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Mykola lavrovskyy – the first director of nizhyn institute of history & philology

The task of this paper is an attempt to systematize the documentary and factual material on the figure of Mykola Lavrovskyy introduced into the scientific circulation and determine his role in the history of Nizhyn. The author proves that Mykola Lavrovskyy has brilliantly coped with the task set before him – the creation of a higher educational institution of a new type for training teachers in Nizhyn in 1875, – revealing the outstanding qualities of the administrator, the economist, the teacher, and the scholar.

Key words: *Nizhyn Institute of History & Philology, Nizhyn Gimnasia of Higher Sciences, Lyceum, director, professor, scholar, economic activity, student, education, learning, internship, library.*

A special place in the history of Nizhyn belongs to Mykola Lavrovskyy. He devoted his life to a difficult mission – the creation of a higher educational institution of a new type for training teachers of secondary schools in Nizhyn in 1875. At the time such institution has been only in the capital of the Russian Empire and could not fully satisfy the needs of a huge country in the teaching staff. Mykola Lavrovskyy has brilliantly coped with the task set before him, revealing the outstanding qualities of the administrator, the economist, the teacher, and the scholar.

The figure of Mykola Lavrovskyy attracted the attention of several researchers. It's worth mentioning an obituary on Lavrovskyy's death, written by Professor A. Dobiáš in 1900 [1] as well as an essay on the life and work of Mykola Lavrovskyy with a biobographical index, prepared by Professor G. Samoilenko in 1993 [2]. The holistic portrait of the first director of Nizhyn Institute of History & Philology (NIHP) on the basis of archival materials from the funds of the State Archives of Chernihiv oblast in the city of Nizhyn was created in the monograph of Petro Motsiaka "The Prince Bezborodko Nizhyn Institute of History & Philology in the portraits of its directors" [3]. Some moments of Mykola Lavrovskyy's work in Nizhyn can be found in the research of Grygorii and Oleksandr Samoilenko "Nizhyn Higher School: History Pages" [4] as

well as in Grygorii Samoilenko's work "The Nezhin Philological School" [5]. Pedagogical views of Mykola Lavrovskiy were the subject of research by other scholars. The task of this paper is an attempt to systematize the documentary and factual material on the figure of Mykola Lavrovskiy introduced into the scientific circulation and determine his role in the history of Nizhyn.

Mykola Oleksiiiovych Lavrovskiy was born on November 21 (according to the old style), 1825, in the priest's family in the village of Vidropuska, Novyi Torzhok district, the Tver province. He obtained his first education at the Novyi Torzhok Theological School, and then entered the Tver Theological Seminary. Upon the graduation from the seminary, he entered the History & Philology department of St. Petersburg Main Pedagogical Institute, which he graduated from with honors in 1851 and was left at the Department of Greek and Latin Literature as an adjunct [6]. In early 1853, Mykola Lavrovskiy defended his master's thesis "On the Byzantine element in the language of the treaties of the Russians with the Greeks" and in February of that year began to lecture on pedagogy at the Kharkiv University. In 1854 he defended his "On Ancient Rus Schools" dissertation for a Doctor's degree in Russian Philology, and in 1855 he was approved as an extraordinary professor, and in 1858 as an ordinary professor at the Department of Pedagogy of the ibidem University [7].

For a long time (since 1862 to January 1, 1875), Mykola Lavrovskiy has been the dean of the History & Philology Faculty of Kharkiv University. This period of Mykola Lavrovskiy's life and activity was marked by his active civic position and ascetic pedagogical work. In the course of the public discussion of the ways of reforming education, Mykola Lavrovskiy expressed the idea of the need for an organic connection between universities, on the one hand, and secondary and primary educational institutions, on the other hand, asked about the so-called pedagogical conversations and teacher congresses, where the controversial educational problems would be discussed. At the same time, he published the article "On the issue of the organization of gimnasias" and presided at the Congress of teachers of Russian language and literature in gimnasias of the Kharkiv educational district [8]. Such active work of Mykola Lavrovskiy in the pedagogical field has not been remained unnoticed, so, in 1875 the Ministry of Public Education assigned him the responsible task of organizing the Institute of History & Philology in Nizhyn on the basis of the Legal Lyceum, since, according to the Ministry, experience has already shown that the only Imperial History & Philology Institute in St. Petersburg and the historical and philological faculties of universities could not till now prepare enough

teachers of ancient languages for gimnasias and teachers of the Russian language and history for all secondary education institutions [9].

In January 1875 Mykola Lavrovskiy came to Nizhyn. It was necessary to solve urgently a number of complex organizational problems, "not to mention the merely external discomforts of life in Nizhyn because of the impassable mud there in it in the 70's, due to the lack of elementary hygienic conditions and inadaptability of apartments for the cultural resident, etc., it was especially sad to feel the absence of serious intelligence in the city, pettyness and mercantileness of interests, lack of healthy aesthetic entertainment, etc." [10].

As Mykola Lavrovskiy noted, for him from the very beginning of work in Nizhyn "the most difficult and important task to be solved before the opening of the Institute was the formation of the teachers and mentors staff" [11]. In addition, the priorities were: the solving of the housing issue for the invited teachers of the future institution, including construction of two-storey wings for apartments on the territory next to the main building; preparation and adoption of the Statute of the Institute of History & Philology and other important documents that would regulate the life of a new educational institution; creation of a library appropriate to the new educational institution; and, finally, a purely economic task - the restructuring of the main building in accordance with the requirements of the Lyceum's reorganization into the Institute.

How were those immediate tasks solved?

As to the formation of the pedagogical team, Mykola Lavrovskiy emphasized in a speech on the occasion of the opening of the Institute, that thanks to the support of the Minister of Education Dmytro Tolstoy, "after a long, sometimes complicated relationship, a sufficiently complete staff of ... teachers and mentors who were ready to get down to the difficult, but grateful business on training future mentors of Russian youth was formed for the first two years" [12]. In particular, Mykola Lavrovskiy invited famous scientists: professor of Roman literature of St. Petersburg History & Philology Institute R. Fokht, professor of Russian literature A. Budylovych, professor of world history of Warsaw University P. Lyupersolsky, prominent philologists R. Brandt, P. Nikitin, M. Sokolov, a psychologist M. Grot, and other scholars to work in Nizhyn [13]. And already by July 1, 1875, there have been 11 people in the pedagogical team: the director, the inspector, the teacher of the Law of God, 4 ordinary professors (one of them was the inspector), one extraordinary professor, two mentors and two teachers [14].

In order to solve housing problems, thanks to the financial support of the Ministry of Education, a contract for 37142 rubles was concluded with the merchant F. Frenkel to build up two stone wings for the

apartments of professors and teachers by October 15, 1877. At the same time, a contract for 50590 rubles was concluded with merchants Ehrenburg and Balabanov to construct the third floor above the middle part of the main building of the institute and various outbuildings (bathhouse, student's hospital, laundry, stables) [15]. Many premises on the first and second floors were also refitted into auditoriums or for other needs, the main building was repaired. Mykola Lavrovsky made every effort to complete construction as soon as possible.

Since January 1875 the working out of the Statute of the Institute, the draft provisions on the gimnasia at the Institute, rules for students of the Institute, etc has begun. On April 21, 1875, the Statute of the Prince Bezborodko Institute of History & Philology in Nizhyn was adopted, and in July 1875, upon the government decree, it came into force. According to the Statute, NIHF obtained the status and rights of the university (§ 49), which task was to "train teachers of ancient languages, Russian language and literature and history for secondary schools of the Ministry of Public Education" [16]. Regarding the management system at the Institute, the Statute stated: "The foremost head of the Institute is the director appointed and dismissed by the Highest Decree upon the submission of the Minister of public education" (§ 4). "The most important duties of the director, besides the improvement of all the components of the Institute, are monitoring students' morality and occupations and direct supervising in scientific and practical classes in one of the subjects of teaching" (§ 11). "The constituent parts of the management of the Institute are: 1) Conference and 2) the Board" (§ 6) [17].

On September 14, 1875 (on the holiday of the Exaltation) a ceremonial opening of the Prince Bezborodko Institute of History & Philology took place in Nizhyn. An official liturgy began at 9:30 am in the Institute church. Then there were a communion, a water sacrificial prayer service and a religious procession at the Institute building, when Bishop Serapion (the head of the Chernigiv diocese) sprinkled the holy water on the auditoriums and other premises. After the procession, in the church, Serapion sanctified an icon from the diocese and handed it to Mykola Lavrovskiy as a sign of his archpastoral blessing to a new nursery of education [18]. Later, the celebrations continued in the assembly hall of the Institute. Mykola Lavrovskiy addressed the audience with a programmatic speech, in which he outlined his vision of the educational process in general and emphasized the tasks of the Institute of History & Philology in particular.

Mykola Lavrovskiy laid the foundations for the fruitful research work of the scientists, the creation of powerful philological and historical schools. On his initiative on February 18, 1876, "in order to strengthen

the scientific activity of the Institute, the Conference had found it useful to publish a periodical collection titled "Izvestia of the Prince Bezborodko Institute of History & Philology in Nizhyn" [19]. Mykola Lavrovskiy paid special attention to the Institute library. When reviewing the minutes of the Institute Conference, the attention is drawn to the fact that professors and instructors ordered a lot of literature for the educational process, and all of these lists were approved without exceptions [20]. Perhaps, the most extensive one-time replenishments of library funds took place during Mykola Lavrovskiy's directorship. That can be traced by comparing the number of copies which have been in the library by 1875 and by 1883 accordingly. So, by the August, 30, 1875, 4034 titles in 12152 volumes had been written in the inventory book, while by the year of Mykola Lavrovskiy's retirement, that is, seven years later, the library of the Institute had had 16475 titles in 38622 volumes [21]. By comparison, by January 1, 1900, the library had had 22,438 titles in 54,428 volumes [22]. Thus, for 17 years after Mykola Lavrovskiy the Institute library received significantly less new revenues than for 7 years of his directorate. However, this is only a quantitative aspect of the case. The qualitative aspect of the replenishment looks even more impressive. Under the direction of Mykola Lavrovskiy, NIHP purchased a library of the late director of the St. Petersburg Institute of History & Philology prof. I. Shteynman (457 titles, 960 volumes) [23]; the library of the former professor of the Moscow University S. Shevyriov (3815 titles in 7359 volumes) [24]; a library of former professor at the University of Leipzig F. Ritschl (3096 titles in 4930 volumes) [25]. These and other acquisitions had already made the library of the Prince Bezborodko Institute one of the best in the Russian Empire.

One of the achievements of Mykola Lavrovskiy as a director was the establishment of a history department, along with classical philology and Russian literature ones. According to the decision of the Ministry of Education #1291(March 6, 1882), students of the history department, who successfully complete the course, will get the right to fill the teachers's vacancies in gimnasias and progimnasias, both in history & geography and in ancient languages [26].

As the former student of the Institute (1878–1882 pp.) A. Krukovsky recalled at his time , "Lavrovskiy's care of the Institute deserves a high praise. Man who has been already old (he was a little over 50 – Author) daily, twice, in the morning and in the evening, accompanied by the economist and the executor, bypassed the huge three-storey building, looking literally at all the premises and the corners: from the students's classrooms, bedrooms and work rooms till the kitchen and smoking

rooms. He [...] found time to be interested in the personal life of students, displaying, when necessary, a greater, purely parental concern" [27].

Indeed, students felt the care of Mykola Lavrovskiy everyday. First of all, one should note the decision of one of the first Conferences in 1875, when for food and general needs of each student it was allocated 35 kopecks per day or 127 rubles 75 kopecks per year [28]. These funds were enough for normal existence throughout the year. As to the nutrition of the students, the already mentioned A. Krukovsky emphasized a rich lunch "with an inevitable third dish, because of which the Rigorians-students called their alma mater the institute of noble girls" [29].

Mykola Lavrovskiy took care for the students' leisure time as well. On his initiative, the Conference of the Institute adopted the decisions on students's rest in the Institute Garden [30]; their swimming in the pond at the estate of the Count O. Musin-Pushkin [31]; dance lessons [32], vocal-literary student parties [33]. However, such events at the Institute were not limited to exclusively aesthetic considerations. They also pursued a charitable purpose. For example, at the beginning of December 1881, the administration of the P. Kushakevych women's progimnasia appealed to Mykola Lavrovskiy to allow them to arrange for two amateur performances in favor of low-income students during winter holidays. The director turned to the trustee of the district and he allowed their arrangement [34]. Since then, philanthropic performances at the Institute have begun to take place quite regularly. Pleasant leisure and charitable care of the neighbor became an integral part of the life of the Nizhyn students.

When in the 1878/1879 academic year the Institute had students of all four years for the first time, a new element appeared in the study program – the teaching internship for the fourth-year students at the Institute gimnasia. "Mykola Oleksiiovych visited those lessons fervently and encouraged other Institute professors to such visits. That visit should become the proper expression and proper meaning of the connection of the Institute with the gymnasium, on which M. O. Lavrovskiy insisted so much" [35].

In addition to the learning activities of students Mykola Lavrovskiy also supported their aspiration for scientific research. To encourage students to independent scholarship, "the Conference decided that the teachers of the main subjects should submit references on the works of all students of the two senior years together with course reports, and that, based on such references, the annual reports on the status and activity of the Institute should indicate the best works of students of all four years" [36], and also appealed to the trustee of the district to allow

the research internship abroad for its alumnus – the teacher of the 1st Kyiv Gimnasia Ivan Turcevykh [37], who became later the famous professor of the Prince Bezborodko Institute. By maintaining contacts with its graduates, the Institute could, if necessary, invite the most talented and inclined to scientific alumni to teach at alma mater.

Mykola Lavrovskiy himself was a well-known scholar not only in the Russian Empire, but also abroad by his in-depth research on the history of Russian education and pedagogy from antiquity to the actual problems of the XIXth century, in particular, the works of his Kharkiv period: his doctoral dissertation (defended in 1855) "On Ancient Rus Schools", biographical research "On Lomonosov according to New Materials" (1865 p.), a number of articles in various magazines about Russian historians and writers. According to contemporaries, "in almost every of those areas he gave something significant, which strengthened him as a well-known scholar and has not lost his value till now, despite the time and rapid progress of science" [38]. During the Nizhyn period, "Notes on the Text of the Russian Bylinas" (1877), "The Prince Bezborodko Gimnasia of Higher Sciences in Nizhyn. 1820–1832" (1879), "On the Biography of Gogol" (1881), several biographical essays on the time of the Gimnasia of higher sciences and the Lyceum as well as his speeches on the solemn acts devoted to the beginning of the academic year were published [39]. Scientific contribution of Mykola Lavrovskiy won deserved recognition. It was in Nizhyn he became an honorary professor (1879) and a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (1879). Mykola Lavrovskiy managed to create such an atmosphere at the Institute, which contributed to the development of important scientific problems. During the second half of the 70's – early 80's of the XIXth century the famous Nizhyn philological school, in particular its Slavic branch was formed at the Institute [40].

As a true scientist, Mykola Lavrovskiy considered teaching at the Institute as the duty. Despite the fact that in the Statute of the Institute (§ 14) the director was prohibited from combining the position of the head of the institution and the post of professor, in 1875 he obtained the permission of the ministerial and district superiors to lecture in the history of Russian literature [41]. Using that right, he taught the history of the literature of Kievan Rus to the second year students and the the history of the new Russian literature to the third year students of the Slavic-Russian department [42].

Authority of Mykola Lavrovskiy in Nizhyn was high, and it is no coincidence that in 1880 when the public of the city discussed the issue of erecting the monument to Mykola Gogol in Nizhyn, Lavrovskiy was

elected an honorary member of the committee for the construction of the monument. The Committee has spent a great deal of fundraising work. In particular, in late December 1880 two charitable performances were arranged at the Institute [43], and the raised funds were spent for preparatory works. On September 4, 1881, the ceremony of opening the monument to the famous alumnus of the Gimnasia of higher sciences took place. Mykola Lavrovskiy made a report during the celebrations; he spoke about the significance of the personality and works of Mykola Gogol [44].

Researchers don't have much information about personal life of Mykola Lavrovskiy. It's known from the director's personal file that he was marriage for the second time (to Olena Krasovska) and that marriage seems to be childless. From the first marriage, he had a daughter Nataliia (1860) who married a professor of the Institute, a state councillor M. Grott in Nizhyn. Here in Nizhyn his granddaughter Eugeniia (1879) and grandson Oleksii (1880) were born [45]. During the period of service Mykola Lavrovskiy was the holder of the Order of St. Ann of the 1st degree, the Order of St. Stanislaus of the 1st and the 2nd degrees, the Order of St. Volodymyr of the 3rd degree and the Medal on the Andriy Ribbon in honor of the 1853–1854 war. Mykola Lavrovskiy completed the service in the rank of secret councillor [46].

Exhausting administrative and economic activity in the process of the formation of a new educational institution, fierce battles at the meetings of the Conference concerning the opening of a historical department at the Institute had saped Mykola Lavrovskiy's health, so, in October 1882 he resigned and moved from Nizhyn to the village of Kochetky in the Chuguiv district of the Kharkiv province (where he had his own house). However, in the next 1883, he accepted the proposal to head the University of Warsaw and was its rector until 1890. It was in 1890 that he has been elected an academician of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. During 1890–1899 Mykola Lavrovskiy worked as a trustee of the Riga educational district. After retiring in August 1899, he lived to be only a month and died on September 18, 1899 in his Kochetky. Mykola Lavrovskiy was buried in Kholodnogorsk Cemetery in Kharkiv. A. Dobiáš and I. Srebnytskyi, Lavrovskiy's colleagues from Nizhyn, were present at the funeral. They appreciated the person who made so much for Nizhyn higher school. In his obituary on the death of Mykola Lavrovskiy, A. Dobiáš emphasized: "It is about him that one can say: "he lived, as he taught", bearing in mind that M. O. Lavrovskiy "was rigorous to himself as well" [47].

Mykola Lavrovskiy has been a director of the Institute in Nizhyn for almost eight years. He was the first director, and therefore he faced with the most difficult mission – to create the Institution and bring it to the level of high state requirements. Mykola Lavrovskiy understood that in the process of educating the people it was necessary to make a titanic effort to ensure the continuity of the connection between primary, secondary and higher schools. The key direction of work in that system was the training of teaching staff, so Mykola Lavrovsky entirely devoted all his talent of the pedagogue and scholar to that noble cause.

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Микола Лавровський – перший директор Ніжинського історико-філологічного інституту

Завданням статті є спроба систематизації введеного до наукового обігу документального та фактичного матеріалу щодо постаті М. О. Лавровського та визна-

чення його ролі в історії Ніжина. Автор доводить, що Микола Олексійович Лавровський блискуче впорався з поставленим перед ним завданням – створенням в місті в 1875 році вищої освітньої установи нового типу з підготовки вчительських кадрів, – виявивши видатні якості адміністратора, господарника, педагога, вченого.

Ключові слова: Ніжинський історико-філологічний інститут, Ніжинська гімназія вищих наук, лицей, директор, професор, вчений, господарська діяльність, студент, освіта, навчання, практика, бібліотека.

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Задачей статьи является попытка систематизации введённого в научный оборот документального и фактического материала, касающегося личности Н. А. Лавровского, и определение его роли в истории Нежина. Автор доказывает, что Николай Алексеевич Лавровский блестяще справился с поставленной перед ним задачей – созданием в городе в 1875 году высшего учебного заведения нового типа по подготовке учительских кадров, – проявив выдающиеся качества администратора, хозяйственника, педагога, учёного.

Ключевые слова: Нежинский историко-филологический институт, Нежинская гимназия высших наук, лицей, директор, профессор, учёный, хозяйственная деятельность, студент, образование, обучение, практика, библиотека.