The Dawning of the Age of the Chromosphere

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chromosphere: main physical characteristics

- stratified: spans 9 pressure scale heights and high to low-β
- requires 30-100x as much power as the corona
- “thermostat”
- nLTE, partially ionized, (magnetized) plasma dynamics
- strongly influenced by surface magnetism
The awkward $\beta \geq 1$ transition occurs within the chromosphere

Gold (1964).

stratification makes this transition geometrically thin

that is not the whole story...

yet the chromosphere is often so-treated
Manifestations of the storage and release of magnetic energy in the Sun’s atmosphere
Young (1892)

MAGNETISM AND SUN-SPOTS.

The occurrence observed by Carrington and Hodgson (p. 119), on September 1, 1859, was immediately followed by a magnetic storm of unusual intensity, the auroral displays being most magnificent on both sides of the Atlantic, and even in Australia.
Magnetic Curves at Greenwich (August 3 and 5, 1872).
4 June 1946: Hα photograph

Source: High Altitude Observatory Archives
SOHO, TRACE, RHESSI
Flare Observations (April 22, 2002)
Approx. size of Earth ➞ 🌏
The rapidly changing black and white pattern in the running time difference movie shows the insertion of hot plasma into coronal loops. This hot plasma originates as spicules at the root of the coronal structure.
An observation

- We have almost 40 years of spacecraft data. Why are we still arguing about the causes of
  - coronal dynamics, heating?
  - space weather?
  - variable UV radiation?
- I believe, in part, it is because we have become comfortable measuring just effects:
  - density, abundance, temperature, velocity
- It’s time to measure causes:
  - forces, free energy
  - the magnetic free energy is a good place to start
- But, if this were easy it would have been done decades ago
Ansatz

• Most “interesting” aspects of solar activity (heating, UV radiation, flares, loss of equilibrium) are related to
  – storage of magnetic free energy in low-\(\beta\) plasma
  – release of this energy on times as short as the Alfven crossing time

• This is because
  – flares, CMEs occur fast and require a lot of energy
  – low-\(\beta\) plasma occupies a large volume \(V\), so \(B^2/2\mu V\) can be large
  – low-\(\beta\) => fast Alfven speed

• Thus, we should try to measure the magnetic free energy within the corona
Difficulties and a path forward

- Free energy means-non potential fields
  - often free component \(<\) potential component
  - must measure vector field not just line-of sight
  - even in the photosphere, such work was not possible until 1980s

- Earlier work: extrapolate photospheric fields
  - essentially requires MHD, as fields are not force-free
  - force free extrapolations have essentially failed (Schrijver, de Rosa)

- A way forward:
  - measure vector fields at coronal base, top of active chromosphere
  - take advantage of a quirk of nature: He I 1083 nm multiplet
  - feasible (TIP- Solanki et al 2003, Casini, Centeno,...)
  - use MHD virial theorem and/or force-free extrapolations
new chromospheric $B$ constraints (including e.g., just fibrils) can provide boundary conditions compatible with the calculations.
let us recall the virial result of Chandrasekhar (1961):

\[ \int_V r \cdot [(\nabla \times B) \times B] dV \]

\[ = \int_V \frac{1}{2} B^2 dV + \int_{\partial V} [(B \cdot r)B - \frac{1}{2} B^2 r] \cdot ds \, , \quad (22) \]

given in standard notation. If the field \( B \) is force-free in a volume \( V \), the left-hand side vanishes and the total energy is determined uniquely by the surface vector field,
Coronal magnetic free energy can be derived from measurements of magnetic fields at the boundaries, under force-free conditions.
The active chromosphere is in a low beta state, more like the corona than the photosphere
photosphere
chromosphere
corona
coronal structure is already present in the chromosphere
Small AR, pores
Small AR, pores
Small AR, pores
Small AR, pores
Chromosphere as seen with IBIS

- Ca II 854.2 nm
- samples many pressure scale heights
- high resolution
  - resolution ≈ 0.3” (DST limit 0.24”)

Fig. 5. Contribution function for CaII 8542 computed in plane-parallel, hydro-static average quiet-Sun atmosphere (Fontenla et al. 1993). Height zero refers to level at which optical depth in the continuum at 500 nm is unity.

G. Cauzzi et al 2008, A+A
Chromosphere as seen with IBIS

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again, base of corona is very different from photosphere

G. Cauzzi et al 2008, A+A
Small AR, pores: including the chromosphere

detailed study of IBIS data: G. Cauuzzi et al 2008, A+A
Small AR, pores: including the chromosphere

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Imaging and infrared spectropolarimetry using facilities at NSO/Sacramento Peak
Facility InfraRed Spectropolarimeter

Telescope: DST

Features: diffraction limited, dual beam, 4-slits for high cadence (20 min.) rasters

Wavelengths: simultaneous 6302, 15650 or 6302, 10830 and runs concurrently with IBIS 8542, G-band camera

Now available for general use!
Also TESOS, CRISP, GFPI,...
IBIS - Interferometric Bidimensional Spectrometer

Dual Fabry-Perot Imaging Spectrometer
(see Cavallini, 2006 for further details)

- High Throughput (*photon starved regime*)
- Extended FOV (*80° diameter*)
- High Spatial Resolution (*0.085”/pixel*)
- Rapid Scanning (*2-5 frames/sec*)

Available Filters

• 589.0 – Na D₂
• 589.6 – Na D₁
• 617.3 – Fe I (SDO/HMI)
• 630.1/630.2 – Fe I
• 656.3 – Hα
• 676.8 – Ni I (MDI ; GONG)
• 709.0 – Fe I [g=0]
• 722.4 – Fe II [g=0]
• 854.2 – Ca II

**Operational Range:**
*550 - 860 nm*
Case study: NOAA 11076 4 June 2010

Contextual SDO AIA images:
1700 red
171 green
193 blue
FIRS  a 4-slit scanning slit spectropolarimeter

- Jaeggli, Lin, Kuhn, Mickey (IfA Hawaii), Hegwer, Rimmele, Penn (NSO)
- Newly commissioned at the Dunn Solar Telescope, Sunspot NM
- Fe I 630.15 and 630.25 lines (photospheric vector $\mathbf{B}$): $R \sim 600,000$
- He I 1083 lines (chromospheric/coronal base vector $\mathbf{B}$): $R \sim 300,000$
- Maps of 145 steps of 10s duration, spanning 175” x 75”
- 4 state polarization modulation
- 1083 QUV, B sensitivities per 0.33x0.33” pixel, $\Sigma 25$ wavelengths/profile
  - $\sigma(QUV)=0.0009 I_c$ (random, high frequency noise)
  - $\sigma(QUV)=0.0014 I_c$ (measured rms fringes/systematic errors)
  - $\sigma(B_{LOS}) \sim 5-10$ G (formal)
- Fringes+noise dominate QU => no vector field (but see below)
FIRS: NOAA 11076 4 June 2010

24 minute scan
Speckle whitelight and Ca II 8542 core
Speckle whitelight and Ca II 8542 core
IBIS  Fabry-Pérot spectropolarimeter

- Ca II 854.2 nm, photospheric/chromospheric vector $\mathbf{B}$: $R >200,000$
- Images 40”x80”, scans 20 wavelengths 6 polarization states, dual beam, 34 s cadence
- 854.2 Sensitivity per 0.17”x0.17” pixel
  - $\sigma(QUV)=0.006 I_c$ (photon noise limited)
  - $\sigma(B_{LOS})\sim 38$ G (for one 34s scan), but small crosstalk
- Similar to FIRS 1083, but acquired every 34 s with superior image quality
IBIS: NOAA 11076 4 June 2010

34s scan
IBIS: NOAA 11076 4 June 2010

34s scan
IBIS: NOAA 11076 4 June 2010

34s scan
S/N ratios with FIRS are currently too small to measure the chromospheric vector field. Mature instruments (TIP) do better.

Kuckein et al. 2009, TIP 10830 data. s/n ~ 4000 cf. FIRS s/n ~ 600. FIRS is a “work in progress”
In the meantime...

MEASURING CHROMOSPHERIC VECTOR FIELDS: B(strength), $\theta$ (inclination), $\varphi$ (azimuth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>region</th>
<th>Product (technique)</th>
<th>instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fe I 6302</td>
<td>photosphere</td>
<td>Vector $\mathbf{B}$ (Milne-Eddington inversions + NLFFF extrapolations)</td>
<td>HMI/SDO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ca II 8542</td>
<td>chromosphere</td>
<td>Vector $\mathbf{V}$ (fibril kinematics) Vector $\mathbf{B}$ (not done - requires NLTE inversions)</td>
<td>IBIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He I 10830</td>
<td>Chromosphere/Coronal base</td>
<td>$B_{\text{los}}$ (HAZEL inversions)</td>
<td>FIRS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical Assumptions

- vectors $\mathbf{V}$ and $\mathbf{B}$ are parallel (or anti-parallel)
- Ca II and He I lines form in the same overall hydromagnetic structure.

- FIRS I(QU)$\mathbf{V} \rightarrow B \cos \theta$, HAZEL inversions of 1083, $z \sim 2\text{Mm}$ ?
- IBIS (QU) fibrils $\rightarrow \varphi$; kinematics $\rightarrow \theta, \varphi$; V,I $\rightarrow B \cos \theta$

$B \cos \theta$ VERY crude, inversions required
NOAA 11076 4 June 2010 again
NOAA 11076 4 June 2010 again
NOAA 11076 4 June 2010 again
First feature tracking results combined with Doppler shifts

Tracking is easiest over penumbrae, where B is harder to measure
A curiosity?

HMI $B_z + n1fff$ field
A curiosity?

IBIS enhanced fibrils + nlfff field

Vertical view, field lines below 4 Mm
NOAA 11076 4 June 2010: conclusions

- Chromospheric vector fields are not yet possible with FIRS
- FIRS was recently commissioned, its performance is not fully understood
- mismatch in morphology NLFFF vs. IBIS fibrils  
  – magnetic field, or thermodynamics, or both?
- IBIS cannot observe 10830, the “ideal” line
- TIP can and has a sensitivity almost an order of magnitude higher than FIRS
- An infrared Fabry-Perot is highly desirable  
  – Si I 10827, He I 10830, Fe I 1.56 microns
- If this were easy it would have been done decades ago
for the future:

**Infrared imaging spectroscopy/spectropolarimetry**

capabilities:

- Extended periods of excellent seeing over bigger FOV
- Zeeman effect enhancement (Fe I 1560nm, ...)
- He I 1083nm as a diagnostic of the magnetic and velocity fields at the coronal base
potential of IR Fabry-Perot Interferometers

TIP - Solanki et al 2003
magnetic field at coronal base

IBIS - Judge et al 2009
advantages of images
Spicules, coronal heating paradoxes, and other animals

Figure: Scott McIntosh

Type II spicules as agents for mass and heat supply to the corona

The rapidly changing black and white pattern in the running time difference movie shows the insertion of hot plasma into coronal loops. This hot plasma originates as spicules at the root of the coronal structure.
Observations (de Pontieu, McIntosh, ...)

- Type I spicules go up and down, < 40 km/s
  - pressure driven field-aligned flows (Hansteen)
  - no supply of mass to corona
- Type II spicules
  - 50 to > 150 km/s apparent speeds
  - “often disappear over their whole length within one or a few time steps (5–20 s) .. some have apparent velocities >250 km/s”
  - velocity distributions similar to spectra of coronal features
  - On-disk counterparts Doppler motions < 50 km/s (RBEs)
  - estimates between $10^5$ and $10^7$ on the Sun
- relationships to Beckers’ “classical” spicules: unclear
A gas dynamic calculation in 1D: field aligned flows generated by a chromospheric forcing and heating. Atomic systems solved along with gas dynamics
A gas dynamic calculation in 1D: field-aligned flows generated by a chromospheric forcing and heating. Atomic systems solved along with gas dynamics.
computed line profiles: carbon II-VI
Spicules, coronal heating paradoxes, and other animals

Judge, Tritschler, Low, 2011 ApJL in press

Spicules and fibrils are sheets? Parker's tangential discontinuities?

potentially serious consequences

Data from Berger et al 2004
Spicules, coronal heating paradoxes, and other animals

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Spicules and fibrils are sheets? Parker’s tangential discontinuities?

potentially serious consequences

Data from Berger et al 2004
the chromosphere: why should anyone care?
You should, if you care about...

- the corona
- space weather
- partially ionized plasmas
- dynamos
- heliospheric UV radiation
- the transition region
- solar MHD
the chromosphere: why should anyone care?
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(Oh, and the chromosphere too)