Herschel Observations of FIR Emission Lines in Brightest Cluster Galaxies

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Digital Object Identifier (DOI)
http://dx.doi.org/10.1051/0004-6361/201014569

Notes/Citation Information
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Herschel observations of FIR emission lines in brightest cluster galaxies*


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Received 30 March 2010 / Accepted 3 May 2010

ABSTRACT

The question of how much gas cools in the cores of clusters of galaxies has been the focus of many, multiwavelength studies in the past 30 years. In this letter we present the first detections of the strongest atomic cooling lines, [Cii], [Oi] and [NI] in two strong cooling flow clusters, A1068 and A2597, using Herschel-PACS. These spectra indicate that the substantial mass of cold molecular gas (>10^7 M☉) known to be present in these systems is being irradiated by intense UV radiation, most probably from young stars. The line widths of these FIR lines indicate that they share dynamics similar but not identical to other ionised and molecular gas traced by optical, near-infrared and CO lines. The relative brightness of the FIR lines compared to CO and FIR luminosity is consistent with other star-forming galaxies indicating that the properties of the molecular gas clouds in cluster cores and the stars they form are not unusual. These results provide additional evidence for a reservoir of cold gas that is fed by the cooling of gas in the cores of the most compact clusters and provide important diagnostics of the temperature and density of the dense clouds this gas resides in.

Key words. galaxies: clusters: intracluster medium – galaxies: elliptical and lenticular, cD

1. Introduction

The cooling process at the cores of galaxy clusters is highly complex: recent XMM-Newton and Chandra observations indicate that the cooling rates are reduced by an order of magnitude below the simple cooling flow models at temperatures below ~2 × 10^7 K (Peterson & Fabian 2006). These X-ray observations, when linked with the detection of radio jet inflated bubbles in the cores of many of the strongest cooling flows (see McNamara & Nulsen 2007, for a review), suggest that the strong suppression of gas cooling is related to energy injection into the intracluster medium by the action of jets and related AGN activity.

The detection of substantial masses of molecular gas in the cores of the most rapidly cooling clusters through CO lines (Edge 2001; Salomé & Combes 2003) and warm H2 molecular lines in the NIR and MIR (Jaffe & Bremer 1997; Egami et al. 2006) indicates that not all cooling is suppressed and this cooled gas may provide the fuel for future AGN activity. These tracers of molecular gas appear to correlate with the strength of optical
lines from ionised gas (Crawford et al. 1999; Edge 2001) and the
dust continuum at MIR and sub-mm wavelengths (O’Dea et al. 2008).
However, the excitation of these various emission lines
and the relative importance of energy input from star formation,
AGN, cosmic rays and/or the intracluster medium is poorly con-
strained (Ferland et al. 2009).

One as yet unexplored diagnostic of the properties of the cold
gas are the atomic cooling lines found in the FIR, [CII], [OI] and
[NII]. The unprecedented sensitivity of Herschel (Pilbratt et al.
2010) to FIR line emission offers the opportunity to assess the
ionisation and density of the colder gas for the first time with the
[CII] line and two principle [OI] lines. The authors were awarded
140 h of time in an open time key program (PI Edge) to inves-
tigate the FIR line and continuum properties of a sample of 11
brightest cluster galaxies (BCGs) in well-studied cooling flow
clusters selected on the basis of optical emission line and X-ray
properties. The full goals of the project are to observe at least five
atomic cooling lines for each object that cover a range in density
and temperature behaviour and obtain a fully sampled FIR spec-
tral energy distribution for systems where significant star for-
mation is expected. In this paper we present the Photodetector
Array Camera and Spectrometer (PACS, Poglitsch et al. 2010)
spectroscopy for the two targets observed in the science demon-
stration phase (SDP), Abell 1068 (z = 0.1386) and Abell 2597
(z = 0.0821). In a parallel paper (Edge et al. 2010), we present
the FIR photometry for these clusters.

The two clusters observed have quite contrasting multiwave-
lenght properties. A1068 is a strong MIR source (O’Dea et al.
2008) with a bright CO detection (Edge 2001) but a weak ra-
tio source (McNamara et al. 2004). A1068 lies just below the
FIR photometry for these clusters.

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2008) with a bright CO detection (Edge 2001) but a weak ra-
tio source (McNamara et al. 2004). A1068 lies just below the
FIR photometry for these clusters.

2. Observations

We have observed the [CII] and [OI] lines at 157.74 μm
and 63.18 μm for A1068 and A2597 with the PACS spectrometer
on Herschel. These are the primary cooling lines of the cold gas
at a temperature T < 40 K (Kaufman et al. 1999). In addition for
A2597 we observed the [NII], [OI] and [OIII] lines at 121.90 μm,
145.52 μm and 88.36 μm. These lines are used to constrain the
excitation and temperature of this gas. Table 1 gives a summary of
the observations.

All spectral line observations were taken in PACS chopped line
scan (standard faint line) mode with chopping-nodding. The simple point observations mode was used for all observations.
The data were reduced following the PACS data reduction guide
(PDRG) using the PACS line spectroscopy script for point source
chop/nod mode as presented by the PACS ICC team during the
Herschel science demonstration phase data processing workshop
at ESAC in December 2009. The reduction was performed within the
Herschel Interactive Processing Environment (HIPE) ver-


3. Results

The [CII] 157 μm and [OI] 63 μm lines are detected at a signal
to noise greater than 30 for both A1068 and A2597. The much
weaker [NII] 122 μm and [OIII] 88 μm lines are detected at the
3–5σ level for A2597. The [OIII] 88 μm line was not detected in
A2597, an upper limit for this line is given in Table 2.

The line spectra are fitted by a model consisting of; (i) a lin-
ear function to determine the continuum flux, and (ii) a single
Gaussian function to determine the line flux. Continuum sub-
tracted line spectra are shown for the central spaxel in Fig. 1
for A1068 and Fig. 2 for A2597. The fitted line centers agree well
with the redshift of CO in the BCG and the fitted FWHM line
widths indicate gas with velocities of 300–500 km s⁻¹.

The [CII] and [NII] lines in the central spaxel of both ob-
jects are well described by a single Gaussian. However, the
[OI] 63 μm lines, where the PACS spectral resolution is best,
have profiles indicative of weak (2–5σ) deviations from a sin-
gle Gaussian function. The [OI] line in A1068 hints at a two-
component structure in the form of a narrow core component
on top of a broad underlying component comparable to the
CO(2–1) profile in Edge (2001). Both [OI] lines observed in
A2597 appear to have their dominant flux component at the sys-
temic redshift of the BCG and a weaker component offset by
about +250 km s⁻¹ which is also seen in the CO data (Salomé,
priv. comm.). We attribute the shared structure of these atomic
and molecular lines to gas kinematics rather than self-absorption
as the observed emission is from a large number of clouds that
have much narrower intrinsic line width.

The resolution of PACS at the observed wavelengths varies
from about 5″ for the [OI] 63 μm line to about 14″ for the
[CII] 157 μm line. We have investigated line emission in all
25 spaxels of the PACS FoV. In all cases the line flux is domi-
nated by the central spaxel. Summing up the flux in all 25 spectra
and comparing it to the flux in the central spaxel shows no evi-
dence of excess line flux as compared to what is expected from
a point source. In order to properly recover the full beam line
fluxes we have applied point source corrections (Appendix A of
the PSPC document) to the central spaxel integrated line fluxes.

The results are listed in Table 2. This spatial resolution matches
the best sub-mm interferometry results for CO (Edge & Frayer
2003; Salomé & Combes 2004) which implies that most of the
Table 1. Log of Herschel-PACS observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Redshift</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Wavelength (µm)</th>
<th>Obsid</th>
<th>Bandwidth (km s(^{-1}))</th>
<th>Resolution (km s(^{-1}))</th>
<th>Beam Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1068</td>
<td>0.1386</td>
<td>[CII]</td>
<td>179.61</td>
<td>1342 186 308</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>13.5′/33 kpc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1068</td>
<td>0.1386</td>
<td>[OI]</td>
<td>71.94</td>
<td>1342 186 307</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.4′/13 kpc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2597</td>
<td>0.0821</td>
<td>[CII]</td>
<td>170.78</td>
<td>1342 187 125</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>12.8′/20 kpc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2597</td>
<td>0.0821</td>
<td>[OI]</td>
<td>68.41</td>
<td>1342 187 124</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5.1′/7.8 kpc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[NII]</td>
<td>131.94</td>
<td>1342 188 942</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>9.9′/15 kpc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[OIII]</td>
<td>157.56</td>
<td>1342 188 704</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>11.8′/18 kpc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[OVI]</td>
<td>95.61</td>
<td>1342 188 703</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7.2′/11 kpc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Spectral line results for Herschel-PACS observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Redshift</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Integrated Line Flux ((10^{-15} \text{ W m}^{-2}))</th>
<th>Velocity offset (km s(^{-1}))</th>
<th>measured FWHM (km s(^{-1}))</th>
<th>intrinsic FWHM (km s(^{-1}))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1068</td>
<td>0.1386</td>
<td>[CII]</td>
<td>104.7 ± 1.8</td>
<td>+25 ± 55</td>
<td>378 ± 40</td>
<td>320 ± 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1068</td>
<td>0.1386</td>
<td>[OI]</td>
<td>64.8 ± 0.2</td>
<td>+25 ± 50</td>
<td>356 ± 40</td>
<td>352 ± 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2597</td>
<td>0.0821</td>
<td>[CII]</td>
<td>58.5 ± 1.9</td>
<td>-15 ± 60</td>
<td>463 ± 40</td>
<td>408 ± 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2597</td>
<td>0.0821</td>
<td>[OI]</td>
<td>54.7 ± 0.2</td>
<td>+40 ± 55</td>
<td>411 ± 40</td>
<td>405 ± 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[NII]</td>
<td>3.8 ± 1.3</td>
<td>+30 ± 60</td>
<td>578 ± 90</td>
<td>505 ± 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[OIII]</td>
<td>3.3 ± 1.3</td>
<td>-57 ± 65</td>
<td>484 ± 90</td>
<td>420 ± 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[OII]</td>
<td>&lt;2.9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Herschel-PACS spectra of [CII] and [OI] in A1068.

emission is on scales <5′ so we believe our PACS line fluxes can be compared to literature values without large beam corrections.

4. Discussion

The primary result from the SDP observations for this project is that the atomic cooling lines are present in both observed clusters. This first detection of these lines in cluster cores reinforces the importance of the cold gas in these environments. However, there is no number of questions that these detections raise.

How do the properties of the FIR lines compare to local LIRGs/ULIRGs? There have been several studies of local galaxies with ISO and high redshift galaxies using ground-based instrument that cover [CII] and [OI] (Malhotra et al. 1997; Maiolino et al. 2005; Hailey-Dunsheath et al. 2010). These studies show that the ratio of [CII] to FIR luminosity is a function of luminosity with relatively less [CII] emission for the most FIR luminous sources. Using the FIR data from Edge et al. (2010), we calculate the [CII] to FIR luminosity ratios of \(10^{-4.1}\) and \(10^{-3.9}\) for A1068 and A2597, respectively. The [CII]/FIR ratios of these two galaxies are comparable to those measured for galaxies of similar \(L_{\text{FIR}}\) (see Fig. 2 of Maiolino et al. 2005). In particular, the [CII] to FIR luminosity ratio is lower for the more FIR luminous of the two galaxies. The ratio of [CII] to [OI] shows less variation (1.62 and 1.07) and is again consistent with other comparable galaxies (Luhman et al. 2003). Also our CO(1–0) to FIR luminosity ratios of \(10^{-5.7}\) and \(10^{-5.6}\) for A1068 and A2597 are consistent with star-forming local galaxies (Malhotra et al. 1997). So, despite potential differences in excitation, pressure and metallicity, the relative intensity of the atomic and molecular lines to the FIR luminosity do not distinguish the BCGs studied here from other FIR bright galaxies.

How do the dynamics of atomic and molecular lines compare? The relative velocity width of the atomic lines compared to the CO and MIR \(H_2\) lines can provide important diagnostics for the dynamics and energetics of the various gas tracers. From the line width alone the resolution corrected line FWHM widths for the [CII] and [OI] lines are \(\approx 330 \text{ km s}^{-1}\) and \(\approx 400 \text{ km s}^{-1}\) for A1068 and A2597 respectively. This compares to 243 ± 13 km s\(^{-1}\) (Edge 2001) and 292 ± 45 km s\(^{-1}\) (Salomé, priv. comm.) for CO(2–1) for A1068 and A2597. In each case the FIR lines are a factor of ~1.35 broader. This is not due to any instrumental broadening in the PACS instrument as the two lines sampled have similar intrinsic line width despite being observed at very different resolution. Instead, this difference is more likely to be related to the lines being emitted from different regions
Within the BCG or in shocks. However, this clearly needs to be tested in more systems and through direct comparison of the [C	extsc{ii}] and [O	extsc{i}] extent with that of CO.

How do the FIR line ratios constrain the gas properties? The relative strength of the FIR lines can constrain several key properties of the gas phase that dominates the emission. The main constraint we can determine directly from our current data is from the [C	extsc{ii}] 158 μm and [O	extsc{i}] 63 and 145 μm lines for A2597. Kaufman et al. (1999) present photodissociation region (PDR) model predictions for the [O	extsc{i}] 145 μm/63 μm and [C	extsc{ii}] 158 μm to [O	extsc{i}] 63 μm line ratios. Combining these two constraints for our observed [O	extsc{i}] 145 μm/63 μm ratio of 0.06 ± 0.02 and [O	extsc{i}] 63 μm to [C	extsc{ii}] 158 μm ratio of 0.94 ± 0.05, we estimate a density of $10^{3.3±0.5}$ cm$^{-3}$ and an incident FUV flux of $G_0$ of 150–1000 Habing units. These values of $G_0$ imply intrinsic FUV luminosities of $\approx 2–5 \times 10^{43}$ erg s$^{-1}$ if the clouds subtend 3–5 kpc. This is comparable to the observed FUV luminosities of these galaxies once dust absorption is taken into account (O’Dea et al. 2004).

5. Conclusions

These initial results from Herschel indicate that atomic cooling lines are present in the brightest cluster galaxies in cooling flow clusters. The intensity and velocity width of these lines is consistent with all the other observed tracers of cold gas in these systems implying they originate from the same population of clouds. The only apparent exception to this in our current observations is that the FIR lines appear to be systematically broader than the CO lines implying that the relative intensity of these lines varies with position within the BCG. The results that will come from our open time key project for 11 BCGs will expand greatly on those presented here with more lines and a greater range of BCG properties. Beyond this, the potential for Herschel to illuminate the properties of the cold gas that may fuel cold nuclear accretion in more distant clusters and local groups is vast.

Acknowledgements. We would like to thank the Herschel Observatory and instrument teams for the extraordinary dedication they have shown to deliver such a powerful telescope. We would like to thank the HSC and NHSC consortium for help with data reduction pipelines. J.B.R.O. thanks HSC, the Herschel Helpdesk and the PACS group at MPE for useful discussions. R.M. thanks the NHSC for the HIPE tutorials.

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