Diamond elements: A finite-element/discrete-mechanics approximation scheme with guaranteed optimal convergence in incompressible elasticity

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SUMMARY

We present a finite-element discretization scheme for the compressible and incompressible elasticity problems that possesses the following properties: i) The discretization scheme is defined on a triangulation of the domain; ii) the discretization scheme is defined—and is identical—in all spatial dimensions; iii) the displacement field converges optimally with mesh refinement; iv) the inf-sup condition is automatically satisfied. The discretization scheme is motivated both by considerations of topology and analysis, and it consists of the combination of a certain mesh pattern and a choice of interpolation that guarantee optimal convergence of displacements and pressures. Rigorous proofs of the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition are presented for the problem of linearized incompressible elasticity. We additionally show that the discretization schemes can be given a compelling interpretation in terms of discrete differential operators. In particular, we develop a discrete analog of the classical tensor differential complex in terms of which the discrete and continuous boundary-value problems are formally identical. We also present numerical tests that demonstrate the dimension-independent scope of the scheme and its good performance in problems of finite elasticity.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, we present a finite-element discretization scheme for the compressible and incompressible elasticity problems that possesses the following properties: i) The discretization scheme is defined on a triangulation of the domain (triangular meshes in two dimensions; and tetrahedral meshes in three dimensions); ii) the discretization scheme is defined—and is identical—in all spatial dimensions; iii) the displacement field converges optimally with mesh refinement; iv) the inf-sup condition (Ladyzhenskaya [Lad69], Babuška [Bab73] and Brezzi [Bre74]) is automatically satisfied and, consequently, the pressure field is free of

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checkerboard modes. The design of the discretization scheme acknowledges from the outset that two main factors determine performance, including convergence, in the incompressible or near-incompressible limit: i) the topology of the mesh; ii) and the choice of displacement and pressure interpolation. Consideration of both factors in the design of a discretization scheme is essential and, in isolation, neither suffices to guarantee the optimal performance of the scheme.

This observation notwithstanding, the literature on finite-elements for incompressible elasticity has emphasized either the choice of interpolation space or the choice of mesh topology but rarely both simultaneously.

The first line of inquiry has led to seminal contributions including: the concept of local bubble enrichment for the displacements first introduced by Crouzeix and Raviart [CR73] and analyzed by Bercovier, Pironneau and Verfürth [BP79,Ver84], Arnold, Brezzi and Fortin [ABF84], and others; Hughes’s assumed-strain method [Hug80], consisting of using different interpolations for the volumetric and deviatoric components of deformation; Simo and Rifai [SR90] reformulation of Hughes’ assumed-strain method based on the Hu-Washizu variational principle (cf [BCR04,LRW04] for recent related work); and others. Assumed strains have their niche between constant strain simplicial elements, to which they fail to apply, and second or higher-order displacement interpolation, such as the Taylor-Hood $Q_k/Q_{k-1}$ elements or the $P_k/P_{k-1}$ elements, $k \geq 2$, which, as shown by Stenberg [Ste90a], require no enrichment (see also [BP79] and [GR86, page 176] for the case $k = 2$). Methods based on bubble enrichment for the displacements, such as the $P_1$-bubble/$P_1$ approach (cf, e. g., [EG04,BF91]), are also popular due to their simplicity and good performance.

The second line of inquiry strives to identify special meshes whose particular topology results in convergent displacements or in the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition. Notable among these is the crossed triangle approach of Nagtegaal, Parks and Rice [NPR74], further discussed and analyzed by Mercier [Mer79] and Kikuchi [Kik83]. Crossed triangle meshes are constructed by quadrisecting square meshes, and have convergence properties similar to the $Q_1/Q_0$ element. Another seminal contribution was made by Le Tallec [Tal81], who discovered a special arrangement of quadrilaterals in two dimensions with the property that $Q_1/Q_0$ elements placed in that arrangement satisfy the inf-sup condition. This work was among the first to establish a clear connection between the inf-sup condition and the topology of the mesh.

In subsequent years, that connection was sharpened and made precise by the macroelement analysis of Boland-Nicolaides [BN83,BN85] and Stenberg [Ste84,Ste90a,Ste90b].

The discretization scheme developed here is motivated both by considerations of topology and analysis. The key objective is to identify a combination of a mesh or ‘tiling’ pattern and a choice of interpolation that guarantee optimal convergence of displacements and pressures. In particular, that scheme should satisfy the inf-sup condition in the incompressible limit, and it should be flexible enough to allow general unstructured discretizations of the domain.

A scheme that meets these requirements can be constructed as follows. We start from an arbitrary triangulation of the domain, or primal mesh, and append to its node set a collection of dual nodes located at the barycenters of the primal elements. We then proceed to subdivide every primal element into $d + 1$ sub-elements, where $d$ is the dimension of space, obtained by connecting the primal and the dual nodes. Finally, we pair the sub-elements resulting from subdivision along all the primal faces to define diamond elements. These elements thus consist of pairs of sub-elements sharing a primal face and contain $d$ primal nodes and $2$ dual nodes, or a total of $d + 2$ nodes. This completes the topological reworking of the primal mesh. We then
proceed to define interpolation spaces for displacements and pressure based on the diamond mesh. For definiteness, we choose piecewise-linear displacement interpolation on sub-elements and constant pressure interpolation on diamond elements. The interpolation spaces are chosen with a view to satisfying the inf-sup condition.

We additionally explore the alternative point of view of discrete mechanics, and show that the diamond approximation scheme can be given a compelling and illuminating interpretation as a discrete mechanics scheme. Discrete mechanics may be regarded as a self-contained theory of deformable solids in which space—and possibly time—is discrete \textit{ab initio}. The central goal is to define a discrete differential complex on a discretization of the domain such that the discrete boundary-value problem, when expressed in terms of discrete differential operators, is identical to the continuum, or classical, boundary-value problem.

However, whereas the differential complex that underlies potential theory, electromagnetism and other vector field theories in $\mathbb{R}^3$, namely the classical de Rham complex with its familiar differential operators $\text{grad}$, $\text{curl}$, and $\text{div}$, is well-known, the differential complex underlying tensor field theories such as linear elasticity seems to have remained cloaked in relative obscurity. The three-dimensional tensor differential complex was fully developed in connection with linear-elastic dislocation theory by Kröner [Krö59] and its differential operators are: the deformation operator $\text{Def}$; the incompatibility operator $\text{Inc}$; and the tensor-divergence operator $\text{Div}$. In keeping with the relative obscurity of this tensor complex, whereas the formulation of discrete differential complexes has received considerable attention in the context of vector field theories (cf., e.g., [Bos93, Bos98, Hip02, Hir03, Leo03], and reference therein), the formulation of discrete tensor differential complexes as a discretization tool has received much less attention. A notable exception is the recent work of Arnold et al. [AW02, Arn02, AFW05b, AFW05a], which has led to the formulation of discrete differential complexes and mixed stress-displacement interpolation schemes well-suited to applications in compressible elasticity.

We formulate a complete discrete tensor differential complex, whose properties mirror closely those of the classical tensor differential complex, such that the corresponding discrete boundary value problem is identical to that which is obtained by means of the diamond approximation scheme. This correspondence shows that the diamond approximation scheme, which is defined in terms of interpolation and Galerkin reduction, is, in effect, a discrete mechanics scheme. We show that the discrete tensor differential operators $\text{Def}$, $\text{Inc}$, $\text{Div}$ have adjointness and exact-sequence properties identical to the classical operators. In particular, we show that they give rise to a Helmholtz-Hodge decomposition of symmetric tensor fields and define a tensor cohomology and tensor-harmonic functions. A key step in connecting the diamond approximation scheme and discrete mechanics is the definition of a suitable metric. This metric entails a certain averaging of volumetric deformations that is ultimately responsible for the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition. The introduction of a metric in turn permits the definition of a discrete isotropic differential complex that is key to the formulation of the discrete boundary-value problem of incompressible linear elasticity. The discrete isotropic differential complex carries a cohomology of its own, and we show that the inf-sup condition is equivalent to the requirement that a certain cohomology group be trivial. This establishes a far-reaching connection between discrete topology and analysis, and confirms the intuition among practitioners that the topology—or layout—of a mesh, as well as the choice of interpolation, have a direct and equally important bearing on the convergence characteristics of an approximation scheme. From this point of view, the diamond scheme may be regarded as a particular choice.
of mesh–or tiling–pattern which ensures that the topology of the mesh is 'right'.

Despite the appeal of discrete mechanics, it bears emphasis that considerations of discrete geometry alone do not guarantee that a discretization scheme is convergent. In particular, counterexamples [HKO] show that there are approximation schemes that are expressible in terms of well-defined discrete differential complexes but which fail to converge in general. These counterexamples demonstrate that considerations of analysis, such as the inf-sup condition, as well as considerations of discrete geometry should play a role in the design of approximation schemes.

The paper is organized as follows. We prove in Section 2 that the inf-sup condition is automatically satisfied by the diamond scheme, which in turn ensures checkerboard-free convergence of the pressure field. In Section 3, we develop the discrete tensor differential complex, including a suitable metric, establish its main properties and show how it relates to the diamond scheme and to the inf-sup condition. The results of the analysis are born out by the numerical tests presented in Section 4.1. These tests additionally demonstrate the dimension-independent scope of the scheme, which can be formulated with equal ease in two, three or any arbitrary spatial dimension; and its good performance in problems of finite elasticity.

2. Problem setting and analysis

Of key concern as regards analysis is the behavior of approximation schemes in the presence of internal constraints such as incompressibility. The analysis tools required for elucidating such behavior are best developed for linear problems. In consequence, we begin by describing diamond elements and analyzing their behavior in the linear regime. Specifically, we choose linear elasticity as a convenient model problem in that regime. Extensions of the approach to nonlinear problems are presented in Section 4.1.

2.1. Linearized elasticity

We begin by collecting relevant results from analysis for subsequent reference and with a view to establishing our notation. We consider an elastic solid occupying a domain \( \Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^d \), which is assumed to be polygonal for the sake of simplicity. The solid deforms under the action of tractions \( t \in L^2(\Gamma_N)^d \) distributed over the Neumann boundary \( \Gamma_N \subset \partial \Omega \), and of body forces \( f \in L^2(\Omega)^d \). For simplicity, we assume that the displacements vanish on the Dirichlet boundary \( \Gamma_D = \partial \Omega \setminus \Gamma_N \). We additionally confine attention to uniform linear isotropic materials characterized by finite Lamé constants \( \lambda > 0 \) and \( \mu > 0 \). The bulk modulus of the material is \( \kappa = \lambda + 2\mu/3 \).

We shall be particularly interested in the behavior of solutions \( u^\varepsilon \) under the scaling \( \lambda/\varepsilon, \varepsilon \to 0 \), corresponding to the incompressible limit. In variational form, the problem is to find the displacement field \( u^\varepsilon \in H^1_\varepsilon(\Omega) \) such that

\[
a(u^\varepsilon, v) + \varepsilon^{-1} \int_\Omega \text{div} u^\varepsilon \text{div} v = l(v), \quad \forall v \in H^1_\varepsilon(\Omega),
\]

In this statement, \( H^1_\varepsilon(\Omega) := \{ v \in H^1(\Omega)^d, \ v = 0 \text{ on } \Gamma_D \} \) is the space of admissible
displacement fields and we have introduced the bilinear and linear forms
\[ a(u, v) = \int_{\Omega} 2\mu \varepsilon(u) : \varepsilon(v), \quad (2a) \]
\[ l(v) = \int_{\Omega} f \cdot v + \int_{\Gamma_N} t \cdot v, \quad (2b) \]
which are independent of \( \epsilon \). Here and subsequently, \( \xi : \zeta = \xi_{ij}\zeta_{ij} \) denotes the inner product between two matrices; and \( u \cdot v \) denotes the inner product of vectors. In addition, \( \varepsilon(u) = (\nabla u + (\nabla u)^T)/2 \) is the strain operator and, for simplicity of notation, we have chosen units such that \( \lambda = 1 \).

We recall (cf., e.g., [LM72]) that Korn’s inequality ensures the coercivity of \( a \), i.e., there exists a constant \( \alpha > 0 \) such that
\[ a(v, v) \geq \alpha \|v\|_{1,\Omega}^2, \quad \forall v \in H^1_0(\Omega), \quad (3) \]
and the existence and uniqueness of solutions of problem (1) follows from the Lax-Milgram lemma. In addition, the solution depends continuously on the data, i.e.,
\[ \|u^\epsilon\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C (\|f\|_{0,\Omega} + \|t\|_{0,\Gamma_N}), \quad (4) \]
where the constant \( C > 0 \) is independent of the loading and the Lamé constants. In the above statements we have introduced the standard \( L^2 \) and \( H^1 \) norms
\[ \|v\|_{0,\Omega} = \left( \int_{\Omega} |v|^2 \right)^{1/2}, \quad (5a) \]
\[ \|v\|_{1,\Omega} = \left( \|v\|^2_{0,\Omega} + \|\nabla v\|^2_{0,\Omega} \right)^{1/2}. \quad (5b) \]

Denoting by \( p^\epsilon \) the pressure
\[ p^\epsilon = \epsilon^{-1} \text{div } u^\epsilon, \quad (6) \]
(1) can be restated as the problem of finding \( u^\epsilon \in H^1_0(\Omega) \) and \( p^\epsilon \in L^2(\Omega) \) such that
\[ \begin{cases} a(u^\epsilon, v) + b(v, p^\epsilon) = l(v), & \forall v \in H^1_0(\Omega), \\ b(u^\epsilon, q) = \epsilon \langle p^\epsilon, q \rangle_{\Omega}, & \forall q \in L^2(\Omega), \end{cases} \quad (7) \]
where we have introduced the additional bilinear forms
\[ b(v, q) = \int_{\Omega} q \text{div } v, \quad (8a) \]
\[ (p, q)_{\Omega} = \int_{\Omega} p q. \quad (8b) \]
We recall that, for Dirichlet boundary conditions, \( \Gamma_D = \partial \Omega \), a standard application of the De Rham theorem [GR86, EG04] results in the inf-sup inequality
\[ \inf_{q \in L^2_0(\Omega)} \sup_{v \in H^1_0(\Omega) \setminus \{0\}} \frac{\int_\Omega q \text{div } v}{\|v\|_{1,\Omega} \|q\|_{0,\Omega}} \geq \beta > 0, \quad (9) \]
where we write \( H^1_0(\Omega) := \{ v \in H^1(\Omega), \ v = 0 \text{ on } \partial \Omega \} \) and \( L^2_0(\Omega) := \{ q \in L^2(\Omega), \ \int_\Omega q = 0 \} \). More generally, in the case of mixed boundary conditions with \( \Gamma_D \neq \partial \Omega \), using a lifting
argument (cf. e. g., [EG04, lemma 4.9, page 181]) and assuming that \( \Gamma_P \) is polyhedral, the following inf-sup inequality holds:

\[
\inf_{q \in L^2(\Omega) \setminus \{0\}} \sup_{v \in H^1_0(\Omega) \setminus \{0\}} \frac{\int_{\Omega} q \ \text{div} \ v}{\|v\|_{1,\Omega} \|q\|_{0,\Omega}} \geq \beta > 0.
\] (10)

The following theorem establishes the existence and uniqueness of solutions and their behavior in the incompressible limit (cf. e. g., [EG04, theorem 4.3, p. 178; proposition 4.44, p. 211]).

**Theorem 1.** For every \( 0 \leq \epsilon \leq \infty \), problem (7) admits a unique solution \((u^\epsilon, p^\epsilon) \in H^1_0(\Omega) \times L^2(\Omega)\) such that

\[
\|u^\epsilon\|_{1,\Omega} + \|p^\epsilon\|_{0,\Omega} \leq C (\|f\|_{0,\Omega} + \|t\|_{0,\Gamma_N}).
\] (11)

uniformly in \( \epsilon \). Moreover,

\[
\|u^\epsilon - u^0\|_{1,\Omega} + \|p^\epsilon - p^0\|_{0,\Omega} \leq C \epsilon (\|f\|_{0,\Omega} + \|t\|_{0,\Gamma_N}).
\] (12)

In particular, \((u^\epsilon, p^\epsilon) \to (u^0, p^0)\) in \(H^1_0(\Omega) \times L^2(\Omega)\) as \( \epsilon \to 0 \).

2.2. General issues of discretization

In this section, we briefly review relevant results of analysis pertaining to the discretization of problem (7); (cf. e. g., [GR86, EG04, BF91] for a complete account). We begin by specifying two sequences of finite-dimensional spaces, \(V_h \subset H^1_0(\Omega)\) and \(P_h \subset L^2(\Omega)\), equipped with the subspace topology. The discretization of (7) is then effected by restricting displacements to \(V_h \subset H^1_0(\Omega)\) and pressures to \(P_h \subset L^2(\Omega)\), along with their variations. In the displacement finite element method, consisting of the constrained minimization of the potential energy over \(V_h\), the space of discrete pressure fields is, by default,

\[
P_h = \{ \text{div} \ v_h, \ v_h \in V_h \}.
\] (13)

With \( 0 < \epsilon < +\infty \), the discrete linearized elasticity problem consists of finding \(u_h^\epsilon \in V_h\) and \(p_h^\epsilon \in P_h\) such that

\[
\begin{aligned}
a(u_h^\epsilon, v_h) + b(v_h, p_h^\epsilon) &= l(v_h), \quad \forall v_h \in V_h, \\
b(u_h^\epsilon, q_h) &= \epsilon (p_h^\epsilon, q_h), \quad \forall q_h \in P_h.
\end{aligned}
\] (14)

Since \(V_h\) is a closed subspace of \(H^1_0(\Omega)\), problem (14) retains coercivity, which in turn ensures existence and uniqueness of discrete solutions. The stability estimate

\[
\|u_h^\epsilon\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C (\|f\|_{0,\Omega} + \|t\|_{0,\Gamma_N})
\] (15)

additionally holds, with constant \( C > 0 \) independent of \( \epsilon \). It follows from this estimate that, for fixed \( h \), the sequence \(u_h^\epsilon\) is uniformly bounded in \( \epsilon \) and, hence, there exists a subsequence that converges in \(V_h\). A standard exercise shows that the limit of that subsequence is indeed a solution of the incompressible discrete problem

\[
\begin{aligned}
a(u_h^0, v_h) + b(v_h, p_h^0) &= l(v_h), \quad \forall v_h \in V_h, \\
b(u_h^0, q_h) &= 0, \quad \forall q_h \in P_h.
\end{aligned}
\] (16)
Unfortunately, for an arbitrary choice of \( P_h \), the only solution to this problem may be \( u_h^0 = 0 \), a phenomenon known as **volumetric locking**. In particular, the default choice (13) is often afflicted by this pathology.

Problem (16) can be reformulated as

\[
a(u_h^0, v_h) = l(v_h), \quad \forall v_h \in \mathfrak{V}_h,
\]

where

\[
\mathfrak{V}_h = \{ v_h \in V_h, \quad b(v_h, q_h) = 0, \quad \forall q_h \in P_h \}.
\]

Evidently, \( \mathfrak{V}_h = \text{Ker} \mathcal{B}_h \) with \( \mathcal{B}_h : v_h \in V_h \to P'_h \ni b(v_h, \cdot) \), where \( P'_h \) is the dual of \( P_h \). In view of (16), we have that \( a(u_h^0, \cdot) - l(\cdot) \in (\text{Ker} \mathcal{B}_h)^\perp = \text{Im} (\mathcal{B}_h^\perp) \). Therefore, there exists a discrete pressure field \( p_h^0 \in P_h \) such that

\[
a(u_h^0, v_h) + b(v_h, p_h^0) = l(v_h), \quad \forall v_h \in V_h.
\]

However, \( p_h^0 \) is uniquely determined only if

\[
b(v_h, q_h) = 0 \quad \forall v_h \in V_h \Rightarrow q_h = 0,
\]

i.e., if \( \text{Ker} (\mathcal{B}_h^\perp) = \{ 0 \} \), which in turn implies that \( \text{Im} \mathcal{B}_h = V_h \). It is equivalent to the discrete inf-sup condition:

\[
\inf_{q_h \in P_h \setminus \{ 0 \}} \sup_{v_h \in V_h \setminus \{ 0 \}} \frac{b(v_h, q_h)}{\| q_h \|_0, \Omega \| v_h \|_1, \Omega} \geq \beta_h > 0.
\]

If this condition is not satisfied with \( \beta_h \) uniformly bounded below by a positive constant independent of \( h \), then the sequence \( p_h^\epsilon \) is not uniformly bounded as \( \epsilon \to 0 \) in general. In practice, the component of \( p_h^\epsilon \) in \( \text{Ker} (\mathcal{B}_h^\perp) \setminus \{ 0 \} \) may blow up as \( \epsilon \to 0 \), and this divergence manifests itself in the form of spurious "checkerboard" modes that corrupt the solution. By way of sharp contrast, the behavior of the uniform solution when the discrete inf-sup condition holds is characterized by the following theorem (cf, e.g., [EG04]).

**Theorem 2.** Suppose that there exits a constant \( \beta > 0 \) independent of \( h \) such that the inf-sup (21) is satisfied with \( \beta_h \geq \beta \) for all \( h > 0 \). Then, for all \( h > 0 \) and \( 0 \leq \epsilon \leq +\infty \), problem (14) admits a unique solution \( (u_h^\epsilon, p_h^\epsilon) \in V_h \times P_h \) such that

\[
\| u_h^\epsilon \|_{1, \Omega} + \| p_h^\epsilon \|_{0, \Omega} \leq C (\| f \|_{0, \Omega} + \| t \|_{0, \Gamma_N}).
\]

uniformly in \( h, \epsilon \). Moreover,

\[
\| u_h^\epsilon - u_h^0 \|_{1, \Omega} + \| p_h^\epsilon - p_h^0 \|_{0, \Omega} \leq C \epsilon (\| f \|_{0, \Omega} + \| t \|_{0, \Gamma_N}).
\]

In addition, if \( (u^\epsilon, p^\epsilon) \in H^1(\Omega) \times L^2(\Omega) \) is solution of (7) with \( 0 \leq \epsilon \leq +\infty \), then

\[
\| u_h^\epsilon - u^\epsilon \|_{1, \Omega} + \| p_h^\epsilon - p^\epsilon \|_{0, \Omega} \leq C \left( \inf_{v_h \in V_h} \| v_h - u^\epsilon \|_{1, \Omega} \right) \left( \inf_{q_h \in P_h} \| q_h - p^\epsilon \|_{0, \Omega} \right).
\]

All the constants in the preceding estimates are independent of the loading, the elastic constants and \( h \).
2.3. Diamond meshes

Next, we introduce a special class of conforming meshes that are derived from conventional triangulations of the domain and that form the basis for subsequent developments.

Suppose that we are given a triangulation of the polygonal domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ ($d = 2, 3$) of interest, to be termed the primal triangulation. Let $N_h$ be the nodal or vertex set and $T_h$ be the collection of $d$-simplices, or elements, in the primal triangulation. By a face of an element $T \in T_h$ we shall specifically mean a $(d - 1)$-face of $T$, i.e., a triangle for $d = 3$ and a segment for $d = 2$. We additionally denote by $F_h$ the set of faces of $T_h$, and by $\partial T$ the collection of faces of element $T$.

The diamond mesh generated by $T_h$ is constructed as follows. For every element $T \in T_h$ we choose a point $T^*$, to be termed the dual node of $T$, in its interior. For instance, $T^*$ may conveniently be chosen as the barycenter of the simplex $T$. The dual nodal set is then the collection of all dual nodes, namely, $T_h^* = \{T^*, T \in T_h\}$. In addition, for every face $F \in F_h$, we define its dual edge $F^*$ to be the set of dual nodes adjacent to $F$. If $F$ is an interior face, then $F^*$ consists of two dual nodes and may be regarded as a segment. If $F$ is a boundary face then $F^*$ contains one single dual node and may be regarded as a ray. The dual edge set is then the collection of all dual edges, namely, $F_h^* = \{F^*, F \in F_h\}$. The diamond element $K(F)$ of a face $F \in F_h$ is the convex hull of $\{F, F^*\}$, i.e., the polytope defined by $F$ and its adjacent dual nodes. Thus, if $F$ is an interior face, $K(F)$ is a bi-triangle for $d = 2$ and a bi-tetrahedron for $d = 3$. If $F$ is a boundary face, $K(F)$ coincides with the unique $d$-simplex incident to $F$. We now define the diamond mesh generated by $T_h$ as the mesh of nodal set $N_h = N_h \cup T_h^*$ and element set $T_h = \{K(F), F \in F_h\}$. The geometry of a two-dimensional diamond mesh is illustrated in Fig. 1.

It follows from the preceding construction that the nodal set of a diamond mesh consists of the union of the primal and dual nodes; and that its element set is the collection of the diamond elements corresponding to all the primal faces. However, it should be carefully noted that diamond meshes contain neither the primal nor the dual mesh. Instead, they interpolate between the primal and dual nodal sets.

Figure 1. a) Simplicial mesh $T_h$ of a pentagonal domain (white circles) and dual node set $T_h^*$ (grey circles). b) Associated diamond mesh.
2.4. Approximation spaces and analysis

Diamond meshes can be taken as a basis for constructing finite element approximations enjoying optimal convergence and stability properties. We take linearized elasticity as a convenient model problem (cf Sec. 2.1), with particular focus on the behavior of the solutions in the incompressible limit.

We begin by introducing the displacement approximation space

\[ V_h = \{ v \in H^1_0(\Omega), \, v|_K \in R(K)^d, \, \forall K \in T_h \} , \]  

where

\[ R(K(F)) = \{ v \in H^1(K), \, v|_{[F,N]} \in P_1([F,N]), \, N \in F^* \} . \]

Here, \( P_1(T) \) is the space of polynomials of order \( \leq 1 \) over the simplex \( T \); and \([F,N]\) denotes the simplex defined by a face \( F \) and a node \( N \). Thus, \( R(K(F)) \) consists of all linear polynomials on each of the constituent simplices \( \{[F,N], \, N \in F^*\} \) of \( K(F) \). With a view to analyzing the incompressible limit, we additionally introduce the pressure space

\[ P_h = \{ p \in L^2(\Omega), \, p|_K \in P_0(K), \, \forall K \in T_h \} , \]

where \( P_0(K) \) is the space of constant functions over the diamond element \( K \). We also consider the subspaces

\[ V^0_h = \{ v \in H^1_0(\Omega), \, v|_K \in R(K)^d, \, \forall K \in T_h \} , \]

and

\[ P^0_h = \{ p \in L^2(\Omega), \, \int_\Omega p = 0, \, p|_K \in P_0(K), \, \forall K \in T_h \} . \]

We note in passing that when \( \Gamma_D = \partial \Omega \), the pressure field is determined up to an additive constant, and the solution \((u,p)\) must be restricted to \( H^1_0(\Omega) \times L^2_0(\Omega) \), or to \( V^0_h \times P^0_h \) in the discrete case, in order to recover uniqueness of the pressure field.

\[ \text{Figure 2. Detail of a 2D-macroelement (in thick lines) generated by the simplex } T \in T_h \text{ (in dashed lines).} \]

Next, we exploit the special topology of diamond meshes in order to prove that the inf-sup condition is satisfied for the pair of spaces \( \{V^0_h, P^0_h\} \). The method of proof relies on
Figure 3. Partial representation of a 3D-macroelement based on a 4-node tetrahedron (white vertices and thick lines); only one of the four diamonds, based on the additional grey vertices is represented.

Figure 4. The four types of two-dimensional macroelements. The triangle that generates the macroelement is shown in dashed lines.

the macroelement technique of Boland-Nicolaides [BN83, BN85] and Stenberg [Ste84, Ste90a, Ste90b]. Thus, for every primal element $T \in T_h$, we define the macroelement

$$M(T) := \bigcup_{F \in \partial T} K(F) = \bigcup_{F \in \partial T} \bigcup_{N \in F^*} [F, N].$$

(30)

Typical two and three-dimensional macroelements are shown in Figs. 2 and 3, respectively. In
dimension $d$, there are $d+2$ types of macroelements, depending as to whether $T \in T_h$ has 0, 1, \ldots, $d$ or $d+1$ faces on the boundary of $\Omega$. By way of illustration, Fig. 4 depicts the four possible types of macroelements in two dimensions. We also identify the unit regular $d$-simplex $\hat{T}$ as a reference simplex, and introduce the corresponding macroelements $\hat{M}$ defined by reflecting the dual node $\hat{T}^*$, which we take to coincide with the barycenter of $\hat{T}$, with respect to the faces of $\hat{T}$ (cf Fig. 4). We shall denote by $\mathfrak{M}$ the set of $d+2$ reference macroelements thus defined.

The spaces

$$\hat{V}_h^0(\hat{M}) = \left\{ v_h \in H_0^1(\hat{M})^d, \ v_h|_\hat{K} \in \mathbb{R}^d, \ \forall \hat{K} \in \hat{M} \right\}$$

(31)

and

$$\hat{P}_h(\hat{M}) = \left\{ q_h \in L^2(\hat{M}), \ q_h|_\hat{K} \in \mathbb{P}_0(\hat{K}), \ \forall \hat{K} \in \hat{M} \right\}$$

(32)

play a central role in subsequent developments.

**Lemma 1.** Let $\hat{M} \in \mathfrak{M}$ be a macroelement and $q_h \in \hat{P}_h(\hat{M})$. Suppose that

$$\int_{\hat{M}} q_h \ \text{div} \ v_h = 0, \ \forall v_h \in \hat{V}_h^0(\hat{M}).$$

(33)

Then $q_h = \text{constant}$.

**Proof:** We begin by noting that $\hat{V}_h^0(\hat{M})$ consists of functions of the form: $v_h = \alpha \phi$ with $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^d$ and $\phi$ the piecewise linear continuous function that takes the values 1 at the center dual node $\hat{T}^*$ and 0 at all the remaining nodes of $\hat{M}$. Let $q_h \in \hat{P}_h(\hat{M})$. Then,

$$\int_{\hat{M}} q_h \ \text{div} \ v_h = \sum_{F \in \partial \hat{T}} q_h|_{\hat{K}(\hat{F})} \int_{\hat{K}(\hat{F})} \alpha \cdot \nabla \phi = \sum_{F \in \partial \hat{T}} q_h|_{\hat{K}(\hat{F})} \int_{\hat{K}(\hat{F}) \cap \hat{T}} \alpha \cdot \nabla \phi = \frac{1}{d} \sum_{F \in \partial \hat{T}} q_h|_{\hat{K}(\hat{F})} |\hat{K}(\hat{F}) \cap \hat{T}| \alpha \cdot \hat{n}_{\hat{F}}$$

(34)
where, here and subsequently, $| \cdot |$ denotes the measure of a set, and $n_\hat{F}$ is the outward unit normal to $\hat{F}$. Suppose that (33) holds. Then, by (34),

$$
\sum_{\hat{F} \in \partial \hat{T}} q_h|_{\hat{K}(\hat{F})} |\hat{F}| n_{\hat{F}} = 0. 
$$

(35)

Consider the linear mapping $A \in L(\hat{P}_h(\hat{M}); \mathbb{R}^d)$ defined by

$$
A(q_h) = \sum_{\hat{F} \in \partial \hat{T}} q_h|_{\hat{K}(\hat{F})} |\hat{F}| n_{\hat{F}}, \quad \forall q_h \in \hat{P}_h(\hat{M}). 
$$

(36)

Then, condition (35) is equivalent to requiring that $q_h \in \ker(A)$, where $\ker(A)$ is the kernel of $A$. But $\ker(A) = \text{im}(A^t)^\perp$, where $\text{im}(A^t)$ is the range of adjoint mapping $A^t$ and $\text{im}(A^t)^\perp$ its orthogonal complement. Since any $d$ of the vectors $|\hat{F}| n_{\hat{F}}$ are linearly independent, it follows that $\dim \text{im}(A^t) = d$ and, hence, $\dim \ker(A) = 1$. Since

$$
\sum_{\hat{F} \in \partial \hat{T}} |\hat{F}| n_{\hat{F}} = 0, 
$$

it follows that functions $q_h = \text{constant}$ belong to $\ker(A)$ and, thus, $\ker(A)$ equals the constant members of $\hat{P}_h(\hat{M})$.

**Proposition 1.** For $d = 2, 3$, there exists a constant $\beta_0 > 0$ independent of the mesh size $h > 0$ such that

$$
\inf_{q_h \in P_0^h(\hat{M}) \setminus \{0\}} \sup_{v_h \in V_0^h(\hat{M}) \setminus \{0\}} \frac{\int_\Omega q_h \cdot \text{div} v_h}{\|q_h\|_0,\Omega \|v_h\|_{1,\Omega}} \geq \beta_0. 
$$

(37)

**Proof :** With reference to Fig. 1, we note the following properties of macroelements:

i) Every diamond element $D \in T_h$ belongs to at least one macroelement, and at most two.

ii) A face of a diamond is contained in the interior of one and only one macroelement.

iii) For every primal element $T \in T_h$, there exists a reference macroelement $\hat{M} \in M$ and a continuous one-to-one mapping $g : \hat{M} \rightarrow M(T)$ with the following properties:

iii.a) $g$ is a simplicial map, i.e., it maps the simplices of $\hat{M}$ to the simplices of $M(T)$,

iii.b) $g$ is piecewise linear, i.e., $g|_{[\hat{F}, N]} \in \mathbb{P}_1([\hat{F}, N])$, for all $\hat{F} \in \partial \hat{T}$ and $N \in \hat{F}^*$.

The proposition then follows from lemma 1 and a theorem of Stenberg [Ste90a, theorem 2.1].

For completeness, we reproduce from [Ste90a, theorem 2.1] the theorem from which the above Proposition is deduced. Two macroelements are said to be part of an equivalence class $E$ if they are in correspondence through a mapping $g$ such as defined in iii) above. A reference macroelement is simply a particular representative in such a class.

**Theorem 3 (Stenberg)** Suppose that there is a fixed set of equivalence classes $E_i$, $i = 1, 2, ..., q$, of macroelements, a positive integer $L$, and a macroelement partitioning $M_h$ such that:
1. For each $M \in E_i$, $i = 1, \ldots, q$,
   \[ q_h \in P_h(M), \int_M q_h \, \text{div} \, v_h = 0 \quad \forall v_h \in V_h^0(M) \implies q_h = \text{constant in } M. \quad (38) \]

2. Each $M \in M_h$ belongs to one of the classes $E_i$, $i = 1, \ldots, q$.

3. Each $K \in T_h$ is contained in at least one and not more than $L$ macroelements of $M_h$.

4. Each face $F$ of an element of $T_h$ is contained in the interior of at least one and not more than $L$ macroelements of $M_h$.

Then, the inf-sup condition (37) holds uniformly in $h$.

Having proven the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition for the couple $V_h^0 \times P_h^0$ corresponding to the case $\Gamma_D = \partial \Omega$, we proceed to prove the general result for the couple $V_h \times P_h$. Our proof is adapted from [EG04, p. 181], corresponding to the continuous case. The additional difficulty in the present setting is to ensure the independence of the inf-sup constant from the mesh size. We shall restrict our attention to polyhedral domains and to Dirichlet boundaries of the form: $\Gamma_D = \bigcup_{i=1}^I \Gamma_i$, where $\{\Gamma_i, \ i = 1, \ldots, I\}$ are faces of $\Omega$.

We begin by recalling the following results from the mathematical theory of mortar methods (see [BMP93,Bel99,Woh01] or [Hau04, assumption 4.2, page 111] for details). Let $\rho^i \in C^\infty_c(\Gamma_i)$ denote positive smooth functions compactly supported on $\Gamma_i$. Assume that the mesh $T_h$ has at least a node inside each $\Gamma_i$. Then, there exist functions $\rho^i_h \in V_h|_{\Gamma_i}$ (more precisely, $\rho^i_h$ are scalar components of functions in $V_h$, restricted to $\Gamma_i$) such that

\[ \rho^i_h = 0 \text{ on } \partial \Gamma_i, \quad (39a) \]

\[ \int_{\Gamma_i} \rho^i_h = \int_{\Gamma_i} \rho^i, \quad (39b) \]

\[ \|\rho^i_h\|_{1,00;i} \leq C \|\rho^i\|_{1,00;i}, \quad (39c) \]

where $\| \cdot \|_{1,00;i}$ denotes the norm of $H^{1/2}_{00}(\Gamma_i)$ (cf., e.g., [LM72]). Consider the displacements field $\rho^i_h n_i$ over $\Gamma_i$, $i = 1, \ldots, I$, where $n_i$ is the constant outward unit normal vector on $\Gamma_i$.

Denote by $R^i_h(\rho^i_h n_i) \in V_h$ a classical lifting onto $\Omega$ satisfying

\[ R^i_h(\rho^i_h n_i) = \begin{cases} \rho^i_h n_i & \text{on } \Gamma_i, \\ 0 & \text{on } \partial \Omega \setminus \Gamma_i, \end{cases} \]

and

\[ \|R^i_h(\rho^i_h n_i)\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C \|\rho^i_h\|_{1,00;i}. \quad (40) \]

We introduce the displacements field

\[ w_h = \sum_{i=1}^I R^i_h(\rho^i_h n_i), \quad (41) \]

and consequently, from (40) and (39c),

\[ \|w_h\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C \sum_{i=1}^I \|\rho^i\|_{1,00;i}. \quad (42) \]
We shall also denote by $P_h : L^2(\Omega) \to P_h$ the $L^2$ orthogonal projection onto $P_h$, defined by

$$\int_{\Omega} q_h P_h p = \int_{\Omega} q_h p, \quad \forall q_h \in P_h,$$

(43)

for all $p \in L^2(\Omega)$.

**Proposition 2.** Let $\Omega$ be a polyhedron and assume that the Dirichlet boundary is of the form $\Gamma_D = \bigcup_{i=1}^I \Gamma_i$ where $\{\Gamma_i, \ i = 1, \ldots, I\}$ are faces of $\Omega$. Let $T_h$ be a triangulation of $\Omega$ and suppose that the interior of every boundary face $\Gamma_i$ contains at least a node of $T_h$. Then, there exists a constant $\beta > 0$ independent of the mesh size such that

$$\inf_{q_h \in P_h \setminus \{0\}} \sup_{v_h \in V_h \setminus \{0\}} \frac{\int_{\Omega} q_h \text{div} v_h}{\| q_h \|_{0, \Omega} \| v_h \|_{1, \Omega}} \geq \beta.$$  

(44)

**Proof:** Let $q \in P_h$ be an arbitrary field of pressure. Let $\lambda_h \in \mathbb{R}$ such that

$$\lambda_h \left( \sum_{i=1}^I \int_{\Gamma_i} \rho_i \right) = \int_{\Omega} q.$$  

(45)

Define $q_0 \in P_h$ as

$$q_0 = q - \lambda_h P_h (\text{div} w_h).$$  

(46)

Since constant pressures belong to $P_h$, an application of (43), the definition (41) of $w_h$ and the integral relation (39b) gives

$$\int_{\Omega} q_0 = \int_{\Omega} q - \lambda_h \left( \sum_{i=1}^I \int_{\Gamma_i} \rho_i \right) = 0,$$

(47)

where the last equality follows from (45). Therefore, we have $q_0 \in P_h^0$, and lemma 1 ensures the existence of $v_0 \in V_h^0$ such that (cf., e.g., [EG04, Lemma A.42, p.471])

$$b(v_0, \mu) = \int_{\Omega} q_0 \mu, \quad \forall \mu \in P_h^0,$$

(48)

and

$$\| v_0 \|_{1, \Omega} \leq \frac{1}{\beta_0} \| q_0 \|_{0, \Omega}.$$  

(49)

Note that equality (48) also holds for any constant pressure $\mu$ because $\int_{\Omega} q_0 = 0$ and $v_0 = 0$ on $\partial \Omega$. Introducing

$$v = v_0 + \lambda_h w_h,$$

(50)

(48) and (43) give

$$b(v, \mu) = \int_{\Omega} q \mu, \quad \forall \mu \in P_h.$$  

(51)

Finally, from the definition of $v$, the stability estimate (49), the definition of $q_0$, and the estimate (42), we get

$$\| v \|_{1, \Omega} \leq \| v_0 \|_{1, \Omega} + |\lambda_h| \| w_h \|_{1, \Omega} \leq \frac{1}{\beta_0} \| q_0 \|_{0, \Omega} + |\lambda_h| \| w_h \|_{1, \Omega} \leq \frac{1}{\beta_0} \| q \|_{0, \Omega} + C |\lambda_h|,$$

(52)
where the constant $C$ is independent of the discretization. From (45), Cauchy-Schwarz inequality gives
\[ |\lambda_h| \leq C \|q\|_{0,\Omega}. \]  
(53)
Hence, it follows from (52) that
\[ \|v\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C \|q\|_{0,\Omega}. \]  
(54)
The existence of $v \in V_h$ satisfying (51) and (54) is equivalent to the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition for the pair of spaces $V_h \times P_h$, as advertised.

\[ \square \]

2.5. Discussion

2.5.1. Crossed triangles

One of the first schemes to exploit a special mesh topology is the crossed triangle element of Nagtegaal, Parks and Rice [NPR74], further discussed and analyzed by Mercier [Mer79] and Kikuchi [Kik83]. The modified approach by Ruas [Rua85] falls within the same category. Specially designed for two-dimensional problems, the scheme consists of splitting quadrilateral elements into four triangles, as shown in Fig. 6a. A standard $P_1/P_0$ approximation for displacements and pressures is then used on the resulting triangulation. The aim of the crossed-triangles scheme is to achieve locking-free optimal low-order approximation for square meshes. Indeed, numerical tests show that the scheme performs similarly to the standard non-locking $Q_1/P_0$ interpolation. Nevertheless, both the crossed-triangles and the $Q_1/P_0$ schemes fail to satisfy the inf-sup condition.

In particular, pressure fields obtained by means of crossed-triangles exhibit the spurious checkerboard mode shown in Fig. 6b, and the pressure field fails to converge in the incompressible limit $\epsilon \to 0$. However, if the pressure field is constrained to be constant over each quadrilateral element, the inf-sup condition is readily shown to be satisfied, e. g., by the macro-element analysis of Boland-Nicolaides [BN83, BN85] and Stenberg [Ste84, Ste90a, Ste90b], as in the proof of Prop. 1. A common implementation of these ideas is to average the pressure field over each quadrilateral element a posteriori. However, it should be carefully noted that a posteriori averaging does not eliminate the large local pressure oscillations that arise within each crossed-triangular element. These oscillations eventually cause numerical difficulties due to ill-conditioning.

Figure 6. a) Crossed triangles obtained by splitting a quadrangle. b) Checkerboard mode in crossed triangles.

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2.5.2. Bubble enrichment A common strategy for alleviating locking is to add bubble functions to the finite-element interpolation. A classical example is the MINI $P_1$-bubble/$P_1$ element first introduced by Crouzeix and Raviart [CR73] and subsequently analyzed by Arnold, Brezzi and Fortin [ABF84]. The present scheme may be regarded as consisting of the introduction of piecewise-affine bubble functions, together with an optimal choice of pressure space. It should be carefully noted that pressure interpolation in the MINI $P_1$-bubble/$P_1$ scheme is conforming, which renders the incompressibility constraint nonlocal and requires the use of global pressure degrees of freedom. By contrast, our choice of pressure interpolation is piecewise constant, and the pressure constraint is enforced locally at the element level.

2.5.3. Other special meshes The topology of two-dimensional diamond meshes bears resemblance to that of special meshes investigated by Le Tallec [Tal81] in connection with the inf-sup condition. However, unlike those meshes studied by Le Tallec diamond meshes derive from simplicial meshes, which are easier to generate than hexahedral meshes, and are defined in any spatial dimension.

2.5.4. Variations on the diamond theme Finally, we note that a number of essentially equivalent variations of the diamond concept are possible. A careful inspection of the proof of Proposition 1 reveals that, provided that no additional nodes are added, the precise form of the displacement interpolation within the diamond cells is immaterial as regards convergence. In consequence, variations of the diamond approximation scheme consisting of replacing the bi-simplicial displacement interpolation described in the foregoing by a different displacement interpolation scheme do not alter the approach in any essential way. For instance, each diamond cell could be partitioned into $d d$-simplices by introducing an edge between the two apices of the cell. Alternatively, a smooth displacement interpolation could be defined in each diamond cell. In either case, the proof of Proposition 1 remains essentially unchanged. Thus, the essence of the diamond scheme is largely of a topological nature: diamond cells must be in correspondence with the faces of the initial simplicial mesh; and each diamond cell must carry a constant pressure.

3. Discrete mechanics re-interpretation

Whereas the differential complex that underlies potential theory, electromagnetism and other vector field theories in $\mathbb{R}^3$, namely the classical de Rham complex with its familiar differential operators grad, curl and div, is well-known, the corresponding differential complex underlying tensor field theories such as linear elasticity appears to be known to a comparatively lesser degree. The three-dimensional tensor differential complex was fully developed in connection with linear-elastic dislocation theory by Kröner [Krö59] and its differential operators are summarized in table I. In this table, $\Omega^*(V)$ denotes the graded algebra of $C^\infty$ forms over an open subset of $\mathbb{R}^3$ taking values in a vector space $V$. The operator $\text{Def}$, or symmetric
Table I. The tensor Kröner complex in \( \mathbb{R}^3 \). The first column collects the designation, domain and range of the operators; the second column collects their definition in operator notation; and the third column collects their expression in orthonormal cartesian coordinates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain and range</th>
<th>'nabla' expression</th>
<th>Coordinate expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{Def} : \Omega^0(\mathbb{R}^3) \to \Omega^3(\text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) )</td>
<td>( \nabla^S \equiv (\nabla + \nabla^1)/2 )</td>
<td>( (\text{Def } u)<em>{ij} = (u</em>{i,j} + u_{j,i})/2 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{Inc} : \Omega^3(\text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \to \Omega^3(\text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) )</td>
<td>( \nabla \times (\bullet \times \nabla) )</td>
<td>( (\text{Inc } \epsilon)<em>{ij} = \epsilon</em>{kl,mn} \epsilon_{kmn} \epsilon_{lnj} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{Div} : \Omega^3(\text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \to \Omega^0(\mathbb{R}^3) )</td>
<td>( \nabla \cdot \nabla )</td>
<td>( (\text{Div } \sigma)<em>i = \sigma</em>{ij,j} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gradient, applied to a displacement field returns the corresponding strain field. Thus, the equation \( \epsilon = \text{Def } u \) represents the classical strain-displacement relations of linear elasticity.

The incompatibility operator \( \text{Inc} \) applied to a symmetric tensor field returns a measure of its incompatibility, i.e., its failure to be a compatible strain field. In particular, if \( \epsilon \) is a strain field, then it follows that \( \text{Inc } \epsilon = 0 \), which are the classical compatibility equations of linear elasticity. In general, fields of the form \( \text{Inc } \epsilon \) represent a linearization of the curvature tensor associated with the linearized metric \( \epsilon \), and will be referred to as discrete curvature fields.

Given a symmetric tensor field \( \sigma \), \( \text{Div } \sigma \) represents the net out-of-balance internal force field. In particular, if \( \sigma \) derives from a three-dimensional Airy stress potential \( A \), i.e., if \( \sigma = \text{Inc } A \), then it follows that \( \sigma \) is in equilibrium, i.e., \( \text{Div } \sigma = 0 \). Thus we have the relations

\[
\text{Inc } \circ \text{Def } = 0, \quad (55a) \\
\text{Div } \circ \text{Inc } = 0. \quad (55b)
\]

In addition, under suitable technical conditions, the sequence of vector spaces and operators

\[
\begin{align*}
0 & \to \Omega^0(\mathbb{R}^3)/\text{RM} \to \Omega^3(\text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \to \Omega^3(\text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \to \Omega^0(\mathbb{R}^3)/\text{RM} \to 0 \\
\text{Def} & \quad \text{Inc} & \quad \text{Div}
\end{align*}
\]

defines an exact short sequence, i.e. the range of each map coincides with the kernel of the following map [BT82]. RM denotes the finite-dimensional space of rigid displacements. In terms of tensor differential operators, the boundary-value problem of linear elasticity may be expressed in the form

\[
\begin{align*}
-\text{Div } (C \text{Def } u) &= f + t, & \text{in } \Omega \cup \Gamma_N \\
u &= 0, & \text{on } \Gamma_D,
\end{align*}
\]

(57a) (57b)

and the the boundary-value problem of incompressible isotropic linear elasticity takes the form

\[
\begin{align*}
-\text{Div } (2\mu \text{Def } u + pg^t) &= f + t, & \text{in } \Omega \cup \Gamma_N \\
g^t : \text{Def } u &= 0, & \text{in } \Omega \\
u &= 0, & \text{on } \Gamma_D,
\end{align*}
\]

(58a) (58b) (58c)

where \( \Omega \) is, e.g., an open, simply connected and bounded subset of \( \mathbb{R}^d \) with Lipschitz boundary, \( C \) denotes the tensor of elastic moduli, \( g^t \) is the contravariant metric tensor, respectively, and \( g^t : \epsilon \) is the trace of a symmetric tensor \( \epsilon \). Without loss of generality, we restrict attention...
to homogeneous displacement boundary conditions. In addition, for reasons that will become apparent in the sequel, we have combined the tractions $t$ with the body forces $f$ by regarding both as signed Radon measures with supports on $\Gamma_N$ and $\Omega$, respectively, and interpreting (57a) and (58a) in the sense of measures.

In this section we show that: the discrete boundary-value problem of incompressible linear elasticity that results from the diamond approximation scheme can be expressed in terms of a discrete counterpart of the tensor differential complex just described; and that, when expressed in terms of discrete differential operators, the discrete boundary-value problem is formally identical to the classical boundary-value problem (58a-58c). The discrete tensor differential complex and its discrete differential operators have properties that are, for the most part, identical to those of the classical tensor differential complex enumerated above. In defining the discrete tensor differential complex, both the topology of diamond meshes, regarded as algebraic complexes (e. g., [Mun84]) and their geometry, regarded as an embedding of the algebraic complex in $\mathbb{R}^3$, play a crucial role. This re-interpretation provides compelling new insights into the discrete boundary-value problem in terms of geometric and differential structures.

In order to define the discrete operators we need to adopt a somewhat more expanded view of diamond meshes than required previously for the strict purposes of analysis. In particular, we need a proper accounting of cells of all dimensions, e. g., vertices, edges, faces and volume cells, in the mesh. A natural accounting device for that purpose is to regard meshes as (regular) cell complexes (e. g., [Mun84]) and their geometry, regarded as an embedding of the algebraic complex in $\mathbb{R}^3$, play a crucial role. This re-interpretation provides compelling new insights into the diamond approximation scheme in terms of geometric and differential structures.

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We shall denote by $E^p(C)$ be the set of $p$-cells of complex $C$, and by $\Omega^p(C; V) = \{ \omega : E^p(C) \to V \}$ the space of functions, or discrete forms, defined on $E^p(C)$ taking values in the vector space $V$. We shall use the expressions $F \prec T$ and $T \succ F$ to denote that $F$ is a face of a cell $T$; $N \prec F$ and $F \succ N$ to denote that $N$ is a vertex of the face $F$; and the symbol $|T|$ to denote the $p$-dimensional Hausdorff measure of a $p$-cell $T$ in $\mathbb{R}^d$. We shall also use the symbol $n$ to denote the outward unit normal to a $(d-1)$-cell $F$. In the remainder of this section, we restrict our attention throughout to the three-dimensional case, $d = 3$. Given $\epsilon \in \mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}$ and $n \in \mathbb{R}^3$ we shall additionally denote by $\epsilon \times n \in \mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}$ the matrix whose rows are the cross-products of the rows of $\epsilon$ and $n$; and by $n \times \epsilon \in \mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}$ the matrix whose columns are the cross-products of $n$ with the columns of $\epsilon$. Finally, we denote by $\text{sym}\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}$ the set of symmetric matrices in $\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}$.

3.1. The simplicial tensor differential complex

Throughout this section $S_h$ denotes a general simplicial complex.

**Definition 1 (Discrete deformation operator)** The discrete deformation operator $\text{Def} : \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3) \to \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym}\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3})$ assigns to every discrete displacement field $u \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$...
the discrete strain field

\[
(\text{Def } u)(T) = \frac{1}{2|T|} \sum_{F \subset T} |F| \left( \langle u \rangle \otimes n + n \otimes \langle u \rangle \right), \quad \forall T \in E^3(S_h)
\]  

(59)

In this expression, \( \langle u \rangle \) denotes the average of the displacements of the vertices of the face \( F \).

**Remark 1.** Let \( I_h u \) be the piecewise-affine interpolation of the discrete displacements \( u \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3) \) over the tetrahedra \( T \in E^3(S_h) \). Then, it follows from definition (59) that

\[
(\text{Def } u)(T) = \frac{1}{|T|} \int_T \varepsilon(I_h u) = \varepsilon(I_h u)_T, \quad \forall T \in E^3(S_h).
\]  

(60)

Thus, the discrete deformation operator yields discrete strain fields that are identical to those computed by direct differentiation of the displacement interpolation.

**Definition 2 (Discrete incompatibility operator)** The discrete incompatibility operator \( \text{Inc} : \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \to \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \) assigns to every discrete strain field \( \varepsilon \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \) the discrete curvature field

\[
(\text{Inc } \varepsilon)(T) = \frac{1}{|T|} \sum_{F \subset T, F \not\subset \partial \Omega} (n \times [\varepsilon]) \times n, \quad \forall T \in E^3(S_h),
\]  

(61)

where \([\varepsilon]\) denotes the jump of \( \varepsilon \) across \( F \).

**Remark 2.** A simple computation shows that \( (\text{Inc } \varepsilon)(T) \) is indeed symmetric for all \( T \in E^3(S_h) \).

We proceed to show that, as is the case for the classical incompatibility operator, the discrete incompatibility operator is self-adjoint.

**Lemma 2.** The \( \text{Inc} \) operator is symmetric, i.e., for every \( \alpha, \beta \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \),

\[
\sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| \text{Inc}(\alpha) : \beta = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| \text{Inc}(\beta) : \alpha.
\]  

(62)

**Proof:** The claim easily follows from the identities: \([(n \times B) \times n] : A = B : [n \times (A \times n)]\), \( n \in \mathbb{R}^3, A, B \in \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3} \); and \( n \times (A \times n) = (n \times A) \times n, n \in \mathbb{R}^3, A \in \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3} \). \( \square \)

Next we proceed to define the discrete differential complex.

**Definition 3 (Discrete divergence operator)** The discrete divergence operator \( \text{Div} : \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \to \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3) \) assigns to every stress field \( \sigma \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \) the force field

\[
(\text{Div } \sigma)(N) = \frac{1}{3} \sum_{F \ni N} |F| \|\sigma\| \cdot n, \quad \forall N \in E^0(S_h).
\]  

(63)

The following lemma shows that the adjointness relations between the classical \( \text{Def} \) and \( \text{Div} \) operators carry over to the discrete setting.

**Lemma 3.** For every \( u \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3) \), \( \sigma \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \), we have

\[
\sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (\text{Div } \sigma) \cdot u = - \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (\text{Def } u) : \sigma.
\]  

(64)
Lemma 4. i) We recall that, for every differential complex analogous to the classical de Rham complex in

\[ \Omega^\text{sym}(\mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \]

and using the notation \( u_h = I_h u \) from Remark 1, we verify that

\[
\sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} (\text{Div } \sigma) \cdot u = - \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (\text{Def } u) : \sigma
\]

\[
= - \int_{\Omega} \varepsilon(u_h) : \sigma_h = \int_{\Omega} u_h \cdot \text{div } \sigma_h + \sum_{F \in E^2(S_h)} \int_F ([\sigma_h] \cdot n) \cdot u_h
\]

\[
= \sum_{F \in E^2(S_h)} |F| ([\sigma] \cdot n) \cdot \langle u \rangle = \frac{1}{3} \sum_{F \in E^2(S_h)} \sum_{N \prec F} |F| ([\sigma] \cdot n) \cdot u(N)
\]

\[
= \sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} \left( \frac{1}{3} \sum_{F \in E^2(S_h); N \prec F} |F| ([\sigma] \cdot n) \right) \cdot u(N),
\]

as required. \( \square \)

Next, we show the sequence \( \text{Def} \rightarrow \text{Inc} \rightarrow \text{Div} \) of discrete differential operators defines a differential complex analogous to the classical de Rham complex in \( \mathbb{R}^n \).

Lemma 4. \( \text{Inc} \circ \text{Def} = 0 \) and \( \text{Div} \circ \text{Inc} = 0 \).

**Proof:** i) We recall that, for every \( T \in E^3(S_h) \), \((\text{Def } u(T))_{ij} = \frac{1}{2} ((\nabla u_h)_{ij} + (\nabla u_h)_{ji}) |_T \)

where \( u_h = I_h u \) is the interpolation of \( u \) over \( S_h \). Hence, by the rank-one compatibility of the field \( \nabla u_h \) we have that \( [\nabla u_h] = a \otimes n \) on every face \( F \in S_h \), whence it follows that

\( (n \times [\text{Def } u]) \times n = (n \times [\nabla u_h]) \times n = 0 \),

and \( \text{Inc} \circ \text{Def} = 0 \).

ii) From the symmetry of \( \text{Inc } \epsilon \) for all \( \epsilon \in \text{sym } \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3} \) we have, for every \( u \in \Omega^3(\mathbb{R}^3) \),

\[
\sum_{T \in E_3(S_h)} |T| (\text{Def } u) : (\text{Inc } \epsilon) = \sum_{T \in E_3(S_h)} |T| (\nabla u_h) : (\text{Inc } \epsilon)
\]

\[
= \sum_{T \in E_3(S_h)} \nabla u_h : \sum_{F \prec T, F \notin \partial \Omega} ([\epsilon] \times n)
\]

\[
= \sum_{F \in E_2(S_h), F \notin \partial \Omega} ([\nabla u_h] : ([n \times \epsilon] \times n)
\]

\[
= - \sum_{F \in E_2(S_h), F \notin \partial \Omega} ([\nabla u_h] \times n) \cdot (n \times \epsilon) = 0,
\]

and the identity \( \text{Div} \circ \text{Inc} = 0 \) follows from Lemma 3. \( \square \)

For ease of reference, we collect the definitions of the discrete tensor differential operators in Table II. The discrete tensor differential operators define the sequence

\[
0 \rightarrow \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)/\text{RM} \rightarrow \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym } \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \rightarrow \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym } \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \rightarrow \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)/\text{RM} \rightarrow 0.
\]

(65)
Table II. The discrete tensor differential complex in $\mathbb{R}^3$. The first column displays the designation, domain and range of the operators; and the second column collects their definitions. In these definitions, $N \in E^0(S_h)$, $F \in E^3(S_h)$ and $T \in E^3(S_h)$.

From Lemma 4, it follows that each operator has a range included in the kernel of the following operator in the sequence. The conditions under which the sequence would be exact are discussed in Section 3.3.

3.2. The discrete linear elastic boundary-value problem

Without additional structure, the discrete tensor differential complex provides a means of expressing the discrete linear elastic boundary-value problem in a manner that is formally identical to its classical counterpart (57a-57b). Here, by the discrete linear elastic boundary-value problem, we specifically mean the Galerkin finite-element boundary-value problem for a linear-elastic body discretized by means of a simplicial complex and piecewise-affine displacement interpolation.

We begin by defining the discrete body and surface forces, $f \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$ and $t \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$, respectively, as

$$ f = \int_{\Omega} \phi_N f, \quad \forall N \in E^0(S_h), $$

$$ t = \begin{cases} \int_{\Gamma_N} \phi_N t, & N \in E^0(S_h) \cap \Gamma_N, \\ 0, & \text{elsewhere in } E^0(S_h), \end{cases} $$

where $\phi_N$ denotes the simplicial shape function over $S_h$ corresponding to node $N \in E^0(S_h)$.

The collection $\{\phi_N, N \in E^0(S_h)\}$ of all such shape functions defines a basis of $V_h$. In analogy to the space $H^1_0(\Omega)$ defined in the foregoing, we also introduce the space $\Omega^0(S_h, \mathbb{R}^3) = \{u \in \Omega^0(S_h, \mathbb{R}^3), u = 0 \text{ on } \Gamma_D\}$ of discrete displacement fields that satisfy homogeneous displacement boundary conditions identically.

**Proposition 3 (Discrete linear-elastic BVP)** Let $S_h$ be a simplicial complex and $V_h$ the corresponding space of piecewise affine interpolants over $S_h$. Then, the corresponding Galerkin boundary-value problem admits the representation

$$ - \text{Div} (C \text{Def } u) = f + t, \quad \text{in } E^0(S_h) \setminus \Gamma_D, $$

$$ u = 0, \quad \text{on } E^0(S_h) \cap \Gamma_D, $$

where $\text{Def}$ and $\text{Div}$ are the discrete deformation and divergence operators over $S_h$.

**Proof**: From Lemma 3 and Remark 1 it follows that

$$ - \sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (\text{Div} (C \text{Def } u)) \cdot v = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (C \text{Def } u) : (\text{Def } v) = a(u_h, v_h), $$
for every $v \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$, where

$$a(u, v) = \int_{\Omega} (C \text{Def } u) : (\text{Def } v)$$

(69)

is the Dirichlet bilinear form of anisotropic linear elasticity. In addition, from the definitions (66a) and (66b) we have

$$\sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (f + t) \cdot v = l(v_h),$$

(70)

where $l(v)$ is the external work linear form (2b). The claim then follows from the isomorphism between the spaces $\Omega^0_\star(S_h, \mathbb{R}^3)$ and $V_h$. □

Lemma 3 also implies that the discrete boundary-value problem (67a-67b) has a variational structure, be it in the variational equality form

$$a(u, v) = l(v), \quad \forall v \in \Omega^0_\star(S_h, \mathbb{R}^3)$$

(71)

or as the minimum problem

$$\inf_{u \in H^1_\sigma(S_h, \mathbb{R}^3)} F(u),$$

(72)

where

$$a(u, v) = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (C \text{Def } u) : (\text{Def } v),$$

(73a)

$$l(u) = \sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (f + t) \cdot u,$$

(73b)

$$F(u) = \frac{1}{2} a(u, u) - l(u)$$

(73c)

are the discrete Dirichlet bilinear form, the discrete external work linear form, and the discrete potential energy, respectively. The proof of Proposition 3 also shows that these variational principles are identical to those obtained by a straight Galerkin reduction of the potential energy.

3.3. The discrete tensor Helmholtz-Hodge decomposition

An example of application of the classical tensor differential complex is the introduction of Airy stress potentials. We proceed to show that the discrete tensor differential complex supplies similar representational tools in the discrete setting. To this end, we begin by establishing the following discrete version of the classical Helmholtz-Hodge decomposition of symmetric tensor fields. This decomposition additionally supplies a powerful connection between tensor-harmonic functions and cohomology analogous to the celebrated de Rahm theorem.

**Definition 4. [Tensor-harmonic functions]** We say that a symmetric tensor field $\gamma \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3})$ is tensor-harmonic if $\text{Div } \gamma = 0$ and $\text{Inc } \gamma = 0$. We shall denote by $\Gamma(S_h)$ the vector space of tensor-harmonic functions over $S_h$. 

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Definition 5. [Tensor-cohomology groups] The groups:

\[ H^1(S_h) = \ker(\text{Def}) \]  
\[ H^2(S_h) = \ker(\text{Inc})/\text{im}(\text{Def}) \]  
\[ H^3(S_h) = \ker(\text{Div})/\text{im}(\text{Inc}) \]

are the first, second and third tensor-cohomology groups of \( S_h \), respectively. In these definitions, the discrete operator \( \text{Def} \) has the domain of definition indicated on the sequence (65).

We introduce the weighted \( \ell^2 \) inner product over \( \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3}) \)

\[ \langle \alpha, \beta \rangle = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| \alpha : \beta. \]  

We additionally denote by \( \ker(T) \) and \( \text{im}(T) \) the null space and range of a linear operator \( T \), respectively.

Lemma 5 (Discrete tensor Helmholtz-Hodge Decomposition) Let \( \sigma \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3}) \) be a symmetric tensor field over \( S_h \). Then

i) There exist fields \( \nu \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3) \), \( A \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3}) \) satisfying the gauge condition

\[ \text{Div} A = 0, \]

and \( \gamma \in \Gamma(S_h) \) such that

\[ \sigma = \text{Def} \nu + \text{Inc} A + \gamma. \]  

ii) All the terms of the decomposition are \( \ell^2 \)-orthogonal in the sense of the inner product (75).

iii) The space \( \Gamma(S_h) \) of tensor-harmonic functions is isomorphic to the cohomology group \( H^3(S_h) \).

Proof: The proof parallels closely the proof of the classical Helmholtz-Hodge decomposition (cf, e.g., [AMT83]). Begin by introducing the bilinear form over \( \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3}) \)

\[ (\alpha, \beta) = \langle \text{Div} \alpha, \text{Div} \beta \rangle + \langle \text{Inc} \alpha, \text{Inc} \beta \rangle. \]  

\( (\cdot, \cdot) \) is clearly symmetric and strictly positive definite when restricted to the quotient space \( \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3})/\Gamma(S_h) \). Note that for every \( \sigma \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3}) \) we have the orthogonal decomposition

\[ \sigma = \gamma + \sigma', \]

with \( \gamma \in \Gamma(S_h) \) and \( \langle \gamma, \sigma' \rangle = 0 \). Since \( (\cdot, \cdot) \) is an inner product on \( \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3})/\Gamma(S_h) \), it follows from the Riesz representation theorem that there exists a unique \( \beta \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3})/\Gamma(S_h) \) such that

\[ (\beta, \alpha) = \langle \sigma', \alpha \rangle, \quad \forall \alpha \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3\times3}). \]  

From Definition 3 and Lemma 2 it follows that

\[ - \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (\text{Def} \circ \text{Div} \beta) \cdot \alpha + \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (\text{Inc} \circ \text{Inc} \beta) \cdot \alpha = \langle \alpha, \sigma' \rangle, \]
for every $\alpha \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym}\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3})$. Setting $v = -\text{Div} \beta$ and $A = \text{Inc} \beta$ we have

$$\text{Div} A = \text{Div} \circ \text{Inc} \beta = 0$$

$$\sigma = \text{Def} v + \text{Inc} A + \gamma.$$  \hspace{1cm} (82a)

$$\sigma = \text{Def} v + \text{Inc} A + \gamma.$$  \hspace{1cm} (82b)

The orthogonality of the decomposition follows directly from Definition 3, Lemma 4, and the definition of $\Gamma(S_h)$. Finally, we prove (iii) by showing the canonical projection $\pi : \Gamma(S_h) \to H^3(S_h) = \ker(\text{Div})/\text{im}(\text{Inc})$ is one-to-one. Let $\gamma \in \Gamma(S_h)$ be such that $\pi \gamma = 0$, namely, the equivalence class of 0 in $H^3(S_h)$. It follows that there exists $A \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym}\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3})$ such that $\gamma = \text{Inc} A$. Because $\gamma \in \Gamma(S_h)$, we also have $\text{Inc} \gamma = 0$ and, therefore,

$$0 = \langle \text{Inc} \gamma, A \rangle = \langle \gamma, \text{Inc} A \rangle = \langle \gamma, \gamma \rangle.$$  \hspace{1cm} (83)

Hence $\gamma = 0$ and the injectivity of $\pi$ follows. To prove surjectivity, let $\dot{\sigma} \in H^3(S_h)$. Applying the Helmholtz-Hodge decomposition to a representative $\sigma$ of $\dot{\sigma}$, it follows that there exist $\nu \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$, $A \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym}\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3})$ and $\gamma \in \Gamma(S_h)$, such that

$$\sigma = \text{Def} \nu + \text{Inc} A + \gamma.$$  \hspace{1cm} (84)

Since $\text{Div} \sigma = 0$, it follows that $\text{Div} \circ \text{Def} \nu = 0$, hence $0 = \langle \nu, \text{Div} \circ \text{Def} \nu \rangle = \langle \text{Def} \nu, \text{Def} \nu \rangle$ and $\text{Def} \nu = 0$. Consequently, there exists a $\gamma \in \Gamma(S_h)$ such that $\pi \gamma \in \sigma$. $\square$

If the vector space $\Gamma(S_h)$ of tensor-harmonic functions over $S_h$ is reduced to $\{0\}$, it follows from Lemmata 5 and 4 that the sequence of discrete tensor differential operators

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
\text{Def} & \text{Inc} & \text{Div} \\
\Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)/\mathbb{R}M & \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym}\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}) & \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym}\mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}) & \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)/\mathbb{R}M & 0 \\
\end{array}
\]

is an exact short sequence. The analogy between the discrete operators and their classical counterparts displayed in Table I is both striking and compelling.

The displacement-strain relations $\epsilon = \text{Def} u$ may be regarded as a special case of the tensor Helmholtz-Hodge decomposition in which the displacement field plays the role of vector potential. Another common application is the representation of a general self-equilibrated stress field $\sigma$ in terms of a three-dimensional discrete Airy potential $A$. Thus, assume that the discrete cohomology group $H^3(S_h)$ is trivial, i. e., $\ker(\text{Div}) = \text{im}(\text{Inc})$. Then, any equilibrated discrete stress field is in $\text{im}(\text{Inc})$ and, therefore, it can be expressed as

$$\sigma = \text{Inc} A.$$  \hspace{1cm} (86)

Clearly, $A$ is determined up to a discrete deformation, i. e., if $A$ is a potential for $\sigma$, then so is $A + \text{Def} u$, for any $u \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$. In order to resolve this indeterminacy we may append the gage condition

$$\text{Div} A = 0.$$  \hspace{1cm} (87)

Then, $A$ is determined up to a tensor-harmonic function and, therefore, is uniquely determined if $H^3(S_h)$ is trivial. The compatibility condition

$$\text{Inc}(C^{-1} \sigma) = 0$$  \hspace{1cm} (88)

supplies a discrete analog of the classical Beltrami-Mitchell compatibility equations (cf. e. g., [Sok46]). The combination of the preceding equations gives

$$\text{Inc}(C^{-1} \text{Inc} A) = 0,$$  \hspace{1cm} (89)
which, in conjunction with the gage condition (87), supplies a discrete tensor bi-laplacian equation for the Airy potential. As in the classical case, the discrete tensor Helmholtz-Hodge lemma 5 also establishes a powerful connection between tensor-cohomology and tensor-harmonic functions.

3.4. The discrete metric

The role played by the metric in defining the linear elasticity boundary value problem is clearly evident in eqs. (58a) and (58b). In this section we proceed to define a discrete metric that, as we shall see, plays an analogous role in the formulation of the discrete problem. Whereas the discrete tensor differential complex introduced in the preceding section can be defined on an arbitrary simplicial complex, the definition of the metric makes use of the diamond complex as well. The need for this additional complex is not evident from a purely geometrical and formal point of view, but instead is evidenced by the analysis of convergence in the incompressible limit. In particular, the metric is designed to ensure the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition.

Definition 6 (Discrete metric) Let \( g^\sharp \) be the contravariant metric in \( \mathbb{R}^3 \). Then, the discrete contravariant metric is the constant symmetric field \( g^\sharp \in \Omega^3(D_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \) such that
\[
(g^\sharp : \epsilon)(D) = g^\sharp \quad \text{for every} \quad D \in E^3(D_h).
\]

Definition 7 (Trace) Let \( \epsilon \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \) be a discrete symmetric tensor field. Then we define its trace \( g^\sharp : \epsilon \in \Omega^3(D_h; \mathbb{R}) \) as
\[
(g^\sharp : \epsilon)(D) = \frac{1}{|D|} \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h), \ T \subset D} |T| \ g^\sharp : \epsilon, \quad \forall D \in E^3(D_h).
\]

The precise manner in which the contravariant metric \( g^\sharp \) determines the trace of a symmetric tensor field on the subdivision complex should be carefully noted. Thus, a key part of the computation of the trace consists of averaging the field over each 3-cell in the diamond complex. The result is a scalar field defined on the diamond complex. As shown earlier, the averaging over diamond cells has the far-reaching consequence of ensuring the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition.

Definition 8 (Isotropic tensors) Let \( p \in \Omega^3(D_h; \mathbb{R}) \) be a scalar field. The corresponding isotropic tensor field \( p \ g^\sharp \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \) is
\[
(p \ g^\sharp)(T) = p(D) \ g^\sharp, \quad T \subset D.
\]

For instance, if \( p \) is a pressure field over the diamond complex, then \( p \ g^\sharp \) is the corresponding hydrostatic stress field. The following reciprocity relation follows directly from the preceding definitions.

Lemma 6. For every \( \epsilon \in \Omega^3(S_h; \text{sym} \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}) \) and every \( p \in \Omega^3(D_h; \mathbb{R}) \),
\[
\sum_{D \in E^3(D_h)} |D| \ p \ (g^\sharp : \epsilon) = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| \ (p \ g^\sharp) : \epsilon.
\]
Remark 3. Let $u_h = I_h u$ be the piecewise-affine interpolation of the discrete displacements $u \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$ over the tetrahedra $T \in E^3(S_h)$. Then, it follows from definition (6) that

$$g^\sharp : (\text{Def } u)(D) = \frac{1}{|D|} \int_D \text{div } u_h, \quad \forall D \in E^3(D_h).$$

(93)

Thus, the trace of the deformation field equals the average divergence of the displacement field on every diamond cell.

3.5. The isotropic discrete differential complex

We recall the classical identities

$$\text{grad } p = \text{div}(p g^\sharp)$$

(94a)

$$\text{div } u = g^\sharp : \varepsilon(u)$$

(94b)

that re-interpret the restriction of the tensor-divergence operator to isotropic fields as a vector-gradient operator; and the trace of the deformation operator as a vector-divergence operator. These operators define the sequence

$$\Omega^0(\mathbb{R}^3) \rightarrow \Omega^2(\mathbb{R}) \rightarrow \Omega^3(\mathbb{R}) \rightarrow \Omega^0(\mathbb{R}^3).$$

(95)

The null operator $0 : \Omega^0(\mathbb{R}) \rightarrow \Omega^0(\mathbb{R})$ simply reflects the fact that any scalar field in $\Omega^3(\mathbb{R})$ can be expressed as a divergence and, hence, is not subject to any compatibility conditions. We shall refer to this complex as the isotropic differential complex in order to emphasize that it is not a vector-differential complex but rather the restriction of the tensor differential complex to isotropic tensor fields. The corresponding isotropic cohomology groups are: $H^2 = \Omega^3(\mathbb{R})/\text{im(div)} = \{0\}; \ H^3 = \ker(\text{grad})/\text{im}(0) = \ker(\text{grad}) = \mathbb{R}$. In particular, we note that $H^3 = \mathbb{R}$, i.e., if a scalar field has a vanishing gradient then it must necessarily be a constant.

The corresponding discrete differential operators are

$$\text{grad } p = \text{Div}(p g^\sharp),$$

(96a)

$$\text{div } u = g^\sharp : \text{Def } u.$$  

(96b)

Lemma 7. For every $u \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)$, $p \in \Omega^3(D_h; \mathbb{R})$, we have

$$\sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (\text{grad } p) \cdot u = - \sum_{D \in E^3(D_h)} |D| \ p (\text{div } u).$$

(97)

Proof: From Lemma 6 we have

$$\sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (p g^\sharp) : \text{Def } u = \sum_{D \in E^3(D_h)} |D| \ p (g^\sharp : \text{Def } u) = \sum_{D \in E^3(D_h)} |D| \ p \text{ div } u,$$

(98)

and from Lemma 3 it follows that

$$\sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| (p g^\sharp) : \text{Def } u = - \sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} \text{Div}(p g^\sharp) \cdot u = - \sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (\text{grad } p) \cdot u,$$

(99)
whence (97) follows as required.

These operators define the sequence

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{div} & : \Omega^0(D_h;\mathbb{R}^3) \rightarrow \Omega^1(D_h;\mathbb{R}) \\
0 & : \Omega^1(D_h;\mathbb{R}) \rightarrow \Omega^2(D_h;\mathbb{R}) \\
\text{grad} & : \Omega^2(D_h;\mathbb{R}) \rightarrow \Omega^3(D_h;\mathbb{R}^3),
\end{align*}
\]

(100)

where, as before, \(\Omega^0(D_h;\mathbb{R}^3)\) denotes the subset of functions in \(\Omega^0(D_h;\mathbb{R}^3)\) vanishing on \(\Gamma_D\); \(\Omega^1(D_h;\mathbb{R})\) stands for the quotient group \(\Omega^1(D_h;\mathbb{R})/S\), where \(S = \mathbb{R}\) if \(\Gamma_D = \partial\Omega\), \(S = \{0\}\) otherwise. By the last arrow in the sequence (100) we specifically mean that only the values of the gradient outside \(\Gamma_D\) are considered.

We can also define discrete isotropic cohomology classes as follows.

**Definition 9 (Discrete isotropic cohomology groups)** The groups:

\[
\begin{align*}
H^2(D_h) & = \Omega^3(D_h;\mathbb{R})/\text{im} (\text{div}) \\
H^3(D_h) & = \ker (\text{grad})
\end{align*}
\]

(101a) (101b)

are the second and third isotropic cohomology groups of \(D_h\), respectively. In this definition, the discrete operators \(\text{div}\) and \(\text{grad}\) have the domains of definition indicated in the sequence (100).

In addition, by the last arrow in the sequence (100) we specifically mean that only the values of the gradient outside \(\Gamma_D\) are considered.

Naturally, we would like \(H^2(D_h) = \{0\}\), and \(H^3(D_h) = \{0\}\). Remarkably, this condition is equivalent to the inf-sup condition for incompressible linear elasticity. This connection confirms the intuition that the inf-sup condition is largely topological in nature.

**Proposition 4.** The following statements are equivalent:

i) \(H^2(D_h) = \{0\}\),

ii) \(H^3(D_h) = \{0\}\),

iii) the inf-sup condition (21) is satisfied.

**Proof:** Begin by recalling the definition: \(B_h : v_h \in V_h \rightarrow P'_h \ni b(v_h, \cdot)\), where \(P'_h\) is the dual of \(P_h\). The condition (21) is classically equivalent to \(\ker (B^*_h) = \{0\}\). By the isomorphism between the spaces \(\Omega^0(S_h;\mathbb{R}^3)\) and \(V_h\), \(\Omega^1(D_h;\mathbb{R})\) and \(P_h\), and the definition of \(\text{grad}\), this is exactly equivalent to \(\ker (\text{grad}) = \{0\}\) which means \(H^3(D_h) = \{0\}\). On the other hand, \(\ker (\text{grad}) = \{0\}\) is equivalent to \(\text{im} (\text{div}) = \{0\}^\perp = \Omega^3(D_h;\mathbb{R})\). 

Since we have previously shown that the inf-sup condition is satisfied by the diamond approximation scheme, it follows that the sequence (100) is indeed exact.

3.6. The discrete incompressible linear elastic boundary-value problem

The definition of a discrete diamond metric finally provides sufficient structure to define a discrete form of boundary-value problem for incompressible linear elasticity.

**Proposition 5 (Discrete incompressible linear-elastic BVP)** Let \(T_h\) be a simplicial complex, \(S_h\) its diamond subdivision complex, \(D_h\) its diamond complex. Then, the corresponding
Galerkin boundary-value problem admits the representation

\[- \text{Div} \left( 2\mu \text{Def} u + p g^2 \right) = f + t, \quad \text{in } E^0(S_h) \setminus \Gamma_D \tag{102a}\]

\[g^2 : \text{Def} u = 0, \quad \text{in } E^3(D_h) \tag{102b}\]

\[u = 0, \quad \text{on } E^0(S_h) \cap \Gamma_D, \tag{102c}\]

where \text{Def} and \text{Div} are the discrete deformation and divergence operators over \(S_h\) and \(g^2\) is the discrete contravariant metric over \(D_h\).

**Proof:** From Lemma 3 and Remark 1 it follows that

\[- \sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (\text{Div} \left( 2\mu \text{Def} u \right)) \cdot v = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| \cdot 2\mu (\text{Def} u) : (\text{Def} v) = a(u_h, v_h), \tag{103}\]

for every \(v \in \Omega^0(S_h; \mathbb{R}^3)\), where \(a(u, v)\) is the isotropic Dirichlet bilinear form (2a).

Additionally, from Lemmas 3 and 6 and Remarks 1 and 3 we have

\[- \sum_{N \in E^0(S_h)} (\text{Div} \left( p g^2 \right)) \cdot v = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| \cdot (p g^2) : \text{Def} \quad v = \sum_{D \in E^3(D_h)} |D| \cdot p (g^2 : \text{Def} \quad v) \tag{104}\]

\[= \int_{\Omega} q_h \text{div} \quad v_h = b(v_h, q_h),\]

where the bilinear form \(b(\cdot, \cdot)\) is defined in (8a). The claim then follows from (70) and the isomorphism between \(\Omega^0(S_h, \mathbb{R}^3)\) and the space \(V_h\) of piecewise affine interpolants over \(S_h\), and between \(\Omega^3(D_h, \mathbb{R})\) and the space \(P_h\) of piecewise constant interpolants over \(D_h\).

As in the case of unconstrained linear elasticity, Lemmas 3 and 6 additionally imply that the discrete boundary-value problem (102a - 102b) has the variational structure

\[a(u, v) + b(v, p) = l(v), \quad \forall v \in \Omega^0(S_h, \mathbb{R}^3) \tag{105a}\]

\[b(u, q) = 0, \quad \forall q \in \Omega^3(D_h, \mathbb{R}), \tag{105b}\]

where

\[a(u, v) = \sum_{T \in E^3(S_h)} |T| \cdot 2\mu (\text{Def} u) : (\text{Def} v), \tag{106a}\]

\[b(u, p) = \sum_{D \in E^3(D_h)} |D| \cdot p (g^2 : \text{Def} u) \tag{106b}\]

are the discrete Dirichlet bilinear form and the bilinear form corresponding to the incompressibility constraint, respectively. The proof of Proposition 5 also shows that the discrete variational problem is identical to the diamond discrete boundary-value problem obtained by mixed interpolation of displacement and pressures. Proposition 4 then provides a purely topological means of verifying the inf-sup condition through the computation of the discrete isotropic cohomology group \(H^3(D_h)\).

4. Numerical examples

4.1. Nonlinear elasticity

In this section, we proceed to formally extend the diamond approach to finite-deformation elasticity and assess its performance in selected benchmark problems. Whereas, as shown in
the foregoing, the case of linearized elasticity is amenable to analysis, comparable analysis tools for finite deformation problems are lacking at present. Therefore, the present discussion is limited to issues of implementation and to demonstrating scope and performance by way of numerical experiment.

For definiteness, we consider an incompressible elastic material with a free energy of Neo-Hookean type, namely:

$$W = W^{\text{dev}}(F^{\text{dev}}) + W^{\text{vol}}(J^*).$$  \hfill (107)

Conveniently, this energy density can be additively decomposed into a deviatoric part:

$$W^{\text{dev}} = \frac{1}{2} \mu [F^{\text{dev}} : F^{\text{dev}} - d],$$  \hfill (108)

and a volumetric part:

$$W^{\text{vol}}(J^*) = \frac{1}{2} \kappa [J^* - 1]^2.$$  \hfill (109)

In these expressions, the deviatoric part of the deformation gradient is defined as

$$F^{\text{dev}} = J^{-1/d} F,$$  \hfill (110)

where

$$J = \det(F)$$  \hfill (111)

is the Jacobian of the deformation and $d$ denotes the spatial dimension. The notational convention of denoting the volumetric deformation by $J^*$ is designed to emphasize that the volumetric deformation is not necessarily evaluated at the same location as the deformation gradient $F$. The total free energy of the quasi-incompressible elastic material is, therefore,

$$W = \frac{1}{2} \mu J^{-2/d} [F : F - d] + \frac{1}{2} \kappa [J^* - 1]^2$$  \hfill (112)

and the first Piola Kirchhoff stress $P = d_F W$ follows in the form

$$P = \mu J^{-2/d} [F - \frac{1}{d} [F : F] F^{-t}] + J \kappa [J^* - 1] F^{-t}.$$  \hfill (113)

In particular, the hydrostatic pressure $p = \text{tr}(J^{-1} P F^T)/d$ is computed to be

$$p = -\kappa [J^* - 1]$$  \hfill (114)

and, hence, we can interpret $\kappa$ as a penalty parameter that enforces the incompressibility constraint

$$J^* - 1 \doteq 0.$$  \hfill (115)

The linearization of the first Piola Kirchhoff stress $P$ with respect to the deformation gradient $F$ yields the tangent moduli

$$A = \frac{2}{d} \mu J^{-2/d} [F : F] [F^{-t} \otimes F^{-t}] + \frac{1}{d} \mu J^{-2/d} [F : F] [F^{-t} \otimes F^{-t}]$$

$$- \frac{2}{d} \mu J^{-2/d} [F \otimes F^{-t} + F^{-t} \otimes F] + \mu J^{-2/d} \iota \otimes I$$

$$+ J \kappa [J^* - 1] [F^{-t} \otimes F^{-t} - F^{-t} \otimes F^{-t}] + J \kappa [F^{-t} \otimes \partial_F J^*],$$  \hfill (116)

which are of fundamental importance for the numerical solution procedure. The non-standard dyadic products introduced in (116) are defined via the identities: $[A \otimes B] \cdot C = A \cdot C \cdot B^t$ and $[A \otimes B] \cdot C = A \cdot C^t \cdot B^t$, in terms of the second order tensors $A$, $B$ and $C$. 

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4.2. Element types

In two-dimensions we evaluate the performance of five different lower-order elements. By way of baseline we consider the standard linear triangle $P_1$ and the standard linear quadrilateral $Q_1$. The third element is denoted as $4P_1P_0$, also referred to as $4CST$ element in the specialized literature. It is composed of four crossed constant-strain triangles and was originally proposed by Nagtegaal et al. [NPR74]. In order to eliminate local pressure oscillations, we plot the averaged pressure on each four-triangle patch as suggested, e.g., by Kikuchi [Kik83]. Finally, we consider the $2P_1P_0$ $F$-bar element of de Souza Neto et al. [NPO05], consisting of a patch of two triangles with constant pressure which can be understood as a geometrically nonlinear generalization of the element introduced by Ruas [Rua85]; and the $F$-bar quadrilateral $Q_1P_0$ of Moran et al. [MOS90]. These five elements are depicted in Fig. 7, with white circles denoting displacement nodes and the dark circles denoting pressure nodes. For each type of element, we analyze two different mesh geometries. The first geometry consists of regular square meshes built from the elements just enumerated and shown in Fig. 7. The second series is of matching geometry but is built from the variants of diamond elements shown in Fig. 8. In this figure, white circles denote primal nodes and the grey circles denote dual nodes. The particular element advocated in the present study is the $2P_1P_0$ diamond element, i.e., the fourth element in Fig. 8.

The $4P_1P_0$, $2P_1P_0$ and $Q_1P_0$ elements are expected to exhibit comparable convergence behavior since they are all based on patchwise averaging. Note, however, that there is a fundamental difference between an $a$ posteriori pressure averaging, as typically applied to the standard $4P_1P_0$ or $4CST$ crossed triangle element, and $a$ priori averaging as applied to the $2P_1P_0$ and the $Q_1P_0$ element. The latter two are more stable in calculations because high local pressure oscillations are precluded $ab$ initio. Indeed, in calculations the $a$ priori averaging of the Jacobian of the $2P_1P_0$ and $Q_1P_0$ element and the $a$ posteriori averaging of the pressure of the $4P_1P_0$ element yield markedly different results.

Fig. 9 illustrates the generation of a three-dimensional diamond from the simplicial mesh.
two 3-simplices shared 2-simplex subdivision diamond element

Figure 9. Construction of three-dimensional diamond elements.

defined by the white primal nodes. We begin by introducing the grey dual nodes and performing a subdivision of each tetrahedron into four sub-tetrahedra. Each resulting three-dimensional diamond element (cf Fig. 9, right) consists of three white primal nodes and two grey dual nodes whence the deformation field is interpolated. The generation of diamond elements in two dimensions can be effected likewise: by introducing dual nodes in every primal triangle: subdividing every primal triangle into three sub-triangles; and joining pairs of sub-triangles sharing a common primal edge. The volumetric deformation and pressure are taken to be uniform over every diamond element. The termination of the diamond mesh at the boundary is accomplished by means of individual sub-elements, i.e., sub-triangles in two dimensions and sub-tetrahedra in three dimensions. In consequence, the boundary of the diamond mesh consists entirely of primal faces.

Intuitively, one could conclude that the introduction of the additional dual nodes increases the complexity of the problem. However, the convergence studies presented in the following show that the extra cost of the additional dual nodes is largely compensated for by an improvement of the interpolation and thus by faster convergence.

4.3. Two–dimensional Cook’s membrane problem

Our first example concerns the classical benchmark problem of Cook’s membrane (cf, e.g., Simo & Rifai [SR90], or more recently by de Souza Neto et al. [NPO05]). The geometry and loading are shown in Fig. 10. The left boundary is fully clamped while the right boundary is subjected to a distributed shearing load \( F = 6.25 \) per unit length, corresponding to a total vertical resultant force of 100. This load is applied in five increments. Plane strain conditions are assumed. The membrane is assumed to be neo-Hookean, eq. (112), with elastic constants \( \mu = 80.1938 \) and \( \kappa = 400942 \) resulting in near-incompressible behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>elements size</th>
<th>dofs</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>4P1P0</th>
<th>2P1P0</th>
<th>Q1P0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>2x2</td>
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<td>3.009043</td>
<td>2.113486</td>
<td>2.176969</td>
<td>4.014569</td>
<td>5.509942</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.219074</td>
<td>5.021598</td>
<td>6.492511</td>
<td>6.657711</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table III. Cook’s membrane – Convergence of top displacement for square meshes
Figure 10. Cook's membrane – Geometry and loading conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>elements</th>
<th>dofs</th>
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<th>Q1</th>
<th>4P1P0</th>
<th>2P1P0</th>
<th>Q1P0</th>
</tr>
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<td>1.5x1.5</td>
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<td>6.841875</td>
<td>6.890742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV. Cook's membrane – Convergence of top displacement for diamond meshes

As a basis for comparison, we specifically monitor the vertical displacement of the upper right corner P and its variation upon mesh refinement. The results for regular square meshes and for the special diamond meshes are summarized in tables III and IV, respectively. The resulting pressure distributions on the deformed configurations are depicted in Figs. 11 and 12, with the former corresponding to regular square meshes and the latter to the special diamond meshes.

As expected, the response of the standard $P_1$ and $Q_1$ element is overly stiff for the constrained problem under consideration. Indeed, the standard elements exhibit typical locking behavior in both the regular and the diamond configurations. In addition, the $P_1$ element suffers from severe checkerboarding, which is also visible but less pronounced in the standard $Q_1$ element.

As expected from analysis, the performance of the patchwise averaging elements, i.e., the $4P_1P_0$, $2P_1P_0$ and $Q_1P_0$ elements, is quite similar. In particular, the vertical displacements of point P are nearly identical in all three cases and converge upon mesh refinement.

This displacement convergence notwithstanding, on the square meshes the $4P_1P_0$, $2P_1P_0$ and $Q_1P_0$ elements exhibit a marked tendency towards checkerboarding. Moreover, the spurious checkerboard modes do not vanish upon mesh refinement. The resulting strong pressure oscillations between patches are clearly visible in the third, fourth and fifth columns in Fig. 11.

By way of contrast, the diamond meshes are free of checkerboarding instabilities. Indeed, in the diamond configuration the $4P_1P_0$, $2P_1P_0$ and $Q_1P_0$ elements, depicted in columns three, four and five of Fig. 12, result in smooth pressure distributions. These tests thus suggest that
diamond elements are indeed free of checkerboard modes even in the finite-deformation range.

4.4. Two-dimensional rigid flat punch

Our second example concerns the benchmark problem of a rigid flat punch (cf Kikuchi [Kik83], or more recently de Souza Neto et al. [NPO05]). The geometry of the problem and the loading conditions are shown in Fig. 13. In a plane strain analysis, we study the deformation of a rectangular rubber block in response to frictionless indentation. The block is nearly-incompressible elastic with $\mu = 80.1938$ and $\kappa = 400942$. The vertical displacement of the indenter is increased incrementally up to a 12.5% compression. Tables V and VI summarize the convergence behavior of the resultant force under mesh.
Figure 12. Cook's membrane – Hydrostatic pressure for diamond meshes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>elements</th>
<th>dofs</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>4P1P0</th>
<th>2P1P0</th>
<th>Q1P0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>325.4552</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6384.5861</td>
<td>324.3814</td>
<td>309.0326</td>
<td>291.1465</td>
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<tr>
<td>8x32</td>
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<td>2090.2477</td>
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<td>1347.6298</td>
<td>1980.0245</td>
<td>289.3809</td>
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<td>16x64</td>
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<td>1060.4881</td>
<td>1285.6713</td>
<td>282.1153</td>
<td>286.4848</td>
<td>280.0719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V. Rigid flat punch – Convergence of forces for square meshes
refinement for meshes in square and diamond configurations, respectively. As before, in both cases the P1 and the Q1 element exhibit severe locking behavior and the predicted response is overly stiff. Consistent with analysis, the 4P1P0, 2P1P0 and Q1P0 elements display nearly identical resultant-force convergence behavior.

By way of contrast, the pressure fields computed in the square and diamond configurations differ markedly, Fig. 14. Thus, whereas the averaged pressure elements, i.e., the 4P1P0, 2P1P0 and Q1P0 elements, exhibit strong checkerboarding in the square-mesh configuration, in the diamond configuration the 4P1P0, 2P1P0 and Q1P0 elements are entirely free from spurious checkerboarding. In particular, the 2P1P0 element may be regarded as an optimal choice in as much as it is simultaneously free of locking and checkerboarding.

4.5. Three-dimensional compression of a square block

One of the appealing features of diamond elements is that they can be defined in any dimension. We proceed to demonstrate this feature by means of the example of a three-dimensional elastic block indented by a frictionless and rigid square punch (cf., e.g., Reese & Wriggers [RW00]). We assume near-incompressible elastic behavior with $\mu = 80.1938$ and $\kappa = 400942$. The boundary conditions and the applied forces are shown in Fig. 15.

We analyze four different meshes containing 661, 2047, 48851 primal nodes and 3072, 10368, 24576 and 48000 dual nodes, respectively. The four meshes considered consist of 5670, 19872, 47616 and 93600 diamond elements inside the domain and 768, 1728, 3072 and 4800 tetrahedra on the boundary. The resulting number of degrees of freedom is 11199, 37245, 87675

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>elements</th>
<th>dofs</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>4P1P0</th>
<th>2P1P0</th>
<th>Q1P0</th>
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<td>1222</td>
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<td>122</td>
<td>6799</td>
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</table>
The deformed configurations corresponding to a compression of 12.5% are depicted in Fig. 16. The left column of the figure shows the boundary tetrahedra, while the right column shows the corresponding diamond elements. The pressure field is shown in grey scale. Convergence upon mesh refinement is assessed in terms of the resultant force corresponding to a punch travel of 0.125. As expected, the applied force resultant decreases with mesh refinement. Thus, the force resultant is computed to be 45.0470 for the coarsest mesh; 42.8267 for the second mesh; 41.7038 for the third mesh; and 41.1025 for the finest mesh. For all four discretizations, the diamond meshes result in smooth oscillation-free pressure distributions.
Figure 15. Three-dimensional compression – Geometry and loading conditions

The three-dimensional analysis is thus consistent with the previous two-dimensional analyses and suggests that the convergence properties of diamond elements are identical in all spatial dimensions. In particular, as in the two-dimensional case the $2P_1P_0$ elements are optimal in the sense of simultaneously being locking-free and free of checkerboard modes.

5. Summary and Conclusion

We have presented a finite-element discretization scheme for the compressible and incompressible elasticity problems based on considerations of topology and analysis. The scheme combines a special mesh or 'tiling' pattern into diamond elements and a choice of interpolation that guarantee optimal convergence of displacements and pressures. In particular, we have shown that the scheme satisfies the inf-sup condition in the context of linearized kinematics. The attendant checkerboard-free convergence of the pressure field has also been demonstrated in the finite-deformation range by way of numerical testing. Additional desirable features of the diamond discretization scheme include its definition for arbitrary unstructured triangulations of the domain and in general spatial dimension.

We close by pointing out a number of open questions and directions for further study. In the present work, we have exhibited one special mesh topology that, in conjunction with appropriate interpolation space, guarantees the satisfaction of the inf-sup condition. A much stronger result, which would bring closure to the subject, would consist of the complete enumeration of all such special topologies.

More generally, we remark that there is an extensive literature on algebraic topology which bears in obvious ways on questions of computational mechanics but which has made limited inroads into the field. Discrete mechanics is an unfolding current attempt at strengthening the connection between algebraic topology, exterior calculus and mechanics. Discretization schemes inspired in discrete calculus have been successful in vector problems such as electromagnetism. By way of contrast, they have been less successful in the context of tensor problems such as elasticity. Indeed, locking and checkerboard phenomena do not arise in scalar problems but are quintessential features of vector problems in the presence of internal constraints.
Counterexamples (cf, e.g., [HKO]) show that the mere ability to express an approximation scheme in terms of discrete differential operators does not ensure that the scheme is locking and checkerboard-free and optimally convergent. This cautionary note notwithstanding, there is a close connection between the classical inf-sup condition and the cohomology of the discrete tensor differential complex (cf Proposition 4), which shows that the topology of the discretization plays an important role in determining convergence. We thus may conclude that both considerations of topology and analysis are essential in the design of discretization schemes and that neither suffices to guarantee the optimal performance of the scheme.

Acknowledgments

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REFERENCES


Figure 16. Three dimensional compression – Hydrostatic pressure for diamond meshes