

Preface

IAU Symposium 207 was the first ever IAU sponsored Symposium (or Colloquium!) in Chile. The advent of many new world-class telescopes, including the VLT, Gemini, Magellan, etc. has turned Chile into the premier astronomical site in the southern hemisphere and the time was ripe for Chile to host an IAU Symposium. The topic was Extragalactic Star Clusters. Despite a vast amount of research and tremendous progress made recently, an IAU Symposium on the general subject had not been held since 1986. The Symposium brought together some 170 researchers from 24 countries working on the many different aspects of extragalactic star clusters in a variety of different wavelength ranges in order to gain a comprehensive picture of star cluster formation and evolution and their role in the evolutionary framework of their parent galaxies. Star clusters are observed in a wide variety of environments and are present in all but the least massive galaxies and their study can tell us about many aspects of both cluster and galaxy formation. Particularly timely was the interplay between researchers working on young starburst clusters and those devoted to ancient globular clusters. The meeting was held from March 12 - 16, 2001 in the lovely town of Pucón, amidst the spectacular setting of the imposing Villarica volcano and the lake of the same name.

The meeting was sponsored by the IAU (by a total of 15 commissions and 6 divisions), Associated Universities Inc, Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, European Southern Observatory, Fundación Andes, Gemini Observatory, Las Campanas Observatory, National Radio Astronomy Observatory, Pontificia Universidad Católica, and the Universidad de Concepción. We are extremely grateful to their generous financial support which helped make this meeting a success. We thank Gary Da Costa, chair of our sponsoring IAU Commission 37, and Ken Freeman, chair of our coordinating Division VII.

The Scientific Organizing Committee was co-chaired by Eva Grebel (Germany) and Doug Geisler (Chile), who were assisted by Beatriz Barbuy (Brazil), Jean Brodie (USA), Gary Da Costa (Australia), Bruce Elmegreen (USA), Juan Forte (Argentina), Uta Fritze-von Alvensleben (Germany), Luis Ho (USA), Rob Kennicutt (USA), Myung Gyoon Lee (South Korea) and Georges Meylan (USA). The Local Organizing Committee was chaired by Doug Geisler (Un. Concepción), with assistance from Danielle Alloin (ESO), Carme Gallart (Un. Chile), Wolfgang Gieren (Un. Concepción), Eduardo Hardy (NRAO), Michael Hilker (Un. Católica), Bill Kunkel (LCO), Dante Minniti (Un. Católica), Bryan Miller (Gemini), Knut Olsen (CTIO), Mario Pedreros (Un. Tarapacá), Tom Richtler (Un. Concepción), Mónica Rubio (Un. Chile), Alistair Walker (CTIO) and Erich Wenderoth (Un. La Serena). The importance of the topic of the Symposium to Chilean researchers is underscored by the fact that all LOC members actively work in the field.

We note with pride that during the course of the Symposium Chilean astronomers gathered together for the first time to discuss the Chilean government's recently-announced FONDAF project and that these efforts bore fruit,

turning into the 5-year Center for Astrophysics program that should prove to be a major impetus for Chilean astronomy.

Among the highlights of the week were the excursions arranged on Wednesday afternoon. Participants had the choice of white-water rafting on the Lower Trancura River, soaking in one of the many beautiful natural hot springs in the area or adventuring up the lower slopes of Volcan Villarica and touring a lava cave. The weather was perfect and a great time was had by all.

The success of the Symposium was due to the combined efforts of a large number of people. Turismo Tajamar travel agency, in particular Pilar Lorca and Luisa Martinez, organized the travel arrangements and the logistical details of the meeting. The staff of the superb Hotel del Lago, especially Jenny Téllez, provided a beautiful venue, service, entertainment and accommodations. Eugenia Geisler made sure everything came together at the meeting. Universidad de Concepción student volunteers Juan Seguel, Carlos Troncoso, Patricio Mella, Carla Baldovin, Mauricio Gonzalez, Omar Valdivia and Paulina Assman assisted as audio-visual technicians, distributors of discussion sheets, etc. Michael Hilker was the artistic genius responsible for our award-winning poster (reproduced as the front cover and on the t-shirts handed out at the meeting which he also arranged). Isabel Rivera, Marcela Sanhueza, Ronald Burgos and Juan Seguel worked on meeting arrangements and writing up these Proceedings. During the meeting, three public lectures were offered, followed by telescope viewing, and these attracted a wide and interested audience. Special thanks to Juan Forte, Wolfgang Gieren and Jim Hesser for spending the extra time to prepare and give these talks, which greatly enhanced the public awareness of astronomy. Candid cameras were yielded by Knut Olsen, Jon Holtzman, Michael Hilker and Jesus Maiz-Apellaniz and provided a number of great photos, some of which are reproduced here. Gaston Calliñirsch took the conference photo. Thanks to the Universidad de Concepción and especially Ernesto Figueroa, Carlos Saavedra and Jaime Alvarez for hosting this Symposium and supporting it financially. The mayor of Pucón, Carlos Barra, and his associates provided many helpful materials and logistical support, and made sure the weather was fixed after a somewhat rough start.

We thank all of the participants for their contributions. The Editors apologize for the delay in producing these Proceedings. While some important papers indeed arrived late, other responsibilities prevented the prompt attention the Proceedings deserved.

Doug Geisler, Eva Grebel and Dante Minniti
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