

Magellanic Cloud Eclipsing Binaries: Primary Distance Indicators

J.D. Pritchard, W. Tobin

Mount John University Observatory and Department of Physics & Astronomy, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand

J.V. Clausen

Copenhagen University Astronomical Observatory, Julianne Maries Vej 30, DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø, Denmark

E.F. Guinan, E.L. Fitzpatrick

Department of Astronomy, Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085, USA

A. Giménez

LAEFF (INTA-CSIC), Apartado 50727, E-28080 Madrid, Spain

I. Ribas

Departament d'Astronomia i Meteorologia, Universitat de Barcelona, Avda. Diagonal 647, E-08028, Barcelona, Spain

Abstract. Our collaboration involves groups in Denmark, the U.S.A. Spain and of course New Zealand. Combining ground-based and satellite (*IUE* and *HST*) observations we aim to determine accurate and precise stellar fundamental parameters for the components of Magellanic Cloud Eclipsing Binaries as well as the distances to these systems and hence the parent galaxies themselves. This poster presents our latest progress.

The utility of double-lined, eclipsing binaries for the measurement of fundamental stellar parameters as well as distances, including systems in the Magellanic Clouds, has recently been reviewed by a number of authors (e.g., Guinan, Bradstreet & DeWarf 1996; Hilditch 1996; Paczyński 1997) so we shall not repeat that here except to make the following important points. The distance to an eclipsing binary system can, in principle, be determined directly, without relying on intermediary calibrating objects. The method is essentially geometric and relies on the determination of the physical stellar sizes and the intrinsic radiated flux.

The physical dimensions of the two components of an eclipsing binary are determined from light curves and the two radial velocity curves for the two components. Modern analysis tools (see Wilson 1994 for an excellent review) allow for accurate and precise modeling of well-detached, semi-detached and even complicated contact systems.

The distance is then determined simply by comparison of an apparent flux with the corresponding absolute flux. This generally relies on the estimation of the effective temperatures of the two components either via spectral classifications, multi-colour photometry or spectrophotometric flux fitting.

An ongoing collaboration between groups in New Zealand, Denmark, the U.S.A., Spain, Britain and Canada has, since 1984, been using telescopes in Chile, Australia and New Zealand as well as both the *IUE* and *HST* satellites to secure optical photometry, spectroscopic radial velocities and uv-spectrophotometry of Magellanic Cloud Eclipsing Binaries. With modern CCDs even 1m telescopes are adequate to obtain light curves with 1% or better photometric accuracy. For the radial velocities, 4m-class telescopes are the minimum requirement for groundbased observations of sufficient quality while one system (HV 2274) has been observed with the (now-defunct) GHRS on the *HST*. Flux fitting to uv-spectrophotometry obtained by satellites promises to be a useful technique for temperature determinations. Ten systems – six in the LMC and four in the SMC – have been observed with the *HST*'s (also now-defunct) FOS. All ten were also observed with the *IUE* and have modern CCD light curves, although some would certainly benefit from further observations. However only a couple have high precision radial velocity curves and HV 2274 is the only system to date for which all the requisite observations have been analysed to yield a distance determination of the highest quality – we determine a distance modulus of 18.49 ± 0.07 to HV 2274 and 18.44 ± 0.07 to the center of the LMC (Guinan et al. 1998). Our collaboration's efforts are therefore now focused on securing the photometry and spectroscopy still required for these systems plus other especially appropriate systems which have come to light as a result of recent microlensing projects such as EROS and MACHO.

The poster presented in Victoria can be downloaded from:

<http://www.phys.canterbury.ac.nz/~phys249/publications.html>

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Discussion

Doug Welch: What is the dominant source of uncertainty in your opinion?

Pritchard: In my opinion, the dominant source of uncertainty arises from interstellar extinction, although the flux fitting method of Fitzpatrick & Massa is producing great results.

Russ Robb: Why not use infrared measurements to avoid extinction problems?

Pritchard: These systems are composed of hot OB-type stars. Although they will have plenty of flux in the IR, it's so far into the Rayleigh-Jeans tail of the flux distributions there is no temperature discrimination.



Smiling faces attest to an enjoyable banquet.