



FASMER, RICHARD RICHARDOVICH

FASMER (VASMER), RICHARD RICHARDOVICH (b. 9 October 1858, St. Petersburg; d. 22 February 1938), eminent Russian numismatist.

Fasmer, of German descent, was born Richard Wilhelm Georg, son of a German merchant. He matriculated in the Department of Philosophy at Leipzig University in 1906. The following year, he began studies in the Department of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish at the University of St. Petersburg, where he attended Pavel Kokovtsov's lectures on Semitic epigraphy and on Hebrew and Syriac languages, as well as the lectures of Vasiliï Bartol'd (see BARTHOLD) on Islamic numismatics. Fasmer graduated from the university in 1910 and became an assistant-keeper of the numismatic collection at the Hermitage Museum. At that time he also became a Russian citizen. His tenure on the Hermitage staff commenced on 1 January 1911. At the beginning of World War I Fasmer enlisted in the army as a cadet of the Nikolaevskoe Engineering School and served until 1918. Upon demobilization he returned to the Hermitage and became a keeper of the Oriental coin collection. In 1920 he replaced Alexis de Markoff as chief numismatic curator. On 11 March 1930 Fasmer was appointed head of the Oriental numismatics division. At the same time, from the end of 1919 until the end of 1930, he also served as a research fellow at the State Academy of the History of Material Culture (division of numismatics and glyptics). During the Stalinist purges, he was dismissed from his position at the Hermitage on 11 March 1934 and arrested. Fasmer died at a



concentration camp in Uzbekistan four years later.

Fasmer's first article appeared in 1914. It dealt with Kufic coins, the dominant concern of his further studies. The most productive period of his scholarly life was between 1925 and 1934, when he published forty-seven articles. Two more articles appeared in Berlin and Tartu after his arrest. Twenty-two of his unpublished manuscripts are preserved in the archives of the Hermitage. Of his published works, six are dedicated to Sasanian numismatics and one to Bactrian coins. Several articles on Islamic numismatics written by Fasmer (and signed "Vasmer") were included in the dictionary *Wörterbuch der Münzkunde* (ed. F. von Schrötter, Berlin and Leipzig, 1930). Fasmer developed the standard procedure for analyzing Kufic coin hoards. His chronological classification of such hoards has been confirmed by many recent finds.

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