

REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP “QUANTUM ASPECTS OF BLACK HOLES”

This is a report on the ICTP network NET'68 activity, workshop “Quantum Aspects of Black Holes and its Recent Progress” which took place in Sept. 2013 in Yerevan, Armenia. This report mainly highlights some basic facts about this workshop. Some further information may be found at the conference website <http://theorphyslab.yzu.am/ICTP/Workshop/>.

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Report prepared by M.M. Sheikh-Jabbari, principle organizer of the workshop.

1 Preparations and organization

As a part of announced activities of the year 2013 of the “Novel approaches to mesoscopic phenomena” (MAMP), ICTP-NET’68, we started planning for the workshop “Quantum Aspects of Black Holes and its Recent Progress” in January 2013. I contacted Vijay Balasubramanian and Jan de Boer asking them for helping us with organization of the workshop, which they kindly accepted. Armen Nersessian was the local organizer of the workshop. The first point we discussed and agreed upon was the style of the activity to be a workshop, and given the financial and other limitations, we decided it to be a two-day activity.

After specifying the topics, which are list of questions and issues in black hole physics research, we thought of list of people to contact as invited speakers. We started with a big list of with names for first, second and third rounds of invitation for each topic and started sending off invitation letters by the end of January. Given the response we received from first round invitations we went on to second or the third.

We realized that late September is perhaps not a good time for such workshops, as people are usually busy with their teaching duties. (Of course we did not have much freedom about the timing, because the conference venue was not available earlier.) However, this is a point to be considered for future activities.

Around April 2013 we set up the workshop website (<http://theorphyslab.yzu.am/ICTP/Workshop/>) which were updated regularly until the end of the workshop, and prepared and posted the workshop poster. We announced the workshop, not only by sending the poster to different places but also by posting it on the INSPIRE and other physics conference announcement sites. I should mention that besides Prof. Armen Nersessian who was the main local organizer, his PhD student Armen Saghatelian and his junior research associate Vahagn Yeghikian, helped a lot with the local organizations and logistic as well as keeping the website update. The computer manager at IPM, Samira Jam, also helped me with setting up the website and preparing the poster.

In the end, our two-day activity started as planned on 24th of Sept. in Yerevan. We had 12 seminars, six each day. The schedule was designed to give ample time for discussions. From what I gather, participants were happy with this setup and found it a useful meeting. Altogether we received 32 participants. Seven were from Iran, basically my team. Eight were from Armenia, three were from Turkey (supported by the network funds, c/o Omer F. Dayi). The rest were from all over the world, from Brazil to USA to Europe and India.

I think the scientific level of the seminars were reasonably good and the workshop achieved its goal of gathering people for having scientific exchanges in the topic area of the workshop. From the organization and logistic viewpoints, too, it was very well organized thanks to the efforts by Armen Nersessian and his team. In particular, arrangements for visa preparations of the Turkish participants was quite non-trivial but worked out just fine.

Finally, I should acknowledge our financial supports: besides the ICTP funds which was the main financial source of the workshop we received support from Regional Training Network on Theoretical Physics funded by Volkswagenstiftung. We also received support from Yerevan state university which hosted the activity.

Next meeting, in Istanbul?

During my visit to Istanbul in August 2013, I had preliminary discussions with Turkish colleagues (including Omer F. Dayi) to host a similar workshop on black holes and related topics next summer, around early Sept. 2014, in Istanbul. Bogazici university can provide the place and a guesthouse, if applied early enough. We will include this activity with some preliminary planning in our proposal for activities of the network in 2014.