

PRELIMINARY INDIRECT MEASUREMENT OF  
COSMIC-RAY PROTON SPECTRUM USING EARTH'S  
 $\gamma$ -RAY DATA FROM *FERMI* LARGE AREA TELESCOPE

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ABSTRACT

Cosmic rays (CRs) are high-energy particles, mostly protons, propagating in space. The rigidity (momentum per charge) spectrum of CRs is well described by a power law for which the spectral index is approximately 2.8 around 30 - 1000 GV. Recent measurements by PAMELA and AMS-02 indicate an abrupt change of the CR proton spectral index at about 340 GV. When CRs interact with the Earth's upper atmosphere,  $\gamma$  rays can be produced and detected by space-based detectors. Here we use the Earth's  $\gamma$ -ray data collected by the *Fermi* Large Area Telescope along with a proton-air interaction model to indirectly determine the CR proton spectral index and compare against observations by other instruments.

KEY WORDS: EARTH'S GAMMA RAYS / COSMIC RAYS/ GEOMAGNETIC FIELD

19 pages

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

The space is full of questionable amazing phenomenon starting from why we have day and night, why the star bright to the advance question about existence of the dark matter. This influence to the mankind to start asking how it happen. Human curiosity bring us so far that now we could observe the sky with high resolution technique. However, the research to gather new knowledge by studying the space is endless and the answering one thing usually bring another mystery. Study of physical science also drag the technology for further step because the limitation of the instrument or technique to explore the nature is another challenging task.

Astrophysical research boundary is expanding through time pass by because the exploration of one thing does open the new door with the darky room waiting for human to shine a light to explore. There are various branch of astrophysical science from theoretical foundation, simulation and experimental physics where they are compliment each other for pushing the frontier of the human knowledge. To study high energy particle accelerators in the universe, the possibility of probing the source is nearly impossible in terms of current technology and resource that required to reach multiple galactic sources that could produce high energy particle called cosmic-rays (CRs). Nevertheless, the technology of observing the particles that arriving the Earth is more plausible for the scientist.

The way to observe cosmic-ray (CR) particles has divided into two ways. One way is measuring the incoming charge particles on ground with a ground-base detector. Alternative way is gathering CRs on the space or basically orbiting spacecraft. Performing analysis on CRs data allow us to interpret the physical properties of CRs particle for both quantatively and qualitatively by taking

simulation and experimental results to compare.

Typically, the spectrum of the CRs would follow the power law with a specific spectral index depending on the rigidity of the charged particles where it was accelerated by a specific source. It is obvious that there will be multiple sources of the CRs in the space including unknown sources. The characteristic of spectrum would be indicated by the source from theoretical simulation and derivations. Consequently, changing of the spectral index from one rigidity to another rigidity will find the discontinuity if there are the translation from one source type to another source from the superposition of multiple spectrums.

*Fermi*-LAT has been launched into the sky and orbiting around the Earth and looking around the space in  $\gamma$ -rays regions. It found that the ring of brightness around the Earth's limb where the major factor that cause this phenomenon is the intereaction of incoming CRs with the Earth's upper atmosphere as analyzed in Abdo et al. (2009). Then the spectrum of  $\gamma$ -rays that was induced by the incoming CRs highly related on the spectrum of CRs.

The first indirect measurement was conducted with 5 years of observations and indicate that there is breaking of spectral index around 302 GV with a significant level  $1\sigma$ . The significant level at this stage is not so strong to conclude the study. The reasons probably came from the nature of the CRs if there is no discontinuity in the incident CRs spectrum, the indirect could measurement distort the information so that the significant could be reducing or the exposure time during the observations is still not enough. In order to confirm that we did our best on the data collection side, performing the analysis with more data could also put us out doubt for the last clue.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to

- To indirectly measure the cosmic ray proton spectrum in rigidity range gigaelectronvolt (GV)

- To put the weight on the previous study with more dataset
- To improve the optimization technique by using heuristical methodology
- To reduce the calculation time by inventing a whole new parallel code in low level from scratch

### 1.3 Outline of Thesis

The dissertation would provide the various information from the overview introductory context to the technical detail that employ in this study as well as the result and interpretation. It is structured as follows.

Chapter I will introduce the reader about the overview of the long track from the historical analogy and zooming into the specific branch of research to get the reader to see where we are and what we are doing to fulfill the frontier of the research.

Chapter II is the background knowledge that will be used in this study. This chapter also have a brief of history in cosmic ray research community which contains an important finding and the impactful experiment that bring us to this far in the research field. Some theoretical detail will be provided on par with the historical discovery but the subchapter of the specific topic will describe more detail in depth of astroparticle physics that involving the high energy physics. Not only the concept of physical process but this chapter also have the apparatus informations where the majority of the content covering the detector part in the spacecraft to demonstrate how the apparatus gather the  $\gamma$ -rays data.

Chapter III is mainly consist of multiple literature reviews involving the study to clarify the theoretical idea as well as for filling the fundamental concept that takes reader to understand the next chapter in detail.

Chapter IV would cover the article reviewing. The content is staring from pioneering article of the field and the evolution that inspire this work.

Chapter V consists of datasets selection, flux calculation , problem optimization and interpretation.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Cosmic-ray

This section consists of historical discovery, from the origin on this field of study until the latest impactful experiment. Not only historical content, it also contains the physical explanation with phenomenon that involving the CR reserch.

##### 2.1.1 History

In 1909, the famous experiment that pioneer the study of CR has been led by Theodor Wolf who take conduct the experiment of altitude variation by taking the apparatus to measure the rate of ionization from the ground to the top of the Eiffle Tower in Paris (Gray (1949)). The result shown that there the ionizaiton rate was slightly increase when the altitude is higher which gives the clues that the origin of cosmic-rays was came from the outer space rather than Earth's inner shell.

However, the experiment of measuring the affect of altitude variation with a tiny altitude scale comparing to the Earth's atmosphere would not enough to consolidate the theory. In the same year, the ballon with a similar instrument has been released up to 1.3 kilometers by Karl Bergwitz to put more weight on the first experiment. They found that the ionization has increased by a quater comparing to ground level (De Angelis (2014)). Three years later, suicidal investigation was conducted by an Australian gentleman who brought the detector and himself to fly with the balloon. His name is Victor Hess, people might have no doubt why this name went so famous because he risk his life with the experiment and he was flying over 5 kilometers above the ground (Hess (1912)). Definitely, the result is strongly significant and impactful to the astrophysical research community. Risking life In 1914, Werner Kolhörster repeated the balloon experiment with higher altitude which around 9 kilometers from the sea level and the ionizaiton rate still does

increase when the balloon flown higher. This emphasize that the source of those ionizing ray came from Earth's upper atmosphere or the outer space.

Not only the altitude variable that related to the intensity of the CRs, but the geographic location of the obervation also does affect to the measurement. The first experiment has done done John Clay who sailed the ship across the ocean from Holland to Java (Clay (1927, 1928)). The result shows that the further from equator, the higher CR intensity. Another exploration for the geographic variation was done by John Compton in the following five years. He basically sailed the ship from the Sydney (northern hemisphere) to Vancouver (the southern hemisphere) for various season during 1936 to 1937 back and forth (Compton & Turner (1937)). The Figure 2.1 demonstrates the latitude variation and the seasonality effects of the multiple trips from the experiment.

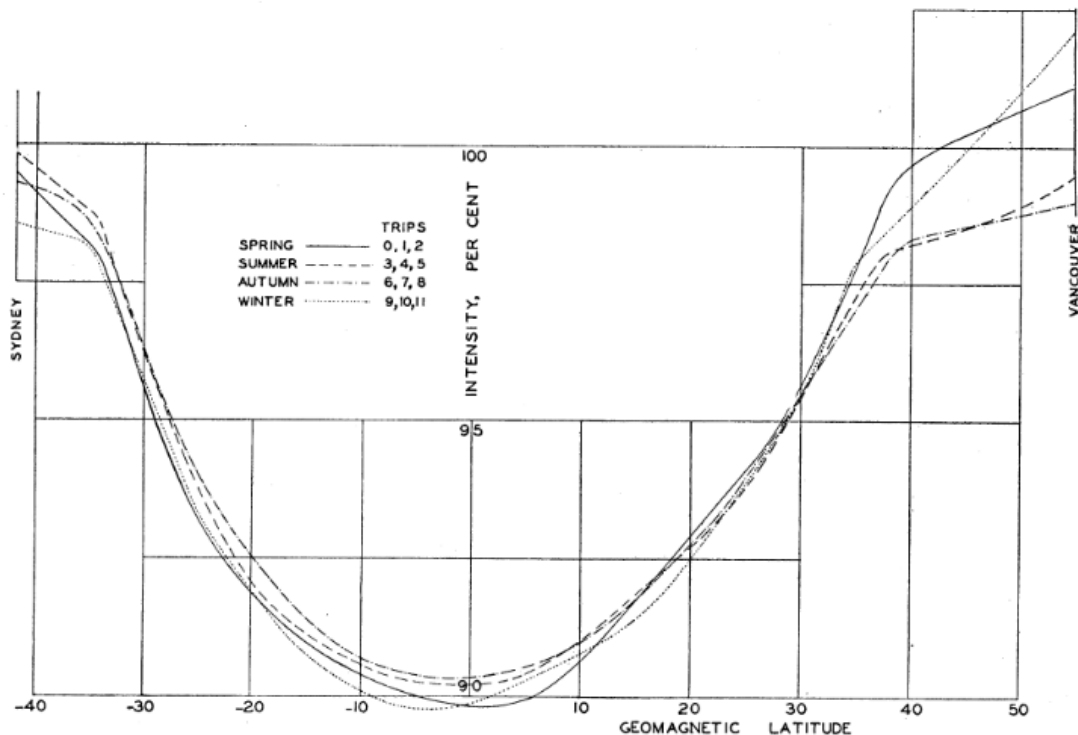


Figure 2.1: Latitude variation for various seasons (Compton & Turner (1937))

The first interpretation study from the discovery has been done by Carl Störmer. The explanation of the CR's altitude variation came from the trajectory of CR particles due to geomagnetic field (Störmer (1934)). In that period, the topic

of geomagnetic field and the effects of CRs was quite famous. Another impactful study of the CRs trajectory and the relevant of Earth's magnetic field was conducted by Bruno Rossi for predicting an asymmetry of the East-West distribution of CR spectrum because the primary CRs does have a positive or negative charge then the cyclic moving direction of the particle was induced by Lorentz force where the direction of the Earth's magnetic field could be identified to determine the direction of the charged particles (Rossi & Greisen (1941)).

The ground based detector is a great option for detecting the CRs where it include primary and secondary CRs. However, investigating the primary CRs is a challenging topic for ground based detector especially for low energy particles. Another interesting option to inspect the asymmetry of East-West could be done by using space based detector that orbiting around the Earth's at some radius in the higher altitude and definitely it would face a lower atmospheric density which consider to be an interesting choice to study the CRs with a lower effects of atmospheric interaction.

In 2008, *Fermi* Large Area Telescope (LAT) has been launched to observed the  $\gamma$ -ray and the lightweight lepton particles which basically are electron and positron.

### **2.1.2 Physical properties**

The physical properties

### **2.1.3 $\gamma$ -ray production**

### **2.1.4 Earth's limb $\gamma$ -ray production**

## **2.2 *Fermi* Large Area Telescope (LAT)**

### **2.2.1 Overview**

### **2.2.2 Apparatus**

### **2.2.3 Event reconstruction**

## **CHAPTER III**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 Data selection**
- 4.2 Flux extraction**
- 4.3 Interaction Model**
- 4.4 Optimization**
- 4.5 Monte Carlo Simulation**
- 4.6 Likelihood ratio test (LRT)**

## **CHAPTER V**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

- 5.1 Limb's angle correction**
- 5.2  $\gamma$ -ray measurement**
- 5.3 Best fit result**
- 5.4 Error determination**

## **CHAPTER VI**

## **CONCLUSION**

example cite Curie (1923)

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**BLA**

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