

INTRODUCTION

The reports on Astronomy, 1976, have been arranged into three Volumes of moderate size and as much as possible homogeneous contents. The Commission Reports have been divided as follows:

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Commissions

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| 4 | Ephemerides |
| 7 | Celestial Mechanics |
| 9 | Instruments and Techniques |
| 14 | Fundamental Spectroscopic Data |
| 15 | Physical Study of Comets, Minor Planets and Meteorites |
| 16 | Physical Study of Planets and Satellites |
| 17 | The Moon |
| 19 | Rotation of the Earth |
| 20 | Positions and Motions of Minor Planets, Comets and Satellites |
| 21 | Light of the Night-Sky |
| 22 | Meteors and Interplanetary Dust |
| 31 | Time |
| 49 | The Interplanetary Plasma and the Heliosphere |
| 5 | Documentation |
| 6 | Astronomical Telegrams |
| 38 | Exchange of Astronomers |
| 41 | History of Astronomy |
| 46 | Teaching of Astronomy |
| 50 | Identification and Protection of Existing and Potential Observatory Sites |

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Commissions

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| 28 | Galaxies |
| 33 | Structure and Dynamics of the Galactic System |
| 34 | Interstellar Matter and Planetary Nebulae |
| 37 | Star Clusters and Associations |
| 47 | Cosmology |
| 40 | Radio Astronomy |
| 44 | Astronomical Observations from outside the Terrestrial Atmosphere |
| 48 | High Energy Astrophysics |

It is hoped that the present system will allow a wider circulation of the separate Volumes to Members of the IAU and other scientists interested in particular topics of astronomical research.

Still it was necessary to adopt the utmost conciseness in the Reports. Otherwise, in view of the considerable increase of the astronomical activity (including the work of physicists, chemists and other non professional astronomers) each of the three volumes could well be more than double its present size.

In view of this restriction the various Presidents of Commissions reacted in different ways. Some have reviewed the recent research in the area of their Commissions, giving only a few general references, others have provided extensive references but little description of the published work. However, in most Commissions' Reports I found a wealth of useful and exciting information that would be valuable for research workers in any field of Astronomy.

I want to thank all Presidents of Commissions and their Colleagues who took part in preparing the various Commissions' Reports.

G. CONTOPOULOS
General Secretary

Athens
January 31, 1976