endpoints to star formation ridges and dust lanes in two-armed spirals. In a previous paper (Puerari & Dottori 1992), we proposed a method to determine the leading or trailing character of the density wave perturbation in spiral galaxies by analyzing the distribution of H II regions. We idealize a new method based on the Fourier analysis of azimuthal profiles, to locate the CR and determine the arm character (trailing or leading) in spiral galaxies. Basically, we compare the behavior of the phase angle of the two-armed spiral in blue and infrared colors that pick out, respectively, young and older disk stellar population. The full paper of this poster contribution was published elsewhere (Puerari & Dottori 1997) and the reader can get more information on that paper. With our new method we confirm for NGC 7479 the existence of the leading pattern with CR at the extreme of the bar. We found in this galaxy the existence of a internal CR, indicating a trailing pattern. NGC 1832 presents three CRs, the inner and the outer ones indicate leading pattern and the intermediate CR, a trailing one. The most plausible physical interpretation for this situation is the existence of two pattern speeds.

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[1] Instituto Nacional de Astrofísica, Óptica y Electrónica, Puebla, Pue., México; puerari@inaoep.mx.
[2] Departamento de Astronomia, Instituto de Física, UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Brazil; dottori@if.ufrgs.br.

NASA 3.0-M LIQUID MIRROR TELESCOPE

M. K. Mulrooney[1,2]

We have constructed a 3.0-meter aperature zenith-staring telescope of an unusual nature. This Liquid Mirror Telescope (LMT) has as its primary mirror a spinning container of elemental mercury (Hg). We rely on the well-known principle that the equillibrium surface configuration of a rotating fluid is a paraboloid (if the axis of rotation is parallel to a uniform gravitational field). In our configuration, the primary container supports a 1.8 mm film of Hg and rotates on an air bearing spindle at 10 rpm, yielding a focal length of 4.5 m (f/1.5). A Wynne-type corrector removes aberrations and produces a 6 cm diameter, 0.64 deg focal plane at prime focus. Optical throughput is 65% allowing for the 78% reflectivity of Hg at visible wavelengths. Corrector distortion has limited resolution to 0.95 arcsec FWHM. Atmospheric seeing at the telescope's location (National Solar Observatory, Sunspot, NM) yields a nominal resolution of 1.3 arcsec (″) FWHM. After a corrector fix in late 1997, we expect to obtain 0.5″ FWHM images with good seeing.

The LMT was constructed with the purpose of characterizing the orbital space debris environment for NASA and conducting very wide/deep field astronomical surveys. Project costs were 1.2 M$ or 5% of the estimated cost for a conventional (glass/pointable) 3.0-m telescope. Since March 1996, we have obtained 100+ hrs of orbital debris observations with various image intensifiers. The present debris detection size is < 4 cm at 1000 km assuming a 0.1 albedo spherical reflector. For the astronomical survey, we are using a Ford 2K thick CCD with 15 um pixels yielding a 0.6″ pix^{-1} plate scale. The CCD is used in Time Delay Integration (TDI) mode wherein we drift scan at the sidereal rate to yield a 97.0 sec exposure time over a 20 arcminute FOV. To date, we have obtained (BVRI) and narrowband (400–1000 nm; 10–30 BW) photometry over 40+ sq. degrees of sky at high galactic latitude centered on +33° Dec. The accumulating data set (200+GB) is being used primarily to generate a wedge diagram extending to a redshift of 0.5 over 10 hrs of Right Ascension and containing approximately 1.5 million galaxies/QSOs; the largest survey of its kind by any telescope to date.

[1] Project Scientist, NASA Orbital Debris Observatory.
[2] Dept. of Space Physics and Astronomy, Rice University, Houston, TX, USA; mulrooney@sn3.jsc.nasa.gov.

EVIDENCE FOR SATURATED INVERSE COMPTON SCATTERING IN GAMMA-RAY BURSTS

A. Crider[1], E. Liang[1], and I. Smith[1]

Early studies of gamma-ray bursts found that the low-energy (30–100 kev) asymptotic spectral slope was typically 0 to −1.5 (Band et al. 1993). However, we examined the time-resolved low-energy GRB spectra measured with the Burst and Transient Source Experiment (BATSE) and found that the asymptotic power slope is often positive (as high at 1.6 ± 0.3) near the beginning of a burst and becomes negative as the burst progresses (Crider et al. 1997). These findings rules out many proposed emission mechanisms but can naturally be explained with saturated Comptonization as an emission mechanism in GRBs. By running Monte Carlo simulations, we