



LOBACHEVSKY UNIVERSITY

**INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND WORLD HISTORY**



**THE PATHS OF EMPIRES: MODELS, PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES
OF SUPRA-ETHNIC POLITIES FROM ANTIQUITY TO MODERNITY**

LOBACHEVSKY STATE UNIVERSITY OF NIZHNY NOVGOROD

October 8–10, 2020

Institute of International Relations and World History

We are happy to announce the call for papers for the *Seventeenth Readings in Memory of Professor Nikolai Petrovich Sokolov*.

It is estimated that between 3000 BC and 1800 AD, there were more than 60 "mega-empires", that means that a significant part of human history occurred within the imperial states or on their periphery. Historical destinies and experience of empires not only arouse a natural research interest, but to a greater or lesser extent continue to influence political and socio-cultural processes in contemporary states, many of which are connected with the imperial formations of the past by direct historical continuity. It is not surprising, therefore, that the past and present of empires and imperialism appear to be a key, ubiquitous topic for many fields of humanities and social sciences, especially history. The relentless interest in the historical phenomenon of empires is undoubtedly fueled by the current political agenda, including the "post-imperial shocks", the processes of globalization, the escalating contradictions and conflicts in the modern world that have both geopolitical and civilizational origins. The relevant issues are currently being actively debated in the categories of "imperial" and "imperialism", which in the light of post-structuralist and post-modernist theories correlate with the categories of nationalism, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, race, the archaeology of knowledge, etc. At the same time, there are still debates about the content of these categories, and there are often claims that they do not have a clear, universally recognized definition or are not suitable as an analytical tool at all, since they are applied to the most heterogeneous phenomena from distant historical eras without proper reflection. A definite response to the problematization and reactualization of the categories "empire" and "imperialism" in the post-imperialist situation, which seemed to have come at the turn of the 80-90s of the twentieth century, has become a dizzying rise of intellectual fashion on studying imperial history, which resulted, at the turn of the century, in the formation of the new discipline of imperiology and such research area as the "new imperial history" which generates new approaches, issues and instruments in comparative studies of imperial formations treated as a specific phenomenon, opposed to "national" histories.

In this regard, it is becoming increasingly urgent to turn to a comprehensive, concrete and comparative-historical, theoretical and empirical study of imperial experiences of the past and present, which includes a number of interrelated problems, subject areas, directions and perspectives of research, namely:

- ✚ objective conditions, driving forces, concrete historical contexts, general patterns and specific features of the formation of imperial states in the pre-modern era, from classical antiquity to the early modern period;
- ✚ historical experience of imperiogenesis and empire-building, comparative historical characteristics of various models of empires and imperialism developed in certain environmental and geographical conditions and based on different ethnic, socio-cultural, religious and ideological grounds;
- ✚ retrospective of the concepts of "empire" and "imperialism", their historiographical fate, the correlation between research (epistemological) paradigms, specific historiographic trends, socio-cultural and political processes of the modern world, the complementarity of imperial and new global history (the globalizing effect of empires);
- ✚ empire and nation, the interaction of imperial and national ideologies in the sociocultural practices of the past and the present, problems of the imperial past in studies of national historiographies;
- ✚ problems of historical continuity and discontinuity in the developments of the great powers of antiquity (Achaemenid Persia, Hellenistic monarchies, Roman Empire) and subsequent imperial formations (Byzantium, Sasanian Persia, Ottoman Turkey, etc.);
- ✚ ways to legitimize and exercise dominance, manage resources, peoples, and spaces, to reify imperial practices in legislation, administrative and political orders, in physical and symbolic violence;
- ✚ imperial identities, self-representation and self-awareness of empires, their perceptions "from within" and "from outside", from subordinate and external actors, in visual images, narratives and stereotypes;

- ✚ imperial (barbarian) periphery in its relations with imperial centers, cross-border influence of empires in politics, material and spiritual culture;
- ✚ "imperial" nations, natives, aliens, colonizers and invaders, resistance and cooperation;
- ✚ integration and infrastructure of empires: borders, land and sea routes, means of communication.

The conference will include workshops on the following topics:

- ✚ «Mountains, rivers, natural and imaginary borders in the political, artistic, and scientific discourses of Classical Antiquities and the Middle Ages»;
- ✚ «Institute of citizenship in the empires and city-states of antiquity»;
- ✚ «The greater Mediterranean: local, regional, and sovereign in the historical dimension».

Thus, the main goal of the conference is to employ a broad historical material to consider in the theoretical, methodological and specific issues of the study of imperial formations of the past and present, the historical ways of formation, transformation, decline and death of empires that are relevant for modern historical, social and political sciences.

If you are interested in participating in the conference, please submit your abstract to one of the following email addresses: makhl@imomi.unn.ru; kostjamarkov@gmail.com. The abstracts should be up to **300 words long**. Authors should include names and their full affiliation. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is April 30, 2020. The organizers reserve the right of selection of the conference papers.

The working languages of the conference are Russian and English.

As soon as we have a draft of the conference program, we plan to apply for a grant, so we might be able to cover (partly at least) travel costs of the participants.

Should you have any other questions, suggestions or comments, do not hesitate to contact us.

Prof. Aleksandr Makhlaiuk, Chair of the Department of Ancient History and Classical Languages, Institute of International Relations and World History, Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod makhl@imomi.unn.ru

Konstantin Markov, Associate Professor, Department of Ancient History and Classical Languages, Institute of International Relations and World History, Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod kostjamarkov@gmail.com