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Attracting public interest in astronomy through art and cultural heritage

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This paper is an overview of the cultural project "Second star to the right", which is an Astro-tourism project carried out by the Italian Institute for Astrophysics (INAF) and the creative agency Bas Bleu Illustration. An interdisciplinary good practice that aims at connecting art, tourism, history and astronomy thus bringing science closer to the public, targeting different audiences.

Astronomy and astronomical phenomena have always inspired art, music, literature and had an important role in our culture. Many of the major monuments in Italy are impressively connected to Astronomy. Just to mention a few examples: the world-famous Brunelleschi Dome of the Cathedral in Florence hosts the world tallest sundial; the Halley comet painted by Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua inspired the tradition of a comet star in Nativity scenes from then onwards; the Royal Norman Palace in Palermo holds the telescope used for the discovery of the first asteroid in history.

Walking downtown in the historic cities the project "Second Star to the right" explores the various ways in which astronomy crept into art and culture: the sun, the moon, planets, constellations and minor bodies are often hidden in the masterpieces of art, pictured in the marble inlays of many churches and in byzantine mosaics, painted in ceilings and frescoes. Italian cultural heritage unveils "astronomical secrets" - clocks, meridian lines, Zodiacs, painted skies and constellations, ancient geographical maps, places connected to scientists such as Galileo Galilei or great explorers such as Amerigo Vespucci, instruments with an ancient charm that undoubtedly reveal the importance that the study of the sky and its movements always had for mankind.

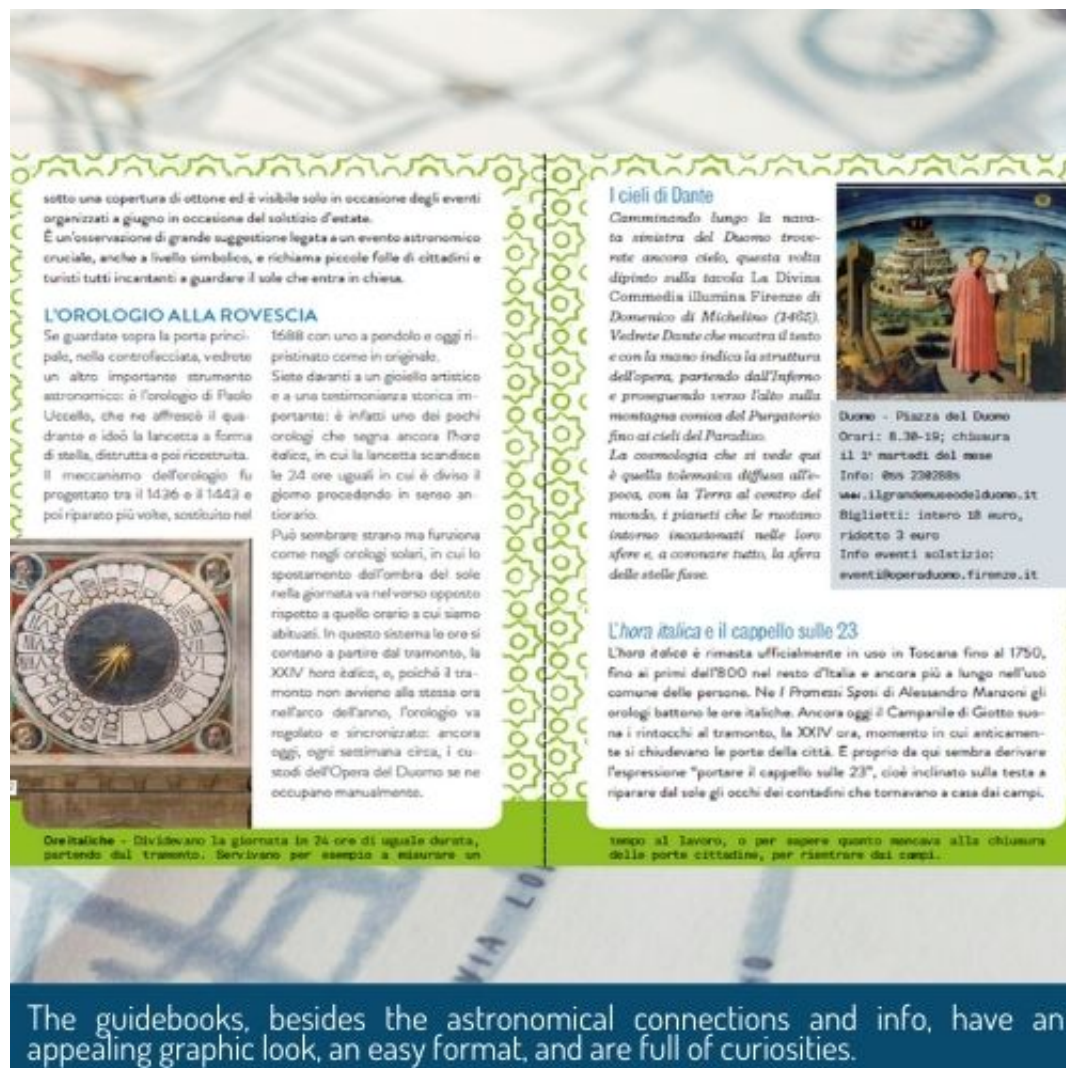
The work of a research institution (INAF) with a creative agency (Bas Bleu Illustration) led to the design and production of a cultural project able to reach a wider public through different products:

- The astronomical guidebook series "Second star to the right": it is a series of paper guidebooks that brings citizens and visitors to discover Italian cities "from an astronomical point of view" (Padua, 2015; Florence, 2019; Palermo, presumably September 2021). Each guide is an attractive, simple, and not-specialist book describing the Astronomy content of many major monuments and places connected to past and modern science. They have a nice and appealing graphic look, an easy format, and are full of curiosities and simple explanations, leading the visitors in the search for Science into artistic masterpieces, historical monuments, churches, museums, places that tell us about illustrious scientists and current research. The books help the

visitors follow different colored routes, for different themes (e.g. the measuring time; following Galileo or other important astronomers footprints; representing earth and sky; etc.);

- A map of the city, representing astronomical routes and highlighting the main astronomical places
- Events such as "walking tours with the astronomer", family activities, students' visits, and laboratories, etc.; these events are carried out in collaboration with the relevant institutions (Churches, Museums, etc), creating new important cultural synergies locally and implementing the cultural role of scientific institutions in the cities.
- A guidebook addressed to children (aged 8-11), with graphic elements and illustrations ("Padova a testa in su", 2017; other cities under study)

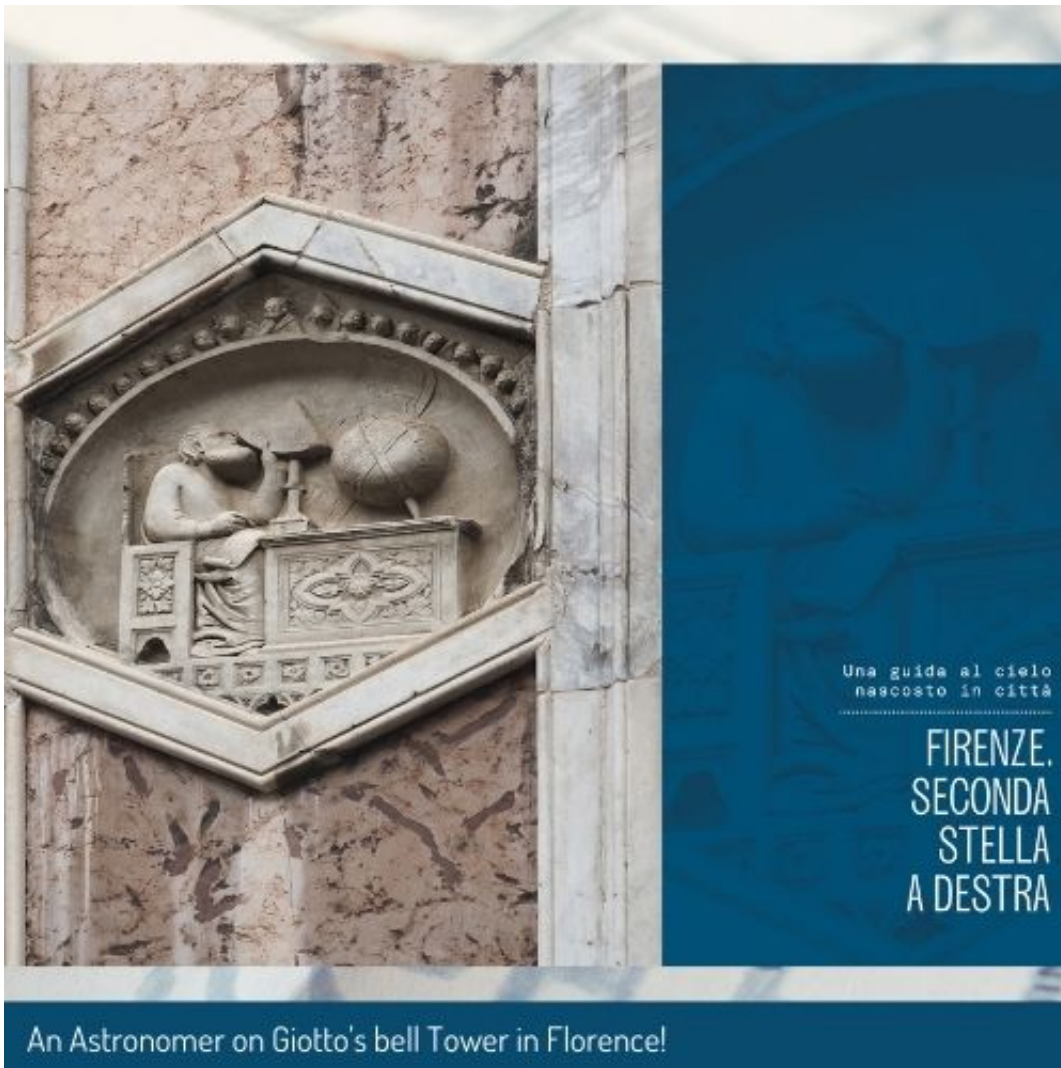
New Technologies and different media and communication languages that we are going to implement to attract different audiences, especially young people: Virtual Reality enhancements, Zap code, serious games such as "treasure hunt", App deepening.



The guidebooks, besides the astronomical connections and info, have an appealing graphic look, an easy format, and are full of curiosities.



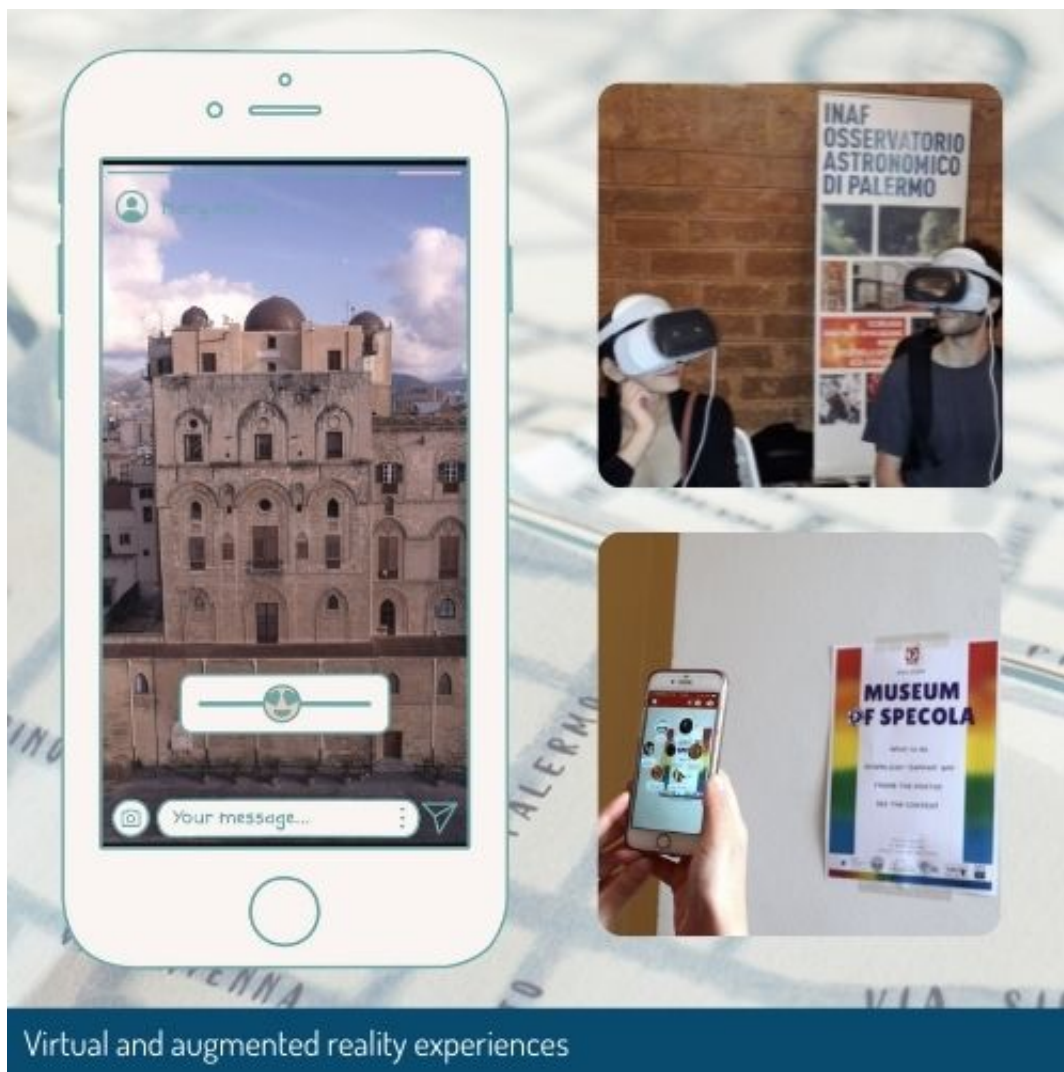
Several activities of public engagement have been developed in order to spread to the wide public the content of the bookguide. Guided city tours following the book route, kids activities, events that took place in "astronomical places" brought visibility to the work.



An Astronomer on Giotto's bell Tower in Florence!



Padova a testa in su, an astronomical guidebook for kids



Virtual and augmented reality experiences



On the summer solstice the sun rises from the sea exactly in the middle of Porta Felice