

WORKING GROUP ON ACTIVE B STARS *(GROUPE DE TRAVAIL POUR LES ETOILES B ACTIVES)*

CHAIRPERSON: Stanislav Štefl

MEMBERS: Conny Aerts, Dietrich Baade, Beatriz Barbuy, Jon E. Bjorkman, Edward F. Guinan, David McDavid, Atsuo Okazaki, Stanley P. Owocki, Geraldine J. Peters, John M. Porter & Thomas Rivinius

The Working Group Organizing Committee (WG OC) was very active during last three years. The main points solved during this period are briefly summarized below.

1. WG Status

The first aim of the WG OC was to fix the status of the WG with respect to the IAU Divisions and Commissions after it turned out that this basic point was not clearly defined. As the result of the discussion, the WG on Active B stars became an inter-Divisional WG sponsored by Divisions IV and V. The presidents of both Divisions kindly accepted the proposal to become members of the WG OC in order to be well informed on the WG activities. The WG is further linked to the following IAU Commissions: 27 - Variable Stars, 29 - Stellar Spectra, 36 - Theory of Stellar Atmospheres, 42 - Close Binary Stars and 45 - Stellar Classification.

2. Be Star Newsletter

The electronic Be Star Newsletter is considered to be an important tool, which informs the WG members as well as professional and amateur communities on activities of the whole WG, brings abstract of new publications in the field, helps to organize the observing campaigns and carry out joint projects. Some improvements were suggested in order to make the Newsletter as effective as possible. For technical and organizational reasons, the Newsletter was moved to the new web site: <http://www.astro.virginia.edu/~dam3ma/benews>. The OC appreciated highly the work of the editors Geraldine J. Peters, Douglas R. Gies and David McDavid.

The Newsletter is now published regularly with 3-4 issues per year. A limited number of hard copies is produced for libraries and WG members without Internet access. The editors can decide on the number of hard copies and their distribution in the way that the publication expenses are minimized. Besides traditional topics (abstracts of new publications, campaign announcements etc.), the Newsletter now contains also shorter review papers, reports on PhD theses and valuable reports from amateur astronomers. Thanks to this new trend it was possible to integrate the good quality data from amateur astronomers in several papers in refereed journals.

3. Be Stars in Review Papers

The WG OC concluded that the results of the Be star research were not appropriately presented in some general astronomical reviews and that an up-to-date review on Be stars is missing. The PASP editors kindly accepted the proposal that the modern review could be considered for publication in their journal. The WG OC nominated two authors for the review, who should submit a review outline to the PASP editors in early 2003.

4. The Next Be/B Star Meeting

The last meeting on Be stars was held in 1999 in Spain. Due to the rapid development of the field and mainly to new observational facilities, the next meeting with somewhat broader range of topics is highly needed in 2004-2005. After the preliminary goals of the meeting were formulated, ten SOC members and two SOC co-chairs (S. P. Owocki and S. Štefl) were elected taking into account the representation of main topics of the meeting and that of geographical regions, observational methods, and important projects. The SOC will submit a proposal for the IAU Symposium or Colloquium in February 2003.

For the first time, a meeting on active B stars should be held outside Europe and North America. The selected venue, Chile and close to the VLTI facility, should emphasize interferometry as the method expected to bring the most significant progress to the field during this decade. The meeting is timed just for the period when results from more than one year of regular VLTI observations can be presented but still when the large part of the B/Be star community will have to learn how to use the facility. The meeting should facilitate the access of the broad community to the VLTI, but at the same time also to strengthen the support of the VLTI e.g. by construction of physically consistent models, which are necessary mainly in the phase of model dependent analyses of visibility curves, or definition of the effective stellar projects for the interferometric observations.

Interferometry should form only one important part of the meeting. Next sessions will be devoted to results of space projects, dynamical modeling of photospheric processes that might feed material into a circumstellar disk, dynamical modeling of circumstellar disks (disk oscillations, role of magnetic field in the disks, interaction of stellar magnetic fields with the disk) and the role of binarity in systems with Be components (forced oscillations in binary systems, binarity vs. rotation relations, influence of the second component on a Be star disk). Preparation of the meeting is in progress.

Stanislav Štefl
Chairperson of the Working Group