

THERMAL FEEDBACK IN THE HIGH-MASS STAR AND CLUSTER FORMING REGION W51: MASSIVE PROTOSTARS LIKE THEIR FOOD WELL-DONE

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Draft version 2016/12/12

ABSTRACT

We present ALMA observations of a 3×1.5 pc area in the W51 high-mass star-forming complex. We identify dust continuum sources and measure the gas and dust temperature through both rotational diagram modeling of CH₃OH and brightness-temperature-based limits. The observed region contains three high-mass YSOs that appear to be at the earliest stages of their formation, with no signs of ionizing radiation from their central sources. The new data reveal high gas and dust temperatures ($T > 100$ K) extending out to about 5000 AU from each of these sources. The extended warm gas provides evidence that, during the process of forming, these high-mass stars heat a large volume (and correspondingly large mass) of gas in their surroundings, suppressing fragmentation and therefore keeping a large reservoir available to feed from. By contrast, the more mature massive stars that illuminate compact H II regions have little effect on their surrounding dense gas, suggesting that these main sequence stars have completed most or all of their accretion. The high luminosity of the massive protostars, combined with a lack of centimeter continuum from these sources, implies that they are not on the main sequence while they accrete the majority of the mass; instead, they may be bloated and cool.

1. INTRODUCTION

High-mass stars are the drivers of galaxy evolution, cycling enriched materials into the interstellar medium (ISM) and illuminating it. During their formation process, however, these stars are nearly undetectable because of their rarity and their opaque surroundings. We therefore know relatively little about how massive stars acquire their mass and what their immediate surroundings look like at this early time. We expect, though, that the physical conditions should be changing rapidly.

The stellar initial mass function (IMF) appears to be a universal distribution (Bastian et al. 2010). However, massive O-stars (with $M > 50M_{\odot}$) almost always form in a clustered fashion (in proto-clusters or proto-associations; de Wit et al. 2004, 2005; Parker & Goodwin 2007). Their presence, and the strong feedback they produce, may directly influence how the IMF around them is formed. If feedback from these stars is relevant while

most of the mass surrounding them is still in gas (not yet in stars), the mass function in such clusters cannot be decided by ISM properties (initial conditions) alone.

Models of high-mass star formation universally have difficulty collapsing enough material to a stellar radius to form very massive stars. Generally, these models produce a high-mass star with enough luminosity to halt further *spherical* accretion at a very early stage, with $M_{*} \sim 10 - 20M_{\odot}$. Radiation pressure provides a fundamental limit on how much mass can be accreted (Wolfire & Cassinelli 1987; Osorio et al. 1999), but geometric effects can circumvent this limit and allow further accretion (Yorke & Sonnhalter 2002; Krumholz et al. 2005, 2009; Krumholz & Matzner 2009; Kuiper & Yorke 2012, 2013; Rosen et al. 2016). Additionally, fragmentation-induced starvation can limit the amount of mass available to the most massive star, instead breaking up massive cores into many lower-mass fragments (Peters et al.

2010b). These simulations still have limited physics and can only produce stars up to $M \sim 80 M_{\odot}$ even in the current best cases (Kuiper et al. 2015, 2016). The question of how massive stars acquire their mass, and especially whether they ever form Keplerian disks, remains open (Beltrán & de Wit 2016).

Nature is clearly capable of producing massive stars larger than those produced in simulations. Within the LMC, stars up to $M \sim 300 M_{\odot}$ have been spectroscopically identified (Crowther et al. 2016). Within our own Galaxy, very massive stars have been found in compact, high-mass clusters such as NGC 3603 and the Arches (Crowther et al. 2010). While it is difficult to identify and characterize the most massive stars in our own galaxy because the UV features best capable of establishing their spectral types are extinguished, it is still possible to find examples of very massive stars close to their birth environments using infrared lines. Barbosa et al. (2008) identified an O3 and an O4 star ($M \gtrsim 50 M_{\odot}$) within the W51 IRS2 region, demonstrating that this region has at some time formed stars on the high end tail of the IMF. It remains to be seen whether W51 will form any very massive stars ($M > 100 M_{\odot}$), but it is an appropriate environment to investigate the process.

The W51 cloud contains two protocluster regions, IRS2 and e1/e2, which each contain $M \gtrsim 10^4 M_{\odot}$ of gas and have large far-infrared luminosities that indicate the presence of embedded, recently-formed or forming massive stars (Harvey et al. 1986; Sievers et al. 1991; Ginsburg et al. 2012, 2016a). Previous millimeter and centimeter observations have revealed the gas reservoir that is forming new stars and, because of the high masses of the individual cores detected, indicated that these new stars are likely to be massive (Zhang & Ho 1997; Eisner et al. 2002; Zapata et al. 2009; Tang et al. 2009; Zapata et al. 2010; Shi et al. 2010a,b; Koch et al. 2010, 2012a,b; Tang et al. 2012; Goddi et al. 2016). The W51 protoclusters, while distant (5.4 kpc; Sato et al. 2010), therefore provide a powerful laboratory for studying high-mass star formation in an environment where massive star feedback is already evident, but formation is still ongoing.

The protocluster region within W51 exhibits many signs of strong feedback. In particular, there are many giant H II regions detected in the infrared through radio (Mehringer 1994; Ginsburg et al. 2015). These H II region bubbles exist on many scales, and the driving populations of OB stars have been identified (Kumar et al. 2004; Ginsburg et al. 2016b). While the larger W51 cloud, which stretches about 100 pc along Galactic longitude, shows some signs of interaction with a supernova remnant (Brogan et al. 2013; Ginsburg et al. 2015), there is as yet no sign that supernovae have occurred within the W51 IRS2 or e1/e2 protocluster regions. They are in the relatively short stage after which high mass stars have formed but before the gas has been exhausted or expelled.

This combination of feedback and ongoing formation is essential for testing components of high mass star formation theory that are relatively inaccessible to simulations. Krumholz (2006) suggests that accretion heating during the formation of high-mass stars can heat massive cores to $\gtrsim 100$ K and therefore suppress fragmentation into smaller stars, which would be expected for

cold cores, though these models have $T > 100$ K out to only $R \lesssim 100$ AU. While simulations have verified the conclusion that early-stage accretion heating can control the mass scale within low-mass star forming regions (Krumholz et al. 2007; Offner et al. 2011; Bate 2012; Bate et al. 2014), there have been neither theoretical nor observational tests of this model for high-mass stars.

We present an observational study of the high-mass star-forming region W51. In Section 2, we describe the observations and data reduction process. Section 3 describes the analysis: We discuss source identification (§3.1), the mass and flux recovered on different spatial scales (§3.2), the observed chemical distribution (§3.3), and temperatures inferred from CH₃OH lines (§3.4). Section 4 discusses scales and types of feedback (§4.1), outflows (§4.1.2), accretion and outflows (§4.2), and fragmentation (§4.4). We conclude in Section 5. Additional interesting features in the W51 data not directly relevant to our main topic, the formation of high-mass stars, are discussed in the Appendices, including an interesting bubble (§B), some remarkable outflows (§C), and a characterization of the lower-mass sources (§D).

2. OBSERVATIONS

As part of ALMA Cycle 2 program 2013.1.00308.S, we observed a $\sim 2' \times 1'$ region centered between W51 IRS2 and W51 e1/e2 with a 37-pointing mosaic. Two configurations of the 12m array were used, achieving a resolution of $0.2''$. Additionally, a 12-pointing mosaic was performed using the 7m array, hypothetically probing scales up to $\sim 28''$. The full UV coverage was from ~ 12 to ~ 1500 m. The spectral windows (SPWs) covered are listed in Table 1, and the lines they cover described in Section 2.1.2.

Additionally, we will comment briefly on project 2015.1.01569.S (PI: Goddi), which observed two fields centered on e2e/e8 and North with very long baselines (resolution $0.04''$) and provides additional insights that our $0.2''$ data do not yield alone. Full details of that data set will be released in a future work.

2.1. Data Reduction

Data reduction was performed using CASA. The QA2-produced visibility data products were combined using the standard inverse variance weighting. Two sets of images were produced for different aspects of the analysis, one including the 7m array data and one including only 12m data. Except where otherwise noted, the 12m-only data were used in order to focus on the compact structures. For the majority of the data here, the conversion from flux density to brightness temperature is $T_B \approx 230K/(Jybeam^{-1})$.

Full details of the data reduction, including all scripts used, can be found on the project's github repository¹.

2.1.1. Continuum

A continuum image combining all 4 spectral windows was produced using `tclean`. We identified line-rich channels from a spectrum of source e8 and flagged them out prior to imaging. We then phase self-calibrated the data on baselines longer than 100m to increase the dynamic

¹ https://github.com/keflavich/W51_ALMA_2013.1.00308.S

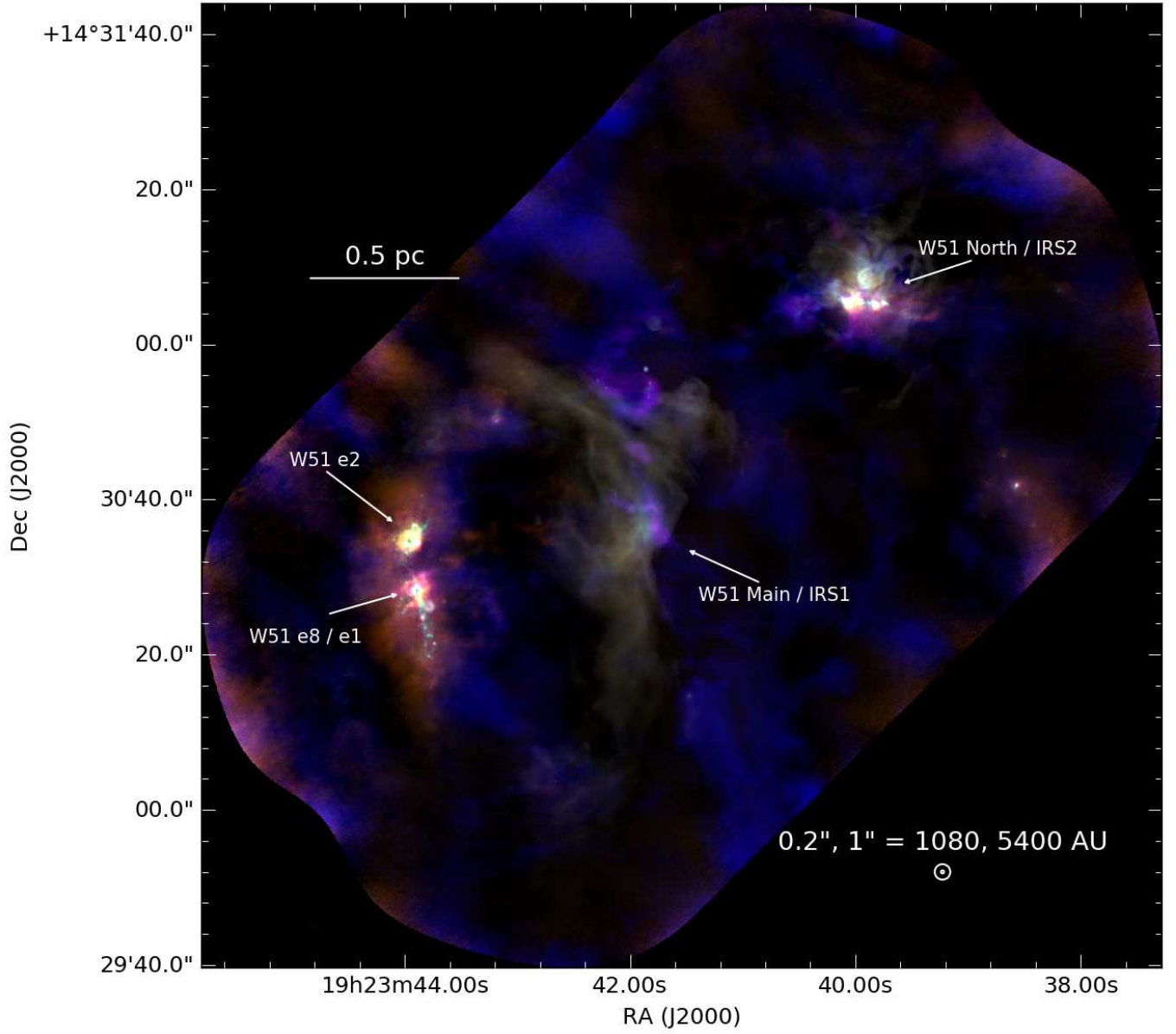


FIG. 1.— An overview of the W51A region as seen by ALMA and the VLA. The main regions discussed in this paper are labeled. W51 e8 is a mm dust source, while W51 e1 is the neighboring H II region. Similarly, W51 IRS2 is the H II region, and W51 North is the brightest mm source in that area. The colors are a composite of millimeter emission lines: CO in blue, CH₃OH in orange, and HC₃N in purple. The 1.3mm continuum is shown in green. The white hazy emission shows VLA Ku-band free-free continuum emission (Ginsburg et al. 2016a).

TABLE 1
SPECTRAL SETUP

| SpwID | Minimum Frequency GHz | Maximum Frequency GHz | Channel Width [ν] kHz | Channel Width [v] km s ⁻¹ |
|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 0 | 218.11930228 | 218.619301 | -122.07 | 0.17 |
| 1 | 218.36288652 | 220.355073 | -488.281 | 0.67 |
| 2 | 230.376575 | 232.36876148 | 488.281 | 0.64 |
| 3 | 232.981075 | 234.97326148 | 488.281 | 0.63 |

range. The final image was cleaned to a threshold of 5 mJy. The lowest noise level in the image, away from bright sources, is ~ 0.2 mJy/beam ($M \sim 0.14 M_{\odot}$ at $T = 20$ K using the extrapolation of Ossenkopf & Henning (1994) opacity from Aguirre et al. (2011) with $\beta = 1.75$), but near the bright sources e2 and IRS2, the noise reached as high as ~ 2 mJy/beam. Deeper cleaning was attempted, but these attempts produced instabilities that resulted in divergent maps. The combined image has a central frequency of about 226.6 GHz assuming a flat spectrum source; a steep-spectrum source, with $\alpha = 4$, would have a central frequency closer to 227 GHz, a difference that is negligible for all further analysis.

2.1.2. Lines

We produced spectral image cubes of the lines listed in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5. For kinematic and moment analysis, the median value over the spectral range [25,30],[80,95] km s $^{-1}$ was used to estimate and subtract the local continuum.

3. RESULTS & ANALYSIS

3.1. Source Identification

We used the `dendrogram` method described by Rosolowsky et al. (2008) and implemented in `astrodendro` to identify sources. We used a minimum value of 1 mJy/beam ($\sim 5\sigma$) and a minimum $\Delta = 0.4$ mJy/beam ($\sim 2\sigma$) with minimum 10 pixels (each pixel is $0.05''$). This cataloging yielded over 8000 candidate sources, of which the majority are noise or artifacts around the brightest sources. To filter out these bad sources, we created a noise map taking the local RMS of the `tclean`-produced residual map over a $\sigma = 30$ pixel ($1.5''$) gaussian. We then removed all sources with peak S/N ≤ 8 , mean S/N per pixel < 5 , or minimum S/N per pixel < 1 . We also only included the smallest sources in the dendrogram, the “leaves”. These parameters were tuned by checking against “real” sources identified by eye and selected using `ds9`: most real sources are recovered and few spurious sources (< 10) are included. The resulting catalog includes 113 sources.

The ‘by-eye’ core extraction approach, in which we placed `ds9` regions on all sources that look ‘real’, produced a more reliable but less complete (and less quantifiable) catalog containing 75 sources. This catalog is more useful in the regions around the bright sources e2 and North, since these regions are affected by substantial uncleaned PSF sidelobe artifacts. In particular, the dendrogram catalog includes a number of sources around e2/e8 that, by eye, appear to be parts of continuous extended emission rather than local peaks; “streaking” artifacts in the reduced data result in their identification despite our threshold criteria. The dendrogram extraction also identified sources within the IRS 2 H II region that are not dust sources. Dendrogram extraction missed a few clear sources in the low-noise regions away from W51 Main and IRS 2 because the identification criteria were too conservative.

When extracting properties of the ‘by-eye’ sources, we used variable sized circular apertures, where the apertures were selected to include all of the detectable symmetric emission around a central peak up to a maximum

radius $r \sim 0.6''$. This approach is necessary, as some of the sources are not centrally peaked and are therefore likely to be spatially resolved starless cores.

Further information about and general discussion of the continuum sources is in Appendix D. For the rest of this section, we focus on only the few brightest sources. The general point source population is briefly revisited in Section 4.7.

3.1.1. W51e2e mass and temperature estimates from continuum

In a $0.21'' \times 0.19''$ beam (1100×1000 au), the peak flux density toward W51 e2e is 0.38 Jy, which corresponds to a brightness temperature $T_B = 225$ K. This is a lower limit to the surface brightness of the millimeter core, since an optical depth $\tau < 1$ or a filling factor of the emission $ff < 1$ would both imply higher intrinsic temperatures. The implied luminosity, assuming black-body emission from a spherical beam-filling source, is $L = 4\pi r^2 \sigma_{sb} T^4 = 2.3 \times 10^4 L_{\odot}$. Since any systematic uncertainties imply a higher temperature, this estimate is a lower limit on the source luminosity. Such a luminosity corresponds to a B0.5V, 15 M_{\odot} main sequence star with effective temperature 4×10^4 K (Pecaut & Mamajek 2013, see Section 4.3 for further discussion of stellar types).

If we assume that the dust is optically thick throughout our beam, and assume an opacity constant $\kappa(226\text{GHz}) = 120$ g cm $^{-2}$, the minimum mass per beam to achieve $\tau \geq 1$ is $M = 18 M_{\odot}$ beam $^{-1}$. This mass is not a strict limit in either direction: if the dust is indeed optically thick, there may be substantial hidden or undetected gas, while if the filling factor is lower than 1, the dust may be much hotter and therefore optically thin and lower mass. However, simulations and models both predict that the dust will become highly optically thick at radii $r \lesssim 1000$ au (Forgan et al. 2016; Klassen et al. 2016), so it is likely that this measurement provides a lower limit on the total gas mass surrounding the protostar. Therefore, unless the stars are extremely efficient at removing material or the gas fragments significantly on < 1000 AU scales, the stellar mass is likely to at least double before accretion halts.

For an independent measurement of the temperature that is not limited to the optically thick regions, we use the CH₃OH lines in band, calculating an LTE temperature that is $200 < T < 600$ K out to $r < 2''$ ($r < 10^4$ au; Section 3.4). As noted in Section 3.4, these temperatures may be overestimates when the low-J lines of CH₃OH are optically thick, but for now they are the best measurements we have available. If the dust temperature matches the methanol temperature, it would be optically thin ($\tau \lesssim 1/3$) and the central source dust mass would be only $\sim 6 M_{\odot}$. However, this latter estimate discounts any substructure at scales < 1000 AU, which we know exists from the 2015.1.01596.S data.

An upper limit on the radio continuum emission from W51e2e is $S_{14.5\text{GHz}} < 0.6$ mJy/beam in a FWHM= $0.34''$ beam, or $T_{B,max} < 30$ K (Ginsburg et al. 2016a). Assuming emission from an optically thick H II region with $T_e = 8500$ K (Ginsburg et al. 2015), the upper limit on the emitting radius is $R(\text{H II}) < 110\text{AU}$. Similar limits are obtained from other frequencies in those data. The free-free contribution to the millimeter flux is therefore

negligible, and the central source is unlikely to be ionizing. Limits on the stellar properties are further discussed in Section 4.3.

3.1.2. W51 e8 and North mass and temperature from continuum

We repeat the above analysis for e8 and North. They have peak flux densities of 0.35 and 0.44 Jy/beam respectively, corresponding to peak brightness temperatures of 205 and 256 K. The lower limit luminosities of W51 e8 and North in a single beam, assuming the brightest detected beam is optically thick, are 1.6×10^4 and $3.9 \times 10^4 L_\odot$, respectively.

W51 North has a free-free upper limit similar to that of W51e2e, but somewhat less restrictive because the noise in that region is substantially higher. W51 e8, by contrast with the others, has a clear detection at cm wavelengths. The source e8n, which is offset from the peak mm emission by $0.13''$ (700 AU), has $S_{25\text{GHz}} = 4.7$ mJy/beam, corresponding to $T_B = 135$ K, which implies an optically thick H II region size $R = 180$ AU. This could be part of an ionized jet or an ionizing binary companion, but its offset from the central mm source suggests that it is not a simple spherically symmetric HCH II region.

The apparent dust masses in the central beams of e8 and North are the same as in e2e, $M \sim 18 M_\odot$, but these measurements are subject to the same limits discussed in Section 3.1.1.

3.2. The mass and light budget on different spatial scales

An evolutionary indicator used for star-forming regions is the amount of mass at a given density; a more evolved (or more efficiently star-forming) region will have more mass at high densities. We cannot measure the dense gas fraction directly, but the amount of flux density recovered by an interferometer provides an approximation.

For the “total” flux density in the region, we use the Bolocam Galactic Plane Survey observations (Aguirre et al. 2011; Ginsburg et al. 2013), which are the closest in frequency single-dish millimeter data available. We assume a spectral index $\alpha = 3.5$ to convert the BGPS flux density measurements at 271.4 GHz to the mean ALMA frequency of 226.6 GHz. The ALMA data (specifically, the $0.2''$ resolution 12m-only data) have a total flux 23.2 Jy above a conservative threshold of 10 mJy/beam in our mosaic; in the same area the BGPS data have a flux of 144 Jy, which scales down to 76.5 Jy. The recovery fraction is $30 \pm 3\%$, where the error bar accounts for a change in $\alpha \pm 0.5$. The threshold of 10 mJy/beam corresponds to a column threshold $N > 1.3 \times 10^{25} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ for 20 K dust. This threshold also corresponds to an optical depth of $\tau \approx 0.5$, implying that a large fraction of the cloud is either approaching optically thick or is warmer than 20 K. For an unresolved spherical source in the $\sim 0.2''$ beam, this column density corresponds to a volume density $n > 10^{8.1} \text{ cm}^{-3}$. Of the area with significant emission, 23% has $T_B > 20$ K (34 mJy beam $^{-1}$) and must have $T_{\text{dust}} > 20$ K, guaranteeing that a substantial fraction of all of the detected continuum emission is coming from warmer gas.

Even more impressive is the amount of the total flux density concentrated into the three ‘massive cores’, W51

e2e, e8, and North. These three contain 12.3 Jy (within $1''$ or 5400 AU apertures) of the total 23.2 Jy in the observed field - more than half of the total ALMA flux density, or 15% of the BGPS flux density. In a Kroupa (2001) IMF, massive stars ($M > 20 M_\odot$) account for only 0.15% of the mass, so in order for the gas mass distribution to produce a ‘normal’ stellar distribution, the high-mass-star-producing gas must be much brighter (hotter) than that making low-mass stars, or the gas in these cores must be substantially redistributed and fragmented into a mixture of high- and low-mass stars as the region evolves.

3.3. Chemically Distinct Regions

The “hot cores” in W51 (e2, e8, and North) are spatially well-resolved and multi-layered. These cores are detected in lines of many different species spanning areas $\sim 5 \times 10^3 - 1 \times 10^4$ AU across. We describe some of the specific notable chemical features in this section, but the overall point that the three hot cores have extended chemical structure is highlighted in Figures 2, 3, and 4, with a fainter hot core shown for contrast in Figure 5.

Surrounding W51e2e, there are relatively sharp-edged uniform-brightness regions in a few spectral lines over the range 51-60 km s $^{-1}$ (Figure 2). Some of these features are elongated in the direction of the outflow, but most have significant extent orthogonal to the outflow. The circularly symmetric features are prominent in CH₃OH, OCS, and CH₃OCH₃, weak but present in H₂CO and SO, and absent in HC₃N and HNCO.

Around e8, a similar chemically enhanced region is observed, but in this case CH₃OCH₃ is absent. Toward W51 North, CH₃OH, H₂CO, and SO exhibit the sharp-edged enhancement feature, while the other species do not.

By contrast, along the south end of the e8 filament, no such enhanced features are seen; only H₂CO and the lowest transition of methanol, CH₃OH $4_{2,2} - 3_{1,2}$, are evident.

The relative chemical structures of e2, e8, and North are similar. The same species are detected in all of the central cores. However, in e2, CH₃OCH₃, CH₃OCHO, CH₃CH₂CN, and Acetone ([CH₃]₂CO) are significantly more extended than in the other sources. g-CH₃CH₂OH is detected in W51 North, but is weak in e8 and almost absent in e2 (Figures 2, 3, 4, 5).

Different chemical groups exhibit different morphologies around e2, and this approximate grouping is also seen around the other cores. Species that are elongated in the NW/SE direction are associated primarily with the outflow (HC₃N, CH₃CH₂CN). Other species are associated primarily with the extended circular core (CH₃OCHO, CH₃OCH₃, [CH₃]₂CO). Some are only seen in the compact core ($R < 0.4'' \sim 2000$ AU; H₂CN, HNCO, NH₂CHO, and vibrationally excited HC₃N). Only CH₃OH and OCS are associated with both the extended core and the outflow, but not the greater extended emission. H₂CCO seems to be associated with only the extended core, but not the compact core. Finally, there are the species that trace the broader ISM in addition to the cores and outflows: H₂CO, ¹³CS, OCS, C¹⁸O and SO. Both HCOOH and N₂D⁺ are weak and associated only with the innermost e2e core.

The presence of these complex species symmetrically

distributed at large distances ($r \sim 5000$ AU) from the central sources is an independent indication of the gas heating provided by these sources. The abundance increase most likely corresponds to $T \gtrsim 85$ K, the approximate sublimation temperature of CH_3OH ice (Green et al. 2009).

3.4. CH_3OH temperatures & columns in the hot cores

The chemically enhanced regions appear to be associated with regions of elevated gas temperature. We examine the temperature structure directly by analyzing the excitation of lines for which we have detected multiple transitions with significant energy differences. We do not use H_2CO for this analysis despite its usefulness as a thermometer because it is clearly optically thick (self-absorbed) in all lines in the hot cores. This section presents the details of the temperature determination, while the implications of the temperature measurements will be discussed later, throughout Section 4.

We produce rotational diagrams for each spatial pixel covering all CH_3OH lines detected at high significance toward at least one position². The detected lines span a range $45 < E_U < 800$ K, allowing robust measurements of the temperature assuming the lines are optically thin, in LTE, and the gas temperature is high enough to excite the lines. These conditions are likely to be satisfied in the e2e, e8, and North cores, except for the optically thin requirement; the lower-J lines in particular are optically thick across much of the extent of the cores.

Sample fitted rotational diagrams are displayed in Figure 7. The line intensities are computed from moment maps integrating over the range (51, 60) km s^{-1} in continuum-subtracted spectral cubes, where the continuum was estimated as the median over the ranges (25-35, 85-95) km s^{-1} , except for the J=25 lines, which had a continuum estimated from the 10th percentile over the same range to exclude contamination from the SO outflow line wings.

To validate some of the rotational diagram fits, we examined the modeled spectra overlaid on the real (Figure 8). These generally display significant discrepancies, especially at low J where self-absorption is evident. In Figure 8, there is clearly a low-temperature component slightly redshifted from the high-J peak that can be seen as a dip within the line profile. The presence of this unmodeled low-temperature component renders our CH_3OH temperature measurements uncertain, biasing them to be slightly high. Nevertheless, the general trend exhibited by CH_3OH temperatures matches expectations if there is a central heating source.

Figure 9 shows a comparison between the CH_3OH $10_{2,9} - 9_{3,6}$ line and the 225 GHz continuum. While the brightest regions in CH_3OH mostly have corresponding dust emission, the dust morphology traces the CH_3OH morphology very poorly. This difference suggests that the enhanced brightness is not simply because of higher total column density. We examine the dust- CH_3OH link more quantitatively in Figure 11; Figure 11d shows the poor correlation.

Figure 10 shows the observed brightness profiles of

² We observe both A- and E-type CH_3OH , but assume the ratio $E/A = 1$, as expected if the molecules have an even moderately high formation temperature $T \gtrsim 20$ K (Wiström et al. 2011).

CH_3OH line and dust continuum emission. Figure 11 shows a comparison of the CH_3OH temperature and abundance. The CH_3OH abundance is derived by comparing the rotational diagram (RTD) fitted CH_3OH column density to the dust column density while using the CH_3OH -derived temperature as the assumed dust temperature. The figure shows all pixels within a $3''$ (16200 AU) radius of e2e, with pixels having low column density and high temperature (i.e., pixels with bad fits) and those near e2w (which may be heated by a different source) excluded. We used moment-0 (integrated intensity) maps of the CH_3OH lines to perform these RTD fits, which means we have ignored the line profile entirely and in some cases underestimated the intensity of the optically thick lower-J lines: in the regions of highest column, the column is underestimated and the temperature is overestimated, as can be seen in Figure 8.

A few features illustrate the effects of thermal radiative feedback on the gas. The temperature jump starting inwards of $r \sim 1.5''$ (8100 AU; Figure 11b) is substantial, though the 100-200 K floor at greater radii is likely artificial³. There is an abundance enhancement at the inner radii, but it appears to be a radial bump rather than a pure increase. The abundance enhancement is probably real, and is approximately a factor of $\sim 5-10$. The inner abundance dip is caused by two coincident effects: first, the CH_3OH column becomes underestimated because the low-J CH_3OH is self-absorbed, and second, the dust becomes optically thick, blocking additional CH_3OH emission, though this latter effect is somewhat self-regulating since it also decreases the inferred dust column (the denominator in the abundance expression).

3.5. Radial mass profiles around the most massive cores

In Figure 12, we show the radial mass profiles extracted from the three high-mass protostellar cores in W51: W51 North, W51 e2e, and W51 e8. The plot shows the enclosed mass out to $\sim 1''$ (5400 AU). On larger spatial scales, the enclosed mass rises more shallowly, indicating the end of the core.

All three sources show similar radial profiles, with each containing up to $3000 M_\odot$ within a compact radius of 5400 AU (0.03 pc). However, the temperature structure within these sources is certainly not homogeneous, and likely a large fraction of the total flux comes from $T \gtrsim 300$ K heated material (Section 3.4; Goddi et al. 2016). If the observed dust were all at 600 K, the mass would be $\sim 17\times$ lower, $100 M_\odot$, which we treat as a strict lower bound as it is unlikely that the dust at more than $r \gtrsim 1000$ AU is so warm. Additionally, it is likely that a substantial mass of cold dust is also present but undetectable because it is hidden by the hotter dust. Figure 12b shows $M(R)$ using $T_{\text{dust}} = T_{\text{CH}_3\text{OH}}$, which is a more reasonable guess at the true mass profile (though it is still a lower limit; see §3.4).

3.6. Ionizing vs non-ionizing radiation

³ The low-J transitions have significant optical depth across the whole region, but in the inner part of the core, the temperature measurement is dominated by the high-J transitions, which give a long energy baseline for the fit. In the core exterior, the high-J lines are not detected, so the (possibly optically thick) low-J lines determine the temperature fit, which results in much lower accuracy and greater bias.

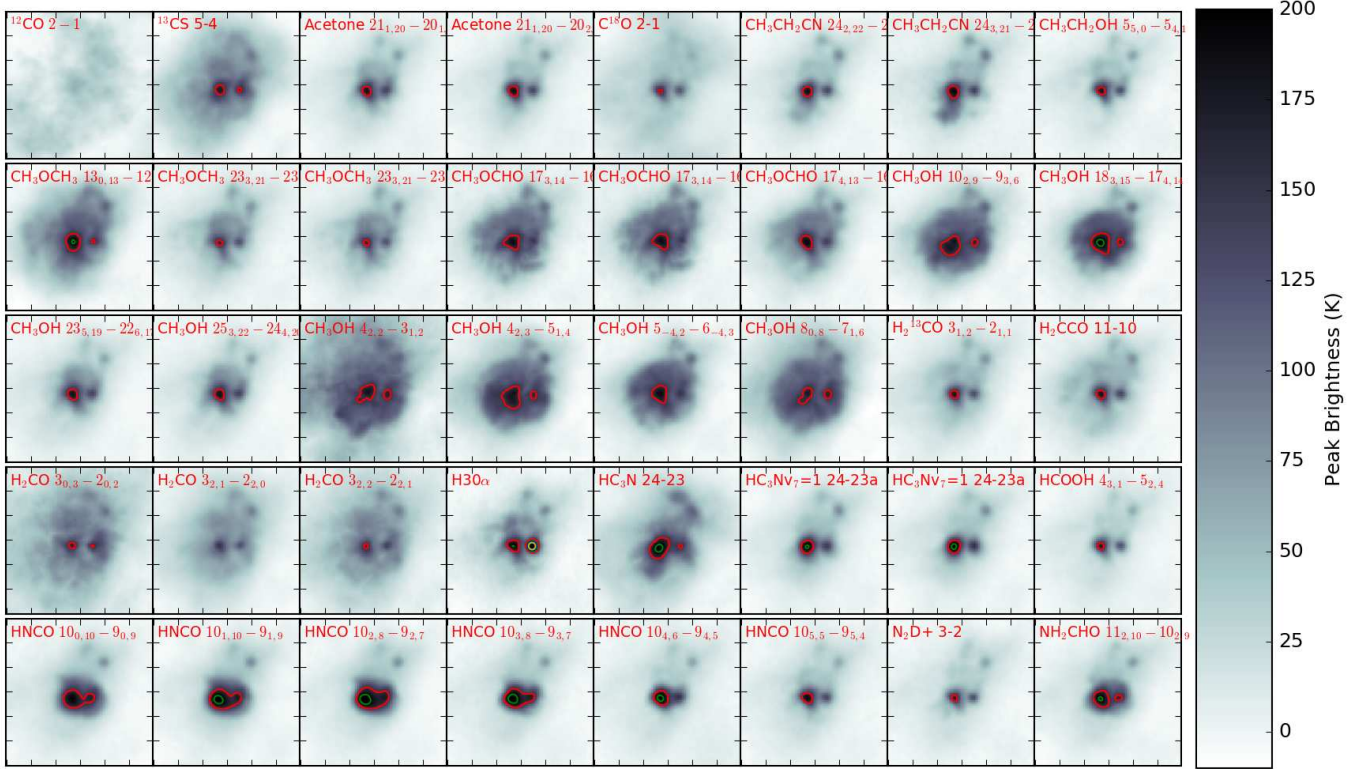


FIG. 2.— Peak brightness maps of the e2 region in 40 different lines over the range 51 to 60 km s⁻¹. To illustrate the lower limit temperature implied by the observed brightness, the maps are not continuum-subtracted. For additional contrast, contours are shown at 150, 200, 250, and 300 K (red, green, blue, yellow). There is a strong ‘halo’ of emission seen in the CH₃Ox lines and OCS. Extended emission is also clearly seen in SO, ¹³CS, and H₂CO, though these lines more smoothly blend into their surroundings. HNCO and NH₂CHO have smaller but substantial regions of enhancement with a sharp contrast to their surroundings. HC₃N traces the e2e outflow. The bright H30α emission marks the position of e2w, the hypercompact HII region that dominates the centimeter emission in e2.

The formed and forming protostars are producing a total $\gtrsim 10^7 L_{\odot}$ of far infrared illumination (Ginsburg et al. 2016a). This radiation heats the cloud’s molecular gas, affecting the initial conditions of future star formation.

The ionizing radiation in W51 was discussed in detail in Ginsburg et al. (2016a). Ionizing radiation affects much of the cloud volume, but little of the high-density prestellar material: there is no evidence of increased gas temperatures in the vicinity of HII regions. While in Section 3.3 we identify chemically enhanced regions as those where radiative feedback has heated the dust and released ices into the gas phase, no such regions are observed surrounding the compact HII regions.

The chemical maps shown in Section 3.3 show the volumes of gas clearly affected by newly-forming high-luminosity stars. The CH₃OH-enhanced region around W51e2e extends 0.04 pc, or 8500 AU (see Section 3.4). Other locally enhanced species, especially the nitrogenic molecules HNCO and NH₂CHO, occupy a smaller and more asymmetric region around e2e and e2w (Figure 13). These chemically enhanced regions are most prominent around the weakest radio sources or regions with no radio detection; they are most likely heated by direct infrared radiation from these sources.

The luminosities of the other UCHII and HCHII regions throughout the observed area are high enough, $L \gtrsim 10^4 L_{\odot}$, to illuminate and excite molecularly enhanced regions if they were surrounded by dense ($n(\text{H}_2) \gtrsim 10^4 \text{ cm}^{-3}$) gas. Since no such regions are detected, we

conclude that these HII regions are not surrounded by such high-density gas but instead are traveling through a lower-density medium. The counterexamples, e2w and d2, are extremely compact and do exhibit some enhanced molecular emission around them, though not as much as the cores, suggesting that they may be moving more rapidly through the dense medium rather than being stationary with respect to it... *explore this idea a little more: what is the equilibration timescale of the $r > 1000$ AU gas? is it plausible that it just hasn’t been heated? If not, why don’t d2/e2w light the big regions?*

3.7. Outflows

While many outflows were detected, we defer their discussion to Appendix C, as the details of these flows is not relevant to the main point of the paper. However, we note that out of the dozen or so outflows detected, *none* come from radio continuum sources (HII regions). All outflows that have a clear origin come from millimeter-detected, centimeter-faint sources, suggesting that these sources are accreting molecular material and are not emitting ionizing radiation.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. The scales and types of feedback

The most prominent features of our observations are the warm, chemically enhanced regions surrounding the highest dust concentrations, and the corresponding *lack* of such features around the ionized nebulae. This difference implies that the immediate star formation process -

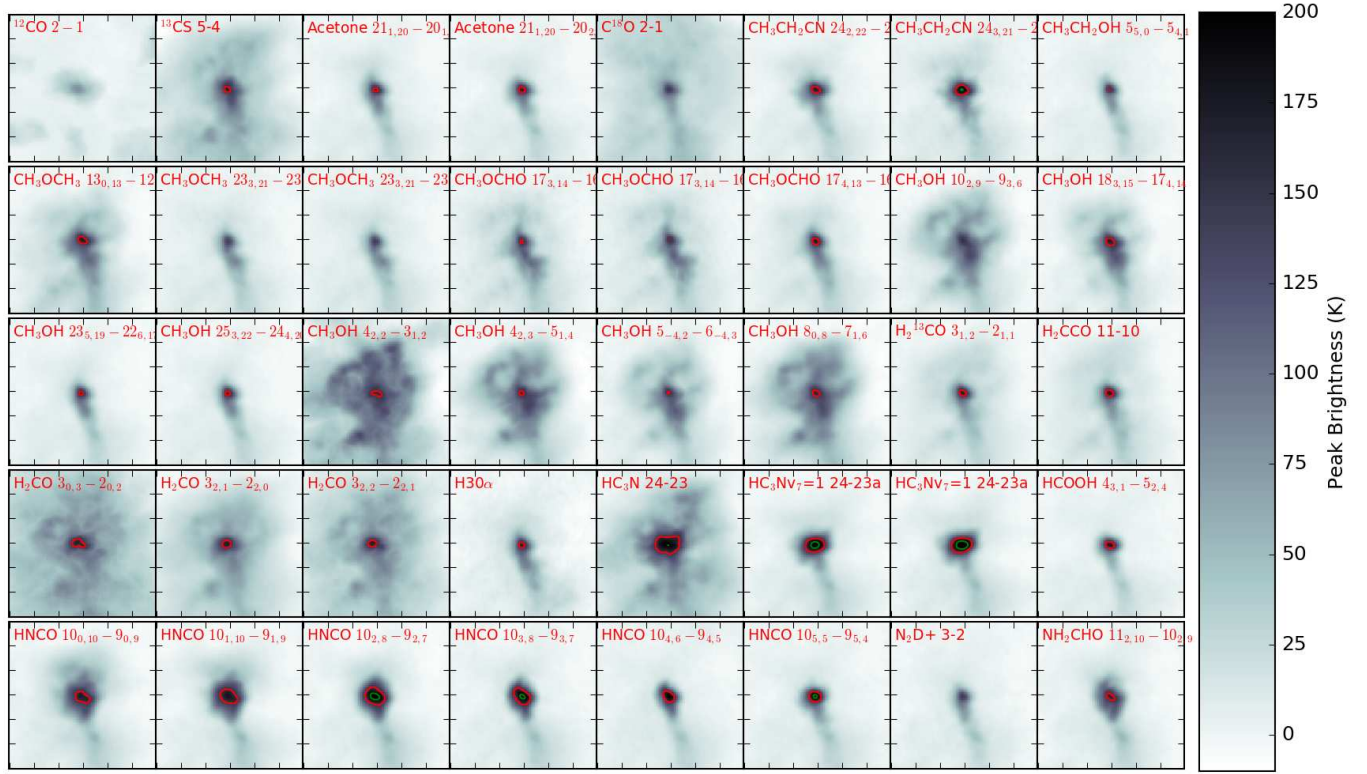


FIG. 3.— Peak brightness maps of the e8 region in 40 different lines over the range 52 to 63 km s^{-1} . For additional contrast, contours are shown at 150 and 200 K (red and green, respectively). As in e2 (Figure 2), there is extended emission in the CH_3OH and OCS lines, but in contrast with e2, the other CH_3Ox lines are more compact. SO is brighter than OCS in e8, whereas the opposite is true in e2.

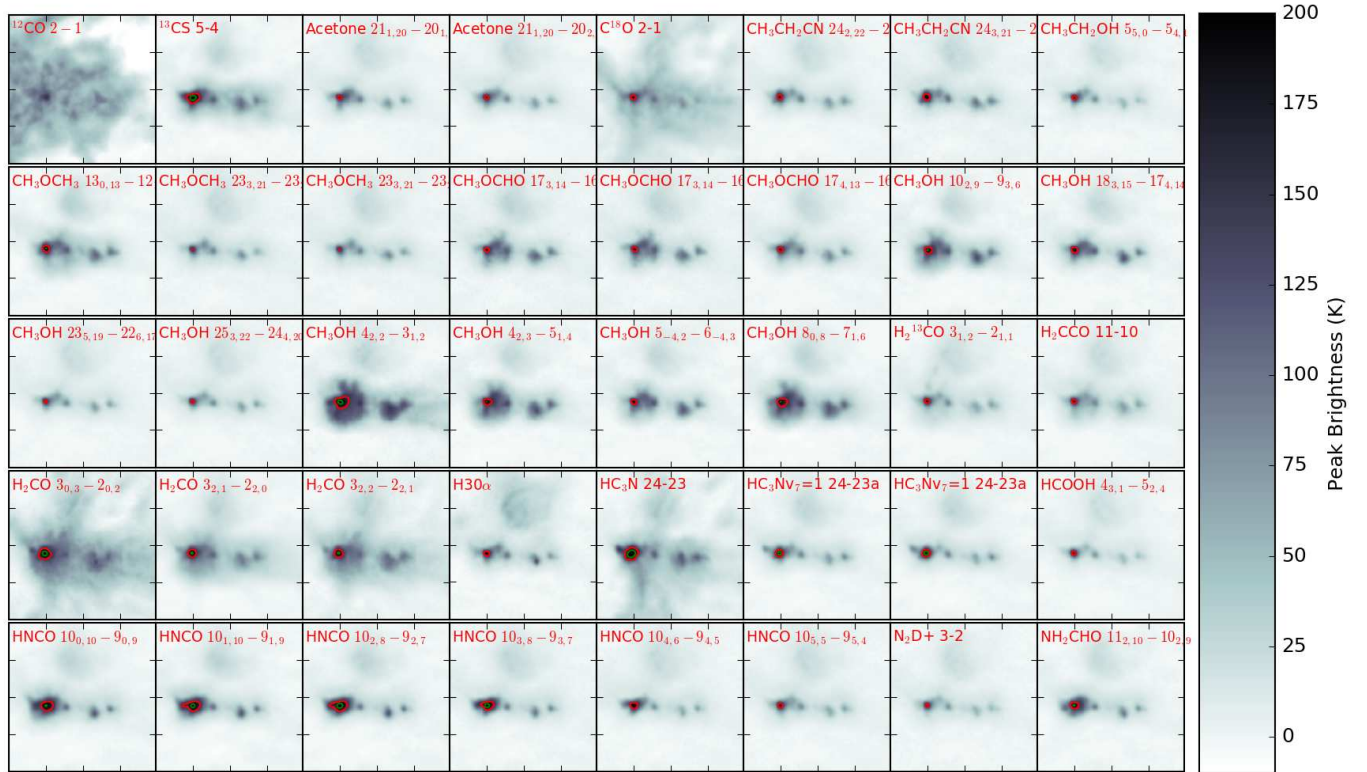


FIG. 4.— Peak brightness maps of the W51 IRS2 region containing the North core in 40 different lines over the range 54 to 64 km s^{-1} . For additional contrast, contours are shown at 150 and 200 K (red and green, respectively). Qualitatively, the relative extents of species seem comparable to e8 (Figure 3). The $\text{H}30\alpha$ point source is W51 d2.

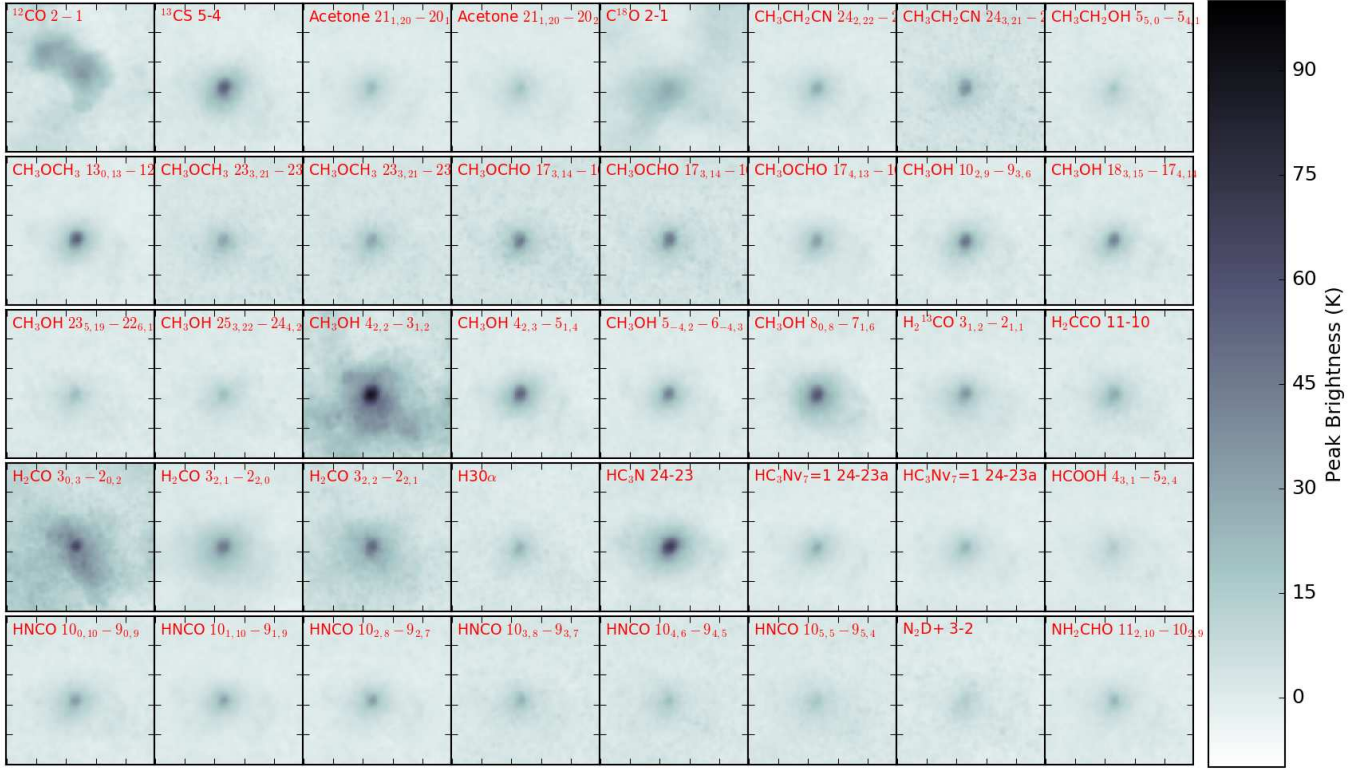


FIG. 5.— Peak brightness maps of the ALMamm14 region in 40 different lines over the range 58 to 67 km s⁻¹. ALMamm14 is one of the brightest sources outside of e2/e8/IRS2, but it is substantially fainter than those regions. Still, it has a noticeably rich chemistry.

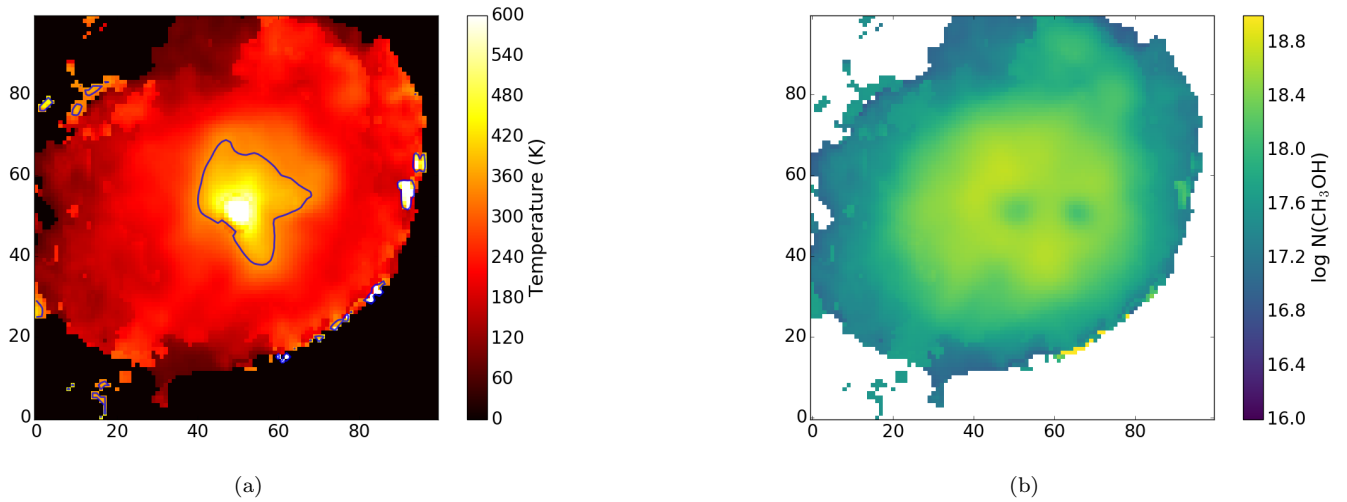


FIG. 6.— Methanol temperature and column density maps around e2. The central regions around the cores appear to have lower column densities because the lines become optically thick and self-absorbed. The contour in the temperature map is at 350 K, where red meat is typically considered “well-done”.

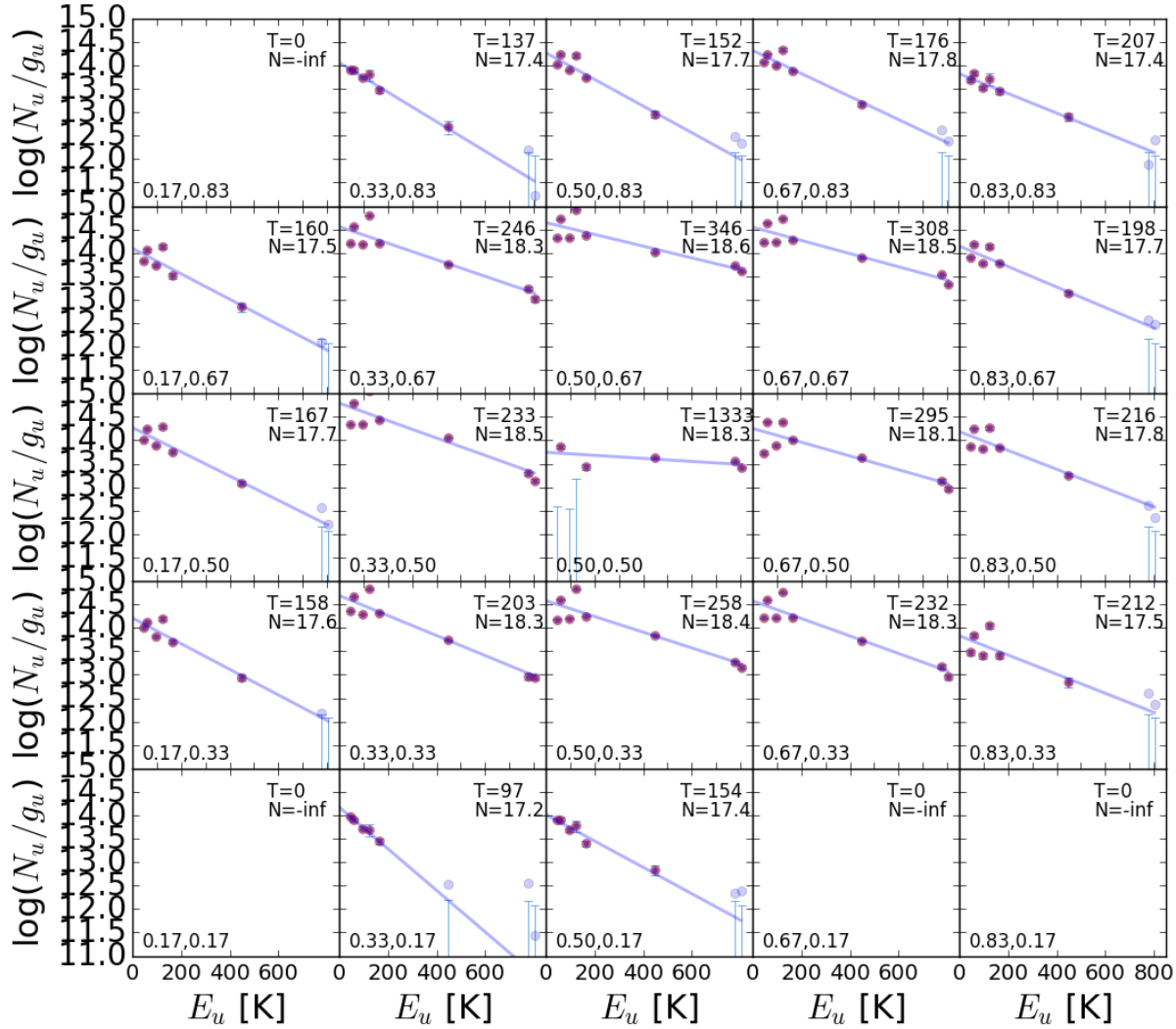


FIG. 7.— A sampling of fitted rotation diagrams of the detected CH_3OH transitions. These are meant to provide validation of the temperatures and column densities derived and shown in Figure 6. The lower-left corner shows the position from which the data were extracted in that figure in units of figure fraction. The horizontal black lines show the detection threshold of each of the transitions; points below these lines are ignored when fitting, and instead the threshold itself is used. The fitted temperature and column are shown in the top right of each plot.

that of gas collapse and fragmentation from a molecular cloud - is primarily affected by feedback from stars that are presently accreting and therefore emitting most of their radiation in the infrared, *not* from previous generations of now-exposed main-sequence stellar photospheres.

On the scales relevant to the fragmentation process, i.e., the ~ 0.1 pc scales of prestellar cores, this decoupling can be explained simply. Stellar light is produced mostly in the UV, optical, and near-infrared. As soon as a star is exposed, either by consuming or destroying its natal core, that light is able to stream to relatively large ($\gtrsim 1$ pc) scales before being absorbed. At that point, the stellar radiation is poorly coupled to the scales of direct star formation. By contrast, stars embedded in their natal cores will have all of their light reprocessed from UV/optical/NIR to the far-IR within a < 0.1 pc

sphere, providing a far-infrared background light capable of heating its surroundings.

The different effects of ionizing vs thermal radiation can be seen directly in the three main massive star forming regions, e2, e8, and North. Figures 13 and 14 show both the highly-excited warm molecular gas in color and the free-free emission from ionized gas in contours. As described in Section 3.6, the spatial differences indicate that the ionizing radiation sources - the exposed OB stars - have little effect on the star-forming collapsing and fragmenting gas.

The low impact of photospheric radiation on collapsing gas suggests that second-generation star formation is relatively unaffected by its surroundings. Instead, the stars of the same generation - those currently embedded and accreting - have the dominant regulating effect on

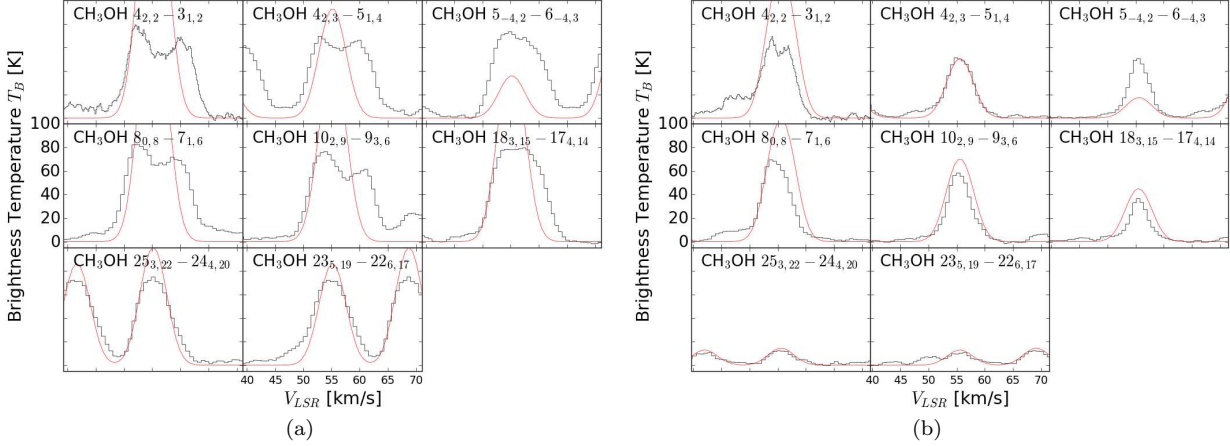


FIG. 8.— Spectra of the CH_3OH lines toward a pair of selected pixels just outside of the e2e core. (a) is $0.55''$ and (b) is $1.33''$ from e2e. The red curves show the LTE model fitted from a rotational diagram as shown in Figure 7. The model is not a fit to the data shown, but is instead a single-component LTE model fit to the integrated intensity of the lines shown. As such, the fit is not convincing, and it is evident that a single-temperature, single-velocity model does not explain the observed lines. Nonetheless, a component with the modeled temperature is likely to be present in addition to a cooler component responsible for the self-absorption in the low-J lines. (a) shows a pixel close to the center of e2e, which is probably optically thick in most of the shown transitions, while (b) shows a better case where the highest- A_{ij} lines are overpredicted but many of the others are well-fit.

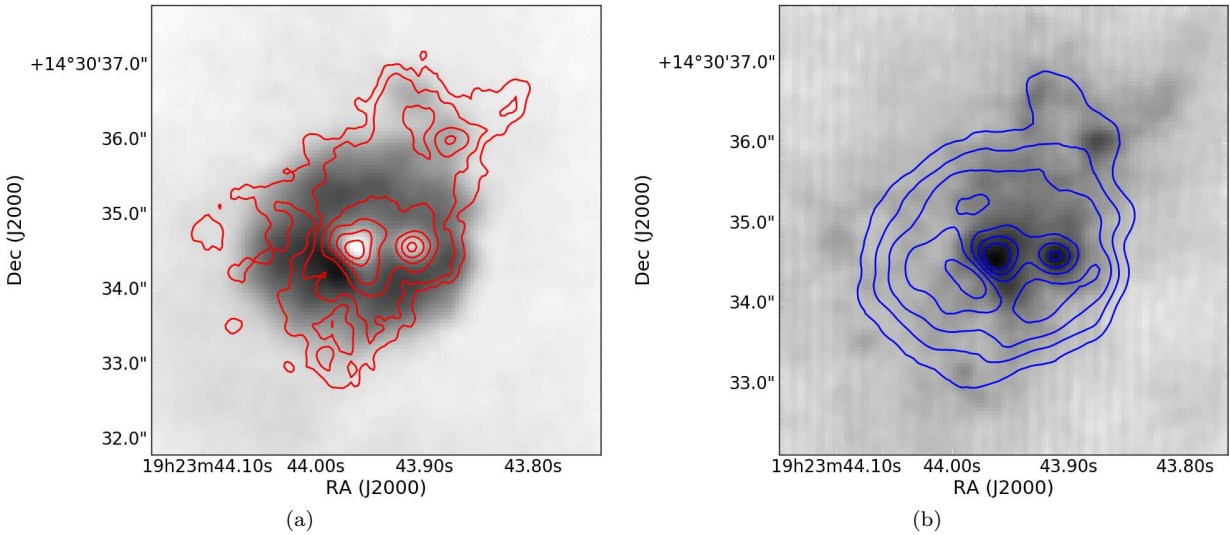


FIG. 9.— Images showing CH_3OH $102,9-93,6$ and 225 GHz continuum emission, with CH_3OH in grayscale and continuum in contours (left) and continuum in grayscale, CH_3OH in contours (right). The fainter (whiter) regions in the center of the CH_3OH map correspond to the bright continuum cores and show where all lines appear to be self-absorbed.

the gas temperature. To the extent that gas temperature governs the IMF, then, the formation of the IMF *within clusters* is therefore predominantly self-regulated, with little external influence.

4.1.1. Hot core chemical structure

In Section 3.3, we showed regions with enhanced emission in a variety of complex chemical species over a large volume. While it is not generally correct to conclude that enhanced emission indicates enhanced abundance, the additional analysis of the CH_3OH abundance in Section 3.4 suggests that there is a genuine enhancement in complex chemical abundances toward these hot cores.

We have not performed a detailed abundance analysis of multiple species, but we nonetheless suggest that these sharp-edged bubbles around the hot cores represent desorption (sublimation) zones in which substantial

quantities of grain-processed materials are released into the gas phase. The relatively sharp edges likely reflect the particular point where the temperature exceeds the sublimation temperature for each species (Garrod et al. 2006; Green et al. 2009), though some species may appear at temperatures above or below their sublimation temperature if they are mixed into ices that have a different sublimation temperature.

Most of the lines identified in the hot cores e2e, e8, and North are also present in ALMamm14. However, their extent is greater toward the more luminous sources. An examination of the relationship between the luminosity of the protostars and the extent of their chemically enhanced zones will be useful for identifying further very massive protostars.

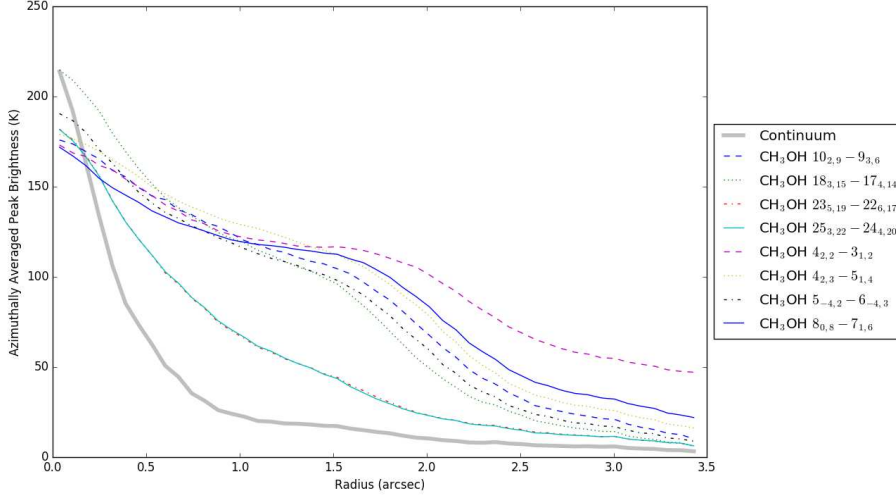


FIG. 10.— Radial profiles of the azimuthally-averaged peak surface brightness of the observed CH_3OH transitions along with the profile of the continuum brightness. These profiles indicate *lower limit* gas temperatures as a function of radius; the true temperature can be substantially higher even if the lines are optically thick because of foreground, cold, self-absorbing layers. The radial profiles were constructed from images with $0.2''$ resolution including only 12m data. The lines are not continuum subtracted, so they represent the true on-sky observed brightness. The abundance bump is evident at $r \sim 1.5''$, while the consistently increasing high-J lines (CH_3OH $23_{5,19} - 22_{6,17}$ and $25_{3,22} - 24_{4,20}$) demonstrate that the excitation is continuing to increase toward the center, even after the lower-J lines become optically thick.

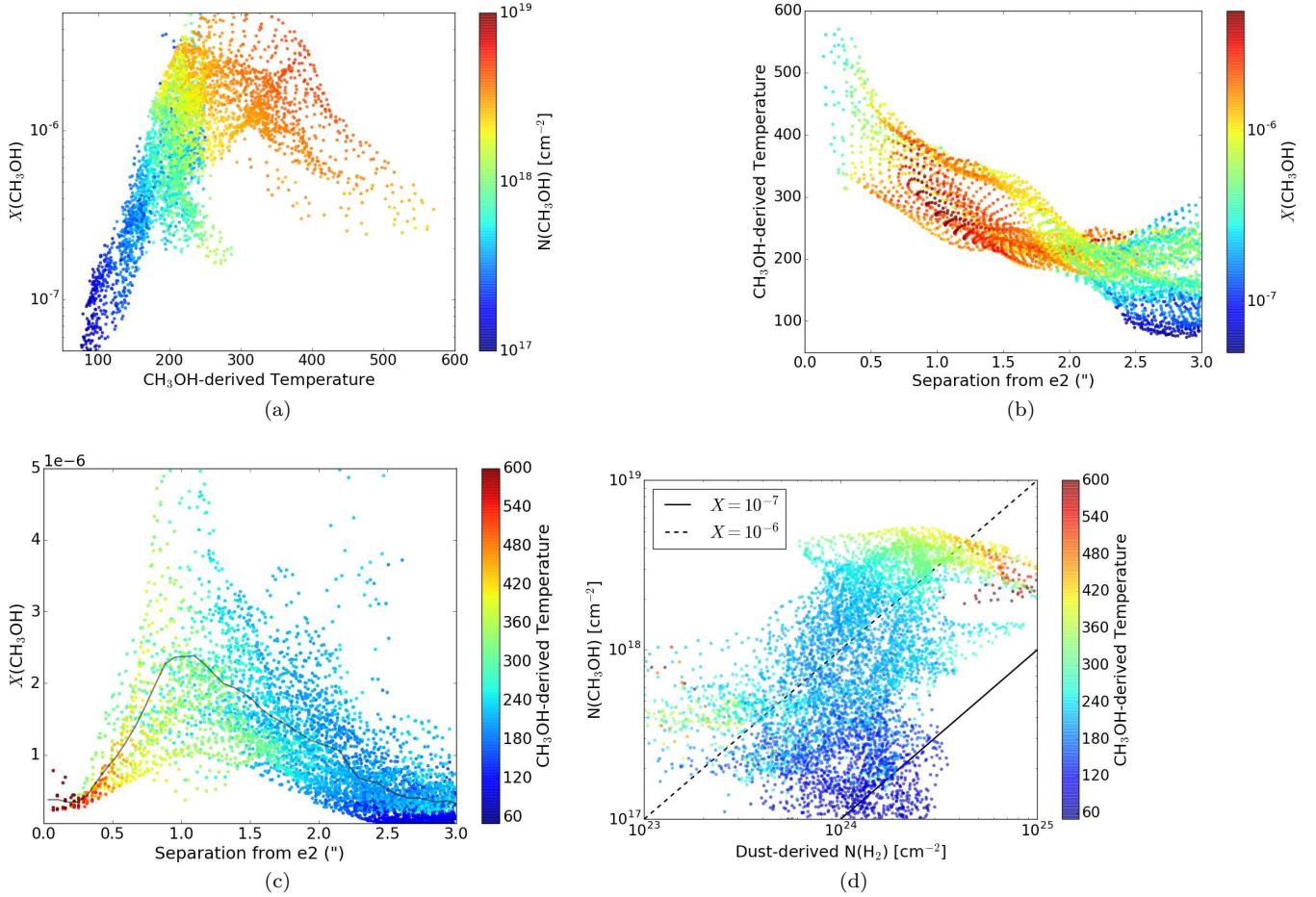


FIG. 11.— Comparison of the CH_3OH temperature, column density, and abundance. (a) The relation between temperature and abundance. There is a weak correlation, but most of the high abundance regions are at high temperatures. (b) Temperature vs distance from e2e. There is a clear trend toward higher temperatures closer to the central source (c) Abundance vs distance from e2e. The apparent dip at $r < 1''$ is somewhat artificial, as it is driven by a rising dust emissivity that corresponds to an increasing optical depth in the dust. The CH_3OH column in this inner region is likely to be underestimated. (d) CH_3OH vs dust column density.

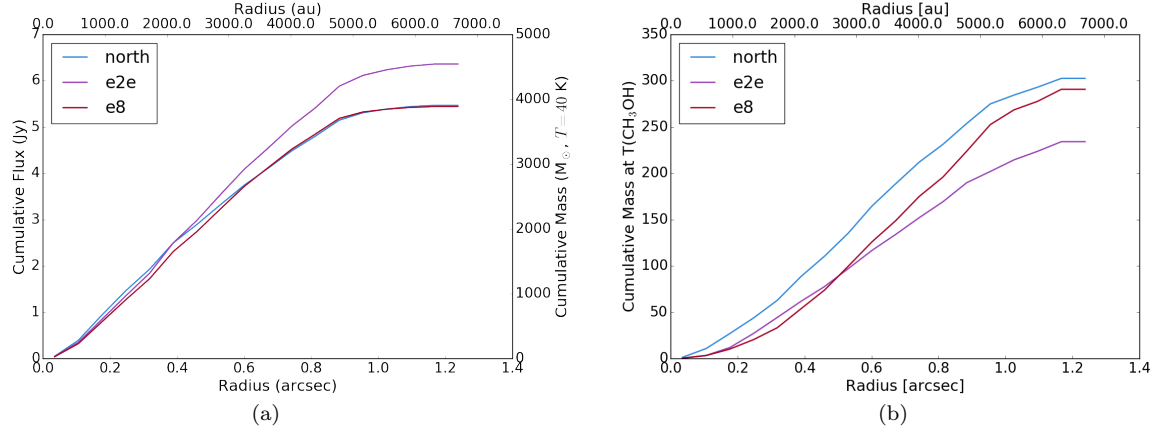


FIG. 12.— The cumulative (a) flux density radial profile and (b) mass radial profile centered on three massive protostellar cores. They share similar profiles and are likely dominated by hot dust in their innermost regions, but they are more likely to be dominated by cooler dust in their outer, more massive regions. The cumulative mass distribution may therefore be deceptive. In (a), we use a constant temperature to convert from flux to mass. In (b), we use the temperature map computed from CH_3OH in Section 3.4.

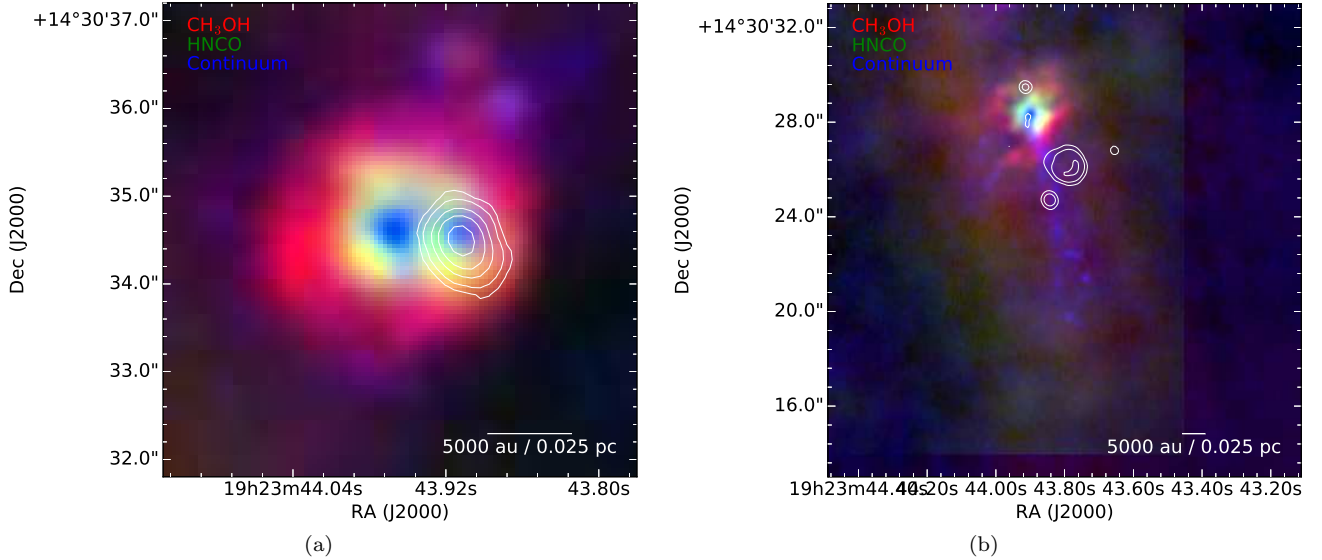


FIG. 13.— Image of CH_3OH $8_{0,8} - 7_{1,6}$ (red), HCNO $10_{0,10} - 9_{0,9}$ (green), and 225 GHz continuum (blue) toward (a) W51e2 (b) W51e8. The contours show Ku-band radio continuum emission tracing the H II regions (a) W51 e2w and (b) W51e1, e3, e4, e9, and e10. The CH_3OH emission is relatively symmetric around the high-mass protostar W51 e2e and the weak radio source W51 e8, suggesting that these forming stars are responsible for heating their surroundings. By contrast, the H II regions do not exhibit any local molecular brightness enhancements (except e8), indicating that the H II regions are not heating their local dense molecular gas.

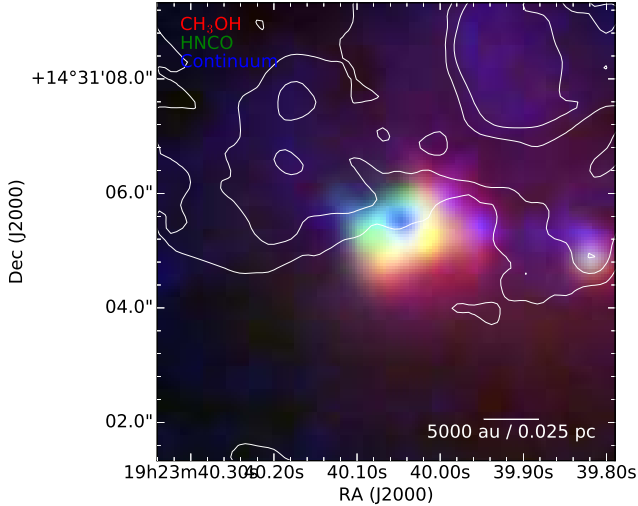


FIG. 14.— Image of CH_3OH $8_{0,8} - 7_{1,6}$ (red), HCNO $10_{0,10} - 9_{0,9}$ (green), and 225 GHz continuum (blue) toward North, as in Figure 13. The contours show Ku-band radio continuum emission tracing the diffuse IRS 2 H II region.

4.1.2. Outflows

While the outflows described in Section C are impressive and plentiful, they are obviously not the dominant form of feedback, as their area filling factor is small compared to that of the various forms of radiative feedback. A low area filling factor implies a substantially smaller volume filling factor and therefore a lower overall effect on the cloud. However, these outflows likely do punch holes through protostellar envelopes and the surrounding cloud material, allowing radiation to escape.

The detection of widespread high-J CH_3OH emission around the highest-mass protostars suggests that the use of CH_3OH as a bulk outflow tracer as suggested by [Krishten & Bergin \(2015\)](#) is not viable in regions with forming high-mass stars. While mid-J CH_3OH emission is detected associated with the outflow (e.g., the $J=10-9$ transition), it is completely dominated by the general ‘extended hot core’ emission described in Section 3.3.

None of the outflows originate in UCH II or HCH II regions. While a clear origin cannot be determined for all of the outflows, it is clear that no cm continuum sources lay at the base of any. The lack of molecular outflows toward these sources implies that they are accreting at most weakly or are accreting (and ejecting) only atomic or ionized material.

4.2. The accreting phase of high-mass star formation is not ionized

The strong outflows observed around the highest-mass forming stars, e2e, e8, and North are clear indications of ongoing accretion onto these sources. However, the bright H II regions, including e2w, e1, and d2, all lack any sign of an outflow or a surrounding rotating molecular structure. Most of these sources lack any surrounding molecular material at all.

Some models of high-mass star formation suggest that accretion continues through the ionized (H II region) phase ([Keto 2002](#); ?). The lack of molecular material around the majority of the compact H II regions in W51 suggests instead that most of the accretion is done by the time an H II region ignites. Additionally, the W51e2 source, which was invoked as an example of an ionized

accretion flow in [Keto et al. \(2008\)](#), is resolved into the e2e hot core driving an outflow and the e2w HCH II region that is not, so the evidence for ionized accretion onto e2w is diminished.

There is one example of a HCH II region surrounded by molecular gas in our sample, the source d2. However, it does not have an associated molecular outflow, so there is no direct evidence of ongoing accretion.

4.3. The accreting stars

In Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, we noted that the *lower limit* luminosities for the three most massive cores correspond to early B-type photospheres. Such stars should emit enough radiation to ignite luminous compact H II regions. The upper limits on the presence of such an H II region are constraining, with $R < 100 \text{ AU}$, which is consistent with the presence of late-type massive main-sequence stars, but inconsistent with any hotter or more luminous (spectral type $< \text{B0.5V}$). If the stellar luminosities are an order of magnitude or more higher, which is possible given the low-resolution constraints on the bolometric luminosity ([Ginsburg et al. 2016b](#); [Sievers et al. 1991](#)) and likely if a large fraction of the stellar radiation is escaping along outflow cavities ([Kuiper & Yorke 2012](#); [Zhang et al. 2013](#)), the luminosity would be too large and the UV radiation too small to be consistent with a main-sequence OB star.

Since we can provide only upper limits on the UV radiation, it is possible that there is none at all. The very large mass reservoir suggests that high accretion rates are possible, and the bright molecular outflows show that accretion is proceeding vigorously (though we have not quantified the rate). Rapid accretion, and in particular rapid and *variable* accretion, can change the properties of the underlying star, bloating the star and reducing its effective photospheric temperature ([Hosokawa & Omukai 2009](#); [Smith et al. 2012](#); [Hosokawa et al. 2016](#)). Such stars can achieve radii $R \gtrsim 200 R_\odot \sim 1 \text{ AU}$ while retaining photospheric temperatures $T \lesssim 5000 \text{ K}$. It may be possible to explore this scenario in more detail with higher-resolution and lower-frequency data.

An alternative possibility is that the high accretion rates have created a quenched H II region ([Walmsley](#)

1995; Osorio et al. 1999; Keto & Wood 2006). In the spherically symmetric version of this scenario, the accretion rate is faster than the ionization rate, such that there is always fresh neutral material to ionize at the surface of the star. The critical rate for H II region quenching is very small, $\dot{M} \sim 4 \times 10^{-6} M_{\odot} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ for a B0 star, so it is very likely that, even if the star has a hot photosphere, it is not capable of driving an expanding H II region. The main reason to disregard this scenario is the assumption of spherical symmetry: if the accretion is proceeding via a disk, there ought to be a substantial fraction of the stellar surface that is not directly accreting and therefore is not quenched. If there is a disk and an ionizing photosphere, there should be an expanding bipolar H II region (Keto & Wood 2006). The lack of such a feature suggests that the stellar photosphere is not emitting ionizing photons.

4.4. Fragmentation: Jeans analysis

Fragmentation is one of the critical problems in high-mass star formation. Assuming typical initial conditions for molecular clouds, with temperatures of order 10 K, gas is expected to fragment into sub-solar mass cores, preventing material from accreting onto single high-mass stars (Krumholz et al. 2015). Even after high-mass stars successfully form, further fragmentation could halt the growth of these stars and limit their final mass (Peters et al. 2010b).

Thermal Jeans fragmentation can be limited or suppressed entirely if the gas is warm enough. The high observed gas temperatures, $T \sim 100 - 600$ K over $\sim 10^4$ AU, around the high mass protostars indicate that their radiative feedback in the infrared has a dramatic effect on the gas. The heated region qualitatively matches that of Krumholz (2006), who described a core heated only by accretion luminosity down to $R = 10$ AU and therefore gave a lower limit on the total heating.

We examined the temperature structure around the highest-mass cores in Section 3.4 and the mass structure in Section 3.5. We put these together to measure the Jeans mass, $M_J = (\pi/6)c_s^3 G^{-3/2} \rho^{-1/2}$, and length, $\lambda_J = c_s G^{-1/2} \rho^{-1/2}$, in Figure 15. These plots show the azimuthally averaged M_J and $R_J = \lambda_J/2$, i.e., they show the Jeans mass if the medium were of uniform density and temperature at the spherical-shell-average density and azimuthal average temperature at each plotted radius.

The mass figure shows that the gas is stable on a beam size scale (~ 1000 AU), while the length figure shows that on larger scales, the gas is unstable to fragmentation. However, on these larger scales, the Jeans length is about the same as the hot core size, and the gas density and temperature structure is highly non-uniform, violating the key assumptions of the Jeans analysis. A more sophisticated analysis of the fragmentation propensity of the gas in such a core structure would be worthwhile but is beyond the scope of this work. We note more simply that, even if thermal fragmentation occurs, it is likely to be greatly reduced compared to models with feedback limited to shorter wavelengths (e.g., ionizing radiation) or at a lower overall amplitude.

Within this large reservoir, there are few currently-detected fragments, supporting the conclusions of the

Jeans analysis. In our data, within 6500 AU of W51 North, there is only 1 (ALMamm35), around e2e there is the H II region e2w and possibly 2-3 others between 5000 and 6500 AU, and around e8 there are none. Admittedly, our data are not very sensitive in the areas immediately surrounding these cores because of dynamic range limitations, and it is not obvious that we should detect cores on such a bright and high-column background. Nonetheless, the lack of compact core detections around the most massive sources is consistent with the interpretation that fragmentation is suppressed.

Given the current structure of the observed cores and their (marginal) stability against fragmentation, it is unlikely that they could have existed at all without the presence of a central heating source. Should these $> 200 M_{\odot}$ cores have been present before high-mass star formation initiated, resting at $T \sim 20$ K as in a typical molecular cloud, they would have been subject to Jeans fragmentation on a much smaller scale and would have formed a cluster of smaller stars. This prior instability implies that the mass currently in the core had to be assembled from larger scales while suppressing or slowing collapse on smaller scales, which is essentially the opposite of inside-out collapse. In turn, such a core assembly implies that aspects of both the ‘competitive accretion’ and ‘core accretion’ models may apply, with mass dumping onto a sink source from large physical scales, yet assembling a quasi-stable core.

The observed high gas temperature provides a mechanism for MYSOs to avoid the “fragmentation-induced starvation” problem discussed by Peters et al. (2010b,a) and Girichidis et al. (2012). By suppressing fragmentation in their surroundings, accreting massive stars are able to sustain their mass reservoir. They can effectively create their own cores by cooking the gas feast that would otherwise form a small cluster into one single serving.

4.5. High-mass star formation within dense protoclusters: A cooperative accretion scenario

Since massive ($M \gtrsim 250 M_{\odot}$) hot cores presently exist, and they appear to be the precursors to a next generation of high mass stars, there is a clear route to high-mass star formation given the presence of strong feedback sources. However, this raises the question of what the initial conditions were. Did the current generation of forming massive stars start life the same way as previous generations?

One possibility hinted at by the density of hyper- and ultra-compact H II regions around each of the massive cores is that they did not. Heating from previous generations of moderate mass stars could have warmed the gas, suppressing fragmentation into the sub-solar mass objects typical in local clouds until enough gas was present to collapse into a substantially larger object. This toy model is analogous to the ‘cooperative accretion’ mode suggested by Zinnecker & Yorke (2007), but at a much earlier stage in the cluster development when the gas is still molecular and dusty and therefore capable of efficient cooling. It is also similar to the results of Krumholz et al. (2011), in which radiative heating drove up the peak of the IMF; in this case, though, we suggest that the affected region is smaller (not the whole cloud) and that the “top-heavy IMF” is a solution, not a problem.

In this scenario, the highest mass stars (probably “very

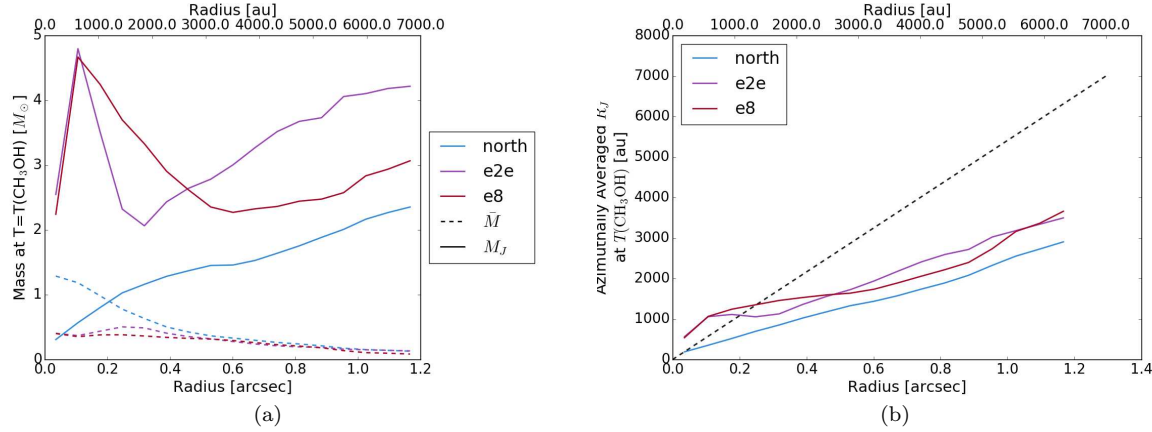


FIG. 15.— The azimuthally averaged Jeans mass surrounding the three most massive cores. We used the CH_3OH temperature from 3.4, Figure 12b in both the Jeans mass calculation and the dust-based mass determination. The density used for the mass calculation is assumed to be distributed over spherical shells. The dashed lines show the measured mean mass per ~ 1000 AU beam at each radius. Since these masses are lower than the local Jeans mass, the gas is stable against fragmentation. The high variation seen at small radii (below $0.2''$) is primarily due to noise.

massive stars”, $M \gtrsim 50 M_\odot$) would only be capable of forming within dense, clustered environments, since larger stars would be prevented from forming by earlier fragmentation elsewhere. The IMF would then be built up by an inverse hierarchy, with progressively larger stars capable of forming over time until the gas is either exhausted (Ginsburg et al. 2016a) or expelled.

However, some of the assumptions in this scenario contradict our observations. If the previous generation were responsible for substantial gas heating, we might expect to see warm gas surrounding the HCH II regions. Instead, we see these stars barely interacting with the dense gas. It is possible, though, that these stars are only effective at dense gas heating *before* they ignite Lyman continuum emission and blow out cavities, and afterward they are merely uninteractive witnesses to continued collapse (Peters et al. 2010a).

The alternatives to this hypothesis are that the initial conditions were entirely set within the gas on these current scales, which seems implausible, or that the current high density of main-sequence stars (i.e., the observed HCH II regions) originated from a broader, lower-density distribution and dynamically collapsed into their current clustered state. If the stars illuminating HCH II regions formed somewhat earlier in a more distributed manner and fell into a common central potential, they would have had little effect on the dense gas temperature.

4.6. Comparison to high-mass star formation theories

Two general classes of star formation theory, “competitive accretion” and “turbulent core accretion” have dominated the discussion of high-mass star formation, though they are not fully complementary theories (Schilke 2016). In their extreme forms, they can be simplified to uniform seeds accreting different amounts of material over their lifetime in the case of competitive accretion and a single, initial, quasistatic high-mass gas core collapsing into a star in the case of turbulent core accretion.

Our observations of high-mass hot cores extending to radii ~ 5000 AU do not directly contradict either of these extremes, but instead suggests that the accretion models used within these theories must be modified.

If there are many simultaneously formed low-mass frag-

ments competing for material, as in competitive accretion, it appears that the formation of a dominant most massive star dramatically changes the conditions for accretion. This single central source heats material enough to reduce the efficiency of Bondi-Hoyle accretion by a factor of 10 for a stationary object, though the reduction is negligible for an object moving near the Virial velocity ($v_{\text{vir}} \gtrsim 5 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ within the hot cores). However, this extended warm region suppresses the formation of new small fragments, as has been observed in simulations with much weaker feedback (e.g. Bate 2009). It is not clear whether the mass accumulated around the most massive protostars at present came from large radii, as in Smith et al. (2009), but it is certainly possible.

If the turbulent core model is used to describe these sources, a few issues arise. First, a ‘cold’ turbulent core with the current density configuration would have been dramatically unstable to fragmentation on small scales. It therefore is unlikely that a static model, with a single preassembled precursor core, is an appropriate initial condition for these forming high-mass stars. Second, the more sophisticated models of evolution from an initial turbulent core suggest that most of the stellar (and accretion) radiation should escape via growing outflow cavities (Zhang & Tan 2011; Zhang et al. 2013, 2014). The circular symmetry seen in the hot core around e2e and its lack of correspondence with the outflowing material (Figure 16) indicates that a large fraction of the stellar or accretion radiation is going directly into the core and not escaping along the poles. This failure of the outflow escape valves suggests a modification of the core evolution within the turbulent core scenario is needed.

The presence of these large-scale, massive, hot cores raises a few questions that are not presently well-addressed by any class of theories. If the hot cores successfully suppress further fragmentation in their envelopes, does that imply that these cores will collapse into single stars? If so, do the cores in any way correspond to ‘initial conditions’, or are the cores created by the stars that form within them? This question is more than merely semantics, as the evolutionary progress within the ‘turbulent core’ model depends on the initial

core structure, and the presence of nearby fragments governs whether ‘competitive accretion’ can occur at all.

There are also some curious implications for ‘isolated’ massive star formation. The stars we see forming are clearly not isolated - they are embedded within fairly rich clusters of massive stars we can see already, and they are very likely to be surrounded by substantial clusters of lower-mass stars. However, *during their formation process*, they may be the only accreting stars within a few thousand AU neighborhood - their thermal feedback may prevent any neighbors from forming simultaneously. This ‘enforced isolation’ might be a way for massive star formation to proceed similarly independent of the size of the parent cloud.

4.7. The population of faint, compact sources

In Section 3.1, we reported the identification of 75 or 113 sources, depending on how you count them, but we have not discussed them since. In this section, we briefly discuss why we have chosen to ignore these sources and offer some cautions and prospects for the interpretation of millimeter sources in crowded star-forming regions.

First, observational considerations have hindered the detection of ‘cores’ down to our theoretical mass limit $M \sim 1M_{\odot}$: the extended millimeter continuum structure resulted in imaging artifacts that limited the dynamic range in the vicinity of bright sources. This effect means that we have a wildly varying completeness to compact sources across our image, and the completeness is difficult or perhaps impossible to measure.

Second, the nature of the sources makes determination of their masses quite difficult. In Appendix D, we discuss our attempts to determine the temperature and structure of the individual sources and characterize them based on their morphology. Most of these sources are centrally concentrated with high central brightness temperatures, suggesting that they are protostellar, which in turn means that any dust-derived mass is subject to dramatic uncertainties in the unresolved temperature structure. More diffuse and cool sources, those that appear similar to local prestellar cores, are theoretically detectable in our data, and some even are detected (those with classification -C- in Table 6), but in practice can only be seen in regions with no other substructure, especially free-free emission, that are rare in the observed area.

These fainter sources are the most prominent members of the next generation of stars forming in this cloud, but we do not yet have the tools needed to understand them. In order to probe the formation of the IMF, we need to be able to determine the masses of stars forming in the millimeter sources, which likely requires multiwavelength data.

The limitations we discuss prevent us from drawing any robust conclusions from these data. However, they are presented in full detail in Appendix D, including description of the spatial structure, characterization technique, and flux distribution.

5. CONCLUSIONS

We have presented ALMA 1.3 mm (226 GHz) continuum and line observations of the high-mass protocluster W51. We examined the three most massive forming stars and the surrounding population of forming stars.

The key observational results include:

- We demonstrated three techniques for estimating the temperature of dust continuum sources with ALMA: limits from dust brightness temperature, limits from line brightness temperature, and LTE modeling of CH_3OH lines. While these methods do not necessarily agree or provide direct and accurate measurements of the temperature, they provide strong enough constraints to draw substantial physical conclusions.
- We cataloged and classified 75 continuum sources on the basis of their dust emission, line emission, and morphology. These sources are prestellar cores, dust-enshrouded protostars, and hypercompact H II regions.
- We identified chemically enhanced regions around high-mass protostars and suggest they are radiatively heated zones in which previously frozen-out chemical species have desorbed into the gas phase.
- We measured the temperature and mass structure surrounding the three highest-mass cores, W51 e2e, e8, and North. All three have masses $M > 200 M_{\odot}$ within $R \lesssim 5000$ AU. They have temperatures inferred from LTE modeling of CH_3OH $100\text{K} < T < 600\text{K}$. Their centers are likely to be optically thick in the dust continuum.
- The flux density recovered in the ALMA map above a threshold of 10 mJy beam^{-1} is $\sim 30\%$ of that seen in single-dish data. At this brightness, cold (20 K) dust would correspond to a column density $N(\text{H}_2) > 10^{25} \text{ cm}^{-2}$, leading us to conclude that a large fraction of the cloud - likely all of the gas emitting at over 10 mJy beam^{-1} - is warmer than 20 K .

From these observations, we have inferred the following:

- During the earliest stages of their formation, before they have ignited H II regions, high-mass protostars heat a large volume, and correspondingly large mass, of gas around them.
- Older massive stars, those with surrounding H II regions, appear to have little effect on the temperature of dense gas around them. While some are embedded within larger hot cores, they do not appear to be the main heating sources. Their luminosity must therefore escape without being locally reprocessed into infrared radiation.
- Heated massive cores surrounding the highest-mass protostars in W51 show no evidence of ongoing fragmentation and are warm enough to suppress Jeans fragmentation. Hot massive cores therefore serve as a mass reservoir for accretion onto possibly single massive stars.

Acknowledgments The National Radio Astronomy Observatory is a facility of the National Science Foundation operated under cooperative agreement by Associated Universities, Inc. This paper makes use of the following ALMA data: 2013.1.00308.S and 2015.1.01596.S.

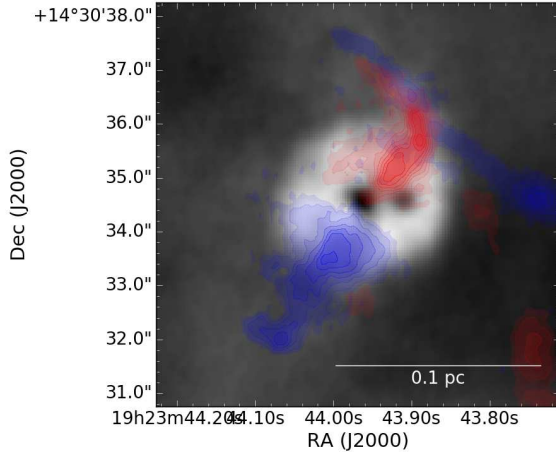


FIG. 16.— The e2e core as seen in the $\text{CH}_3\text{OH } 8_{0,8} - 7_{1,6}$ line with the integrated ^{12}CO outflow overlaid in red and blue. The ‘core’ is circularly symmetric, while the outflow is clearly bipolar.

ALMA is a partnership of ESO (representing its member states), NSF (USA) and NINS (Japan), together with NRC (Canada), NSC and ASIAA (Taiwan), and KASI (Republic of Korea), in cooperation with the Republic of Chile. The Joint ALMA Observatory is operated by ESO, AUI/NRAO and NAOJ. JMDK gratefully acknowledges funding in the form of an Emmy Noether Research Group from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), grant number KR4801/1-1.

Code Packages Used:

- CASA <https://casa.nrao.edu/>
- pyspeckit <http://pyspeckit.bitbucket.org>

Ginsburg & Mirocha (2011)

- aplpy <https://aplpy.github.io/>
- wcsaxes <http://wcsaxes.readthedocs.org>
- spectral cube <http://spectral-cube.readthedocs.org>
- ds9 <http://ds9.si.edu>
- dust_emissivity dust_emissivity.readthedocs.org

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APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONAL DETAILS

In this Appendix, we present the complete list of imaged lines.

TABLE 2
SPECTRAL LINES IN SPW 0

| Line Name | Frequency GHz |
|---|------------------|
| H ₂ CO 3 _{0,3} – 2 _{0,2} | 218.22219 |
| H ₂ CO 3 _{2,2} – 2 _{2,1} | 218.47564 |
| CH ₃ OH 4 _{2,2} – 3 _{1,2} | 218.44005 |
| CH ₃ OCHO 17 _{3,14} – 16 _{3,13} E | 218.28083 |
| CH ₃ OCHO 17 _{3,14} – 16 _{3,13} A | 218.29787 |
| CH ₃ CH ₂ CN 24 _{3,21} – 23 _{3,20} | 218.39002 |
| Acetone 8 _{7,1} – 7 _{4,4} AE | 218.24017 |
| O ¹³ CS 18-17 | 218.19898 |
| CH ₃ OCH ₃ 23 _{3,21} – 23 _{2,22} AA | 218.49441 |
| CH ₃ OCH ₃ 23 _{3,21} – 23 _{2,22} EE | 218.49192 |
| CH ₃ NCO 25 _{1,24} – 24 _{1,23} | 218.5418 |
| CH ₃ SH 23 ₂ – 23 ₁ | 218.18612 |

A BUBBLE AROUND E5

There is evidence of a bubble in the continuum around e5 with a radius of 6.2'' (0.16 pc; Figure 17). The bubble is completely absent in the centimeter continuum, so the observed emission is from dust. The bubble edge can be seen from 58 km s⁻¹ to 63 km s⁻¹ in C¹⁸O and H₂CO, though it is not continuous in any single velocity channel. There is a collection of compact sources (protostars or cores) along the southeast edge of the bubble.

The presence of such a bubble in dense gas, but its absence in ionizing gas, is surprising. The most likely mechanism for blowing such a bubble is ionizing radiative feedback, especially around a source that is currently a hypercompact HII region, but since no free-free emission is evident within or on the edge of the bubble, it is at least not presently driving the bubble. A plausible explanation for this discrepancy is that e5 was an exposed O-star within the past Myr, but has since begun accreting heavily and therefore had its HII region shrunk. This model is marginally supported by the presence of a ‘pillar’ of dense material pointing from e5 toward the south.

The total flux in the north half of the ‘bubble’, which shows no signs of free-free contamination, is about 1.5 Jy. The implied mass in just this fragment of the bubble is about $M \sim 350 M_{\odot}$ for a relatively high assumed temperature $T = 50$ K. The total mass of the bubble is closer to $M \sim 1000 M_{\odot}$, though it may be lower ($\sim 500 M_{\odot}$) if the southern half is dominated by free-free emission.

TABLE 3
SPECTRAL LINES IN SPW 1

| Line Name | Frequency GHz |
|--|------------------|
| H ₂ CO 3 _{2,1} – 2 _{2,0} | 218.76007 |
| HC ₃ N 24-23 | 218.32471 |
| HC ₃ Nv ₇₌₁ 24-23a | 219.17358 |
| HC ₃ Nv ₇₌₁ 24-23a | 218.86063 |
| HC ₃ Nv ₇₌₂ 24-23 | 219.67465 |
| OCS 18-17 | 218.90336 |
| SO 6 ₅ – 5 ₄ | 219.94944 |
| HNCO 10 _{1,10} – 9 _{1,9} | 218.98102 |
| HNCO 10 _{2,8} – 9 _{2,7} | 219.73719 |
| HNCO 10 _{0,10} – 9 _{0,9} | 219.79828 |
| HNCO 10 _{5,5} – 9 _{5,4} | 219.39241 |
| HNCO 10 _{4,6} – 9 _{4,5} | 219.54708 |
| HNCO 10 _{3,8} – 9 _{3,7} | 219.65677 |
| CH ₃ OH 8 _{0,8} – 7 _{1,6} | 220.07849 |
| CH ₃ OH 25 _{3,22} – 24 _{4,20} | 219.98399 |
| CH ₃ OH 23 _{5,19} – 22 _{6,17} | 219.99394 |
| C ¹⁸ O 2-1 | 219.56036 |
| H ₂ CCO 11-10 | 220.17742 |
| HCOOH 4 _{3,1} – 5 _{2,4} | 219.09858 |
| CH ₃ OCHO 17 _{4,13} – 16 _{4,12} A | 220.19027 |
| CH ₃ CH ₂ CN 24 _{2,22} – 23 _{2,21} | 219.50559 |
| Acetone 21 _{1,20} – 20 _{2,19} AE | 219.21993 |
| Acetone 21 _{1,20} – 20 _{1,19} EE | 219.24214 |
| Acetone 12 _{9,4} – 11 _{8,3} EE | 218.63385 |
| H ₂ ¹³ CO 3 _{1,2} – 2 _{1,1} | 219.90849 |
| SO ₂ 22 _{7,15} – 23 _{6,18} | 219.27594 |
| SO ₂ v ₂ = 1 20 _{2,18} – 19 _{3,17} | 218.99583 |
| SO ₂ v ₂ = 1 22 _{2,20} – 22 _{1,21} | 219.46555 |
| SO ₂ v ₂ = 1 16 _{3,13} – 16 _{2,14} | 220.16524 |

TABLE 4
SPECTRAL LINES IN SPW 2

| Line Name | Frequency GHz |
|--|------------------|
| ¹² CO 2 – 1 | 230.538 |
| OCS 19-18 | 231.06099 |
| HNCO 28 _{1,28} – 29 _{0,29} | 231.873255 |
| CH ₃ OH 10 _{2,9} – 9 _{3,6} | 231.28115 |
| ¹³ CS 5-4 | 231.22069 |
| NH ₂ CHO 11 _{2,10} – 10 _{2,9} | 232.27363 |
| H30 α | 231.90093 |
| CH ₃ OCHO 12 _{4,9} – 11 _{3,8} E | 231.01908 |
| CH ₃ CH ₂ OH 5 _{5,0} – 5 _{4,1} | 231.02517 |
| CH ₃ OCH ₃ 13 _{0,13} – 12 _{1,12} AA | 231.98772 |
| N ₂ D ⁺ 3-2 | 231.32183 |
| g-CH ₃ CH ₂ OH 13 _{2,11} – 12 _{2,10} | 230.67255 |
| g-CH ₃ CH ₂ OH 6 _{5,1} – 5 _{4,1} | 230.79351 |
| g-CH ₃ CH ₂ OH 16 _{5,11} – 16 _{4,12} | 230.95379 |
| g-CH ₃ CH ₂ OH 14 _{0,14} – 13 _{1,13} | 230.99138 |
| SO ₂ v ₂ = 1 6 _{4,2} – 7 _{3,5} | 232.21031 |
| CH ₃ SH 16 ₂ – 16 ₁ | 231.75891 |
| CH ₃ SH 7 ₃ – 8 ₂ | 230.64608 |

With such a large mass, the implied density of the original cloud, assuming it was uniformly distributed over a 0.2 pc sphere, is $n(\text{H}_2) \approx 2 - 5 \times 10^5 \text{ cm}^{-3}$.

To evaluate the plausibility of the H II-region origin of the bubble, we compare to classical equations for H II regions. The Strömgren radius is

$$R_s = \left(\frac{3Q_H}{4\pi\alpha_B n^2} \right)^{\frac{1}{3}}. \quad (\text{B1})$$

For $Q_H \sim 10^{49} \text{ s}^{-1}$, $\alpha_B = 3 \times 10^{-13} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$, $R_s \approx 0.01 \text{ pc}$.

TABLE 5
SPECTRAL LINES IN SPW 3

| Line Name | Frequency GHz |
|--|------------------|
| CH ₃ OH 4 _{2,3} – 5 _{1,4} | 234.68345 |
| CH ₃ OH 5 _{–4,2} – 6 _{–4,3} | 234.69847 |
| CH ₃ OH 18 _{3,15} – 17 _{4,14} | 233.79575 |
| ¹³ CH ₃ OH 5 _{1,5} – 4 _{1,4} | 234.01158 |
| PN 5 – 4 | 234.93569 |
| NH ₂ CHO 11 _{5,6} – 10 _{5,5} | 233.59451 |
| Acetone 12 _{11,2} – 11 _{10,1} AE | 234.86136 |
| SO ₂ 16 _{6,10} – 17 _{5,13} | 234.42159 |
| CH ₃ NCO 27 _{2,26} – 26 _{2,25} | 234.08812 |
| CH ₃ SH 15 ₂ – 15 ₁ | 234.19145 |

The Spitzer solution for HII region expansion gives

$$R_{\text{HII}}(t) = R_s \left(1 + \frac{7}{4} \frac{c_{\text{II}} t}{R_s} \right)^{\frac{4}{7}}. \quad (\text{B2})$$

With $c_{\text{II}} = 7.5 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ and $t = 10^4 \text{ yr}$, $R_{\text{HII}}(t) \approx 0.04 \text{ pc}$, while at $t = 10^5 \text{ yr}$, it is $R_{\text{HII}} \approx 0.16 \text{ pc}$, which is comparable to the observed radius ($r_{\text{obs}} \sim 0.13 - 0.19 \text{ pc}$)

Whitworth et al. 1994 give the fragmentation timescale as

$$t_{\text{frag}} \sim 1.56 \left(\frac{c_s}{0.2 \text{ km s}^{-1}} \right)^{\frac{7}{11}} \left(\frac{Q_{\text{H}}}{10^{49} \text{ s}^{-1}} \right)^{-\frac{1}{11}} \left(\frac{n}{10^3 \text{ cm}^{-3}} \right)^{-\frac{5}{11}} \text{ Myr}. \quad (\text{B3})$$

Plugging in our numbers gives $t_{\text{frag}} \approx 1.0 \times 10^5 \text{ yr}$, or $10\times$ longer than the expansion time.

These values are consistent with a late O-type star having been exposed, driving an HII region, for $\sim 10^4 - 10^5$ year, after which a substantial increase in the accretion rate quenched the ionizing radiation from the star, trapping it into a hypercompact ($r < 0.005 \text{ pc}$) configuration. The recombination timescale is short enough that the ionized gas would disappear almost immediately after the continuous ionizing radiation source was hidden. This is essentially the scenario laid out in De Pree et al. (2014) as an explanation for the compact HII region lifetime problem. In this case, however, it also seems that the HII region has effectively driven the “collect” phase of what will presumably end in a collect-and-collapse style triggering event.

Technically, it is possible that e5 actually represents an optically thick high-mass-loss-rate wind rather than an ultracompact HII region. For example, η Car would have a flux of $\sim 0.5 \text{ Jy}$ at 2 cm and $\sim 5 \text{ Jy}$ at 1 mm at the distance of W51. While we cannot rule out this possibility, it would render the association of e5 with the ‘bubble’ purely coincidental.

OUTFLOWS

We detected many outflows, primarily in CO 2-1 and SO 6₅ – 5₄. The flows are weakly detected in some other lines, e.g. H₂CO, but we defer discussion of outflow chemistry to a future work.

In this section, we discuss some of the unique outflows and unique features of outflows in the W51 region. We show the most readily identified outflows in Figures 20, 19, 21, and 22.

The Lacy jet

A high-velocity outflow was discovered within the W51 IRS2 region by Lacy et al. (2007), and subsequently detected in H77 α by Ginsburg et al. (2016a). We have discovered the CO counterpart to this outflow, which comes from near the continuum source ALMAmm31 (Figure 18). Strangely, though, the outflow is not directly centered on the millimeter continuum source, but is slightly offset. The outflow shows red- and blue-shifted lobes that form the base of the ionized outflow reported by Lacy et al. (2007, Figure 19).

The presence of the Lacy jet is important for ruling out outflows from HII regions. It provides clear evidence that a molecular outflow that is subsequently ionized can be easily detected in existing radio recombination line data. If outflows of comparable mass were being launched from the stars at the centers of HCHII regions (e.g., e2w), we would detect these flows. Their absence provides an upper limit on the outflow rate - and presumably the accretion rate - onto these sources. While we cannot yet make that limit quantitative, it is clear that the HCHII region sources are accreting substantially less than the dust continuum sources.

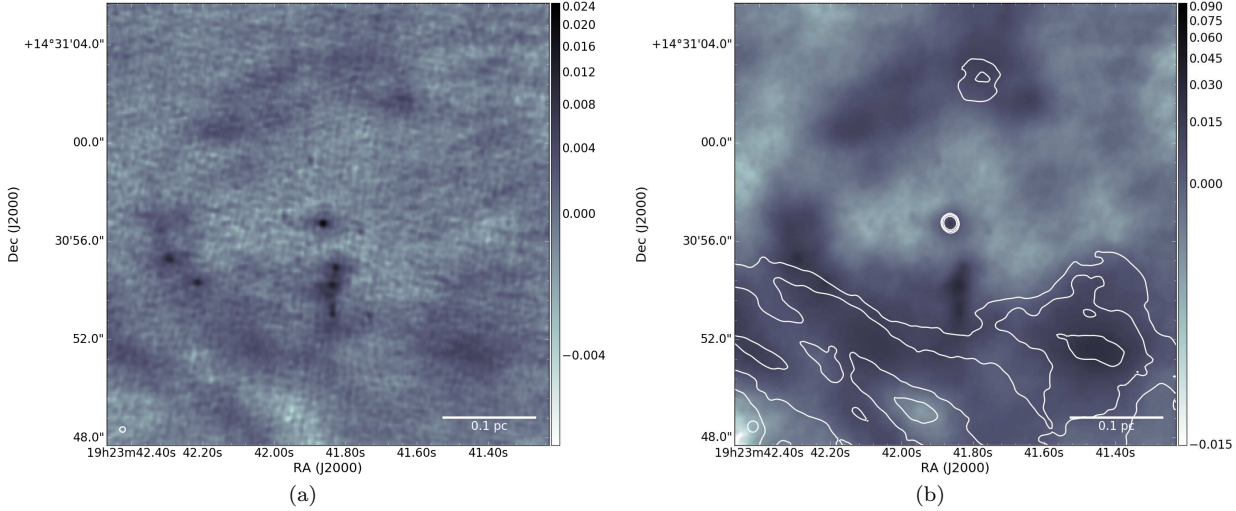


FIG. 17.— The bubble around source e5. The bubble interior shows no sign of centimeter emission, though the lower-left region of the shell - just south of the “cores” - coincides with part of the W51 Main ionized shell. The source of the ionization is not obvious. (*Left*): A robust -2.0 image with a small ($0.2''$) beam and poor recovery of large angular scale emission. This image highlights the presence of protostellar cores on the left edge of the bubble and along a filament just south of the central source. (*Right*): A robust +2.0 image with a larger ($0.4''$) beam and better recovery of large angular scales. The contours show radio continuum (14.5 GHz) emission at 1.5, 3, and 6 mJy/beam. While some of the detected 1.4 mm emission in the south could be free-free emission, the eastern and northern parts of the shell show no emission down to the $50 \mu\text{Jy}$ noise level of the Ku-band map, confirming that they consist only of dust emission.

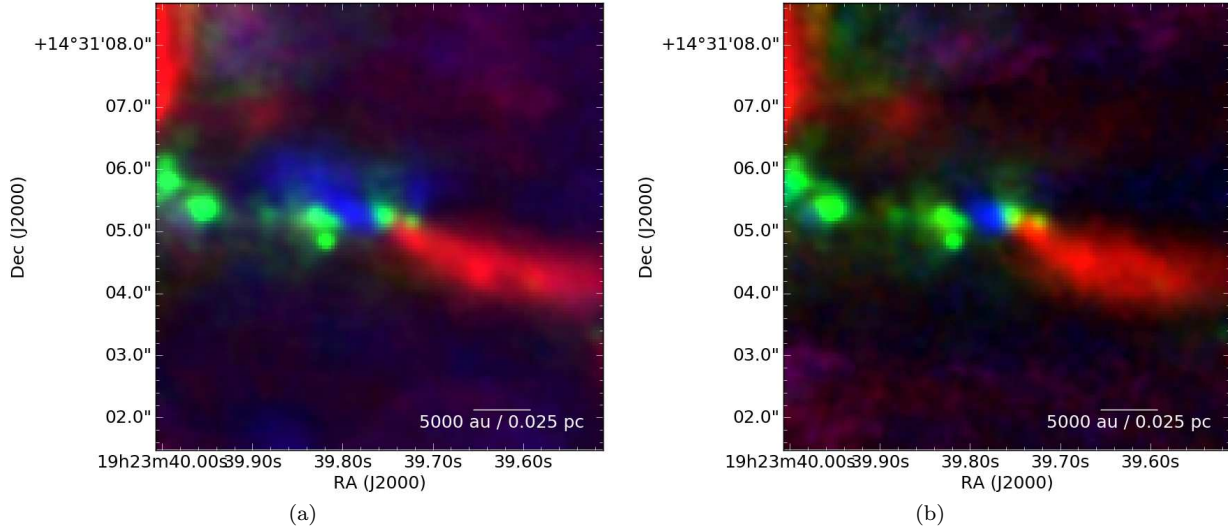


FIG. 18.— Outflows shown in red and blue for (a) CO 2-1 and (b) SO $6_5 - 5_4$ with continuum in green. This symmetric molecular outflow forms the base of the Lacy et al. (2007) ionized outflow detected further to the east. The continuum source is offset from the line joining the red and blue outflow lobes.

north

The outflow from W51 North is extended and complex. A jet-like high-velocity feature appears directly to the north of W51 North in both CO and SO (Figure 19). However, in SO, this feature begins to emit at $\sim 47 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ and continues to $\sim 100 \text{ km s}^{-1}$. The CO emission below $< 70 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ is completely absent, presumably obscured by foreground material. The blueshifted component, by contrast with the red, points to the southeast and is barely detected in CO, but again cleanly in SO. It is sharply truncated, extending only $\sim 1''$ ($\sim 5000 \text{ AU}$). Unlike the Lacy jet, there is no evidence that this outflow transitions into an externally ionized state.

The northernmost point of the W51 North outflow may coincide with the Hodapp & Davis (2002) H_2 and [Fe II] outflow. There is some CO 2-1 emission coincident with the southernmost point of the H_2 features, and these all lay approximately along the W51 North outflow vector. However, the association is only circumstantial.

The e2e outflow

The dominant outflow in W51, which was previously detected by the SMA (Shi et al. 2010b,a), comes from the source e2e. This outflow is remarkable for its high velocity, extending nearly to the limit of our spectral coverage in

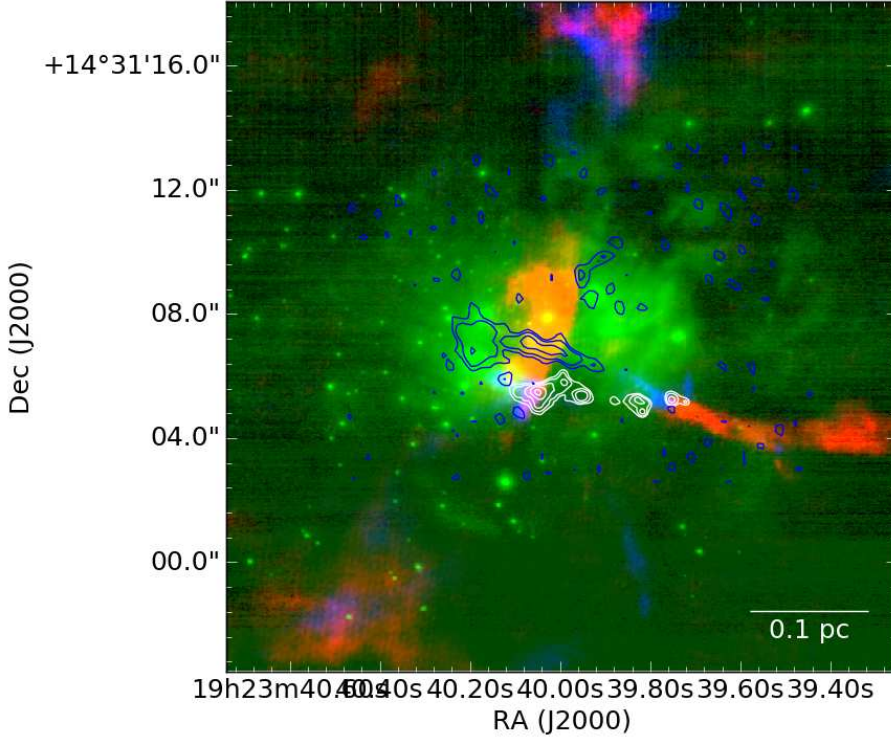


FIG. 19.— Outflows in the W51 IRS2 region. The green emission is NACO K-band continuum (Barbosa et al. 2008), with ALMA 1.4 mm continuum contours in white and H77 α contours in blue. The Lacy et al. (2007) jet is prominent in H77 α .

^{12}CO . The ends of the flow cover at least $-50 < v_{\text{LSR}} < 160 \text{ km s}^{-1}$, or a velocity $v \pm 100 \text{ km s}^{-1}$.

The morphology is also notable. Both ends of the outflow are sharply truncated at $\sim 2.5''$ (0.07 pc) from e2e (Figure 20). To the southeast, the high-velocity flow lies along a line that is consistent with the extrapolation from the northwest flow, but at lower velocities ($10 < v_{\text{LSR}} < 45 \text{ km s}^{-1}$), it jogs toward a more north-south direction (Figure 21). In the northwest, the redshifted part of this flow ($70 < v_{\text{LSR}} < 120 \text{ km s}^{-1}$) apparently collides with a blueshifted flow from another source ($22 < v_{\text{LSR}} < 45 \text{ km s}^{-1}$), suggesting that these outflows intersect, though such a scenario seems implausible given their small volume filling factor.

The extreme velocity and morphology carry a few implications for the accretion process in W51. The sharp symmetric truncation at the outflow ends, combined with the extraordinary velocity, suggests that the outflow is freshly carving a cavity in the surrounding dense gas. The observed velocities are high enough that their bow shocks likely dissociated all molecules, so some ionized gas is likely present at the endpoints; this ionized gas has not been detected in radio images because of the nearby 100 mJy HCHII region e2w. The dynamical age of the outflow is ~ 600 years at the peak observed velocity, which is a lower limit on the true age of the outflow.

e8

There are at least four distinct outflows coming from the e8 filament. The e8 core is launching a redshifted outflow to the northwest. A blueshifted outflow is coming from somewhere south of the e8 peak and pointing straight east. While these originate quite near each other, they seem not to have a common source, since the red and blue streams are not parallel (Figures 20 and 22). The e8 outflows are too confused and asymmetric for simple interpretation.

DETAILS OF THE EXTRACTED SOURCES

We provide additional information and details about the continuum source extraction, along with complete catalogs, in this Appendix.

The spatial distribution of continuum sources

The detected continuum sources are not uniformly distributed across the observed region. The most notable feature in the spatial distribution is their alignment: most continuum sources collect along approximately linear features. This is especially evident in W51 IRS2, where the core density is very high and there is virtually no deviation from the line. The e8 filament is also notably linear, though there are a few sources detected just off the filament.

On a larger scale, the e8 filament points toward e2, apparently tracing a slightly longer filamentary structure that is either lower-column or resolved out by our data. With some imagination, this might be extended along the entire northeast ridge to eventually connect in a broad half-circle with the IRS2 filament (Figure 23). This morphology hints at a possible sequential star formation event, where some central bubble has swept gas into these filaments. However, there is reason to be skeptical of this interpretation: this ring has no counterpart in ionized gas as would be expected

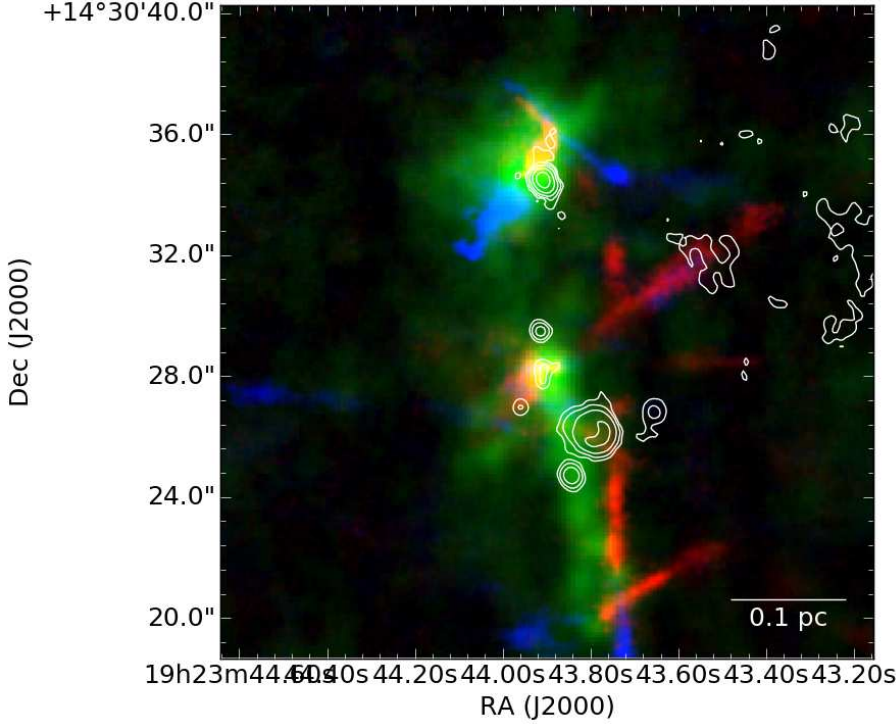


FIG. 20.— Outflows in red and blue overlaid on mm continuum in green with cm continuum contours in white. The northern source is e2, the southern source at the tip of the long continuum filament is e8.

if it were driven as part of an expanding H II region or a wind bubble, and there is little reason to expect such circular symmetry from an isolated molecular cloud, so the star forming circle may be merely a coincidental alignment.

Whether it is physical or not, there is a relative lack of millimeter continuum sources within the circle. There is no lack of molecular gas, however, as both CO and H₂CO emission fill the full field of view.

Photometry

We created a catalog of the hand-extracted sources including their peak and mean flux density, their centroid, and their geometric properties. For each source, we further extracted aperture photometry around the centroid in 6 apertures: 0.2, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8, 1.0, and 1.5". We performed the same aperture photometry on the W51 Ku-band images from Ginsburg et al. (2016b) to estimate the free-free contribution to the observed flux density measurements. The free-free contribution at ~ 226 GHz will fall in a range between optically thick, spectral index $\alpha_\nu = 2$, and optically thin, $\alpha_\nu = 0.1$, which correspond to factors of $S_{226\text{GHz}} = 227S_{15\text{GHz}}$ and $S_{226\text{GHz}} = 1.3S_{15\text{GHz}}$, respectively. These measurements are reported in Table 6.

The source flux density distribution is shown in Figure 24. The most common nearest-neighbor separation between cataloged sources is $\sim 0.3''$, which implies that the larger apertures double-count some pixels. The smallest separation is $0.26''$, so the $0.2''$ aperture contains almost only unique pixels. The corresponding masses are shown in Figure 27 assuming the dust temperature is equal to the source's peak line brightness temperature (Section D.3).

Except where noted below, the hand-selected sources are used for further analysis as they are more reliable.

Temperature estimation of the continuum sources

The temperature is a critical ingredient for determining the total mass of each continuum source or region. Since we do not have any means of directly determining the dust temperature, as the SED peak is well into the THz regime and inaccessible with any existing instruments at the requisite resolution, we employ alternative indicators. Above a density $n \gtrsim 10^5 - 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-3}$, the gas and dust become strongly collisionally coupled, meaning the gas temperature should accurately reflect the dust temperature. Below this density, the two may be decoupled.

The average dust temperature, as estimated from Herschel Hi-Gal SED fits (Molinari et al. 2016; Wang et al. 2015), is 38 K when including the $70 \mu\text{m}$ data or 26 K when excluding it. This average is obtained over a $\sim 45''$ (~ 1 pc) beam and therefore is likely to be strongly biased toward the hottest dust in the H II regions. Despite these uncertainties, this bulk measurement provides us with a reasonable range to assume for the uncoupled, low-density dust, which (weakly) dominates the mass (see Section 3.2).

One constraint on the dust temperature we can employ is the absolute surface brightness. For some regions, especially the e8 filament and the hot cores, the surface brightness is substantially brighter than is possible for a beam-filling, optically thick blackbody at 20 K, providing a lower limit on the dust temperature ranging from 20 K (35 mJy/beam) to ~ 300 K (0.5 Jy/beam). Toward most of this emission, optically-thick free-free emission can be strongly ruled out as the driving mechanism using existing data that limits the free-free contribution to be $< 50\%$ if it is optically thick,

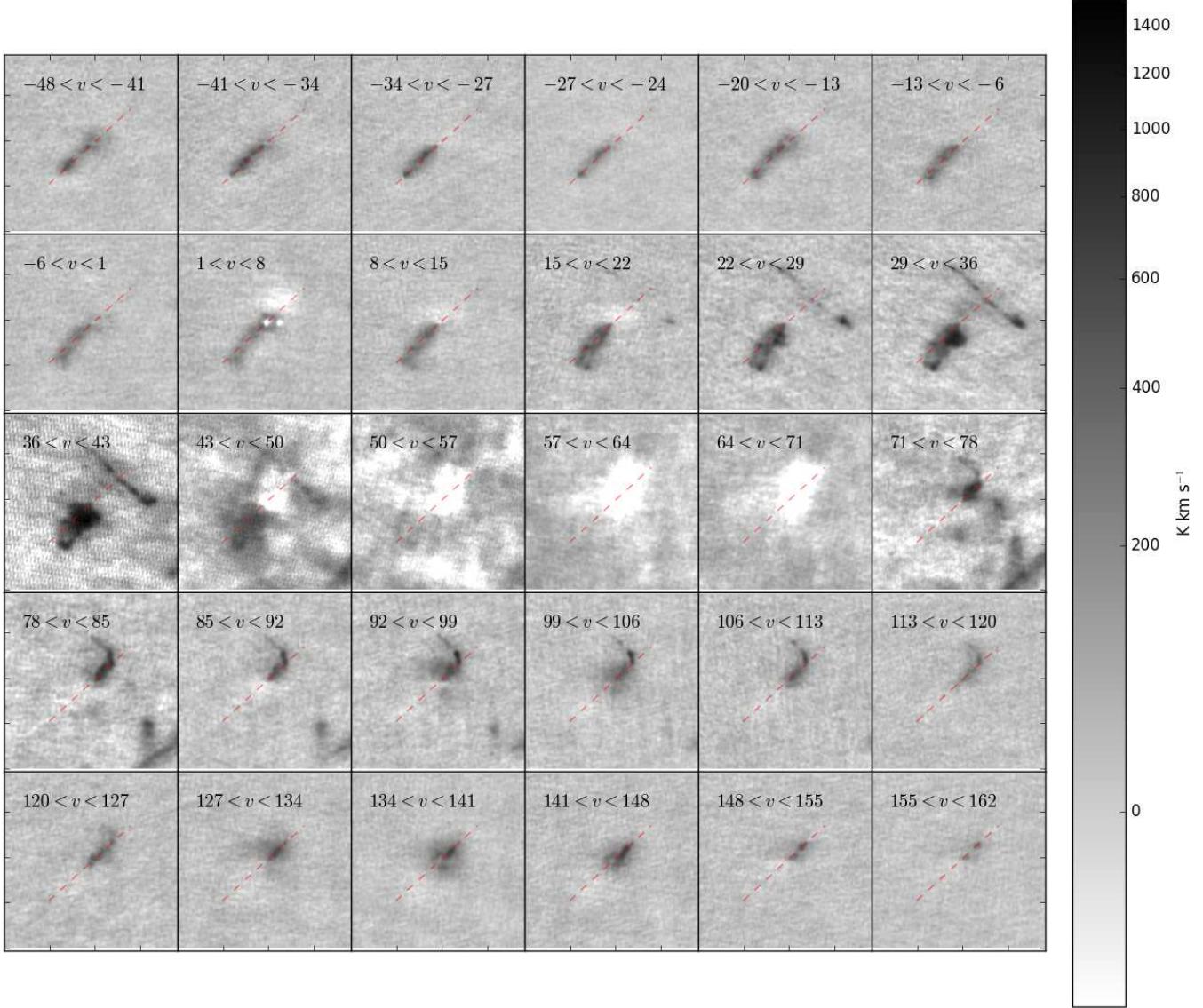


FIG. 21.— Channel maps of the e2e outflow in CO 2-1. The dashed line approximately connects the northwest and southeast extrema of the flow.

and negligible ($\ll 1\%$) if it is optically thin at radio wavelengths (Ginsburg et al. 2016a; Goddi et al. 2016).

To gain a more detailed measurement of the dust temperature in regions where it is likely to be coupled to the gas, we use the peak brightness temperature $T_{B,max}$ of spectral lines along the line of sight. If the observed molecule is in local thermal equilibrium, as is expected if the density is high enough to be collisionally coupled to the dust, and it is optically thick, the brightness temperature provides an approximate measurement of the local temperature near the $\tau = 1$ surface. If any of these assumptions do not hold, $T_{B,max}$ will set a lower limit on the true gas temperature. Only two mechanisms can push $T_{B,max} > T_{dust}$: nonthermal (maser) emission, which is not known for any of the observed lines nor expected given the reasonable T_B observed, or a dust-emitting region that has a smaller beam filling factor than the gas-emitting region, which is unlikely when the dust emission structure is resolved, as is the case toward most sources.

One potential problem with this approach is if the gas becomes optically thick before probing most of the dust, in which case spectral line self-absorption will occur. Some transitions of more abundant molecules, e.g., CO and H₂CO, are likely to be affected by this issue. However, many of the molecules included in the observations have lower abundances, especially in lower-density gas, and are likely to be optically thin along most of the line of sight.

Some sources have no detected line emission aside from the molecular cloud species CO and H₂CO, which are also associated with more diffuse gas and not isolated to the compact continuum sources but in these cases peak locally on the compact source. The minimum density requirement imposed by a continuum detection at our limit of 1.6 mJy is $n > 10^{7.5} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ for a spherical source. At such high density, it is unlikely that the species are undetected because they are subthermally excited. More likely, the line-nondetection sources have an underlying emission source that is very compact, optically thick, and/or cold.

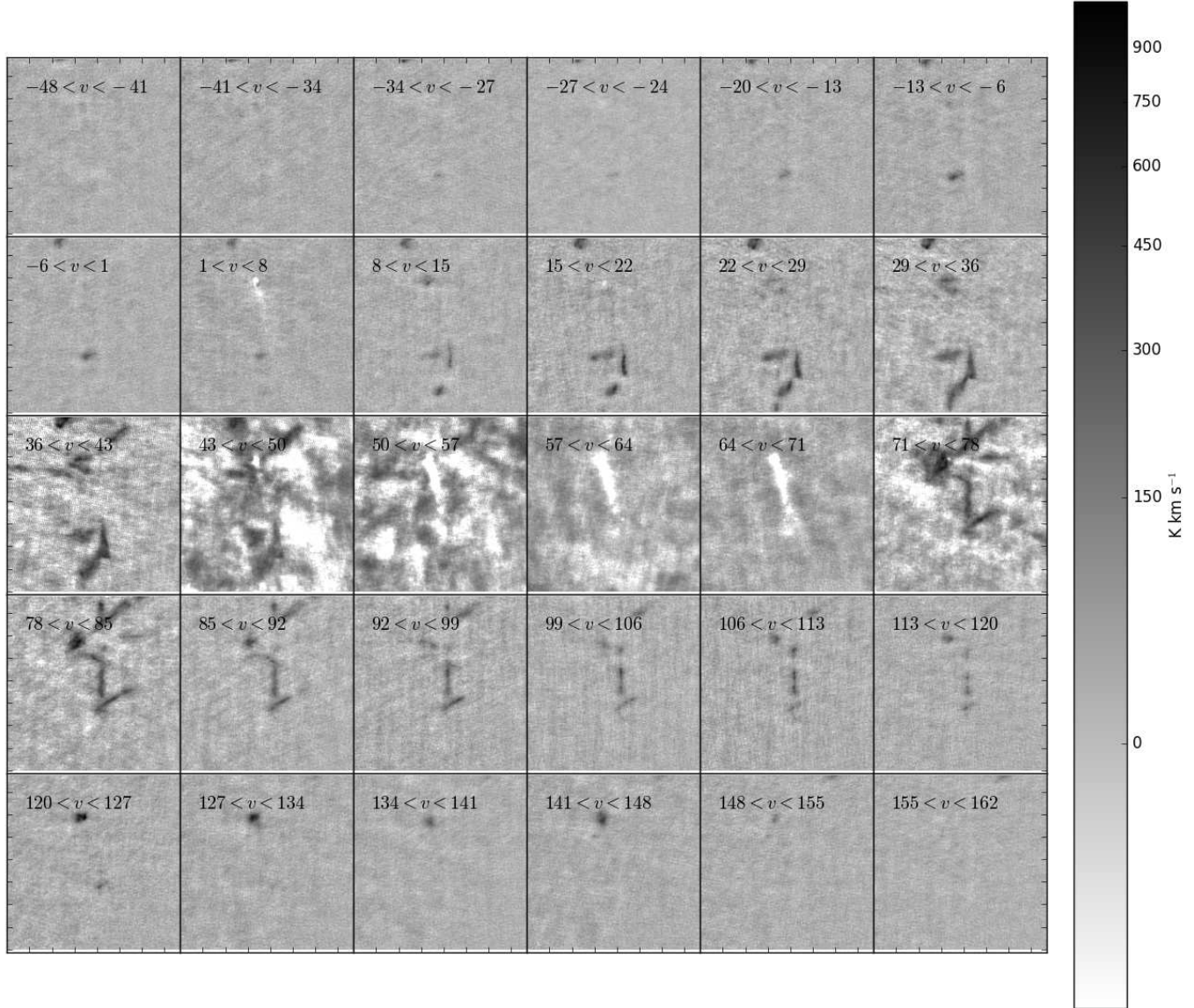


FIG. 22.— Channel maps of the e8 outflow in ^{12}CO 2-1. The outflows here are more erratic, with fewer clearly-connected red and blue lobes.

Figure 25 shows the distribution of peak line brightnesses for the continuum sources. The spectra used to determine this brightness are the spectra obtained from the brightest continuum pixel within the source aperture. To obtain the peak line brightness, we fit Gaussian profiles to each identified line listed in Tables 2-5, rejecting those with poor fits. The line brightnesses reported in the figure are the sum of the continuum-subtracted peak line brightness and the continuum brightness (i.e., they are the raw observed peak brightness). Excepting CO and H_2CO , which are excluded from the plot, CH_3OH is the brightest line toward most sources.

We use these peak line brightness temperatures to compute the masses of the continuum sources. For sources with $T_{B,\text{max}} < 20$ K, we assume $T_{\text{dust}} = 20$ K to avoid producing unreasonably high masses; in such sources the lines are likely to be optically thin and/or subthermally excited. The correction is illustrated in Figure 26.

This section has provided some simple temperature estimates across all of the detected continuum sources. In Section 3.4, we examine the thermal structure of the hot cores in more detail.

The nature of the continuum sources

Millimeter continuum sources in star-forming regions are usually assumed to be either protostars or starless cores. However, in this high-mass star-forming region, we have to consider not only those possibilities but also potential free-free sources and high-luminosity main-sequence stars embedded in dust.

To distinguish these possibilities, we measure both the spectral lines and features of the continuum emission toward the compact continuum sources. Main sequence OB stars and their illuminated ionized nebulae are in principle easily identified by their free-free emission, so we use centimeter continuum and radio recombination line to identify these sources. Starless cores, protostellar cores, and their variants are more difficult to identify, so we used a combination

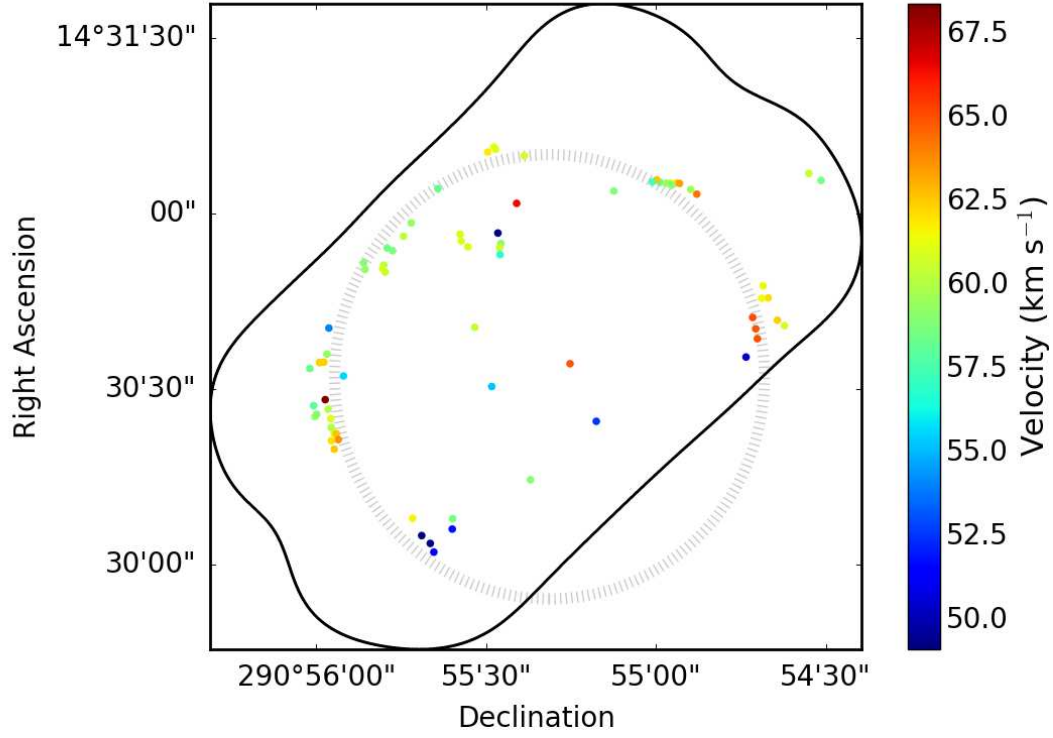


FIG. 23.— The spatial distribution of the hand-identified core sample. The black outer contour shows the observed field of view. The dashed circle (with $r = 1$ pc) shows a hypothetical ring of star formation.

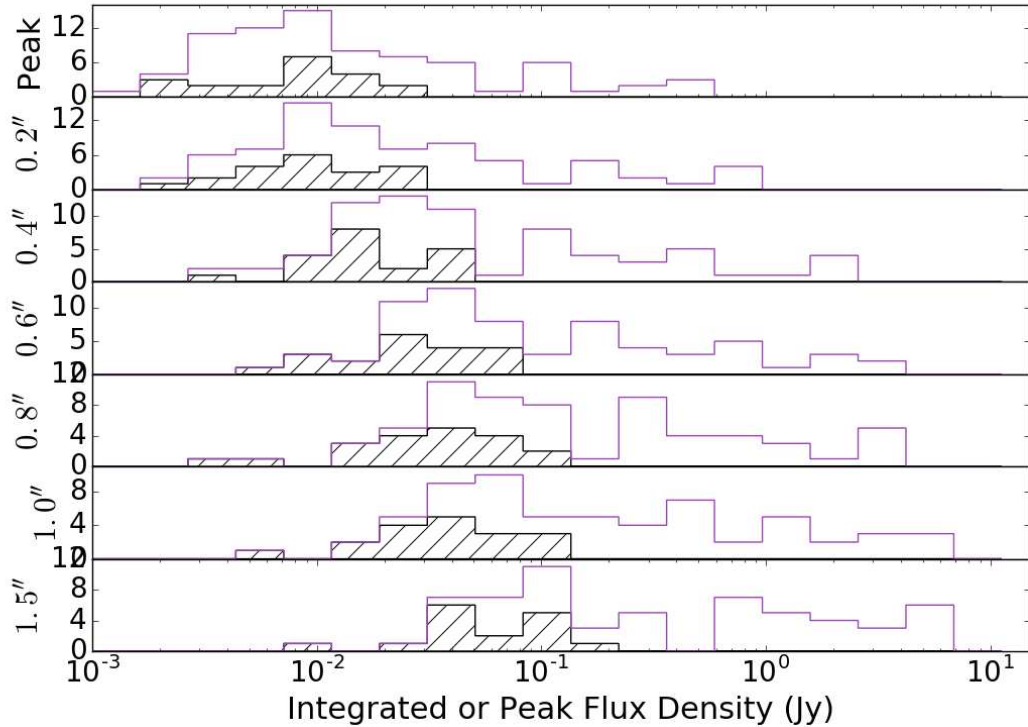


FIG. 24.— Histograms of the core flux densities measured with circular apertures centered on the hand-extracted core positions. The aperture size is listed in the y-axis label. For the top plot, labeled ‘Peak’, this is the peak flux density in Jy/beam. For the rest, it is the integrated flux density in the specified aperture. The unfilled data show all sources and the hashed data are for starless core candidates (Section D.4). See Figure 27 for the corresponding masses.

TABLE 6
CONTINUUM SOURCE IDS AND PHOTOMETRY PART 1

| Source ID | RA ° | Dec ° | $S_\nu(0.2'')$ | $S_\nu(0.4'')$ | $T_{B,max}$ K | $M(T_B, 0.2'')$ M_\odot | $M(T_B, peak)$ M_\odot | Categories |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| ALMAmm1 | 290.9286 | 14.5022 | | 0.01 | 11 | 2.6 | 2.6 | fCc |
| ALMAmm2 | 290.9266 | 14.5022 | | 0.01 | 4 | 3 | 12 | fCc |
| ALMAmm3 | 290.9267 | 14.5017 | | 0.01 | nan | 3 | 2.9 | f- |
| ALMAmm4 | 290.9276 | 14.5006 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 11 | 5.4 | 6.1 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm5 | 290.9277 | 14.5010 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 5.9 | 7.3 | 8.8 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm6 | 290.9282 | 14.5014 | | 0.01 | 3.8 | 2 | 1.1 | fC- |
| ALMAmm7 | 290.9196 | 14.5068 | | 0.01 | 1.4 | 2.5 | 7.1 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm9 | 290.9228 | 14.5041 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 5.8 | 15 | 9 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm10 | 290.9114 | 14.5132 | | 0.01 | 5.3 | 2.6 | 1 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm11 | 290.9112 | 14.5127 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 12 | 14 | 12 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm12 | 290.9115 | 14.5127 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 11 | 3.7 | 11 | -C- |
| ALMAmm13 | 290.9118 | 14.5112 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 11 | 5 | 8.6 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm14 | 290.9107 | 14.5116 | 0.07 | 0.14 | 36 | 23 | 23 | -c |
| ALMAmm15 | 290.9104 | 14.5114 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 35 | 4.9 | 8.1 | -c |
| ALMAmm16 | 290.9092 | 14.5186 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 5.6 | 16 | 32 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm17 | 290.9259 | 14.5151 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 12 | 11 | 5 | fCc |
| ALMAmm18 | 290.9262 | 14.5154 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 5.6 | 11 | 4.1 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm19 | 290.9263 | 14.5157 | | 0.01 | 21 | 3.2 | 1.4 | — |
| ALMAmm20 | 290.9235 | 14.5172 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 6.6 | 5.7 | 4 | -C- |
| ALMAmm21 | 290.9249 | 14.5196 | 0.01 | 0.01 | nan | 6.3 | 31 | -c |
| ALMAmm22 | 290.9246 | 14.5198 | 0.01 | 0.02 | nan | 6.1 | 18 | — |
| ALMAmm23 | 290.9187 | 14.5178 | 0.02 | 0.07 | 26 | 11 | 5.2 | — |
| ALMAmm24 | 290.9165 | 14.5182 | 0.29 | 0.6 | 72 | 46 | 32 | -Hc |
| ALMAmm25 | 290.9255 | 14.5113 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 3.8 | 13 | 6 | fCc |
| ALMAmm26 | 290.9296 | 14.5149 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 8.9 | 9.5 | 14 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm27 | 290.9290 | 14.5156 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 5 | 7.2 | 8.2 | fC- |
| ALMAmm28 | 290.9320 | 14.5090 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 19 | 11 | 6.5 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm29 | 290.9247 | 14.5085 | 0.01 | 0.02 | nan | 6.4 | 11 | f-c |
| ALMAmm30 | 290.9298 | 14.5150 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 4.3 | 5.9 | 2 | fCc |
| ALMAmm31 | 290.9156 | 14.5181 | 0.17 | 0.36 | 46 | 43 | 16 | -c |
| ALMAmm32 | 290.9155 | 14.5181 | 0.09 | 0.23 | 94 | 1 | 13 | -H- |
| ALMAmm33 | 290.9160 | 14.5181 | 0.19 | 0.51 | 48 | 48 | 18 | — |
| ALMAmm34 | 290.9162 | 14.5181 | 0.08 | 0.24 | 9 | 1 | 1 | -H- |
| ALMAmm35 | 290.9166 | 14.5183 | 0.2 | 0.58 | 34 | 76 | 18 | — |
| ALMAmm36 | 290.9147 | 14.5176 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 11 | 16 | 6.5 | -Cc |

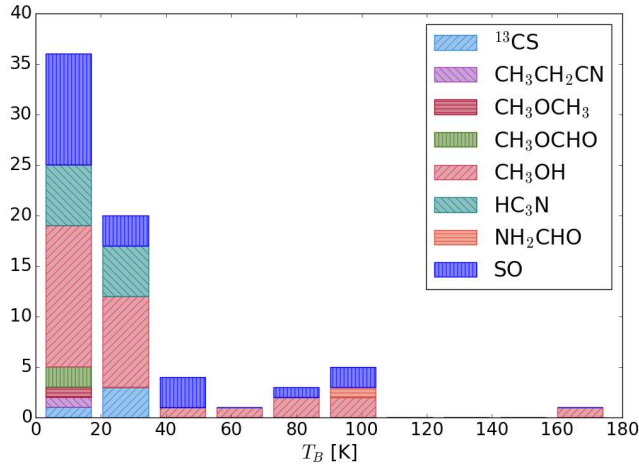


FIG. 25.— Histogram of the brightest line toward each continuum source. The bars are colored by the molecular species associated with the brightest line that is not associated with extended molecular cloud emission, i.e., CO and its isotopologues and H_2CO are excluded.

of gas temperature and continuum concentration parameter to classify them.

To estimate the gas temperature toward the compact sources, we fit each of up to ~ 50 lines (see Tables 2-5) with Gaussian profiles to attempt to determine the relative line strengths toward each source. Most sources were detected in at least $\sim 5 - 10$ lines, though some of these are associated with interstellar rather than circumstellar material, i.e., H_2CO , CO, ^{13}CS . For sources with detections in non-interstellar lines, we used the peak brightness temperature of the

TABLE 7
CONTINUUM SOURCE IDS AND PHOTOMETRY PART 2

| Source ID | RA ° | Dec ° | $S_\nu(0.2'')$ | $S_\nu(0.4'')$ | $T_{B,max}$ K | $M(T_B, 0.2'')$ M_\odot | $M(T_B, peak)$ M_\odot | Categories |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| ALMAmm37 | 290.9243 | 14.5152 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 34 | 6.4 | 3.1 | -c |
| ALMAmm38 | 290.9209 | 14.5095 | | | 2 | 1.7 | 15 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm39 | 290.9245 | 14.5197 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 3.4 | 5.5 | 25 | -C- |
| ALMAmm40 | 290.9231 | 14.5194 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 9.2 | 5.3 | 5.5 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm41 | 290.9327 | 14.5112 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 3 | 8.6 | 13 | -c |
| ALMAmm43 | 290.9150 | 14.5178 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 17 | 14 | 4.8 | fC- |
| ALMAmm44 | 290.9086 | 14.5182 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 5.7 | 6 | 28 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm45 | 290.9115 | 14.5187 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 4.4 | 5.2 | 1.8 | -C- |
| ALMAmm46 | 290.9243 | 14.5147 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 24 | 8.5 | 3 | — |
| ALMAmm47 | 290.9274 | 14.5179 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 4.9 | 4.5 | 9.2 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm48 | 290.9287 | 14.5162 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 8.1 | 6.7 | 13 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm49 | 290.9300 | 14.5142 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 21 | 9.8 | 7.6 | — |
| ALMAmm50 | 290.9301 | 14.5141 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 14 | 14 | 6.3 | -C- |
| ALMAmm51 | 290.9300 | 14.5139 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 16 | 13 | 2.7 | -C- |
| ALMAmm52 | 290.9117 | 14.5107 | | 0.01 | 7.9 | 3.5 | 1 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm53 | 290.9119 | 14.5117 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 13 | 5.7 | 5.6 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm54 | 290.9122 | 14.5099 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 2.5 | 3.6 | 9.7 | -Cc |
| ALMAmm55 | 290.9309 | 14.5140 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 4.5 | 7.7 | 6.5 | -C- |
| ALMAmm56 | 290.9310 | 14.5143 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 5.3 | 6.4 | 5.4 | -C- |
| ALMAmm57 | 290.9239 | 14.5147 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 2 | 4 | 1.2 | fCc |
| d2 | 290.9159 | 14.5180 | 0.16 | 0.43 | 99 | 18 | 15 | -H- |
| e1mm1 | 290.9327 | 14.5074 | 0.16 | 0.42 | 23 | 95 | 31 | — |
| e2e | 290.9332 | 14.5096 | 0.69 | 1.9 | 84 | 94 | 61 | -H- |
| e2e peak | 290.9332 | 14.5096 | 0.74 | 1.8 | 1 | 8 | 68 | -Hc |
| e2nw | 290.9328 | 14.5100 | 0.22 | 0.51 | 4 | 69 | 33 | -c |
| e2se | 290.9337 | 14.5093 | 0.04 | 0.1 | 93 | 4.4 | 7.3 | -H- |
| e2w | 290.9330 | 14.5096 | 0.54 | 1.2 | 85 | 72 | 6 | fHc |
| e3mm1 | 290.9326 | 14.5069 | 0.05 | 0.18 | 23 | 29 | 9.4 | — |
| e5 | 290.9244 | 14.5157 | 0.03 | 0.03 | nan | 18 | 34 | F-c |
| e8mm | 290.9329 | 14.5078 | 0.68 | 1.7 | 18 | 43 | 16 | -H- |
| eEmm1 | 290.9334 | 14.5070 | 0.04 | 0.1 | 39 | 12 | 7 | — |
| eEmm2 | 290.9333 | 14.5071 | 0.04 | 0.1 | 22 | 24 | 6.5 | — |
| eEmm3 | 290.9335 | 14.5075 | 0.04 | 0.1 | 22 | 27 | 8.1 | -c |
| eSmm1 | 290.9326 | 14.5065 | 0.07 | 0.18 | 34 | 26 | 2 | — |
| eSmm2 | 290.9325 | 14.5062 | 0.07 | 0.17 | 29 | 31 | 23 | -c |
| eSmm2a | 290.9323 | 14.5062 | 0.05 | 0.13 | 24 | 28 | 18 | — |
| eSmm3 | 290.9323 | 14.5059 | 0.05 | 0.1 | 29 | 23 | 16 | -c |
| eSmm4 | 290.9326 | 14.5059 | 0.04 | 0.1 | 27 | 17 | 1 | — |
| eSmm6 | 290.9325 | 14.5055 | 0.05 | 0.11 | 23 | 29 | 15 | -c |
| north | 290.9169 | 14.5182 | 0.72 | 1.7 | 69 | 12 | 59 | -Hc |

The Categories column consists of three letter codes as described in Section D.4. In column 1, F indicates a free-free dominated source, f indicates significant free-free contribution, and - means there is no detected cm continuum. In column 2, the peak brightness temperature is used to classify the temperature category. H is ‘hot’ ($T > 50$ K), C is ‘cold’ ($T < 20$ K), and - is indeterminate (either $20 < T < 50$ K or no measurement). In column 3, c indicates compact sources, and - indicates a diffuse source.

line as an estimated lower limit on the core temperature.

In the continuum, we measured a ‘concentration parameter’, which is the ratio of the flux density in a $0.2''$ aperture to that in a $0.2''$ - $0.4''$ annulus divided by three to account for the annulus’ larger area. A uniform source with $r > 0.4''$ source would have a concentration $C = 1$ by this definition, while an unresolved point source would have a Gaussian profile resulting in $C = 14$. Only one source approaches this extreme, the HII region e5, while the rest have $C \leq 7$. We set the threshold for a ‘concentrated’ source to be $C > 2$, which is arbitrary, but does a reasonable job of distinguishing the sources with a clear central concentration from those that have none.

We classified each of the 75 hand-selected sources on the following parameters:

1. Free-free dominated sources ($S_{15GHz} > 0.5S_{226GHz}$) are HII regions
2. Free-free contaminated sources ($S_{15GHz} > 0.1S_{226GHz}$) are likely to be dust-dominated but with HII region contamination; these are either dusty sources superposed on or embedded in a large HII region or they are compact, dusty HII regions
3. Starless core candidates were identified as those with cold peak brightness temperatures $T_B < 20$ K and with a high concentration parameter ($C > 2$)
4. Hot core candidates are those with peak $T_B > 50$ K and $C > 2$
5. Extended cold core and hot core candidates are those with $T_B < 20$ and $T_B > 50$ K and $C < 2$

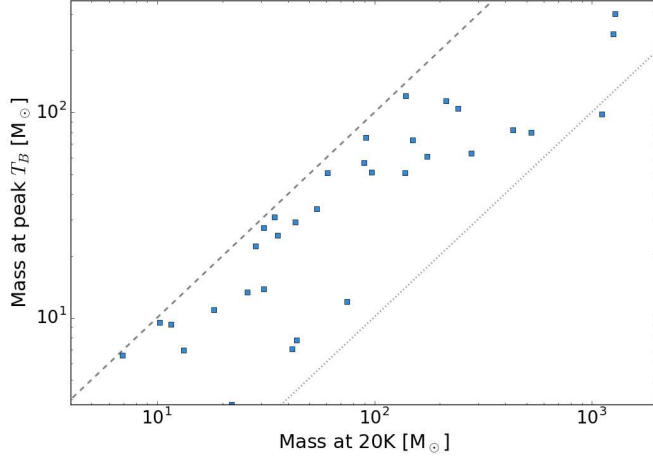


FIG. 26.— The mass computed assuming the dust temperature is the peak brightness temperature vs. that computed assuming $T_{dust} = 20$ K for the aperture extracted continuum sources. The dashed line shows $M(T_{B,max}) = M(20K)$ and the dashed line shows $M(T_{B,max}) = 0.1M(20K)$

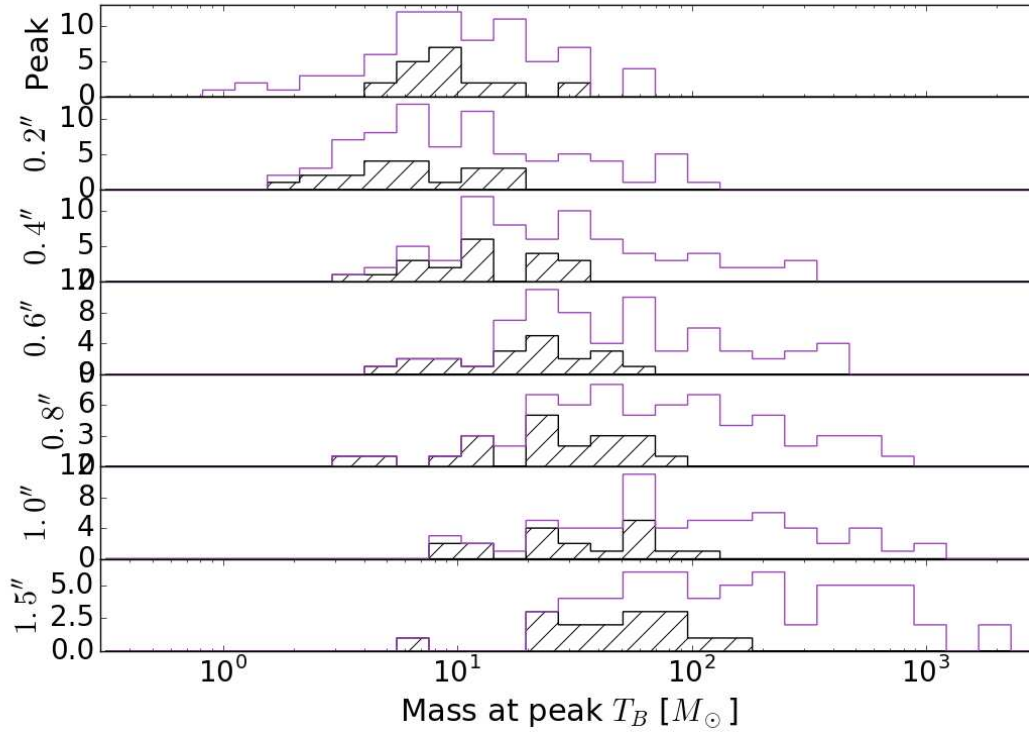


FIG. 27.— Histograms of the core masses computed from the flux density measurements shown in Figure 24 using the peak brightness temperature toward the center of that source as the dust temperature. The aperture size is listed in the y-axis label. For the top plot, labeled ‘Peak’, the mass is computed from peak flux density in Jy/beam. For the rest, it is the integrated flux density in the specified aperture in Jy. The unfilled data show all sources and the hashed data are for starless core candidates (Section D.4).

6. The remaining sources with $S_{15GHz} < 0.1S_{226GHz}$ and $50 > T_B > 20$ K were classed as uncertain compact ($C > 2$) or uncertain extended ($C < 2$)

These classifications are set in the ‘Categories’ column of Table 6. They serve as a broad guideline for further analysis.