Numerical results on interior dynamics of ocean worlds (moons and small planets of the outer solar system)

many people (including G. Choblet)





- the outer solar system: giant planets with moons, small planets/asteroids/TNOs,
- abundance of water and other volatiles beyond the snow line,
- formation history and evolution probably differ from that of terrestrial planets: slower and cooler for all planetary objects besides the giants.



- very much a data driven science (nothing was really added to the knowledge of Galilean satellites after their discovery until the 1980s),
- opportunity driven exploration: first the Moon and Mars, then other terrestrial planets,
- outer solar system first visited through flybys by the Pioneer 10 & 11 and Voyager 1 & 2 probes (also see New Horizons).









ocean worlds in the outer solar system:

- from the asteroid belt to the Kuiper belt (moons, asteroids, mini-planets),
- from planet-size moons to much smaller objects,
- hydrospheres: several tens of Earth oceans for large objects, water/rock fraction 100s of times Earth's even for smallest bodies,
- ▶ ocean worlds might be the rule rather than the exception.

Solar System Major Moons

Tethys

Umbriel

Dione

Titania

Rhea

Oberon

Saturn...

Mimas Enceladus

Uranus...

Miranda Ariel

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Titan



Callisto





lapetus Neptune...

Proteus

Triton

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the Moon

Ganymede

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why are ocean worlds interesting?

- small terrestrial planets (rock mantle, sometimes metallic core), surrounded by an hydrosphere (liquid water and ices?),
- as such, may involve magmatism, dynamo action (Ganymede) and pertain to the comparative study of terrestrial planets, constituting a relatively numerous sample,
- as these bodies harbor liquid water together with energy sources, most promising targets in terms of habitability in the solar system which motivates space exploration.
- much less observational constraints on the interior (e.g. no seismology) ⊕ a larger sample: while governing equations are identical, the status of numerical models differ.

Interior dynamics

Interior dynamics: liquid versus solid layers



- solid (ice/rocks) and liquid (water/molten metal alloy), often two-phase
- time scale strongly differs (viscosity) from that of Earth's oceans for liquid layers to that of tectonic plates,
- in the case of liquid layers: turbulence, appropriate regimes may be hard to reach numerically,
- in the case of solid layers: much simpler dynamics but the fluid is much more complex (rheology, various phases).

Conservation equations for a liquid layer (anelastic approx.)

continuity:

$$\nabla \cdot (\rho_r \mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{0},$$

Navier-Stokes:

$$ho_r\left(rac{\partial \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u}\cdot
abla \mathbf{u} + 2\mathbf{\Omega} imes \mathbf{u}
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ho' +
ho' \mathbf{g} + \mathbf{j} imes \mathbf{B} +
abla \cdot \mathbf{S},$$

induction:

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} = \nabla \times \left(\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{B} - \lambda \nabla \times \mathbf{B} \right), \nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = \mathbf{0},$$

energy:

$$\rho_r c_p \left(\frac{\partial T'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla T' \right) - \alpha T_r \left(\frac{\partial p'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla p' \right) = -\nabla \mathbf{F} + H_\eta + H_\lambda + H_r$$

$$\frac{\partial \xi}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \xi = \nabla \cdot \left(\kappa_{\xi} \rho_r \nabla \xi \right) + H_{\xi}$$

Conservation equations for a liquid layer (anelastic approx.): no magnetic field

continuity:

$$\nabla \cdot (\rho_r \mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{0},$$

Navier-Stokes:

$$\rho_r\left(\frac{\partial \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u} + 2\mathbf{\Omega} \times \mathbf{u}\right) = -\nabla \rho' + \rho' \mathbf{g} + \mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{B} + \nabla \cdot \mathbf{S},$$

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Conservation equations for a solid layer (anelastic approx.): no rotation

continuity:

$$\nabla \cdot (\rho_r \mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{0},$$

Navier-Stokes:

$$\rho_r\left(\frac{\partial \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u} + 2\mathbf{\Omega} \times \mathbf{u}\right) = -\nabla \rho' + \rho' \mathbf{g} + \nabla \cdot \mathbf{S},$$

energy:

$$\rho_r c_p \left(\frac{\partial T'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla T' \right) - \alpha T_r \left(\frac{\partial p'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla p' \right) = -\nabla \mathbf{F} + H_\eta + H_r$$

$$\frac{\partial \xi}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \xi = \nabla \cdot \left(\kappa_{\xi} \rho_r \nabla \xi \right) + H_{\xi}$$

Conservation equations for a solid layer (anelastic approx.): no inertia

continuity:

$$\nabla \cdot (\rho_r \mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{0},$$

Navier-Stokes:

$$\rho_r\left(\frac{\partial \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u}\right) = -\nabla \rho' + \rho' \mathbf{g} + \nabla \cdot \mathbf{S},$$

energy:

$$\rho_r c_p \left(\frac{\partial T'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla T' \right) - \alpha T_r \left(\frac{\partial p'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla p' \right) = -\nabla \mathbf{F} + H_\eta + H_r$$

$$\frac{\partial \xi}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \xi = \nabla \cdot \left(\kappa_{\xi} \rho_r \nabla \xi \right) + H_{\xi}$$

Conservation equations for a solid layer (anelastic approx.): rheology

continuity:

 $\nabla \cdot (\rho_r \mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{0},$

Navier-Stokes:

$$\mathbf{0} = -\nabla p' + \rho' \mathbf{g} + \nabla \cdot \mathbf{S},$$

with

$$S_{ij} = 2\eta \left(e_{ij} - \frac{1}{3} \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_i} \right), e_{ij} = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} + \frac{\partial u_j}{\partial x_i} \right),$$

energy:

$$\rho_r c_p \left(\frac{\partial T'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla T' \right) - \alpha T_r \left(\frac{\partial p'}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla p' \right) = -\nabla \mathbf{F} + H_\eta + H_r$$

$$\frac{\partial \xi}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \xi = \nabla \cdot \left(\kappa_{\xi} \rho_r \nabla \xi \right) + H_{\xi}$$



The cubed sphere mesh





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The cubed sphere mesh



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Tidal deformation



- tidal deformation is maximal for the less rigid material layers : oceans and atmosphere for the Earth, partially molten rocks for lo, "warm" ice (close to the melting point) for Europa,
- part of the deformation (non elastic) is not reversible and the associated energy converted into heat,
- for Jupiter and Saturn's moons, the proximity of the giant planet raises larger tides and eccentricity maintained by orbital resonances with other moons induces a varying tidal potential that warrants efficient tidal dissipation,
- while other hat sources (radioactive, primordial) decay with the planet's age, tidal dissipation is linked to orbital evolution and may induce less monotonous evolutions.

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Magmatism on Europa's seafloor

What are the conditions for present-day magmatism on Europa? Běhounková et al., *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 2021.



- tectonically active ice shell (e.g. Kattenhorn and Procter, 2014), a salty ocean (Kivelson et al., 2000) interacting with possibly active rocky interior (Moore and Hussmann, 2009),
- chemical evolution of Europa's ocean and its habitability conditioned by the interaction with the rocky seafloor (Vance et al., 2016),
- the habitability potential influenced by the heat released to seafloor (Altair et al., 2018).

What are the conditions for present-day magmatism on Europa? Běhounková et al., *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 2021.



- thermal state of Europa's mantle depending on heat sources available and heat extraction,
- what are the requirements for sustainability of melting in Europa's mantle?
- which measurements can indicate a recent volcanic activity?
What are the conditions for present-day magmatism on Europa? Běhounková et al., *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 2021.

temperature profile

melting profile



- initial conditions: temperature profile follows the solidus temperature except in the upper part,
- huge melting at the beginning of evolution,
- melt production at the base of the conductive lid.

What are the conditions for present-day magmatism on Europa? Běhounková et al., *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 2021.





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 concentration of melting zones at high latitudes due to tidal dissipation. What are the conditions for present-day magmatism on Europa? Běhounková et al., *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 2021.



generated melt volumes during last pulse 0.25 Gyr: 10⁷ km³ in each area, comparable to Large Igneous Provinces on Earth (Ernst et al., 2005; Ross et al., 2005; Sobolev et al., 2011).



the enigmatic activity at Enceladus' south pole



- > Saturn's (b) sixth moon, $R_s = 252$ km, $T \simeq 33$ h, $e \simeq 5 \times 10^{-3}$
- embedded in the densest part of Saturn's diffuse E-ring,
- Voyager 2: contrast between relatively young regions near equator and older, high latitude regions, very much unlike Mimas' ancient cratered surface,
- \Rightarrow is Enceladus the source of E-ring's material ? (Terrile and Cook, 1981)







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ocean is salty

Na (and K) salts in E-ring (Postberg et al., 2009)

salts and organics in plume (Postberg et al., 2011)

deep hydrothermalism

nano-silica particles in Saturn's environment \Rightarrow 90°C, > 40 km deep (Hsu et al., 2015)

 H_2 in the plume \Rightarrow hydrothermal reactions (Waite et al., 2017)

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Tidal heat production in Enceladus' deep interior (2): the core

- due to low central pressure, Enceladus' core is likely unconsolidated, even if accretion involved large impacts (Monteux et al., 2016),
- ▶ first gravity measurements (less et al., 2014) yield $\rho_{core} \simeq 2.4 \text{ g cm}^{-3} \rightarrow \text{porosity could be as large as 20-25 %,}$
- porosity in excess to 20, % weakens the core with ice/water controlling the deformation,
- at present, a few GW could be generated by viscous dissipation in the core filled with ice.



Roberts (2015)

 \Rightarrow what power could be produced by dissipation in a core filled with liquid water ?

Tidal dissipation in Enceladus porous core



 \Rightarrow several 10s of GW can be produced with a slightly heterogeneous diffuse pattern: heating is maximal and homogeneous near the centre and decreases more slowly at the poles towards the surface

Porous convection with heterogeneous (tidal) heating



 \Rightarrow upwellings concentrated at the poles and trailing/leading meridians where maximal dissipation occurs.

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Hot spots at the seafloor



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Ocean circulation driven by seafloor heterogeneity



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hot vibrating core model (Choblet et al., Nat. Astro. 2017)





sublimation-driven convection in Sputnik Planitia

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Pluto's interior

- Pluto and Charo's masses determined from astrometry prior to New Horizons (HST, Earth-based, Brozović et al., 2015)
- after refined shape from NH's LORRI camera, Pluto's bulk density is 1854±11 kg m⁻³ (or 2/3 rock, 1/3 water),
- Pluto's differentiation is likely (icy surface, accretion and radiogenic heat models) but still uncertain, subsurface ocean is possible (several circumstantial clues but no direct evidence),
- carbon compounds could/might/should/must be present, clathrates...





Pluto's geology

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A transient phenomenon: pattern maturation $Ra_{\infty} = 10^7$; $R_{\eta}^{\infty} = 10^3$



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convection sets in with small scale plumes.

Planetary scale convection as a result of climate

the convective dynamics of SP's N_2 ice layer depends on Pluto's global climate,

- as such, it differs strongly from the subsolidus convection in the ice layers of Jupiter or Saturn (largely controlled by the interior heat budget), and would resemble ocean dynamics on Earth,
- on other sufficiently massive planetary bodies, a similar activity could occur if low-viscosity volatile ice (N₂, CO, CO₂ or possibly CH₄) is abundant - plausible candidates areTriton or Umbriel as well as large TNOs such as Eris and Makemake.