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The use of scintillometry for validating aggregation schemes over heterogeneous grids

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ABSTRACT

A number of studies have been devoted to derive the diurnal course of regional evapotranspiration (ET) especially in semi-arid areas where the assessment of this term is of crucial importance for water resources management. One approach to derive regional evapotranspiration is based on the use of aggregation schemes in conjunction with energy-balance or land-surface models. However, the effectiveness of this approach cannot be fully assessed without a comparison between the model's flux simulations and the ground truth observations. In the present study, the issue of using scintillometry for validating spatial and temporal aggregation schemes over heterogeneous grids has been investigated. Data collected within the SUDMED project over the oliveyard of Agdal which was located near the Marrakech city (Morocco), have been used to test the aggregation schemes. The Agdal oliveyard was made up of two contrasted fields, or patches. Even though the two sites appear relatively homogeneous, they differ strongly in terms of soil moisture status and vegetation percent cover. The higher soil moisture in the northern site creates heterogeneity at the scale of the entire olive yard (i.e. at grid-scale).

Firstly, the diurnal course of the grid-scale evapotranspiration ($(ET_{sim})_{SA}$) estimated from spatial aggregation scheme is compared to that derived from the scintillometry ((ET_{LAS})). The $(ET_{sim})_{SA}$ is obtained as the residual term of the energy balance providing the estimates of the available energy ($AE(=R_n - G)$, where R_n and G are the net radiation and the soil heat flux, respectively, and sensible heat flux. The latter is estimated by using a simple two-layer model developed by Lhomme et al. (1994). The root mean square difference (RMSD) and the correlation coefficient (R^2) between $(ET_{sim})_{SA}$ and (ET_{LAS}) were about 46 W m^{-2} and 0.78, respectively. Secondly, we compared the diurnal course of the grid-scale evapotranspiration ($(ET_{sim})_{TA}$) estimated from the temporal aggregation scheme with the (ET_{LAS}) . $(ET_{sim})_{TA}$ is obtained by extrapolating the instantaneous values of the available energy and the evaporative fraction ($EF(=ET/AE)$) estimated at the satellite overpass to daily ones. The instantaneous values of AE and EF have been derived using remotely sensed surface temperature measured using a ground-based infrared thermometer combined with ancillary micrometeorological data such as wind speed, incoming and outgoing solar radiation, and temperature and humidity of the air. The RMSD and the R^2 were about 43 W m^{-2} and 0.7, respectively. Despite the complexity of the site induced by the strong heterogeneity in the soil moisture which is related to the employed irrigation method (flood irrigation), and the consequences in terms of the footprint of the instruments, the obtained statistical results showed that both aggregation schemes performed successfully with regard to estimates of the evapotranspiration over heterogeneous grids.

Finally, to further assess the performance of the developed approach, a second dataset collected in northern Mexico has been also used. The result shows that the approach provides acceptable values of aggregated evapotranspiration. Consequently, scintillometry can potentially be used in the development and the validation of aggregation approaches to improve the representation of surface heterogeneity land-surface-atmosphere models operating at large scales.

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1. Introduction

Regions classified as semi-arid or arid constitute roughly one-third of the total global land surface. In these regions, due to the combined effect of human intervention and the expected modification of precipitation pattern water managers are faced

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with several challenges. Among them, water resource scarcity combined to increase of water demands, competition among different water user groups, which lead to over-exploitation of aquifers. The serious environmental and socio-economic consequences of these factors have led the earth science community to investigate the issue of the impact of human and natural induced changes on the hydrological cycle and water resources with the ultimate objective of developing tools so that managers and politicians can make decisions based on state of the art science. In this context, a strong emphasis has been directed toward understanding the processes controlling the exchanges of water and energy between the land surface and the atmosphere. Due to the importance of the evapotranspiration (ET) flux in the water cycle, especially in arid and semi-arid regions, efforts have been particularly oriented toward improving its estimates at different space-time scales. However, quantifying diurnal ET variation over large and heterogeneous areas is not straightforward (Kustas and Norman, 2000).

In this regard, remotely sensed data can be a valuable tool to address this issue (Kustas and Norman, 1996, 1999; Kustas et al., 2001, 2004; Norman et al., 1995, 2003, 2006). Geostationary sensors can provide regional scale of ET with temporal sampling from 15 min to 1 h, but their spatial resolution is very coarse. In fact, a single pixel may contain surfaces with widely varying characteristics (mixed fields), which make the interpretation of the data very difficult. In contrast, sun-synchronous satellites provide data with better spatial resolution, but the temporal resolution is poor. Therefore the issue of discrepancy between the space-time scale of satellite observation and that at which the process needs to be described is still an open research question (McCabe and Wood, 2006).

For the purpose of irrigation management, the combination of the sun-synchronous sensors data and aggregation schemes can provide a workable solution (Chehbouni et al., 2008a). The aggregation scheme is conceived as a method which seeks to link the model parameters that control surface exchange on a patch scale with the area-average value of equivalent model parameters applicable on a larger scale or grid-scale, assuming that the same equations are used to describe surface fluxes at both scales. In this regard, substantial progress has been made in the last decade to develop aggregation schemes which range from physically based through semi-empirical, to entirely empirical (Braden, 1995; Chehbouni et al., 1995; Raupach and Finnigan, 1995) or experimental studies (Arain et al., 1996; Blyth and Harding, 1995; Chehbouni et al., 2000a; Moran et al., 1997; Noilhan et al., 1997; Sellers et al., 1997). However, one of the main difficulties regarding the development of these aggregation procedures is the evaluation of their outputs/performances against ground observations. The straightforward solution is to deploy a network of patch scale measurement devices such as eddy correlation systems. However, due to the high cost of the devices and the requirement for continuous availability of well-trained staff to operate and maintain them, this solution cannot be implemented on an operational basis.

In this context, scintillometry can be considered as an attractive method for routinely measuring area-averaged surface fluxes. Using a Large Aperture Scintillometer (LAS), one can obtain area-averaged surface fluxes over distances from a few hundred metres up to several kilometres. Recently, several investigations have indeed demonstrated its potential to derive area or path average of the sensible heat flux over large and heterogeneous surfaces (Asanuma and Lemoto, 2006; Chehbouni et al., 1999, 2000b, in press; Ezzahar et al., 2007a, 2009; Hoedjes et al., 2007; Kleissl et al., 2006; Lagouarde et al., 2002; Marx et al., 2008; Watts et al., 2000). The combination of LAS measurements and estimates of available energy can provide reasonable retrieval of area-averaged ET as the

residual term of the energy-balance equation (Chehbouni et al., 2000b, in press; Ezzahar et al., 2007b, 2009; Hemakumara et al., 2003). Consequently, the scintillometer (LAS), is becoming popular in hydrometeorological studies, because it is relatively cheap, robust and easy to operate and maintain.

The main objective of the current study is to assess whether the LAS can be used to validate spatial and temporal aggregation schemes at grid-scale by comparing the ET derived from the LAS and those estimated from both aggregation methods. For the spatial aggregation method, the ET was obtained as the residual term of the energy balance providing the estimates of the available energy and sensible heat flux using ground-based radiometric surface temperature measurements and an ancillary micrometeorological data. For the temporal aggregation method, the ET was obtained by extrapolating the instantaneous values of the available energy and the evaporative fraction estimated at the satellite overpass to daily ones using a simple heuristic approach developed by Chehbouni et al. (2008a). This approach used the radiometric surface temperature derived at the satellite overpass and an ancillary micrometeorological data. The particularity of the studied is related to two factors. First, the nature of the study site is very complex: tall, sparse, large and contrasted olive trees fields and the method employed for irrigation (flood irrigation) which amplifies the heterogeneity of the grid. Second, as far as we know, this is the first study where that the LAS has been used to validate both spatial and temporal aggregation schemes.

2. Experiment site and measurements

The experiment was carried out in the fall of 2002, between day of year (DOY) 295 and 306 (22 October to 2 November) in a 275-ha Agdal olive orchard which is located to the southeast of Marrakech, Morocco ($31^{\circ}36'N$, $07^{\circ}58'W$). This experiment was a part of the SUDMED project (Chehbouni et al., 2008b) which took place in southern Mediterranean region (Marrakech, Morocco), to assess the spatio-temporal variability of water needs and consumption for irrigated crops during water shortages. In this section, site description and experimental set-up are briefly summarized; the

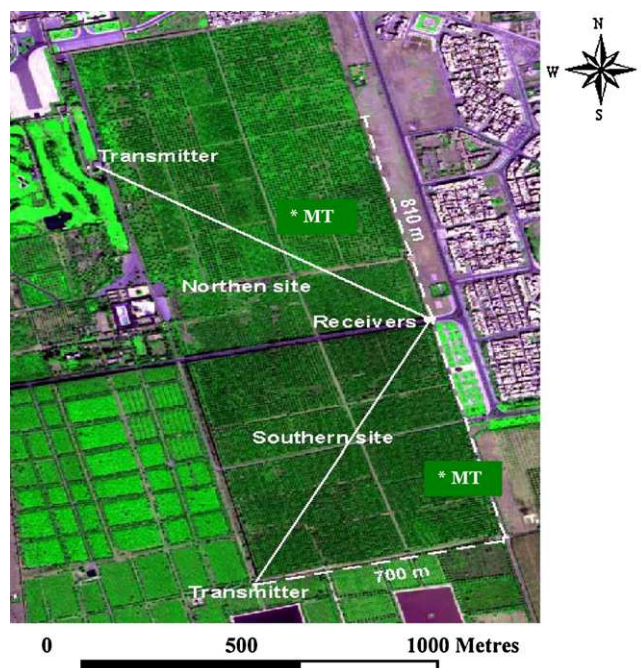


Fig. 1. Overview of the location site and the experimental setup (Quickbird image). The locations of LAS and micrometeorological towers (MT) are marked.

reader is referred to Ezzahar et al. (2007a) for a complete description. Fig. 1 displays the area of interest on a very high spatial resolution image acquired by the Quickbird satellite. The climate is typically semi-arid Mediterranean; precipitation falls mainly during winter and spring (about 75% of the total precipitation), from the beginning of November until the end of April, with an average ranging from 192 to 253 mm per year. The atmosphere is dry with an average relative humidity of 56% and the evaporative demand is very high (1600 mm per year, Er-Raki et al., 2008), greatly exceeding the annual rainfall.

The experimental area is divided into two sites, which were relatively homogeneous in terms of vegetation types, but differ strongly in characteristics (mainly soil moisture status, and, to a lesser extent, vegetation percent cover). These sites are referred to as the “southern site” and the “northern site” (see Fig. 1). The average height of the olive trees during the experiment period was 6.5 m at the southern site and 6 m at the northern site. The mean fraction cover was approximately 55% at the southern site and 45% at the northern site, as obtained from hemispherical canopy photographs (using a Nikon Coolpix 950[®] with a FC-E8 fish-eye lens converter, field of view 183°).

Both sites were equipped with a set of standard meteorological instruments to measure wind speed and direction (model Wp200, R.M. Young Co., Traverse City, MI, USA); air temperature and humidity (model HMP45AC, Vaisala Oyj, Helsinki, Finland) at 9 m above the ground. These instruments were set up 9 m above ground. Net radiation was measured using net radiometers (a model CNR1, Kipp and Zonen, Delft, The Netherlands at the southern site and a model Q7, REBS Inc., Seattle, WA, USA at the northern site). These radiometers were placed at 8.5 m height to embrace vegetation and soil radiances by ensuring the field of view was representative of their respective cover fractions. The CNR1 measures the four components of the net radiation, i.e. independent estimates incoming and outgoing solar and far-infrared radiation. In order to calculate the albedo over the northern site, two pyranometers (model CM5, Kipp & Zonen, Delft, The Nether-

lands) were mounted to measure incoming and outgoing short-wave radiation. Soil and vegetation surface temperatures were measured using two infrared thermometers (model IRTS-Ps, Apogee Instruments Inc., Logan, UT, USA), with a 3:1 field of view, at heights of 1 and 8.4 m respectively. Soil heat flux density was measured at a depth of 0.01 m using soil heat flux plates (HFT3-L, Campbell Scientific Ltd.) which were installed at three locations in order to get good average values; underneath the canopy (always shaded), in between the trees (mostly sunlit), and in an intermediate position. Time Domain Reflectometry (TDR) probes (model CS616, Campbell Scientific Ltd.) were installed at depth of 0.05 m to measure soil water content. Their outputs have been calibrated using the gravimetric method. The slope, the intercept and the correlation coefficient of the obtained linear regression were 66, 58 and 0.96 respectively. Measurements were taken at 1 Hz, and averages stored at 30-min intervals on CR10X data loggers (Campbell Scientific Ltd.). The prevailing wind direction during the study period was from the northwest. The half-hourly values of the measured climatic variables including the air temperature, air relative humidity, incoming solar radiation, and wind speed are shown in Fig. 2.

Besides the standard meteorological measurements, two eddy covariance systems were installed to provide continuous measurements of the vertical fluxes of heat, water vapour and CO₂ at a height of 8.8 and 8.7 m for the southern and northern sites, respectively. The EC systems consisted of a 3D sonic anemometer (CSAT3, Campbell Scientific Ltd.) and an open-path infrared gas analyzer (Li7500, Licor Inc.). Raw data were sampled at a rate of 20 Hz and were recorded using CR23X dataloggers (Campbell Scientific Ltd.) which were connected to portable computers to enable storage of large raw data files. The half-hourly values of fluxes were later calculated off-line after performing coordinate rotation, frequency corrections, correcting the sonic temperature for the lateral velocity and presence of humidity, and the inclusion of the mean vertical velocity according to Webb et al. (1980). Data from the eddy covariance system were processed using the

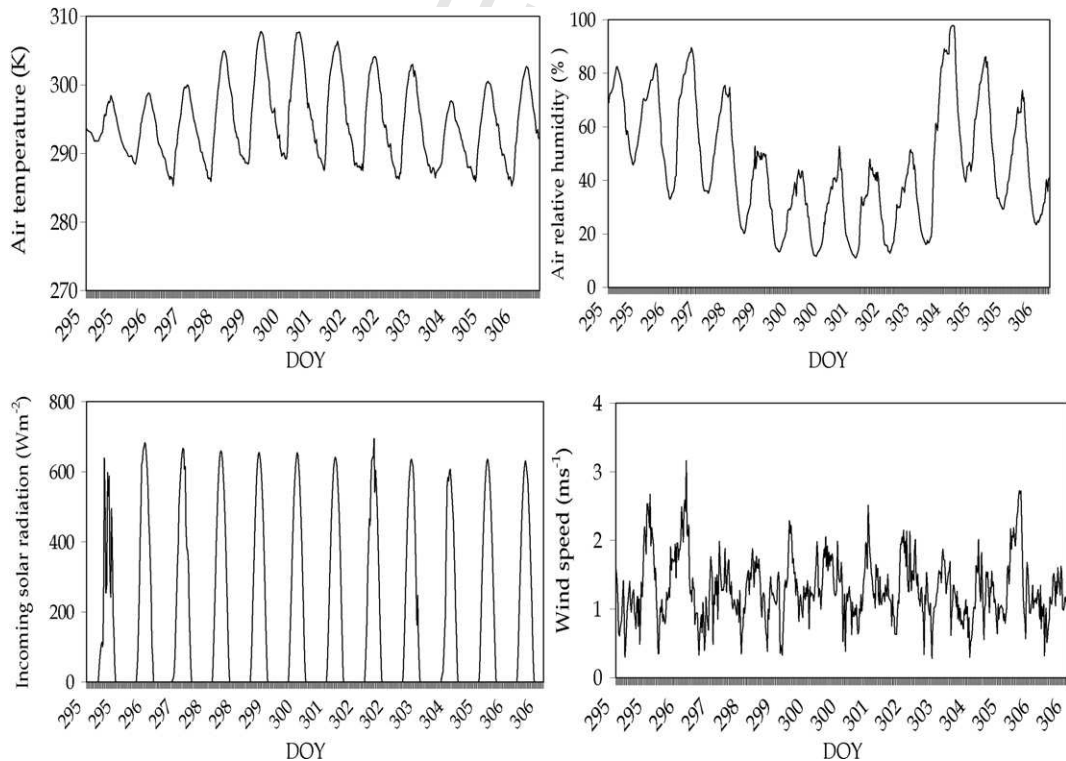


Fig. 2. Half-hourly values of weather variables during the study period.

software 'ECPack' developed by the Meteorology and Air Quality group, Wageningen University (available for download at <http://www.met.wau.nl/>).

Two identical Large Aperture Scintillometers were mounted at heights of 14 m in the southern site and 14.5 m in the northern site (see Fig. 1). These instruments were constructed by the Meteorology and Air Quality Group (Wageningen Agriculture University, The Netherlands) and were originally designed by Ochs and Wilson (1993). They have an aperture size of 0.15 m and the transmitter operates on a wavelength of 0.94 μm . At the receiver, C_n^2 is sampled at 1 Hz and stored as 1-min averages using a CR510 data logger (Campbell Scientific Ltd.). Over the southern site, the LAS was installed perpendicular to the dominant wind direction, over a path length of 1050 m. The transmitter was mounted on a tripod installed on a roof, located on the southwest corner of the southern site, while the receiver was mounted on a 15-m-high tower that was positioned next to the road that separates the two sides of the orchard. Over the northern site, the LAS was almost parallel to the dominant wind direction, and it measured over a path length of 1070 m. The transmitter was mounted on a tripod installed on a roof located near the northern corner of the northern site. The receiver was installed on the same tower as the receiver of the LAS installed over the northern site in such a manner that the two signals did not interfere. The measured values of C_n^2 were used to derive the sensible heat fluxes (see Appendix A) and the evapotranspiration from the LAS was calculated by imposing the energy-balance closure assumption using the measured net radiation and the measured soil heat flux. Ezzahar et al. (2007a) have evaluated the accuracy of the both scintillometers by comparing the derived sensible heat fluxes with those measured with eddy covariance systems for the same period of the current study. The obtained linear regression yielded a slope of 0.95 (1), correlation coefficient of 0.89 (0.74) and a root mean square difference of 24 W m^{-2} (27 W m^{-2}) for the southern site (northern site). The statistical results of these comparisons showed a better agreement for the southern site than for the northern site due to the contrast between the two sites in terms of water availability. Indeed, in addition to the difference in the cover and height of vegetation between the two sites, the period of this study was chosen in order to have a distinct difference between the two sites in term of soil moisture. The southern site was dry and the northern site had just been irrigated. Fig. 3 shows the evolution of the volumetric water content throughout the experiment. From Fig. 3, it is clear that the grid, comprised of the northern and southern sites, is very heterogeneous. Therefore, this study presents a good opportunity to estimate the ET over heterogeneous grids.

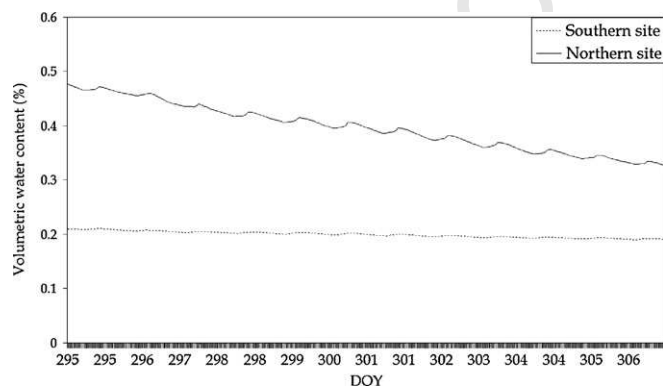


Fig. 3. Evolution of the volumetric water content during the experimental period for the southern site (dotted line) and northern site (solid line).

3. Modeling approach

3.1. Model for surface flux estimates

3.1.1. Sensible heat flux

For homogeneous vegetation cover conditions, a single-source Soil-Vegetation-Atmosphere Transfer (SVAT) model may be suitable for estimating the sensible heat flux; however in most cases the landscape is under partial vegetation canopy so that soil and vegetation contribution to the sensible heat flux exchange should be explicitly taken into account (Norman et al., 1995). For more complex canopies as the present study site, a two-source energy-balance model provides a more realistic representation of the sensible heat flux exchanges with the lower atmosphere (Lhomme et al., 1994; Merlin and Chehbouni, 2004; Norman et al., 2000). In this specific study, the sensible heat flux is estimated using the simple two-layer model developed by Lhomme et al. (1994). Here, only a brief description of the model is provided, the reader is referred to Lhomme et al. (1994) for a complete description. According to Lhomme et al. (1994), the sensible heat flux at the patch scale is expressed as follows:

$$H_{\text{Mod}} = \rho c_p \left[\frac{(T_R - T_a) - c\delta T}{r_a - r_e} \right] \quad (1)$$

where r_a is the aerodynamic resistance to heat transfer between the level of apparent sink of momentum and the reference height (sm^{-1}) (Brutsaert, 1982). r_a is calculated using the classical formulae which take into account the stability correction functions for wind and temperature (Brutsaert, 1982). T_R is the surface temperature (K), and r_e is the equivalent resistance defined by:

$$r_e = \frac{r_{af} r_{as}}{r_{af} + r_{as}} \quad (2)$$

where r_{as} is the aerodynamic resistance between the soil and the canopy source height (Shuttleworth and Gurney, 1990) and r_{af} is the bulk boundary layer resistance of the canopy (Choudhury and Monteith, 1988). The term δT represents the temperature difference between the foliage and the soil. Lhomme et al. (1994) have linked statistically δT to $(T_R - T_a)$ by the following empirical equation:

$$\delta T = a(T_R - T_a)^m \quad (3)$$

Finally c is given by

$$c = \left[\frac{1}{1 + (r_{af}/r_{as})} \right] - f_v \quad (4)$$

where f_v is the fractional vegetation cover, a and m are empirical coefficients (a positive real number and m positive integer) which were determined statistically by adjusting H estimated to H observed. The value of 0.25 and 2 were used respectively for a and m (Hoedjes et al., 2008)

3.1.2. Available energy

In general, the estimation of the evapotranspiration as the residual term of the energy-balance equation over a heterogeneous grid requires, additionally to the sensible heat flux estimates, a network of the net radiometers and the soil heat flux in order to capture the heterogeneity of the grid, which is also costly and not really feasible for operational purposes. Therefore, we proposed to estimate the available energy using a simple model which uses radiometric surface temperature, albedo and incoming solar radiation data (Chehbouni et al. (2008a)). This model is described as follows:

287 3.1.2.1. **Net radiation.** The net radiation quantifies the energy
288 available for crop evapotranspiration, photosynthesis, and soil
289 heating (Monteith and Unsworth, 1990). It is the difference
290 between the incoming and outgoing shortwave and long wave
291 radiation fluxes, and is expressed as follows:

$$R_n = (1 - \alpha)R_g + \varepsilon_s R_a - R_t \quad (5)$$

292 where α is the surface albedo, R_g is the global solar radiation, ε_s is
293 the surface emissivity which has an almost constant value (in
294 practical work a value of 0.98, may be taken for crop canopies;
295 Ortega et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2003), R_a the atmosphere thermal
296 radiation and R_t is the thermal radiation which is emitted by the
297 surface. Both R_a and R_t can be expressed in function of air
298 temperature and surface temperature (Monteith and Unsworth,
299 1990; Duarte et al., 2006), respectively. Then, Eq. (5) can be
300 rewritten as:
301

$$R_n = (1 - \alpha)R_g + \varepsilon_s \sigma (\varepsilon_a T_a^4 - T_R^4) \quad (6)$$

302 where σ is the Stefan–Boltzman constant and ε_a is the emissivity of
303 the atmosphere.

304 Several authors have proposed empirical relationships which
305 relate the atmospheric emissivity to the air temperature (Ang-
306 strom, 1918; Brunt, 1932; Idso, 1981). For clear skies, Brutsaert
307 (1975) has computed ε_a from air temperature and vapour pressure
308 as:
309

$$\varepsilon_a = 1.24 \left(\frac{e_a}{T_a} \right)^{1/7} \quad (7)$$

310 where e_a is the air vapour pressure (hPa). In what follows, this
311 equation will be used without including any correction for the
312 effect of clouds, because as shown as shown in Fig. 2, the
313 experimental period contained only a few cloudy data.

314
315 3.1.2.2. **Soil heat flux.** The soil heat flux (G), which is a function of
316 the thermal conductivity of the soil and the vertical temperature
317 gradient, is difficult to obtain in a physical-based manner over
318 large heterogeneous areas. Several researchers have parameter-
319 ized G as a constant proportion of R_n (i.e. $G = cR_n$) that is fixed
320 for the entire day or period of interest (Mecikalski et al., 1999; Norman
321 et al., 1995, 2000; Crawford et al., 2000; Su, 2002). Recommended
322 values for G/R_n are around 0.30 for sparse canopies but values
323 ranging from 0.15 to 0.40 have been reported in the literature
324 (Brutsaert, 1982; Choudhury, 1987; Humes et al., 1994; Kustas
325 and Goodrich, 1994). Recently, Santanello and Friedl (2003) have
326 reported that G is unfortunately neither constant nor negligible on
327 diurnal time scales. G/R_n can range from 0.05 to 0.50 and is driven
328 by several factors: time of day, soil moisture and thermal
329 properties, as well as the amount and height of vegetation (Kustas
330 et al., 1993). In the current study, the ratio of the soil heat flux to
331 net radiation was estimated according to Santanello and Friedl
332 (2003) as follows:

$$\frac{G}{R_n} = A \cos \left[\frac{2\pi(t + 10800)}{B} \right] \quad (8)$$

333 where t is the time of day in seconds, and A and B are adjusting
334 factors which were set by Santanello and Friedl (2003) as 0.31 and
335 74 000 s, respectively. Using the same factors, this model was used
336 with success over a wide range of climate and surface conditions
337 (Hoedjes et al., 2008; Chehbouni et al., 2008a; and Ezzahar et al.,
338 2009).

339 Provided that sensible heat flux H , net radiation R_n and soil heat
340 flux G estimates are obtained using the aforementioned formula-
341 tions, estimated latent heat flux ET can be derived as the residual
342 term of the energy-balance equation.
343

3.2. Aggregation procedures

344

345 In this section, two aggregation algorithms are presented to
346 estimate the diurnal course of evapotranspiration at the grid-scale:
347 spatial aggregation which consists of upscaling the patch
348 measurements/or estimates to grid-scale estimates and the
349 temporal aggregation which consists of extrapolating the grid-
350 scale instantaneous values which can be derived from remote
351 sensing to daily ones. In what follows, the area-averaged over the
352 grid is denoted by the angle brackets, $\langle \cdot \rangle$.

3.2.1. Spatial aggregation

353

354 In the following, the theory which underlies essential aspects of
355 the application of the spatial aggregation algorithm to formulate
356 the grid-scale surface fluxes is described. The spatial aggregation is
357 conceived as a method which seeks to link the model parameters
358 which control surface exchange on a patch scale with the area-
359 average value of equivalent model parameters applicable at larger,
360 model grid-scale, and to adopt the equations that are accepted as
361 reasonable descriptions of surface-atmosphere exchanges at the
362 patch scale to describe the area-averaged behavior of hetero-
363 geneous cover on the grid-scale. The strategy adopted in this
364 current study to infer grid-scale surface fluxes is based on two
365 assumptions (Shuttleworth et al., 1997; Chehbouni et al., 2000a,
366 2008a): the first one consists in determining grid-scale surface
367 fluxes in such a way that the flux equations on the grid-scale must
368 have the same form as those used on a patch scale but whose
369 arguments are the aggregate expressions of those on the patch
370 scale. The second one stipulates that “the effective or area-average
371 value of land surface parameters is estimated as a weighted average
372 over the component cover types in each grid through that function
373 involving the parameter which most succinctly expresses its relation-
374 ship with the associated surface flux” (Shuttleworth et al., 1997).
375 Expressions of grid-scale surface fluxes (denoted by angle
376 brackets) resulting from the application of this simple aggregation
377 rule are given below:

$$\langle R_n \rangle = (1 - \langle \alpha \rangle) R_g + \langle \varepsilon_s \rangle \sigma (\varepsilon_a T_a^4 - \langle T_S^4 \rangle) \quad (9)$$

378

$$\frac{\langle G \rangle}{\langle R_n \rangle} = A \cos \left[\frac{2\pi(t + 10800)}{B} \right] \quad (10)$$

380

$$\langle H_{Sim} \rangle = \rho c_p \left[\frac{\langle (T_R) - T_a \rangle - [(\langle r_{as} \rangle / \langle r_{as} \rangle + \langle r_{af} \rangle) - f](a \langle (T_R) - T_a \rangle^m)}{\langle r_a \rangle - \langle r_e \rangle} \right] \quad (11)$$

382

383 Similarly, the application of the second assumption leads to the
384 following set of relationships between local (subscript i) and
385 effective (in brackets) radiative temperature, surface emissivity,
386 surface albedo, displacement height and roughness length
387 (Chehbouni et al., 2008a):
388

$$\langle T_R \rangle = \left[\frac{\sum_i f_i \varepsilon_i (T_{Ri})^4}{\langle \varepsilon \rangle} \right]^{0.25} \quad (12)$$

391

$$\langle \varepsilon_s \rangle = \sum_i f_i \varepsilon_{si} \quad (13)$$

394

$$\langle \alpha \rangle = \sum_i f_i \alpha_i \quad (14)$$

393

396

$$\ln(z_0) = \sum_i f_i \ln(z_{0i}) \quad (15)$$

$$\langle d \rangle = \sum_i f_i d_i \quad (16)$$

where f_i is the fraction of the surface covered by the patch i with obviously $\sum_i f_i = 1$. T_{Ri} is the radiometric surface temperature over the patch i . In this study, T_{Ri} was derived from measured soil and canopy temperatures weighted by the fractional area of vegetation (Ezzahar et al., 2007b; Norman et al., 1995) as follows:

$$T_{Ri} \approx [f_c T_c^4 + (1 - f_c) T_s^4]^{1/4} \quad (17)$$

where f_c is the cover fraction of olive trees, and T_s and T_c are the measured soil and canopy temperatures respectively, using two infrared thermometers.

ε_i , α_i , z_{0i} and d_i are the surface emissivity, the albedo, the roughness length and the displacement height for the patch i .

Finally, the grid-scale evapotranspiration derived from the spatial aggregation method (denoted as $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{SA}$) can be obtained as the residual term of the energy-balance equation:

$$\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{SA} = \langle R_n \rangle - \langle H_{Sim} \rangle - \langle G \rangle \quad (18)$$

Although this method seems very practical for estimating surface fluxes. However, as stated by Chehbouni et al. (2000a), it has a major limitation since its derivation is from semi-empirical relationships between the local and effective surface parameters are not always theoretically supported. In the regard, the relationship between model and observational variables (see Eq. (3)), which is established at patch scale, can introduce additional errors when extended to grid-scale. However, the finding of Chehbouni et al. (2000a, 2008a) seems to indicate that these errors have a limited impact on surface flux estimates. Nevertheless, establishing physically based relationships between model and observational variables at grid-scale is an ongoing research topic.

3.2.2. Temporal aggregation

Grid-scale evapotranspiration ($\langle ET \rangle$) can be also determined using remote sensing data in conjunction with an energy-balance model. Practically, the sun-synchronous sensors are the most suitable for deriving $\langle ET \rangle$ (French et al., 2005; Chehbouni et al., 2008a). However, these sensors provide only instantaneous values at the satellite overpass. These are of limited interest to water managers who are primarily focusing on daily values of $\langle ET \rangle$ (Bastiaanssen et al., 2000). Several methods have been proposed for extrapolating instantaneous ET to daily values. The simplest consist of relating daily ET to the instantaneous near surface vertical temperature gradient at midday (Jackson et al., 1977), or assuming the ET diurnal course is similar to that of solar irradiance, to be approximated by a sine function. However, due to their empirical character, both method accuracies are limited (Zhang and Lemeur, 1995). Another possibility is assuming a constant daytime evaporative fraction ($EF = ET/AE$), to be used with daily available energy ($AE = R_n - G$) for deriving daily ET (Sugita and Brutsaert, 1991; Gomez et al., 2005). The EF is defined as the ratio of ET to the available energy, AE. Recently, Hoedjes et al. (2008) have shown that assuming a constant daytime EF to derive accurate ET cannot be generalized to all surface conditions. Under dry conditions, the constant EF assumption seems to lead to reasonable results with regard to daily ET estimation. While under wet conditions, EF depicts a concave up shape with a pronounced decrease during early morning and a sharp increase during late afternoon (see Fig. 2 in Hoedjes et al., 2008). Furthermore, since the largest evaporative fluxes occur during these conditions, the use of

a diurnal constant value of EF induces a large error in the calculation of ET.

To overcome this problem, Hoedjes et al. (2008) have proposed a new heuristic approach to parameterize the diurnal course of EF over homogeneous surfaces using the atmospheric parameters and soil moisture status (dry or wet). This approach has been generalized by Chehbouni et al. (2008a) to a mixture of contrasted three fields (cotton, chickpea and wheat) in northern Mexico. In the current study, we applied the same method developed by Chehbouni et al. (2008a) to derive $\langle EF \rangle$ over a grid sparse olive tree canopy. Compared to earlier studies, our investigations were performed in difficult environmental conditions due to the type of vegetation (tall and sparse vegetation), and the irregular space-time soil moisture pattern induced by the type of irrigation. On the grid-scale, the actual $\langle EF \rangle$ diurnal course parameterized when accounting for both atmospheric demand and soil moisture status is given by Chehbouni et al. (2008a):

$$\langle EF_{Sim}^{ACT} \rangle = \begin{cases} \langle EF_{Sim} \rangle r_{EF}^{1130} & \text{for } \langle \beta^{1130} \rangle \leq 1.5 \\ \langle EF_{Rem}^{1130} \rangle & \text{for } \langle \beta^{1130} \rangle > 1.5 \end{cases} \quad (19)$$

$\langle EF_{Sim} \rangle$ is the EF diurnal course parameterized when accounting for atmospheric demand (i.e. global solar radiation (R_g) and relative humidity (RH)) only, which is formulated as:

$$\langle EF_{Sim} \rangle = 1.2 - \left(0.4 \frac{R_g}{1000} + 0.5 \frac{RH}{100} \right) \quad (20)$$

r_{EF}^{1130} is a correction factor given by:

$$r_{EF}^{1130} = \frac{\langle EF_{Rem}^{1130} \rangle}{\langle EF_{Sim}^{1130} \rangle} \quad (21)$$

where $\langle EF_{Sim}^{1130} \rangle$ is $\langle EF_{Sim} \rangle$ at 11:30 UTC, and $\langle EF_{Rem}^{1130} \rangle$ is the EF estimated from remote sensing observations at 11:30 UTC calculated as:

$$\langle EF_{Rem}^{1130} \rangle = \frac{((AE)_{Rem}^{1130}) - ((H_{Sim})_{Rem}^{1130})}{((AE)_{Rem}^{1130})}$$

where $((H_{Sim})_{Rem}^{1130})$ is the value of the sensible heat flux at 11:30. The latter was estimated from Eq. (11) using the effective radiometric surface temperature (Eq. (12)). $((AE)_{Rem}^{1130})$ is the estimated available energy at 11:30 UTC calculated by combining Eqs. (9) and (10) using also the effective radiometric surface temperature.

$\langle \beta^{1130} \rangle$ is the value of the Bowen ratio $((H_{Sim})_{Rem}^{1130} / ((AE)_{Rem}^{1130}) - ((H_{Sim})_{Rem}^{1130}))$ at 11:30 UTC, which is used to switch from a constant to a daily variable $\langle EF \rangle$.

In this study, the time of 11:30 UTC was chosen since it corresponds to the local time of overpass of the ASTER satellite (Hoedjes et al., 2008). When choosing the AVHRR overpass time over north-western Mexico, i.e. 14:00 UTC, Chehbouni et al. (2008a) have shown that this parameterization was also reasonable.

In addition to the parameterization of the $\langle EF \rangle$, retrieval of the diurnal course $\langle ET \rangle$ requires also $\langle AE \rangle$ over the diurnal cycle, which is not routinely available. Here again, the same heuristic approach developed by Chehbouni et al. (2008a) on the grid-scale, was used in this specific study. This approach combines the instantaneous remote sensing observations of AE ($((AE)_{Rem}^{1130})$) at 11:30 UTC with a function $\langle R \rangle$ involving the meteorological information which can be obtained from observation networks and/or weather forecasts

to derive AE diurnal courses. The latter is expressed as:

$$\left(\frac{\langle(AE)\rangle^t}{\langle(AE)\rangle_{Rem}^{1130}}\right) = f\left(\frac{\langle R^t \rangle}{\langle R^{1130} \rangle}\right) \quad (22)$$

where R^t is a function given by:

$$\langle R^t \rangle = (1 - \langle \alpha \rangle) R_g^t + \langle \varepsilon_s \rangle \varepsilon_a^t \sigma (T_a^t)^4 \quad (23)$$

where t is the time of the day, f is the following 2nd order function:

$$f\left(\frac{\langle R^t \rangle}{\langle R^{1130} \rangle}\right) = a_2 \left(\frac{\langle R^t \rangle}{\langle R^{1130} \rangle}\right)^2 + a_1 \left(\frac{\langle R^t \rangle}{\langle R^{1130} \rangle}\right) + a_0 \quad (24)$$

where a_0 , a_1 and a_2 are empirical coefficients established by Hoedjes et al. (2008) as 0.48495, 1.15120 and 0.34285, respectively, when calibrating this function over a homogeneous olive orchard in Morocco. Using the same coefficients, Chehbouni et al. (2008a) have extended the AE parameterization with success to grid-scale. It is of important to notice that outgoing long wave radiation is purposely not introduced in Eq. (23). This was made to avoid the requirement for daily course of surface temperature which is not available at the appropriate space scale.

Finally, the grid-scale evapotranspiration (denoted, $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA}$) is obtained as follows:

$$\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA} = \langle EF_{Sim}^{ACT} \rangle \langle (AE) \rangle^t \quad (25)$$

4. Results and discussion

In this study, only daytime observations have been considered, since the most important surface fluxes occur during this interval, and the behavior of the temperature structure parameter is not well known for stable conditions which can create greater uncertainty in the fluxes, especially over heterogeneous surfaces. Note that the half-hourly time scale is used in all analysis. This section will be organized as follows: firstly a comparison between the sensible heat fluxes derived from the LAS and those estimated using the Lhomme et al. (1994) model on the grid-scale. Secondly, we compare the LAS-derived diurnal course of the evapotranspiration and that estimated using spatial and temporal aggregation schemes on the grid-scale.

4.1. Sensible heat fluxes

Before evaluating the accuracy of the application of the Lhomme et al. (1994) model on the grid-scale, we first present

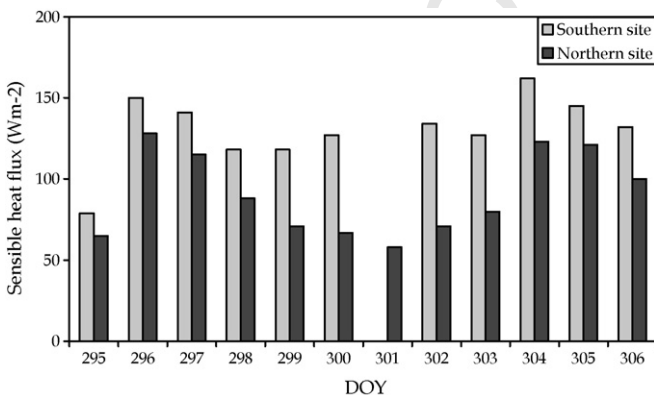


Fig. 4. Daily average daytime values of the sensible heat flux derived from the LAS over the northern and southern sites during the study period.

in Fig. 4 the daily average daytime values of the sensible heat flux derived from the LAS over both sites. The contrast between the two sites in terms of water availability (irrigation) can clearly be seen in this figure. Sensible heat flux values over the southern site are considerably higher than those over the northern site. The maximum difference between the values of H was around 63 W m^{-2} , seen on DOY 302.

At the patch scale, the Lhomme et al. (1994) model has been tested with success using the data collected over the southern site (Hoedjes et al., 2007, 2008). However, as far as we know such a study of the applicability of the Lhomme et al. (1994) model to the grid-scale has never been performed before. In this study, an effort has been made to apply this model over a heterogeneous grid which comprised the northern and southern sites using the aggregation rules. The simulated grid-scale sensible heat flux ($\langle H_{Sim} \rangle$) was estimated using Eq. (11). Since satellite based surface temperature measurements were not available, ground-based surface temperature measured over each patch were used to construct grid-scale surface temperature using Eq. (12). Similarly, Eqs. (15) and (16) have been used to derive grid-scale displacement height and roughness length. Note that their patch scale values were derived as fraction of the vegetation height.

The effectiveness of this approach should have been validated by installing one scintillometer spanning the entire grid-scale. However, this could not be achieved easily for practical reasons since this unique scintillometer should have been installed much higher than the two LAS used in this study in order to avoid saturation.

To overcome this problem, Ezzahar et al. (2007a) developed a new approach to infer an aggregated structure parameter of the refractive index on the grid-scale ($\langle C_n^2 \rangle$) using the same data collected in the current study. This approach combines LAS patch scale measurements, meteorological data and aggregation schemes. For more details the reader can refer to Ezzahar et al. (2007a). It is worth mentioning that the obtained $\langle C_n^2 \rangle$ behaved according to Monin–Obukhov Similarity Theory. Then, this $\langle C_n^2 \rangle$ was used to derive the grid-scale sensible heat flux ($\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$) by applying MOST at the grid-scale. The accuracy of this approach has been investigated by comparing $\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$ to the area average of sensible heat flux measured by the eddy covariance systems which were installed on the meteorological towers (see Fig. 1). The result of this comparison showed a good agreement with a $\text{RMSD} = 20.3 \text{ W m}^{-2}$ and $R^2 = 0.89$ (Ezzahar et al., 2007a). Here, the values obtained for $\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$ in Ezzahar et al. (2007a) have been used to validate $\langle H_{Sim} \rangle$. Fig. 5 displays the comparison between $\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$ and $\langle H_{Sim} \rangle$. The RMSD is 30 W m^{-2} and the correlation coefficient and the slope associated with the linear regression

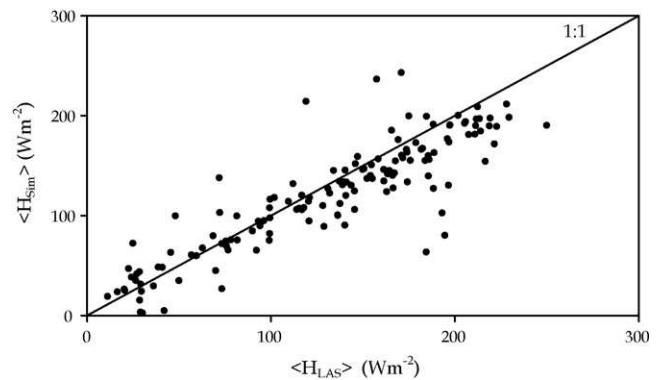


Fig. 5. Comparison between the sensible heat fluxes ($\langle H_{Sim} \rangle$) (using the Lhomme et al. (1994) model at grid-scale), and ($\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$) (obtained by combining LAS patch scale measurements, meteorological data and an aggregation model, Ezzahar et al., 2007a).

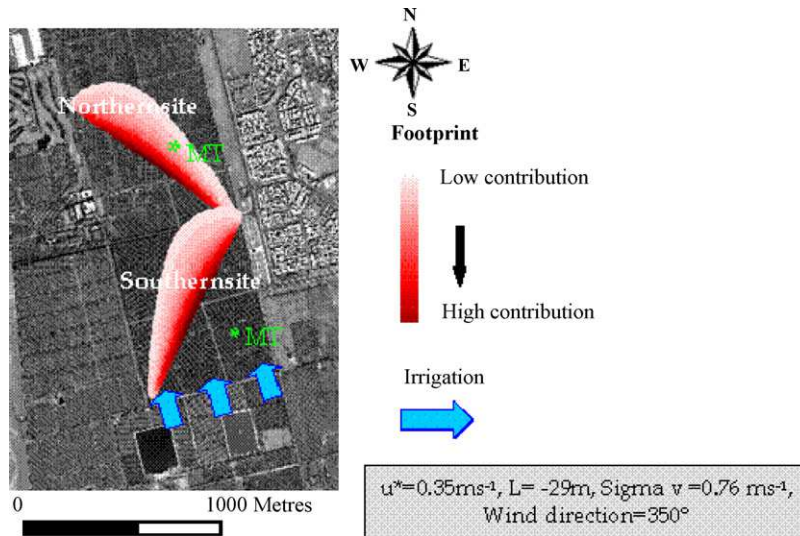


Fig. 6. Footprint of the LAS, calculated using the footprint model of Horst and Weil (1994). The direction of irrigation is also shown.

591 forced to the origin were 0.76 and 0.90, respectively. This result
592 indicates that the aggregation schemes are not exact and errors are
593 associated with some of the assumptions used to drive them.
594 Additionally, some scatter is related to the footprint effect of the
595 scintillometers (see Fig. 6). Nevertheless, considering the complex-
596 ity of the study site, the obtained result is very encouraging.
597 Consequently, it can be concluded albeit its simplicity, the
598 Lhomme et al. (1994) model, can be considered a suitable model
599 for estimating the sensible heat fluxes using the effective
600 radiometric surface temperature over heterogeneous grids.

601 4.2. Evapotranspiration

602 4.2.1. Spatial aggregation

603 Before evaluating the accuracy of the evapotranspiration
604 derived from the spatial aggregation, we compare first the grid-
605 scale available energy ($\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$) against the ground-based
606 measurement (denoted $\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$) in Fig. 7. The $\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$ was obtained by
607 combining Eqs. (9) and (10). Here again, the estimation of the
608 $\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$ used the effective radiometric surface temperature
609 (Eq. (12)) through Eq. (9). The effective surface emissivity and
610 albedo required for the estimation of the $\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$, were derived
611 from Eqs. (13) and (14). The $\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$ was derived as area-
612 averages of those measured over the southern and the northern

613 sites. The correspondence between $\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$ and $\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$ was quite
614 good. The RMSD value was 40 W m^{-2} , and the linear regression
615 forced to the origin yielded a 0.89 slope value and a 0.98 correlation
616 coefficient. It should be noted that in this specific study, the
617 atmospheric radiation was estimated using Brutsaert's formula
618 without cloudiness correction; because the experiment period
619 included few cloudless data. Except DOY 295, all days were sunny
620 (see Fig. 2). Therefore, the use of Brutsaert's equation will not
621 introduce significant error in the estimation of atmospheric
622 radiation. However, there might be other sources of errors such
623 as those related the uncertainly associated with the aggregation
624 method which is purely of a semi-empirical nature, as well as those
625 associated with the measurement of net radiation which ranges
626 from 5% to 7% for instruments of the same manufacture and 10% to
627 15% between manufacturers (Field et al., 1992). It is also possible
628 that some error compensation might have occurred which may
629 explained the fact that difference between the estimated and
630 measured available was less than expected even over homo-
631 geneous surfaces.

632 Using values of $\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$ and $\langle H_{Sim} \rangle$ which were calculated using
633 the effective radiometric surface temperature (see Eqs. (9)–(11)),
634 the diurnal course of grid-scale evapotranspiration, $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{SA}$
635 was estimated as the residual term of the energy-balance equation
636 (Eq. (18)). $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{SA}$ was compared to the grid-scale evapotran-

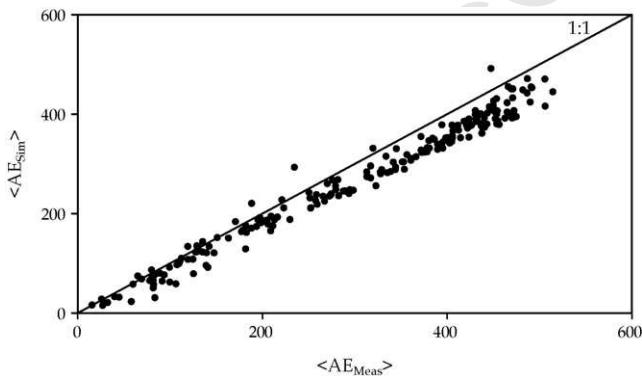


Fig. 7. Comparison between the estimated ($\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$, obtained using the spatial aggregation scheme, Eqs. (9) and (10)) and observed ($\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$, obtained as area-weighted averages of those measured over both sites) area-averaged available energy.

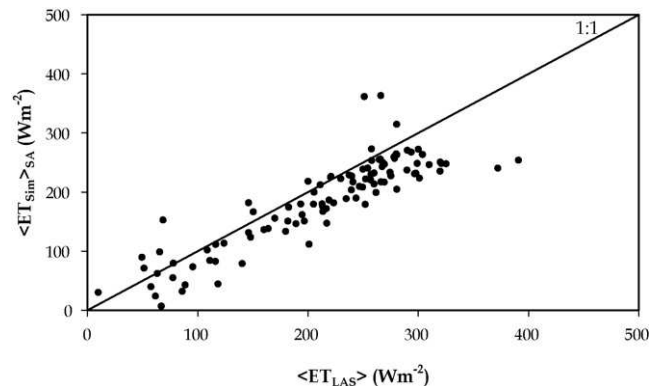
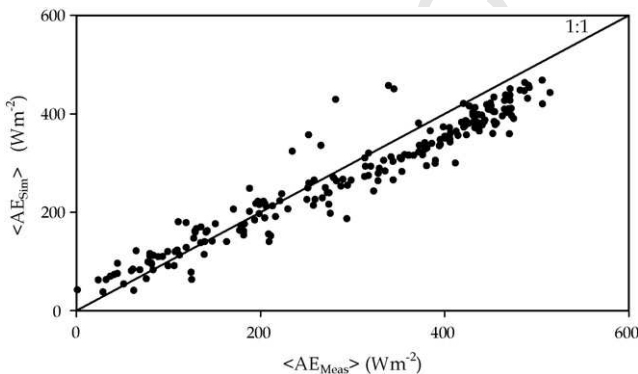


Fig. 8. Comparison between $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{SA}$ (estimated using the spatial aggregation scheme) and $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ (obtained from the LAS as the difference between the $\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$ and $\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$).

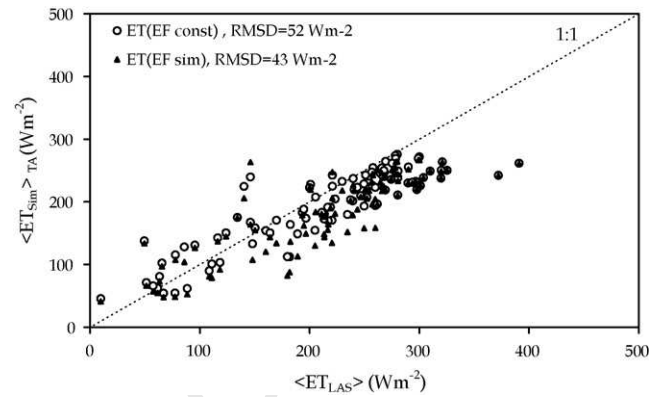
637 spiration ($\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$) derived from the LAS as the difference between
 638 the $\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$ and $\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$ in Fig. 8. The RMSD between $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{SA}$ and
 639 $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ was 46 W m^{-2} and the correlation coefficient and the slope
 640 associated with the linear regression forced to the origin were 0.78
 641 and 0.87, respectively. This confirms the results reported by several
 642 authors where the potential of the LAS to derive accurate
 643 evapotranspiration has been demonstrated (Ezzahar et al.,
 644 2007b, 2009; Chehbouni et al., 2000b, in press; Hemakumara
 645 et al., 2003; Hoedjes et al., 2002). It should be noted that the
 646 problem of closure of the energy balance has no big effect on the
 647 results, because both approaches forced the energy-balance
 648 closure. Such discrepancy can be explained by the combination
 649 of two factors. First, the error associated to the impact of the
 650 footprint. Second, since the ET is obtained as the residual term of
 651 the energy-balance equation, any difference between measured
 652 and estimated available energy and sensible heat flux is directly
 653 translated into error in the estimated ET. However, despite the
 654 observed scatter, the correspondence between $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{SA}$ and
 655 $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ is acceptable considering the difficulty in estimating
 656 grid-scale latent heat flux over such complex grid. Finally, it can
 657 be concluded that the spatial aggregation procedure yielded reason-
 658 able grid surface fluxes estimates.

659 4.2.2. Temporal aggregation

660 In this section an effort has been made to extend the heuristic
 661 approach which consists of extrapolating instantaneous values to
 662 daily ones proposed by Hoedjes et al. (2008) over a homogeneous
 663 patch to a heterogeneous grid (tall and sparse vegetation, irrigation
 664 method employed). Before obtaining the grid-scale evapotrans-
 665 piration using the temporal aggregation, the grid-scale of
 666 available energy ($\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$) estimated using Eq. (22), was compared
 667 to the ground-based measurements ($\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$) in Fig. 9. The
 668 correspondence between $\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$ and $\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$ was quite good. The
 669 RMSD value was 47 W m^{-2} , and the linear regression forced to the
 670 origin yielded a 0.90 slope value and a 0.91 correlation coefficient.
 671 By comparing these results with those obtained when we used the
 672 spatial aggregation, it can be seen that in addition to the error
 673 related to the spatial aggregation, the use of the temporal
 674 aggregation generates an added extra error in the estimation of
 675 $\langle AE \rangle$ (about 21%). However, considering the complexity of the grid,
 676 the footprint effect and the error associated with the assumptions
 677 used to drive aggregation rules, it can be concluded that the
 678 proposed heuristic approach leads to reasonable estimates of the
 679 diurnal course area average available energy. The results of this
 680 study confirm and generalize the findings of Hoedjes et al. (2008)
 681 who established this heuristic approach on the southern site which
 682 was one of the two patches of our grid-scale study as well as those
 683 established by Chehbouni et al. (2008a) over short vegetation.



684 Fig. 9. Comparison between the estimated ($\langle AE_{Sim} \rangle$, obtained using the temporal
 685 aggregation scheme (Eq. (22))) and observed ($\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$, obtained as area-weighted
 686 averages of those measured over both sites) area-averaged available energy.



687 Fig. 10. Comparison between $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA}$ (estimated using the temporal aggregation
 688 scheme through Eqs. (19)–(25)) and $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ (obtained from the LAS as the difference
 689 between the $\langle AE_{Meas} \rangle$ and $\langle H_{LAS} \rangle$). Also included is the grid-scale evapotranspiration
 690 calculated by considering a constant diurnal evaporative fraction (EF) equal to that
 691 at 11:30 UTC (EF_{1130}).

684 Finally, the diurnal course of the grid-scale evapotranspiration,
 685 $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA}$, was retrieved using Eqs. (19)–(25). Fig. 10 displays the
 686 validation of these $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA}$ retrievals, against values derived from
 687 the LAS ($\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$). Also included is the grid-scale evapotranspiration
 688 calculated by considering a constant diurnal evaporative fraction
 689 (EF) equal to that at 11H30 (EF_{1130}). It can be clearly seen that taking
 690 into account the diurnal variation of EF significantly improves
 691 $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA}$ retrieval. RMSD between $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA}$ and $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ was
 692 43 W m^{-2} , the relative error was 19% and the slope was 0.88, as
 693 compared to 52 W m^{-2} , 27% and 0.82, respectively when using a
 694 constant EF. These results corroborated with those established by
 695 Hoedjes et al. (2008) and Chehbouni et al. (2008a). Additionally, by
 696 properly taking into account the effect of the grid heterogeneity due
 697 to both vegetation and soil moisture variations along the grid and the
 698 error associated to the application of the aggregation rules, the
 699 agreement between the $\langle ET_{Sim} \rangle_{TA}$ and $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ is considered to be
 700 acceptable.

701 In general, as for the spatial aggregation scheme, the temporal
 702 aggregation method can be considered suitable for practical
 703 purposes. Indeed, the spatial aggregation needs the diurnal courses
 704 of the radiometric surface temperature for calculating the sensible
 705 heat fluxes and the available energy. However, this variable cannot
 706 be obtained using remote sensing technique at the required scale
 707 for irrigation management purposes (a few hundred meters
 708 resolution). Geostationary sensors can provide the diurnal courses
 709 of spatially radiometric surface temperature with temporal
 710 sampling from 15 min to 1 h, but their spatial resolution is very
 711 coarse. The advantage of combining spatial and temporal
 712 aggregation schemes is to be able to estimate daily value of ET
 713 at the grid-scale using a single value of surface temperature at the
 714 satellite overpass time.
 715



716 Fig. 11. Experimental design for the Yaqui valley experiment (Chehbouni et al.,
 717 2008a, in press).

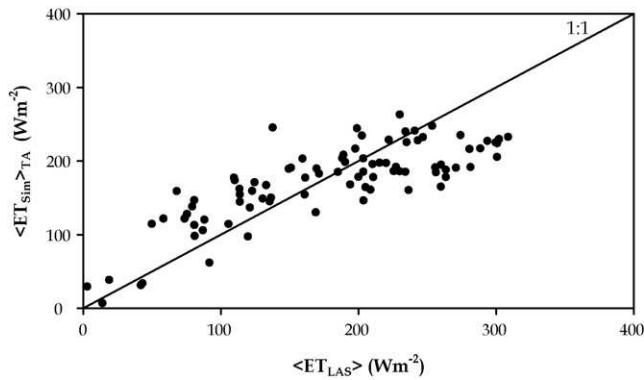


Fig. 12. Comparison between $\langle ET_{sim/TA} \rangle$ (estimated using the temporal aggregation scheme (Chehbouni et al., 2008a)) and $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ (obtained from the LAS, Chehbouni et al., in press).

To further assess the performance of the developed combination of temporal and spatial aggregation methods, a second dataset collected in northern Mexico (Chehbouni et al., 2008a, in press) was used. The grid consisted of three adjacent fields: cotton, chickpea and wheat. The three fields with eddy covariance flux towers are shown in Fig. 11. Both studies used the same data. Here, we briefly recall the objectives of these studies. In Chehbouni et al. (2008a), the temporal aggregation scheme for deriving diurnal course of $\langle ET_{sim/TA} \rangle$ was tested with success over the three fields by comparing the $\langle ET_{sim/TA} \rangle$ retrievals to those measured by the eddy covariance systems. This was achieved by using the same temporal aggregation scheme used in this study (Eqs. (19)–(25)). The study of Chehbouni et al. (in press) aimed to assess the potential and the limitations of the LAS in inferring path average of the sensible (H_{LAS}) and latent ($\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$) fluxes over the three fields by comparing the LAS fluxes to those measured by the eddy covariance systems.

Fig. 12 presents the comparison of $\langle ET_{sim/TA} \rangle$ (derived in Chehbouni et al. (2008a)) with $\langle ET_{LAS} \rangle$ (derived in Chehbouni et al., in press). The statistical results of this comparison showed that the RMSD was about 48 W m^{-2} and the correlation coefficient and the slope associated with the linear regression forced to the origin were 0.90 and 0.65, respectively. Comparing these results with those obtained in the current study, it can be concluded that the proposed approach can be used with success in different environmental conditions. The results are an important step toward developing the remote sensing algorithms for better estimation of the evapotranspiration on a large scale relying on the use of the scintillometry. Additional investigation using data collected over a range of surface type combinations are required to generalize and confirm our finding, and more importantly, future research should be directed towards building robust relationships between model and observational variables directly at the grid-scale.

5. Conclusions

Comparisons of grid-scale evapotranspiration derived from the scintillometer with those estimated from the spatial and temporal aggregation schemes, under difficult environment conditions (sparseness of vegetation and heterogeneity in terms of soil moisture pattern induced by the “flood irrigation” method), showed an acceptable result using data collected in the central of Morocco. Additionally, the temporal aggregation scheme has been tested with success over a heterogeneous grid in a semi-arid region in northern Mexico. This finding confirms and generalizes the consistency of the aggregation schemes for accurate estimates of the evapotranspiration over heterogeneous grids. However, it is

worth noting that the aggregation algorithms presented here have some limitations. The method to establish relationships between the local and effective surface parameters is purely of a semi-empirical nature which is not universal. Additionally this method uses local measurements of surface temperature; albedo and solar radiation which were assumed to be representative of the individual site. This assumption can certainly lead to some errors since the heterogeneity is also encountered at the field or patch scale. Future research should be thus directed towards building robust physical relationships between the local and effective surface parameters as well as testing it using remotely sensed data, which provide spatial distribution of surface temperature, albedo and solar radiation.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

A.1. Surface fluxes using scintillometry

The LAS is a device that provides measurements of the variation in the refractive index of air caused by atmospheric turbulence. This instrument consists of a transmitter and a receiver, both with an aperture diameter of 0.15 m, set up at a separation distance (or path length) ranging from 250 to 5000 m. The transmitter emits electromagnetic radiation, which is scattered by the turbulent atmosphere, and the resulting variations in signal intensity (scintillations) are recorded by a receiver comprising an identical mirror and a photodiode detector. The intensity fluctuations are related to the path average structure parameter of the refractive index of air, C_n^2 . The scintillations are primarily the result of fluctuations in air temperature and humidity. Strictly speaking, the measured C_n^2 is related to the structure parameters of temperature C_T^2 , of humidity C_q^2 , and the covariant term C_{Tq} . For electromagnetic waves in the visible and near-infrared region, however, humidity related scintillations are much smaller than temperature related scintillations. Wesely (1976), and more recently Moene (2003), have shown that for a LAS operating at a near-infrared wavelength, we can derive the structure parameter of temperature C_T^2 from C_n^2 using:

$$C_T^2 = C_n^2 \left(\frac{T_a^2}{-0.78 \times 10^{-6} p} \right)^2 \left(1 + \frac{0.03}{\beta} \right)^{-2} \quad (\text{A.1})$$

where T_a is the air temperature (K), p is atmospheric pressure (Pa) and β is the Bowen ratio. The factor involving the Bowen ratio is the correction term for the influence of humidity fluctuations.

Using Monin-Obukhov Similarity Theory (MOST), the sensible heat flux (H_{LAS}) can be obtained from C_T^2 and additional wind speed data through the following dimensionless relationship:

$$\frac{C_T^2 (z_{LAS} - d)^{2/3}}{T_*^2} = f_T \left(\frac{z_{LAS} - d}{L} \right) = c_{T1} \left(1 - c_{T2} \frac{z_{LAS} - d}{L} \right)^{-2/3} \quad (\text{A.2})$$

where L is the Obukhov length (m) ($L = \rho c_p T_a u_*^3 / kg H_{LAS}$), and T_* is the temperature scale ($T_* = \frac{-H_{LAS}}{\rho c_p u_*}$). The friction velocity (u_*) is

expressed as:

$$u_* = ku \left[\ln \left(\frac{(z_{LAS} - d)}{z_0} \right) - \psi \left(\frac{(z_{LAS} - d)}{L} \right) \right]^{-1} \quad (A.3)$$

where z_{LAS} is the effective height of the LAS above the surface, ψ is the integrated stability function (Panofsky and Dutton, 1984), d is the displacement height and z_0 is the roughness length, k is the von Karman constant, g is the gravitational acceleration, ρ is the density of air and c_p is the specific heat of air at constant pressure. Here, d and z_0 were calculated as a function of the vegetation height (Ezzahar et al., 2007a,b). During the iteration procedure, the Bowen ratio is evaluated using the H_{LAS} , measured net radiation (R_n) and measured soil heat flux (G) [$\beta = (H_{LAS}/(R_n - G - H_{LAS}))$]. In this study we will confine ourselves to unstable conditions and will use the MOST relationship f_T in Eq. (2) given by De Bruin et al. (1993).

Finally, the ET from the LAS can be derived by imposing the energy-balance closure assumption (Chehbouni et al., 2000b, in press; Ezzahar et al., 2007b, 2009; Hemakumara et al., 2003; Hoedjes et al., 2002).

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