PREFACE

Gravitational collapse is one of the basic processes driving evolution within galaxies, assembling giant molecular clouds, initiating fragmentation within those clouds, producing stars with planet-forming disks, and ultimately creating planets and other solid bodies out of diffuse material. Opposed by gas pressure, turbulence, radiation pressure, angular momentum and magnetic fields, gravity cannot be one hundred percent effective in creating these more compact configurations. In particular, the feedback provided by the formation of massive stars - photoionization and its associated photo-heating, stellar winds, and supernova explosions - allow the interplay of competing processes to shape the content of the universe.

The outstanding contributions of Peter Bodenheimer to our understanding of these mechanisms are numerous and well known. One of the fathers of numerical astrophysics and a restless theorist in search of full understanding of how stars and planets form, he has also made important contributions to our understanding of the physics of the Interstellar Medium and of the effects caused by massive star formation in molecular clouds and dwarf galaxies. Apart from acquiring an outstanding physical insight, Peter has done more than his share as a great teacher and he has earned the respect and frienship from all of us.

The scientific party to celebrate the outstanding scientist and friend was organized in Ensenada, Baja California-México (December 2003), under the auspices of the Instituto de Astronomía (UNAM) and the Instituto Nacional de Astrofísica Optica y Electrónica (INAOE) and gathered more than sixty renowned scientist from all over the world.

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