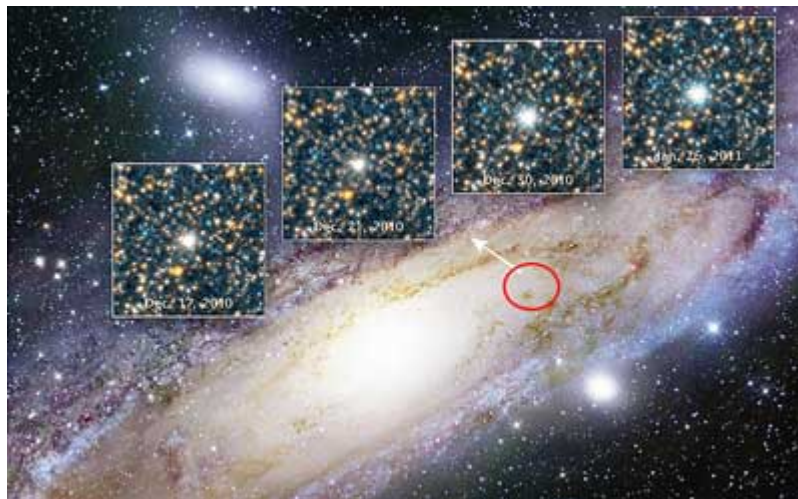


The twinkle that changed our universe

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This handout picture provided by NASA shows the star named Hubble variable number one, or V1's positions on December 17, 21 and 30 in 2010 and January 26, 2011. NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has viewed the star (circled in pic) that was instrumental in helping Edwin Hubble show that the Andromeda Galaxy lies beyond our galaxy. Prior to the discovery of V1, many astronomers, including Harlow Shapley, thought spiral nebulae, such as Andromeda, were part of our Milky Way Galaxy.



In fact, Shapley and Heber Curtis held a public debate in 1920 over the nature of these nebulae. In 1923, Hubble sent a letter, along with a light curve of V1 (like the one in the pic), to Shapley telling him of his discovery. After reading the note, Shapley reportedly told a colleague, “Here is the letter that destroyed my universe.”

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