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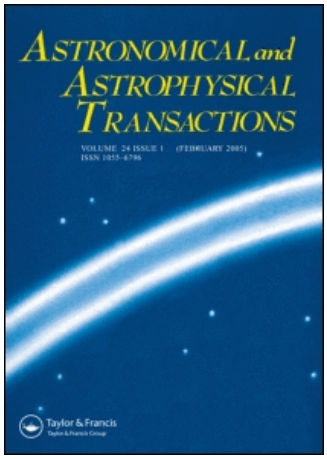

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On the status of archaeoastronomyin russia

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CONFERENCE

ON THE STATUS OF ARCHAEOASTRONOMY IN RUSSIA

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On May 18–19, 1994, the first international round-table conference on Archaeoastnomy in Russia was held at the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS).

Conference participants represented archaeologists from Russia and Ukriane and researchers from Institute for History of Science and Technology of the RAS and from the EAAS. The conference was planned as an interdisciplinary scientific meeting aimed at establishing a successful collabration of researchers in varios fields of science, first of all archeology and history of astronomy, interested in the latest developments in all kinds of research connected with archaeoastronomy.

IA RAS was the organizer of the meeting.

The conference was opened by Prof. W. I. Guljaev, the deputy director of IA RAS.

The conference included three topical session.

The first session was "The Prehistory of Astronomy", referring to the period of astronomy before the earliest written records and has a conceptual character. A single paper was presented at this session. A. A. Gurstein, in his paper "On the Origin of the Zodiacal Constellations and a three-part picture of the sky", made a reconstruction of the evolution of the Zodiacal Constellations based on the Indoeuropean and Sumero–Akkadian religio-cultural data, induding artifacts such as cult statuettes, cuneiform tablets, cylinder seals and boundary stones. He argued that the development, over some six millennia, of the twelve houses of the Zodiac in three groups of four was dictated by the changes made by precession in the positions of the vernal and autumnal equinoxes and the winter and summer solstices.

A. A. Gurstein also found that all of ancient constellations were divided into three groups: the first group of upper-"air" constellations, the second group of

middle – "earth" constellations, and, finally, the third group of bottom-"water" contellations.

A. A. Gurstein estimated that this division was made, probably, 14000 years ago. This value was estimated by analyzing the preccession phenomenon.

The topic of the second session was "The History of Astronomy", referring to the period after the beginning of written records. It also had a single paper presented.

The paper "The Understanding of the Milky Way in Mesoamerica" by G. G. Ershova was based on mythology. She assumed the existence of a connection between the beginning of the Maya calendar (3113 B. C.), the Milky Way location in the middle of the selestial sphere in that era and the dualistic principle of the thought in ancient civilisations.

The third session was entitled "Excavations of relics – cult sanctuaries with possible astronomical function of the Stonhenge type".

In the papers of this topics, astronomical substance of the relics was discussed: possible orientation of the relics base axis toward sunrise and sunset at the summer and winter solstices; possible mark points reffering to rising of varios bright stars and also using some details of relics as day counter for lunar intervals.

T. M. Potemkina, in her paper "On the function of a religions site with a circular eneolitic architecture" presented religions and astronomical elements of one of the most ancient relics of this type – Savin, located in the Ural–Siberian region of Russia.

The paper "The eneolitic site of Veligdany-2 near Tumen" by L. A. Dryabina described excavation results at the second site of the Savin type in the Western Siberia.

In his paper "The Tuim cromlech: an image of the Universe", I. L. Kyslasov descriebed an astronomical interpretation of a unique eneolitic Siberian site situated near the Middle Enisey river.

The paper "A cult center of the 10–12th centuries near the Zbruch river" by I. P. Rusanova dealt with the astronomical interpretation of some archaic ceremonies.

In the short communication "A cult site of the Eneolitic – early bronze epoch near Ekatherinbourg" I. M. Chairkina reported about a future excavation of one of the Savin-type sites with using of modern archaeoastronomical experience.

In the final part of the conference, the term "archaeoastronomy" and its content was discussed.

The participians of the conference decided to continue such meetings.