

IN MEMORIAM

VIKTOR VALERIANOVICH BUNAK

Viktor Valerianovich Bunak, one of the oldest and most outstanding anthropologist died in Moscow on March 12, 1979. After taking a degree in anthropology at the Department of Geography of the Moscow University under his teacher Professor D. N. Anuchin, he continued his studies in Germany and in other European countries, contacting the most renowned European specialists of the period. From the year 1921 onward, after the death of D. N. Anuchin, up to 1931, he was Director of the Anthropological Institute of the Moscow University, subsequently he was appointed Head of the Department of Anthropology and he headed also the Department of Human Morphology of the same institute. In 1943 V. V. Bunak joined the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., where he continued his activities till the end of his fruitful life.

With these modest biographical data, however, we cannot exhaust the wide scope of scientific activities of this great scholar. The contemporary anthropology has lost in V. V. Bunak one of the most versatile and most productive scientists of the 20th century. Now, in the age of extreme scientific specialization when even inside the formerly simple anthropological science a group of new branches has arisen, each with its own complex methodology, V. V. Bunak remained a versatile scientist dealing with problems ranging from the origin of man, social differentiation of the mankind, morphological problems, to the ontogenesis of man and to population-genetic aspects of the anthropological research.

The most important contribution of V. V. Bunak to anthropology is the comparative morphological analysis of the structural components of the human body. With this problem are dealing his studies analysing the causes of disappearing of the superstructures on the primate skulls during the evolutionary process, diverse functions of the cerebral and facial skull, brachycephalisation phenomenon etc. Let us mention here his book "The Human Skull and the Stages of its Formation in Fossil Man and in modern Races" published in 1959. The study of fossil Man occupied an important place in V. V. Bunak's work. He described the endocranium of the Teshik-Tash child. He was the editor of the

publication of the manuscript late of G. A. Bonch-Osmolovski on the Kük-Koba Neanderthal Man (1954) with detailed and carefully written commentaries. He studied the famous Upper Palaeolithic skull from Sungir on which he read also a paper at the 11th Congress of the Anthropological and Ethnographical Sciences in Chicago in 1973. His last work "The genus Homo and his Evolution", completed just before his death, is in print.

Equally important and broad is also the contribution of V. V. Bunak to the human racial problems. He initiated and organized broad anthropological research of the Russian people. The results of this research were published in a large monography "The Ethnic History of the Russian People in the Light of Anthropological Research" in 1965. But besides this wide scope of activities, whose purpose was to study the geographical variability of anthropological character over a vast territory, V. V. Bunak paid great attention also to anthropometry of ethnic groups living in conditions of relative isolation. He studied many ethnic groups in the Caucasus, in the Polesye region of White Russia and also some semi-isolated groups of Ukrainians. He was one of the pioneers of collecting cranio-logical data of historical on modern populations and he used these data for the interpretation of the geographical variability of the anthropological characters of the present period. His monography "Сrania Armenica" a study of the anthropology of the Near East, published back in 1927, has remained a classical issue in this field. He wrote in 1975 a complex survey of anthropology of the European part of the Soviet Union, published in a multivolume international edition called "Rassengeschichte der Menschheit", edited by K. Saller and I. Schwidetzki. Population-genetic aspects of the anthropological research and problems of the theory of balanced polymorphism were dealt with in a report on blood-groups of the population of the East-European plain and in the monograph "Russkie Sibiri" (Russians to Siberia) in 1972 of which was editor. He generalized his vast experience concerning the racial situation in various regions and he applied an original classification of racial groups already in the nineteen-thirties and continued elaborating it with further-details up to the last year.

The studies of V. V. Bunak in human morphology are astonishing thanks to their volume, abundance of original material, versatility and wide scope.

Well-known are also his papers on somatology, on body-comparison, on physical development, body proportions in feet, study of the skeleton, determination of body length according to the length of the long-bones, age differences of the facial soft tissues variations in pigmentation and methods of its determination and many other things. The results of his enormous activities have been summarized in

his book "Anthropometry", published in 1941, and widely known among the specialists. Equally popular is his "Morphology of Man" forming part of the book "Anthropology. A short Course", published in 1941 and edited by him.

His friendly co-operation was of great value for the editors of the *Anthropologie* journal. He played a decisive role also in re-creating this journal in 1962 (See his welcome letter in *Anthropologie* No. 1, 1962). The international anthropological community have lost in him a great scholar, a profound humanist and a good friend.

V. P. Alekseev
I. I. Gokhman
G. V. Lebedyinskaya