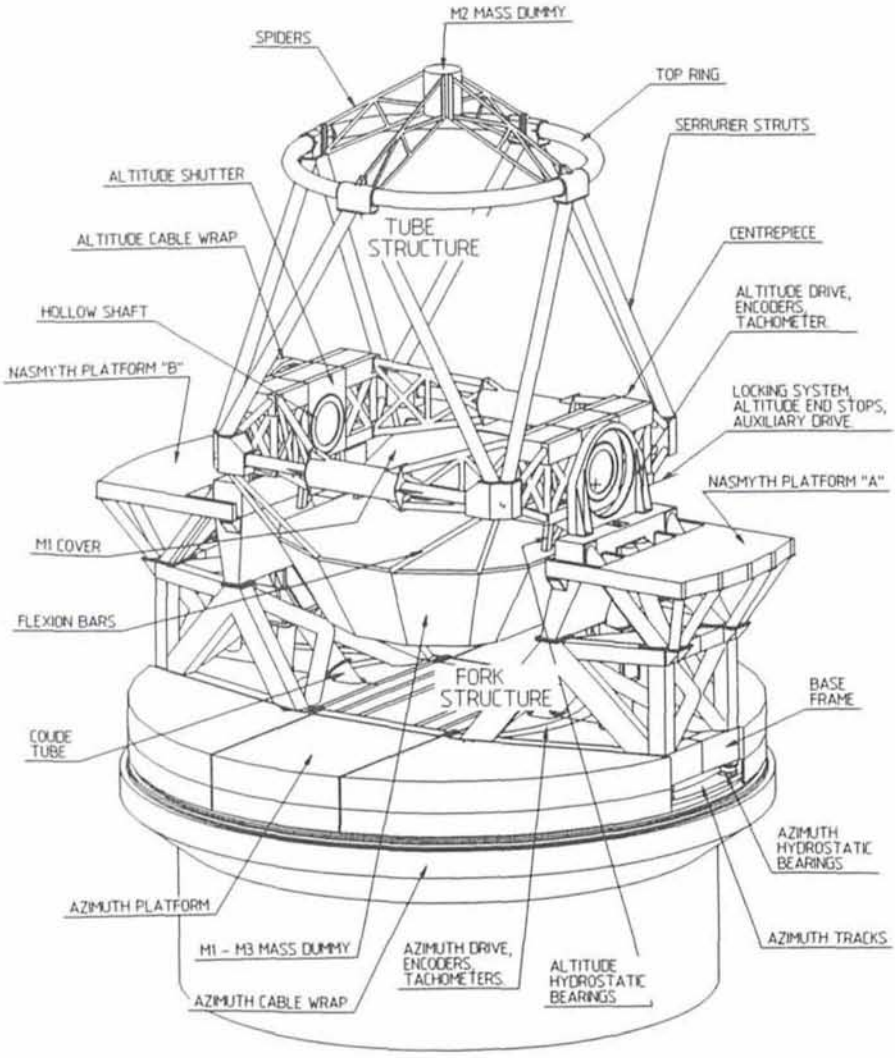

Figure 2: *Definition of telescope structure components and subsystems.*

engineering work including buildings, roads, site development and energy systems, the main elements of interferometry (e.g. auxiliary telescopes and delay lines). By the end of 1992, 80 per cent of the VLT capital budget is expected to be committed.

STAFF MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Europe

BALLEMANS, Irma (NL), Programme Documentation Assistant/Archivist
FILIPPI, Giorgio (I), Software System Engineer
FREUDLING, Wolfram (D), Fellow
STEFL, Stanislav (CS), Associate
ZHU, Nenghong (RC), Associate

Chile

MATHYS, Gautier (B), Associate
STORM, Jesper (DK), Fellow
VAN WINCKEL, Hans (B), Student

Departures

Europe

BAUER, Harry (D), Electronical Engineer
BECKER, Joachim (D), VLT Project Manager/Head, VLT Division

The Paranal Observatory Becomes Reality

M. J. DE JONGE, ESO

In the middle of September the first VLT contractor to execute work on the Paranal site, Interbeton from the Netherlands, started to move its earth-moving equipment and basecamp to the site.

Interbeton, contracted for the levelling and landscaping of the mountain top, had prior to beginning the actual earth-moving work, to reestablish new topographical references. The only topographical reference in the Paranal area is namely on the peak of the mountain and would disappear with the start of the levelling work.

While the survey work was going on, the base camp was finished and the contractor's staff moved into their temporary homes.

Drilling rigs, bulldozers and front loaders moved to the mountain top and started to make a first platform, of a size big enough to turn the trucks, to be used for the transport of excavation material.

The levelling work, consisting of removing approximately 250000 m^3 from the mountain top to create a 20000 m^2 flat area on which the telescopes, the optical laboratories and the interferometer tracks will be located, had really begun.

The first drillings led to the first earth removal by explosives and on September 23 the silence of the Paranal area was broken, which initiated the VLT construction activity which will last till the end of the century.

The excavation material will almost all be used to make an artificial platform to the east side of the telescope area on which the last part of the access road will be constructed.

This platform needs to be rather large since the road requires a 12-m clearance width in order to allow the transport of large telescope parts and the main mirrors.

As from the moment the Contractor moved to the site, also ESO staff belonging to the VLT Division's Staff and Building Group installed themselves on the site in order to ensure permanent supervision of the levelling work. In particular the compacting of the road platform requires intensive follow-up and