

# Observations of Organic Chemistry on Titan

Steven Charnley

*Astrochemistry Laboratory, Solar System Exploration Division, Code 691, Science and Exploration Directorate, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771, USA*

Titan is the largest moon of Saturn, with a thick (1.45 bar) atmosphere composed primarily of molecular nitrogen and methane. Atmospheric photochemistry results in the production of a wide range of complex organic molecules, including hydrocarbons, nitriles, aromatics and species of possible pre-biotic relevance. Studies of Titan's atmospheric chemistry thus provide a unique opportunity to explore the origin and evolution of complex organic matter in a primitive (terrestrial) planetary atmosphere. Underpinned by laboratory measurements, remote and in-situ observations of hydrocarbons, nitriles and oxygen-bearing species provide important new insights in this regard. The Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) is a powerful new facility, well suited to the study of molecular emission from Titan's upper and middle-atmosphere [1]. This presentation will focus on detection and mapping of rotational emission lines from molecules including HNC, CO, HC<sub>3</sub>N, CH<sub>3</sub>CN, C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>3</sub>CN and C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>CN [2,3], as well minor isotopologues [4]. Possible chemical formation pathways for these species will be discussed, and the scope for improved understanding of non-aqueous organic chemistry through laboratory experiments and atmospheric/liquid-phase simulations under Titan-like conditions will be examined [5].

## References

- [1] M. A. Cordiner et al., *ApJ*, **795**, L30 (2014)
- [2] M. A. Cordiner et al., *ApJ*, **800**, L14 (2015)
- [3] J. Lai et al., *AJ*, **154**, 206 (2017)
- [4] E. Molter et al., *AJ*, **152**, 42 (2016)
- [5] M. Y. Palmer et al., *Science Advances*, **3**, e1700022 (2017)