

Imaging the Gas from 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. M. F. A'Hearn¹, J. Agarwal², J.-L. Bertaux³, D. Bode-wits¹, G. Cremonese⁴, B. Davidsson⁵, S. Fornasier⁶, C. Güttler², J. Knollenberg⁷, F. La Forgia⁸, L. Lara⁹, M. Lazarin⁸, C. Leyrat⁶, Z. Lin¹⁰, S. Magrin⁸, G. Naletto¹¹, H. Sierks², C. Snodgrass¹², N. Thomas¹³, C. Tubiana², and J.-B. Vincent², ¹Department of Astronomy, University of Maryland, College Park MD 20742-2421 USA, ma@astro.umd.edu, ²MPS, Justus-von-Liebig-Weg 3, Göttingen 37077 Germany, ³LATMOS, CNRS/UVSQ/IPSL, 11 boulevard d'Alembert, 78280, Guyancourt, France, ⁴INAF, Osservatorio Astronomico di Padova, Vicolo dell'Osservatorio 5, 35122 Padova, Italy, ⁵Department of Physics and Astronomy, Uppsala University, Box 516, 75120 Uppsala, Sweden, ⁶LESIA-Observatoire de Paris, CNRS, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Université ParisDiderot, 5 place J. Janssen, 92195, Meudon, France, ⁷Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (DLR), Institut für Planetenforschung, Rutherfordstraße 2, 12489 Berlin, Germany, ⁸University of Padova, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Vicolo dell'Osservatorio 3, 35122 Padova, Italy, ⁹Instituto de Astrofísica de Andalucía (CSIC), c/ Glorieta de la Astronomía s/n, 18008 Granada, Spain, ¹⁰National Central University, Graduate Institute of Astronomy, 300 Chung-Da Rd, Chung-Li 32054 Taiwan, ¹¹University of Padova, Department of Information Engineering, Via Gradenigo 6/B, 35131 Padova, Italy, ¹²Planetary and Space Sciences, Department of Physical Sciences, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK, ¹³Physikalisches Institut der Universität Bern, Sidlerstr. 5, 3012 Bern, Switzerland.

Introduction: The OSIRIS Wide-Angle Camera (WAC) on the Rosetta orbiter includes narrow-band filters to image gaseous emission by CS, OH, NH, CN, NH₂, Na, and [O I]. The WAC also includes filters to isolate the cometary continuum between the various emission features [1]. The data processing to obtain an image of the gas is very sensitive to the absolute calibration of the surface brightness in the images but also on the reflectivity spectrum of the grains producing the continuum. Furthermore, the filters vary considerably in their ability to isolate single emission features.

The data are processed through the OSIRIS pipeline processing system to provide geometrically corrected, absolutely calibrated (radiance, i.e., surface brightness) images in each filter. Subsequent processing is done with the procedures described in [2] for the filters of the International Halley Watch (IHW), with appropriate modifications for the differences in filters between OSIRIS and IHW. Solar colors are obtained from observations of the solar analog 16 Cyg.

Note that all species observable in the visible are fragments of the parent molecules in the nucleus. Thus in general the emission is expected to be much flatter spatially than that of parent molecules. However, the [O I] emission is prompt emission in the dissociation of parent molecules so it traces the spatial distribution of parents. The quality of the data varies considerably from one emission band to another and we will focus on the recent data (inside 3 AU), particularly including the [O I] filter.

Since physical conditions in the innermost cometary coma at large heliocentric distance are very different from those normally encountered in Earth-based observations of comets, one has to consider physical processes that are not important for typical Earth-based

observations. The forbidden red line of O ($\lambda 6300\text{\AA}$, ¹D-³P) is produced as one of the possible branches in the photodissociation of H₂O and was originally used with ground-based spectra to track the H₂O in comets. However, the line can also be formed in the dissociation of CO and CO₂, as discussed, e.g., in [3]. Furthermore, there is emission by NH₂ very close to the [O I] line, which is negligible in a sufficiently narrow filter but not so in the OSIRIS WAC filter. Furthermore, in the innermost coma at these large heliocentric distances, electron impact processes may be important as seen in data from ALICE [4] and sputtering by higher energy particles may be important as seen in data from ROSINA [5].

The key result of the images will be to associate the gaseous abundances with the dust jets that are seen, initially arising from the neck of the comet but later seen above many different locations on the limb. We will also present overall production rates (when the FOV is sufficiently large) and temporal variations.

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References:

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