The VLTi/PIONIER survey of southern TTauri disks

Fabien Anthonioz[1] F. Ménard[2,1], C. Pinte[1], W-F. Thi[1], J.-B. Lebouquin[1], J.-P. Berger[3], M. Benisty[1], O. Absil[4], G. Duchène[5,1], B. Lazareff[1], F. Malbet[1], R. Millan-Gabet[6], W. Traub[7], and G. Zins[1]

[1] Institut de Planétologie et d'Astrophysique de Grenoble, 38400 St Martin d'Hères, France.

[2] UMI-FCA, CNRS/INSU, France (UMI 3386), and Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile.

[3] European Southern Observatory, 85748 Garching, Germany.

[4] Institut d'Astrophysique et de Géophysique, Université de Liège, Sart Tilman, Belgium.

[5] Astronomy Department, University ofCalifornia, Berkeley, CA 94720-3411 USA.

[6] California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA 91125, USA.

[7]Jet Propulsion Laboratory (NASA/JPL), Pasadena, CA, 91109, USA.

email: `Fabien.Anthonioz@obs.ujf-grenoble.fr`

Abstract.
Studying the inner regions of protoplanetary disks (1-10 AU) is of importance to understand the formation of planets and the accretion process feeding the forming central star. Herbig AeBe stars are bright enough and they have been observed previously by interferometers. The data for the fainter T Tauri stars is much more sparse. In this contribution we present the results of our ongoing survey at the VLTI. We used the PIONIER combiner that allows the simultaneous use of 4 telescopes, yielding 6 baselines and 3 independent closure phases at once. PIONIER's integrated optics technology makes it a sensitive instrument. We have observed 22 T Tauri stars so far, the largest such survey for T Tauri stars to this date.

Our results demonstrate the very significant contribution of an extended component to the interferometric signal. The extended component is different from source to source and the data, with several baselines, offer a way to improve our knowledge of the disk geometry and/or composition. We also present a detailed case study to show how the extended component can be associated to scattered light. These results validate an earlier study by Pinte *et al.* (2008) and show that the dust inner radii of T Tauri disks now appear to be in better agreement with the expected position of the dust sublimation radius, contrarily to previous claims.

Keywords. techniques: interferometric, stars: pre–main-sequence, interferometric survey

1. Introduction

The inner parts of the disks are intensively studied for the formation of terrestrial planets, the accretion process and more generally the evolution of the disk shape and composition. While Near-InfraRed (NIR) interferometry is able to resolve these regions, the first data sets published were limited to a few baselines (generally 1 or 2) and sensitivity. Simple geometrical models were used to interpret the data, e.g., the (gaussian) ring model. That model is based on the assumption that all the NIR emission come from the heated disk's inner rim thus creating a luminous ring around the star.

Inner radii inferred by such model are coherent with the sublimation radius for the more luminous Herbig stars but suggest significant deviations for the less luminous T Tauri stars. Various physical mechanisms have been proposed to explain this unexpected discrepancy (Eisner *et al.*(2007)). However, Pinte *et al.* (2008) showed that taking into

account light scattering in details in the models allowed to resolve the apparent discrepancy between the inferred inner radius and the sublimation radius for low luminosity stars. Light scattering has a further interesting observable consequence: it is expected to produce a rapid decrease of the visibilities at short baselines. Detecting such "drop-off" requires a good u-v coverage of faint targets. We present the results of our survey below.

2. PIONIER observations

The interferometric data were obtained with the four relocatable Auxiliary Telescopes (AT) of the Very Large Telescope Interferometer (Haguenauer *et al.*(2010)) and the 4-telescope combiner PIONIER (Lebouquin *et al.*(2011)). We observed 22 southern T Tauri stars brighter than H=8.5 during 25 nights distributed over 5 semesters. The weather condition were average for the majority of the nights with a total of 13/22 nights lost due to bad weather (5/7 for the last period). The stars were selected based on available evidence for the presence of a circumstellar disk, usually NIR excess in the SED or evidence from radio interferometry.

The use of 4 telescopes simultaneously allows for measurements of 6 different baselines, resulting also in 3 independent closure phase measurements. PIONIER is also more sensitive than its predecessors, allowing a significant sample of the relatively fainter T Tauri stars to be observed. During the 4 first runs, the ATs were stationed in an extended array configuration, providing separations on the ground between telescopes ranging from 47 to 129 meters.The last run has been carried in compact configuration (separations between 11 and 36 meters).

The observation strategy was designed to intertwine the science target between different calibrators. A typical observation sequence was then CAL1 - SCI - CAL2 - SCI - CAL1 and repeat as needed, with each observation block (either science or calibrator) typically composed of 5 exposures each of which composed of 100 scans. Data reduction and calibration was performed by running the dedicated PNDRS package† (Lebouquin *et al.*(2011)).

3. Description of the data sets

For the data collected in the extended array configuration, only the middle part of the visibility curve is measures, i.e., neither the drop-off at short baselines nor the "fully resolved range" at very long baselines where the visibilities plateau are measured. In that middle range, the visibilities vary roughly as a straight line for simple star+disk sources. If an extended structure is present, causing a quick drop-off at short baselines, then extrapolation of the observed mid-range visibility curve to zero spacings should yield values below unity. We performed a linear fit on our sample (fig:1). A large fraction of the visibility curves has an intercept at 0m baseline below $V^2=1$, as expected from the presence on an extended source of incoherent light, e.g., extended scattered light over the disk surface.

To explain that "drop-off", consider an object composed of a unresolved star + its disk, which visibility can be splitted (to first order) into the thermal emission coming from the inner rim and the scattered emission coming from all over the surface. With these assumptions, the total visibility can be written :

$$V_{tot} = \frac{V_{star}F_{star}+V_{therm}F_{therm}+V_{ext}F_{ext}}{F_{star}+F_{therm}+F_{ext}}$$

† http://apps.jmmc.fr/∼swmgr/pndrs
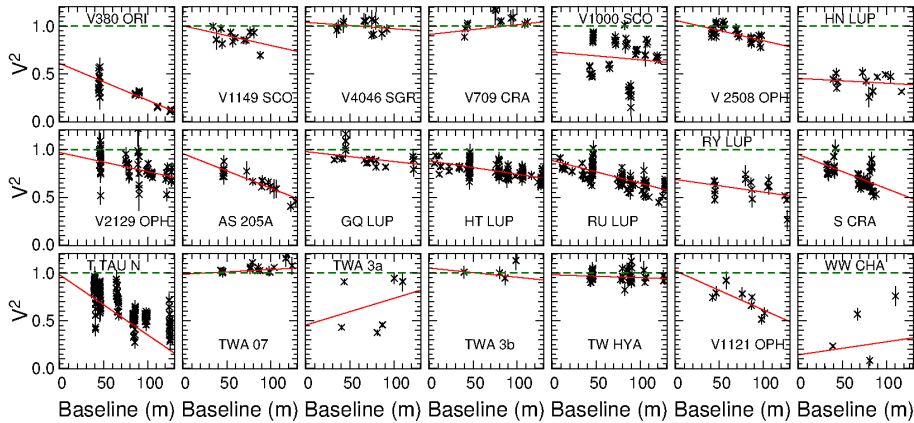
Figure 1. Visibility data (black points) of our sample and their associated linear regression (solid line).The dashed horizontal line indicate $V^2 = 1$. For nearly all the resolved non binary stars with low inclination, the intercept of the linear fit is below 1, indicating an extended component, varying from star to star

With V the visibility and F the flux coming from the star (X_{star}), the disk's thermal emission (X_{therm}) and the disk's scattered light (X_{ext}). Since the scattered light is extended, it is very resolved and it makes the visibility decrease quickly, thus creating the drop-off at short baselines. The short baseline data now available provide constraints on the size of the scattering region as the drop-off is detected up to ≈10m baselines; for the 2 objects considered (HT and RU Lupi), the scattering region must be larger than 5 AUs.

4. Detailed modelling

While the simple linear fitting of our data provides some information about the large scattering emission, it is a *qualitative* tool limited to simple systems with low inclinations. That kind of analysis cannot provide information about the disk's structure and composition. To derive more quantitative information, we are are running disk models and radiative transfer, including more data as well, for the individual sources.

As an exemple we present the model created to adjust both SED and the interferometric data of the TTauri star HT Lupi. To do so, we used the radiative transfert code *MCFOST* (Pinte *et al.*(2006)), including full scattered light treatment. The modelled disk is composed of an inner dusty disk, a gap (to take into account the clearing operated by the close companion (ghez *et al.*(1997))) and a massive outer disk. This model also matches the Spitzer IRS spectra when the inner disk is filled with small astrosilicate grains (as defined by Draine & Lee (1984)). To constrain the inclination and the position angle, we calculated the values of the visibility and closure phase of our model (at the same baselines and for the same closed triangles) by rotating our image model in order to find the best position angle value, and doing this for each inclination. As we can see in the fig 2 our model successfully reproduces the SED and long baseline interferometric data, but has to be refined further to fit our recently acquired short baseline data .

5. Summary

We observed 22 TTauri stars with the ESO/VLTi PIONIER NIR interferometer at H-Band. By applying a simple linear fit to the data, we find that nearly all resolved
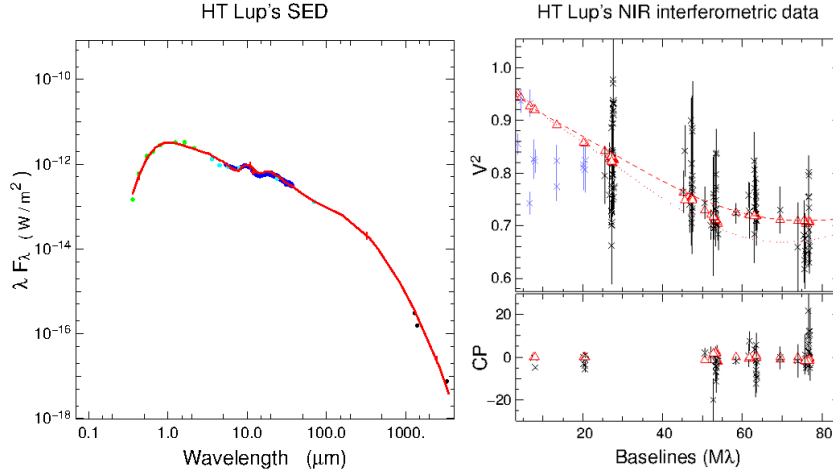
Figure 2. *Left*: fit of HT Lupi's SED. Our model is displayed by the bold red line, the dark blue line is the Spitzer spectrum and the other points represent the visible, NIR, IRAS and mm photometry. *Right*: modelling or the visibility profile (upper panel) and closure phase (lower panel). The data and error bars are displayed in black (or in blue for the recently acquired short baseline data). The dashed and dotted line are the visibility profiles of our model along the minor and major axis. the triangles are the visibility profile of our model taking into account the baselines orientation.

Young Stellar Object present a luminous extended component that we associate with scattered light, the fractionnal luminosity of which varies greatly from one YSO to the other. These results are in agreement with the study presented in Pinte *et al.* (2008).

To have more quantitative results, we used the radiative transfer code MCFOST to fit the photometric and interferometric data of HT Lupi. Our parametric model successfully matches the SED, the PIONIER closure phase and visibility data for the long baselines. The addition of short baseline data indicates that the extended emission is currently underestimated by our model.

To go further, more complete u-v coverage and wavelength coverage would be necessary.

Acknowlegdment

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Discussion

ALYCIA WEINBERGER: Could you describe whether the uncertainties on the visibilities include all calibration uncertainties that is, is the absolute level of the visibilities reliable at the level of the error bars shown?

FABIEN ANTHONIOZ: Shortly, yes. More presisely, all the instrumental and atmospheric biases are calibrated by intertwining the science target between different calibrators (as explained in the last paragraph of the section 2). For more information about PIONIER (including the calibration), I warmly recommend the paper from Lebouquin *et al.*(2011).