

# GALAXIES NEAR THE NORTHERN GALACTIC PLANE

R. WEINBERGER

Institut für Astronomie der Universität Innsbruck, Universitätsstrasse 4, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria

*Received July 30, accepted October 19, 1979*

**Summary.** — A survey on the POSS of the northern galactic plane in the interval  $l = 33^\circ$ - $213^\circ$ ,  $b = \pm 2^\circ$  has led to the detection of 207 galaxies, 200 of them being new. Six may possibly be identified with listed radio sources. Infrared photographs were taken of two galaxies, one lying  $1.6$  distant from the Maffei objects, the other in the vicinity of the Rosette nebula; for the latter a radio flux density of  $11$  mJy was found at  $6$  cm.

The galaxies are far from being uniformly distributed: There is a strong preponderance in number towards the galactic anticentre and the objects here tend to lie above the galactic equator. Since each galaxy implies a relatively transparent region, investigations of galactic structure may be fruitful in the areas of these galactic windows.

**Key words:** Low latitude galaxies — Finding list — Galactic windows.

**1. Introduction.** — Dedicated searches for galaxies near the galactic plane are few in number and have been restricted to selected areas (e.g. Böhm-Vitense, 1956; Fitzgerald, 1974; Dodd and Brand, 1976). They are severely hampered by the interstellar extinction: Firstly, nearly all of the larger surveys have been based on blue exposures, which are rather unsuitable for work in obscured regions. Secondly, the obscuration changes the appearance of galaxies, thus impairing their identification; likewise, other types of objects such as small reflection nebulae, dense distant star clusters, etc. can easily be mistaken for extragalactic nebulae at low latitudes. Search conditions can be improved by a very deep photographic survey at a wavelength as long as possible. The Palomar Observatory Sky Survey (POSS) E prints ( $m_{\text{lim}}$  for stars = 20.0,  $\lambda_{\text{eff}} \sim 6400$  Å) meet these criteria rather well and have therefore been used for my search. Incidentally, the E and O prints have already been utilized for large galaxy surveys in all galactic latitudes, but never down to or near the limiting magnitude (e.g. Vorontsov-Vel'jaminov *et al.*, 1962-1968; Nilson, 1973). Thus few galaxies close to the galactic equator are known.

The purpose of the present survey is twofold: (i) Detection of hitherto unknown, relatively transparent regions in the plane of our galaxy. These galactic windows around every galaxy would be important for investigations of the galactic structure, e.g. for a search for distant spiral arm tracers. (ii) A tabulation of new galaxies, including those near the limiting magnitude. This list would facilitate optical identifications of unidentified low latitude sources of possible extragalactic origin.

**2. Search procedure.** — The region within  $l = 33^\circ$ - $213^\circ$ ,  $b = \pm 2^\circ$  was searched on the POSS E prints by the aid of a binocular microscope and using a 16-fold

magnification. Overlapping zones within these boundaries were always included in order to reduce the number of overlooked objects and to estimate the completeness of the survey. The POSS O charts were used for comparison purposes only. Usually, the prints were illuminated from above, but in case of dubious images and extended luminous nebulae, an illumination from below was often of great help. The average, pure search time amounted to about 1 hour per  $10^\circ$ .

Since a number of prints were not yet at my institute's disposal, I carried out part of the survey at other institutes (Landessternwarte Königstuhl, Heidelberg; Institut für Astronomie, Vienna).

**3. Results and discussion.** — It is difficult to make clear statements about the completeness of the present survey. The galaxies with a diameter of  $\varnothing \geq 1'$  were ostensibly recorded in earlier surveys; actually, I discovered only 6 extragalactic nebulae with  $\varnothing \geq 1'$  on the E prints. On the other hand, stars and galaxies at the limiting magnitude are not distinguishable. In addition, there are several reasons for a necessarily uncomplete registration. Two characteristic reasons: Very compact, roundish looking galaxies (or central regions of spirals where the arms are already hidden by obscuration) are hardly discernible from stars. Furthermore, the densely packed star images in the galactic plane will hide several galaxies. Insufficiencies during the search are added. Comparisons of overlapping zones in the rather galaxy-rich anticentre indicate that I seem to have overlooked approximately one quarter of the recognizable galaxies.

In table I the 207 galaxies found within  $l = 33^\circ$ - $213^\circ$ ,  $b = \pm 2^\circ$  are listed in order of increasing galactic longitude. *Running  $N^{\text{os}}$*  are given in the first column; when supplied with a letter, it denotes an already known galaxy, with is cited at the end of the table. The

galactic coordinates follow. The subsequent equatorial coordinates were measured with an accuracy of about  $\pm 1'$  in both  $\alpha$  and  $\delta$  on the POSS prints, whose numbers are given in the next column. From the lower left field corner of the just quoted POSS prints,  $x$  and  $y$ , the rectangular coordinates (in mm) are measured. A + sign in the column denoted with *E & O* means that the galaxy is visible on the O print too. Finally, the diameters of the objects on the E prints are listed. — Classification of the galaxy type seemed to be feasible only in 20 cases: Spiral galaxies are N<sup>os</sup> 4, 10, 17, 27, 35, 40, 69, 79, 87, 91, 93, 112, 114, 128, 152, 157, 171, 175, 180 and 182.

The overall distribution of the galaxies is displayed in figure 1. The longitude interval of  $180^\circ$  was divided into 4 segments of each  $45^\circ$  length; not shown in the figure is the region between  $l = 33^\circ$  and  $78^\circ$ , since no galaxies were detected there. In this figure the asymmetrical distribution of the galaxies with longitude is apparent. Up to  $l \sim 160^\circ$ , only occasionally regions transparent enough so that galaxies can shine through are found. The clustering around  $l \sim 87^\circ$  moreover possibly belongs to the new close cluster of galaxies which was reported by Huchra *et al.* (1977). Maffei 1 and 2, the famous nearby systems at  $l \sim 136^\circ$ ,  $b \sim -0.5$  do not define a transparent region in the usual sense, since both are reddened by  $A_v \geq 5^m$ . Striking is the conglomerate at  $l \sim 160^\circ$ . Beginning with  $l \sim 175^\circ$ , an asymmetric latitude distribution is evident: The galaxies tend to lie above the equator, i.e. the main dust obscuration obviously lies to the south of the galactic equator; possibly, this special dust location continues up to the transparent region in Puppis ( $l \sim 250^\circ$ ), where a comparable arrangement has been found by FitzGerald (1974) and Dodd & Brand (1976). — Generally, clusterings in figure 1 up to a few degrees in diameter do not necessarily define large, very transparent areas, but may also represent somewhat less transparent regions through which real galaxy clusters are dimly visible.

In his figure 1, Steinlin (1962) plotted the Lick observational counts (to  $m_{pg} = 18$ ) within  $25^\circ$  of the old galactic equator. In the same region as that one I surveyed there are five galactic windows, at  $l \sim 57^\circ$  ( $\varnothing \sim 2^\circ$ , south of the galactic equator),  $89^\circ$  ( $2^\circ$ , north),  $103^\circ$  ( $4^\circ$ , north),  $112^\circ$  ( $4^\circ$ , north), and  $112^\circ$  ( $5^\circ$ , south). Curiously enough, none of the Lick windows shows up in my figure 1, though the red prints have a fainter limiting magnitude and the interstellar extinction is reduced (a red extinction coefficient of 0.82 compared to 1.34 in the blue, according to the normal interstellar reddening law. However, two small adjacent Lick windows at  $l \sim 161^\circ$  and  $181^\circ$ , both commencing at  $b \sim +2^\circ$ , suit well the galaxy distribution of the present figure 1 near these locations.

3.1 INDIVIDUAL GALAXIES. — Because of their positions, two objects in table I particularly raised my interest: N° 20 is the nearest in angular distance to the Maffei galaxies; N° 205 is near to the Rosette nebula and rather bright. For both objects a confirmation of their extragalactic nature seemed desirable. Photographs at  $0.7 \mu$  (*R*) and  $0.9 \mu$  (*I*) were taken with a cooled image tube camera at the 1.2 m telescope on the Calar Alto in Spain; details of the camera system, which has an S1 cathode and a P11 phosphor, are given by Beetz *et al.* (1974). The limiting magnitudes of the plates for stars are  $20^m \pm 0^m.5$  in *R*,  $16^m.5 \pm 1^m$  in *I*.

N° 20,  $1.6$  distant from the Maffei galaxies, was visible on the POSS E print only, as a very weak object, and could therefore possibly be mistaken for a plate flaw. In figure 2a, b however, its reality and nonstellar nature is confirmed. N° 20 is not coincident with any known radio source.

N° 205 lies only  $2^\circ$  distant to the north from the centre of the Rosette nebula and may be strongly reddened. It was originally noticed during a survey for heavily obscured galaxies (Weinberger *et al.*, 1978). N° 205 looks quite like a distant galaxy in figure 3a, b. Additionally, we carried out radio observations: The radio flux density at 6 cm as observed with the 100 m Effelsberg telescope is  $S = 11 \pm 3$  mJy.

A few galaxies of table I are possibly or certainly related to known radio sources, among them the already cited Maffei 2 (N° 21), N° 45 and N° 51.

Furthermore, B2 0537 33 (Colla *et al.*, 1970) = OG 362 (Ehmann *et al.*, 1974) seems to be associated with N° 135 (perhaps N° 134).

BG 0444 + 44 (Fanti *et al.*, 1974) may possibly be N° 49.

Finally, within the positional uncertainties, LHE 132 (Dixon, 1970) coincides with N° 63.

**Acknowledgements.** — I am indebted to Prof. J. Pfeleiderer and Dipl. Phys. R. Mross for their efforts as to the radio observations and reductions and to Drs. R. Chini and H. Hartl for their assistance in obtaining the infrared photographs. Furthermore, I am grateful for the permission to use the POSS prints of the Landessternwarte Königstuhl in Heidelberg and of the Institut für Astronomie in Vienna. The allotment of observing time on the German 100 m and 1.2 m telescope is gratefully acknowledged. This work is part of the projects N<sup>os</sup> 3361, 3378 and 3487, supported by the Austrian « Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung ».

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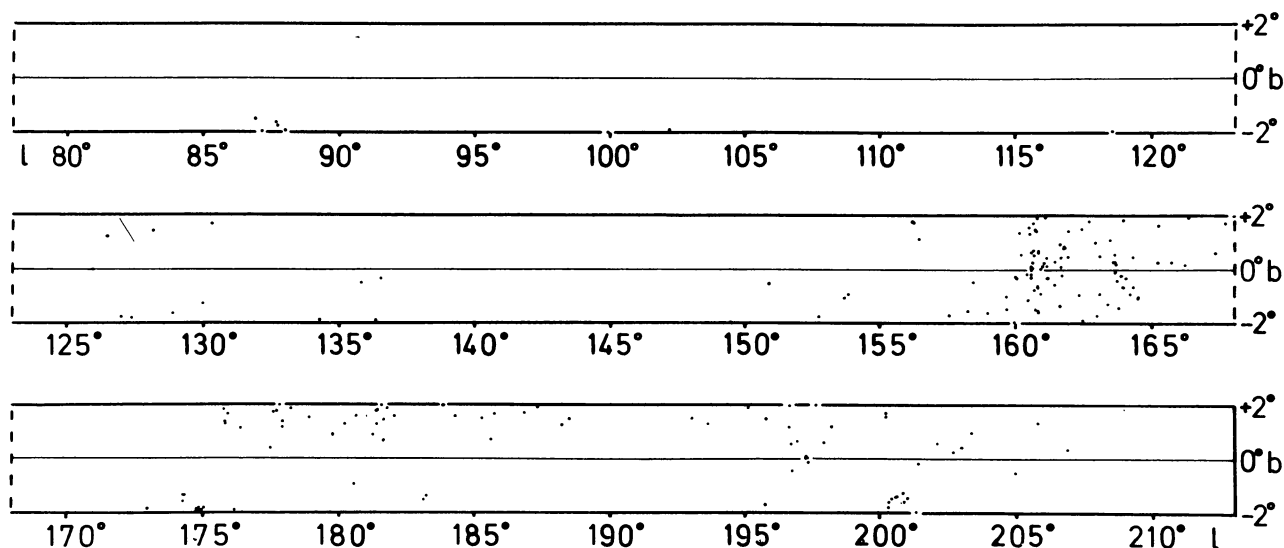
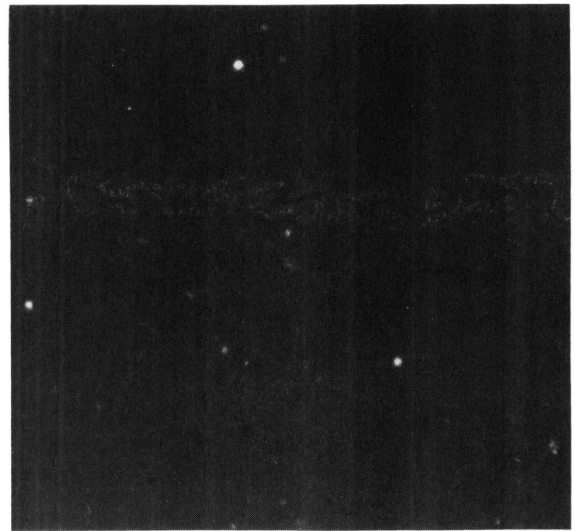


FIGURE 1. — Distribution of 207 galaxies in the northern galactic plane. Since no galaxies were detected in the section  $l = 33^\circ\text{-}78^\circ$ , it has been omitted.

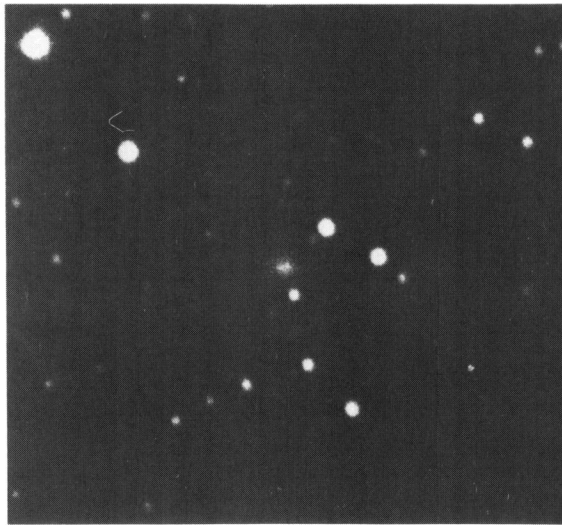


a)

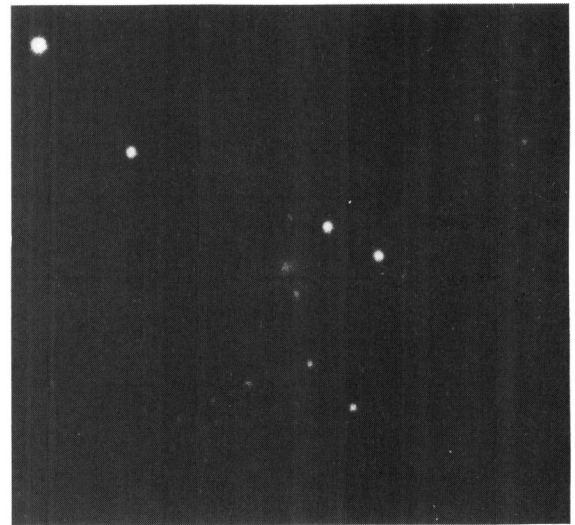


b)

FIGURE 2a, b. — *R* (2a) and *I* (2b) photographs of N° 20 (1.2 m telescope, exposure time 45 min).  
North is at the top, east at left. The pictures cover an area of  $147'' \times 138''$ .



a)



b)

FIGURE 3a, b. — *R* (3a) and *I* (3b) photographs of N° 205 (1.2 m telescope, exposure time 45 min).  
North is at the top, east at left. The scale is as above.

TABLE I. - Galaxies on the POSS E prints within  $l = 33^{\circ}$ - $213^{\circ}$ ,  $b = \pm 2^{\circ}$ .

Table with columns: No., l, b, alpha (1950), delta (1950), POSS, x, y, EAO, E B. It lists 200 galaxies with their coordinates and classification data.

a) Maffei 1

b) Maffei 2

c) No. 03108 in the Uppsala General Catalogue of Galaxies (Nilson, 1973) = No. 20 in Table IV of Böhm-Vitense (1956)

d) Optical counterpart of 3C129 (Hill & Longair, 1971)

e) Optical counterpart of 3C129.1 (Hill & Longair, 1971)

f) No. 21 in Table IV of Böhm-Vitense (1956)

g) No. 03490 in the Uppsala General Catalogue of Galaxies (Nilson, 1973)