

AMHERST CENTER FOR RUSSIAN CULTURE

**Jacob J. Bickerman Collection on Nikolai Gumilev  
1917-1931**

Summary: The Jacob J. Bickerman Collection on Nikolai Gumilev contains the research material, correspondence, published and unpublished matters related to a research project of Jacob J. Bickerman (1898-1979), a Russian émigré and physical chemist who settled down in the United States. The collection provides materials on famous Russian poet Nikolai Gumilev (1886-1921) and reflects Bickerman's attempt to compile a collection of Gumilev's writings.

Quantity: 0.5 linear feet

Containers: 1 document manuscript box

Processed: August 2012

By: Tanya Chebotarev

Listed: September 2012

By: Tanya Chebotarev

Finding Aid: September 2012

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Edited by: Stanley Rabinowitz, Director, Center for Russian Culture

Access: There is no restriction on access to the Jacob J. Bickerman Collection on Nikolai Gumilev for research use. Particularly fragile items may be restricted for preservation purposes.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Historical Note

Jacob J. Bikerman was born in Odessa on November 8, 1898 and died in the United States in 1979. Bikerman emigrated from Russia in 1920, settling first in England, then in Germany, and finally in the United States. While in Europe, he started collecting material on Nikolai Gumilev and acquired letters and other ephemera documenting Gumilev's stay in Paris. Unfortunately, his attempt to publish a collection of Gumilev writings has never been implemented.

Nikolai Gumilev (1886-1921) was a poet, prosaist, editor, and translator. He is known as a creator of Acmeism, a literary school that occupies an important place in history of Russian literary Silver Age.

Gumilev volunteered to serve in the Russian army in August 1914. In 1917, he was transferred to Paris and spent several months there serving in the Russian Expeditionary Forces in France and Macedonia. In 1918, he returned to Petrograd where he worked as an editor and translator for the World Literature series.

In August 1921, Gumilev was arrested by the Bolsheviks for his alleged part in an anti-Soviet plot. Although the charges were fabricated, Gumilev and sixty others were executed within weeks.

### History of the Papers and Their Organization

In 2007, the Jacob J. Bikerman Collection on Nikolai Gumilev was donated to the Amherst Center for Russian Culture by his daughter Dina Bikerman Schoonmaker.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

### Scope and Content Note

The Jacob J. Bikerman Collection on Nikolai Gumilev contains professional, research, personal material, and printed matters documenting Bikerman's research on Nikolai Gumilev. Apparently, Bikerman was planning to publish a collection of writings, articles and memoirs on Nikolai Gumilev (1886-1921) executed by the Bolsheviks. The Bikerman collection will be of particular interest to scholars studying the history of Russian literature in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Organization and Arrangement

The Jacob J. Bikerman Collection on Nikolai Gumilev is organized into five series:

1. Nikolai Gumilev Materials (n.d.- 1917)

- Sub-Series 1: VARIA (n.d.-1917)
- Sub-Series 2: Correspondence to Nikolai Gumilev (n.d.-1917)
- 2. Jacob J. Bikerman Materials (1925-1931)
  - Sub-Series 1: Correspondence to Jacob J. Bikerman (1925-1931)
  - Sub-Series 2: Jacob J. Bikerman's lists and notes (n.d.)
- 3. Materials by Others (n.d.-1917)
- 4. Photographs (1917, 1918)
- 5. Printed Materials (1909-1917)

Series Descriptions

**Series 1, NIKOLAI GUMILEV MATERIALS (n.d.-1917)**

Sub-Series 1: VARIA contains bibliographies, drafts of poems, a notebook with enclosures, and notes on Russian poetry.

Sub-Series 2: Correspondence to N. Gumilev contains the letters from Anna Akhmatova, A. Gumileva (mother), A.S. Gumileva (sister) and I. Meshcherskii.

**Series 2, JACOB J. BIKERMAN MATERIALS (1925-1931)**

Sub-Series 1: Correspondence to Jacob J. Bickerman includes letters from various people regarding N. Gumilev

Sub-Series 2: Jacob Bikerman's lists and notes contains list of materials left by N. Gumilev in Paris, poems, and one newspaper clipping.

**Series 3, MATERIALS BY OTHERS (n.d. - 1917)**, includes poems by unidentified authors, draft of a letter on behalf of N. Gumilev, collection of military songs and unidentified typescript.

**Series 4, PHOTOGRAPHS (1917, 1918)** consists of two photographs.

**Series 5, PRINTED MATERIALS (1909-1917)** contains brochures, invitations, magazines, prints, and programs.

Container list

**Series 1, NIKOLAI GUMILEV PAPERS (n.d. - 1917)**

Sub-Series 1: VARIA (n.d., 1917)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	n.d.	Bibliography, holograph

Jacob J. Bikerman Collection on Nikolai Gumilev

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1	1	1917 Sep 30- Oct 6	Bibliography on verso of a bill from the Pension Galilée, holograph
1	1	n.d.	Drafts of three poems, holograph
1	1	n.d.	List of poems, autograph, signed
1	1	[1917]	Green notebook with enclosure
1	1	n.d.	Notes on Russian poetry, 4 pages, holograph, incomplete
1	1	1917 Apr 3	Artsybashev, Alexander. Note to N. Gumilev on verso of a report in Gumilev's hand, holograph
1	1	n.d.	"Ves' dvor zasypannyi peskom", poem, holograph, 1 page

Sub-Series 2: CORRESPONDENCE TO NIKOLAI GUMILEV (n.d., 1917)

1	2	1917 [Aug 3], Aug 15	Akhmatova, Anna, 2 A.L.S., 2 envelopes
1	2	1917 Jun 27	Bachhover, C.E., A.L.S.
1	2	1917 Jun 29, Aug 12, Aug 25	Gumileva, A. (mother), 2 A.L.S, 1 telegram
1	2	1917 Jun 29	Gumileva, A.S. (sister), 1 envelope, 1 postcard
1	2	n.d.	Meshcherskii, I. one note with a pencil drawing

**Series 2, JACOB J. BIKERMAN MATERIALS (1925-1931)**

Sub-Series 1: CORRESPONDENCE TO JACOB J. BIKERMAN (1925-1931)

1	3	1926 Dec 31	Citron, E.M., A.L.S., 1 envelope
1	3	n.d.	Ertaurant, M. to unidentified (Wednesday evening)
1	3	1925 Nov 28	Lukhnitskii, P.N., A.L.S., 1 envelope
1	3	1931 Nov 30	Toporkov, Sergei, T.L.S., 1 envelope

Sub-Series 1: JACOB J. BIKERMAN LISTS AND NOTES (n.d.)

1	4	n.d.	Lists of materials left in Paris by N. Gumilev
1	4	n.d.	Two poems by N. Gumilev
1	4	n.d.	Newspaper clipping

**Series 3, MATERIALS BY OTHERS (n.d.-1917)**

1	5	n.d.	Envelope signed to Chancellerie de Monsieur Rapp
1	5	n.d.	Firsov, Timofei, collection of military songs, holograph, 60 pages

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1	5	n.d.	<i>Skazanie o zhizni soldat lageria le Kurtin</i> , typescript, 4 pages
1	5	1917 Dec	Vil'kina, L., <i>Madrigal</i> , typed poem dedicated to N. Gumilev
1	5	n.d.	Unidentified, poems, holograph, 8 pages
1	5	n.d.	Unidentified, prose, holograph, 3 pages
1	5	n.d.	Unidentified, note
1	5	n.d.	Unidentified, draft of a letter on behalf of N. Gumilev (in English)

**Series 4, PHOTOGRAPHS (1917, 1918)**

1	6	1917 Jun	Sultan of Zanzibar, inscribed to N. Gumilev
1	6	1918 Jan 1	L'dov, Konstantin, inscribed to N. Gumilev, photo by K. Bulla

**Series 5, PRINTED MATERIALS (1909-1917)**

1	7	n.d.	<i>Cadet Rousselle</i> , print
1	7	n.d.	Etchings from a book (2)
1	7	1917 Dec 6	Invitation, Serge Ivanoff
1	7	1917 Jun24	<i>Manifestation Sic</i> , program
1	7	n.d.	<i>Pirame A Thisbé</i> , print
1	7	1917 Apr 29	<i>Russkaia Svoboda</i> , #2
1	7	1909	<i>Russkii v Italii</i> , #3
1	7	1915 Nov	<i>A Voice from India</i> , #2