

MESSIER 25, OPEN CLUSTER

Open Cluster M25 (also known as Messier Object 25 or IC 4725) is an open cluster in the constellation Sagittarius. It was discovered by **Philippe Loys de Chéseaux** in 1745 and included in Charles Messier's list in 1764.

OBSERVATION DATA (J2000.0 EPOCH)

Right ascension 18h 31.6m

Declination $-19^{\circ} 15'$

Distance 2.0 kly (613 Pc)

Apparent magnitude (V) 4.6

Apparent dimensions (V) 32.0'

Radius 10

Estimated age 90 million years

M25 is at a distance of about 2,000 light-years away from Earth. The spatial dimension of this cluster is about 19 light years across. A Delta Cephei type variable star designated *U Sagittarii* is a member of this cluster.

JEAN-PHILIPPE DE CHÉSEAU

Jean-Philippe Loys de Chéseaux, May 4, 1718 in Lausanne – November 30, 1751) was an astronomer from Lausanne in Switzerland. In 1746 he presented a list of nebulae, eight of which were his own new discoveries, to the Académie Française des Sciences. The list was noted privately by Le Gentil in 1759, but only made public in 1892 by **Guillaume Bigourdan**. Chéseaux was among the first to state, in its modern form, what would later be known as Olbers' Paradox: that is, if the universe is infinitely old, with an infinity of stars, the night sky should be as bright as day. De Chéseaux discovered two comets: C/1743 X1 — C/1746 P1

A wealthy Swiss landowner, mathematician and astronomer, De Chéseaux lived near Lausanne, where he was born on May 4, 1718. He had a private observatory with a simple 14-foot refractor, a 2-foot Gregorian reflector, as well as a quadrant which could measure to an accuracy of 15 minutes of arc.

He is famous for his observations of the comet he discovered (on December 13, 1743) and observed 1743 until March 1744, although this had been first discovered (on December 9) by **Dirk Klinkenberg** in 1743. De Chéseaux describes this comet in depth, which became brighter than Jupiter and at one time exhibited no less than six tails. He originally discovered another comet two years later, on August 13, 1746: Comet 1746 De Chéseaux (C/1746 P1, 1747).

In 1745 and 1746, De Chéseaux compiled a list of 21 nebulous objects (including M25) of which he had originally discovered 8 objects. Moreover, he

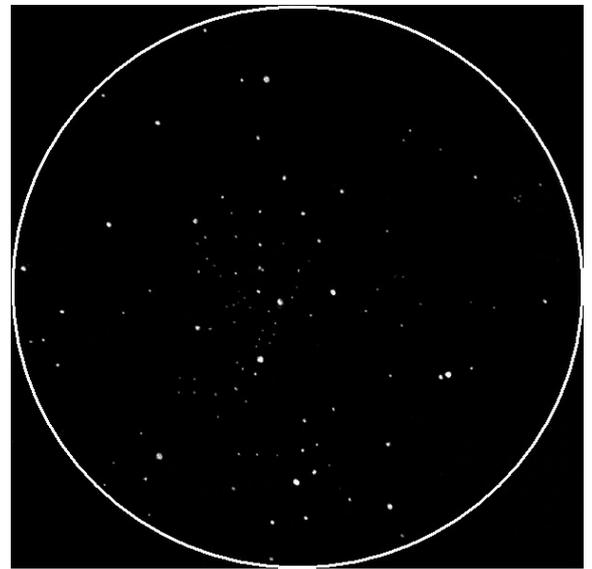
independently re-discovered M6, NGC 6231 and M22. De Chéseaux sent this list to his grandfather, **Reaumur**, in Paris, who read it at a meeting of the French Academy of Sciences on August 6, 1746, but it then stayed unpublished and more or less forgotten until Guillaume Bigourdan recovered and published it within a larger paper in 1884.

De Chéseaux also did some little-known research into Biblical chronology, attempting to date the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth by analysing astronomical observations in the Book of Daniel. This work was published posthumously in *Mémoires posthumes de M. de Chéseaux* in 1754.

De Chéseaux did not grow very old; he died on November

30, 1751 at age of only 33.

AK, with Wikipedia Notes



Open Cluster M25. Picture of the Day 2009 August 31



Portrait of Jean-Philippe de Chéseaux

