

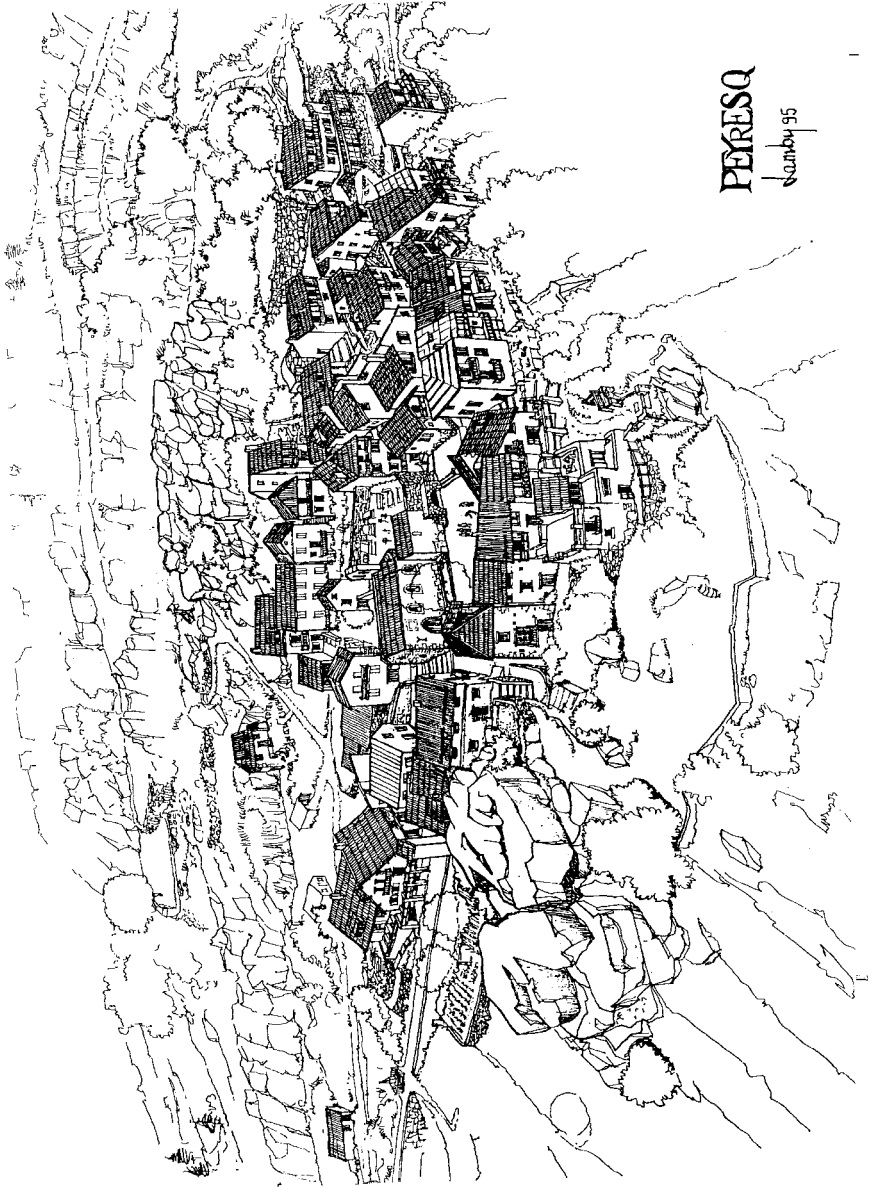
Preface

The workshop Peyresq Physics 8 was devoted to “*The Early Universe: Confronting Theory with Observations.*” It was held from June 21 to June 27, 2003 in Peyresq, Alpes de Haute Provence, France. This workshop was the eight of a series of annual meetings which brings together physicists active in different areas of theoretical physics.

Peyresq is a medieval Provençal village situated 100 km from Nice at an altitude of 1528 m. The village was founded in the early thirteenth century. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were around 50 houses and by 1851 the village counted 208 inhabitants distributed among 53 families. Like many other villages of Haute-Provence, it was almost completely deserted after the Second World War. During the 1950s the village was progressively entirely rebuilt in its original spirit and style by students of Belgian universities, mainly the Université Libre de Bruxelles, under the guidance of Mady and Toine Smets. The aim was to create a “*Foyer d’Humanisme,*” an international humanistic center for cultural, artistic, and scientific pursuits.

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