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SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Upper Atmospheric Research

We continued the analysis of the measurements of the DBI accelerometer on board of the Italian San Marco satellite. We studied the time and spatial variations of the following phenomena:

1. sudden depletion of the neutral density
2. sudden, impulse like increase of the total density, appearance of giant waves
3. acoustic gravitational waves associated with spatial resonance
4. sudden increase of the amplitude of waves at certain heights

We studied the dependence of the above phenomena on the part of the day, the geographic longitude and height.

We performed a statistical study of the locations and times of the respective appearance in order to explain the sudden increase of the amplitude of the neutral density depletions (NDD), giant waves and waves. We recognized that the NDDs are resulted in the interaction with the plasma bubbles arising in the ionosphere and the sudden increase of the amplitude is triggered by the convective instability due to the decreasing growing rate in the function of the height. We constructed an expression for improving the MSIS/CIRA upper atmosphere model describing the density increase by the heating, previously not represented by the model.

Solar-Terrestrial Relations

We studied the physical background of the previously published dependence of the solar-tropospheric effect on the magnetic polarity. We concluded that the B_y component of the IMF plays a key role in this process.

We succeeded to demonstrate further geoeffective properties of the solar plasma currents. Among these the most interesting are those connected with the polarizations dependence of the semiannual fluctuation. The Russell-McPherron effect is powerful primarily in those years when the dipole fields of the Sun and Earth are antiparallel. We found, however, that in case of CMEs the effect appeared in those years when the fields are parallel. The reason for this is probable the helical topology of the CMEs. We performed further investigations for demonstrating the relationship between PIXIE ionosphere measurements and air pressure data.

Planetary Studies

We started to construct the general model of the Zodiacal Light by comparing the ISO and COBE measurements.

We succeeded in observing the nucleus of the 22P/Kopff comet in the optical (HST) and thermal infrared (ISO). We obtained 1.67 ± 0.18 km for the effective radius and 0.042 ± 0.006 for the geometric albedo.

Using the HST PC2 we successfully detected the nuclei of 13 short period comets and the special 29P/Schwassmann-Wachmann 1 object.

Based on the measurements of the ISO ISOCAM camera we obtained for the effective radii of cometary nuclei 0.56 km (103P/Hartley 2) and 56 km (Hale-Bopp).

The NASA DS1 in situ space probe confirmed the size of the nucleus of the P/Borelly comet, we obtained earlier using the HST. After the Halley comet this is the second one having close up images from the nucleus.

The dust jets visible on the images obtained by Deep Space 1 also give support for our previous hypothesis on the differences concerning the hardness and/or the volatile matter content of subnuclei of the cometary nuclei.

In 2000/2001 during the 9th session of the HST we successfully detected the nuclei of 10 short period comets. We succeeded in determining their size and large scale properties. The assumption seems to be firmly supported that the majority of the short period comets originates from the Kuiper belt, might have evolutionary relationship with the Kentaurs, respectively.

Using the HST, VLT (Very Large Telescope) we observed fragments of cometary nuclei, becoming observable by the disintegration of the C/1999 S4 (LINEAR) comet in 2000. The diameter of the fragments of measurable size (assuming spherical shape and 4% geometrical albedo) are about 70-100 m. One can recognize several dozen fragments on the HST images. We discussed a possible effect for speeding up the process of disintegration: collisions with the debris dispersed along specific asteroid orbits.

In the period reported we succeeded in collecting accurate astrometry data on the 2000RD53 NEA object which was classified into the PHA category.

We continued the observation and data reduction of the smaller bodies of the Solar System, using the telescopes of the Konkoly Observatory. In the framework of a recent international campaign we did observations with the CCD camera, mounted on the 1 m RCC telescope on Pizskéstető, for multicolor photometry of the minor planet 1998 SF, a quite recently specified target of the MUSES-C Japanese-American project.

We continued operating the PDS-SBN European Subnode. In agreement with the Department of Astronomy of the University of Maryland we started the revision of the images taken from the Halley comet by the VEGA TVS.

We suggested an explanation for the meteoritic origin of a cluster of dark boulders on the bright Martian surface photographed by the Mars Global Surveyor.

On the 3-10 m resolution images of the Mars Global Surveyor (MGS) space probe we observed interesting gray-black spotting phenomena on the late winter and early spring pictures. Based on the study of more than 200 high resolution images taken by the Mars Global Surveyor (MGS) we worked out a possible biological model for the activity of suspected Martian Surface Organisms (MSO), might be responsible for the DDSs.

Space-related Solar research

We investigated how the total flux and flux density of the active region was changing during six months. With disappearing the sunspots the flaring was practically stopped. The CMEs, however, was continuously formed in a great number (4-8 in one rotation).

We gave a comprehensive picture on the changes at all available wavelengths we followed up in the period between the birth and disappearance of an active region (AR) (from July until December, 1996). We used for this the data of the SOHO instruments (MIDI, EIT, CDS, SUMER, CELIAS), the Yohkoh soft X-ray (SXT, BCS), the GOES, the SOLSTICE and the 10,7 cm radio data. We performed the follow up of the evolution of two AR using the Kitt Peak and the SOHO/MIDI magnetic pictures. It turned out from the comprehensive investigation of two cases (NOAA 7912, October 1995 – January 1996, and NOAA 7978, July-December 1996) that depending on the configuration of the magnetic field below the photosphere the changes observable on the surface are caused by the differential rotation. In case of distorted flux tubes, however, we may expect a different behavior.

The statistical analysis of the birth, the geometrical and physical properties of the CMEs led us to conclude that the most probable time for the coronal mass ejection is the increase of the helicity of the related ARs (e.g. due to the raising of a twisted flux tube or successive appearance of bipolar fields, in a lesser extent, the differential rotation).

With the detailed study of an isolated AR (July-December, 1996) we followed up the long term housekeeping of the AR. We gave a lower estimate for the helicity taken away by the magnetic clouds of matter.

We did a significant progress in the field of the photospheric databases. We put historical Hungarian solar observations of four decades in digital form onto the ftp server of the Heliophysical Observatory and the DPD1988 database was completed. Our sunspot area-contrast investigations served as starting point for the later irradiance studies.

According to our investigations the Debrecen sunspot catalogue is recently the most reliable concerning not only the positions of the spots but also the data of the areas.

Space Astrophysics

We mapped the chromospheric activity of AR Lacertae, a close binary consisting of components of K0+G2 spectral types. Resulting in this procedure we found more compact bright UV sources and an absorption region.

The longest variation showed a periodicity of 70 years, known already. Beside this we found cycles of about 6.5 years and a shorter one of about 2.4 years in the brightness variation of the star.

We established and operate a group for scientific and calibration works in connection with the ESA Infrared Space Observatory (ISO) and in a close cooperation with the data centers in Madrid and Heidelberg. The cooperation will be continued also in long term focusing on the Herschel satellite, planned to launch by the ESA in 2007.

Using Fourier analysis we investigated the images obtained by the ISOPHOT and instead of getting an expected spectral index of $\alpha = -3$ we found values within very wide limits.

Studying the fine structure of the Galactic cirrus clouds based on the ISO measurements we worked out a formalism enabling us to make a more accurate prediction for the arc minute scale brightness fluctuations. Using these results we determined the relative contribution of the cirrus and cosmological infrared background radiation on the faintest parts of the sky and gave a new value for the fluctuation of the background level.

We started studying systematically the cold dust disks around main sequence stars by the standard reduction of the far infrared measurements observed with the ISO photometer. One of the main objectives of this investigations will be the search for dust structures, similar to the dust clouds of the Sun and the Kuiper belt, around nearby very bright stars (e.g. Sirius)

Using the SRON 'IRAS Software Telescope' we estimated the fluxes of the far infrared. point sources and obtained pictures of better resolution from star forming regions.

Based on the observations of the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory we showed that the relationship between the energy and duration of the gamma bursts are different for the short and long GRBs.

PUBLICATIONS

International scientific papers and talks:

2000

1. Ábrahám, P., et al.: 2000, Proceedings. of the IAU Coll. 181, in press.
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5. Ábrahám, P. and Leinert, C.: 2000, "ISO observations of binary T Tau stars", in Proc. of. IAU Symposium 200, p. 343,
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9. 33. COSPAR congress, Warsaw: E. Illés-Almár, P. Bencze, I. Almár: Spatial and temporal variation of acoustic gravity waves and sudden impulse-like neutral density changes in the thermosphere. (accepted in *Adv. Space Res.*) talk
10. 33. COSPAR congress, Warsaw: I. Almár : „*What could COSPAR do for the protection of the planetary and space environment?*” , talk
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15. van Driel-Gesztelyi, L., Demoulin, P., Ireland, J., Thompson, B., Fludra, A., Oláh, K., Kővári, Zs., Harra L.K., Mandrini, C.H., Bocchialini, K., and Orlando, S.: 2001, “An observational test for solar atmospheric heating”, in Proc. ‘Recent Insights into the Physics of the Sun and Heliosphere: Highlights from SOHO and other Space Missions’, IAU Symp. No. 203, edited by Paul Brekke, submitted
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19. van Driel-Gesztelyi, L.: 2000, "Evolution of CME-productive active regions and switchbacks", S-RAMP Symposium 3, 'CMEs and Coronal Holes', Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan, talk
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3. ACTA ASTRONAUTICA ‘Special Issue on Astronautical Terminology’, guest editor I. Almár,: I. Almár: “Preface - Astronautical Terminology”, I. Almár - E. Both: „The delimitation problem - selecting the basic list of terms for an astronautical dictionary”, I. Almár: „Some difficulties with the standardization of definitions”, accepted,
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