THE END OF THE BELGRADE MERIDIAN CIRCLE

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With deep regret we have to inform the astronomical community of the vanishing of the Belgrade Meridian Circle (BMC). It was completely destroyed by fire on May 10th, 1999.

BMC was one of the three fundamental instruments (Transit Instrument and Vertical Circle are the other two) all with the same aperture and the focal distance (190/2578 mm) that existed at Belgrade Observatory. Since 1970 the observations carried out with this instrument were used in compiling numerous catalogues as this Observatory's contribution to the International Reference Frame (Sadžakov and Dačić, 1989, 1990, Sadžakov et al., 1981, 1982, 1991, 1992, 1996, Sadžakov and Šaletić, 1972, Sadžakov and Damjanović, 1997). For instance, these observations were used in the construction of the Fifth Fundamental Catalogue (FK5) (Sadžakov and Dačić, 1992).

During the last decade we intended to modernize BMC with new electronic equipment (CCD technique) but due to financial problems the undertaking progressed very slowly (Protitch-Benishek et al., 1997, Pinigin et al., 1998).

Now all the plans have gone up in flames!

References

