SUPERNOVAE AND SUPERNOVA REMNANTS

Edited by Cristiano Batalli Cosmovici

VOLUME 45



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SUPERNOVAE AND SUPERNOVA REMNANTS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUPERNOVAE HELD IN LECCE, ITALY, MAY 7-11, 1973

Edited by

CRISTIANO BATALLI COSMOVICI

Astrophysics and Space Science Group, Institute of Physics, University of Lecce, Lecce 73100, Italy

Assisted by

EMILIA D'ANNA and ALFREDO BORGHESI



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VOLUME 45

SUPERNOVAE AND SUPERNOVA REMNANTS

PREFACE

This conference is a tribute to those astronomers who pioneered the investigation of this subject such a short time ago and who carried it through to its present state.

(H. Arp, Concluding Remarks of the Conference)

A previous conference, covering mainly the observational aspects of Supernovae, was held at the Haute Provence Observatory in September 1963.

In the following ten years this field of research has considerably increased; it seemed, therefore, the right time to organize an international conference on Supernovae taking into account that in the meantime important discoveries, such as the Pulsars, had been made, and new techniques of observation were available. This book contains the proceedings of this conference held at Porto Cesareo (Lecce), Italy, during the period May 7 through 11, 1973. About one hundred participants from eighteen countries attended the conference.

It was also the first attempt to hold an international conference in the Salento, the southernmost region of Apulia, in whose capital, Lecce, the newly founded Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lecce is located.

The program of the conference included the results and techniques of Supernova surveys, photometric and spectral studies, statistics of Supernovae, Supernova Remnants, and finally, theories on Supernovae and Supernova Remnants.

The review and contributed papers were of an excellent scientific standard, thus assuring the complete success of the conference. Among the people who contributed to the organizational success I would like first to thank Prof. Francesco Bertola for suggesting this conference and for continuous help in preparing it, and all the other members of the Scientific Committee for their valuable suggestions and advice.

The Director of the Institute of Physics, Prof. Saverio Mongelli was most helpful in providing financial support and all necessities for the conference.

Dr Emilia D'Anna, general secretary of the conference, was an excellent and untiring collaborator in its organization, and in the preparation of the proceedings.

Dr Alfredo Borghesi and Dr Livio Ruggiero were especially cooperative in providing excellent residential and conference facilities.

My special thanks are also due to Prof. Guido Pizzella, to the Rector of the University of Lecce, Prof. Giuseppe Codacci-Pisanelli, to the President of the Faculty of Sciences, Prof. Ida Gasparini-Cattaneo, and to my wife, Beatrice, for their moral support.

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X PREFACE

The conference would not have been possible without the financial support of the following institutions:

Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Ministero per gli Affari Esteri, Regione Puglia, Provincia di Lecce, Comune di Lecce, Comune di Monteroni, Comune di Nardò, Banca del Salento, Ente Provinciale per il Turismo, Banca Vallone e Venturi.

Lecce, September 1973

CRISTIANO BATALLI COSMOVICI

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Adams, D. J., Dept. of Astronomy, University of Leicester, Leicester, Great Britain

Agrinier, B., Centre d'Études Nucléaires de Saclay, 91-Gif-Sur-Yvette, France

Aiello, S., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

Ardeberg, A., European Southern Observatory, Santiago, Chile

Arp, H., Hale Observatories, Pasadena, Calif., U.S.A.

Barbieri, C., Osservatorio Astrofisico, Asiago, Italy

Barbon, R., Osservatorio Astrofisico, Asiago, Italy

Belli, B. M., Lab. di Astrofisica CNR, Frascati, Italy

Bertola, F., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Biermann, L., Max-Planck-Institut für Physik und Astrophysik, München, Germany

Bollea, A., Laboratorio del Plasma nello Spazio, Frascati, Italy

Bonetti, A., Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

Bonoli, F., Osservatorio Astronomico Universitario, Bologna, Italy

Borghesi, A., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Branch, D., Norman, Okla., U.S.A.

Broglia, P., Osservatorio Astronomico, Merate, Italy

Buchler, J. R., Belfer Graduate School of Science, Yeshiva University, New York, U.S.A.

Caloi, V., Laboratorio di Astrofisica, CNR, Frascati, Italy

Capaccioli, M., Osservatorio Astronomico, Padova, Italy

Casini, C. B., Osservatorio Astronomico, Milano-Brera, Italy

Cavaliere, A., Laboratorio di Astrofisica, CNR, Frascati, Italy

Celnikier, L. M., Section d'Astrophysique 92, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France

Chiosi, C., Osservatorio Astronomico, Padova, Italy

Chiosi, E., Osservatorio Astronomico, Padova, Italy

Ciatti, F., Osservatorio Astrofisico, Asiago, Italy

Cline, T. L., Nasa Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md., U.S.A.

Conconi, P., Osservatorio Astronomico, Merate, Italy

Cosmovici, C. B., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Dallaporta N., Osservatorio Astronomico, Padova, Italy

D'Anna, E., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

De Bruyn, A. G., Sterrewacht te Leiden, Leiden, Holland

De Groot, M., European Southern Observatory, Santiago, Chile

Detre, L., Konkoly Observatory, Szabadsaghegy, Budapest, Hungary

Dickel, J. R., University of Illinois, Dept. of Astronomy, Urbana, Ill., U.S.A.

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D'Odorico, A., Osservatorio Astrofisico, Asiago, Italy

Duin, R. M., Sterrewacht te Leiden, Leiden, Holland

Ferrari, A., Istituto di Fisica dell'Università, Torino, Italy

Friedjung, M., Institut d'Astrophysique, Paris, France

Gallino, R., Istituto di Fisica dell'Università di Torino, Torino, Italy

Gordon, C., IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Lab., Yorktown Heights, N.Y., U.S.A.

Gorenstein, P., Center for Astrophysics, Smithsonian Astrophys. Observ., Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.

Goss, W. M., Sterrenkundig Lab. Kapteyn, Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen, Groningen, Holland

Gull, S. F., Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, Great Britian

Hassan, S. M., Helwan Astronomical Observatory, Cairo, Egypt

Heidmann, J., Section d'Astrophysique, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France

Henbest, S. N., Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, Great Britain

Immirzi, G., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Jelley, J. V., AERE, Nuclear Physics Division, Harwell, Great Britain

Johansson, K., Astronomical Observatory, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

Köbke, K., Institut für Kernphysik, Technische Hochschule Darmstadt, Darmstadt, Germany

Leggieri, G., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Lopez-Garcia, A., Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad de Valencia, Observatorio Astronómico, Valencia, Spain

Lovas, M., Konkoly Observatory, Szabadsaghegy, Budapest, Hungary

Madore, B. F., Dept. of Astronomy, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Mansfield, V., Center for Radiophysics and Space Research, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., U.S.A.

Massaro, E., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Palermo, Palermo, Italy

McCarthy, M. F., Specola Vaticana, Castel Gandolfo, Vatican

Meikle, W. P. S., Dept. of Natural Philosophy, University of Glasgow, Great Britain

Mongelli, S., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Moore, E., New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Socorro, N.M., U.S.A.

Palumbo, G. G. C., Laboratorio TE.S.R.E. CNR, Bologna, Italy

Pizzella, G., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Pizzichini, G., Laboratorio TE.S.R.E. CNR, Bologna, Italy

Porter, N. A., Belfield Physics Department, University College, Dublin, Ireland

Reeves, H., Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique, Centre d'Étude Nucleaires de Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, Saclay, France

Robba, N. R., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Palermo, Palermo, Italy

Romano, G., Osservatorio Astronomico, Padova, Italy Rosino, L., Osservatorio Astronomico, Padova, Italy

Rossi, B., Dept. of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.

Ruggiero, L., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Sartori, L., Dept. of Physics, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb., U.S.A.

Scarsi, L., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Palermo, Palermo, Italy

Searle, L., Hale Observatories, Pasadena, Calif., U.S.A.

Setti, G., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Soliani, G., Istituto di Fisica, Università di Lecce, Lecce, Italy

Spinelli, G., Istituto di Matematica, Università di Milano, Milano, Italy

Stephenson, F. R., Dept. of Geophysics and Planetary Physics, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Great Britain

Taffara, S., Osservatorio Astronomico, Padova, Italy

Tammann, G. A., Astronomisch-Meterologische Anstalt der Universität Basel, Binningen, Switzerland

Treves, A., Istituto di Scienze Fisiche, Università di Milano, Milano, Italy

Wickett, A. J., Dept. of Nuclear Physics, University of Oxford, Oxford, Great Britain

Wild, P., Astronomisches Institut der Universität Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Wilson, A. S., Sterrewacht te Leiden, Leiden, Holland

Woltjer, L., Dept. of Astronomy, Columbia University, N.Y., U.S.A.

Wood, R., Royal Greenwich Observatory, Herstmonceux Castle, Hailsham, Great Britain

Zarnecki, J. C., Dept. of Physics, University College London, Mullard Space Science Laboratory, Great Britain

Zwicky, F., California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif., U.S.A.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	IX
SCIENTIFIC AND ORGANIZING COMMITTEES	ΧI
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	XIII
CONFERENCE PHOTOGRAPH	XVI
F. ZWICKY / Review of the Research on Supernovae	1
PART I/RESULTS AND TECHNIQUES OF SUPERNOVA SURVEYS	
L. ROSINO* and G. DI TULLIO / The Asiago Supernova Search	19
P. WILD / The Supernova Search at Zimmerwald	29
W. L. W. SARGENT, L. SEARLE*, and C. T. KOWAL / The Palomar Supernova	
Search	33
L. DETRE / Supernova Survey at the Konkoly Observatory	51
A. G. DE BRUYN / A Search for Radio Emission from Young Extragalactic	
Supernova Remnants	55
J. V. JELLEY*, W. P. S. MEIKLE, R. W. P. DREVER, G. G. C. PALUMBO, F. BŌNOLI, H. SMITH, and T. DELANEY / An Experiment to Search for Prompt Emis-	
sions from Supernovae at Microwave Frequencies	61
J. HEIDMANN / The Distance of NGC 7319 in Stéphan's Quintet and Its Super-	01
nova	73
F. R. STEPHENSON / Historical Observations of Supernovae	7 <i>5</i>
PART II / PHOTOMETRIC STUDIES OF SUPERNOVAE	
TART II/FIIOTOMETRIC STUDIES OF SUFERNOVAE	
H. ARP / Photometry of Supernovae	89
R. BARBON*, F. CIATTI, and L. ROSINO / On the Light Curve of Type I Supernovae	00
A. ARDEBERG and M. DE GROOT / Photometry and Spectroscopy of the 1972	99
Supernova in NGC 5253	103
R. BARBON, F. CIATTI*, and L. ROSINO / Recent Observations of Supernovae	105
at Asiago	115
R. WOOD / Observations of the 1968 Type II Supernova in NGC 5236	119
* Contributor who delivered the paper at the conference.	

PART III / SPECTRA OF SUPERNOVAE AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

	125
L. SARTORI*, B. C. CHIU, and P. MORRISON / The Spectrum of SN 1972e and	
the Fluorescence Theory of Supernova Light	131
M. F. MCCARTHY / Objective Prism Spectra of SN 1972e near Maximum	
Phase	135
M. FRIEDJUNG / A Check on the Size of the Region Producing Fe II Emission	
Lines of the 1961 Supernova in NGC 1058	143
W. M. GOSS*, R. J. ALLEN, R. D. EKERS, and A. G. DE BRUYN / Variable Radio	
Emission from the Extragalactic Supernova-1970g in M 101	145
PART IV / STATISTICS OF SUPERNOVAE	
TART IV STATISTICS OF SOI ERNOVAL	
G. A. TAMMANN / Statistics of Supernovae	155
N. DALLAPORTA / On the Frequency of Type I and Type II Supernovae	187
M. F. MCCARTHY / Space Distribution of Supernovae in Parent Galaxies	195
G. DE VAUCOULEURS / Notes on the Type II Supernovae	203
D. BRANCH / Supernovae and Extragalactic Distances	209
G. A. TAMMANN / Remarks on Outlying Supernovae and the Structure of	
Their Parent Galaxies	215
PART V/SUPERNOVA REMNANTS	
TIME TO SELECTION TO REMINIMINE	
P. GORENSTEIN / Observation of X-Ray Emission from Supernova Remnants	223
P. GORENSTEIN / Observation of X-Ray Emission from Supernova Remnants D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Rem-	223
	223243
D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Rem-	
D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus	243
D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution	
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum 	243251
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. 	243251
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts 	243251
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Observations from the Crab Nebula and NP-0532 	243 251 261
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Ob- 	243 251 261
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Observations from the Crab Nebula and NP-0532 S. D'ODORICO / Physical Conditions in the Filaments of SNR from Their Optical Spectra: IC 443 	243251261267
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Observations from the Crab Nebula and NP-0532 S. D'ODORICO / Physical Conditions in the Filaments of SNR from Their Opti- 	243251261267
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Observations from the Crab Nebula and NP-0532 S. D'ODORICO / Physical Conditions in the Filaments of SNR from Their Optical Spectra: IC 443 R. M. DUIN*, R. G. STROM, and H. VAN DER LAAN / High Resolution 21 cm Continuum Observations of Some Galactic Supernova Remnants 	243251261267283
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Observations from the Crab Nebula and NP-0532 S. D'ODORICO / Physical Conditions in the Filaments of SNR from Their Optical Spectra: IC 443 R. M. DUIN*, R. G. STROM, and H. VAN DER LAAN / High Resolution 21 cm 	243251261267283
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Observations from the Crab Nebula and NP-0532 S. D'ODORICO / Physical Conditions in the Filaments of SNR from Their Optical Spectra: IC 443 R. M. DUIN*, R. G. STROM, and H. VAN DER LAAN / High Resolution 21 cm Continuum Observations of Some Galactic Supernova Remnants S. N. HENBEST / Observations of the Structures of Tycho's and Kepler's Supernova Remnants at 2.7 and 5.0 GHz 	243251261267283295
 D. J. ADAMS* and J. C. ZARNECKI / X-Ray Observations of Supernova Remnants by Copernicus V. N. MANSFIELD* and E. E. SALPETER / Preliminary Results on the Evolution of Supernova Remnants and their X-Ray Spectrum T. L. CLINE and U. D. DESAI / Search for Celestial X-Ray Bursts B. PARLIER, B. AGRINIER, M. FORICHON, J. P. LERAY, G. BOELLA, L. MARASCHI, R. BUCCHERI, N. R. ROBBA, and L. SCARSI* / Gamma-Ray Observations from the Crab Nebula and NP-0532 S. D'ODORICO / Physical Conditions in the Filaments of SNR from Their Optical Spectra: IC 443 R. M. DUIN*, R. G. STROM, and H. VAN DER LAAN / High Resolution 21 cm Continuum Observations of Some Galactic Supernova Remnants S. N. HENBEST / Observations of the Structures of Tycho's and Kepler's Super- 	243251261267283295

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E. L. CHUPP, D. J. FORREST, A. N. SURI, R. ADAMS, and C. TSAI / Search for Gamma Ray Lines from Supernovae and Supernova Remnants T. A. LOZINSKAYA / Optical Observations of Supernova Remnants Simeiz 59 and W28	311 317
PART VI/THEORIES ON SUPERNOVAE AND	
SUPERNOVA REMNANTS	
L. WOLTJER / Supernovae and their Remnants	323
JR. BUCHLER / Carbon Detonation Supernovae	329
J. R. DICKEL / The Continuum Radio Spectra of Supernova Remnants	333
S. F. GULL / The Evolution of Young Supernova Remnants	337
J. R. DICKEL* and D. K. MILNE/ The Magnetic Field Distribution in Supernova	
Remnants	343
A. S. WILSON / Distribution and Motion of the Relativistic Electrons in the Crab	
Nebula	355
S. AIELLO, A. BONETTI*, F. MENCARAGLIA, and E. MASSARO / Dust Envelope	
in Young Supernova Remnants	365
E. P. MOORE / Pre-Detonation Lifetime and Mass of Supernovae from Galaxy	
Density Wave Theory (Abstract)	373
A. FERRARI / On the Formation of Wisps in the Crab Nebula	375
H. REEVES / Deuterium and Boron from Supernovae?	381
L. WOLTJER / Concluding Remarks	383
H. ARP / Review of the Conference	385

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REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH ON SUPERNOVAE

F. ZWICKY

Hale Observatories, Pasadena, California Institute of Technology, Calif., U.S.A.

1. The Original Scenario

In the 1928 April issue of Harper's Magazine there appeared an article by George Ellery Hale, then Director of the Mount Wilson Observatory, which was entitled 'The Possibilities of Large Telescopes'. The article starts out with the following sentence,

"Like buried treasures, the outposts of the universe have beckoned to the adventurous since immemorial times."

It has been related that Mr Rockefeller read only this first sentence of the article and immediately called up Hale, offering to support any of his big plans financially. A few months later the International Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation awarded the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena six million dollars for the construction of a new Astrophysical Observatory and Laboratory, to be conducted in close cooperation with the Mount Wilson Observatory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Hale's plans for the new observatory envisaged the building of a 200-in. reflecting telescope and all necessary auxiliary apparatus and devices.

At the California Institute of Technology, there were at that time five of us who had previously dabbled with various problems of theoretical, observational and instrumental astronomy, namely R. C. Tolman, Professor of Physical Chemistry, Dr J. J. Johnson, who had been on many solar eclipse expeditions, Dr John Strong, working on various phases of applied astronomy and on infrared radiation, Dr Sinclair Smith, who had helped perfecting many instruments at the Mount Wilson Observatory and who had considerable experience as an observer, and especially in the evaluation of the performance characteristics of various telescopes and the effects upon them of atmospheric seeing, and finally myself. As developments went, the five of us subsequently worked together most efficiently for many years on a great variety of problems. Three of the men having passed away, there remain only Professor John Strong and myself cooperating more intensively than ever on problems in astronomy, as well as in morphological research, he and I acting respectively as the Vice President and the President of the International Society for Morphological Research.

The temptation, in 1928, for the five of us above mentioned faculty members at CIT to switch our allegiance from physics to astrophysics and astronomy was of course very great, and we were soon engaged working on various aspects of the new observatory, as well as making plans for future observational projects. We were accompanied on our way by Hale's advice,

"Do not make any mean plans."

2 F. ZWICKY

With this license, and Hale's confidence in us, we started on projects which fairly stunned the Babylonians among the staid astronomical fraternity, but which, to our own amazement turned out to be successful beyond all expectation.

Personally I felt that, although Hale had established astrophysics as a new discipline, astronomers in general simply did not know enough physics to apply its fundamental principles to their science and that they did not at all realize that beyond measuring positions, motions, apparent luminosities and spectra of conspicuous stats and galaxies with admirable precision, there awaited us an unknown buried multitude of hidden treasures, that is, new cosmic bodies and phenomena which could only be divined through systematically directed intuition and subsequent tenacious search with proper instruments. Actually to this very day the morphological method of directed intuition has been studied and applied by only a very few. This is not the place to systematically explain this method. To those who eventually intend to make use of the morphological approach, however, it may be of interest if we sketch briefly how, with the method of directed intuition, specifically the field of supernovae was opened up and how the search for and the research on cosmic implosions and explosions was planned and conducted during the past four decades.

Morphological thought attempts to visualize all possible solutions of any given problem and all possible explanations for any set of facts which are not immediately and uniquely interpretable. To explore and to evaluate all aspects of a given situation, however, is only possible in limited cases in which all of the items involved, as well as the interactions between them, are clearly known. In practical cases we must limit ourselves to what Professor John Strong has proposed to call MODEST MORPHOLOGY.

Thus, when I started occupying myself with problems in astronomy I was not satisfied, for instance, with accepting the theory of the expansion of the universe as the only possible explanation of the large redshifts in the spectra of distant galaxies and, in several papers (*Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci* 15 (1929) 773–779 and *Phys. Rev.* 34 (1929) 1623–1624) I studied other alternatives. Among these the possibility, nay even the certainty of the existence of a gravitational drag on light, which lowers the frequency of quanta while they travel through intergalactic space has remained foremost in my mind.

My principal interest, however, was directed toward predicting the existence of new cosmic bodies and phenomena and then use optimally suited instruments and procedure for their discovery. After tenaciously implementing this approach for the past forty years I feel satisfied that it has proved most fruitful and that it has been successfully tested in a sufficient number of cases to merit incorporation in the curriculae of instruction of all institutions of learning. Among the scientists, who came to the same conclusion, Dr P. Chamaraux of Paris Observatory in Meudon, in a letter of 1972 to me states this conclusion most succintly by writing about the discovery of compact galaxies, "Je trouve en effet très remarquable que vous ayez prévu l'existence de ces objects avant de les découvrir, puis de les étudier. Cela me fait beaucoup penser à la découverte de Neptune par Le Verrier, excepté que Le Verrier n'a pas lui-même identifié la planète."

Concerning the prediction of the existence of new cosmic bodies and phenomena, I

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started in 1928 (*Proc. Nat. Acad.* **14** (1928) 592–597) from a few elementary principles or socalled pegs of knowledge that promised to direct the intuition into the proper channels.

- (a) Obviously, because of atractive forces acting between the elementary particles and bodies of microscopic and cosmic sizes, matter in general has a tendency to agglomerate and to compact.
- (b) The tendency toward compaction is counteracted by preexisting kinetic energy possessed in different degree by the various bodies in the universe.
- (c) Furthermore, compaction cannot proceed unilaterally since, in the process, energy will be released which automatically will result in some of the matter involved being ejected with high speeds of escape. Thus, at the same time that compact bodies are formed, matter is also being dispersed into space, interplanetary, interstellar or intergalactic.
- (d) The process of compaction of matter can take place in many ways, slowly, by accretion for instance, or by fast implosion. This point is exceedingly important, since some of the most serious mistakes have been made by prejudices of various investigators concerning the kinetics of the compacting processes. One of these 'Denkfehler' was largely responsible for the face that my original theory of the existence of neutron stars and their role as the compact remnants of some supernovae was not accepted for more than three decades.

Contemplating the above stated aspects of possible avenues to discoveries to be made at our new observatory on Palomar Mountain, it struck me in particular that the study of cosmic implosions and explosions and their inevitable results of compaction and of dispersion of matter had not been given enough attention in the past. In fact, Henry Norris Russell, who spent some time every year at the Mount Wilson Observatory as an Associate of the Carnegie institution tried to impress on me time and again that implosive processes were freaks and played no role whatever in the evolution of matter in the universe. Eddington in 1930, when I lectured in Cambridge, England on cooperative phenomena and the physics of crystals told me the same thing.

Disregarding these wise councils, Dr Walter Baade and I focussed our attention on one of the best known phenomena in the realm of fast cosmic reactions and engaged in a study of novae, that is of stellar implosions and explosions which within a few hours or days result in outbursts that increase the luminosity of the stars involved by factors up to the order of one million. A careful perusal of the literature, however, revealed that, in addition to what we later on proposed to call common novae, such as the well known Nova Persei of 1901, Nova Aquilae of 1918 and others, some outbursts had been observed and reported on in the past which indicated the occurrence of a much brighter class of novae. These, in 1933, Baade and I proposed to call supernovae.

There were in particular two types of observations pointing to the existence of supernovae, thousands of times as bright as common novae, or billions of times as bright as the Sun, at maximum luminosity.

In the first place, since the discovery in 1885 of a temporary star near the nucleus of