

E. Kontizas, M. Kontizas, D. H. Morgan and G. P. Vettolani (eds.), *Wide-Field Spectroscopy*, Proceedings of the 2nd Conference of the Working Group of IAU Commission 9 on “Wide-Field Imaging” held in Athens, Greece, May 20–25, 1996, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Holland, 405 + xxv pp., April 1997, hardbound NLG 295.00/USD 182.00/GBP 110.00, ISBN 0—7923—4518—5.

The preface to these proceedings states that they give a ‘spherical view’, a nice description of what is indeed a mixed bag. Wide-field spectroscopy is at the threshold of a new age, combining over a dozen 8 m-class telescopes with field reformatters using thousands of fibers for spectroscopic surveys that dwarf all previous efforts. The first part of the book describes the techniques, starting with an excellent review of fiber spectrometry (I. R. Parry) and presenting a selection of programs of which the Sloan survey is the most ambitious ongoing one and the Chinese LAMOST – 4000 simultaneous spectra – the most ambitious one on the drawing board. The other two sections exemplify galactic and extra-galactic survey-style applications of current wide-field spectrometry. They are a hodge-podge of astronomical research interests, of course dominated by galaxies for which these surveys take the role performed by Miss Cannon for stellar astrophysics over eighty years ago, and furnish an overview of what is going on that is most useful to non-specialist astronomers and to the instrumentalists who develop the new instruments – and worry about how to process all those terabytes of spectra.

There is an author index but no subject index and no object index, sur-

prising in a book covering so much astronomical terrain. The book is well produced in Kluwer's standard style, but it also obeys Kluwer's high standard of pricing which makes it too expensive to be privately owned. I recommend it to astronomy libraries.

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