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## **Unknown Pages from the History of Polish-Georgian Cultural Relations: Nikoloz Dubrovsky**

**Abstract:** Since ancient times, Georgians have interacted with both their immediate neighbors and distant countries. Of particular note is the historical friendship between Georgia and Poland. These two countries share deep political, economic, historical, and cultural ties. The aim of this article is to review Georgian-Polish relations and to present to the public a person whose contribution to shaping these relations is significant. Professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky, whose merits have yet to be fully appreciated, is associated with the establishment of the Georgian University. This world-class scholar came under the pressure of the totalitarian (Soviet) regime, which later attempted to erase his name.

**Keywords:** Akaki Tsereteli State University, Nikoloz Dubrovsky, history of Poland, history of Georgia, history of higher education.

The article is about professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky, a renowned researcher, historian, one of the founders of higher education institutions in Georgia and abroad, whose way of life and biography is still unknown to the wide public. Very little has been said about the merits and activities of Nikoloz Dubrovsky. He belongs to such people who create true history, set an example for future generations and leave them true values.

\* Giorgi Chichinadze – dyrektor Biblioteki Państwowego Uniwersytetu Akaki Tsereteli, autor m.in. artykułu *Zbiory specjalne i książki radzieckie w bibliotece Państwowego Uniwersytetu Akakiego Ceretelego* (2022).

In the allotted space, it is impossible to fully and deeply analyze the merits of the scientist, that's why I will draw your attention to his biographical data, review the evolution of scholarly interests and present his main achievements.

He was born on May 16, 1874, in the city of Akhaltsikhe, although in different sources Batumi is indicated as his place of birth. For example: the bibliographic dictionary of the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia and the Georgian encyclopedia indicate the city of Akhaltsikhe; Merab Kalandadze in his article "Nikoloz Dubrovsky in memories" and Giorgi Mchedlidze in his book "Letters on famous people" consider the city of Batumi as the birthplace of Nikoloz Dubrovsky. While working on the report, I came across the materials regarding Nikoloz Dubrovsky in the central archive of the city of Kutaisi. Although the documentation is scarce, it turned out to be extremely important for our research. One of the documents that we found in the archive is the "Certificate of Maturity" (Аттестат зрелости), his certificate of completion of the gymnasium of the city of Kutaisi (picture 1). In the mentioned document, we found out his place of birth and it is the city of Akhaltsikhe. The "Certificate of Maturity", at that period and even today is a strictly controlled document that confirms the existence of a certain level of education and is issued by an institution that is controlled by the state (picture 2). Thus, the information in the above-mentioned document, including the information about the place of birth, are infallible. Once and finally we can state that the birthplace of Nikoloz Dubrovsky is the city of Akhaltsikhe.

Despite his Polish origin, he was connected to the Georgian world by blood. His father was Polish – Alexander Dubrovsky, his mother was Georgian – surnamed Tabatadze, and his grandmother, his father's mother was Amilakhvari, very well known Georgian noble family surname. Nikoloz Dubrovski loved Georgia and respected Georgian culture very much.

In 1897, he graduated from Kutaisi Classical Gymnasium and in the same year he enrolled at Warsaw University, majoring in history and philology. In the above mentioned work of Prof. Giorgi Mchedlidze, he notes with sadness that his name is not written/engraved on the board of honored graduates of Kutaisi Classical Gymnasium. People whose merits and heritage are still not properly appreciated should be better represented and take their rightful place. I hope, in nearest future the name of Nikoz Dubrovsky will decorate the bas-relief of the above-mentioned school.

While studying at the University of Warsaw, the gifted young man attracted the attention of the professors from the beginning, and later, after receiving the diploma, the worthy student was left to prepare for a professor. Along with history, Nikoloz Dubrovsky studied European languages. In Poland, he became a teacher and researcher of European scale. Nikoloz Dubrovsky did not follow Marxist ideology from the beginning. He was enrolled in the Cadets Party and was a figure of liberal views.

As I mentioned, Nikoloz Dubrovsky was a researcher and historian of European rank, which, by the way, is perfectly seen in his early works. I think he could have become a widely known scholar had it not been for his political views. Nikoloz Dubrovsky was forced to leave Warsaw in 1912. After leaving Poland and giving his support a Bolshevik-totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union, it seems that he finally gave up and practically withdrew from active scientific work, which was equal to suicide. This significantly explains the fact that his scientific works available to us are few.

He returned to Georgia and stayed here until 1918. At that time, Nikoloz Dubrovsky worked as a teacher of history and historiography at the women school in Tbilisi, later on he became a director of this school. In 1918, due to disagreement with the Menshevik government<sup>1</sup>, he moved to Baku to work. Here, he actively participates in formation of the Technical Institute<sup>2</sup>. For some period he was firstly dean of the faculty and than the rector. On November 15, 1919, classes began at the university. The first introductory lecture at the Faculty of History and Philology was read by Dean Professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky. Later he was appointed the first rector until September 1, 1921. The first meeting of the Scientific Council of the Institute was held on December 15, 1920, under the chairmanship of the first rector, professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky. While working on the report, we tried out to find information about professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky in the archives and libraries of Baku, unfortunately, so far without success. However, the library of Baku State University provided us with several articles about the establishing of the university. The materials allows us to fill the gaps in the period of Nikoloz Dubrovsky's life connected to Baku.

<sup>1</sup> The First Democratic Republic of Georgia merely existed for three incomplete years (1918–1921), yet, left an important trace on the history of our country.

<sup>2</sup> At present it is Baku State University.

Giorgi Chichinadze, *Unknown Pages from the History of Polish-Georgian Cultural Relations...*

In 1922, Nikoloz Dubrovsky also leaves Baku and continues to work in Moscow. In the capital of Russia, he was invited to give lectures at several universities at the same time, but he was mainly the professor of Moscow University<sup>3</sup>.

In 1932, Nikoloz Dubrovsky comes back to Georgia due to the health problems and is immediately invited as a professor at Tbilisi State University. From 1938 to 1942 he was the head of the Department of History of Colonial Countries, created with his initiative and great effort.

From November 15, 1933, he started working as the head of the Department of World History of the newly established Kutaisi State Pedagogical Institute, nowadays Kutaisi Akaki Tsereteli State University and headed this department for the rest of his life. In both Georgian higher education institutions, Nikoloz Dubrovsky left an incredible mark thanks to his excellent teaching skills and brilliant oratorical talent, which is so necessary for a professor. Although, he did not have a perfect command of the Georgian language and gave lectures mainly in Russian, he did not have a language difficulty with the students, he spoke to them in Georgian and took exams in this language. Nikoloz Dubrovsky's led courses at Kutaisi Pedagogical Institute on colonial, dependent countries and new history.

In general, professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky was attentive to the young scientists and generation, but here I want to mention one fact. He invited Ms. Nino Kublashvili to work in the World History Department and accepted her for post-graduate studies; later, he also helped Assistant Professor Iona Kublashvili. Both of them significantly contributed to the education of many students. Nino Kublashvili was the first woman to become a professor at the University.

Nikoloz Dubrovsky donated his rich personal library to Kutaisi Pedagogical Institute, nowadays Akaki Tsereteli State University. With this action, he expressed his great respect and gratitude towards to the oldest city of Georgia, where he received education and worked productively in the field of education. Unfortunately, no list of books given by him free of charge or any type of document that would allow us to find out what materials Professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky donated to the university library has survived to this day. However, in the collection of rare books of ATSU, we found hundreds of old printed and unique books, which on the outer cover of the book have a personal seal with the inscription "Ex Libris N. Dubrovsky". It was not hard to find out the meaning of this Latin words – it means

<sup>3</sup> At present it is Lomonosov Moscow State University.

“From the books of N. Dubrovsky”. Also, the curators of the above-mentioned library department have revealed books on which his initials (name and surname) and the year of purchase are indicated (picture 3). It is interesting that several of them were acquired during his stay in Warsaw. With great pleasure, I would like to mention that in the nearest future, the Polish materials will be separated from the General collection and will be placed in an independent room/space, which will be named after Professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky.

Due to the above-mentioned reasons, Nikoloz Dubrovsky, a brilliant lecturer, could not fully reveal his abilities in the field of scientific research. His attitude towards the Bolshevik-totalitarian regime and its ideology is certainly negative, and as a researcher he did not want to make any compromises and step by step he abandoned scientific work. Today, many of us understand his principles and appreciate his bravery. The work of this excellent historian is perhaps another example of how difficult and terrible fate awaits a scholar under a totalitarian regime.

We know three works published by Nicholoz Dubrovsky: “The Florentine publicist of the 14<sup>th</sup> century”, which was about Kaluccio Salutati, one of the leaders of the Italian Renaissance. It was published in 1905. The second important research “N.I. Kareev’s scientific-literary work” was published in the same year, and the third – “July Revolution and Bourgeoisie” dates from 1906. I do hope that future research in the Polish archives (University of Warsaw) will help us discover unknown works and biographical data, which will help us to complete his scientific achievements and biography.

With regard to these early Works of Nikoloz Dubrovsky, the specialists conclude that “we are dealing with a highly learned, deeply erudite, wide-ranging researcher-historian who has deep knowledge into the history of Western Europe”.

At the end of the my report on professor Nikoloz Dubrovsky, I regret that his work is not properly appreciated. This gap would be partially filled if at least one volume/edition of his works were published. And here too, I do hope that Georgian researchers and scientists will make it real.

АТТЕСТАТЪ ЗРѢЛОСТИ.

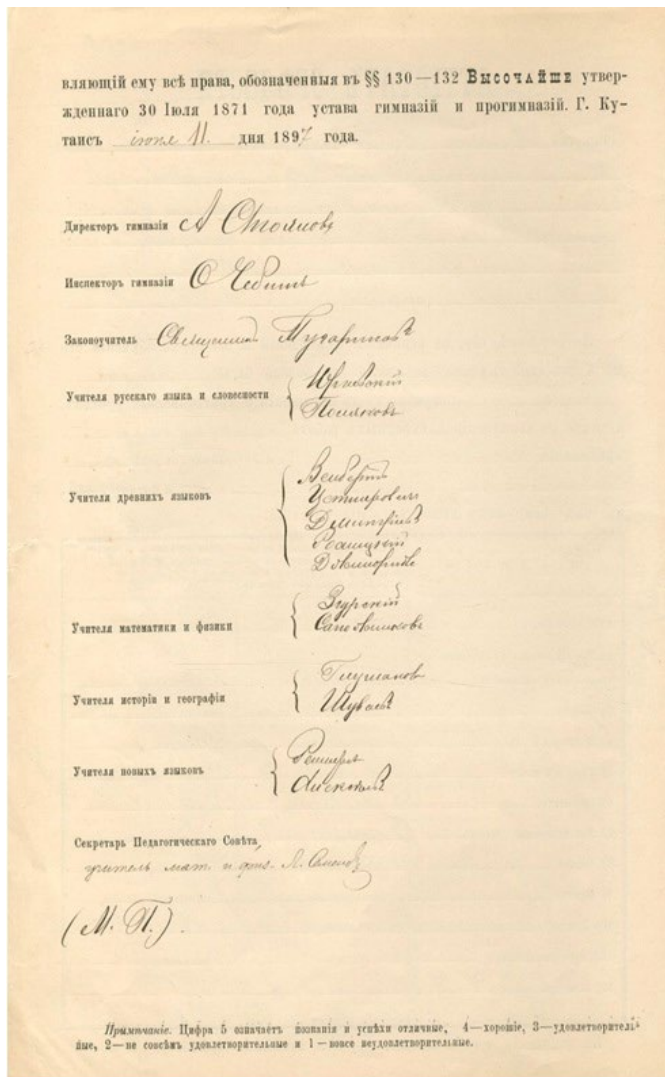
Данъ сей *Николаю Дубровскому, православному гражданину-владельцу, сыну титулованнаго солдата, родившемуся в уездномъ городѣ Велицкомъ Псковской губерніи 4 мая 1871 года, обучающемуся на здѣшней Кутаисской гимназіи и состоящему въ Кутаисской гимназіи и обучающемуся отныне сей въ VIII классѣ, в томъ,*

Во-первыхъ, что, на основаніи наблюденій за все время обученія его въ Кутаисской гимназіи, поведеніе его вообще было *отличное*, исправность въ посещеніи и приготовленіи уроковъ, а также въ исполненіи письменныхъ работъ *очень хорошая*, прилежаніе *очень хорошее* и любознательность *очень хорошая* и во-вторыхъ, что онъ обнаружилъ нижеслѣдующія познанія:

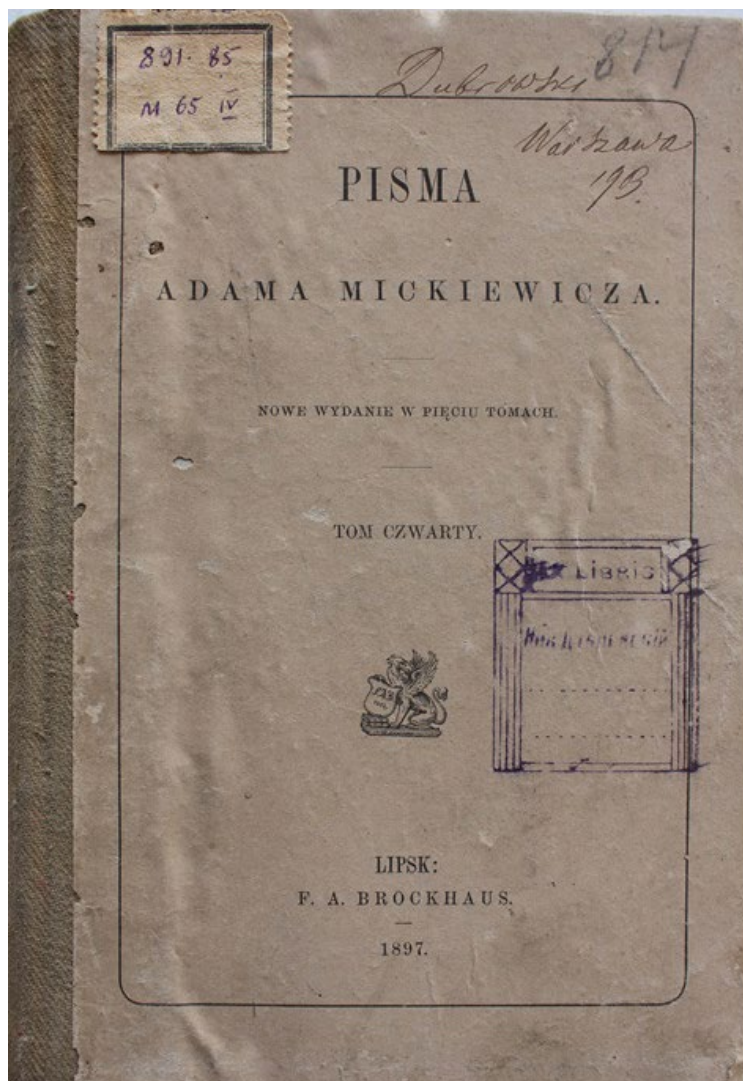
ПРЕДМЕТЫ	Отмѣты, выставленные въ Педагогическомъ Советѣ на основаніи § 74 правилъ объ воспитаніяхъ учениковъ гимназій	На испитаніи, произведенномъ 19, 23, 24, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32 мая и 4, 5 июня
1) Законъ Божій	4 (хорошо)	4 (хорошо)
2) Русскій языкъ съ церковно-славянскимъ и словесность	5 (отлично)	5 (отлично)
3) Логика	5 (отлично)	5 (отлично)
4) Латинскій языкъ	4 (хорошо)	4 (хорошо)
5) Греческій языкъ	5 (отлично)	5 (отлично)
6) Математика	3 (удов.)	3 (удов.)
7) Математическая географія	3 (удов.)	
8) Физика	3 (удов.)	
9) Исторія	5 (отлично)	4 (хорошо)
10) Географія	4 (хорошо)	
11) Французскій языкъ	4 (хорошо)	3 (удов.)
12) Нѣмецкій языкъ		

На основаніи чего и выданъ ему сей аттестатъ зрѣлости, предоста-

Picture 1. Certificate of Maturity  
Zdjęcie 1. Świadectwo dojrzałości  
Рисунок 1. Аттестат зрелости



Picture 2. Certificate of Maturity  
 Zdjęcie 2. Świadectwo dojrzałości  
 Рисунок 2. Аттестат зрелости



Picture 3. A book from N. Dubrovsky private library

Zdjęcie 3. Książka z osobistej biblioteki N. Dubrovsky'ego

Рисунок 3. Книга из личной библиотеки Н.Дубровского



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