



OPTICA

Fiber Optics in Astronomy

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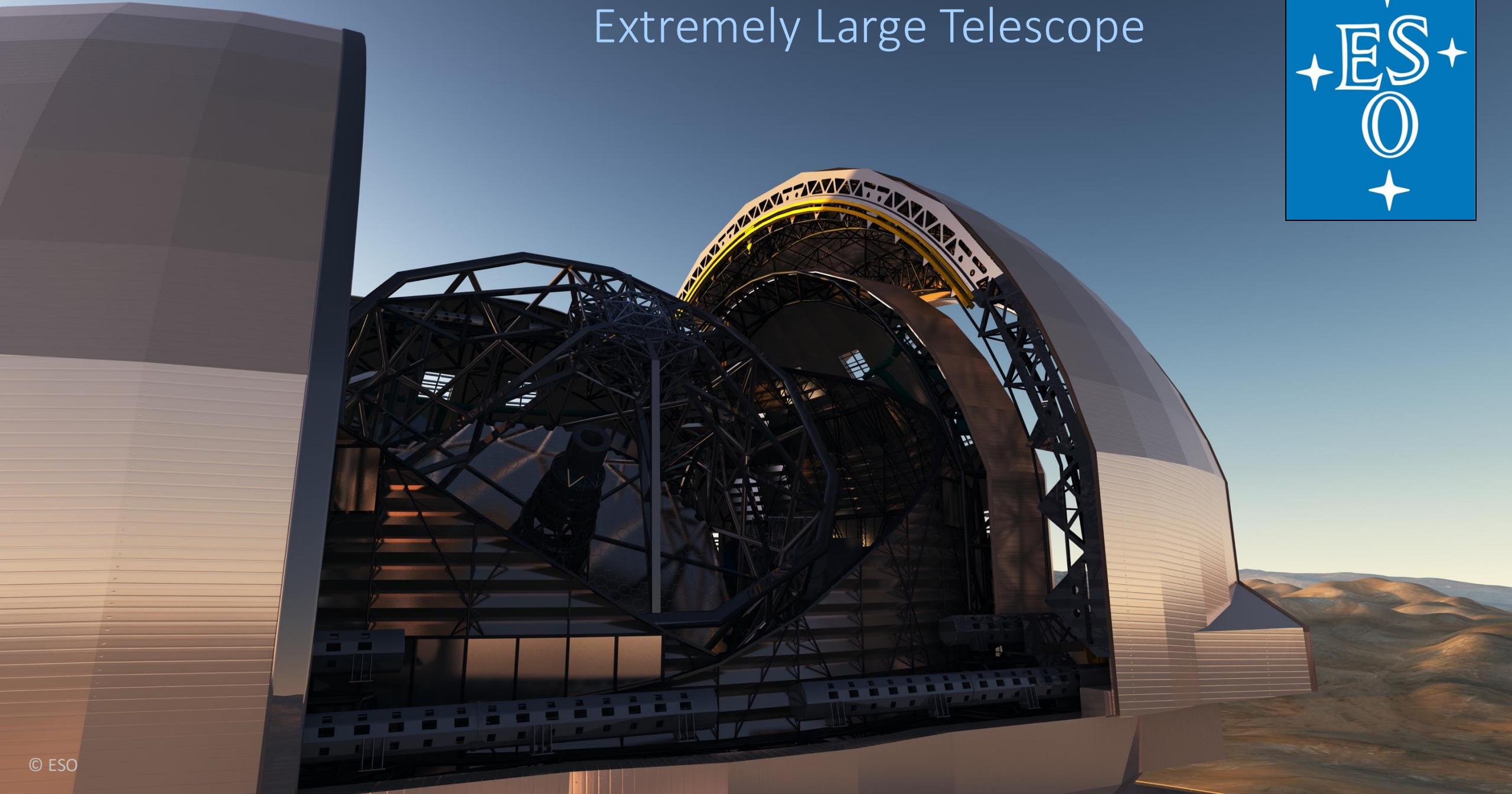
University of Potsdam

Deutsches Zentrum für Astrophysik

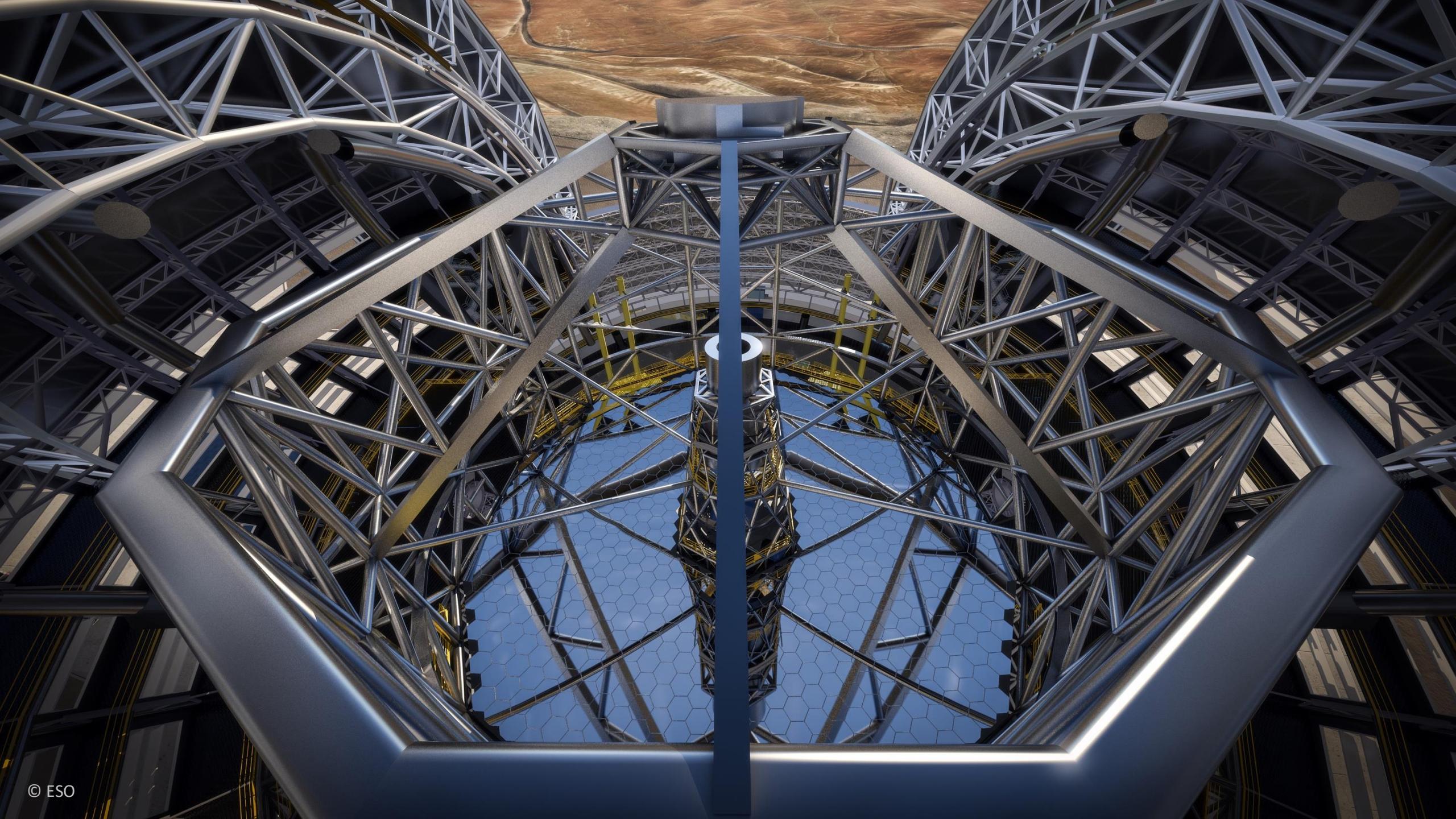
Overview:

- Instrumentation for Astrophysics
- Intro: Optical Fibers in Astronomy
- Applications
 - High Resolution Spectroscopy
 - Multi-Object Spectroscopy
 - Integral Field Spectroscopy
- Technology Transfer
- Astrophotonics
- Summary

Extremely Large Telescope









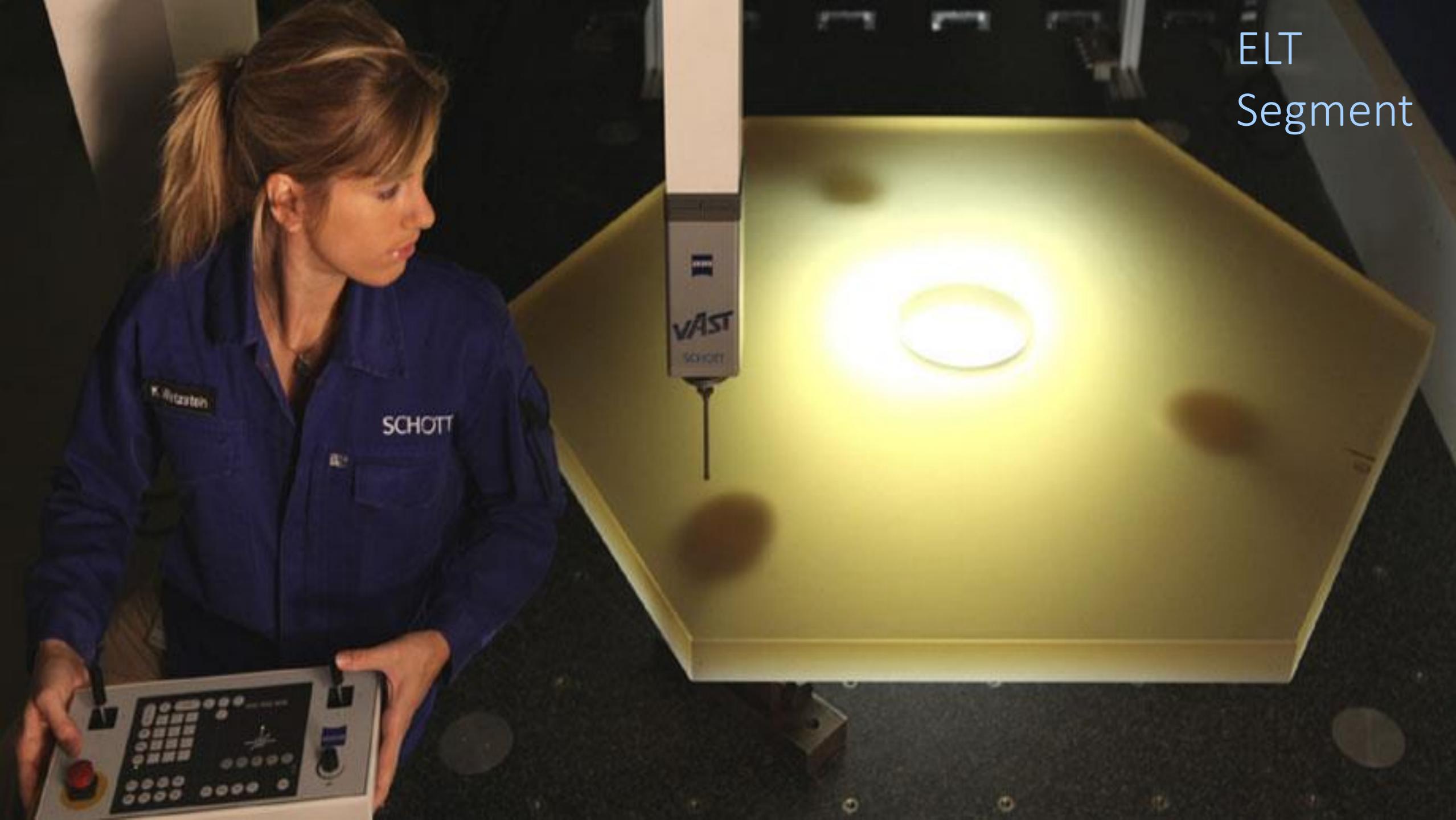


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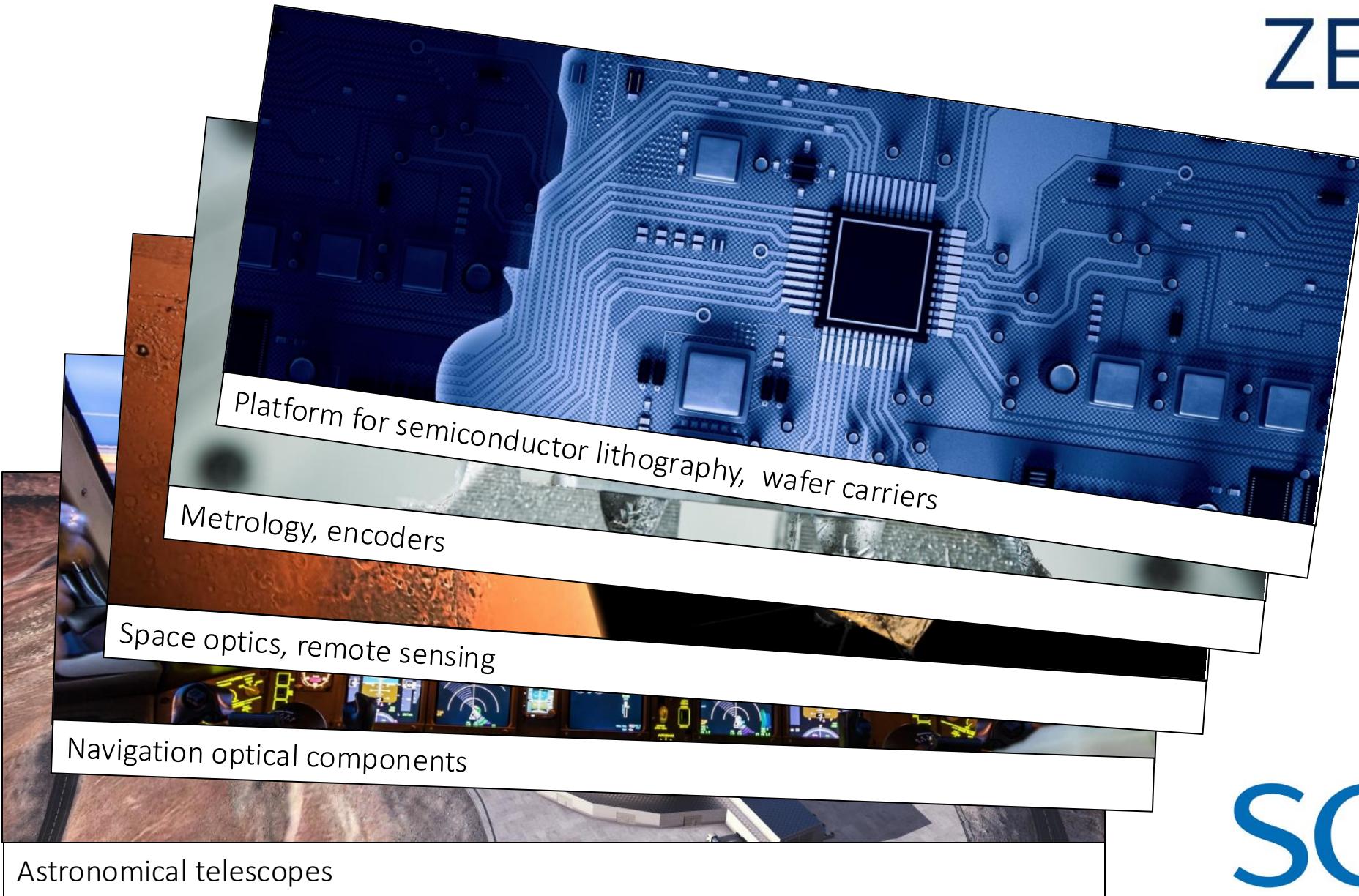




ELT
Segment

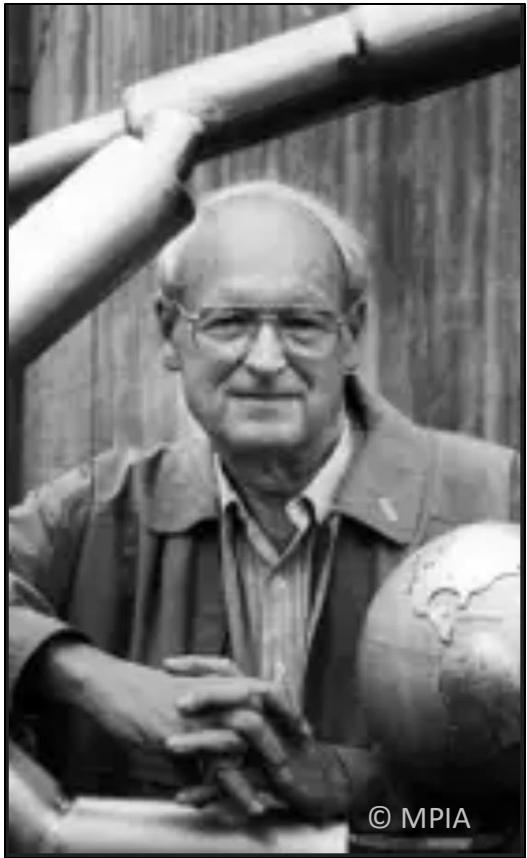


ZERODUR®



SCHOTT

<https://www.schott.com/de-de/products/zerodur-p1000269/applications>



Hans Elsässer
(1929 – 2003)



Low-expansion glass for telescopes

50 years of Zerodur milestones

04 April 2018 Marcus Woo Technology

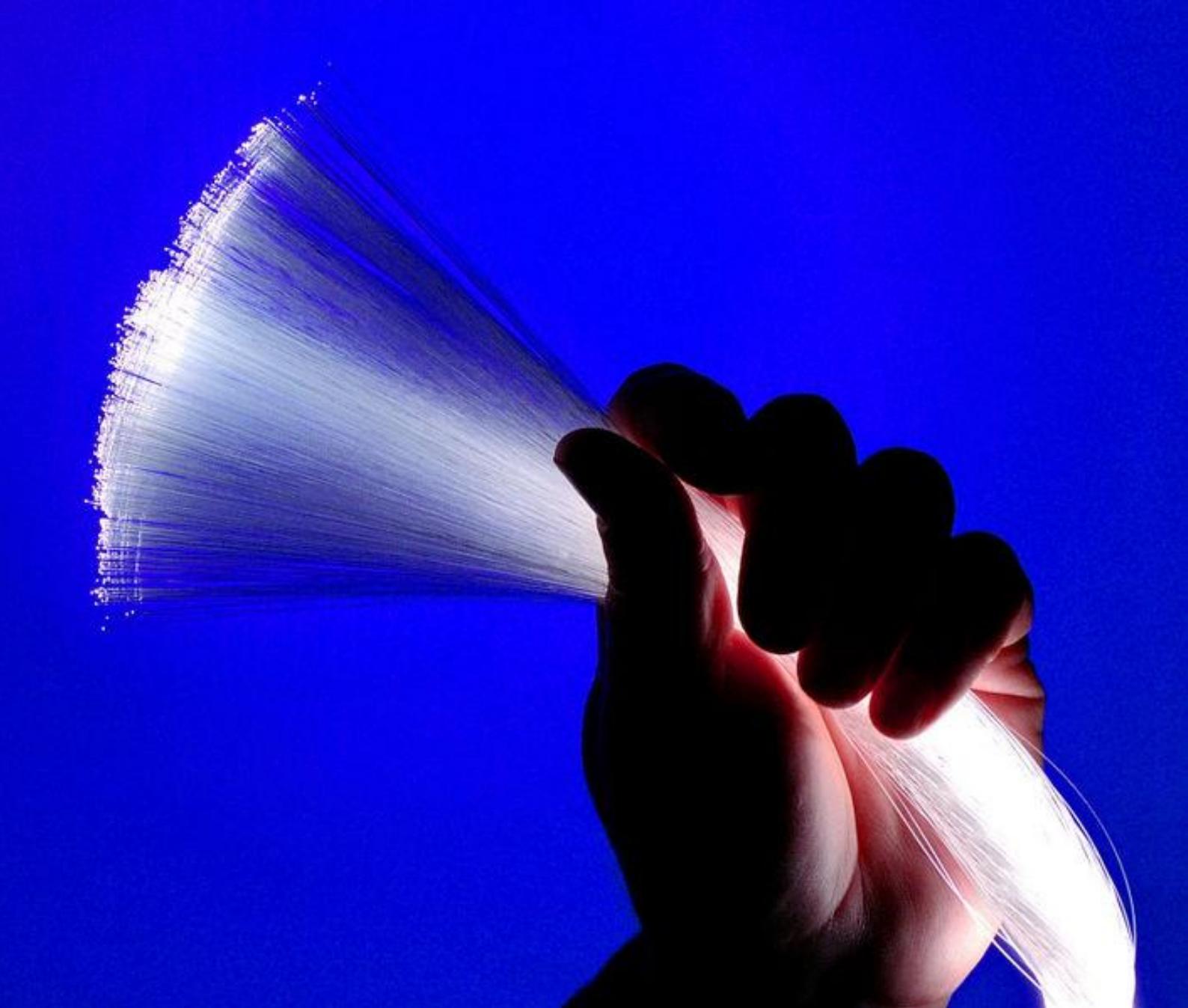
For a telescope to compete with the world's best, in 1966 Hans Elsässer, director of the observatory at the University of Heidelberg, sought the help of German glass company Schott. Could they, he asked, fabricate a 4-meter telescope mirror? Schott had recently started working with a new class of promising materials called ceramic glass, which S. Donald Stookey of Corning had invented in 1957. It's now a common material found in casserole dishes and other cookware.

After a couple of years, Schott came up with the right ceramic glass for telescope mirrors, and called it Zerodur. In 1968, the company agreed to build a 3.6-meter mirror blank and several smaller mirrors for the Max Planck Institute of Astronomy's Calar Alto Observatory in southern Spain.

Technology transfer from fundamental research to Industry



Optical Fibers in Astronomy



Wave Optics

Maxwell Equations

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{D} = \rho$$

Gauß' law

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$$

Gauß' law for
magnetic field

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}$$

Law of induction

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{H} = \mathbf{j} + \frac{\partial \mathbf{D}}{\partial t}$$

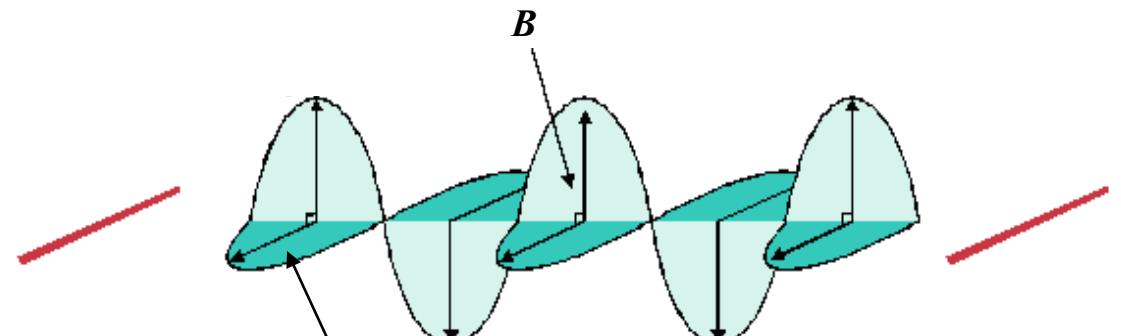
Law of magnetic flux

$$\mathbf{B} = \mu_0 \mu_r \mathbf{H}$$

B : magnetic flux density, H : magnetic field

$$\mathbf{D} = \epsilon_0 \epsilon_r \mathbf{E}$$

D : electrical flux density, E : electrical field



→ Wave Equation

Helmholtz Equation

$$\nabla^2 \mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) e^{i\omega t} - \mu\epsilon\omega^2 \mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) e^{i\omega t} = 0$$

$$n = \sqrt{\mu\epsilon}$$
] Index of refraction

$$\nabla^2 \mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) e^{i\omega t} - n^2 k^2 \mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) e^{i\omega t} = 0$$

analogous for H field:

$$\nabla^2 \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{r}) e^{i\omega t} - n^2 k^2 \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{r}) e^{i\omega t} = 0$$

Guided Modes



$l = 0, m = 1$



$l = 1, m = 1$



$l = 2, m = 1$



$l = 0, m = 2$



$l = 3, m = 1$



$l = 1, m = 2$



$l = 4, m = 1$



$l = 2, m = 2$



$l = 0, m = 3$



$l = 5, m = 1$

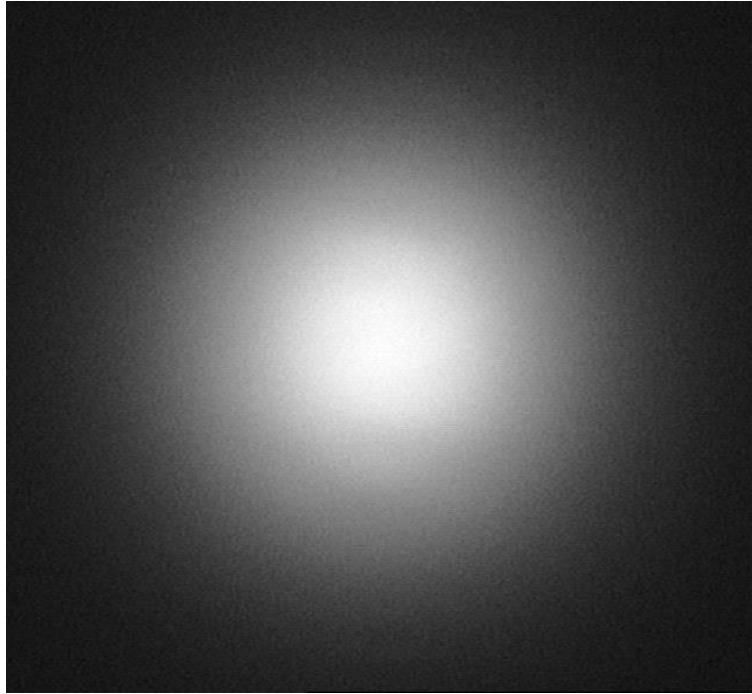


$l = 3, m = 2$

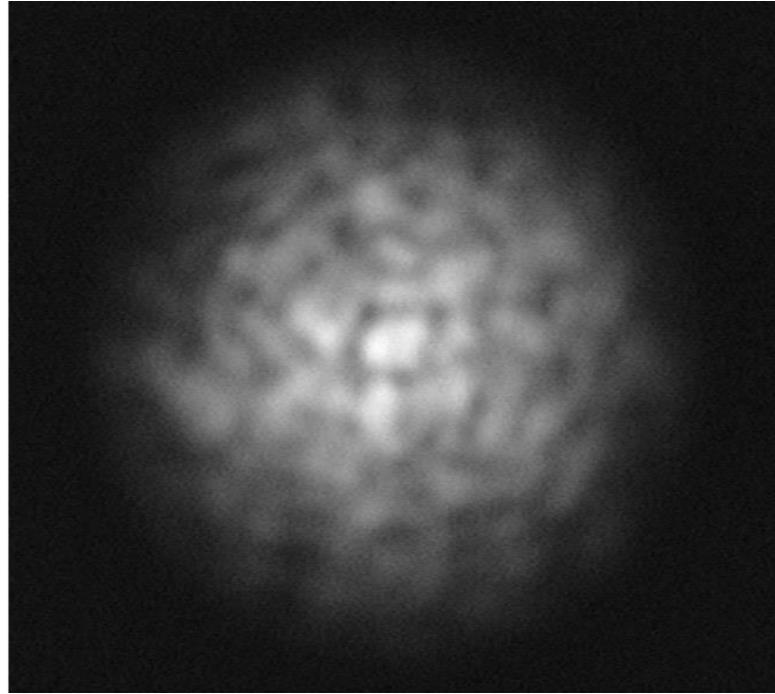


$l = 1, m = 3$

Guided Modes



Single Mode Fiber (SMF)



Multi Mode Fiber (MMF)

THE ASTROPHYSICAL JOURNAL, 218: 776-782, 1977 December 15
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A VERY LARGE OPTICAL TELESCOPE ARRAY LINKED WITH FUSED SILICA FIBERS

J. R. P. ANGEL, M. T. ADAMS, T. A. BOROSON, AND R. L. MOORE

Steward Observatory, University of Arizona

Received 1977 April 15; accepted 1977 June 10

ABSTRACT

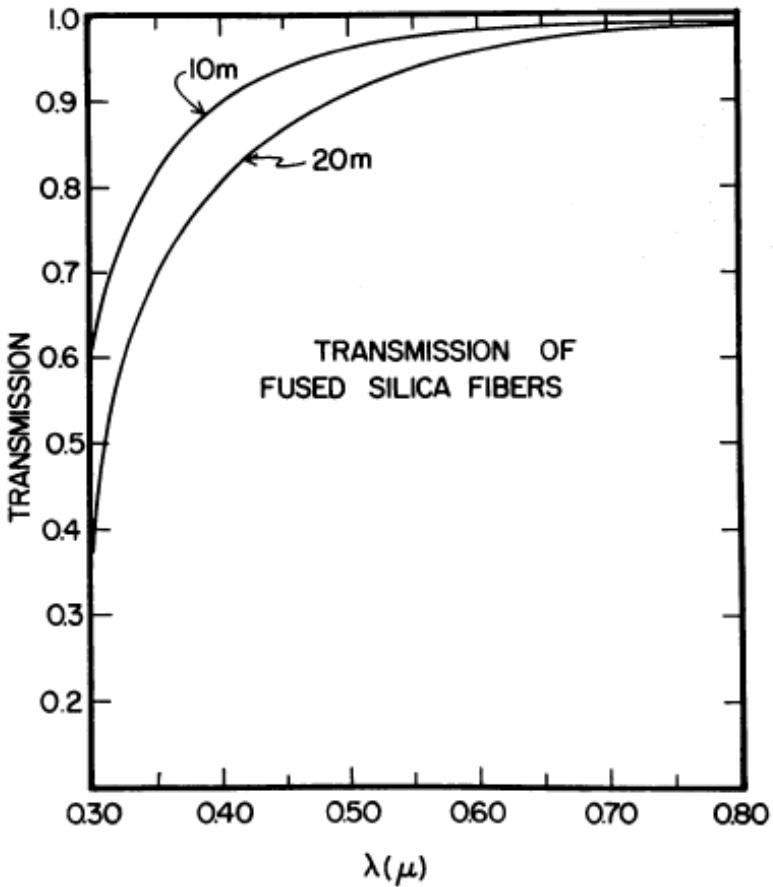
The practical limit in area for single telescope mirrors is around 20 m^2 . In order to make much larger telescopes, necessary for the study of very faint objects, light must be collected by more than one mirror. A relatively inexpensive telescope with a collecting area of several hundred square meters can be constructed with fibers to bring together light from many mirrors, each of area $\sim 5 \text{ m}^2$. This approach is made possible by the recent development for communications of fused silica fibers which show high transmission in the spectral range $0.3\text{--}2 \mu\text{m}$ over lengths of $\sim 20 \text{ m}$, and which do not badly degrade focal ratio over the same distance. Several single fibers at the prime focus of each mirror would each pick up light from an area of a few square arc seconds, matched to the typical seeing disk. This approach is ideally suited for spectroscopy because the fiber ends would be brought directly to a line at the spectrograph slit. We suggest that flexure errors in the mirror support structure be compensated for by moving the fibers at the prime focus, and that the star field at each prime focus as seen by a sensitive imaging detector be used to determine the correction. No lasers or secondary optics are then needed to coalign the mirrors, and the telescope is made useful for deep imaging by summing all the detector outputs.

Subject heading: instruments

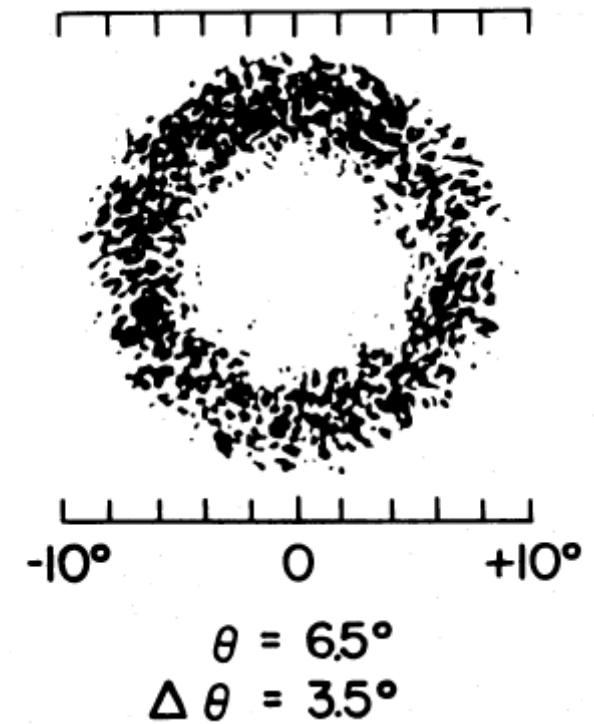
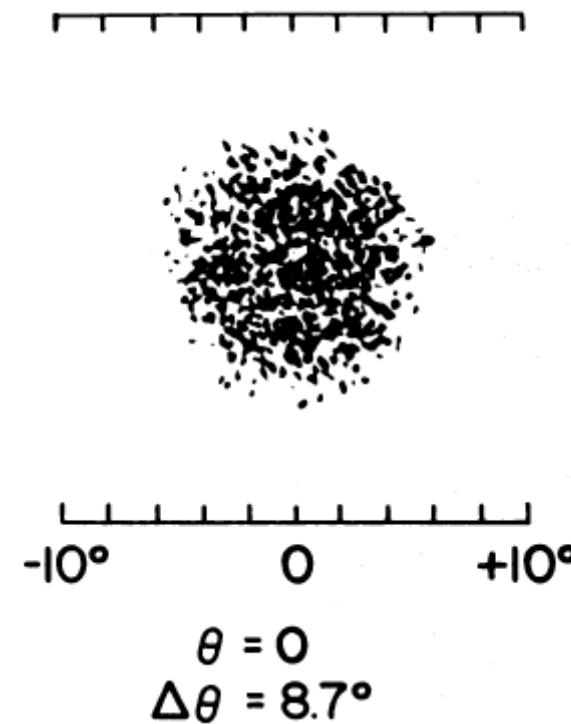


Roger Angel
© Univ. Arizona

Fiber Transmission



„Focal Ratio Degradation“



Angel J.R.P., Adams M.T., Boroson T.A., Moore R.L., 1977, ApJ, 218, 776

Mode expansion theory and application in step-index multimode fibres for astronomical spectroscopy

E. HERNANDEZ^{1*}, M. M. ROTH¹, K. PETERMANN², A. KELZ¹, B. MORALEJO¹ AND K. MADHAV¹

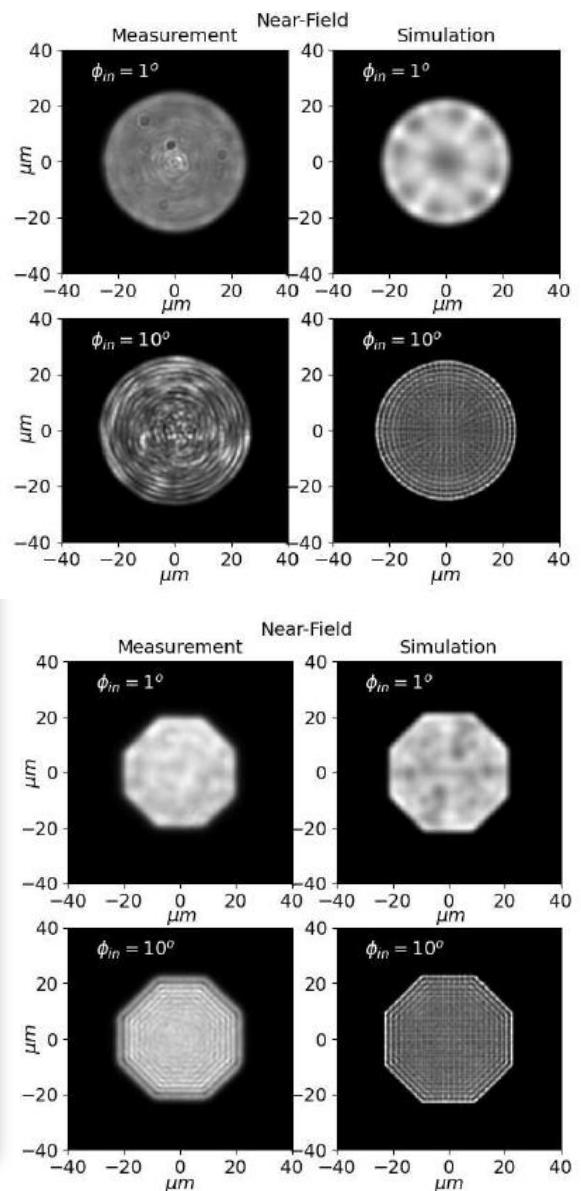
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Abstract: In astronomical spectroscopy, optical fibres are abundantly used for multiplexing and decoupling the spectrograph from the telescope to provide stability in a controlled environment. However, fibres are less than perfect optical components and introduce complex effects that diminish the overall throughput, efficiency, and stability of the instrument. We present a novel numerical field propagation model that emulates the effects of modal noise, scrambling, and focal ratio degradation with a rigorous treatment of wave optics. We demonstrate that the simulation of the near- and far-field output of a fiber, injected into a ray-tracing model of the spectrograph, allows to assess performance at the detector level.

© 2021 Optical Society of America

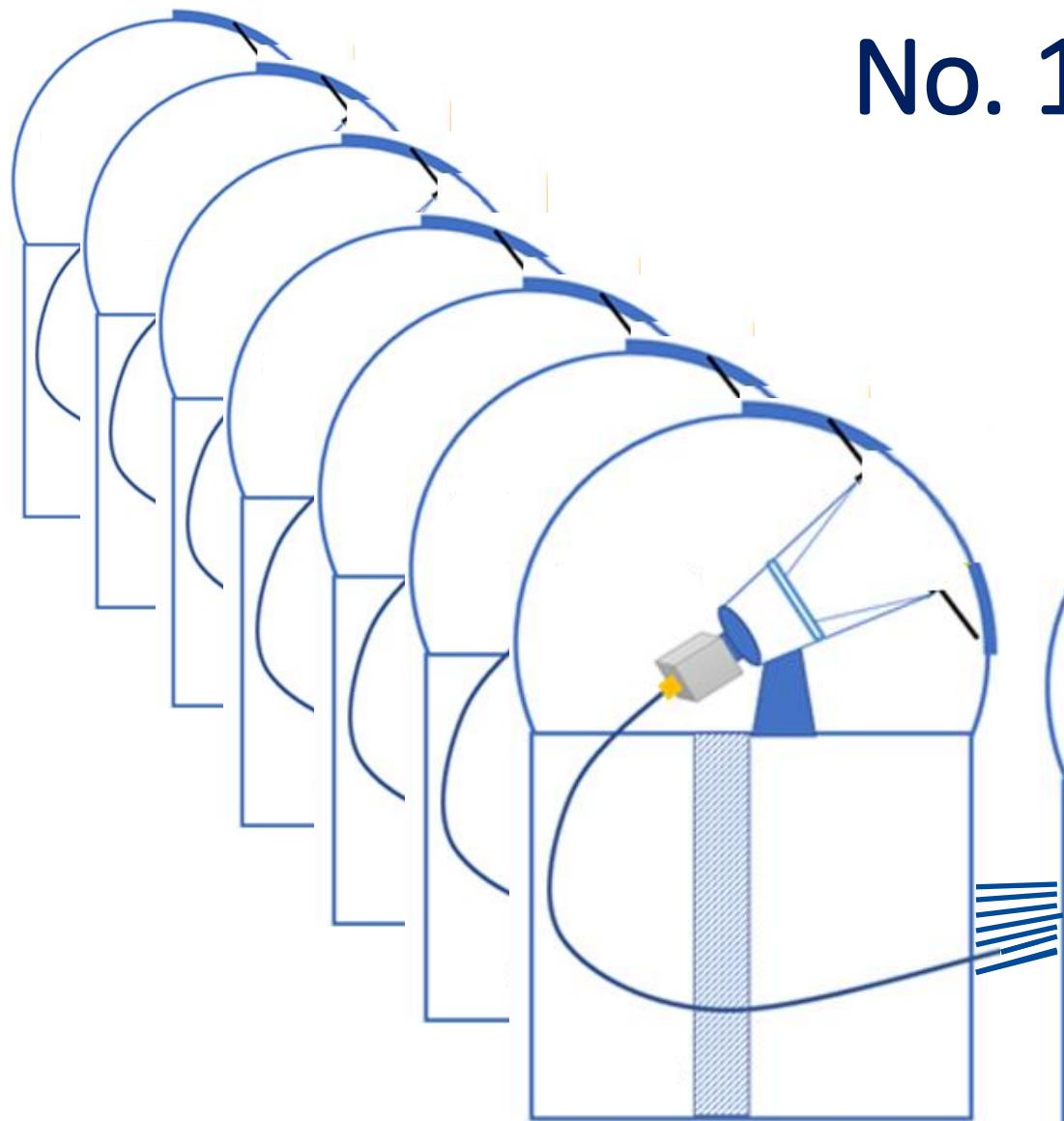


Hernandez E., Roth M.M., Petermann K., Kelz A., Moralejo B., Madhav K., 2021, JOSAB, 38, A36

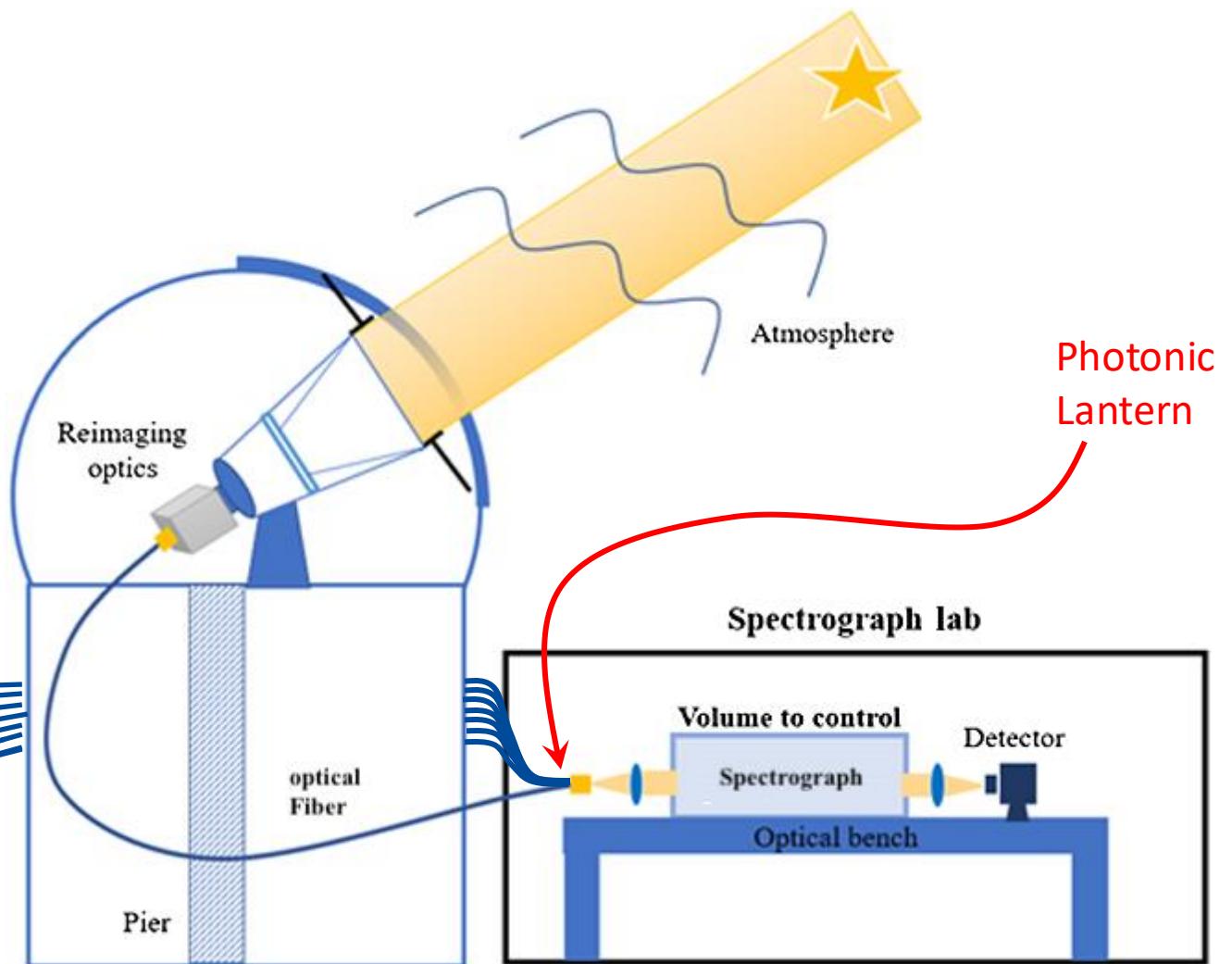
Optical Fibers in Astronomy

There are (at least) 3 good reasons
why to couple spectrographs
with optical fibers

No. 1: Stability !



Angel J.R.P. et al. 1977, ApJ, 218, 776



Hubbard E.N., Angel J.R.P., Gresham M.S., 1979, ApJ, 229, 1074

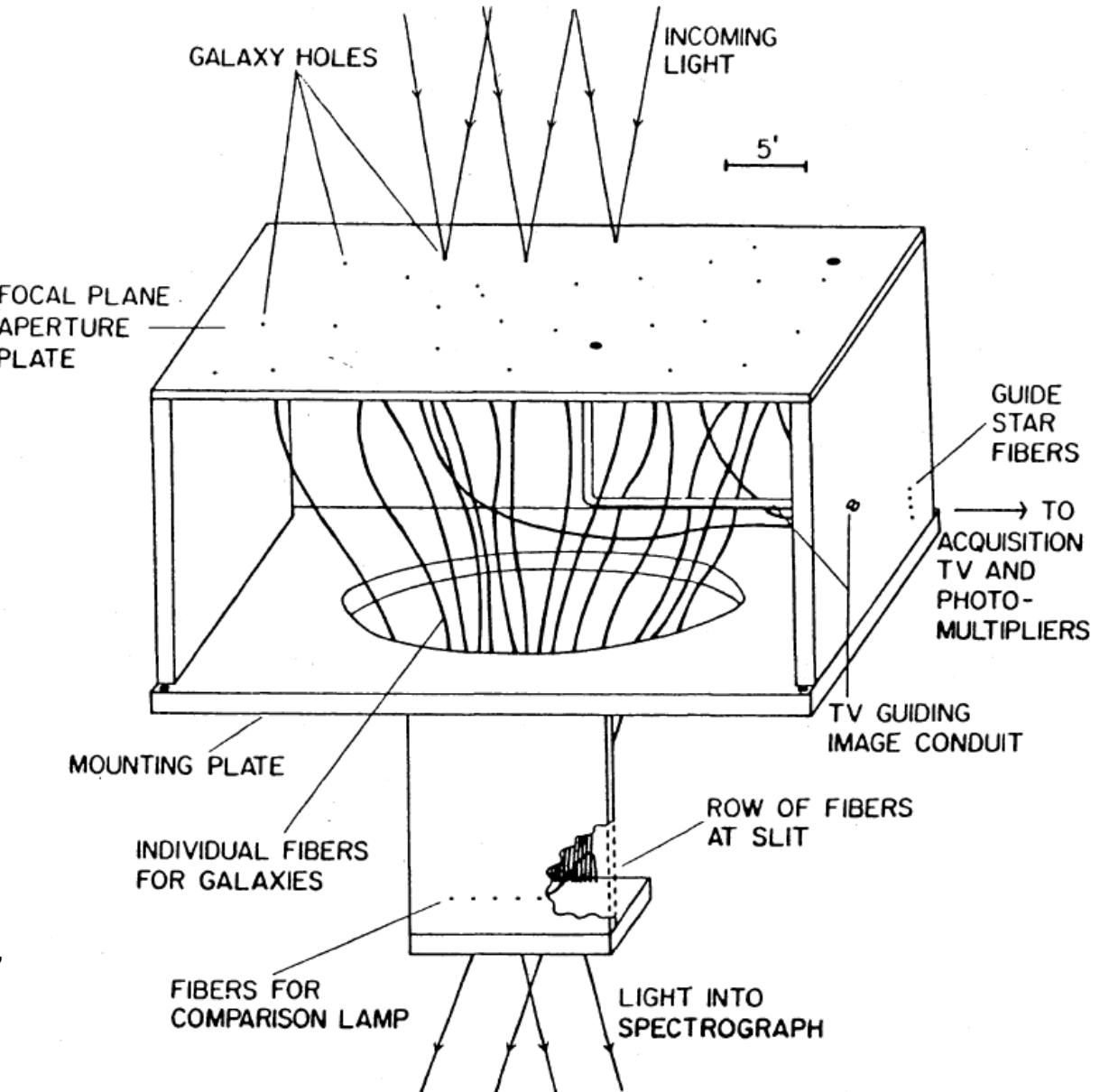
No. 2: Multiplex !

Multi-Object Spectroscopy

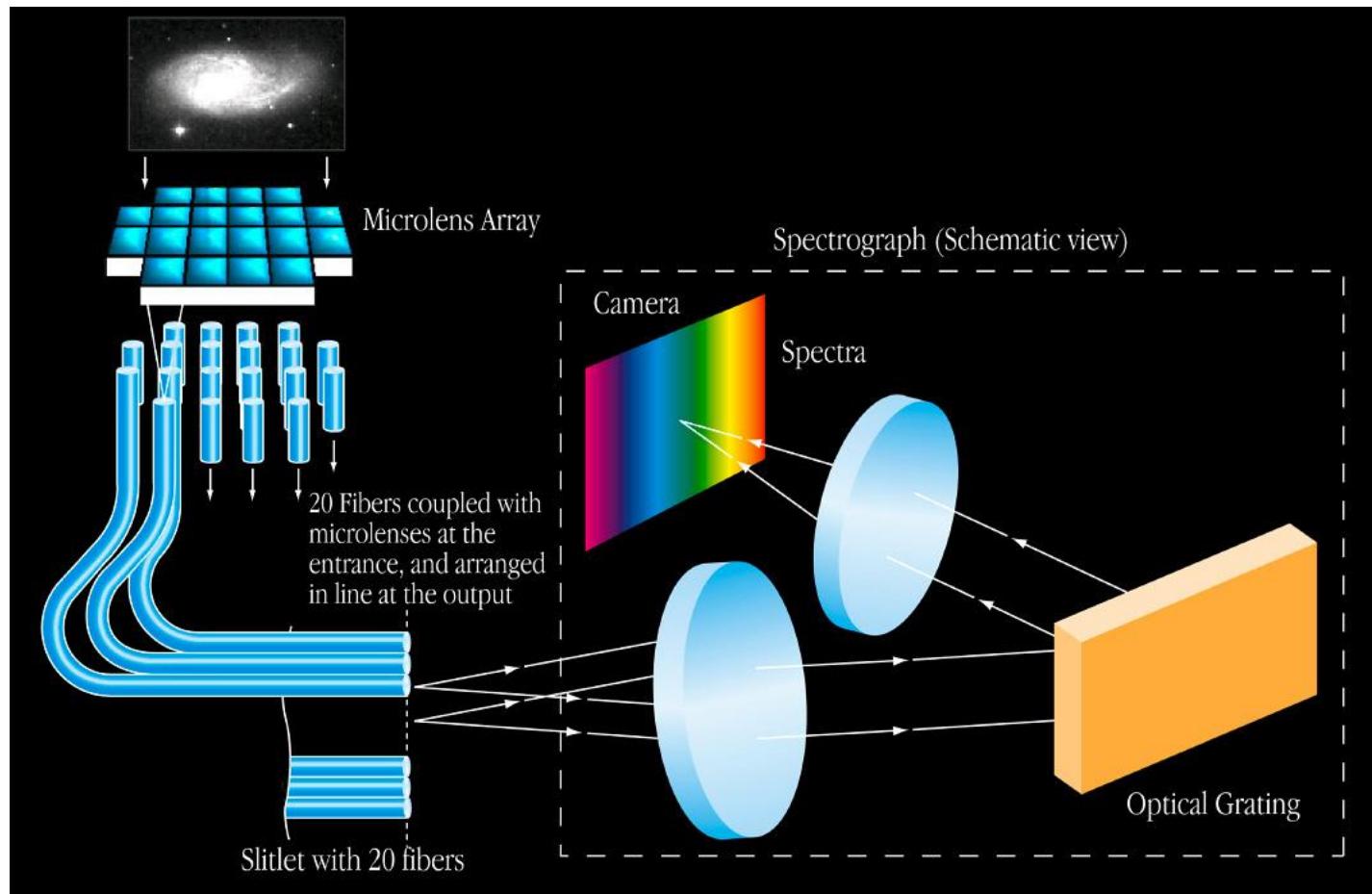
The „MEDUSA“ Spectrograph

Hill J.M., Angel J.R.P., Scott J.S., Lindley D., Hintzen P., 1982,
SPIE, 331, 279

See also review by Hill J.M., 1988, ASPC, 3, 77



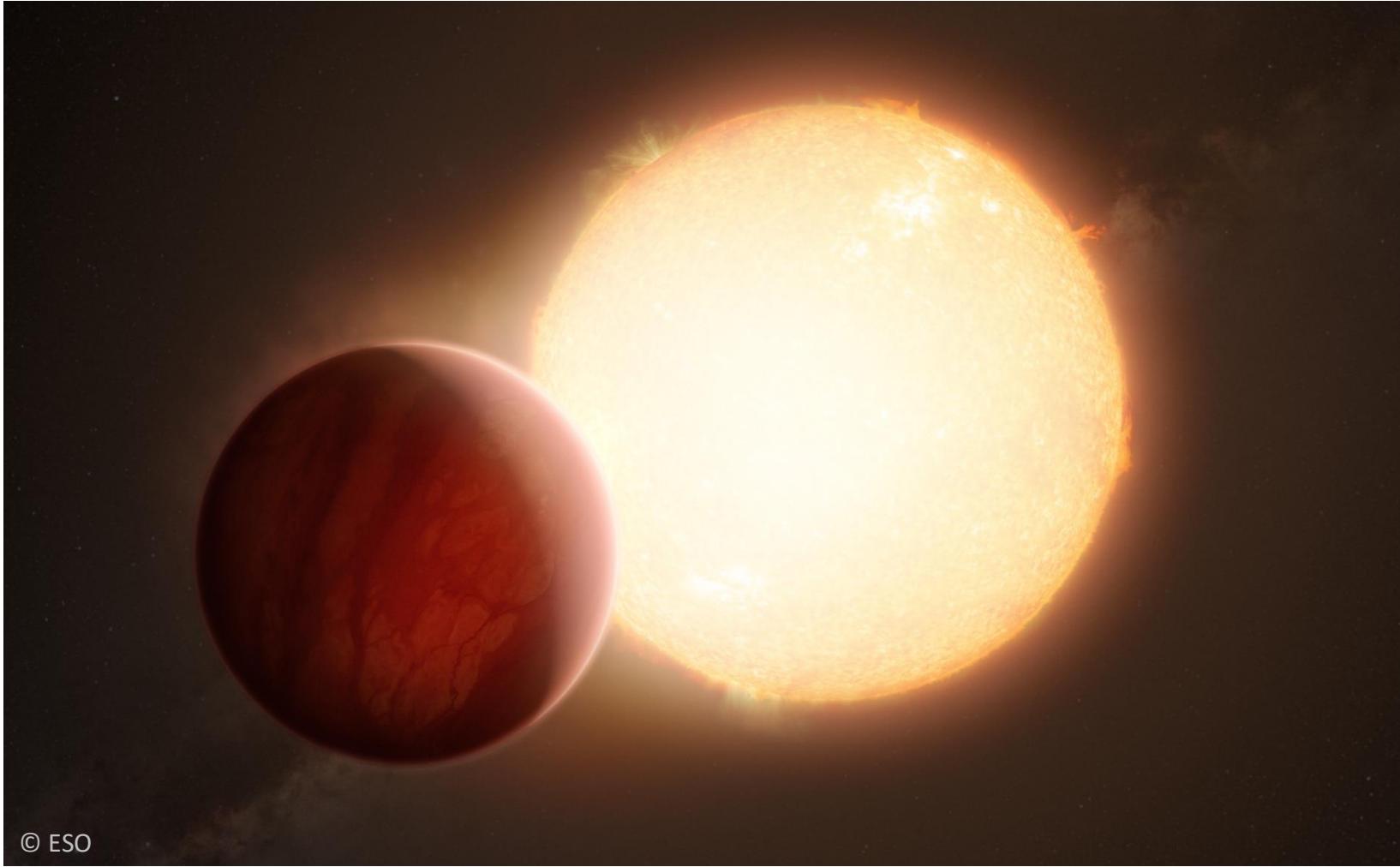
No. 3: Imaging Spectroscopy !



Credit: ESO

No. 1: Stability

Exoplanet system



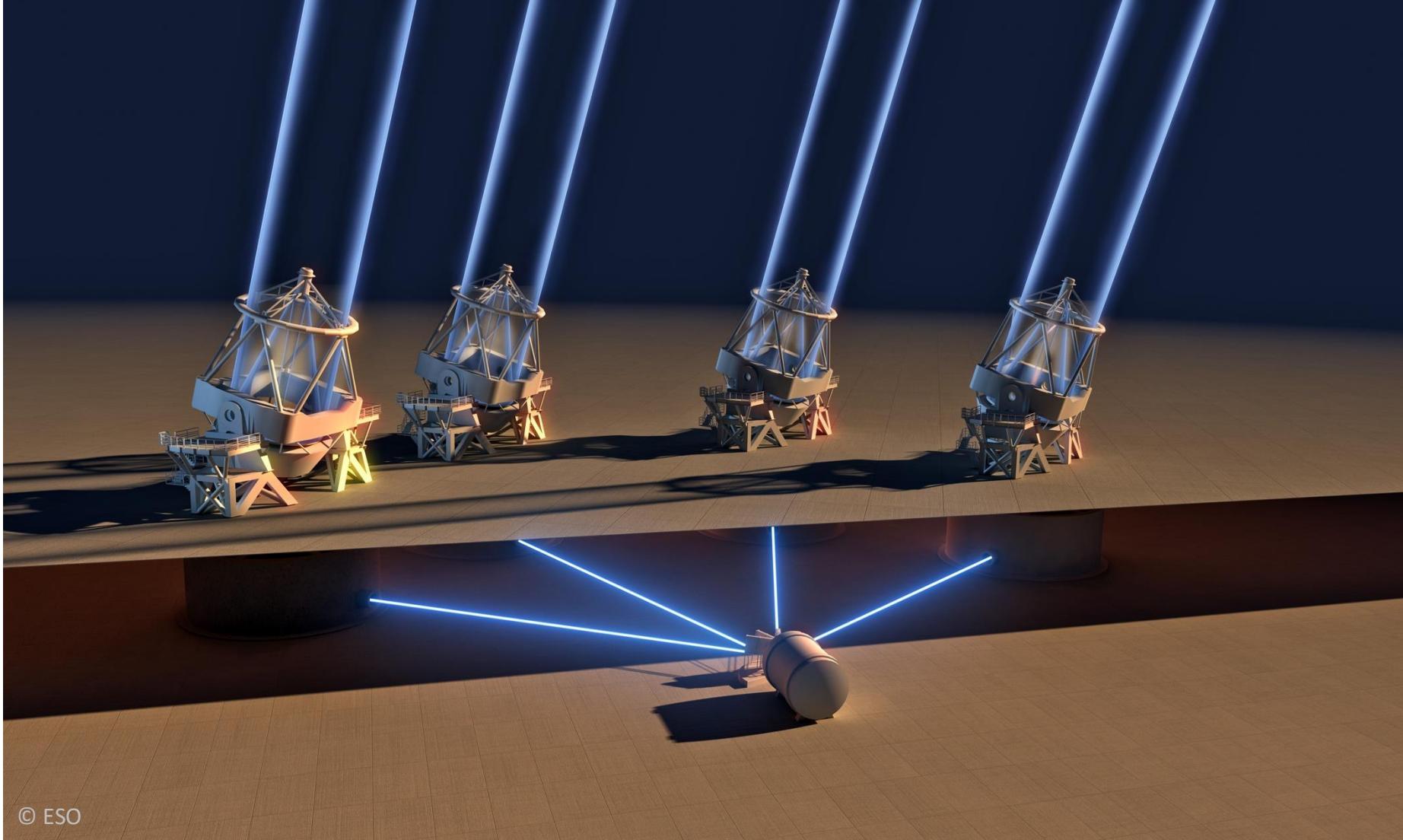
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Photo: A. Mahmoud

Michel Mayor
Nobel Price 2019

ESPRESSO @ VLT



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ESPRESSO @ VLT

	HR (1-UT)	UHR (1-UT)	MR (4-UT)
Wavelength range	380–788 nm	380–788 nm	380–788 nm
Resolving power (median)	140,000	190,000	70,000
Aperture on sky	1''.0	0''.5	4x1''.0
Total efficiency	11%	5%	11%
RV precision (requirement)	< 10 cm/s	< 5 m/s	< 5 m/s
Limiting V-band magnitude*	~17	~16	~20
Binning	1x1, 2x1	1x1	4x2, 8x4
Spectral sampling (average)	4.5 px	2.5 px	5.5 px (binned x2)
Spatial sampling per slice	9.0 (4.5) px	5.0 px	5.5 px (binned x4)
Number of slices	2	2	1

ESPRESSO @ VLT



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ESPRESSO @ VLT



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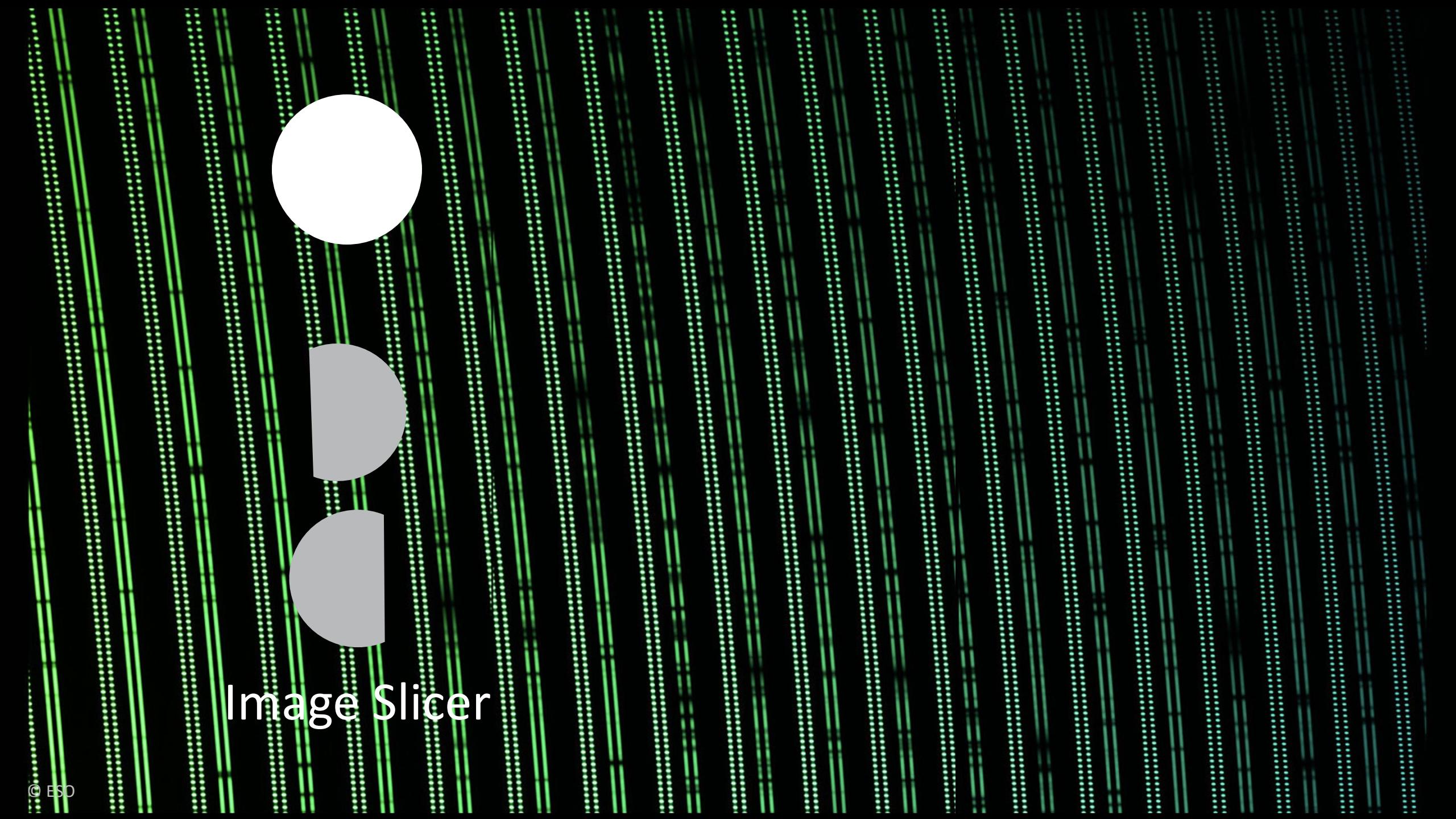
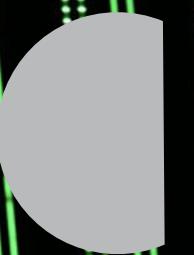
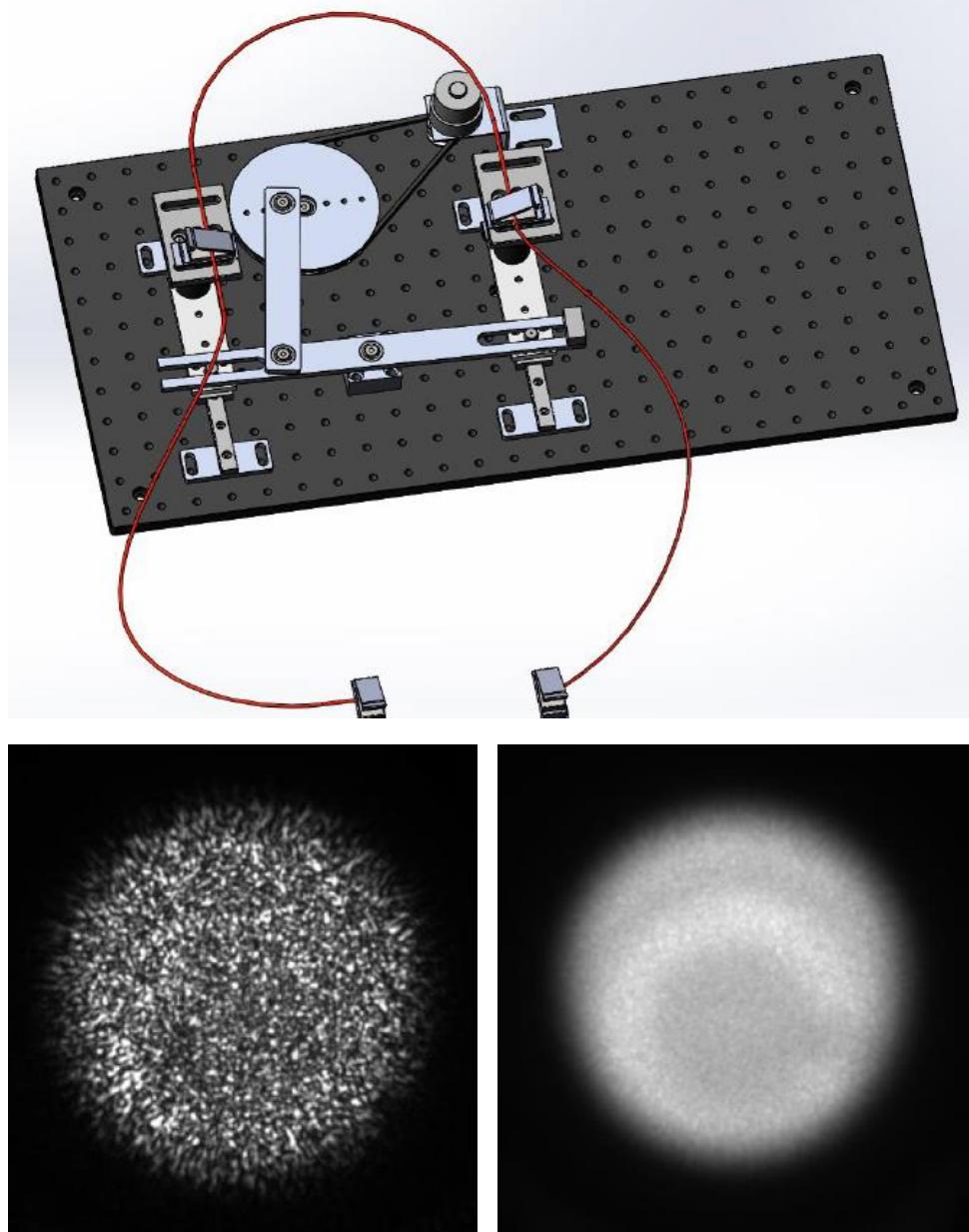
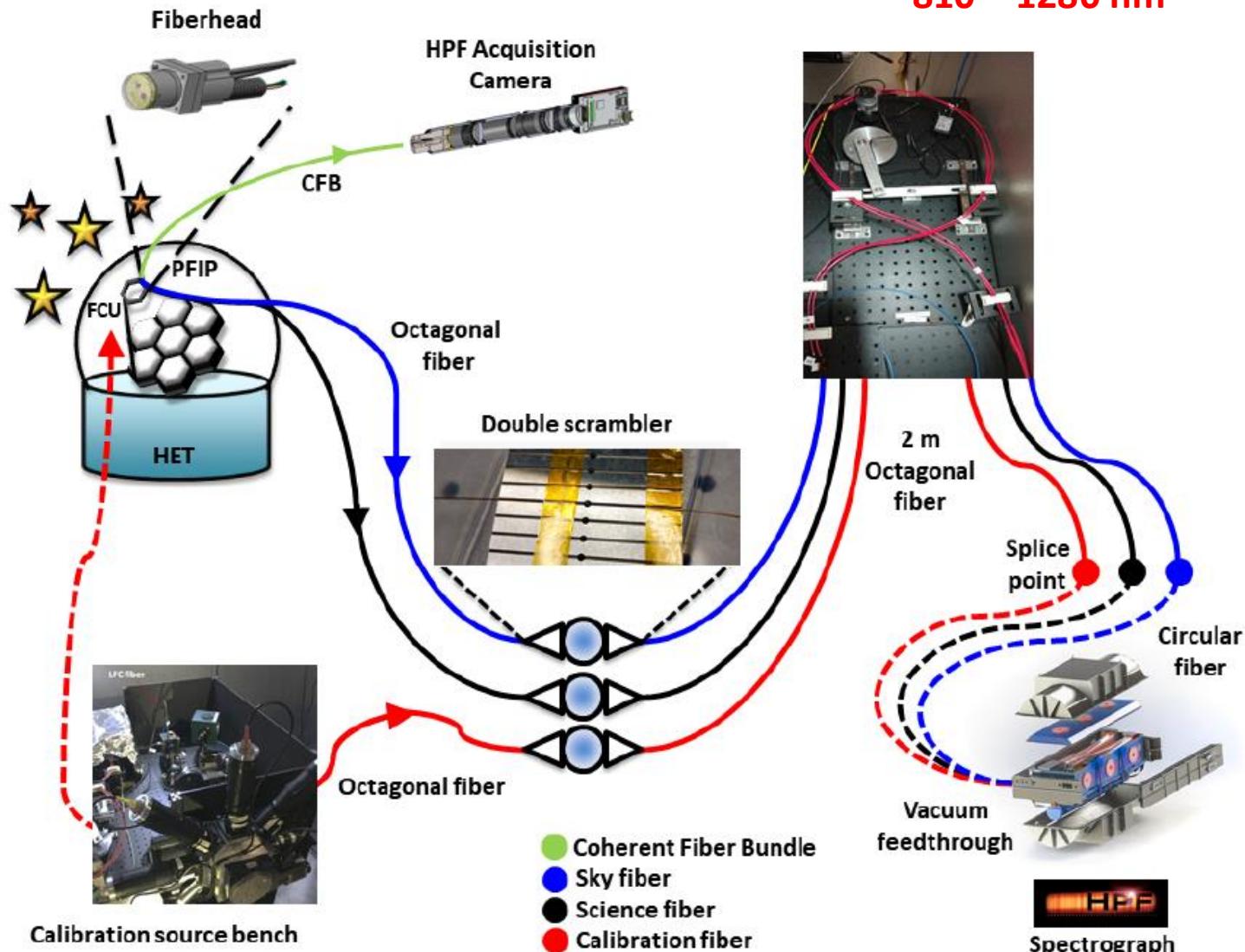


Image Slicer



HPF: Habitable-Zone Planet Finder

810 – 1280 nm



Kanodia S., Mahadevan S., Ramsey L.W., SJ. et al., 2018, SPIE, 10702, 107026Q

Hill 1988, ASPC 3, 77

CARMENES @ Calar Alto 3.5m

	VIS channel	NIR channel
Wavelength coverage, $\Delta\lambda^*$	<u>520-960 nm</u>	<u>960-1710 nm</u>
Detector	1 x 4kx4k e2v CCD231-84	2 x 2kx2k Hawaii-2RG
Wavelength calibration	Th-Ne lamps & Fabry-Pérot etalon	U-Ne lamps & Fabry-Pérot etalon
Working temperature, T_{work}	285.000 ± 0.005 K	140.000 ± 0.005 K
Spectral resolution, R	94,600	80,400
Mean sampling	2.8 pixels	
Mean inter-fibre spacing	7.0 pixels	
Cross disperser	Grism, LF5 glass	Grism, infrasil
Reflective optics coating	Silver	Gold
No. of orders	55	28
Échelle grating	2 x Richardson Gratings R4 (31.6 mm^{-1})	
Target fibre field of view	1.5 arcsec	
A&G system field of view	3 arcmin	
A&G system band	Approx. R	



© Calar Alto

Multi-Object Spectroscopy

Multi-Object Spectroscopy

THE ASTRONOMICAL JOURNAL, 120:1579–1587, 2000 September
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THE SLOAN DIGITAL SKY SURVEY: TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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(THE SDSS COLLABORATION)

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9414 citations in ADS
(as of July 31, 2025)



York D.G., Adelman J., Anderson J.E.,
Anderson S.F., Annis J., Bahcall N.A.,
Bakken J.A., et al., 2000,
AJ, 120, 1579

SLOAN Digital Sky Survey

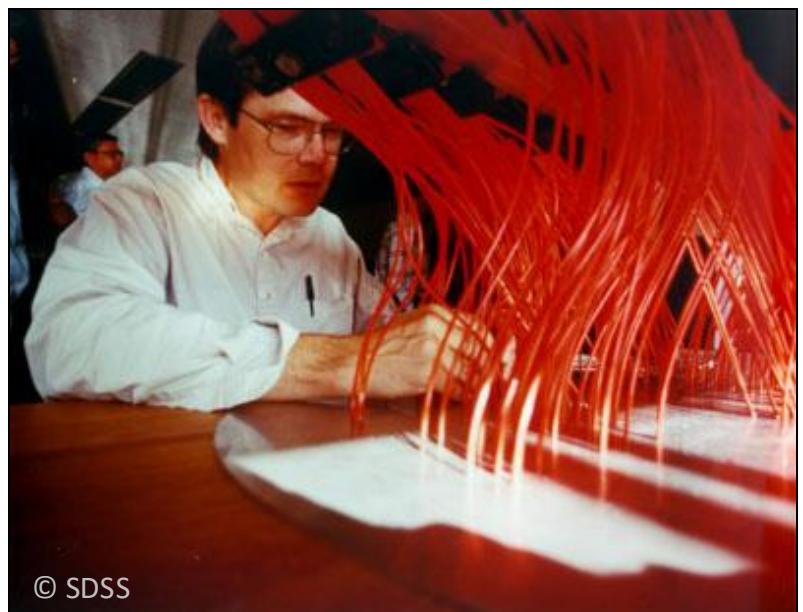
2.5m SDSS Telescope
Apache Point Observatory



© SDSS



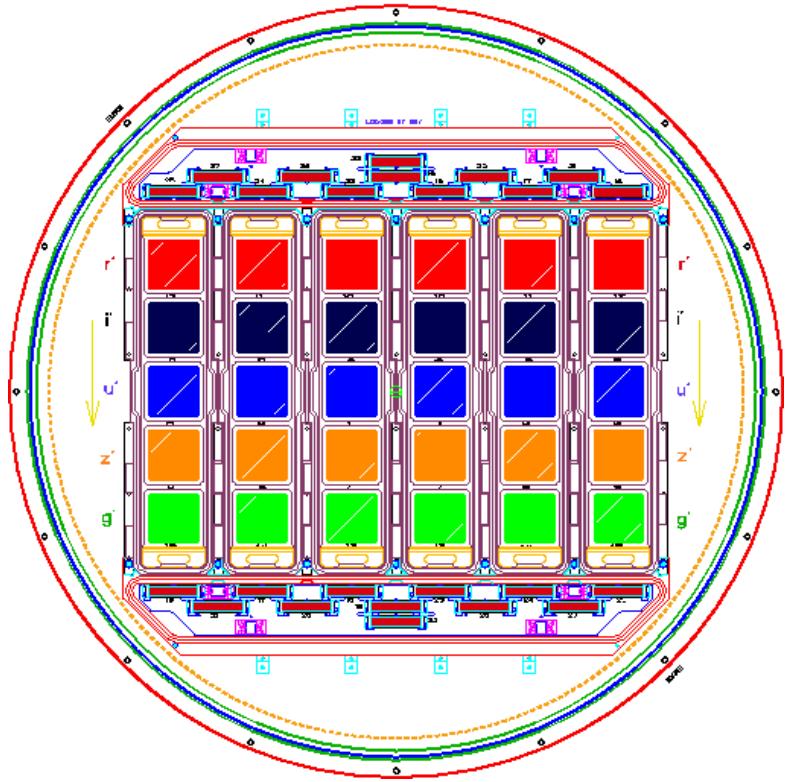
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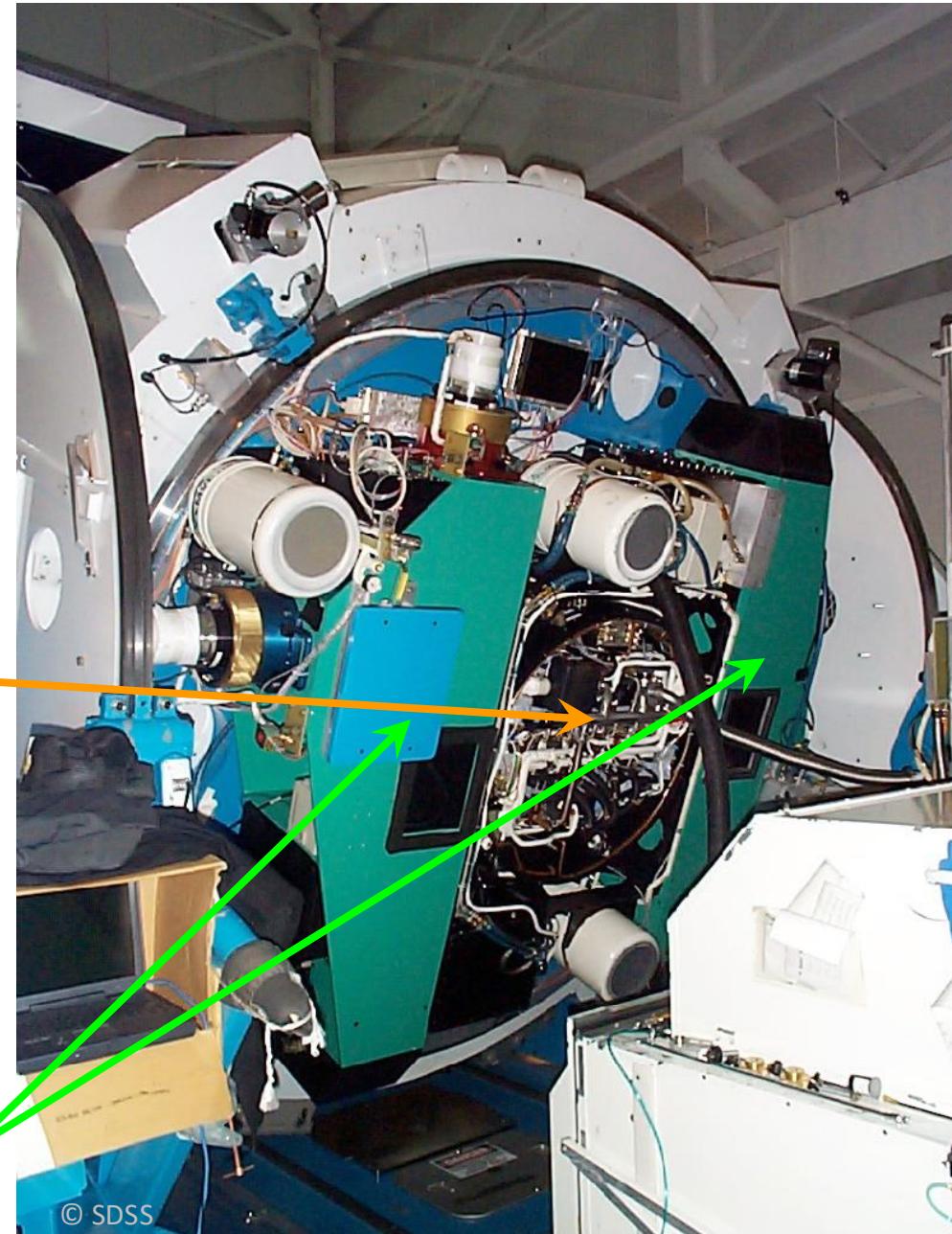
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SLOAN Digital Sky Survey

Direct imaging CCD camera,
30 x SITe 2048×2048 pixels



two 2-channel-spectrographs (blue/red),
fiber-coupled to the telescope



SLOAN Digital Sky Survey

Combined imaging and spectroscopic survey:

SDSS-I: 2000-2005

SDSS-II: 2005-2008 → DR7

SDSS-III: 2008-2014 → DR8, DR9, DR10

Deep images in 5 filter bands:

u', g', r', i', z'

359/481/623/764/906 nm

DR8: largest optical survey dataset

- images for >500 million stars and galaxies
- spectra for ~2 million objects
- 8000 square degrees survey area

Telescope and instrumentation (York et al. 2000):

2.5m telescope, f/5, 3° FoV, 0.5m auxiliar telescope (photometric calibration)

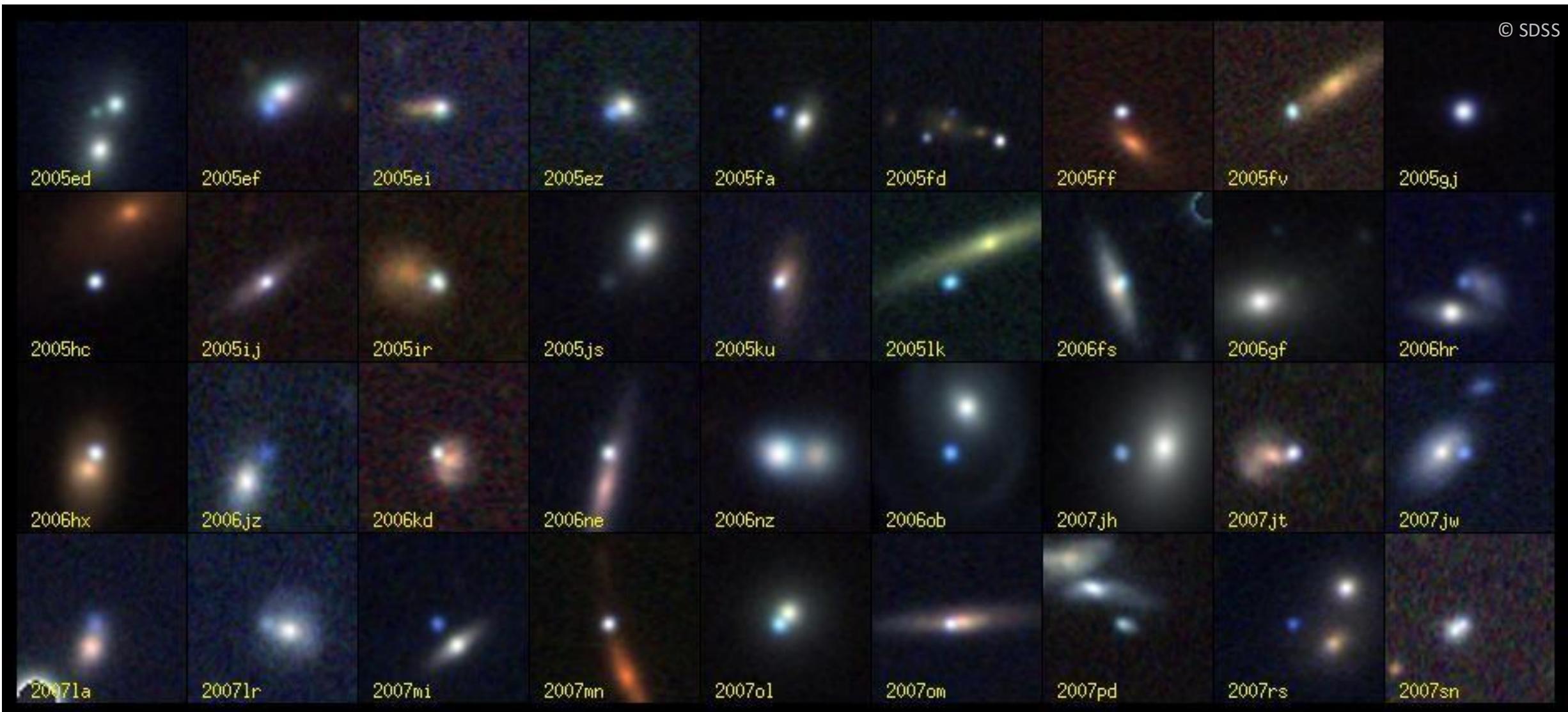
- 120 MPixel CCD camera, FoV 1.5 deg²
- 2 fiber-coupled spectrographs > **600 spectra per exposure**

SLOAN Digital Sky Survey

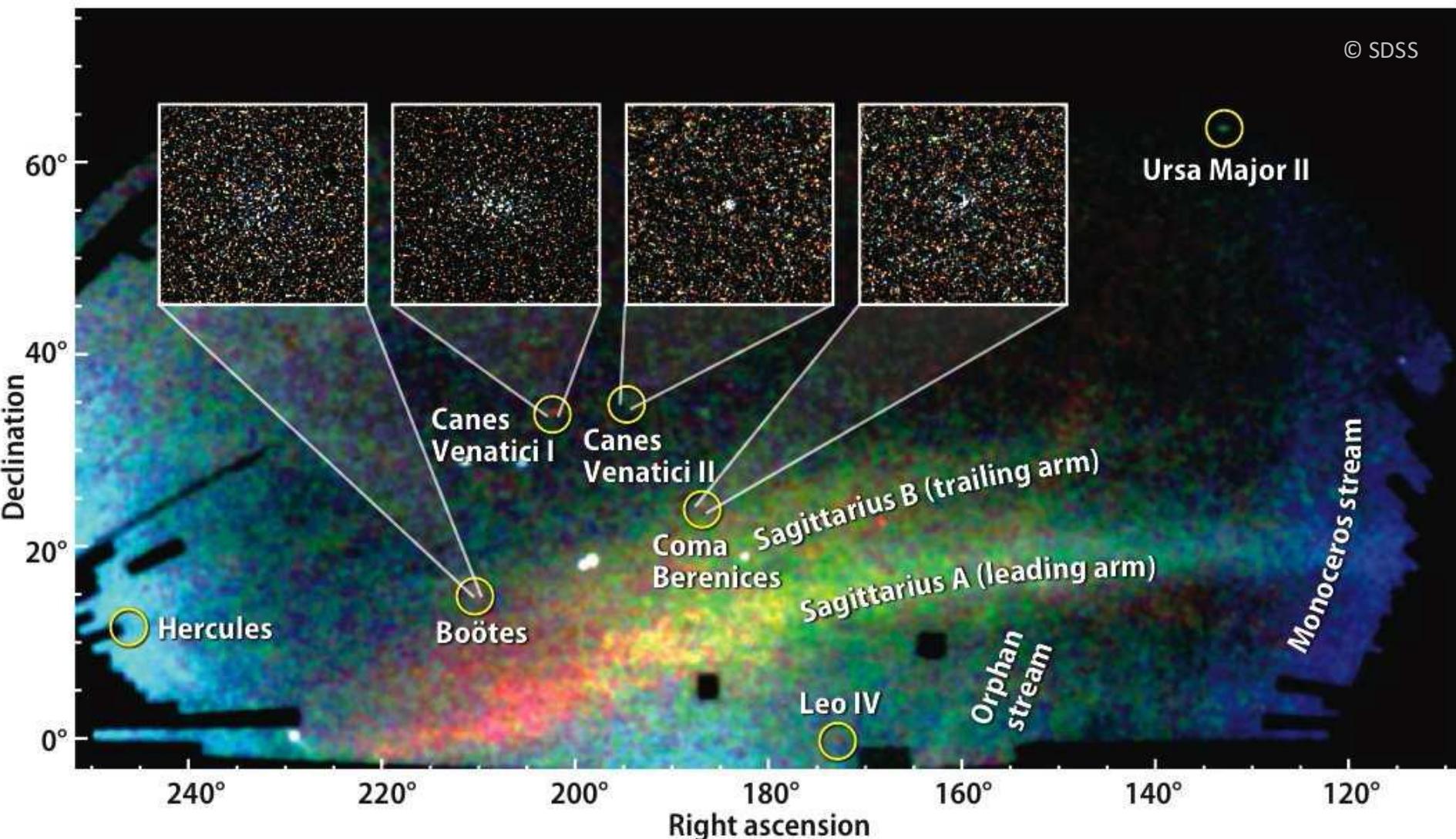
- The discovery of the most distant quasars, powered by supermassive black holes in the early Universe
 - The discovery of large populations of sub-stellar objects
 - Mapping extended mass distributions around galaxies with weak gravitational lensing
 - Systematic characterization of the galaxy population
 - The demonstration of ubiquitous substructure in the outer Milky Way
 - Demonstration of the common origin of dynamical asteroid families
 - Precision measurement of the luminosity distribution of quasars
 - Precision measurements of large scale clustering and cosmological constraints
 - Precision measurement of early structure with the Lyman-alpha forest
 - Detailed characterization of small and intermediate scale clustering of galaxies
 - Discovery of many new companions of the Milky Way and Andromeda
 - Discovery of stars escaping the Galaxy
 - Discovery of acoustic oscillation signatures in the clustering of galaxies
 - Measurements of the clustering of quasars over a wide range of cosmic time
- total of more than 10000 publications in refereed journals
→ countless dissertations

SLOAN Digital Sky Survey

Supernovae type Ia



SLOAN Digital Sky Survey



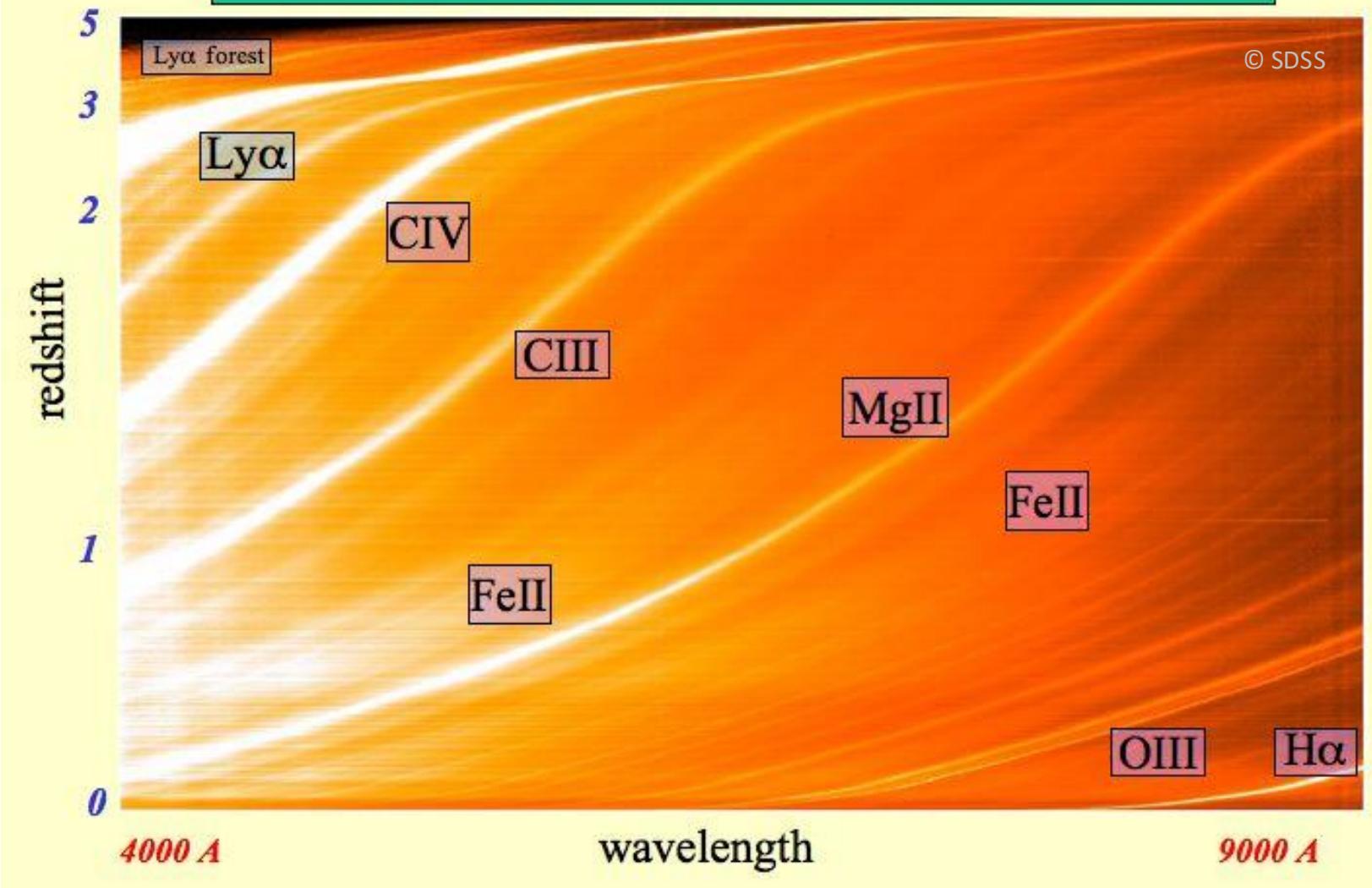
Map of stars in the outer regions of the Milky Way (across 1/5 of the sky). Trails and streams that cross the image are stars torn from disrupted Milky Way satellites (Belokurov et al. 2006).

Four insets: surviving, very faint dwarf galaxies.

The color-coding represents distance, with red being the most distant and blue being the closest.

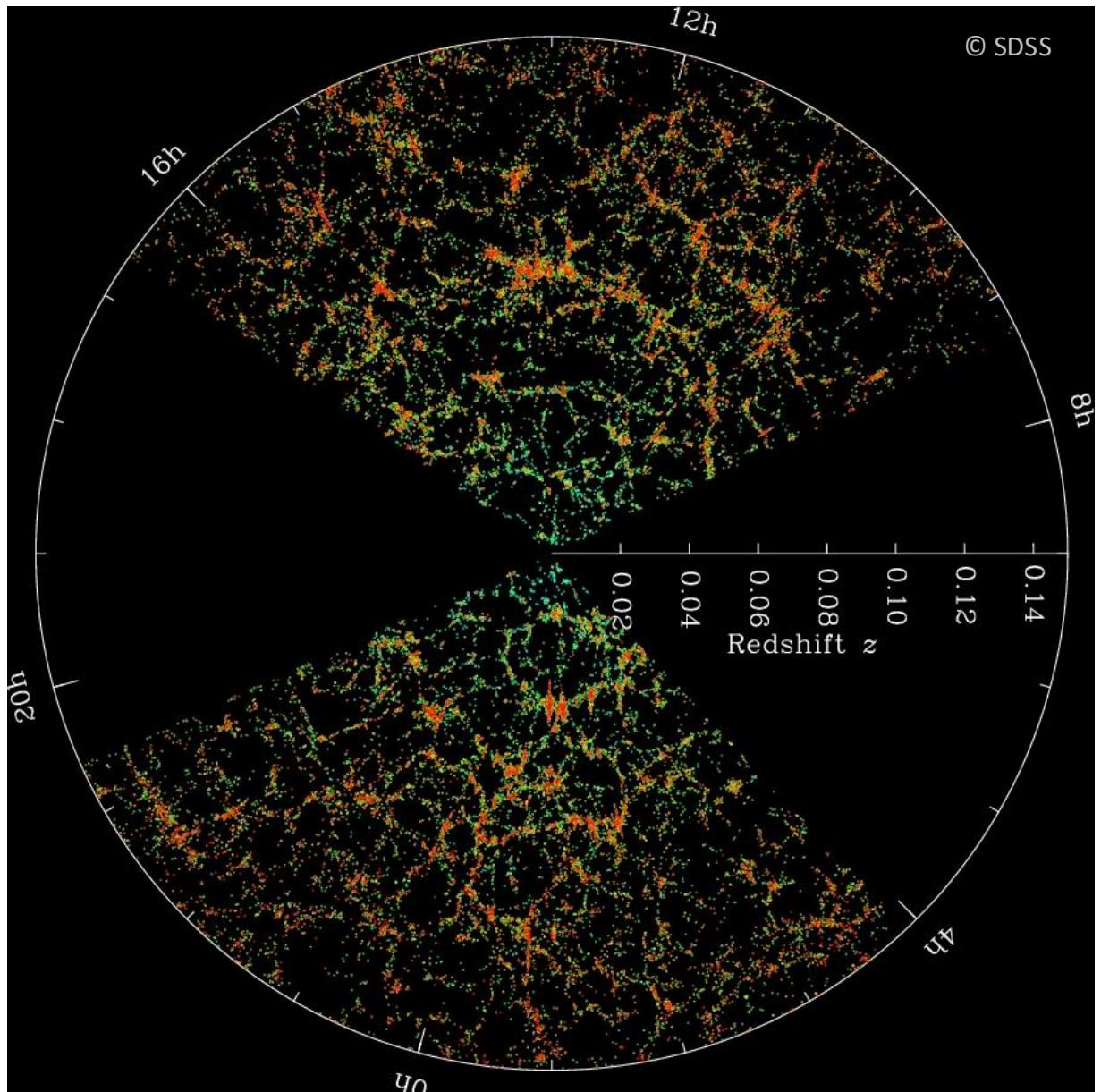
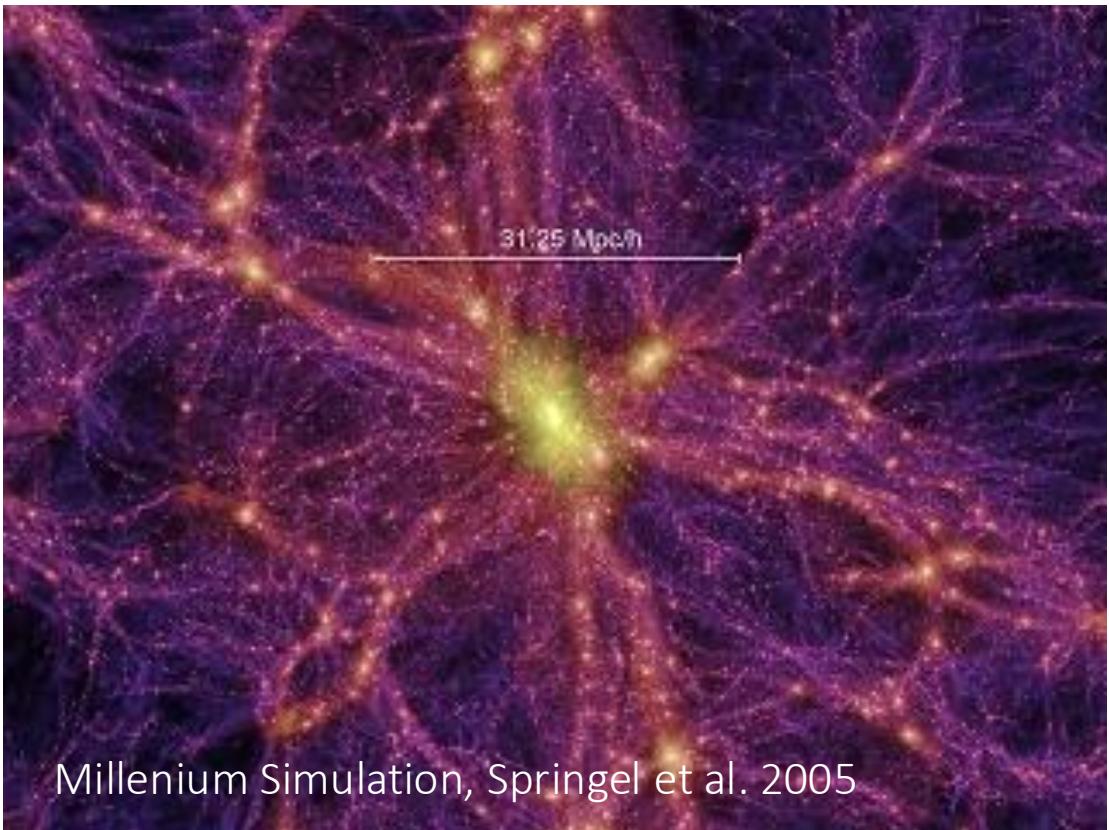
SLOAN Digital Sky Survey

46,420 Quasars from the SDSS Data Release Three

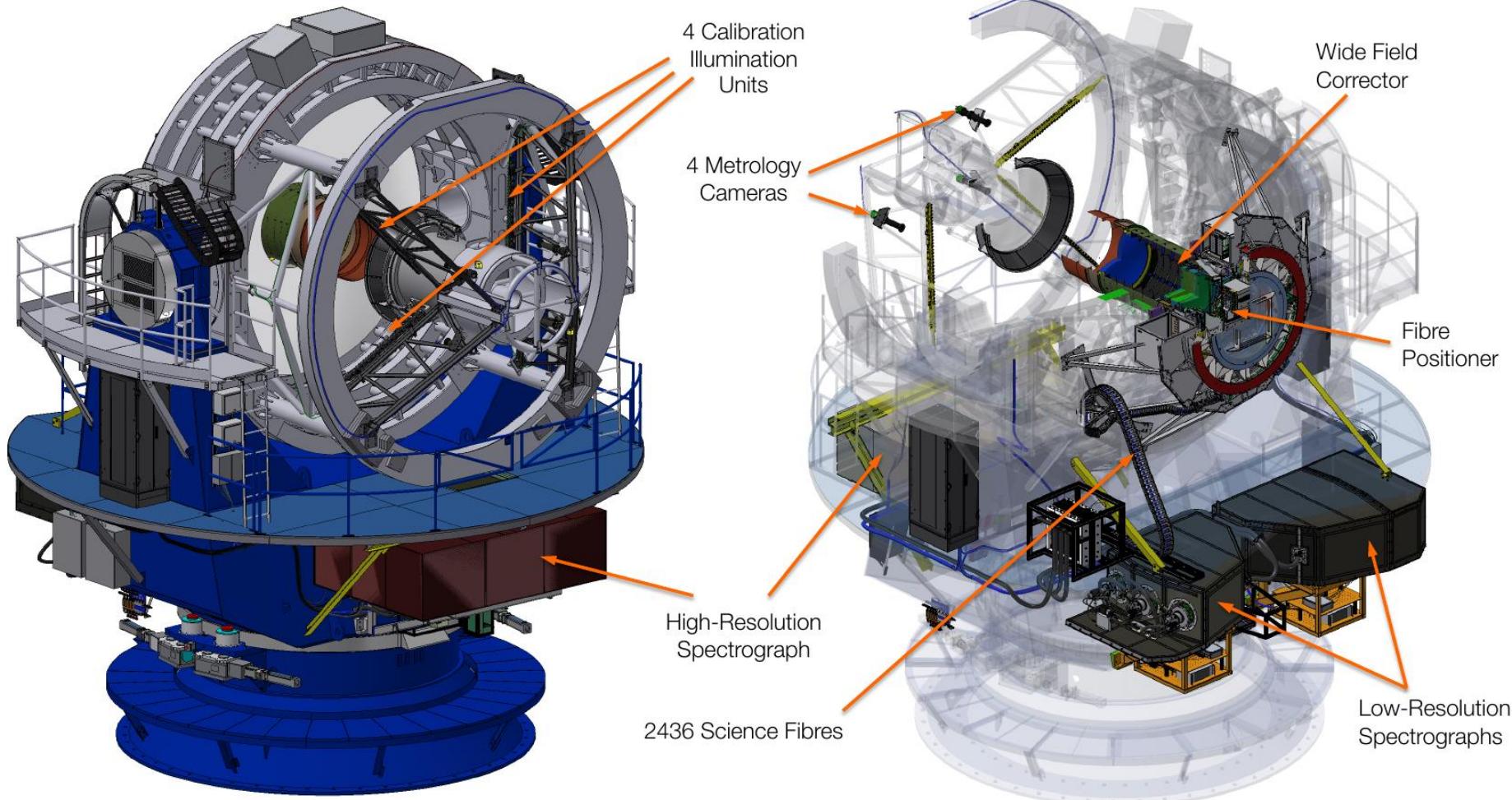


SLOAN Digital Sky Survey

SDSS redshift survey
to test cosmological models



4MOST: flagship survey facility for ESO



© AIP

4MOST

Requirements

2-hour observation to yield:

- radial velocities with a precision of better than **2 km/s** for any Gaia source ($G_{\text{Vega}} < 20.5$ mag)
- stellar parameters and abundances of up to 15 chemical elements to **15.5 mag**, abundances with a precision of better than 0.15 dex for key elements down to **18 mag**
- redshifts of **$r_{\text{AB}} < 22$ mag** galaxies and AGN

Field of view

Shape: hexagonal

Size: **4.2 deg²**

Diameter: **2.5 deg**

30,000 deg²

2436

Shape: circular

Size: **1.65 arcsec²**

Diameter: **1.45 arcsec**

15 arcsec

LRS: **3.2 Mh/yr**

HRS: **1.6 Mh/yr**

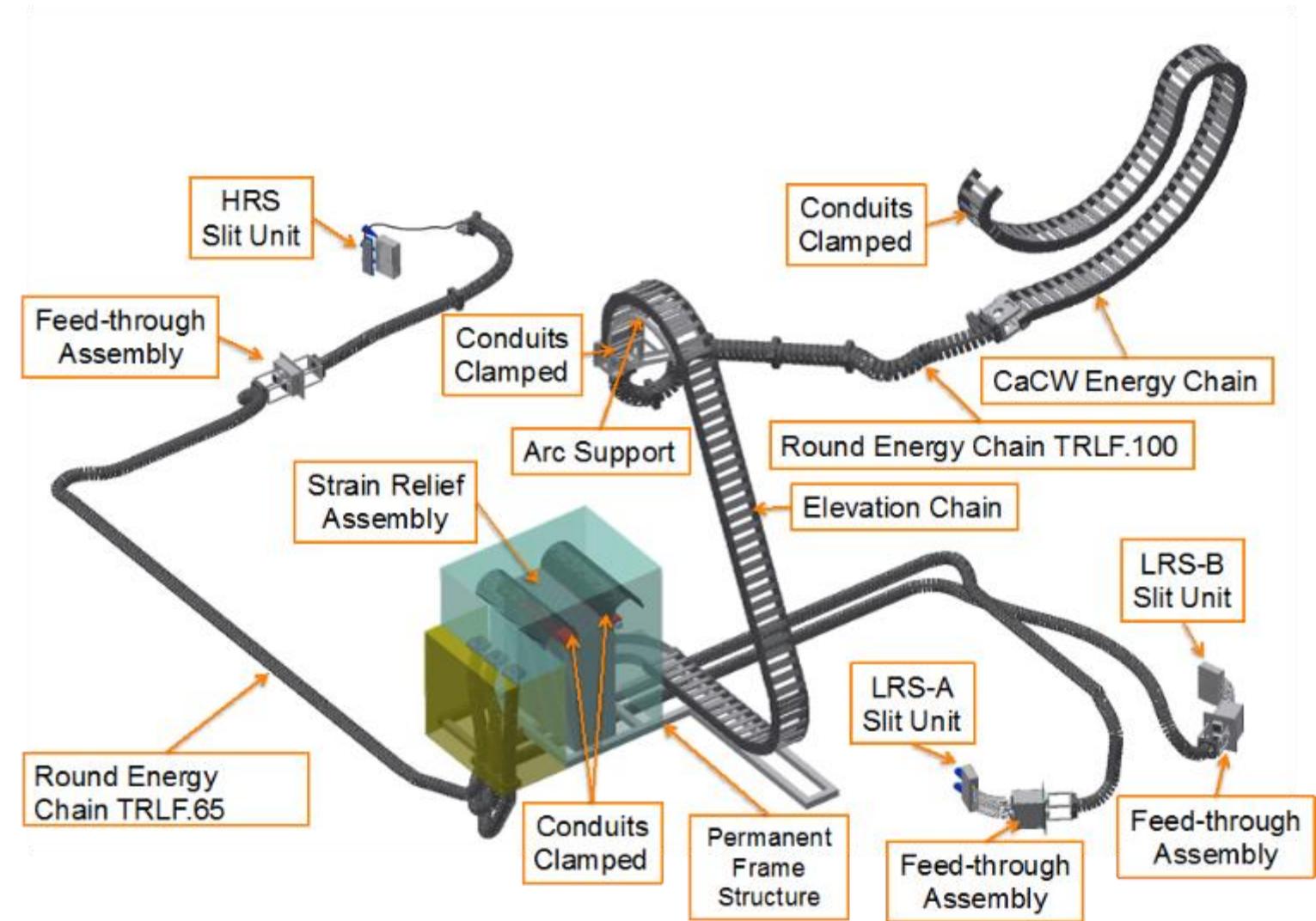
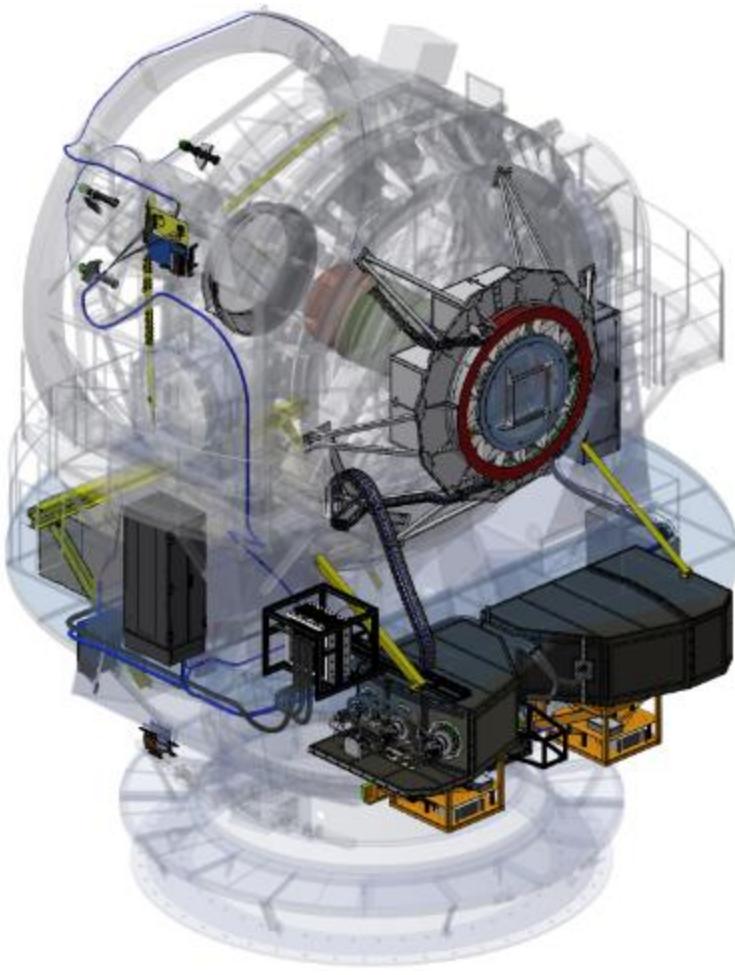
Readout noise: **< 2.3 e⁻**

Readout modes: normal (100 kHz), fast (400 kHz)

Binning modes (cross-dispersion × spectral): **1×1, 2×1, 1×2, 2×2, 1×4**

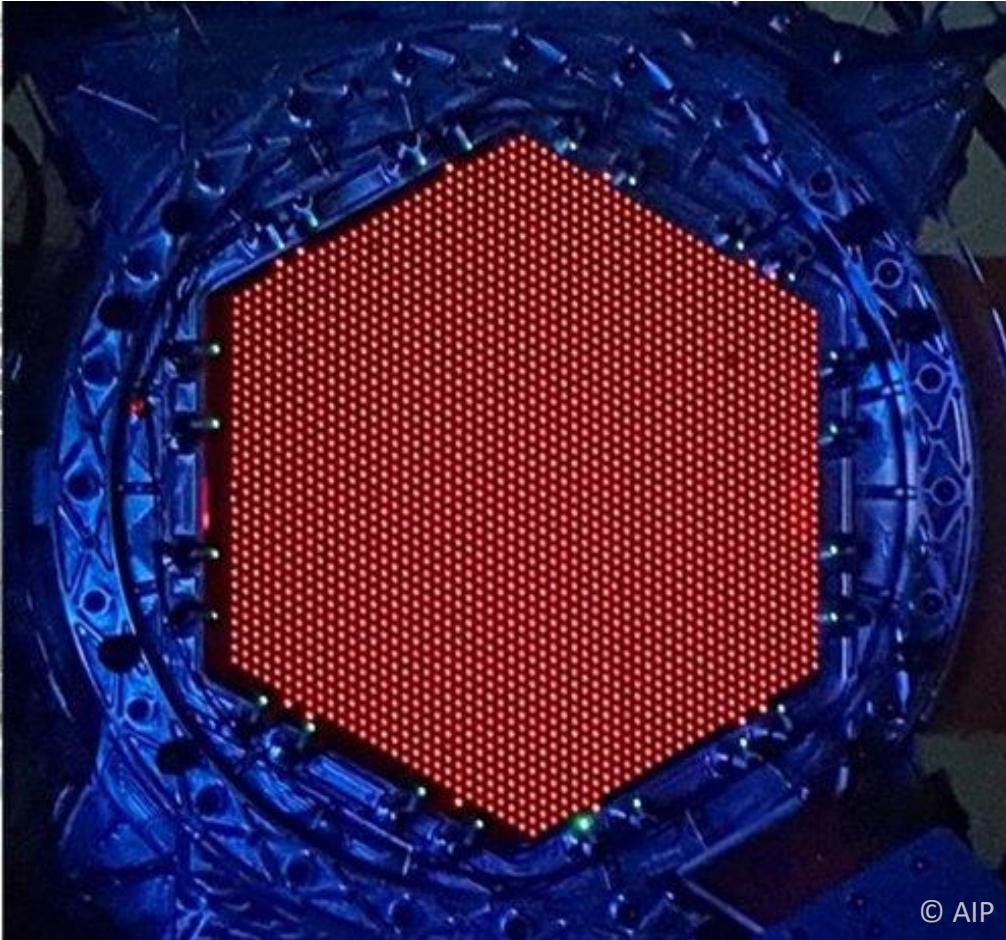
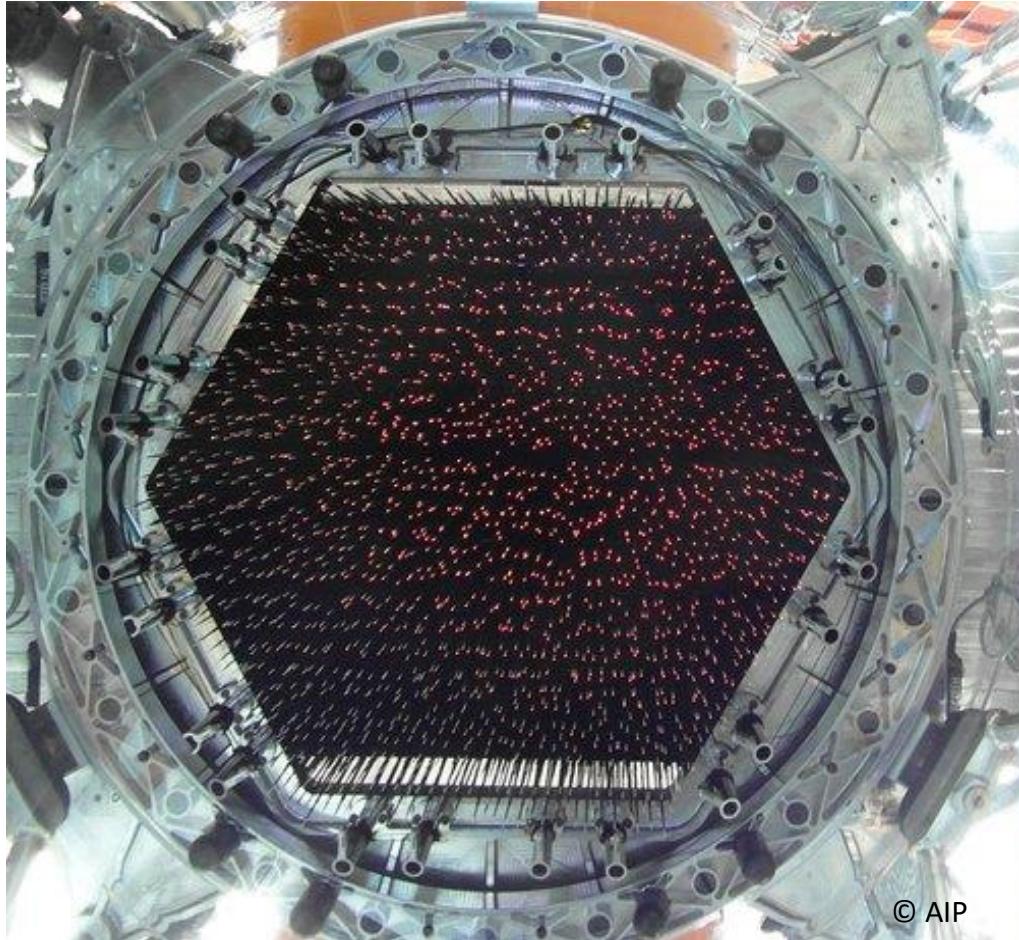
5-year survey: more than **20 million spectra** at low resolution and more than **3 million spectra** at high resolution.

4MOST Fiberfeed System



4MOST Fiber Positioner „AESOP“

- 2436 movable science fibre spines
- 12 guide fibre bundles
- 24 fixed fiducial fibres

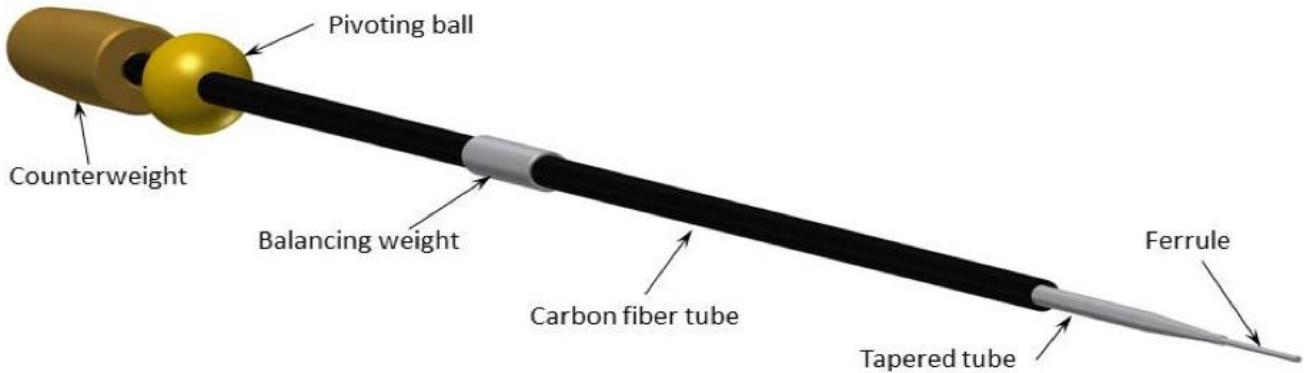


Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium

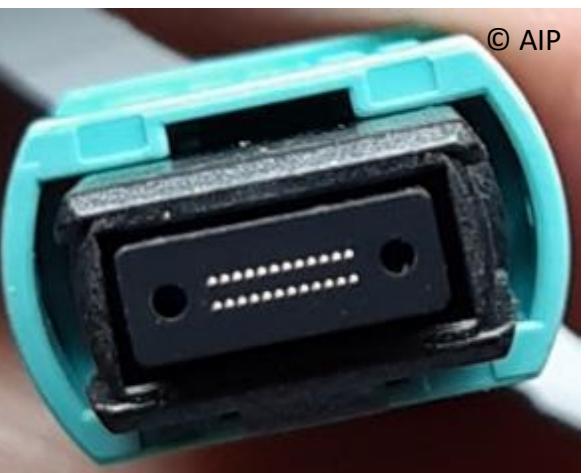
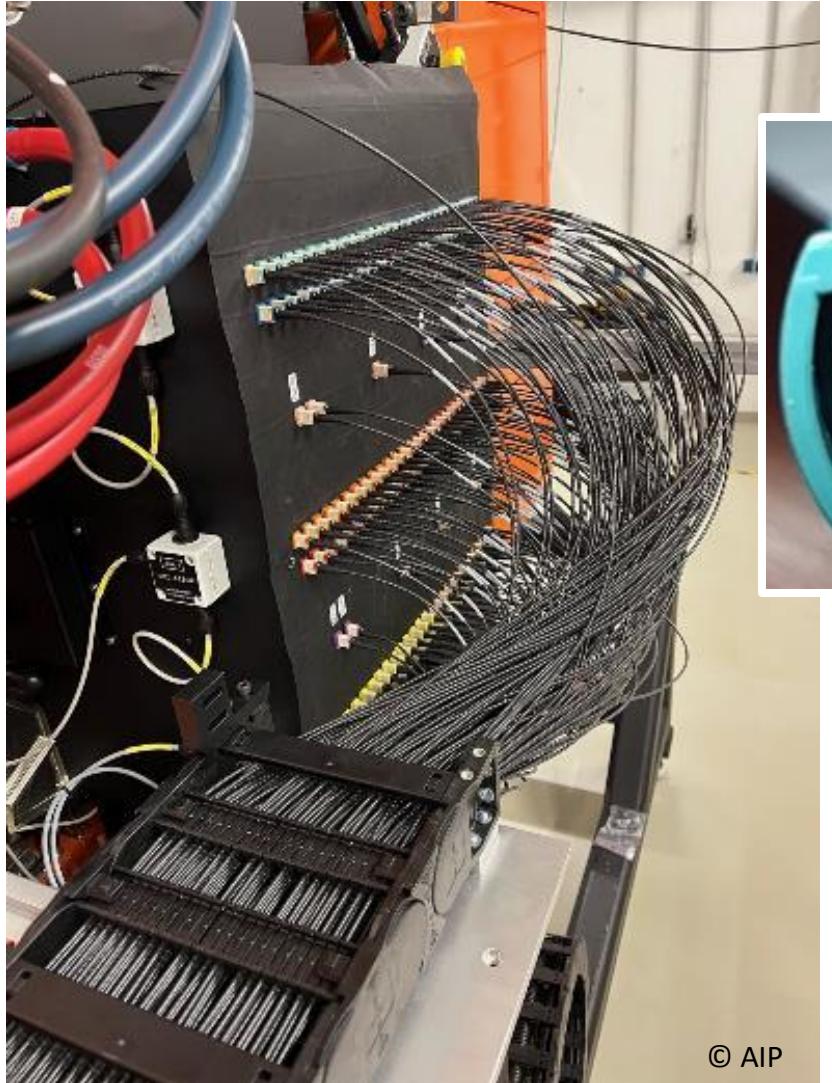
Credit:
Andreas Kelz and
4MOST Consortium

- 2436 Fibers
- Tilting Spine Fiber Positioner
- Positioning with 2 minutes over patrol field of 0.5m diameter

Developed by AAO, Australia

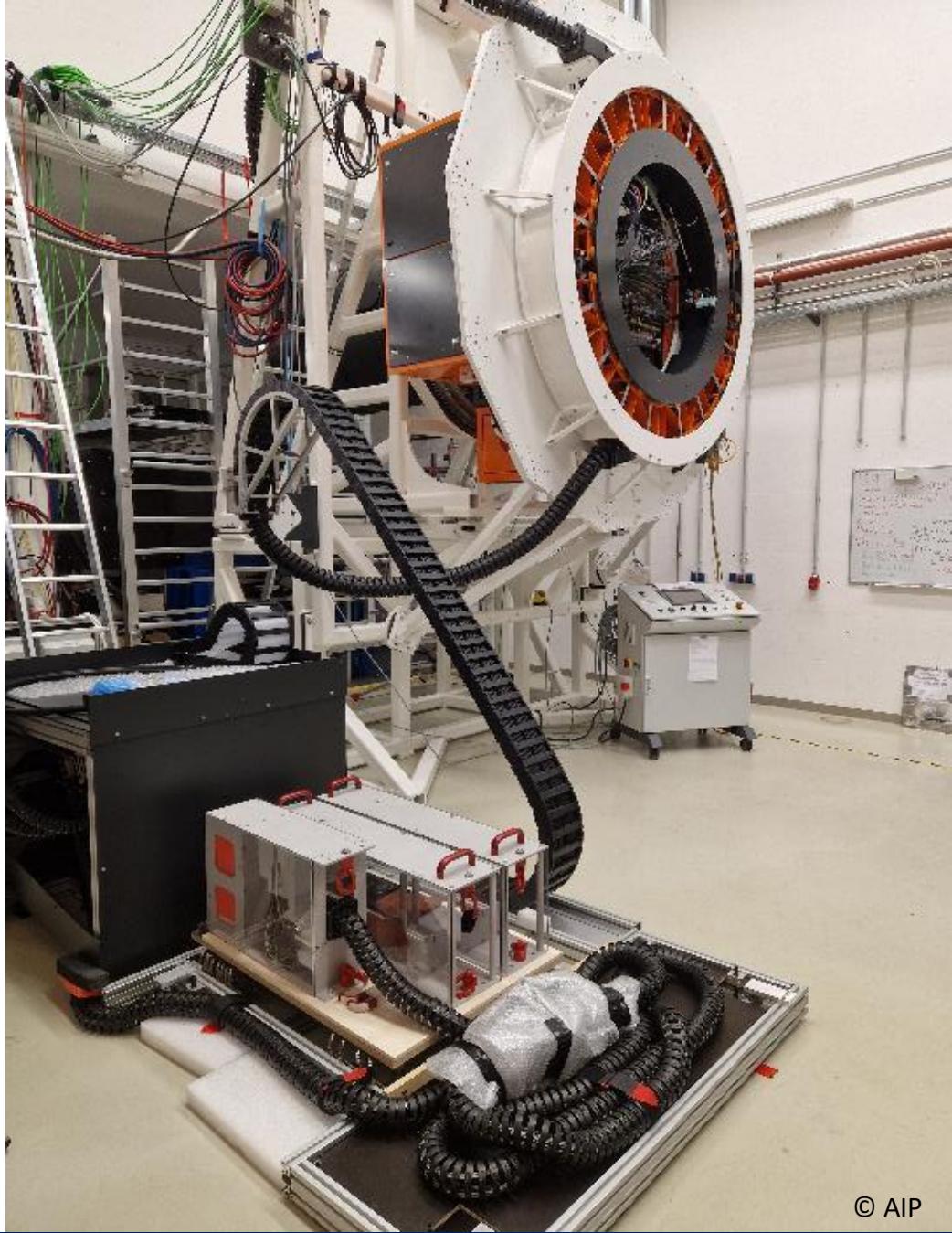


4MOST Fiber Cable Wrap

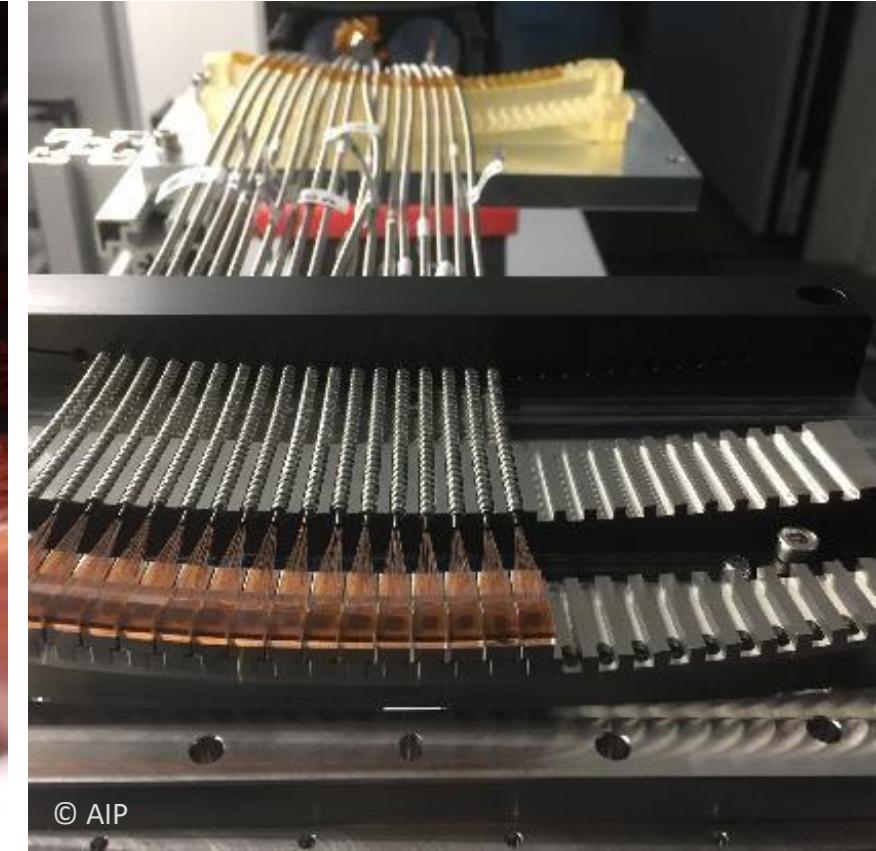
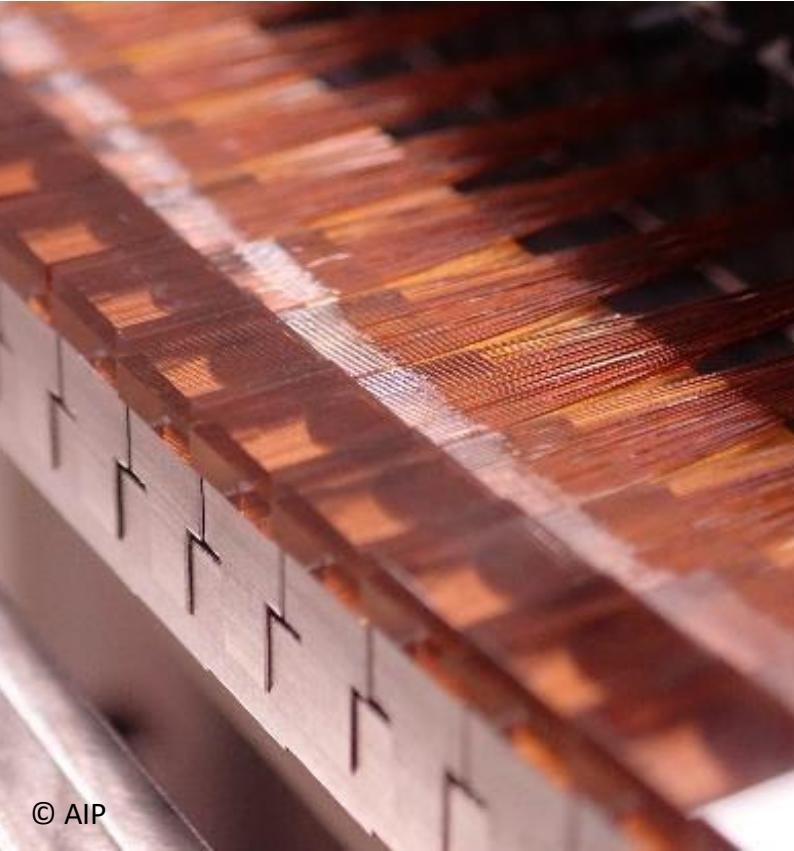


MTP24F Elite connector
(from US Conec)

Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium



4MOST Fiber Slit Assembly



Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium

4MOST Commissioning in Chile

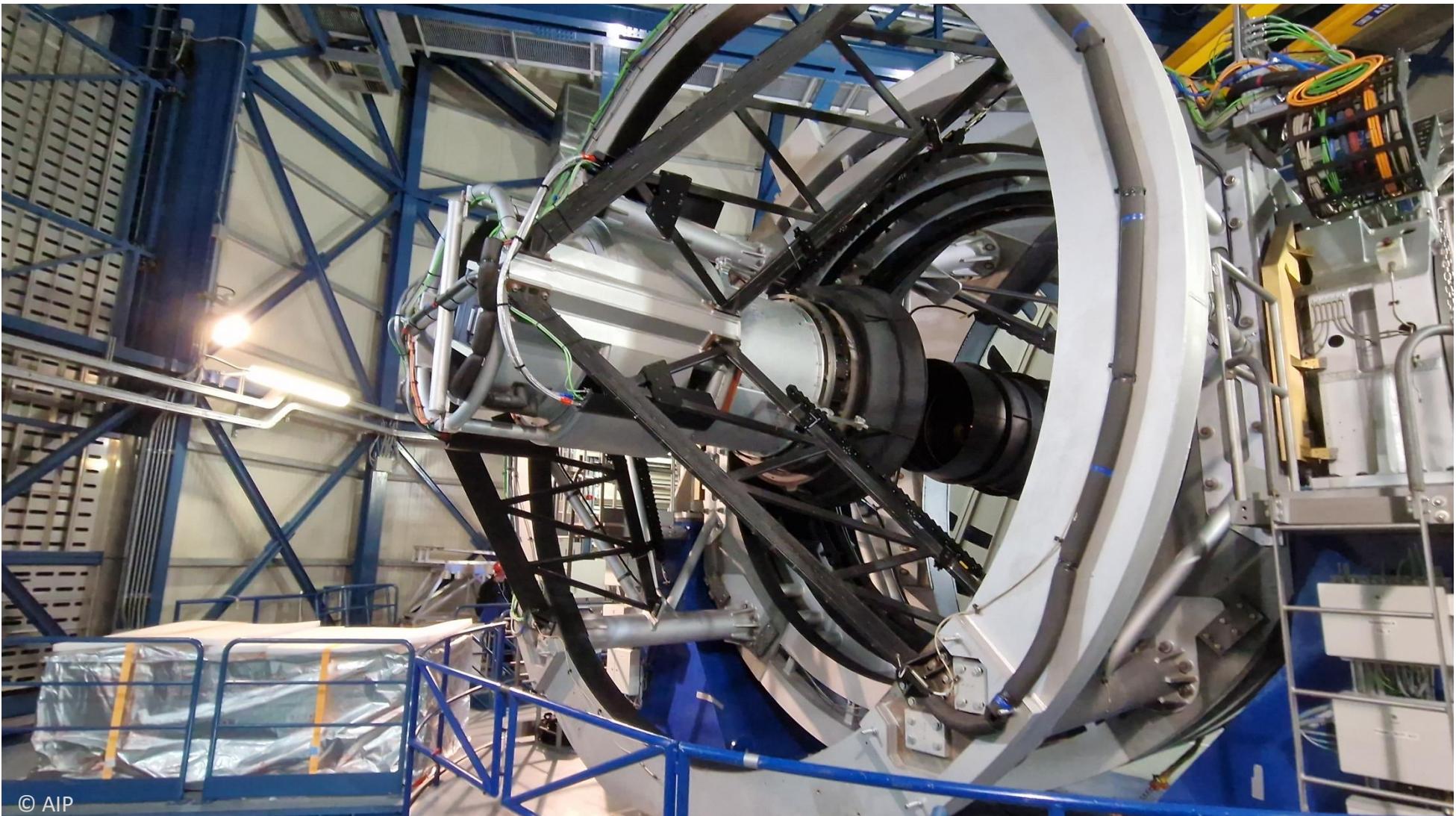
Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium



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4MOST Commissioning in Chile

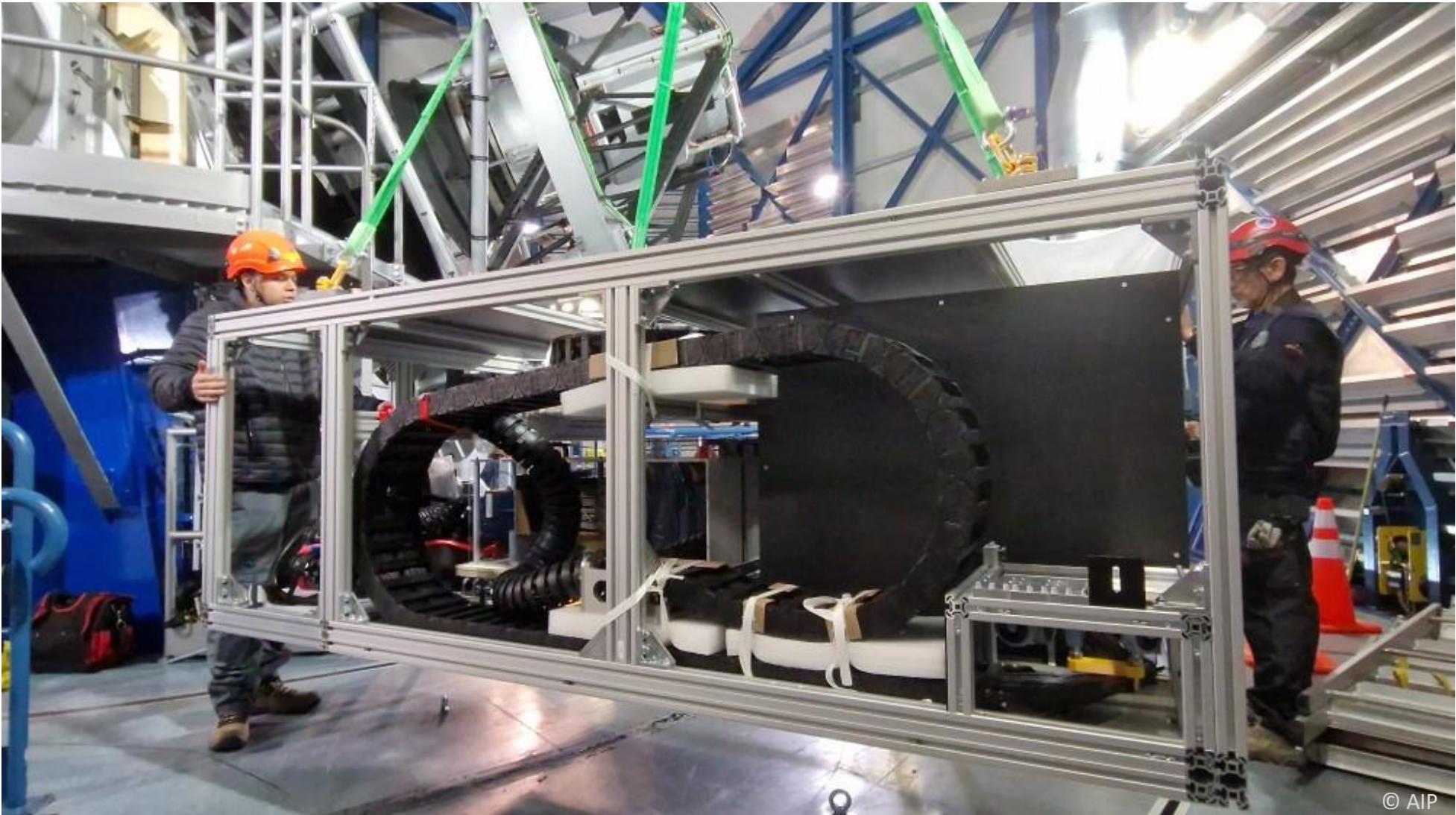
Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium



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4MOST Commissioning in Chile

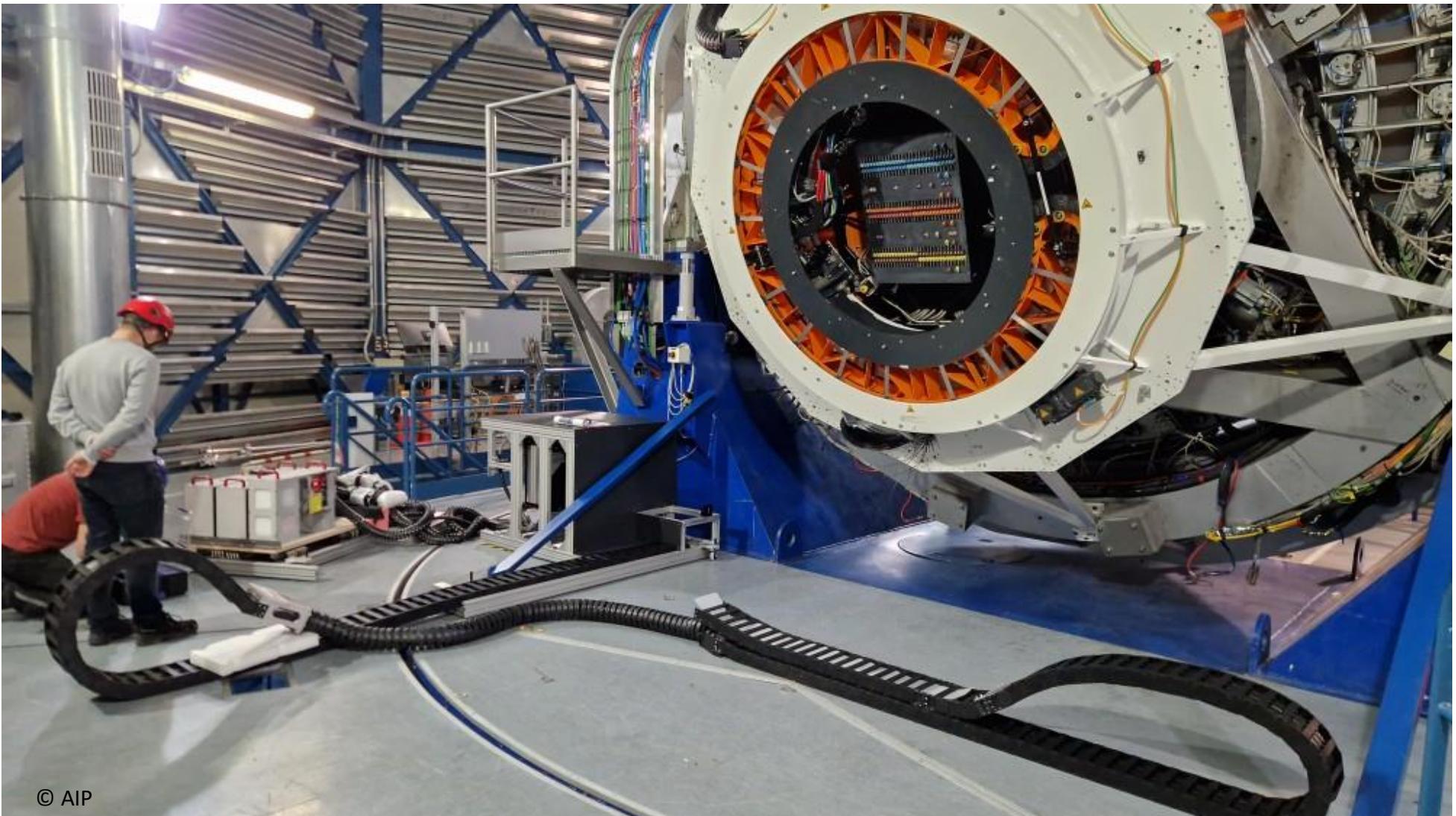
Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium



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4MOST Commissioning in Chile

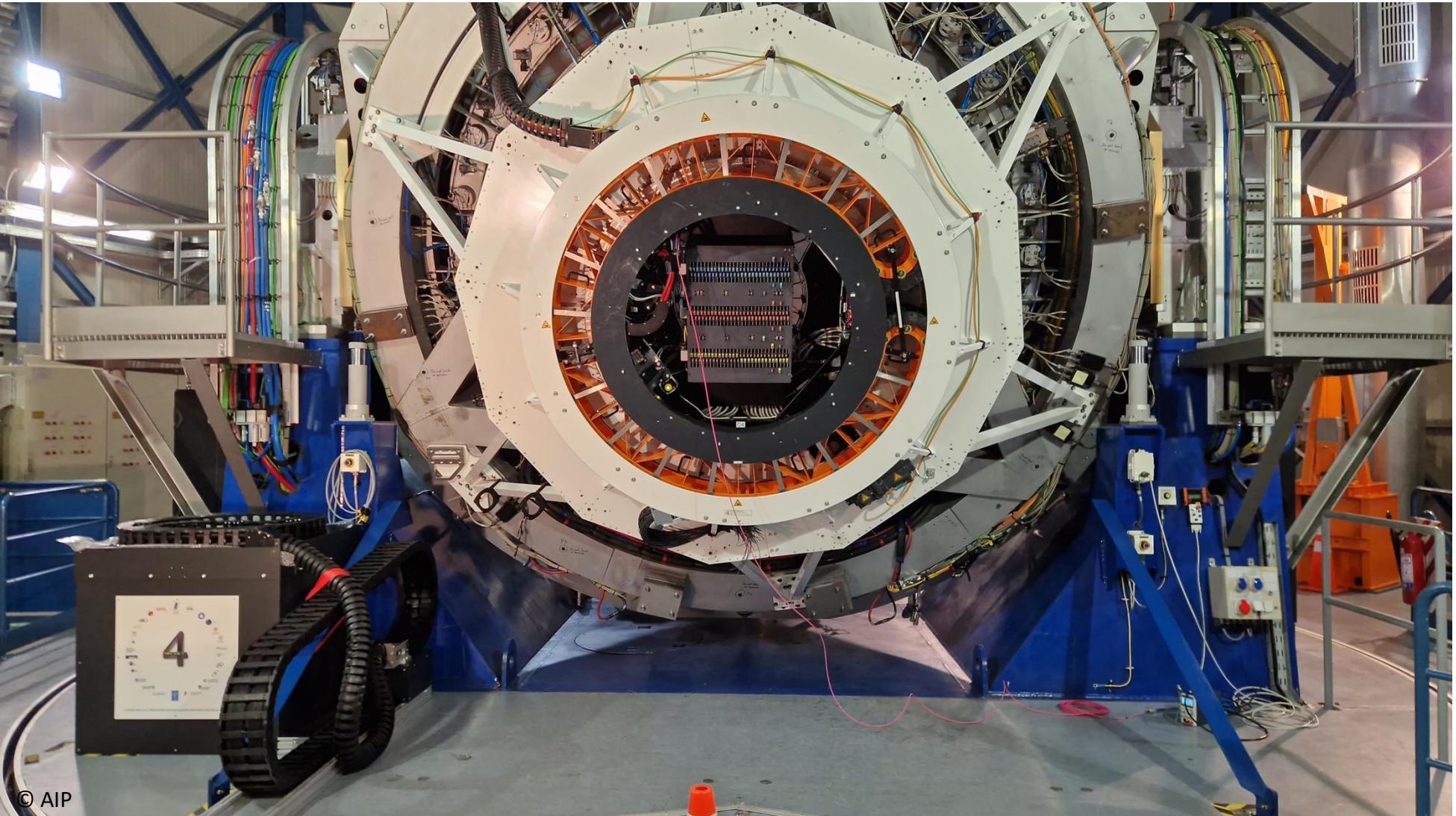
Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium



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4MOST Commissioning in Chile

Credit: Andreas Kelz and 4MOST Consortium

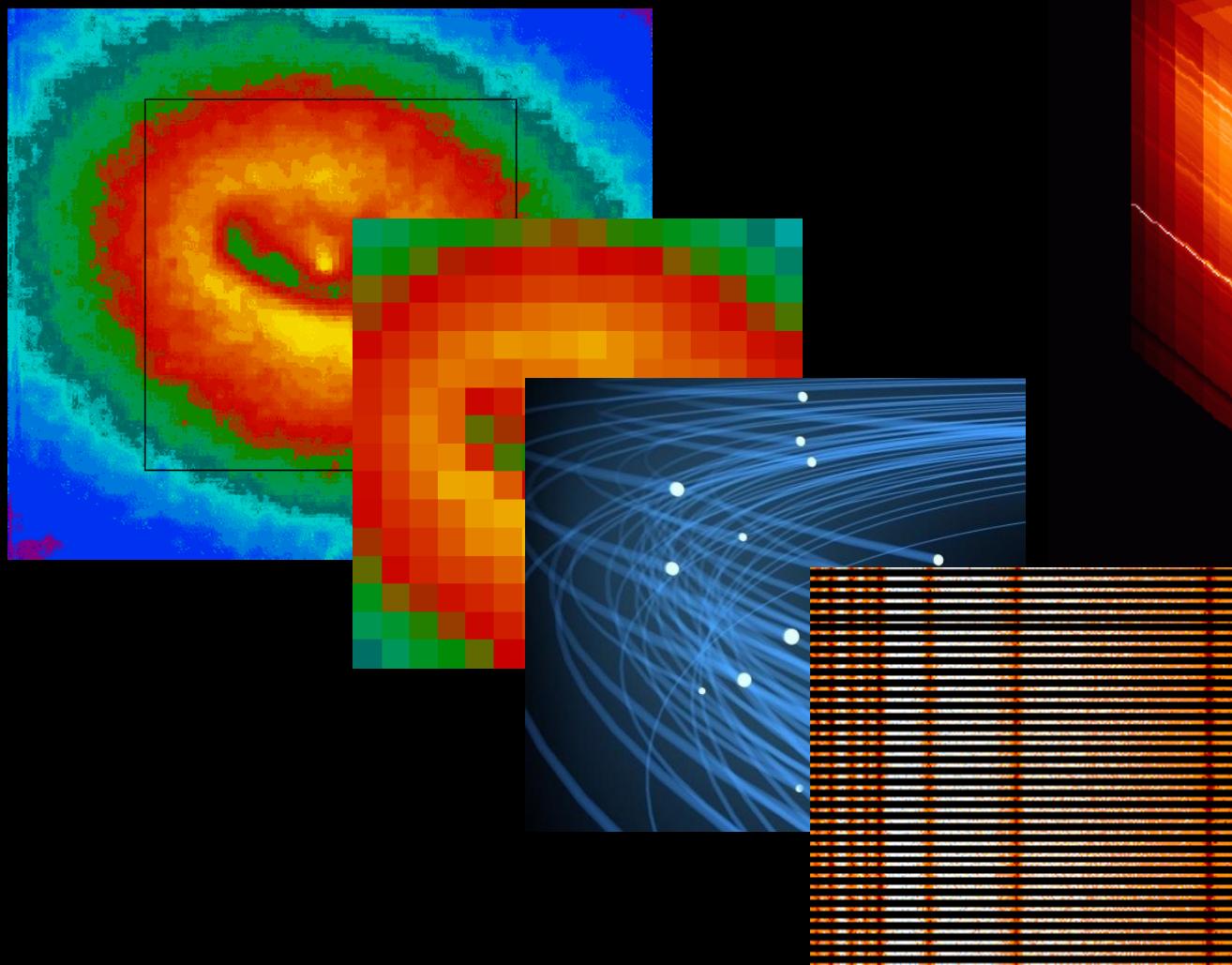


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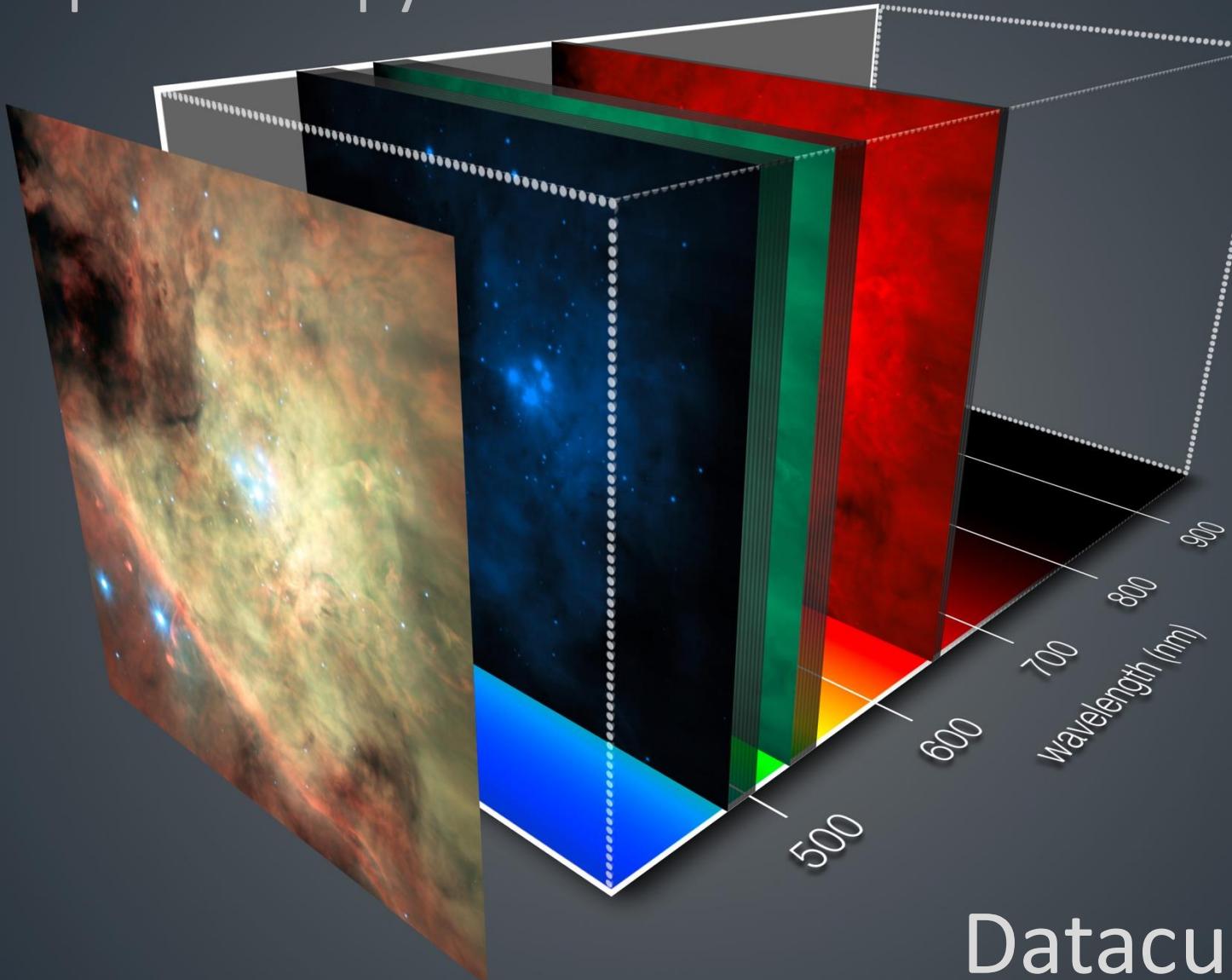
Integral Field Spectroscopy

Integral Field Spectroscopy

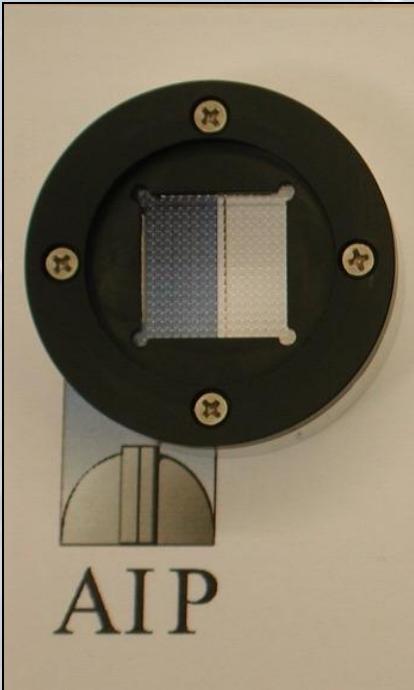
Data Cube



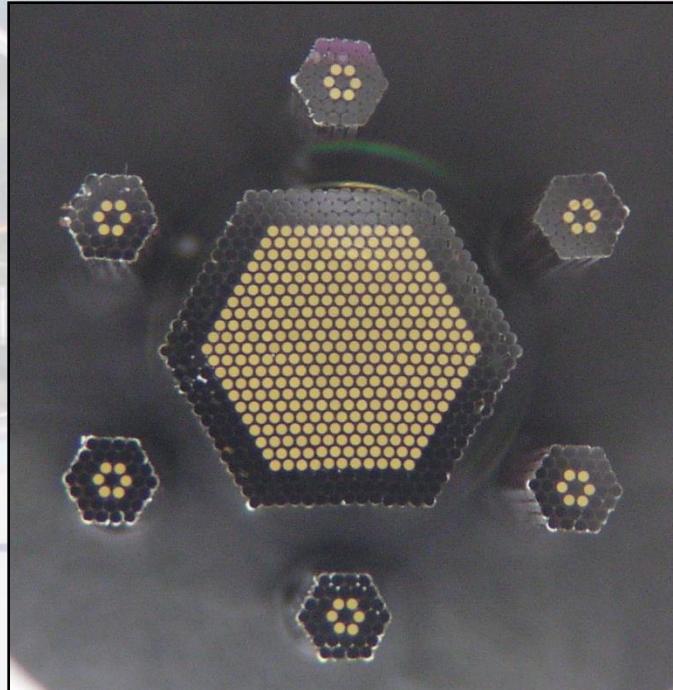
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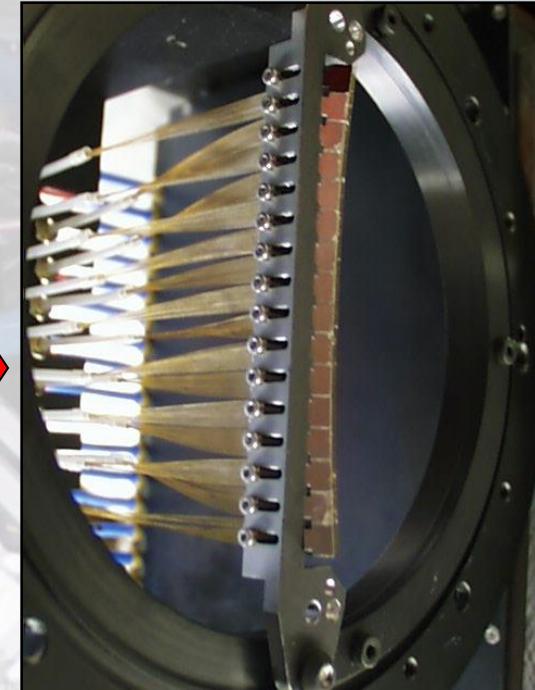
Datacube



LARR IFU



PPak IFU

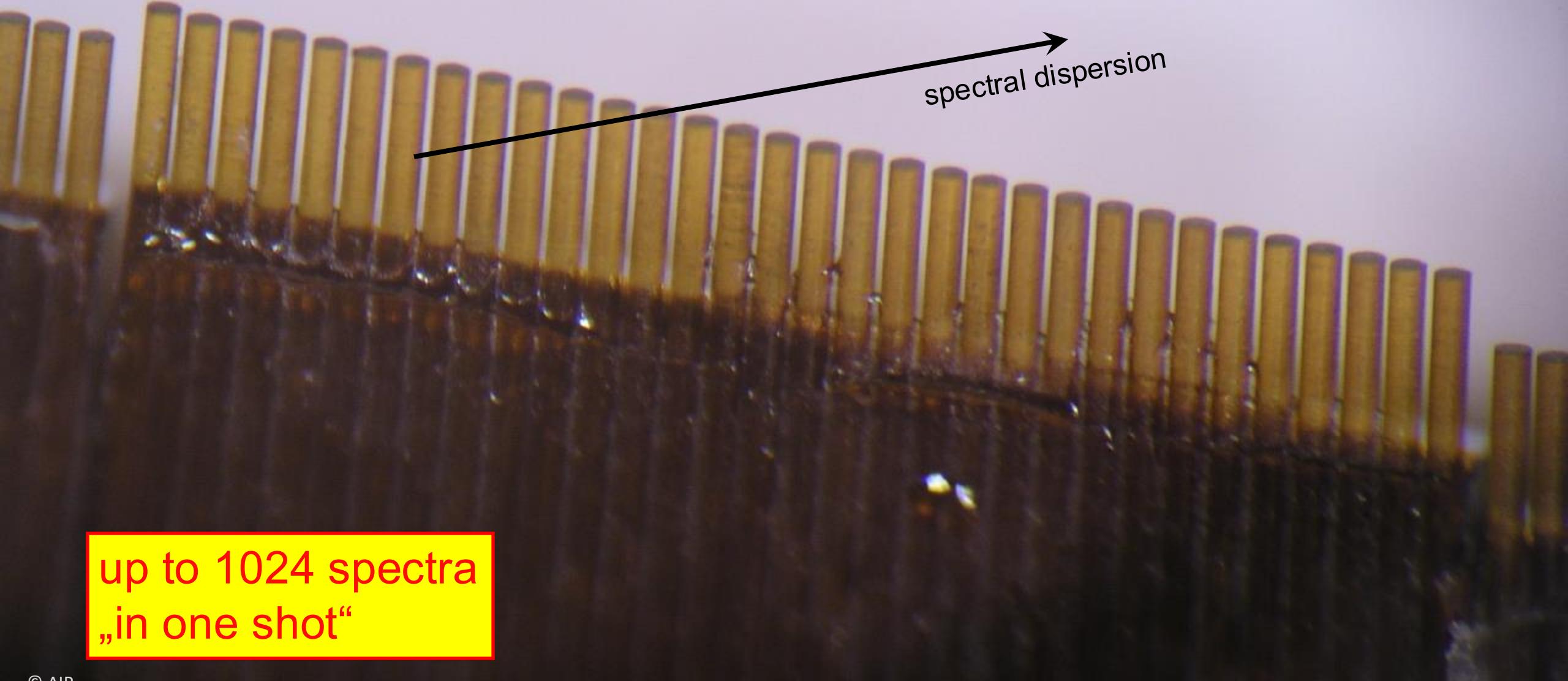


Fiber Slit



Fiber Optics

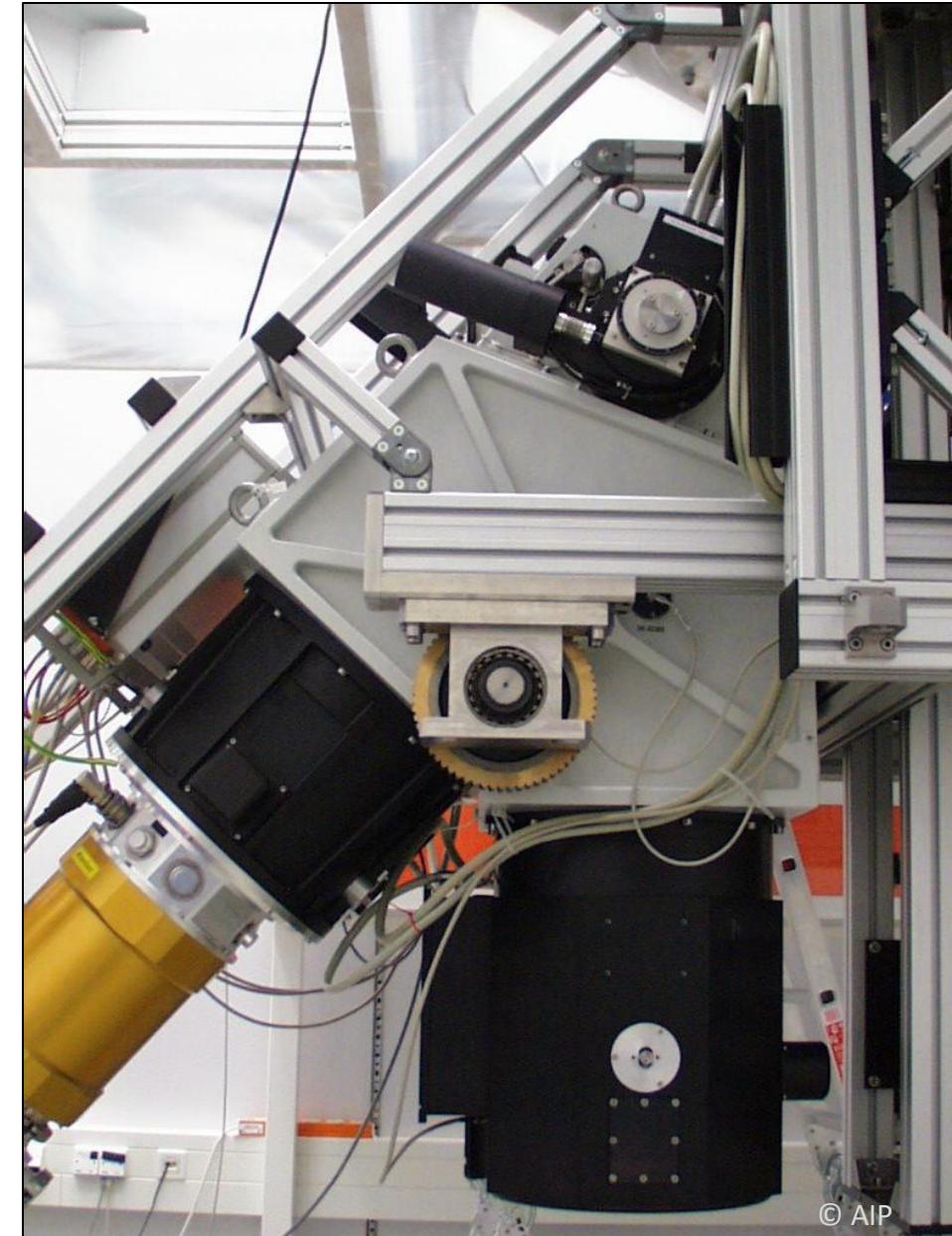
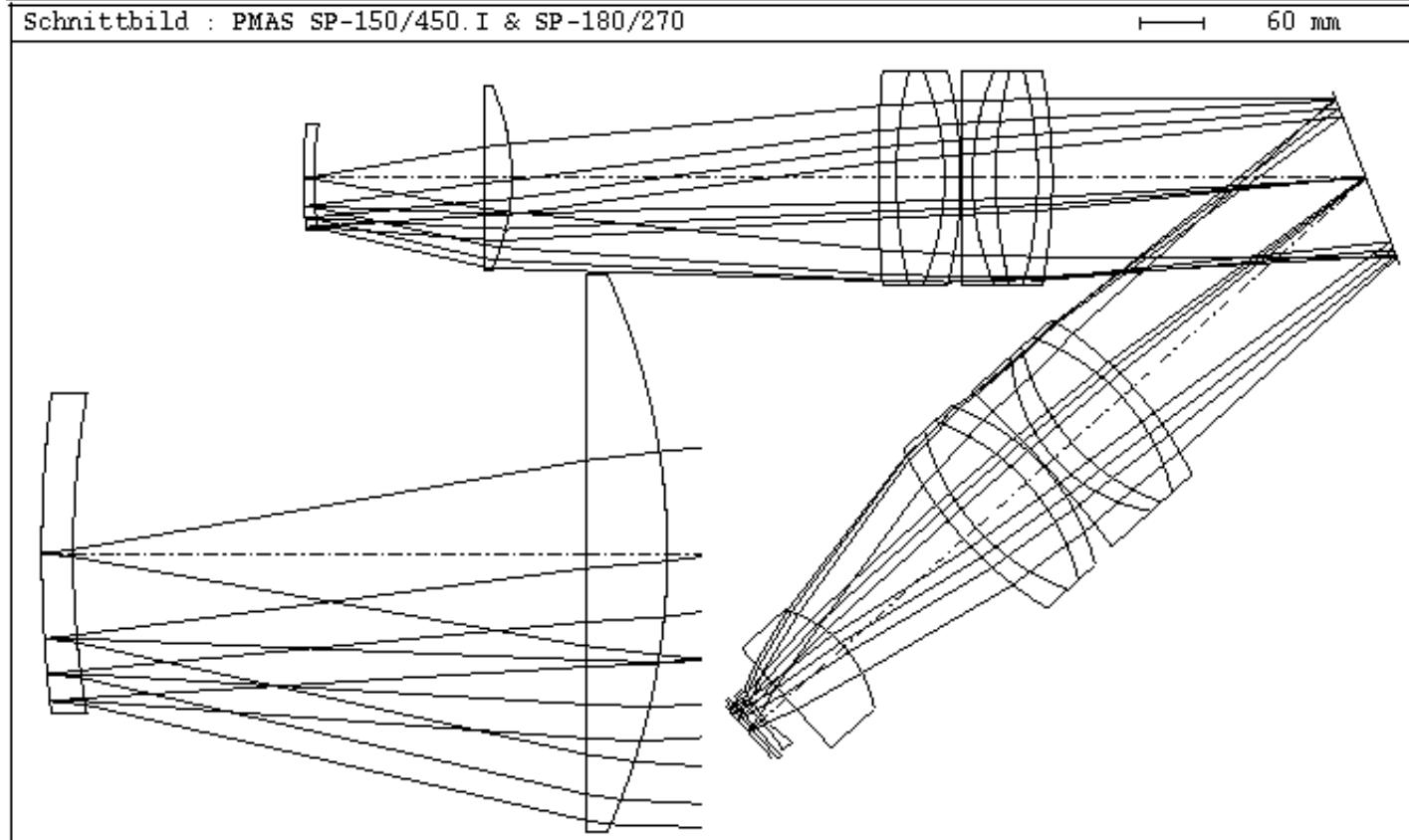
Fibre pseudo-slit



up to 1024 spectra
„in one shot“

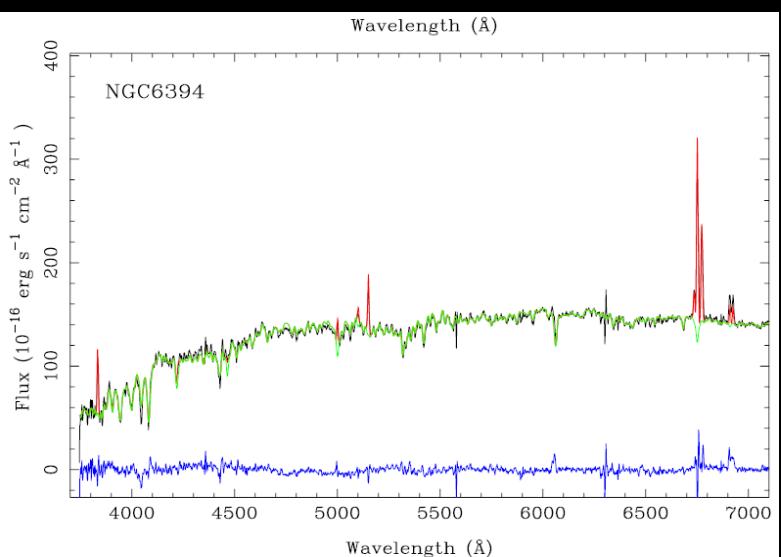
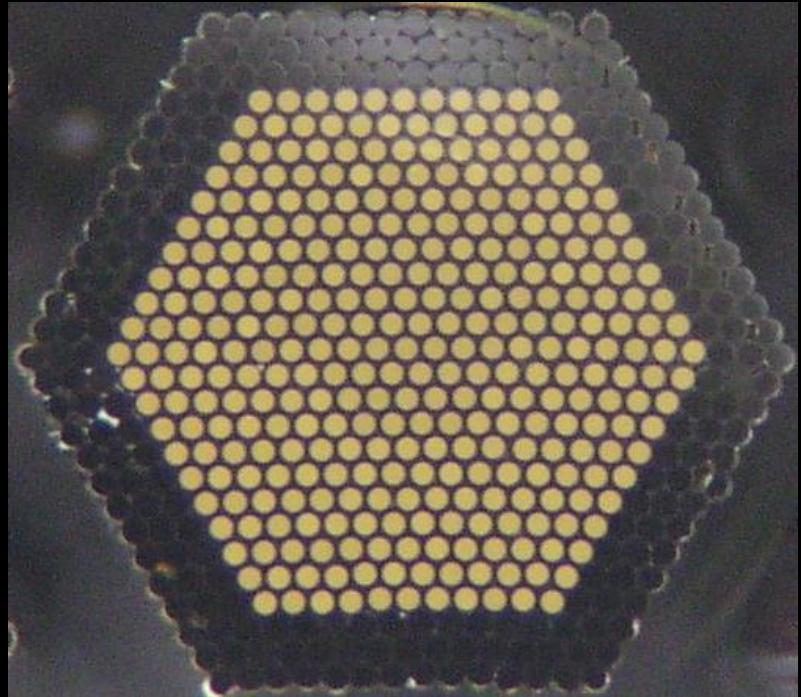
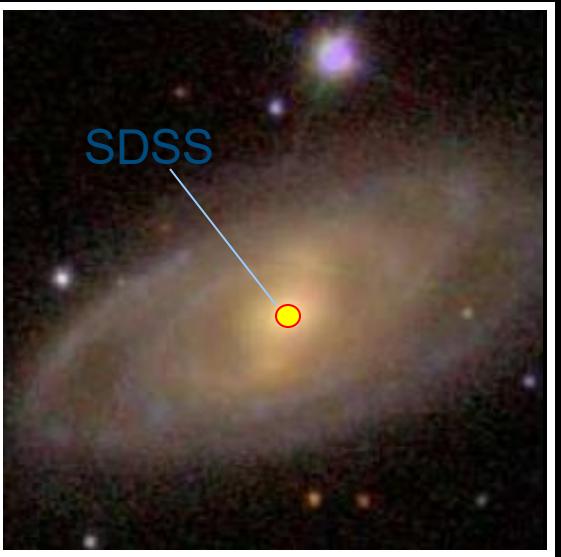


PMAS Fiber Spectrograph



© AIP

Integral Field Spectroscopy





CALIFA SURVEY

Calar Alto Legacy Integral Field spectroscopy Area survey

public access:
www.caha.es/CALIFA

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[5th Busy Week](#)

CALIFA 1st DATA RELEASE



NGC 300

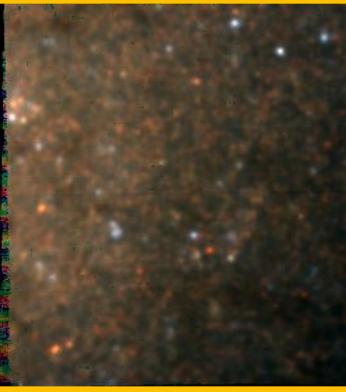


NGC 300

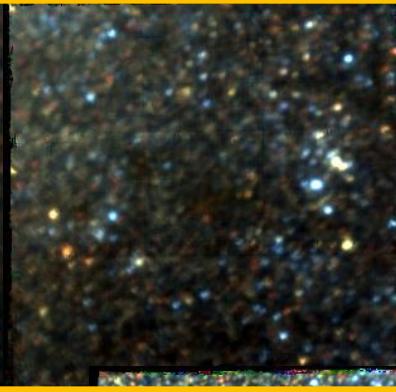
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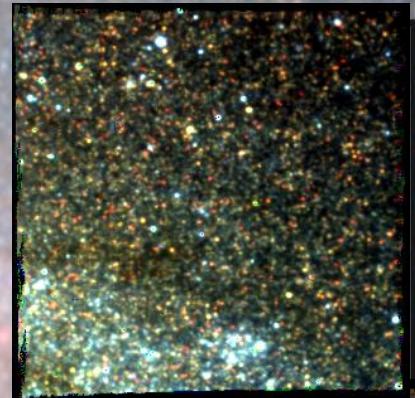
1.2"



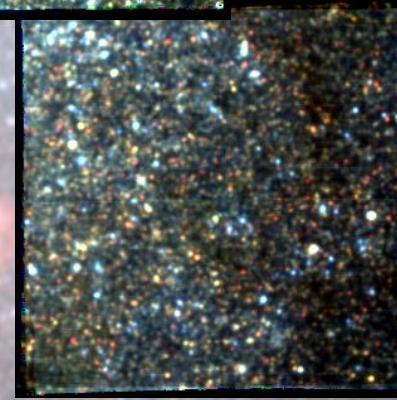
1.0"



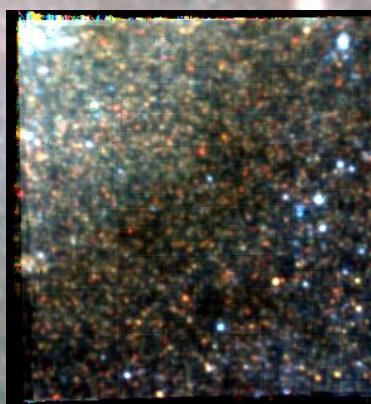
0.75"



0.8"



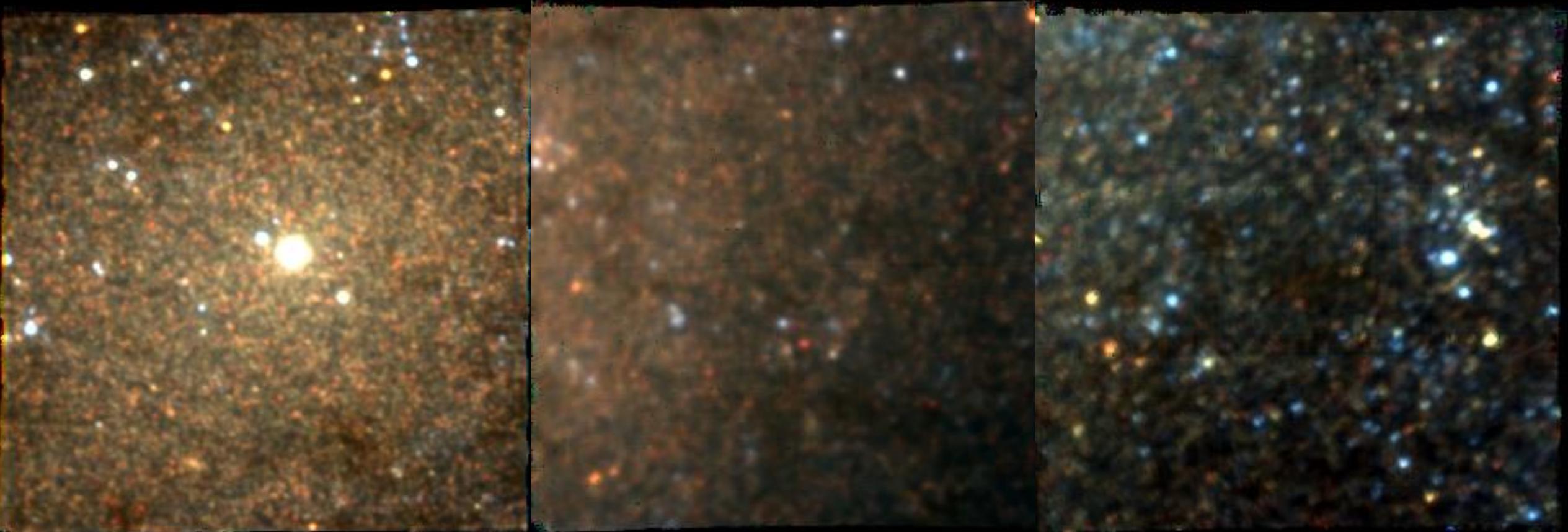
0.85"



0.6"



without Adaptive Optics



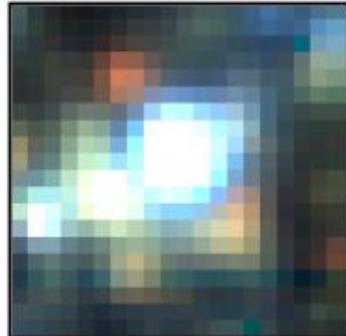
with Adaptive Optics



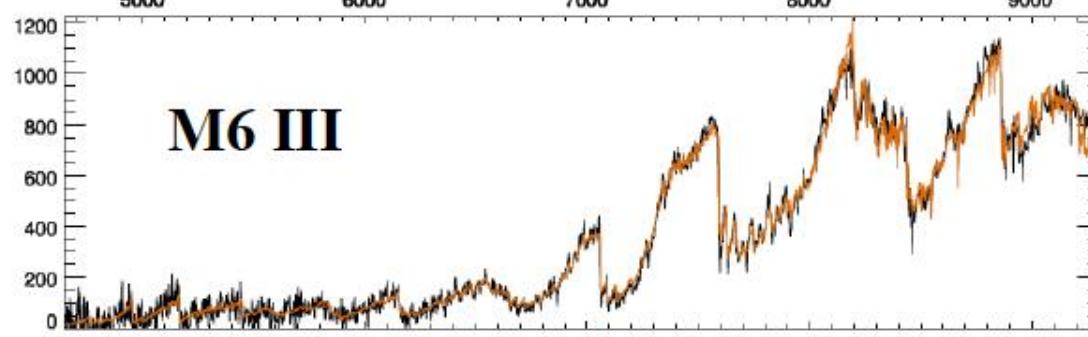
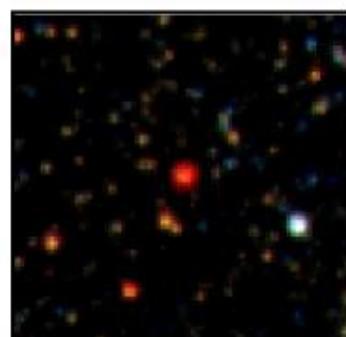
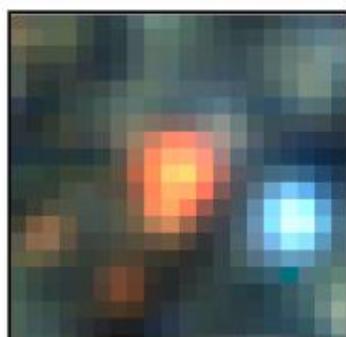
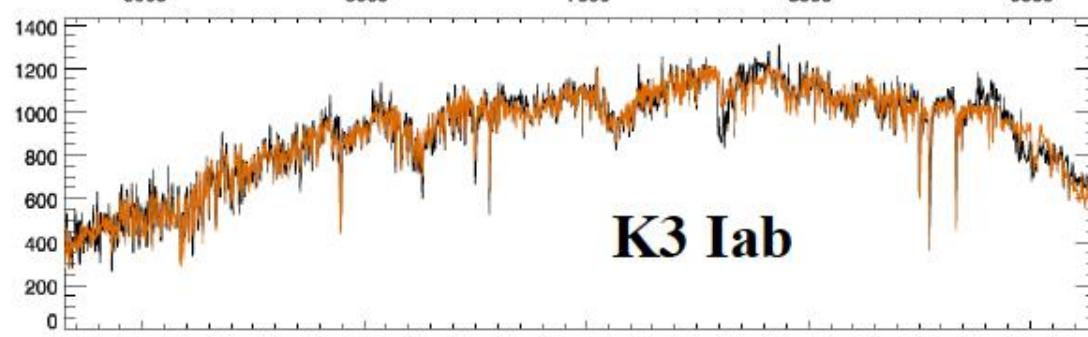
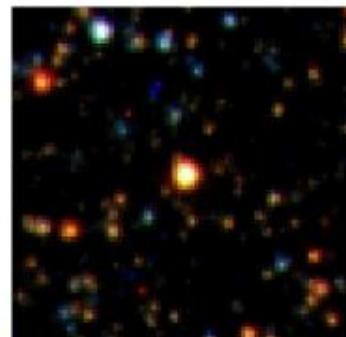
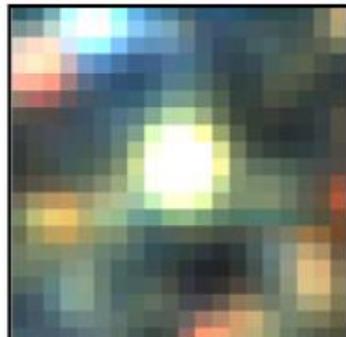
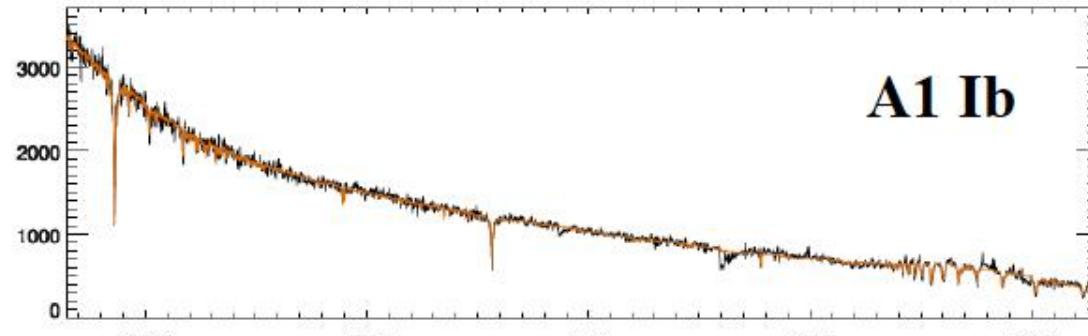
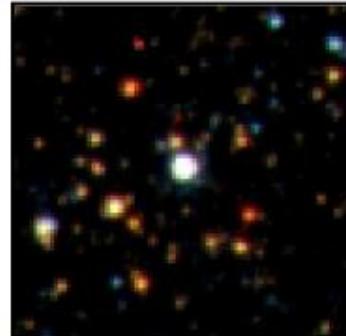
Images and *spectra* of individual stars:

Disruptive
Innovation !

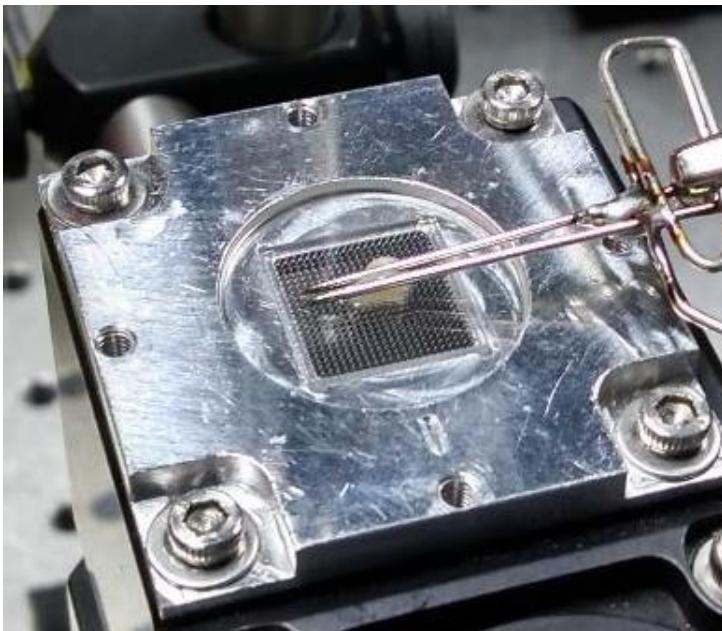
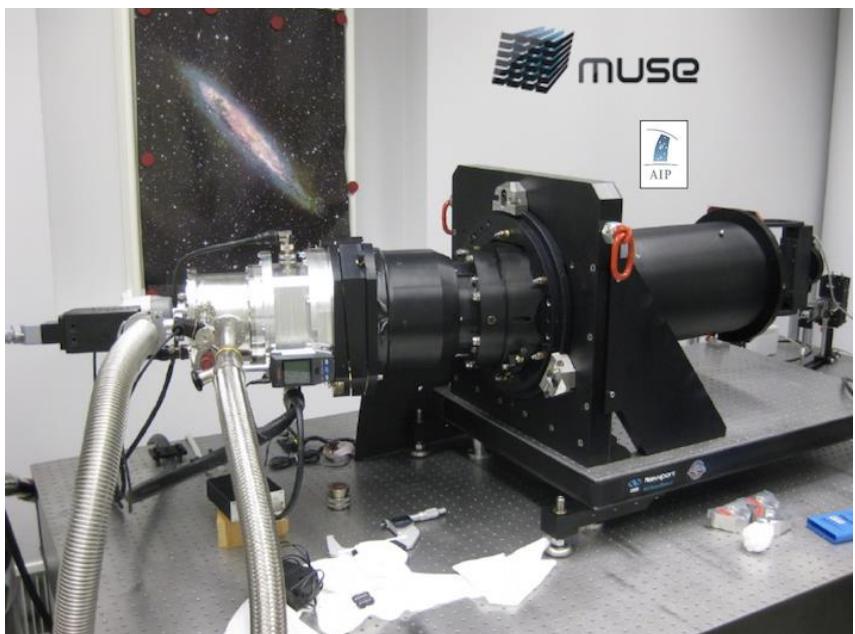
VLT + MUSE



Hubble Space Telescope



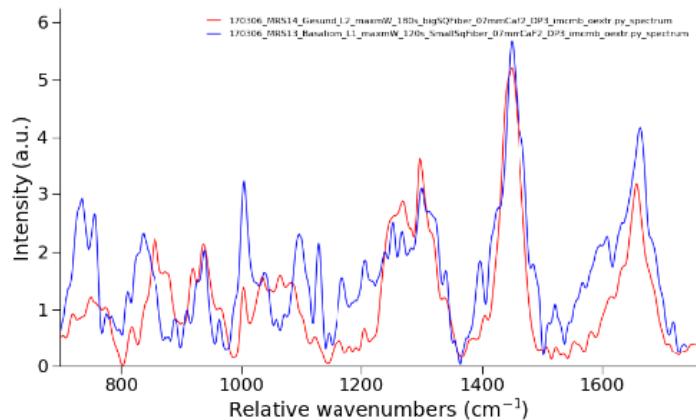
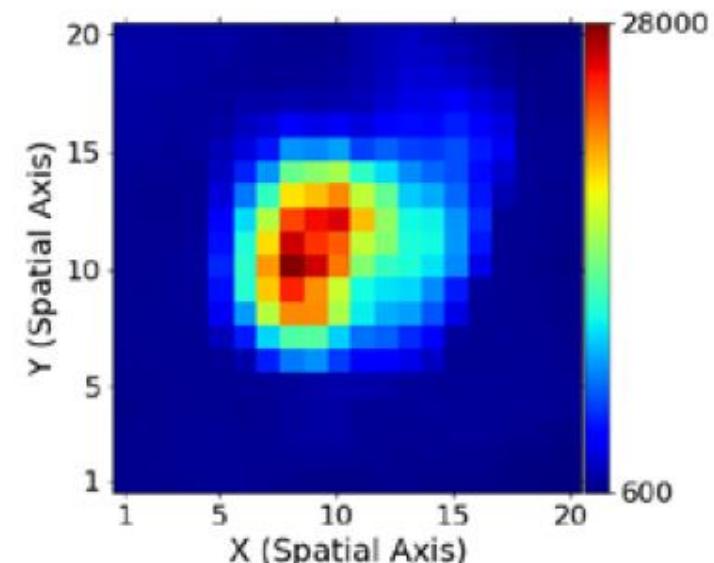
Excursion: Technology Transfer



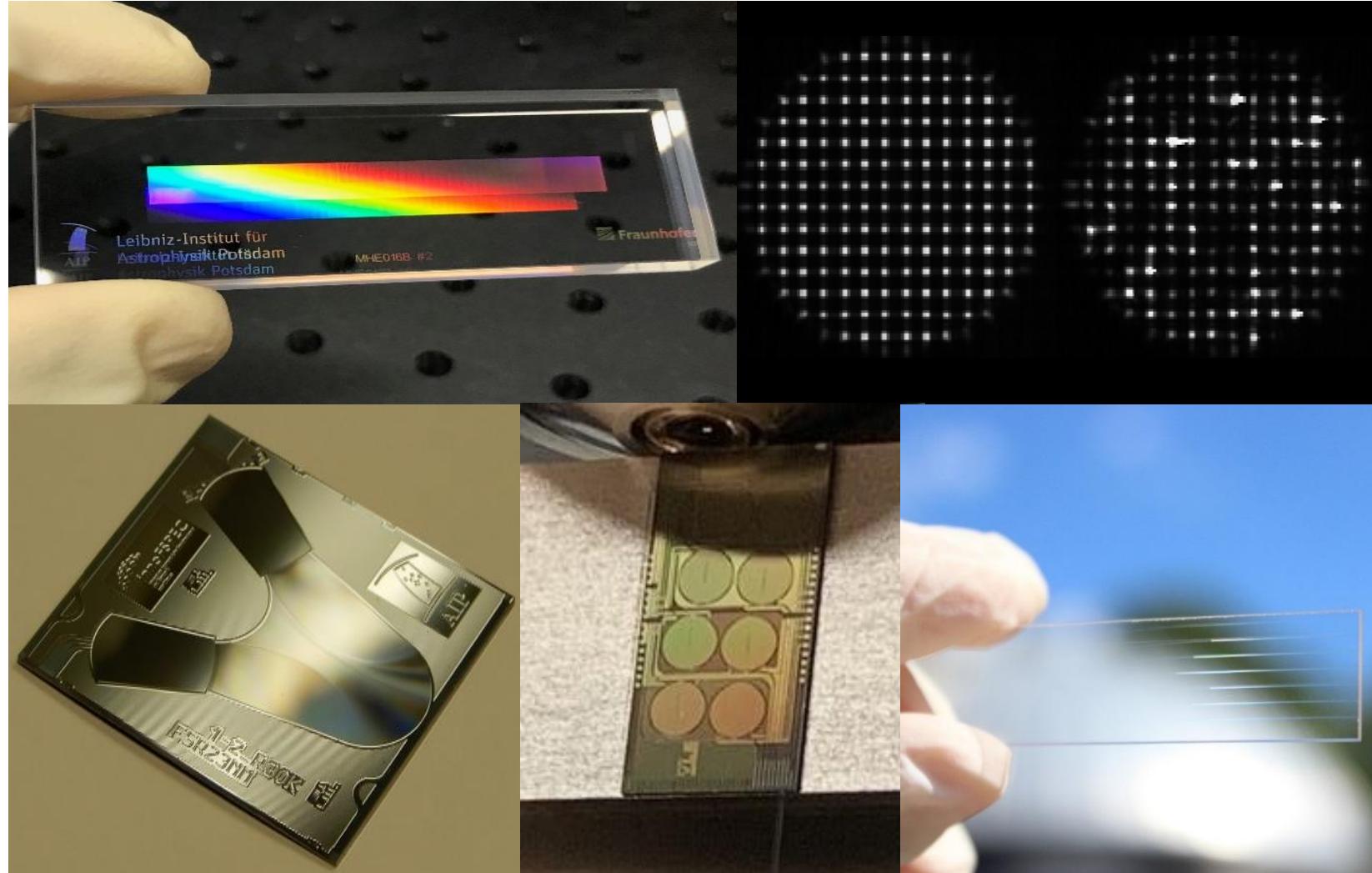
clinical sample of
basal cell carcinoma (BCC)



malign tissue
benign tissue

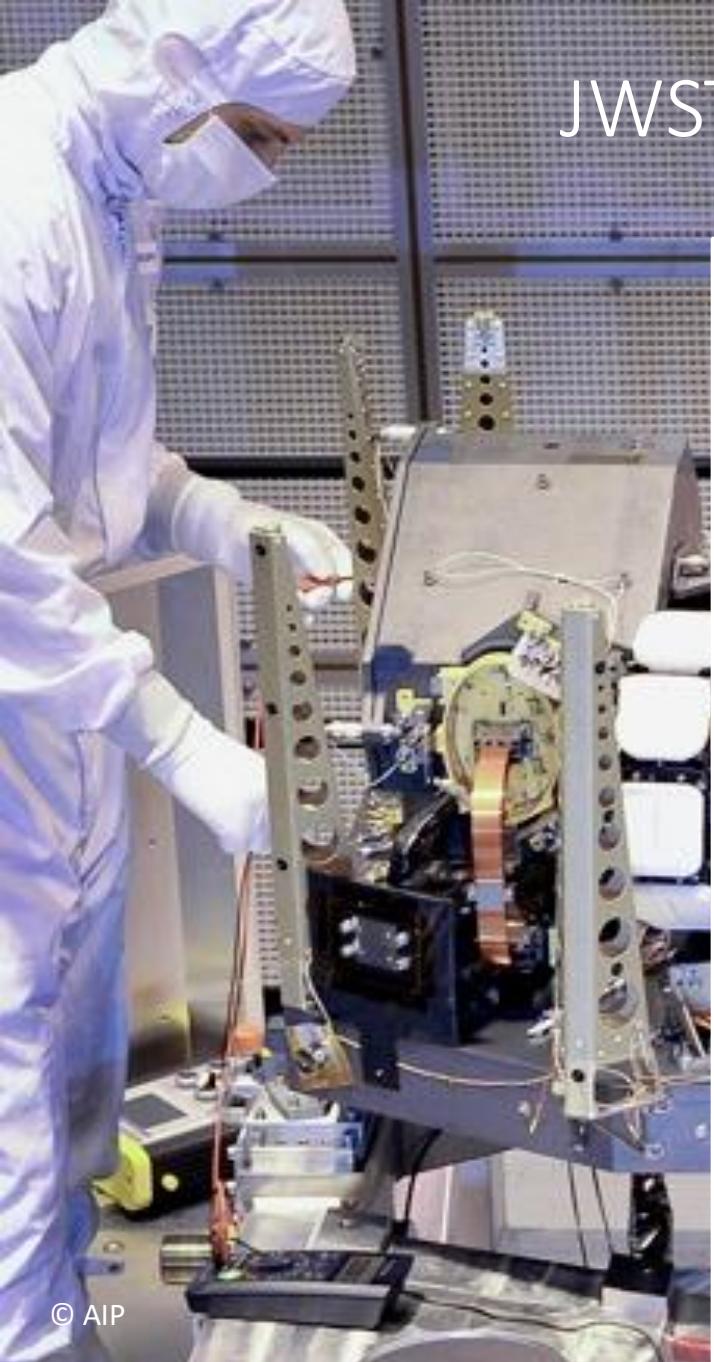


Astrophotonics

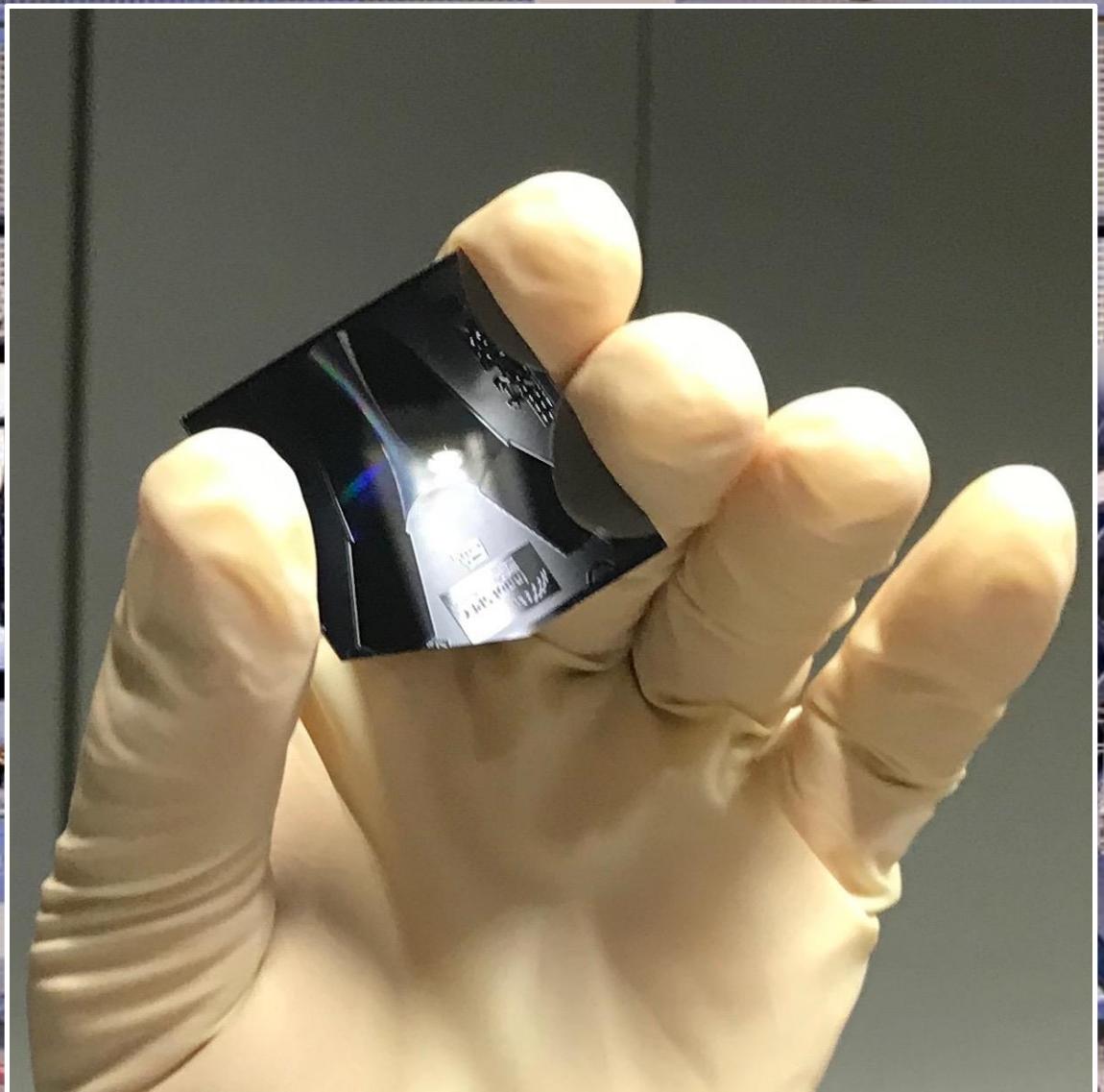


- 1 Complex FBG Filters & Phase Masks
- 2 Photonic Lanterns for AO & Spectroscopy
- 3 AWGs for Spectroscopy
- 4 Ring Resonators for Frequency Combs
- 5 Beam Combiners for Interferometry

JWST NIRspec

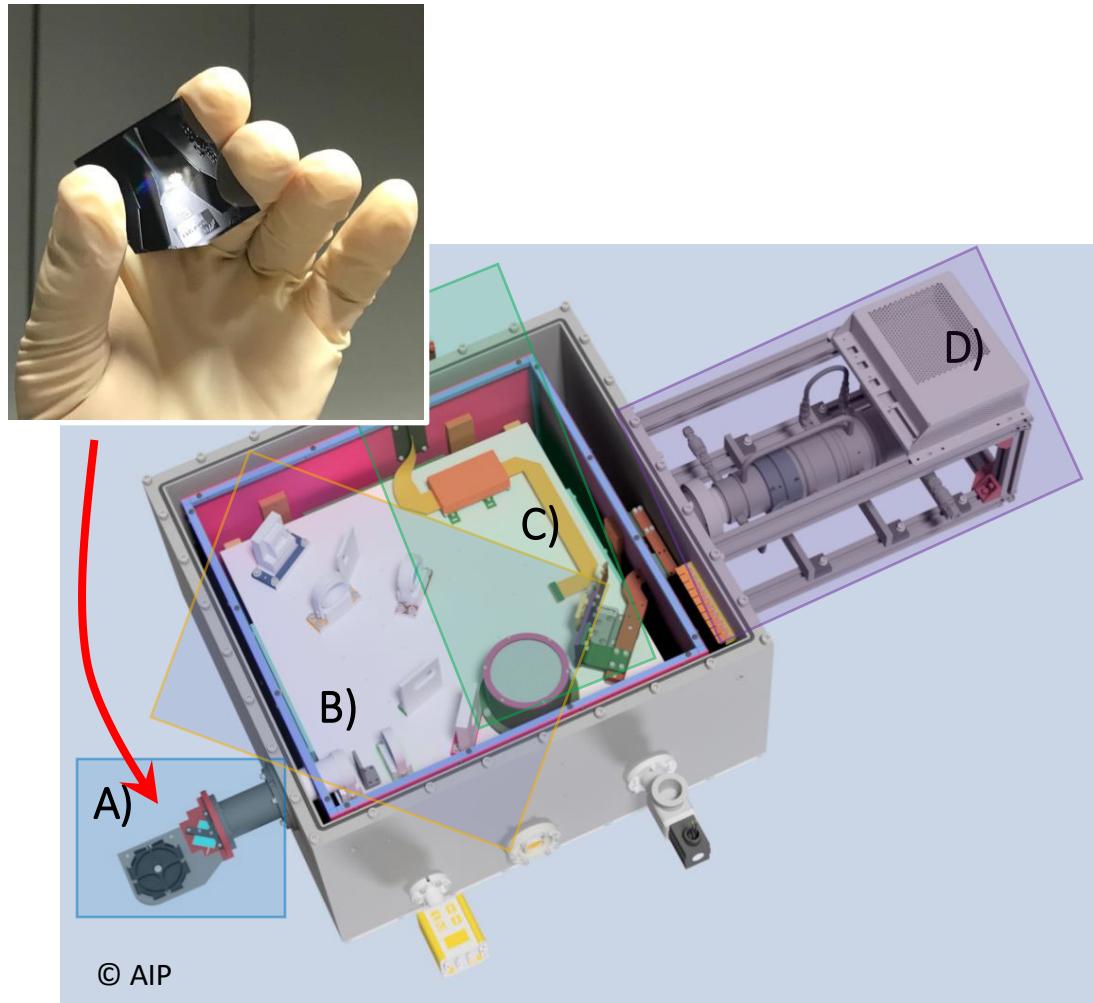


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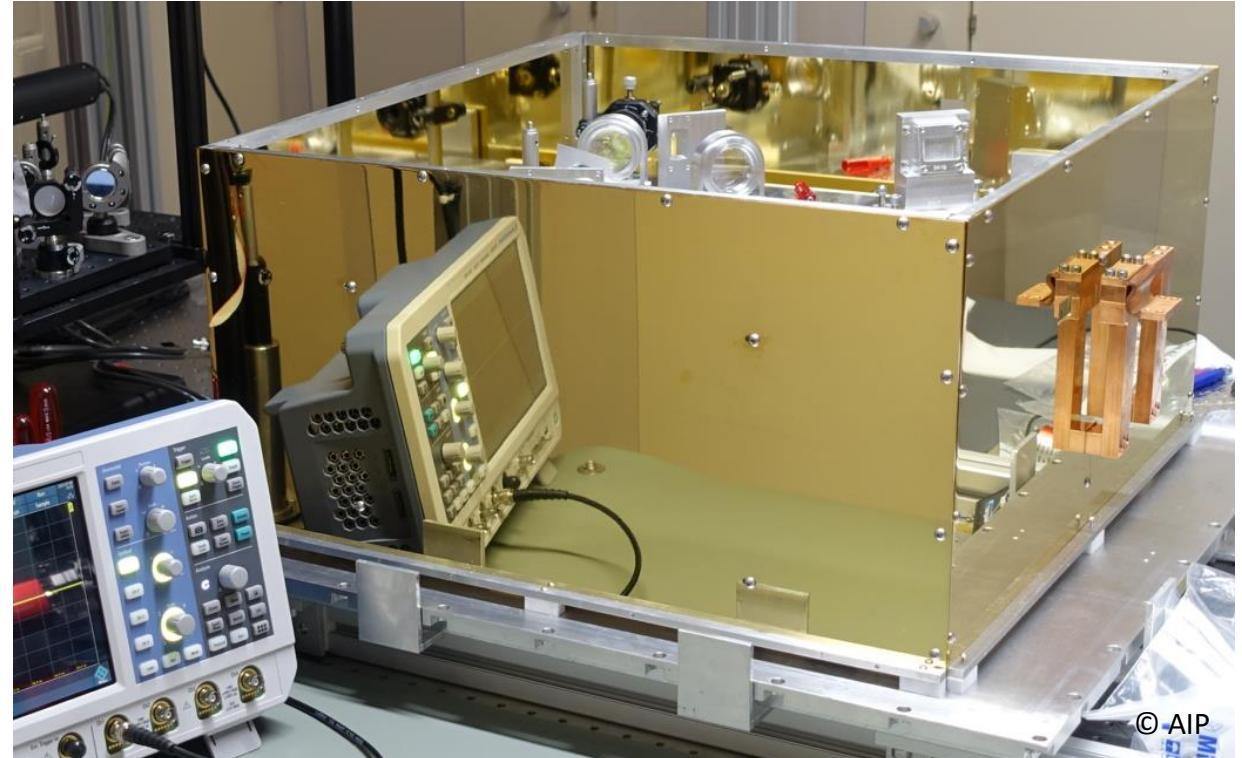


© Astrium

PAWS: Potsdam Arrayed Waveguide Spectrograph



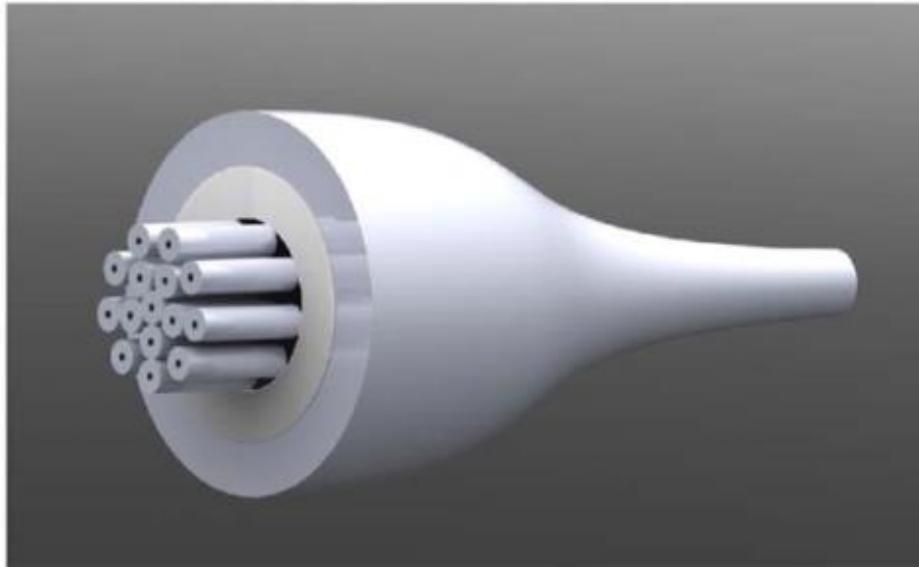
CAD View



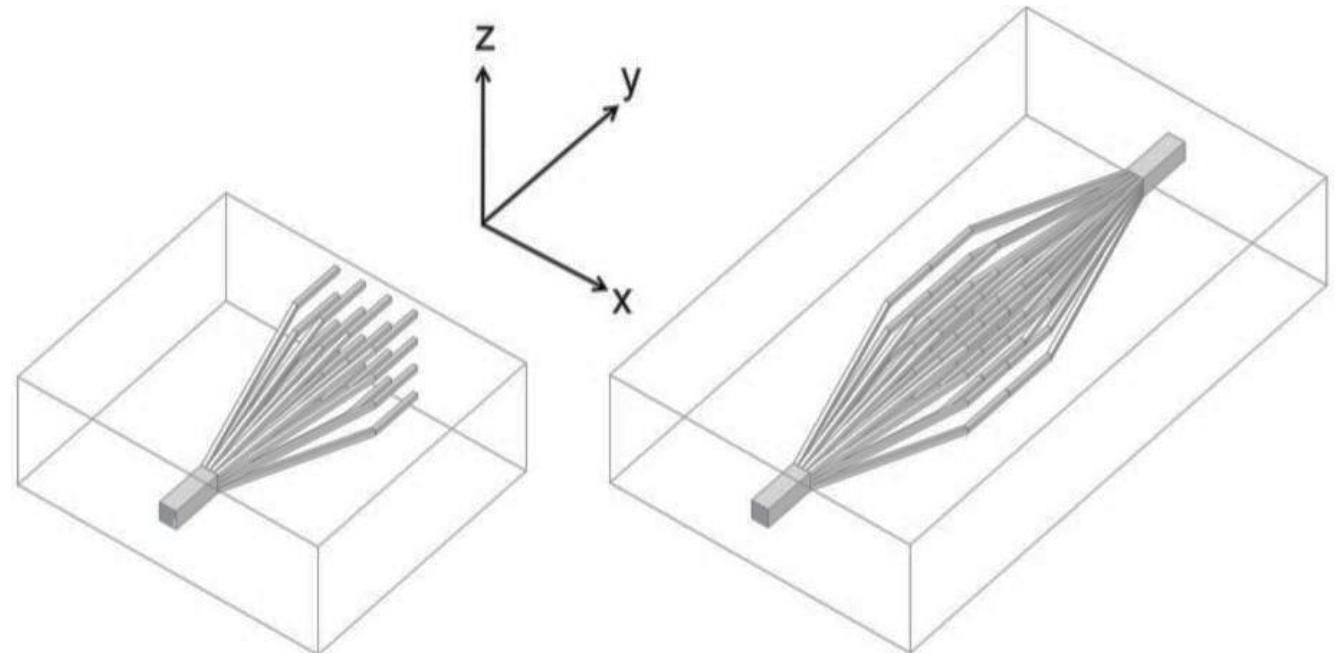
PAWS assembled in the lab

Photonic Lanterns

Mode converter: **SMF** to **MMF**, or vice versa

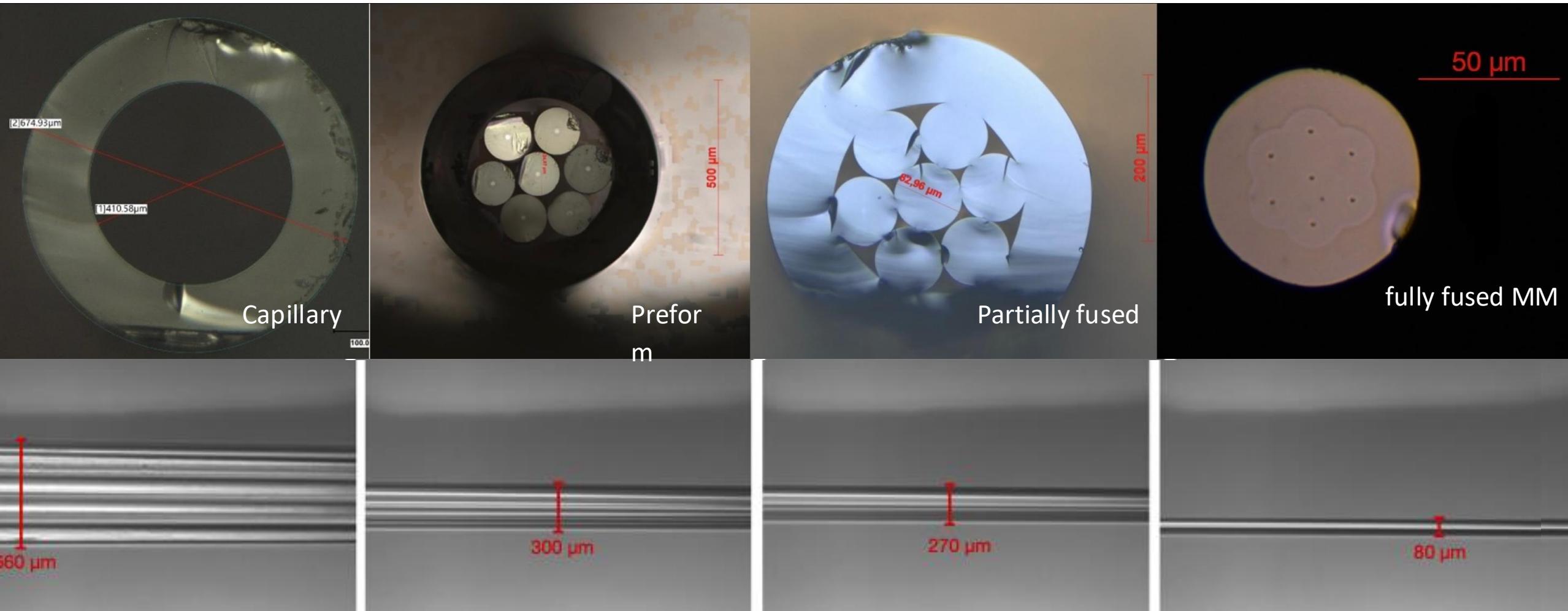


Velázquez-Benítez, et al. 2018



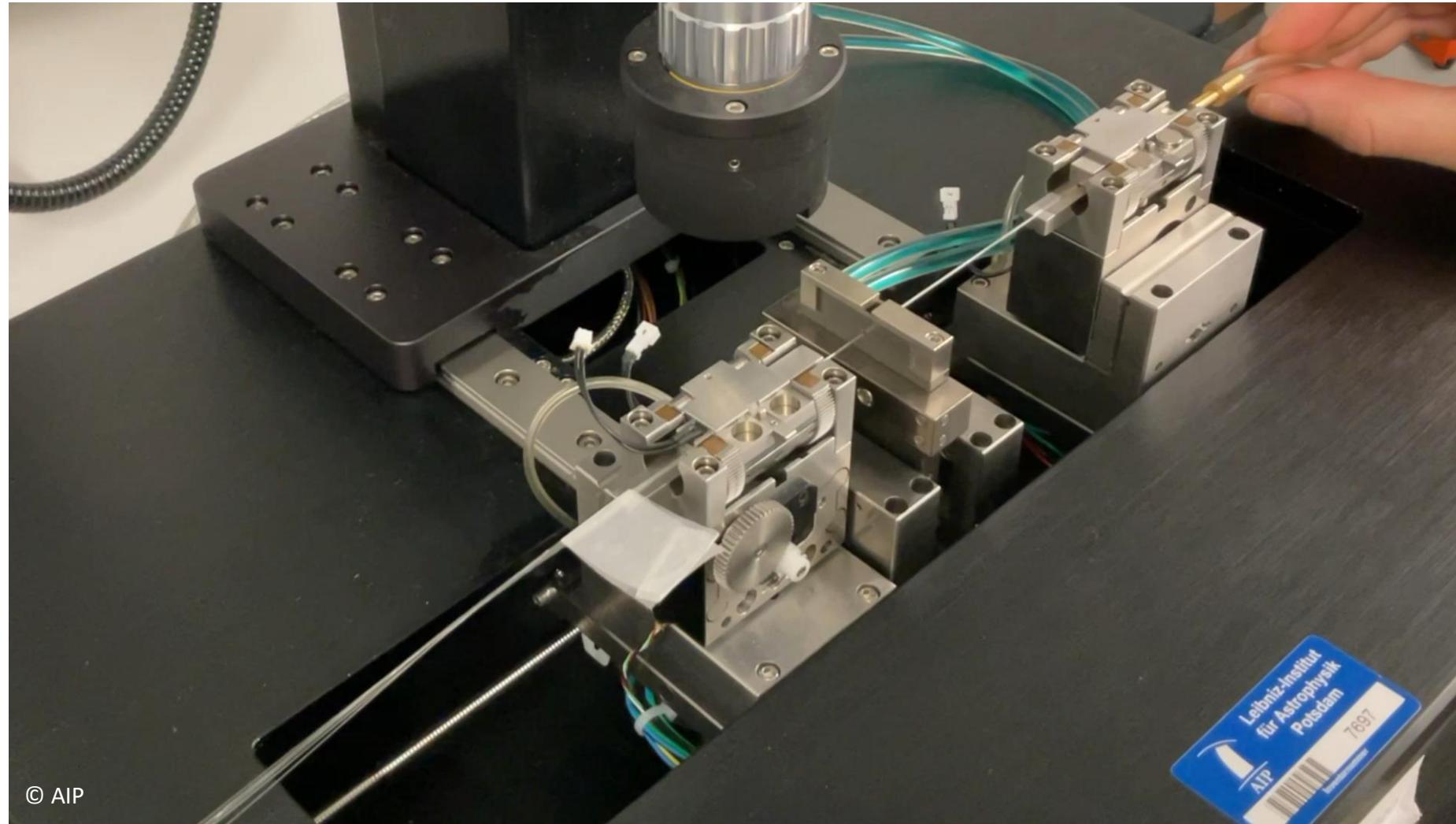
Thomson, R. R. et al. Optics Exp. 19 6 (2011): 5698-705

Photonic Lanterns



Rypalla J., et al. 2024, Proc. SPIE 13100, 131006P

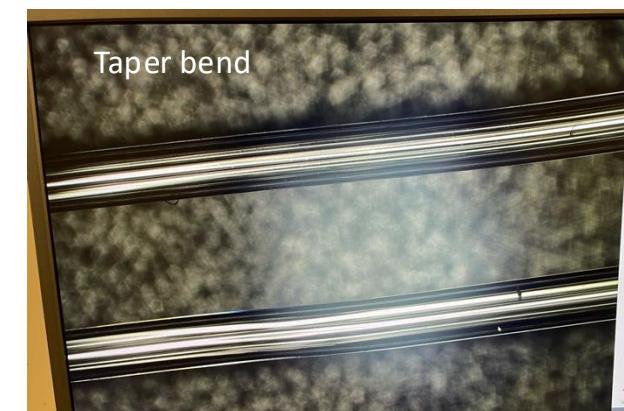
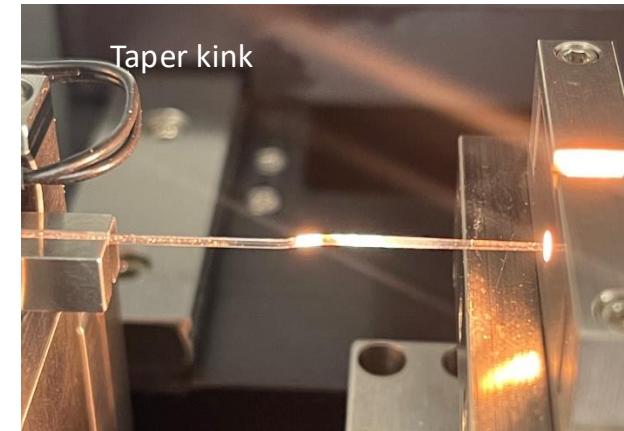
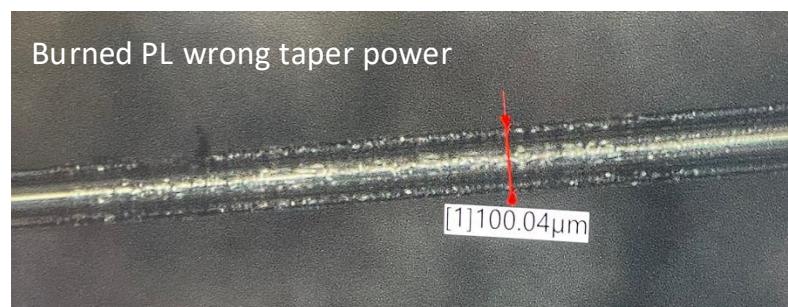
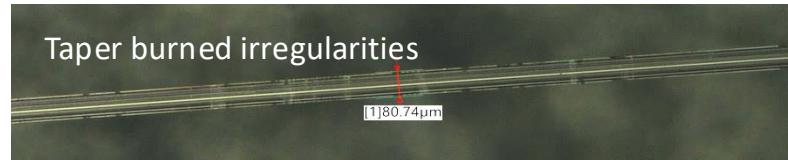
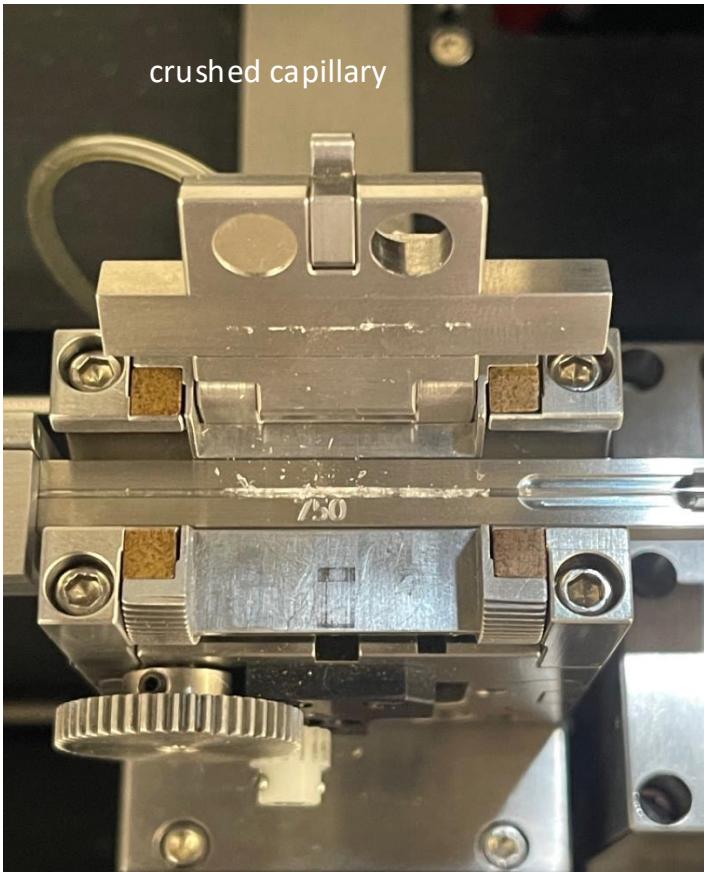
Photonic Lanterns



© AIP

Credit : Julian Rypalla, Kalaga Madhav (AIP)

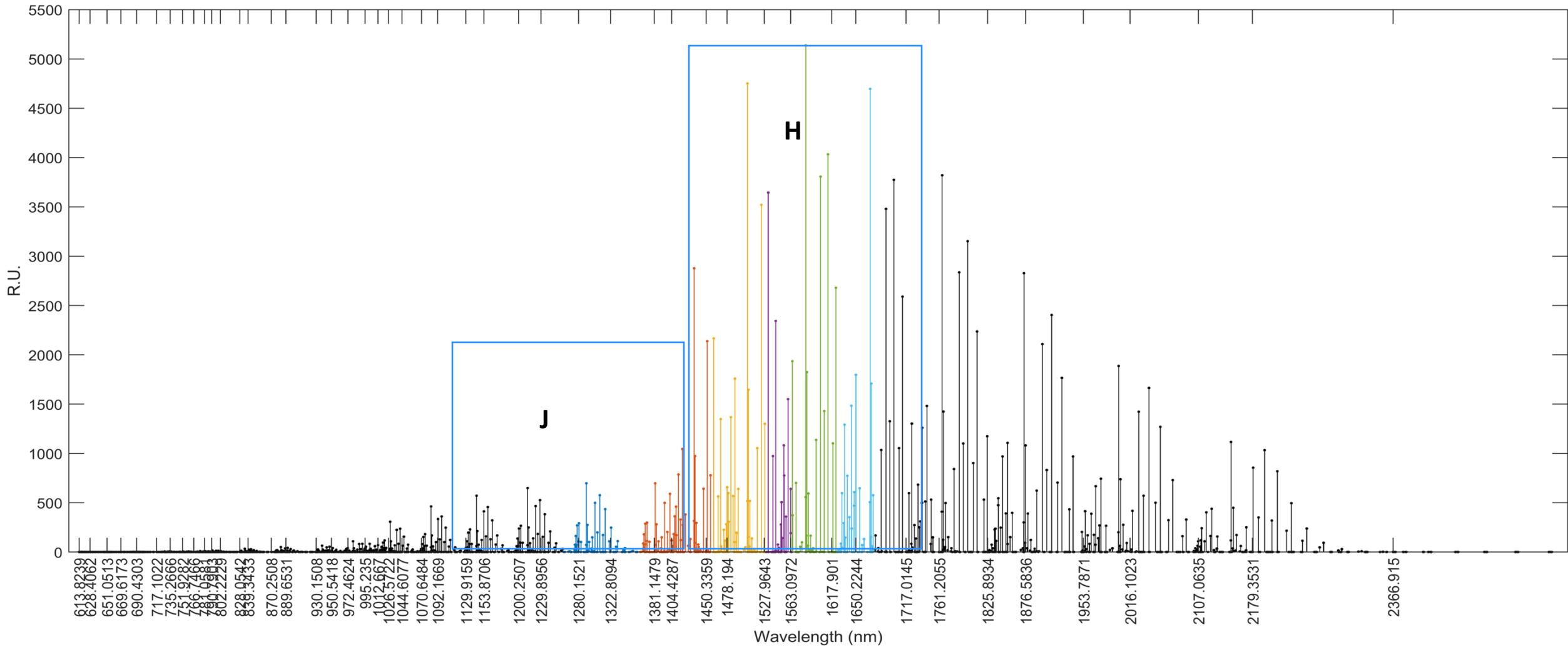
Photonic Lanterns (and what can go wrong...)



Credit : Julian Rypalla, Kalaga Madhav (AIP)

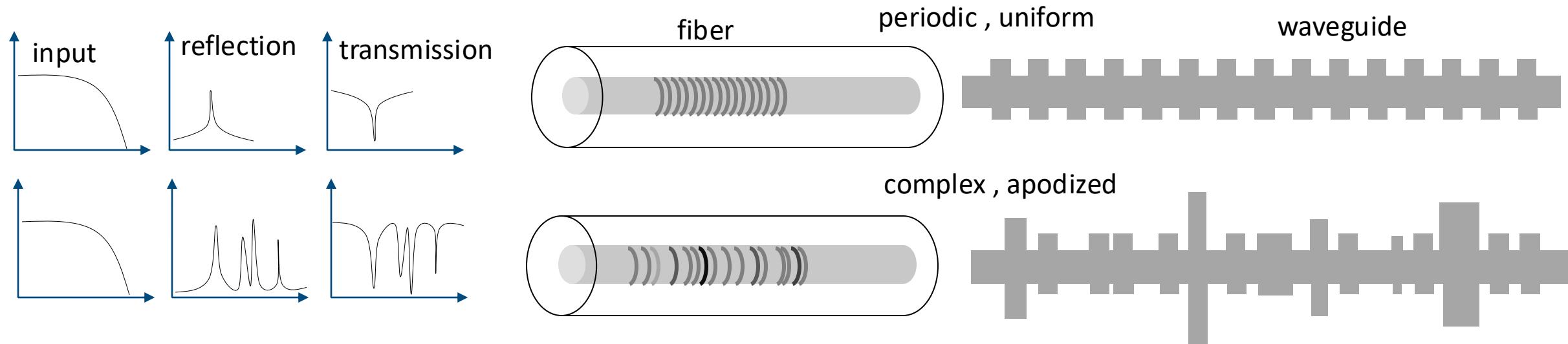
Fiber Bragg Gratings for OH Line Filters

The problem: extremely bright and highly variable OH emission lines in the NIR



Fiber Bragg Gratings for OH Line Filters

Bragg gratings are periodic or aperiodic structures inscribed into a waveguide, typically by changing the refractive index by periodic high power laser inscription



Credit : Aashia Rahman, Kalaga Madhav (AIP)

Fiber Bragg Gratings for OH Line Filters

- Suppress OH lines before light enters spectrograph at high resolution ($R = 10,000$), maintain high throughput (>80%)

Opt. Express Vol. 12, Issue 24, 5902 (2004)

New approach to atmospheric OH suppression using ...

THE ASTRONOMICAL JOURNAL, 145:51 (13pp), 2013 February
© 2013. The American Astronomical Society. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

doi:10.1088/0004-6256/145/2/51

GNOSIS: THE FIRST INSTRUMENT

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Monthly Notices

of the
ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

MNRAS **492**, 2796–2806 (2020)

Advance Access publication 2020 January 8

doi:10.1093/mnras/staa028



First demonstration of OH suppression in a high-efficiency near-infrared spectrograph

S. C. Ellis^{1,2}★ J. Bland-Hawthorn,^{2,3} J. S. Lawrence,¹ A. J. Horton,¹ R. Content,¹ M. M. Roth,⁴ N. Pai,¹ R. Zhelem,¹ S. Case,¹ E. Hernandez,⁴ S. G. Leon-Saval,^{2,3} R. Haynes,⁵ S. S. Min,³ D. Giannone,⁴ K. Madhav,⁴ A. Rahman,⁴ C. Betters,^{1,3} D. Haynes,⁵ W. Couch,¹ L. J. Kewley,⁵ R. McDermid,⁶ L. Spitler,⁶ R. G. Sharp⁵ and S. Veilleux^{7,8}

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²Sydney Institute for Astronomy (SIfA), School of Physics A28, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

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⁴Leibniz-Institut für Astrophysik Potsdam, An der Sternwarte 16, D-14482 Potsdam, Germany

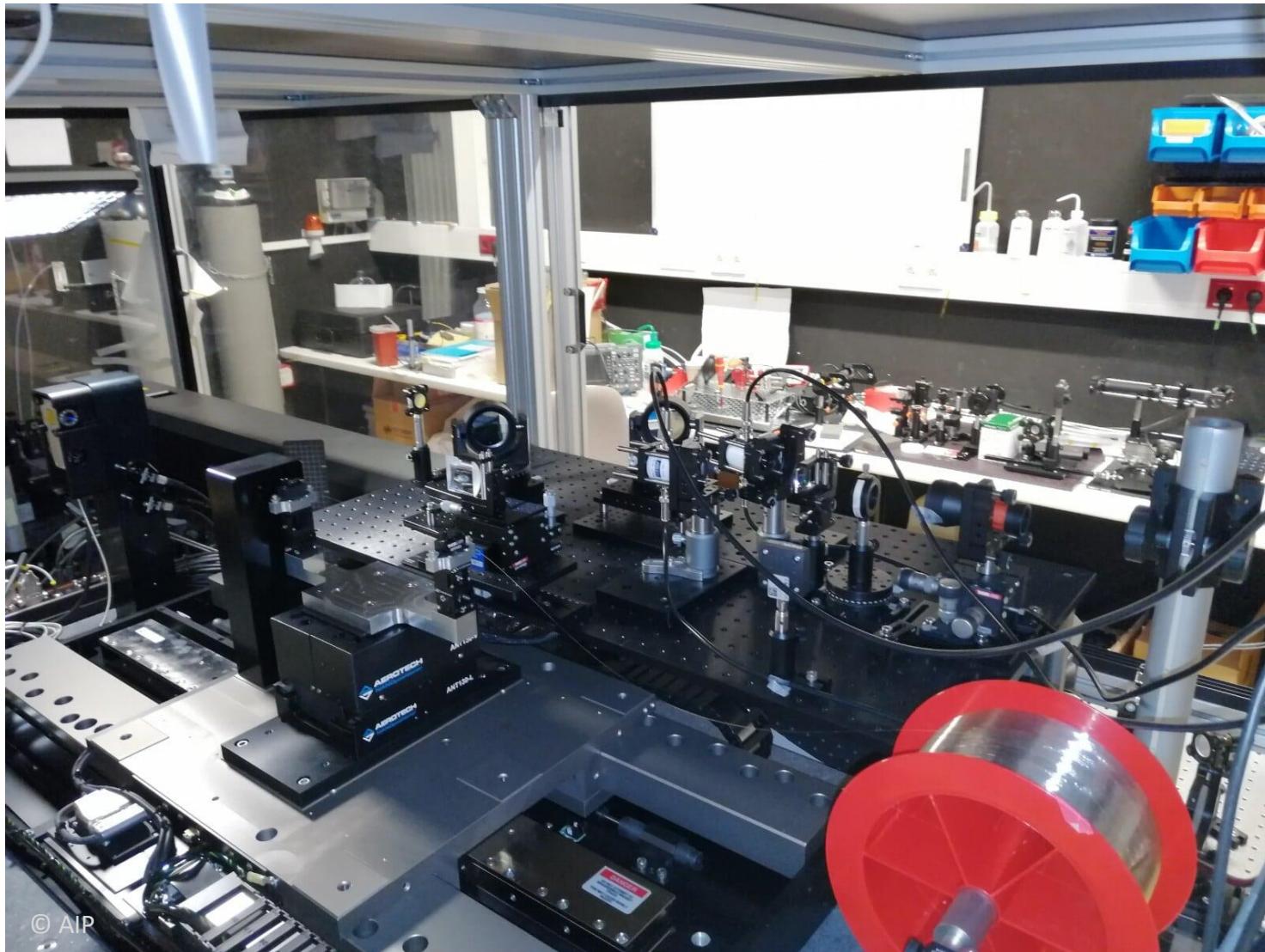
⁵Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Australian National University, Weston Creek, ACT 2611, Australia

⁶Department of Physics and Astronomy, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW 2109, Australia

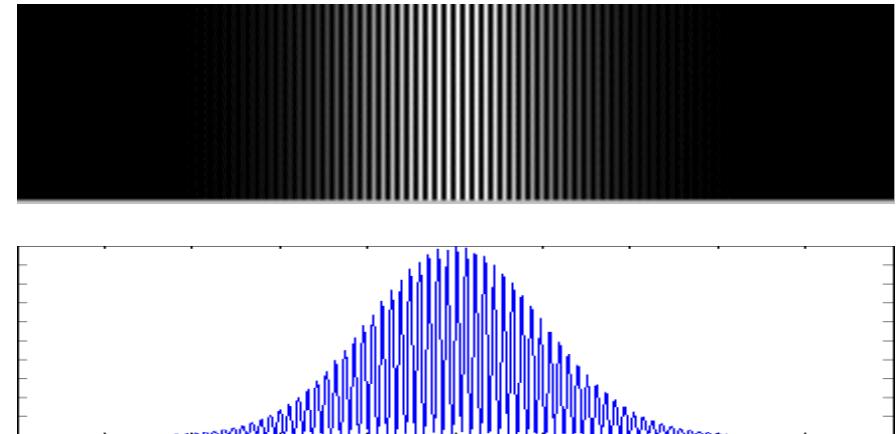
⁷Department of Astronomy, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA

⁸Joint Space-Science Institute, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA

Fiber Bragg Gratings for OH Line Filters: METI Interferometer



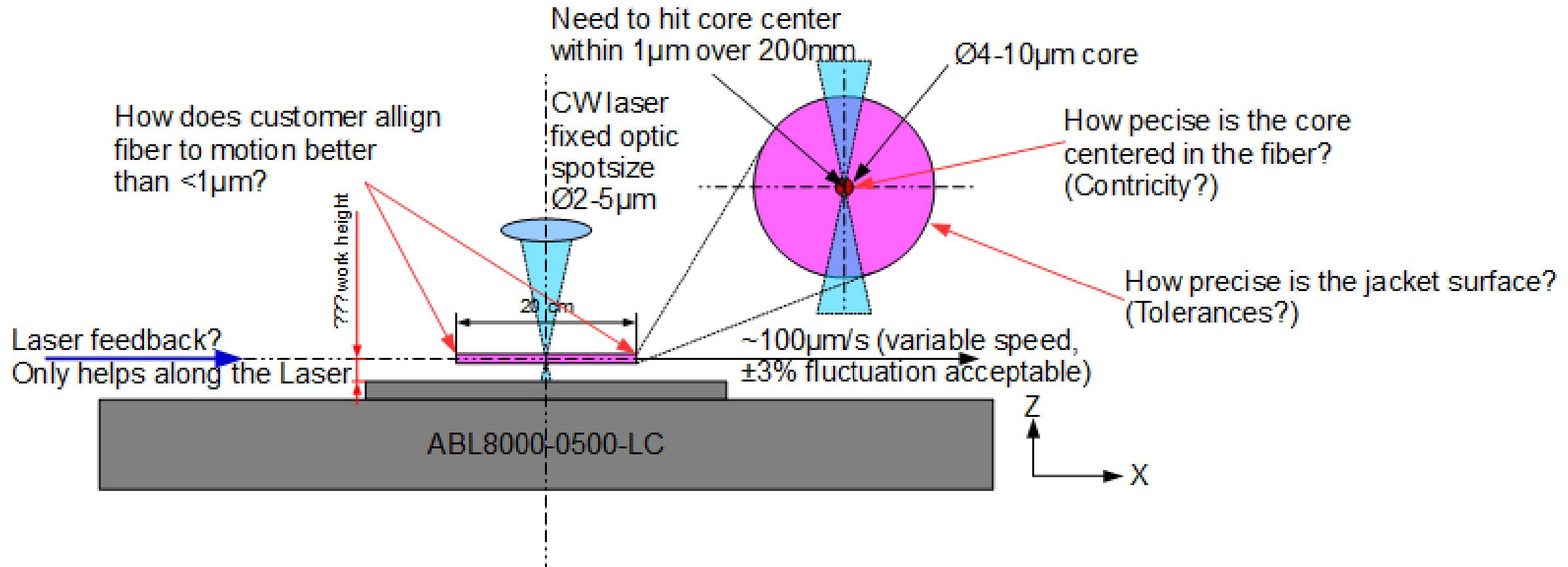
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Rahman. A. et. al. 2023, CLEO 2023,
Technical Digest Series, paper SF1H.3.

Credit : Aashia Rahman, Kalaga Madhav (AIP)

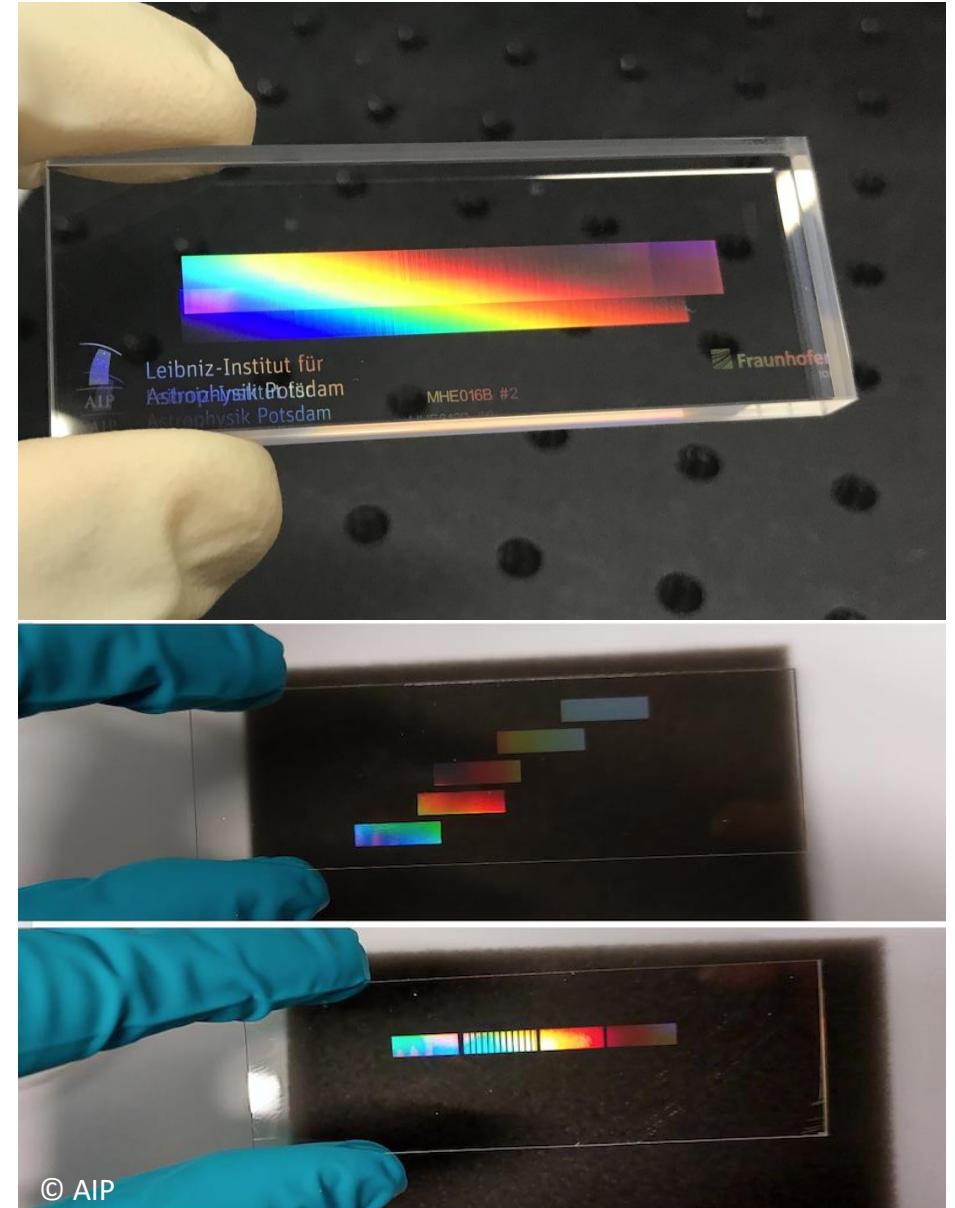
Fiber Bragg Gratings for OH Line Filters: METI Interferometer



Fiber Bragg Gratings for OH Line Filters

■ Complex Phase masks

Luo, X. et. al., Proc. SPIE 13100, 1310068

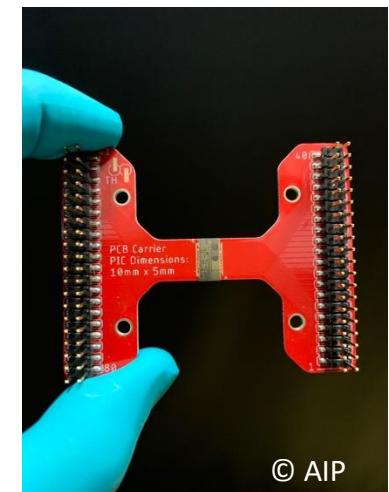
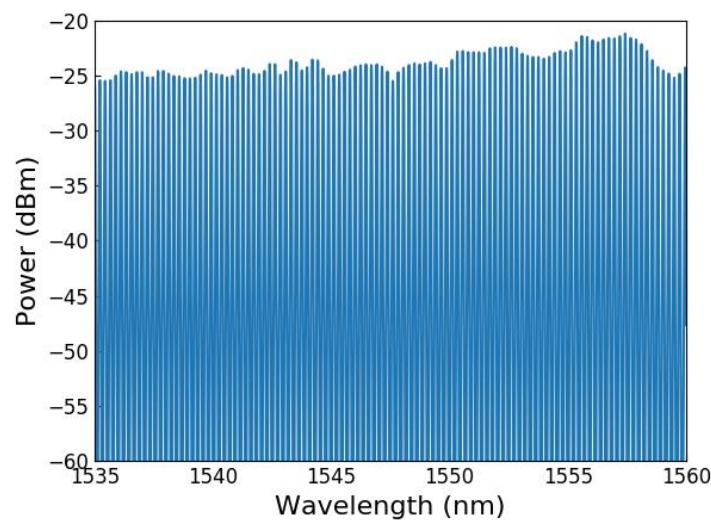
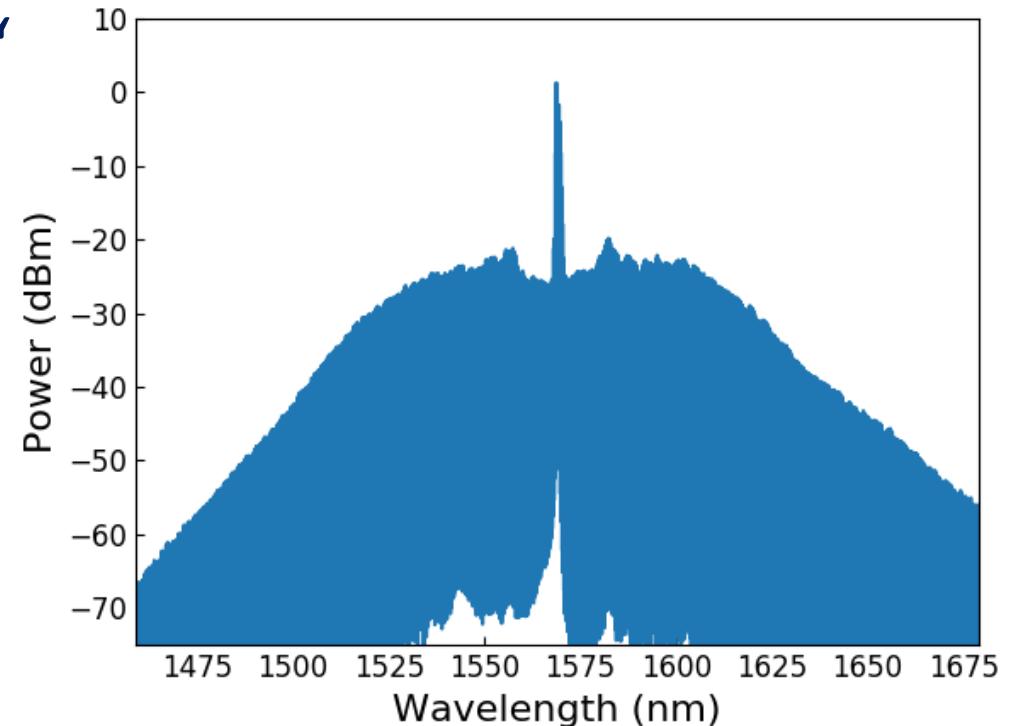


Ring Resonator Frequency Comb „POCO“



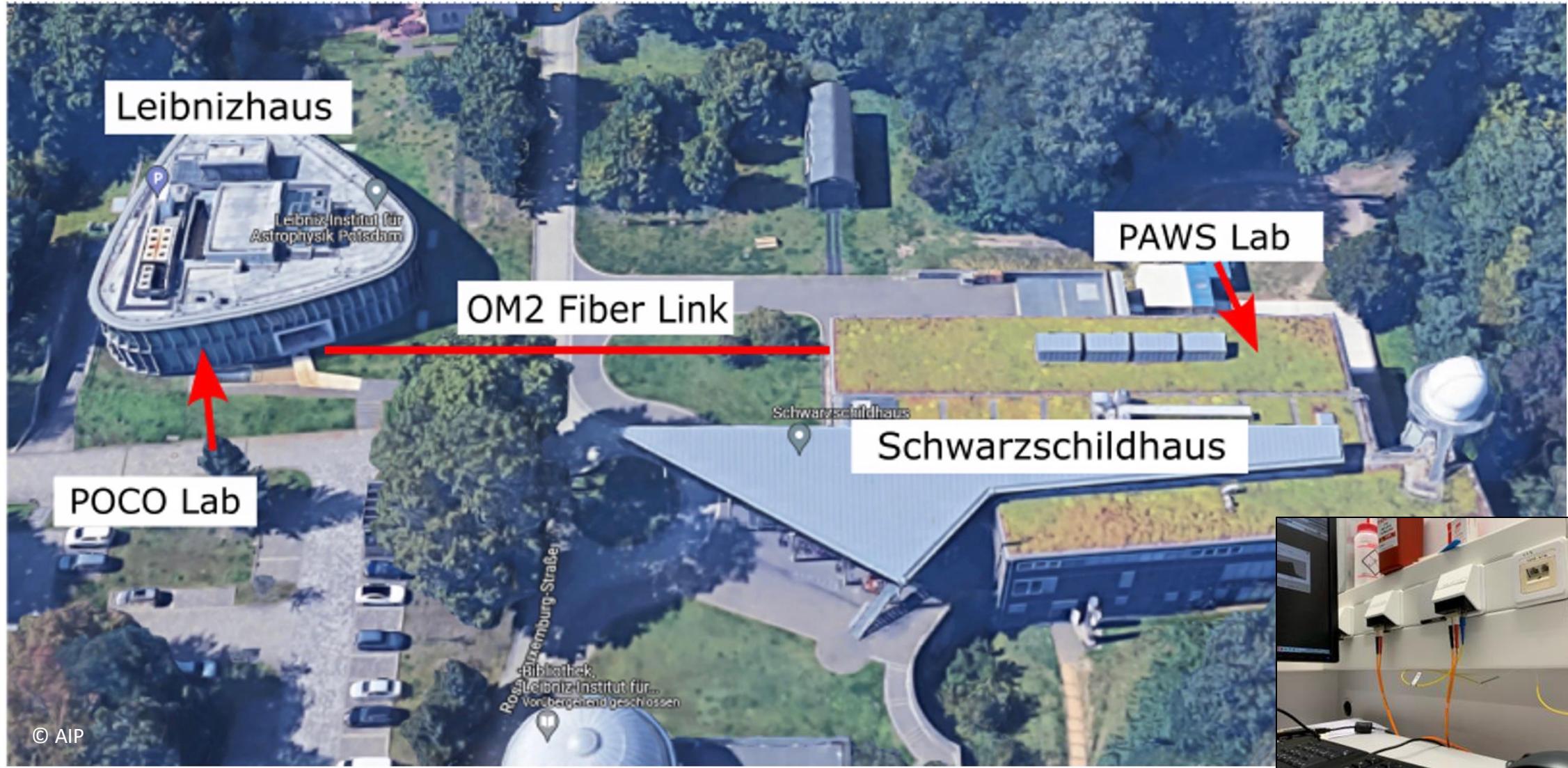
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Specification	Typical
Comb spacing (f_{rep})	$f_{\text{rep}}=28.55 \text{ GHz}$
f_{rep} stability	$\Delta f_{\text{rep}} < 1 \text{ kHz}$
f_{CEO} stability (absolute reference)	$\Delta f_{\text{CEO}} < 50 \text{ kHz}$
Spectral range	1250-1700nm (NIR) 400nm to 600nm (VIS)
Power per comb line	>0.1 nW @... (VIS)
Line width	1 kHz
Central wavelength	1560nm/1590nm NIR 520nm/530nm VIS
RV stability	25 cm/sec
Form	19" EIA rack
Power	240 VAC@50Hz 1-Phase
Cooling requirements	None
Features	Tunable



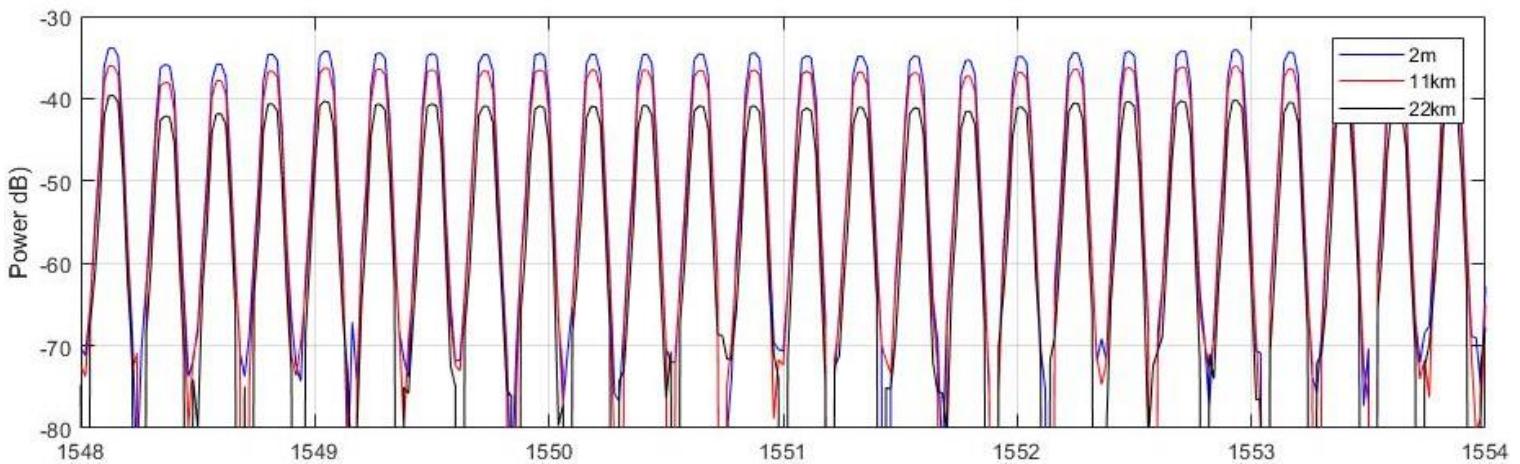
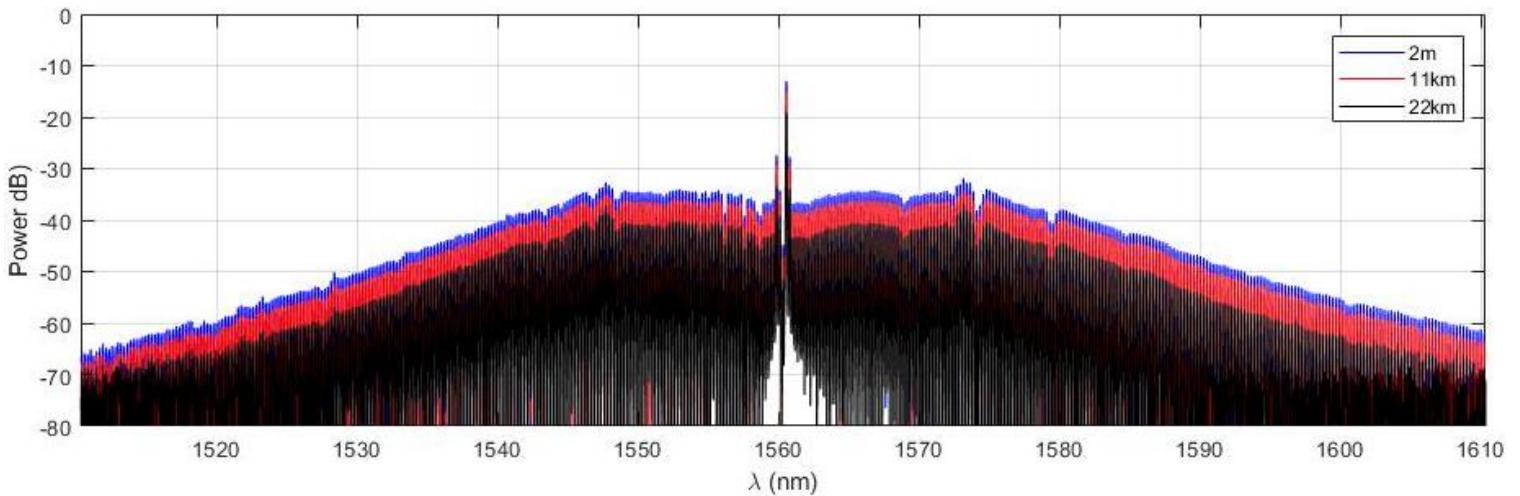
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Ring Resonator Frequency Comb „POCO“ tested with PAWS



Ring Resonator Frequency Comb „POCO“ tested with PAWS

Comb transmitted
over 10s of kms



Summary

Coupling telescopes to spectrographs allows to:

- achieve ultra-high stability, e.g. for exoplanet search
- to observe large statistical samples with multi-object spectroscopy
- realize integral field spectroscopy

Optical fibers couple to photonic devices

Optical fibers can be used as filters, even as spectrographs, and sensors

Acknowledgements



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