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Pavel Petrovich Parenago All-Russian Astronomical Conference 'Stellar Systems'

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Pavel Petrovich Parenago All-Russian Astronomical Conference ‘Stellar Systems’

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This issue is dedicated to the proceedings of the conference held at the Sternberg Astronomical Institute (Moscow, Russia) from 24 to 26 May 2006 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Professor P.P. Parenago.

Pavel Petrovich Parenago, a famous Soviet astronomer, a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and one of the founders of the Moscow School of Galactic astronomy, was born on 20 March 1906 (Gregorian calendar) in Krasnodar. He developed a great interest in astronomy and started regular binocular and field-glass observations at a young age. P.P. Parenago graduated from the Department of Physics and Mathematics of Moscow State University in 1929, although he had been a staff researcher of the Main Astrophysical Institute (GAFI) since 1925. In 1935, he received the degree of Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. P.P. Parenago was elected Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1953 and became the first person to be awarded the Bredikhin prize founded by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1954.

P.P. Parenago began to give lectures in Galactic astronomy in 1934 for the first time in the USSR. He viewed this branch of astronomy as dedicated to the study of the structure and evolution of stellar systems based on mass observational data. Galactic astronomy includes stellar statistics, stellar kinematics and investigation of variable stars, which serve as ‘markers’ of the evolutionary stages and distance-scale indicators. His excellent course of Galactic astronomy was published in 1938, with revised editions in 1946 and 1954. P.P. Parenago headed the chair of Galactic astronomy founded in 1940 at the Department of Mechanics and Mathematics of Moscow State University and held this office to the end of his life.

In 1932, P.P. Parenago started his extensive studies of the structure and kinematics of the Galaxy based primarily on variable-star data. In 1940, he and B. V. Kukarkin began a systematic compilation of the data on variable stars – the work that later formed the basis of the General Catalogue of Variable Stars and which has been carried out at the Sternberg Astronomical Institute for almost 60 years. Parenago’s complex study of more than 3000 stars in the Great Orion Nebula, which is the nearest star-forming region to the Sun, acquired wide recognition.



The participants of the memorial session (from left to right): K.A. Portsevsky, A.I. Eremeeva, E.L. Ruskol, G.A. Ponomareva, J. Einasto and Yu.N. Efremov.



Pavel Petrovich Parenago

P.P. Parenago expressed great interest in the investigation of the kinematics of Galactic subsystems. He gained world recognition for his study of nearby dwarf stars and the discovery of the systematic increase in their peculiar velocities, as well as for his work on the dynamics of stellar systems.

P.P. Parenago was an excellent teacher who trained an entire 'galaxy' of famous students including A.S. Sharov, F.A. Tsitsin, Yu.N. Efremov, E.D. Pavlovskaya, D.K. Karimova, G.A. Starikova and V.P. Arkhipova.

P.P. Parenago continued research activities to the end of his life and died on 5 January 1960 at the peak of his creative power.