

Preface

The European VLBI Network (EVN) is the materialization of the European joint collaborative efforts in VLBI science and techniques: an extremely large scale astronomical facility that is fully open not only to astronomers from all over Europe, but to all astronomers over the world. This collaboration involving the major radio observatories in Europe, as well as institutes in Asia and South Africa, is well recognized by the European Union and has become an example of scientific collaboration for other disciplines. EVN scientists use to meet biannually to review, discuss and debate the most recent VLBI scientific results and technical developments. As the EVN itself, the EVN meetings series have now reached an interest well beyond the European borders reflecting the deep spirit of VLBI scientists who aim to deploy their activities at a global level.

This book contains the proceedings of the 7th Symposium of the EVN meeting series which was hosted by the Spanish Observatorio Astronómico Nacional (OAN) of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN) and which was held in Toledo, Spain. At its greatest prosperity, Toledo under the Moorish rule (712-1085) was the capital of an independent kingdom in which Astronomy reached an impressive level of splendor. Under the Moors and later under the kings of Castile, who made it their chief residence, Toledo was a center of the Moorish, Spanish, and Jewish cultures and thus a great center in which these very different ways of life co-existed happily for quite a long time. The Arabic astronomer Azarquiel (1029 - 1100) and later the king Alfonso X “el Sabio” (1221 - 1284), whose name has become inseparable from that of Toledo, made impressive astronomical observations to produce the most accurate astronomical tables of that time. These high accuracy data, once in hands of Copernicus (1473 - 1543), turned out to be impossible to be understood in the frame of the Earth centered theories, and motivated the heliocentric theory that opened a new Era in the history of knowledge. It was the wish of the organizers of the Symposium that the city of Toledo serves as an inspiring frame in which the scientific discussions and collaborative initiatives turn to be specially fruitful.

Besides the very interesting scientific program, the Symposium included the EVN Users’ meeting, a visit to the new 40-meter radiotelescope that OAN/IGN is constructing in Yebes, and the now traditional EVN football match. The symposium also provided the perfect opportunity to OAN/IGN to celebrate the 25 years of radioastronomy in Spain, the 100 years of astronomy at OAN/IGN, and the 200 years of the first astronomical observation (Herschel 25-feet telescope) at OAN’s Real Observatorio Astronómico de Madrid.

The Editors of this volume requested the written version of the contributions (talks and posters) well before the meeting, so the book could be delivered to the participants at the beginning of the Symposium. This motivated quite strict instructions and deadlines for the authors to send their manuscripts in a format nearly ready for publication. The authors then need to be acknowledged for their excellent willingness that has resulted in a very complete and extremely interesting volume. We thank Eduardo Ros for his help in providing many macros to compose this book.

The scientific content of this Symposium was defined by the Scientific Organizing Committee which worked in a very constructive manner: Willem Baan (Co-chairman) (WSRT/ASTRON, NL), Jesús Gómez-González (Co-chairman) (IGN, ES), Francisco Colomer (Secretary) (IGN, ES), Antxon Alberdi (IAA, ES), Rafael Bachiller (IGN, ES), Roy Booth (OSO, SE), Robert Brown (NAIC, USA), Patrick Charlot (Obs. Bordeaux, FR), Phillip Diamond (MERLIN/JBO, UK), Mike Garrett (JIVE, NL), Justin Jonas (HRAO, ZA), Andrzej Kus (TCfA, PL), Franco Mantovani (IRA, IT), Wolfgang Schlüter (IfAG, DE), Richard Strom (ASTRON, NL), Merja Tornikoski (MRO/HUT, FI), Liao Xinhao (SHAO, CN), Anton Zensus (MPIfR, DE), and Jin Zhang (UAO, CN).

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