

TIDES IN THE MARTIAN ATMOSPHERE — AND OTHER TOPICS

by

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**DEDICATION**

With love and thanks

To family and friends

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> . . . . .	<b>13</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> . . . . .	<b>16</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> . . . . .	<b>17</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> . . . . .	<b>18</b>
1.1 Preamble . . . . .	18
1.2 Introduction to the Martian Atmosphere . . . . .	21
1.3 Observations of the Martian Upper Atmosphere . . . . .	24
1.4 Dissertation Structure . . . . .	26
1.5 Sources of Support . . . . .	28
<b>CHAPTER 2 TOPOGRAPHICALLY-CONTROLLED THERMAL TIDES IN THE MARTIAN UPPER ATMOSPHERE</b> . . . . .	<b>30</b>
2.1 Abstract . . . . .	30
2.2 Introduction . . . . .	31
2.3 MGS Aerobraking . . . . .	35
2.4 Sol-to-Sol Variability . . . . .	41
2.4.1 Introduction to Sol-to-Sol Variability . . . . .	41
2.4.2 Observations of Sol-to-Sol Variability . . . . .	42
2.4.3 Discussion of Sol-to-Sol Variability . . . . .	49
2.5 Observations of the Zonal Structure . . . . .	53
2.5.1 Introduction to the Zonal Structure . . . . .	53
2.5.2 Changes in Zonal Structure on Weekly Timescales . . . . .	56
2.5.3 Changes in Zonal Structure With Altitude . . . . .	60
2.5.4 Changes in Zonal Structure With Latitude . . . . .	68
2.5.5 Changes in Zonal Structure With Local Solar Time . . . . .	76
2.6 Modelling of the Zonal Structure . . . . .	85
2.6.1 Constraints on Tidal Modes Responsible for Zonal Structure . . . . .	85
2.6.2 Other Tidal Observations and Theory . . . . .	94

2.6.3	Effects of the Surface on Zonal Structure . . . . .	98
2.7	Mars Odyssey and Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter . . . . .	99
2.8	Future Work . . . . .	102
2.9	Conclusions . . . . .	105
<b>CHAPTER 3 DEVELOPMENT OF A NOVEL “BALANCED ARCH” TECHNIQUE FOR MEASURING WINDS . . . . .</b>		<b>108</b>
3.1	Introduction . . . . .	108
3.2	Conservation of Momentum in an Atmosphere . . . . .	113
3.2.1	Simplest Approximation to Equation 3.1 . . . . .	115
3.2.2	Scale Analysis on Equation 3.1 . . . . .	117
3.3	Mars Scale Analysis . . . . .	122
3.3.1	$r$ component . . . . .	122
3.3.2	$\theta$ component . . . . .	124
3.3.3	$\phi$ component . . . . .	128
3.3.4	Approximate Equations . . . . .	130
3.4	Venus Scale Analysis . . . . .	131
3.4.1	$r$ component . . . . .	132
3.4.2	$\theta$ component . . . . .	132
3.4.3	$\phi$ component . . . . .	132
3.4.4	Approximate Equations . . . . .	133
3.5	Titan Scale Analysis . . . . .	133
3.5.1	$r$ component . . . . .	134
3.5.2	$\theta$ component . . . . .	134
3.5.3	$\phi$ component . . . . .	135
3.5.4	Approximate Equations . . . . .	135
3.6	Summary of Simplified Equations . . . . .	135
3.7	“Balanced Arch” Technique for Estimating Wind Speed . . . . .	137
3.8	Validation of “Balanced Arch” Technique . . . . .	140
3.8.1	Test on a Simple Atmosphere . . . . .	140
3.8.2	MTGCM Testing . . . . .	142

<b>CHAPTER 4 APPLICATION OF “BALANCED ARCH” TECHNIQUE TO MGS ACCELEROMETER DATA . . . . .</b>	<b>144</b>
4.1 Introduction . . . . .	144
4.2 Hemispheric Averages . . . . .	148
4.3 Northern Hemisphere . . . . .	150
4.3.1 NH — Effects of Longitude . . . . .	150
4.3.2 NH — Effect of Latitude . . . . .	150
4.3.3 NH — Effect of Altitude . . . . .	152
4.3.4 NH — Summary . . . . .	152
4.4 Southern Hemisphere . . . . .	152
4.4.1 SH — Effect of Longitude . . . . .	152
4.4.2 SH — Effect of Latitude . . . . .	154
4.4.3 SH — Effects of Latitude and Altitude . . . . .	156
4.4.4 SH — Summary . . . . .	158
4.5 Discussion of Results . . . . .	158
4.6 Comparison to Simulations . . . . .	159
4.7 Future Work . . . . .	162
<b>CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS OF ENTRY ACCELEROMETER DATA . . . . .</b>	<b>164</b>
5.1 Abstract . . . . .	164
5.2 Introduction . . . . .	165
5.2.1 Uses of Accelerometers in Spaceflight . . . . .	165
5.2.2 Fluid Dynamics and Atmospheric Entry . . . . .	167
5.2.3 Flight Heritage . . . . .	168
5.3 Equations of Motion . . . . .	168
5.3.1 Previous Work . . . . .	168
5.3.2 Alternative Formulation . . . . .	169
5.3.3 Inertial Cartesian and Spherical Frames . . . . .	170
5.3.4 Momentary Cartesian and Spherical Frames . . . . .	170
5.3.5 Transformations between Frames . . . . .	171
5.3.6 Solution Procedure for the Gravity-only Case . . . . .	172
5.3.7 The Spacecraft Frame . . . . .	175



5.4	The Effects of an Atmosphere on Trajectory Reconstructions . . . . .	176
5.4.1	Addition of Aerodynamics to the Solution Procedure . . . . .	176
5.4.2	The <i>Head-on</i> Option for Constraining Spacecraft Attitude . . . . .	177
5.4.3	The <i>Drag-only</i> Option for Constraining Spacecraft Attitude . . . . .	178
5.4.4	The <i>Acceleration Ratios</i> Option for Constraining Spacecraft Attitude . . . . .	180
5.4.5	The <i>Gyroscopes</i> Option for Constraining Spacecraft Attitude . . . . .	183
5.4.6	Summary of Techniques Used to Constrain Spacecraft Attitude . . . . .	187
5.4.7	Parachute Considerations . . . . .	188
5.4.8	Error Considerations . . . . .	189
5.5	Trajectory Reconstruction applied to Mars Pathfinder . . . . .	192
5.5.1	Programming Details . . . . .	192
5.5.2	Assembly and Preparation of Pathfinder's Accelerometer Data . . . . .	193
5.5.3	Entry State Problems . . . . .	197
5.5.4	Results . . . . .	203
5.6	Atmospheric Structure Reconstruction . . . . .	203
5.6.1	Fluid Dynamics During an Atmospheric Entry . . . . .	203
5.6.2	Generalized Density Reconstruction . . . . .	210
5.6.3	Generalized Pressure and Temperature Reconstructions . . . . .	212
5.6.4	Error Considerations . . . . .	214
5.7	Atmospheric Structure Reconstruction applied to Mars Pathfinder . . . . .	215
5.7.1	The Importance of an Aerodynamic Database . . . . .	215
5.7.2	Results . . . . .	216
5.7.3	$C_D = 2$ Approximation . . . . .	223
5.8	Conclusions . . . . .	224

5.9	Acknowledgements . . . . .	226
<b>CHAPTER 6 SCIENTIFIC USES OF CRUDE TELEMETRY DURING ATMOSPHERIC ENTRY . . . . . 227</b>		
6.1	Abstract . . . . .	227
6.2	Deriving Acceleration, Velocity, and Position . . . . .	228
6.3	Deriving Atmospheric Properties . . . . .	233
6.3.1	First Technique for Density . . . . .	234
6.3.2	First Technique for Pressure . . . . .	234
6.3.3	First Technique for Temperature . . . . .	235
6.3.4	Second Technique for Temperature . . . . .	236
6.3.5	Second Technique for Pressure . . . . .	237
6.3.6	Third Technique for Temperature . . . . .	237
6.3.7	Third Technique for Pressure . . . . .	238
6.3.8	Fourth Technique for Temperature . . . . .	239
6.3.9	Summary . . . . .	240
6.4	Uncertainties in Transmitted Frequency . . . . .	240
6.5	Simulated Trajectory and Atmospheric Properties . . . . .	242
6.6	Derived Trajectory and Atmospheric Properties Using Clean $v$ . . . . .	249
6.7	Derived Trajectory and Atmospheric Properties Using Noisy $v$ . . . . .	265
6.8	Conclusions . . . . .	281
<b>CHAPTER 7 COMPARISON OF VIKING LANDER 1 AND MOLA TOPOGRAPHY . . . . . 283</b>		
7.1	Abstract . . . . .	283
7.2	Summary . . . . .	283
7.3	Introduction . . . . .	284
7.4	Altimetry from the Viking Landers . . . . .	284
7.5	Comparison with MOLA Altimetry . . . . .	285
7.6	Implications for Viking Atmospheric Structure Results . . . . .	288
7.7	Correcting the Viking Atmospheric Structure Results . . . . .	288
7.8	Conclusions . . . . .	289

<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	<b>ENIGMATIC NORTHERN PLAINS OF MARS</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9</b>	<b>AGE OF LUNAR CRATER GIORDANO BRUNO</b>	<b>295</b>
9.1	Abstract	295
9.2	Introduction	295
9.3	Meteor Storm	298
9.4	Other Tests of Hartung's Hypothesis	302
9.5	Conclusions	306
<b>CHAPTER 10</b>	<b>SIMPLE CLIMATE MODELS</b>	<b>307</b>
10.1	Abstract	307
10.2	Two-Box Model	308
10.2.1	Variational Principle	308
10.2.2	Solution for $F$	311
10.3	Other Simple Climate Models	314
10.3.1	Rodgers's Model	315
10.3.2	Paltridge's Model	317
10.3.3	Lin's Model	318
10.3.4	Restricted Solution	320
10.3.5	Restricted Solution to Rodgers's Model	320
10.3.6	Restricted Solution to Paltridge's Model	321
10.3.7	Restricted Solution to Lin's Model	324
10.3.8	Restricted Solution to Zero and Infinite Heat Transport Models	327
10.3.9	Conclusions	328
<b>CHAPTER 11</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>CHARACTERIZING THE ZONAL STRUCTURE WITH AN HARMONIC FIT</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	<b>GENERATING CONSTANT ALTITUDE DATA FROM THE PDS PROFILES</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	<b>CURVATURE TERMS IN EQUATIONS 3.6 – 3.7</b>	<b>347</b>

<b>APPENDIX D SIMPLIFYING THE VISCOUS TERMS IN EQUATIONS 3.6 – 3.7</b> . . . . .	<b>350</b>
<b>APPENDIX E ESTIMATING THE IMPORTANCE OF LATITUDINAL CHANGES IN PRESSURE</b> . . . . .	<b>353</b>
<b>APPENDIX F UNCERTAINTY ANALYSES FOR SECTION 6.3</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>F.1 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.1</b> . . . . .	366
<b>F.2 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.2</b> . . . . .	367
<b>F.3 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.3</b> . . . . .	367
<b>F.4 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.4</b> . . . . .	369
<b>F.5 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.5</b> . . . . .	372
<b>F.6 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.6</b> . . . . .	372
<b>F.7 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.7</b> . . . . .	373
<b>F.8 Uncertainties for Section 6.3.8</b> . . . . .	373
<b>REFERENCES</b> . . . . .	<b>376</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	Parameters of periapsis during aerobraking . . . . .	39
2.2	Examples of density profiles during a resonance . . . . .	43
2.3	Sol-to-sol variability during the 3:1 — 8:1 resonances . . . . .	44
2.4	The 11:1 resonance . . . . .	50
2.5	Fit to outbound densities at 130 km between 10°S and 20°S . . . . .	55
2.6	As Figure 2.5, but inbound data . . . . .	59
2.7	Repeat interval between inbound and outbound measurements . . . . .	61
2.8	Variation in zonal structure with altitude . . . . .	63
2.9	Variation in normalized harmonic amplitudes with altitude . . . . .	64
2.10	Variation in phases with altitude . . . . .	65
2.11	Contour plot of normalized fitted densities . . . . .	69
2.12	Normalized amplitudes from Figure 2.11 . . . . .	72
2.13	Phases from Figure 2.11 . . . . .	73
2.14	Wave-2 component of Figure 2.11 . . . . .	74
2.15	Wave-3 component of Figure 2.11 . . . . .	75
2.16	Repeat interval between inbound and outbound in polar regions . . . . .	81
2.17	Polar inbound dayside densities . . . . .	82
2.18	Polar outbound dayside densities . . . . .	83
2.19	Polar inbound nightside densities . . . . .	84
2.20	Meridional structure of the eight lowest order Hough modes with $\sigma = 1, s = -1$ . . . . .	89
2.21	Vertical wavelengths of selected Hough modes . . . . .	90
2.22	Harmonic decomposition of martian topography . . . . .	100
2.23	Martian topography . . . . .	101
3.1	Pressure profiles derived for orbit P679. . . . .	114
4.1	MTGCM $v_\phi$ , $L_s = 30^\circ$ , LST = 16 hrs. . . . .	160
4.2	MTGCM $v_\phi$ , $L_s = 90^\circ$ , LST = 15 hrs. . . . .	161
5.1	Reconstructed latitude using PDS entry state. . . . .	198

5.2	As Figure 5.1, but east longitude. . . . .	199
5.3	Difference in reconstructed latitudes as a function of time. . . . .	201
5.4	As Figure 5.3, but east longitude. . . . .	202
5.5	As Figure 5.3, but altitude. . . . .	204
5.6	Fractional difference in density versus time. . . . .	217
5.7	As Figure 5.6, but pressure. . . . .	218
5.8	As Figure 5.6, but temperature. . . . .	219
5.9	Fractional difference in density versus altitude. . . . .	220
5.10	As Figure 5.9, but pressure. . . . .	221
5.11	As Figure 5.9, but temperature. . . . .	222
5.12	Fractional difference in temperature versus altitude using $C_D = 2$ . . . . .	225
6.1	Simulated $z$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	244
6.2	Simulated $v$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	245
6.3	Simulated $a$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	246
6.4	Simulated $\rho$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	247
6.5	Simulated $p$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	248
6.6	Clean derived $z_n$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	251
6.7	Clean derived $z_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	252
6.8	Clean derived $v_n$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	253
6.9	Clean derived $v_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	254
6.10	Clean derived $a_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	255
6.11	Clean derived $\rho_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	256
6.12	Clean derived $\rho_n$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	257
6.13	Clean derived $p_n^*$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	258
6.14	Clean derived $p_n^{\textcircled{a}}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	259
6.15	Clean derived $p_n^{\#}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	260
6.16	Clean derived $T_n^*$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	261
6.17	Clean derived $T_n^{\textcircled{a}}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	262
6.18	Clean derived $T_n^{\#}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	263
6.19	Clean derived $T_{n+1/2}^{\textcircled{s}}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	264
6.20	Noisy derived $z_n$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	267
6.21	Noisy derived $z_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	268
6.22	Noisy derived $v_n$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	269
6.23	Noisy derived $v_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	270
6.24	Noisy derived $a_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	271

6.25	Noisy derived $\rho_{n+1/2}$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	272
6.26	Noisy derived $\rho_n$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	273
6.27	Noisy derived $p_n^*$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	274
6.28	Noisy derived $p_n^\circ$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	275
6.29	Noisy derived $p_n^\#$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	276
6.30	Noisy derived $T_n^*$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	277
6.31	Noisy derived $T_n^\circ$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	278
6.32	Noisy derived $T_n^\#$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	279
6.33	Noisy derived $T_{n+1/2}^\$$ vs. $t$ . . . . .	280
7.1	Topographic profiles beneath the Viking Lander 1 entry trajectory. . . . .	286
7.2	Shaded relief map of MOLA planetary radius data referenced to the Viking Lander 1 landing site. . . . .	287
8.1	The northern plains of Mars. (a) Topographic profile near Utopia. (b) Topographic profile near Alba Patera. (c) Viking photomosaic near Utopia. (d) MOLA shaded relief map near Utopia. . . . .	294
9.1	Giordano Bruno. . . . .	297
9.2	Variation in Meteor Storm properties with ejecta size. . . . .	301
9.3	Giordano Bruno close-up. . . . .	303
10.1	Simple two-box climate model. . . . .	309
B.1	Periapsis altitude versus $L_S$ . . . . .	345
E.1	Aerobraking Geometry . . . . .	355

## LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Details of the 3:1 – 8:1 resonances . . . . .	46
2.2	Harmonic amplitudes and phases from Figures 2.5 and 2.6 . . . . .	58
2.3	Comparison of dayside and nightside harmonic fits . . . . .	80
2.4	Hough modes satisfying the excitation and propagation criteria. . .	92
3.1	Relevant Parameters for Developing “Balanced Arch” Technique . .	123
3.2	Scale Analysis of Equation 3.6 . . . . .	125
3.3	Scale Analysis of Equation 3.7 . . . . .	126
3.4	Dominant Terms in Equation 3.18 for Mars case . . . . .	127
3.5	Scale Analysis of Equation 3.8 . . . . .	129
4.1	NH — Effects of Longitude . . . . .	151
4.2	NH — Effects of Latitude . . . . .	151
4.3	NH — Effects of Altitude . . . . .	153
4.4	SH — Effects of Longitude . . . . .	155
4.5	SH — Effects of Latitude . . . . .	157
4.6	SH — Effects of Latitude and Altitude . . . . .	157
7.1	Viking Lander 1 Atmospheric Profiles. . . . .	290



## ABSTRACT

The dynamics of the martian upper atmosphere are not well-understood. I have identified the dominant tidal modes present in the upper atmosphere by comparing density measurements from the aerobraking of the Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft to predictions from classical tidal theory. Other observations and general circulation models have also provided constraints. I have presented a justification for why topography has a strong influence on the tides in the upper atmosphere. I have also studied sol-to-sol variations in density at fixed altitude, latitude, longitude, season, and time of day. I have developed a novel “Balanced Arch” technique to derive pressures and temperature from these density measurements that also estimates the zonal wind speed in the atmosphere. These are the first measurements of winds in the martian upper atmosphere. This technique can also be applied to anticipated data from Titan to measure winds in its upper atmosphere.

I have developed techniques to derive density, pressure, and temperature profiles from entry accelerometer data, used them to investigate the entry of Mars Pathfinder, and discovered that surprisingly accurate temperature profiles can be derived without using any aerodynamic information at all. I have also investigated techniques to derive atmospheric properties from the Doppler shift in telemetry from a spacecraft during atmospheric entry and found that a surprisingly robust estimate of temperature at peak acceleration can be derived.

I have discovered a network of tectonic ridges in the otherwise bland northern plains of Mars and studied their implications for a possible ocean in that area.

I have tested the hypothesis that the formation of lunar crater Giordano Bruno was witnessed in 1178 AD and rejected it due to the lack of any observations of the immense meteor storm that must have followed the crater’s formation.