

SMC SMP 24: A NEWLY RADIO-DETECTED PLANETARY NEBULA IN THE SMALL MAGELLANIC CLOUD

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SUMMARY: In this paper we report a new radio-continuum detection of an extragalactic planetary nebula (PN): SMC SMP 24. We show the radio-continuum image of this PN and present the measured radio data. The newly reduced radio observations are consistent with the multi-wavelength data and derived parameters found in the literature. SMC SMP 24 appears to be a young and compact PN, optically thick at frequencies below 2 GHz.

Key words. planetary nebulae: individual: SMC SMP 24 – Magellanic Clouds – Radio Continuum: ISM

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the radio-continuum properties of planetary nebulae (PNe) has been recently reinstated by the report of the radio-continuum observations of PNe in the Magellanic Clouds (Filipović et al. 2009). The comprehensive multifrequency study, based on Australia Telescope Compact Array+Parkes mosaic surveys of Magellanic Clouds (MCs) (Hughes et al. 2006, 2007, Payne et al. 2004, 2009, Filipović et al. 1995, 1997, 2002, 2005, 2008), helped to reveal the true nature of more than 50 PN candidates in MCs as compact H II regions. Also, based on our radio data, Reid and Parker (2010) were able to re-classify three ultra-bright PNe (previously classified as 'true' PNe) as contaminants due to their strong radio fluxes. Our MCs radio PN detections represent only $\sim 3\%$ of the optical PN population of the MCs. Most likely, we are selecting only the strongest radio-continuum emitters, possibly at a variety of different stages of their evolution (Vukotić et al. 2009).

Prior to this study, a radio detection of only three extragalactic PNe have been reported in the literature (Zijlstra et al. 1994, Dudziak et al. 2000). Based on the radio-continuum properties of radio-bright Galactic PNe the expected radio flux densities at the distance of the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC) and the Small Magellanic Cloud (SMC) are up to ~ 2.5 and ~ 2.0 mJy, respectively at 1.4 GHz. While the LMC sample conforms with the radio luminosity limit predicted from Galactic PNe, the SMC PN sample appears to be unusually strong radio emitter.

The known and well refined distances to the LMC/SMC provide a large opportunity for accurate evaluation of important physical properties for PNe such as ionised masses and electron densities. Also, a statistically significant sample of radio detected extragalactic PNe will allow the construction and examination of the bright end of the radio PN luminosity function (PNLF) and comparison with established theoretical and empirical PNLFS of MCs obtained at other wavelengths (Jacoby et al. 1990, Mendez et al. 1993, Stanghellini 1995, Jacoby and De Marco 2002, Ciardullo et al. 2002).

Therefore, we initiated a deep, 6 cm radio-continuum, survey which will attempt to detect and accurately measure the radio-continuum flux densities of 50+ MCs PNe. As the first step in this project we thoroughly examined the archived Australia Telescope Compact Array (ATCA) data (the Australia Telescope Online Archive¹) in order to find out if any of the objects have already been observed and to estimate upper flux limits for the prepared sample. In this paper, we report the radio detection of SMC SMP 24 (hereafter SMP 24), found in the ATCA's archival deep observation of the SMC supernova remnant SNR 0101-7226 conducted in 1993/1994 by Ye et al. (1995).

2. MULTIWAVELENGTH DATA

SMP 24 (LHA 115 – NS70; Henize, 1956) is an SMC PN located approximately 2 arcmin north of the NS66 giant star-forming complex. From its appearance in H α and [O III] spectral lines, Stanghellini et al. (2003) designated this PN as an elliptical with a possible faint halo. The authors reported a flux calibrated intensity in the H β line, optical extinction ($c_{H\beta}$), and relative intensities of several bright spectral lines. Also, the photometric radii of the nebula and the nebular dimensions, measured from the 10% brightness contour, have been reported. They determined the electron density $\log n_e \approx 3.1$ from [S II] $\lambda\lambda 6716, 6731$ lines and calculated ionised mass of the nebula ($M_i \approx 0.86 M_\odot$). It is important to note that the reported ionised mass, calculated using the Eq. (6) from Boffi and Stanghellini (1994), is by a factor of 2.8 and 4 larger than the average mass of the rest of the PNe from the SMC and LMC sample reported in this paper, respectively. From the [O II] electron density diagnostic ($I(\lambda 3726.0)/I(\lambda 3728.8)$), Stanghellini et al. (2009) and Shaw et al. (2010) reported a significantly higher electron density $\log n_e \approx 3.4$ for this PN of. Assuming the rest of the parameters used by Stanghellini et al. (2003) remains the same, the new electron density estimate will half the ionised mass to $M_i \approx 0.4$. The newly obtained mass is in a much better agreement with the rest of the SMC PN sample. We tabulated the reported data relevant to this study in Table 1.

SMP 24 is observed as a part of spectroscopic observations of 25 MCs PNe conducted with the *Spitzer Space Telescope* Infrared Spectrograph (Bernard-Salas et al. 2009). The presence of hydrogenated amorphous carbon molecules (HACs) in this PN, is interpreted by the authors as an evidence of the early evolutionary stage. The SMP 24 central star is characterised by a very low ionisation poten-

tial, also noticed by Stanghellini et al. (2009) (EC 1-2). Also, this PN is detected in the Spitzer Survey of the Small Magellanic Cloud (S³MC: Bolatto et al. 2007), which imaged the star-forming body of the SMC in all seven MIPS and IRAC wave bands. Measured flux densities from the *B* band to the 70 μ m band (where the PN is not detected) are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 1. SMP 24: Multi-wavelength data and parameters compiled from the literature.

Parameter			Reference
RA(2000)	00 59 16.6		1
DEC(2000)	-72 02 00.8		1
$\log F(H\beta : \lambda 4861)$	-12.66	($\frac{ergs}{cm^2s}$)	2
$c(H\beta)$	0.047		2
R_{phot}	0.20	(arcsec)	2
θ	0.38	(arcsec)	2
T_e	11620_{-740}^{+910} K	(K)	3
$\log n_e$	3.4(3.1 [†])	(cm^{-3})	3(2)
M_{ion}	0.4 (0.86 [†])	(M_\odot)	4(2)
$n(He^+)/n(H^+)$	0.097 \pm 0.011		5

References: 1) Jacoby and De Marco (2002), 2) Stanghellini et al. (2003), 3) Shaw et al. (2010), 4) this paper, 5) Idiart et al. (2007)

3. 20 cm DETECTION OF SMP 24

SMP 24 was observed by T. Ye, S. Amy, L. Ball and J. Dickel with the ATCA as a part of the project C281 over two 12 hour sessions on 25th August 1993 and 10th February 1994. Two complementary array configurations at 20/13 cm ($\nu=1377/2377$ MHz) were used – 1.5B and 6B. However, SMP 24 is positioned some $\sim 18'$ from the pointing centre and therefore appeared outside of the primary beam of the 13 cm observations. The source 1934-638 was used for the primary calibration and the source 0252-712 as the secondary calibrator. More information on observing procedure and other sources observed during these sessions can be found in Ye et al. (1995).

The MIRIAD (Sault and Killeen 2010) and KARMA (Gooch 2006) software packages were used for reduction and analysis. The initial high-resolution image was produced from the full dataset and using the MIRIAD multi-frequency synthesis (Sault and Wieringa 1994) and natural weighting. The obtained 20 cm image has a resolution $7.0'' \times 6.6''$

Table 2. SMP 24: IR data compiled from the literature.

Band	<i>B</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>K</i>	3.6 μ m	4.5 μ m	5.8 μ m	8.0 μ m	24 μ m	70 μ m
F_λ (mJy)	0.878	1.622	0.395	0.473	0.534	0.902	1.870	2.252	3.813	9.292	28.028	<(10 \times)5

¹<http://atoa.atnf.csiro.au/>

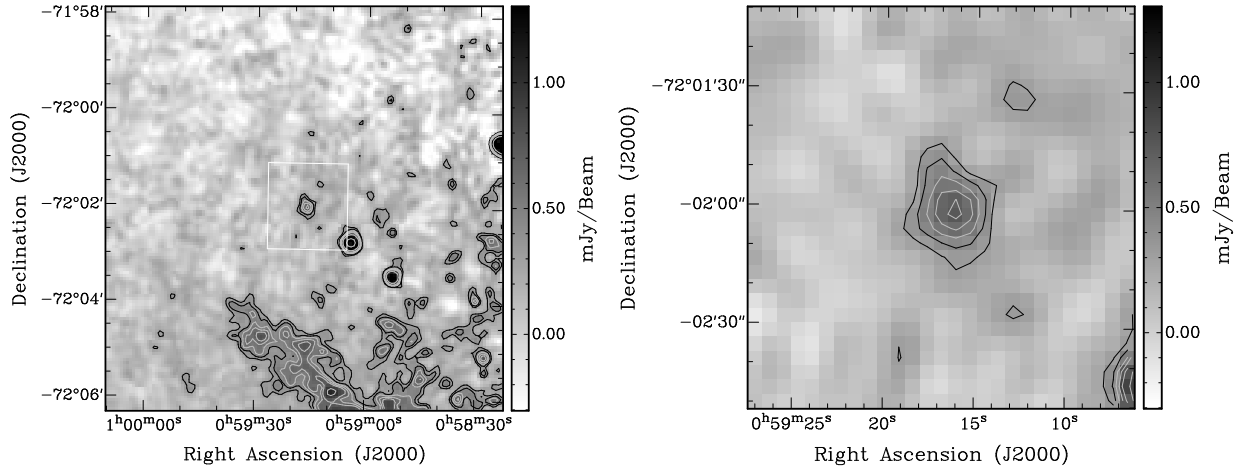


Fig. 1. Radio-continuum total intensity images of SMP 24 overlaid with contours at: 0.3, 0.4 (black), 0.5, 0.6, 0.7, 1 and 2 mJy (grey). The white box in the left panel indicates the zoom region which is presented on the right. The beam size is shown at the bottom left corner of each of the images.

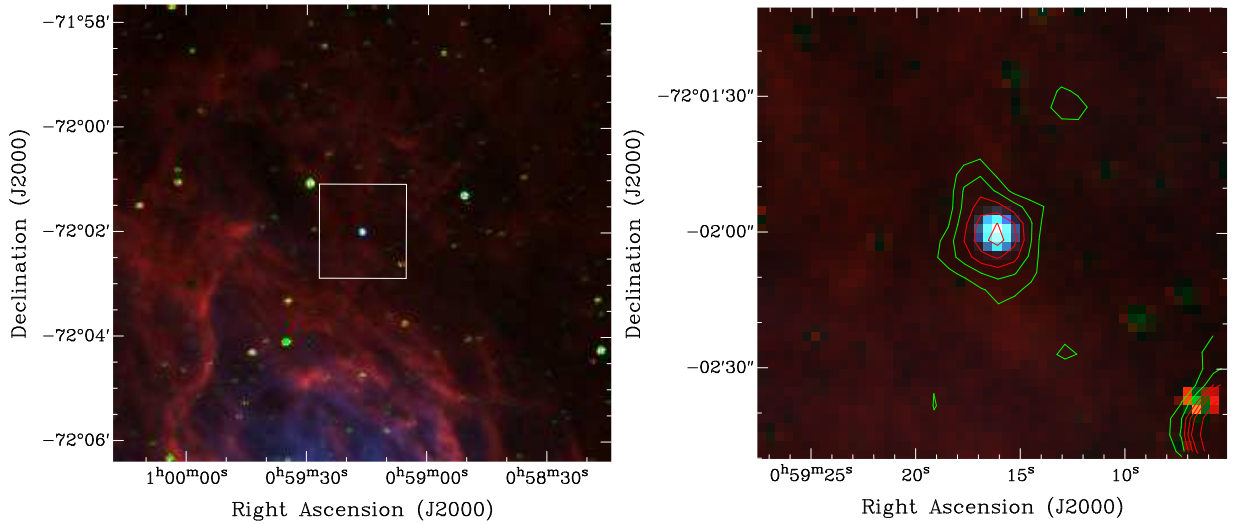


Fig. 2. Colour composite (RGB) images of the SMP 24 region with $H\alpha$ in green, $[OIII]$ in blue, and $[SII]$ in red, and with arbitrary intensity scaling. **Left:** The 8×8 arcmin region of the SMC where SMP 24 is located. The PN can be seen in the centre of the field as a distinctive blue point source. The white box indicates the "zoom" region which is presented on the right. The part of the star forming region N 66 can be seen to the South of the PN. **Right:** A radio-continuum contour map of SMP 24 superposed on the MCELS colour composite image. Contours are at: 0.3, 0.4 (dark green), 0.5, 0.6, 0.7, 1 and 2 mJy (red).

at $PA=42.6^\circ$ and an estimated r.m.s. noise $0.05 \text{ mJy beam}^{-1}$ which is significantly better than Ye et al. (1995) of $0.1 \text{ mJy beam}^{-1}$. We attribute this difference to a slightly different cleaning technique and a careful flagging of very noisy observational data. The new high-resolution and high-sensitivity analysis of these observations will be presented in the future papers.

However, due to the effect of the decreasing phase stability with increasing baseline length, which could affect the position and the flux density estimate of faint, point like sources, we created an additional "low-resolution" total intensity image by ex-

cluding long baselines (i.e. without correlations with Antenna 6). The excerpts from this "low-resolution" map, which is used in this study, are presented in Fig. 1. The map has a resolution $15.3''\times 14.4''$ at $PA=39.8^\circ$ and an estimated local r.m.s. noise $0.1 \text{ mJy beam}^{-1}$ measured from the $\sim 8'\times 8'$ box centred on the SMP 24.

To confirm the positional correlation between the newly found radio source and SMP 24, we created a colour composite (RGB) image of the SMP 24 region using data from the Magellanic Cloud Emission Line Survey (MCELS: Smith and The MCELS Team 1999). Fig. 2 (Left) represents the region of

the SMC centred on SMP 24. The PN can be seen in the centre of the field as a distinctive blue point source. In Fig. 2 (Right) we show a radio-continuum contour map of SMP 24 superposed on the MCELS colour composite image. From Fig. 2, it can be seen that the peak flux in the radio domain appears to be well correlated with the peak flux in the optical line emission.

The position and the peak flux density of the SMP 24 was determined by fitting a two-dimensional Gaussian to the restored and beam-corrected total intensity map. We used the MIRIAD's task IMFIT with a clip level of 5σ (where σ is the measured local r.m.s. noise). All pixels below the clipping level were excluded from the fitting process. The error in the measured peak flux density is estimated as a quadrature sum from the local noise level ($0.1 \text{ mJy beam}^{-1}$) and the uncertainty in the gain calibration (10%). However, due to the non-linear systematic errors which can arise from a large distance from the phase centre and a low signal to noise ratio (e.g. CLEAN bias), we applied additional 30% of uncertainty in the final flux density estimate. The results and the parameters used in the fitting procedure are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. SMP 24: ATCA radio-continuum data.

Parameter		
Frequency	1337	MHz
Synth. Beam	15×14	(arcsec)
local r.m.s. noise (σ)	0.1	(mJy beam^{-1})
Peak Flux	0.73 ± 0.13	(mJy beam^{-1})
Flux Density	0.7 ± 0.4	(mJy)
RA(2000)	00 59 16.3	
DEC(2000)	-72 01 59.9	

4. DISCUSSION

The presented multi-wavelength data is in a good agreement with the suggestion that SMP 24 is a very young PN (Bernard-Salas et al. 2009). The 20 cm peak flux density observed in this PN corresponds to the low limit for the radio surface brightness temperature of $\sim 4.3 \times 10^3 \text{ K}$ (assuming the upper limit of $\theta \approx 0.38$) for the angular diameter. This implies an optically thick or at least partially optically thick radio-continuum emission at 20 cm. The same implication can also arise from a comparison between the measured radio flux density and the flux derived from the $\text{H}\beta$ emission line. Due to the same dependence on the nebular density, it is expected that the centimeter radio-continuum emission and Balmer lines emission are well correlated (see Pottasch 1984, Eq. IV-26). From parameters tabulated in Table 1 ($F(\text{H}\beta)$, $c(\text{H}\beta)$, T_e and $n(\text{He}^+)/n(\text{H}^+)$), we estimated flux of 1.1 mJy at 1.4 GHz. Although within the uncertainty range, this 40% deviation from the measured 1.4 GHz radio-continuum flux indicates that the self-absorption by the nebula is important in this frequency band and

implies an existence of a significant density stratification (where the reported $\log n_e \approx 3.4 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ is probably only the average).

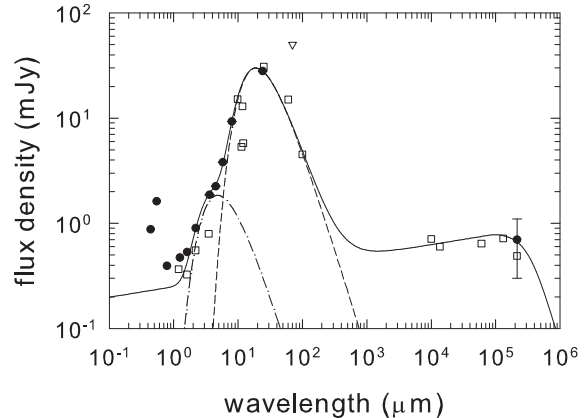


Fig. 3. SED of SMP 24 from B band to radio frequencies. Dashed line represents the best fit to the FIR band with the black body (BB) approximation. The dot-dashed line represents the best fit (BB approximation) to the empirical distribution in NIR and MIR bands. The summed SED of the radio-continuum, dust and the hot dust is plotted with solid line. The triangle represents the detection limit in the $70 \mu\text{m}$ band. Overplotted boxes represent the observed SED of a young Galactic PN IC 418, scaled to the distance of the SMC (see text for more details).

The empirical and modelled spectral energy distributions (SED) of SMP 24 are presented in Fig. 3. Since only one observation is available in the radio-continuum band, we roughly estimated the position of the turnover (critical) frequency using the obtained brightness temperature at 20 cm. From $T_b = T_e(1 - e^{-\tau_\nu})$, we found an average optical depth of $\tau_{20\text{cm}} = 0.47$ at 20 cm. The critical frequency (ν_c) can now be found from $\tau_\nu = (\nu/\nu_c)^{-2.1}$ (Pottasch 1984). From these two points we constructed the SED for SMP 24 using the simple approximation of the uniformly ionised region with constant density and constant electron temperature (see Eq. (4) in Sharova 2002).

Assuming that SMP 24 is a young planetary nebula, we expect its central star still be closely surrounded by the ejected dusty envelope. In order to estimate the dust temperature (T_d), we fitted a blackbody spectrum to the far IR (FIR) data. It is important to note that the R_{phot} measurement from Stanghellini et al. (2003) is used as an estimate for the angular diameter of the emitting dust. Also, no attempt was made to estimate the optical depth in IR bands. The best fit is obtained with $T_d \approx 270 \text{ K}$ (Fig. 3: dashed line). However, to better reproduce the observed SED down to $1 \mu\text{m}$, we fitted additional hot dust component in the mid and near IR bands (MIR and NIR, respectively) with estimated $T_{\text{hd}} \approx 1000 \text{ K}$ (dot-dashed line) and with the same

approximations used for the FIR band. The summed SED of the radio-continuum, the dust and hot dust was plotted in Fig. 3 with solid line. The MIR to radio ratio for this object is found to be ~ 12 which is in accord with a range of values expected for the PNe (Cohen and Green 2001, Cohen et al. 2007).

For comparison, we overplotted the observed radio-continuum to IR SED of young Galactic PN IC 418 scaled to the distance of SMC. Observational data are from Meixner et al. (1996), Guzmán et al. (2009), Pazderska et al. (2009) and Vollmer et al. (2010) and with adopted distance to this PN of 1.3 kpc (Guzmán et al. 2009). This object is already used by Bernard-Salas et al. (2009) for a comparison with the SMC PN SiC feature (broad feature from 9 to 13 μm seen regularly in carbon stars but very rarely in Galactic PNe). IC 418 is a bright and young C-rich Galactic PN with well defined ring structure with angular diameter of ~ 12 arcsec (~ 0.25 arcsec scaled to the SMC distance). It is surrounded by a low-level ionised halo and embedded into a large molecular envelope (Taylor et al. 1989, Hyung et al. 1994). As can be seen from Fig. 3, IC 418 shows a clear similarity in SED with SMP 24.

5. SUMMARY

In this paper, we presented a detection of radio-continuum emission from the SMC PN: SMP 24. This object is a radio luminous PN with estimated flux density of 0.7 ± 0.4 mJy at 1.4 GHz (~ 2.7 Jy scaled to the distance of 1 kpc). Because of the relatively high brightness temperature at 1.4 GHz and the significant difference between the measured radio-continuum flux and that predicted from $H\beta$, we conclude that the ionised shell of this PN is very likely optically thick (or partially optically thick) at frequencies below 2 GHz. However, it is important to note that, in order to properly examine radio-continuum properties of this PN, the additional, multi-frequency radio-continuum data are needed. This PN is scheduled to be observed in our ATCA-based follow-up observations of MC's PNe.

We discussed the evolutionary stage and spectral energy distribution of this SMC PN in the light of the available multi-wavelength data and from the evident similarities with a young and well studied Galactic PN IC 418. SMP 24 appears to be a young PN with a dynamic age of < 1000 yr. The ionised gas and the hot dust are very likely still located in the same region, close to the central star. We believe that our future high resolution and high sensitivity radio-continuum observations of SMP 24 will help to reveal some of its intrinsic physical properties (e.g. emission measure, physical size and mass of the ionised shell).

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SMC SMP 24: НОВА РАДИО ПЛАНЕТАРНА МАГЛИНА У МАЈЛОМ МАГЕЛАНОВОМ ОБЛАКУ

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Претходно саопштење

У овој студији представљамо нове АТСА резултате посматрања у радио-континууму вангалактичке планетарне маглине: SMC SMP 24. Нова радио-посматрања су конзистентна са посматрањима на осталим та-

ласним дужинама и параметрима нађеним у досадашњим истраживањима. SMC SMP 24 је највероватније млада и компактна планетарна маглина, оптички густа на фреквенцијама испод 2 GHz.