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Preface

The Fessenkov Astrophysical Institute (FAI), Almaty, Kazakhstan was founded by academician V.G. Fessenkov in 1941 and is a well known institute worldwide. The main research directions of FAI include active galactic nuclei, stellar dynamics, young stars and nebulae, solar research and planetary research.

This special issue of *Astronomical and Astrophysical Transactions* is devoted to the publication of the papers prepared for the 4$^{\text{th}}$ Fessenkov Readings – the traditional conference to be held on August 19–22, 2013 by the Fessenkov Astrophysical Institute. The papers highlight the main directions of scientific work performed in the Institute during several last years, including both observational and theoretical investigations.

Previously, *Astronomical and Astrophysical Transactions* has published the papers of conferences held in the FAI: AApTr Vol. 22, Issue 2, 2003, dedicated to 50 years of FAI and AApTr Vol. 24, Issue 4, 2005, the special issue dedicated to the 1$^{\text{st}}$ Fessenkov Readings conference. The proceedings of the next two Fessenkov Readings conferences were published in the Kazakhstan editions: 2$^{\text{nd}}$ Fessenkov Readings: 2007, "Contemporary astrophysics: traditions and perspectives"; 3$^{\text{rd}}$ Fessenkov Readings: October 2010, review papers dedicated to the 60$^{\text{th}}$ anniversary of the Fessenkov Astrophysical Institute and published in the book "Astrophysics in Kazakhstan", Almaty, 2010.

This special issue highlights the astrophysical research made in the Fessenkov Astrophysical Institute over the last years. It contains original papers, both observational and theoretical, related to the investigation of stars, the solar system and galactic systems, as well as the reviews of the noctilucent cloud spectral observations in Kazakhstan in 2006–2007 (in terms of Kazakhstan Space Program) and three invited papers (by collaborators from P.K. Sternberg Astronomical Institute of M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University and Sankt-Petersburg State University).

E.Ya. Vilkoviskij



The Tyan-Shan Observatory of the Fessenkov Astrophysical Institute



The Assy-Turgen Observatory of the Fessenkov Astrophysical Institute