

The Andromeda Galaxy

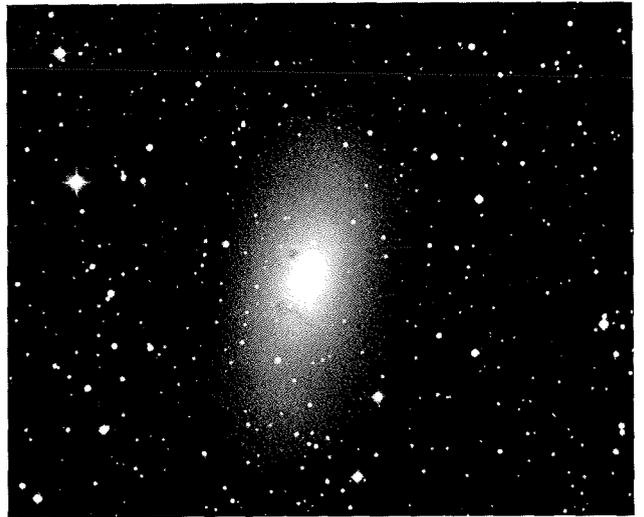
The fact that the astronomical objects on this and the preceding page lie in the northern celestial hemisphere should not worry our readers: please be assured that ESO continues to operate in the southern sky!

The southern part of the Andromeda Galaxy (M31) and one of its companions, the elliptical galaxy NGC 205, are here reproduced from one of the plates from the second major photographic survey, now in progress with the Palomar Oschin (Schmidt) Telescope. The original plates of POSS II are being copied in the photographic laboratories at the ESO Headquarters for the "Palomar Observatory/European Southern Observatory Photographic Atlas of the Northern Sky".

The photos shown here were masked and enhanced by ESO photographer Hans-Hermann Heyer. A comparison with the prints in the "Hubble Atlas" (1961; pp. 3 and 18) serves as illustration of the advances in astronomical photography during the past decades.

Note in particular the splendid resolution of M31 into individual stars and the dark dust lanes in NGC 205. North is up and east is to the left on both photos.

The editor



Contracts Signed for Two VLT Instruments: FORS and CONICA*

H. VAN DER LAAN, ESO Director General

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this meeting room at the European Southern Observatory Headquarters; welcome especially to the teams of CONICA and FORS. This day and event mark a milestone on the trajectory of the VLT Observatory. It is something that many of us have looked forward to and worked towards.

It is also a milestone in ESO's history, and in its own way in the integration of European astronomy. I think we all know that throughout Europe there are astronomy groups and institutes, smaller ones and larger ones, who in part rely on ESO as an astronomy service organiza-

tion. Throughout its almost 30-year history, ESO has provided science services for the community, primarily at the La Silla Observatory, but also in important ways here at ESO Headquarters by way of reduction services, measuring machines, computers, and also of bringing people together during Workshops and in Symposia. In fact this year we have a particularly busy Workshop and Symposium programme. The community has advised us primarily through committees such as the Users Committee, the Scientific Technical Committee, the Observing Programmes Committee, the

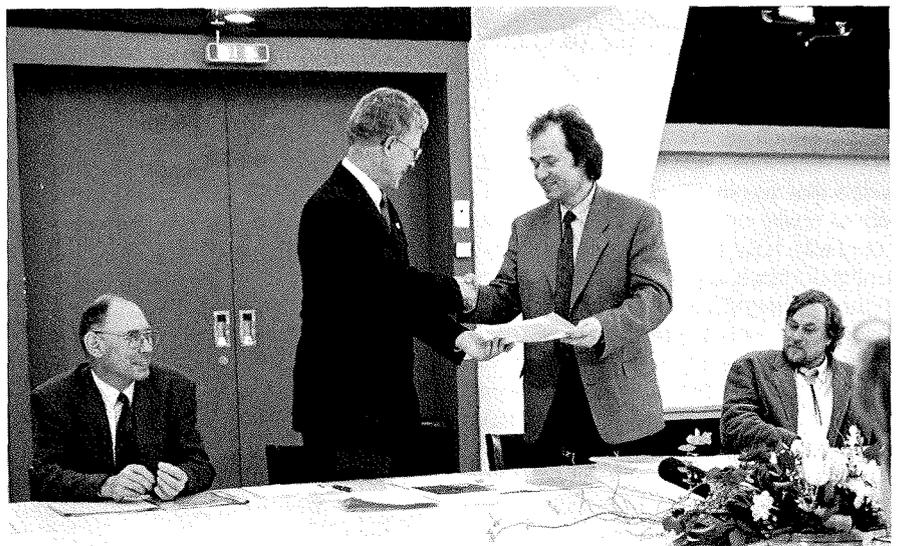
astronomers in Council and through Panels and Working Groups.

I think the new element which is marked today is that henceforth the community will not only advise ESO, but will also work for and with ESO in a very substantial manner. The scope of the VLT programme is in a sense too large for this organization. It is not only the largest programme ever in ground-based astronomy, in relative terms, it's also much larger for ESO than, say, LEP was for CERN, or HERMES is for ESA. The people in our organization were almost entirely occupied by providing the

* Ed. note: This is a condensed version of a speech given on February 6, 1992, at a brief ceremony in the ESO Headquarters on the occasion of the official start-up on the work on two of the VLT instruments, FORS and CONICA, described in the following articles in this *Messenger* issue. On behalf of the FORS team participated Prof. I. Appenzeller (Landessternwarte Heidelberg), Principal Investigator, FORS team, Prof. K. Fricke (Universitäts-Sternwarte, Göttingen), Dr. H. Niklas, Dr. W. Seifert (Landessternwarte Heidelberg), Prof. W.-P. Kudritzki (Universitäts-Sternwarte München), Dr. Muschinok (Universitäts-Sternwarte München) and Dr. Kiesewetter (Universitäts-Sternwarte München).

The CONICA group was represented by Dr. R. Lenzen (Max-Planck-Institut für Astronomie, Heidelberg), Principal Investigator, Dr. S. Beckwith (Max-Planck-Institut für Astronomie, Heidelberg), Dr. K. Wagner, Dr. A. Eckert, Dr. R. Hofmann (Max-Planck-Institut für Extraterrestrische Physik, Garching), Dr. Roberto (Osservatorio Astronomico di Torino).

Present also were a number of ESO engineers and astronomers, who will be involved in the FORS and CONICA projects.



At the ceremony, from left to right: I. Appenzeller, H. van der Laan, R. Lenzen and R. Kudritzky.