

## Fellows at ESO



Silvia Leurini

I studied physics at the Università di Cagliari, in sunny Sardinia, where I was raised, but I was soon fascinated by astronomy, probably because I found it, and still do, the most romantic and philosophical branch of physics.

I then moved to Bonn, where I obtained my PhD under the supervision of Karl Menten at the Max-Planck-Institut für Radioastronomie. During this period I started working on massive star formation, mostly through spectroscopic observations at millimetre wavelengths. Thanks to this, I gathered extensive observational experience and visited beautiful countries with millimetre-wavelength telescopes, such as Spain, Hawaii and Australia. I finished my PhD at the end of 2004, when the APEX project was in its final commissioning phase. Therefore I decided to stay in Bonn as a postdoc and took part in the APEX project. I was so fascinated by the Atacama desert and by the challenge of working at 5000 m altitude to observe at high frequency, that in 2006 I decided to stay in Germany, despite the weather, and took up a fellowship at ESO in Garching in order to be directly involved in the next project in the Atacama, ALMA.

Since arriving in Garching I have continued my work in star formation, but I have expanded my studies to shorter wavelengths. For my functional work I joined the ESO ALMA team as European User Support specialist for the Common Astronomy Software Applications (CASA) package. I also had the unique opportunity to work at the ALMA Test Facility in New Mexico on testing of the ALMA prototype antennas.

ESO offers an incredibly stimulating scientific atmosphere with many seminars and lively discussions at morning coffee. The diversity of research carried out by ESO researchers is something that will be hard to match anywhere else. I will be sad to leave Garching behind, but I am excited about moving on to the next chapter of my career. I will join the Max-Planck-Institut für Radioastronomie in Bonn as a staff member — back to a research institute where radio astronomy is not an exception!

Masayuki Tanaka

I did my undergraduate studies at the Tohoku University, which is in the northern part of the main island of Japan. After that, I moved to the University of Tokyo to start my PhD there. My thesis research focused on observations of distant galaxy clusters using the Subaru 8.2-metre telescope. After receiving my PhD, I moved to Germany and started my first postdoc at ESO.

This is the first time I have worked at an international institute. I am quite impressed by the wide range of science covered at ESO and the neighbouring institutes, and I find ESO a very stimulating environment. It is great to have so many seminars and visitors every week in Garching. Soon after arriving at ESO, I started new collaborations with people at ESO and the local institutes.

I have continued to work on galaxy clusters, but the focus has shifted to high redshift clusters, particularly those at  $z > 1$ . When I started my fellowship, I could not imagine that I would be working on  $z \sim 2$  galaxies. The VLT has excellent instruments for this work, and I am fortunate to have access to the VLT to further my science.

I am a VLT user, and, at the same time, I am a VLT astronomer. I am one of the relatively few Garching fellows who are brave enough to take up functional duties on Paranal and I have spent quite a bit of time on the mountain. Paranal is an amazing place in many respects — beautiful sunsets with the green flash, an amazing night sky, world-leading telescopes, hard-working people, scary earthquakes, incredibly sweet desserts at the cafeteria, etc., etc.. It is great experience for me to operate the VLT for so many nights.

Later this year, I will go back to Tokyo to take a small step forward in my career. I am very excited to move on to the next chapter in my life. But it will be sad to leave the Biergartens behind, but my friend told me that there is an Oktoberfest in Tokyo. I shall wear Lederhosen and say “Prost” in Tokyo!

