

Near-Infrared Photometry of Protostars

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The Programme

For several years our group at Stockholm Observatory has been involved in a far infrared study of star-forming regions. This project, which is performed in collaboration with the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, consists of mapping molecular clouds, where we have indications of star formation, with a two-channel photometer. The photometer is fed by a 60 cm telescope which is carried to 35 km altitude by a helium-filled balloon. The two channels of the photometer are sensitive between 60 and 200 microns. In the clouds we are studying there are objects strongly believed to be protostars. These stars heat up the dust surrounding them, and the dust then reemits the stellar radiation at far-infrared wavelengths. In this way we can study this type of very young objects although they are totally obscured in the visual part of the spectrum. We have studied several objects in which known near-infrared (1 to 5 microns) sources are lying. In fact we used the existence of near-infrared sources as one of our indicators for on-going star formation. The balloon data made it possible to assign an accurate total luminosity to each of these sources.

Studies of I-Tauri stars have shown them to be variable, and since these stars are supposed to be low-mass young objects one would assume that even younger stars also should be variable, on a timescale that could be hours, days or years. A search for this variability would have to be done in the near infrared, since the sensitivity of the far-infrared photometer is not sufficient to spot any change less than a factor two in luminosity. All this is valid for low-mass stars, and it is not known if high-mass protostars also show variability, but since we had observed both high and low-mass sources with the balloon telescope, we decided to make a near-infrared study of these objects. In order to search for variations, we set up a programme where we would use the 1 m photometric telescope on La Silla to observe about 10 objects which met the following conditions. First, old near infrared observations should be available, so we have something to compare with, on a long timescale (a few to about 10 years). Secondly, they should have been observed with the balloon telescope so that we know the luminosity of the source and therefore its mass. In order to spot short timescale variations (hours, days), we decided to observe each object several times every night. The programme should also be repeated about a year later to search for further possible changes.

Observations and Results

The observations were performed in November 1980 and December 1981, each observing period consisting of 7 nights. We were lucky with the weather and lost only 2 of them. Reduction of the observations was made at Stockholm Observatory, with a software package developed by Dr. P. Lindroos. Preliminary reductions of the data showed that the mean extinction coefficients at La Silla (1) could be used and this gives us an estimated error in the K filter (2.2 micron) of 0.05 magnitude. Some of the results are presented in Table 1. The values given there for 1980 and 1981 are mean values of all observations in these years. Regarding short timescale variations we cannot conclusively prove anything. In several cases there seems to be a variation of the order of 0.1 magnitude in the span of one day, but since our error in K is only half that value, such a variation cannot be ascertained unless more accurate observations are performed, which means the use of

the 3.6 m telescope. However, on the long timescale the situation is different. As can be seen from the table, several of the sources have varied significantly. This strengthens the case that we are here observing young objects. Both Rosette IRS and NGC 2264 IR, according to our balloon observations, are high-mass objects, and there seems to be a significant variation over the timespan of a few years.

Another part of the project was mapping in the K-band several areas where we would expect to find protostars from other indications, such as proximity to Herbig-Haro objects and CO temperature peaks. Several sources not previously reported in the literature were found, and the analysis of this part of the project is still taking place.

TABLE 1.

Object	K(1980)	K(1981)	K(Previous)	Ref
I1551 IRS5	9.43(6)	9.52(7)	8.94(10)	2
HH 1 CS-star	8.10(2)	8.26(1)	8.20(1)	3
Rosette IRS	6.99(1)	7.00(1)	7.41(20)	4
NGC 2264 IR	5.21(1)	5.18(3)	4.88(6)	5

Table 1: The values listed are magnitudes in the K filter. For the 1980 and 1981 numbers, the digit within parentheses is the standard deviation in units of 1/100 of a magnitude. The column "K(Previous)" gives values that have been found in the literature as marked by the column Ref. The numbers in parentheses here are the quoted errors cited.

References

- (1) D. Engels, W.A. Sherwood, W. Wamsteker and G.V. Schultz, ESO Preprint No. 130, 1980.
- (2) K.M. Strom, S.E. Strom and F.J. Vrba, *A.J.* **81**, 320, 1976.
- (3) M. Cohen and R.D. Schwartz, *Ap.J.* **233**, L77, 1979.
- (4) M. Cohen, *Ap.J.* **185**, L75, 1973.
- (5) D.A. Allen, *Ap.J.* **172**, L55, 1972.

A New Infrared Telescope

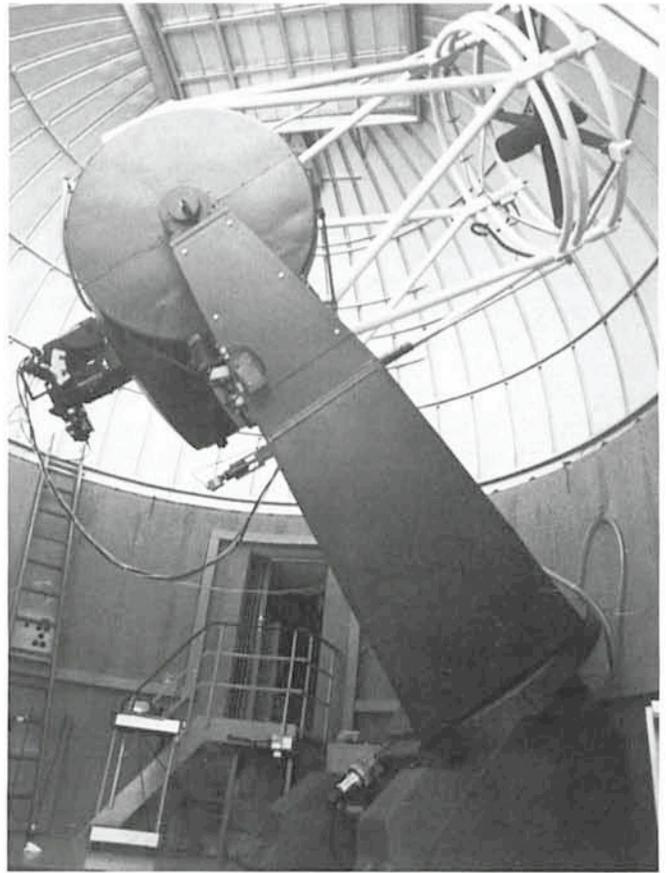
An important facility for Italian astronomy has been formally inaugurated on October 15, 1982 with the presence of the President of the National Research Council, E. Quagliariello, the Director General of ESO, L. Woltjer, H. Debruner on behalf of the Hochalpine Forschungs-Stationen and various other Italian and Swiss authorities. The new 1.5 m Cassegrain telescope is located on the Gornergrat (3,150 meters). The site can be easily reached from Zermatt by train under almost any seasonal condition. This point was proven on the day of the ceremony when an intense, early-fall snow storm amused and shocked some participants, at least those coming from sunny Italy!

The project to build this instrument arose within the Italian scientific community in the 70s and was well supported by C.N.R. A working group led by C. Occhialini-Dilworth and O. Citterio with participants from various institutions (Milano, Bologna, Firenze, Roma) led to the completion of the telescope in 1979. Its optics and mechanics were optimized in order to take full advantage of the site excellence for infrared work. Indeed, the statistics indicate that especially in the winter period the

Gornergrat has a very small amount of precipitable water (less than ~ 1 mm) and of course very low ambient temperatures (down to -20°C or so). After some time spent on the installation of the telescope and auxiliary facilities (a small workshop, electronic equipment for guiding and data acquisition with a PDP 11/34 computer), the facility is now in full use. For the purpose of operating the telescope, a Center for Infrared Astronomy has been established in Florence as a joint venture of the Arcetri Astrophysical Observatory and the National Research Council, under the general Direction of M. Landini. The main purpose of the Center is to operate the telescope as a national facility, to prepare the required advanced instrumentation and to carry out research in infrared astronomy. Concerning the instrumentation (in addition to what has already been developed in other Italian institutes), a Florence team led by P. Salinari is now busy making available for general observers in the near IR a new very sensitive InSb spectrophotometer (already operational) and a cooled spectrometer (which should become operational late in 1983). Additional future plans include the use of two-dimensional arrays and CCD development, subject to decisions about funding levels.

In any case, a new important facility is now available in Europe in one of the most exciting areas of modern astronomy and its use is not restricted to Italian astronomers despite the heavy booking of the first few months of observing time. Having joined ESO, being on the verge of inaugurating the first of two new 32 m radio telescopes (mainly for VLBI studies), the Italian scientific community looks forward to the use of the new telescope and to the increasing chance that the Ministry of Education will in the near future support the long awaited project of a national 3.5 meter optical telescope.

F. Pacini, Osservatorio di Arcetri



The new Italian infrared telescope on Gornergrat.

PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS

STAFF

Arrivals

Europe

NOETHE, Lothar (D), Systems Analyst/Senior Programmer, 1.1.1983

Chile

EICHENDORF, Walter (D), Astronomer, 1.1.1983 (transfer from Garching)
ZUIDERWIJK, Eduardus (NL), Astronomer, 15.2.1983

Departures

Europe

TKANY, Sylvia (D), Receptionist, 30.11.1982
MÜLLER, Karel (DK), Administrative Assistant (Accounting), 31.12.1982
MACFARLANE, Penelope (GB), Scientific Reports Typist, 9.1.1983
COIGNET, Gilbert (F), Electronics Technician, 28.2.1983

Chile

DE BREY, Eric (NL), Administrative Officer, 31.12.1982

FELLOWS

Arrivals

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SADLER, Elaine (GB/Austr.), 15.1.1983

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MOTCH, Christian (F), 28.02.1983

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STUDENTS

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BOISSON, Catherine (F), 26.12.1982

The Proceedings of the

Second ESO Infrared Workshop

which took place from 20 to 23 April in Garching, have just been published. The price for this 446-p. volume is DM 50.— and has to be prepaid.

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