



Galactic Nebulae in Scorpius

This impressive composite of four photographically enhanced ESO(R) plates of fields 277 (below, right), 278 (below left), 332 (above, right) and 333 (above, left) was presented by ESO photographers H.-H. Heyer and H. Zodet during their talk at the recent meeting of the IAU Working Group on Astronomical Photography (see page 50). It shows an area in the southern part of the constellation Scorpius and also the northern part of Ara.

The central object in field 332 is the emission nebula IC 4628 (distance 1.6 kpc); south of it, at the edge of field 332, lies the open star cluster NGC 6231 (distance about 2 kpc) with associated nebulosity. This cluster contains at least 70 hot stars of type O and forms the nucleus of the Scorpius OB1 association.

The combination of the four fields covers a sky area of about 10×10 degrees and brings out a bewildering complex of stars, dark and bright

nebulae of different structures (filaments, "elephant's trunks" bays, etc.). Note in particular the large "finger" that stretches diagonally across field 332, with associated arcs and radial, dark nebulae at its end in field 277. It is apparently part of the larger structure that is delineated by the parallel borders across fields 332 and 278. Many of the structures are supposedly "cavities", which are comparatively void of interstellar matter, because it has been blown away by the action of the hot stars in this area.

