

Multi-frequency study of supernova remnants in the Large Magellanic Cloud

The case of LMC SNR J0530–7007

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Received 21 December 2011 / Accepted 8 February 2012

ABSTRACT

Context. The supernova remnants (SNRs) known in the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC) show a variety of morphological structures in the different wavelength bands. This variety is the product of the conditions in the surrounding medium with which the remnant interacts and the inherent circumstances of the supernova event itself.

Aims. This paper performs a multi-frequency study of the LMC SNR J0530–7007 by combining Australia Telescope Compact Array (ATCA), Molonglo Observatory Synthesis Telescope (MOST), Röntgensatellit (ROSAT) and Magellanic Clouds Emission Line Survey (MCELS) observations.

Methods. We analysed radio-continuum, X-ray and optical data and present a multi-wavelength morphological study of LMC SNR J0530–7007.

Results. We find that this object has a shell-type morphology with a size of $215'' \times 180''$ ($52 \text{ pc} \times 44 \text{ pc}$); a radio spectral index ($\alpha = -0.85 \pm 0.13$); with $[S \text{ II}]/H\alpha > 0.4$ in the optical; and the presence of non-thermal radio and X-ray emission.

Conclusions. We confirmed this object as a bona-fide shell-type SNR which is probably a result of a Type Ia supernova.

Key words. ISM: supernova remnants – Magellanic Clouds – radio continuum: ISM – ISM: individual objects: SNR J0530–7007

1. Introduction

Lying towards the south ecliptic pole, the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC), is in one of the coldest parts of the radio sky, uncontaminated by Galactic foreground emission (Haynes et al. 1991). The LMC's position and its known distance of 50 kpc (di Benedetto 2008) makes the LMC arguably the best galaxy in which to study supernova remnants (SNRs) in our Local Group of galaxies.

In the radio-continuum, SNR emission is predominantly non-thermal, giving rise to a typical radio spectral index of $\alpha \sim -0.5$ ($S \propto \nu^\alpha$). However, the environment in which the SNR evolves i.e. the interstellar medium (ISM) with its ambient magnetic field, will not only affect the radio spectral index observed but also the SNR's morphology, structure and behaviour (Filipović et al. 1998).

In a $H\alpha$ survey of the LMC, Davies et al. (1976) reported “diffuse filaments” with a size of $10' \times 9'$ at RA(J2000) = $5^{\text{h}}30^{\text{m}}30^{\text{s}}.35$ and Dec(J2000) = $-70^{\circ}07'51''.5$ and named it DEM L218. A radio source designated 0531-701 was identified by Turtle & Mills (1984) at RA(J2000) = $5^{\text{h}}30^{\text{m}}38^{\text{s}}.19$ and Dec(J2000) = $-70^{\circ}07'33''$ and classified as an SNR candidate in a survey with the Molonglo Observatory Synthesis Telescope (MOST). Filipović et al. (1998) detected this source

in the Parkes radio surveys of the Magellanic Clouds (MCs; $\lambda = 6 \text{ cm}$ and 3 cm) but due to a rather flat spectrum of $\alpha = -0.17 \pm 0.24$ and the survey's low resolution (Parkes Beam Sizes: $4:9$ at $\lambda = 6 \text{ cm}$; $2:7$ at $\lambda = 3 \text{ cm}$), they were unable to classify it as an SNR at that time. Haberl & Pietsch (1999, hereafter HP99) detected a nearby Röntgensatellit (ROSAT) X-ray source ([HP99] 1081) at a position of RA(J2000) = $05^{\text{h}}30^{\text{m}}51.8^{\text{s}}$ and Dec(J2000) = $-70^{\circ}06'44''$; however, this object is close to the LMC bar where confusion is significant. The object was re-discovered using the Magellanic Clouds Emission Line Survey (MCELS) (Smith et al. 2004). This study inferred that the object is likely a large, old radiative shell-type SNR with enhanced $[S \text{ II}]$ ($[S \text{ II}]/H\alpha > 0.4$). Blair et al. (2006) also observed the object using the Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Explorer (FUSE) satellite, at a position of RA(J2000) = $05^{\text{h}}30^{\text{m}}37^{\text{s}}$, Dec(J2000) = $-70^{\circ}08'40''$ with a beamsize of $145''$. Weak, yet moderately broad lines of O VI were detected, in addition to possible, but uncertain C III lines. Desai et al. (2010) reported that there are no molecular clouds detected towards this object and that there are no young stellar objects in its vicinity.

In this paper, we report new Australia Telescope Compact Array (ATCA) radio-continuum observations at $\lambda = 3 \text{ cm}$ and 6 cm . These new radio-continuum observations in conjunction with previous radio-continuum ($\lambda = 20 \text{ cm}$ and 13 cm

Table 1. Integrated flux densities of SNR J0530–7007.

| ν (MHz) | λ (cm) | Beam size ($''$) | rms (mJy) | S_{Total} (mJy) |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 843 | 36 | 43.0×43.0 | 0.5 | 107^a |
| 843 | 36 | 43.0×43.0 | 0.5 | 80 |
| 1400 | 20 | 40.0×40.0 | 0.5 | 62 |
| 2400 | 13 | 54.1×48.9 | 0.4 | 52 |
| 5500 | 6 | 33.8×33.8 | 0.05 | 23 |
| 9000 | 3 | 22.5×22.5 | 0.05 | 10 |

Notes. ^(a) Integrated flux density from Turtle & Mills (1984).

(ATCA), $\lambda = 36$ cm (MOST)), X-ray (ROSAT) and optical (MCELS) observations are used to confirm that the object in the LMC centered at RA(J2000) = $5^{\text{h}}30^{\text{m}}40.4^{\text{s}}$ and Dec(J2000) = $-70^{\circ}07'27.4''$ is a bona-fide SNR that, hereafter, we will call SNR J0530–7007. The observations, data reduction and imaging techniques are described in Sect. 2. Astrophysical interpretation of the newly obtained moderate-resolution total intensity images, in combination with existing ROSAT and MCELS images are discussed in Sect. 3.

2. Observations and data reduction

2.1. Radio-continuum

Radio-continuum observations at the five frequencies shown in Table 1 have been used to study and measure the flux densities of SNR J0530–7007. For the 36 cm (MOST) flux density measurement given in Table 1, we used the unpublished image as described by Mills et al. (1984). The 20 cm (ATCA) image used is from Hughes et al. (2007).

Australia Telescope Compact Array (ATCA) observations from 1992 April 29 and 30 (project C195) of SNR J0530–7007 were also used. These observations were made at wavelengths $\lambda = 13$ cm and 20 cm ($\nu = 2400$ MHz and 1400 MHz) using the 375 array configuration.

Recently, on 2011 November 15, we observed SNR J0530–7007 (project C634), with the ATCA in the EW352 configuration, at $\lambda = 3/6$ cm (9000 and 5500 MHz) and a bandwidth of 2 GHz (ATCA project C634). In addition to this, SNR J0530–7007 was observed using the ATCA on 1995 November 12 with the 6A array (ATCA Project C461; $\lambda = 3/6$ cm ($\nu = 8640$ MHz and 4800 MHz)). Both observations were carried out in snap-shot mode, totalling about 1 hr (each) of integration over a 12 h period. These two sets of observations were combined with mosaic observations from project C918 (Dickel et al. 2005).

For all these radio-continuum observations, baselines formed with ATCA antenna 6 were excluded, as the other five antennas were arranged in a compact configuration. Source PKS B1934–638 was used for primary (flux) calibration and source PKS B0530–727 was used for secondary (phase) calibration. More information on the observing procedure and other sources observed under the project C634 can be found in Bojčić et al. (2007); Crawford et al. (2008a,b); Čajko et al. (2009); Crawford et al. (2010); Bozzetto et al. (2010, 2011, 2012). Parkes radio-continuum data from Filipović et al. (1995, 1996) were initially combined with the ATCA data wherever the shortest ATCA baselines were less than the Parkes diameter of 64 m, and the observational frequencies corresponded, in order to provide zero-spacing. However, as the rms noise of the Parkes

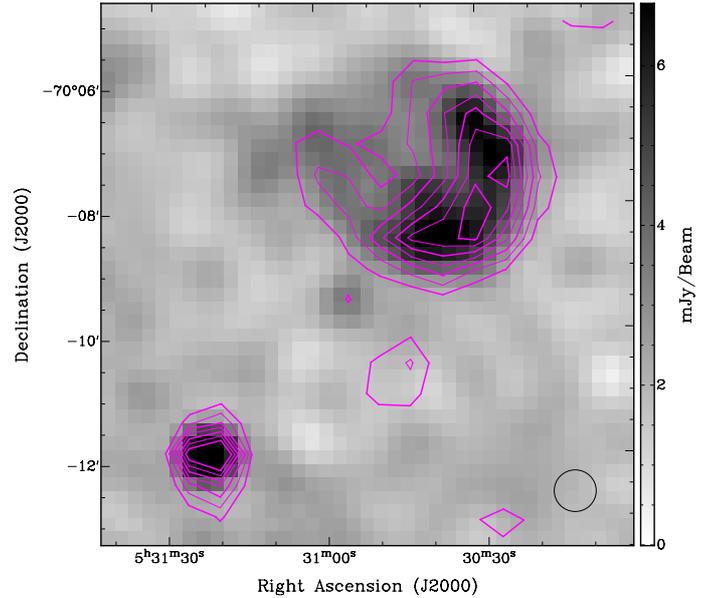


Fig. 1. Combined ATCA observations of SNR J0530–7007 at 20 cm (1400 MHz) overlaid with MOST 36 cm (843 MHz) contours. Contours are from 2 to 8 mJy/beam in steps of 1 mJy/beam. The black circle in the lower right corner represents the synthesised beamwidth (at 20 cm) of $40''$.

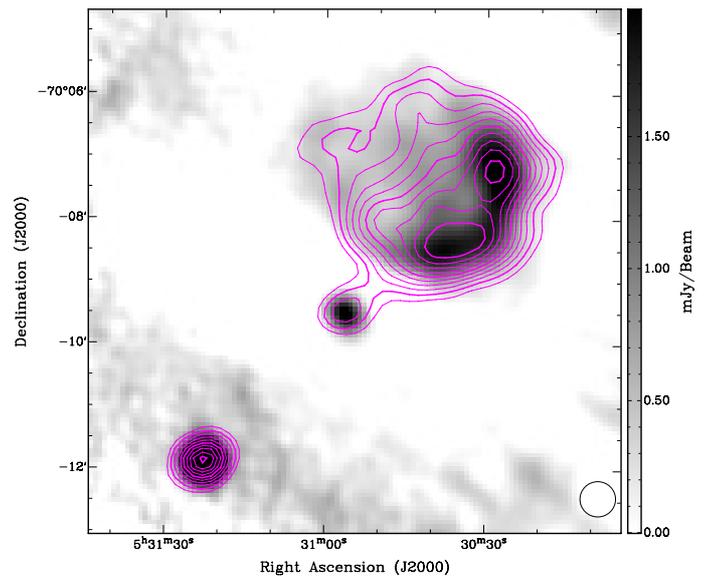


Fig. 2. Combined ATCA observations of SNR J0530–7007 at 6 cm (5500 MHz) overlaid with 13 cm (2400 MHz) contours. Contours are from 1.5 to 6 mJy/beam in steps of 0.5 mJy/beam. The black circle in the lower right corner represents the synthesised beamwidth (at 6 cm) of $33.8''$.

observations are significantly higher, especially at 3/6 cm, it was decided not to use these observations in our final analysis.

The total-intensity images in Figs. 1 and 2 were formed using the standard MIRIAD (Sault et al. 1995) tasks employing multi-frequency synthesis using a natural weighting scheme with a correction for the primary beam response applied. A similar procedure was used for both U and Q Stokes parameter maps. However, due to the low dynamic-range (signal to noise ratio between the source flux and 3σ noise level) self-calibration could not be applied.

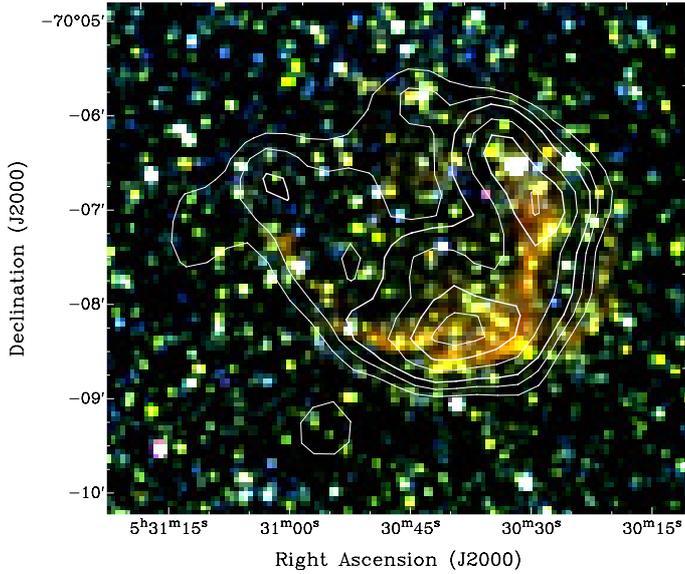


Fig. 3. MCELS composite optical image (RGB = $H\alpha$, [S II], [O III]) of SNR J0530–7007 overlaid with 20 cm radio contours. Contours are 3, 3.5, 4, 5, 6 and 7 mJy/beam.

2.2. Optical

The MCELS observations (Smith et al. 2006) were carried out with the 0.6 m University of Michigan/Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory (CTIO) Curtis Schmidt telescope, equipped with a SITe 2048 × 2048 CCD, giving a field of $1.35^\circ \times 1.35^\circ$ at a pixel scale of $2.4'' \times 2.4''$. It mapped both the LMC and SMC in narrow bands covering $H\alpha$, [O III] ($\lambda = 5007 \text{ \AA}$), and [S II] ($\lambda = 6716, 6731 \text{ \AA}$). Also observed were matched red and green continuum bands, used primarily to subtract the stars from the images to reveal the full extent of the faint diffuse emission. All the data has been flux-calibrated and assembled into mosaic images; a small section of the mosaic is shown in Fig. 3.

The high-resolution $H\alpha$ image in Fig. 3 was obtained with the MOSAIC II camera on the Blanco 4-m telescope at the CTIO. It confirms a distinctive optical nebulosity associated with the SNR candidate. Here, for the first time, we present optical images of this object in combination with our new ATCA radio-continuum and ROSAT X-ray data.

2.3. X-rays

SNR J0530–7007 lies in the field of view of several pointed observations of ROSAT’s Position Sensitive Proportional Counter (PSPC). The HP99 catalogue includes a very weak detection ([HP99] 1081, Fig. 4) within the extent of the radio emission from SNR J0530–7007. However, the X-ray properties of this source are unclear: The hardness ratios are poorly defined ($HR1 = 1.00 \pm 1.23$) or undefined (HR2) and therefore give no meaningful information on the spectrum. The HP99 catalogue was derived from individual PSPC observations, without combining the exposures of overlapping fields. To investigate [HP99] 1081 and its possible association with SNR J0530–7007 in more detail, we selected 9 observations of the LMC which covered the SNR within $24'$ of the optical axis (to avoid the degraded point spread function at larger off-axis angles). In Table 2 we give the ROSAT sequence number, target name, exposure time and central coordinates of the selected pointings, as well as

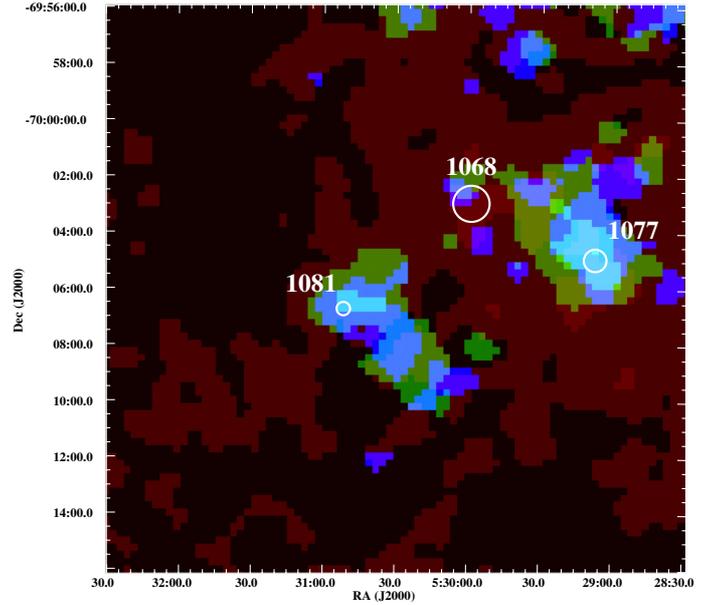


Fig. 4. The ROSAT PSPC RGB colour image of the area around SNR J0530–7007. The energy bands are: red (0.1–0.4 keV), green (0.5–0.9 keV) and blue (0.9–2.0 keV). The image has a pixel size of $15''$ and is smoothed with a σ of 1.5 pixel. The annotations denote sources from HP99.

the off-axis angle of SNR J0530–7007 in each of them. Images were produced at different energy bands (broad: 0.1–2.4 keV, soft: 0.1–0.4 keV, hard: 0.5–2.0 keV, hard1: 0.5–0.9 keV and hard2: 0.9–2.0 keV) from the merged data. A colour image of the area around the SNR with net exposure (vignetting corrected) of ~ 48 ks is shown in Figs. 4 and 5 with red, green and blue representing the X-ray intensities in the soft, hard1 and hard2 bands. The resolution of the ROSAT PSPC varies with energy but the point spread function is always less than $1'$.

The HP99 catalogue contains two other sources detected in the neighbourhood of source 1081 (see Fig. 4). [HP99] 1068 is a weak source with an existence likelihood of 11.8, just above the threshold used for the catalogue. No useful information about extent or hardness ratios can be derived. Source [HP99] 1077 is a clear detection (existence likelihood 22.8) with indication for an extent of $31''$ (likelihood for the extent of 13.3). Therefore, [HP99] 1077 looks like an extended source itself, but no significant radio nor optical emission in the MCELS images is seen at its position. Future X-ray observations are required to investigate the whole region around the three ROSAT sources in more detail.

3. Results and discussion

The remnant has a typical horse-shoe morphology (Figs. 1, 2 and 3), centered at RA(J2000) = $5^{\text{h}}30^{\text{m}}40.4^{\text{s}}$ and Dec(J2000) = $-70^\circ 07' 27.4''$. The measured position differs from that of the FUSE observations (Blair et al. 2006), since the FUSE observation was aimed only at the Southern side of the shell and not at the centre of the SNR.

The size of SNR J0530–7007 at $\lambda = 20$ cm is $215'' \pm 4'' \times 180'' \pm 4''$ (52 ± 1 pc \times 44 ± 1 pc). The size was measured by taking line profiles along the major (NE-SW) and minor (SE-NW) axis (PA = 45°) of the remnant using the KARMA¹ (Gooch 2006) tool KPVSLICE and determining the distance between the

¹ <http://www.atnf.csiro.au/computing/software/karma/>

Table 2. ROSAT observations summary of SNR J0530–7007 (sorted by RA).

| ROSAT sequence | Target name | Obs. time (s) | RA (J2000) | Dec | Off-axis angle ^a (arcmin) |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|--|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 180 287p | NOVA LMC 1995 | 2531 | 05 ^h 26 ^m 50.04 ^s | −70°01′11.5″ | 21.3 |
| 400 298p | RX J0527.8–6954 | 1058 | 05 ^h 27 ^m 48.00 ^s | −69°54′00.0″ | 20.2 |
| 400 298p-1 | RX J0527.8–6954 | 7502 | 05 ^h 27 ^m 48.00 ^s | −69°54′00.0″ | 20.2 |
| 400 298p-2 | RX J0527.8–6954 | 7802 | 05 ^h 27 ^m 48.00 ^s | −69°54′00.0″ | 20.2 |
| 400 148p | RX J0527.8–6954 | 6064 | 05 ^h 27 ^m 48.00 ^s | −69°54′00.0″ | 20.2 |
| 180 255p | RX J0527.8–6954 | 9763 | 05 ^h 27 ^m 50.04 ^s | −69°54′00.0″ | 20.0 |
| 300 172p | NOVA LMC 1988 a | 6272 | 05 ^h 32 ^m 28.08 ^s | −70°21′36.0″ | 17.0 |
| 300 172p-1 | NOVA LMC 1988 a | 2993 | 05 ^h 32 ^m 28.08 ^s | −70°21′36.0″ | 17.0 |
| 300 172p-2 | NOVA LMC 1988 a | 3880 | 05 ^h 32 ^m 28.08 ^s | −70°21′36.0″ | 17.0 |

Notes. ^(a) Mean angular distance of [HP99] 1081 to the optical axis of the telescope.

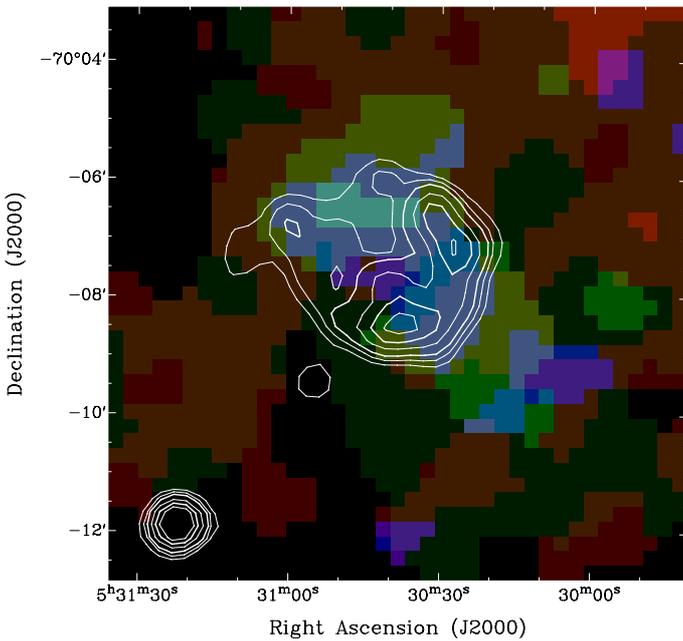


Fig. 5. The ROSAT PSPC RGB colour image of SNR J0530–7007 overlaid with the contours of 20 cm intensity. Contours are 3, 3.5, 4, 5, 6 and 7 mJy/beam.

point when the line profile first rises above 3σ (1.50 mJy) and the point when it finally falls below 3σ . The thickness of the shell is estimated to be $<30''$ (7 pc) at 6 cm, about 30% of the SNR’s radius (ie. a filling factor of 0.64).

The merged ROSAT PSPC images reveal an elongated structure of X-ray emission at the location of the SNR with a brighter spot right at the position of [HP99] 1081. The presence of extended X-ray emission is coincident with the radio emission of the SNR (Fig. 5). In X-rays, the brightest part is in the northeast while the MCELS optical emission closely follows radio-continuum appearance (Fig. 3).

We note that the significant difference in the flux density measurement at 36 cm (107 mJy in Turtle & Mills (1984) vs 80 mJy in this work) may introduce a very large uncertainty in the spectral index measurement ($S \propto \nu^\alpha$). A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that we applied different fitting model than Turtle & Mills (1984). Using all values of integrated flux density estimates (except for 36 cm value from Turtle & Mills (1984); Table 1), a spectral index ($S \propto \nu^\alpha$) distribution is plotted in Fig. 6. The overall radio-continuum spectra (Fig. 6; black line)

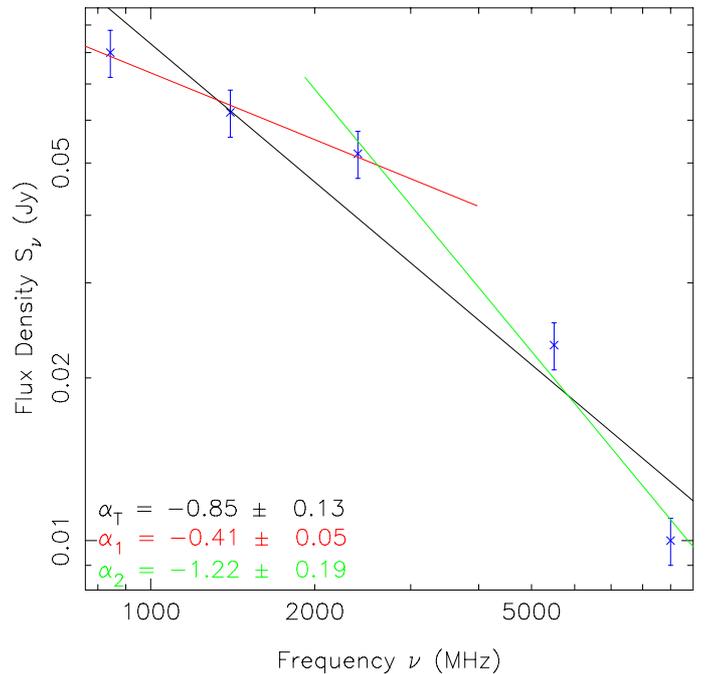


Fig. 6. Radio-continuum spectrum of SNR J0530–7007. The black line (α_T) is the overall radio-continuum spectra, the red line (α_1) between 36 cm and 13 cm, and the green line (α_2) between 13 cm and 3 cm. Note log–log scale.

from SNR J0530–7007 was estimated to be $\alpha_T = -0.85 \pm 0.13$, while the typical SNR spectral index is $\alpha = -0.5 \pm 0.2$ (Filipović et al. 1998). This somewhat steeper spectral index would indicate a younger age despite its (large) size of 52×44 pc, suggesting it as an older (more evolved) SNR. We also note that this may indicate that a simple model does not accurately describe the data, and that a higher order model is needed. This is not unusual, given that several other Magellanic Clouds SNR’s exhibit this “curved” spectra (Crawford et al. 2008a; Bozetto et al. 2010, 2011). Noting the breakdown of the power law fit at shorter wavelengths, we decomposed the spectral index estimate into two components, one (α_1) between 36 and 13 cm, and the other (α_2) between 13 and 3 cm. The first component (Fig. 6; red line), $\alpha_1 = -0.41 \pm 0.05$ is a reasonable fit and typical for an evolved SNR, whereas the second (Fig. 6; green line), $\alpha_2 = -1.22 \pm 0.19$, is a poor fit, and indicates that non-thermal emission can be described by different populations of electrons with different energy indices. Although the low flux at

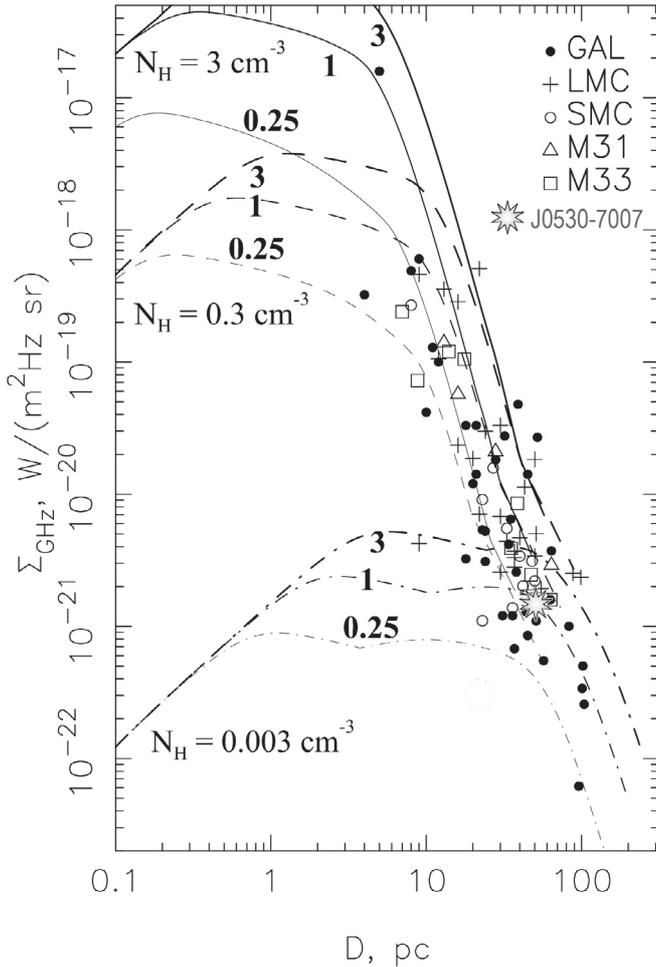


Fig. 7. 1 GHz Surface brightness-to-diameter diagram from Berezhenko & Völk (2004), with SNR J0530–7007 added. The evolutionary tracks are for ISM densities of $N_{\text{H}} = 3, 0.3$ and 0.003 cm^{-3} and explosion energies of $E_{\text{SN}} = 0.25, 1$ and $3 \times 10^{51} \text{ erg}$.

3 cm (and to a lesser extent at 6 cm) could cause the large deviations, an underestimate of up to $\sim 50\%$ would still lead to a “curved” spectrum.

Without reliable polarisation measurements at any radio-continuum frequency we cannot determine the Faraday rotation and thus cannot deduce the magnetic field strength. However, we can use the new equipartition formula derived by Arbutina et al. (2012) from diffusive shock acceleration (DSA) theory (Bell 1978) to estimate a magnetic field strength: This formula is particularly relevant to magnetic field estimation in SNRs, and yields magnetic field strengths, similar to but more precise than, those given by classical equipartition (Pacholczyk 1970) and the revised equipartition (Beck & Krause 2005) method. The average equipartition field over the whole shell of SNR J0530–7007 is $\sim 53 \mu\text{G}$ (see Arbutina et al. (2012); and corresponding “calculator”²), corresponding those of middle-aged SNRs where the interstellar magnetic field is compressed and moderately amplified by the strong shocks.

Figure 7 shows a surface brightness-diameter ($\Sigma - D$) diagram at 1 GHz with theoretically-derived evolutionary tracks (Berezhenko & Völk 2004) superposed. SNR J0530–7007 lies at

² Calculator available at <http://poincare.matf.bg.ac.rs/~arbo/eqp/>

$(D, \Sigma) = (48 \text{ pc}, 1.1 \times 10^{-21} \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ Hz}^{-1} \text{ Sr}^{-1})$ on the diagram. Its position tentatively suggests that it is in the early Sedov phase of evolution – expanding into a very low density environment with the canonical initial energy of a supernova explosion (10^{51} erg).

High-mass stars rarely form in isolation, so core-collapse supernovae are expected to be associated with other high-mass stars. We used data from the Magellanic Cloud Photometric Survey (MCPS Zaritsky et al. 2004) to construct colour-magnitude diagrams (CMDs) and identify blue stars more massive than $\sim 8 M_{\odot}$ within a 100 pc ($396''$) radius of SNR J0530–7007. The CMD in Fig. 8 (left) contains only 13 B-star candidates ($V < 16, B - V < 0$). The red crosses in Fig. 8 (right) shows where the B-star candidates are with respect to SNR J0530–7007. These criteria would also find stars as late as B2-3 stars. More stringent criteria ($V < 14, B - V < 0$), roughly equivalent to searching for OB stars in the Sanduleak (1970) catalog, would find only 1 star.

Comparison of the star formation histories (Harris & Zaritsky 2009) in the vicinity of SNR J0530–7007 and SNR J0529–6654 (Bozzetto et al., in press) yields a significant difference: The star formation rate near SNR J0530–7007 shows an upturn around 50 Myr ago, whereas the vicinity of SNR J0529–6654 has a strong spike in the star formation rate in the last 12–25 Myr. The lack of recent high-mass star formation around SNR J0530–7007 suggests that it is more likely to be the remnant of a Type Ia supernova.

4. Conclusion

We have carried out the first detailed multi-frequency study of the LMC SNR J0530–7007, showing that:

1. SNR J0530–7007 is a relatively large ($215'' \pm 4'' \times 180'' \pm 4''$ ($52 \pm 1 \text{ pc} \times 44 \pm 1 \text{ pc}$)) shell-type SNR;
2. It has radio spectral index $\alpha = -0.85 \pm 0.13$ between 843 MHz and 9000 MHz, but the spectrum appears to be peaked/curved;
3. SNR J0530–7007 is in the early Sedov phase, expanding into a very low density environment;
4. The average equipartition field over the whole shell of SNR J0530–7007 is $\sim 53 \mu\text{G}$;
5. There is a lack of recent local high-mass star formation, suggesting that SNR J0530–7007 is the remnant of a Type Ia supernova.

With strong optical [S II] emission ($[\text{S II}]/\text{H}\alpha > 0.4$), the presence of non-thermal radio and X-ray emission, this object satisfies all three criteria for classifying it as an SNR.

Acknowledgements. We used the KARMA and MIRIAD software package developed by the ATNF. The ATCA is part of the Australia Telescope which is funded by the Commonwealth of Australia for operation as a National Facility managed by CSIRO. The Magellanic Clouds Emission Line Survey (MCELS) data are provided by R. C. Smith, P. F. Winkler, and S. D. Points. The MCELS project has been supported in part by NSF grants AST-9540747 and AST-0307613, and through the generous support of the Dean B. McLaughlin Fund at the University of Michigan, a bequest from the family of Dr. Dean B. McLaughlin in memory of his lasting impact on Astronomy. The National Optical Astronomy Observatory is operated by the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy Inc. (AURA), under a cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation. This research is supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia through project No. 176005. P. Maggi acknowledges support

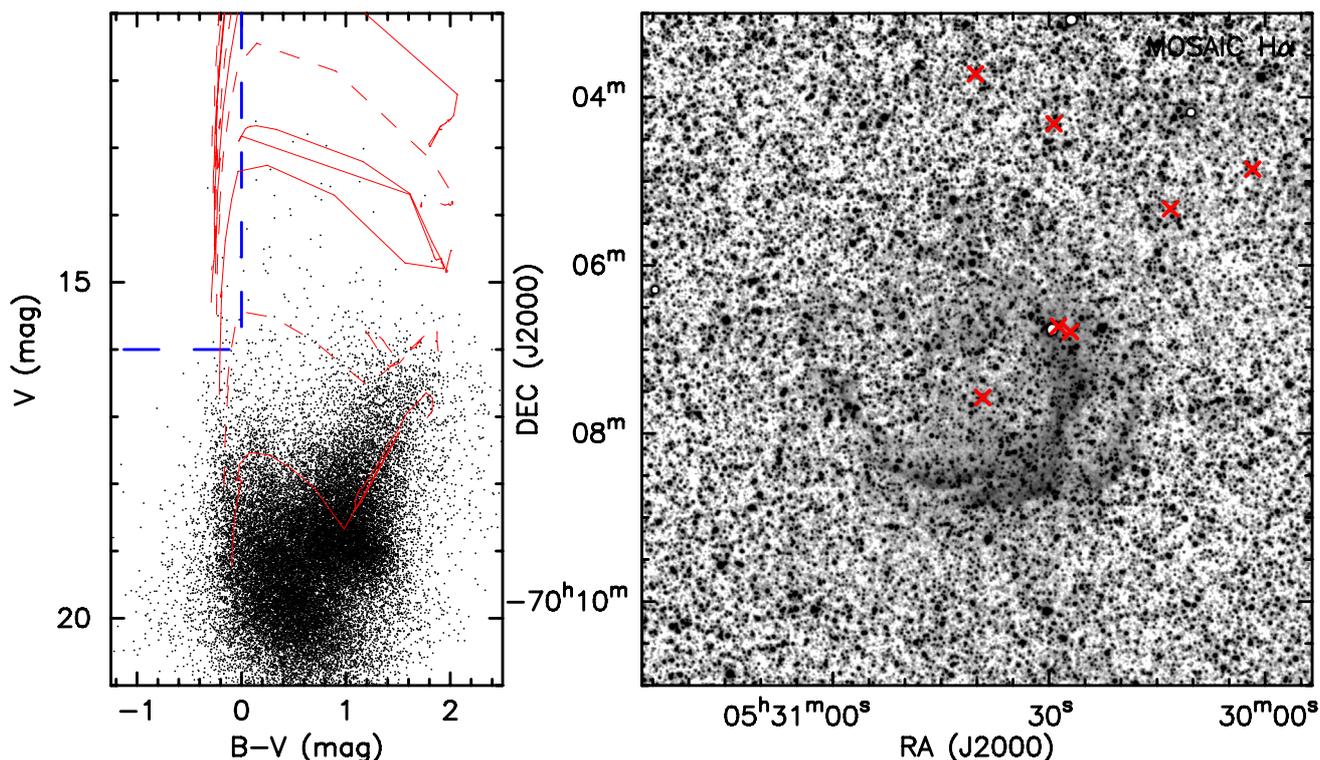


Fig. 8. The left panel shows a $B - V, V$ colour–magnitude diagram from the MCPS (Zaritsky et al. 2004). Stellar evolutionary tracks from Lejeune & Schaerer (2001) are shown as dashed red lines (bottom to top: 5, 15, 25 and 60 M_{\odot}) and solid red lines (bottom to top: 3, 9, 20 and 40 M_{\odot}). Heavy dashed blue lines denote the selection criteria for B-star candidates, which lie in the top left corner of the diagram. The right panel shows the MCELS-2 $H\alpha$ image of the area around SNR J0530–7007. B-star candidates are denoted by overlaid red crosses.

from the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie/Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (BMWI/DLR) grant FKZ 50 OR 1201.

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