

Russian science in the European context in the first half of the nineteenth century

International conference dedicated to the 250th anniversary of Alexander von Humboldt's birth and the 190th anniversary of his trip to Russia

National Library of Russia

St. Petersburg

12-13 November 2019

In 2019, the 250th anniversary of the birth of the explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) has been celebrated. Humboldt is known as the botanist and geographer who made the “second discovery of America”, the founder of plant geography who opened a new era in natural science. His trip to the Urals and Siberia at the invitation of the Russian government in 1829 was a milestone in establishing contacts between the European and Russian scientific communities.

On November 12 and 13, 2019, the anniversary of Humboldt's return from his Siberian trip to Saint-Petersburg, a scientific conference dedicated to Humboldt's heritage and his contacts with Russian scientists in the broad context of the time was held at the National Library of Russia, whose Manuscripts Department houses correspondence between Humboldt and his colleagues in Russia and Western Europe.

The first day of the conference was devoted to the scientific work of Humboldt himself, to individual episodes of his trip to Russia, to his visit to the Russian capital, the two speeches he gave at the Saint-Petersburg Academy of Sciences, to his contacts with Russian scientists and the use of his ideas in the study of the Earth's magnetic field and the mountain relief of Central Asia by researchers of the next generations.

The second day's papers were focused on scientific relations between Russia and Western Europe from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century: European contacts of Russian university professors, specialists in mining, physicians, seafarers.

In conclusion, the participants had the opportunity to hold in their hands a belonging of Alexander von Humboldt's: a silver salt cellar presented by the traveller during his trip across Russia to someone of his compatriots.

Within the framework of the conference, two exhibitions were inaugurated:

«Letters of Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) in the Manuscripts Department of NLR»

http://nlr.ru/nlr_visit/RA2707/rukopisey-pisma-gumboldta

and «Publications of Alexander von Humboldt's works preserved in NLR»

http://nlr.ru/nlr_visit/RA2709/izdaniya-a-gumboldta-v-fondah-rnb

The conference was attended by scientists from Russia, Germany, Turkey, Denmark and Finland.

The conference materials will be published in book form by the publishing house of the National Library of Russia.