

Estonian paremiologist Arvo Krikmann has compared the collection of Internet folklore with pumping water out of a bottomless well. As the well shows no signs of drying, there is plenty of work to be done on studying the composition and sediments of the water.

Mare Kalda
Estonian Literary Museum

THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR ASTRONOMY IN CULTURE 17TH ANNUAL MEETING (SEAC 2009)

The annual meeting of SEAC took place at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, Egypt, October 25–31, 2009. It was a very hospitable ambience at a famous place, which perfectly embodied the spirit of the Mediterranean ancient world, Egyptian and Islamic culture. The conference had been convened by Prof. Mosalam Shaltout (National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics – NRIAG, Egypt), Dr. Juan A. Belmonte, President of SEAC, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, Tenerife, Spain, and Ms. Hoda El-Mikaty, Director of the Planetarium Science Center, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt. SEAC 2009 was especially dedicated to be a part of the International Year of Astronomy (IYA 2009) activities.

Around 80 talks, including 8 invited lectures, were given. There was a diversity of issues discussed, concerning the main topics: Megalithic Phenomena in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond, Archaeoastronomy in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond, Eastern Mediterranean Astronomy (Egypt, Greece, and Rhodes), Astronomy at the Ancient Bibliotheca of Alexandria, Astronomy in Old Europe, Astronomy in Middle Ages, Islamic Astronomy, Copernicus and Galileo Galilei Revolutions, Babylonian Astronomy, Mesoamerican and Pacific Astronomy, Minoan Civilization Astronomy, Traditional African Astronomy, Beyond: Other Topics in Cultural Astronomy.

To a great extent the quality of the presentations was very good or, in fact, excellent. Nevertheless, and as usual at the annual SEAC meetings, methodological approaches and problems were discussed frequently and intensively, mostly during the coffee breaks. The interdisciplinary and multifaceted researches presented had been inspiring, but also made it obvious that cultural astronomy needs to further develop ideas about bringing together methodologies and perceptions from very different fields and to ensure the strength of evidence. The focus of SEAC 2009 was set on Ancient Egyptian astronomy, but results of research in cultural astronomy in the Mediterranean area, ancient India, China, Mesoamerica, South America, and Africa were also presented. The time scale spanned several millennia, from the early Neolithic to the Islamic and Christian Middle Ages and the Baroque. Some talks were dedicated to aspects of



*The annual meeting of SEAC took place at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.
Photo by Andres Kuperjanov 2009.*

astronomy in education, a field of research which is very important for the future of awareness-raising in cultural astronomy, astronomy, and sciences in general. A particular point of discussion throughout the meeting was set by the question of certain anthropological conditions related to ancient worldviews and their appearance in cultural astronomy.

SEAC 2009 at Bibliotheca Alexandrina was a credit regarding the research activities in cultural astronomy. This statement is confirmed by 21 colleagues, who decided to ask for membership in SEAC and who had been approved – effectively a record in the 17th year since the foundation of the society.

Finally, the executive committee of SEAC congratulates the organizers and their numerous helpers of SEAC 17th 2009 for their excellent work.

On behalf of the executive committee

Dr. Michael A. Rappenglück MA
Secretary of SEAC