

JACOB DAVID TAMARKIN—HIS LIFE AND WORK

EINAR HILLE

Few members of our Society enjoyed such a firmly established and well deserved popularity as Jacob David Tamarkin during the twenty years that he stood in our midst. J. D., as his friends called him, was a personality and a colorful one; those who knew him well held him in fond affection and everybody respected his integrity and selfless service. The interest which he took in his fellowmen was most helpful and he stimulated mathematical activity wherever he went. His erudition and wise counsel were at the service of young and old; many of us are grateful to him for a start or a helping hand at a critical moment. He lived intensely and enjoyed it; he kept open house to his friends, and all mathematicians and musicians were his friends. He was the life of every mathematical gathering where his contagious laughter and roaring voice carried far and wide. It is a sad task to write his life; it is also a difficult one because so much of his colorful past is either hidden behind the famous curtain or cannot be told.¹

J. D. was born in Chernigov (northern Ukraine; Russia) on June 28 (old style = July 11), 1888. His father was a physician, his mother belonged to the landed gentry, and he was their only child. His parents later moved to St. Petersburg where J. D. graduated from the Second Gymnasium in 1906. Among his classmates was Alexander Alexandrovich Friedmann, the future physicist.² They were bosom friends; they worked together in school and were destined to remain closely associated until the final separation in 1925. Their early interest went to number theory and resulted in a joint paper on quadratic congruences and the numbers of Bernoulli ([1] in the appended bibliography) which was dated October 5, 1905 and appeared in the *Mathematische Annalen* the following year. This was J. D.'s first paper and Friedmann became the first of his many collaborators of which at least twenty have been identified.³ The authorities of the school thought that the achievement deserved special recognition and awarded them gold medals.

¹ I am grateful to Professors C. R. Adams, R. C. Archibald, L. L. Silverman, S. Timoshenko, J. V. Uspensky (since deceased), and G. Vernadsky for valuable information bearing on various phases of J. D.'s life and work.

² Born June 17, 1888, died September 16, 1925. The facts concerning Friedmann's life, used in the following, are taken from his curriculum vitae in the *Receuil de Géophysique*, Leningrad, vol. 5 (1927) pp. 11–15.

³ See the list before the Bibliography proper. Cf. footnote 6 according to which the names of N. M. Günther and J. V. Uspensky should be added to the list.