Disciplines and Nations: Niko Marr vs. His Georgian Students on Tbilisi State University and Japhetidology/Caucasology Schism

Marcello Cherchi, H. Paul Manning

Abstract

It is arguable that no figure in Soviet linguistics has had more influence on that and related disciplines than the Georgian linguist Nikolaj Jakovlevich Marr (in Georgian, Niko Iakobisdze Mari) (1864-1934). This influence was so powerful and pervasive that its end was stipulated by no less a figure than Joseph Stalin, in no less a venue than a "debate on linguistics" held on the pages of Pravda in 1950. Marr's role in the development of Soviet linguistics, ethnology, and other disciplines has been the focus of numerous other works, and in this essay we will confine our attention primarily to the pre-Soviet Marr, attending to a series of often acrimonious disputes between Marr and his Georgian colleagues and students that marked the transition of his intellectual and political interests from a parochial focus on Georgia and the Caucasus to a far wider purview. In this transition, Marr's increasingly antagonistic relationship with his Georgian students, coming to a head with the founding of Tbilisi State University in 1918, plays a major role. We believe that the seeds of many crucial changes in Marr's theories were sown in this period, and our objective is to place Marr in his Georgian context.

Full Text:

PDF

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5195/cbp.2002.92

Refbacks

- There are currently no refbacks.