

The Impact Clan: A Disenchanted Look at Asteroid Impact Monitoring Science

Dr. Germano D'Abramo

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How many times in the last decade have you heard announcements about asteroids with unusually high Earth-collision chances in the near future? Surely more than once, we guess. It is not difficult to find sentences like "this is one of most dangerous asteroids ever found" every now and then in the media. It is probably difficult for the man in the street to reconcile his (ordinary) perception of risk with something that, despite these continuous and alarming announcements, has never happened and is still not happening: how many people have been killed by these nasty asteroids in the history of mankind? Earthquakes, floods, and volcanic eruptions are known to be dangerous because they have already struck with a high death toll. This book is an informed and disenchanted review of the activity of the so-called "Impact Monitoring Systems", which were born in the late 90's. The author happened to be involved in this business right from the outset, when he started his research career. His critique addresses directly the merits of that science, providing the reader with scientific and rigorous arguments against the worth of such an activity, at least in the way in which it is currently being carried out. But this book also brings together the personal and human vicissitudes of the author, experienced during his 16 years spent in Astronomy and Astrophysics research, his views on Science, Life and Society. The book is non-fiction; it is accessible to any (curious) person with a highschool/college level education.



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