



DICKSON, MARTIN BERNARD

DICKSON, MARTIN BERNARD (b. Brooklyn, 22 March 1924, d. Princeton, 14 May 1991), Iranist and Central Asianist who specialized in Safavid history. It was as a cryptographic technician for the OSS that he began his training in Persian at the University of Michigan (1943). He served in both the Asian and Eastern European theaters of war, adding Russian and Chinese to his repertoire of languages. After the war he left the army to receive his BA at the University of Washington (1948) in Far Eastern Languages and Literature. Unable to pursue his interests in Chinese Turkestan, for China was in the midst of Mao's revolution, Dickson turned first to Turkey, where he studied with Zeki Velidi Togan, and then to Persia. He did his graduate work at the Department of Oriental Languages and Literature at Princeton University, where he received his Ph.D in 1958 and became professor of Persian studies (1959-91). In his dissertation, *Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks (The Duel for Khurasan with 'Ubayd Khan. 930-946/1524-1540)*, he defined the Safavid political system, focussing on the civil war (924-42/1524-36) that erupted upon the accession of Shah Ṭahmāsb. Dickson's magnum opus, the edition of *Houghton Shahnameh* (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass. 1981), entailed a two-decade long (1960-80) collaborative project with the Safavid art historian Stuart Cary Welch. Their analytic comments on the 16th-century Safavid painting not only delineate the Turkman and Timurid sources of the Safavid idiom, but also try to recapture the personalities of the artists responding to the actors and themes of the stories they painted.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Other published works: “Uzbek Dynastic Theory in the Sixteenth Century,” *Trudy XXV-ogo Mezhdunardnogo Kongressa Vosto-kovedov*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 208-16; “The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty,” *JAOS* 82/4, 1962, pp. 503-17 (review of Laurence Lockhart’s *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia*).

(KATHRYN BABAYAN)