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Proceedings will be useful for students and researchers working in the following areas: pattern recognition and image analysis; knowledge processing and representation; knowledge based decision support system, fuzzy mathematics and systems, applications of pattern recognition and image analysis.

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Section list

0	Plenary Papers.....	13
1	Pattern Recognition and Image Processing.....	25
2	Data Analysis.....	149
3	Signal Processing.....	219
4	Systems and Parallel Architectures for Signal and Image Processing	268
5	Knowledge-Based Expert and Decision Support Systems.....	303
6	Application of Pattern Recognition and Informaton Processing	351
7	3D Image Processing and Modeling.....	442

Contents

Committees PRIP'2011	9
Welcome from the Honorary Conference Chair and Co-Chairs	11
Key-note speakers	12
Plenary Papers	13
<i>Robert E. Hiromoto</i> GPU and Multi-cores: Computational Thinking – Art and Science	13
<i>Chanin Joochim, Hubert Roth, Chayakorn Netramai</i> Robust 3D Map Building Using 3D sensors	17
<i>Janusz Zalewski</i> Latest Developments in Artificial Intelligence Techniques for Prognostics – A Brief Survey	21
Pattern Recognition and Image Processing	25
<i>Zalesky B. A., Lukashovich P. V.</i> Scale Invariant Algorithm to Match Regions on Aereo or Satellite Images	25
<i>Alzaabi A., Alquié G., Tassadaq H., Seba A.</i> Harris Extraction and SIFT Matching for Correlation of Two Tablets	31
<i>Aguilar-González P. M., Kober V., Karnaukhov V.</i> Pattern Recognition with Noisy Target	35
<i>Bekhtin Y. S., Bryantsev A. A.</i> Matching Pursuit of Coherent Structures During Wavelet-Based Fusion of Noisy Multi- spectral Images	39
<i>Zharkikh A. A., Bychkova S. M.</i> Modeling of the Recognition Algorithm of Direction of Random Shift of Point on a Plane on a Random Rotations Background	43
<i>Khrustalev P.</i> Method of a Finding of a Skyline on the Image	48
<i>Gorshkova K., Shumsky I., Tsiatlatnikau R.</i> Photo Localization on Identification Documents in Conditions of Incomplete and Noisy Information	52
<i>Kozlovskii V. A.</i> , <i>Maksimova A. J.</i> Algorithm of Pattern Recognition with Intra-Class Clustering	54
<i>Verma A., Liu Ch.</i> Fusion of Color SIFT Features for Image Classification with Applications to Biometrics .	58
<i>Vadapalli H. B., Nyongesa H., Omlin C. W. P.</i> Classifying Facial Action Units: Use of Time Variant Data and Recurrent Neural Networks	64
<i>Gubchik I. N., Ivanov N. N.</i> Tracking of an Object in Colony of Sparse Cells	69
<i>Grushetsky Y. E., Tuzikov A. V.</i> Motions Space Clustering for Template-Based Protein Docking	73
<i>Pradun D. V.</i> Block-Parallel Clustering of Multispectral Images Using Max Flow Network Algorithm . .	76
<i>Nedzved A., Nedzved O., Ablameyko S., Uchida S.</i> Object Extraction at Nano-Surface Images	80
<i>Naqvi S. A. Khattak T., Rehan W., Elahi A.</i> A Novel Model for Face Recognition	84
<i>Siddiqi M. H., Truc P. T. H., Lee S., Lee Y.-K.</i> Level Set Based Automatic Human Body Segmentation	88
<i>Farag A., Atta R., Mahdi H.</i> Face Recognition Based on the Statistical Features of BDIP and Wavelet Transform . . .	92

<i>Guzik P., Matiolański A., Orzechowski T. M., Dziech A.</i>	
Evaluation of Parameters for Haar-Like Features Based Face Detection Algorithm	96
<i>Tulyakov S., Sadykhov R.</i>	
Face Recognition on Machine Readable Travel Documents: Algorithms and Results	99
<i>Dvoenko S. D.</i>	
On Clustering of a Set of Members by Distances and Similarities	104
<i>Khatami A., Mirghasemi S.</i>	
A Hybrid Intelligent Algorithm-Based Color Space Conversion for Skin Detection	108
<i>Moreno R., Graña M., Ramik D. M., Madani K.</i>	
Image Segmentation by Spherical Coordinates	112
<i>Lisitsa Y. U., Yatskou M. M., Apanasovich V. V., Rui H., Apanasovich T. V.</i>	
Fully-automated segmentation of tumor nuclei in cancer tissue images	116
<i>Damaratski A., Juodelis A.</i>	
A Novel Technique of Partial Supervision for a Heuristic Algorithm of Possibilistic Clustering	121
<i>Kharinov M.</i>	
Adaptive Dichotomous Image Segmentation	127
<i>Sizov R., Kovalev T., Mironenko V., Prytkov V.</i>	
Algorithms of Searching and Marking Out Biological Objects	131
<i>Trekin A., Matveev I. A.</i>	
Projection Method for Pupil Detection	135
<i>Żywicki M., Matiolański A., Orzechowski T. M., Dziech A.</i>	
Knife Detection as a Subset of Object Detection Approach Based on Haar Cascades	139
<i>Ganchenko V., Petrovsky A., Pawlowski T.</i>	
Special Areas Detection on Agricultural Fields Images Using Color Characteristics and Image Local Variability Evaluations	143
Data Analysis	149
<i>Tarkov M. S., Tikhonov N. V.</i>	
Evaluating the Thermogram Heterogeneity Based on Its Quadtree Representation	149
<i>Stankevich S. A., Starovoitov V. V., Shklyar S. V.</i>	
Joint Subpixel Analysis of Different Spatial Resolution Multispectral and Hyperspectral Imagery	153
<i>Sergeeva K., Vorobejchikov S.</i>	
An Efficient Algorithm for Detecting a Change Point of Autoregressive Parameters of AR(P)/ARCH(Q) Process	156
<i>Burkatovskaya Y., Vorobejchikov S.</i>	
Sequential Procedure of Parameter Change Detection in AR/ARCH Process	159
<i>Dvoenko S. D., Panferov A. V.</i>	
The Problem of Negative Eigenvalues Removing from Matrixes of Pairwise Comparisons	165
<i>Kovalev V., Dmitruk A., Safonau I.</i>	
A Method for Morphological Image Mining	169
<i>Marushko Y.</i>	
Forecasting Multivariate Time Series Using Ensembles of Neural Network	172
<i>Podolskiy V. E.</i>	
Simple Fuzzy Based Optimization Approach to the Problem of Dividing Outliers into Classes of Valuable and Noise Points	176
<i>Dotsenko A. S., Kondratenko Y. P.</i>	
Computer Hand Gesture Recognition Using Fuzzy Logic	179
<i>Arroyo-Cañada F.-J., Gil-Lafuente J.</i>	
Effectiveness of Interactive Advertising Formats Versus Non Interactive in the Television Environment: a Simulation Based in Fuzzy Logic Analysis	183
<i>Viattchenin D. A.</i>	
An Approach to Constructing a Possibility Distribution for the Number of Fuzzy Clusters	188
<i>Liu R., Gillies D. F.</i>	
Feature Selection Using Order Statistics	195

<i>Hancharou D., Nedzved A., Starovoitov V. V.</i>	
Histological Image Stitching Algorithm Based on Normalized Statistical Moment	200
<i>Aliyeva N. T., Ismayilov E. A.</i>	
Research of a Class of Smooth Membership Functions	204
<i>Butkin G., Zhuk D., Tuzikov A. V.</i>	
Nonparametric Transforms for Describing Local Image Features	209
<i>Chernov S., Kharin A.</i>	
Error Probabilities Evaluation in Sequential Testing of Simple Hypotheses for Dependent Observations	213
<i>Myshev A. V., Chunyayev N. V., Shelyakov M. A.</i>	
Cognitive Computer Technologies of Graphic Images Analysis	216
Signal Processing	219
<i>Piunovsky E.</i>	
Using Wavclet Lifting Scheme for Audio Data Compression	219
<i>Aida-Zade K., Sharifova A.</i>	
A comparison Between Allophone, Syllable, and Diphone Based TTS Systems for Azer- baijan Language	222
<i>Fedyayev O. I., Bondarenko I. Yu.</i>	
Segment-Holistic Speech Recognition System Based on Model of Brain Hemispheric Inter- action in Speech Perception	226
<i>Semenchik V., Pahomov V.</i>	
Harmonic Signal Amplitude and Phase Measurement for Microwave Imaging System	231
<i>Bushra J., Fauwet E., Laligant O.</i>	
Piecewise Image De-Noiseing Utilizing Discontinuous Edges	237
<i>Wassermann J., Dziech A.</i>	
New Approach in Video Watermarking Based on DPCM and Transform Coding	241
<i>Stankevich A., Petrovsky Al., Petrovsky A.</i>	
An FPGA-Based CABAC Module for Real-Time H.264/AVC Decoder	245
<i>Novikov A. E., Petrovsky A.</i>	
Embedded DSP Module for Active Noise Control in Ventilation Systems	249
<i>Petrovsky N. A., Parfieniuk M.</i>	
Distributed Arithmetic-Based Quaternion M-Band Wavelets Kernel for Multi-Resolution Analysis of Multimedia Data	253
<i>Klucheniya V.</i>	
FPGA Architecture of DCT Processor Based on Lifting Steps for Real-Time Embedded Applications	259
<i>Golovko V., Apanel E., Mastykin A., Vaitsekhovich H., Eustigneev V.</i>	
Neural Network Model for Transient Ischemic Attacks Diagnostics	263
Systems and Parallel Architectures for Signal and Image Processing	268
<i>Minkevičius S., Kulvietis G.</i>	
A Mathematical Model of the Message Switching System	268
<i>Kulik B., Zuenko A., Fridman A.</i>	
Modified Reasoning by Means of N-Tuple Algebra	271
<i>Archvadze N., Pkhovelishvili M., Shetsiruli L.</i>	
The Complexity of Program Synthesis from Examples	275
<i>Khanh N. Q.</i>	
Security Requirements for SOA on the Base of Security Standards of Web-Service	280
<i>Mustafayev E. E., Hasanov J. Z., Sharifova A.</i>	
The Device of Recognition and Scoring of Printed Texts	283
<i>Timchenko L., Kokriatskaia N., Melnikov V., Ivasyuk I., Makarenko R.</i>	
Training the Parallel-Hierarchical Network for Recognition Static and Dynamic Images . .	286

<i>Salnikov I. I.</i>	
The Analysis of Distant Objects' Spatio-Temporal Parameters in Information Technical Systems	290
<i>Burmako E., Sadykhov R.</i>	
Conflux: Embedding Massively Parallel Semantics in a High-Level Programming Language	294
<i>Sadykhov R., Uvarov A., Pertsev D.</i>	
Parallel Face Detection Algorithm for GPU Architecture	299
Knowledge-Based Expert and Decision Support Systems	303
<i>Artemieva I. L., Zuenko A., Fridman A.</i>	
Integration of Ontologies, Knowledge and Data Archives into Ontology-Based Modeling Systems	303
<i>Gurevich I.</i>	
Atoms, Molecules and Fundamental Restrictions on Characteristics of Information Systems	307
<i>Mamedova M. H., Djabrailova Z. G., Aliyev H. B.</i>	
The method of Decision-Making Support for Employment of IT-Specialty Personnel Considering the Requirements of Employers	313
<i>Lbov G. S., Polyakova G. L.</i>	
Forecasting Method Based on Logical Regularities	317
<i>Litvinskaya O. S., Salnikov I. I.</i>	
Mathematical Decision Making Model for Selecting Implementation Means of Information Technical System	320
<i>Rusc T., Fornalski P., Dziech A., Slusarczyk P.</i>	
Computer System for Management and Full-text Search of Court RecordsClasses	322
<i>Varlamov O.</i>	
Mivar's Technologies to Development of Intelligent Systems and Project Development Active Multi-Subject Online Mivar's Encyclopedia	326
<i>Djabrailova Z. G., Nobari S. M.</i>	
Defining Methods of Importance Factor of the Criteria in the Solution of Personnel Management Problems and Detection of Contradictions	330
<i>Rustamov S.</i>	
Structure and Contents of the Intellectual Systems, Which Ensure Human-Computer Dialogue	334
<i>Kaliukhovich D.</i>	
Effect of Perceptual Expectancy on Neural Adaptation: Computational Approach	337
<i>Shut O. V.</i>	
Logical and Precedent-related Approaches to Representation of Information in Pattern Recognition Problems: Comparative Analysis and Applications	339
<i>Krasnoproshin V., Obratsov V., Vissia H.</i>	
Knowledge Formalization in Decision Support Systems	342
<i>Kostyukovich N. Yu., Shakah G., Valvachev A. N.</i>	
Modeling of Nature-Territorial Complexes Based on Organizational Structures	347
Application of Pattern Recognition and Informaton Processing	351
<i>Bogush R., Brovko N.</i>	
An Efficient Smoke Detection Algorithm for Video Surveillance Systems Based on Optical Flow	351
<i>Megrelishvili R., Besiashvili G., Shengelia S.</i>	
One-Way Cryptography Function Using $N \times N$ Matrices	355
<i>Kumari L. L., Dharmaratne A.</i>	
A Survey on Age Progression Techniques for Elderly People	358
<i>Antidze J., Gulua N.</i>	
Generalized Tools for Computer Realization of Natural Language Models	362
<i>Ramík D. M., Sabourin Ch., Madani K.</i>	
Hybrid Artificial Vision System Combining Salient Object Extraction and Machine-Learning Skills	366

<i>Myshev A. V.</i>	The Metrological Theory of Information Dynamics for Intelligent Tech-Nologies' Processes of Processing and Analyzing Information	370
<i>Sergeev R. S., Tuzikov A. V., Eremin V. F.</i>	Statistical Approach to HIV-1 Mutation Analysis and Its Application	374
<i>Anfleets S. V., Kasyanik V. V., Shuts V. N.</i>	Application of Algorithms for Searching Motion in the Frame for the Detection of Vehicles	378
<i>Zaitseva E., Rusin M., Levashenko V.</i>	Reliability Analysis of Complex System	381
<i>Pisarenko V., Pisarenko J.</i>	Some Algorithms of UAV's Coordinates Definition by Onboard Processor According to Videocameras	387
<i>Kabysh A., Golovko V., Mikhniayeu A., Rubanau U., Lipnikas A.</i>	Behavior Patterns of Adaptive Multi-Joined Robot Learned by Multi-Agent Influence Reinforcement Learning	392
<i>Vaitsekhovich L., Golovko V., Madani K.</i>	Modeling of Multi-Agent Intrusion Detection System Based on Interaction Graph of Agents	397
<i>Diomin V., Kostyuk D., Nikoniuk A.</i>	Dynamic Windows Scaling in Unix-Like Systems Interface	402
<i>Baranauskas V., Bartkevičius S., Šarkauskas K., Kabysh A.</i>	Using Vector Marks for Robot Navigation	406
<i>Krasnoproshin V., Mazouka D.</i>	Graphics Pipeline Automation Based on Visualization Algebra	410
<i>Liu H., Krasnoproshin V.</i>	Electronic Commerce Websites Evaluation Based on Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process . .	413
<i>Avakaw S., Doudkin A., Voronov A., Orlova T.</i>	Software Applications of Input Data Preparation for Single-Beam Layout Generator of IC Topology	417
<i>Inyutin A.</i>	Algorithm of the PCB Topology Inspection and Defects Classification	422
<i>Kuzmich A. I., Shakah G., Valvachev A. N.</i>	Remote Monitoring System for Mobile Objects	427
<i>Avakaw S. M., Doudkin A., Inyutin A., Rusetsky S. A., Otwagin A. V.</i>	Paralleling Aerial Image Simulation Based Multi-Agent Approach for Photolithography .	431
<i>Podenok L. P.</i>	On Modular Exponentiation in Residue Number System	438
	Image Processing and Modeling	442
<i>Struts S. V., Matveev I. A.</i>	Reconstruction of 3D Structure of Human Face Using a Pair of Images and 3D Model of Human Face	442
<i>Podkosova Y., Vasiuhova S. A., Varlamov O.</i>	Use of Technologies of the Virtual Reality in Three-Dimensional Visualization of Results and Mivar's Application of Training Systems	447
<i>Amarger V., Ramík D. M., Moreno R., Rossi L., Madani K., Graña M.</i>	Wildland Fires' Outlines Extraction: a Spherical Coordinates Framed RGB Color Space Dichromatic Reflection Model Based Image Segmentation	451
<i>Losik G.</i>	A Recognition Model Using Objects Variability Information	455
<i>Kapura V., Sachenko A., Roth H., Adamiv O.</i>	Method of Stereoimage Fusion for 3D Reconstruction	461
	Subject Index	464
	Author Index	468

Object extraction at nano-surface images

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recently with fast development of nanotechnologies, atomic force microscopy (AFM) are started widely used. They allow determining the sizes of structural elements and mechanical properties of objects at nano-surfaces [1]. The individual atoms, molecules and large macro-associations are considered in studying the characteristics of nano-scale objects.

However, further image analysis methods should be used to extract objects and their characteristics. This is quite difficult task because nano-surface images have many specifics. There are attempts to process such type or similar images [2-5]. However, each concrete case should be considered in details. We considered processing magneto-optical images in our papers [6-7]. This study continues analysis of magneto-optical images moving to nano-surface images.

In the paper, the processing scheme, methods of constructing finite element models of nano-samples of AFM images, setting rules of the boundary conditions for simulation of contact interaction are proposed. The results of computational experiments to determine the characteristics of image objects by means of the package LS-DYNA are presented.

2. SPECIFICS OF NANO-SURFACE IMAGES

The nano-surface objects can be represented as hemispheres. They are presented as rounded regions with increasing brightness toward the center on grayscale nano-images (Figure 1).

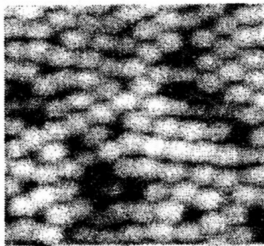


Fig. 1 – Grayscale image of nano-surface with spherical objects

The brightness profile of the original image horizontally is represented by a smooth line (Figure 2). A profile in the vertical direction has high contrast and small overshoots (Figure 3).

There is a heterogeneous geometric contrast on the image where the vertical changes component is much higher than horizontal component. This effect is related to the conditions of imaging. The process of constructing an image is based on scanning the surface of the cantilever. After scanning, at the image the duration of receipt of the adjacent vertical pixels is significantly higher than the

duration of receipt of horizontal pixels. The result is affected by a number of external interference: a geometric drift and the drift of brightness.

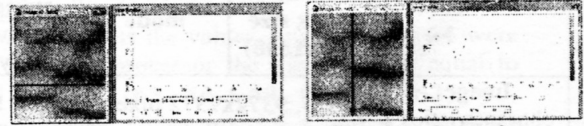


Fig. 2 – Brightness profile of horizontal and vertical direction

Also a cantilever has a certain inertia in the time of the horizontal scanning. This causes to the fact that the properties of light in each line receive the unique features. Such heterogeneity is reflected in the global brightness histogram (Figure 3). Histogram of the nano-surface is similar to a Gaussian distribution. But it has a lot of individual pulses that sharply differ from their neighbors. A removing or compensation for these defects is necessary because they affect the quality of image processing.

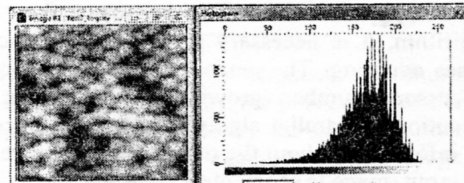


Fig. 3 – Histogram of the nano-surface image

3. CORRECTION OF LOCAL CONTRAST HETEROGENEITY

Geometric heterogeneity of the contrast in images obtained by atomic force microscopy is a serious problem which solution in the general case has not yet been found.

In this paper, we propose two approaches. The first one is to generate a possible background for the image, the second is based on the calculation of the characteristics of local contrast for vertical and horizontal lines. Both approaches are based on the assumption of symmetry of objects at the nano-surface.

In the first method, two background images are generated. One is created by repeated application of a simple averaging convolution with a large raster (for 256x256 image – bitmap 14x14):

$$I_{xy} = \frac{1}{2 \cdot n} \sum_{i=y-n}^{y+n} \sum_{j=x-n}^{x+n} I_{ij}$$

where I_{xy} – value of the pixel on the image with coordinates x, y , n – the half-size of the raster convolution.

As a result of this transformation an image corresponding to dark backgrounds is obtained (Figure 5. b).

M be a spectral endmembers matrix of $l \times m$ dimension. Linear mixture model is described by the equation

$$r = M \times \alpha + n \quad (1)$$

where $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \dots, \alpha_l)^T$ – vector of $l \times 1$ dimension, α_j – fraction of j -th endmember in pixel, n – vector of $m \times 1$ dimension, which describes the additive noise. Vector α is an approximate solution to the overdetermined equation $M \times \alpha \approx r$. Endmember fractions in (1) are the solution to simultaneous equations

$$\begin{cases} \|M \times \alpha - r\| \rightarrow \min \\ \sum_{j=1}^l \alpha_j = 1 \\ \alpha_j \geq 0 \quad \forall j = 1, \dots, l \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

where the constraints imposed by physical considerations.

In [5] a faithful algorithm for (2) solving is presented. Unfortunately, this model is rarely realized in practice, because the full matrix of endmembers of scene is usually unknown. In this case, there is one or more reference endmembers extracted, and the rest treated as junk. In [6] known algorithm of such type TCMI is extended to the case of physical constraints over endmember fractions:

$$\begin{cases} (r - M \times \alpha)^T \times R^{-1} \times (r - M \times \alpha) \rightarrow \min \\ \alpha_j \geq 0 \quad \forall j = 1, \dots, l \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

where $R = \sum_{i=1}^n r_i \times r_i^T$, n is the number of pixels in image, which is analyzed.

Subpixel analysis is a powerful tool for many remote sensing applications. However, the allocation of each endmember within the pixel remains uncertain. But if you adjust the correct allocation of endmember fractions inside the image pixels in view of spatial relationships, and then perform the endmember fractions mixing yet in the image subpixels, you can get enhanced hyperspectral image.

Generally, natural and artificial objects of the Earth's surface follow the principle of compactness, i.e. subpixel fractions of the same endmember in adjacent pixels often also spatially located in the adjacent subpixels. Therefore it is possible to reallocate subpixel fractions α_{iq} , $q = 1, \dots, k$, within each pixel in a certain optimal way. In this case, the endmember total fraction α_i within a whole i -th pixel must be kept:

$$\sum_{q=1}^k \alpha_{iq} = k \alpha_i \quad (4)$$

where k – the number of subpixels per pixel.

After the reallocation of subpixel fractions for all l endmembers present in the current pixel, the full signal r_{iq} in each q -th subpixel can be calculated as a mixture of endmember spectra M_j , $j = 1, \dots, l$, with weights of corresponding subpixel fractions:

$$r_{iq} = \sum_{j=1}^l \alpha_{ijq} \cdot M_j \quad (5)$$

Mixing (5) consistently runs for all k subpixels of all n

pixels in image and thus a subpixel spatial resolution hyperspectral image is formed [9].

4. ALGORITHM

A specific feature of the future Belarusian and Ukrainian remote sensing satellites is the simultaneous acquisition both multispectral and hyperspectral imagery with different spatial resolution. This feature can be used for joint sub-pixel analysis of remote sensing data, while the spectral endmembers unmixing is carried out by hyperspectral imagery, and higher-resolution multispectral one handles as reference for the reallocation of subpixel fractions. So, the new algorithm for hyperspectral imagery spatial resolution enhancement based on reallocation of subpixel spectral endmember fractions is offered. The processing dataflow is shown in Fig.1.

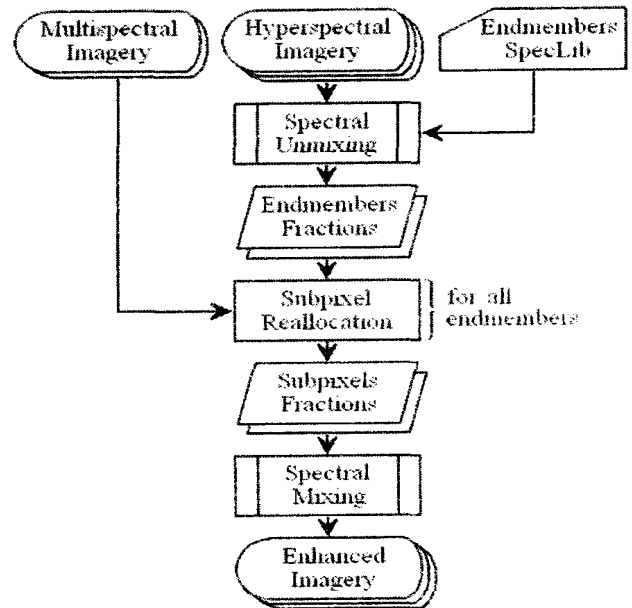


Fig.1 – Joint subpixel analysis flowchart

In hyperspectral image the endmembers unmixing is performed according to (3). The spectral reflectances of endmembers are stored in the spectral library. In such a manner the endmember fractions are traced in hyperspectral image pixels. Further, taking into account the endmember subpixel fractions spatial relationships and constraints (4), a reallocation of endmember subpixel fractions in subpixels of each pixel of the hyperspectral image is carried out by reference to higher resolution multispectral image. This operation is performed for all endmembers and thus the subpixel fractions thereof are obtained. In conclusion, reallocated endmember fractions in subpixels are mixed up by (5), resulting in hyperspectral image of enhanced spatial resolution. Hyperspectral image scaling ratio in the processing is caused by the number of subpixels per pixel k , i.e. by the source and reference images resolution quotient.

It is obvious that the visual and interpretational accuracy of the enhanced resolution restored image will depend both on the correct endmembers identification in the reference image, and analysis completeness of all endmembers present in the scene.

$$L^*(i, j) = L(i, j) + \left(\frac{C^*(i, j) * n * m}{1 - C^*(i, j)} - \sum_{v(i, j) \in \{K_1 - K_2\}} (L(i, j) - L(i, j))^2 H(L(i, j)) \right)^{0.5}$$

This procedure is repeated for each element of each horizontal image line.

The proposed algorithm uses the statistical definition of local contrast. Due to this the homogeneity of texture, its "roughness" and granularity are taken into account (Figure 7).

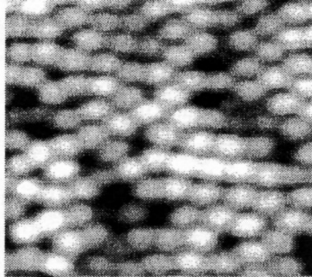


Fig. 7 – The result of the local correction of the contrast on the image of nano-surface

The experiment showed that the second method gives a clearer picture as a result, but the first method works three times faster.

4. OBJECT EXTRACTION AT NANO-SURFACE IMAGES

Objects that form the surface are the basis for determination of its characteristics: size, shape, height and position. To determine these characteristics it is necessary to find applicable objects in the image.

The selection of objects can be carried out in different ways. We assume that the objects are presented as spheres that intersect. In this case they can be represented as a topological surface. Then it is possible to determine the position of cavities between them.

4.1 WATERSHED-BASED IMAGE SEGMENTATION

Watershed algorithm is used for determining the boundary lines between objects. The resulting image is often divided into a large number of small areas (pools), most of which are not significant in solving the problem.

Lines of the watershed of the image are the boundaries that separate areas of this image. In the topographic representation of images, numerical values (such as gray levels) for every pixel serve as the height of this point. The main problem of this algorithm is over-segmentation, because all boundaries and noises are displayed in the gradient. Therefore the process of noise removal is necessary.

As a result the direct application of this algorithm to the image of nano-surface gives additional false objects (Figure 8).

Application of contrast correction before the noise filtering significantly improves the result (Figure 9).

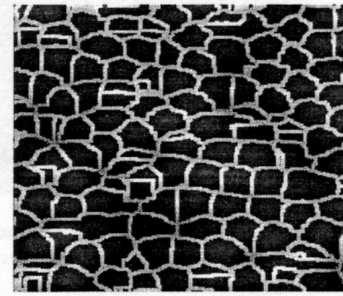


Fig. 8 – Result of the algorithm watershed applied directly to the image of nano-surface

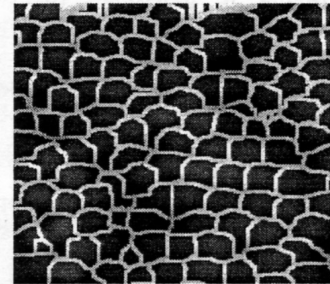


Fig. 9 – The result of watershed algorithm applied to image of the nano-surface after local contrast correction and a noise filtering

The algorithm allows obtaining the boundary of objects. However, the boundary lines are slightly chopped because a transformation uses urban metrics of computation of distances.

4.2 OBJECT EXTRACTION AT SEGMENTED IMAGE

As mentioned above the objects in the image represent hemispheres but the image boundaries mainly composed of polygons. To solve this problem, a special algorithm for correcting the shape on the basis of mathematical morphology was developed.

The first step of algorithm is the the inversion of boundaries Then objects clasped to the edge are removed (Figure 10).

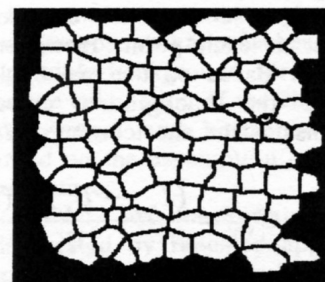


Fig. 10 – The result of removing of objects clasped to the edge

The image contains small objects that have emerged in the empty fields. They are removed by a noise filtering by area (Figure 11).

Then the correction of boundaries of objects by using morphological opening operation is performed (Figure 12).

In the result objects of nano-surface image are extracted. This algorithm has several advantages compared with the original method. It allows to extract objects and calculate the series of geometric and brightness

characteristics which can be used for a more complete description.

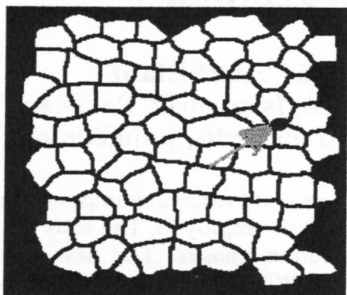


Fig. 11 – The image with a deleted small object

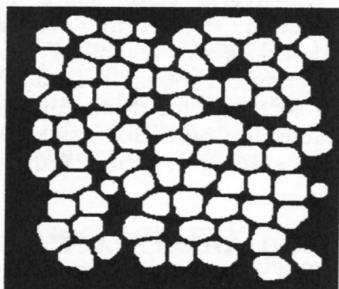


Fig. 12 – Correction of form of objects

5. CONCLUSION

In the paper, the scheme of computational experiments, methods of constructing finite element models of nano-samples of their AFM images, setting rules of the boundary conditions for simulation of contact interaction have been proposed. The results of computational experiments to determine the characteristics of contact interaction by means of the package LS-DYNA were presented. The obtained results show that it is possible to extract images objects and calculate the series of geometric and brightness characteristics and image features in such complicated images as nano-structures.

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