BOOK REVIEWS


The book presents a systematic review of the past and present developments of space activities throughout the world. It then attempts a forecast of the future developments in the next 25 years and beyond.

The matter is of importance and needs urgent and serious discussion to be brought in front of the public. Thus, the author has to be commended for his effort. The discussion suffers somewhat from the shortness of the expose, which results in some instances in a partial view of such a complex matter.

The author skilfully avoids becoming too specialised and dwelling on too many scientific and technical details. The book, thus results in a discussion easily accessible and profitable to the public, at large.

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This book contains proceedings of a discussion meeting held in London on 21 and 22 May, 1986, two months after the spacecraft encounters with comet Halley. The papers were first published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London A* 323 (1987), pp. 247–449. While the individual results of the Halley observations have already been published in much more detail elsewhere (especially in ESA SP-250 and 278), this book presents an excellent overview of the fundamental problems of solar system astronomy relevant to comets. The quality of the 15 review papers is evident just from the names of their authors, who are well known as outstanding experts in this research area: M. Arnould, D. Smith, E. Anders, D. E. Brownlee, C. T. Pillinger, G. W. Wetherill, F. L. Whipple, D. W. Hughes, A. J. Meadows, J. A. M. McDonnell *et al.*, T. Encrenaz, S. W. H. Cowley, S. V. M. Clube, J. C. Brandt, and D. McNally. The topics include the identification of cometary, interplanetary and interstellar molecules; problems of nucleosynthesis; results of laboratory studies of meteorites and cosmic dust with their cosmoogonical implications; nature and evolution of different types of interplanetary objects; history of comet Halley; and a summary of the most important new results obtained during its last apparition. A good discussion record supplements the overall picture by pointing out the unresolved and controversial prob-

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