

**D.S. LIKHACHOV AND THE HUMANITIES IN RUSSIA:
“THE PAST – TO THE FUTURE”**

Each scientist should be grateful to his predecessors, respect his contemporaries and be responsible to future scientists. Then his activities will live for many years on the globe.

D.S. Likhachov “Thoughts about Science”

I can't but say a few words in the beginning of my report about the role played by academician Dmitry Sergeevich Likhachov in my life, in my formation as a scientist.

When I became a student of the Philological Faculty of the Lomonosov Moscow State University in the long gone 1972, I knew practically nothing about Old Russian literature. I graduated from a common soviet school, in which schoolchildren were presented *The Song of Igor's Campaign* – and practically nothing more was said about the first nearly eight centuries of history of Russian literature. And D.S. Likhachov's book *The Poetics of Old Russian Literature* fell into my hands when I was a first-year student – and turned all my ideas not only of Old Russian culture but literature in general upside down, and also another science, which I knew little about then – the study of literature, and science as a whole, its methodology and, if you want it, philosophy.

Later I also read without stopping, “swallowed” the book *Development of Russian Literature in the 10th – 17th Centuries* by Dmitry Sergeevich and reread it several times. There were other books by him later – and the choice was made: I dedicated myself to studies of Old Russian literature at the University and I wrote my diploma paper about one of its top, “classical” works as Dmitry Sergeevich said, *The Story of Grief-Misfortune*, in which “everything was new and unusual for traditions of Old Russian literature: popular verses, popular language, unusual nameless character, fine awareness of a human person, though falling to the last stages of degradation”¹.

After that my academic life made an unexpected turn: I turned from a literary historian into a linguist, and I defended my both theses in the science of languages, and was elected a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. But Old Russian literature as the first love was not forgotten. A number of my articles and one book, *Golden Chain*², of 2003 are dedicated to it. And when in the end of 2017 the Academy offered to publish two of my small books, one of them was dedicated to my main academic profession – the science of the Russian

language, and the second to that very first academic love – *The Story of Grief-Misfortune*³. Thus, today, the loop of my academic life is closed (or, to be more exact, one of its spiral turns – what is to be expected in future?): I started from Old Russian literature – I’m finishing with it, and all that under the great influence by Dmitry Sergeevich.

Dmitry Sergeevich played a special role in my scientific-organizational activities. I was the academic secretary of the Department of Literature and Language Sciences of the RAS for many years, and Dmitry Sergeevich was one of its most respected members. He came to our general meetings, I went to St. Petersburg, to the Pushkin House, to off-premises meetings of our Department’s Bureau – and I watched how Dmitry Sergeevich treated his colleagues, what scientific ethical principles he was guided by, what methods he used to solve various scientific-organizational tasks – and I again learnt from him, now it was the complex art of organization and arrangement of the “academic life”, in many of its manifestations associated with high ideals, and in everyday life often just routine and sometimes not without small intrigues and even some squabbles. There is nothing to be done – scientists are just people, with merits and faults common for humans. And Dmitry Sergeevich knew how to deal with all these subtleties and how to untie these Gordian knots, never raising his weak, slightly shaking voice, but demonstrating such firmness and even determination in due moments, which nothing could sway.

I could not come to the burial ceremony when Dmitry Sergeevich quietly died in a very old age, even here demonstrating his indispensable culture and refinement as we bitterly joked in our Department: Dmitry Sergeevich died several days after the lady of his age, a corresponding member of the RAS V.N. Yartseva, “letting the lady go first”. It’s just sad humour.

After that I took part in drawing up various documents for immortalizing academician Likhachov under the guidance of V.I. Matvienko, who was the Vice Prime Minister of the Government of the Russian Federation at the time, I came to St. Petersburg, to the Likhachov Scientific Conference invited by the Likhachov International Charity Fund, and finally I was honoured to take part in the opening ceremony, when the memorial stele was opened on the square now bearing Dmitry Sergeevich’s name. D.A. Granin was present there as well, he was very old but still fairly hale and hearty. The weather was typical for St. Petersburg: low clouds and drizzling rain. Well, it was to be like that: St. Petersburg saluted its honoured resident, “who grew up in a typically average St. Petersburg family and studied in typical St. Petersburg schools”⁴, as Dmitry Sergeevich wrote himself, with “typical” St. Petersburg weather. Later we went to the Kronwerk restaurant to have a memorial repast, we spoke about Dmitry Sergeevich, about life in general, and Daniil Granin got excited as a young man after a couple of small glasses of vodka, and even gave a short and witty monologue about female legs. And it seemed that Dmitry Sergeevich was among us: he was sitting, looking at us with his wise eyes and

encouraging us with his weak, slightly shaking voice: “Everything is fine, friends, everything is fine, you should do it like that. Life goes on, life goes on”.

Why did I dedicate so much time to academician Likhachov’s role in my life? Not because of vanity. “Vanity is born by spiritual emptiness”⁵, Dmitry Sergeevich said. I’d like to hope that I don’t suffer from this illness. I just wanted to underline the following: Dmitry Sergeevich always understood... no, not understood, he just felt it, he lived with it – with the fact that science is people making it. Reread his words, which I used as the epigraph, simple and clear. His language was always simple and clear. He thought that “‘The beauty of style’ often serves as just a replacement for the lack of thought”⁶. There is a deep thought hidden in these simple words: be grateful to your predecessors, respect your contemporaries, don’t forget your responsibility to those who will come to replace you – and the future of science will be provided for. And he lived just like that. And we have to try to live like that. This is very difficult. But we have him as an example...

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Dmitry Sergeevich always had more than enough of his own academic work as well as scientific-organizational problems, but he still managed to find time for the activities related to state support of research, first of all, surely, in the humanitarian field. I already had to speak about Dmitry Sergeevich’s role in formation and development of new forms of grants to support science in Russia⁷. I’ll remind of just several cases related to this side of academician Likhachov’s activities.

Once, viewing the video records archives of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation, I found a record of Dmitry Sergeevich speaking, and he said then: “In this case, this is not a foundation, this is something wider, and – I clearly feel it basing on my many years of experience in the Academy of Sciences – it is destined to transform the character of our science, get rid of incompetent people, people who work little, activate science, give it new tasks, new tools and even new technology. I welcome exactly this Foundation very much”.

Dmitry Sergeevich was for grants to support science at once, from the moment the first scientific foundations appeared in Russia. Because of that he became one of the “founding fathers” of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation together with academicians N.I. Tolstoy, A.A. Fursenko, B.V. Raushenbakh, A.P. Derevyanko, Ye.P. Chelyshev and a number of others, and after that, he was a member of the Foundation Council from the date of the Foundation’s establishment in 1994 and till his death in 1999.

D.S. Likhachov as a Council member was for every kind of support and preservation of spiritual heritage of Russia, for development of source studies, textological and bibliographic research, for scientific expeditions (he especially cared for archaeographical expeditions), for publication of hand-written heritage from archives, libraries, private collections.

D.S. Likhachov as a scientist published a number of books with the Foundation's financial support: "Cultural Monuments. New Discoveries. 1998", "Historical Poetics of Russian Literature" (1999), he prepared the new edition of the book "Textology (based on Russian Literature of the 10th-17th centuries)" (2001), supplemented by research by A.A. Alexeev on textological studies of Slavic copies of the Bible and A.G. Bobrov on principles of Old Russian chronicles publication.

2006 was announced the Year of the Humanities, Culture and Education – the Year of Academician D.S. Likhachov by the Order of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin. In this connection, the joint contest was held by the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation and the Likhachov International Charity Fund, dedicated to his 100th anniversary.

The contest was of great interest to Russian scientists. The expert council received 652 applications to examine. On the whole, the experts noted high academic level of most filed in applications. The expert council recommended the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation to support 26 projects for RUB 5 million 470 thousand, including 9 research projects, 8 publishing projects, 7 conferences and 2 expeditions, which represented big scientific and cultural centers of Russia: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Veliky Novgorod, Yaroslavl, Petrozavodsk, Krasnodar, Belgorod, Makhachkala.

Many projects were directly connected with the programme events of the Year of D.S. Likhachov. The Foundation supported the jubilee congress "Culture and the Future of Russia", dedicated to the 100th anniversary of academician D.S. Likhachov (St. Petersburg); international and regional conferences "Archivist and Historian. Interaction in the Context of Contemporary Science and Culture", "Preservation of Cultural and Historical Heritage: Urgent Issues of Russian and European Cooperation", "Historical and Cultural Traditions of Small Towns in the Russian North", "Jubilee VII Conference on History and Culture of Old and New Russia in Memory of D.S. Likhachov", "Forgotten Heritage. How to Save Russian Wooden Architecture".

Publication of works by D.S. Likhachov in three volumes "Memoires. Thoughts. Works of Various Years" was an important event of the jubilee year. Publishing projects developing D.S. Likhachov's scientific ideas were supported as a part of the joint contest: "The Dictionary of Old Russian Musical Terms", "The Donation Book of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius

Monastery of 1674”, “Cosmologic Works in Old Russian Books”, “Russian Hand-Written Herb Books of the 17th – 18th Centuries”.

A number of supported projects was connected with studies and development of the scientist’s archives: “D.S. Likhachov’s Photo Collection”, “Scientific and Technical Description of Academician D.S. Likhachov’s Archives”, with the studies of his scientific heritage: “Dmitry Sergeevich Likhachov is the Researcher of Russian Chronicling”, “Old Russian Religious Ethics: from Hilarion of Kiev to Serapion of Vladimir”, “D.S. Likhachov’s Concept of the Theoretical History of Literature and World Literary Process”, “Preparation for Publication of the Old Russian Apocrypha *The Song for the Raising of Lazarus* of the 12th-13th Centuries (Research and texts)”, “Preparation for Publication of the Collection of Archives Documents *D.S. Likhachov. From Epistolary Heritage (from the Russian State Archives of Literature and Arts collections)*”, preparation for publication of selected letters “From Dmitry Sergeevich Likhachov’s Scientific Correspondence with Personnel of the Old Russian Literature Department of the Institute of Russian Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences on the Argument about the Authenticity of *The Song of Igor’s Campaign*”, etc.

The contest of scientific projects conducted by the Foundation and made to coincide with the Year of Academician Likhachov, helped profound and thorough studies of scientific heritage, development of scientific ideas, making popular creative works by the outstanding Russian scientist, with whose name the establishment and activities of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation were connected for many years.

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What did D.S. Likhachev think about the future of Russian humanities, the future of Russian culture and the future in general? I’ll try to be short as “brevity is a scientist’s politeness”⁸ (another aphorism by Dmitry Sergeevich!).

First. The title of one of the books by Dmitry Sergeevich is *The Past – To the Future*. And there is the deepest thought in this very title: if we care for the favourable future of ourselves, our family, our country, the whole mankind, we just have to know, respect, appreciate and protect the past – ours, our family’s, our country’s, the past of the whole mankind. Because of that care for conservation of cultural heritage in all its manifestations is not just a bee in a bonnet (please, forgive me for the expression) of some eccentrics stuck in the past. This is care for the favourable future of all of us. As for science, no matter all its latest achievements, no matter its innovative character, it should stand on the strong foundation of scientific achievements of the predecessors.

Second. Dmitry Sergeevich thought that “Each area of our life will require scientific thinking in future, mechanic work will be performed by mechanisms”⁹. What conclusion follows from that? A very simple one: train generations of people, armed with the ability for scientific thinking already today, starting from school, otherwise there won’t be a place for us in future, we’ll be pushed out by others, who took care of that in due time. Is it simple? Yes, it is. But it’s very difficult for this simple thought to make its way to the minds of our education managers at all levels.

And finally, third. Dmitry Sergeevich said: “We have to think that the personality of scientist will play a bigger and bigger role in science”¹⁰. And what follows from that? Train not just erudite persons, “walking encyclopedia” in all kinds of educational institutions today, but a versatile, moral man, an individual. Otherwise, neither the country, nor its science will have a “bright” future. And that seems simple. But how difficult it is to prove the simple fact in “high” offices that education is not “providing services”, no matter that they are of a special kind, but bringing up individuals, persons.

Let’s sum up the results. What does academician Likhachov teach us? With respect to the past, bringing up versatile, moral individuals, armed with the ability for scientific thinking – forward, to the future. And then the future of Russian science, especially the humanities, will be provided for.

NOTES

1. *Likhachov D.S.* The Great Heritage. 2nd ed., supplemented. Moscow, 1980. P. 356.
2. *Vorotnikov Yu.L.* Golden Chain: On Translation of Old Russian Book Legacy into the Modern Russian Language. Moscow, 2003.
3. *Vorotnikov Yu.L.* The Art World of “The Story of Grief-Misfortune”. Moscow, Russian Academy of Sciences. 2017.
4. *Likhachov D.S.* The Past – To the Future: Articles and Essays. Leningrad, 1985. P. 574.
5. *Ibid.* P. 572.
6. *Ibid.* P. 570.
7. *Vorotnikov Yu.L.* D.S. Likhachov and the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation // Problems of Preservation and Study of Cultural Heritage: To the 100th Anniversary of Academician D.S. Likhachov. Proceedings of academic session of the Department of Historical and Philological Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow. December 20, 2006. P. 36-41.
8. *Likhachov D.S.* The Past – To the Future: Articles and Essays. Leningrad, 1985. P. 570.
9. *Ibid.* P. 575.
10. *Ibid.* P. 574.