

FOREWORD

This volume collects a part of the communications presented to the SEAC XXIII Conference, held in Rome "Sapienza" University on November 9-13 2015 and entitled "Astronomy in Past and Present Cultures".

Only those papers, which have been accepted after a rigorous peer-review procedure, are published here. The papers testify to the impressively broad range of the arguments treated at the conference, which include the general Problems and Methods of Cultural Astronomy, as well as Astronomy in ancient European and Extra-European Cultures and Cultural Astronomy in Middle Age, Renaissance and Modern Epoch. In our view, the quality and variety of the subjects treated and of the results presented show the vitality and the increasing scientific level of Cultural Astronomy and related fields.

This volume demonstrates the importance of the sciences complementarities in the human sciences methodological approach. In this regard, the Cultural Astronomy and related fields can help Archaeology and the historical and philological sciences to substantially advance in the understanding of the ancient social dynamics and ideological behaviors.

In fact, archaeologists are perfectly aware of the essential role of the natural landscape surrounding human life in order to understand the relationship between men and their thinking. In spite of this wide accepted view, it is only in recent time, compared to the history of the human sciences that the concept of the historical landscape used by the scholars has enlarged to include also the sky. This is due to the meeting between archaeology and astronomy in a proper scientifically framework, as the one European Society for Astronomy in Culture provided since 1992. In this larger view, the celestial vault become an important part of the anthropomorphic landscape.

This volume synthesizes in a wide chronological and geographical historical frame, from the Prehistory, through Pre-classical and Classical Ages, the Middle Age and the Modern Epoch, from West to East, the several approaches that human cultures use to shape the cosmos. In every ages cultures create their own relationships between what is below, the Earth, where people live continuously modifying the landscape, and what is above, the Sky, where the gods can provide the deep reasons underlying the human changes.

The Guest Editors

Dr. Jean Paul Hernandez, SJ (Chaplain of Rome University Chapel), Dr. Cesar Gonzalez Garcia (CSIC-INCIPIT, Santiago de Compostela), Prof. Giulio Magli (Milan Polytechnic), Dr. Davide Nadali (Rome University "La Sapienza"), Dr. Andrea Polcaro (Perugia University), Dr. Lorenzo Verderame (Rome University "La Sapienza")