

The Sky on Earth or of the right distance

XIV International Congress of the Italian Society of Archaeoastronomy

17th-18th October 2014

Scientific Committee:

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The XIV Congress of the Italian Society of Archaeoastronomy entitled *Sky on Earth or of the right distance* will take place on 17th-18th October 2014 at the University of Padua and will be organized by the Department of Cultural Heritage and the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The Italian Society of Archaeoastronomy continues in its task of creating opportunities and chances of interaction between scientific cultures which are different, but nonetheless committed to dialoguing, looking at the sky and the earth. Two compartments apparently distant, but that dominate the scene in which man plays his role and finds out his own history: from the most remote antiquity to the present day, indeed, they represent an almost specular correspondence of differences which integrate themselves by necessity. It is sufficient to think that a simple tool as the sundial, which took advantage of the sun, its light and its shadow, was used in order to be able to learn about the passing of time, but also to orient properly the Roman land division. This practice was concretely anchored to the sacredness of the sky since the *groma* (the Roman surveying instrument used to trace the *limites*) was *auspicaliter posita*. In this sense, the dimensions of time, sky and terrain space were combined within the sacred.

The way many groups of people have considered and built up relationships with the celestial sphere represents the theme of our meetings: in substance, we want to investigate progressively on the link between the cosmos, human life and what it produces, verifying, in terms of scientific rigour, the possible astronomical content which may be recognised in the material culture produced by different historical and geographical contexts. Essentially, as has been said, archaeoastronomy is the set of studies "about what historic and prehistoric populations have done with reference to celestial phenomena, or the way they made use of them and what role these studies have played in their culture." The integrated research of physical sciences and humanities intends to build a synergistic framework formed by information that comes from an interdisciplinary context and which aims at defining new and original models of interpretation and understanding of the Cultural Heritage.

In particular, among the main themes of the Conference held in Padua, there will be the discussion about astronomical and statistical methodologies used today to specify the degree of reliability of the chronological and cultural definition of the sites and artifacts which are of an archaeoastronomical interest. Given the coincidence between the conference and the most interesting phases of the Rosetta mission towards the Churyumov-Gerasimenko comet, the program will include a public lecture on the Rosetta Stone and its archaeological and symbolic significance.

During the Conference, the areas of the discussion, which will take into consideration issues related to the territory, human settlements, architectures and artefacts, as well as research tools, will be organised into four sessions:

1 - archaeoastronomical value (methodologies, procedures and outcomes for the knowledge, the governance and the enhancement of the cultural heritage with astronomical value);

2 - cultural astronomy (analysis of astronomical, geometrical and instrumental knowledge existing from antiquity to the eighteenth century; relations between astronomical knowledge and societal lives, especially in the contexts of different expressions and manifestations of human activities);

3 - history of science (birth and development of studies aimed at understanding the interrelationships between man and the cosmos);

4 - poster session.