

PREFACE

To approach the comprehension of Mesoamerican astronomical signs, it is necessary to establish correlations among many essential concepts of modern astronomy and the numerous culture expressions. Thus, through the study of Mesoamerican signs and the pursuit of their astronomical signifiers, we have learned to recognize certain iconographic aspects that summarize the methods of recording observed astronomical phenomena, which were of interest to human groups in the prehispanic past. All this includes the existence of various levels of astronomical information contained in the Mesoamerican material culture, manifested through different indicators: type of calendrical codices; orientation of plinths and buildings; rock art such as petroglyphs and astronomical markers; architectural works and the great diversity of signs immersed in the prehispanic arts as sculpture and mural painting. So, with the purpose of bringing together the diverse views on the study of the Mesoamerica and appreciate the importance of the prehispanic astronomical science, the Instituto de Astronomía and the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and the Dirección de Estudios Arqueológicos and the Coordinación Nacional de Difusión of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), with seven decades of protection and recovery of cultural heritage of Mexico, with the support of their directors José Franco, Carlos Serrano, Luis Alberto Martos and Benito Taibo Mahojo, respectively, joined efforts to organize the meeting Cantos de Mesoamérica during the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (10 to 13 November).

The meeting organizers were J. Daniel Flores Gutiérrez of Instituto de Astronomía, Lorenzo Ochoa Salas of Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, both from UNAM, and Rosalba Nieto Calleja of Dirección de Estudios Arqueológicos, INAH. Bertha Vázquez Román and Alfredo Díaz Azuara worked as secretaries. The edition of this publication has been possible through the strong support of the William Lee director of the Instituto de Astronomía and Silvia Torres, editor of the “Revista Mexicana de Astronomía y Astrofísica, Serie de Conferencias”.

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