

# 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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## Illustrative materials

While every effort has been made to identify copyright owners and to obtain their permission to use their material in this book, the publishers apologise for any errors and omissions and would welcome these being brought to their attention.

## 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>