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V3876 Sgr, A MIRA STAR, NOT A NOVA

Khatisashvili (1982) gives an accurate position and finding chart for V3876 Sgr, identifying the object as Nova Sgr 1978. The finding chart and position agree with, and improve upon, those given by Hoffleit (1972) and Hatfield (1972) for the object which received the designation V3876 Sgr in the 60th Name-list (Kukarkin et al 1975) and the third supplement to the third edition of the General Catalogue of Variable Stars (Kukarkin et al. 1976). That variable, however, which had been discovered at the Maria Mitchell Observatory in 1971 by Pamela Bonnell (Hoffleit 1972), is classified (Kukarkin 1976, based on Hoffleit 1972) not as a nova but as a Mira star.

My assistants and I have inspected some 250 plates of the field at the Maria Mitchell Observatory, taken in 1969-1983, to search for nova activity in the vicinity. We find only typical long-period variations of the Mira star, consistent with slightly changed elements.

The last well-observed maximum was at $JD\ 2441484 \pm 5^d$, $E = 13$ according to the published elements

$$JD_{\max} = 2436830 + 358 E$$

which were valid for the interval, $JD\ 2436000-41500$.

Since then we have caught only an increasingly small part of the descending branch. The little that we see is better represented by

$$JD_{\max} = 2441484 + 352 E$$

for the interval 2441400 to the present. This is a return toward the shorter period, 345^d , which had been found to satisfy the observations in $JD\ 2423900-32000$.

The only 1978 Nova in Sagittarius of which I am aware is about 8° south of V3876. It was discovered on an objective prism plate taken in March, 1978 (Stenholm and Lundström 1979). It received the designation V4049 Sgr in the 65th Name-list (Kholopov et al. 1981). A large-scale finding chart and precise position have been given by McCarthy et al. (1981).

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