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XII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present report does not give a full representation of the actual state of research in the field of the history of astronomy, being only a short summary of main activities of the Commission and containing the information, which has been conveyed to the president by members and consulting members of Commission 41. Such a representation may be done by the bibliography of books and papers on the history of astronomy edited by P. G. Kulikovskiy (Moscow). It would be unfeasible for the president to outline in this short report the general trends of investigations in the field of the history of astronomy because of their great diversity and a dispersion of printed works in various, often not easily accessible publications. It can be said, that at present there appears an increase of interest in the history of ancient and medieval astronomy, particularly in the Islamic astronomy, which is not well known yet. Also in other branches of the history of astronomy, as the XVIIth-century scientific revolution, the history of modern astronomy, critical biographies of astronomers etc. we mark progress.

One of the main tasks of the IAU commissions is the coordination of scientific actions, which are needing international cooperation. For that reason the question of realization of both resolutions, adopted by the Thirteenth General Assembly of IAU comes into prominence. Especially the start of editorial work on the General History of Astronomy seems to be very urgent and desirable. The second question, which needs a strong international cooperation, is the preservation of astronomical instruments of historical interest, as well as the protection from destruction of personal papers and other heritage of deceased astronomers.

In order to make accessible the historical sources preserved in observatories or other scientific institutions, an action of microfilming them has been started, as mentioned in Section IX and in the Information Circulars of Commission 41.

Two international unions are interested in the history of astronomy: IAU and International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS), and therefore a close cooperation of both unions in the field of the history of astronomy is very desirable. Such cooperation is partly realized by the participation in the works of Commission 41 of eminent scientists, who are active also in the IUHPS, but its tightening would be useful for the promotion of further progress of

investigations on the history of astronomy. A proposal has been made late in 1967 that the Commissions of History of Astronomy in both unions should consist of the same members. The president of Commission 41 has not been authorized to decide in that question. After the consultation with members of the organizational Committee of Commission 41 the whole question has been postponed to the Fourteenth General Assembly of IAU, when final decisions are to be taken.

During the Fourteenth General Assembly of IAU it should also be decided where the General History of Astronomy is to be published and how its Editorial Board should be organized.

E. RYBKA

President of the Commission