

Reviews by Roberts and Haynes (The Hubble sequence) and Maeder and Conti (Massive star populations in nearby galaxies) touch upon many of these crucial aspects of extragalactic studies.

Bigger than the galaxies and their clusters is the Universe itself and its origin and evolution occupy the attention of a very large number of theorists and observers. Today Physical Cosmology is an observational/experimental science in which definite physical models are used to interpret and predict the results of measurements. Results from the COBE satellite, from the HST key project to determine extragalactic distances to greater accuracy and from high resolution spectroscopy of faint distant galaxies with the Keck telescope have opened up hitherto inaccessible ways of investigating the cosmological problem. Many of the well-established notions of the Standard Big Bang Cosmology are being severely tested, the cosmological ques-

tions are being further sharpened. What is the age of the Universe? Is the Universe going to expand forever? How much of the matter in the Universe is in the dark form? How did galaxies form? When did they form? These and many other related questions are exercising the minds of the cosmologist, the astronomer and the particle physicist and a great debate is on. This volume 32 of the Annual Review brings us a flavour of these issues through the articles of Carr, White, Scott and Silk, Dekel and Fabian. There is a lot to ponder over and a lot to marvel at.

I shall be remiss if I do not mention the Prefatory Chapter of this volume. Margaret Burbidge is the author of it and her contribution 'Watcher of the skies' is a delight to read. Burbidge has been one of the distinguished astronomers of our times and the account of her life as a professional astronomer is of great common interest. As she says, the ARAA

Editorial Board invited her to write an account that would acquaint an observational astronomer today 'with what it was like to use optical telescopes before TV, 2-dimensional photon counting devices and computers'. She has succeeded in her job admirably. We now have in ARAA Prefatory Chapters accounts by three of the famous foursome B²FH.

Astronomy and astrophysics are a rapidly progressing field. Many of the results reviewed in this volume will either be improved upon or superseded by new developments in future. By monitoring this progress annually through superbly written articles, ARAA is doing a signal service to the astronomical community.

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MEETINGS/SYMPOSIA/SEMINARS

National Seminar on Biotechnology: New Trends and Prospects

Date: 25-27 November 1996

Place: Hardwar

Themes include: Microbial preparations and plant products; Education and research in biotechnology— Indian priorities; Microbial technology and renewable energy; Biotechnology for agriculture; Biotechnology in health care and food biotechnology.

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National Symposium on Environment III: 1996. Eco-friendly and Biorational Pollution Management in Soil, Water and Air

Date: 10-12 December 1996

Place: Pune

The above seminar will be held in Hindi at National Chemical Laboratory, Pune. Themes: a) Pesticides: Alternatives – plant products, IPM, biopesticides etc. ; b) Industrial effluents; c) Early warning systems: Role of biomonitoring; d) Miscellaneous.

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Edited and published by Prof. P. Balaram and Prof. S. Ramaseshan, Current Science Association, Bangalore 560 080.
Typeset by R D Typesetters, Bangalore 560 010. Printed by Lotus Printers, Bangalore (Ph: 3380167).