

## Finding Quasars

**Proceedings of a Workshop on Optical Surveys for Quasars.** (Tucson, AZ, Jan. 1988.) PATRICK S. OSMER, ALAIN C. PORTER, RICHARD F. GREEN, and CRAIG B. FOLTZ, Eds. Astronomical Society of the Pacific, San Francisco, 1988 (distributor, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, UT). xvi, 378 pp., illus. \$32. *Astronomical Society of the Pacific Conference Series*, vol. 2.

Imagine a gaseous sphere with a diameter less than 1/10,000 that of our Milky Way galaxy. Then imagine packing this astronomically minuscule chunk of gas with luminous energy equal to the brightness of 100 to 1000 galaxies. Viewed from Earth across a distance so vast that its light has taken billions of years to reach us, this object called a quasar appears as a brilliant point in the center of an otherwise ordinary galaxy. Currently, many believe that the actual source of energy in a quasar is a monstrous black hole. For this reason alone, large numbers of astronomers have been studying quasars since their discovery nearly a quarter century ago. But of equal interest are the insights quasars suggest into the infancy of the universe.

*Proceedings of a Workshop on Optical Surveys for Quasars* is a collection of 46 reviews and poster presentations that demonstrates immense progress in one narrow but important area of quasar research, the production of large samples of quasars. Sponsored by the National Optical Astronomy Observatories, the workshop gathered participants from almost every group active in the field. The papers are highly technical, but the optical survey data are of wide astronomical interest. The compendium of 20 surveys alone makes this book a unique resource.

Some of the key questions to be answered by such large samples of quasars include:

- 1) When did quasars first form? The strategy is to establish the time when the numbers of quasars appear to increase rapidly. If found, that epoch may also be a clue to when the surrounding galaxies first formed.
- 2) What are the relative numbers of intrinsically brighter and fainter objects? Time evolution of these distributions directly reflects the statistical ensemble of quasar births, evolution in brightness, and perhaps

final demise. Quasars may also show the effects of optical distortions (such as multiple imaging, brightening, or variability) due to the lensing or bending of light from the gravity of intervening objects, luminous or otherwise. Thus quasars provide a probe of the "dark matter" most astronomers believe to permeate space.

3) Are quasars clustered? If so, changes in any clustering with time may be used to track the competition between the pull of gravity and the expansion of the universe. We can take advantage of Einstein's theory of general relativity to relate the inferred matter density to the geometry of the universe. At distances beyond which gravity has had time to rearrange matter, clustering provides a fossilized imprint of the fluctuations in the universe during the first moments of the big bang.

4) What are the correlations among the observable properties of quasars? These properties include luminosity, spectral features, time scales of variability (related to the size of the quasar emitting region), the presence of neighboring quasars and galaxies, and distance. Such correlations constrain quasar models and cosmologies.

Only five years ago, sufficient data to address these questions were practically nonexistent. Three new technologies, however, have revolutionized the speed and accuracy of quasar searches: faster computers for automated data reduction and simulation of errors and selection biases, charge-coupled devices (CCDs) as detectors with near-perfect efficiencies, and multiple-object spectroscopy using optical fibers.

The most impressive evidence of recent progress is the survey by B. Boyle and his colleagues. They have detected, identified, and obtained distances to 420 quasars that are 100 times fainter than the largest previous survey of 114 quasars completed by M. Schmidt and R. Green in 1983. Contrary to the widespread belief that quasars were once much more plentiful in the early universe, these new faint surveys suggest that, on average, quasars were actually about the same in number but 100 times brighter.

Progress has also been made in surveys for quasars more distant than those studied by Boyle. Three teams led by S. Warren, C. Hazard, and M. Schmidt have broken the

record for finding the most distant quasar several times in the last two years. (The previous record stood for nine years.) As the searches continue, the teams are finding dozens of quasars that do not break records but are very distant. Whether their data show an increase of quasars with time, and thus detection of the epoch of quasar creation, remains controversial.

Within the next few years, these three surveys and several other extensive ones described in the book will be finished. And as promised, all the key questions identified above will be answered at some level. But the history of astronomy warns us that new information, improved statistics, fainter limits, and more sophisticated questions will undoubtedly arise and keep these quasar surveyors busy for years to come.

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## Seafloor Discoveries

**Seabed Pockmarks and Seepages.** Impact on Geology, Biology and the Marine Environment. M. HOWLAND and A. G. JUDG. Graham and Trotman, London, 1988 (U.S. distributor, Kluwer, Norwell, MA). xiii, 293 pp., illus. \$117.

Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* defines "pockmark" as a mark or pit due to small-pox. But the present book obviously does not deal with an oozing medical problem; rather, it is concerned with geological features for which the medical term seems appropriate: concave, crater-like depressions that occur on the seafloor. Before 1970, pockmarks were not included in geological jargon, and only in the latest edition of the American Geological Institute's *Glossary of Geology* (1987) does the term make its appearance. But since 1970, when seabed pockmarks were first observed with the aid of the then-new side-scan sonar on the continental shelf off Nova Scotia, they have been reported to be present on the seafloor in many parts of the world.

This book does an outstanding job of summarizing the occurrences of seabed pockmarks worldwide, with particular attention (two chapters) given to the North Sea, an area of significant petroleum development. Not only are the morphological, mineralogical, and biological aspects of pockmarks considered in detail, the processes that may form them are discussed at length. Although pockmarks are defined in the AGI *Glossary* on the basis of morphology, this book implies a genetic element in the definition by emphasizing the role of fluid escape

# Proceedings Of A Workshop On Optical Surveys For Quasars

**RS Peters**



## **Proceedings Of A Workshop On Optical Surveys For Quasars:**

Proceedings of a Workshop on Optical Surveys for Quasars Patrick Stewart Osmer, 1988      **Optical Surveys for Quasars** Patrick S. Osmer, 1988      **Proceedings of a Workshop on Optical Surveys for Quasars** Patrick Stewart Osmer, 1988      *Astronomy from Wide-Field Imaging* H.T. MacGillivray, E.B. Thomson, Barry M. Lasker, I. Neill Reid, David F. Malin, Richard M. West, Hilmar Lorenz, 2012-12-06 H T MacGILLIVRAY Royal Observatory Blackford Hill Edinburgh EH9 3HJ Scotland U K IAU Symposium No 161 on Astronomy from Wide Field Imaging held in Potsdam Germany during 23-27th August 1993 was the first conference organised by the recently formed Working Group of IAU Commission 9 on Wide Field Imaging. This Working Group was instigated during the XXIst meeting of the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union in Buenos Aires in 1991 and represented a merging of the former formal IAU Working Group on Astronomical Photography and the informal Digitised Optical Sky Surveys Working Group. Dr Richard West was invited to be Chairperson and hence was given the daunting task of organising the Group from scratch. The very fact that the first conference after only two years was a major IAU Symposium says much about the determination and enthusiasm of Richard West to fulfilling the aims of the new Working Group. The siting of the conference in Potsdam in formerly East Germany provided an excellent opportunity to advantage from the political changes in Eastern Europe. Good access to the meeting was possible by scientists from Eastern European countries allowing exchange of information on the very important Wide Field facilities in both East and West, information on the rich archives of photographic plates that exist in both East and West and allowing discussions between scientists facing very similar problems in both East and West.      **New Windows to the Universe** International Astronomical Union, 1990-11-30. *New windows to the universe* presents a timely and stimulating exposition of six major areas in astrophysics. Volume one contains the sun and solar like stars, stellar structure and evolution and astronomical instrumentation. Volume two contains structure and evolution of galaxies, active galaxies and cosmology and a section on interstellar and intergalactic medium. Scientists from all over the world met in Tenerife to give their perspective on their area of expertise. The resulting volumes will be of lasting value to the astrophysical community.      *The Epoch of Galaxy Formation* Carlos S. Frenk, Richard S. Ellis, T. Shanks, Alan F. Heavens, John A. Peacock, 2012-12-06. Scientists in the late twentieth century are not the first to view galaxy formation as a phenomenon worthy of explanation in terms of the known laws of physics. Already in 1754 Kant regarded the problem as essentially solved. In his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* he wrote: 'If in the immeasurable space in which all the suns of the Milky Way have formed themselves we assume a point around which through some cause or other the first formation of nature out of chaos began, there the largest mass and a body of extraordinary attraction will have arisen which has thereby become capable of compelling all the systems in the process of being formed within an enormous sphere around it to fall towards itself as their centre and to build up a system around it on the great scale. Observation puts this conjecture almost beyond doubt. More than 200 years later a

similar note of confidence was voiced by Zel dovich at an IAU symposium held in Tallin in 1911 Extrapolating to the next symposium somewhere in the early eighties one can be pretty sure that the question of the formation of galaxies and clusters will be solved in the next few years Perhaps few astronomers today would share Kant s near certainty or feel that Zel dovich s prophecy has been fulfilled Many however will sympathize with the optimistic oltlook of these two statements

**Physical Cosmology** Alain Blanchard,1991

**Wide Field Spectroscopy And The Distant Universe - Proceedings Of The 35th Herstmonceux Conference** S Maddox,Alfonso Aragon-salamanca,1995-05-31 Galaxies represent the most readily visible fabric of the cosmos Their morphological types luminosities and environmental surroundings contain valuable clues as to their origin and evolution Locally a strong correlation is seen between galaxy morphology and environmental location this may have been molded at surprisingly modest redshifts Spectroscopic and photometric studies of deep fields also suggest remarkably recent changes in the galaxy population The associated growth of structure during the same interval can be tracked via X ray studies of distant clusters of galaxies Very recently impressive observational facilities have been completed each of which has extended the astronomers dataset to look back times where such evolutionary effects can be studied This volume discusses surveys which share a common theme the need for a large number of ground based spectra It focuses on the various approaches via a single theme concerned with the evolution of galaxies and their distribution In the near future impressive new observational facilities will be able to generate large statistical spectroscopic surveys and the aim of this volume is to assess the scientific impact that ongoing and future spectroscopic surveys can make Emphasis is placed on the role of non optical and satellite facilities and the co ordination of international efforts

**Particle Astrophysics** Jean-Michel Alimi,1990

*Wide-Field Spectroscopy* E. Kontizas,M. Kontizas,D.H. Morgan,G.P. Vettolani,2012-12-06 E KONTIZAS

Astronomical Institute National Observatory of Athens P O Box 20048 Athens GR 11810 GREECE The international conference on Wide Field Spectroscopy and its sub ject matter were agreed during the general assembly of the International Astronomical Union IAU in August 1994 by the Working Group of Com mision 9 Wi de Field Imaging This meeting gave an opportunity to world experts on this subject to gather in Athens in order to discuss the cur rent exploitation and the impending opportunities that exist in the area of multi object spectroscopy with particular emphasis on 1 Astronomical instruments data acquisition processing and analysis techniques 2 Astrophysical problems best tackled through wide field multi object spectroscopy The new fibre optic technology offers an important tool for the advancement of basic research and the development of industrial applications Astronom ical spectroscopy is a field of astronomy which has contributed much to the advancement of fundamental physics The spectra of hot stars have been used to determine the well known Balmer formula for the wavelength of hydrogen lines in the late 19th century Since then spectroscopy has made enormous progress in stellar atmosphere studies in kinematics and in the detection of high redshifts in the Universe The traditional techniques of obtaining wide field spectroscopic data are based on slitless spectroscopy objective prism Several observations world wide

make use of these techniques in order to obtain information on the spectral properties of objects in large areas of the sky

**Australian Journal of Physics** ,1990      New Frontiers in Binary Star Research Kam-Ching Leung, Il-söng Na, National Science Foundation (U.S.), Korean Science and Engineering Foundation, 1993      **An Introduction to Active Galactic Nuclei** Bradley M. Peterson, 1997-02-13 How can we test if a supermassive black hole lies at the heart of every active galactic nucleus What are LINERS BL Lacs N galaxies broad line radio galaxies and radio quiet quasars and how do they compare This timely textbook answers these questions in a clear comprehensive and self contained introduction to active galactic nuclei for graduate students in astronomy and physics The study of AGN is one of the most dynamic areas of contemporary astronomy involving one fifth of all research astronomers This textbook provides a systematic review of the observed properties of AGN across the entire electromagnetic spectrum examines the underlying physics and shows how the brightest AGN quasars can be used to probe the farthest reaches of the Universe This book serves as both an entry point to the research literature and as a valuable reference for researchers in the field      **The Physics of LINERs in View of Recent Observations** Mike Eracleous, 1996      Cool Stars, Stellar Systems and the Sun ,1995      *The Minnesota Lectures on Extragalactic Neutral Hydrogen* Evan David Skillman, 1996      Astronomical Data Analysis Software and Systems ,1997      Advances in Solar Physics Euroconference ,1997      Library and Information Services in Astronomy ,1998      *Bibliographic Guide to Conference Publications* New York Public Library. Research Libraries, 1987 Vols for 1975 include publications cataloged by the Research Libraries of the New York Public Library with additional entries from the Library of Congress MARC tapes

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