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David G. Long
david_long@byu.edu

Jacqueline Etcheto

See next page for additional authors

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Wind Speed Effect on L-Band Brightness Temperature Inferred From EuroSTARRS and WISE 2001 Field Experiments

Jacqueline Etcheto, Emmanuel P. Dinnat, Jacqueline Boutin, Adriano Camps, Senior Member, IEEE, J. Miller, Stéphanie Contardo, J. Wesson, Jordi Font, and David G. Long, Senior Member, IEEE

Abstract—The results from two field experiments in the Mediterranean Sea are used to study the wind speed dependence of brightness temperature at L-band. During the EuroSTARRS airborne experiment, an L-band radiometer made measurements across a large wind speed gradient, enabling us to study this dependence at high wind speed. We compare our results with a two-scale emissivity model using several representations of the sea state spectrum. While the results are encouraging, unfortunately the accuracy of the model does not permit us to distinguish between the so-called twice Durden and Vesecsky spectrum and the Elhoutsky spectrum above 7 m s\(^{-1}\). The effect of foam is certainly small. During the WISE 2001 field experiment carried on an oil rig, we studied this dependence at low wind speed, finding an abrupt decrease of the wind speed effect on the brightness temperature below 3 m s\(^{-1}\).

Index Terms—Foam, L-band, radiometry, sea state spectrum, sea surface salinity, wave, wind.

I. INTRODUCTION

SEA SURFACE salinity (SSS) is of primary importance to ocean circulation. On one hand, it is a driving force for thermohaline circulation; on another hand, it is a powerful tracer of water masses. Yet, at present, it is monitored in very limited areas of the global ocean; large parts of the ocean have never been measured [1]. The ARGO program aims at improving our knowledge of ocean salinity in the water column by deploying an array of 3000 profiling floats all over the ocean. Nevertheless, the ability to monitor surface salinity for years on a regular basis from satellite would be a significant improvement for the understanding of global ocean circulation and of its consequences for climate. Recent studies analyze the potential impact of satellite SSS and prove its usefulness for a better simulation of the oceanic mixed layer in the equatorial Pacific region [2] and for improving El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) predictions [3]. It is during the late 1960s that the possibility of a potential use of L-band (1.41 GHz) microwave radiometers to measure salinity came in, the first airborne measurement being made in 1970 [4]. However, only the recent arrival of two-dimensional synthetic aperture radiometers have made measurements in this wavelength range feasible with a reasonable spatial resolution. As a result, the Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity mission (SMOS) (http://www.cesbio.ups-tlse.fr/fr/indexsmos.html) was selected to be launched in 2007 by the European Space Agency (ESA) in 1999. In preparing for the SMOS mission, ESA sponsored several field experiments in order to improve sea surface emissivity models in L-band: EuroSTARRS [5], WISE 2000 [6], and WISE 2001 [7]. In this paper, we address the issue of the effects of sea surface roughness and foam on emissivity.

II. EUROSTARRS CAMPAIGN

This airborne experiment used the Salinity Temperature and Roughness Remote Scanner (STARRS) L-band radiometer from the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL). It was mounted on a Dornier 228 plane from the Deutschen Zentrum für Luft und Raumfahrt (DLR). One flight took place above the Gulf of Gascogne on November 17, 2001; another one was made above the Mediterranean Sea on November 21, 2001. Here, we will use the only measurements performed over a variable wind speed region: they were made over the Mediterranean Sea during the return flight from Barcelona to Munich on November 23, 2001. The flight track is shown on Fig. 1. The plane left the Spanish coast at 16h40 UT and reached the French coast at 17h49. The flight took place after sunset, thus avoiding sun glint.

A. Measurements During Transit Flight

1) Radiometer: During the transit, STARRS was mounted flat below the aircraft. The radiometer is a pushbroom instrument with a phased array that acquires data with six beams ori-
ented almost perpendicular to the plane track simultaneously. The measurements are made only at vertical polarization, referred to the radiometer plane. When the radiometer is parallel to the sea surface, as it is the case during this flight, this is vertical polarization in the sea surface frame. Due to a hardware problem, the measurements were noisy, and we could use only the data from two antenna beams during the first part of the flight: we used measurements made between 16h53 (starting far from coast) and 17h20 (stopping before high noise); the doubled line in Fig. 1 shows the part of the flight used. Because of calibration problems on some antenna beams and receivers, we use only measurements from the directions 2L and 3R looking, respectively, at 21.5° left (off-nadir angle) and 38.4° right of the aircraft. The half-power beamwidth is 14.5° for the 2L antenna and 16.5° for the 3R one. The highest side lobe is 11 dB, and the beam efficiency is 89% and 90%, respectively.

2) Measurements of Geophysical Parameters: Since this flight was not planned as part of the experiment, no dedicated in situ measurements were made in support of the radiometer measurements. Therefore, we used data from the Observatoire de Recherche sur l’Environnement SSS (ORE-SSS) program, which monitors the sea surface temperature (SST) and the SSS onboard ships of opportunity [8]. In addition, we obtained SST images from Airborne Very High Resolution Radiometer (AVHRR) local area coverage measurements and wind velocity from SeaWinds-on-QuikSCAT (QSCAT) scatterometer measurements.

M.S. Rome left Marseille toward the Strait of Gibraltar on November 28, five days after the flight. The measurements of SST and SSS made onboard are shown in Fig. 2(a) and (b). Between 41°N and 42.88°N in the latitude band overflown by the plane, the SST measured by the ship varied between 13.4 °C and 15.8 °C, with a minimum around 42 °C. Since SST can vary rapidly, we checked with SST retrieved from AVHRR measurements at 2-km resolution by the SATMOS data bank (www.satmos.meteo.fr/html/SATELLITE.html). The composite image of the measurements made on November 22 and 23 is shown in Fig. 3 being in qualitative agreement with the ship results, with a minimum in the middle of the journey.

Yet, when the AVHRR measurements are colocated with the ship measurements, it appears that the region of low SST moved southwestward by about 0.3° both in longitude and in
latitude in five days. When this shift is taken into account, the measurements differ everywhere by less than 0.5°. Considering that, on one hand, the infrared SST has an accuracy of a few tenths of a degree, and on another hand the SST may evolve in five days, we consider this agreement as reasonable. In addition, around 15 °C, the $T_i$ sensitivity to temperature is only 0.1 K (°C)$^{-1}$. Therefore, we use the AVHRR data colocated with the radiometer measurements for SST values, since they were measured approximately at the time of the aircraft flight. The SSS measured in the same zone was rather homogeneous, ranging from 37.7–37.95 psu, with a tendency to increase southward. No correlation with SST was observed, especially no SSS features associated with the observed region of low SST. Unless moving with a varying shelf-slope front, SSS is a slowly time varying quantity due to low air–sea water flux, and it should be relatively stable during five days in this area. In addition, the SSS measured on November 22 at platform Casablanca slightly southwest of the plane track (40.72°N 1.36°E) was 38.1 psu in agreement with the ship measurements. Consequently, we consider the SSS to be 37.8 psu all along the flight, since the expected variation of the brightness temperature ($T_i$) for such an SSS variation is less than ±0.1 K, a negligible variation compared to the variation due to sea state.

QSCAT passed above the zone at 1734 UT on November 23 during the plane flight. The neutral-stability 10-m height wind velocity was retrieved at 2.5-km pixel resolution by the Brigham Young Microwave Earth Remote Sensing Laboratory using the experimental method described in [9]. The resulting wind colocated along the plane track is shown in Fig. 4. The plane started from Barcelona in a region of light wind (3–4 m·s$^{-1}$) and then crossed a strong gradient to enter a region of strong wind (20–25 m·s$^{-1}$). This gives us a unique opportunity to study the wind speed dependence of $T_i$. Though the high-resolution wind measurements used here are somewhat noisier than conventional 25-km QSCAT winds, they are estimated to have rms wind speed errors of less than 2 m·s$^{-1}$. The high-resolution winds provide additional comparison points as well as finer spatial detail. The radiometric measurements analyzed here were made 15–40 min before the satellite pass. Using Taylor’s hypothesis (space scale = time scale × wind speed), we estimate that in the meantime the wind structures might move by as much as 7–25 km. This is consistent with the comparison between the ARPEGE meteorological model wind field ($0.25° \times 0.25°$; 6h resolution) at 18h and the QSCAT measurements indicating a westward displacement of the wind speed gradient on the order of 20 km in half an hour. The regions of low and high wind speed being rather homogeneous according to QSCAT, little short-term variability is expected; only the zones of intermediate wind speed might be slightly displaced eastward, and we do not expect that this will have a major impact on the present study.
B. Wind Speed Dependence of $T_b$

In order to remove most of the dependence of $T_b$ on incidence angle ($\theta$), SST and SSS from the sea state dependence, parameterized through wind speed ($U$), we split $T_b$ in two terms as in [10]

$$T_b = T_{\text{refl}}(\varepsilon(\text{SST, SSS}), \theta) + T_{\text{wind}}(\varepsilon(\text{SST, SSS}), \theta, U, \Phi)$$

(1)

where $\varepsilon$ is the sea water permittivity and $\Phi$ the wind direction. We use the two-scale sea surface emissivity model described in [10] and the measured SST, SSS, and $\theta$ to compute $T_{\text{refl}}$. $T_{\text{refl}}$ is then subtracted from both the measured and the modeled $T_b$ before comparing modeled and measured $T_{\text{wind}}$. The dependence of $T_{\text{wind}}$ on wind direction, which is expected to be small compared to the measurement accuracy [10], is neglected as well as the dependence of $T_{\text{wind}}$ on the incidence angle, which is expected to be less than 0.25 K for the range of incidence angles explored by each antenna [11]. For the sea water permittivity, the Klein and Swift [12] parameterization is used. The modeled $T_b$ is corrected for the effects affecting the measured $T_b$: incidence angle using the plane attitude measurements, antenna pattern effect, atmospheric emission and absorption [13], and galactic and cosmic noise [14]. $T_{\text{wind}}$ measured by the 3R and 2L antenna beams is plotted together with the wind speed in Fig. 5. Even though the radiometer measurements show large fluctuations at minutes scale, probably due to a superimposed spurious noise suspected to originate from a leakage in the electronic circuits, the increase of $T_{\text{wind}}$ with wind speed is clear.

The wind speed dependence of the measured $T_{\text{wind}}$ is shown in Fig. 6. For each QSCAT wind speed measurement colocated with each antenna footprint (the two antennas’ footprint centers are 3.6 km apart so that they are colocated with different QSCAT cells), the corresponding $T_b$ measurements were averaged. The error bars show the standard deviation for each average. The bias between the two beams is due to an imperfect gain calibration. A straight line was fitted by least square fit for each antenna: for the 3R antenna, the slope is 0.252 K m$^{-1}$ s$^{-1}$ (the standard deviation of the measurements with respect to the fit is 0.90 K); for the 2L antenna, the slope is 0.266 K m$^{-1}$ s$^{-1}$ (the standard deviation of the measurements with respect to the fit is 0.93 K). The confidence level at 95% computed with a test of Student is 0.0225 K m$^{-1}$ s$^{-1}$ for the 3R antenna and 0.0233 K m$^{-1}$ s$^{-1}$ for the 2L antenna. The wind speed dependence obtained from the two-scale model at SST 15$^\circ$C, SSS 37.8 psu, and incidence angles 21.5$^\circ$ and 38.4$^\circ$ using twice the Durden and Vesecky spectrum [15] is superimposed on the data: the agreement is quite good, the model slope in this wind speed range being 0.24 K m$^{-1}$ s$^{-1}$. Yet, the data are too noisy to completely validate this model.

In Fig. 7, we plotted the model result for different parameterizations of the sea state with wind speed: Durden and Vesecky spectrum and twice this spectrum, Elfouhaily spectrum [16], Elfouhaily spectrum plus foam (active foam coverage according to [17], and foam emissivity according to [18]). The slope predicted by the Durden and Vesecky spectrum is too small and is supposed to be accurate in the range 3–50 GHz. We chose arbitrarily to use this parameterization, since very little is known about the effect of foam at L-band. No particular non-linear increase in $T_b$ can be seen on our measurements for wind speed larger than 7–10 m s$^{-1}$ (Fig. 6) when wave breaking becomes nonnegligible. This means that the foam effect in L-band, if any, is small. This is compatible with the observations made during the WISE 2001 experiment [19]: the increase in $T_b$ due to foam was 0.1 K for 15-m s$^{-1}$ wind speed at incidence 30$^\circ$ in vertical polarization. Given data scattering, we would not be able to observe such a small increase.

III. WISE 2001 FIELD EXPERIMENT

This campaign was conducted at Repsol’s *Casablanca* oil rig located 40.72$\pm$N 1.36$\pm$E from October 23 to November 22, 2001. It employed a fully polarimetric L-band radiometer and in situ measurements of oceanic and meteorological parameters. A complete description can be found in [20].

Here, we use only the measurements made when the radiometer was pointing at a 44$^\circ$ incidence angle during periods of 1 h. Results obtained at other incidence angles are analyzed in [20]. The $T_b$ measurements were averaged during 15 min. They are compared with wind speed averaged during the same period. Most of the time, we took the wind speed measured onboard a buoy at 2.5-m height except during one week during which it was not available; then, we took wind speed measured at 69-m height. Since in our emissivity model the wind stress is converted into wind speed under a neutral stability assumption, we convert the measured wind speed to equivalent neutral wind speed at 10-m height as follows. The wind speed is deduced under nonneutral conditions from measured air–sea temperature difference, relative humidity, and wind speed using the algorithm described in [21], where the roughness length is the one proposed in [22]. Above the top of

![Fig. 7. Modeled wind speed dependence using different spectral parameterizations: (Dotted line) Durden and Vesecky, (dashed line) Elfouhaily, (solid line) twice Durden and Vesecky, (dashed–dotted line) Elfouhaily plus foam.](image-url)
the surface layer (defined as ten times the wind speed value), a constant vertical wind profile is used. Then, the wind stress is converted into a wind speed at 10-m height under neutral conditions $U$ assuming a logarithmic vertical profile of the wind. The wind speed dependence of the measured brightness temperature in vertical ($T_{b_v}$) and horizontal ($T_{b_h}$) polarization is shown in Fig. 8 (top). The data points are color coded in SST. A straight line is fitted for wind speed larger than 3 m · s$^{-1}$. The SST influence is clearly visible: for the same wind speed, the measurements made at low SST are well above those made at higher SST. This is particularly clear for $U$ around 6 m · s$^{-1}$. These measurements are less noisy than those made at other incidence angles during the same campaign as can be seen in [20]. It might be due to the fact that the measurements at 44° incidence were always performed at the same time and same azimuth, between 9 and 11 UT and pointing westward, while in [20] measurements made at all local times are plotted together as well as measurements made pointing west–northwest and north–northeast. Fig. 9 shows the galactic noise that should enter the radiometer after specular reflection on the sea for measurements performed at 44° and 45°. It was derived from the cosmic background and continuum sources measured during the Stockert survey [23] and from the Hydrogen line emission survey [24]. The signal was convolved by the antenna pattern. It should be multiplied by the reflection coefficient of the sea at these incidence angles: 0.58 and 0.76 for vertical and horizontal polarizations respectively. At 44° incidence, most measurements were made for a galactic noise coming from a quiet region of the galactic sky (galactic noise between 3.3–3.7 K), while at 45° incidence, the antenna sees a signal originating from the galactic plane in the afternoon so that, over one day, the galactic noise varies between 3.3–6.5 K. The measured $T_{b_v}$ were corrected for the expected galactic noise, but recent comparisons between galactic noise derived from the above-mentioned surveys and measurements made with radiometers looking at the sky show disagreements up to ±0.5 K, which origin remains unknown (personal communication, Y. Kerr). Hence, the quality of the galactic noise corrections that were applied to WISE measurements is possibly dependent on the region of the galactic sky (i.e., on the local time of the radiometric measurements).

Fig. 8 (bottom) shows the same plot for $T_{\text{wind}}$. The scatter of the points is now random. The standard deviation of the points with respect to the fit is decreased by about 0.1 K, from 0.153 to 0.036 K in vertical polarization and from 0.431 to 0.333 K in horizontal polarization. In Fig. 8, it can be clearly seen that $T_{\text{wind}}$ abruptly decreases for wind speed lower than 3 m · s$^{-1}$. This behavior was observed at 2.65 GHz by [25] during a flight above Chesapeake Bay. It was not observed during the EuroSTARRS flight, probably because both the $T_{b}$ and the wind speed measurements were noisy; it is known that the scatterometer measurements are very inaccurate below 3 m · s$^{-1}$. The slope of the fit between 3–18 m · s$^{-1}$ is 0.014 K · m$^{-1}$/s in vertical polarization and 0.195 K · m$^{-1}$/s in horizontal polarization, different from what is found at 45° incidence angle in [20]. This might be due to the inaccuracy generated by more noisy data at 45°, as discussed above. Also, the azimuth of the measurements is not the same, and different sea states are observed in different directions due to wave reflection on the platform as discussed in [20]. 

![Fig. 8. Wind speed dependence in (top) vertical and (bottom) horizontal polarizations measured at 44° incidence angle during WISE 2001 of brightness temperature and $T_{\text{wind}}$.](image-url)
wind speed dependence found for the two-scale sea surface emissivity model described in [10] above 3 m \cdot s^{-1} using the different parameterizations of the sea spectrum is 0.087, 0.129, and 0.173 K \cdot m^{-1}/s in vertical polarization and 0.158, 0.213, and 0.315 K \cdot m^{-1}/s in horizontal polarization for the Durden and Veisecky, the Elfouhaily, and twice the Durden and Veisecky spectra, respectively. In vertical polarization, the measurements have wind speed dependence weaker than any of the model result. In horizontal polarization, it lies between Durden and Veisecky and Elfouhaily. This disagreement between model and data might come from a modification of part of the wave spectrum due to the presence of the platform, especially by creating reflected waves. In addition, it was observed during WISE 2000 that waves reflected by the platform affect the amount of foam: the foam coverage observed north of the platform was lower than the one observed west by one order of magnitude [6].

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We studied measurements from two campaigns to improve our knowledge of the wind sensitivity of brightness temperature at L-band. During EuroSTARRS, very strong winds were encountered. It enables us to compare observations to a two-scale emissivity model for \( T_v \) at moderate and high wind speed. Within the accuracy of the measurements, the agreement between data and model is good when modeling the sea state with twice the Durden and Veisecky spectrum. When using the Elfouhaily spectrum, for winds below 7 m \cdot s^{-1}, the data are in disagreement with the model, while they are not incompatible at higher wind speed taking into account the noise of the measurements. It is also shown that the effect of foam on \( T_v \) cannot be large. During the WISE 2001 campaign, low noise measurements at incidence 44° were performed at low and moderate wind speed. It enables us to check the validity of studying the wind speed dependence on \( T_{lw\text{wind}} \) rather than on \( T_l \). We could see an abrupt decrease of \( T_{lw\text{wind}} \) for wind speed lower than 3 m \cdot s^{-1}. The wind speed dependence of \( T_{lw\text{wind}} \) above 3 m \cdot s^{-1} is much less than what was observed during EuroSTARRS. Even though the model predicts a decrease with incidence angle for \( b \) larger than 40°, this result cannot be reconciled with the model. It might come from a distortion of the sea state during WISE 2001 due to the presence of the platform. Even though more measurements are needed to completely validate an L-band emissivity model, these results are encouraging.

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REFERENCES

Jacqueline Etcheto was born in Meknes, Morocco, in 1943. She received the Agregación de Physique degree and the Docteur es Sciences Physiques degree for her thesis on space plasma physics in 1965 and 1972, respectively, both from the École Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles, Paris, France.

She became a Full-Time Scientist in Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in 1965. She is presently appointed to Laboratoire d'Océanographie Dynamique et de Climatologie, Paris, France, as Directeur de Recherches. From 1965 to 1987, she has been working on space plasma physics, focusing on studies of propagation and generation of waves in the magnetosphere. She was responsible for relaxation sounders onboard GEOS1 (ESA, 1977), GEOS2 (ESA, 1978), and ISEE1 (ESA/NASA, 1977), including instrument definition, provision of hardware, data handling, and scientific use of data. In 1988, she became interested in oceanography, using the synergy between remotely sensed measurements and in situ data to study the air–sea CO₂ exchange at large scale. Her research activity is multiyear estimation of air–sea CO₂ flux at regional scale using both satellite (wind speed, SST, ocean color) and in situ (PCO₂ and related parameters, including launching CARIJCA buoys) data. Since 1999, she is involved in the preparation of the SMOS satellite (ESA, 2007) intended at determining sea surface salinity using L-band radiometry. She is interested in the development and validation of sea surface emissivity models at L-band, including validation campaigns. She is coordinating the group of French scientists involved in the ocean part of the SMOS project. She has published 80 papers in the open literature.

Emmanuel P. Dinnat was born in Sarcelles, France, on January 5, 1975. He received the DEA degree in instrumental methods in astrophysics and their spatial applications and the Ph.D. degree in computer science, telecommunications, and electronics from the University Paris VI, Paris, France, in 1999 and 2003, respectively.

He was with the Institut d’Astrophysique de Paris, Paris, France, from June to September 1998, where he studied the specific entropy profile in elliptical galaxies and in X-ray gas of galaxy clusters. From March 1999 until April 2003, he was with the Laboratoire d’Océanographie Dynamique et de Climatologie (LODYC), Paris, France, where he pursued the Ph.D. in the fields related to the Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity (SMOS) mission of the European Space Agency. He is currently with the European Space Agency, European Space Research and Technical Centre (ESA/ESTEC), Noordwijk, The Netherlands. His research interests are microwave remote sensing, sea surface salinity, scattering from rough surfaces, atmospheric radiative transfer, and numerical simulation.

Adriano Camps (S’91–A’97–M’00–SM’02) was born in Barcelona, Spain, in 1969. He received the Telecommunications Engineering degree and the Ph.D. degree in telecommunications engineering in 1992 and 1996, respectively, both from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), Barcelona, Spain.

From 1991 to 1992, he was with the ENS des Télécommunications de Bretagne, Bretagne, France, with an Erasmus Fellowship. In 1993, he joined the Electromagnetics and Photonics Engineering group, Department of Signal Theory and Communications, UPC, as an Assistant Professor, and since 1997 as an Associate Professor. In 1999, he was on sabbatical leave at the Microwave Remote Sensing Laboratory, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His research interests are microwave remote sensing, with special emphasis in microwave radiometry by aperture synthesis techniques. He has performed numerous studies within the frame of European Space Agency SMOS Earth Explorer Mission. He is an Associate Editor of Radio Science.

Dr. Camps received the second national award of university studies in 1993, the INDRA Award of the Spanish Association of Telecommunication Engineering to the best Ph.D. in 1997, the extraordinary Ph.D. award at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in 1999, the First Duran Farell Award and the Ciudad de Barcelona Award, in 2000 and 2001, respectively, both for Technology Transfer, in 2002, the Research Distinction of the Generalitat de Catalunya with an Erasmus Fellowship. In 1993, he joined the Electromagnetics and Photonics Engineering group, Department of Signal Theory and Communications, UPC, as an Assistant Professor, and since 1997 as an Associate Professor. In 1999, he was on sabbatical leave at the Microwave Remote Sensing Laboratory, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His research interests are microwave remote sensing, with special emphasis in microwave radiometry by aperture synthesis techniques. He has performed numerous studies within the frame of European Space Agency SMOS Earth Explorer Mission. He is an Associate Editor of Radio Science.

Jacqueline Boutin received the Ph.D. degree in physical methods in remote sensing from the University Paris VII, Paris, France, in 1990.

She is currently a Research Scientist at Laboratoire d’Océanographie Dynamique et de Climatologie/CNRS, Paris. She has widely studied the validity of remotely sensed wind speeds and the ocean/atmosphere exchange of CO₂ at large scale using both satellite (wind speed, SST, ocean color) and in situ data. Since 1999, she has been involved in the preparation of the Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity (SMOS) mission and has focused on the retrieval of ocean salinity from L-band measurements. She is a Principal Investigator on several satellite projects [ENVISAT (ESA); ADEOS2 (NASA/NASA); Col on SMOS (ESA)].
J. Miller received the Ph.D. degree in meteorology and physical oceanography from the University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL.

He has worked in academia, private consulting, and government laboratories. He is currently Associate Director for Ocean, Atmosphere, and Space Research at the U.S. Office of Naval Research Global, London, U.K.

Stéphanie Contardo was born in Paimpol, France, in 1977. She received the B.Sc. degree in physics from the University of Rennes, Rennes, France, in 1999, and the M.Sc. degree in remote sensing from the University of Toulouse, Toulouse, France, in 2000.

She is currently a Research Assistant with Laboratoire d’Océanographie Dynamique et de Climatologie, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Université Pierre-et-Marie Curie, Paris, France, where she works on the SMOS project.

Jordi Font received the Licenciado and Ph.D. degrees in physics from the Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, in 1973 and 1986, respectively.

He is currently a Senior Researcher at the Institut de Ciències del Mar (CSIC), Barcelona, since 1991, and is responsible for the Physical Oceanography Group since 1987. He is the author and coauthor of 215 communications to scientific symposia and 95 published papers. He is Principal Adviser of several Ph.D. theses. He is a Principal Investigator for several Spanish and European research contracts.

His main research activities are physical oceanography; the study of the marine circulation in the western Mediterranean from hydrographic, current-meter (vessel mounted, moored, and drifting), and satellite measurements; variability and dynamics of the ocean surface layer and shelf-slope exchange processes; and the use of remote sensing of the oceans in studying the marine circulation and dynamics. He is currently Co-Lead Investigator for ocean salinity in the European Space Agency SMOS mission.

Dr. Font is a member of several international societies and committees and has participated in 42 oceanographic campaigns.

J. Wesson, photograph and biography not available at the time of publication.

David G. Long (S’80–SM’98) received the Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, in 1989.

From 1983 to 1990, he was with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Pasadena, CA, where he developed advanced radar remote sensing systems. While at JPL, he was the Senior Project Engineer on the NASA Scatterometer (NASCAT) project, which was flown aboard the Japanese Advanced Earth Observing System (ADEOS) from 1996 to 1997. He was also the Experiment Manager and Project Engineer for the SCANSCAT scatterometer (now known as SeaWinds). In 1990, he joined the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Brigham Young University (BYU), Provo, UT, where he currently teaches upper division and graduate courses in communications, microwave remote sensing, radar, and signal processing, is the Director of BYU’s Center for Remote Sensing, and is the Head of the Microwave Earth Remote Sensing Laboratory. He is the Principal Investigator on several NASA-sponsored interdisciplinary research projects in microwave remote sensing and innovative radar systems. He has numerous publications in signal processing and radar scatterometry. His research interests include microwave remote sensing, radar, polar ice, signal processing, estimation theory, and mesoscale atmospheric dynamics. He has over 250 publications in the open literature.

Dr. Long has received the NASA Certificate of Recognition several times.