

P R E F A C E

IAU Transactions are published as a volume corresponding to each General Assembly. Volume A is produced prior to the Assembly and contains Reports on Astronomy, prepared by each Commission President. The intention is to summarize the astronomical results that have affected the work of the Commission since the production of the previous Reports up to a time which is about one year prior to the General Assembly. Volume B is produced after the Assembly and contains accounts of Commission meetings which were held and other material.

In 1976 (Grenoble), volume XVI, and 1979 (Montreal), volume XVII, IAU Transactions A were produced in three parts, each of about 230 pages, so that individuals could choose to purchase part only of the complete volume. In 1982 for this volume a different policy is adopted. Volume XVIII A reverts to one part, produced from camera-ready manuscript, published in one cloth-bound edition, but there is the supplementary production of a paper-bound volume in which standards of production have been adopted that enable a fixed number to be produced for distribution at the 18th General Assembly at Patras, Greece, at a low cost if ordered on the Registration Form by participants. In this way it becomes a working document of the General Assembly as was the production of the "Draft Reports" of earlier General Assemblies. It receives the title "Reports on Astronomy, 1982 - 18th General Assembly of the IAU, Patras, Greece".

The style and length of Presidents' Reports varies from 2-page outline summaries to, in one case, a 44-page compilation with ten named contributors, or in other cases many hundreds of references. Most of the Reports are in English and the Union is indebted to those Presidents who use one of the official IAU languages for their Reports when it is not their mother tongue. The technicalities of camera-ready copy mean that a few typing errors that remain undetected could not be corrected in the time available. Generally speaking, the production of the camera-ready copy by Presidents was of a very high standard and thanks are due to all those, including the staff of the IAU Secretariat, who have used their skill to produce the material for this volume.

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