LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Received 1 November 1988

"Will the Real V503 Cygni Please Stand Up?"

The AAVSO preliminary 'e' scale chart for 2023+43 V503 Cyg was drawn by Scovil in 1981 from a photo taken by Fr. Ronald Royer at Ford Observatory, Mt. Peltier, CA. This photo shows a speck near the plate limit which was presumed to be V503 by comparison with a finder chart published in the Russian **Variable Stars** (1960). The first hint that something might be in error was Scovil's note dated October 1984 on his chart: "V503 seems slightly out of position - should be closer to 11.1 comp. star."

While observing the field on August 21, 1987, Griese noticed that the star in outburst was not V503 as marked on the chart, but a faint nearby field star. After labelling this star "a" and notifying AAVSO Headquarters and observer John Bortle, we started monitoring the two positions hoping to see both stars in outburst.

Finally, on August 16, 1988, while observing with the 24-inch Perkin Telescope at Van Vleck Observatory, Griese found star "a" up at magnitude 13.4. He called Scovil who photographed the field with the 22-inch Maksutov at Stamford Observatory, documenting the outburst and position. We followed this outburst, which was typical of dwarf novae. Griese then sought the original literature sources at the Yale Astronomy Department library. On close inspection we concluded that the finder chart mentioned above and ones published in other profesional journals were sketches or tracings from small-scale photos, modified by sketching, and so not very accurate. Obviously the positions of field stars did not match the AAVSO chart or its source photo.

Recently Scovil has been drawing new preliminary charts for U Gem stars listed in the **Atlas of Northern Dwarf Novae** by A. Bruch, et al. in **Astronomy & Astrophysics** (1981). This atlas provides three photos of each field, one with the variable faint, one with it in outburst, and one of the field from the Palomar Sky Survey. V503 Cyg is included in this atlas. The photos show that star "a" is apparently V503 Cyg. We applaud the efforts of Bruch and his co-workers in providing the detailed and highly accurate photographic charts identifying the variable stars in their atlas. One wonders: although the Palomar Survey shows no star at the erroneous position (to about 20th magnitude), what was the speck on the Royer photo? Was it just a defect, or is there another U Gem star lurking there?

REFERENCES

Bruch, A. et al. 1981, **Astron. & Astrophys. 70**, 481.
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