

## SUMMARY

The exhibition is dedicated to 150 years of the outstanding scholar and collector, Academician Nikolay Petrovich Likhachev (12 April 1862 – 14 April 1936). It has been organized jointly by the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg Institute for History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Although Likhachev's main interests were in the realm of Russian history, he was convinced that it could not be divorced from universal history as its context. His method was based on the study of sources as inseparable unities of texts and material objects they are written on. He was a pioneer in a number of historical disciplines, such as Old Russian and Byzantine sphragistics; besides, he had an expert knowledge of diplomatics, palaeography, genealogy, numismatics and history of Russian and Byzantine icon painting.

Likhachev's research was inseparable from his activities as a collector. His vast and profound knowledge helped him in selecting materials for his collection, which in turn could become an object of study. The formation of his collection took place during the three decades of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The goal of Likhachev's meticulous and strictly systematic selection of objects for his collection was to recreate the history of writing, from the Ancient Orient to the nineteenth century. The collection was kept and exhibited in Likhachev's house built for the purpose. World War I and then the Revolution of 1917 ruined all his plans concerning further studies of the collection materials. His collecting activities were practically put an end to; the collection itself was in jeopardy. In 1918, it was transferred to Petrograd Archaeological Institute; in 1925, it was reorganized into the Museum of Palaeography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. In 1930, Likhachev was arrested and banished on a false accusation of having organized a counterrevolutionary organization. During his absence, the Museum of Palaeography was reorganized into the Museum (later, Institute) of the Book, Document and Script, with the aims much different from those of the creator of the collection. Having returned from exile in 1933, Likhachev could no longer pursue his research; he died two and a half years later.

In 1938, after the Institute of the Book, Document and Script had been closed, the collection became divided among several institutions. At present, some 34,000 Russian and Western European documents and manuscripts of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Modern Period, as well as a collection of watermarks, leaflets, book

covers and medieval Western European seals, plus Likhachev's immense library (c. 80,000 volumes) are in the Archive of St. Petersburg Institute for History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The oriental manuscripts and documents are kept in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences; the Old Russian and Byzantine manuscripts and the early printed books are in the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Hermitage Museum has c. 25,000 items from Likhachev's collection, including ancient Oriental and Classical Antiquity materials (c. 2,500 and c. 600 items respectively), Byzantine, Old Russian, and Near- and Far Eastern works of applied arts (several hundred of these), the Byzantine and Old Russian sphragistic collections (over 6,000 and over 600 seals respectively), the numismatic collection (c. 15,000 coins) and a small number of Western European monuments.

Commemorating the renowned scholar, it was decided to combine the most interesting and significant items of Likhachev's unique collection, now preserved at different institutions, and in this way to show the history of written documents and writing generally from the earliest times to the beginning of the twentieth century. The catalogue of the exhibition begins with three introductory articles devoted to Likhachev's life and work (by Elena Stepanova), his collecting activities (by Lev Klimanov) and the history of the Museum of Palaeography (by Elena Piotrovskaya and Elena Meshcherskaya). Then follow 460 catalogue entries with detailed commentaries.

Part I of the catalogue presents specimens of ancient writing, of Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, Greece and Rome. Part II includes documents and written monuments of Byzantium, Russia before Peter the Great and medieval and Renaissance Europe (liturgical and historical writings, official and private acts, ecclesiastical documents and autographs). Part III is devoted to Byzantine, Old Russian and medieval Western European pendant seals. Part IV contains documents of the Modern Period, those of Russia, from the eighteenth to early twentieth century, and Western Europe, from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth century. Part V deals with oriental writing of the Middle Ages and the Modern Period, from Ethiopia and Arabia in the west to China and Indonesia in the east. Part VI includes numismatic materials of Classical Antiquity, Byzantium, Old Rus, medieval Western Europe and the Middle and the Far East. A considerable portion of materials in the catalogue are published for the first time. The catalogue has a supplement (by Lev Klimanov) with the annotated list of antiquaries, collectors and scholars with whom Likhachev was in contact when creating his collections.