



DYAKONOV, MIKHAIL MIKHAĬLOVICH

D'YAKONOV, MIKHAIL MIKHAĬLOVICH (b. St. Petersburg, 26 June 1907, d. Moscow, 8 June 1954), Russian scholar of Iranian studies. The son of an economist, he spent his youth in Norway and in 1924-26 studied with Georg Morgenstierne at the University of Oslo, specializing in Iranian studies. He continued his studies, particularly in ancient and modern European and eastern languages, at the University of Leningrad with V. V. Bartol'd, A. A. Freĭman, A. A. Romaskevich, and others until 1930. In 1930-31 D'yakonov was a researcher in both the regional museum and the Uzbek Scientific Research Institute in Samarqand, and in 1931 he spent several months in a similar position at the Ukrainian Institute of Oriental Studies in Kharkov. From then until 1941 he was at the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, becoming head of the Iranian and Near Eastern section in 1934 and director of the Oriental Department in 1938. His first dissertation, *Bronzovyĭ vodoleĭ 1206 g. n.e.* (A Bronze aquamanile dated A.D. 1206) was published in *III. Mezhdunarodnyi Kongress po Iranskomu Iskusstvu i arkheologii. Doklady* (Third International Congress on Iranian Art and Archaeology. Proceedings; Moscow and Leningrad, 1939, pp. 45-52), and in 1938 he was named docent at the University of Leningrad; throughout this period he lectured there and at the Academy of Fine Arts. After military service in World War II he served briefly as vice-dean of the faculty of history at the University of Moscow, but in 1945 he returned to the Hermitage. In 1949 he was promoted to university professor, and in 1951 he became secretary of the Leningrad branch of the



Institute of the History of Material Culture, subsequently rising to director. In 1953 he returned to the University of Moscow as professor in the faculty of history.

D'yakonov's first scholarly publication was a study, in collaboration with L. T. Gyuzal'yan, of the manuscripts of Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma* in Leningrad collections (*Rukopisi Shakh-Name v Leningradskikh sobraniyakh* [Manuscripts of the *Šāh-nāma* in Leningrad collections], Leningrad, 1934); they then examined the miniatures in these manuscripts (*Iranskie miniatyury v rukopisyakh Shakh-Name Leningradskikh sobranii* [Persian miniatures in manuscripts of the *Šāh-nāma* in Leningrad collections], Leningrad, 1935). Subsequently D'yakonov published many excellent translations of selections from the text, as well as from the works of Faḡr-al-D'in Gorgānī, Neẓāmī, Jāmī, and others (for bibliographies of his works, see Belenitskiĭ; Fajans).

D'yakonov's important article "Bronzovaya plastika pervykh vekov khidzhry" (Bronze sculpture of the early centuries *hejrī*; *Trudy Otdela Vostoka, Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* 4, 1947, pp. 155-79 (with French summary), dealt with Persian metalwork up to the early 13th century. In 1939 he began archeological work and in 1946 became the principal excavator of the Sogdian-Tajik expedition (from 1952 the Tajik archeological expedition, with D'yakonov as director), sponsored jointly by the Tadzhikistan branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and by the Hermitage. His major contribution as an archeologist was to clarify the positions of Sogdia and Bactria in the history of Central Asia. He was one of the first to investigate Sogdian painting (at Panjīkant) and to clarify its importance in the history of Asian art. His excavations on the Kobādiān ("Arkheologicheskie raboty v nizhnem techenii reki Kafirnegana/Kobadian 1950-1951 gg." [Archeological work on the lower course of the Kafirnegān/Kobādiān river, 1950-51], in *Materialy i issle-dovaniya po arkheologii SSSR* [Materials and investigations on the archaeology of the U.S.S.R.] XXXVII, Moscow and Leningrad, 1953, pp. 252-93) and Tūp-kāna (Tūp-khāna) for the first time yielded stratigraphic evidence for the evolution of culture in ancient Bactria.

A skilled epigrapher, D'yakonov participated in decipherment and initial publication, with I. M. D'yakonov and V. V. Livshits, of Parthian inscriptions from Nisa ("Dokumenty iz drevneĭ Nisy. Rasshifrovka i analiz" [Documents from ancient Nisa. Decipherment and analysis], in I. M. D'yakonov and V. A. Livshitz, eds., *Materialy yuzhno-turkmenistanskoĭ arkheologicheskoi*



kompleksnoi ekspeditsii [Materials from the general southern Turkmenistan archeological expedition] II, Moscow and Leningrad, 1951, pp. 21-65; “Parfyanskiĭ arkhiv iz drevnei Nisy” [The Parthian archive from ancient Nisa], *Vestnik drevnei istorii* 4, 1953, pp. 114-30).

In his last years he wrote a series of synthetic works on the culture and archaeology of Central Asia and Persia. They included detailed studies of the ancient history of Bactria (“Slozhenie klassovogo ob-shchestva v severnoi Baktrii” [The constitution of class society in northern Bactria], *Sovetskaya arkhologiiya* 19, 1954, pp. 120-40; *U istokov drevnei kul'tury Tadzhikistana* [Toward the source of the ancient culture of Tajikistan], Stalinabad, 1956), as well as several works on Sogdian art (“Rospisi Pendzhikenta i zhivopis' Srednei Azii” [Mural paintings from Panjikant and the pictorial art of Central Asia], in *Zhivopis' drevnego Pyandzhikenta* [The painting of ancient Panjikant], Moscow, 1954, pp. 83-158). His *Ocherki istorii drevnego Irana* (An outline history of ancient Iran, Moscow, 1961), a revised and expanded version of his second dissertation, was the first such synthesis published in Russian; in it he brought together evidence from literary sources, archeological monuments, and exhaustive study of the secondary literature in European languages. Although he also intended to write a survey of the history of medieval Persia, he never did so.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Bank, “M. M. D'yakonov (1907-1954).

(Nekrolog),” *Soobshcheniya Gosudarst-vennogo Ermitazha* 7, 1955, p. 2.

A. M. Belenitskiĭ, “Pamyati Mikhaila Mikhaĭlovicha D'yakonova” (Memories of Mikhail Mikhailovich D'yakonov), *Kratkie soobshcheniya o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniyakh Instituta istorii material'noi kul'tury* 55, 1954, pp. 155-58.

L. C. Bretanitskiĭ, “Mikhail Mikhaĭlovich D'yakonov. K shesti-desyatiletiiu so dnya rozhdeniya” (Mikhail Mikhaĭlovich D'yakonov. On the sixtieth



anniversary of his birth), *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 1967/3, pp. 188-91.

S. Fajans, "The Publications of Mikhail Mikhailovich D'iakonov," *Ars Orientalis* 2, 1957, pp. 512-19.

"Mikhail Mikhaïlovich D'yakonov. 1907-1954," *Vestnik drevneï istorii*, 1964/3, pp. 122-23.

S. P. Tolstov, "Mikhail Mikhaïlovich D'yakonov," *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 1954/3, pp. 122-23.