

## PERSONALIA

### **Archaeologist, Ethnographer, Art Historian— 60 Years of Scientific Research: To the Anniversary of Professor D.G. Savinov**

March 20, 2021 marks the 80th anniversary of Dmitry Glebovich Savinov, an outstanding scientist, teacher, and remarkable person, Professor of the Department of Archaeology at Saint Petersburg State University.

Dmitry G. Savinov has made a significant contribution to Russian science. He has devoted his life to studying and reconstructing the primordial and medieval history of the peoples inhabiting the Eurasian steppes.

The range of D.G. Savinov's scientific research is great. His field of interest covers the period from the Bronze to New Age; his expeditionary routes embraced the vast territory stretching from Northern China to the taiga zone of Western Siberia, and from the Caucasus and Black Sea region to Transbaikalia. The scope of his studies is large-scale indeed.

The study of medieval archaeology is among the main directions of the scientific activity of Dmitry G. Savinov. The topic of his candidate dissertation was "Culture of the Population of Southern Siberia in the pre-Mongol Period (10th–12th Centuries)" (1974); his doctoral dissertation was dedicated to the topic of "Formation and Development of Early Medieval Archaeological Cultures of Southern Siberia" (1987). History and archaeology of the medieval period, as well as the preceding Xiongnu-Sarmatian age, were the main topics of many monographs of the scholar, including "The Peoples of South Siberia in the Early Turkic Period" (Leningrad, 1984), "Steppe Empires of Ancient Eurasia" (St. Petersburg, 2005, co-authored with S.G. Klyashtorny), "Upper Ob Region at the Turn of the Eras. Basandai Culture" (Novosibirsk, 2008, co-authored with A.V. Novikov and S.G. Roslyakov), "Minusinsk Province of the Xiongnu" (St. Petersburg, 2009). Many specialists still regard these books as the reference ones.

Dmitry Savinov, a first-year student at the Department of Theory and History of Art at the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture of the USSR Academy of Arts became interested in archaeology when he participated in the Baikal expedition headed by M.P. Gryaznov in 1959. Thereafter, the young man made important changes in his life plans; he transferred to the Leningrad State University. He was attracted by the romance of the expeditionary life, the search and study of the amazing archaeological monuments of



Southern Siberia, which were literally underfoot. Dmitry participated in the Tuva and Krasnoyarsk archaeological expeditions, during which, on his own initiative, he looked for and traced the images on the mounds' stone fences. A.D. Grach, a prominent specialist in the archaeology of Southern Siberia and the head of the Tuva archaeological expedition, played a special role in the professional education of the young field researcher.

The diploma thesis of D. Savinov, a student of the Archaeology Department of the Leningrad State University, was devoted to the rock art of Southern Siberia and Central Asia. The independent choice of the thesis topic by the senior student surprised to some extent his scientific advisor Professor M.I. Artamonov, who headed the Department of Archaeology in those years. The young researcher's fascination with the issues of primitive art was probably formed under the influence of family traditions; his parents and grandfather were professional artists.

After the brilliant defense, the main contents of D.G. Savinov's thesis was published in the "Bulletin of the Leningrad University" (1964). The case is undoubtedly significant, since only a real scientific work could be published in a serious journal. The topics of ancient and medieval art are still among the basic fields of Dmitry Savinov's scientific studies. He has published almost 70 scientific papers addressing this theme. He was the first to set the task of studying deer stones in the Eurasian steppes, identify pictorial styles, describe their local characteristics, and study the carvings on the mound stones. Dmitry Savinov was one of the first to identify the links between the Okunev art and the art of southwestern Asia in his book "The Primitive Periphery of Class Societies before the Great Geographical Discoveries (Problems of Historical Contacts)" (1978). He identified the Arzhan-Mayemir style in the Early Scythian Art in Central Asia and Southern Siberia. D.G. Savinov's works devoted to the theoretical issues of the study of primitive art are widely known. In his papers, Dmitry G. Savinov has always expressed his original vision of the subject of fine art or proposed a new meaningful exciting idea about ancient art. He proposed reconstructions of the diversity of the world embodied in realistic and irrational forms of human perception. His reconstructions of rituals were based on many years of work at the Department of Ethnography of the Leningrad University.

In 1968, Professor R.F. Its reconstituted the Department of Ethnography at the Leningrad State University and proposed a position to D.G. Savinov, when he finished his military service after graduating from the university. Dmitry Savinov accepted this offer and soon became one of the most respected teachers of the students, future ethnologists. While working at this department, he developed his own scientific method of research at the intersection of archaeology and ethnography; this approach served as the basis for studying the problems of ethnocultural genesis and ethnopolitical history of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia and Southern Siberia. In fact, his career can be considered as a good example of the multidisciplinary approach to research.

The academic stage of the scientific activity of our hero is comparably short, but quite fruitful, especially in expeditionary works. In 1984, D.G. Savinov occupied a position at the Department of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology (LOIA) of the USSR Academy of Sciences. He headed a large-scale Middle Yenisei expedition; later, he headed all rescue archaeology works of the LOIA at new construction sites. He believed that his task was not only to save archaeological monuments from destruction, but also to preserve and musealise the objects of cultural heritage. Many multi-ton carved slabs and sentry-stones from the mounds in the Askыз steppe were threatened with

destruction. On the initiative of Dmitry Savinov, these were transported to the village of Poltakov in Khakassia and became the basis for a unique museum. At present, this village has an open-air museum, probably the only one in the Russian Federation, in which all the exhibits are stone slabs from mounds, with carved images of the Bronze to Middle Ages.

During these years, Dmitry G. Savinov investigated the unique Late Bronze Age settlement of Torgozhak in the Minusinsk Basin; the recovered materials provided a new insight into the Middle Yenisei antiquities. The results of these works were presented in a monograph (1996) and a series of articles. The materials of this site have always attracted attention of specialists.

In 1991, Dmitry Savinov resumed his work at the Saint Petersburg University, but at the Department of Archaeology. His skills of an organizer of the educational and research processes were especially evident during the period of his heading the department (1996–2002). It should be remembered that these years were the most difficult in our country; however, during the crisis, the department expanded research supported by grants and projects, arranged scientific conferences at various levels, and published volumes of collected papers on various topics. The scientific community appreciated the conferences, including international ones, focusing on specific types of archaeological sites. Among them are "Kurgan: Historical and Cultural Research and Reconstruction" (1996), "Sanctuaries: Archaeology of Ritual and Issues of Semantics" (2000), "Figurative Monuments: Style, Era, Compositions" (2004). Dmitry G. Savinov initiated these scientific conferences, dealt with organizational issues, and edited materials for publication.

The activities of an interdisciplinary seminar entitled "Theory and Methodology of the Archaic" are also associated with his name. In the course of the long-term work of the seminar under his direction, the scholars shared the accumulated experience of scientific research and knowledge with other researchers attending the meetings. The wide range of topics discussed at the meetings is evidenced by the released collections of reports edited with the participation of D.G. Savinov.

Profound knowledge of history, ethnography, and archaeology allows Dmitry Savinov to conduct successful research related to the historical interpretation of archaeological sources. These research results are presented in articles devoted to the sociogenesis of the populations of Southern Siberia in the Bronze and Early Iron Age, as well as to the separate topics of the worldview of ethnocultural associations of the antiquity and medieval period. The historical approach manifests itself in almost all the works of Professor D.G. Savinov.

Over the years of his work at the Saint Petersburg University, Dmitry G. Savinov has shown himself as

a brilliant teacher and mentor of the young people. He trained dozens of first-class specialists; his most talented disciples defended their candidate dissertations in archaeology and ethnography.

In a short essay, it is hardly possible to highlight all the aspects of the multifaceted activity of our celebrant, an outstanding scientist—archaeologist, historian, ethnographer, researcher of ancient and medieval monuments of Siberia and Central Asia, who dedicated almost 60 years to the humanities and 45 years to the training of highly qualified specialists. Scientific heritage of Dmitry G. Savinov as an author and co-author includes about 500 articles and 20 monographs. And it is constantly being replenished. Dmitry Glebovich Savinov is widely known in the international scientific community. In 2013, he was elected a Corresponding Member of the German Archaeological Institute (Berlin), one of the oldest and most respected scientific organizations in the world.

His wife Natalya is the faithful life partner of Dmitry Savinov. His achievements are her merit too: Natalya participated in expeditions together with Dmitry every year; her presence provided inspiration for fruitful work. Together they raised a wonderful son, Fedor, and help raising their grandchildren.

On behalf of the archaeologists of Siberia, we congratulate the “True Siberian man from St. Petersburg” Dmitry G. Savinov—an outstanding scientist, excellent teacher, brilliant lecturer, and polemicist—on his anniversary. We wish him good health, new discoveries, and implementation of his creative plans, talented and grateful students, and many joyful years of life.

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