

WELCOMING ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LOC

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to welcome you on Elba. You are the participants to the first IAU Symposium held at the Elba International Physics Center. Let me spend a few words on how this came about.

In 1988, Stefano Fantoni, nuclear physicist at the Department of Physics at the University of Pisa (used to come on vacation to Elba), and me (I was born on Elba), while drinking coffee entertained the idea of organizing a workshop on Physics on Elba. A few months later the Director of the Azienda di Soggiorno e Turismo – the local touristic organization – informed me that there was in construction a conference room in Marciana Marina and urged me to advertise this among the academics of the University of Pisa. Immediately Stefano and me decided to use this facility and we began to organize workshops devoted to Many Body physics, our discipline. The Elba International Physics Center was born. Since then we had several workshops (32 in total) devoted to nuclear physics, molecular dynamics, solid state physics, biophysics, and obviously, astrophysics. Indeed the first workshop was on astrophysics: in September 1989 the EIPC hosted the workshop: ‘Chemical and Dynamical Evolution of Galaxies’. Including the workshops in program for this year, we had in total eight astrophysical workshops and a school of astronomy for Italian PhD students. We appreciated in particular the interest of the European Southern Observatory, which organized three ESO Workshops at the EIPC.

At the end of the previous IAU Symposium on Wolf-Rayet stars on Bali, my good friend and co-worker Francesca Matteucci, who has been on Elba as organizer and participant to the first few workshops, suggested this locality as host of the future IAU Symposium on WR stars to Karel van der Hucht. And so you are here! Fundamental to this reality has been Karel, the true engine of the organization. Decisive the contribution of the member of SOC. Absolutely precious Antonella and her collaborators. Thanks are due to Bruno Barsella and Massimo Stiavelli who helped me in the preparation of the Abstract Booklet. We acknowledge the economic support from the International Astronomical Union, the International Science Foundation, the Dipartimento di Fisica dell’Università di Pisa, the Agenzia Spaziale Italiana via a local grant of our group in Pisa and the Azienda di Soggiorno e Turismo dell’Elba. Finally, I wish you a pleasant stay in Elba and a really successful Symposium. Now I sit in my row, ready to learn a lot about Wolf-Rayet stars, which, from my personal perspective, are a fundamental key piece in the jigsaw puzzle of galactic evolution.

Federico Ferrini