

25th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE ACTIVITY AND SOCIETY (E5)
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SPACE AND SOCIETY: THROUGH HISTORY

Abstract

“Man must arise above the Earth – to the top of atmosphere- and beyond- for only thus we will fully understand the world in which he lives.” Socrates (469-399 BC). During history, society has always been influenced by the curiosity and mystery and then the knowledge and study of space. Archaeological findings show the populations’ beliefs and also the associations of events happening to them, where science mixed with art and religion. Starting from Stonehenge, arriving to the Egyptians, experts of “archaeoastronomy”. The Pyramids, with their architecture gave the Pharaohs two pathways of renewal and resurrection after death. Then the Greeks, who founded two of the most famous features which still influence our nowadays life: the Zodiac and the Horoscopes. The Sun became a key life point for people, not only astronomers, and when Greek astrologers added to the Zodiac the time of birth and combine with Sun and Rising signs then people started to study their own horoscope and interpret their life according to the stars. The Horoscope and the Chinese calendar were used to foretell fortunes according to the astronomical phenomenon. Very famous is also Hindu astrology (Jyotia), divided into the three different branches: Siddhanta (Indian astronomy), Sahit (Mundane astrology for predicting wars, economics) and Hor (detailed predictive astrology). Still in modern India astrology and traditional medicine have a big influence for population. Indians still believe that planets can influence a human being life, and they are important for the justice’s administration. Art is the expression of interpretation of space, but often mixing with other components: religion, superstition, science. Realization of architectural structures, or designing an horoscope, or painting are all externalization of space’s interpretation. Although with several differences, nowadays life is definitely suffering the influence of the past. Some more evolved countries started to look at the stars and the space above only under a scientific point of view and as such society has now several philosophers and engineers and astronomers who spend their lives looking for discoveries, while there are still some more that believe that their destiny is written in the stars. Nevertheless, the ones and the others, with different point of view, still believe that planets influence our life: the first ones want to find in the stars the origin of the Universe, the second ones want to read in the stars their future and perhaps to play the lottery with some lucky numbers.