

FINAL REMARKS

Gustavo E. Romero

Facultad de Ciencias Astronómicas y Geofísicas, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Paseo del Bosque, B1900FWA La Plata, Argentina, & Instituto Argentino de Radioastronomía (CCT La Plata, CONICET; CICPBA; UNLP), C.C.5, (1894) Villa Elisa, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Six decades have passed since the IAR (Instituto Argentino de Radioastronomía) was founded by decree of Bernardo Houssay. Illustrious names such as Enrique Gaviola, Jorge Sahade, Merle Tuve, and Houssay himself participated in the gestation of the Institute. In many ways, the IAR was a unique experience in the history of astrophysics in Argentina and South America: an institution that began as a simple observatory to map the southern sky in the 21 cm line of neutral hydrogen, and ended up as a leading institution in basic research in the entire width of the electromagnetic spectrum, a center for theoretical astrophysics, and a technological development pole for the space industry that ended up with applications of remarkable social impact. Today, the IAR is one of the most versatile players in the Argentine science and technology system, and a model of how investments in basic research can have a long-term impact that leads to unexpected technological applications. This is the path taken by other major institutions in the Northern Hemisphere, such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) or the European Space Agency (ESA).

This long journey has only been possible thanks to the effort and dedication of three generations of scientists, technologists and technicians who have devoted their knowledge, courage, and love of science to the noble task of building a better future. And they did so under extremely difficult conditions, perhaps unimaginable to those who today enjoy the results of their achievements. Some literally sacrificed their careers and even their lives in pursuit of a vision. A vision of a country where basic science is the engine of technological development that makes it possible to change reality. And they did it from a discipline that was unknown in the country at the time, alien to the local tradition, in the face of prejudice and sometimes incomprehension and even hostility.

The collection of articles found in the pages of this volume is a tribute to these men and women. They show that their dream is a reality. It is our responsibility to see that it remains so.

And now, as I conclude and look back, I can only express gratitude, with humility, along with the secret hope that perhaps I too have contributed, even in a small way, to this stupendous odyssey.

Gustavo E. Romero
IAR, Villa Elisa
December 1st, 2023.