the value usually adopted for Serpens. The Serpens core is a dense sub-region of the Serpens cloud, with an extent of only about 5′ (0.6 pc) on the plane of the sky. As a consequence, the contribution of depth to the uncertainty of the distance to the Serpens core is expected to be very limited, and that distance can be assumed to be 415 ± 5 pc. The Serpens cloud, on the other hand is about 3 degrees across, or 25 in diameter. The distance to the cloud as a whole should therefore be taken to be 415 ± 25 pc.

A detailed analysis of the possible reasons for the discrepancy between the most popular distance used for Serpens in the last 15 years, and that obtained directly from a trigonometric parallax is given in Dzib et al. (2010). Their conclusion is that the method used by Straizys et al. (1996, 2003) would naturally be sensitive to the first dust contribution along the line of sight, which might be associated with the clouds in the Aquila Rift rather than those of Serpens. In that interpretation, the Serpens and Aquila Rift clouds would not be physically associated, but merely located along the same line of sight. This is certainly not unexpected since that line of sight is roughly in the direction of the Galactic plane. It will be very important to obtain VLBI parallax measurements of other stars in the direction of Serpens to confirm the distance measurement of Dzib et al. (2010) and clarify the relation between Serpens and the Aquila Rift.

2.5. *Orion*

Together with Taurus, Orion is undoubtedly the most often studied region of star-formation. The efforts to measure the distance to Orion have largely been concentrated on the Orion Nebula region (an interesting and entertaining account of the history of the distance to Orion is given by Muench et al. 2008). For decades, the accepted distance was 480 pc following Genzel et al. (1981). In the last five years, however, several VLBI parallax measurements have been published. Hirota et al. (2007) obtained a distance of 437 ± 19 pc using VLBI observations of water masers in the BN/KL region, whereas Sandstrom et al. (2007) found 389 ± 23 pc from VLBI continuum observations of a flaring star. The issue was settled by Menten et al. (2007) and Kim et al. (2008) who independently obtained highly consistent measurements (414 ± 7 pc and 418 ± 6 pc, respectively).

It should noted, however, that the distances quoted so far are only for the Orion Nebula region. The Orion cloud complex is about 100 pc across, so different parts of the complex are most certainly at different distances. In addition, there are a number of dark clouds (e.g. L1617 and L1622; Reipurth et al. 2008) located in the vicinity of the Orion complex, but whose relation to the Orion clouds themselves is unclear. There are some indications that some of these clouds might be significantly closer than the Orion Nebula. Thus, a comprehensive VLBI program aimed at establishing the distance to the different parts of the Orion and surrounding clouds appears to be necessary.

3. THE GOULD'S BELT DISTANCE SURVEY

The VLBI observations described so far have targeted a total of only about a dozen different objects, but have already significantly refined our knowledge of the distance to the nearest regions of star-formation. In several cases, they have provided the first direct indications of the three-dimensional structure of these regions.

One of the world's premier VLBI instruments (the Very Long Baseline Array - VLBA) is currently undergoing a major upgrade, which will increase its bandwidth (and therefore its sensitivity) by a factor of several. Thanks to that upgrade, observations similar to those presented here will become feasible for several hundred young stars. Taking advantage of that possibility, we have initiated a large project (the *Gould's Belt Distance Survey*) aimed at measuring the distance to about 200 young stars distributed across the five regions described in § 2 (Ophiuchus, Taurus, Perseus, Serpens and Orion). The first stage of the project will use about 120 hours of observing time on the Expanded Very Large Array (EVLA) to identify adequate targets. Following that first stage, a total of about 2000 hours of VLBA time will be dedicated to the astrometric observations themselves. The EVLA observations have started in February 2011, and will continue until the summer/fall of that year. The VLBA observations, on the other hand, will start in the fall 2011 and last for a total of about 4 years.

The final goal of the *Gould's Belt Distance Survey* is to estimate with unprecedented accuracy the mean distance, three-dimensional structure and internal kinematics of the five regions described in § 2. This will have important consequences both for the study of star-formation, and for our understanding of the local structure of the Milky Way. In particular, our observations will shed new light on the very origin of Gould's Belt.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Multi-epoch VLBI astrometry of young stellar sources in nearby regions of star-formation have been