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# New evidence for the reawakening of Teide volcano

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## Abstract

Geophysical signals accompanying the reactivation of a volcano after a period of quiescence must be evaluated as potential precursors to impending eruption. Here we report on the reactivation of the central volcanic complex of Tenerife, Spain, in spring 2004 and present gravity change maps constructed by time-lapse microgravity measurements taken between May 2004 and July 2005. The gravity changes indicate that the recent reactivation after almost a century of inactivity was accompanied by a sub-surface mass addition, yet we did not detect widespread surface deformation. We find that the causative source was evolving in space and time and infer fluid migration at depth as the most likely cause for mass increase. Our results demonstrate that, even in the absence of previous baseline data and ground deformation, microgravity measurements early in developing crises provide crucial insight into the dynamic changes beneath a volcano.

## 24 **Introduction**

25  
26 Anomalous geophysical signals at dormant volcanoes, or those undergoing a period of  
27 quiescence, need to be evaluated as potential precursors to reawakening and possible eruption  
28 [White, 1996]. There are several recent examples of volcanic re-activation after long repose  
29 intervals culminating in explosive eruption [Nakada and Fuji, 1993; Robertson et al., 2000], but  
30 non-eruptive behaviour is equally documented [De Natale et al., 1991; Newhall and Dzurisin,  
31 1988]. The dilemma scientists are confronted with is how to assess future behaviour and to  
32 forecast the likelihood of an eruption at a reawakening volcano, when critical geophysical data  
33 from previous activity is missing due to long repose periods. In Spring 2004, almost a century  
34 after the last eruption on the island, a significant increase in the number of seismic events located  
35 inland on the volcanic island of Tenerife (Fig. 1) marked the reawakening of the central volcanic  
36 complex (CVC), the third-highest volcanic complex on Earth rising almost 7000 m from the  
37 surrounding seafloor [García et al., 2006]. The increase in onshore seismicity, including five felt  
38 earthquakes, coincided with both an increase in diffuse emission of carbon dioxide along a zone  
39 known as the Santiago Rift [Pérez et al., 2005] and increased fumarolic activity at the summit of  
40 the 3718 m high Teide volcano [García et al., 2006].

41

## 42 **Integrated geodetic network on Tenerife**

43 As a reaction to the developing crises, we installed the first joint ground  
44 deformation/microgravity network on the island in early May 2004, two weeks after the start of  
45 increased seismicity. The network consists of 14 benchmarks, which were positioned to provide  
46 coverage of a rather large area ( $> 500 \text{ km}^2$ ) of the CVC, including the Pico Viejo-Pico Teide  
47 complex (PV—PT), the Las Cañadas caldera (LCC) as well as the Santiago Rift (SR) (Figs. 1 and

48 2). The network was designed to meet rapid response requirements, i.e. the network can be fully  
49 occupied to a precision of less than 0.01 mGals of individual gravity readings and less than 0.04  
50 m in positioning errors within 6 working days despite the frequently rugged terrain. The first  
51 reoccupation of the network was performed in July 2004, followed by campaigns in April 2005  
52 and July 2005. Benchmark locations and cumulative ground deformation and gravity changes  
53 between May 2004 and July 2005 are given in Tables 1-4 in the supporting online material. All  
54 results are given with respect to a reference located south of the LCC (benchmark LAJA). Within  
55 the average precision of benchmark elevation measurements ( $\pm 0.03$  m), using two dual-  
56 frequency GPS receivers during each campaign, we did not observe widespread ground  
57 deformation. However, between May 2004 and July 2005, four benchmarks, two located in the  
58 eastern sector of the LCC (MAJU and RAJA), one marking the northern-most end of the network  
59 and also the lowest elevation (766 m; CLV1) and finally a benchmark located on an isolated rock  
60 spur on the western LCC rim (UCAN, supporting online material) did show ground uplift above  
61 measurement precision. Residual gravity changes (corrected for the theoretical Free-Air effect),  
62 observed during the May-July 2004, May 2004-April 2005 and May 2004-July 2005 periods are  
63 listed in the supporting online material and shown in Figure 2.

64

## 65 **Results**

66 The observed gravity changes do not fit a simple symmetrical pattern as observed, for example,  
67 during caldera unrest at the Campi Flegrei [Gottsmann *et al.*, 2003] or at Long Valley [Battaglia  
68 *et al.*, 2003]. The spatial distribution of gravity changes across the area under investigation is  
69 asymmetrical. The smallest gravity changes were observed in the central and eastern depression  
70 of the LCC, where cumulative changes over the 14-month period were only slightly higher than

71 the precision level ( $\pm 0.015$  mGal on average; 1 mGal=  $10\mu\text{m/s}^2$ ). A marked positive gravity  
72 anomaly, with a maximum amplitude of around 0.04 mGal, developed in the North-West of the  
73 covered area between May and July 2004, while a negative anomaly was found to the east,  
74 centered on station MIRA. The gravity increase noted between the first two campaigns  
75 (benchmarks C774 and CLV1) was followed by a decrease sometime between July 2004 and  
76 April 2005. During the same period, a N-S trending positive anomaly appears north-west of the  
77 PV-PT summit area between, reaching the western part of the LCC (Figs. 2a-b). In addition,  
78 gravity increased significantly along the northern slopes of Pico Teide, including benchmarks  
79 TORR and FUEN located close to the La Orotava valley between July 2004 and April 2005,  
80 adding to the impression of a spatio-temporal evolution of the causative source. It is interesting to  
81 note that on 5 December 2004 a new fissure with fumarole emission appeared in the Orotava  
82 valley [[www.iter.es](http://www.iter.es)]. A gas plume emanating from the summit fumaroles of Pico Teide was  
83 particularly noticeable during October 2004 [*García et al.*, 2006], between surveys 2 and 3. In  
84 summary, significant gravity changes occurred mainly across the northern flanks of the PV-PT  
85 and along a ca. 6 km wide zone along the western side of the volcanic complex into the  
86 westernmost parts of the LCC between May 2004 and July 2005 (Fig. 2c). During the same time,  
87 a marked gravity decrease was recorded at the intersection of the Orotava Valley (OV) and the  
88 LCC (Fig. 2c).

89 Except for two benchmarks (MAJU and RAJA) where observed gravity changes can be explained  
90 by free-air effects (gravity changes due to elevation changes), mass/density changes in the sub-  
91 surface appear to cause the major part of the perturbation of the gravity field.

92

93 **The effect of water table fluctuations**

94 Data from two drill holes, located in the eastern half of the LCC (Fig. 2d), provide information on  
95 water table fluctuations during the period of interest. A drop of ca. 5 cm/month between surveys  
96 1 and 4 was recorded in one drill hole located close to benchmarks 3RDB and MAJU, which is  
97 similar to the average monthly drop in water level due anthropogenic extraction over the past 3  
98 years [Farrujia *et al.*, 2004]. Water levels decreased by 22 cm/month on average between  
99 February 2000 and January 2004 in a drill hole located close to benchmark MIRA. The gravity  
100 decrease of 0.025 mGal recorded between May 2004 and July 2005 at benchmark MIRA, located  
101 at the intersection of the Las Cañadas caldera and the Orotava valley, can be explained by a net  
102 water table decrease ( $\delta h$ ) of 3 m, consistent with this earlier trend, assuming a permeable rock  
103 void space ( $\phi$ ) of 20 % and a water density ( $\rho$ ) of 1000kg/m<sup>3</sup> ( $\Delta g_w = 2\pi G \rho \phi \delta h$ ) [Battaglia *et al.*,  
104 2003]. Following the same rationale, gravity changes at 3RDB and MAJU are corrected by -  
105 0.008 mGal to account for the recorded water table fall in the nearby borehole. Hence, any  
106 gravity change observed within the central and eastern parts of the LCC (3RDB, MAJU, RAJA,  
107 MIRA) can be fully attributed to changes in (shallow) groundwater levels and we treat the net  
108 mass change as zero for this area in the computation of overall mass changes in the following  
109 sections (Fig. 2d).

110 Outside the LCC, comprehensive monitoring data on groundwater level is lacking and correction  
111 for groundwater level variations is difficult. Groundwater is collected and extracted along several  
112 hundred (sub)horizontal tunnels (*galerias*) protruding into the upper slopes of the CVC [Marrero  
113 *et al.*, 2005]. Since 1925, a decrease of several hundred meters in the groundwater level has been  
114 noted for the area covered by the northern and western slopes of the CVC  
115 [<http://www.aguastenerife.org/>]. We therefore consider it very unlikely that the gravity increase

116 noted in the north and west of the CVC is related to an increase in the groundwater table, and  
117 hence infer deeper processes to be the most probable cause of gravity change in this region.

118

### 119 **Interpretation**

120 The coincidence of earthquake epicenter concentration (a mixture of volcano-tectonic events and  
121 regional earthquakes with pure volcanic events such as tremors and long-period signals) in the  
122 area of gravity increase over the same time period (Fig. 2d), suggests that both signals are related  
123 to the same or linked phenomena. Unfortunately, precise data on earthquake hypocentres are not  
124 available, but a semi-qualitative analysis suggests a depth of several kilometres [R. *Ortiz*,  
125 personal communication]. The spatial coverage of the benchmarks does not allow the wavelength  
126 of the May 04 – July 05 gravity anomaly to be assessed precisely. In particular, the lower limit of  
127 the wavelength along the northern slopes of the PV-PT complex cannot be unambiguously  
128 retrieved on the basis of the available data. The maximum wavelength of the gravity anomaly is  
129 on the order of 17 km if defined by both observed and interpolated (kriging) data (Fig. 2d) on the  
130 northern slopes of the PV-PT complex, which implies a maximum source depth of between 2.5 to  
131 5.2 km below the surface, assuming simple axisymmetrical source geometries [*Telford et al.*,  
132 1990]. This would place the source to within the depth of the shallow magma reservoirs beneath  
133 the PV-PT complex believed to host chemically evolved magma [*Ablay et al.*, 1998]. However,  
134 since the positive anomaly is only defined by 4 benchmarks (CLV1, C774, CRUC and TORR) its  
135 actual wavelength could be smaller than 17 km and the source depth could be shallower than  
136 inferred above. Furthermore, ambiguities remain on the actual amplitude of the anomaly, which  
137 is defined only by data observed at CRUC.

138 The continuation of the positive anomaly in the western part of the LCC (Fig. 2c) shows a shorter  
139 wavelength indicating a shallow (few km deep) source.

140 Due to the spatial separation of benchmarks an assessment of sub-surface mass addition is greatly  
141 biased on the selection of the area affected by gravity increases. We define a maximum area by a  
142 kriging-based interpolation of the gravity changes between May 2004 and July 2005 in the  
143 northern and western parts of the CVC. A Gaussian Quadrature integration over this area gives a  
144 mass addition of  $1.1 \cdot 10^{11}$  kg, with lower and upper 95% confidence bounds of  $8.4 \cdot 10^9$  kg and  
145  $2.0 \cdot 10^{11}$  kg, respectively. These values should be regarded as maximum values.

146 In theory, subsurface volume changes derived from ground deformation data can be correlated to  
147 sub-surface mass changes from gravity data to infer the density of the causative source. However,  
148 in the absence of significant surface deformation, the source density cannot be determined  
149 directly and the nature of the source remains ambiguous. However, three scenarios are worth  
150 considering when assessing causative processes for the observed gravity increase: i) arrival of  
151 new magma at depth, ii) migration of hydrothermal fluids and iii) a hybrid of both.

152 Volcanic eruptions of the CVC over the past few centuries were dominantly fed by basic and  
153 intermediate magmas in the form of fissure eruptions along the Santiago Rift [*Ablay and Marti,*  
154 2000], implying shallow dyke emplacement along this NW-SE trending extension zone. The  
155 observed gravity increase between May 2004 and April 2005 (Fig. 2) appears to denote a zone at  
156 a  $45^\circ$  angle to the strike of the rift. The wavelength of the anomaly in the western and central  
157 parts of the LCC (Fig. 2d) is not consistent with shallow dyke emplacement to perhaps within a  
158 few tens or hundred meters depth. There is also no other direct geophysical or geochemical  
159 evidence in support of magma emplacement in the form of a shallow dyke over the 14 month  
160 observation time. However, dyke emplacement at greater depth (a few km below the surface) into



161 the Santiago Rift (with partial contribution to the gravity increases at benchmarks CLAV1, C774  
162 and CRUC), perhaps recharging an existing reservoir, cannot be unambiguously excluded for the  
163 period May-July 2004, coinciding with the peak in the number of earthquakes recorded by the  
164 National Geographic Institute [<http://www.ign.es>]. Dykes along the Santiago Rift are on average  
165 less than 1 m wide. Ground deformation caused by an individual dyke of this size a few km  
166 below the surface would be below the precision of our GPS measurements. Thus, a magma  
167 injection into a conjugated fault system, perhaps at some angle to the Santiago Rift, cannot be  
168 unambiguously ruled out as the trigger for the reawakening of the volcanic complex in May  
169 2004. There is, however, little evidence to support the idea that the mass increase observed  
170 during campaigns 2 and 3 is caused solely by magma movement.

171 An alternative explanation for the observed gravity increase is fluid migration through the CVC.  
172 Volcano-tectonic events detected in the seismic record [*García et al.*, 2006, *Tárraga et al.*, 2006]  
173 may have triggered the release and upward migration of hydrothermal fluids from a deep magma  
174 reservoir. Alternatively, fluid migration may have resulted from (a) the perturbation of an  
175 existing deep hydrothermal reservoir and resultant upward movement of fluids due to magma  
176 injection or (b) from pressurising seawater saturated rocks.

177 Migration of hydrothermal fluids through a permeable medium causes little surface deformation,  
178 but the filling of pore space increases the bulk density of the material resulting in a gravity  
179 increase at the ground surface. To explore this scenario, and as a first order approximation, we  
180 performed a inversion of the gravity change recorded between May 2004 and July 2005 along the  
181 northern and western slopes of the PV-PT complex for a source represented by a N-S striking  
182 infinite cylindrical horizontal body [*Telford et al.*, 1990]. The approximation of an infinite body  
183 is valid as long as the radius of the cylinder is far smaller than its length. The model results

184 depend linearly on density change but non-linearly on both the radius and depth of the body.  
185 Using a global optimization iterative method [*Sen and Stoffa, 1995*] with various initial values for  
186 depth and radius, we find convergence of the inversion results at a depth of  $1990 \pm 120$  m below  
187 the surface using residual gravity data from all benchmarks. While depth is insensitive to the  
188 assumed source density change, the radius scales to the inverse of density. Assuming a volume  
189 fraction of 30% which is fully permeable, filling this void space with (hydrothermal) fluids of  
190 density  $1000 \text{ kg/m}^3$  would produce a bulk density increase of  $0.3 \text{ kg/m}^3$ . The resultant source  
191 radius is around  $80 \pm 20$  m. Although the fit to the data is within errors very good (Fig. 3), we find  
192 that the positive anomaly in the eastern part of the LCC cannot be satisfyingly modelled. For this  
193 area, we conclude on either a local effect or, more likely, an error in the GPS measurements  
194 during the installation of benchmark RAJA, since the reported gravity increase results from the  
195 free-air effect of the  $7 \pm 4$  cm inflation detected over the 14 months period. Ignoring the  
196 potentially erroneous GPS measurement, the gravity residual for RAJA matches those of  
197 neighbouring benchmarks MAJU and 3RDB. Combining all available geophysical information,  
198 we conclude that migration of hydrothermal fluids along a permeable N-S striking zone is the  
199 most likely cause of the observed perturbation of the gravity field. A conceptual model of mass  
200 migration covering the 14-month observation period is shown in Fig. 4.

201

## 202 **Conclusions**

203 While magma recharge at depth into the north-western rift zone of Tenerife is likely to have  
204 triggered the reawakening of the CVC, the cause of the 14 month perturbation of the gravity field  
205 is most probably not related to magma flow. A more likely scenario is the migration of fluids  
206 inside the complex triggering the observed gravity changes.

207 We demonstrate that time-lapse microgravity monitoring of active volcanoes can provide vital  
208 insights into their sub-surface dynamics, particularly where structural complexities and  
209 heterogeneous mechanical properties of the subsurface do not obey a simple linearly elastic  
210 relationship of stress generation and resultant ground deformation [*Dvorak and Dzurisin, 1997*].  
211 Arrival of a small batch of magma at depth and the release and upward migration of hot fluids  
212 may be a common trigger of reactivation after long repose periods and may be quantifiable by  
213 perturbations in the gravity field but may not be accompanied by ground deformation.  
214 Quantification of sub-surface mass/density changes must be regarded as essential for the  
215 detection of potential pre-eruptive signals at reawakening volcanoes before ground deformation  
216 or other geophysical signals become quantifiable [*Rymer, 1994*].

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225 table data on Tenerife and N. Perez for providing GPS data.

226

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287

288 **Figure captions:**

289 Figure 1:

290 Perspective view of Tenerife island located in the Canarian Archipelago off the coast of North-  
291 West Africa (inset), using a colour-coded digital elevation model (DEM; elevation in meters).  
292 Highest point is Teide volcano (3718 m a.s.l.) located at 28.27°N and 16.60°W. Black dots  
293 indicate epicentres of seismic events recorded between May 2004 and July 2005 by the National  
294 Geographic Institute [<http://www.ign.es>]. Black rectangle identifies the area covered by the joint  
295 GPS/gravity network. LCC indicates the location of the Las Cañadas caldera.

296

297 Figure 2:

298 Residual gravity changes between (a) May and July 2004; (b) May 2004 and April 2005; (c) May  
299 2004 and July 2005. (d) is the same as (c), but corrected for the effect of water table changes.  
300 Gravity changes are draped over a DEM of the central volcanic complex (CVC) of Tenerife.  
301 Black line in (a) delineates head wall of the Las Cañadas caldera (LCC). Benchmark locations  
302 (crosses) and identification are shown as well as the prominent topographic features of the  
303 Santiago Rift, Teide volcano and the Orotava Valley (OV). Uncertainty in gravity changes are on  
304 average  $\pm 0.015$  mGal (1 mGal =  $10 \mu\text{m/s}^2$ ). In (c) the area to the east of the CVC, where a gravity  
305 decrease was detected, coincides with the intersection of the Las Cañadas caldera with the  
306 collapse scar of the Orotava valley. This zone represents a major hydrological outlet of the  
307 caldera. In (d) stars represent epicentres of seismic events recorded between May 2004 and July  
308 2005. Both gravity increase and seismicity appear to be spatially and temporally correlated. Line  
309 A-B represents datum for profile shown in Fig. 4.

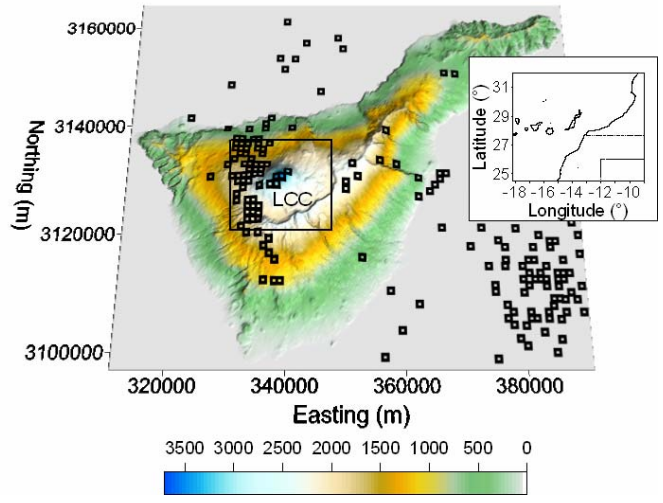
310

311 Figure 3:



312  
313 Predicted (a) and residuals between observed and predicted gravity changes (mGal) (b) for the  
314 period May 2004 to July 2005. Predicted values are derived from inversion for an infinite  
315 horizontal cylinder as an approximation of the zone undergoing a mass/density increase at the  
316 northern and western slopes of the PV-PT complex. Observed gravity changes were corrected for  
317 the effect of water table fluctuations in the central and eastern part of the LCC prior to inversion.  
318 Red colours indicate that the model is predicting higher gravity changes than observed, blue  
319 colours indicate the opposite. Green colours indicate match between predictions and  
320 observations.

321  
322 Figure 4:  
323 Cross-section through the CVC along the profile A-B shown in Figure 2d, including a conceptual  
324 model of events between May 2004 and July 2005. (1) Likely injection of magma during peak of  
325 onshore seismic activity two weeks before installation of network (May 2004). (2) Release of  
326 fluids or perturbation of existing hydrothermal system causing migration of fluids from NW to  
327 SE (May - July 2004; Fig. 2a) and later (July 2004-April 2005 and further into July 2005) along a  
328 N-S striking zone (Figs. 2b-d). (3) Upward migration of fluids along the upper surface of the high  
329 density/low permeability Boca Tauce magmatic body situated beneath the western caldera [*Ablay*  
330 *and Kearey, 2000*]. (4) Fluid migration into an overlying aquifer, located at a depth greater than  
331 900 m beneath the LCC floor and thought to feed the PT summit fumaroles [*Araña et al., 2000*],  
332 can explain the increased fumarolic activity of Teide in 2004. The western caldera boundary fault  
333 may act as a pathway for fluids to shallower depth.



334

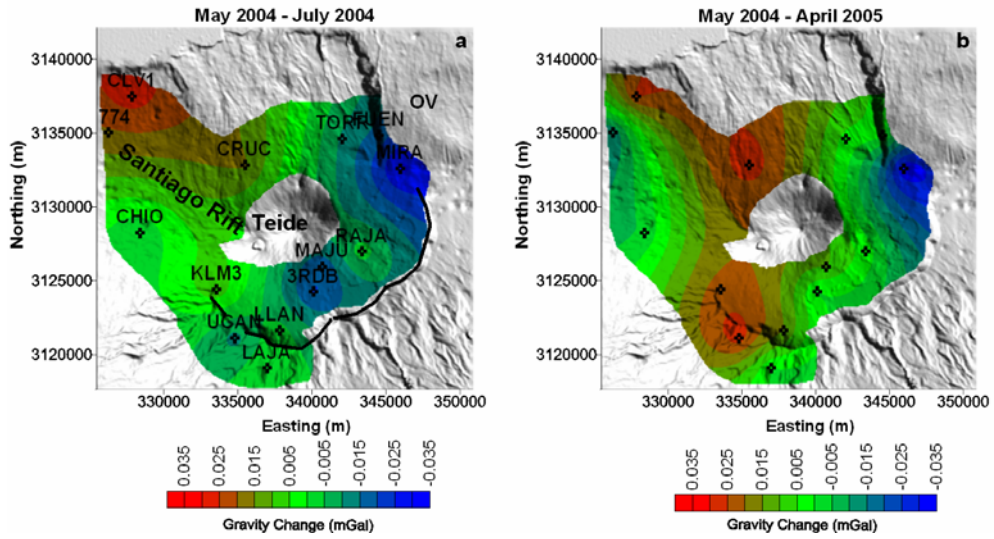
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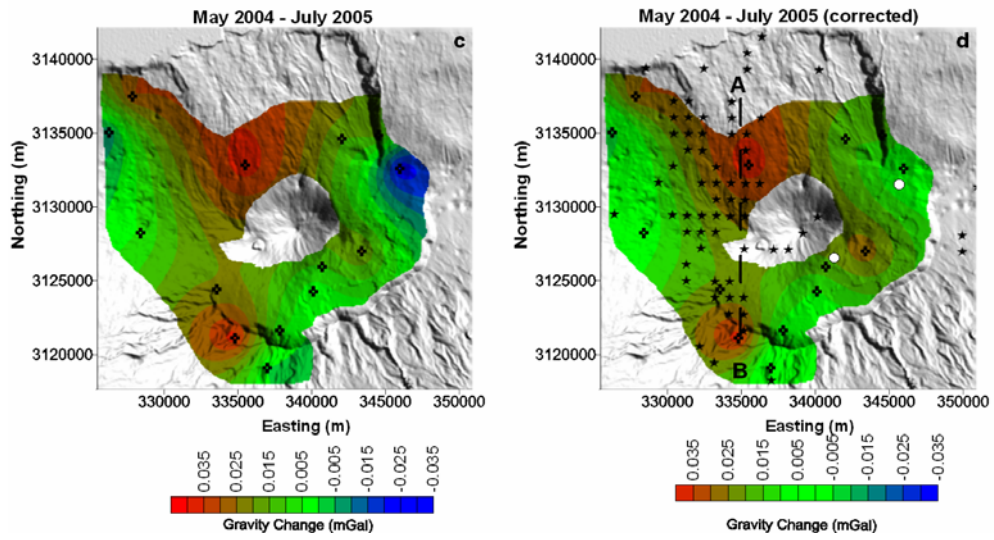
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**FIGURE 1**

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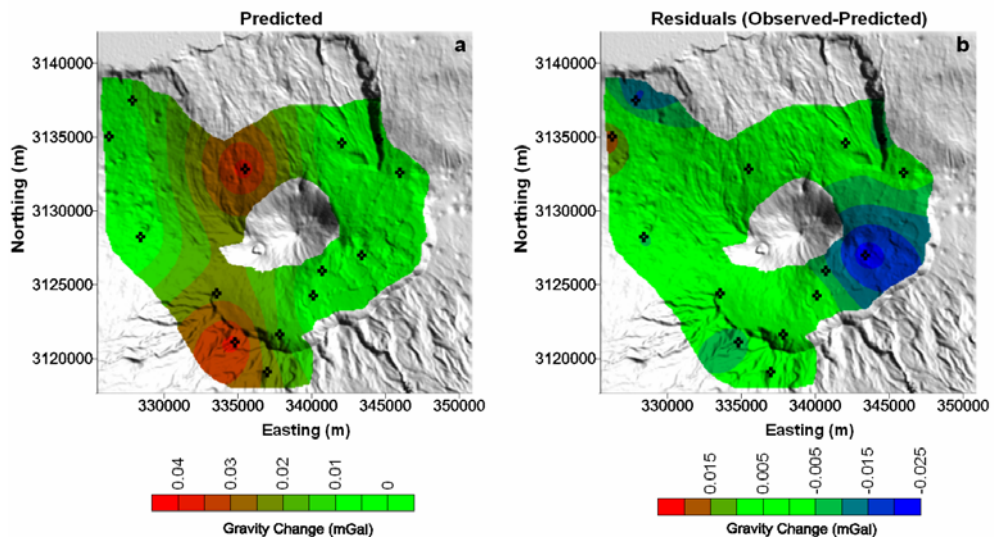
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**FIGURE 2**



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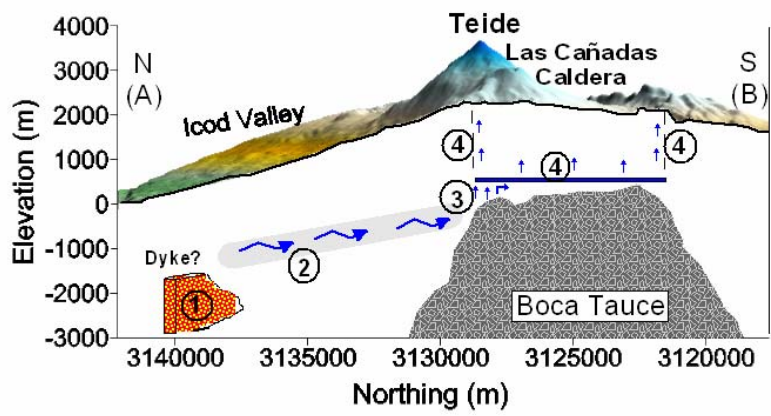
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**FIGURE 3**

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**FIGURE 4**