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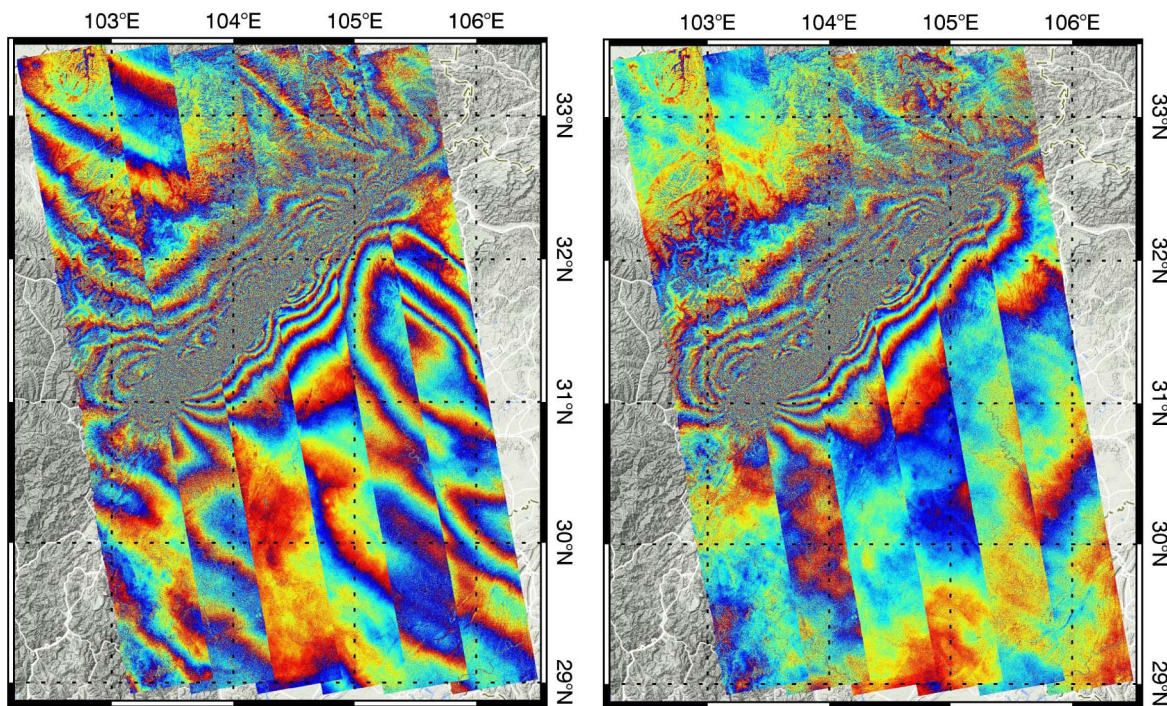
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Mosaic of Advanced Land Observing Satellite Phased-Array type L-band SAR interferograms of the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake. Original interferogram disrupted by the variation of the ionosphere electron density (left), and after ionospheric path delay estimation and compensation by using the split-spectrum method (right).

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PAPERS

Oceans

- Comparison of Valid Ocean Observations Between MODIS Terra and Aqua Over the Global Oceans *L. Feng and C. Hu* 1575
- Impact of Assimilating SARAL/AltiKa SWH in SWAN Model During Indian Ocean Tropical Cyclone Phailin *S. A. Bhowmick, S. Basu, R. Sharma, and R. Kumar* 1812

Subsurface and Geology

- A Magnetic Measurement System and Identification Method for Buried Magnetic Materials Within Wet and Dry Soils *Y. Ege, S. Nazlibilek, A. Kakilli, H. Citak, O. Kalender, K. L. Erturk, G. Sengul, and D. Karacor* 1803

Electromagnetics

- Modeling Land Surface Roughness Effect on Soil Microwave Emission in Community Surface Emissivity Model *M. Chen and F. Weng* 1716

Hyperspectral Data Processing

- A Low-Rank and Sparse Matrix Decomposition-Based Mahalanobis Distance Method for Hyperspectral Anomaly Detection *Y. Zhang, B. Du, L. Zhang, and S. Wang* 1376
- Uniformity-Based Superpixel Segmentation of Hyperspectral Images *A. M. Saranathan and M. Parente* 1419
- Dual-Clustering-Based Hyperspectral Band Selection by Contextual Analysis *Y. Yuan, J. Lin, and Q. Wang* 1431
- Rotation-Based Support Vector Machine Ensemble in Classification of Hyperspectral Data With Limited Training Samples *J. Xia, J. Chanussot, P. Du, and X. He* 1519
- Noise Simulation and Correction in Synthetic Airborne TIR Data for Mineral Quantification *C. Hecker, D. Riley, M. van der Meijde, and F. D. van der Meer* 1545
- Shapelet-Based Sparse Representation for Landcover Classification of Hyperspectral Images *R. Roscher and B. Waske* 1623
- Thin Cloud Removal Based on Signal Transmission Principles and Spectral Mixture Analysis *M. Xu, M. Pickering, A. J. Plaza, and X. Jia* 1659
- Morphological Attribute Profiles With Partial Reconstruction *W. Liao, M. Dalla Mura, J. Chanussot, R. Bellens, and W. Philips* 1738
- Beyond Background Feature Extraction: An Anomaly Detection Algorithm Inspired by Slowly Varying Signal Analysis *R. Zhao, B. Du, L. Zhang, and L. Zhang* 1757

(Contents Continued on Page 1246)



Coupled Sparse Denoising and Unmixing With Low-Rank Constraint for Hyperspectral Image	1818
. <i>J. Yang, Y.-Q. Zhao, J. C.-W. Chan, and S. G. Kong</i>	
Image Processing and Analysis	
Quantitative Quality Evaluation of Pansharpened Imagery: Consistency Versus Synthesis	1247
. <i>F. Palsson, J. R. Sveinsson, M. O. Ulfarsson, and J. A. Benediktsson</i>	
A Novel Vision-Based Adaptive Scanning for the Compression of Remote Sensing Images	1336
. <i>C. Shi, J. Zhang, and Y. Zhang</i>	
Unsupervised Deep Feature Extraction for Remote Sensing Image Classification	1349
. <i>A. Romero, C. Gatta, and G. Camps-Valls</i>	
Optimal Solar Geometry Definition for Global Long-Term Landsat Time-Series Bidirectional Reflectance Normalization	1410
. <i>H. K. Zhang, D. P. Roy, and V. Kovalsky</i>	
Data Fusion Technique Using Wavelet Transform and Taguchi Methods for Automatic Landslide Detection From Airborne Laser Scanning Data and QuickBird Satellite Imagery	1610
. <i>B. Pradhan, M. N. Jebur, H. Z. M. Shafri, and M. S. Tehrani</i>	
Automatic Image Registration of Multimodal Remotely Sensed Data With Global Shearlet Features	1685
. <i>J. M. Murphy, J. Le Moigne, and D. J. Harding</i>	
A Multifractal-Based Wavefront Phase Estimation Technique for Ground-Based Astronomical Observations	1705
. <i>S. K. Maji, H. M. Yahia, and T. Fusco</i>	
Scene Classification via a Gradient Boosting Random Convolutional Network Framework	1793
. <i>F. Zhang, B. Du, and L. Zhang</i>	
A Penalized Spline-Based Attitude Model for High-Resolution Satellite Imagery	1849
. <i>H. Pan, Z. Zou, G. Zhang, X. Zhu, and X. Tang</i>	
Geo-Information Systems	
An Integrated Active Contour Approach to Shoreline Mapping Using HSI and DEM	1586
. <i>A. Sukcharoenpong, A. Yilmaz, and R. Li</i>	
Microwave Radiometry	
Improved MUSIC-Based SMOS RFI Source Detection and Geolocation Algorithm	1311
. <i>H. Park, V. González-Gambau, A. Camps, and M. Vall-Ilossera</i>	
L-Band Radio-Frequency Interference Observations During the SMAP Validation Experiment 2012	1323
. <i>M. Aksoy, J. T. Johnson, S. Misra, A. Colliander, and I. O'Dwyer</i>	
On the Coiflet-TDS Solution for Scattering by Sharp Coated Cones and Its Application to Emissivity Determination	1399
. <i>M. Jin, M. Bai, L. Zhang, G. Pan, and J. Miao</i>	
Radar Systems	
Adaptive Nullforming to Mitigate Ground Clutter on the National Weather Radar Testbed Phased Array Radar	1282
. <i>C. D. Curtis, M. Yeary, and J. L. Lake</i>	
Robust Linear Depolarization Ratio Estimation for Dual-Polarization Weather Radar	1462
. <i>R. M. Beauchamp and V. Chandrasekar</i>	
Polarimetric Bias Correction of Practical Planar Scanned Antennas for Meteorological Applications	1488
. <i>C. Pang, P. Hoogeboom, F. Le Chevalier, H. W. J. Russchenberg, J. Dong, T. Wang, and X. Wang</i>	
Dual-Platform Large Along-Track Baseline GMTI	1554
. <i>S. V. Baumgartner and G. Krieger</i>	
A Robust Attenuation Correction System for Reflectivity and Differential Reflectivity in Weather Radars	1727
. <i>S. Lim and V. Chandrasekar</i>	
Synthetic Aperture Radar	
Polarimetric Decomposition of L-Band PolSAR Backscattering Over the Austfonna Ice Cap	1267
. <i>G. Parrella, I. Hajnsek, and K. P. Papathanassiou</i>	
Automatic Detection and Reconstruction of 2-D/3-D Building Shapes From Spaceborne TomoSAR Point Clouds	1292
. <i>M. Shahzad and X. X. Zhu</i>	
Toward Operational Compensation of Ionospheric Effects in SAR Interferograms: The Split-Spectrum Method	1446
. <i>G. Gomba, A. Parizzi, F. De Zan, M. Eineder, and R. Bamler</i>	
Processing of Very High Resolution Spaceborne Sliding Spotlight SAR Data Using Velocity Scaling	1505
. <i>Y. Wu, G.-C. Sun, C. Yang, J. Yang, M. Xing, and Z. Bao</i>	
Use of SAR Data for Detecting Floodwater in Urban and Agricultural Areas: The Role of the Interferometric Coherence	1532
. <i>L. Pulvirenti, M. Chini, N. Pierdicca, and G. Boni</i>	

Impact of Scene Decorrelation on Geosynchronous SAR Data Focusing	1635
. <i>A. Recchia, A. Monti Guarnieri, A. Broquetas, and A. Leanza</i>	
The SAR Passband Problem: Analytical Model and Possible Practical Solutions.	1647
. <i>B. J. Doring and M. Schwerdt</i>	
Vessel Refocusing and Velocity Estimation on SAR Imagery Using the Fractional Fourier Transform	1670
. <i>R. Pelich, N. Longépé, G. Mercier, G. Hajduch, and R. Garelló</i>	
Phase Calibration of Airborne Tomographic SAR Data via Phase Center Double Localization	1775
. <i>S. Tebaldini, F. Rocca, M. Mariotti d'Alessandro, and L. Ferro-Famil</i>	
Joint Monostatic and Bistatic STAP for Improved SAR-GMTI Capabilities	1834
. <i>D. Cristallini and I. Walterscheid</i>	
Meaningful Object Segmentation From SAR Images via a Multiscale Nonlocal Active Contour Model.	1860
. <i>G.-S. Xia, G. Liu, W. Yang, and L. Zhang</i>	
Global Navigation Satellite System	
Weak Tsunami Detection Using GNSS-R-Based Sea Surface Height Measurement.	1363
. <i>K. Yu</i>	
Lidar Systems	
Assessing the Contribution of Woody Materials to Forest Angular Gap Fraction and Effective Leaf Area Index Using Terrestrial Laser Scanning Data.	1475
. <i>G. Zheng, L. Ma, W. He, J. U. H. Eitel, L. M. Moskal, and Z. Zhang</i>	
Satellite Systems	
Measurement of the Point Response Functions of CERES Scanning Radiometers	1260
. <i>G. L. Smith, J. Daniels, K. Priestley, S. Thomas, and R. B. Lee, III</i>	
Determination of the SNPP VIIRS SDSM Screen Relative Transmittance From Both Yaw Maneuver and Regular On-Orbit Data.	1390
. <i>N. Lei, X. Chen, and X. Xiong</i>	
Qualitative Verification of CE-2's Microwave Measurement: Relative Calibration Based on Brightness Temperature Model and Data Fusion.	1598
. <i>G.-P. Hu, Y.-C. Zheng, A.-A. Xu, and Z.-S. Tang</i>	
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ANNOUNCEMENTS	
Call for Papers—IEEE GEOSCIENCE AND REMOTE SENSING MAGAZINE	1874

About the Cover: On May 12, 2008, an earthquake struck the Wenchuan region in central China. The cover shows a mosaic of synthetic aperture radar (SAR) interferograms, produced with Advanced Land Observing Satellite Phased-Array type L-band (ALOS) images, measuring the earthquake deformation. This set of images is what is typically selected by researchers for studying the coseismic deformation pattern of the earthquake. This is because the acquisition dates of these images reduce the influence of postseismic deformation on the interferograms. Unfortunately, this image set is heavily influenced by ionospheric distortions. The ionospheric disturbances are superimposed on the ground motion signal and are clearly visible in the interferogram (left). To cover the whole earthquake, many adjacent tracks have to be joined. Since each track was acquired on a different day, each one experienced a different ionosphere. This is the reason for the strong phase jumps present between tracks in the left interferogram. To enable thorough geophysical modeling of the earthquake, the superimposed ionospheric disturbances needs to be corrected. The split-spectrum method is based on the dispersive nature of the ionosphere and separates the ionospheric component of the interferometric phase from the nondispersive component related to topography, ground motion, and tropospheric path delay. After estimation and removal of the ionospheric contribution, the interferogram (right) only shows the ground deformation produced by the earthquake. Phase jumps between different tracks are also greatly reduced. For more information please see “Toward Operational Compensation of Ionospheric Effects in SAR Interferograms: The Split-Spectrum Method,” by Gomba *et al.*, which begins on page 1446.