

## Preface

The Royal Astronomical Society National Astronomy Meeting (NAM) 2014 was hosted by the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation (ICG) at the University of Portsmouth. It was held during June 23rd to 26th 2014 and was sponsored by the RAS, STFC, SEPnet and Winton Capital.

As part of this meeting a session stream titled *Modern Archaeoastronomy: From Material Culture to Cosmology* took place on Monday 23rd proposed and organized by Brian Sheen (Roseland Observatory) and Daniel Brown (Nottingham Trent University). It consisted of an illustration of the many aspects of archaeoastronomy or cultural-astronomy as it has developed and embraced areas such as anthropology, public engagement and sociology.

Anita Heward (Press Officer NAM) stated that ‘sessions on the history of astronomy have been a feature of many NAM programmes over the years, but NAM 2014 was the first to include a dedicated session on archaeoastronomy.’ It was motivated from past decades where our understanding of astronomy of our ancestors has become more strongly based on factual data. As such it allowed researchers to identify possible traces of astronomical knowledge in archaeological remains and artefacts. Archaeoastronomy is an ideal example of the advancement in this area as well as the power of interdisciplinary work that in recent times has started to interpret these findings through cultural, anthropological and educational research. This session will offer an opportunity to present a multitude of different approaches of analyzing the perception and origins of astronomy in ancient and modern cultures, and also bring together young researchers and students in the field to present their research to a wider community.

The stream consisted of two parallel sessions. The first session was chaired by B Sheen and started with D Brown giving an introductory view of the field of archaeoastronomy and setting the scene for the following presentations. Fabio Silva (University College London) followed with his presentation on the implementation of Skyscape Archaeology within the context of Dolmen found in Portugal. Pamela Armstrong (University of Wales Trinity Saint David) continued, by discussing cosmologies of Mesolithic and Neolithic Skyscapers offering material towards a proposed shift from lunar to solar influenced cosmologies. Richard Bower (ICC/IMEMS Durham University) concluded the first parallel session with a more recent illustration of De Luce: Modelling the 13th Century Universe of Robert Grosseteste. The second session was chaired by D Brown and started by Liz Henty (University of Wales Trinity Saint David) who used her work on Tomnaverie Recumbent Stone Circles to showcase how phenomenological Skyscape Archaeology offers an alternative to large scale statistical studies. Frank Prendergast (Dublin Institute of Technology) then used a similar approach with respect to Irish passage tomb data to be more meaningfully considered and culturally interpreted within broader archaeological and social anthropological contexts. The final presentations were given by Jacky Nowakowski (Cornwall Archaeological Unit) and B Sheen that presented their work and interpretations on the Hurlers stone circles project *Mapping the Sun*.

This volume has evolved from this stream and contains five papers from well as a contribution of Nicholas Campion (Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture). They form a more detailed and deeper presentation of the material presented during the sessions.

Finally, I would like to thank the scientific committee, the local organizing committee as well as the reviewers of the papers who helped with the revision process.

Daniel Brown

Editor



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