

Forword by Guest Editors

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**Selected Papers of the INSAP X – Oxford XI – SEAC 25th Joint Conference
'ROAD TO THE STARS',
held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 18th–22nd September 2017**

This special volume of papers is the culmination of a planning process that began in 2014. The ambition then was to hold an inaugural Scientific Conference of three of the bodies representing the Cultural Astronomy community - INSAP, OXFORD and SEAC. Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain was proposed and jointly agreed as the venue - a place famed over centuries as the most important pilgrimage terminus in Europe. Relevantly for the visiting conference delegates, the very translation of the name 'Santiago de Compostela' was a likely metaphor for Cultural Astronomy because of the strong links between the place and city with culture, astronomy and the sky. So the choice of the conference title 'Road to the Stars' by the Local Organising Committee was most appropriate and symbolically charged with meaning.

The initial call for papers had global reach and resulted in 160 submissions of abstracts. An international Scientific Organising Committee undertook a rigorous review of these based on their state of completion, novelty, advancement of the field, academic quality and relevance to the themes of the conference. Following adjudication, 88 were accepted for oral presentation with a further 24 admitted as poster presentations. The Book of Abstracts (eds. A. César González-García, Patricia Martín-Rodilla and Juan Antonio Belmonte) also featured seven artwork installations for inclusion in the conference agenda and this element greatly enriched the delegate experience (the art was publicly exhibited in the local Fonseca College). The 88 presentations accepted for oral presentation were grouped into the following seven thematic sessions for delivery over the five-day period: Land and Skyscapes, Ancient Astronomies, Anthropology of the Sky, From Rome to Santiago, Education and Heritage, Inspiring Skies, Methods, and a Poster Exhibition. The field excursions to the Neolithic dolmen at Dombate and the Bronze Age rock art of Campo Lameiro were unforgettable experiences, as were the other cultural events arranged by the Local Organising Committee.

Post conference, delegates who presented orally or by poster were each invited to submit a written paper limited to eight pages in length. The Editorial Board sent these for double-review to a panel of anonymous referees. The process was regulated by MAA's review criteria/rules and has resulted in the 63 papers featured in this special volume. Papers are thematically grouped into four categories: Ancient Astronomies, Heritage Education & Methods, Inspiring Skies, and Light & Shadows. On a sad note, one of two papers by the late Vito Francesco Polcaro contains a wonderful obituary by his son Andrea (co-author) and we greatly mourn Vito's passing.

By now, the cherished memories and profound experiences of the conference delegates at Santiago de Compostela are ephemeral. It is hoped, however, that the contents of this volume will provide a permanent record of the diverse interdisciplinary scholarship and research effort of all those who have contributed to this amazing journey - one which started in each of our countries of origin and fittingly ended at Santiago de Compostela.

Finally, we sincerely acknowledge the tireless work of the Local Organising Committee, the Scientific Organising Committee and the many anonymous reviewers.