

PREFACE AND EDITORIAL NOTES

IAU Symposium No. 144 was held in Leiden in the summer of 1990, hosted by the Leiden Observatory and the Laboratory for Space Research Leiden. The meeting was devoted to the interstellar medium in the broadest sense, with emphasis on the interface between disks and halos of galaxies. This disk-halo connection is of major importance for studies of interstellar processes and galactic structure and evolution. Because of the wealth of new observational information, ranging from radio frequencies to the gamma-ray regime, and the considerable progress in theoretical studies in recent years, it was felt that this was the appropriate time to review the state of the art in an IAU symposium.

One of the main goals of the symposium was to bring together scientists working on widely different aspects of the field. The Scientific Organizing Committee, representing a broad range of expertise and nationalities, invited 34 speakers and selected 17 contributed oral presentations. Ample time was reserved for more than 60 poster presentations, which could all be displayed during the entire meeting. There were about 140 participants, coming from as many as 21 countries. Their long and lively discussions contributed significantly to the great success of the symposium.

This book contains the proceedings of the oral contributions, presented here in chronological order. A poster book, containing the substance of the poster presentations, was published by the Leiden Observatory prior to the meeting. Apparently, having this poster book available during the symposium was greatly appreciated by the participants. A few poster papers are included in the present volume, because they were accidentally excluded from the poster book. Copies of the poster proceedings can be obtained from the editor.

The non-scientific highlight of the meeting was a trip in a fleet of six classical flat-bottom sailing boats, followed by the conference banquet at the "Kager Plassen" lakes and a priceless after-dinner talk by Prof. H.C. van de Hulst. Photographs of this happening can be found scattered throughout the book.

The organizers express their gratitude to the institutions and companies that have financially supported the symposium. They are also very indebted to the Mayor of Leiden and the University of Leiden for the warm reception offered to the participants in the City Hall. I am grateful to every member of the Scientific and Local Organizing committees, especially to Janet Soulsby and Ernestine Spindel for their invaluable help in the organization of the meeting and the editing of the proceedings. Jan Melisse presented smoothly all slides, five days long, from a dark and stuffy projection room.

Hans Bloemen