

Protoclusters and the Formation of Massive Stars

S. Molinari, Istituto di Fisica dello Spazio Interplanetario-CNR, Via Fosso del Cavaliere, 00133
Roma, Italy
molinari@ifsi.rm.cnr.it

L. Testi, R. Cesaroni, F. Palla, Osservatorio Astrofisico di Arcetri,
Largo E. Fermi 5, 50125 Firenze, Italy
lt, cesa, palla@arcetri.astro.it

J. Brand, Istituto di Radioastronomia-CNR, Via P. Gobetti 101, 40129 Bologna, Italy
brand@ira.bo.cnr.it

We have completed a systematic search for intermediate and high-mass protostellar objects in the northern and part of the southern sky. A homogeneous database exists, containing high spatial resolution line and continuum imaging from 1 μm to 3.6 cm for the most promising candidates of the sample.

We investigate modes and time scales for star formation in these systems. Clustering is present at all wavelengths, indicating clump fragmentation early on in the formation process, and we discuss the implications for the formation of massive objects in the accretion-*vs*-coalescence framework. We also discuss the potential impact of the FIRST mission for our understanding of the formation of protoclusters and massive stars.