



THE EUROPEAN ORGANISATION FOR ASTRONOMICAL RESEARCH (ESO) READIES A NEW 2.5 TON INSTRUMENT FOR ITS VERY LARGE TELESCOPE IN NORTHERN CHILE: THE "X-SHOOTER", A HIGHLY EFFICIENT SPECTROGRAPH CAPABLE OF RECORDING A CELESTIAL OBJECT'S ENTIRE LIGHT SPECTRUM IN ONE SINGLE OBSERVATION

The X-Shooter, built collectively by 11 institutes in Denmark, France, Italy and the Netherlands, does what it previously took multiple telescopes and observations to do: capture the full light spectrum of an object in space. X-Shooter simultaneously collects all wavelengths, from the ultraviolet (300nm) to the near-infrared (2400nm), allowing it to study the object from different "perspectives" (different types of light provide different types of information about a source). It is a very efficient machine, making it especially useful for studying gamma-ray bursts. It has, however, already been used to look at low metallicity stars, X-ray binaries, distant galaxies and quasars, and the nebulae associated with Eta Carinae and the supernova 1987A. X-Shooter will be made available to the larger astronomical community for research use beginning in October.

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