

**Technical Developments for the  
Geomorphological Reconstruction of Palaeo Ice  
Sheets from Remotely Sensed Data**

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**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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**Submitted: May 2003**

**Title:**

Technical Developments for the Geomorphological Reconstruction of Palaeo Ice Sheets from Remotely Sensed Data

**Summary:**

Ice sheet reconstructions are concerned with an understanding of the dynamics of palaeo ice sheets through time. This involves ascertaining the configuration of ice domes and flow patterns, as well as the evolution of glaciation and deglaciation. The use of remotely sensed data (radar and visual/near infra-red imagery) has been a key development in these studies, allowing the rapid mapping of individual landforms over large areas. These data sources record electro-magnetic reflectance of an illuminated landscape which leads to the introduction of random and systematic bias'. This research explores the propagation of these bias' and recommends that, in order to obtain optimum imagery, sensor spatial resolution is <30m and solar elevation is <20° at acquisition. More problematic is the selective bias introduced by the solar azimuth in relation to the orientation of linear landforms. This cannot be removed and requires a good knowledge of the study area or an additional primary data source (e.g. radar or digital elevation model).

DEMs are rapidly supplementing, and in many cases replacing, satellite imagery in landform mapping. However as they record surface elevation, rather than surface reflectance, they should be able to provide a bias-free data source for landform mapping. Methods by which the landscape can be visualised are explored with the purpose of providing a bias free method, although no single visualisation was found to be satisfactory. A suitable mapping strategy was developed through the application of these methods to the mapping of glacial landforms from a DEM of the Lake District.

Once landform mapping has been completed it is common for mapped landform data to be generalised in order to reduce their complexity and so aid interpretation. This is usually a manual technique that involves reducing several thousand individual lineaments to summary lines. The thesis concludes with the development of a set of tools to help with this manual process, as well as provide quantitative verification. This is then applied to the landforms mapped from the Lake District in the previous chapter. A method for the automation of this procedure is also suggested.

# Acknowledgements

Many people have been involved in the long toil of the past 6 years, all of whom I would like to thank for their help and support. In particular, thanks to Chris Clark. Your honesty and high standards are a breath of fresh air in the academic world. During my time, I have just about seen Jane, Coomeran, Chris and Paul come and go. You have all provided help in many ways (including data) and, as a research group, it's been great to have discussions.

Others who have helped include Paul Cole, Wishart Mitchell and Steve Wise. Graham and Paul put up with me throwing maps at them for printing. Many thanks to Steve and Kamie who have piqued my interest in DEMs; hopefully more work looms on this front. Rachel and Rut at Erdas have fielded (far too) numerous support calls from me.

A variety of data have been used in this project. The OS have provided free academic use of their DEM data, MIMAS have made available SPOT and Landsat TM satellite imagery, whilst Clas Hättestrand allowed access to the Russian ETM+ imagery. ERA-Maptec kindly forgot to invoice the project for the fantastic Landsat TM data.

Finally, my wife and children have formed a large part of this work. I thank them for their patience and long suffering, and maybe Daddy won't be locked away typing through the long evenings.

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