

Preface

The symposium "The Impact of VLBI on Astrophysics and Geophysics" was held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, from May 10 to May 15, 1987. 268 participants from 23 countries attended the meeting, and 182 papers were presented, including 23 invited review papers, 45 other oral contributions, and 114 poster papers.

Conferences on scientific results of VLBI have been held at approximately four-year intervals since 1970. Previous meetings were: Charlottesville, VA 1970, Pasadena, CA 1974, Heidelberg 1978, Bologna 1983. The present meeting was held on the twentieth anniversary of the first coherent VLBI experiments conducted in 1967 by groups in Canada and the U.S. and also on the 100th anniversary of the discovery of radio waves by Hertz and of the Michelson-Morley experiment.

There were 18 scientific sessions: 6 devoted to extragalactic astronomy; 3 to galactic astronomy; 1 to astrometry; 4 to geophysics; and 3 to instrumentation and analysis. Major topics of discussion included: superluminal radio sources; gravitational lenses; steep spectrum sources; low frequency variables, polarization; distance measurements; cosmic masers; radio stars; interstellar scattering; reference frames; plate tectonics; earth orientation; propagation effects; orbiting VLBI; new telescopes and arrays; and image formation and processing techniques. At the end of most sessions, time was set aside for an oral review of a group of poster papers by a knowledgeable reviewer.

The symposium was sponsored by the International Astronomical Union (Symposium 129), International Union of Radio Sciences, and American Geophysical Union, and additional support was received from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, Smithsonian Institution, Interferometrics Corporation, and Signatron Corporation. With this support, travel grants were provided to 45 participants.

Excursions were made to a Red Sox baseball game; a performance by the Boston Pops orchestra; Plimouth Plantation; Haystack Observatory; and the Museum of Fine Arts. A banquet was held at the Museum of Science in Boston, in the midst of a special exhibit on Science in India that included a model of the Ooty array.

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Mark Reid
James Moran