IGR J12319–0749: evidence for another extreme blazar found with INTEGRAL

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ABSTRACT

We report on the identification of a new soft gamma-ray source, IGR J12319–0749, detected with the IBIS imager on board the INTEGRAL satellite. The source, which has an observed 20–100 keV flux of ~8.3 × 10⁻¹² erg cm⁻² s⁻¹, is spatially coincident with an AGN at redshift z = 3.12. The broad-band continuum, obtained by combining XRT and IBIS data, is flat (Γ = 1.3) with evidence for a spectral break around 25 keV (100 keV in the source rest frame). X-ray observations indicate flux variability which is further supported by a comparison with a previous ROSAT measurement. IGR J12319–0749 is also a radio emitting object likely characterized by a flat spectrum and high radio loudness; optically it is a broad-line emitting object with a massive black hole (2 × 10⁸ solar masses) at its center. The source Spectral Energy Distribution is similar to another high redshift blazar, 225155+2217 at z = 3.668: both objects are bright, with a large accretion disk luminosity and a Compton peak located in the hard X-ray/soft gamma-ray band. IGR J12319–0749 is likely the second most distant blazar detected so far by INTEGRAL.

Key words. gamma-rays: observations, X-rays: galaxies - galaxies: active: individual: IGR J12319–0749

1. Introduction

Blazars are the most powerful of all Active Galactic Nuclei (AGNs); their continuously emitting radiation covers the entire electromagnetic spectrum from radio to gamma-ray frequencies. Because of their enormous luminosities, blazars are visible to very large distances/redshifts. In the widely adopted scenario of blazars, a single population of high-energy electrons in a relativistic jet radiate from the radio/FIR to the UV/soft-X-ray through the synchrotron process and at higher frequencies through inverse Compton (IC) scattering soft-target photons present either in the jet (synchrotron self-Compton [SSC] model), in the surrounding material (external Compton [EC] model), or in both ( Ghisellini et al. 1998 and references therein). Therefore a strong signature of the blazar nature of a source is a double peaked structure in the Spectral Energy Distribution (SED), with the synchrotron component peaking anywhere from infrared to X-rays and the Compton component extending up to GeV or even TeV gamma-rays. To explain all the different SEDs observed in blazars, Fossati et al. (1998) proposed the blazar sequence, which claims an inverse relation between peak energies and source luminosity: the more luminous sources have both synchrotron and Compton peaks at lower energies than their fainter (and generally at lower redshifts) counterparts. Within the blazar population, high redshift objects, which belong to the class of flat spectrum radio Quasars (FSRQ), tend to be the most luminous ones. Recently, Ghisellini et al. (2010) showed that the hard X-ray selected blazars at high redshifts are those with the most powerful jets, the most luminous accretion disks and the largest black hole masses. In other words, they are among the most extreme blazars, even more extreme than those selected in other wavebands like the gamma-ray region explored by Fermi/LAT.

Theoretically, this can be understood on the basis of the blazar sequence and indeed can be considered a proof of its validity: the high energy peak in the SED of the most powerful blazars is in the hard X-ray/MeV range. As a consequence, these objects are more luminous in the 20–100 keV band than above 100 MeV, and thus become detectable in the hard X-ray surveys even if they are undetected in the gamma-ray ones. Taken from another point of view, this also means that a survey in hard X-rays is more efficient in finding the most powerful blazars lying at the highest redshifts.

Within the Swift/BAT sample, there are 10 blazars (all FSRQs) at redshift greater than 2, of which five have a redshift between 3 and 4 (Ghisellini et al. 2010). Within the INTEGRAL/IBIS surveys we have 8 blazars at z ≥ 2 of which 2 are located between 3 and 4 (Malizia et al. 2012).

Here, we provide evidence for the discovery with INTEGRAL of yet another powerful blazar, IGR J12319–0749 associated with a quasar at z = 3.12; we present a set of follow-up observations with Swift/XRT/UVOT, provide the first combined X/gamma-ray spectrum of the source and discuss its non simultaneous SED. This is likely the second most distant blazar ever detected by INTEGRAL.

2. INTEGRAL data

IGR J12319–0749 was reported for the first time as a high energy emitter by Bird et al. (2010) in the 4th INTEGRAL/IBIS catalogue. The source is detected with a significance of ~4.8σ at a position corresponding to R.A.(J2000) = 12°31′54.5″ and Dec.(J2000) = −07°48′57.6″ with an associated positional un-
During the period March 27 and July 14, 2011 XRT carried out seven observations of the sky region containing IGR J12319–0749 for a total exposure of ~4 ks (see Table 1 for details on individual measurements). XRT data reduction was performed using the XRTDAS standard data pipeline package (xrtpipeline v. 0.12.6), in order to produce screened event files. All data were extracted only in the Photon Counting (PC) mode (Hill et al. 2004), adopting the standard grade filtering (0–12 for PC) according to the XRT nomenclature.

Events for spectral analysis were extracted within a circular region of radius 20′ (which encloses about 90% of the PSF at 1.5 keV, Moretti et al. 2004) centered on the source position. The background was extracted from various source-free regions close to the X-ray source using both circular/annular regions with different radii, in order to ensure an evenly sampled background. In all cases, the spectra were extracted from the corresponding event files using XSELECT software and binned using grppha in an appropriate way, so that the χ² statistic could be applied. We used the latest version (v.011) of the response matrices and create individual ancillary response files (ARF) using xrtmkarf v.0.5.8. In all our fitting procedures we have used a Galactic column density which in the direction of IGR J12319–0749 is 1.7×10²⁰ cm⁻² (Kalberla et al. 2005).

The XRT images extracted in the 0.3–10 keV band were searched for significant excesses (above 2.5 sigma level) falling within the IBIS 90% confidence error circle; only one source was clearly detected in each individual observation, as well as in the combined image (see Figure 1). This source is located at R.A.(J2000) = 12ʰ3¹⁰ᵐ⁺⁷ˢ.⁶⁷ and Dec.(J2000) = −0⁷°⁺⁴⁷″.² (90% confidence level) which makes this X-ray source compatible with the faint detection reported by ROSAT. It also coincides with the NVSS/QSO object mentioned above; since this is the only source detected in X-rays, we assume that it is the true counterpart of the IBIS object.

Table 1 reports for each X-ray measurement, the observation date, the relative exposure, the net count rate in the 0.3–10 keV energy band, and the detection significance. There is some evidence that the source flux underwent some changes over the XRT monitoring with the most evident variation occurring between observation #2 and #7, i.e. over a few months period. Variability in QSO is not unexpected and can be used to characterise further this new gamma-ray source.

The UVOT instrument (Roming et al. 2005) observed IGR J12319–0749 in conjunction with the XRT for all of the observations listed in Table 1. Each observation consists of one or more exposures with a single UVOT filter. The data were analysed using the latest HEASoft tools and calibration products following the methods described by Poole et al. (2008) and Breeveld et al. (2010). A 3″ source aperture centered on the X-ray position and a surrounding annulus background region were used for all the exposures; the usual corrections including dead time, coincidence loss, and aperture loss were made. Magnitudes were obtained from the observed count rates using the latest zero points (Breeveld et al. 2011) and are reported in Table 1 for each observation. To convert to AB magnitudes, 1.02, 1.51, and 1.69 should be added to the reported u, uvw1, and uvw2 magnitudes respectively (Breeveld et al. 2011). The source was only detected in the u filter in observation #4 and #7 while 90% confidence upper limits for either the uvw1 or uvw2 filters are listed for the other measurements. Count rates were also converted to fluxes using the prescription of Poole et al. (2008).

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1 When detected, the UVOT source is only 0.4 arcsec from the X-ray position.
4. X-ray spectral analysis and results

The spectral analysis of the XRT data indicated that the soft X-ray spectrum during observation #1 and #4, i.e. the two with the best statistical significance, is hard and bright: a simple power law fit to these two measurements provides $\Gamma = 0.96^{+0.14}_{-0.31}$ and $\Gamma = 1.53 \pm 0.28$, together with a $2–10$ keV flux of $5.7 \times 10^{-12}$ and $2.6 \times 10^{-15}$ erg cm$^{-2}$ s$^{-1}$, respectively. Note that for simplicity, here and in the following all modelling has been carried out in the observer’s rest frame.

The $0.1–2.4$ keV band flux is at around $1.4 – 1.5 \times 10^{-12}$ erg cm$^{-2}$ s$^{-1}$ to be compared with the lower ROSAT flux which is in the range $0.41 \times 10^{-12}$ erg cm$^{-2}$ s$^{-1}$ depending on the source spectrum; this comparison provides another indication that the source might be variable in soft X-rays.

To better characterise the QSO’s X-ray spectrum and in view of the fact that the IBIS detection is over a few revolutions, i.e. provides an average flux, we have also combined all seven XRT spectra and repeated the spectral analysis. The fit to the average XRT spectrum provides a photon index $\Gamma = 1.32 \pm 0.14$ and a $2–10$ keV flux of $3.3 \times 10^{-12}$ erg cm$^{-2}$ s$^{-1}$.

Finally, a joint spectral fit to the average XRT and IBIS data was also attempted. To account for possible calibration mismatch between the two instruments and/or variability between the two datasets, we introduced a constant $C$ which was left free to vary. A simple power law provides an acceptable fit with $\Gamma = 1.35 \pm 0.14$, $C = 0.8^{+0.3}_{-0.2}$ and $\chi^2 = 31.4$ for 22 d.o.f. Since in the data to model ratio, there is some evidence for a high energy cut-off $(E_c)$, we have also fitted the source broad-band spectrum with a cut-off power law: in this case, $\Gamma = 1.24^{+0.17}_{-0.19}$, $C = 2.53^{+0.54}_{-0.38}$, $E_c = 24.5^{+7.0}_{-6.6}$ and $\chi^2 = 25.7$ for 21 d.o.f. (see Figure 2). With respect to a simple power law the $\Delta \chi^2$ is 5.7 for 1 extra parameter, which implies a fit improvement at a confidence level of around 96%, not highly significant, but still suggestive that a spectral change might be present in the spectrum of IGR J12319–0749. In the source rest frame this change would be located at around 100 keV.

Assuming that this broad-band fit represents the average state of the source, we obtain observer frame luminosities $^3$ of $2.8 \times 10^{47}$ erg s$^{-1}$ in the X-ray ($2–10$ keV) band and $7.3 \times 10^{47}$ erg s$^{-1}$ at hard X-rays ($20–100$ keV), i.e. IGR J12319–0749 has a high energy luminosity similar to those observed in the Ghisellini et al. (2010) sample of high redshifts blazars.

5. Is IGR J12319-0749 another powerful blazar?

The source is reported in the NED database $^4$ as NVSS J123157–074717, but with no reference, while it is not contained in the SIMBAD archive; despite being potentially quite a powerful AGN, it has never been studied before. Nonetheless, the sparse information available is sufficient to characterise broadly this new gamma-ray source.

The NVSS (NRAO VLA Sky Survey, Condon et al. 1998) image of IGR J12319–0749 shows the source to be core dominated with no extended radio features and a 1.4 GHz flux of 59.8±1.8 mJy. The source is also listed in the FIRST survey with a similar 1.4 GHz flux ($60.99 \pm 0.16$ mJy, White et al. 1997). No other detection is reported at radio frequencies preventing a measurement of the source spectrum and an estimate of the radio loudness defined as $RL = L_{5GHz}/L_B$. Despite this, we can make some guesses on the source spectral shape at radio frequencies considering that IGR J12319–0749 has not been detected in the Australian Telescope 20GHz (AT20G) survey positing a limit of 40 mJy to its flux at this frequency (Murphy et al. 2010). Assuming $S \propto \nu^{\alpha}$ and the information available, we estimate that $\alpha$ is $\leq -0.15$; this makes the source compatible with being a flat spectrum radio QSO $^5$. Furthermore, by evaluating the source B magnitude flux we should also be able to put a limit on the source radio loudness. IGR J12319–0749 is listed in the USNO–B1.0 catalogue (Monet et al. 2003) with a $B$ magnitude in the range 19.7–19.8 while the $R$ and $I$ magnitudes are $\sim 19.7$ and $\sim 18.2$ respectively. Using the standard photometric system conversion from magnitude to flux (Zombeck 1990), we estimate a $B$ flux in the range 0.05–0.06 mJy; extrapolating the 1.4 GHz flux to 5 GHz using the limit obtained on the radio spectral index, it is possible to estimate loosely that the radio loudness is $\leq 1000$, sufficiently high to suggest that the source maybe a radio loud AGN $^6$.

IGR J12319–0749 is not reported in the near infrared 2MASS survey, with upper limits to the $J, H, K$ flux of $\sim 17.1$, $\sim 16.4$, and $\sim 15.3$ magnitudes, respectively (Skrutskie et al. 2006).

Optically, the source is classified as a broad emission line AGN (FWHM $= 5600$ km s$^{-1}$) by Masetti et al. (2012); these authors further estimate the mass of the black hole at the center of the QSO to be $2.8 \times 10^{9}$ solar masses, i.e. quite a massive black hole similar to those found in other high redshift blazars discovered in hard X-ray surveys (Ghisellini et al. 2010, De Rosa et al. 2012).

At high energies, the source is bright with a hard X-ray spectral shape $(\Gamma = 1.2 – 1.3)$ and some indication of flux variability. There is marginal evidence in the combined XRT/IBIS data for a spectral break at around 100 keV (source rest frame) which could be interpreted as a peak in the spectral energy distribution.

Taken all together, the observed properties suggest that IGR J12319–0749 could be a bright blazar, in which the emission is relativistically beamed and theSED is double peaked. In Figure 3 (left side), we construct the non-simultaneous (source rest frame) SED of this object by combining all data gathered in

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$^2$ see http://www.xray.mpe.mpg.de/rosat/survey/rass-fsc/ for further information

$^3$ We adopt $H_0 = 71$ km s$^{-1}$ Mpc$^{-1}$, $\Omega_M = 0.73$ and $\Omega_L = 0.27$.

$^4$ available at http://ned.ipac.caltech.edu/.

$^5$ Flat spectrum radio sources have $\alpha \geq -0.5$ (Massardi et al. 2011)

$^6$ Radio loud AGN have RL values in the range 10–100 (Kellerman et al. 1989)
Table 1. *Swift* detections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>XRT Exposure</th>
<th>XRT Count Rate</th>
<th>XRT σ</th>
<th>UVOT mag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>27/03/2011</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>83.2±9.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>w1≤21.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>10/05/2011</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>109.0±19.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>w1≤21.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>25/06/2011</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>51.2±12.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>w2≤21.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>28/06/2011</td>
<td>1702</td>
<td>77.7±6.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>w2≤21.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>29/06/2011</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>74.8±19.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>w2≤22.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>05/07/2011</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>51.2±20.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>w2≤20.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>14/07/2011</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>37.0±10.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>u=19.81±0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( a \) Total on-source exposure time;  
\( b \) The count rate is estimated in the 0.3–10 keV energy range.

From the available optical/UV data and reported black hole mass, it is possible to evaluate that the source accretion disk is emitting at 10% or more of the Eddington luminosity (see Figure 3, right panel). This is similar to other high-z blazars discovered by hard X-rays surveys, which tend to have black holes with M greater than 10⁹ solar masses and disks emitting close or above 10% of the Eddington limit.

6. Conclusions

Through X-ray follow-up observations with *Swift*/XRT, we have been able to likely identify the newly discovered *INTEGRAL* source, IGR J12319–0749, with a radio source coincident with an AGN at \( z = 3.12 \). This would make IGR J12319–0749 the second most distant object so far detected by *INTEGRAL*.

The source probably belongs to the class of flat spectrum radio QSO: it is a broad line AGN with a huge black hole at its center; it is likely radio loud and it shows variability at X-ray energies. The source SED is also similar to another high-z source.
L. Bassani: IGR J12319–0749: evidence for another extreme blazar found with INTEGRAL

(225155+2217) discovered by means of hard X-ray observations: it has a similar brightness and disk luminosity, a Compton peak location in the hard X-ray soft gamma-ray domain and is not detected by Fermi/LAT. We conclude that this is likely another example of an extreme blazar, i.e. those showing the most powerful jets, the most luminous accretion disks and the largest black hole masses. This finding further supports the claim that the hard X-ray waveband is the most efficient to discover such powerful AGN.

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