

Preface

The XXth General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union was held in Baltimore, Maryland USA from August 02 to 11, 1988. The Inaugural Ceremony on August 02 was held in the presence of representatives of the United States Government, the State of Maryland, the City of Baltimore and the host institution -the Johns Hopkins University- as well as of the National and Local Organising Committees.

The scientific programme maintained the high standards of the Union and the scientific proceedings may be found either in this volume or in volume 8 of *Highlights of Astronomy*. The scientific programme was organised by the 40 Commission Presidents and coordinated by the General Secretary (1985-1988), Dr. J.-P. Swings. The local arrangements were effectively made through the National Organising Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. F. Drake and the Local Organising Committee under the co-Chairmanship of Prof. A. Davidsen and Dr. R. Giacconi. The smooth day to day operation of the meeting resulted from the incomparable dedication of Karen Weinstock and Harold Screen.

This volume summarises the work of the XXth General Assembly. Chapter I contains the discourses at the Inaugural Ceremony and the music for the specially composed Fanfare for Brass Ensemble. Chapter II contains the proceedings of the Extraordinary General Assembly of August 02, 1988. Chapter III contains the proceedings of both sessions of the General Assembly, the report of the Finance Committee and the Accounts, the Resolutions adopted and other matters of Union's business. Chapter IV is the Report of the Executive Committee 1985-1988. Chapters II, III and IV record the business of the Union. Chapter V records the business and scientific sessions of the Commissions during the General Assembly. Chapters VI, VII and VIII contain the Statutes, By-Laws and Working Rules of the Union, the membership list (individual, geographical and by Commission) and the IAU Style book respectively. In order to make the sections of this volume of the Transactions more easily accessible, the Functions and Statutes of the Union, Chapter VI, have been printed on pink paper and the Membership details, Chapter VII, on green paper. A list of commonly used abbreviations in this volume appears immediately after the list of contents.

In the preparation of the volume I am deeply grateful to my predecessor, J.-P. Swings for his unstinted help, advice and translation of the Statute revisions into French; to Roger Cayrel for his work in translating the Resolutions into French; to George Wilkins for undertaking and bringing to fruition the preparation of the current IAU Style Book -and to the editors of the principal astronomical journals for their valuable suggestions; in particular to Monique Orine for her work in preparing the text of this volume and to both Monique Orine and Huguette Gigan of the Paris Secretariat for the preparation of the final camera ready copy during a period of considerable difficulty occasioned by a postal strike and the move of the Secretariat.

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April 24, 1989