

For the Runge-Lenz operator

$$\mathbf{M} = \frac{1}{2m}(\mathbf{p} \times \mathbf{L} - \mathbf{L} \times \mathbf{p}) - \frac{Ze^2}{r}\mathbf{x} \quad (1)$$

it's trivial to prove its hermicity, given the hermicity of all of \mathbf{p} , \mathbf{L} and \mathbf{x} .

To prove $[\mathbf{M}, H] = 0$, first recall (exercise 1.31)

$$[p_k, F(\mathbf{x})] = -i\hbar \frac{\partial F}{\partial x_k} \quad (2)$$

then for a spherically symmetric potential $V(\mathbf{x}) = V(r)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} [L_k, H] &= \epsilon_{ijk} \left[x_i p_j, \frac{p^2}{2m} + V(r) \right] \\ &= \epsilon_{ijk} \left\{ \left[x_i p_j, \frac{p^2}{2m} \right] + [x_i p_j, V(r)] \right\} \\ &= \epsilon_{ijk} \left\{ \left[x_i, \frac{p_i^2}{2m} \right] p_j + x_i [p_j, V(r)] \right\} \\ &= \epsilon_{ijk} \left[\frac{2i\hbar}{2m} p_i p_j + x_i (-i\hbar) V'(r) \frac{x_j}{r} \right] = 0 \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

The last step was due to the sum over i, j and $\epsilon_{ijk} = -\epsilon_{jik}$.

Now for $k = 1, 2, 3$,

$$[M_k, H] = \overbrace{\frac{1}{2m} \epsilon_{ijk} [p_i L_j - L_i p_j, H]}^A - \overbrace{\left[Ze^2 \frac{x_k}{r}, H \right]}^B \quad (4)$$

where

$$B = Ze^2 \sum_i \left[\frac{x_k}{r}, \frac{p_i^2}{2m} \right] = \frac{Ze^2}{2m} \sum_i \left\{ p_i \left[\frac{x_k}{r}, p_i \right] + \left[\frac{x_k}{r}, p_i \right] p_i \right\}$$

But

$$\left[\frac{x_k}{r}, p_i \right] = i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} \frac{x_k}{r} = i\hbar \left(\frac{\delta_{ik}}{r} - \frac{x_i x_k}{r^3} \right) \quad (5)$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} B &= \frac{i\hbar Ze^2}{2m} \left[\left(p_k \frac{1}{r} - \sum_i p_i \frac{x_i x_k}{r^3} \right) + \left(\frac{1}{r} p_k - \sum_i \frac{x_i x_k}{r^3} p_i \right) \right] \\ &= \frac{i\hbar Ze^2}{2m} \left[\underbrace{\sum_{i \neq k} \left(p_k \frac{x_i x_i}{r^3} + \frac{x_i x_i}{r^3} p_k \right)}_X - \underbrace{\sum_{i \neq k} \left(p_i \frac{x_i x_k}{r^3} + \frac{x_i x_k}{r^3} p_i \right)}_Y \right] \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

where the last step uses the identity

$$\frac{1}{r} = \frac{1}{r^3} \left(x_k x_k + \sum_{i \neq k} x_i x_i \right)$$

Now let's look at term A in (4).

Since $[L_i, H] = [L_j, H] = 0$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} [p_i L_j - L_i p_j, H] &= [p_i, H] L_j - L_i [p_j, H] \\ &= -Ze^2 \left\{ \left[p_i, \frac{1}{r} \right] L_j - L_i \left[p_j, \frac{1}{r} \right] \right\} \\ &= -i\hbar Ze^2 \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} L_j - L_i \frac{x_j}{r^3} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

Plugging (7) into A term in (4), we have

$$A = -\frac{i\hbar Z e^2}{2m} \overbrace{\epsilon_{ijk} \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} L_j - L_i \frac{x_j}{r^3} \right)}^W \quad (8)$$

Now compare (6) to (8), it remains to prove $X - Y = -W$. In fact

$$\begin{aligned} W &= \epsilon_{ijk} \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} L_j - L_i \frac{x_j}{r^3} \right) \\ &= \epsilon_{ijk} \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} \epsilon_{lmj} x_l p_m - \epsilon_{lmi} x_l p_m \frac{x_j}{r^3} \right) \\ &= \epsilon_{ijk} \epsilon_{lmj} \frac{x_i}{r^3} x_l p_m - \epsilon_{ijk} \epsilon_{lmi} x_l p_m \frac{x_j}{r^3} \\ &\quad \text{(relabeling } i \leftrightarrow j \text{ in 2nd term)} \\ &= \epsilon_{ijk} \epsilon_{lmj} \frac{x_i}{r^3} x_l p_m - \epsilon_{jik} \epsilon_{lmj} x_l p_m \frac{x_i}{r^3} \\ &\quad (\epsilon_{ijk} = -\epsilon_{jik}) \\ &= \epsilon_{ijk} \epsilon_{lmj} \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} x_l p_m + x_l p_m \frac{x_i}{r^3} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

Inspecting (9), we see that for any given non-vanishing ϵ_{ijk} , any non-zero contribution of ϵ_{lmj} must be from either $l = i, m = k$, or $l = k, m = i$, therefore

$$\begin{aligned} W &= \overbrace{\epsilon_{ijk} \epsilon_{ikj} \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} x_i p_k + x_i p_k \frac{x_i}{r^3} \right)}^{\text{contrib. from } l=i, m=k} + \overbrace{\epsilon_{ijk} \epsilon_{kij} \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} x_k p_i + x_k p_i \frac{x_i}{r^3} \right)}^{\text{contrib. from } l=k, m=i} \\ &= - \left[\overbrace{\epsilon_{ijk}^2 \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} x_i p_k + x_i p_k \frac{x_i}{r^3} \right)}^{X'} - \overbrace{\epsilon_{ijk}^2 \left(\frac{x_i}{r^3} x_k p_i + x_k p_i \frac{x_i}{r^3} \right)}^{Y'} \right] \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

Comparing (6) and (10) we can see that $X = X'$ and $Y = Y'$ since any contributing term in (10) will satisfy $i \neq k$, hence $[x_i, p_k] = [x_k, p_i] = 0$.