

# **Heritage Sites of Astronomy and Archaeoastronomy in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention**

**A Thematic Study**

**Clive Ruggles and Michel Cotte**

**with contributions by**

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# Contents

Preface .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vi
Further information .....	vii
List of authors .....	viii
Introduction <i>Michel Cotte and Clive Ruggles</i> .....	1
Background to the ICOMOS–IAU Thematic Study .....	1
Aims, objectives and broad methodology .....	2
Some preliminaries about the nature of astronomical and archaeoastronomical heritage ...	3
Management: general considerations .....	12
Chapter 1 Earlier prehistory <i>Michael Rappenglück</i> .....	13
Case Study 1.1 The Thaïs bone, France .....	16
Case Study 1.2 The decorated plate of the Geißenklösterle, Germany .....	19
Case Study 1.3 The Ishango bone, Democratic Republic of the Congo .....	21
Case Study 1.4 The astronomical rock panels in the Lascaux Cave, France .....	24
Chapter 2 Later prehistoric Europe <i>Clive Ruggles</i> .....	28
Case Study 2.1 Stonehenge World Heritage Site, United Kingdom <i>Amanda Chadburn</i> .....	36
Case Study 2.2 Seven-stone antas, Portugal and Spain .....	41
Case Study 2.3 The stone circles at Odry, Poland <i>Stanisław Iwaniszewski</i> .....	43
Chapter 3 Pre-Columbian America <i>Stanisław Iwaniszewski</i> .....	46
Case Study 3.1 Boca de Potrerillos, Mexico <i>Stanisław Iwaniszewski and William Breen Murray</i> .....	54
Case Study 3.2 Caguana, Puerto Rico <i>Angel Rodriguez</i> .....	57
Case Study 3.3 Chankillo, Peru <i>Ivan Ghezzi</i> .....	59
Case Study 3.4 The metallurgical centre of Viña del Cerro, Chile <i>Ricardo Moyano</i> .....	62
Chapter 4 Indigenous uses of astronomy <i>Jarita Holbrook, Stephen McCluskey and Clive Ruggles</i> .....	65
Case Study 4.1 Navajo star ceilings, USA <i>Stephen McCluskey and Von Del Chamberlain</i> .....	71
Case Study 4.2 Atituiti Ruga, Mangareva, French Polynesia <i>Clive Ruggles</i> .....	74
Case Study 4.3 Wurdi Youang, Australia <i>Ray Norris</i> .....	76
Chapter 5 Ancient and medieval Far East <i>Shi Yun-li and Clive Ruggles</i> .....	80
Case Study 5.1 Taosi observatory, China <i>Xu Fengxian and He Nu</i> .....	86
Case Study 5.2 Denfeng observatory, China <i>Xu Fengxian</i> .....	90
Case Study 5.3 Beijing ancient observatory, China <i>Shi Yun-li</i> .....	94
Case Study 5.4 Cheomseongdae observatory, Republic of Korea <i>Park Jeong Eun</i> ...	96
Chapter 6 India <i>Subhash Kak</i> .....	99
Case Study 6.1 The Jantar Mantar at Jaipur, India <i>Michel Cotte</i> .....	108

Chapter 7	Mesopotamia and the Middle East	<i>John Steele</i>	113
Chapter 8	Ancient Egypt	<i>Juan Belmonte</i>	117
Case Study 8.1	The tomb of Senenmut at western Thebes, Egypt		127
Case Study 8.2	The temple of Amun at Karnak, Egypt		129
Case Study 8.3	The temple of Hathor at Dandara, Egypt		131
Case Study 8.4	The pyramids of Giza and related buildings, Egypt		133
Case Study 8.5	Napata, Sudan, including the temples of Djebel Barkal and the Nuri necropolis		136
Chapter 9	The Classical World	<i>Efthymios Nicolaidis, Giulio Magli and Clive Ruggles</i>	139
Case Study 9.1	The Pnyx, Athens, Greece	<i>Michael Wright</i>	146
Case Study 9.2	The acropolis of Alatri, Italy	<i>Giulio Magli</i>	148
Case Study 9.3	The Pantheon, Rome, Italy	<i>Giulio Magli</i>	151
Chapter 10	Islamic astronomy	<i>Tofiq Heidarzadeh</i>	155
Case Study 10.1	The Maragheh observatory, Iran		163
Case Study 10.2	Ulugh Beg’s observatory, Uzbekistan		166
Chapter 11	Medieval astronomy in Europe	<i>Stephen McCluskey</i>	169
Case Study 11.1	Monkwearmouth–Jarrow, United Kingdom		177
Case Study 11.2	The Baptistery of Parma, Italy	<i>Manuela Incerti</i>	180
Case Study 11.3	Strasbourg cathedral, France, and astronomical time		184
Chapter 12	Astronomy from the Renaissance to the mid-twentieth century	<i>Michel Cotte, Danielle Fauque and Clive Ruggles</i>	188
Case Study 12.1	The Royal Observatory, Greenwich, United Kingdom	<i>Rebekah Higgitt</i>	195
Case Study 12.2	The Royal Observatory, Cape of Good Hope, Republic of South Africa	<i>Ian Glass</i>	199
Case Study 12.3	Meudon observatory, France	<i>Stéphane Le Gars</i>	204
Case Study 12.4	Mount Wilson observatory, USA	<i>Gudrun Wolfschmidt and Clive Ruggles</i>	206
Case Study 12.5	The Einstein Tower, Potsdam, Germany	<i>Gudrun Wolfschmidt and Michel Cotte</i>	209
Chapter 13	The development of radio astronomy	<i>Richard Wielebinski and Tom Wilson</i>	213
Case Study 13.1	The Stockert radio telescope, Germany	<i>Richard Wielebinski</i>	221
Chapter 14	Applied astronomy in modern times	<i>Michel Cotte</i>	224
Case Study 14.1	The Struve geodetic arc, Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, and Ukraine		226
Chapter 15	Space heritage	<i>David DeVorkin and Mikhail Marov</i>	229
Chapter 16	‘Windows to the universe’—starlight, dark-sky areas and observatory sites	<i>Cipriano Marín, Richard Wainscoat and Eduardo Fayos-Solá</i>	238
Case Study 16.1	Lake Tekapo – Aoraki – Mount Cook Starlight Reserve, New Zealand	<i>Margaret Austin and John Hearnshaw</i>	246
Case Study 16.2	Eastern Alpine Starlight Reserve and Großmugl Starlight Oasis, Austria	<i>Günther Wuchterl</i>	249
Case Study 16.3	AURA Observatory, Chile	<i>Malcolm Smith</i>	252
Case Study 16.4	Mauna Kea Observatory, Hawaii, USA	<i>Richard Wainscoat</i>	255
Case Study 16.5	Canarian observatories, Spain	<i>Casiana Muñoz-Tuñón and Juan Carlos Pérez Arencibia</i>	257
Conclusion	Astronomical heritage in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention: developing a professional and rational approach	<i>Michel Cotte and Clive Ruggles</i>	260

# Preface

This Thematic Study results from a collaborative project between the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), an advisory body to UNESCO for cultural heritage, and the International Astronomical Union (IAU), the world's foremost professional organization for astronomy, through its Working Group on Astronomy and World Heritage. It is published jointly by ICOMOS and the IAU

The main aims of the project are to gain an improved understanding of the character and composition of different forms of astronomical heritage and to identify optimal methods for, and potential problems in, defining this type of heritage in the context of the World Heritage Convention. As a result of the collaboration, the international team of authors is drawn from two complementary scientific and professional communities both of whom have provided invaluable input and expertise. The need to combine methodologies and develop common lines of approach has presented a range of challenges and each of the contributing authors named on various chapters and case studies has played a vital role in helping us to rise to them. Where no author is named on a case study, it has been provided by the author of the chapter that contains it.

These contributing authors provided the first drafts of their articles working to a common specification that we had supplied. Subsequently we assessed these contributions in detail and, in some cases, heavily reorganized and amended them in order to impose a suitable degree of consistency of approach and style and depth of analysis (as well as of length).

Where substantial cuts have been made to the individual authors' reports and case studies, it is our intention to make fuller versions available on the website of the Astronomy and World Heritage Initiative <http://www.astronomicalheritage.net/> following the publication of this Thematic Study. Updates, together with and further reports and case studies, will also be posted on the Initiative's website in due course, forming part of an electronic resource that will continue to be developed into the future.

As with all ICOMOS Thematic Studies, the case studies presented do not in any sense constitute a 'provisional list'. They include a mixture of properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List, sites included on national Tentative Lists, and others. It must be emphasized, especially in the last case, that the presence or absence of any property as a case study in this volume carries no implications whatsoever regarding the outcome of the nomination process should it ever be put forward for inscription to the List, either alone or through a serial nomination.

*CR and MC, June 2010*

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## Further Information

Further information relating to astronomy and archaeoastronomy and/or the context of the World Heritage Convention can be found on the following websites:

UNESCO World Heritage Centre	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">whc.unesco.org</a>
International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)	<a href="http://www.icomos.org">www.icomos.org</a>
International Astronomical Union (IAU)	<a href="http://www.iau.org">www.iau.org</a>
UNESCO Astronomy and World Heritage Initiative	<a href="http://www.astronomicalheritage.net">www.astronomicalheritage.net</a>
IAU Working Group on Astronomy and World Heritage	<a href="http://www.astronomicalheritage.org">www.astronomicalheritage.org</a>
Inter-Union Commission on the History of Astronomy	<a href="http://www.historyofastronomy.org">www.historyofastronomy.org</a>
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	<a href="http://www.iucn.org">www.iucn.org</a>
International Society for Archaeoastronomy and Astronomy in Culture (ISAAC)	<a href="http://www.archaeoastronomy.org">www.archaeoastronomy.org</a>

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