

PREFACE

Four years after the First Workshop on Robotic Autonomous Observatories, the number of automatic astronomical facilities worldwide continues to grow, and the level of robotisation, autonomy, and networking is increasing as well, with further strong impact in many astrophysical fields, like the search for extra-solar planets, the monitoring of variable stars in our Galaxy, the study of active galactic nuclei, the detection and monitoring of supernovae, and the immediate follow-up of high-energy transients such as gamma-ray bursts.

The manuscripts published in these Conference Series of the Revista Mexicana de Astronomía y Astrofísica are the fruit of the III Workshop on Robotic Autonomous Observatories held in Torremolinos, Málaga (Spain) on Oct 7-11, 2013. The main focus of the workshop dealt with the new and existing astronomical facilities whose goal is to observe a wide variety of astrophysical targets with no (or very little) human interaction. The workshop became an international forum for researchers to summarise the most recent developments and ideas in the field, with a special emphasis given to the technical and observational results obtained within the last five years.

As in 2009 and 2011, Torremolinos (10 km away from Málaga) was the perfect place for hosting the workshop with pleasant early October temperatures and the possibility of swimming in the Mediterranean sea at any time, as the Conference room at Hotel Camino Real was only 200m away. And twelve kilometres away, the 3,000 yr old Málaga Town, offered new views of its centre, thanks to new archaeological excavations, with its magnificent view from the Alcazaba fortress and the Car Museum during the Guided Tour to Málaga, prior to the Conference dinner in Parador Nacional de Golf at the seashore. The excursion day to Tanger (Morocco) was also a unique experience for many of the attendants.

The Workshop was organized by both the Instituto de Astrofísica de Andalucía of the Spanish Research Council (IAA-CSIC) and the Department of System Engineering and Automatics at Universidad de Málaga (UMA) with support from the EU FP7 GLORIA Project (ref. 283783) as a special session was focused on GLORIA. We want to thank the members of the Scientific Organizing Committee (SOC): V. Connaughton, A. J. Castro-Tirado (chair), S. Guziy, L. Hanlon, R. Hudec, A. Klotz, V. Lipunov, L. Mankiewicz, K. Strassmeier and S. B. Pandey for arranging an excellent scientific programme, and express our gratitude to the members of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC): S. Castillo, L. Cuesta, A. García-Cerezo, J. Gorosabel, S. Jeong, M. Jelínek, V. Muñoz-Fernández (chair), C. Pérez del Pulgar, M. Pérez-Ramírez, R. Sánchez-Ramírez and J. C. Tello. Together with the Torremolinos and Malaga Town Halls and the Patronato de Turismo de la Costa del Sol, they made of the staying of the 80 participants in Málaga an unforgettable experience.

We appreciate all the anonymous referees and Rev. Mexicana de Astronomía y Astrofísica for the very careful edition of this Issue.

We also thank Irina Guziy for designing the nice Workshop announcement poster, and both María Eva Alcoholado-Feltström (helped by Mercedes Garcés García) for her assistance as Workshop secretary in order to achieve a perfect organization.

Juan C. Tello, Alberto Riva, David Hiriart and Alberto J. Castro-Tirado

Granada, Torino, Ensenada and Málaga