XLIX Congresso della Società Astronomica Italiana
Omaggio a Pietro Tacchini:
dalla Società degli Spettroscopisti Italiani a LBT

Catania, May 02-07, 2005

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FOREWORD

The 49th Meeting of the Italian Astronomical Society (SAIt) was dedicated to the memory of the great astronomer Pietro Tacchini, a very high level figure in the astrophysical scenario of the dawn, a promoter of Memorie della Società degli Spettroscopisti Italiani (then Memorie della Società Astronomica Italiana) and the Astrophysical Journal, and the founder of the high altitude observatory built up in 1880 on Mount Etna.

The Meeting was held in Catania from 2 to 7 May 2005, in the magnificent framework of the Monastero dei Benedettini (Monastery of Benedictines), restored in recent years and today the seat of the Faculty of Arts of the University. In fact it is the same architectural complex that once hosted the city seat of Catania Astrophysical Observatory with its big dome, always a reference spot in the city views from the heigths around. We did not have so much time to organize the Meeting: indeed the decision of the SAIt Board was made in middle November 2004. So, in a little more than five months, by forced marches, the Meeting project was taking shape day after day under the scientific and organizatory aspects, and eventually, at the begining of May, we were able to offer, by general consent, a very high standard product.

About two hundred delegates attended the Meeting, perhaps the greatest number in the SAIt history, spread over the seven scientific sessions, with about ten invited reviews, fifty selected oral presentations, and a hundred posters, the last displayed in the lengthy Monastery corridors we remember from the novel ”I Vicerè” (The Viceroys) written by Federico De Roberto’s lively pen.

The opening ceremony, in the presence of the vice-Rector and political and academical authorities, took place in the Aula Magna of the University. It was devoted to the recalling of Pietro Tacchini’s figure and works, and reached the top when very young and brilliant researchers were awarded Tacchini Prizes, and supported our confidence in Italian Astrophysics keeping in time its present very high level.

Days flew past in a undeclared competition among the sessions, one more interesting than another, we were not bored (sleepers were very rare, caught in the act and in aeternum by an inexorable photographer!), the talks were competing for clarity and lucidity and discussion never failed.

Very attended was also the one following the reports by Pallavicini on INAF (National Institute for Astrophysics) and by Chiuderi on RIAA (Inter-university Network for Astronomy and Astrophysics). Great appeal had the public conference on ”Observation of the Universe” given by Capaccioli and the classroom talks given by Antonucci, Barbieri, Bonoli, Colangeli, Coradini, Drago, Tofani, and the visit, at the end of the Meeting, to the Reggio Calabria Planetary, a structure realized thanks to Angela Misiano’s efforts. Finally, we are most grateful to the Scientific Organizing Committee to which some session extra-coordinators, Bertola, Blanco, Cavaliere, Maraschi, Palla, Treves were added, for its proficuous advice and continuous interaction; and to the Local Organizing Committee, whose productive and tireless work permitted the practical realization of the Meeting. We also express our warmful thanks to the President of SAIt, Salvatore Serio, to the President of INAF, Piero Benvenuti, to INAF-Catania Astrophysical Observatory, and to the Astrophysics Section of the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the Catania University.

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