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978-0-521-12530-7 - Archaeoastronomy in the Old World  
Edited by D. C. Heggie  
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## Archaeoastronomy in the Old World

### About this book

This volume summarises the proceedings of a conference which took place at the University of Oxford in September 1981. Held under the auspices of the International Astronomical Union and the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science, the meeting reviewed recent research in Old World Archaeoastronomy. The publisher received the final typescript for production in March 1982. The papers on archaeoastronomy in the Americas are also published by Cambridge University Press in a companion volume, *Archaeoastronomy in the New World*, edited by A.F. Aveni.

The papers in this book are concerned with shedding light on a controversial aspect of European prehistory, especially that of north-west Europe: was astronomy practised here in the late neolithic and bronze ages, and, if so, what was its purpose? These questions are of obvious interest to prehistorians, but modern interest in them has been stimulated largely by those whose professional background is in the pure and applied sciences, while they raise technical issues which have aroused the interest of statisticians and astronomers.

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## PREFACE

The papers in this book are concerned with shedding light on a controversial aspect of European prehistory, especially that of north-west Europe: was astronomy practised here in the late neolithic and bronze ages, and, if so, what was its purpose? These questions are of obvious interest to prehistorians, but modern interest in them has been stimulated largely by those whose professional background is in the pure and applied sciences, while they raise technical issues which have aroused the interest of statisticians and astronomers. The diverse backgrounds of the authors of these papers reflect the multidisciplinary approach which the subject deserves and, indeed, requires.

The papers were presented at an international symposium on archaeoastronomy that was held at The Queen's College, Oxford, from 4 to 9 September, 1981. All the invited papers dealing with ancient astronomy in the old world are included, except for one introductory paper on the astronomical background, and the volume also contains a wide selection of the contributed papers, some of which were presented as posters. Papers dealing with American archaeoastronomy will be found in a companion volume edited by A.F. Aveni.

It is a pleasure to thank the authors of these papers for the time they have devoted to the preparation of their typescripts, and the staff of Cambridge University Press for their careful and expeditious production of this volume. This is also a suitable opportunity to thank the three bodies which materially supported the activities at the conference: the International Astronomical Union, the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science, and the British Academy. But particular thanks are due to Michael Hoskin, who not only originally proposed the holding of the conference, but devoted much energy and good humour to its efficient organisation.

Edinburgh

Douglas C. Heggie

5 March 1982

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