

SATELLITE RADAR INTERFEROMETRY

Interferometric synthetic aperture radar (InSAR) is an active remote sensing method that uses repeated radar scans of the Earth's solid surface to measure relative deformation at centimeter precision over a wide swath. It has revolutionized our understanding of the earthquake cycle, volcanic eruptions, landslides, glacier flow, ice grounding lines, ground fluid injection/withdrawal, underground nuclear tests, and other applications requiring high spatial resolution measurements of ground deformation. This book examines the theory behind and the applications of InSAR for measuring surface deformation. The most recent generation of InSAR satellites has transformed the method from investigating 10s to 100s of synthetic aperture radar images to processing 1 000s and 10 000s of images using a wide range of computer facilities. This book is intended for students and researchers in the physical sciences, particularly for those working in geophysics, natural hazards, space geodesy, and remote sensing. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

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Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

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Theory and Practice

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Contents

<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page ix</i>
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Essential Ingredients for Satellite Remote Sensing	2
1.2 Main Categories of Satellite Remote Sensing	4
2 Principles of Synthetic Aperture Radar	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Fraunhofer Diffraction	8
2.3 Two-Dimensional Aperture	13
2.4 Range and Azimuth Resolution	14
2.5 Constraints on Pulse Repetition Frequency	15
2.6 Problems	17
3 Satellite Orbits	19
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 Kepler Elements	21
3.3 Precession of the Orbit Plane	24
3.4 Ground Track of Circular Orbit	25
3.5 Ellipsoidal Earth Model	28
3.6 Special Orbits	30
3.7 Precise Orbits for InSAR	34
3.8 Problems	39
4 SAR Image Formation	41
4.1 Overview of the Range-Doppler Algorithm	41
4.2 Processing Onboard the Satellite	41
4.3 Digital SAR Processing	42

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
4.4	Range Compression	46
4.5	Azimuth Compression	48
4.6	Example with ALOS L-Band Orbit	56
4.7	Problems	58
5	Interferometric Processing	60
5.1	Interferogram Formation	60
5.2	Contributions to Phase	61
5.3	Phase due to Earth Curvature	62
5.4	Look Angle and Incidence Angle for a Spherical Earth	63
5.5	Critical Baseline	65
5.6	Approximate Phase due to Topography	66
5.7	Topography from Single-Pass InSAR: SRTM	67
5.8	Exact Phase due to Earth Curvature and Topography	68
5.9	Geocoding	69
5.10	Geocoded SLC InSAR Processing Strategy	71
5.11	Problems	72
6	Coherence, Filtering, and Phase Gradient	73
6.1	Need for Filtering an Interferogram	73
6.2	Coherence and Filtering Techniques	74
6.3	Goldstein Frequency Domain Filter	79
6.4	Phase Gradient	79
6.5	Problems	82
7	Phase Unwrapping	84
7.1	Basic Concepts	84
7.2	Fourier Transform Algorithm	89
7.3	Branch Cut (Goldstein) Algorithm	92
7.4	Minimum Cost Flow (SNAPHU) Algorithm	93
7.5	Nearest-Neighbor Algorithm and Loop Closure	95
7.6	Summary	97
7.7	Problems	99
8	SAR Modes	101
8.1	Introduction	101
8.2	Polarization	103
8.3	Range and Azimuth Resolution	104
8.4	ScanSAR Processing and Interferometry	105
8.5	Terrain Observation by Progressive Scans	111

	<i>Contents</i>	vii
8.6	SweepSAR	119
8.7	Problems	121
9	Troposphere, Ionosphere, and Tide Corrections	122
9.1	Contributions to Phase	122
9.2	Refractive Index of the Troposphere and Ionosphere	125
9.3	Characteristics and Mitigation of the Troposphere Delay	128
9.4	Characteristics and Mitigation of the Ionosphere Advance	136
9.5	Tides and Aliasing	142
9.6	Problems	146
10	Complementary Approaches and Time Series	147
10.1	Complementary Approaches	147
10.2	Range and Azimuth Pixel Offsets	148
10.3	Multiple Aperture and Burst Overlap Interferometry	150
10.4	Stacking Approach	154
10.5	Small Baseline Subset Method	156
10.6	Persistent Scatterer Algorithms	159
10.7	Problems	165
11	Integration of InSAR and GNSS	166
11.1	Complementary Attributes of InSAR and GNSS	166
11.2	Vector Decomposition	167
11.3	Corrected GNSS LOS Displacement for Events	171
11.4	Interseismic Velocity and Strain Rate	172
11.5	InSAR/GNSS Time Series	177
11.6	Problems	181
	<i>References</i>	184
	<i>Index</i>	195

Preface and Acknowledgments

This textbook provides a comprehensive overview of satellite radar interferometry for mapping surface deformation from various phenomena, including earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, glacier flow, ice grounding lines, ground fluid injection/withdrawal, and underground nuclear tests. It is designed for students and researchers in the physical sciences, who have completed courses in introductory physics, calculus, and computer science.

The book covers the physical principles, mathematical models, and algorithms used in Interferometric synthetic aperture radar (InSAR) processing from a geodetic perspective. Readers will gain insights into both the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of InSAR, making it a valuable resource for understanding and utilizing this powerful remote sensing technology.

Chapter 1 discusses six types of remote sensing methods possible from Earth orbit and introduces radar interferometry as the optimal approach for measuring small surface deformation.

Chapter 2 explains the basic physics of radar imaging from orbital altitude, including the limits on accuracy, spatial resolution in the range and azimuth directions, and the fundamental limitation on swath width.

Chapter 3 details the kinematics of satellite orbits and their use in InSAR processing and its automation. It covers the six parameters needed to describe an orbit (Kepler elements or Cartesian state vector), transforming coordinates from an Earth-fixed frame to the satellite frame, and methods to calculate a centimeter-accuracy satellite trajectory from a sequence of state vectors.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive presentation of the commonly used range-Doppler algorithm for focusing complex backscatter data into a single-look complex (SLC) image.

Chapter 5 explains the process of forming an interferogram from two geometrically aligned SLC images and methods for extracting deformation and topography

from the interferometric phase. It also covers critical baseline, geocoding, and geocoded SLCs.

Chapter 6 discusses the main methods for filtering complex interferograms and computing coherence and phase gradient.

Chapter 7 introduces the basic concepts and fundamental limitations (i.e., residues) of phase unwrapping. It presents three common unwrapping methods: the global Fourier transform method, the path-following branch-cut method, and the minimum cost flow method. Additionally, it covers methods for correcting integer ambiguities using phase closure within stacks of interferograms.

Chapter 8 explores a wide range of SAR operational modes, including polarization and wide swath modes. It reviews the fundamental limitation of the standard swath-mode acquisition and discusses three methods for increasing swath width: ScanSAR, terrain observation by progressive scans (TOPS), and SweepSAR for the upcoming NASA–ISRO–SAR mission.

Chapter 9 examines the three factors that affect radar range measurement: spatial and temporal variations of the dry and wet components of the troposphere, phase advance of radar waves through the ionosphere, and the solid Earth tides. It also discusses practical corrections and mitigation approaches.

Chapter 10 presents complementary approaches to measuring surface deformation by radar, including pixel offset tracking, multiple aperture interferometry, and burst overlap interferometry. The second part of the chapter discusses methods for extracting surface velocity and time series from a large set of interferograms, as well as identifying pixels that remain stable over long periods.

Chapter 11 highlights the need for ground control, such as Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) survey points, to bring InSAR deformation measurements into a geodetic reference frame. It also explains the theory for projecting vector GNSS displacement into scalar line-of-sight (LOS) InSAR displacement and the computation of strain rate from InSAR.

This textbook has been developed over the past two decades from a Space Geodesy class at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, as well as GMTSAR short courses at UNAVCO and EarthScope. Each chapter includes a set of exercises and solutions to highlight the important concepts.

The algorithms described in the book are implemented in a computer software package called GMTSAR, an open-source, InSAR processing system designed for users familiar with the Generic Mapping Tools (GMT). While the book references this specific software, the content is also relevant to any modern InSAR processing system.

GMTSAR software was developed over a period of 25 years to create a geodetically accurate, open-source InSAR processing system. Many individuals contributed to its development.

Howard Zebker (Stanford) provided the original FORTRAN code for the SAR processor. Evelyn Price (a University of California, San Diego (UCSD) student) translated this code into C, simplifying it while keeping the SAR-focusing algorithm unchanged. Price and Sandwell expanded this into a complete InSAR package by adding cross-correlation and phase modules. Paul Jamason (UCSD) wrote the preprocessors for ERS (CCRS and DPAF). Remko Sharro's (Delft University) *getorb* routines were used to compute precise orbits for proper focus, geolocation, and baseline estimation.

The GIPS package, developed by Peter Ford (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), led to the creation of the SIOSAR system, which remained stable for 11 years. Sean Buckley, a student at UT Austin, developed the Envisat preprocessor. In 2010, GIPS was replaced by GMT modules. Rob Mellors (San Diego State University) developed the Advanced Land Observing Satellite preprocessing code, later translated by Matt Wei (a UCSD student) into the ERS and Envisat preprocessors. Mellors also wrote new software for image cross-correlation and Goldstein/Werner interferogram filtering.

Xiaopeng Tong (a UCSD student) tested and refined the codes, removing some approximations from SIOSAR. He also developed scripts for two-pass processing, stacking, and the time series (SBAS) C-code. The statistical-cost, network-flow algorithm for phase unwrapping C-code, written by Curtis Chen and Howard Zebker (Stanford), is used without modification.

Paul Wessel (University of Hawaii) enhanced GMT to process large binary tables and modified all the code to interface with GMT routines during his sabbatical at Scripps Institute of Oceanography in 2013. He also developed code for Keyhole Markup Language output for Google Earth. GMTSAR uses the GMT routines *blockmedian* and *surface*, developed by Walter Smith and Paul Wessel (Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory). These routines are central to GMTSAR algorithms for transforming between geographic and radar coordinates.

Most recently, Xiaohua Xu (a UCSD student) and David Sandwell developed preprocessing and alignment codes for TOPS-mode interferometry, with assistance from Pablo Gonzalez (Leeds University, UK). Recent developments include InSAR corrections, GNSS integration by Katherine Guns, and common scene stacking by Katia Tymofeyeva. Many users provided feedback and bug reports, helping to achieve a robust and stable software set.

Funding for research algorithms and code development was provided by the NASA Earth Surface and Interior program. The National Science Foundation Cyberinfrastructure for Sustained Scientific Innovation program supported code testing, hardening, and documentation (e.g., this book). EarthScope, formerly UNAVCO, supported GMTSAR short courses where lectures and homework problems were developed. Khalid Soofi supported the project through funding from

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Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

xii

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