

Why Single Dish?

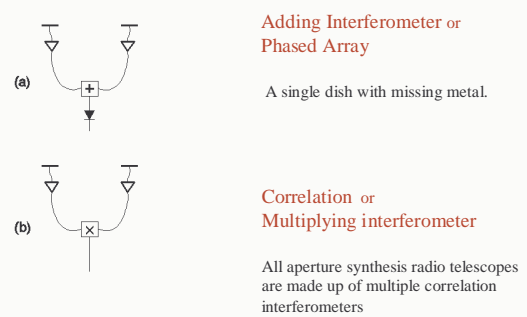
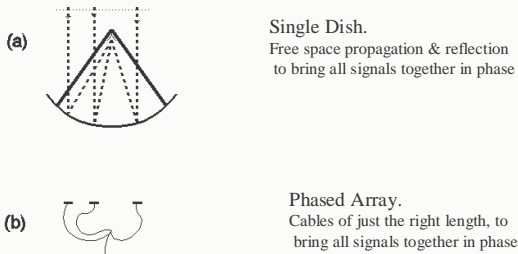
Darrel Emerson
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NAIC-NRAO School on Single-Dish Radio Astronomy, Arecibo, June 2005

Why Single Dish?

- What's the Alternative?
- Comparisons between Single-Dish, Phased Array & Interferometers
- Advantages and Disadvantages of Correlation Interferometer
- Scale-sizes, Spatial Frequencies, Spatial Filtering: Examples
- Practical Details
- Future Telescopes
- Conclusions

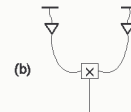
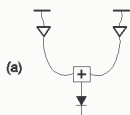
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Phased Array (Adding Interferometer) vs. Correlation Interferometer

2-Element Phased array:

- Signal into each antenna element: a, b
- Noise of each antenna amplifier: A, B
- Before detector: $(A + a) + (B + b)$
- After detector: $[(A+a) + (B+b)]^2$
or
 $A^2 + B^2 + a^2 + b^2 + 2(A.a + A.b + B.a + B.b + A.B + a.b)$
Time-averaged products of uncorrelated quantities tend to zero, so this averages to just:
 $A^2 + B^2 + a^2 + b^2 + 2.a.b$



Multiplying or Correlation Interferometer:

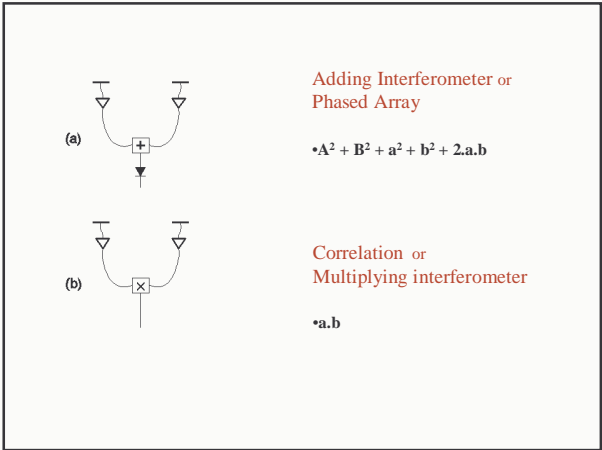
- After multiplier: $(A + a).(B + b)$
or
 $A.B + A.b + a.B + a.b$

NB:
multiplication + averaging
= correlation

- After averaging, uncorrelated products tend to zero, so this becomes just

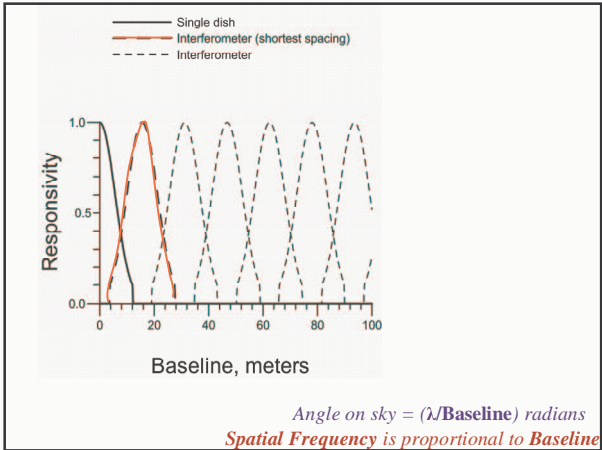
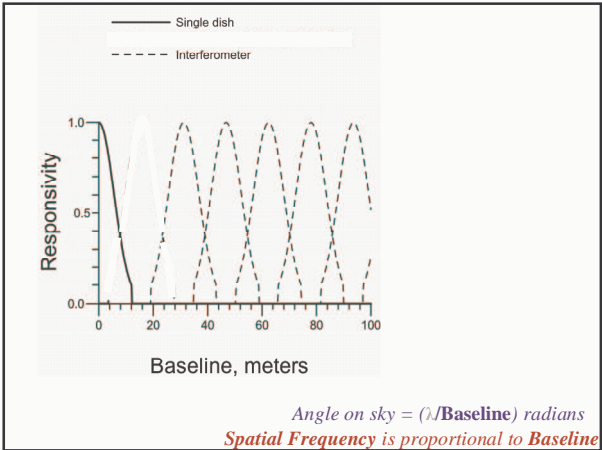
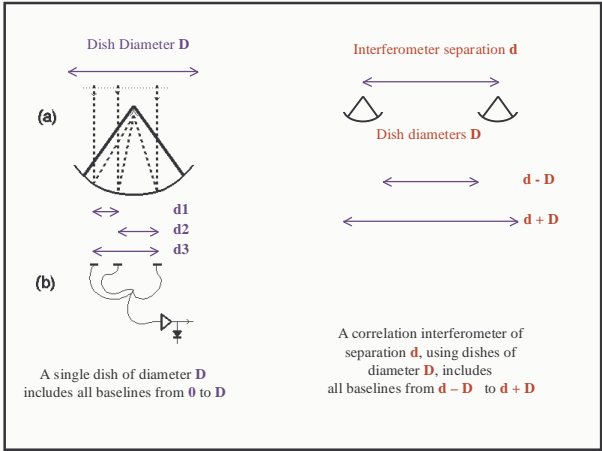
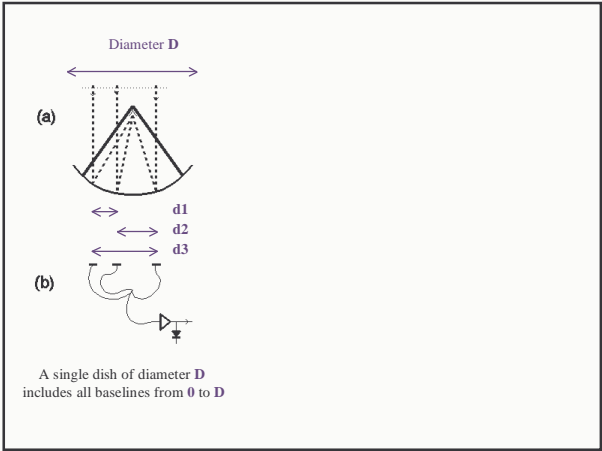
$a.b$

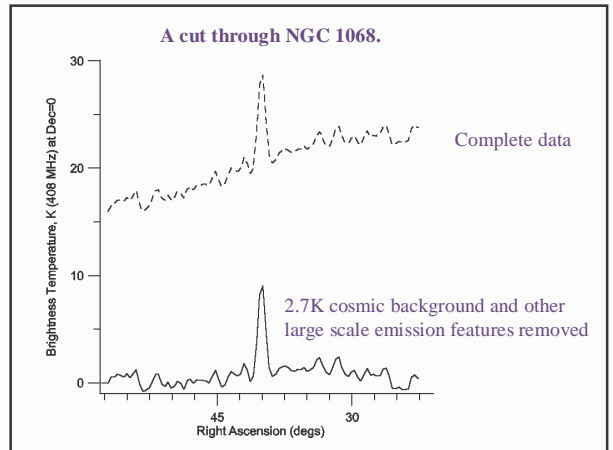
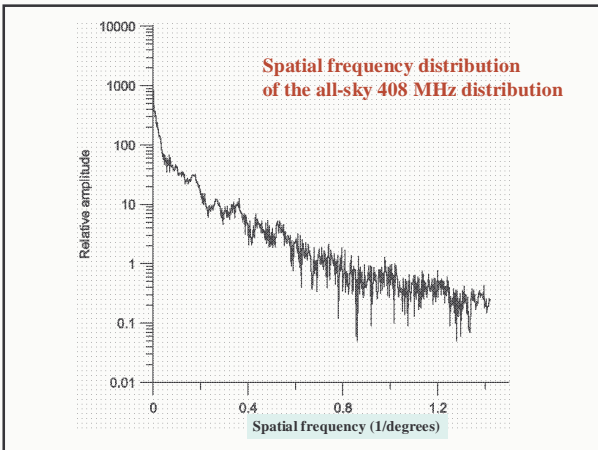
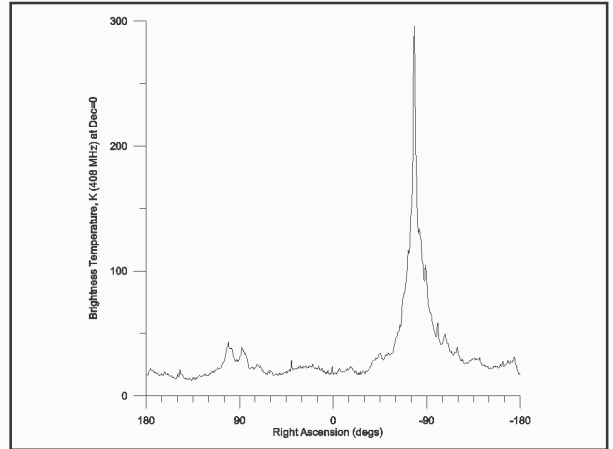
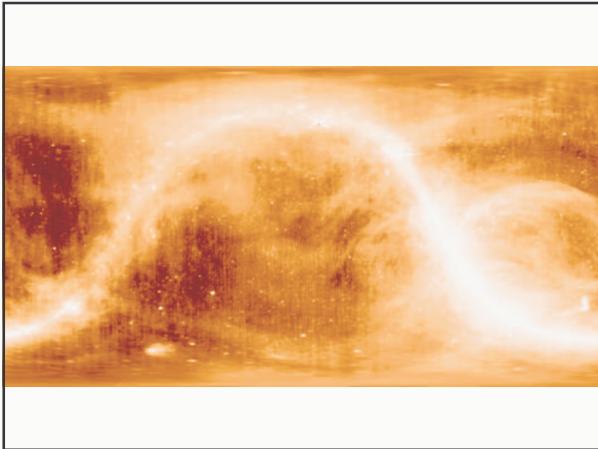
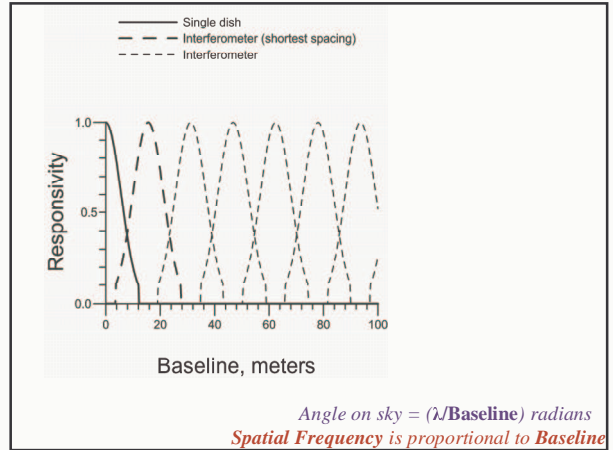
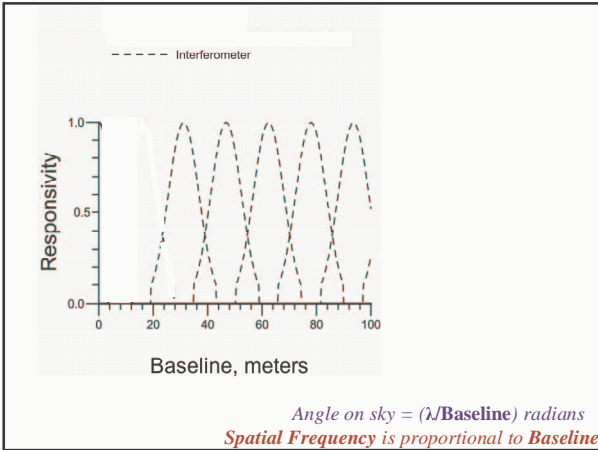
The averaged output no longer depends on A or B , the internally generated amplifier noise voltages (ignoring statistical fluctuations)

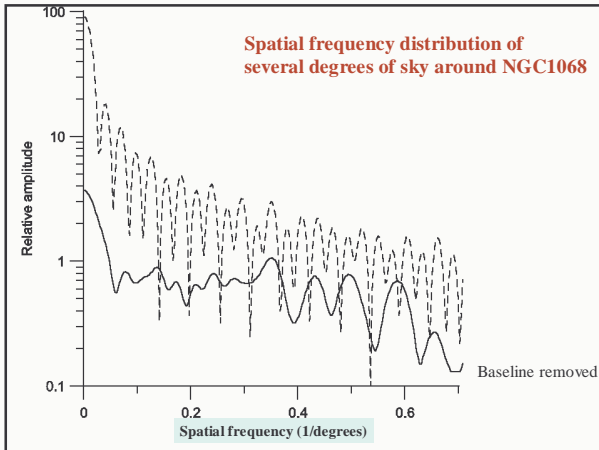


Phased Array (Adding Interferometer) vs. Correlation Interferometer

- Phased Array (Adding Interferometer) is the same as the Single-dish telescope (just missing some metal & using more cable instead).
- Single Dish *very* susceptible to changes in receiver gain, and to changes in receiver noise temperature
- Correlation Interferometer nearly immune to receiver gain and noise changes
- Some source distributions, or combination of sources may be *invisible* to the correlation interferometer.







Spatial Frequencies: Single Dish vs. Interferometer

- Single Dish has a high spatial frequency cut-off in resolution set by its diameter
- Interferometer has a low spatial frequency cut-off set by its minimum antenna separation
- Sometimes, the interferometer low frequency cut-off is advantageous
- Usually, Single Dish maps are analysed in a way that removes the lowest spatial frequencies too. We don't normally want the 3 K cosmic background in our data
- The relative flux in low spatial frequencies is typically far greater than that at higher spatial frequencies
- For cases where we DO want large scale structure, we may HAVE TO use a Single Dish.

Sensitivity

- Even after allowing for the insensitivity to large scale structure, the BRIGHTNESS TEMPERATURE sensitivity of an aperture synthesis telescope is usually FAR poorer than a single dish, even for the same collecting area.
 - For equal total collecting area and rx performance, the sensitivity to point sources S (in Jy) is identical for a SD and a synthesis array. (Ignoring factors of order $\sqrt{2}$)
 - For a SD, the observed antenna temperature on an extended source approximately equals the source brightness temperature.
 - Converting from flux density S , in Jy per beam, into temperature T_b of an extended source, one expression is:

$$T_b = (S / (2k)) \cdot (\Omega)^{-2}$$
 where Ω is the beam solid angle
 - Note that T_b is inversely proportional to diameter D for a Single Dish, and to maximum baseline d for an aperture synthesis array.

$$T_b = (S / (2k)) \cdot (\Omega)^{-2}$$

where Ω is the beam solid angle, approximately $(\lambda/D)^2$ for a dish of Diameter D
or approximately $(\lambda/d)^2$ for an interferometer with maximum baseline d

So, for a given sensitivity to point sources S , the sensitivity in brightness temperature T_b

$$T_b = S \cdot D^2 / (2k) \quad \text{for dish of diameter } D$$

$$T_b = S \cdot d^2 / (2k) \quad \text{for interferometer of maximum baseline } d$$

The interferometer of equal collecting area has worse sky brightness temperature sensitivity by a factor $(d/D)^2$.

This is the filling factor of the array of antennas.

This poorer brightness temperature sensitivity is *in addition* to potentially poor spatial frequency coverage for large-scale structure

If your science requires the large scale structure, there's probably **NO ALTERNATIVE** to including Single Dish data

Practical Details

- The **fundamental** characteristics of a Single Dish are its good potential sensitivity to large scale structure, and its lack of sensitivity to fine structure, or high spatial frequencies.
- **Practical** details are just as important.

Practical Advantages of Single Dish observing:

- **Spatial frequency response**
- **Sensitivity:**
 - Sensitivity in **Jy** (point source) depends just on **collecting area**, SD or Interferometer.
 - Sensitivity in brightness temperature **K** (extended emission) gets WORSE as (Max. Baseline) squared, for the same collecting area – i.e. roughly as $(d/D)^2$
 - 100-meter single dish: ~2 K/Jy
 - 1-mile max baseline aperture synthesis telescope: ~1600 K/Jy
- Ability to map very extended areas quickly
- May provide large collecting area with manageable electronic complexity
- **Simplicity:** one receiver, not N receivers, nor $N(N-1)/2$ correlations
- BUT *relatively* easy to implement large imaging arrays, including bolometers, which can increase mapping speed by orders of magnitude.
- Multi-frequency receivers relatively easy investment
- **Flexibility:**
 - Relative ease of upgrading, customizing hardware to an experiment
 - Relative ease of implementing radar tx systems
 - A single large dish can add significant sensitivity to (e.g.) VLBI arrays
 - Software possibly simpler: "Conceptually" easier to understand for novice astronomers. (But this is inexcusable!)

Practical Disadvantages of Single Dish observing:

- **Spatial frequency response**
- **Mechanical complexity** replaces electronic complexity
- **Susceptibility to instrumental drifts in gain and noise** - don't have the correlation advantage of interferometers
- **Interferometers can *in principle* give high sensitivity and high total collecting area.**
- **Aperture synthesis imaging is a form of multi-beaming** - arguably obtaining more information from the radiation falling on a telescope than is possible with a single dish.

The overall key parameters are

1. Spatial frequency response and sensitivity
2. Relative complexity.

SUMMARY

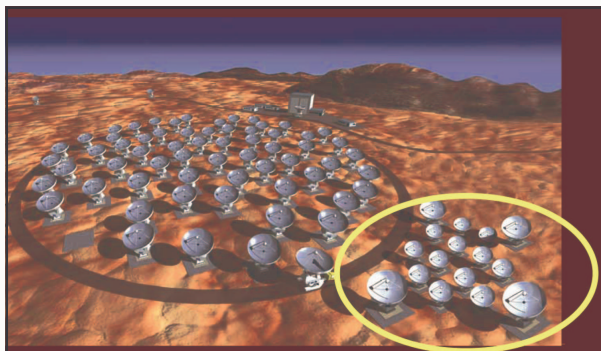
- Don't think in terms of a "Single Dish Observer" or an "Interferometrist."
- Both technologies have their advantages and disadvantages. Choose the right tools for the job.
- Often, a combination of both tools may be required in order to do a good job
- Future telescopes (e.g. ALMA) may be built to allow both Single Dish and Interferometer observing, in order to provide the astronomer with the complete range of spatial frequencies needed for the science.

In future the distinction between "Single Dish" and "Interferometer" observing may become blurred.

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The ALMA array is designed to operate as 64 "independent" single dish telescopes, as well as a 2016-baseline interferometer



The ALMA array is to now be augmented by the compact array, the ACA. The purpose is to add 4 large single dishes plus 12 small interferometer dishes to give the short baselines, which will give full, optimum coverage of the low spatial frequencies.