



INOSTRANTSEV, KONSTANTIN ALEXANDROVICH

INOSTRANTSEV, KONSTANTIN ALEXANDROVICH (b. St. Petersburg, Russia, 17 April 1876; d. Leningrad, USSR, end of December, 1941), Russian orientalist and historian of culture, best known abroad as the author of *Sasanidskie et'udy* (*Etudes sassanides*). In 1896, Inostrantsev matriculated in the University of St. Petersburg, Faculty of Oriental Languages (Department of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Tatar Languages). He attended the lectures of the eminent teachers, arabist Victor R. Rosen, iranologist Valentin A. Zhukovsky, professor of ancient Iranian languages Carl G. Salemann (q.v. at www.iranica.com), professor of the medieval history of Iran and Central Asia Vasiliĭ V. Barthold (q.v.); and their lectures helped shape the scholarly interests of the young researcher. In the course of his studies Inostrantsev prepared his first publication, an analysis of theories on the origin of the Xiong-nu (see HUNS) in the Chinese sources and the relation of European Huns to them. In 1898 that work was awarded a gold medal, and in 1900 it was published under the title *Hunnu i Gunny* (Xiong-nu and Huns).

Inostrantsev remained at St. Petersburg University, after graduating in 1899, for further Oriental studies and preparation for a professorship. He particularly studied the Arabic and Persian sources which held information on the culture of earlier times and on pre-Islamic vestiges in the customs of islamized populations. He also participated in conferences organized by the Oriental branch of the Russian Archeological Society and from 1902 was a



member of this institution. In 1903-09 he served as curator of the Department of Ethnography in the Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, and made several journeys to the Caucasus for collection of ethnographical material.

The output of his fruitful historico-cultural researches comprised two dozen short and long papers in scientific periodicals, mostly in ZVORAO (*Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo obshchestva* "Transactions of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archeological Society," Vols. 13-18, 1900-08). These included articles on ancient textiles and precious stones, Oriental ceramics and carpets, Middle Asian ossuaries and *astodāns*, and names in Russian of Arabic and Persian origin; he gave a Russian translation of the ceremony on the festive departure of the Fatimid caliphs from court. The most valuable of Inostrantsev's works were those concerned with the remains of Sasanian traditions in the early Islamic society of Iran. The arabist Ignatiĭ Yu. Krachkovskii cited Inostrantsev as one of the few researchers who utilized the Arabic sources for the study of Sasanian history and traditions. Barthold, noting the extreme difficulties in analysis and translation of the Arabic texts concerned with ethnography and art, acknowledged Inostrantsev's talent for overcoming problems in this area.

Four articles, previously published in Russian periodicals, were collected together in *Sasanidskie et'udy* (1909); and in 1910 he defended that book as his doctoral dissertation on the history of the Orient. In 1913 it earned him the V. R. Rosen Gold Medal awarded by the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archeological Society: (1) "The Persian literary tradition during the first centuries of Islam" (pp. 1-40) examines the regional transmission and the translation of pre-Islamic literature after the Arab conquest, with emphasis on its contribution to didactic *adab* (q.v.) literature in Arabic. Inostrantsev draws especially on the information in the *Fehrest* (q.v.) of Ebn al-Nadim. (2) "Sasanian military theory" (pp. 41-81) reviews the Arabic sources and the relevant Byzantine literature, translates an excerpt of the *Ā'in-nāma* (q.v.) from Ebn Qotayba (q.v.), then discusses tactics, archery, and the game of polo. (See ARMY i.) (3) "The Sasanian festival of spring" (pp. 82-109) gives a translation and commentary on Musā b. 'Isā al-Kesrawi's (d. 870 C.E.) account of the celebration of Nowrz (See FESTIVALS i.); his discussion draws on descriptions of this spring festival in modern Iran and on customs both Muslim and Zoroastrian. (4) "Customs of the Caspian population of Iran in the 10th century" (pp. 110-35) translates and comments on an excerpt from Maqdisi on the Deylamites (q.v.). Their practice of lineage endogamy leads him



to the subject of pre-Islamic consanguineous marriage (see FAMILY LAW i). His discussion of customs relating to marriage and hospitality also involves another source for the region, the *Qābus-nama* of Kay Kā'us b. Eskandar. All four studies, while drawing on Arabic literature to illuminate different aspects of Sasanian-period culture, at the same time underscore the persistence of elements of that culture in the new Muslim society.

The scholarly activity of Inostrantsev in the decade 1911-20 was less intensive, though of as much diversity as before. Publications of those years in Russian and European periodicals included articles on Islamic epigraphy, the pre-Muslim culture of Ḳvārazm and Middle Asia, the emigration of Zoroastrians (Parsis) from Iran to India in the 8th century, and ethnographic analysis of ancient customs evidenced in *Ardā Virāz nāmag* and *Māda-yān ī haz'ar Dādestān*. In the following years, because of serious illness, his output diminished to 3 articles in Russian, 1 in German, and 14 in English. The majority of the English articles appeared in the *Journal of K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* in Bombay, with the help of his colleagues and contemporaries, such as L. Bogdanov. Most of these publications were translations of his principal papers that had been published previously in Russian.

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