

Photometry of symbiotic stars

VIII. EG And, TX CVn, BF Cyg, CH Cyg, AG Dra and AX Per

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Abstract. We present photoelectric U, B, V, R observations of 6 classical symbiotic stars. The main results can be summarized as follows: **EG And** (HD 4174, BD+39 167) : A sinusoidal variation displaying two maxima (minima) during the orbital period was observed also in the R band. **TX CVn** (HD 63173, BD+37 2318): A periodic, \sim 190-day, variation in the U band was found, corresponding to the orbital period of the binary. The shaping and colour indices of the minima suggest that they are probably caused by eclipses. **BF Cyg** (MWC 315, Hen 1747): A wave-like variation in the light curve (LC) indicates that the system has finally returned to quiescence. A minimum of the light was observed at JD 2 450 684.5. **CH Cyg** (HD 182917, BD+49 2999): This star persisted in a quiescent phase till May 1998. The last observations indicate a brightening of \sim 1.5 mag in U , showing that CH Cyg just entered a new active phase. **AG Dra** (SAO 16931, BD+67 922): Our measurements cover the recent eruption centred around JD 2 450 670 (1997.6) and the following minimum. **AX Per** (MWC 411, GCRV 896): The recent photometry revealed a deep minimum lasting about 400 days around JD 2 450 280 (1996.5). The timing of two other minima in the historical LC and colour indices during the recent minimum suggests that they can be caused by eclipses of the inner binary (the symbiotic pair, $P_{\text{orb}}=680$ days) by a giant star ($R \approx 200 - 300 R_{\odot}$) orbiting it in a long-period (46.5-yr) orbit.

Key words: stars - binaries - symbiotic - photometry

1. Introduction

Spectrum of symbiotic stars is generally characterized by three different sources of light: the hot ($T_{\star} \sim 10^5$ K) and the cool ($T_{\text{cool}} \sim 3000$ K) stellar components and a nebular component. Currently they are commonly accepted as long-period interacting binaries. ($P_{\text{orb}} \sim 1-3$ years) consisting of a red giant and a hot compact object, embedded in a gaseous nebula. Many systems show extended quiescent periods which are often alternated by intensive activity.

A very different geometry of the source of the optical light during different levels of activity can be observed in the profiles of LCs (e.g. Skopal 1998). The main aim of this contribution is to present new photometric observations of selected symbiotic stars, and to illustrate such behaviour.

2. Observations

Our photoelectric U, B, V, R measurements were performed using single-channel photoelectric photometers mounted in the Cassegrain foci of 0.6-m reflectors at the Skalnaté Pleso (hereafter SP in Tables) and Stará Lesná observatories (SL). Our new Observations cover the period from about January 1996 to June 1998.

3. Results

3.1. EG And

Differential photometry, EG And – HD 4143 (SAO 63173, BD+37 2318), is compiled in Table 1. Figure 1 shows the LC in the R band. A modulation displaying a double wave during the orbital period is the most significant feature of the EG And LC. The amplitude, $\Delta R_{max} \sim 0.2$ mag, is comparable to that observed in V and B (cf. Skopal 1997a). Currently, the nature of the observed sinusoid in LCs of EG And is seen in the ellipsoidal variation due to tidal distortion of the red giant component (Wilson & Vaccaro 1997). However, the same type

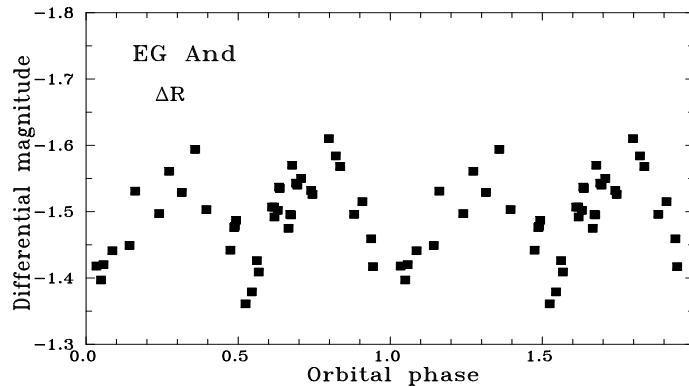


Figure 1. The LC of EG And in R . It consists of the data published by Hric et al. (1996) and those in Table 1. The data were folded with the ephemeris for the primary minima, $Min = JD\ 2\,446\,336.7 + 482 \times E$, which corresponds to the times of inferior conjunction of the cool giant (Skopal 1997).

of variability in U , but with $\Delta U > 0.3$ mag, argues against this interpretation (Wilson & Vaccaro 1997). According to the ionization model for symbiotic stars

(e.g. Seaquist et al. 1984), the H α region, prolonged along the line joining the stars, could produce this wave-like variation by different projections of its optically thick part into the line of sight in different orbital phases (e.g. Skopal 1997a). This interpretation can easily explain the larger amplitude at shorter wavelengths (cf. Fig. 2 of Skopal 1996). However, the first possibility cannot be excluded. As a result, the author is of the opinion that a combination of both approaches is needed to explain this type of LCs of symbiotic stars successfully.

Table 1. U, B, V, R observations of EG And

| Date | JD _{hel} -2 400 000 | U | B | V | ΔR | Obs |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| 12/01/96 | 50095.360 | -1.704 | -1.433 | -1.501 | -1.610 | SP |
| 23/01/96 | 50106.344 | — | -1.476 | -1.465 | -1.584 | SP |
| 30/01/96 | 50113.318 | -1.414 | -1.378 | -1.448 | -1.568 | SP |
| 08/10/96 | 50365.473 | -1.601 | -1.439 | -1.495 | -1.594 | SP |
| 26/10/96 | 50383.368 | -1.430 | -1.322 | -1.384 | -1.503 | SP |
| 03/12/96 | 50421.349 | -1.655 | -1.283 | -1.326 | -1.442 | SP |
| 09/12/96 | 50427.469 | — | — | — | -1.476 | SP |
| 10/12/96 | 50428.497 | -1.456 | -1.310 | -1.364 | -1.478 | SP |
| 12/12/96 | 50430.309 | — | — | — | -1.487 | SP |
| 27/12/96 | 50445.355 | -1.399 | -1.176 | -1.227 | -1.361 | SP |
| 06/01/97 | 50455.355 | — | — | — | -1.415 | SP |
| 14/01/97 | 50463.292 | -1.399 | -1.234 | -1.306 | -1.426 | SP |
| 17/01/97 | 50466.370 | — | — | — | -1.409 | SP |
| 11/02/97 | 50491.234 | -1.536 | -1.328 | -1.382 | -1.492 | SP |
| 11/03/97 | 50519.263 | -1.419 | -1.431 | -1.483 | -1.570 | SP |
| 24/09/97 | 50716.368 | -1.308 | -1.271 | -1.329 | -1.441 | SP |
| 21/10/97 | 50743.580 | -1.919 | -1.304 | -1.330 | -1.449 | SP |
| 30/10/97 | 50752.462 | -1.486 | -1.356 | -1.424 | -1.531 | SP |
| 07/12/97 | 50790.425 | -1.495 | -1.345 | -1.392 | -1.497 | SP |
| 23/12/97 | 50806.380 | -1.481 | -1.392 | -1.463 | -1.561 | SP |
| 12/01/98 | 50826.301 | -1.413 | -1.347 | -1.419 | -1.529 | SP |

3.2. TX CVn

The results of our photometric measurements of TX CVn are in Table 2. Stars BD+382374 (SAO 63223, $V=9.36$, $B-V=0.30$, $U-B=0.03$) and HD 111113 (SAO 63189, $m_v=8.4$, $m_{pg}=9.4$) were used as the comparison and the check, respectively. Figure 2 displays U, B, V LCs compiled from the data published in our previous papers and those in Table 2. The LC reflects a gradual fading of the star's brightness. The most significant feature of our new observations is the minimum ($\Delta U \sim 0.6$ mag, $\Delta B \sim 0.35$ mag, $\Delta V \sim 0.2$ mag) observed at JD 2 450 477.4. A period search in the U data, using Stellingwerf's (1978) method

Table 2. U, B, V, R observations of TX CVn

| Date | JD _{hel} -2 400 000 | U | B | V | ΔR | Obs |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| 12/01/96 | 50095.487 | 11.132 | 10.835 | 10.141 | 0.324 | SP |
| 13/01/96 | 50096.493 | 11.141 | 10.843 | 10.149 | 0.358 | SP |
| 21/01/96 | 50103.698 | 11.162 | 10.838 | 10.133 | 0.349 | SP |
| 22/01/96 | 50104.683 | 11.140 | 10.882 | 10.153 | 0.361 | SP |
| 23/01/96 | 50105.691 | 11.128 | 10.834 | 10.125 | 0.347 | SP |
| 24/01/96 | 50106.692 | 11.005 | 10.803 | 10.098 | 0.327 | SP |
| 30/01/96 | 50113.493 | 10.997 | 10.832 | 10.150 | 0.327 | SP |
| 25/02/96 | 50139.479 | 11.000 | 10.791 | 10.102 | 0.317 | SP |
| 08/03/96 | 50151.472 | 11.028 | 10.825 | 10.144 | 0.350 | SP |
| 18/03/96 | 50161.494 | 11.056 | 10.825 | 10.147 | 0.361 | SP |
| 20/04/96 | 50194.356 | 11.053 | 10.810 | 10.111 | 0.322 | SP |
| 03/12/96 | 50421.503 | 10.481 | 10.498 | 9.859 | 0.084 | SP |
| 09/12/96 | 50427.638 | 10.571 | 10.545 | 9.881 | 0.111 | SP |
| 10/12/96 | 50428.651 | 10.583 | 10.544 | 9.880 | 0.115 | SP |
| 27/12/96 | 50445.618 | 10.600 | 10.556 | 9.914 | 0.145 | SP |
| 06/01/97 | 50455.595 | 10.978 | 10.769 | 10.000 | 0.198 | SP |
| 07/01/97 | 50456.519 | 10.971 | 10.776 | 10.006 | 0.201 | SP |
| 18/01/97 | 50467.546 | 11.092 | 10.742 | 9.967 | 0.178 | SP |
| 02/02/97 | 50482.616 | 11.088 | 10.750 | 9.972 | 0.173 | SP |
| 19/02/97 | 50499.515 | 11.049 | 10.741 | 9.975 | 0.182 | SP |
| 01/03/97 | 50509.418 | 10.552 | 10.536 | 9.850 | 0.079 | SP |
| 10/03/97 | 50518.521 | 10.511 | 10.510 | 9.856 | 0.091 | SP |
| 11/03/97 | 50519.449 | 10.489 | 10.519 | 9.856 | 0.089 | SP |
| 24/04/97 | 50563.351 | 10.329 | 10.402 | 9.791 | 0.073 | SP |
| 15/05/97 | 50584.535 | 10.261 | 10.379 | 9.775 | 0.064 | SP |
| 30/10/97 | 50752.653 | 10.415 | 10.449 | 9.844 | 0.110 | SP |
| 07/12/97 | 50790.696 | 10.573 | 10.516 | 9.898 | 0.158 | SP |
| 23/12/97 | 50806.689 | 10.555 | 10.529 | 9.929 | 0.195 | SP |
| 13/01/98 | 50827.672 | 10.616 | 10.569 | 9.919 | 0.156 | SP |
| 18/02/98 | 50863.489 | 10.691 | 10.594 | 9.950 | 0.190 | SP |
| 26/02/98 | 50871.475 | 10.734 | 10.622 | 9.976 | 0.209 | SP |
| 10/05/98 | 50944.393 | 10.653 | 10.583 | 9.934 | 0.171 | SP |

showed the best period to be ~ 190 days, which is very close to that given by the orbital solution ($P_{\text{orb}} = 198.3 \pm 3.0$; Kenyon & Garcia 1989). The shape, colour indices and timing of the minima suggest that they are caused by eclipses of the hot star by its cool giant companion. This indicates a high inclination of the orbital plane of TX CVn.

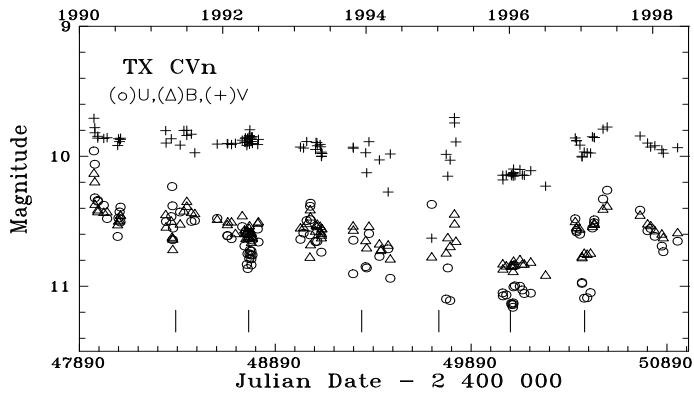


Figure 2. The U, B, V LCs of TX CVn. The observed minima correspond to eclipses of the hot star by the cool giant. Those, better covered by observations, are marked by vertical bars.

3.3. BF Cyg

The photometric measurements of BF Cyg are given in Table 3. Figure 3 shows the U, B, V LCs covering the recent outburst from 1990 to the present quiescent phase. The neighbouring stars HD 183650 (SAO 68384, $V=6.96$, $B-V=0.71$, $U-B=0.34$) and BD+30 3594 (LF2+3011, UBV 16553, $V=9.54$, $B-V=1.20$, $U-B=1.70$) were used as the comparison and check, respectively. A detailed study of this object was published by Skopal et al. (1997). Here we note a strong difference in the shapes of the minima observed during the maximum (JD 2 448 445) – nearly rectangular in profile – and those in quiescence – a sinusoid through the orbital period. This variation reflects the drastic change in the geometry of the source of the optical continuum. During the maximum of the star's brightness it is centred on the hot component simulating its photosphere, while during quiescence it occupies a large volume, the HII zone, in the binary. These changes are known to be connected with the change in temperature of the hot star at different levels of activity: T_* $\sim 8 \times 10^4$ K in quiescent phases and T_* $\sim 1.2 - 1.8 \times 10^4$ K in the maximum (e.g. Fernandez-Castro et al. 1990; Skopal et al. 1997).

3.4. CH Cyg

Our unpublished photometry is summarized in Table 4. Other data obtained at the SP and SL since 1996 have already been published by Skopal (1997b). Stars HD 182691 (SAO 31623, $V=6.525$, $B-V=-0.078$, $U-B=-0.24$) and HD 183123 (SAO 48428, $m_v=8$, $m_{pg}=8.6$) were used as the comparison and check, respectively. Figure 4 displays the U and V LCs covering the period since the 1992 active phase. Our photometry shows that CH Cyg persisted in a quiescent phase

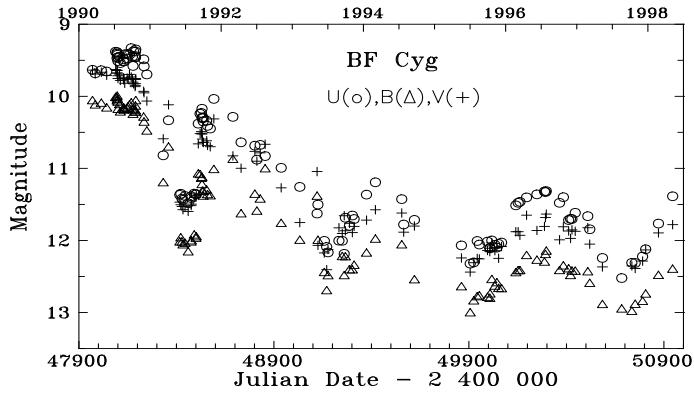


Figure 3. The LCs of BF Cyg covering the recent (1989) outburst and the present quiescence. Note a strong difference in the shape of minima during the active and quiescent phases.

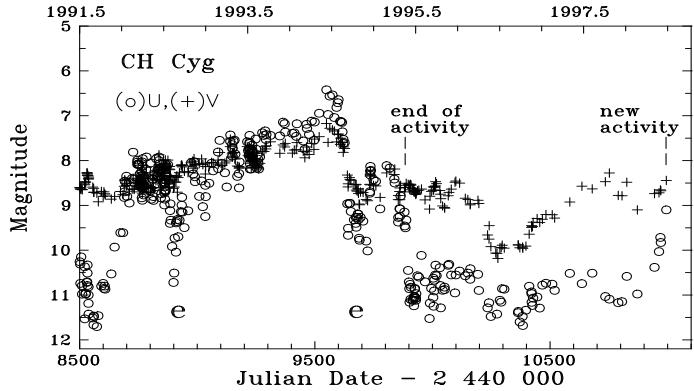


Figure 4. The U and V LCs of CH Cyg covering the period of the recent, 1992, activity, the subsequent quiescence and the beginning of a new active phase. Eclipses in the inner binary are denoted by e .

till May 1998. However, the last observations indicate a brightening of ~ 1.5 mag in U , showing that CH Cyg just entered a new active phase. Detailed studies of this unique triple-star system have recently been published by Skopal et al. (1996a, 1996b, 1998a, 1998b).

3.5. AG Dra

Our measurements cover the recent eruption centred around JD 2 450 670 (1997.6) and the following minimum, just prior to the next expected brightening. Stars

Table 3. U, B, V, R observations of BF Cyg

| Date | JD _{hel} -2 400 000 | U | B | V | ΔR | |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|----|
| 25/02/96 | 50140.588 | 11.513 | 12.440 | 11.879 | 4.108 | SP |
| 09/03/96 | 50152.600 | 11.478 | 12.411 | 11.879 | 4.114 | SP |
| 18/03/96 | 50161.581 | 11.464 | 12.411 | 11.929 | 4.079 | SP |
| 20/04/96 | 50195.533 | 11.402 | 12.201 | 11.650 | 3.878 | SP |
| 13/06/96 | 50248.510 | 11.361 | 12.266 | 11.861 | 3.998 | SP |
| 22/07/96 | 50287.440 | 11.320 | 12.293 | 11.805 | 3.942 | SP |
| 27/07/96 | 50292.442 | 11.329 | 12.187 | 11.682 | 3.966 | SP |
| 31/07/96 | 50296.503 | 11.316 | 12.141 | 11.634 | 3.919 | SP |
| 07/10/96 | 50364.337 | 11.478 | 12.410 | 11.991 | 4.131 | SP |
| 27/10/96 | 50384.293 | 11.399 | 12.345 | 11.810 | 4.077 | SP |
| 23/11/96 | 50411.232 | 11.717 | 12.386 | 11.868 | 4.159 | SP |
| 03/12/96 | 50421.193 | 11.701 | 12.479 | 11.972 | 4.226 | SP |
| 10/12/96 | 50428.202 | 11.703 | 12.417 | 11.853 | 4.158 | SP |
| 27/12/96 | 50445.198 | 11.616 | 12.420 | 11.874 | 4.166 | SP |
| 01/03/97 | 50509.583 | 11.663 | 12.427 | 11.823 | 4.145 | SP |
| 11/03/97 | 50519.612 | 11.845 | 12.587 | 12.051 | 4.324 | SP |
| 15/05/97 | 50584.436 | 12.243 | 12.881 | 12.368 | 4.703 | SP |
| 22/08/97 | 50683.371 | 12.522 | 12.943 | — | — | SP |
| 13/10/97 | 50735.237 | 12.310 | 12.976 | 12.353 | 4.709 | SP |
| 30/10/97 | 50752.241 | 12.313 | 12.879 | 12.389 | 4.720 | SP |
| 07/12/97 | 50790.201 | 12.223 | 12.838 | 12.286 | 4.576 | SP |
| 23/12/97 | 50806.216 | 12.122 | 12.736 | 12.131 | 4.424 | SP |
| 26/02/98 | 50871.642 | 11.766 | 12.477 | 11.895 | 4.233 | SP |
| 10/05/98 | 50944.508 | 11.387 | 12.391 | 11.781 | 3.960 | SP |

BD+67925 (SAO 16952, $V=9.88$, $B-V=0.56$, $U-B=-0.04$) and BD+67923 (SAO 16935, $V=9.46$, $B-V=1.50$, $U-B=1.89$) were used as the comparison and check, respectively. The data are summarized in Table 5. Figure 5 shows the profiles of the U, B, V LCs covering the recent active phase. According to the energy distribution in the spectrum of AG Dra, obtained in the quiescent and active phases (cf. Fig. 5 of Greiner et al. 1997), the brightening in the optical region during eruptions may be due to increased radiation of the nebula (the HII zone). Extension of the ionized zone in the binary is determined through the parameter (e.g. Seaquist et al. 1984)

$$X = \frac{4\pi\mu^2 m_H^2}{\alpha_B} a L_{\text{ph}} \left(\frac{v_\infty}{M} \right)^2, \quad (1)$$

which depends only upon the physical properties of the binary. Other parameters, α_B stands for the total hydrogenic recombination coefficient for case B , μ is the mean molecular weight, v_∞ is the terminal velocity of the wind and m_H is the mass of the hydrogen atom. We calculated the number of hydrogen ionizing

Table 4. U, B, V, R observations of CH Cyg

| Date | JD _{hel} - 2 440 000 | U | B | V | ΔR | Obs |
|----------|----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|------------|-----|
| 15/05/97 | 10584.340 | 10.516 | 10.512 | 8.924 | 0.257 | SP |
| 05/07/97 | 10635.512 | 10.745 | 10.366 | 8.573 | -0.066 | SP |
| 18/08/97 | 10679.440 | 10.514 | 10.295 | 8.632 | 0.035 | SP |
| 13/10/97 | 10735.296 | 11.034 | 10.366 | 8.472 | -0.163 | SP |
| 30/10/97 | 10752.320 | 11.093 | 10.194 | 8.278 | -0.297 | SP |
| 07/12/97 | 10790.284 | 11.170 | 10.548 | 8.776 | 0.108 | SP |
| 23/12/97 | 10806.265 | 11.148 | 10.567 | 8.786 | 0.098 | SP |
| 12/01/98 | 10826.209 | 10.584 | 10.203 | 8.484 | -0.143 | SP |
| 26/02/98 | 10871.585 | 10.978 | 10.730 | 9.100 | 0.316 | SP |
| 10/05/98 | 10944.452 | 10.383 | 10.733 | 8.738 | 0.082 | SP |
| 29/05/98 | 10963.407 | 10.031 | 10.211 | 8.720 | — | SL |
| 04/06/98 | 10969.412 | 9.714 | 9.974 | 8.653 | 0.128 | SP |
| 06/06/98 | 10971.413 | 9.829 | 10.071 | 8.673 | — | SL |
| 29/06/98 | 10994.381 | 9.100 | 9.476 | 8.444 | 0.076 | SP |

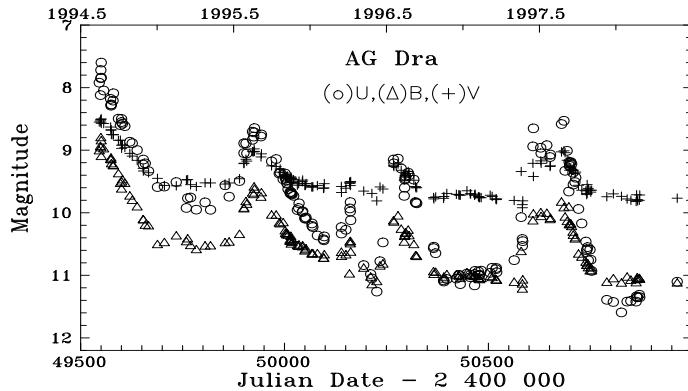


Figure 5. The U, B, V LCs of AG Dra covering the period of the active phase, which began in 1994.5. Recently published data by Tomova & Tomov (1998) and Petrík et al. (1998) are also included.

photons, L_{ph} [photons s⁻¹], as

$$L_{\text{ph}} = \frac{L_h}{\sigma T_{\text{eff}}^4} \pi (hc)^{-1} \int_0^{912} \lambda B_\lambda(T_{\text{eff}}) d\lambda, \quad (2)$$

where L_h [erg s⁻¹] is the total luminosity of the hot star. For $T_{\text{eff}} = 10^5$ K, $L_h = 2500 L_\odot$ (Mikolajewska et al. 1995), Eq. 2 yields $L_{\text{ph}} = 1.8 \times 10^{47}$ photons s⁻¹. Finally, for separation of the stars, $a=350 R_\odot$, the mass loss rate from the gi-

Table 5. U, B, V, R observations of AG Dra

| Date | JD _{hel} -2 400 000 | U | B | V | ΔR | Obs |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|------------|-----|
| 15/12/95 | 50067.601 | 10.209 | 10.643 | 9.583 | – | SP |
| 17/12/95 | 50069.586 | 10.229 | 10.647 | 9.587 | – | SP |
| 28/12/95 | 50080.677 | 10.362 | 10.645 | 9.566 | – | SP |
| 12/01/96 | 50095.543 | 10.423 | 10.716 | 9.610 | – | SP |
| 13/01/96 | 50096.550 | 10.440 | 10.718 | 9.603 | – | SP |
| 14/01/96 | 50097.599 | 10.378 | 10.663 | 9.535 | – | SP |
| 25/02/96 | 50139.656 | 10.332 | 10.686 | 9.675 | – | SL |
| 25/02/96 | 50139.524 | 10.229 | 10.623 | 9.579 | – | SP |
| 07/03/96 | 50150.565 | 10.272 | 10.664 | 9.607 | -0.720 | SP |
| 17/03/96 | 50160.461 | 9.931 | 10.459 | 9.530 | -0.786 | SP |
| 18/03/96 | 50161.440 | 9.980 | 10.486 | 9.566 | -0.732 | SP |
| 20/04/96 | 50194.311 | 10.837 | 10.876 | 9.653 | -0.807 | SP |
| 30/05/96 | 50234.372 | 10.774 | 10.842 | 9.588 | -0.843 | SP |
| 06/06/96 | 50241.500 | 10.474 | 10.809 | 9.620 | -0.774 | SP |
| 13/07/96 | 50278.541 | 9.135 | 10.041 | 9.220 | -1.145 | SP |
| 21/07/96 | 50286.408 | 9.292 | 10.254 | 9.321 | -1.077 | SP |
| 09/08/96 | 50305.357 | 9.401 | 10.358 | 9.371 | -1.040 | SP |
| 08/10/96 | 50365.608 | 10.565 | 10.933 | 9.757 | -0.719 | SP |
| 09/10/96 | 50366.342 | 10.542 | 10.976 | 9.778 | – | SL |
| 13/10/96 | 50370.627 | 10.646 | 10.944 | 9.747 | -0.708 | SP |
| 03/12/96 | 50421.454 | 11.051 | 10.985 | 9.705 | -0.694 | SP |
| 09/12/96 | 50427.584 | 10.996 | 10.997 | 9.712 | -0.701 | SP |
| 10/12/96 | 50428.689 | 10.995 | 11.003 | 9.716 | -0.704 | SP |
| 29/12/96 | 50447.530 | 10.972 | 10.952 | 9.648 | -0.781 | SP |
| 06/01/97 | 50455.636 | 11.030 | 10.999 | 9.699 | -0.687 | SP |
| 07/01/97 | 50456.586 | 10.990 | 10.997 | 9.697 | -0.697 | SP |
| 17/01/97 | 50466.514 | 10.980 | 11.004 | 9.716 | -0.688 | SP |
| 18/01/97 | 50467.626 | 10.928 | 10.996 | 9.702 | -0.691 | SP |
| 26/01/97 | 50475.612 | 10.939 | 11.036 | 9.741 | -0.673 | SP |
| 02/02/97 | 50482.498 | 10.925 | 11.041 | 9.759 | -0.655 | SP |
| 01/03/97 | 50509.524 | 10.879 | 11.027 | 9.738 | -0.683 | SP |
| 10/03/97 | 50518.420 | 10.902 | 11.061 | 9.780 | -0.640 | SP |
| 11/03/97 | 50519.500 | 10.882 | 11.071 | 9.790 | -0.649 | SP |
| 24/04/97 | 50563.417 | 10.758 | 11.102 | 9.803 | -0.651 | SP |
| 15/05/97 | 50584.384 | 10.454 | 11.064 | 9.809 | -0.622 | SP |
| 18/08/97 | 50679.503 | 8.582 | 9.820 | 9.027 | -1.372 | SP |
| 21/10/97 | 50743.613 | 10.548 | 10.804 | 9.634 | -0.838 | SP |
| 07/12/97 | 50790.640 | 11.391 | 11.102 | 9.743 | -0.674 | SP |
| 23/12/97 | 50806.600 | 11.426 | 11.045 | 9.698 | -0.704 | SP |
| 12/01/98 | 50826.534 | 11.593 | 11.114 | 9.737 | -0.669 | SP |
| 12/02/98 | 50863.562 | 11.336 | 11.060 | 9.712 | -0.678 | SP |
| 26/02/98 | 50871.531 | 11.349 | 11.054 | 9.716 | -0.676 | SP |
| 29/05/98 | 50963.380 | 11.102 | 11.113 | 9.762 | – | SL |

ant star, $\dot{M} = 2 \times 10^{-7} M_{\odot} \text{ yr}^{-1}$, and the terminal velocity of the wind of $20\text{-}30 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ (cf. Mikolajewska et al. 1995; Greiner et al. 1997), the parameter

$$X > 10, \quad (3)$$

which corresponds to the *open* HII zone (cf. Seaquist et al. 1984). Consequently, the hot star wind, which developed during the outburst (Viotti et al. 1994), will consume the excess of the L_{ph} photons (note that the HII region is open) and thus produce a surplus of recombinations in addition to the quiescent phase, resulting in an increased flux of optical photons. However, a quantitative model is needed to verify this idea.

3.6. AX Per

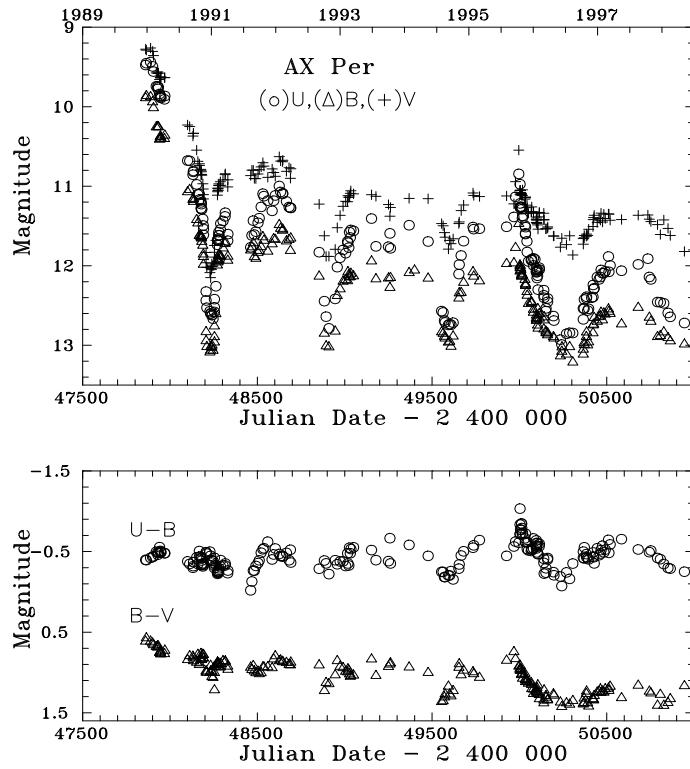


Figure 6. Top: The LCs of AX Per from its maximum to quiescence. A very broad minimum around $\sim\text{JD } 2\,450\,280$ results probably from eclipse of the symbiotic pair by a giant star. Bottom: The $B - V$ and $U - B$ colour indices demonstrate reddening of the object during eclipses.

The recent, 1995.78 to 1998.35, measurements of AX Per in the U, B, V, R bands are given in Table 6. Star BD+54 331 (HD 9839, SAO 22444, $V=7.43$, $B-V=1.02$, $U-B=0.63$) and the neighbouring star ($\alpha_{1950} = 01^{\text{h}} 33.5^{\text{m}}$, $\delta_{1950} = 53^{\circ} 59'.5$) were used as the comparison and check, respectively. We measured the check star with respect to the comparison and found its brightness as $V=9.48$, $B-V=1.37$, $U-B=1.20$. Figure 6 shows the U, B, V LCs obtained at our observatories. The presented photometry revealed a deep minimum lasting about 400 days centred at $\sim\text{JD } 2\,450\,280$ (1996.5). Two other minima, similar in profile to that recently observed, were recorded around JD 2 433 280 (1950.0) and JD 2 416 280 (1903.5) (Wenzel 1956; Lindsay 1932). The timing and shapes of these minima and the significant reddening of the light measured during the recent minimum suggest that the minima could be eclipses caused by a third giant star ($R \approx 200 - 300 R_{\odot}$) orbiting the inner binary (the symbiotic pair) in a long-period (46.5-yr) orbit.

Table 6. U, B, V, R observations of AX Per

| Date | JD _{hel} -2 440 000 | U | B | V | ΔR | Obs |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| 14/10/95 | 50005.265 | 11.03 | 12.011 | 11.055 | – | SL |
| 15/10/95 | 50006.520 | 11.268 | 12.043 | 11.099 | 2.972 | SP |
| 17/10/95 | 50008.485 | 11.264 | 12.031 | 11.089 | 2.964 | SP |
| 21/10/95 | 50012.282 | 11.269 | 12.118 | 11.104 | – | SL |
| 21/10/95 | 50012.302 | 11.258 | 12.101 | 11.094 | – | SL |
| 22/10/95 | 50013.465 | 11.289 | 12.081 | 11.118 | 2.977 | SP |
| 25/10/95 | 50016.512 | 11.402 | 12.111 | 11.115 | 2.988 | SP |
| 26/10/95 | 50017.606 | 11.372 | 12.103 | 11.045 | 2.915 | SP |
| 09/11/95 | 50031.466 | 11.494 | 12.158 | 11.162 | 2.972 | SP |
| 12/11/95 | 50034.592 | 11.592 | 12.212 | 11.146 | 2.948 | SP |
| 13/11/95 | 50035.211 | 11.515 | 12.235 | 11.136 | – | SL |
| 13/11/95 | 50034.458 | 11.602 | 12.218 | 11.142 | 2.961 | SP |
| 21/11/95 | 50043.402 | 11.693 | 12.310 | 11.237 | 2.999 | SP |
| 22/11/95 | 50044.389 | 11.827 | 12.357 | 11.269 | 3.024 | SP |
| 29/11/95 | 50051.442 | 11.946 | 12.460 | 11.340 | 3.091 | SP |
| 15/12/95 | 50067.430 | 11.929 | 12.436 | 11.326 | 3.109 | SP |
| 17/12/95 | 50069.499 | 11.918 | 12.455 | 11.321 | 3.111 | SP |
| 18/12/95 | 50070.522 | 11.925 | 12.446 | 11.260 | 3.066 | SP |
| 28/12/95 | 50080.250 | 11.907 | 12.570 | 11.323 | – | SL |
| 28/12/95 | 50080.370 | 11.996 | 12.533 | 11.341 | 3.124 | SP |
| 05/01/96 | 50088.513 | 11.920 | – | – | 3.045 | SP |
| 13/01/96 | 50096.245 | 12.080 | 12.641 | 11.419 | – | SL |
| 13/01/96 | 50096.386 | 12.035 | 12.673 | 11.455 | 3.221 | SP |
| 14/01/96 | 50097.508 | 12.07: | 12.61: | 11.40: | 3.235 | SP |
| 15/01/96 | 50098.210 | 12.051 | 12.657 | 11.426 | – | SL |

Table 6. continued

| Date | JD _{hel} - 2 440 000 | <i>U</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>V</i> | ΔR | Obs |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|------------|-----|
| 16/01/96 | 50099.226 | 12.082 | 12.656 | 11.455 | — | SL |
| 17/01/96 | 50100.414 | 12.154 | 12.643 | 11.468 | — | SL |
| 21/01/96 | 50104.210 | 12.125 | 12.731 | 11.486 | — | SL |
| 22/01/96 | 50105.376 | 12.057 | 12.525 | 11.385 | 3.185 | SP |
| 23/01/96 | 50106.293 | 12.3:: | 12.77: | 11.54: | 3.29: | SP |
| 30/01/96 | 50113.374 | 12.02: | 12.59: | 11.33: | 3.147 | SP |
| 31/01/96 | 50114.221 | 12.048 | 12.644 | 11.332 | — | SL |
| 25/02/96 | 50139.245 | 12.371 | 12.782 | 11.419 | — | SL |
| 25/02/96 | 50139.317 | 12.307 | 12.667 | 11.339 | 3.250 | SP |
| 27/02/96 | 50141.336 | 12.402 | 12.628 | 11.425 | 3.246 | SP |
| 08/03/96 | 50151.254 | 12.570 | 12.808 | 11.536 | 3.353 | SP |
| 09/03/96 | 50152.266 | 12.535 | 12.828 | 11.535 | — | SL |
| 18/03/96 | 50161.318 | 12.453 | 12.854 | 11.527 | — | SL |
| 18/03/96 | 50161.617 | 12.412 | 12.831 | 11.512 | 3.314 | SP |
| 20/04/96 | 50194.562 | 12.632 | 12.877 | 11.626 | 3.399 | SP |
| 23/04/96 | 50197.561 | 12.689 | 12.895 | 11.626 | 3.408 | SP |
| 30/05/96 | 50234.506 | 12.929 | 13.119 | 11.766 | 3.486 | SP |
| 07/06/96 | 50242.464 | 12.990 | 13.062 | 11.653 | 3.460 | SP |
| 08/06/96 | 50243.492 | 12.8:: | 13.01:: | 11.6:: | — | SL |
| 04/07/96 | 50269.427 | 12.856 | 13.097 | 11.734 | 3.518 | SP |
| 22/07/96 | 50287.521 | 12.842 | 13.003 | 11.623 | 3.445 | SP |
| 09/08/96 | 50305.553 | 12.846 | 13.197 | 11.864 | 3.620 | SP |
| 08/10/96 | 50365.533 | 12.674 | 13.097 | 11.729 | 3.495 | SP |
| 08/10/96 | 50365.563 | 12.536 | 13.035 | 11.658 | — | SL |
| 13/10/96 | 50370.575 | 12.539 | 12.953 | 11.649 | 3.439 | SP |
| 14/10/96 | 50371.275 | 12.424 | 12.97:: | 11.62:: | — | SL |
| 26/10/96 | 50383.309 | 12.408 | 12.876 | 11.629 | 3.409 | SP |
| 27/10/96 | 50384.232 | 12.389 | 12.819 | 11.602 | 3.432 | SP |
| 02/11/96 | 50390.348 | 12.5:: | 12.9:: | 11.618 | — | SL |
| 08/11/96 | 50396.364 | 12.5:: | 12.94: | 11.541 | — | SL |
| 25/11/96 | 50413.222 | 12.402 | — | — | 3.292 | SP |
| 03/12/96 | 50421.403 | 12.392 | 12.829 | 11.507 | 3.281 | SP |
| 04/12/96 | 50422.259 | 12.241 | 12.730 | 11.420 | — | SL |
| 07/12/96 | 50425.246 | 12.292 | 12.721 | 11.394 | — | SL |
| 10/12/96 | 50428.330 | 12.283 | 12.636 | 11.365 | 3.197 | SP |
| 27/12/96 | 50445.458 | 12.143 | 12.684 | 11.454 | 3.235 | SP |
| 07/01/97 | 50456.337 | 12.172 | 12.626 | 11.406 | 3.205 | SP |
| 14/01/97 | 50463.339 | 12.142 | 12.617 | 11.427 | 3.164 | SP |
| 18/01/97 | 50467.330 | 12.052 | 12.571 | 11.338 | 3.161 | SP |
| 26/01/97 | 50475.235 | 12.094 | 12.667 | 11.450 | 3.216 | SP |
| 03/02/97 | 50483.387 | 12.092 | 12.581 | 11.351 | 3.163 | SP |
| 11/02/97 | 50491.276 | 12.070 | 12.594 | 11.406 | 3.175 | SP |

Table 6. continued

| Date | JD _{hel} - 2 440 000 | <i>U</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>V</i> | ΔR | Obs |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|------------|-----|
| 01/03/97 | 50509.639 | 11.884 | 12.529 | 11.348 | 3.112 | SP |
| 04/03/97 | 50512.271 | 12.076 | 12.559 | 11.350 | 3.151 | SP |
| 11/03/97 | 50519.318 | 11.996 | 12.585 | 11.427 | 3.185 | SP |
| 15/05/97 | 50584.478 | 12.063 | 12.717 | 11.418 | 3.161 | SP |
| 18/08/97 | 50679.578 | 11.983 | 12.509 | 11.364 | 3.103 | SP |
| 13/10/97 | 50735.352 | 11.91: | — | 11.36: | 3.144 | SP |
| 21/10/97 | 50743.542 | 12.141 | 12.633 | 11.415 | 3.211 | SP |
| 30/10/97 | 50752.528 | 12.172 | 12.684 | 11.444 | 3.224 | SP |
| 07/12/97 | 50790.497 | 12.456 | 12.876 | 11.483 | 3.253 | SP |
| 23/12/97 | 50806.443 | 12.459 | 12.864 | 11.607 | 3.386 | SP |
| 12/01/98 | 50826.354 | 12.472 | 12.818 | 11.424 | 3.258 | SP |
| 05/02/98 | 50850.381 | 12.593 | 12.890 | 11.530 | — | SL |
| 18/02/98 | 50863.364 | 12.642 | 12.930 | 11.620 | 3.431 | SP |
| 10/05/98 | 50944.544 | 12.72:: | 12.97:: | 11.82: | 3.57: | SP |

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