

«ASIA AND AFRICA: THEIR HERITAGE AND MODERNITY»

While the White Nights of St. Petersburg and the longest day of the year provided a holiday atmosphere, a vast number of specialists on Asia and Africa were hard at work. They engaged in a lively exchange of ideas at the XXIXth International Congress on Historiography and Source Studies of Asia and Africa. The midsummer date was 21-23 June, 2017. The venue was the venerable Faculty of Asian and African Studies at St. Petersburg State University.

An appropriate emphasis upon Chinese sources was noted from the opening moments of the Congress (paper by Professor Vladimir S. Myasnikov, Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences). This was followed by intensive panel sessions on China, Japan, Korea, Central Asia, Turkey, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, Iran, India, Southeast Asia, Arab countries, the Ancient Near East and Egypt, as well as Mongolian, Tibetan and Buddhist studies.

Panels dealt with topics such as Islam in Russia and the history of Oriental Studies in Russia with a particular focus on the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg. Certain sessions were held in memory of outstanding scholars, such as the late Professor Anna A. Dolinina (1923-2017) in Arab studies and the late Professor Dmitri A. Olderogge (1903-1987) in African languages and anthropology. Important panels were devoted to the languages and the literatures of Asia and Africa.

A special workshop involved young scholars in Asian and African Studies. Furthermore, students from the Faculty of Asian and African Studies responded enthusiastically to the challenge of mounting a photographic exhibition on the Intangible Heritage of the Nubian Nile with captions in the Russian language.

Senior participants attended from Asia, Africa, North America and many parts of Europe. A contribution from Kryoneri-Athens demonstrated the use of hagiographical sources for Arab-Byzantine relations (paper by Professor Vassily Christides, Director, Institute of Graeco-Oriental and African Studies). There was also a presentation from the University of Copenhagen on the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies and on area studies in general by Dr. Stig Toft Madsen. Round table discussions explored the topic of 'Traditionalism and Orient' and 'Middle East as a Major Centre of "the Arch of Instability on the Rim of Eurasia and North Africa".'

The Secretary of the Organizing Committee, Alexander S. Matveev, and his team performed miracles including two published volumes of proceedings as «ASIA AND AFRICA: THEIR HERITAGE AND MODERNITY».

Tribute is due to Professor Nikolay N. Dyakov, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, for welcoming participants and bringing the Congress to its successful conclusion. Finally, gratitude is expressed to the Honorary Head of the Organizing Committee, Professor Mikhail B. Piotrovsky, Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Director of the State Hermitage Museum and Dean of the Faculty of Asian and African Studies.