

Preface

This volume contains the papers presented at IAU Symposium 179 on “New Horizons from Multi-Wavelength Sky Surveys” which was held at The Johns Hopkins University from the 26th through the 30th of August 1996. This meeting was organized under the auspices of the “Wide-Field Imaging” working group of IAU Commission 9.

This was the latest conference in the rapidly advancing and continually evolving field of wide field astronomy. We have come a long way from the original conferences in Geneva (May 1989, “Proceedings of the First Conference on Digitised Sky Surveys,” Bull. d’Information du CDS, No.37) and Edinburgh (June 1991, “Digitised Optical Sky Surveys,” *Astrophys.Space Science Library*, vol 174), which dealt primarily with photographic sky surveys and the digitization of these optical data for quantitative analysis. The technological advances in instrumentation, detector development and computing have brought digital surveys and surveys at other wavebands to the forefront as shown by the conference in Potsdam (August 1993, “Astronomy from Wide Field Imaging,” IAU Symposium 161). More recently, the working group is highlighting the importance of spectroscopic and multi-wavelength observations by sponsoring two meetings, one in Athens (May 1996, “Wide-Field Spectroscopy,” *Astrophys.Space Science Library*, vol 212), and this one in Baltimore. This is a good indication of how broad and active a field this has become.

There were 192 registered participants at the meeting representing 16 countries from all parts of the globe and 150 papers or posters were presented. This volume presents the written versions for most of these contributions.

This conference was sponsored by the International Astronomical Union, the Space Telescope Science Institute, The Johns Hopkins University, The University of Maryland and the Goddard Space Flight Center. We are very grateful to the sponsoring institutions for their generous support.

A conference of this size cannot possibly succeed without the efforts and dedication of a large number of people including the Science and Local Organising Committees, the local staff who kept things running smoothly, and all the participants; we are indebted to them all.

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