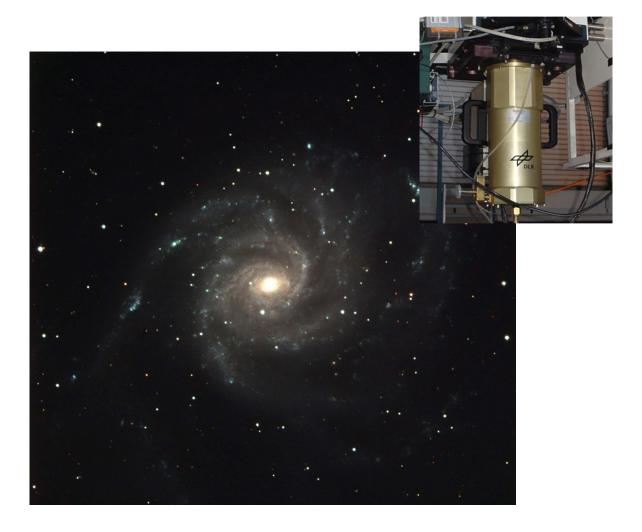
# Observing with the DLR-MKIII CCD Camera at the CA 1.23m Telescope



Version: 2.02 Date: Feb 20, 2025 Author: Stefano Mottola German Aerospace Center (DLR)

stefano.mottola@dlr.de

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# 1 Observation Guide Using the DLR-MKIII Camera

# **1.1 Introduction**

The DLR-MKIII camera is a fast-readout, low noise, cryogenically cooled scientific camera presently installed at the CA 1.23m telescope. It is equipped with an e2v CCD231-84-NIMO-BI-DD CCD sensor with 4k x 4k pixels and 15 $\mu$ m pitch. The sensor has 4 output amplifiers that can be used individually or in parallel for faster readout. The chip is antireflection coated (ER1) and is manufactured out of deep-depletion high-resistivity silicon. This technology maximizes the quantum efficiency of the detector especially in the red and near-infrared spectral bands. The usable dynamic range of the camera is limited by the capacity of the video processor which is linear up to about 32k DN (regardless of readout speed or binning setting).

In conjunction with the Bonn shutter installed at the 1.23m telescope, exposure times as low as 0.1s can be achieved with a homogeneity error less than 1%. The shutter fast speed facilitates the acquisition of bright sources and sky flats. The camera acquisition software supports a shutterless frame-transfer readout mode, which can be used in conjunction with a frame-transfer mask placed in the filterwheel to achieve concurrent exposure and readout of a sub-region of the CCD. This readout mode is useful in those cases where high time resolution (as in the case of planetary occultations) is necessary. As an additional benefit when using the frame-transfer readout, the shutter wear and tear associated with lengthy short-exposure sequences is completely avoided.

The camera is installed at the telescope's Ritchey-Chretien focus with no field corrector, and has a plate scale of 0.314"/pixel. The corresponding field of view (FOV) is 21.4' x 21.4'. The 4-position filterwheel accepts circular filters with a diameter of 100 mm that cover the whole FOV. Alternatively, an 8-position filterwheel can be installed, that accepts 50 mm circular filters, which only cover the central region of the CCD.

# 1.2 Setup

# **1.2.1** Prepare telescope and camera for observation

The DLR camera can be operated locally or remotely. In both cases the procedure for the observations is basically the same, as remote observations are performed through Windows Remote Desktop sessions, which seamless relay the remote computer's desktop. The only difference is represented by the necessity of properly configuring the remote session in case of remote observations. In particular, special certificates need to be installed on the remote client computer in order to access the camera acquisition computer (*Andor-controller*) and the telescope control computer (*wastro12*). The necessary certificates, along with installation instructions, can be obtained from the CAHA IT staff. Figure 1 shows a sketch of the network topology for the remote observations.

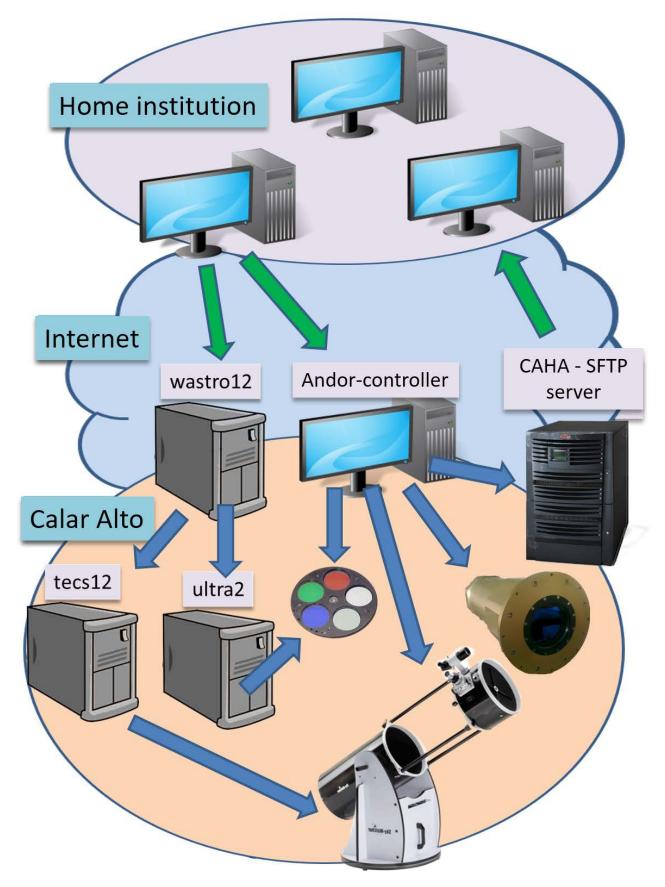


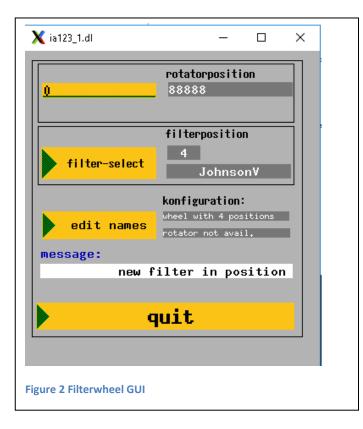
Figure 1 Network topology

Two Remote Desktop sessions are needed to perform the observations:

• The first one to the Windows 11 PC Andor-controller. This computer controls the acquisition, the telescope and filterwheel operations. The CCD camera is attached directly to this computer, while the telescope and filterwheel are controlled by Andor-controller by requesting *rts2* services. *rts2* is a distributed Telescope Control System (TCS) developed by Petr Kubanek, which runs on various workstations in Calar Alto, and that provides services for operating and retrieving status information from the telescope and the filterwheel. In turn, *rts2* communicates with the telescope by using the telescope's native TECS protocol. *rts2* is also capable of controlling the acquisition of the DLR camera. However, this mode of operation is not supported by DLR.

The *Andor-controller* PC can be accessed through a Remote Desktop session by logging on as user *obs13* onto *Andor-controller.caha.es*, after the proper certificates have been installed (see above). The access password and detailed Remote Desktop configuration instructions can be obtained from the Calar Alto IT staff.

• The second Remote Desktop session connects to *wastro12*. This Windows PC computer solely acts as a gateway to the Sun workstation *ultra2*, to which the filterwheel is directly connected. This gateway configuration is necessary because Solaris - the *ultra2* operating system - does not support the Remote Desktop protocol, and its native X-Windows protocol is not routed through the Calar Alto firewall for security reasons. The *wastro12* PC is also used to start and monitor the TECS services on the *tecs12* workstation – a second Sun workstation - to which the telescope control hardware is directly interfaced. *tecs12* runs the telescope graphical user interface (GUI), which allows switching the telescope and dome on/off and allows manual pointing of the telescope.



The *wastro12* PC can be accessed through a Remote Desktop session by logging on *wastro12.caha.es*. The *ultra2* and *tecs12* workstations can be accessed from *wastro12* by using the Windows X-terminal server application MobaXterm. The respective access credentials can be obtained by the Calar Alto IT staff.

Note: please make sure that the tcp/ip ports used by the Remote Desktop protocol are routed through the firewall of your home institution. In case of doubts please contact your system administrator.

X 1.23m telescope Control							2	×
File Commands E	merg. Dome E	merg. Building	Emerg. Telescope	Emerg. Computer	REMOTE			Help
		<i>1.23m Telescope</i> <i>at</i> <i>Calar Alto Observatory</i> 13:09:18.7 23:59:59.9 37:13:19						
Main Drives	2 Avis	hydi	raulic : OFF					
Vine Control of State				eMail: kzimmermann@	@mpia.de			
			Idle Observe	Balance Mai	intenance			
Figure 3 Telescope	GUI							

# **1.2.2** Set up *ultra2*

- Close any existing filterwheel GUI on *wastro12* by pressing the Quit button (see Figure 2) and confirming.
- Close any existing *ultra2* terminal window.
- Start a new *ultra2* terminal window on *wastro12* by using the *MobaXterm* X-Windows application. The access credentials for *ultra2* can be obtained from the Calar Alto IT staff.
- On the *ultra2* terminal window appearing on *wastro12* after log-in, check that no instances of the *ia123* process are running, otherwise anomalies in the filterwheel operations may arise. This check can be performed by typing **ps** -al in the *ultra2* terminal window. In case an instance of the *ia123* process is still running, it should be killed by typing kill PID, where PID is the process ID corresponding to *ia123* as listed in **ps** -al.
- Start the filterwheel GUI by typing **ia123&** in the *ultra2* terminal window.

#### **1.2.3** Set up *tecs12*

- Check whether the telescope GUI is running on *wastro12* (see Figure 3), in which case, exit it.
- Check whether the "start tecs" GUI is running on wastro12 (see Figure 4), in which case, exit it.
- Start a new *tecs12* terminal window on *wastro12* by using the *MobaXterm* X-Windows application. The access credentials for *tecs12* can be obtained from the Calar Alto IT staff.
- Launch the "start tecs" GUI by typing start on the tecs12 terminal window.

$\nabla$	start tecs
🔶 CI	irrent version
💠 pr	evious version
💸 te	st version
💠 ur	nder develop (staff only)
	start tecs
	start gui
š	

# **1.2.4** Restart the *rts2* system



• Restart the *rts2* system by pressing the "Restart RTS2" icon **Construct** on the *wastro12* desktop. This step synchronizes the information in the *rts2* system with the TECS database. It also interrogates TECS about the model of the filterwheel installed (4-position or 8-position). The initialization procedure asks for user confirmation that the filterwheel detected is indeed the one meant to be installed.

The initialization routine displays verbose information during this process, which in general lasts 2 minutes, during which several warning messages might be displayed. The user should not be bothered by those messages. Also, the *"start gui"* button on the *start tecs* GUI (Figure 4) turns red. At the end of initialization, the user is prompted to press a key on *wastro12* to close the initialization window. After a short while, the *"start gui"* button on the *start tecs* GUI should turn green again. Should the *"start gui"* button not turn green within 4 minutes of the start of initialization, please try to start the *rts2* initialization procedure again.

#### 1.2.5 Set up Andor-controller

- Log into Andor-controller with the credentials provided by the CAHA IT staff.
- Create on *Andor-controller* a directory for the night. The images should be stored locally on drive e:\ . Please follow exactly the naming convention from existing folders. The date on the directory name should correspond to the beginning of the night.
- Create a directory for the night on the SFTP server *cadata.caha.es*, where the data will automatically be uploaded upon acquisition. The credentials for logging on the SFTP server can be obtained from the CAHA staff. The directory on the SFTP server can be created with any SFTP client from any computer. The most convenient way, however, is to use the FileZilla application on *Andor-controller*. Please follow the naming convention from the previous nights.

Hydraulics     On     Cast GRB update       Drives     off     GRB reception       Tracking     off     Auto-observe       M1 cover     dosed     Last packet time stamp       Ring temp. (C)     4.5     Last packet deltaT	
Tracking     off     Auto-observe       M1 cover     dosed     Last packet time stamp       Ring temp. (C)     4.5     Last packet deltaT	
M1 cover     dosed     Last packet time stamp       Ring temp. (C)     4.5     Last packet deltaT	
Ring temp. (C) 4.5 Last packet deltaT	
s. Filter Wheel (W0) Show non visible events	
Current filter 3 Show only visible tonight	
JohnsonI 5 Min GRB altitude	
Free 6 Current GRB detection	
IohnsonR 7	
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Target 0.	.0
16 01 26.0 LST 17 43 38.1 Alt 89.9 Az 0.0 Actual 93	3.1
Focus pos (mm)       46.699       GRB DEC       Copy         et Coords.       01 42 12.1       RA (J2K)       01 40 44.0       dRA/dt ("/min)       0.00       Airmass       1.         +37 13 16       Dec (J2K)       +37 05 42       dDec/dt ("/min)       0.00       Target       0.00	o0

• Start the RTS2-monitor application, which provides a display of the current telescope and filterwheel status (see Figure 5). After the *rts2* initialization performed on *wastro12* in a previous step, the 3 LEDs on the left-hand side of RTS2-monitor should be lit green. If, after 2 minutes of *rts2* initialization these LEDs are still grayed-out or yellow, please perform the *rts2* initialization again. Automatic GRB notifications are no longer supported. Therefore, the GRB LED is always grayed out.

DLR-MKIII X1 0 X2 4096   Output Filename Y1 0 Y2 4112   X:2025\20250129 X-bin 2 Y-bin 2   Test.fits Change Speed normal Change   Exposure Parameters Speed normal Change   CDD Temperature Control Image CCD Temperature (C) = -99.9   Type Dark Test Dewar dT (C) = 0.8   Ibject Name:   Last Name Last Name   Comment: Image User Defs 1   System Messages Stop Readout   Press Statt for a new exposure   Exposure Time Left (s): Readout Progress (%):	Hardware	Utilities	V 2.08	Quit
Output Filename   e:\2025\20250129   Test fits   Change   Exposure Parameters   Time   0.000   (s)   Normal   Type   Dark   Test   Object Name:   Comment:   System Messages   Press Start for a new exposure   Exposure Time Left (s):   Readout   Vised Disk Space (%): 7   System Monktor Jan 30 08:33:47 - RPC listening on port 4747 Jan 30 08:33:410 - Warning! In test mode images will	Camera Model		CCD Configuration	
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• Check that the filter positions shown on RTS2-monitor show the correct number and labels

of the filters.

- Perform a test operation of the filterwheel from *Andor-controller* by issuing an '*ia\_filter n*' command in a CMD console. Check in *rts2-monitor* that the desired filter position is reached.
- Start the acquisition program by clicking on the *AstPhot* icon on *Andor-controller* and select File/Acquire. You will be prompted for an observer



name, an image name prefix and the folder in which the images are stored before the GUI appears. The camera GUI *start\_ccd* (Figure 6) has a similar functionality as the one for the old camera on *ultra2*. Images acquired will be displayed automatically in *AstPhot*. It is advisable to reduce the size of the displayed image in *Astphot* in order to speed up the update of the remote screen. This is done by the command Window/Zoom/Squeeze in *AstPhot* (or the shortcut Ctrl-).

• Launch the *start\_SFTP* applet (Figure 7) by clicking on the respective icon on the *Andor-controller* desktop. Make sure that the name of the destination directory shown in the field *'Directory on SFTP server'* is correct and exists on the *cadata.caha.es* server. This will ensure that the images acquired are automatically uploaded to the SFTP server. Note that eventual existing files in the destination directory on the SFTP server with the same file name as the images to be copied will not be overwritten. Instead, the program will rename the newer files by appending a serial number. However, since uploading files to an already populated directory is frequently the sign of a mistake in the directory naming convention, the user should do proper double-checking if this condition occurs.

	V 0.01
Directory on SFTP server	
DATA/1.23m/ccd123_2025-01-30	
_ast file copied	
System messages	
Server ready	

# **1.2.6** General remarks

#### Pragmatics

- Please leave the camera acquisition GUI running at all times during your campaign, as this will ensure proper CCD temperature controlling.
- At the end of your campaign you can close the camera acquisition GUI, but please leave the power supply on in the exit confirmation dialog box.
- The power supply should only be switched off by the CAHA staff when the camera is going to be warmed up and dismounted.

#### Operations

• Both telescope and filterwheel operations can be performed either directly from the TECS GUI or via *rts2* commanding from the Andor-controller PC. The latter supports both direct commanding through the Windows CMD console, and commanding through python 2.7 scripts. However, it is strongly discouraged to mix GUI and CMD-console commanding during the same observing session. The reason is that the rts2 subsystem retrieves filterwheel and status information directly by interrogating TECS and the filterwheel GUI. In order not to overload the limited computer resources of ultra2 and tecs12, however, rts2 performs polls with a rather low frequency and caches the results of the poll. If the user changes the filter position or moves the telescope manually via the GUI, the content of the rts2 cache will be outdated, until a new poll takes place. The consequence of this behavior will range from possible wrong telescope and filter entries in the image headers to a complete lock-up of the filterwheel. For this reason, is recommended that, after the initial setup on ultra2, the user solely controls the telescope and filterwheel from the Andor-controller via CMD-console. Only in this way can it be guaranteed that the image header entries are consistent and the fiterwheel and telescope are commanded properly.

# 2 Scripting Reference

These python 2.7 scripts can be used to control the telescope and the camera. They can be both be used directly from the Windows CMD command line, or called from a python script. Look at *oscript\_rts2.py* on the desktop for examples on how to examine the exit codes.

# 2.1 Scripts

#### 2.1.1 dark

Take a series of dark or bias exposures. The object name is set to 'darkXXX.Xs', where XXX.X is the exposure time. If the exposure time is 0 the object name is set to bias.

Arguments

Exposure Time - Exposure time in seconds.

Number of images - Optional, default: 20

Example

dark 30 15

This will take 15 dark exposures with 30s each.

#### 2.1.2 multidark

Take dark or bias exposures with multiple exposure times. Up to 8 exposure times are supported.

Arguments

Number of images

Exposure Time(s) - List of exposure times in seconds, if 0 object name is set to bias

Example

multidark 10 0 50 120

This will take 10 bias images, 10 dark exposures with 50s and 10 dark exposures with 120s.

#### 2.1.3 focus

Take a sequence of 8 exposures at different focus positions. It is recommended to set up a sub region of the CCD and set the binning to 1x1 before starting a focus sequence. The result of the

sequence is a composite image that consists of 8 exposures, each one shifted by 30 lines (last exposure is shifted by 60 lines to make the shift direction easily recognizable).

Arguments

Focus position - Initial focus position at the start of the sequence

Exposure time - Optional, Exposure time in sec, default: current value in acquisition program GUI

Step - Optional, amount the focus is increased between the exposures in cm, default: 0.03

Example

focus 45.5 5 0.1

This will take a focus sequence with 5s exposure time each step, starting at 44.5 and increasing focus position by 0.1 each step.

#### 2.1.4 single

Take multiple images of a single field without moving the telescope.

Arguments

Object name - Name of object for Fits header

Exposure time - Exposure time in seconds

Number of images - Optional, default: 20

Example

single 1\_Ceres 30 15

This will take 15 30s exposures and write the object name 1\_Ceres in the Header. The telescope position must be set with the command  $t_posit$  beforehand.

#### 2.1.5 dither

Take multiple images of a single field randomly moving the telescope between the images (max 100 arcsec in RA and DEC). The script will continuously take images until it is ended by pressing ctrl+c. Exposure time and name of the field are prompted by the script.

Arguments

RA - RA in hh mm ss.s

DEC - Dec in dd mm ss.s

tracking\_RA - Optional, additional tracking in RA in arcsec/h

tracking\_DEC - Optional, additional tracking in DEC in arcsec/h

Example

dither 10 9 50.2 40 13 12.5

This will move the telescope to the given coordinates, prompt for exposure time and field name and start image acquisition. Please note that the tracking is specified in terms of coordinate motion, and not plane-of-the-sky projected motion.

# 2.2 Telescope Commands

#### 2.2.1 ia\_filter

Set filter. In order for this command to work, the filter GUI must be running on *ultra2*.

Arguments

filter number - Number of filter to be set

**Return values** 

0 on success, 1 if filter cannot be set (failed to set requested filter, filter number out of range)

Example

ia\_filter 2

Set 2<sup>nd</sup> filter in wheel.

#### 2.2.2 t\_dspeed

Set telescope R.A. and Decl. coordinate motions.

Arguments

tracking RA - additional tracking in RA in arcsec/h

tracking DEC - additional tracking in DEC in arcsec/h

**Return values** 

0 (success), 2 (telescope moving)

Example

t\_dspeed 10.5 -20.3

Please note that the tracking is specified in terms of coordinate motion, and not plane-of-the-sky projected motion.

#### 2.2.3 t\_focus

Set telescope focus position.

Arguments

focus position - Focus position to be set

Return values

0

Example

t\_focus 46.95

Set focus position to 46.95.

#### 2.2.4 t\_moving

Check if telescope is currently moving.

Arguments

none

Return values

1 (telescope is moving), 0 (telescope not moving).

#### 2.2.5 t\_offset

Move the telescope by the specified offset from the last  $\texttt{t_posit}$  pointing.

Arguments

offset RA - offset in RA in arcsec

offset DEC - offset in DEC in arcsec

**ad** | **xy** – Optional. Specifies whether the offsets correspond to RA/Dec coordinates or in projected sky coordinates. Default: **ad**.

**Return values** 

0 (success), 2 (telescope moving), 3 (telescope not ready (e.g. drives off)).

Example

t\_offset 30 30

Caution: the offset is computed from the last position reached through a t\_posit command. If the telescope is pointed via the TECS GUI or through a direct TECS command, t\_offset will produce erratic results.

#### 2.2.6 t\_posit

Point the telescope to the specified position. Coordinates are in J2000 and can be entered either in deg or hms/dms.

Arguments

wait | nowait - return immediately or wait until pointing finished

RA - Right ascension in deg or HH MM SS.SS

DEC - Declination in deg or sDD MM SS.SS

**Return values** 

0 (success), 1 (wrong syntax), 2 (telescope - already moving), 3 (coords malformed), 4 (coords not reachable), 5 (telescope is not ready (e.g. drives off)), 6 (commanded position is not reachable), 7 (timeout (only with wait option)), 8 (pointing failed (reached coordinates differ from commanded coordinates, can only be checked with **wait** option)).

Example

t\_posit nowait 10 9 50.2 40 13 12.5

This will move the telescope to RA=10 h 9 m 50.2 s and DEC=40 deg 13 m 12.5 s and return immediately.

#### 2.2.7 t\_request

Get telescope status (RA, DEC, HA, LST, AIRMASS) and print it to the console.

Arguments

none

**Return values** 

0

#### 2.2.8 t\_state

Get operational state of the telescope.

Arguments

none

**Return values** 

1 - hydraulics off, 2 - drives off, 3 - tracking off, 4 - m1\_cover closed, 10 - ready for observing.

# 2.3 Camera Commands

To use these commands the acquisition program *start\_ccd* on *Andor-controller* must be running.

#### 2.3.1 camera\_dlr1\_start

Start an exposure.

Arguments

wait | nowait - Optional. Return immediately or wait until exposure finished. Default: wait.

Return values

0 - success, 1 - error

# 2.3.2 camera\_expmode

Set exposure mode.

Arguments

test | normal

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

#### 2.3.3 camera\_exptime

Set exposure time.

Arguments

exposure time - Exposure time in seconds

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

# 2.3.4 camera\_exptype Set exposure type.

Arguments

#### science | dark | flat | focus

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

#### 2.3.5 camera\_objectname

Set object name.

Arguments

object name - name of object to be exposed next

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

Example

camera\_objectname 'some object'

Object names containing spaces must be single-quoted.

#### 2.3.6 camera\_userdef

Select predefined user settings (binning, chip geometry, readout speed, amplifier) in *start\_ccd*. The settings must be defined in *start\_ccd* and correspond to the User Setting buttons 1 to 4.

Arguments

#### 1|2|3|4

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

Example

camera\_userdef 3

Set userdef 3 in *start\_ccd*.

2.3.7 camera\_bin

Set binning in *start\_ccd*.

Arguments

binning x

binning y

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

Example

camera\_bin 2 2

Set binning in *start\_ccd* to 2 by 2.

#### 2.3.8 camera\_speed

Set readout speed in *start\_ccd*.

Arguments

slow|normal|fast

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

Example

camera\_speed fast

Set readout speed in *start\_ccd* to fast.

# 2.3.9 camera\_amp

Select readout amplifier. If set to 4 all amplifiers are used simultaneously. Please note that changing output amplifier will change the orientation of the image.

Arguments

0|1|2|3|4

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

Example

camera\_amp 4

Use all amplifiers simultaneously.

#### 2.3.10 camera\_format

Set CCD geometry. Note that only full frame format is supported if all readout amplifiers are used.

Arguments

X1 - first column

X2 - last column +1

Y1 - first row

**Y2** - last row +1

where the coordinates are counted starting from 0 and refer to pre-binning values. Please note that reading out from all output amplifiers simultaneously (camera\_amp 4) does not allow the selection of a sub-region.

**Return values** 

0 - success, 1 - error

Example

camera\_format 1000 3000 1000 3000

Defines a 2000 x 2000 pixel sub-region centered approximately at the center of the CCD.

# 3 F.A.Q.

# 1. I cannot access the Andor-controller PC with a Remote Desktop session.

- Make sure that the proper certificates are installed on the local PC. (Only Windows clients are currently supported).
- Make sure that *Andor-controller* is switched on by pinging it from *wastro12*.
- 2. I don't find the icon of the camera acquisition program on the *Andor-controller* desktop. Where is it?
  - The camera GUI is accessed through the AstPhot program by selecting File/Acquire.
- 3. I cannot start the camera acquisition program. A warning says that there is another instance already running.
  - Only one instance of the camera acquisition program can be running at a time. This warning occurs if another user is logged onto *Andor-controller* and left an acquisition session open. In such case contact the DLR or CAHA staff to close the open session.
- 4. I restarted the *rts2* system on *wastro12* but the *"start GUI"* button on the *"start tecs"* application is still red after a few minutes.
  - Please try to restart rts2 again. If after a few attempts the button stays red, please contact CA staff.

# 

These are possible symptoms that multiple instances of the *ia123* daemon are running on the *ultra2* workstation.

- Close the filterwheel GUI.
- List all running processes in an ultra2 terminal (ps -al)
- Check if there is any running instance of ia123. If so, look up its process id number (pid)
- Kill the process by issuing a kill <pid> command in an *ultra2* terminal.

Another possibility is that the user has mixed GUI and CMD operations. If that is the case, please re-initialize *rts2* on *wastro12* as described earlier. In case there was a filterwheel lock-up, it might be necessary to move the filter manually from the GUI before passing to CMD operations.

# 6. Images are not automatically uploaded to the CAHA SFTP server

- Make sure that the *start\_sftp* program is running on the *Andor-controller* PC.
- Check the transfer status and the last image transferred in the notification area of the *start\_sftp* program.
- Make sure the target directory is existing on the CAHA server (*start\_sftp* does not create the target directory).

- If you are using a GUI-based SFTP client (as FileZilla) to check the existence of the files on the CAHA SFTP server, make sure you refresh the view of the client after a transfer, as these clients don't usually refresh the directory content automatically.
- Make sure the *start\_sftp* program points to tonight's directory on the SFTP server. If the program still points to an older directory, newer files with the same name will be renamed without warning.
- 7. The image FITS header shows incorrect object coordinates (or filter number or focus position or mirror temperature) information.
  - Telescope status information is retrieved by the camera acquisition by interrogating rts2 services. If such information is not retrieved correctly, some rts2 services might not be running or be out of synch. In such case re-initialize rts2 by pressing on the 'Restart rts2' icon on wastro12. Please note that the rts2 services need a few minutes to be restarted. If the acquisition program is started before that period, it will report warnings, as the communication with rts2 is not yet established.
- 8. An error message is displayed in the notification area of the camera acquisition program, saying that information cannot be obtained from *rts2*.
  - See point 6.

# 9. The CCD acquisition program shows unrealistic CCD temperatures.

- The CCD temperature controller has crashed, possibly due to electrostatic discharge during nitrogen refill.
- Try a soft reset of the camera by restarting the acquisition program (and leaving the power supply on in the confirmation dialog).
- If a soft reset did not help, try a camera hard reset by closing the acquisition program and switching off the power supply in the confirmation dialog. Wait one minute and open the acquisition program again.
- If none of the above works, just panic.

# 10. The dewar dT has dropped to a value lower than –2.5 C.

 The dewar dT measures the temperature difference between the dewar and the local air. If this value drops below -2.5 C the dewar isolation is degraded and condensation on the optical window may occur. Contact the CAHA staff for reestablishing a good vacuum.

# 11. The Temperature LED control on the camera acquisition program has turned red.

• The CCD temperature is increasing. Liquid nitrogen needs to be refilled.

# **12**. The *t\_offset* command does not work as expected.

• The *t\_offset* command moves the telescope by a user-specified amount with respect to the last position reached through a *t\_posit* command. As an example, issuing twice the *t\_posit* command with the same parameters will cause the telescope to be moved once. Issuing the *t\_posit* command after the telescope has been moved

through the TECS GUI or through a direct TECS command may result in an unpredictable behavior.

# 13. What is the system gain of the camera in el/s?

• The system gain of the camera is listed in the image FITS header for the particular camera setup used.

# 14. What is the readout noise of the camera for my configuration?

• The easiest way to determine the current readout noise of the camera is to compute the standard deviation of a sub-region of a bias frame (e.g. by typing 's' in *AstPhot*) and multiply the result by the system gain.

# 4 Appendix I: Start-of-night checklist

- 1. Establish a Remote Desktop connection to *wastro12*.
- 2. Ensure that all GUIs and terminal windows to *tecs12* and *ultra2* are properly closed.
- 3. Establish an X-Window connection to *ultra2* from *wastro12*.
- 4. Verify that no instance of the *ia123* process on *ultra2* is running.
- 5. Launch the filterwheel GUI by typing **ia123&** in the *ultra2* terminal.
- 6. Establish an X-Window connection to *tecs12* from *wastro12*.
- 7. Launch the *start tecs* GUI by typing **start** in the *tecs12* terminal.
- 8. Restart the *rts2* system by pressing the corresponding icon on the *wastro12* desktop.
- 9. Start the telescope GUI on *tecs12* by pressing the *start tecs* button on the *start tecs* GUI.
- 10. Establish a Remote Desktop connection to *Andor-controller*.
- 11. Start the *rts2-monitor* applet on *Andor-controller*.
- 12. Ensure the 3 left-hand side LEDs on *rts2-monitor* are green.
- 13. Create a local directory for the night on Andor-controller.
- 14. Create a directory for the night on the SFTP server.
- 15. Launch or update the destination field of the *start\_sftp* applet and verify that it is pointing to the correct SFTP directory.
- 16. If not running, start *Astphot* and start a *start\_ccd* acquisition session.
- 17. Set acquisition directory in *start\_ccd* to the directory created for the night.

# 5 Appendix II: End-of-night checklist

# End of night

- 1. Park and shut down the telescope from the telescope GUI on *ultra2*.
- 2. Close the *SFTP\_start* applet on *Andor-controller*.
- 3. Leave the *start\_ccd* program on *Andor-controller* running.
- 4. Fill out carefully the night report after clicking on the "NightReport 1.23" icon in the wastro12 desktop, reporting in detail any technical issue you may have suffered.

# End of campaign

In addition to the previous steps:

- 1. close all GUIs and open terminal windows in *wastro2*.
- 2. Leave the *start\_ccd* program on *Andor-controller* running.

# 6 Appendix III: Spanish keyboard mapping

