

O Władysławie Dybowskim (1838-1910) i jego działalności naukowej

On Władysław Dybowski (1838-1910) and his research work

SUMMARY

In the 19th century, especially after the closing down of the Polish-language University of Wilno (now Vilnius in Lithuania) in 1832, many Poles received tertiary instruction at the University of Dorpat (now Tartu in Estonia). They mainly studied law and medicine, as well as protestant theology. Among the few Poles who pursued studies of natural science were the brothers Benedykt (1833-1930) and Władysław Dybowski (1838-1910), who later became known for their research in zoology and other fields of natural science. The elder of the two brothers was famous for limnological and hydrobiological research, which he conducted during his exile into Siberia in the years 1865-1877. He devoted a great deal of research to the study of gamma rids in Lake Baikal, and sent specimens of the molluscs that he collected in that lake to his brother Władysław for study and description.

Władysław Dybowski started his natural science studies at Dorpat University in 1857. He graduated five years later with a summa cum laude diploma for his paleontological thesis entitled *Beschreibung der silurischen Bryozoen und Anthozoen Est- und Livlands*. Embroiled in the insurgency of 1863 he remained outside the university for several years, and returned to Dorpat only in 1871, when he joined the Chair of Mineralogy and Geognosy. He received his Master's of Science degree in 1873 for the thesis *Monographie der Zoantharia sklerodormata rugosa aus der Silurformation Estland*. Since 1876, he held the post of Privatdozent and lecturer in general palaeontology, while two years later he was awarded a doctoral degree for the dissertation *Die Chaetetiden der ostbaltischen Silurformation*. This dissertation marked the end of his direct contact with the university.

Władysław Dybowski was disabled and could no longer remain a Privatdozent at Dorpat University. In 1878 he moved to Niańków in the region of Nowogródek (in that is now Belarus). There he established a private naturalist laboratory, in which he studied specimens of fauna sent over to him by his brother from Siberia, as well as physiographic materials (fauna and flora) the he collected on his own in the Nowogródek region. He also became well versed in the folk culture and even the history of the Byelorussians.

The memoirs of Polish graduates of the Dorpat University depict it as an enclave of academic liberties in a country, the Tsarist Russian Empire, that was terrorized by the police. This seems to be a largely true picture. The example of Władysław Dybowski shows that Poles could be awarded summa cum laude diplomas and even the tenures of Privatdozent. However, the German-Russian staff of the then German-language university did not allow Poles to gain stable positions as heads of chairs (professors). They had to leave the university, without being able to take a position at any other university in the Empire. Only a few of them, like Władysław Dybowski, were able to set up their own private research laboratories.

Władysław Dybowski's struggle against physical suffering and his legacy of research have fascinated many historians of science. This has been reflected in many publications, the most important of which (published by Polish and Byelorussian scholars) have been cited in the current article.

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