

# CULTURE AND COSMOS

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**Editor Nicholas Campion**

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## Editorial

*Culture and Cosmos* is the longest standing publication in the field of cultural astronomy. As was made clear in the first editorial in 1997, the critical study of cultural astronomy cannot be separated from the history of astrology. The accepted contemporary distinction between astronomy and astrology becomes increasingly difficult to justify if we look at non-Western and premodern cultures. Both terms, astronomy and astrology, are problematic when we consider the entire sweep of history and culture, but convenient just as long as we remember that they are culturally situated. Therefore, the journal examines cultural uses and consequences of the human relationship with the sky across the board, across cultures and time periods. In terms of theory and method, it is based in the humanities and social sciences. The journal's subtitle is 'a journal of cultural astronomy and the *history* [my emphasis] of astrology'. However, an understanding of culture requires an understanding of history along with anthropology and sociology.

Therefore, just as the study of culture it extends into other subject areas, such as the study of religions and theoretical and methodological perspectives such as phenomenology and reflexivity, so must cultural astronomy. It is necessarily inter-disciplinary. In this respect this issue begins with the re-publication of Stanislaw Iwaniszewski's seminal paper from 1991, which first named and defined Cultural Astronomy, and set out for the first time the academic disciplines required to study astronomy's cultural relationships, associations and consequences. (Stanislaw Iwaniszewski, 'Astronomy as a Cultural System', *Интердисциплинарни зследвания (Interdisciplinary Research)*, Archaeological Institute and

Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1991, Vol. XVIII, pp.282–88). The paper has been edited for English flow and style, but the content otherwise remains the same. We then continue with a more recent theoretical reflection on Cultural Astronomy from Patrick Curry, ‘Enchantment, Place and Space: Implications for Cultural Astronomy’. Curry’s polemic argues that Cultural Astronomy cannot assume that the meaningless cosmos generally assumed by modern science – and hence scientific astronomy – is a given. Instead, Curry argues, Cultural Astronomy could equally take as a baseline the meaningful cosmos assumed by non-modern, non-western and indigenous astronomies. Laura Andrikopoulos then relates theory to textual examples, partly responding to Curry’s views on Enchantment, ‘Myth, Enchantment and Psychological Astrology’. Andrikopoulos describes the psychological astrology of the twentieth-century as a form of ‘inscape’. The scope of the possible topics encompassed by Cultural Astronomy is represented in the four other papers in this issue: Mark Sutton on Plato’s geometrical cosmos, Claudia Rousseau on Renaissance representations of the corona borealis, Tom Hockey on ways to interpret responses to the total solar eclipse of 7<sup>th</sup> August 1869, and Jessica Heim on a vital contemporary issue, the development of Lunar land ethic.

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