

WELCOME ADDRESS

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As is usual for the welcoming address on a IAU Colloquium, it is always difficult to decide what to say. My personal involvement with Novae, the subject of the Colloquium, is rather limited. On the other hand I still remember with pleasure the days when I was implementing the first generation infrared instrumentation for general users at the ESO Observatory at La Silla, in Chile and, if my memory does not fail me, it was Dr. Duerbeck who on site discovered Nova Cygni 1975, presently better known as V1500 Cygni. This occasion gave me the pleasure of allowing me to make one of the first 10 micron observations of this star. Note that La Silla is at -29° and Nova Cygni was at $+47^\circ$, therefore we made only a short series of observations, which was not so bad since Nova Cygni was one of the fastest Novae in history. I hope that with this historical introduction I have acquired the right to entertain you a few more minutes.

I am very pleased that the European Space Agency through its IUE Observatory here in Madrid, has been able to give support to this IAU Colloquium on Classical Novae. This is the first such meeting held in the capital of Spain, a site full of history, but where the surroundings where you meet, - this very nicely equipped and designed conference building made available by Caja de Ahorros de Madrid - , have no historical value on which I could dwell, but are extremely good for the free exchange of thoughts needed for a successful meeting. On the other hand I also consider this Meeting a recognition from the International Astronomical Union for the dramatic changes in Astronomy in Spain over the last 10 years. The explosion of observing facilities has brought a renovation in the field, and the many young Spaniards who are drawn into Astronomy are having wealth of opportunities available. It must be quite nice to start your studies in these conditions, and from what I have seen they are well matched to the challenge.

As a last remark I would like to stress the extremely fruitful work done in the field of Novae through the availability of facilities which allow multi-frequency observations. Since IUE has been a strong motivation for the somewhat frenetic activities needed to make successful multi-wavelength observations, which for rapidly variable objects as Novae have to be done preferably simultaneously, I am glad that the IUE Observatory has been able to contribute significantly to the Meeting. I am certain that many of the new problems which you will encounter during the Meeting will be related with the correlation of results with EXOSAT, EINSTEIN, IRAS, IUE, optical, radio and infrared measurements. Hopefully HST will also bring many extragalactic Novae within reach for similar studies, although IUE has recently brought the first UV studies of extragalactic novae in the Large Magellanic Cloud. Of course we can only speculate about the future missions which are now in preparation.

Among the sponsors I would like to single out the Planetarium of Madrid, which through its excellent programs brings both astronomy as well as innovation to the people and especially to school children. Such activities cannot be underestimated in importance for the professional astronomers, since I am certain that during this Meeting many references will be made to the important contribution of Amateur Variable Star Observers, who are making their presence most strongly felt through the excellent work in the A.A.V.S.O.

Let me finish with complimenting the S.O.C. with putting together what looks to me like a very exciting program, and the L.O.C. with its organization, which must have been good since you are all here.

I hope that you will have a stimulating and interesting meeting and will not keep you any longer from addressing matters of more interest to you.