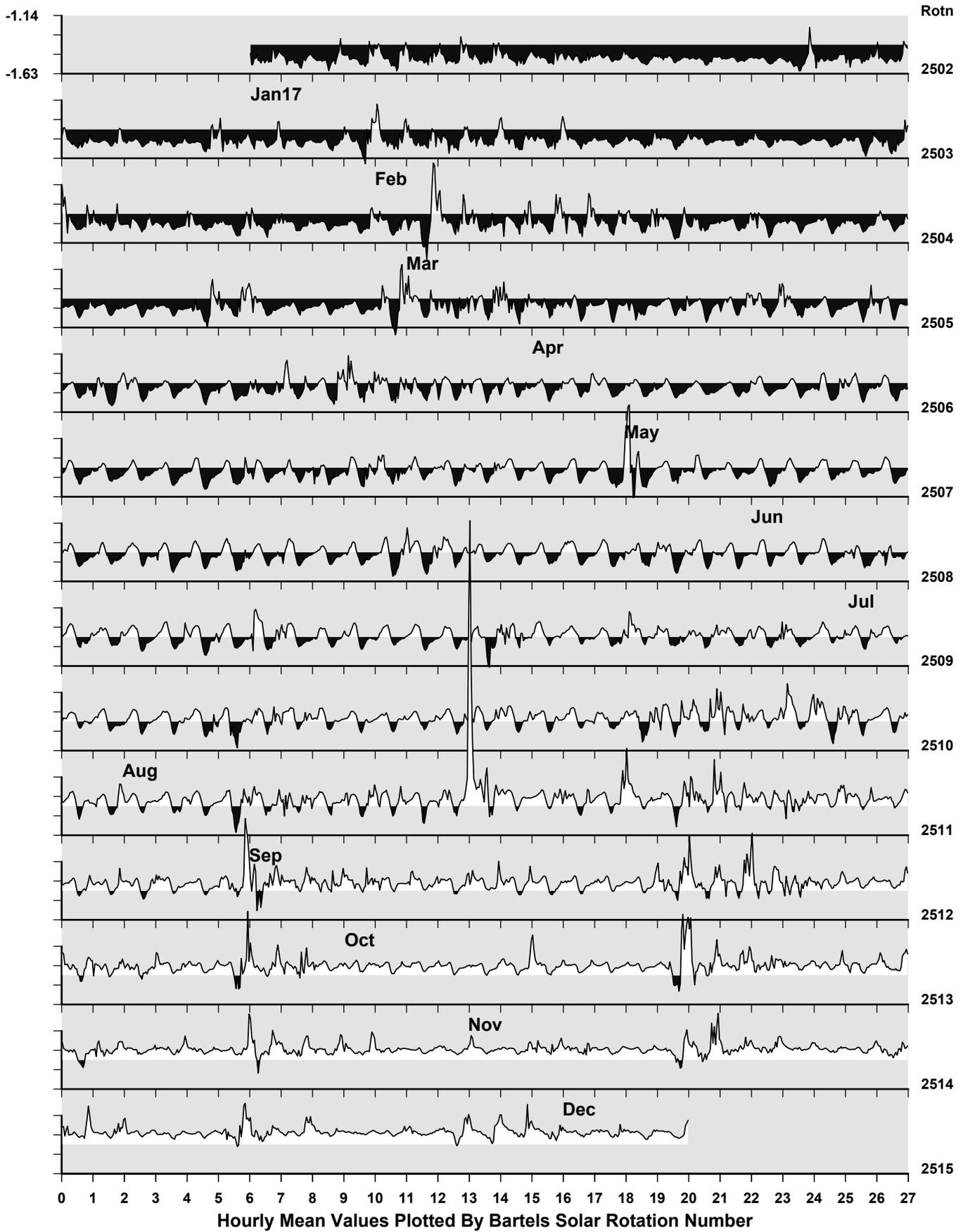
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Day number: 365

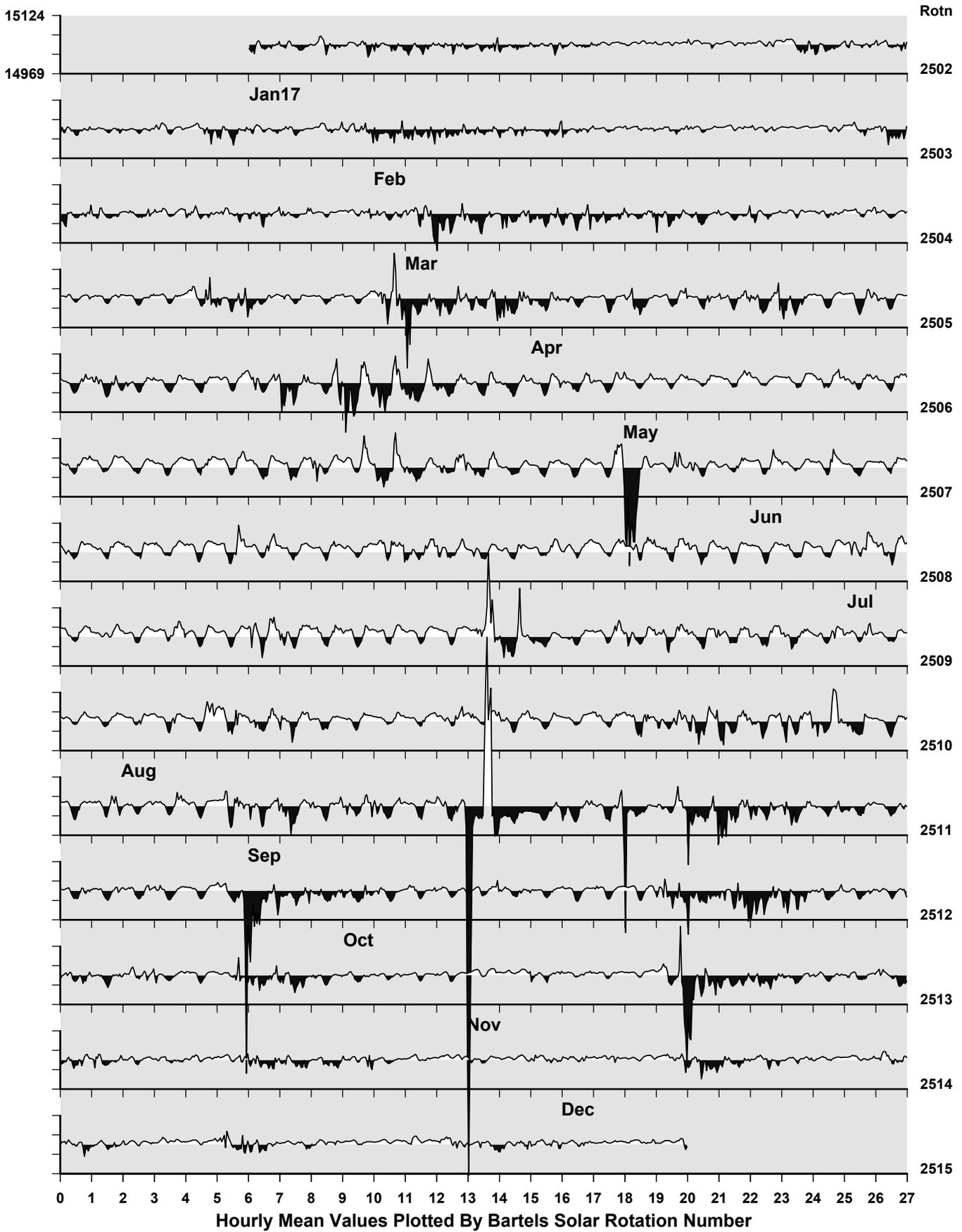


# Lerwick Observatory: Declination (degrees)

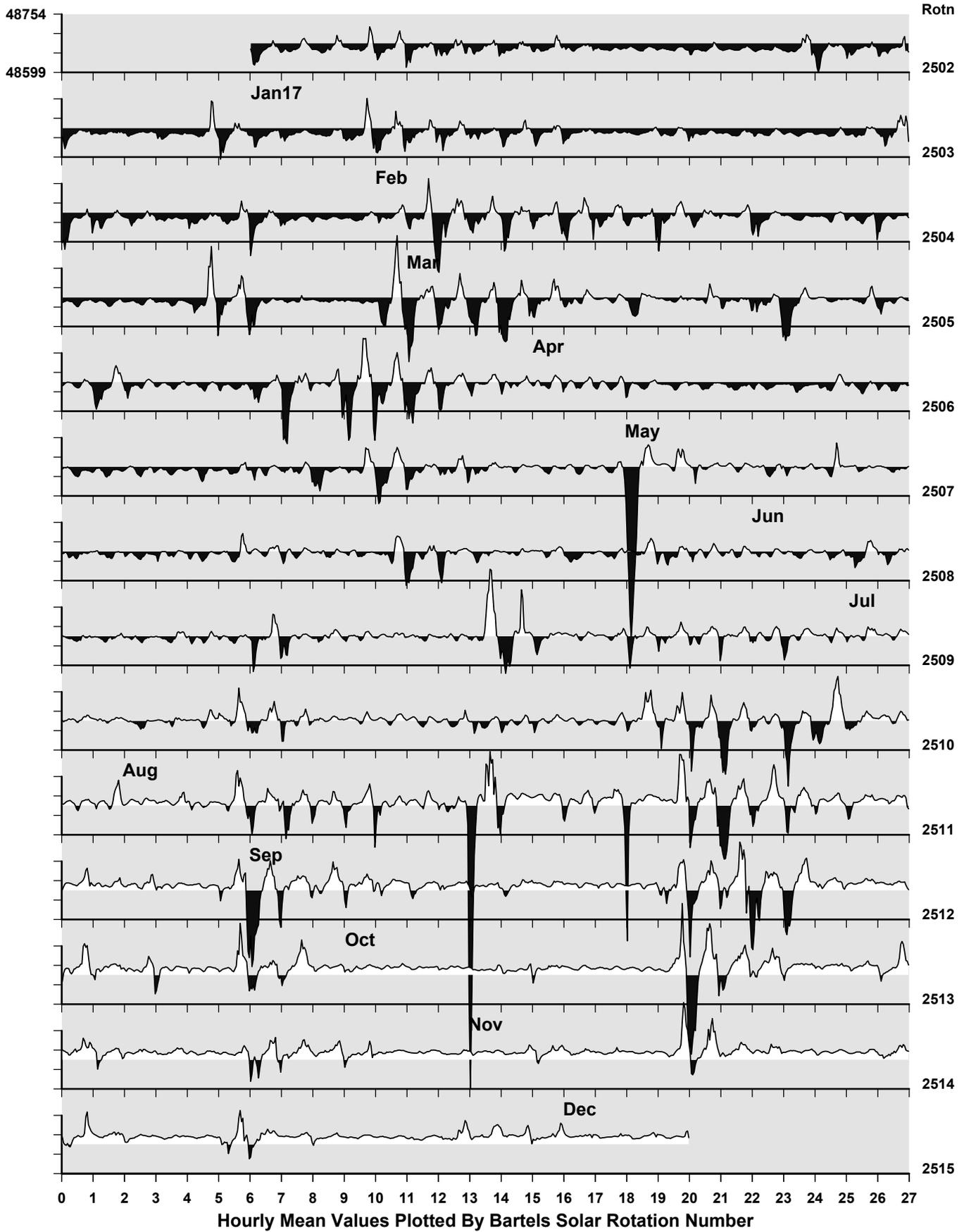


Hourly Mean Values Plotted By Bartels Solar Rotation Number

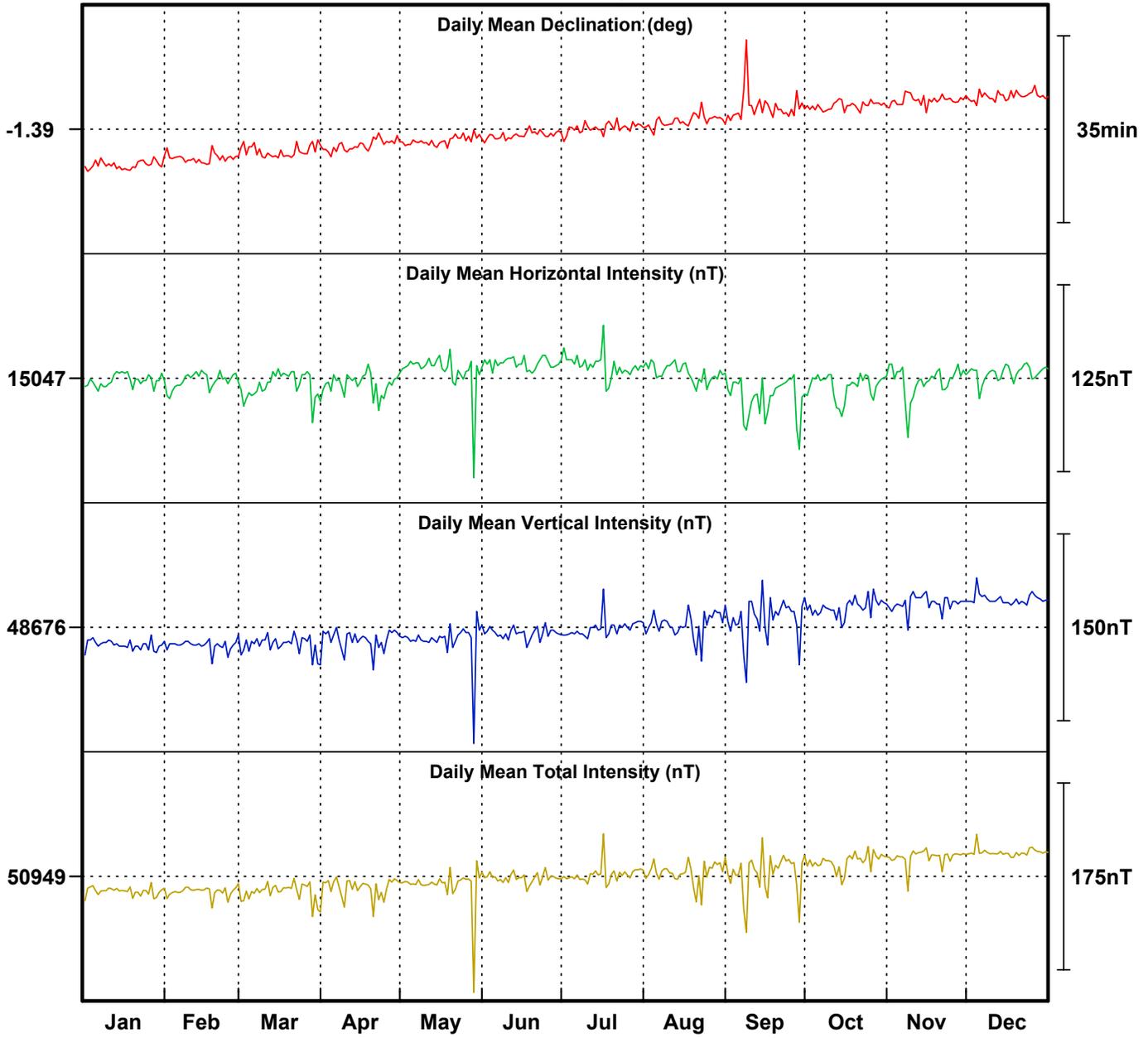
# Lerwick Observatory: Horizontal Intensity (nT)



# Lerwick Observatory: Vertical Intensity (nT)



# Lerwick Observatory 2017



### Monthly Mean Values for Lerwick Observatory 2017

Month	<i>D</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>F</i>
January	-1° 29.8′	15045 nT	72° 49.2′	15040 nT	-393 nT	48662 nT	50935 nT
February	-1° 28.5′	15045 nT	72° 49.2′	15040 nT	-387 nT	48662 nT	50935 nT
March	-1° 27.2′	15042 nT	72° 49.4′	15037 nT	-382 nT	48662 nT	50934 nT
April	-1° 26.1′	15043 nT	72° 49.4′	15038 nT	-377 nT	48666 nT	50938 nT
May	-1° 25.3′	15052 nT	72° 48.8′	15047 nT	-373 nT	48666 nT	50941 nT
June	-1° 24.2′	15057 nT	72° 48.6′	15052 nT	-369 nT	48671 nT	50947 nT
July	-1° 22.9′	15055 nT	72° 48.8′	15051 nT	-363 nT	48675 nT	50951 nT
August	-1° 21.5′	15050 nT	72° 49.2′	15046 nT	-357 nT	48679 nT	50952 nT
September	-1° 18.9′	15034 nT	72° 50.3′	15030 nT	-345 nT	48683 nT	50951 nT
October	-1° 18.7′	15042 nT	72° 50.0′	15038 nT	-344 nT	48692 nT	50963 nT
November	-1° 17.7′	15045 nT	72° 49.9′	15041 nT	-340 nT	48696 nT	50967 nT
December	-1° 16.9′	15050 nT	72° 49.6′	15046 nT	-337 nT	48699 nT	50971 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)
04-12-17	16 13	SSC*	B	13.2	1.76	4.6

#### 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			
None						

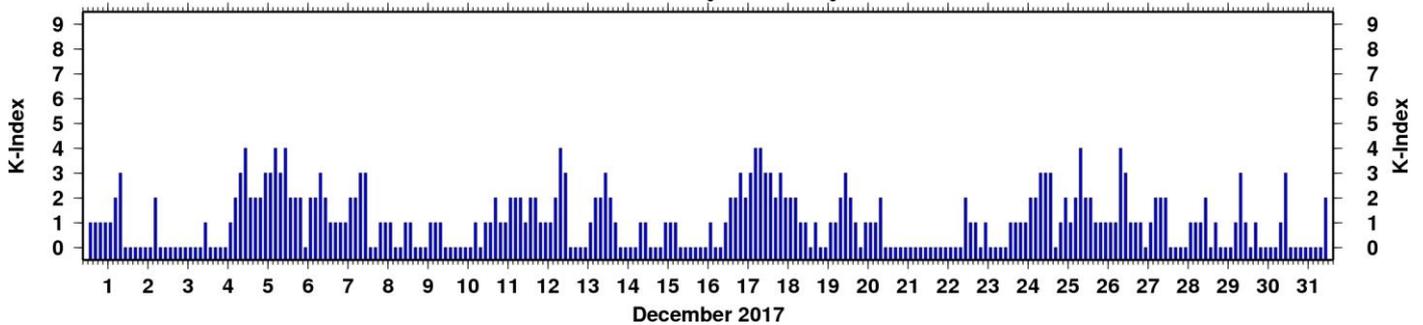
#### Note:

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	1	1	1	1	2	3	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4
5	2	2	2	3	3	4	3	4
6	2	2	2	0	2	2	3	2
7	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3
8	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
9	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
11	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
12	2	2	1	1	1	2	4	3
13	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	3
14	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
15	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
16	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
17	2	2	3	2	3	4	4	3
18	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	1
19	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	3
20	2	1	0	1	1	1	2	0
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
23	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
24	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3
25	3	0	1	2	1	2	4	2
26	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	3
27	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	2
28	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
29	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	1
30	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

**Lerwick Observatory 3-hourly K-Indices**



## The *aa* Index

Date	Day	3-hourly <i>aa</i> -indices								<i>Aa<sub>am</sub></i>	<i>Aa<sub>pm</sub></i>	<i>Aa</i>
01-12-17	335	8	16	8	8	12	32	20	8	9.9	18.0	13.9
02-12-17	336	8	2	2	8	8	32	5	5	5.1	12.6	8.9
03-12-17	337	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	8	2.5	3.8	3.1
04-12-17	338	5	5	12	12	24	32	45	45	8.6	36.8	22.7
05-12-17	339	32	24	32	59	102	67	45	45	36.9	64.8	50.8
06-12-17	340	24	32	32	12	32	24	24	24	25.1	26.1	25.6
07-12-17	341	12	8	12	8	45	32	20	20	9.9	29.3	19.6
08-12-17	342	8	12	12	12	16	5	8	8	11.0	9.2	10.1
09-12-17	343	5	5	5	5	16	12	8	5	5.2	10.2	7.7
10-12-17	344	2	5	8	2	8	5	2	12	4.5	6.8	5.7
11-12-17	345	8	24	16	16	32	24	20	16	16.0	23.1	19.5
12-12-17	346	24	16	16	24	12	33	45	20	20.1	27.6	23.8
13-12-17	347	5	5	12	12	12	16	20	20	8.6	16.9	12.8
14-12-17	348	20	8	5	8	8	2	12	12	10.2	8.6	9.4
15-12-17	349	2	2	5	12	12	8	8	12	5.5	9.9	7.7
16-12-17	350	2	5	5	5	12	5	5	24	4.5	11.6	8.0
17-12-17	351	16	24	45	38	46	59	67	45	30.9	54.1	42.5
18-12-17	352	45	32	59	32	32	16	12	8	42.2	17.0	29.6
19-12-17	353	8	8	5	5	12	16	20	20	6.5	16.9	11.7
20-12-17	354	12	12	5	20	5	8	12	2	12.3	6.8	9.6
21-12-17	355	5	5	5	17	12	2	2	2	8.3	4.8	6.5
22-12-17	356	2	2	2	5	5	2	2	12	3.1	5.5	4.3
23-12-17	357	12	12	12	12	8	2	8	8	11.9	6.5	9.2
24-12-17	358	12	16	20	32	32	46	24	24	20.1	31.5	25.8
25-12-17	359	33	8	12	16	12	16	33	16	17.2	19.3	18.3
26-12-17	360	20	16	8	12	12	16	58	37	13.9	30.9	22.4
27-12-17	361	8	16	8	8	20	32	16	24	9.9	23.1	16.5
28-12-17	362	8	5	8	8	16	16	8	12	7.2	13.0	10.1
29-12-17	363	5	5	2	8	12	8	20	8	5.1	11.9	8.5
30-12-17	364	5	5	5	2	5	8	2	20	4.5	8.8	6.6
31-12-17	365	2	2	5	5	5	5	8	20	3.8	9.5	6.7
Monthly Mean Value											15.4	

### 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<sub>am</sub>*, *Aa<sub>pm</sub>* 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

