Seismic evidence for ultralow-velocity zones beneath Africa and eastern Atlantic

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Abstract. SKS waveforms recorded at distances of about 110° are extremely useful to constrain seismic velocity structure at the base of the mantle. SKS waves near this distance develop a complicated interference pattern with the phases \( SP_{n}KS \) and \( SKP_{n}S \). We report anomalous behavior of this interference in a number of recordings of deep earthquakes beneath South America from stations in Europe and Africa. We model these data with two-dimensional dome-like structures at the base of the mantle which extend laterally by a few hundred kilometers and in which the shear velocity is up to 30% lower than in the Preliminary Reference Earth Model (PREM). The spatial extent of these structures, their position with respect to the SKS core exit points, and their seismic characteristics can not be uniquely determined. However, the presence of a dipping or a concaved upper interface is a key attribute of successful models. Models that invoke flat layers are insufficiently complex to explain the most erratic waveform behavior. The most anomalous data correspond to sampling regions at the base of the mantle beneath the East African Rift and beneath the Iceland, where possibly, whole mantle upwellings form.

1. Introduction

The lowermost 300 km of the mantle (termed \( D'' \) in this paper) is a complex region according to seismological observations and geodynamic models. It contains a thermal boundary layer at its base which transmits about 10 to 15% of the Earth’s heat flow [Davies, 1980]; it is highly heterogeneous, and it may well influence convection in the core and mantle [Lay et al., 1998].

Seismic models of \( D'' \) are derived using a variety of data. Tomographic maps of \( D'' \) [e.g., Li and Romanowicz, 1996; Masters et al., 1996; Grand et al., 1997; Ritzwoller and Lavely, 1995] are primarily based on body wave travel times. They show regions with relatively high seismic velocity (compared to Preliminary Reference Earth Model (PREM) [Dziewonski and Anderson, 1981]) beneath the circum-Pacific which possibly represent the seismic signatures of downwelling slabs [e.g., Engerbretson et al., 1992]. Broad low seismic velocity anomalies, which may represent large-scale upwellings, are present beneath Africa and the central Pacific where subduction has not occurred since the Mesozoic [e.g., Chase and Shrowl, 1983]. These low-velocity regions contain many of the world’s hot spots [Crough and Jurdy, 1980], and they correlate with the long-wavelength geoid highs as expected for a convecting mantle [Hager et al., 1985]. Additional seismological constraints on the spatial extent, seismic velocity gradients, and shear velocity anisotropy within these large-scale anomalies have come from the modeling of \( P_{c}P \) precursors [Mori and Helmberger, 1995; Revenaugh and Meyer, 1997], broadband SKS and \( SP_{n}KS \) waveforms [Garnero and Helmberger, 1996], differential travel times [Breger and Romanowicz, 1998], broadband precursors to \( PKP \) [Wen and Helmberger, 1998a], and \( SV-SH \) polarization [Lay et al., 1998].

Most of these body wave modeling efforts focused primarily on the Pacific anomaly which is well sampled by seismic waves that propagate from deep earthquakes in the western Pacific to stations in North America.

Recently, high-quality broadband data have been provided by the 1994-1995 experiment in Tanzania [Nyblade et al., 1996; Ritsema et al., 1998a], which enables us to study the deep mantle beneath Africa by waveform modeling. In particular, recordings of earthquakes in the southwestern Atlantic Ocean at the Tanzania array show large shear wave travel time delays that indicate the presence of anomalous structure in the lower mantle beneath Africa (Plate 1).

Plate 1a shows \( S \) and \( ScS \) travel time delays (with respect to PREM) of an event in the Sandwich Islands, while Plate 1b shows \( S \) and SKS delays by an event in the Drake Passage. The \( S, ScS, \) and SKS waves propagate through the same mantle corridor between the Drake Passage and central Asia (Plate 2). Note that the delay of \( S \), generated by the Sandwich Island event, increases systematically from about zero at 65° to about 10 s at 75°. \( ScS \) phases are delayed by about 12 s over the entire distance range. The Tanzania array was installed on the boundary between the Tanzania Craton and the East African Rift. Ritsema et al. [1998b] estimate that about 3-4 s of the \( S \) delay is caused by anomalously low seismic velocity structure beneath the rift. The most compelling evidence that the remaining 6-8 s of the delay of \( S \) and \( ScS \) is caused by low-velocity structure in the lower mantle beneath Africa is provided by the SKS data from the Drake Passage event shown in Plate 1b. The trend of SKS delays is opposite from the trend of \( S \) and \( ScS \) of the Sandwich Island earthquake even though the paths through the upper mantle are virtually identical.

These data have been modeled by Ritsema et al. [1998b] with a continuous two-dimensional (2-D) structure that extends 1500 km into the mantle and which contains a uniform 3% drop in shear velocity relative to PREM. The model displayed in Plate 1, however, was obtained by adopting the tomographic model of Grand [1994] in which the shear velocity anomalies in the midmantle (1500-2600 km depth) have been...
enhanced [Ni et al., 2000]. This model explains the data of Plate 1 as well as S-SKS differential travel times from South American events recorded in Africa. We introduce this model to define the shear velocity anomaly above the D" region as the African low-velocity zone (ALVZ), but we do not imply that the ALVZ is necessarily detached from the D"; although it is in Grand’s [1994] tomographic results. Dynamic models can reproduce ALVZ-type structures by invoking strong depth-dependent viscosity [Thompson and Tackley, 1998; Zhang and Yuen, 1997]. However, broad upwellings tend to efficiently remove the core-mantle boundary (CMB) thermal boundary layer, leading us to question what this slow D" structure beneath the ALVZ is, whether it contains ultralow-velocity zones (ULVZ) at its base, and how it relates to whole mantle upwellings in general.

2. Analysis

The seismic phases SPaKS and SKPaS are most clearly observed in radial component seismograms recorded at epicentral distances larger than 105°-110°. These phases arrive just behind the seismic phase SKS and are produced when S impinges upon the CMB at the critical S-to-P conversion angle [Kind and Müller, 1975]. The paths of SKS, SPaKS, and SKPaS are very similar in the core and mantle. However, SPaKS and SKPaS also contains short P diffractions along the base of the mantle (Figure 1). By analyzing the interference of SPaKS and SKPaS with the SKS, we can constrain the fine-scale seismic velocity and density structure at the base of the mantle with relatively high resolution.

The PREM model predicts that SPaKS and SKPaS separate from SKS near 110°. The bifurcation of SKS can be seen in PREM synthetics shown on the right in Figure 2 as SPaKS and SKPaS form a single pulse (both phases have identical travel time) that is well separated from SKS beyond about 114°. If the P velocity at the base of the mantle is lower than in PREM, the bifurcation shifts to shorter distances [Garnero et al., 1993]. Thus identifying this bifurcation point becomes an excellent tool for constraining the P velocity structure at localized regions just above the CMB, although still ambiguous with respect to SKS entry and exit points.

2.1. Anomalous Waveform Data Sampling the Base of the Mantle Beneath Iceland and Africa

The study of SPaKS and SKPaS waveforms requires recordings of relatively deep earthquakes in order to avoid interference with the surface reflections of pSKS and sSKS. We selected World-Wide Seismograph Stations Network (WWSN) recordings of 16 deep focus earthquakes (Table 1) beneath

![Figure 1](image1.png)

**Figure 1.** Schematic ray plots displaying direct S entering the core as P along with a diffracted ray P on the left and P exiting the core as S and containing a P multiple in a slow layer on the right. The response can reach critical angle if α > α as indicated which can enhance or reduce amplitudes by locally dipping. We will refer to these two packets of rays as (a) SPaKS and (b) SKPaS.

![Figure 2](image2.png)

**Figure 2.** Display of Tanzania array waveform data (radial displacement) containing SKS interference and corresponding synthetics generated with a reflectivity code. The event and path locations are given in Plate 2.
Plate 1. Cross sections of velocity structure connecting Sandwich Island to the Tanzania array (shaded lines in Plate 2) along with ray paths appropriate for (a) ScS, S and S and (b) SKS and S. The corresponding travel times on the right were computed from synthetics generated for these 2-D sections (solid lines) along with observed picks from the array as discussed by Ritsema et al. [1998b] reduced by PREM. The velocity model was derived from the tomographic images of Grand [1994] by applying an ad hoc enhancement scheme proposed by Ni et al. [2000] for other profiles.
Plate 2. Tomographic map of the bottommost mantle velocity (modified from Grand [1994] by Ni et al. [2000]) along with ray paths indicating sampled structures. Stars denote event locations with triangles indicating World-Wide Seismograph Stations Network (WWSSN) stations and TAN, the position of the Tanzania array. The heavy line segments indicate the short paths of diffracted P (SP$_{d}$K$S$ and SKP$_{d}$$S$) along the core-mantle boundary (CMB). Segments corresponding to anomalous waveforms are rose colored. The heavy shaded lines indicate the position of the 2-D cross sections displayed in Plate 1.
South America and Tanzania array recordings for an earthquake beneath Colombia. The Colombia event was at a depth of 70 km and the phase sSKS arrives well after SKS and SKKS (Figure 2). The waveform data shown in Figure 2 are anomalous in several aspects. First, the travel time of SKS is delayed by about 5-10 s. The SKS delay is particularly large at stations AMBA and PUGE, apparently owing to the local rift structure [Ritsema et al., 1998a]. Second, there is an abrupt change in the amplitude ratio of SKKS to SKS beginning at about 110° with a noticeable increase indicative of the interference caused by the SKS bifurcation. Third, several SKS pulses are anomalously broader than predicted by PREM, especially at stations MITU and SING. At larger distances, SKS and SKP₃S are obvious as two distinct pulses in the data. The differential travel time of SKS and SKP₃S is well predicted by PREM synthetics, but the amplitude of SKP₃S is anomalously large.

A sample of radial component WWSSN recordings is given in Figure 3 along with PREM synthetics in Figure 3a. These data are divided shown in Figures 3b-3d. Figure 3b (Normal) contains recordings that can, to a large extent, be explained by the PREM model. Recordings for distances smaller than 110° (UME 9 at 104° through UME 7 at 110°) show simple SKS pulses similar to the PREM synthetics. SKS and SKP₃S emerge as separate signals in the record EIL at 9 near 111°, as pre-

Figure 3. Display of (a) PREM synthetics accompanied by (b)-(d) analog WWSSN records (radial component) of SKS and diffractions displaying normal and anomalous waveforms (beneath Iceland (Figure 3c) and Africa (Figure 3d)). The numbers indicate events as identified in Table 1. The stations are identified by their three letter codes with corresponding locations given in Plate 2. Timing lines appropriate for SKS, SP₃KS (PREM), and SKP₃S (anomalous with respect to Iceland data) are included. Note that events 5, 6, and 12 appear relatively simple at stations on the left while the recordings of these events at KEV and KRK are complex. The same feature occurs at AAE for events 2 and 9. Note also that the two traces of AAE that are not very anomalous, AAE11 and AAE1, correspond to the southern and northernmost paths.
dicted by PREM. The P diffractions associated with the normal data propagate primarily through regions of D'' where the average seismic wave velocity is PREM-like [Garnero and Helmberger, 1995, 1998]. The waveforms in Figure 3c (Iceland) yield strong secondary arrivals that develop at much shorter distances than in the normal recordings in Figure 3b. Compare, for example, the broad signals in recordings KEV 14 with the relatively narrow SKS signals in recordings NUR 14 inserted above it for direct comparison. This same feature occurs in KEV 14 when compared with UME 9. This implies that the path to KEV is anomalous near the CMB, since this broadness does not appear to be a source effect. Figure 3d (Africa) shows anomalous recordings at station AAE in eastern Africa. We emphasize recordings AAE 2, AAE 3, and AAE 9. The "shoulder" on AAE 14 is similar to that of KBS. Note that these types of features occur in the PREM synthetics and more normal type data at great distances, i.e., EIL 9. However, the recording of event AAE 11 does not show this feature even though it is at the same distance. The path corresponding to AAE 11 is located farther to the south compared to the other recordings and could be a manifestation of lateral variation.

The great circle paths corresponding to the data of Figure 3 are shown in Plate 2. Heavy line segments represent the short P wave diffracted path along the CMB boundary which are colored red if they are associated with anomalous waveform behavior. Note that the southern path segment associated with AAE 11 is labeled black (normal) as compared to AAE 14, AAE 2, AAE 3, and AAE 9, which are labeled red (anomalous). Here we assume that D'' structures causing the waveform complexity are located at the core exit locations of SKS within or at the northern edge of the large-scale low shear velocity anomaly beneath Africa.

2.2. Modeling the SKS Waveform Bifurcation

To some extent, the waveform complexities seen in Figure 3 can be produced with 1-D models which invoke reduced P velocities at the base of the mantle. Such models are effective in producing the delays of SP$_d$KS and SKP$_d$S and enhancing their amplitudes with respect to SKS [Garnero et al., 1993]. Synthetics for basal layers with thickness from 10 to 40 km and with P and S velocity reductions of 5% match the data well. If the anomaly is confined to either the core entry or core exit point of SKS, we need to increase the velocity anomalies to 10% [Helmberger et al., 1996a]. Such one-sided structures with thickness variations ranging from 5 to 40 km fit are particularly useful to explain many anomalous mid-Pacific data [Garnero and Helmberger, 1995]. A sample of these observations is displayed in Figure 4a. Note that a secondary phase (SP$_d$KS) emerges at epicentral distances smaller than 110º, and several recordings yield high-amplitude secondary pulses (denoted by the solid dots) that cannot easily be ex-
SKS coda. By reducing the thickness of the basal layer the os-

temperature in basal layers is significantly reduced (Figure 5); SPdKS and SKPdS amplitudes can be obtained when the shear

tment of high-amplitude SKPS signals at relatively short epi-

those shown in Figure 4 (dots) cannot be modeled with a sim-

Figure 1, a structure dipping upward allows for the develop-

ment of high-amplitude SKPdS signals at relatively short epi-

cilatory wave train is suppressed [Garnero and Helmberger,

anomalously strong and develops early relative to PREM.

models help us to discriminate between viable models at this

small scale.

2.3. Modeling the African Waveform Data

High-amplitude reflections are often recorded by stations

located in sedimentary basins. These signals have been suc-

cessfully modeled using dipping interfaces [Helmberger et al.,

1983]. Models with dipping interfaces lend themselves also to

the study of teleseismic SKS waveform data. As illustrated in

Figure 1, a structure dipping upward allows for the develop-

ment of high-amplitude SKPdS signals at relatively short epi-

central distances without introducing complex SKS coda.

Synthetics for models with dipping interfaces can be com-

puted using 1-D model by simply increasing the velocity con-

trast locally, where $\alpha_i$ becomes the apparent velocity referred
to as the "local stretching approximation" of Helmberger et al.
[1996b]. Another new method to compute more accurate syn-

thetics for such extreme models was introduced by Wen and Helmberger [1998b]. In this approach, the interaction of SKS

and SKPdS with fine-scale CMB structure near the SKS core

exit point is estimated using a finite difference technique, while

the propagation of SKS and SPdKS through the core and

mantle is treated analytically. A comparison of the "local dip-
ing approximation" against the more exact solution is also

made in Figure 6. The synthetics in Figure 6 (right) are com-
puted for a dome that is 80 km high, 200 km wide, in which the

P and S velocity is reduced by 10%. The dome is positioned

with respect to the SKS core exit point to maximize the ampli-
tude of the reflection from the upper boundary of the dome.

Internal multiples within the dome while notable are not

strong if the S velocity reduction is <10%, or if the height of

the dome is <20 km (Figure 7). Synthetics for domes with a

height of 40 km and with P and S velocity reductions of 10% and

30%, respectively, provide a good match to the Iceland profile, capturing most of the strong interference near 111°.

Only the average structure is sufficient for modeling these

waveforms. The shape of the dome and the velocity gradient at

tits top affect the waveforms only marginally [Wen and Hel-

berger, 1998b].

The models are not only nonunique in terms of trade-offs

between structural shape and seismic parameters but also in

terms of the position of the ULVZ dome with respect to SKS

core exit points (Figure 8). If we place the dome such that the

P wave traveling upward within the dome is reflected back
downward at the upper boundary of the dome and reflected

backup at the core near critical angle $S$, we can generate a

strong and delayed SKPdS as displayed on the right. The am-

plitude of this converted P-to-S phase is large only over a few

degrees as discussed by Helmberger et al. [1996a], and the ge-

ometry becomes extremely important. Small lateral shifts of

the dome alter the amplitude of this phase and produce rapid

changes in the SKS-SKPdS interference pattern. For example,

the recording at KBS near 109° in Figure 7 is obtained from a
distinctly different path than those traveling to KEV and KRK
(shown in Plate 3) and can be fit by synthetics for the 20D
model and by synthetics for the 40D model which invokes a
dome that is shifted slightly to the left (Figure 8c). Obvi-
ously, without a dense epicentral distance sampling of the

SKS-SKPdS we cannot constrain the shape and position of

ULVZ domes completely, nor do present-day tomographic
models help us to discriminate between viable models at this

small scale.

2.3. Modeling the African Waveform Data

A broad low shear velocity anomaly is located in D' be-

neath the eastern Atlantic and Africa (Plate 4, top) which is far

more anomalous than the shear velocity structure beneath Ice-

cland. However, station AAE appears to be near the northern

edge. We would expect an Iceland-type geometry with the SKS

points situated on the limb of the structure and SKS' bifurca-
tion waveforms to sample more of the slow velocity. In fact,

most AAE waveforms can be modeled with synthetics taken

from Figures 8b-8d. For these events, SKS emerges to the right

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<th>Distance(deg)</th>
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Figure 5. The three columns of synthetics are appropriate for

tree models assuming various degrees of drops in P and S ve-
celcity along with indicated at the top. The layer thickness is

30 km. Mixed paths with a low-velocity layer for SPdKS and

PREM for SKPdS. (top) WWSSN (LP) simulation with (bottom)
broadband (BB) assuming a (2, 2, 2) trapezoidal time history.

These synthetics are plotted as a record section with a reducing

velocity. Note the complexity as the shear velocity drops and

shift of the interference to shorter distances.
Figure 6. Comparison of (left) the Iceland observations against synthetics produced by (middle) an analytical approach and (right) those generated by the hybrid method (dome). The numbers above the synthetics indicates the ULVZ layer thickness relative to the SKS path with the numbers in parentheses indicating the percentage jump in $\alpha_s$. The layer velocities and dome velocities are 10% lower than PREM both in $P$ and $S$ with the same density. The dome height is 80 km and is situated relative to SKS to maximize the diffraction amplitude.

of the structure. A comparison of the AAE observations against these synthetics (Figure 8c) is displayed in Figure 9, except for the two records denoted by asterisks, selected from slightly different geometries indicated in Figure 8. Waveform complexities such as a small shoulder in AAE 14 and perhaps the high-amplitude $SKP_dS$ pulse in AAE 9 are likely due to 3-D structure. Although the comparison between data and synthetics is not perfect, the 2-D synthetics do explain the very strong secondary arrival near 111° much better than synthetics computed for models with flat-layered structures.

The waveform corresponding to the southernmost path to AAE, denoted by the black segment in Plate 4 is not as anomalous, and neither are many of the Tanzania array waveforms. This could mean that the ULVZ has pinched out or the geometry here is less favorable to $SKP_dS$. It would appear that the SKS exit points are near the maximum slowness, a situation not unlike that producing Figure 8a. For comparison, we added column (d) (Figure 10) containing our best fitting mixed 1-D layered model. The path geometry appears to be in agreement with most of the observations (Figure 10) where the $SKP_dS$ interference occurs at relatively larger distance than at AAE. These 2-D synthetics were generated from Figures 8a and 8d, with a time history adjusted to roughly match the GOMA observation assumed to be ($SKS - SKP_dS$) interference free. This is relatively simple in the Mix 1-D model since the synthetics reduce essentially to a delta function for distances less than 107°. The 2-D structures with large seismic parameter drops remain somewhat complex at all ranges because of internal multiples, especially in Syn2D2. Figure 10c was included to show the expected behavior for the same dome positions used in modeling the AAE data set but with no long-period WWSSN filter. These waveforms (Syn2D2) do not fit the observations.
very well, especially at the shorter distances. The Syn2D1 synthetics fit the data quite well except at a few stations (SING and PUGE) which prefer a weak SKPdS such as displayed in column Mix 1-D. The broadness of some of the southernmost paths, such as RUNG and MITU, is quite pronounced in agreement with Syn2D1 synthetics. Allowing the geometry to vary slightly would obviously aid in the modeling process; that is, the observations at KIBE look like the average of Syn2D1 and Syn2D2. In short, it appears that the array data are sampling some complex structure on the northern edge of a strong anomaly, which is delaying the development of SKPdS. Another possibility is that the ULVZ is fading away into a LVZ such as modeled on the right. Either interpretation yields a picture with rapidly varying CMB structure beneath the northern edge of Grand’s [1994] anomalous D" structure. Thus it appears that the African structure is not unlike that occurring beneath the mid-Pacific, essentially a widespread low-velocity zone with pockets of ULVZs beneath some regions.

3. Discussion

It appears that an ULVZ exists under a portion of the ALVZ and may be associated with the upwelling process. The ALVZ can be seen in the upper panel of Plate 4 as a low shear velocity structure that extends from the CMB into the upper mantle, bracketed by SKS and SKKS. A much clearer expression of the ALVZ extending into the upper mantle is shown by Ritsema et al. [1999]. However, there appears to be some horizontal offsets along this path. This may indicate a change in the style of convection caused by the expected increase in viscosity at these depths or chemistry [Kellogg et al., 1999]. At shallower depths, receiver function analysis at the Tanzania array also suggest that shear velocities in the transition zone, the structure between the 410 and 660 km boundaries, are anomalously low [Gurrola et al., 1999]. They suggest lateral changes in the depths to these boundaries and conclude that the transition zone is ~25 km thinner than the global average of 250 km. A similar result has been reported earlier for the transition zone beneath Iceland [Shen et al., 1996]. The P wave tomographic model by Bijwaard et al. [1998] also suggests that a continuous low-velocity anomaly extends from the upper mantle beneath Iceland to the CMB. Africa and Iceland have both been classified as regions where volcanism may be related to mantle plumes [e.g., Sleep, 1990]. Thus, perhaps the correlation of mantle plumes with anomalous low-velocity regions at the CMB, as proposed by Williams et al. [1998], has merit. Although the evidence is weaker than below Africa, there seems to be a vertical structure beneath the southern Mid-Atlantic Ridge, i.e., near 55° in Plate 4 (top).

There is direct evidence for an LVZ or perhaps an ULVZ beneath the north Mid-Atlantic as discussed earlier, i.e., path from Sandwich Island to VAL in Plate 2. Thus there appears to be some relationship between the downwelling beneath the Americas and the upwelling to the east. If the fast velocities is indicative of heavy material (cold), as suggested by Sidorin et al. [1999], it may push the thermal boundary layer away from the Americas toward Africa causing it to thicken, which could be the anomalous layer (D") near the CMB beneath the ALVZ in Plate 1.

**Figure 7.** Anomalous observations of South American events recorded at KEV and KRK along with three columns of synthetics. The observations are aligned on SKS with a line indicating the diffraction SKPdS. The dome heights are 80, 40, and 20 km with reductions in velocity as indicated.
Figure 8. Sensitivity tests showing the effect on dome position with respect to SKS, with lines indicating the range of CMB crossings. Thus the dome is directly centered on the SKS paths on the left and shifting off the dome to the right where the diffracted effects are enhanced in the 108° to 112° window. (top) A WWSSN response, (bottom) displacement. The amplitudes are plotted relative to the top trace (105°). Note the small amplitudes in Figure 8b at the larger ranges where SKS is being defocused by the strong curvature. These wave shapes will be used to model the African data.

Figure 9. Comparison of the AAE waveform observations with synthetics selected from Figure 8c except for the two observations labeled by asterisk. Some of these synthetics have been shifted slightly in distance to correct for small changes in source depth, as in the work by Garnero and Helmberger [1998]. Note the strong interference observed for events 2, 3, and 9, which are well-modeled by this 2-D structure.
Plate 3. Diagram of path geometry relative to anomalous structure. The surface panel contains a map with Iceland situated above a 2-D-shaped dome in yellow. Mantle paths of SKKS (blue) and SKS (red) are indicated in solid with core paths (dotted).
Plate 4. (top) A 2-D section of Grand's tomography model with SKKS (red) and SKS (brown) geometrical paths connecting the South American event to TAN. (middle) Predicted times relative to PREM, SKS (solid) with SKKS (dashed). Note that the differential times (dotted) are nearly zero as observed. (bottom) A detailed map of the CMB showing the piercing points, SKS (crosses) and SKKS (circles) along with P diffraction segments. Also note that the TAN samples of SKS are already well into the slow structure relative to the geometry for AAE.
Another explanation is that the $D''$ structure beneath ALVZ is simply a manifestation of a small amount of melt. As suggested by Knittle [1998], we might expect some chemical differentiation assuming a hot lower mantle [Holland and Ahrens, 1997]. Some melt would move upward fueling the upwelling directly and some would move downward forming a heavy slow $D''$, providing the CMB density anomaly proposed by Ishii and Tromp [1999]. In this context, the ULVZs would just be a local concentration of particularly strong melt below a major upwelling.

In conclusion, we have reviewed existing SKS bifurcation waveform data in comparison with observations sampling beneath Iceland and Pacific with new data from Africa. To model the extreme delays and strengths of SKP, tS relative to SKS in some observations requires ULVZs containing short-wavelength structures on the CMB. Thus we have examined the ray paths through the Grand's [1994] tomography model in detail for the simplest situation (Iceland) with the most complex (Africa). Velocity drops in $S$ of up to 30% and curvature of interfaces of 40 km over 300 km laterally proved effective in modeling efforts in both situations. However, these synthetics are 2-D and the structure is obviously 3-D. Thus, to resolve these detailed features of ULVZs in relationship to surrounding structure will require very dense station coverage of the type proposed in the U.S. array experiment along with 3-D synthetics.

Acknowledgment. This research has been supported by National Science Foundation grant EAR97-2508. We thank Michael Gurnis for his helpful suggestions and the thoughtful comments by the referees, Rob van der Hilst, Barbara Romanowicz, and John Castle. Contribution 8633 of the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences, California Institute of Technology.

References


Figure 10. (a) Comparison of TAN observations with synthetics assuming a dome structure and a mixed path. The (b) Syn2D1 and (c) Syn2D2 plots contain the Green's functions given in Figures 8a and 8d. (d) The synthetic Mix 1D contains the layered approximation with PREM on the source end, and a 5% drop in a layer 30 km thick beneath the array (see Figure 5). The dotted traces correspond to the southernmost paths as displayed in Plate 4.


