Hipparchos

The Hellenic Astronomical Society Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1, Year 1 **May 1995**

Message from the President

Greek astronomers have been united under the newly formed Hellenic Astronomical Society (HEL.A.S). The large response of the Greek astronomical community has more than doubled our members in the last few months.

From now on the Greek astronomers will have their own voice on all issues that affect their astronomical activities in Greece and their collaboration with astronomers abroad, both scientific and organizational.

I hope that the Newsletter of the Society will not only provide news about its activities, but also be a forum expressing the goals and problems of all Greek astronomers.

I am happy that among our members there are many Greek astronomers working abroad together with astronomers of Greek ancestry, or having special relations with Greece. This Newsletter will be a link with their homeland, and it will be open to them for expressing their views and wishes.

I am also particularly happy that HEL.A.S. is among the first Affiliated Societies of the European Astronomical So

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In 1993, the National Observatory of Athens celebrated 150 years of scientific operation

(See page 2 for further details)

The first elected Council of HELA.S.

G. Contopoulos (President, Athens)
J. Hadjidemetriou (Vice-President. Thessaloniki)
J.H. Seiradakis (Secretetry, Thessaloniki)
P. Laskarides (Treasurer, Athens)
M. E. Contadakis (Chancellor, Thessaloniki)
E. Kontizas (Chancellor, Athens)
J. Ventura (Chancellor, Heraklion)

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The 2nd Hellenic Astronomical Conference will take place in Thessaloniki in Summer 1995

The second Hellenic Astronomical Conference will take place in Thessaloniki in June-July 1995. The Conference is organised by the Hellenic Astronomical Society and sponsored by the University of Thessaloniki, the University of Athens, the National Astronomical Committe and the National Observatory of Athens. We hope that it will be supported by the Municipality of Thessaloniki and several local or national organizations, institutions and companies. The *Local Organizing Committee (LOC) consists of* J. Hadjidemetriou, (Chairman), M. Contadakis, (Vice-Chairman), J.H. Seiradakis (Secretary), H. Varvoglis (Treasurer), S. Avgoloupis (Member) and K. Kokkotas (Member). The *Scientific Organizing Committee (SOC) consists of* L.N. Mavridis, Thessaloniki (Chairman), J. Ventura, Heraklion (Vice-Chairman), C. Alissandrakis, Ioannina, M. Contadakis, Thessaloniki, G. Contopoulos, Athens, E. Kontizas, Athens, P. Laskarides, Athens, K. Poulakos, Athens, E. Sarris, Xanthi, J.H. Seiradakis,

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The founding members of HEL.A.S.

In September 1993, during the 1st Hellenic Astronomical Conference, which took place in Athens under the aigis of the University of Athens and the sponsorship of the National Astronomical Committee, a large number of Greek astronomers decided to proceed with the establishment of the *Hellenic Astronomical Society* (HEL.A.S.). Fifty four signed the Constitution of the Society. This is a large number, considering that the number of Greek astronomers world-wide does not exceed about two hundred. Later, the Constitution was signed by twelve more colleagues, so that when the *Society* was recognised by the Court of Justice of the City of Athens, the total number of **Founding Members** was sixty six. Among them 61 are *Ordinary* members and 5 are *Junior* members:

α) Ordinary Founding Members

1. Antonopoulou Evgenia, Assistant Professor, Athens
2. Arzoglou-Kontiza Mary, Assistant Professor, Athens
3. Avgoloupis Stavros, Assistant Professor, Thessaloniki
4. Barbanis Vassilios, Professor, Thessaloniki
5. Bellas-Velidis Ioannis, Physicist-Programmer, Athens
6. Bozis George, Professor, Thessaloniki
7. Caranicolas Nikolaos, Assistant Professor, Thessaloniki
8. Chryssovergis Michael, Athens
9. Contadakis Michael, Associate Professor, Thessaloniki
10. Contopoulos George, Professor, Athens
11. Danezis Emmanuel, Assistant Professor, Athens
12. Flogaiti Aikaterini, Lecturer, Patras
13. Gerogiannis Vassilios, Assistant Professor, Patras
14. Goudis Christos, Professor, Patras
15. Grigorelis Floros, Lecturer, Thessaloniki
16. Hadjidemetriou John, Professor, Thessaloniki
17. Ichtiaroglou Symeon, Associate Professor, Thessaloniki
18. Kazanas Demosthenes, Researcher, NASA, USA
19. Kokkotas Konstantinos, Assistant Professor, Thessaloniki
20. Konstantopoulos Ioannis, Assistant Professor, Athens
21. Kontizas Evangelos, Researcher, Athens
22. Korakitis Romylos, Assistant Professor, Athens
23. Kouveliotou Chryssa, Researcher, NASA, USA
24. Kylafis Nikolaos, Associate Professor, Heraklion
25. Laskarides Paul, Associate Professor, Athens
26. Livaniou-Rovithi Eleni, Assistant Professor, Athens
27. Makris Konstantinos, Peer Professor, Athens
28. Mathioudakis Michael, Researcher, Berkeley, USA
29. Mavridis Lyssimachos-Christos, Professor, Thessaloniki
30. Mousas Xenofon, Assistant Professor, Athens
31. Niarchos Panagiotis, Assistant Professor, Athens
32. Papadopoulos Demetrios, Associate Professor, Thessaloniki
33. Papagiannis Michael, Professor, Boston, USA
34. Papamastorakis Ioannis, Associate Professor, Heraklion
35. Persides Sotirios, Professor, Thessaloniki
36. Petropoulos Vassilios, Researcher, Athens
37. Pinotsis Antonios, Assistant Professor, Athens
38. Plionis Emmanuel, Researcher, SISSA, Italy
39. Polymilis Chronis, Assistant Professor, Athens
40. Poulakos Konstantinos, Researcher, Athens
41. Prokakis Theodoros, Researcher, Athens
412 Sarris Eleftherios, Researcher, Athens
43. Seiradakis John-Hugh, Associate Professor, Thessaloniki
44. Sinachopoulos Demetrios, Researcher, Brusselles, Belgium
45. Solomos Nikolaos, Athens
46. Spyrou Nikolaos, Professor, Thessaloniki
47. Stathopoulou Maria, Lecturer, Athens
48. Svolopoulos Sotirios, Peer Professor, Athens
49. Terzian Yervant, Professor, Cornell, USA
50. Theodosiou Efstratios, Assistant Professor, Athens

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Athens National Observatory:

A hundred and fifty years of scientific activities

In 1993, the *National Observatory of Athens* (NOA) celebrated 150 years of fruitful operation. It is the oldest scientific foundation of modern Greece and was founded by Baron George Sinas who also donated the first astronomical and meteorological instruments. It was inaugurated on June 26, 1842 by King Otto, during a solar eclipse. The first building of the Observatory, near the hill of Pnyx, was designed by the famous Danish architect Theofilos Hansen. The construction was finished in 1845 and George Vouris was its first Director. Julius Schmidt and Demetrios Eginitis, eminent scientists, served as its Directors.

In 1986 the National Observatory of Athens was reorganised in four Institutes. Its main activities refer to the study and promotion of research in the fields of *Astronomy and Astrophysics, Space Physics, Meteorology* and *Seismology.* Today, the main Laboratories operated by the *Astronomical institute* of NOA are: (a) The *Pendeli Astronomical Station* founded in 1937l, located on

(Continued from page 2)

51. Tsikoudi Vassiliki, Assistant Professor, Ioannina
52. Tsinganos Kanaris, Associate Professor, Heraklion
53. Vardavas Elias, Associate Professor, Heraklion
54. Varvoglis Haralambos, Associate Professor, Thessaloniki
55. Varvoglis Petros, Lecturer, Xanthi
56. Ventura Josef, Professor, Heraklion
57. Vlahos, Lukas, Associate Professor, Thessaloniki
58. Vogglis Nikolaos, Assistant Professor, Athens
59. Xilouris Kiriaki, Researcher, Arecibo, USA
60. Xiradaki Evangelia, Athens
61. Zafeiropoulos Vassilios, Assistant Professor, Patras

β) Junior Founding Members

1. Argyropoulos Stylianos, Athens
2. Georganopoulos Markos, Boston, USA
3. Grammenos Theofanis, Athens
4. Drillia Georgia-Athanasia, Athens
5. Maravelias Sergios, Athens

the top of a hill on the Pendeli mountain, named "Koufos". A large 64 cm refractor (the Newall telescope) is situated on the major dome of this hill, now used as a visitors' centre. (b) The Astronomical Observatory of Cryoneri-ion, founded in 1975, located 22 km from the small town of Kiato at an altitude of 1 km. Its main instrument is a 120 cm refractor.

The main activities of the Astronomical Institute are: (1) Collection and analysis of astronomical data. (2) Research in several disciplines, including *Astrophysics, Planetary Sciences, Stellar, Galactic* and *Extragalactic Astronomy.* (3) Services to individuals and organisations concerning calendar data and astronomical phenomena. (4) Education, particularly in the graduate level. (5) Guided tours about astronomy to the public.

V. Kontizas,
Director of the Astronomical Institute

Setting a good example

Last September, after a long and fruitful career at the Greek Universities, Professor B. Barbanis retired on pension from the University of Thessaloniki. Soon after he was inaugurated *Professor Emeritus* and since then he resumed his scientific activities to full capacity. With his retirement, Professor Barbanis, once again, has set a good example and offered a token of his love and dedication for science and his students. During a simple and solemn ceremony, he announced that he wishes (a) to dedicate his scientific library to the Laboratory of Astronomy of the University of Thessaloniki and (b) that, for the next four years, he offers an annual scholarship of 300 000 drachmas to a student of the Department of Physics of the University of Thessaloniki with the best record in Astronomy, with emphasis on observations. The selection of the students shall be made by members of staff of the Laboratory of Astronomy who should take into account the grades of the students in the Astrono_my courses of the 5th and 6th semesters.

HEL.A.S is proud that Professor Barbanis has been its first President.

A prize for students of Observational Astronomy

- Are you a Member of HEL.A.S.?
- Have you paid your subscription and your annual contribution?;

Communications

From the President of the International Astronomical Union, I. Woltjer

Thank you for your letter concerning the founding of the Hellenic Astronomical Society which appears to have been a very useful move in view of the increasing activity in astronomy in Greece, also outside the *Athens - Thessaloniki* area. The IAU wishes HEL.A.S. all possible success.

From the President of the American Astronomical Society, F. Shu

Thank you for your letter of July, 20 1994, informing me of the establishment of the Hellenic Astronomical Society (HEL.A.S.) and of your election as its first President. On behalf of the Council of the American Astronomical Society, please allow me to offer our sincerest congratulations and best wishes. Since Greece is the fountainhead of astronomy as a modern science, we regard this development as propitious indeed for our subject.

I have passed on your request for a copy of the AAS Newsletter to the Executive Officer and the Secretary, Dr. Peter Boyce and Dr. Roger Bell. Please let me know if there is any other way in which the Americal Astronomical Society can help. I look forward to many fruitfuly interactions between our two Societies in the future.

From the ex-President of the Royal Astronomical Society, M. Rees.

Many thanks for your letter containing news of the new Hellenic Astronomical Society. This venture certainly has the very best wishes of the Royal Astronomical Society, with which I hope cordial relations will be established. I am now no longer the RAS president, but will pass on your letter to my successor, in the hope that an exchange of publications and information can indeed be initiated.

From the Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society, J.E.J. Lane

I hope that the new Society is a succesS.

Obituary

JOHN XANTHAKIS DIED GREEK ASTRONOMY LOST ITS WISE *NESTOR*

John Xanthakis, the wise Nestor of Greek Astronomy, whose 40 years in the Academy of Athens left a powerful imprint on Greek Astronomy and Greek Science in general, died on July 10, 1994 at the age of 90. Born in 1904 in Gytheion, Lakonia, Xanthakis started his academic carrier at the University of Athens as Chief Assistant of Demetrios Eginitis. After a long and very successful research work at the Strasbourg Observatory as a collaborator of the famous French astronomer Andre Danjon, Xanthakis was appointed in 1938 Professor of Mathematics at the Evelpidon Military Academy of Athens. In 1939 he was appointed as the first Professor of Astronomy at the University of Thessaloniki. During the difficult years of the second world war and the German occupation, Xathakis became one of the leading personalities of Macedonia. First he devoted himself with great enthusiasm to the creation of the Department of Astronomy of the University of Thessaloniki, which owes to him its sole telescope. His main contribution however, was his great impetus to the astronomical research work of high level, which secured him the unanimous recognition of the international astronomical community and his triumphant election as full member of the Academy of Athens in 1955.

From his new position at the

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The establishment of the Hellenic Astronomical Society:
A brief history

The first serious attempt to establish a *Hellenic Astronomical Society* was undertaken in 1982 during the XVIII General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union, which took place in Patras, Greece. There, during several meetings, a dozen astronomers gathered in order to put the foundations of the long sought Society.

Later, several people attempted to draw a draft Constitution which would form the basis of the Society. Individual drafts were made by P.G. Niarchos, by M.E. Contadakis and by M. Danezis, J. Deligiannis, X. Mousas, D. Papathanasoglou and Th. Papayiannopoulos. Gr. Antonakopoulos, M. Papagiannis and Th. Prokakis made several attempts to organise meetings and smooth out the difficulties that had risen during these very first steps towards the establishment of the Society. Unfortunately, these efforts did not produce any definite results.

In the mid-eighties there were some discussions among colleagues during working lunches. J. Ventura and J.H. Seiradakis started collecting relevant material, which later proved very useful.

It was much later, in November 1991, when P. Laskarides issued the first announcement of the 1st Hellenic Astronomical Conference, that the idea of the establishment of an Astronomical Society, seemed ripe again. J.H. Seiradakis, on sabbatical leave in Bonn, drafted a first plan. This was restructured and completed during several meetings with D. Synachopoulos, either in Bonn or in Brussells. Later S. Avgoloupis, B. Barbanis, S. Persides, N. Spyrou and H. Varvoglis commented on it and a semi-final version was sent to the major astronomical establishments in Geece for further comments. A final version was presented to the participants of the 1st Hellenic Astronomical Conference, which was held in Athens in September 1992.

During the Athens Conference, several astronomers became founding members of the Hellenic Astronomical Society. A few more founding members signed the Constitution during the next few weeks bringing the total number of founding members to sisty six (66). The paperwork for the recognition of the Society was undertaken by a lawer in Athens. Some further delays were encountered, but finaly on May 25 1993 the Hellenic Astronomical Society, HEL.A.S. (in greek: Ελληνική Αστρονομική Εταιρεία, ΕΛ.ΑΣ.ΕΤ.) was recognised by the Court of Justice in Athens. The names of the 66 founding members are mentioned in a separate column.

The appointed Council of HEL.A.S. became aware of the verdict of the Court of

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(ESTABLISHMENT OF HEL.A.S.)

Justice in June 1993. The President of the Council, B. Barbanis (Thessaloniki), assisted by J. Ventura, Vice-President (Crete), P. Laskarides, Secretary (Athens), K. Makris, Treasurer (Athens), Chr. Goudis (Patras), K. Poulakos (Athens) and V. Tsikoudi (Ioannina) Members, initiated the procedure for the first elections of HEL.A.S. In the elections, which took place on June 2nd 1994, participated 83% of the founding members. The elected members of the first Council of HEL.A.S. are listed in a separate column.

Meanwhile by January 1994 another 74 colleagues applied to become members, bringing, the total number to 140.

The Hellenic Astronomical Society has been active ever since. It has been recognised as an *Affiliated Member* of the European Astronomical Society. It has established links with other international astronomical societies. It is organising the 2nd Hellenic Astronomical Conference in Thessaloniki in June 1995.

The above account describes briefly the events concerning the establishment of HEL.A.S. I do not claim to know all the details and I hope that this letter may provoke useful reactions that may shed more light to the early history of the work and efforts that eventually led to the establishment of the Hellenic Astronomical Society.

(John H. Seiradakis)

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(MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT)

ciety (E.A.S). As I was one of the first to propose the formation of E.A.S. (as Assistant General Secretary of the IAU in 1970) I am extremely glad to see the expansion of this Society, and its increasingly important role for European Astronomy.

The first important activity of our Society is the organization of the 2nd Hellenic Astronomical Conference during the Summer of 1995. More information about this Conference is provided in the present Newsletter. I am glad that a large number of astronomers from Greece and abroad have expressed their wish to participate. Among them there are many astronomers from neighbouring countries. Thus our Society will provide a good link also with our neighbours.

I would like to emphasize also that our Society wants to establish contacts with border areas between astronomy and other disciplines. Among our members, and speakers at the 2nd Hellenic Astronomical Conference, there are people working in Dynamics in general, and the theory of Chaos in particular, Relativistic Physics, Space Research, etc.

I would like to thank all those that helped to establish our Society. In particular I should thank the first appointed Council of HEL.A.S., under Dr. B. Barbanis, and our present Secretary Dr. J.H. Seiradakis, for his enthusiastic and hard work for our Society.

I thank also the International Astronomical Union and all the National Societies that sent their warm wishes for the formation of HEL.A.S.

We want our Society to be a live one. So, please, write to us your views, either for the attention of our Council, or for publication in our Newsletter.

I wish you all a ***Good Beginning*** *(in Greek:* ***Καλή Αρχή****).*

The president of HEL.A.S.
G. Contopoulos

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(CONFERENCE)

Thessaloniki and N. Spyrou, Thessaloniki,. These people have started working towards their goals preparing a fruitful and pleasant conference. The aim is a three-day conference, with parallel sessions, covering a variety of fields both in theory and observations.

For further information, on the scientific goals please contact the members of the Scientific Organizing Committee. Questions about accomodation and local matters should be addressed to the Local Organizing Committee.

2nd Hellenic Astronomical Conference
Local Organizing Committee
Laboratory of Astrronomy
University of Thessaloniki
GR-54006 Thessaloniki, Greece
Tel. +30 31 998173 (J.H. Seiradakis)
FAX +30 31 995384
E-Mail elaset@astro.auth.gr

Meetings of Interest to HEL.A.S. Members

11-22 June 1995: NATO Advanced Study Institute "*Solar and Astrophysical Magnetohydrodynamics*", Iraklion, Greece (Contact: Kanaris Tsinganos, Univ. of Crete, Dept. of Physics, 71409 Iraklion, Greece, E-mail: tsingan@iesl.forth.gr)

2 last weeks June 1995: NATO Advanced Study Institute "*Hamiltonian Systems with Three or More Degrees of Freedom*", Barcelona, Spain (Contact: C. Simp, Dept. of Applied Mathematics, Univ. of Barcelona, 08071 Barcelona, Spain).

3-7 July 1995: Conference on "*Radio Emission from the Stars and the Sun*", Barcelona, Spain (Contact: Ultramar Congress, Diputacio, 238, 3o, E-08007 Barcelona, Spain, E-mail: radio@mizar.am.ub.es)

3-8 July 1995: IAU Symposium No. 172: *Dynamics, Ephemerides and Astrometry in the Solar System,* Paris, France (Contact: Bureau des Longitudes, IAU Symposium No. 172, 77 Avenue Denfert-Rochereau, F-75014, Paris, France, E-mail: bdl95@bdl.fr)

12-28 July 1995: *ICTP Summer School in high Energy Physics and Cosmology,* Trieste, Italy (Contact: E. Gava, ICTP Summer School in HEP, P.O. Box 586, I-34100, Trieste, Italy, E-mail: smr858@ictp.trieste.it)

13-21 July 1995: 2nd Volga International Summer School on *Space Plasma Physics*, Nizhniy, Novgorod/Volga River, Russia (Contact: Bo Thidi, Swedish Inst. of Space Physics, S-755 91 Uppsala, Sweden, E-mail: bt@irfu.se

25-30 July 1995: IAU Colloquium No. 158: *Cataclysmic Variables and Related objects*, Keele, Staffordshire, England (Contact: F.A. Ringwald, E-mail: far@astro.keele.ac.uk)

31 July-3 August 1995: Workshop "*Chaos in Gravitational N-Body Systems*", La Plata, Argentina (Contact: J. Muzzio, Obs. Astronomico, Paseo del Bosque, 1900 La Plata, Argentina, E-mail: jcmuzzio@fcaglp.edu.ar).

6-12 August 1995: GR14, International Conference on "*General Relativity and Gravitation*" (Contact: GR14, International Conference on GRG, Instituto di Fisica Matematica "J.L. Lagrange Via C. Alberto 10, 10123 Torino, Italy, E-mail: GR14@dm.unito.it)

7-11 August 1995: Meeting in honor of D. Lynden-Bell "*Gravitational Dynamics*", Cambridge, England (Contact: O. Lahav, Inst. of Astronomy, Univ. of Cambridge, Cambridge CB3 0HA England).

20-23 August 1995: :*7th Gregynoy Workshop on Numerical Relativity*", Cardiff, U.K. (Contact: M. Alcubierre, Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Wales, College of Cardiff, Cardiff CF2 3YB, E-mail: M.Alcubierre-Noya@astro.cf.ac.uk)

25-29 September 1995: 4th European & 39th Italian Astronomical Society Meeting "*Progress in European Astrophysics*" Catania, Italy (Contact: JENAM-95, c/o Observatorio Astrofisico, Vialee Andrea Doria 6, I-95125, Catania, Italy, E-mail: mrodono@astrct.ct.astro.it)

26 September - 6 October 1995: "*Astrophysical Sources of Gravitational Radiation*", Les Houches, France (Contact: Ms. C. Rosolen, D.A.R.C., Observatoire de Paris - Section de Meudon, 92190 Meudon, France, E-mail: houches@iris.obspm.fr)

3-6 October 1995: 9th Cambridge Workshop on "*Cool Stars, Stellar Systems and the Sun*", Florence, Italy (Contact: R. Pallavicini, Oss. Astrofisico, Arcetri, Largo Enrico Fermi 5, I-50125 Firenze, Italy, E-mail: pallavic@arcetri.astro.it)

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(OBITUARY)

Highest Institution of Greece for the advancement of Sciences, Letters and Arts, Xanthakis offered again unique services to his science and his country. Following his advice, the Academy of Athens decided to establish its "Research Centre for Astronomy and Applied Mathematics", which, under his supervision became soon an institution of international recognition. His research work in the field of solar activity and solar and solar-terrestrial relationships, contributed very considerably to the promotion of the image of Greek astronomy in the International Astronomical Community.

Xanthakis offered also very distinguished services to his country. He served twice as Minister of Agriculture and played an important role in the establishment and administration of numerous research and public institutions of the country.

He combined the abilities of a creative scientist with the charisma of an excellent personality and a great patriot. With his death Greek Astronomy lost its wise Nestor, the Greek nation a valuable leader, his family their beloved father and his numerous friends and collaborators a valuable supporter. His achievements, however, will remain unforgettable, as will our gratitude to him for his valuable services.

(L.N. Mavridis)