

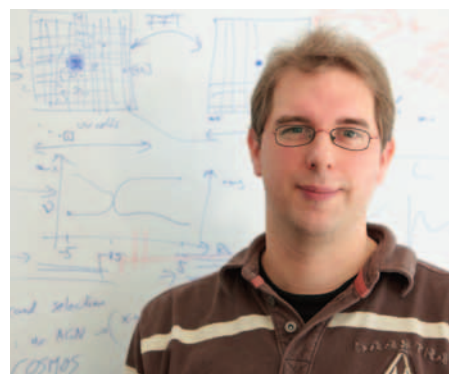
on me. Unfortunately, growing up in the light-polluted city of Amsterdam, often the Moon was the only object visible in the sky at night. I kept my interest in astronomy alive by reading lots of books, with topics ranging from a detailed description of the Solar System to the theory of the Big Bang. When I went to university, I had no doubt what I wanted to study, and in 1995 I started my undergraduate studies in astronomy at the University of Leiden. During the first few years of study I somehow was very certain I would finish my degree and start a career outside the academic world. This assumption turned out to be completely wrong ...

My ideas for the future radically changed when I was doing my Master's project at the Leiden Observatory. The research consisted of reducing multicolour imaging data. Shortly after choosing my project, my supervisor asked me whether I wanted to go for an observing run with the NTT on La Silla. Although scientifically the observing run was not a huge success (lots of clouds!), I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Exploring various ways to get the best results and to make new discoveries fascinated me and by the time I finished my Master's thesis, I was determined to pursue a career in astronomy.

After finishing my degree in 1999 at the Leiden Observatory, I went to the University of Cambridge for a one-year Master's in astronomy working at a more numerical project. In 2000 I returned to Leiden to start my PhD project. The aim was to study the environment of powerful radio galaxies at redshifts between two and five by searching for overdensities of Lyman- α emission-line galaxies. My project got off to a flying start, as three months into my PhD our group received confirmation that our VLT large programme had been accepted. This meant that I had the opportunity to visit Paranal several times to obtain all the data I needed for my thesis. The observations went really well, giving me more than enough results to write several papers and to fill my thesis. After defending my PhD thesis in 2005, I went back to Cambridge, this time to work as a research associate at the Institute of Astronomy. My work there focused on studying galaxies and quasars at the highest redshifts ($z > 6$), using, amongst others, data from large public surveys like SDSS and UKIDSS.

As nearly all my research made use of large amounts of ESO data, applying for an ESO Fellowship was the obvious next step for me. Currently, I am in my third year as an ESO Fellow working in

Garching. One of the great things about being at ESO is the possibility of attending many of the large number of interesting workshops and talks that are organised in the area each year. Besides continuing to study very high redshift objects, working at ESO also gives me the opportunity to be involved in the E-ELT project. I find it very exciting to be able to contribute to a project with such importance for the future of European astronomy. As an undergraduate student on my first observing trip I was thoroughly impressed by the size of the mirror of the NTT, so I can hardly imagine how it will be to stand next to a 42-metre telescope in (hopefully) a few years from now!



Bram Venemans

Personnel Movements

Arrivals (1 January–31 March 2011)

Europe

Drouart, Guillaume (F)	Student
Lakicevic, Masa (SRB)	Student
Riesel, Jürgen (D)	Administrative Clerk
Sartoris, Barbara (I)	Student
Schmid, Erich (D)	Software Engineer
Westmoquette, Mark (GB)	Fellow

Chile

Barria, Daniela (RCH)	Student
Gorgeot, Florian (F)	Student
Jager, Henderikus (NL)	System Engineer
Jones, David (GB)	Fellow
Lieder, Stefan (D)	Student
Pozzobon, Matteo (I)	Senior Mechanical Engineer
Rioseco, Diego (RCH)	Legal Advisor

Departures (1 January–31 March 2011)

Europe

Dremel, Günther (D)	Administrative Clerk
Feng, Lu (VR)	Student
Jalali, Behrang (IR)	Student
Müller, André (D)	Student
Nilsson, Kim (S)	Astronomer
Völk, Elisabeth (D)	Secretary/Assistant

Chile

Andreoni, Gaetano (I)	IT Quality Assurance Manager
Emmerich, Alejandra (RCH)	Secretary/Assistant
Gallegos, Leonardo (RCH)	Telescope Instruments Operator
Gutierrez, Flavio (RCH)	System Administrator
Lassalle, Jacques (F)	Safety Engineer
Lira, Luis Felipe (RCH)	Legal Advisor
Planesas, Pere (E)	Test Scientist