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DES of a Slingsby Firefly Aircraft: Unsteady Flow Feature Extraction using POD and HODMD

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, Higher-Order Dynamic Mode Decomposition (**HODMD**) has been applied to find the main patterns and frequencies of a transient aerodynamic flow field when an aircraft wing experiences stall. This method has been applied to a computational flow simulation with a turbulence model based on a hybrid RANS/LES (commonly known as Detached-Eddy Simulation [DES]), where a combination of 2D and 3D flow visualization techniques are used to understand the vortex shedding from the main wing and its interaction with the tailplane. Simulation results have been compared to the experimental ones and the results with POD have been compared with the HODMD **analysis**. **The main** advantage of HODMD resides in its identification of the main physical phenomena and the most relevant instabilities that lead the fluid **dynamics**. **New flow control strategies can be defined when the underlying physics and the flow dynamics are known**. Moreover, HODMD **is robust** in noisy and turbulent databases using less data than FFT, which **gives potential** for future flow control applications, focused on improving the **aircraft's** efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Aircraft design is an evolving area and with the availability of advanced numerical techniques such as finite element methods and computational fluid dynamics (CFD), it is now possible to do an initial detailed **design virtually** (Raymer 1999; Okonkwo and Smith 2016; Rizzi et al. 2010). A challenging area of any design is the prediction of aerodynamic coefficients during and beyond aircraft stall (Ciliberti et al. 2017; Lutz et al. 2015; Grote and Radespiel 2006; Teng et al. 2015; Lutz et al. 2016; Teng et al. 2016). More specifically, the pitching moment and lift and drag coefficients have complex characteristics (Phillips 2010), which at high angles of attack may change significantly post-stall, in some cases leading to an autorotation and the development of a spin (Rao and Go 2019; Bennett and Lawson 2018).

The complex nature of the coefficients and the possibility of spin generally lead to a requirement for extensive wind tunnel and flight testing (Hall et al. 2004) to verify the behaviour of the aircraft in a heavy stall (Heinz 2020). Recent developments of advanced numerical methods, such as Detached Eddy Simulation (DES) and unsteady RANS methods (Zhou et al. 2019a; Zhou et al. 2019b), now offer the opportunity to predict these complex aerodynamic behaviours with greater fidelity (Wang and Fu 2017; Casadei et al. 2019; Neves et al. 2020), supplementing the existing experimental data **and providing** design fixes, ahead of the flight testing program.

Where DES-based turbulence modelling **is** widely used in 3D transient simulations, it is necessary to highlight the limitations of Reynolds-Averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) approaches. Several computational studies in the past have experienced a common limitation with RANS solver and turbulence models applied to unsteady flows (Spalart and Allmaras 1997; Nichols 2006; Sinha et al. 1998). The RANS solver produces increased eddy viscosity which causes excessive damping of the unsteadiness of the flow field. Spatially filtered models such as Large-Eddy Simulation (LES) have provided improved results for simulating unsteady flows. LES models, however, are currently limited to low Reynolds numbers

52 because of the computing resources required to resolve the small-scale turbulent structures.
53 LES is not yet, therefore, a feasible tool for the simulation of highly transient 3D flow fields.

54 In recent years, hybrid methods, which behave as a standard RANS model within the
55 attached boundary layer and as an LES Sub-Grid Scale model in the rest of the flow (more
56 commonly known as DES), have been increasingly used to address this problem (Spalart
57 et al. 2006; Menter 1994; Menter and Kuntz 2003). A hybrid RANS/LES model, based on
58 the $k - \omega$ SST formulation (Menter 1994; Menter and Kuntz 2003), was therefore chosen
59 for this research. This type of model improves the turbulent flow predictions in the regions
60 with significant separated flows.

61 **DES Method**

62 As explained above, the DES is essentially a hybrid LES/RANS model, which uses the
63 standard RANS formulation within the attached boundary layers and activates an LES Sub-
64 Grid Scale type model in the rest of the flow, including the separated regions. A typical DES
65 simulation has been known to significantly reduce the computational resources required for
66 the high-Reynolds number wall-bounded flows, where using a full LES modelling would be
67 prohibitively expensive. In the DES formulation, the standard RANS length scale is replaced
68 with a DES length scale defined as follows.

69 The length scale for the RANS turbulence model $k - \omega$ SST, in terms of the turbulence
70 kinetic energy k and the specific dissipation rate ω , can be written as:

$$71 \quad l_{k-\omega} = \frac{k^{1/2}}{\beta^* \omega}, \quad (1)$$

72 For the DES formulation, the length scale in the standard RANS equation is replaced by
73 a DES length scale, \tilde{l} , which is calculated as:

$$74 \quad \tilde{l} = \min(l_{k-\omega}, C_{DES}\Delta), \quad (2)$$

75 and $\Delta = \max(\Delta x, \Delta y, \Delta z)$.

76 Here C_{DES} is a calibrated constant for the DES model (it is equal to 0.61), and Δ is
77 the largest cell dimension in the local grid. The modified length scale, calculated using the
78 relation in eq. 2, ensures a length scale that is the same as the standard RANS length scale
79 near the walls, where $l_{k-\omega} \ll \Delta$ and reduces to the local grid spacing away from the walls,
80 where $l_{k-\omega} \gg \Delta$. The effect of this is to activate a hybrid turbulence model that behaves
81 as a standard RANS model within the attached boundary layers and as an LES Sub-Grid
82 Scale model in the rest of the flow, including the separated regions.

83 **POD and DMD Methods**

84 In addition to the CFD, to simulate transient aerodynamic flow fields, several compu-
85 tational techniques have been developed, which aid in the extraction of flow features and
86 interpretation of complex flow characteristics. The main goal of such methods is to decom-
87 pose the flow as an expansion of hierarchical modes, which describe the main flow dynamics
88 using a reduced basis of modes. Using this information, it is possible to identify the main
89 patterns driving the flow dynamics. These patterns lead the main flow instabilities producing
90 changes in the flow (i.e.: transition from laminar to turbulent flow, drag increasing or drag
91 reduction, heat transfer enhancement, et cetera). The patterns can also be used to construct
92 reduced order models, to reproduce or predict the flow dynamics with a reduced computa-
93 tional cost (in terms of memory and computational time). Two such techniques, which are
94 proving increasingly popular in the complex aerodynamic flow fields, are proper orthogo-
95 nal decomposition (POD) and dynamic mode decomposition (DMD) (Vega and Le Clainche
96 2021; Berkooz et al. 1993). POD and DMD methods have seen application in the anal-
97 ysis of turbulent flow flows (Chen et al. 2012; Hu et al. 2020), or non-linear dynamical
98 systems and poor-quality experimental data (Le Clainche and Vega 2017b; Higham et al.
99 2016; Le Clainche et al. 2017a). These decomposition methods also offer the possibility
100 of flow forecasting in compressible flows (Rona and Brooksbank 2003), or other complex
101 fluid flows (Howard et al. 2017; Gardner et al. 2019). The ability to forecast unsteady
102 flows with POD or DMD may allow incorporation into an advanced flow control system

103 for aerodynamic stall (Frankhouser et al. 2015), or control other aerodynamic phenomena
104 in-flight (Alexander et al. 2016), where POD or DMD methods would allow prediction of
105 the onset of different aerodynamic characteristics. Higher-order dynamic mode decomposi-
106 tion (HODMD) (Le Clainche and Vega 2017a) is an extension of DMD, introduced for the
107 identification of flow patterns in complex turbulent data (Le Clainche et al. 2020) and exper-
108 iments with noisy data (Le Clainche et al. 2017b). The accuracy and validity of the method
109 have been tested in complex and realistic aerodynamic flow fields, identifying the evolution
110 of crossflow instabilities (Le Clainche et al. 2019) and predicting flutter flight test (Mendez
111 et al. 2021) (see more examples in (Vega and Le Clainche 2021)). Furthermore, work has
112 been completed in the identification of the main dynamics of the dynamic stall. In this case,
113 (Mohan et al. 2015) explored the flow structures and frequencies driving the dynamic stall
114 using POD and DMD. Moreover, (Mallik and Raveh 2020) applied these techniques to a
115 NACA 0012 airfoil to study the aerodynamic damping due to light dynamic stall.

116 Previous work by the authors (Neves et al. 2020), has demonstrated how a DES model
117 can correctly predict the aerodynamic behaviour in a heavy stall. In that initial work,
118 basic validation measurements were used to check the DES model, by observing the buffet
119 behaviour during the stall. Initial observations from the DES model showed an extensive
120 unsteady wake, with evidence of a wake-tailplane interaction.

121 In this paper, one of the key aims is to use 3D flow visualisation techniques to extract,
122 analyse and interpret the complex vortical structures in the DES data, which are shed from
123 the main wing in stall, and travel downstream to interact with the tailplane. Moreover, POD
124 and HODMD methods are used to assess their application in capturing the distribution of
125 the unsteady energy spectrum and the reconstruction of the unsteady flow snapshots. The
126 other key aim of the present study is to understand and assess the application of data-driven
127 methods (POD and HODMD), in analyzing the energy content of unsteady vortical struc-
128 tures shed from the aircraft wing and control surfaces, and identifying the main frequencies
129 leading the flow dynamics, which can be connected with flow instabilities (Le Clainche et al.

2020).

To meet these aims, a full 3D CFD simulation, using two-equation DES turbulence modelling will be performed and the resulting transient CFD data will be processed using POD and HODMD techniques, to extract dominant frequency modes in the unsteady fluctuations. The frequency characteristics captured will be cross-checked with the 3D vortex shedding identified from the spectral analysis, as well as from the experimental measurements.

NUMERICAL SIMULATIONS

CFD Modelling

Previous work by the authors described the DES model based on $k - \omega$ SST formulation, and its application in modelling the unsteady flow field around the Slingsby in the stalled condition (Neves et al. 2020). The following section summarises the main details of the CFD simulation and outlines the additional data extracted from the computed unsteady flow field, to apply the proper orthogonal decomposition (POD) and HODMD methods to the DES wake data.

Pre-processing and Geometrical Setup for the CFD Simulation

A half model of a Slingsby Firefly geometry was meshed using the CFD pre-processor in ANSYS, ANSYS ICEM CFD. A 3D fluid domain in a semi-cylindrical topology was chosen for generating the computation mesh. To ensure that the computed flow field was not influenced by the domain boundaries and based on previous studies (Lawson et al. 2017), the boundaries were set to be at least 10 times the largest characteristic length of the body being studied, with a pressure field domain boundary. A hybrid mesh was generated initially with a top-down approach Octree method, with prism layers representing the boundary layer. The final mesh was computed with the Delaunay method, a bottom-up approach that requires an initial surface mesh, which was set as triangular in this case with prisms and tetrahedra for the fluid volume.

The final computational domain had an overall mesh size of 11.3 million cells, Figure

156 1a shows the aircraft geometry and a cross-sectional view of the mesh generated. Here the
157 isotropic cells are visible around the main wing and extend a considerable distance down-
158 stream to cover the aircraft tailplane. These cells ensure the DES model can be activated in
159 this region. For the prism layers in the mesh, an initial height and total height were set so
160 that the three regions of the turbulent boundary layer, namely, the viscous layer, the buffer
161 layer and the log-law region, were adequately modelled. To achieve this, the prism layers
162 were designed to contain a cell inflation layer of $y^+ < 1$ to $y^+ = 1000$. Since in this work
163 the region of interest is the wing's wake where the vortex shedding occurs, the grid cells
164 behind the main wing were maintained close to isotropic volumes with a minimum amount
165 of cell stretching so that an LES-type length scale is invoked in this region. All the solid
166 surfaces were treated as adiabatic walls with a no-slip condition. For the solution, an implicit
167 density-based solver was run using a $k - \omega$ SST turbulence model, with the DES solution
168 initialised from a RANS solution with a convergence of 10^{-4} for globally scaled residuals.
169 The DES solution was run with a time step of 6.7×10^{-4} s and 20 iterations per time step.

170 The spatial discretization used in the simulations was **finite volume method** (default op-
171 tion for compressible flow in Fluent), with a second-order central differencing applied to the
172 modified turbulent viscosity and a second-order implicit scheme was adopted for the tempo-
173 ral discretization. The density-based solver option was chosen to ensure a fully compressible
174 solution and a constant time step of 6.7×10^{-4} s was maintained for the unsteady simulation
175 (a constant time step is essential for the time consistency of the resolved unsteady struc-
176 tures especially in DES simulations). **The time step size for the simulation was setted after**
177 **considering the smallest shedding frequency of interest in this case, and also in agreement**
178 **with the literature of Spalart on DES modelling** (Spalart 2001). Furthermore, each transient
179 solution at each time step was resolved by applying 20 subiterations. The simulations were
180 run initially for a total of 8000 **time steps** (**stable** unsteady flow **characteristics were** achieved
181 by this time) **for** fully resolved unsteady structures. Then the unsteady pressure monitors
182 were activated and the flow simulations were run for further 8500 **time steps**, to study the

183 spectral contents of the pressure signals at various locations. Further details on the mesh
184 generation and the CFD setup can be found in (Neves et al. 2020).

185 FLIGHT TEST DATA

186 This section summarises previous flight test work by the authors (Neves et al. 2020)
187 which was taken from a *T67M260* Slingsby Firefly light aircraft and used to validate the
188 DES model. The flight tests were designed to aerodynamically stall the aircraft, whilst
189 accelerometer, video and surface flow data were recorded. Additional ground tests were also
190 completed to establish resonant structural modes of the tailplane structure. The latter work
191 was completed, as videos taken during the flight indicated a strong interaction of the wing
192 wake with the tailplane structure. This video data and the data processing methods used to
193 measure the tailplane behaviour in the stall will be the subject of a separate paper.

194 An example of normal axes Pixhawk4 accelerometer and spectra data at $250Hz$, taken
195 from a stall sequence, are shown in Figure 2. The sequence is timed from the initiation of
196 the Pixhawk4 unit and significant stages are indicated in the sequence, as confirmed from
197 accompanying video data in the flight. In the first stage of the sequence, shown in Figure 2a,
198 the engine idle frequency of $1050rpm$ ($17.5Hz$) dominates the spectra. Around $1.5s$ later, the
199 aircraft is stalled and the dominant frequencies switch from the engine to the aerodynamic
200 and structural interactions, indicated in Figure 2b, where the tailplane structural natural
201 frequencies are **excited at** $9.4Hz$ and $40.5Hz$. In this case, the DES model was predicting
202 aerodynamic wake shedding frequencies close to the lower frequency of the tailplane structure
203 (Neves et al. 2020), as confirmed by the video footage of the tail. In the last two stages of
204 the sequence, a large change and reduction in acceleration can be seen which coincides with
205 the ‘wing drop’ in **a heavy stall**. This phenomenon is the initial stage of a wing autorotation.
206 **However, in the final stage, the pilot has prevented this from occurring** and has started
207 the recovery from the stall to normal flight, where engine power has now been added, as
208 evidenced by **the return of** the dominant frequency of the engine in the spectra (see Figure
209 2c), as also seen in the first stage in Figure 2a.

METHODOLOGY

This section introduces the two data-driven techniques to analyse the data obtained in the numerical simulations. We use Proper Orthogonal Decomposition (POD) and Higher-Order Dynamic Mode Decomposition (HODMD), which are techniques that provide complementary information. HODMD can find the main dynamics of the system while POD identify modes based on the kinetic energy. Each POD mode is associated to multiple frequencies, while each DMD mode oscillate with a single frequency. For simplicity, the data are organized in matrix form. Let

$$\mathbf{P} = [\mathbf{p}_1, \mathbf{p}_2, \mathbf{p}_3, \dots, \mathbf{p}_K], \quad (3)$$

be a matrix of K snapshots, where \mathbf{p}_i represents the pressure field in the flow or the velocity vector components (or the two of them, concatenated in rows). In this article, the first methodology only uses the pressure field, where each column is a vector of length M , formed by the pressure field from each snapshot, where M is the number of grid points forming the computational mesh. In the data analysed in this article $M < K$, hence the rank of \mathbf{P} is $N \leq K$. In the other methodology presented, both the pressure and velocity fields are concatenated in rows, where each column is a vector of length $4M$ (the pressure field and the three velocity components). The summary of the steps implemented on the methodology can be found in Figure 3.

Proper Orthogonal Decomposition

Proper Orthogonal Decomposition (POD) is a technique used to decompose a random vector or scalar field into a set of deterministic functions or modes. Its origin can be traced to the field of turbulence, when it was first introduced by Lumley (Lumley 1967). The decomposed functions of the POD modes contain valuable information on the characteristics of the unsteady flows. In particular, the POD is used to identify the coherent structures in turbulent flows, which are generally difficult to define and observe.

235 The POD method involves decomposing the original vector or scalar field into a sum of
 236 weighted basis functions, and the functions are computed from the original flow field data,
 237 more specifically, from the fluctuating flow field. The formation of the basis functions is **from**
 238 statistical correlation and contains normalized basis functions, which are orthogonal among
 239 them. Here, only the mathematical background relevant to the main POD concept and the
 240 approach used to reconstruct the snapshot of the flow field are given. **A** more comprehensive
 241 coverage on the method can be found in the literature (Chatterjee 2000; Sirovich 1987;
 242 Cordier and Bergmann 2008).

243 As an illustration, the POD approach of analysing a known pressure history is **presented**.
 244 The main goal is to construct a set of time-independent POD bases that maximise the L2
 245 norm representing the pressure field in the flow. Based on the snapshot matrix eq.3, a
 246 correlation matrix \mathbf{C} can then be formed by,

$$247 \quad \mathbf{C} = \tilde{\mathbf{P}}^T \tilde{\mathbf{P}}, \quad (4)$$

248 where $\tilde{\mathbf{P}}$ is obtained by recasting the matrix \mathbf{P} to give a zero mean value, i.e.,

$$249 \quad \tilde{\mathbf{P}} = [\mathbf{p}_1 - \bar{\mathbf{p}}, \mathbf{p}_2 - \bar{\mathbf{p}}, \mathbf{p}_3 - \bar{\mathbf{p}}, \dots, \mathbf{p}_K - \bar{\mathbf{p}}], \quad (5)$$

250 where $\bar{\mathbf{p}} = (\sum_{i=1}^K \mathbf{p}_i) / K$. It should be noted that these snapshots do not necessarily
 251 need to be equidistant in time **for proper** performance of this technique. A singular value
 252 decomposition rearranges \mathbf{C} in the following matrix product:

$$253 \quad \mathbf{C} = \mathbf{V} \mathbf{\Lambda} \mathbf{V}^T, \quad (6)$$

254 where the diagonal matrix $\mathbf{\Lambda}$ in eq.6 contains the eigenvalues $[\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \lambda_3, \dots, \lambda_N]$ of \mathbf{C} ,
 255 \mathbf{V} is the matrix of the associated eigenvectors, which are connected to the POD modes
 256 (organized in columns) as presented below, and the eigenvalues, $\lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \lambda_3 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_N$,
 257 represent the energy content associated to each POD mode. **Thus**, the POD modes are

258 ordered from the most energetic to the smallest energy content.

259 A proper orthogonal decomposition basis function, $\Phi = [\phi_1, \phi_2, \phi_3, \dots, \phi_N]$ is then
 260 described as,

$$261 \quad \Phi = \tilde{\mathbf{P}}\mathbf{V}. \quad (7)$$

262 A matrix containing the POD coefficients, \mathbf{A} , can then be formed as $\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{C}\mathbf{V}$, where
 263 each column of this matrix contains the POD coefficients α_{ik} , where the subscript k denotes
 264 the k -th POD mode and subscript i denotes the i -th snapshot coefficient of POD mode k .
 265 Each snapshot i can then be reconstructed as,

$$266 \quad \hat{\mathbf{p}}_i = \bar{\mathbf{p}} + \left(\sum_{k=1}^R \alpha_{ik} \phi_k \right). \quad (8)$$

267 The accuracy is dependent on the number R of POD modes retained in the expansion. An
 268 approximation on the accuracy of the reconstructed snapshots (in $E\%$) may be approximated
 269 by using the first R (with $R \leq N$) POD modes, such that,

$$270 \quad \frac{\sum_{k=1}^R \lambda_k}{\sum_{k=1}^N \lambda_k} > \frac{E}{100}. \quad (9)$$

271 Higher Order Dynamic Mode Decomposition (HODMD)

272 **Higher order Dynamic mode decomposition (HODMD)** decomposes the spatio-temporal
 273 data, organised in snapshots (\mathbf{p}_k is the data collected at time t_k), as a Fourier expansion of
 274 DMD modes:

$$275 \quad \mathbf{p}_k \approx \mathbf{p}_k^{DMD} = \sum_{n=1}^N a_n \mathbf{u}_n e^{(\delta_n + i\omega_n)t_k}, \quad k = 1, \dots, K, \quad (10)$$

276 where \mathbf{u}_n are the DMD modes. These modes are weighted by an amplitude, a_n , they
 277 grow or decay in time by a growth rate, δ_n , and oscillate with a frequency, ω_n . The number
 278 of DMD modes retained, N , can be referred to as the spectral complexity, while K is the

279 temporal dimension, which generally represents the number of snapshots available for the
 280 decomposition. In HODMD, the data in eq.3 are equidistant in time, with time step Δt .

281 The algorithm of HODMD is described in detail in (Le Clainche and Vega 2017a), but it
 282 can be summarised in two main steps: (1) a spatial reduction and (2) the DMD-d algorithm.
 283 Initially, the spatio-temporal data are collected into a snapshot matrix as **outlined** in eq.3.
 284 For the first step, a singular value decomposition (SVD) is applied to reduce the spatial
 285 redundancies, i.e. to remove noise in experimental data or **to retain** the large scale structures
 286 in the case of complex or turbulent **flows**. The number of SVD modes retained **in** HODMD
 287 is defined automatically with a tunable tolerance ε_1 as in eq.9. Then, the DMD-d algorithm
 288 (the second step) is applied. This algorithm uses d time-delayed snapshots, resulting in **a**
 289 **sliding** window process, **similar to** the power spectral density (PSD) analysis. The parameter
 290 d is tunable, as well as a new tolerance ε_2 , which defines the DMD modes retained in the
 291 expansion eq.10. HODMD will be applied to identify the main structures in the non-linear
 292 simulation of the turbulent flow. As presented in multiple examples in the literature (e.g.
 293 see (Vega and Le Clainche 2021)), HODMD is the appropriate tool, as the data analysed are
 294 turbulent and highly complex. With this algorithm, the main frequencies and modes driving
 295 the flow dynamics, which generally represent flow instabilities, will be **identified** (Le Clainche
 296 et al. 2020).

297 In what follows, the accuracy of the approximation of the original database (\mathbf{p}_k^{DMD}),
 298 using the DMD expansion eq. (10), will be measured in terms of the relative root mean
 299 square (RRMS) error as

$$300 \text{ RRMS error} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{k=1}^K \|\mathbf{p}_k^{DMD} - \mathbf{p}_k\|_2^2}{\sum_{k=1}^K \|\mathbf{p}_k\|_2^2}}. \quad (11)$$

301

302 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CFD Simulation Results - Time-Dependent Flow Field

The unsteady aerodynamic flow field data was exported at 507 time instances, where each time-dependent three-dimensional flow field was written at **every time step**. Overall the total time of the exported unsteady data was over 3 times the largest vortex shedding period. The exported data were used to perform **a** detailed analysis on the evolution of unsteady vortical structures, around the main wing and the tailplane.

From these results, the computed flow was found to be highly unsteady and dominated by large-scale vortex shedding from the main wing. The unsteady features with significant vortical fluctuations can clearly be seen in Figure 4, which shows the time development of tubular vortical structures in terms of the iso-surfaces of the second invariant of the velocities (Q-criterion) (Jeong and Hussain 1995).

Two important unsteady features are evident from the figure: firstly, the vortices shed from the main wing are seen to completely cover the tailplane. This feature clearly suggests that **the tailplane's** effectiveness may be affected by the separated flow from the main wing. Although, the tailplane wake only indicates partial tailplane stall, thus retaining longitudinal stability, which is evidenced in flight by the pitching moment **changes** during the stall recovery. Secondly and more importantly, the shed vortices from the outboard of the main wing (region outside the mid-span) are seen to **convect** inward (negative z-direction) as they travel downstream before reaching the tailplane. This is thought to be related to the fuselage interaction on the pressure field, but also due to the wing spanwise **loading** profile. The Slingsby wing outer section has a shorter chord and a NACA 23013 profile when compared to a NACA 23015 at the root. The wing also has “washout” with 3° incidence at the root reducing to 0.33° at the tip. This may be a contributing factor driving the pressure gradient and observed inboard vortex convection. This spanwise convection has also been reported in flight by one of the authors on a similar aircraft when using smoke visualisation (Hoff and Gratton 2013).

The outboard vortical structure (marked by **a** black oval) is seen to meet the vortical

330 structure shed from the wing root at the tailplane. This indicates the presence of a highly
331 three-dimensional flow field characterised by rolling and twisting of vortical structures which
332 impact the aircraft tailplane. A more quantitative study of these variations may be obtained
333 by analysing the frequency content of the pressure time-history data. This has been done by
334 outputting the power spectrum of the time signal. Subsequent POD and HODMD analyses
335 have been carried out in the indicated sample in Figure 1. Figure 5 shows the computed
336 power spectrum for the transient pressure signal in the form of a spectrogram, for the case
337 when the angle of attack was $\alpha = 16^\circ$. The data correspond to sampling points located at
338 the final third of the main wing chord, and its spanwise location is inboard of the midspan.
339 From the figure, the presence of two dominant frequencies, which are close together, is clearly
340 evident. After performing the detailed analysis of the evolution of 3D unsteady structures,
341 the results suggest that the two frequencies in this power spectrum correspond to the shed
342 vortices from the root and tip regions of the main wing, which were observed to be arriving
343 at the tailplane. It is worth mentioning here that the flow visualisation showed that the
344 vortices take approximately the same time to reach the tailplane, although the outboard
345 structure travels a longer distance, resulting in the closely-spaced frequencies. It must also
346 be highlighted that further detailed monitoring is needed near the tailplane, to capture the
347 interaction of the shedding from the inboard & outboard positions of the main wing, to
348 assess whether there is any non-linear coupling between the modes. This non-linear analysis
349 will be the subject of further research.

350 Finally, these two closely-spaced frequencies are close to the first tailplane structural nat-
351 ural frequency found in the experiments (Section **Flight Test Data**). The small difference
352 found between the frequencies calculated numerically and experimentally is thought to be
353 related to the noise generally found in experimental measurements, especially in flight tests,
354 where the level of noise can reach values of up to 30% compared to the real signal (see
355 (Mendez et al. 2021)). This error is quantified with the relative error, when comparing both
356 frequencies: $f_{exp} = 9.4Hz$, $f_{num} = 11Hz$, relative error = 17%. This error is assumed in the

357 remaining of the article.

358 **POD modes of the Transient Flow Field**

359 POD analysis was performed on the transient flow field predicted by the time accurate
360 DES simulation at an x-y plane, which extends from the wing trailing edge to the tailplane
361 leading edge in x, over $y = +1.5\text{m}$ to $y = -0.5\text{m}$, at z position corresponding to 10% of
362 the wing span from the wing root (see Figure 1b, Plane 1). The cumulative sum of the
363 normalized energy of the first 26 modes is plotted in Figure 6. Here, the sum of the energy
364 in the first 9 modes accounts for 99.9% of the energy. This corresponds to $E = 99.9\%$ in
365 eq.9. This analysis has therefore shown that most of the flow ‘energy’ was concentrated in
366 the first few spatial modes, and that a modal approach to the prediction of the transient
367 flow is capable of capturing the key features of the unsteadiness in the flow field.

368 A reconstruction of the pressure snapshots was also performed to test how well the POD
369 modal description of the flow represented the actual flow physics. The transient pressure
370 snapshot was reconstructed using the expansion given by eq.8, and in this particular case
371 only the first 9 modes were used (i.e. $R = 9$ in eq.8). The result is plotted in Figure 7 along
372 with the original snapshot from the CFD. It was found that the accuracy of the reconstructed
373 snapshots improved with increasing the number of POD modes retained, as expected. Al-
374 though there were also regions of discrepancies in the reconstruction (e.g. high-pressure area
375 in the right) in Figure 7 and this may be due to the truncation of higher wavenumber modes
376 in the reconstruction. However, this does not alter the essential characteristics of the flow
377 features, which are preserved well in the POD results. Finally, the temporal coefficients of
378 the three first POD modes have been analysed with a Fast Fourier Transform (FFT). Figure
379 8 shows that the main frequency of the modes analysed is 11.7Hz . This frequency is closely
380 related to one of the two frequencies found in the spectrogram of the CFD simulation.

381 **Higher-Order Dynamic Mode Decomposition Results**

382 In addition to the POD analysis performed in the previous section, further analysis of the
383 unsteady CFD simulation, as outlined in the first section of the results, was performed using

384 HODMD. Specifically, HODMD has been applied to analyse two sets of databases, one set
 385 corresponding to three different $x - y$ (streamwise - normal component) planes, situated at
 386 (spanwise component) $z = 0.89\text{m}$, 1.66m and 5.32m , corresponding to 10% (Plane 1), 25%
 387 (Plane 2) and 98.5% (Plane 3) of the wing span from the wing root (see Figure 1b), with
 388 plane 3 extending in x to the tailplane leading edge tip. ; and another set related to three
 389 $y - z$ planes, situated at $x = 1.52\text{m}$, 2.21m and 3.41m . The three planes are placed such that
 390 the first plane is immediately behind the wing trailing edge, the third plane is immediately
 391 in front of tail plane and the second plane is at a distance $\approx 40\%$ of the distance between
 392 the first and third plane. As in the previous case, each database is also composed of 507
 393 snapshots equidistant in time with $\Delta t = 6.7 \times 10^{-4}\text{s}$.

394 In the following results, HODMD has been specifically calibrated to maximise the accu-
 395 racy of the reconstruction of the snapshot matrix following the DMD expansion presented in
 396 eq.10. To achieve this, the algorithm has been solved by tuning the value of the parameter
 397 $d \in [50, 250]$ and the parameters $\varepsilon_1 = \varepsilon_2$ to 10^{-3} and 10^{-4} providing both, coarse and fine
 398 results, respectively, which are robust (the method retains similar DMD modes using these
 399 calibrations, to represent the flow physics). Figure 9 shows the frequencies as a function
 400 of the amplitudes for the two analysed databases, $x - y$ planes on top, and $y - z$ planes
 401 on the bottom part of the figure, using several calibration parameters. The analysis of the
 402 first case identifies the main frequency f' with $11.78Hz$, its sub-harmonic $f'/2$ with $5.89Hz$,
 403 the interaction between the first two modes, defined with frequency $f' + f'/2$, at $17.67Hz$,
 404 and the first harmonic mode of the main frequency $2f'$ with $23.55Hz$. As well as in the
 405 analysis of the temporal coefficients of the POD modes, a careful examination of this main
 406 frequency revealed that it is related to one of the two frequencies shown on the spectrogram
 407 of Figure 5 (this frequency is near $12Hz$ on the spectrogram and $f' = 11.77Hz$ calculated
 408 with HODMD).

409 The analysis of the second case shows the presence of a new frequency, $f^* = 13.37Hz$.
 410 This new frequency is in line with the results from the spectrogram in Figure 5 and with

411 the experiments, where it showed the presence of two leading closely-spaced frequencies at
412 $f \approx 12Hz$ (mentioned before) and $f \approx 13Hz$. Both the spectrogram analysis above (Figure
413 5) and the HODMD analysis have shown the presence of **this** new frequency, suggesting that
414 the presence of this frequency could be connected to the non-linear coupling of the modes in
415 the flow field. Further research is necessary to confirm this complex unsteady phenomenon.

416 In Figure 10, the main DMD modes extracted from the analysis of the $x - y$ planes are
417 shown. Here it is evident that the y and z velocity components clearly show the downstream
418 movement (along x -axis) of the dominant vortex structures and the streamwise velocity
419 component map also **highlights** this feature, with a positive velocity along the vortex **sheet**.
420 **It is possible to follow the position of the highest intensity area from the y and z velocity**
421 **components along the three different planes studied, showing the convection characteristics**
422 **of the wake flow.** Finally, the leading mode also shows a decrease in the pressure with
423 increasing streamwise position (on the wake behind the wing). Similarly, the results on the
424 first two $x - y$ planes also show similar flow features, as they represent different parts of the
425 wake behind the wing. On the other hand, the last plane shows the movement of the main
426 vortex near the tip of the wing, which is a feature that also appears **in the results** of the
427 shed vortices (Figure 4).

428 Figure 11 compares the streamwise velocity in the leading modes identified by the method
429 (f' , $f'/2$, $f' + f'/2$ and $2f'$). As expected, the sub-harmonic mode shows similar structures
430 as the main mode, but with **a** larger size. This is a common feature, generally identified
431 in periodic **dynamics** (Vega and Le Clainche 2021). **The** same explanation can be extended
432 to the structures of the first harmonic with frequency $2f'$. In this case, the harmonic is
433 similar to the main mode, but the size of the structures is smaller. Finally, the shape of the
434 mode with **frequency** $f' + f'/2$, which represents the modal interaction between the leading
435 frequency mode and its sub-harmonic, is a combination of the aforementioned two modes.

436 **Comparable** to the analysis presented above on the $x - y$ planes, HODMD analysis was
437 also performed on the $y - z$ planes as shown in Figures 12 and 13. The new frequency mode

438 f^* is compared with the leading frequency mode f' , also identified in the previous analysis.
439 The highest intensity of the DMD mode related to this new frequency f^* (Figure 12) is
440 mainly centred around the wingtip vortex, characterising its movement. This vortex rotates
441 on the $y - z$ plane, so the velocity components corresponding to these axes show the rotation
442 in all the planes. The streamwise velocity component mainly shows the movement of the
443 wake behind the wing. Moreover, the pressure field shows two pressure drops, one due to
444 the fuselage interaction (low z -coordinate) and one on the wingtip vortex.

445 Finally, the shape of the leading frequency mode, f' , calculated in this plane (Figure 13),
446 highlights its connection to the main wing vortex shedding frequency. It is important to
447 mention that, in all the analysed results, thus far, it is clear that the unsteady flow field is
448 highly three-dimensional, as the structures appearing on this mode are characterised by the
449 presence of the three components of the velocity. The pressure field only shows the fuselage
450 interaction on this mode. These analyses thus have indicated the presence of a complex
451 non-linear coupling of the multiple modes.

452 Figure 14 shows the reconstruction of the original databases of the streamwise velocity
453 component and pressure field. It can be seen that when using the modes obtained, the
454 algorithm can reconstruct the data. The error obtained in the process has been calculated
455 with eq. 11, obtaining an RRMS error of 2% for the $x - y$ planes and 2.17% for the $y - z$
456 planes.

457 It should be noted that, although the complexity of the flow analysed is very high, the
458 number of patterns describing the flow dynamics is small. The general flow dynamics is
459 represented by a leading frequency mode f' and its non-linear interactions, representing
460 the vortex shedding, modelling the wake behind the wing, and a new mode f^* , which is
461 connected to the wingtip vortex. This information offers the potential to develop reduced-
462 order models describing the flow physics in this complex problem. This will be the topic for
463 future research.

464 CONCLUSIONS

465 This paper has presented a detailed analysis of DES CFD results from the transient flow
466 field of a Slingsby light aircraft in stall conditions. A study of the unsteady flow structures
467 showed the presence of a highly three-dimensional complex flow structure, where the vortices
468 shed from the root and tip regions of the main wing were observed to converge downstream
469 at the fore of the tailplane, and then convect towards the tailplane. Since the vortices
470 travelling from the wing tip cover comparatively longer distances, they were found to travel
471 faster than the root vortices. This characteristic manifested itself as two closely separated
472 shedding frequencies in the unsteady power spectrum. The flow visualisation also showed
473 3D rolling and twisting of the vortical structures as they travelled downstream.

474 Dynamic modelling of the unsteady flow has also been investigated by using POD and
475 HODMD. The POD analysis was applied specifically to the unsteady pressure field as this
476 exerts higher aerodynamic loads on the wing surfaces and is, therefore, of the most relevance
477 for the flow around wings, in stall conditions. The method was used to reconstruct the
478 unsteady pressure snapshot from a weighted addition of POD bases, and the results showed
479 that the reconstruction was capable of retaining all the salient features of the unsteady flow.

480 Additionally, HODMD method was applied to both the velocity and the pressure fields.
481 The method was shown to identify the main flow structures driving the flow dynamics.
482 More specifically, the oscillating frequencies leading the motion of the three-dimensional
483 rolling and twisting of the vortical structures have been successfully identified, highlighting
484 the flow instabilities present in the flow.

485 POD also allows the reconstruction of an unsteady snapshot of the 3D unsteady flow field,
486 which would be important for reconstructing the flow field at any arbitrary time instance.
487 The temporal coefficients of POD also shows the main frequency leading the motion of the
488 flow.

489 Further, the unsteady analysis fidelity offered by HODMD was able to capture the all
490 the important unsteady modes in the flow field. The main dynamics modelling the flow are

491 represented by a mode modelling the vortex shedding in the wake behind the wing and its
492 harmonics and another mode modelling the **wingtip** vortex shedding. This result could be
493 combined in future research with flow control strategies. **Moreover, the** flow physics of the
494 highly complex flow studied **here** can be represented by a reduced number of DMD **modes,**
495 **thus offering the potential** to develop a reduced-order model. **This will be the topic of future**
496 **research by the authors.**

497 DATA AVAILABILITY

498 Codes are available on-line in <https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/z8ks4f5vy5/1>.
499 The data will be shared upon request.

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504 NOTATION

$x - y - z$ = aircraft axes;
 α = angle of attack;
 ρ = air density;
 ν = efficiency;
 ω = engine rotational speed;
 γ = flight path descent angle;
505 AR = wing aspect ratio;
ADC = air data computer;
CFD = computational fluid dynamics;
DES = detached eddy simulation;
EAS = equivalent airspeed;
HODMD = higher-order dynamic mode decomposition;
POD = proper orthogonal decomposition.

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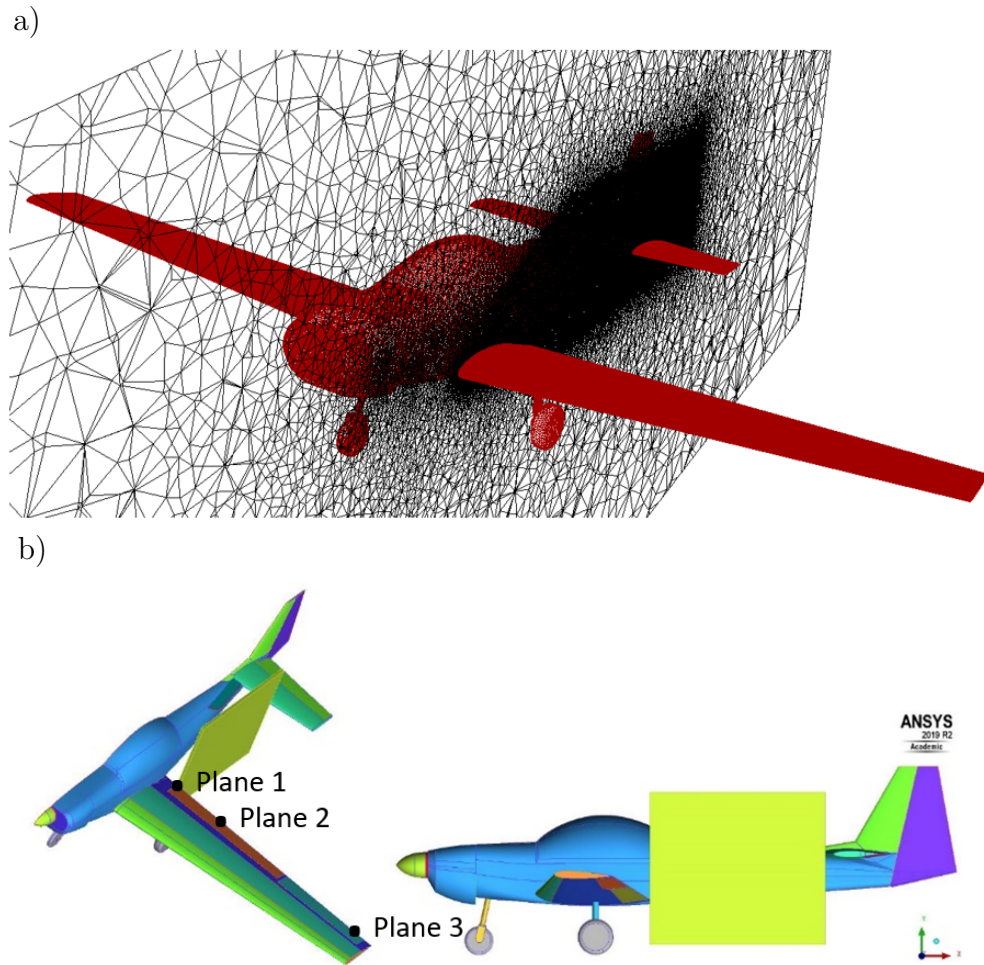


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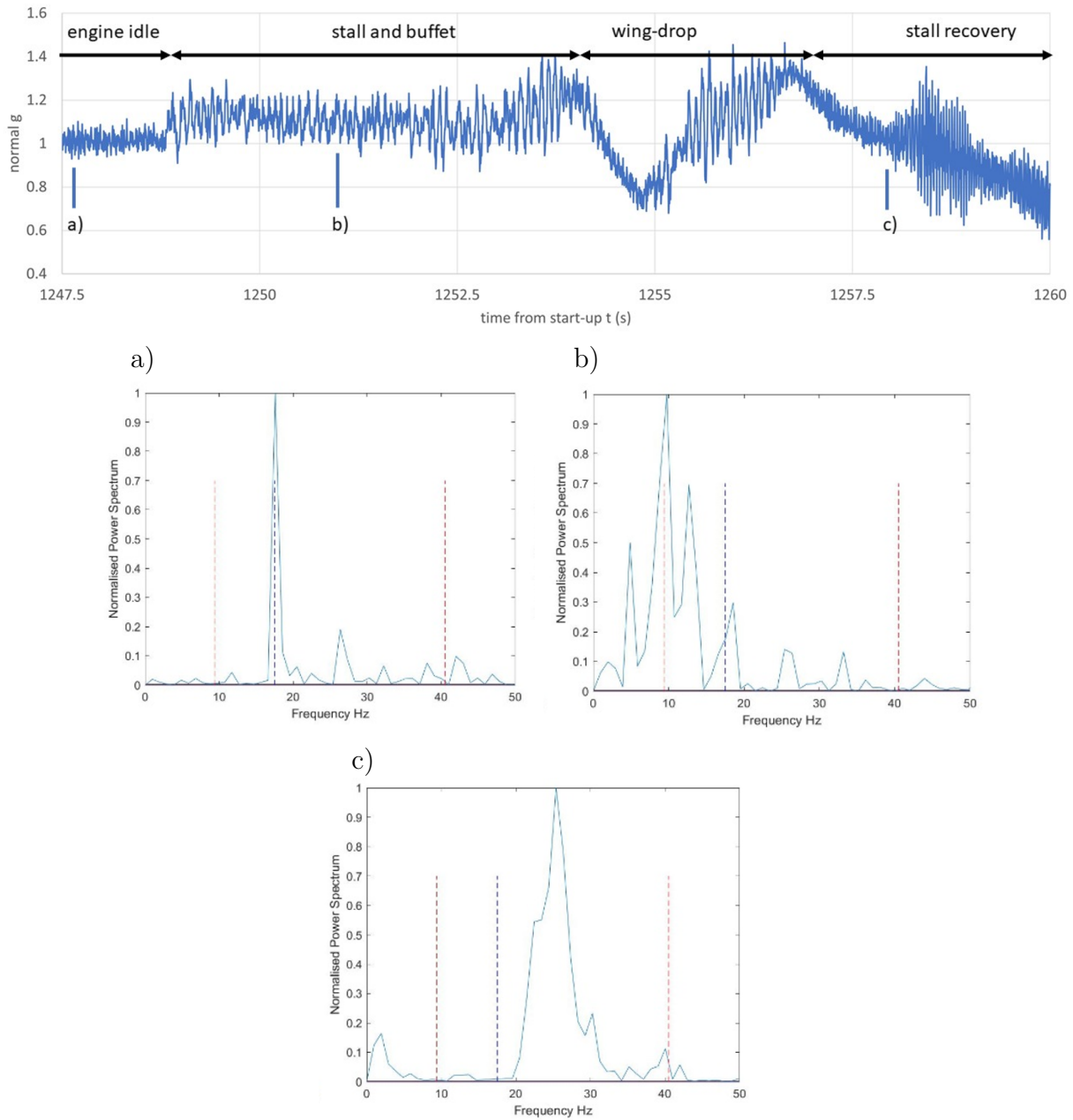


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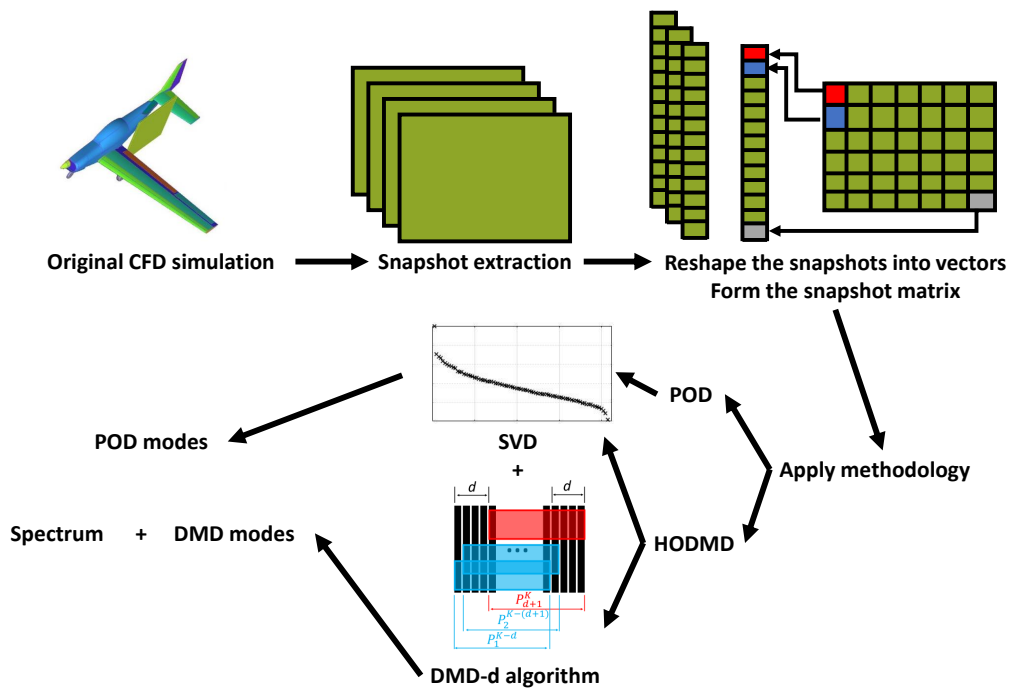


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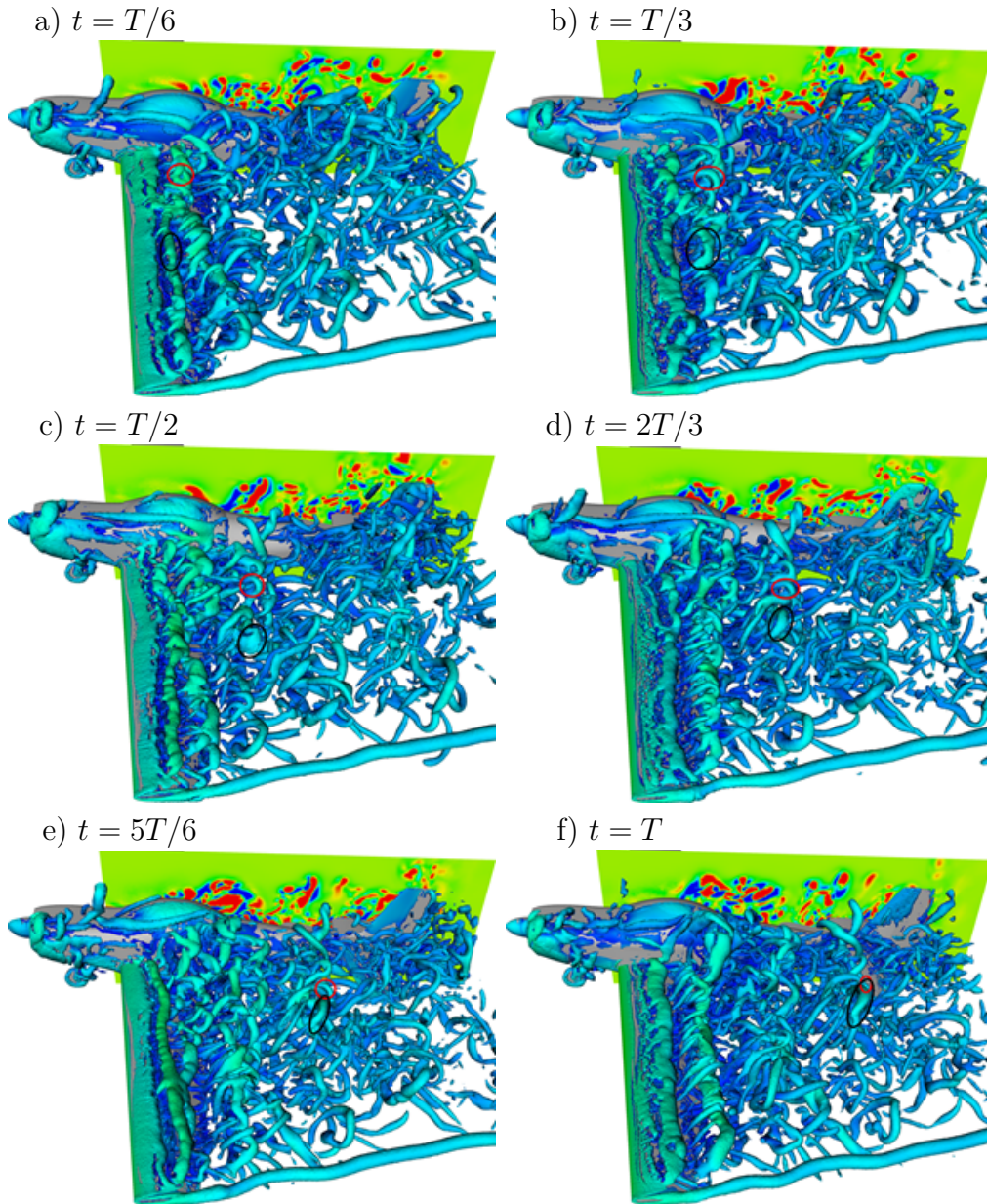


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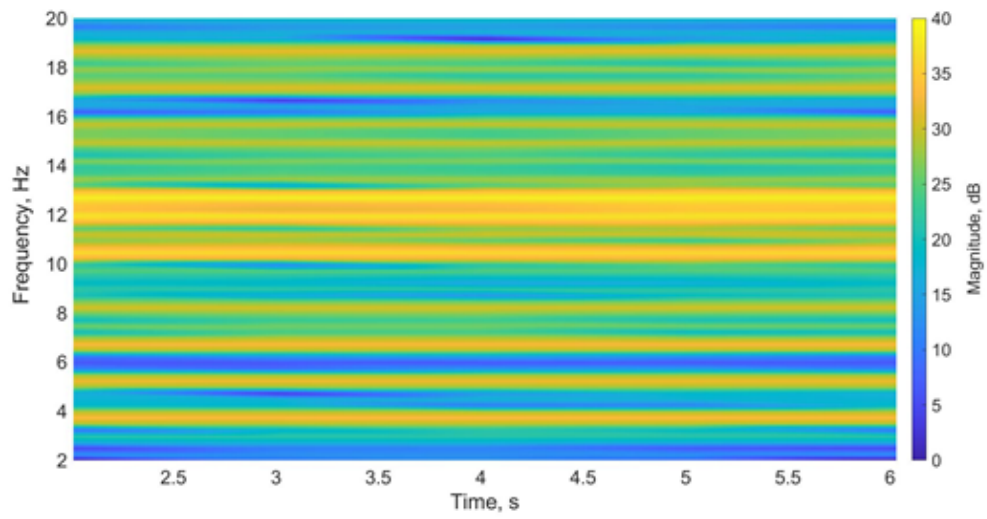


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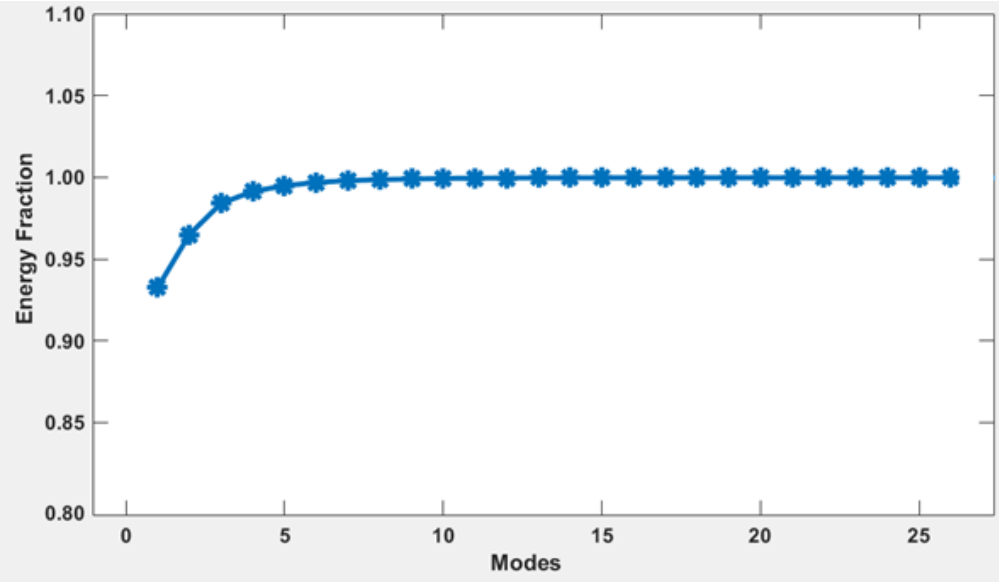


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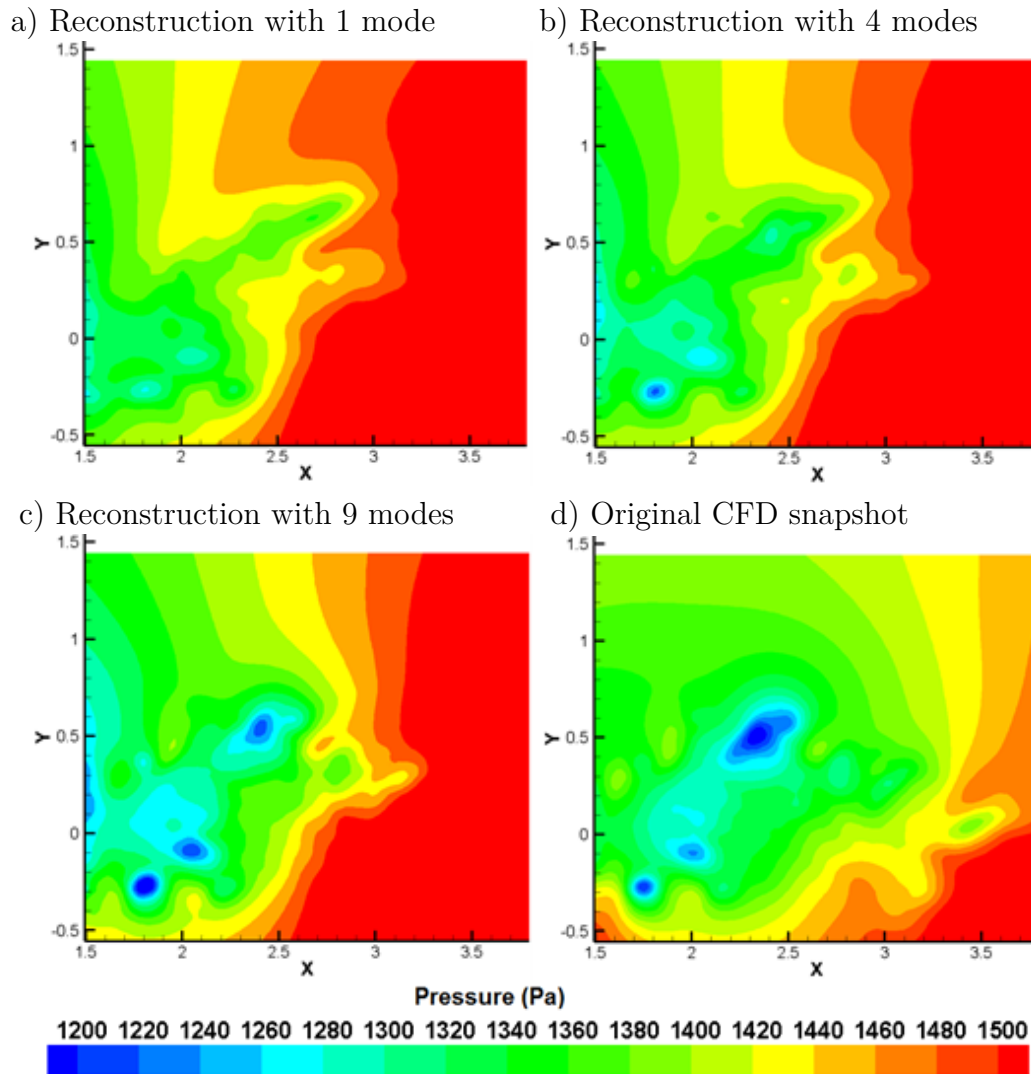


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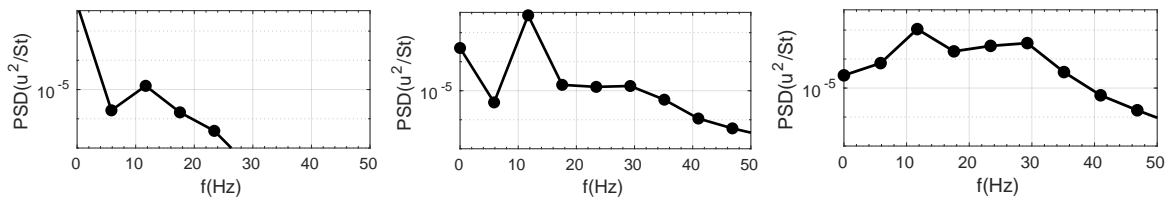


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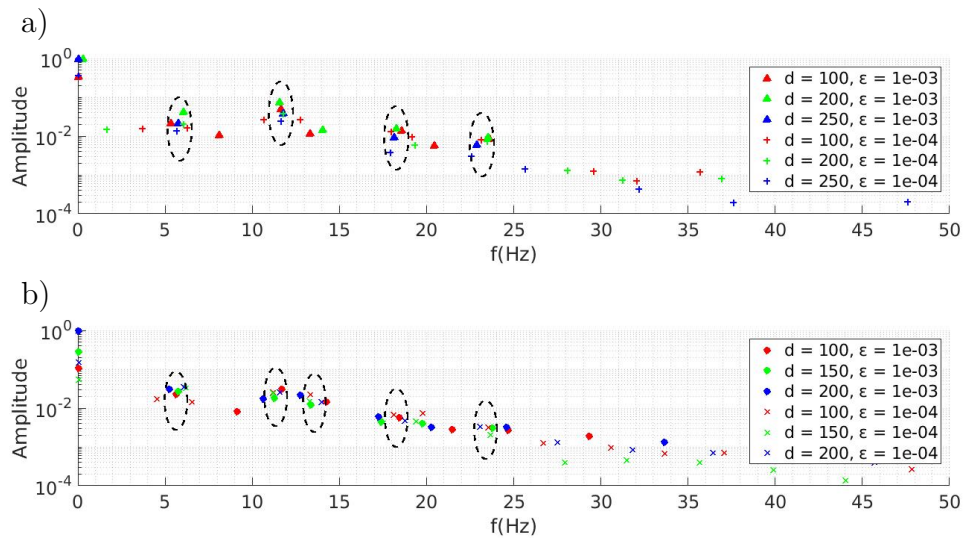


Fig. 9. Frequency vs. amplitudes representing the HODMD modes in the $x - y$ planes (a) and the $y - z$ planes (b) extracted in the wake of the airplane at $z = 0.89, 1.66, 5.32$ for (a) and $x = 1.52, 2.21$ and 3.41 for (b)

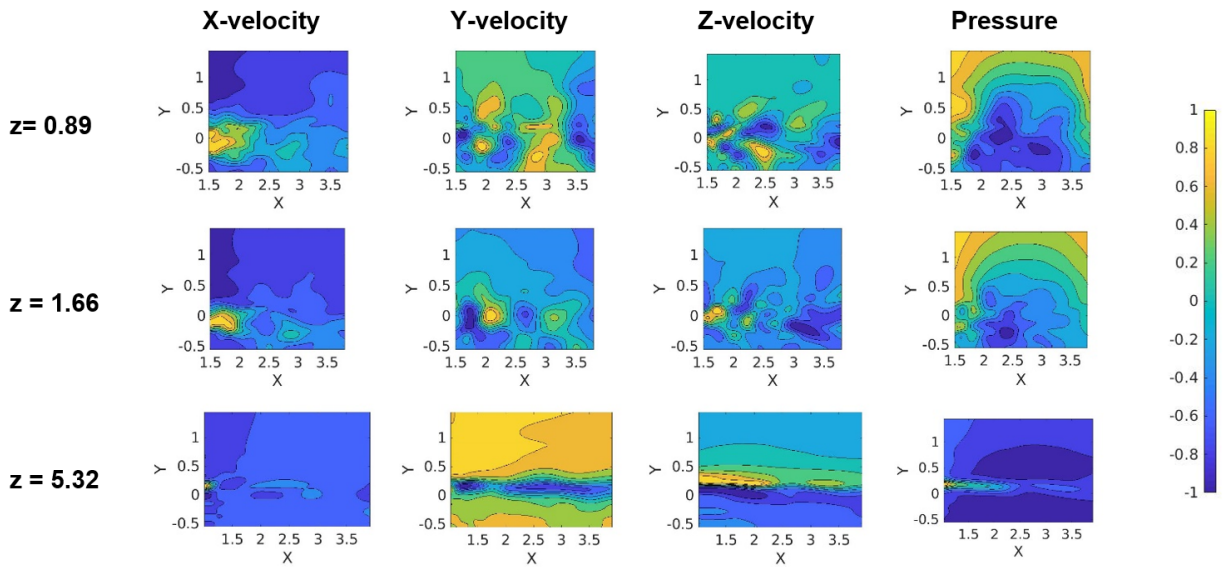


Fig. 10. Real part of the three velocity components and the pressure field of the main DMD mode ($f' = 11.78Hz$) calculated in three $x - y$ planes (for several values of z).

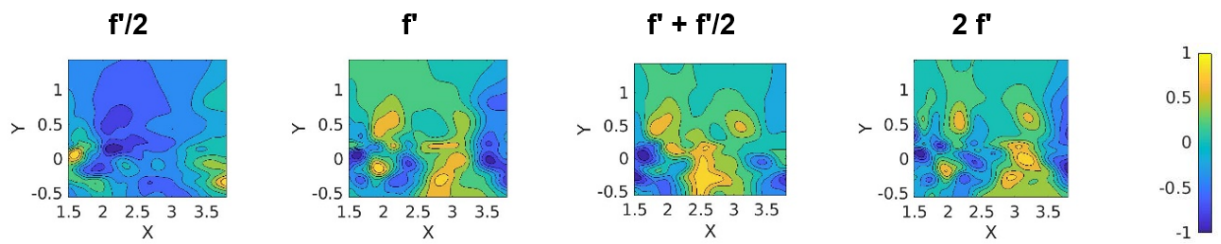


Fig. 11. Real part of the normal (y) velocity component of the most relevant DMD modes. The leading frequency is $f' = 11.78Hz$.

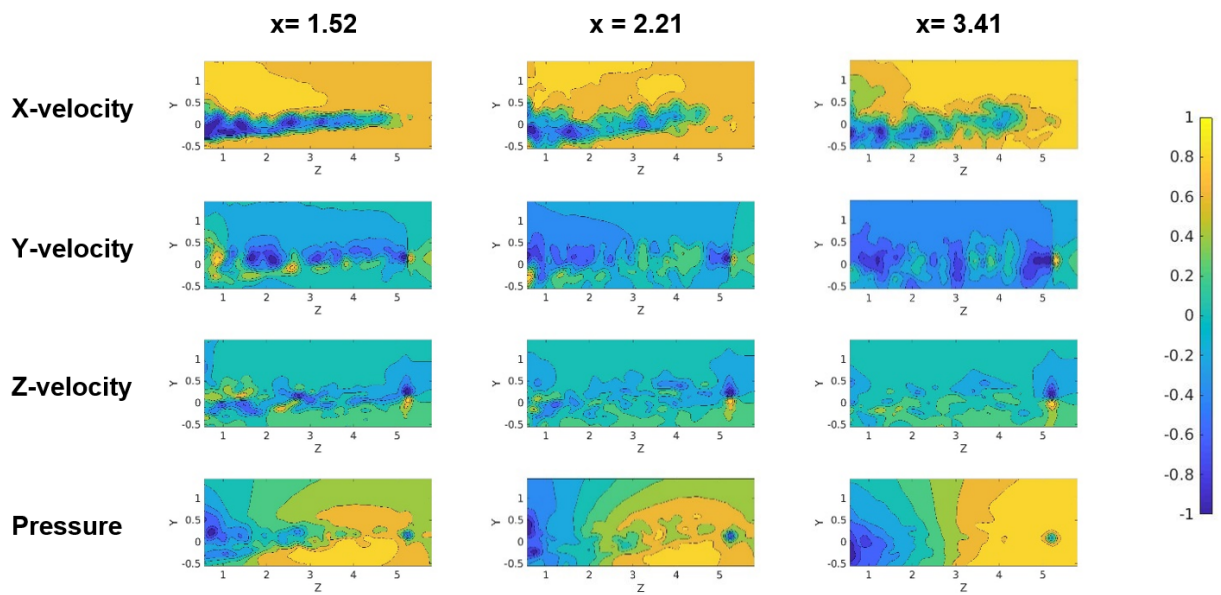


Fig. 12. Real part of the three velocity components and the pressure field of the new-frequency DMD mode ($f^* = 13.37 Hz$) calculated in three $y - z$ planes.

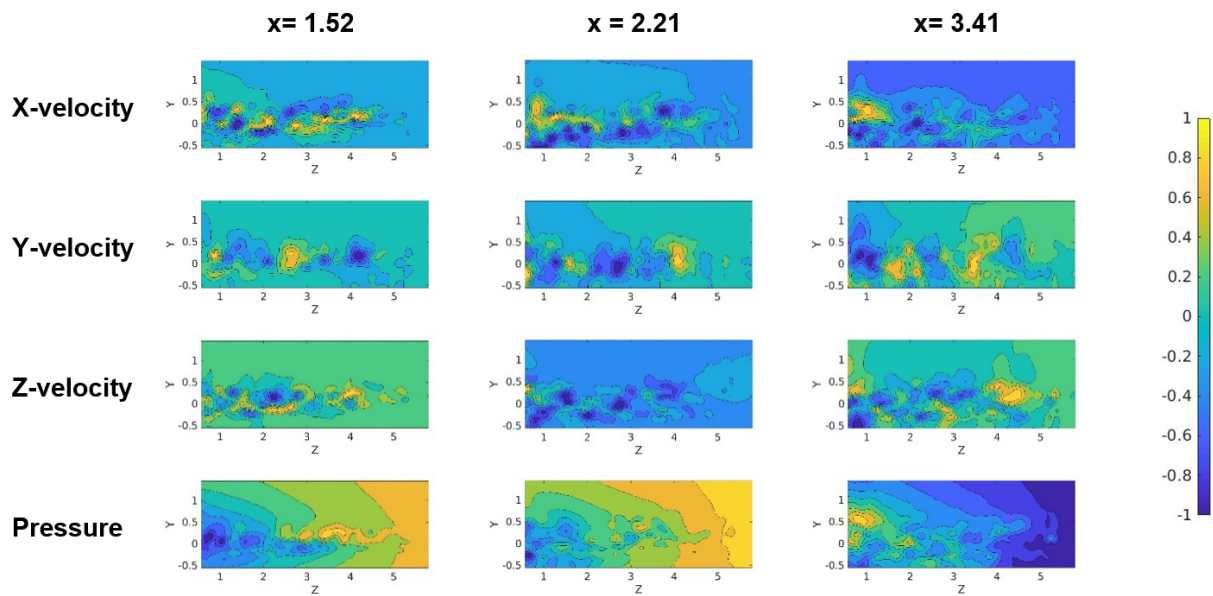


Fig. 13. Same as Figure 12 for the leading frequency mode, $f' = 11.78Hz$.

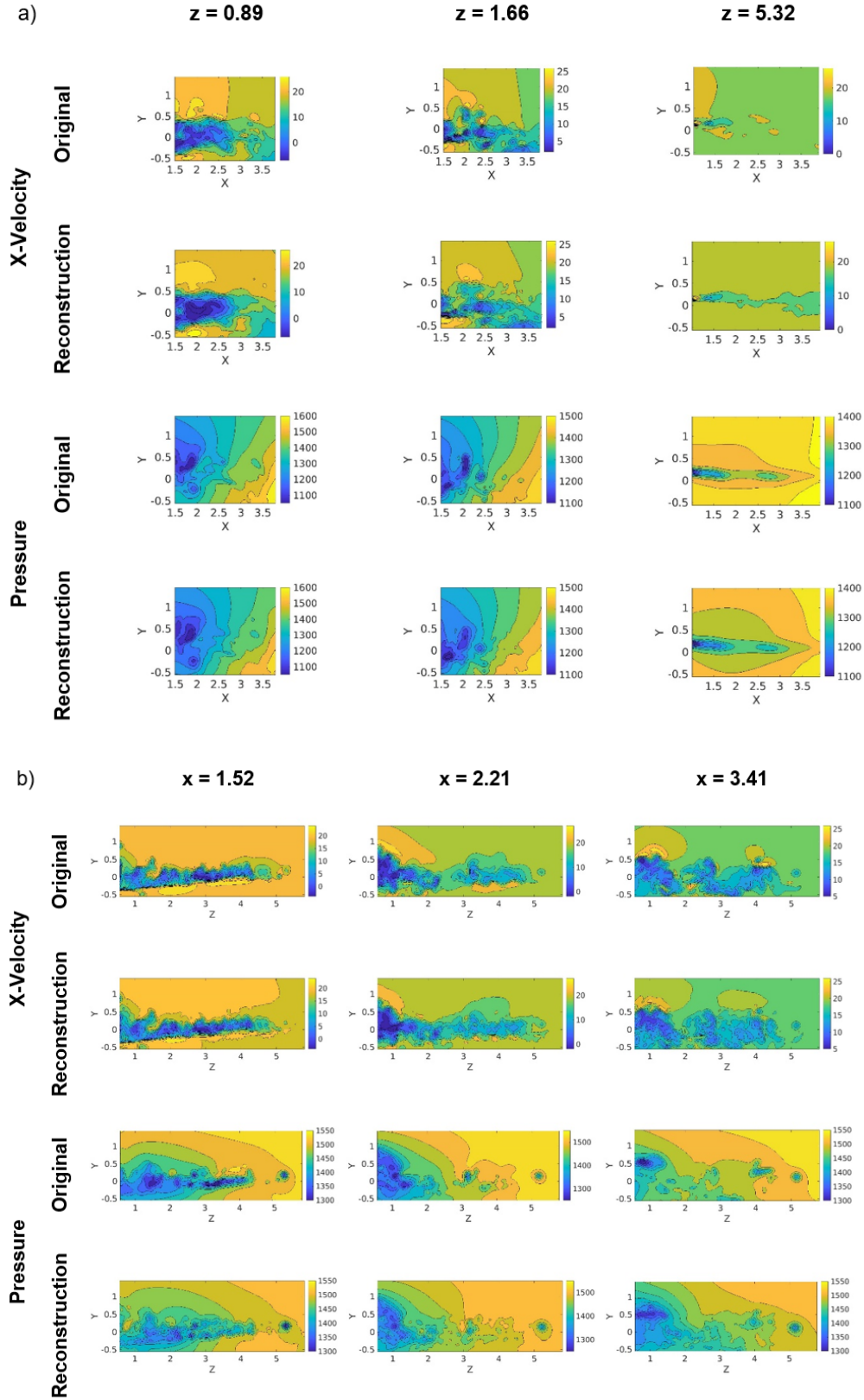


Fig. 14. Representative snapshot of the reconstructed planes after using HODMD for the streamwise velocity component and the pressure field. (a) $x - y$ planes. (b) $y - z$ planes.