

PREFACE

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An unprecedented number of Commissions manifested their interest in the above topic proposed by Commission 33. They were: 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 37, and 45. The Organizing Committee, composed of: L. Perek (Chairman), T. A. Agekjan, O. J. Eggen, Ch. Fehrenbach, W. Gliese, K. F. Ogorodnikov, H. F. Weaver, and R. Woolley, had the difficult task to select talks and speakers who would give an adequate picture of the present state of this intricate problem.

Held one year after the IAU Colloquium No. 17 on Stellar Ages, which provided a solid basis in one aspect of the topic, it prominently showed the importance of nearby stars as a sample with the best available knowledge of selection effects and the most precise motions.

The prosaic solar neighbourhood covers a negligibly small part of the Galaxy. It contains, however, information on general questions of structure, dynamics, stability, and evolution of the entire galactic system.