

Foreword

The 27th annual meeting of the Société Européenne pour l'Astronomie dans la Culture (SEAC) took place in Bern and was celebrated jointly with the 25th European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) annual meeting whose title was 'Beyond Paradigms in Archaeology'. This is the main reason for the title of the present volume. This confluence took advantage of the invitation on the part of the EAA to celebrate together for the first time the two annual meetings. The conference took place in Bern (Switzerland) from September 4th until September 7th, 2019. The SEAC meeting was structured in three main sessions with several invited talks, oral presentations and posters. There was also a round table with an open debate to discuss on the role of Cultural Astronomy within Archaeology and the Humanities in general. The present volume includes a good number of the presentations at the three main sessions of the meeting.

In the last years it has been the norm that SEAC meetings lasted for five days, however, to accommodate fully within the EAA schedule, this meeting was shorter and perhaps more focused on the archaeological part of Cultural Astronomy.

Cultural Astronomy, as the endeavour to explore and understand the role of the sky in past and present societies, and how they have incorporated such into their culture, includes a part closely related to archaeology. This is what has traditionally been called archaeoastronomy. Recent attempts to bridge the gap even further include the proposal to incorporate archaeoastronomy as part of Landscape Archaeology, or even further to devise a new corpus named Skyscape Archaeology. Papers on these issues are presented in the last part of these proceedings (The Archaeology of Astronomy: Concepts of Space and Time Materialised in Cultures).

However, Cultural Astronomy and particularly SEAC do explore such role of the heavens from the perspectives of the Anthropological sciences. In this sense, a number of papers were also presented at that meeting. In addition, some of them are present in the first part of the present volume (Cultural Astronomy, Skyscape and Ontology: how celestial objects and events have featured in the belief systems, cosmologies and worldviews of different societies).

Finally, in the last decades SEAC has been deeply concerned with the methodology and theoretical issues of our discipline. As a central part of every scientific endeavour, we offer here a number of interesting papers on different topics related to the methodology and theory of Cultural Astronomy (Frontiers in Theory, Methodology and Education within Cultural Astronomy).

Indeed, some papers are a review of previous knowledge, as it was intended that a large fraction of the invited talks should be devoted to offer archaeologists (the main public attending an EAA meeting) an up to date view of Cultural Astronomy matters. Most of these, though, are not present in this volume. For such the reader is referred to the recently edited Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy. However, some papers do include nonetheless such reviews. Most papers in this volume, then, include a short summary of recent research in widely different areas, from Roman light and shadow effects to highlight power, to how astronomy and archaeoastronomy are presented and thought. From Mayan city organization to Etruscan temple orientation and the ontology of the sky.

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President of SEAC on behalf of the editors

