



DECR representative takes part in round table on Armenian religious literature



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On the 12th of October, in the territory of the Armenian Church Complex in Moscow, a round table took place, entitled “Holy Translators Day. Armenian Literature in Russian Translations. Present-Day Translation Problems.”

The meeting was timed to the Feast of the Holy Translators the Armenian Apostolic Church celebrated that day, as well as to the commemoration day of St. Gregory the Enlightener of Greater Armenia that the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates on the 13th of October.

The Synaxis of the Holy Translators is a great moveable feast in the Armenian liturgical calendar,

celebrated on the second Saturday in October. It was established in the middle of the 5th century to commemorate the work of the scholars who had translated the Holy Scripture into the Armenian language, led by Isaac the Great, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians and St. Gregory's direct descendant, and Archimandrite (Vardapet) Mesrop Mashtots. Over the centuries, new outstanding representatives of the Armenian ecclesiastical tradition were included in the Synaxis of the Holy Translators, among them Catholicos of Cilicia Nerses IV the Gracious and Vardapet Grigor Narekatsi (Gregory of Narek). In Soviet Armenia, the feast was officially called the Day of Armenian Culture. Nowadays it is celebrated nationwide.

Organized with the blessing of Archbishop Yezras (Nersissian), head of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan, the round table brought together theologians, historians, philologists, linguists and other scholars from various Russian universities and research institutions. Among its keynote speakers were Prof. A.A. Kornilov, head of the Centre for Armenian Studies at the Nizhny Novgorod State University; associate professor A.Zh. Martirosyan of the Moscow State Linguistic University's Department of Language and Culture Studies of the CIS and Near Abroad Countries; and Hierodeacon Georgy (Ramazyan), lecturer at the Church History Department of the Moscow Theological Academy.

With the blessing of Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, and at the invitation of the supreme authority of the Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan, taking part in the meeting was Mr Sergey Alferov, DECR staff member, senior lecturer at the Department of Applied Church Disciplines of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies. As he pointed out in his address, nowadays Armenian ecclesiastical literature is studied at all leading educational institutions of the Moscow Patriarchate. For instance, Russian translations of the Sharakan – the book of Armenian religious hymns – along with the Book of Lamentations by Grigor Narekatsi are included in the recommended reading list for students taking the Course on Oriental Churches prepared by the DECR and Ss. Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute. In its composition and spiritual depth, the Book of Lamentations reminds hymnographic masterpieces by St. Ephraim the Syrian and may be compared to such remarkable example of the Byzantine literature as the Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete. To a large extent, the work of Grigor Narekatsi is concordant with the ideas of Saints Tikhon of Zadonsk, Theophan the Recluse, Ignatius (Brianchaninov), Priests Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov, as well as Vladimir Solovyov, Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and other prominent Russian thinkers, which creates ample opportunities for further research.

The round table meeting was followed by a reception at the Armenian Church Complex in Moscow.