- Visibility calibration
- Self-calibration

Astronomical Techniques II : **Lecture 10**

Ruta Kale

Low Frequency Radio Astronomy (Chp. 4)
http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/ncra/gmrt/gmrt-users/low-frequency-radio-astronomy

Synthesis imaging in radio astronomy II, Chp 5

Interferometry and synthesis in radio astronomy (Chp 10)

CASA tutorial
http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~ruta/ras-tutorials/CASA-tutorial.html

Purpose of calibration

To remove the effects of
a) *instrumental* factors and b) *atmospheric* factors in the measurements.

- Such factors largely depend on individual antennas or pairs of antennas. Thus these should be removed before performing the imaging.

Calibration

- Role of calibrators:

In order to measure the effect of instrumental factors, one needs to observe something for which one can predict the visibility.

Data taken towards calibrator sources are useful here. Calibrators are usually *bright, unresolved* sources that dominate the field of view – and chosen to be located close to the position of the target. The point source response of interferometer is expected to be constant across baselines and thus is predictable.

Instrumental factors I (long term)

Among the instrumental factors there are some that vary only on timescales of several weeks or months. These include:

1. *Antenna position coordinates*
2. *Antenna pointing corrections* resulting from axis misalignments or other mechanical tolerances.
3. *Zero-point settings for the delays* – settings for which the delays from the antennas to the correlator inputs are equal.

Such parameters only vary with major changes such as antenna location change (e. g. movable antennas such as of VLA). Usually observatories make these corrections – individual observations do not need measurements.

Instrumental factors II (short term)

There are also instrument parameters that *vary over the course of a single observation* – on timescales of a few to several minutes or hours. Either these are predictable changes or need continuous monitoring.

Predictable changes:

- *atmospheric attenuation* as a function of zenith angle (~)
- *variation of antenna gain as a function of elevation*
- *shadowing* of one antenna by a neighboring antenna at low elevation angles. Generally data where shadowing affects the observation are discarded as the correction can be difficult due to effects of diffraction.

Instrumental factors III (short term)

There are also instrument parameters that vary over the course of a single observation – on timescales of a few to several minutes or hours.

Changes that need to be monitored during an observation:

- *variable atmospheric attenuation* as a function of zenith angle
- phase *variation in the local oscillator system*
- *variation of system noise temperature* due to changing ground pickup in the sidelobes.

Phase delay

Visibility sampled at each antenna pair i, j:

$$V_{ij}(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty}\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathcal{A}_\nu(l,m)\ I_\nu(l,m) e^{-2\pi i (u_{ij}(t) l + v_{ij}(t) m)}\, dl\, dm$$

Geometric phase difference produced by the differential path length between the radiation from a source located at (l,m) to each antenna, compared with a fictitious source at the phase tracking center.

$$\phi_g = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda}(L_x \cos H \cos\delta - L_y \sin H \cos\delta + L_z \sin\delta)$$

Phase delay

Visibility sampled at each antenna pair i, j:

$$V_{ij}(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty}\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathcal{A}_\nu(l,m)\; I_\nu(l,m) e^{-2\pi i (u_{ij}(t) l + v_{ij}(t) m)}\, dl\, dm$$

Recall:

$$\begin{pmatrix} u \\ v \\ w \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{\lambda} \begin{pmatrix} \sin H_0 & \cos H_0 & 0 \\ -\sin\delta_0 \cos H_0 & \sin\delta_0 \sin H_0 & \cos\delta_0 \\ \cos\delta_0 \cos H_0 & -\cos\delta_0 \sin H_0 & \sin\delta_0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} L_X \\ L_Y \\ L_Z \end{pmatrix}$$

The phase due to geometric delay is $2\pi w$

$$\phi_g = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda}(L_x \cos H \cos\delta - L_y \sin H \cos\delta + L_z \sin\delta)$$

Phase delay

$$\phi_g = 2\pi\nu\tau_g = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda}(L_x \cos H \cos\delta - L_y \sin H \cos\delta + L_z \sin\delta)$$

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta\phi_g = 2\pi\nu\Delta\tau_g \quad &= \quad \frac{2\pi}{\lambda}(\Delta L_x \cos H \cos\delta - \Delta L_y \sin H \cos\delta + \Delta L_z \sin\delta \\ &+ \quad \Delta\alpha \cos\delta (L_x \sin H + L_y \cos H) \\ &+ \quad \Delta\delta(-L_x \cos H \sin\delta + L_y \sin H \sin\delta + L_z \cos\delta))\end{aligned}$$

$\Delta\tau_g$ Differential geometric delay

(L_x, L_y, L_z) Assumed baseline separation for antennas i, j

$(\Delta L_x, \Delta L_y, \Delta L_z)$ True – assumed separation

(α, δ) True source position

$(\Delta\alpha, \Delta\delta)$ True – minus assumed position

Phase delays result in error in positions in the image

Calibration formalism

Relation between the observed visibilities and the true visibilities:

$$\widetilde{V}_{ij}(t) = \mathcal{G}_{ij}(t)V_{ij}(t) + \epsilon_{ij}(t) + \eta_{ij}(t)$$

t	Time of observation
$\mathcal{G}_{ij}(t)$	Baseline-based complex gain
$\epsilon_{ij}(t)$	Complex offset for the baseline
$\eta_{ij}(t)$	Stochastic complex noise

Can be separated into antenna based amplitude and phases

$$\mathcal{G}_{ij}(t) = g_i(t)g_j^*(t) = a_i(t)a_j(t)e^{i(\phi_i(t)-\phi_j(t))}$$

Observations of calibrators provide N(N-1)/2 measurements of G_{ij} and thus we can solve for the N values of $g_i(t)$.

Antenna pointing error

- Difference between the actual pointing position and the desired position.

Antenna pointing errors can be result of :
Mis-alignment of the polar or elevation axes, gravitational deformation of the structure, atmospheric refraction, time dependent deformation due to heating of the antenna, wind loading of the antenna.

Measuring this requires observations of positions well distributed across the sky.
Antenna based pointing solutions are found and applied. (Done by the observatories)

Delay calibration

Visibilities measured over a finite bandwidth are given by:

$$V_{ij}(t) = \int_0^\infty \left(\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathcal{A}_\nu(l,m) I_\nu(l,m) e^{-2\pi i \nu \Delta\tau_g} \, dl \, dm \right) e^{2\pi i \nu \Delta\tau_r} \mathcal{G}_{ij}(\nu) \, d\nu$$

(i, j)	Antenna pair
ν	Frequency
$V_{ij}(t)$	Visibility integrated over a bandwidth
$\mathcal{G}_{ij}(\nu)$	Complex gain as a function of frequency
$\Delta\tau_g$	Differential geometric delay
$\Delta\tau_r$	Residual instrumental delay – the error in the inserted delay relative to the delay tracking center.

Delay calibration

Visibilities measured over a finite bandwidth are given by:

$$V_{ij}(t) = \int_0^{\infty} \left(\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathcal{A}_\nu(l,m) I_\nu(l,m) e^{-2\pi i \nu \Delta\tau_g} \, dl \, dm \right) e^{2\pi i \nu \Delta\tau_r} \mathcal{G}_{ij}(\nu) \, d\nu$$

The net phase difference between the ends of the band that results from a net residual delay is given by:

$$\Delta\phi = 2\pi \Delta\nu (\Delta\tau_g - \Delta\tau_r)$$

Such residual delays are removed by fitting and removing the phase slopes across the frequency band in the data.

Delay between the two orthogonal polarization channels also needs correction or there is a loss in the cross-hand response.

Atmospheric effects

- Propagation of radio signal through the atmosphere introduces modification of the phase of the signal due to refraction.

Components of the atmosphere are modeled and the delays corrected.

At mm waves water vapour in the atmosphere is of concern.

At low frequencies (<a couple of GHz), the ionospheric effects become important.
Ionosphere is a magneto-active plasma region in the atmosphere at 60 – 2000 km above the Earth’s surface – consists of charged particles that result in refraction of the waves and rotation of plane of polarization.

Could introduce a systematic shift in source positions as a function of time if all antennas are affected by the same column of plasma – but can introduce more complex effects if different parts of the array pass through patches having distinct properties.

Can be corrected by obtaining total electron content (TEC) measurements.

Bandpass calibration

Compensating for the change of gain as a function of frequency is called bandpass calibration.

Strong source observed and the response across the band is determined.

Usually this response varies over several hours and thus observation of a strong source every few hours is sufficient.

The baseline based gain is factored into antenna based gains and determined and the visibilities are corrected for.

Polarization calibration

Polarimetry: The polarization of a quasi-monochromatic wave is described by the 2x2 matrix of correlations between two orthogonal components. For right circular and left circular polarizations as orthogonal modes, the polarization is described by:

$$\begin{pmatrix} RR^* & RL^* \\ LR^* & LL^* \end{pmatrix}$$

Stokes' parameters: intensity I, two linear polarization parameters Q and U and a circular polarization parameter V
The above matrix represented in linear combinations of Stokes' parameters is:

$$\begin{pmatrix} I+V & Q+iU \\ Q-iU & I-V \end{pmatrix}$$

Polarization calibration

Stokes' parameters: intensity I, two linear polarization parameters Q and U and a circular polarization parameter V

These parameters fully describe the polarization state of the radiation. Corresponding to each parameter there are visibilities and a corresponding image. The visibilities are measured as a linear combination of the 4 correlations produced by an interferometer. For R and L polarized feeds:

$$\begin{aligned} V[R \star R] &= V_I + V_V \,, \\ V[L \star L] &= V_I - V_V \,, \\ V[R \star L] &= (V_Q + iV_U)\; e^{-2i\chi} \\ V[L \star R] &= (V_Q - iV_U)\; e^{2i\chi} \end{aligned}$$

χ is parallactic angle which determines the orientation of the feed with respect to the sky.

Polarization calibration

Leakage terms

The feeds are not exactly orthogonal and this results in “leakage” of RR polarization into LL and vice versa.
If v_R and v_L are voltages from the two polarizations and the true electric fields are E_R and E_L, then,

$$v_R = E_R e^{-i\chi} + D_R E_L e^{i\chi}$$
$$v_L = E_L e^{i\chi} + D_L E_R e^{-i\chi}$$

The leakage terms are also called as “D-terms”.

The visibilities are given by:

Delay between R and L:

$$e^{\pm i(\phi_R - \phi_L)}$$

$$\begin{aligned} V[R\star R] &= V_I + V_V \\ V[L\star L] &= V_I - V_V \\ V[R\star L] &= e^{-2i\chi}(V_Q + iV_U) + (D_{R1} + D^*_{L2})V_I \\ V[L\star R] &= e^{2i\chi}(V_Q - iV_U) + (D_{L1} + D^*_{R2})V_I \end{aligned}$$

Polarization calibration

For polarization calibration one requires to find the leakages or “D-terms”
And the delay between R and L.

For measuring D-terms observation of a bright unpolarized calibrator is used. Q and U terms are zero and thus the cross hand visibility is the sum f the leakages.

For the delay, a strongly polarized source with known position angle is needed. For equatorial mounts parallactic angle is constant but for alt-az mounts it needs to be calculated.

The visibilities are given by:

Delay between R and L:

$$e^{\pm i(\phi_R - \phi_L)}$$

$$\begin{aligned} V[R \star R] &= V_I + V_V \\ V[L \star L] &= V_I - V_V \\ V[R \star L] &= e^{-2i\chi}(V_Q + iV_U) + (D_{R1} + D^*_{L2})V_I \\ V[L \star R] &= e^{2i\chi}(V_Q - iV_U) + (D_{L1} + D^*_{R2})V_I \end{aligned}$$

Primary beam

$$V_{ij}(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty}\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathcal{A}_\nu(l,m)\ I_\nu(l,m) e^{-2\pi i(u_{ij}(t)l+v_{ij}(t)m)}\, dl\, dm$$

The effect of A(l,m) must be removed from the image.

Needs to be measured in all four polarization correlations.

1. *Beam squint between polarizations*: a slight difference in the electrical pointing centers of right and left circular polarizations due to off-axis feed placement is called beam squint. The primary beam correction is done separately for each pol.
2. *Polarization characteristics across the beam*: D-terms substantially change outside 50% of the beam – thus polarization measurements outside this are not reliable.
3. *Alt-azimuth mount*: Since the beam rotates w. r. t. the source, any asymmetry in the beam will lead to effect in the cross hand correlations. Thus correction has to be done for short intervals when the change is small and then added together.
4. *Different antenna elements*: If antenna characteristics differ, polarization only at the center can be relied upon.

Self-calibration

Aim is to produce a model of the intensity distribution, the Fourier transform of which when corrected by gain factors will reproduce the measured visibilities within the noise level.

A convenient method due to Schwab 1980 is to *minimize* the sum of squares of residuals by varying complex gains g_i, g_j and the model sky,

$$\mathcal{S} = \sum_{k} \sum_{\substack{i,j \\ i \neq j}} w_{ij}(t_k) \left| \widetilde{V}_{ij}(t_k) - g_i(t_k) g_j^*(t_k) \widehat{V}_{ij}(t_k) \right|^2$$

The w_{ij} are weights. The time over which gains are assumed to be constant depend on the effects that govern their variation.

In most cases we have small number of degrees of freedom (the gains to be determined) and a large number of measurements of visibilities.

Self-calibration

The sky intensity model can be iteratively refined – this is done via self-calibration. The name follows after the fact that we are using the image itself as its own calibrator.

The iterative recipe is:

- Make an initial model of the sky (use CLEAN).
- Solve for complex gains.
- find the corrected visibility,

$$V_{ij,\mathrm{corr}}(t) = \frac{\widetilde{V}_{ij}(t)}{g_i(t)g_j^*(t)}$$

- Form a new model from the corrected data using constraints on the source structure.
- Again solve for complex gains and repeat until there is no improvement.

Self-calibration is found to work. But there is no proof of convergence.
- for telescopes with large number of elements there are few variables in terms of gains as compared to the available constraints.
- sources are “simple” in their structure.

Self-calibration (caution !)

Self-calibration is found to work. But there is no proof of convergence.
 - for telescopes with large number of elements there are few variables in terms of gains as compared to the available constraints.
- sources are “simple” in their structure.

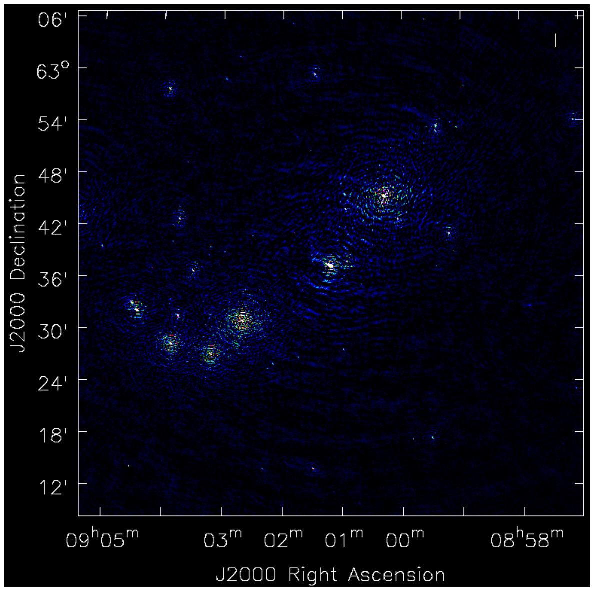
Can lead to totally wrong results if the model incorporates any features from the image which are due to errors in calibration – the very effect which this procedure is trying to remove.

A variant to avoid sensitivity to spurious outliers, Schwab 1981 suggested minimisation of “l_1” :

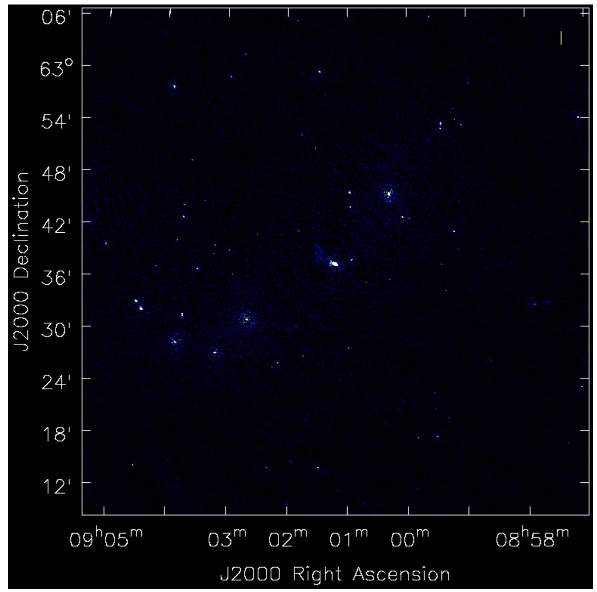
$$\mathcal{S} = \sum_k \sum_{\substack{i,j \\ i \neq j}} w_{ij}(t_k) \left| \widetilde{V}_{ij}(t_k) - g_i(t_k) g_j^*(t_k) \widehat{V}_{ij}(t_k) \right|$$

Solved for gain phases-only in the first few iterations and then for both amplitude and phase of the complex gain.

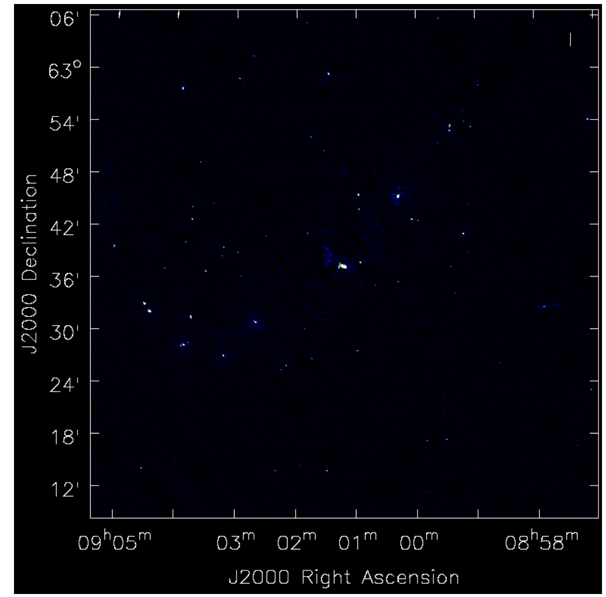
Example of self-calibration



First image after cleaning.

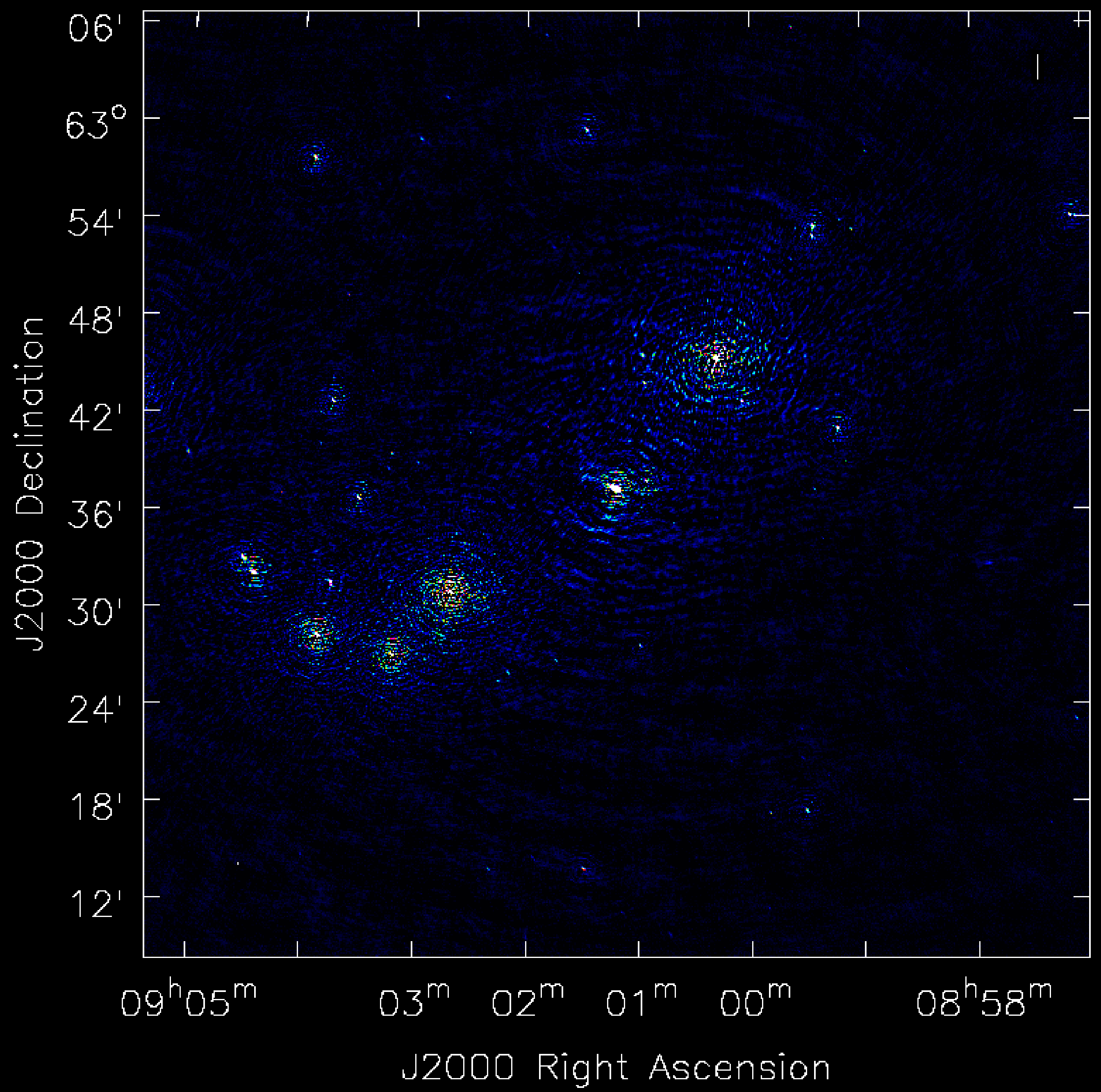


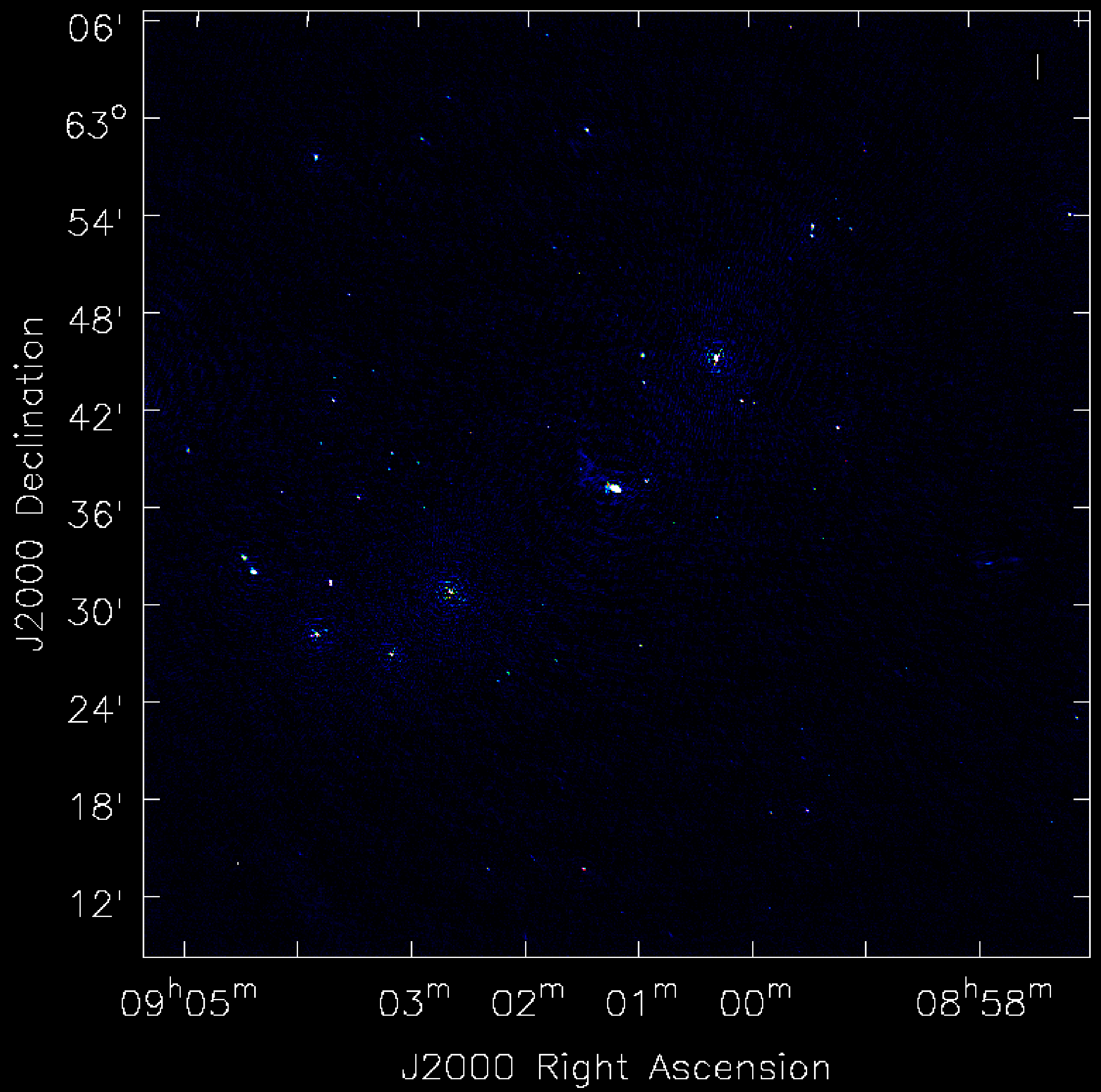
After first round of self-calibration



After second round of self-calibration

GMRT 610 MHz data


06'
63°
54'
48'
42'
36'
30'
24'
18'
12'
J2000 Declination
09h05m
03m
02m
01m
00m
08h58m
J2000 Right Ascension


06'
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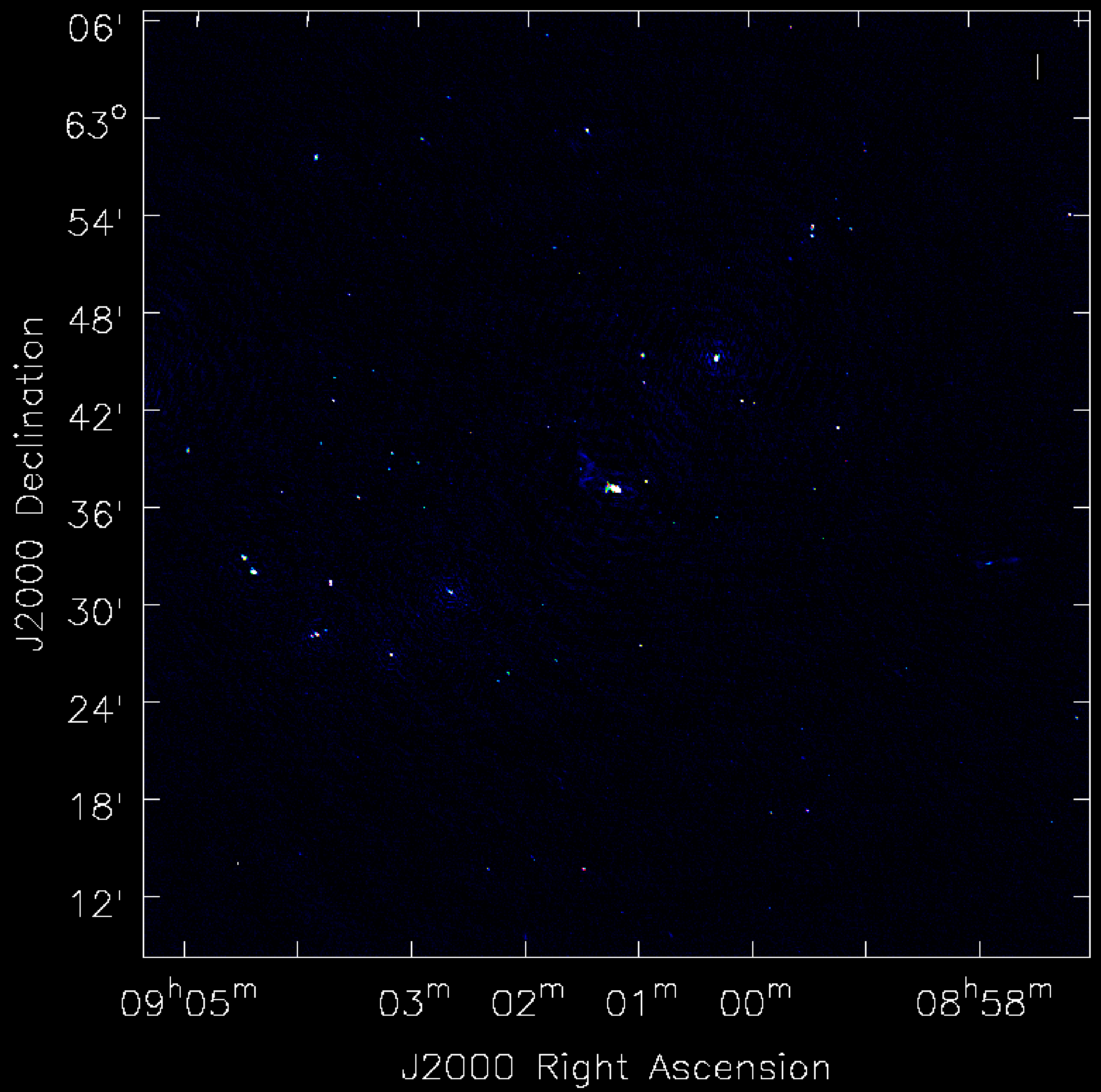
J2000 Right Ascension


06'
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09h05m
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02m
01m
00m
08h58m
J2000 Right Ascension

Calibration in practice (GMRT)

In a typical dataset contains:

Primary calibrator : absolute flux calibrator
Bandpass calibrator : usually the flux calibrator serves as a bandpass calibrator
Secondary calibrator or phase calibrator
Target source

Flux cal – Phase cal – (Target source – Phase cal) – Flux cal
Loop over

-Delay calibration
-Absolute flux calibration
-Phase calibration
-Bandpass calibration
-Application of the calibration to the target

http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~ruta/ras-tutorials/CASA-tutorial.html

```
…:summary+    Observed from   27-Nov-2017/23:53:01.1   to   28-Nov-2017/01:32:52.6 (TAI)
…::summary
…:summary+    ObservationID = 0         ArrayID = 0
…:summary+   Date        Timerange (TAI)          Scan  FldId FieldName             nRows     SpwIds   Average Interval
…:summary+   27-Nov-2017/23:53:01.1 - 00:02:49.0     1      0 3C147                  31755  [0]   [8.05]
…:summary+   28-Nov-2017/00:10:03.8 - 00:14:53.7     2      1 1248-199               15660  [0]   [8.05]
…:summary+              00:17:59.0 - 00:48:02.8     3      2 SGRB                   97440  [0]   [8.05]
…:summary+              00:48:51.2 - 00:53:49.1     4      1 1248-199               16095  [0]   [8.05]
…:summary+              00:57:02.4 - 01:27:06.3     5      2 SGRB                   97440  [0]   [8.05]
…:summary+              01:27:54.6 - 01:32:52.6     6      1 1248-199               16095  [0]   [8.05]
…::summary          (nRows = Total number of rows per scan)
…::summary Fields: 3
…:summary+   ID   Code Name             RA               Decl           Epoch   SrcId      nRows
…:summary+   0    C    3C147            05:42:36.129706 +49.51.07.19954 J2000   0          31755
…:summary+   1    C    1248-199         12:48:23.899892 -19.59.18.69778 J2000   1          47850
…:summary+   2    C    SGRB             13:09:48.089888 -23.22.53.34805 J2000   2         194880
…::summary Spectral Windows:  (1 unique spectral windows and 1 unique polarization setups)
…:summary+   SpwID  Name   #Chans   Frame   Ch0(MHz)  ChanWid(kHz)  TotBW(kHz) CtrFreq(MHz)  Corrs
…:summary+   0      none    2048    TOPO     550.049        97.656    200000.0    650.0000   RR  LL
…::summary Sources: 3
…:summary+   ID   Name              SpwId RestFreq(MHz)  SysVel(km/s)
…:summary+   0    3C147             0     0              1.03605565933e-320
…:summary+   1    1248-199          0     0              1.03605565933e-320
…:summary+   2    SGRB              0     0              1.03605565933e-320
…::summary Antennas: 30:
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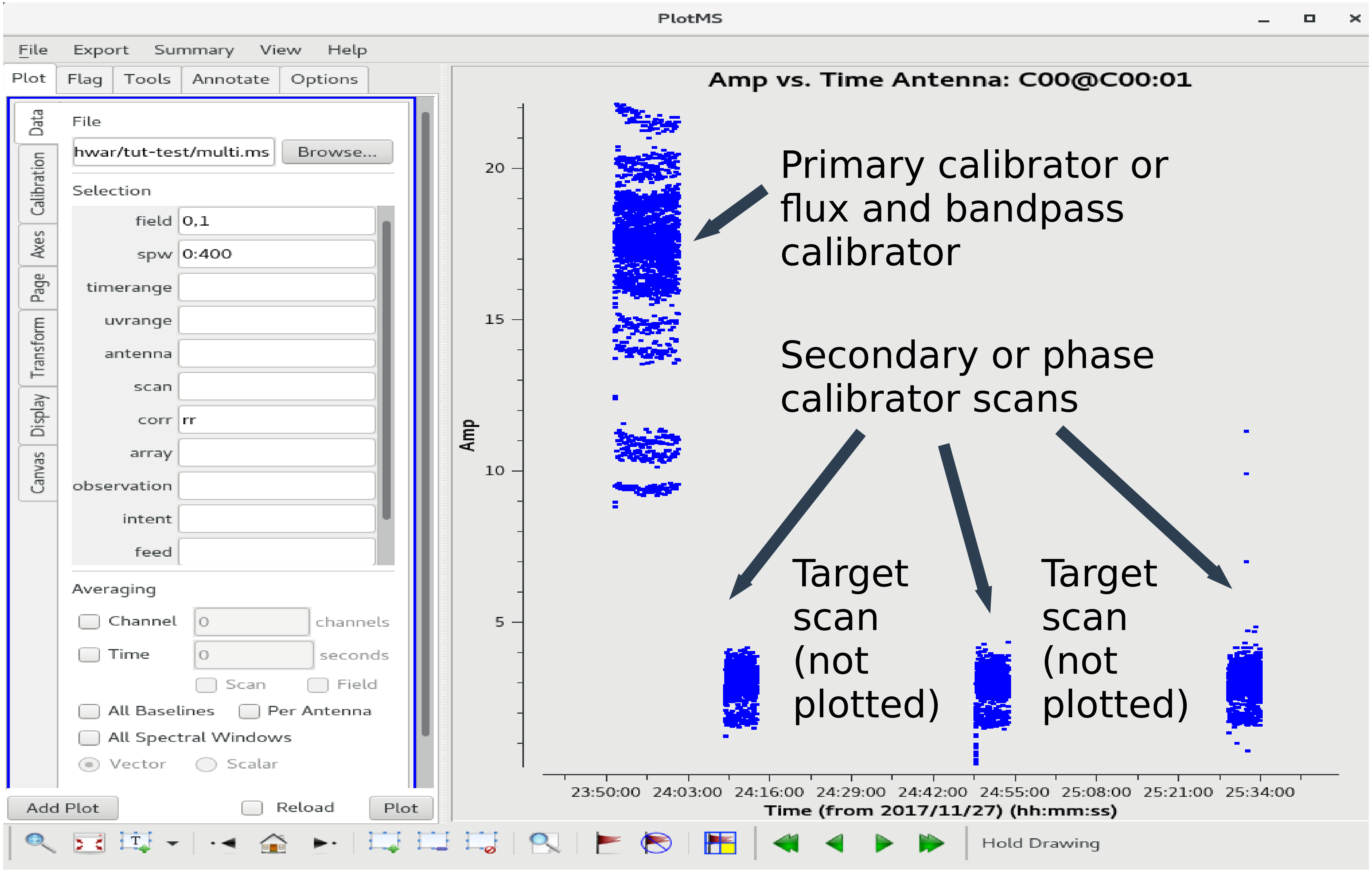
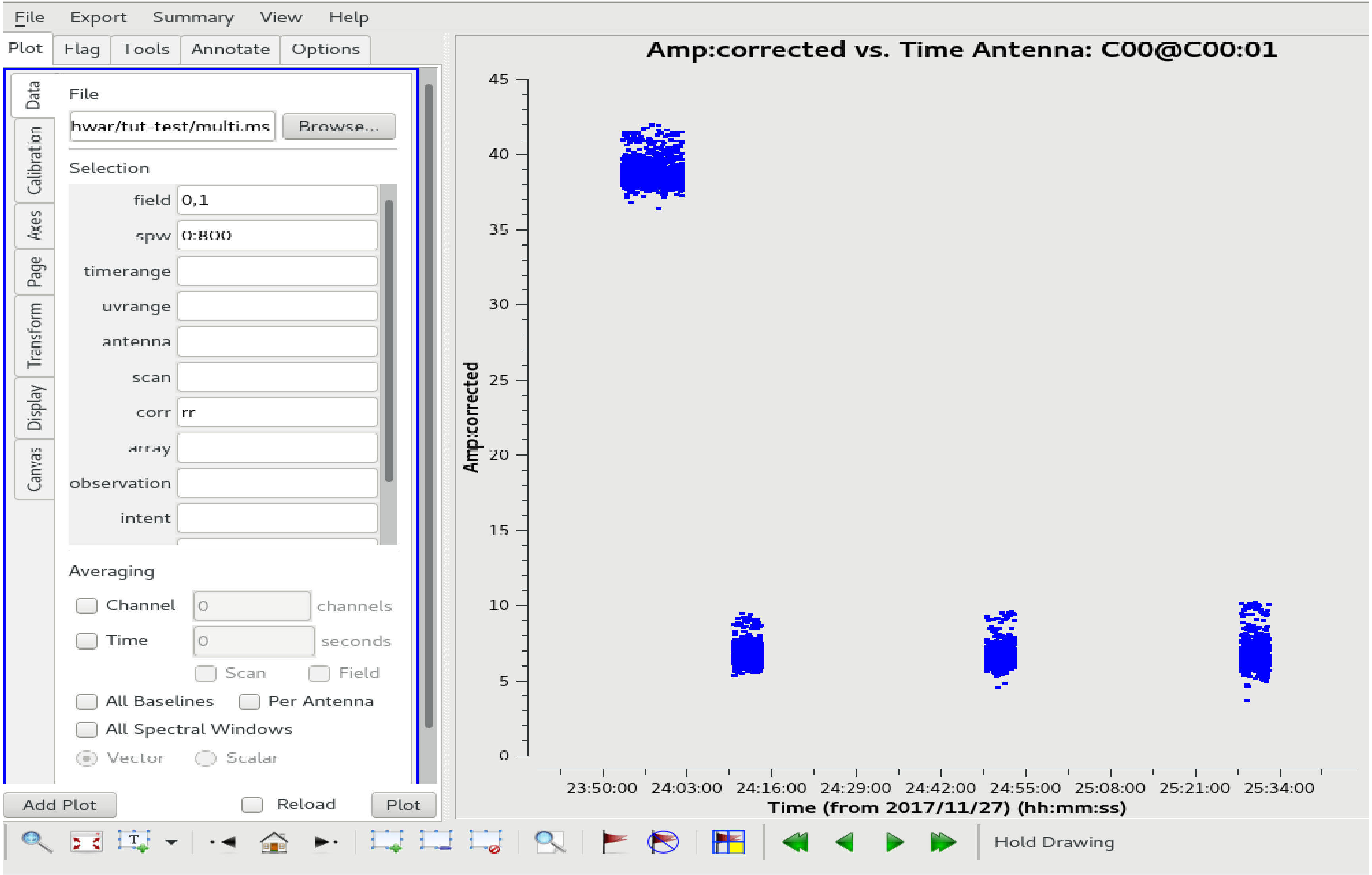
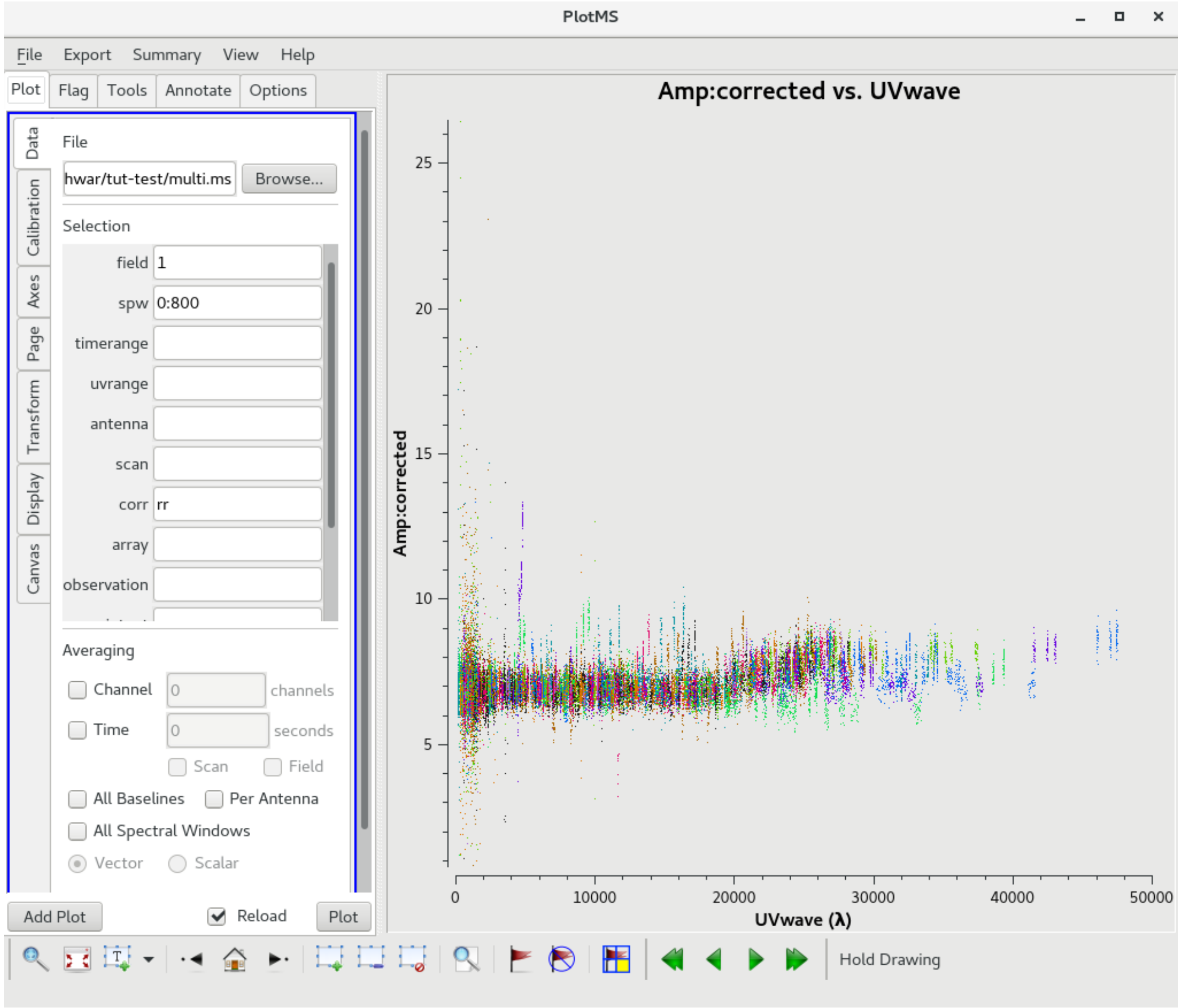
Uncalibrated data on calibrators



Calibrated data on calibrators



Calibrated amplitude Vs uv



Calibrator phases (point source)