

LONG-TERM OPTICAL VARIATIONS OF 20 VIOLENTLY VARIABLE EXTRAGALACTIC RADIO SOURCES

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ABSTRACT

Photometric data for 20 optically violent variable extragalactic radio sources have been obtained during a continuous 11-year monitoring program. Light curves and photometric data, in some instances in more than one color, are presented and discussed. Evidence of temporal changes in the variability characteristics of particular sources is examined.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1968 photographic observations of more than 200 quasars, BL Lac objects, and compact galaxies have been carried on at Rosemary Hill Observatory with the 76- and 46-cm reflectors. Results of the initial seven years of this program were reported by McGimsey *et al.* (1975) and Scott *et al.* (1976), hereafter referred to as Paper I and Paper II, respectively. Paper I presented data for the optically violent variables, or OVV's, in the program at that time. As defined by Penston and Cannon (1970), OVV's exhibit changes of a magnitude or more on a time scale of days or weeks.

The present paper updates, improves, and supplements the data presented in Paper I, extending the completely re-reduced light curves an additional four years. Five of the marginal OVV's from Paper I have not been retained, since extended monitoring has failed to confirm that they currently belong in this class. Five new objects, AO 0235+164, OE 110, NRAO 190, B2 1308+326, and NRAO 530, have been added. It should be emphasized that some known OVV's (e.g., 3C 279, PKS 1510-08, B2 1101+38), while included in our monitoring program, are not included in this paper because they have not shown OVV activity in our observations. Such objects, together with the remaining (non-OVV) sources on the Rosemary Hill program, will be the subject of a subsequent paper.

II. OBSERVATIONS

Most exposures are made at the f/4 Newtonian focus of the 76-cm reflector. However, many plates of the brighter sources were obtained at the f/10.5 Cassegrain focus of the 46-cm reflector. Simultaneous exposure tests using the two telescopes reveal no systematic differences in magnitude for stellar objects. For objects with significant nonstellar components (PKS 1514-24, 3C 120) the f/4, 30-in. exposure times have been adjusted, by careful empirical tests in each case, to record only the

stellar component, and again these show no significant systematic differences with the 46-cm data (in a series of such tests the true nuclear magnitude is approached asymptotically as the exposure time is reduced). Objects are monitored using one or more of the following plate/filter combinations, which yield, respectively, m_{pg} , U , B , V , or I magnitudes.

- m_{pg} : unfiltered, nitrogen-baked and hydrogen soaked Kodak 103a-0 plates (Scott and Smith 1976) or unfiltered, forming-gas-baked Kodak IIIa-J plates (Scott *et al.* 1977).
- U : 103a-0 (treated as above) + UG-2 filter
- B : 103a-0 (treated as above) + GG-385 filter
- V : nitrogen-baked or hydrogen-soaked Kodak IIa-D plates (Schoening 1977) + GG-495 filter
- I : forming-gas-baked Kodak I-N (Scott *et al.* 1977) + RG-695 filter. (Some early I-N plates were ammonia hypersensitized.)

All plates are exposed in sealed cassettes that have been flushed with dry nitrogen to prevent changes in sensitivity due to atmospheric oxygen and moisture. All plates are developed 9^m in MWP-2 (Difley 1968).

III. DATA REDUCTION

Comparison sequences from the literature were used whenever possible. In other cases, sequences were calibrated by photographic transfer from nearby standard fields such as well-calibrated clusters or Selected Areas (SAs). For some of the m_{pg} calibrations the photometry by Brun (1957) of the Mount Wilson Selected Areas was used. In view of the zero-point errors found by Stebbins *et al.* (1950) in the original Mount Wilson photometry, until a similar study of the Brun photometry is done some reservation must be attached to the resulting photographic magnitudes. For all but five objects (PKS 0420-01, NRAO 190, NRAO 530, OX 074, and PKS 2345-16) the original Brun-calibrated magnitudes have been put on the B system by employing an empirically determined $B - m_{pg}$ correction obtained by using a more

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TABLE I. Positional and variability subclass data for the 20 sources.

Object	$\alpha(1950.0)$	$\delta(1950.0)$	Subclass
AO 0235+164	02 ^h 35 ^m 52 ^s .6	+16°24'05"	I?
OE 110	03 ^h 06 ^m 20 ^s .7	+10°17'56"	III
PKS 0420-01	04 ^h 20 ^m 43 ^s .1	-01°27'32"	IV
3C 120	04 ^h 30 ^m 31 ^s .6	+05°14'53"	II ^a
NRAO 190	04 ^h 40 ^m 04 ^s .7	-00°23'16"	III
PKS 0735+17	07 ^h 35 ^m 14 ^s .3	+17°49'12"	III
OJ 287	08 ^h 51 ^m 57 ^s .5	+20°18'00"	II
PKS 0906+01	09 ^h 06 ^m 35 ^s .7	+01°33'53"	I
ON 231	12 ^h 19 ^m 01 ^s .1	+28°30'36"	I
B2 1308+326	13 ^h 08 ^m 08 ^s .2	+32°36'54"	III
PKS 1514-24	15 ^h 14 ^m 45 ^s .0	-24°11'20"	I
NRAO 512	16 ^h 38 ^m 49 ^s .0	+39°53'00"	III
3C 345	16 ^h 41 ^m 17 ^s .7	+39°54'11"	IV ^a
NRAO 530	17 ^h 30 ^m 13 ^s .4	-13°02'46"	?
3C 371	18 ^h 07 ^m 18 ^s .3	+69°48'56"	III
OX 074	21 ^h 44 ^m 43 ^s .2	+09°15'43"	III
BL Lac	22 ^h 00 ^m 39 ^s .0	+42°02'08"	I
3C 446	22 ^h 23 ^m 10 ^s .5	-05°12'23"	III ^a
3C 454.3	22 ^h 51 ^m 29 ^s .2	+15°52'54"	I ^a
PKS 2345-16	23 ^h 45 ^m 27 ^s .2	-16°48'11"	IV

^a Subclass change from Paper I.

recently calibrated B -sequence in the object field and making near-simultaneous exposures in both systems. In all but one case (PKS 0735+17), these corrections fall in the range expected for typical UV-excess objects (+0.2 to +0.6). While in principle the $B - m_{pg}$ parameter might be a function of epoch for variable objects, our experience indicates that in practice such changes fall within the normal errors of the measurements.

Calibration of comparison sequences in the I bandpass presents a more difficult problem. Photographic transfer is employed whenever there is a suitable set of photoelectric standards sufficiently near the field of interest. However, the extreme paucity of standard I sequences (as opposed to individual stars), combined with their generally bright ($I < 14.0$) limiting magnitudes, often makes satisfactory transfers of this type difficult or impossible. An alternative exists when a photoelectric U , B , V sequence has been established in the field of the object. Johnson *et al.* (1966) tabulated colors ($U-V$, $B-V$, $V-R$, $V-I$, etc.) for nearly 5000 stars of various spectral types and luminosity classes. Thus, given the $U-V$ and $B-V$ colors, the $V-I$ color (and hence the I magnitude) of the star can be estimated if the $U-V$ and $B-V$ values are represented in their table. These Johnson I magnitudes can then be converted to the Kron system (I_K) using a known relation between the $B-V$ color and the difference between I and I_K . Caution must be exercised if reddening becomes a factor, and stars whose colors make it difficult to establish their luminosity class must be avoided. Reddening is generally not a problem at the high galactic latitudes of most compact sources, and we have found we can estimate $V-I$ colors, in general, to $\pm 0.^m1$ with this technique, which is adequate for our purpose in view of the smoothing that occurs during actual data reduction.

Plates are read on a Cuffey iris astrophotometer, and preliminary reductions are carried out on a Commodore PET microcomputer. The PET uses a cracovian least-squares routine (Banachiewicz 1942) to fit a parabolic curve to the comparison star magnitudes and the iris readings.

Final magnitudes are obtained with an Amdahl 470/V6 computer that employs a similar least-squares routine. The computed calibration curve for each plate is displayed graphically to insure that it is of the appropriate form (linear for well-exposed stars, but becoming asymptotic to the sky background as the plate limit is approached). This precaution is of most importance when the object is near the plate limit and/or when a small extrapolation of the calibration curve is necessary. The reduction program is iterative, smoothing the reference sequence to correct for errors in the initial magnitudes and for field errors in the telescope. The error quoted in Table II is the rms scatter of the comparison-star magnitudes around the calibration curve, which we adopt as a measure of the quality of the individual plate. A detailed description of the statistical methods employed in this and earlier papers is given by Penston and Cannon (1970).

All data, going back to 1968, have been re-reduced for the present paper to take advantage of the additional smoothing of reference sequences permitted by adding four years of data, to allow for the use of new or extended sequences that have become available since Paper I, and to facilitate the use of computer plotting routines for error-free generation of the light curves. In a number of cases, questionable data points have been re-examined, even to the re-reading of old plates. Thus the light curves have been extended, not only in time, but also in accuracy.

IV. RESULTS

The 20 OVs are listed in Table I with their 1950.0 co-ordinates and their variability subclass (for a discussion of these subclasses, see Sec. V). References to finder charts are given for all these objects by Veron and Veron (1975), except for OE 110, whose finder is given in Leacock *et al.* (1976). The results of the observations are given in Table II as follows: col. 1, the UT date of the observation; col. 2, Julian Date—2,400,000 for the midpoint of the exposure; col. 3, the observed magnitude; col. 4, the rms error of the observation; col. 5, the magnitude system; plates taken in m_{pg} are denoted by a *P*.

The light curves of each of the objects are presented in Fig. 1. The length of the error bars is $\pm\bar{\sigma}$, where $\bar{\sigma}$ is the average rms error for that object in that color. For sources that had been observed during different epochs in both *B* and m_{pg} , the m_{pg} points were put on the *B* system using an empirically determined correction. Where four or more observations were made on a single night, an average of these points was plotted. The light curves are in order of right ascension with the exception of B2 1308+326 and AO 0235+164, which appear in Figs. 1(a) and 1(f), respectively, in order to conserve space.

The 20 sources are considered individually in the following remarks. Pertinent related work on the objects, and the light curve itself, are discussed. Also, the method and source of the calibration are indicated in each case.

AO 0235+164. This BL Lac object is one of the most violent variables known, both in terms of its large amplitude and its short time scale. Reike *et al.* (1976) recorded a maximum of $B = 15.25$ during the 1975 outburst. On the Palomar Sky Survey print of December 1, 1951 it is very faint ($B \geq 20.5$), yielding a total known range of about 5^m3.

AO 0235+164 has been monitored at Rosemary Hill since 1977, during which time it showed four distinct peaks, including a recent outburst nearly as bright as that in 1975. Two smaller events of 1^m7 and 1^m0 occurred during late 1978, had maxima separated by about 50 days, and were precursors to the major outburst. In 31 days during the latest flare the source brightened from 18^m26 to 15^m45, and then declined 2^m3 to 17^m77 in just 12 days. It is possible that the rise time was significantly less than 31 days since there was a three-week hiatus in the observations at the start of the year. In any event, both the rise to maximum and the decline were significantly steeper than those recorded by Rieke *et al.* (1976), although the decline in 1975 was incompletely observed. From archival data Liller and Eachus (1975) found only one definite outburst ($B = 15.8$, 1939–1940). In this case, however, the object remained brighter than 17^m magnitude for between 100 days and a year. Such prolonged activity is not indicated in the most recent event, as our latest data (3/15/79) show the source at about 17^m7. While this is 2^m5 fainter than the recorded maxi-

mum it is also 2^m7 brighter than the known minimum, indicating that the object is far from quiescent at this point. Plates were reduced using the photoelectric reference stars of Rieke *et al.* (1976) and McGimsey *et al.* (1976).

OE 110. The optical counterpart of the Ohio radio source OE 110 was identified at Rosemary Hill as an optically variable BL Lac object by Leacock *et al.* (1976). Archival studies by Miller (1977) showed the object as bright as $B = 16.0$ in 1940 and revealed 4^m5 variability on a time scale of a year or less. OE 110 declined rapidly from its late-1975 maximum (1^m8 in 66 days). A second outburst and decline (1^m8 in 59 days) during late 1976 showed an almost identical decay rate, averaging about 0^m03/day. OE 110 has continued to fade slowly, and of five plates taken during 1978, none yielded reliable magnitudes, implying that the object is currently no brighter than 20th magnitude. The data in Table II include both unfiltered IIIa-J exposures (necessary when the object is faint) and GG-385-filtered 103a-O plates. An empirically determined correction ($B - m_{pg} = 0^m30$) was used to place the unfiltered magnitudes on the *B* system. A *B* comparison sequence for OE 110 was calibrated by photographic transfer from SA 71, using the p.e. magnitudes of Purgathofer (1969).

PKS 0420-01. At the time Paper I was completed, PKS 0420-01 was undergoing a two-magnitude outburst. At this writing it has just declined to its base level from an even larger outburst during 1977–1978. Dent *et al.* (1979) proposed a correlation between the 1974–75 optical event and a recently recorded radio outburst at 15.5 GHz. The time delay between these two events was 2.2 ± 0.2 years. In view of the similarity between the most recent outburst and the 1974–1975 flare, a second radio outburst might be expected during 1980; detection of such an event would be strong evidence in support of the association proposed by Dent *et al.* The comparison sequence was calibrated by photographic transfer from SA 99.

3C 120. The Florida long-term light curve of 3C 120 shows a continued decline in average brightness by about one magnitude since 1972. Superimposed are short-term fluctuations of up to one magnitude. Reike and Lebofsky (1979) found a similar long-term decline in the infrared region between 1.6 and 3.5 μ m, with the infrared flux declining by a factor of three between 1972 and 1978. The Rosemary Hill comparison sequence was selected from the p.e. standards of Kinman (1968) and Angione (1971).

NRAO 190. In Paper II NRAO 190 was considered to be a marginal OV, based on the 11 rather widely spaced data points available at that time. More intensive recent observations have shown this source to be extremely active, exhibiting at least three two-magnitude outbursts. The nature of the recent light curve makes it likely that some events were missed in the earlier years. Three recent plates indicate yet another very rapid flare. The source was recorded at 19^m03 on 12/30–31/78,

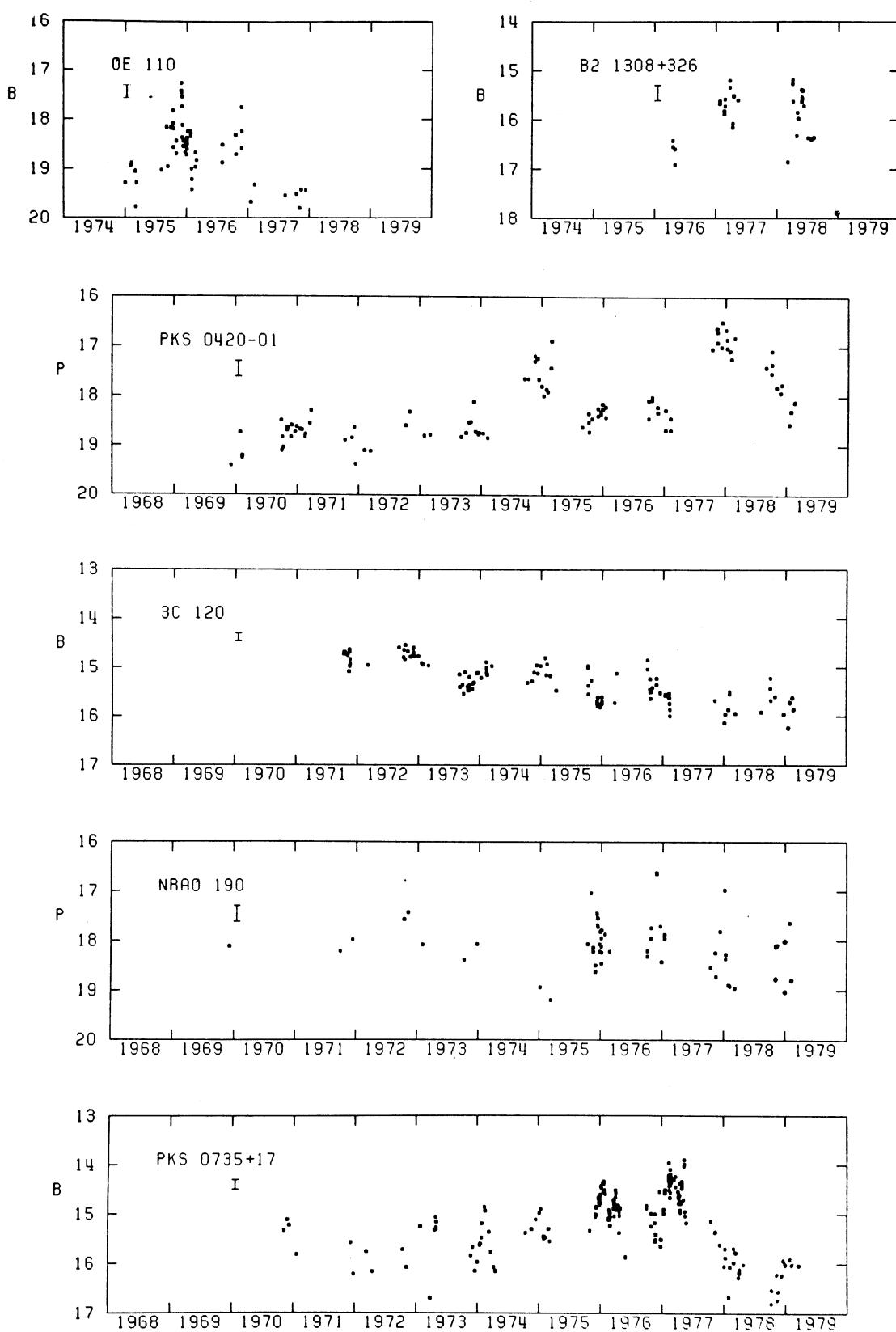


FIG. 1(a). Light curves of 20 OVV sources.

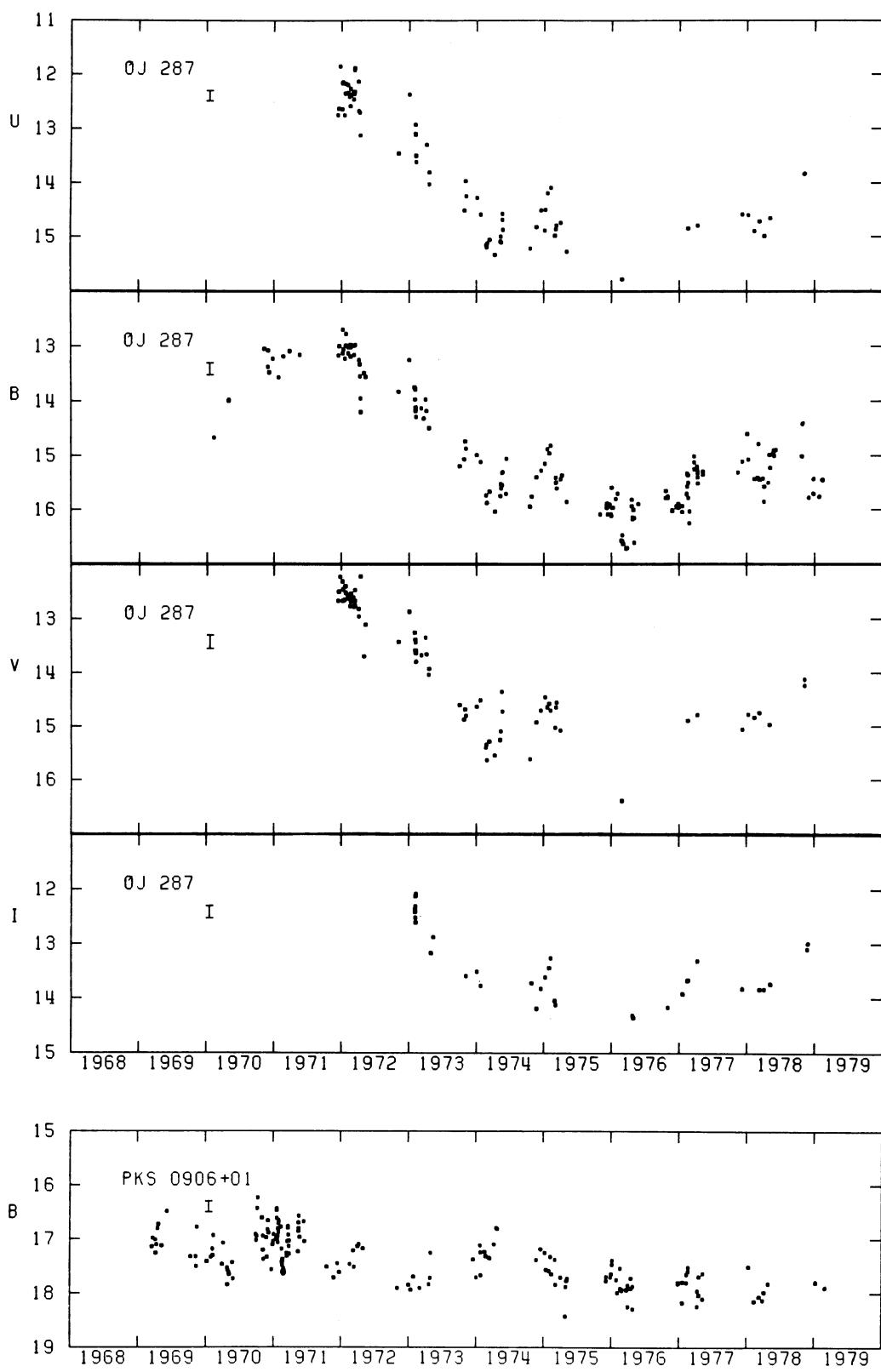


FIG. 1(b). Light curves of 20 OVV sources.

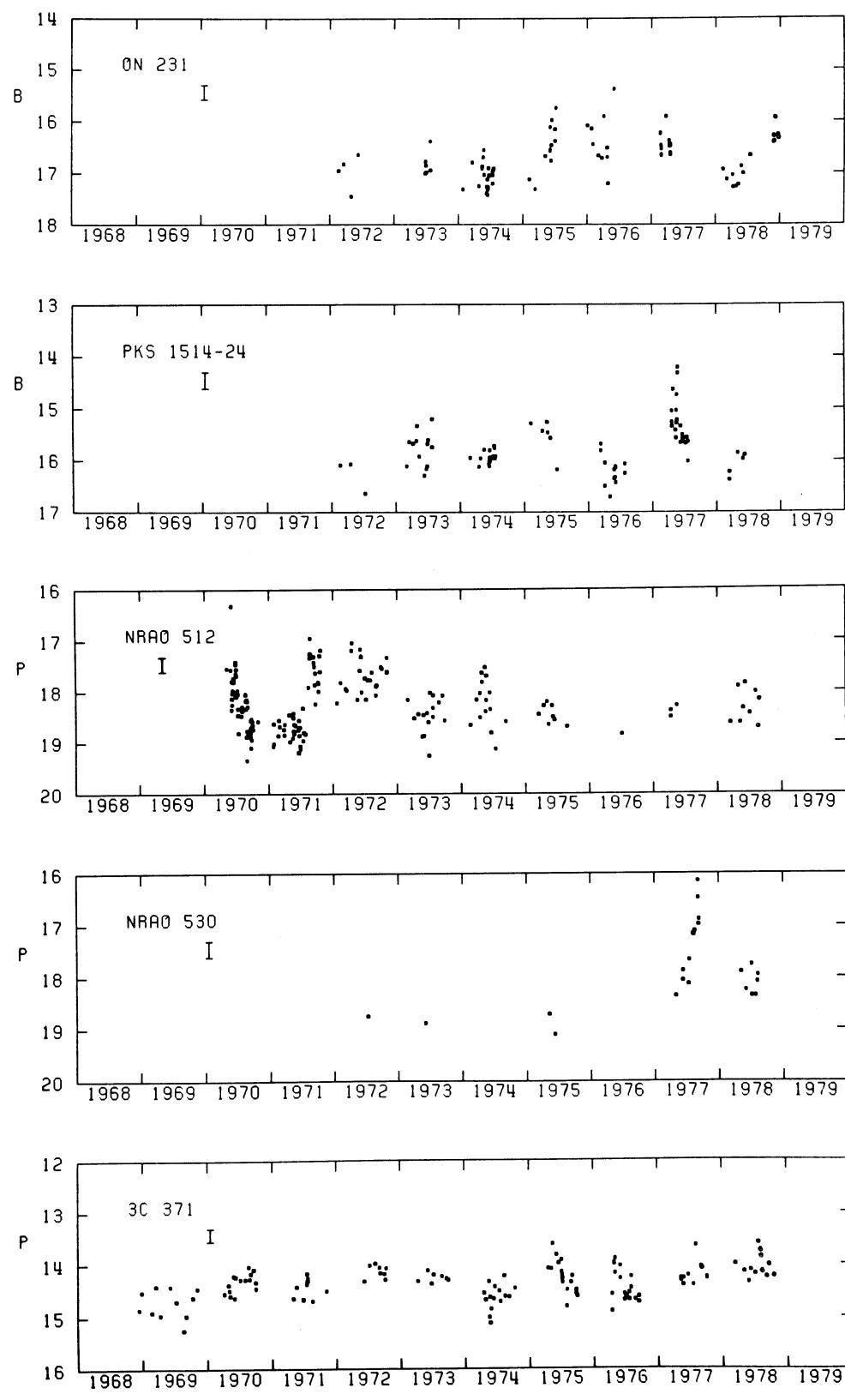


FIG. 1(c). Light curves of 20 OVV sources.

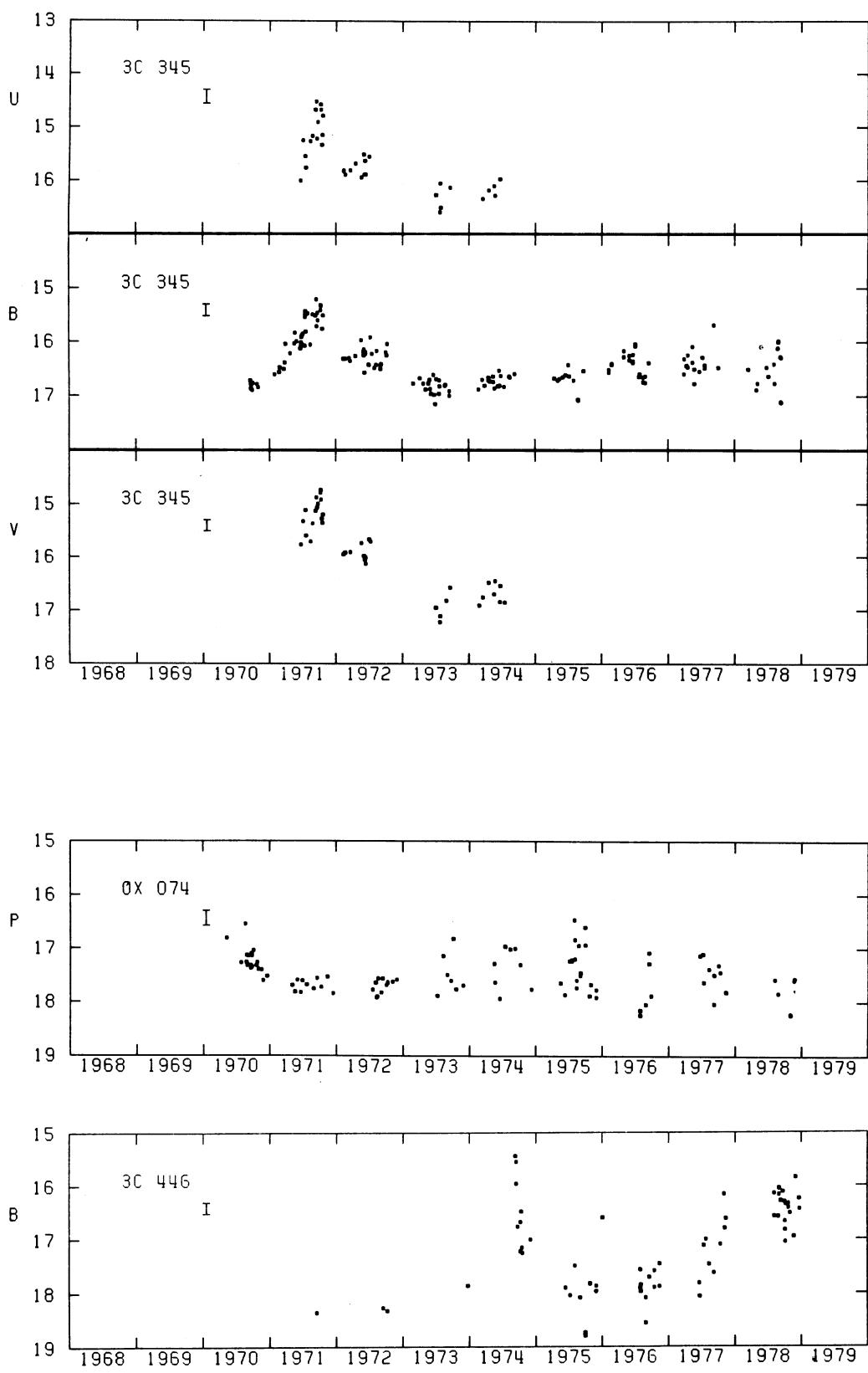


FIG. 1(d). Light curves of 20 OVV sources.

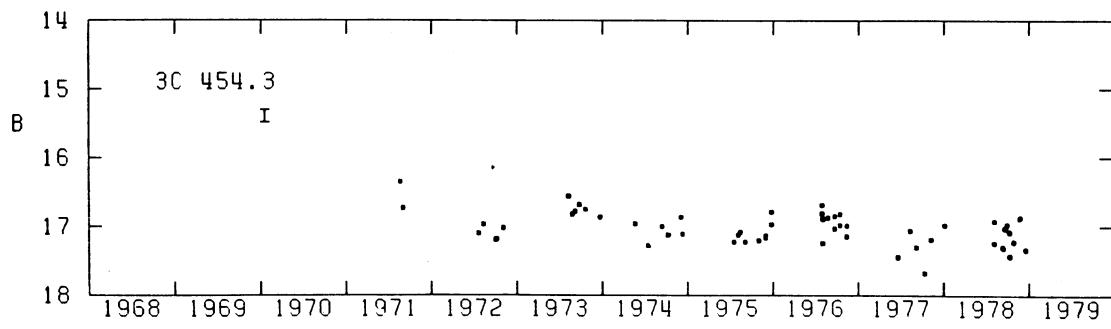
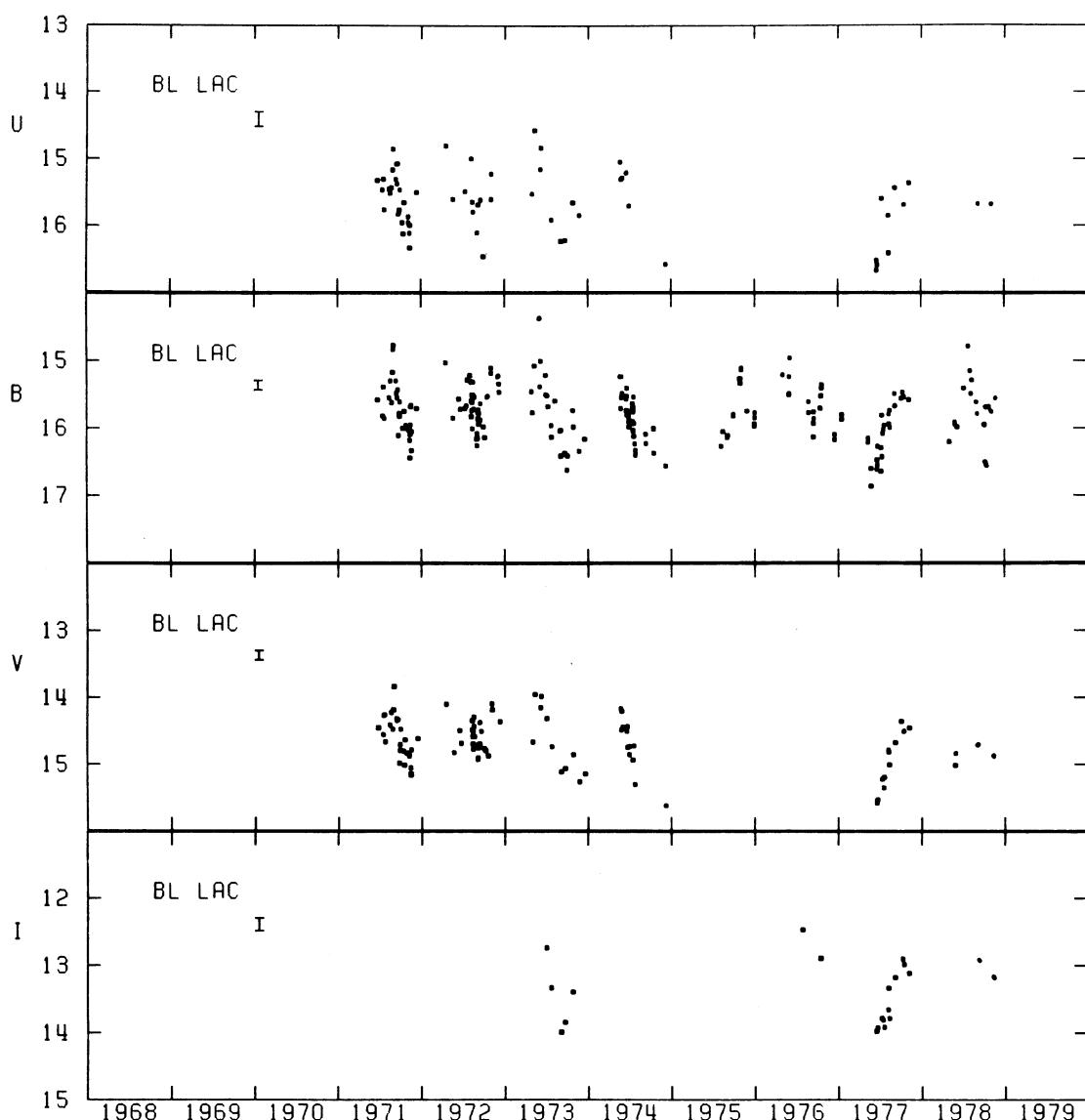


FIG. 1(e). Light curves of 20 OVV sources.

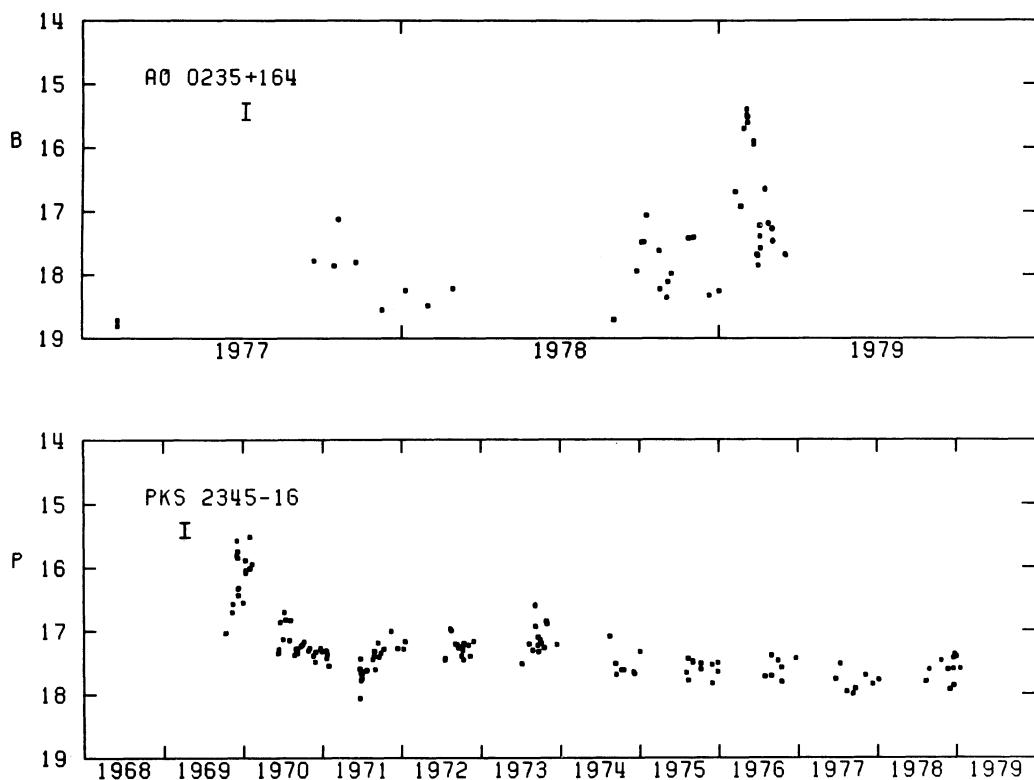


FIG. 1(f). Light curves of 20 OVV sources.

17^m65 on 1/18–19/79 and 18^m78 on 1/28–29/79. SA 96 was used to calibrate the sequence around NRAO 190.

PKS 0735+17. This well-known BL Lac object has exhibited a large number of 1- to 2-magnitude outbursts since 1972. In addition to these rapid excursions there was an increase in average brightness from 1973 to 1977. The brightest recorded magnitude occurred during the 1977 outburst, when PKS 0735+17 reached $B = 13.90$. In 540 days it faded by 3^m3 to $B = 17.22$, which is below the faintest previously recorded magnitude (Carswell *et al.* 1974, and Pollock 1975). The object is presently relatively quiescent at $B \sim 16.0$. The U , B , and V comparison sequences are those of Wing (1973). The infrared sequence was derived using the $U-V$, $B-V$, and $V-I$ data of Johnson *et al.* (1966); see the Data Reduction section. The value of $B - m_{pg} = -0.2$ suggests that there may be a zero-point error in the initial m_{pg} sequence.

OJ 287. At the time Paper I was completed, it seemed that the long decline which began in 1972 had been terminated by a one-magnitude flare in early 1975. Subsequently, however, the general decline was resumed until the object reached $B = 16.7$ a year later. Even including the archival data of Craine and Warner (1973), Visvanathan and Elliot (1973), and Pollock (1975b), this was the faintest that OJ 287 had ever been observed to be. The brightest known value was $B = 12.36$, recorded

by Dyck *et al.* (1971) during the 1971 maximum. Thus the total range of the four-year decline was 4^m3, and this is, of course, also the total known range of the object. In early 1977 OJ 287 began a general brightening trend that has continued until the present.

Additional I-band data recorded during the long decline, but not presented in Paper I, are shown in Fig. 1. The infrared decline resembled that at shorter wavelengths, although the amplitude of the brief outburst in early 1975 was slightly smaller ($\Delta I = 0^m93$, $\Delta V = 1^m16$, $\Delta B = 1^m13$, $\Delta U = 1^m13$).

The U , B , and V sequences are a combination of the sequences of Penston and Wing (1973) and a single star measured by McGimsey (1975) to extend the faint end of the range. The I sequence was established from the $U-B$, $U-V$, and $V-I$ data of Johnson *et al.* (1966); see the Data-Reduction section. The $B - m_{pg}$ correction was +0.50.

PKS 0906+01. This object, identified as an OVV by Folsom and Smith (1969), is one of several in the program that have shown long-term declines in their average brightness (cf. 3C 120, PKS 2345-16). After an extremely active period in 1969–1971 the object declined in average brightness at 0^m4/year during the next two years. In the 1973–1974 observing season a modest brightening of 0^m5 occurred, followed by a slow fading over the next four years to $B \sim 18.0$ in 1978. This secular decline is accompanied by "flickering" of $<\pm 0^m5$. The

major flare occurred, with the source reaching $B = 14.21$ on 5/24/77. The subsequent decline of $1.^m8$ in 58 days was identical in decay rate to the two $1.^m8$ declines seen in OE 110. By early 1978 PKS 1514–24 was relatively faint ($B = 16.3$), although still $0.^m4$ brighter than its faintest recorded value of 16.71 in 1976. The B sequence was calibrated from SA 107 (Purgathofer 1969) and our results are in good agreement with Andrews *et al.* (1974) and Strittmatter *et al.* (1972). However, there is a half-magnitude difference between our magnitudes and those of Disney *et al.* (1974). Since no details of the latter observations are given it is difficult to comment on this apparent discrepancy. We do note that the $B-V$ values of Disney *et al.* for 6/14/74 and 6/17/74 are anomalously blue (by about 0.4 mag) when compared with the photometry of Andrews *et al.*, Kinman (1976), and Westerlund and Wall (1969). All of these measurements were obtained when PKS 1514–24 was at $V \sim 15.1$, although not on the same date.

NRAO 512. This object has shown very violent short-term activity, as well as long-term trends. In the four years since Paper I, however, it has not shown a major outburst. Less intensive monitoring may influence this result, but on 13 plates obtained between 1976 and 1978 NRAO 512 was not visible, implying that it was certainly fainter than 19th magnitude. Barbieri *et al.* (1977), using their own data plus that of Paper I, suggested a “best period” for NRAO 512 of 720 days. Our observations give no evidence of any major activity since the 1974 outburst, and it should be noted that a 720-day period is an almost exact harmonic of the observational artifact introduced by the annual apparition of an object. The sequence for NRAO 512 was calibrated from SA 17. Barbieri *et al.* determined $B - m_{pg} = +0.3$ for Rosemary Hill data on this object.

3C 345. This extensively observed QSO was extremely active between 1965 and 1973, undergoing two $2.^m5$ outbursts (a summary of data from this period is given by Barbieri *et al.* (1977)). Since its decline from the 1972–1973 event, 3C 345 has not exhibited such violent behavior, but rather showed a slowly rising envelope with one-magnitude fluctuations superimposed. In only one case was it recorded brighter than $B = 16.0$ during this period. Barbieri *et al.* gave evidence for possible periodicities of 1600, 800, and 140 days. These results would predict a maximum in early 1976. A small event did occur during 1976; however, its amplitude and duration were much less than in the two events that occurred in 1967 and 1971. Observations through the next proposed maximum, some time during 1980, should provide more conclusive evidence concerning periodic behavior and shed light on the applicability of spinar-type models (such as that of Morrison 1969) for this and similar objects. The data were reduced using the sequence of Angione (1971). A $B - m_{pg}$ of $+0.60$ was used.

NRAO 530. Using the radio position of Wade (1970), Kristian and Sandage (1970) identified the optical

counterpart of NRAO 530 as a faint ($m_{pg} \simeq 21$) object, perhaps associated with a cluster of galaxies. Welch and Spinrad (1973) reported the mean radio spectrum to be relatively flat, with a flux of 7 Jy at 407 MHz and 3.9 Jy at 22,300 MHz. Slight radio variability was observed at 2.9 and 4.5 cm (Medd *et al.* 1972) and 3.8 cm (Dent and Kojoian 1972). Welch and Spinrad (1973) reported $m_{pg} = 18.5$ from a blue plate taken 5/23/72. Baldwin *et al.* (1973) observed NRAO 530 spectroscopically between 3468 and 6797 Å, finding only one emission line (5333 Å). They estimated a magnitude of $m_b = 18.0 \pm 1.0$, confirming the apparent brightening detected by Welch and Spinrad. The four plates of NRAO 530 obtained at Rosemary Hill between 1972 and 1976 showed no significant variability. A small brightening in early 1977 motivated more intensive observations, which revealed a sharply peaked three-magnitude flare. The object brightened from $18.^m37$ to $16.^m15$ in 130 days, then faded $0.^m85$ in one day. At this point the object was lost to the Sun. Considering the rapid variability and total range ($16 \leq m_{pg} \leq 21$) of NRAO 530, continued multifrequency monitoring and a renewed attempt to establish its redshift are important. The NRAO 530 comparison sequence was calibrated using the photometry of NGC 6356 by Sandage and Wallerstein (1960) and the conversion formula of Arp (1961).

3C 371. The Florida light curve of this well-known N-galaxy is characterized by a slowly varying component with more rapid ~ 1 -magnitude flickering. There is a strong suggestion of a secular increase in brightness at a rate of $0.^m1 \text{ yr}^{-1}$. Only one well-defined, peaked outburst has been recorded (in 1975), and the total range of $1.^m3$ is similar to that found by Usher and Manley (1968) using Harvard archival data. The m_{pg} comparison sequence was derived from the U, B, V photometry of McGimsey and Miller (1977), using the conversion formula of Arp (1961).

OX 074. As reported in Paper I, OX 074 underwent a radical change in its variability characteristics between 1972 and 1973. After declining from a large outburst in 1970, the object was very constant ($\Delta m < 0.^m5$) for two years. Since that time it has shown continual 1- to 1.5-magnitude fluctuations while maintaining about the same base level. This type of behavior also existed to a lesser extent in 3C 345 after its 1971 outburst, but it is not evident for PKS 2345-16, which underwent a similar outburst and decline between 1969 and 1978. Our most recent plate (11/22–23/78) shows OX 074 at $\sim 17.^m6$, about $0.^m5$ above base level. The comparison sequence was calibrated with SA 89.

BL Lac. BL Lac is one of the most active objects in our monitoring program. The archival data (Shen and Usher 1970) reveal extremely violent activity, including a 400-day period during which the object varied over nearly its entire recorded range ($12.4 \leq B \leq 16.7$). Similar chaotic activity is evident in the composite light curve for 1969 to 1971 presented by Bertaud *et al.* (1973), although in this case the object always remained

at least one magnitude below its maximum recorded brightness. The Florida light curve illustrates that this erratic behavior has continued over the last eight years, with two large, well-defined outbursts occurring since 1977. The U , B , V sequences for BL Lac were selected from the sequence of Bertaud *et al.* (1969). The infrared sequence was derived using the $U-V$, $B-V$, and $V-I$ data of Johnson *et al.* (1966); see the Data-Reduction section.

3C 446. This OVV has been closely monitored at Rosemary Hill since its large outburst in 1974, when it attained a peak magnitude of $B = 15.44$, about equal to the maximum reported for the 1966 outburst (Kinman *et al.* 1966). In 1975 3C 446 faded to 18.77 , only 0.1 magnitude brighter than its faintest recorded magnitude (Sandage *et al.* 1966). From 1976 through 1978 the object has undergone a 0.7 yr $^{-1}$ general brightening with rapid 1- to 2-magnitude fluctuations superimposed. 3C 446 peaked at 15.85 (12/1/78), then faded about 0.6 magnitude in three weeks before being lost to the Sun. Data were reduced using the sequence of Angione (1971).

3C 454.3. Although this object is a known OVV (Tritton and Selmes 1971; Lü 1972; and Angione 1971) it has shown little activity since monitoring began at Rosemary Hill in 1971. The minimum brightness ($B = 17.64$) found by Tritton and Selmes was equaled on 1/12/77 ($B = 17.68$). Since 1971 the object has remained at least 1.5 magnitudes fainter than the maximum of 14.8 obtained from the Harvard archives by Angione, while showing a very slow (0.08/year) decline over an eight-year period. The sequence of Angione (1971) was used to reduce the data.

PKS 2345-16. The Florida light curve for PKS 2345-16 provides an excellent example of the necessity of observations over a long-time base (order of decades) to determine the real optical behavior of QSOs. Since the 2.0 flare in 1969 reported by Folsom *et al.* (1970), the source has been quiescent, exhibiting intrayear fluctuations of <1.0 magnitude superimposed on a general decline of ~ 0.05 yr $^{-1}$. A striking similarity exists between the Florida light curves of 3C 345 from 1970 to 1977 and PKS 2345-16 from 1969 to 1973, especially when the durations of the respective major outbursts are taken into account. SA 116 was used to calibrate the sequence for PKS 2345-16.

V. DISCUSSION

On the basis of the overall nature of their light curves, each of the OVVs of Paper I was assigned to one of four variability subclasses. Subclass I includes objects whose behavior is dominated by rapid flickering without conspicuous long-term trends. Objects of subclass II, conversely, show long-term changes in mean level much larger than any short-term flickering. In subclass III the short-term and long-term effects are of comparable amplitudes. Finally, subclass IV is episodic, displaying

long intervals of quiescence punctuated by brief outbursts of activity.

The extended light curves of the present work afford an opportunity to test the stability of such classifications. Table I lists new and independently determined subclasses for the OVVs of the present paper. Paper I emphasized that these categories do not have rigid boundaries and thus overlap somewhat. For the 15 objects common to both papers, 11 retained their original classifications on the basis of this completely independent evaluation. The reclassifications of 3C 120 and 3C 345 are borderline cases that now appear to contain characteristics of both the original and new subclasses. With the elimination of the single bright magnitude in September 1972 (see Paper I), which is of dubious quality, 3C 454.3 is now more appropriately placed in subclass I. The most obvious change occurred in 3C 446, which at the time of Paper I had shown a large, spiked outburst but no long-term trends. Since that time it has shown a steady, three-year brightening. For two of the new OVVs the appropriate subclass is in doubt because of their relatively short-time baselines. It should be pointed out that some (or perhaps all?) of these objects may alter their variability characteristics from epoch to epoch. For example, examination of the composite historical light curve of OJ 287 (Pollock 1975b) shows that from 1934 to 1940 it would have been placed in subclass III, from 1945 to 1952 and from 1970 to 1979 in subclass II, and from 1953 to 1958 in subclass I. Consequently, it is preferable to consider these classifications as representative of recent behavior, rather than as necessarily indicating some intrinsic difference between the sources. Even the appropriateness of the OVV classification itself may be subject to temporal variation (cf. PKS 2345-16).

The diversity of the time scales and amplitudes of optical variability in these objects makes explanation of the fluctuations by a single physical mechanism difficult. Background flickering of about half a magnitude seems to be a common feature of all these objects (and many non-OVVs as well), whether they are in an active or a quiescent phase. Well-defined outbursts of several magnitudes (with relatively monotonic rises and declines) occur on time-scales as short as a few weeks (e.g., AO 0235+164) to as long as several years (e.g., OJ 287). Any comparison of such events, however, cannot be complete without considering the total absolute flux represented by each event. This requires the distance to the source be known (for which we must assume cosmological redshifts), as well as the pre-, inter-, and post-flare fluxes at all frequencies. The latter are, of course, never completely available, but on at least one occasion, the 1975 outburst of AO 0235+164, a significant portion of the spectrum was observed. The wealth of information available for that event graphically illustrates the value of co-operative programs to obtain simultaneous, multifrequency data during outbursts. A much larger data base is available for the flux variations

in a single bandpass (generally the *B* band). The results of an examination of this information, using previously published light curves, data from this paper, and the Florida data on approximately 100 non-OVVs (Pica *et al.*, 1979) will be the subject of future work. Such a study will put constraints on mechanisms proposed to account for the diverse variability seen in these objects.

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