


Why Single Dish?

Chris Salter

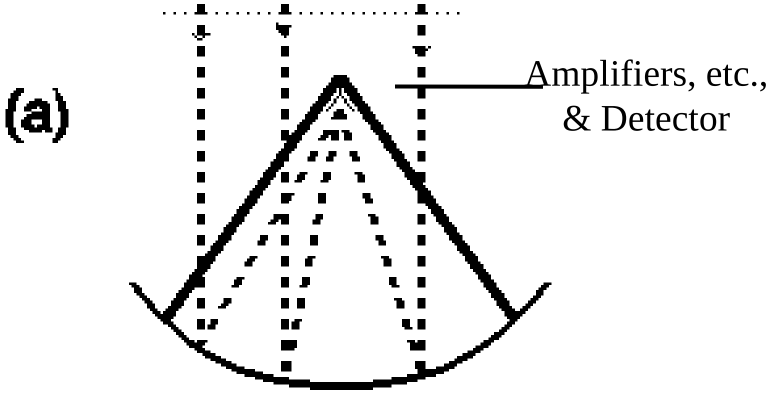
Green Bank & Arecibo Observatories


with **IMMENSE THANKS** to

Darrel Emerson, NRAO Tucson

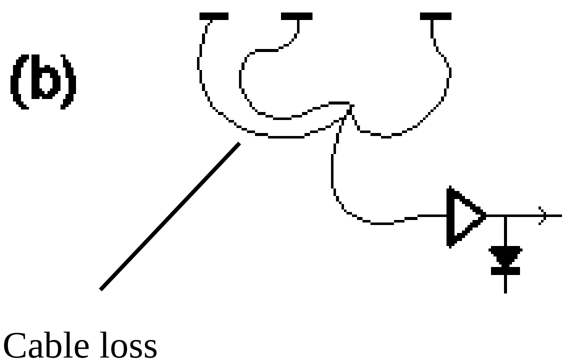
School on Single-Dish Radio Astronomy. Green Bank, Aug. 2019

What are the Alternatives to Single Dishes?



Single Dish.

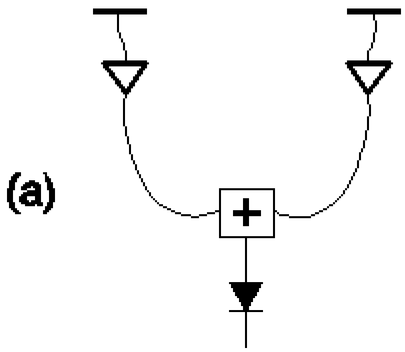
Free space propagation & reflection to bring all signals together in phase



Phased Array.

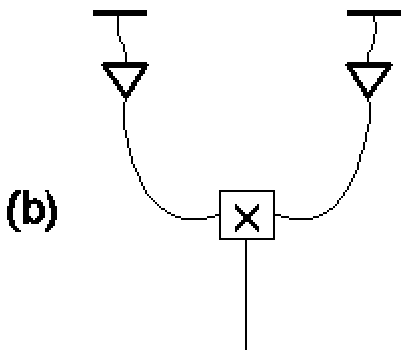
Cables of just the right length, to bring all signals together in phase

Interferometer Options



Adding Interferometer or
Phased Array

A single dish with missing metal.



Correlation or
Multiplying interferometer

All aperture synthesis radio telescopes are made up of multiple correlation interferometers

Phased Array (Adding Interferometer) *vs.* Correlation Interferometer

2-Element Phased Array:

Signal voltage into each antenna element: **a, b**

Noise voltage of each antenna amplifier: **A, B**

Before detector:

$$(A + a) + (B + b)$$

After detector:

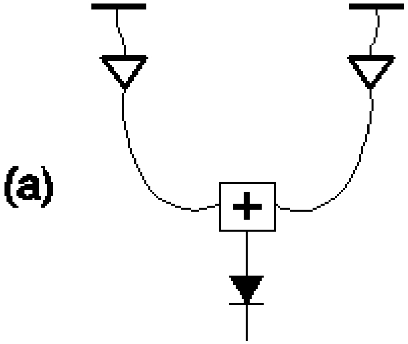
$$[(A+a) + (B+b)]^2$$

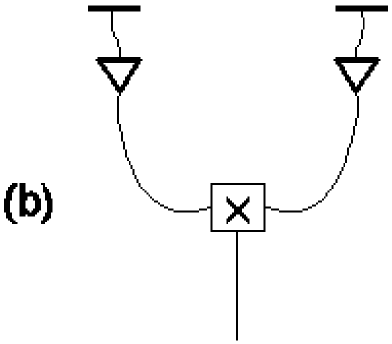
or

$$A^2 + B^2 + a^2 + b^2 + 2.(A.a + A.b + B.a + B.b + A.B + a.b)$$

Time-averaged products of uncorrelated quantities tend to zero, so this averages to just:

$$\boxed{A^2 + B^2 + a^2 + b^2 + 2.a.b}$$





Multiplying or Correlation Interferometer:

•After multiplier: **(A + a).(B + b)**

or

A.B + A.b + a.B + a.b

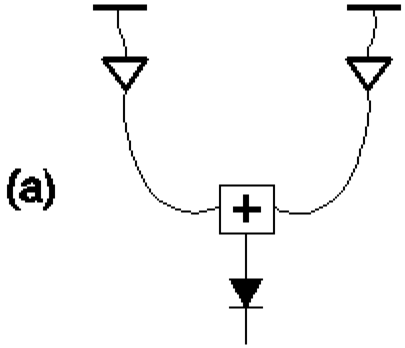
•After averaging, uncorrelated products tend to zero, so this becomes just;

a.b

NB:
multiplication + averaging = correlation

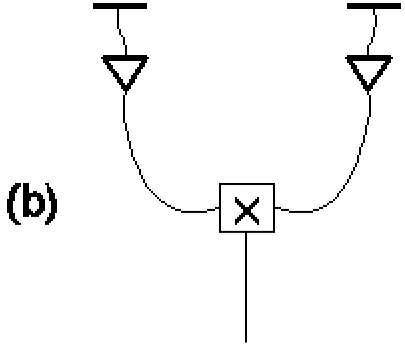
***The averaged output no longer depends on A or B, the internally generated amplifier noise voltages** (ignoring statistical fluctuations)*

In Summary



Adding Interferometer or
Phased Array

- **$A^2 + B^2 + a^2 + b^2 + 2.a.b$**



Correlation or
Multiplying Interferometer

- **a.b**

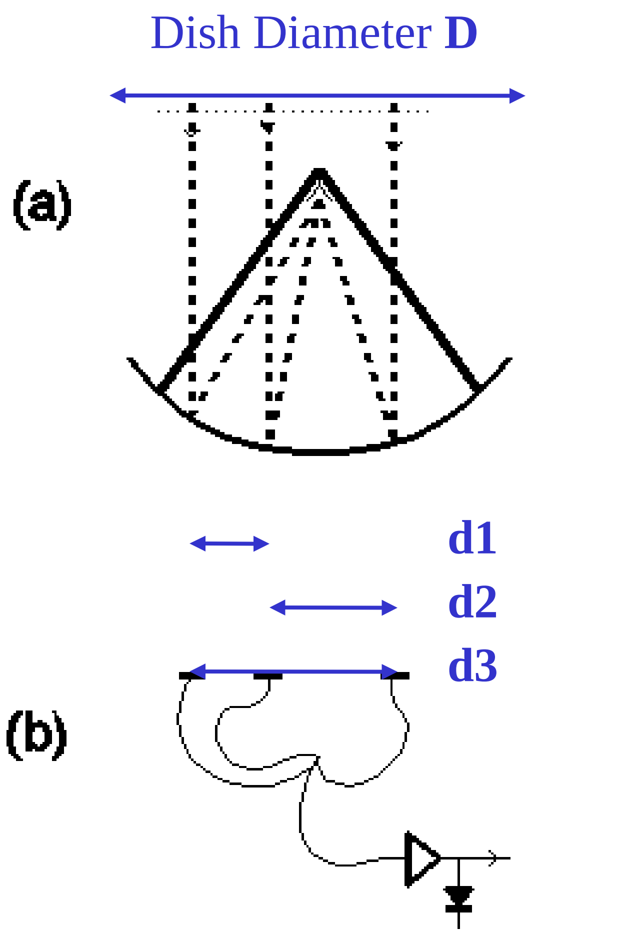
Comparison of Phased Array (Adding Interferometer) *vs.* Correlation Interferometer

- The **Phased Array (Adding Interferometer)** is the same as the **Single-dish telescope**, (just missing some metal & using more cable instead).

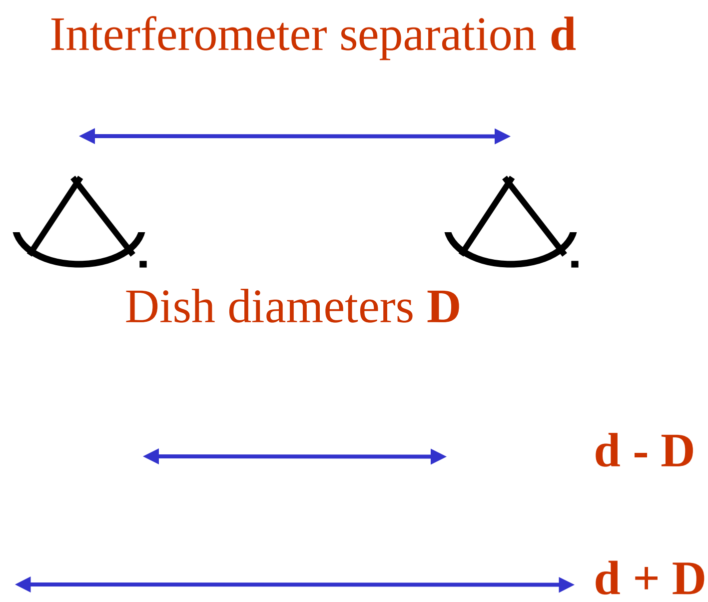
- **Single Dish/Phased Array** are ***very*** susceptible to changes in receiver gain, and to changes in receiver noise temperature.

- The **Correlation Interferometer** is essentially immune to receiver gain and noise changes.

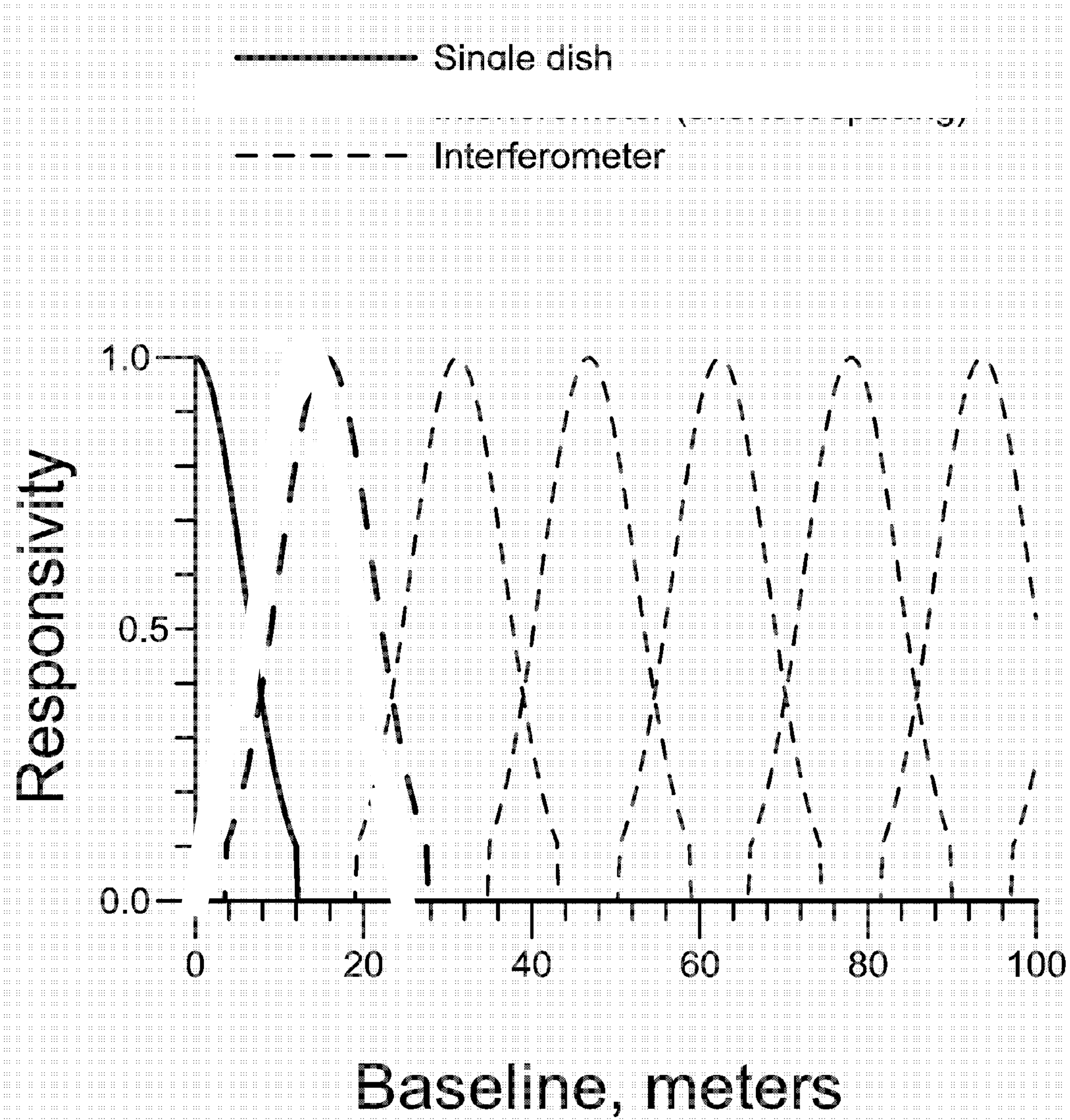
- Some source distributions, or combination of sources may be ***invisible*** to the **Correlation Interferometer**. This includes angularly very extended distributions.



A single dish of diameter **D**
includes all baselines from **0** to **D**

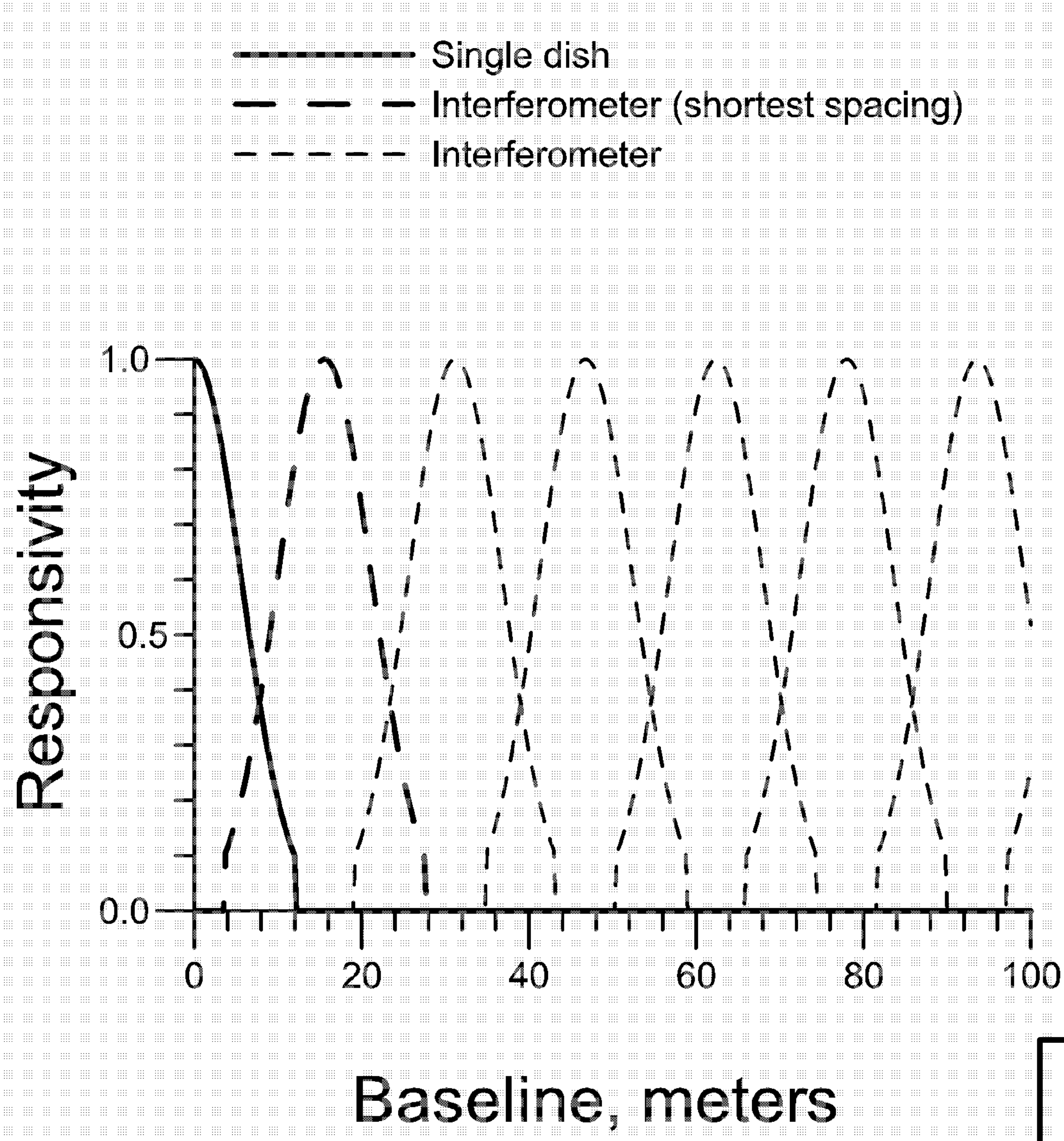


A correlation interferometer of separation **d**, using dishes of diameter **D**, includes all baselines from **d – D** to **d + D**



Angle on sky = (λ/Baseline) radians

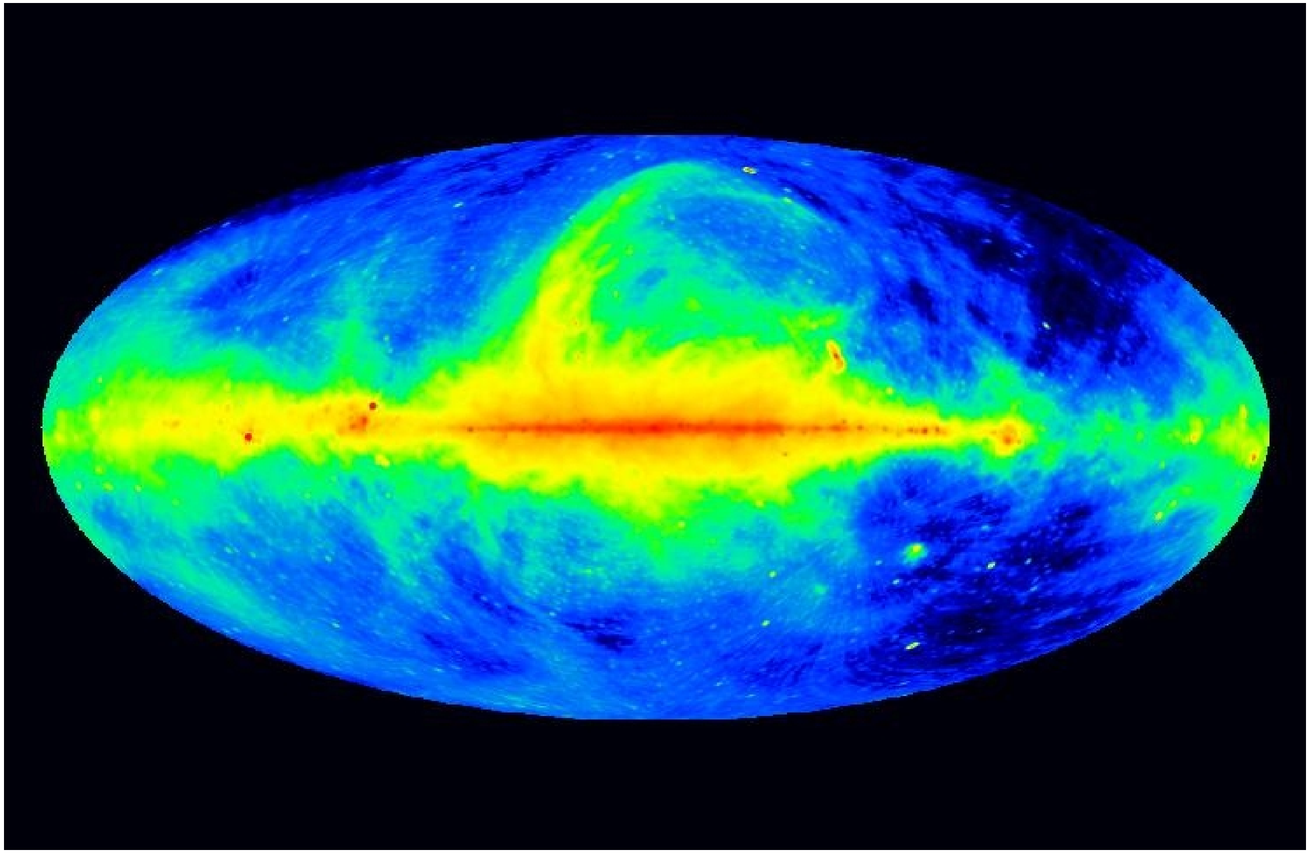
Spatial Frequency *is proportional to* ***Baseline***



To get an accurate picture of the large scale structure and total flux density in a field, AND ALSO the fine scale detail in a source, you require a combination of both interferometric and single-dish observations.

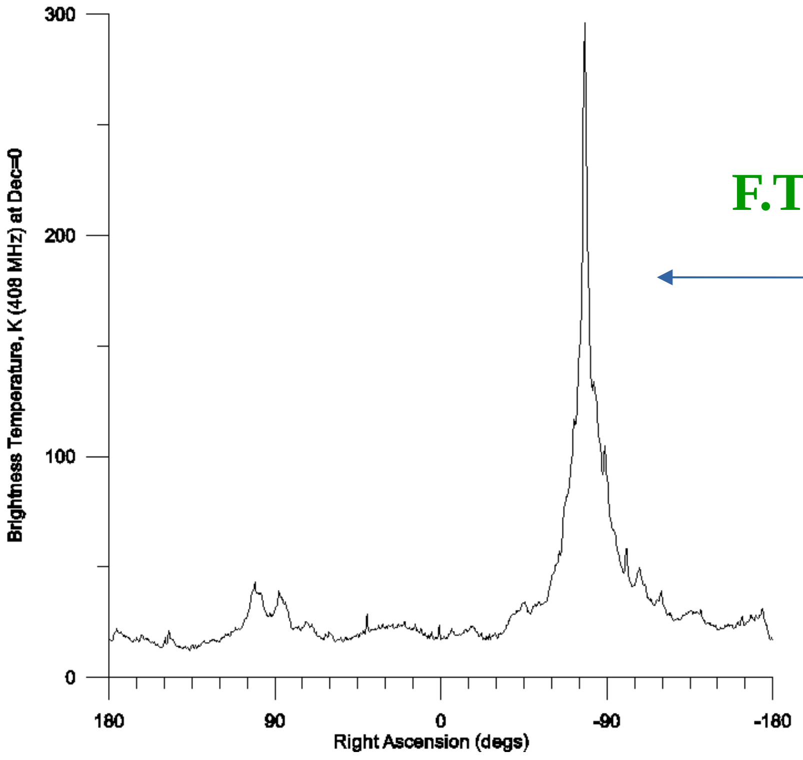
Make sure that you attend Natalie Butterfield's talk!

The Whole Radio Sky (408 MHz -- λ73 cm)



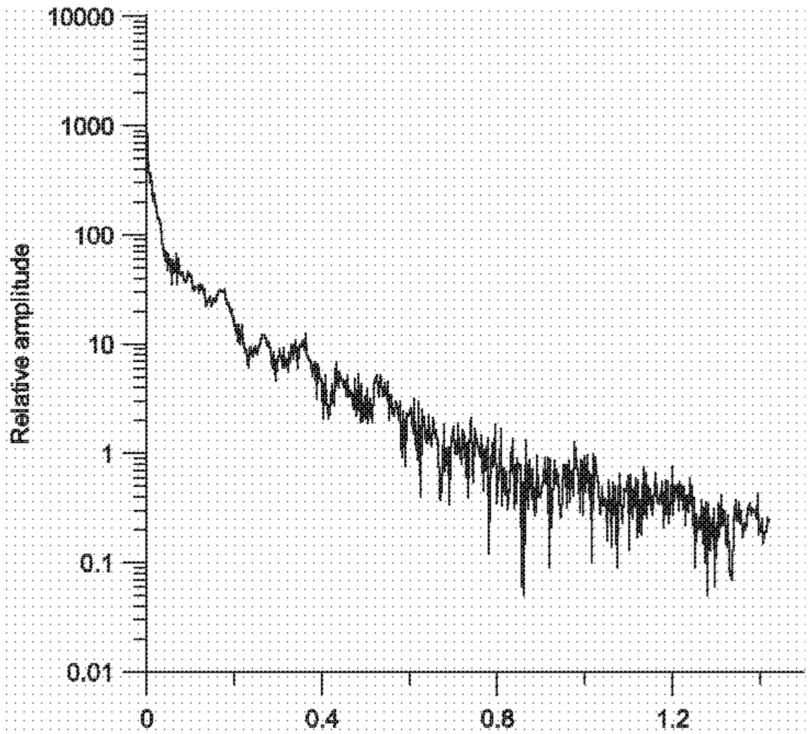
Made with 4 large single-dish telescopes. Contains all the flux in the sky (including the 3 K Cosmic Microwave Background!) Could only have been made with single dishes.

A cross-section through the 408-MHz All-Sky Image at Dec~0°



F.T.

Spatial frequency distribution of the all-sky 408 MHz distribution



Spatial frequency (1/degrees)

Spatial Frequencies: Single Dish *vs.* Interferometer

- **Single Dish has a high-end spatial frequency cut-off in resolution set by its diameter.**

- **Interferometer has a low-end 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; e.g. 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, likely in combination with an interferometer.**

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 **$(d/D)^2$.**
- 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 focal-plane 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 VLBI arrays.
- Software possibly simpler: "Conceptually" easier to understand for novices.
- Use as test-bed for new receiver systems.

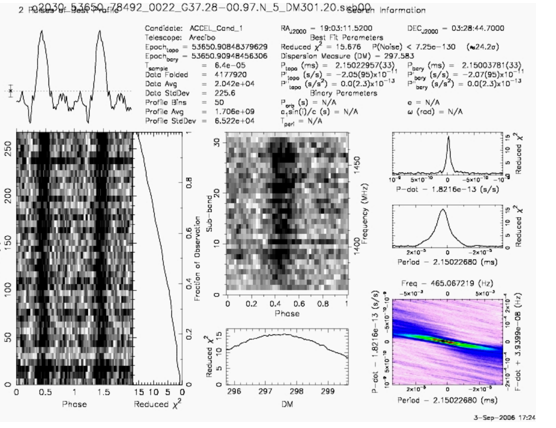
- **Commensality**

Practical Disadvantages of Single Dish Observing

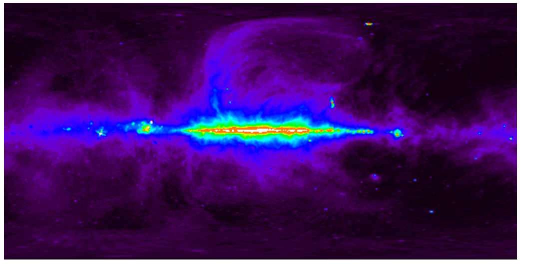
- Limited spatial-frequency response.
- Mechanical complexity replaces electronic complexity.
- Susceptibility to instrumental drifts in gain and noise - don't have the correlation advantage of interferometers.
- Interferometers can *in principle* give high sensitivity and large total collecting area (SKA).
- 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.

Things Single-Dish Do Well

- **Pulsar searches** (~2600 known radio pulsar; the vast majority found with single dishes.)

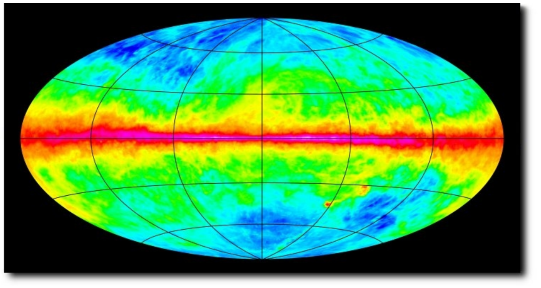


408-MHz Continuum



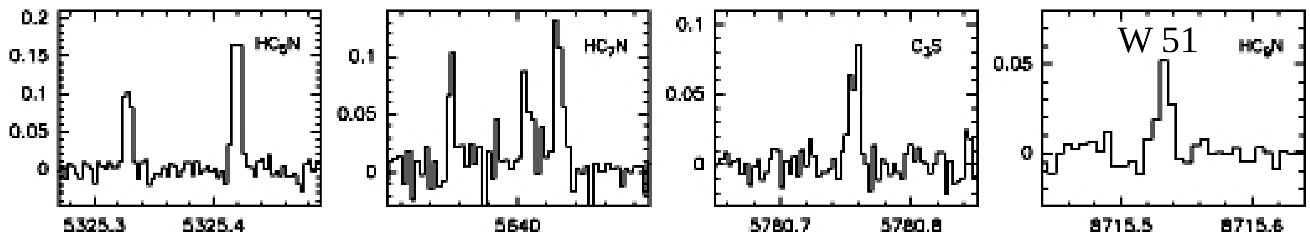
- **Large-area "background" surveys**

1420-MHz Neutral Hydrogen\ (HI)

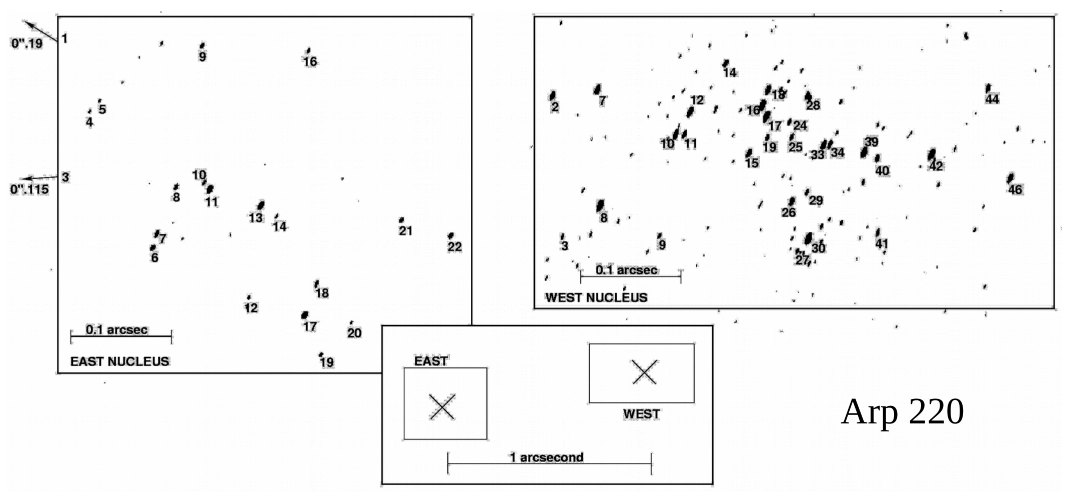


Things Single-Dish Do Well (Cont.)

- **Molecular line searches**

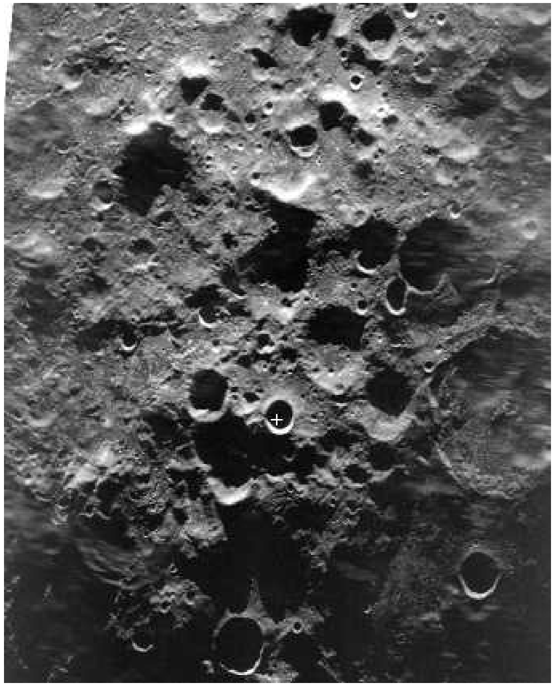


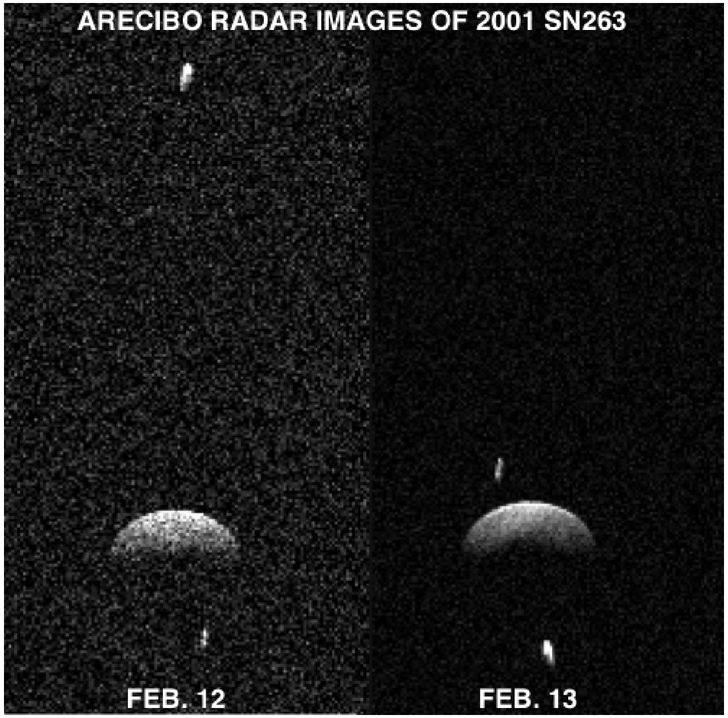
- **High-sensitivity VLBI**



Things Single-Dish Do Well (Cont.)

- **Solar System Radar**





- **Win Nobel Prizes! (1974, 1978, 1993, 2006)**

Single-Dishes: New or Under Construction

- The Large Millimeter Telescope (**LMT/GTM**) of 50-m diameter in Mexico of INAOE & Umass. In service since 2013.

- Sardinia Radio Telescope (**SRT**) of 64-m diameter working to 115 GHz. In service from 2011.

- The Five hundred meter Aperture Spherical Telescope (**FAST**) of 500-m diameter built in China for frequencies to ~3 GHz. First light 2016.

- The 6-m sub-mm **CCAT-P** (Cerro Chajnantor Atacama Telescope).