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LIDAR STUDIES OF THE MIDDLE ATMOSPHERE.

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Contents

1 The Atmosphere	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Atmospheric Structure.....	2
1.2.1 Composition.....	2
1.2.2 Temperature Structure.....	3
1.2.3 Atmospheric Stability and Gravity Waves.....	5
1.2.4 Dynamics.....	7
1.3 The Stratosphere.....	8
1.3.1 The Stratospheric Aerosol Layer.....	9
1.3.2 The Ozone Layer.....	11
1.4 Conclusions.....	13
2 Light Scattering and Absorption in the Atmosphere.	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Atomic and Molecular Scattering.....	15
2.2.1 Rayleigh Theory.....	15
2.2.2 Attenuation due to Molecular Scattering.....	21
2.2.3 Raman Scattering.....	22
2.2.4 Brillouin Scattering.....	25
2.2.5 Doppler Effects.....	27
2.2.6 Fluorescence and Resonant Scattering.....	30
2.3 Mie Scattering.....	30
2.4 Conclusions.....	34
3 LIDAR Systems, An Overview	35
3.1 Introduction.....	35
3.2 Historical Overview.....	35
3.3 Lasers in LIDAR.....	37
3.4 Aerosol and Cloud LIDAR.....	38
3.5 Modern Rayleigh LIDAR.....	39
3.6 Differential Absorption LIDAR (DIAL).....	42
3.7 Raman LIDAR.....	43
3.8 Resonance LIDAR.....	45
3.9 High Spectral Resolution LIDAR.....	46
3.10 The LIDAR Equation.....	47
3.11 Conclusions.....	50

4 Equipment	51
4.1 Introduction	51
4.2 Laser	51
4.2.2 Laser Specifications	52
4.2.3 Laser Pulse Repetition Frequency Considerations.....	52
4.2.4 Theory of the Copper Vapour Laser.....	54
4.3 Optics	55
4.3.1 Introduction.....	55
4.3.2 Design Requirements	55
4.3.3 Optical System.....	55
4.3.4 Optical Components.....	57
4.4 Telescope.....	58
4.5 Shutter System	59
4.5.1 Mirror Shutter	59
4.5.2 Blanking Shutter	61
4.5.3 Laser Shutter	62
4.5.4 Shutter Switching Speed	63
4.6 Electronic Control System.....	65
4.7 Data Collection System	68
4.8 Conclusions.....	69
5 Telescope Production	70
5.1 Introduction	70
5.2 Design Requirements.....	70
5.3 Telescope Specifications.....	71
5.4 Classification of Errors	73
5.5 Primary Mirror Manufacture.....	73
5.6 The Polishing Machine	76
5.7 The Tool	77
5.7.1 Grinding the Tool	78
5.7.2 Testing the Tool.....	79
5.8 Grinding the Primary Mirror.....	79
5.9 Primary Mirror Testing - Mechanical	80
5.10 Primary Mirror Testing - Optical	80
5.11 Electroless Nickel Plating	84
5.12 Further Shape Correction	86
5.13 Secondary Mirror	87
5.14 Conclusions.....	88

6 Fluorescence From Optical Components	89
6.1 Introduction	89
6.2 Available Information	89
6.3 Fluorescence Testing	90
6.4 Results	91
6.5 Modifications to Optics	94
6.6 Conclusions	94
7 Data Analysis Techniques	95
7.1 Introduction	95
7.2 Raw Data	95
7.3 Separation of Background and Molecular Scattering Signals	98
7.4 Scattering Ratios	102
7.5 Density	104
7.6 Temperature	106
7.7 Uncertainties in Temperature Profiles	109
7.8 Conclusions	112
8 Data Analysis	113
8.1 Preliminary Examination	113
8.2 Shutter calibration	114
8.3 Background and Backscattered Laser Light Levels	119
8.4 Scattering Ratio Profiles	123
8.5 Temperature profiles	128
8.6 Conclusions	131
9 Summary and Future Work	133
9.1 Summary	133
9.2 Future Work	134
Appendices	
A Data Summary	A-1
B Nightly Scattering Ratio Profiles	B-1
C Monthly Scattering Ratio Profiles	C-1
D Monthly Temperature Profiles	D-1
E Nightly Temperature Profiles	E-1
References	R-1

Abstract

The work described in this thesis includes the design, construction, operation and data analysis for a stratospheric Rayleigh lidar (LIght Detection And Ranging) system.

This thesis first reviews the areas of atmospheric physics and light propagation in the earth's atmosphere. A review of the history and present state of lidar techniques is also given.

The present Lidar system was designed to operate as a Doppler lidar, however as the first stage of this project it has been set up to operate in a similar manner to a more conventional stratospheric Rayleigh lidar.

This lidar system has a number of unique design features. These include the use of a single 1 m diameter telescope for transmission of the laser pulse and reception of the backscattered light. Associated with this is a high speed rotating shutter system that switches the optical system from transmit to receive mode. A detailed description of the equipment is given. This includes details of the production of the telescope and of the operation of the lidar's electronic control system.

A problem encountered with fluorescence from optical components that are common to both the transmit and receive optical paths is discussed, along with a solution.

The methods used for the analysis of Rayleigh lidar data are discussed. Scattering ratio and temperature profiles are calculated for data collected during the period 10 March 1992 to 11 May 1993.

The scattering ratio profiles clearly show the reduction in the scattering from the stratospheric aerosol layer. This is due to the removal of the aerosol injected by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. The measured relative density profiles show very good agreement with the CIRA model densities. Agreement with the model of Fleming et al is not as good.

Calculated temperature profiles generally agree well with the model temperatures.