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BOOK REVIEW

The European Scientist. Symposium on the era and work of Franz Xaver von Zach (1754–1832) (*Acta Historica Astronomiae* 24)

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This is another interesting volume of the *Acta Historica Astronomiae* series containing the Proceedings of a Symposium on the life and work of F.-X. von Zach, held in Budapest on September 15–17, 2004 at the occasion of the 250th birthday of this Hungarian geodesist and astronomer.

This book presents documents related to Franz Xaver von Zach's many travels to and membership of almost two dozen foreign institutions and scientific societies. Most interesting aspects of cultural history of the school and educational system in the 18th–19th century in Hungary are included. The personality of Zach is explored from different angles: instrumentalist, his conflicts with contemporaneous scientists, his errors and his heroic achievements.

The collection of papers is very diverse, and papers are not really related to Franz Xaver von Zach himself, but concentrate on observational and theoretical aspects of the science of his era (instruments and observing projects in China, Hungary, Germany, ...). The book is most useful for people interested in the history of geodesy.

This is a quite affordable book with very high information content. The book contains 23 contributions, of which four have no abstract, and one consists of the abstract only. Several papers are very well documented with numerous footnotes and figures and reproductions of historical documents, though some papers contain figures and reproductions with rather poor image resolution. Regrettably, this compilation of very useful cultural and scientific information does not contain an index.

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