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Leon Tsenkovsky (1822–1887): New Archival Sources for the Biography of an Outstanding Scientist

Andrii E. Lebid ^{a, b, c, *}, Liubov Zhvanko ^d, Dmytro Kibkalo ^e^a Cherkas Global University, Houston, USA^b East European Historical Society, Houston, USA^c Sumy State University, Sumy, Ukraine^d Poltava State Agrarian University, Poltava, Ukraine^e State Biotechnological University, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Abstract

The figure of Leon Tsenkovsky (1822–1887), an outstanding Polish scientist of international renown in the field of biological sciences, warrants further study and examination of newly identified historical sources, as he exemplifies how a scientist can reach the pinnacle of scientific knowledge despite adverse circumstances. The article focuses on the preservation of documents related to the scholar in archival institutions in Poland, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation. The purpose of this article, which builds upon the authors' previous research, is to introduce previously unknown historical documents held in the collections of the State Archives of Odesa Region (Ukraine) into the broader scholarly discourse. These unique documents, published here for the first time, shed light on the final year of his time in Odesa, the honors he received as a distinguished scholar, and the commemoration of his memory. English translations of the 17 Russian-language documents are provided below, preceded by a list identifying each document. Of particular value are Leon Tsenkovsky's service record, his letters, and a letter from Nobel laureate Ilya Mechnikov, who initiated Tsenkovsky's election as an honorary member of Imperial Novorossiia University. The documents included in this publication may prove useful for new scholarly research on the history of Polish biological science.

Keywords: Leon Tsenkovsky, Imperial Novorossiia University, Odesa, archival document, history of biology.

1. Introduction

Leon Tsenkovsky (1822–1887) was a world-renowned biological scientist: a microbiologist, botanist, bacteriologist, traveler, theoretician, experimental scientist, talented educator, and one of the most outstanding protistologists of his time. A Pole by birth and a Varsovian in spirit, he was the first scientist in Eastern Europe to develop an anthrax vaccine independently of Louis Pasteur. He held a leading position among Polish scientists who worked for the advancement of a homeland that had been deprived of statehood. He was an honorary professor at nearly all Russian universities, a member of all natural science societies, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, a member of the German Botanical Society, and an honorary member of the Royal Microscopical Society. Through his friends Jerzy Aleksandrowicz and Titus Halubinski, he maintained constant contact with the Polish scientific community

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* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: a.lebid@socio.sumdu.edu.ua (A.E. Lebid)

([Żwanko, Kibkało, 2023: 20](#)). In 1916, the Polish zoologist and professor at Lviv University, Józef Nusbaum-Hilarowicz, described Leon Tsenkovsky as follows: “Among outstanding naturalists, we encounter remarkable figures of intellect and heart, individuals of far above-average character, figures who impress us with their love for the loftiest ideals of goodness, truth, and beauty. One such figure was our renowned biologist, Prof. Leon Tsenkovsky, a scientist and researcher of worldwide fame” ([Nusbaum-Hilarowicz, 1916: 65](#)).

The scholar's life journey took him through numerous cities and countries: Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Egypt, Sudan, Warsaw, Yaroslavl, St. Petersburg, Paris, Berlin, Dresden, Nice, Wiesbaden, Berlin, Dresden, Odesa, St. Petersburg, Kharkiv, and Leipzig. This arduous journey can be divided into the following periods: “Warsaw” (until 1839, followed by several brief stops); “St. Petersburg” (1839–1847, 1854–1859); “Yaroslavl” (1850–1854); “abroad” (1860–1865); “Odesa” (1865–1871); “Kharkiv” (1872–1887). He spent twenty-two years of his life in Ukraine, at the universities of Odesa and Kharkiv. It was in Kharkiv, at the Veterinary Institute, that he made his discovery, and it was only there that he found a tolerant and supportive environment, as well as financial support from local landowners, which helped the scientist achieve an orderly life and inner peace.

The purpose of this article, which builds upon previous research, is to introduce previously unknown historical documents held in the State Archives of Odesa Region (Ukraine) to the broader academic community. These documents shed light on the final year of Leon Tsenkovsky's Odesa period, his recognition as a distinguished scientist, and the commemoration of his memory.

2. Materials and methods

Regarding the archival sources on Professor Leon Tsenkovsky that have survived to this day, it should be noted that they are located in the archival collections of three countries – Poland, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. In the holdings of the Archive of the Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, there is a separate file titled “Letters from Leon Tsenkovsky to Jerzy Aleksandrowicz (Originals) 1845–1887” (Inv. No. 2728.1). In the upper right corner of the folder is the inscription “Cat. A.” According to archival principles, Category A designates archival materials intended for permanent preservation. It contains 50 letters and an envelope with a red wax seal ([Żwanko, Kibkało, 2022: 32](#)). This correspondence was prepared by the authors of the article and published in the aforementioned edition. It was the result of a joint project with the Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

At the Central State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg, as becomes apparent after reviewing the information posted on its website, in Fonds 14 – Imperial Petrograd University (1819–1918) [Imperatorskii Petrogradskii universitet] (1819–1918) – the “personal collections” contain several documents relating to the St. Petersburg period of Tsenkovsky's life:

Op. 1, D. 4750. On the Examination of Candidate Tsenkovsky and Student Khodnev for the Master's Degree, 1845,

Op. 1, D. 5408. On the Service of Leon Tsenkovsky, Extraordinary Professor of Botany, 1854,

Op. 1, D. 5866. On the conferral of the following degrees [...] on Tsenkovsky, 1858,

Op. 1, D. 5911. On the awarding of prizes to professors and other officials of the University of St. Petersburg... 1858,

Op. 1, D. 5921. Regarding the establishment of a new scholarship for impoverished students at the University of St. Petersburg, to be funded this winter through public lectures by Professors Nikitenko, Gorlov, Tsenkovsky, and Stasiulevich, 1858,

Op. 1, D. 9070. On the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize at Imperial Kharkiv University, 1889,

Op. 3, D. 7823. On proposals by the head of the St. Petersburg educational district regarding sending university assistant professor Stasiulevich and Professor Tsenkovsky abroad for academic purposes and allocating funds for travel expenses, 1856.

In Ukraine, documents relating to the activities of Leon Tsenkovsky are found only in the collections of the State Archives of Odesa Region. Unfortunately, his documents have not been preserved in the State Archives of the Kharkiv Region in Kharkiv, in Collection 667 – Imperial Kharkiv University, 1805–1917 – as the collection suffered severe damage during World War II. Therefore, Collection 45 – Imperial Novorossiia University (now the Ilya Mechnikov Odesa National University) – contains very valuable and, in fact, unique documents. These consist of three files listed in three different inventories:

Op. 7, D. 14. On the appointment, confirmation, transfer, and dismissal of university faculty and officials (O ustalaniu, zatwierdzaniu, przenoszeniu i zwalnianiu wykładowców i urzędników uniwersyteckich),

Op. 8, D. 17. On the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize,

Op. 11, D. 8. On the Election as Honorary Members of Imperial Novorossiia University.

The 17 documents presented below are grouped into three sections: I. Documents concerning Leon Tsenkovsky's resignation from service as an ordinary professor at the Imperial Novorossiia University (docs. 1–9); II. Documents concerning his election as an honorary member of Imperial Novorossiia University (docs. 10–13); III. Documents concerning the establishment of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize (docs. 14–17).

All documents were originally written in Russian and have been translated into English. Illegible signatures are indicated by [Signature], and omitted passages by [...]. Abbreviations used in the original documents are retained in the translations.

3. Discussion

In contemporary Ukrainian historiography, Professor Leon Tsenkovsky is primarily discussed in articles published on the occasion of his anniversaries, as well as in scattered references within studies on the history of biological science. Some of these focus on the scholar's time in Odesa, which is also discussed in publications dedicated to the history of Ilya Mechnikov Odesa National University. However, it should be noted that in these publications, the authors present a generalized biography of him, drawing on the works of their predecessors, without utilizing archival sources held in the collections of the State Archives of Odesa Region. For example, in the article by V.O. Kuznietsov and F.P. Tkachenko, dedicated to the historical aspects of mycological research at Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa in 1865–1890, it is emphasized that Leon Tsenkovsky became the first ordinary professor in the Department of Botany, where he worked from 1865 to 1871. The authors noted that “although his dissertations were devoted to the study of plants and protozoa, he also paid considerable attention to fungal organisms in them”. Attention is also drawn to the fact that “L.S. Tsenkovsky left many students in Odesa, but only two of them continued research in the field of mycology – M.K. Sredinsky and V.I. Shmankevich” ([Kuznietsov, Tkachenko, 2024: 123-124](#)).

A publication dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the founding of the university in Odesa highlights Leon Tsenkovsky's contribution to the establishment and development of botanical science within its walls. In particular, it emphasizes that it was he who established “...a laboratory attached to the Botanical Cabinet, where students had the opportunity to conduct a wide range of research in algology, anatomy, physiology, and plant systematics, as well as certain experiments in microbiology” ([Odeskyi..., 2015: 163-164](#)). Furthermore, he was the first at the university to initiate comparative studies of representatives of various taxonomic groups of aquatic fungi, in particular certain chytridiomycetes and saprolegniomycetes, involving students in his research ([Odeskyi..., 2015: 163-164](#)).

Leon Tsenkovsky, as the founder of the Kharkiv center for modern microbiology – one of three in present-day Ukraine – is mentioned in a study by V. Naida and Y. Boiko. The authors noted that in Kharkiv, Tsenkovsky gradually shifted from botanical research to protistology, and consequently, the central focus of his scientific research was determining the significance of microbiological processes in the food industry and technology, as well as studying the possible mechanisms underlying them ([Naida, Boiko, 2023](#)).

In her analysis of Leon Tsenkovsky's time in Kharkiv – which spanned from 1872 until his death in 1887 – A.A. Korobchenko noted that the scientist made a smooth transition from botany, a field close to his heart, to microbiology – a branch of science to which he also contributed many new and significant advances. The problem was that the vats containing the sugary liquid would occasionally fill with a slimy mass, and the product – almost ready for use – had to be discarded. It was Tsenkovsky who determined that the slime was caused by a bacterium whose cell wall was capable of swelling. He named this mysterious microorganism *Ascococcus mesenteroides* and developed a method to combat it ([Korobchenko, 2015: 347](#)). Leon Tsenkovsky's biography is also included in a biographical dictionary dedicated to prominent Poles in Kharkiv (Liubov Zhvanko), as he became one of the city's three honorary residents ([Żwanko, 2018](#)).

In Polish historiography, as noted by researchers Krystyna Kowalska and Wiktoria Zielińska, Professor Leon Tsenkovsky is featured in specialized biographical publications as well as in comprehensive studies on the development of the natural sciences during the Russian Empire ([Kowalska, Zielińska, 1966: 41](#)). Materials about him are usually found in journals and collections of scientific papers that highlight specific aspects of the scholar's scientific work ([Róźiewicz, 1988](#)).

The book “*Per aspera ad astra: The Letters of Leon Tsenkovsky (1822–1887)*”, published by Liubov Zhvanko and Dmytro Kibkalo in 2022 by the Nicolaus Copernicus University Press in Toruń, serves as a kind of culmination of their predecessors' work. The book is the first publication in modern Polish and Ukrainian historiography to examine Leon Tsenkovsky as a scholar, friend, husband, and father. Its pages contain, for the first time, the scholar's complete correspondence from 1845 to 1887 with his Warsaw friend Jerzy Aleksandrowicz ([Żwanko, Kibkalo, 2022](#)). Other studies have also examined particular aspects of Tsenkovsky's scholarly work ([Kunicki-Goldfinger, 1988: 711–714](#)). In a series of publications, the authors of this article have addressed various aspects of his life and work ([Żwanko et al., 2021; Żwanko, Kibkalo, 2021; Żwanko et al., 2023; Żwanko, Kibkalo, 2023](#)).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Odesa period of Leon Tsenkovsky's life has not received adequate coverage in the scholarly literature, nor have archival documents from this period of his life been introduced into scholarly circulation. Unfortunately, the scholar's biography still contains certain gaps that need to be filled using archival sources.

4. Results

In mid-1865, Leon Tsenkovsky – whom Minister of Public Education Aleksander Gołownin had appointed ordinary professor of botany at the Imperial Novorossiia University in late March of that year –

moved to Odesa. At this university, he became close friends with the future Nobel laureate Ilya Mechnikov, with whom he maintained a warm friendship until his death.

During his time in Odesa, Tsenkovsky carried out quite successful scientific, educational, and social work, and made great efforts to transform Odesa into a center for natural sciences research in the south of the Russian Empire. He conducted intensive research on rhizopods and flagellates, describing new species of freshwater and marine protozoa during that time. He was also actively involved in social affairs. On December 22, 1869, the first meeting of the Novorossiia Society of Naturalists, organized by Tsenkovsky, took place. At the third meeting on January 2, 1870, he was elected its first president. On September 11, 1871, at the next meeting, the scientist announced that, due to various adverse circumstances, he was leaving Odesa and resigning from the presidency, having sincerely expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve in this honorary position (Buchinskii, 1888: 19, 22). He made great efforts to establish the Marine Biological Station in Sevastopol.

At the university, he taught plant anatomy and physiology, including paleobotany, devoting a great deal of time to microscopic demonstrations. The historian of biology Boris Raikov noted that “Tsenkovsky was the first professor in Russia to teach botany with a microscope in hand” (Raikov, 1959: 596). His lectures were extremely popular; they were more like philosophical discussions, attended not only by students of the natural sciences but also by students from other departments (Buchinskii, 1888: 16). Many accounts of this famous educator have survived: these were not lectures, but gatherings with a truly philosophical spirit – gatherings that completely captivated the audience with their clarity and precision. In these lectures, Tsenkovsky knew how to address the most interesting problems in the natural sciences, while providing insightful and reasonable explanations that satisfied the young, perceptive minds of his listeners. This is the main reason why Tsenkovsky’s lectures were attended not only by natural scientists but also by students from other departments. And this enthusiasm was not temporary or fleeting, but recurred regularly year after year. Even today, some of his students cannot recall the figure of Tsenkovsky – whom they call the “apostle of natural science” – without being moved (Róźiewicz, 1988: 684).

Although Leon Tsenkovsky was one of the most distinguished scholars in Odesa, admired by numerous colleagues and recognized by the authorities (in 1868 he was awarded the Order of St. Anna, 2nd Class; in 1871, he was granted the rank of State Councilor with seniority dating back to 1861), he encountered manifestations of chauvinism among the professorial community at the university. Jerzy Róźiewicz noted: “Nevertheless, there was a sizeable group of professors at the Imperial Novorossiia University, mostly former teachers at the Richelieu Lyceum – people of mediocre qualifications, prone to intrigue, who opposed Tsenkovsky, especially if they could do so covertly, for example during secret ballots at university council meetings. This was the case, for example, in 1870, when, in a vote on granting Tsenkovsky a research mission to the Mediterranean, as many as 10 of the 21 council members eligible to vote at the time voted against it” (Róźiewicz, 1988: 685).

The candidacy of another Pole at that university – the distinguished chemist Aleksander Weryhi for the chair of chemistry – was rejected on the grounds of his nationality (Kijas, 2000: 49). Leon Tsenkovsky left Imperial Novorossiia University in protest against the discrimination against Aleksander Weryhi. In September 1871, he left briefly for Saint Petersburg, though he intended to move permanently to Kharkiv.

List of documents preserved in the collections of the State Archives of Odesa Region

1. Leon Tsenkovsky’s request to the Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University for his dismissal from service, April 13, 1871.
2. Letter from Sergei Golubtsov, trustee of the Odesa Educational District, to the Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University regarding Leon Tsenkovsky’s improperly submitted request for discharge from service, April 14, 1871.
3. Letter from Fyodor Leontovich, Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University, to Leon Tsenkovsky regarding the submission of a new request for dismissal from service, April 18, 1871.
4. Resolution of the Council of Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the dismissal of Leon Tsenkovsky.
5. Request by Leon Tsenkovsky to the Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University for his dismissal from service, May 15, 1871.
6. Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the approval of Prof. Leon Tsenkovsky’s request for his dismissal from service, May 31, 1871.
7. Order of the Administrator of the Ministry of Public Education, the deputy minister, regarding the dismissal of Professor Leon Tsenkovsky of Imperial Novorossiia University from service, July 31, 1871.
8. Letter from the Rector of the Imperial Kharkiv University to the Rector of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the submission of Professor Tsenkovsky’s official record, November 10, 1872.
9. Service record of Leon Tsenkovsky, former ordinary professor at Imperial Novorossiia University, Doctor of Botany, and State Councilor, dated November 24, 1872.
10. Letter from Ilya Mechnikov to the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the nomination of Professor Leon Tsenkovsky as an honorary member of the University, February 6, 1881.

11. Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the election of Leon Tsenkovsky as an honorary member, February 28, 1881.
12. Approval by Petr Lavrovsky, trustee of the Odesa Educational District, of Professor Leon Tsenkovsky as an honorary member of Imperial Novorossiia University, March 3, 1881.
13. Letter of thanks from Professor Leon Tsenkovsky to the Council of Imperial Novorossiia University on his election as an honorary member, April 15, 1881
14. Letter from Ivan Shchelkov, Rector of the Imperial Kharkiv University, to the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the establishment of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize, November 7, 1889.
15. Letter from Semen Yaroshenko, Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University, to the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics and the Board of the Society of Naturalists regarding the discussion of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize, November 1889.
16. Letter from the Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of Imperial Novorossiia University to the Rector concerning the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize, December 7, 1889.
17. Regulations Governing the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize.

I. Documents concerning the dismissal of Leon Tsenkovsky from the position of ordinary professor at the Imperial Novorossiia University.

Document 1 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 65)

Leon Tsenkovsky's request to the Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University for his dismissal from service, April 13, 1871.

April 13, 1871

To His Excellency the Rector of Novorossiia University.

In light of the intrigues that have taken place in the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, which undermine the dignity of the professorship, I find it impossible to remain a professor at the University and humbly request that Your Excellency, if possible, accept my resignation at the earliest opportunity.

Ordinary professor
Leon Tsenkovsky
April 13, 1871.

Document 2 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 68-68v)

Letter from Sergei Golubtsov, trustee of the Odesa Educational District, to the Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University regarding Leon Tsenkovsky's improperly submitted request for discharge from service, April 14, 1871.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION

Confidential.

To M[r]. Rector of the Imperial Novorossiia University.

Trustee of the Odesa
Educational District.

Office
Odesa.
April 14, 1871

No. 19.

RE: NO. 427.

From Your Excellency's report, I noted, among other things, that M[r]. Tsenkovsky, in his petition to you requesting his retirement, used the phrase "due to the intrigues that took place in the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, which undermine the dignity of the professorship" In view of Art.[icle] 80 of Vol.[ume] I of the C.[ode] of L.[aws] of the Russian Empire (1857 ed.[ition]), the Stat.[ute] of the Gov.[erning] Senate (App.[endix]), and Art.[icle] 267 of Vol.[ume] X, B.[ook] 2, of the Civ.[il] Laws, under which petitions containing defamatory or reproachful language are not accepted, I respectfully request that Your Excellency return the aforementioned petition to M[r]. Tsenkovsky and invite him to submit a new petition using language permitted by law.

Trustee Golubtsov

Document 3 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 69)

Letter from Fyodor Leontovich, Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University, to Leon Tsenkovsky regarding the submission of a new request for discharge from service, April 18, 1871.

To Ord.[inary] Prof.[essor] L.S. Tsenkovsky

No. 447

Rector

Pursuant to Art.[icle] 80 of Vol.[ume] I of the C.[ode] of L.[aws] of the Russian Empire (1857 ed.[ition]), the Stat.[ute] of the Gov.[erning] Senate (App.[endix]), and Art.[icle] 267 of Vol.[ume] X of the C.[ode] of L.[aws], Civ.[il] Laws, B.[ook] 2,

April 18, 1871

I humbly request that you, Dear Sir, submit a new petition for resignation using language permitted by law.
Rector

Document 4 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 71-71v)

Resolution of the Council of Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the dismissal of Leon Tsenkovsky.

The Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University finds:

first, that the desire expressed by Mr. Tsenkovsky to resign from the University is a regrettable event for the University;

second, that the main reason for M[r]. Tsenkovsky's departure from the University lies, as is evident from his petition, in his opinion that "an intrigue has taken place at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics that demeans the professorial rank";

third, that such a statement by Mr. Tsenkovsky, which constitutes an insult not only to the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics but also to the University, is entirely without foundation and was made by Mr. Tsenkovsky under the influence of a momentary outburst of irritation and therefore does not represent fully considered intentions.

Taking into account all of the above considerations, the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University, guided by the principles of justice and wishing to avoid consequences that would be unfavorable both to the University and to M[r]. Tsenkovsky, asks M[r]. Tsenkovsky whether he would consider it fairer and more consistent with both his personal dignity and the interests of the University to withdraw his request for resignation and explain to the Faculty Council that his decision had been ill-considered and made in haste.

Document 5 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 119)

Leon Tsenkovsky's request to the Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University for his dismissal from service, May 15, 1871.

No. 343
To the Rector

May 15, 1871

His Excellency
Mr. Rector of the Imperial
Novorossiia University

I have the honor to request that Your Excellency accept my resignation.

Ordinary professor
Leon Tsenkovsky

Odesa, May 3
1871

The application bears the inscription: To the Office of Trustees of the Od.[esa] Educ.[ational] District,
June 7, 1871
No. 119

Document 6 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 120)

Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the approval of Prof. Leon Tsenkovsky's request for his resignation from service, May 31, 1871.

Meeting of the Council on May 31, 1871

No. 343
Rector

29. Request by L.S. Tsenkovsky, ordinary professor in the Department of Botany, for his resignation from service.

I request that the Trustee grant Prof. Tsenkovsky's petition, noting that the University has no objections to Prof. Tsenkovsky's retirement.

[Signature]

Document 7 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 122-123)

Order of the Administrator of the Ministry of Public Education, Deputy Minister, regarding the dismissal of Professor Leon Tsenkovsky of the Imperial Novorossiia University from service, July 31, 1871.

ORDER

OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE MINISTRY
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE DEPUTY MINISTER,
dated July 31, 1871.

No. 14.

(Published in the Senate Gazette
on August 13, 1871, No. 65.)

[...]

The following are dismissed from service: [...] Ordinary professor at the Imperial Novorossiia University, State Councilor Tsenkovsky – upon his own request.

[...]

Signed: Acting Minister, Deputy Minister, State Secretary *I. Delyanov*.

Document 8 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 345)

Letter from the Rector of the Imperial Kharkiv University to the Rector of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the submission of Professor Tsenkovsky's service record, November 10, 1872.

No. 861

November 10, 1872.

Rec.[tor] of the Univ.[ersity]

MINISTRY
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

To the Rector of the Imperial
Novorossiia University

RECTOR
OF THE IMPERIAL
Kharkiv University

November 3, 1872
No. 986
Kharkiv

Former Professor of the Imperial Novorossiia University, Tsenkovsky has re-entered service as an ordinary professor at Imperial Kharkiv University, effective May 17, 1872.

Consequently, I have the honor to humbly request Your Excellency to issue an order for the certificate of Professor Tsenkovsky's service to be sent to Imperial Kharkiv University.

Rector of the University [Signature]

Secretary of the Council [Signature]

The document bears the inscription:

To the Rector of the Imperial Kharkiv University
November 24, 1872, No. 1248, enclosing Certificate No. 1105 and Diploma No. 8242.

Document 9 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 7. D. 14. L. 358-361v)

Service record of Leon Tsenkovsky, former ordinary professor at Imperial Novorossiia University, Doctor of Botany, and State Councilor, dated November 24, 1872.

Certificate

The bearer of this document, former ordinary professor at the Imperial Novorossiia University, Doctor of Botany, State Councilor Leon Semenovich Tsenkovsky, as evidenced by his official service record, is 43 [sic] years of age; he is of the Roman Catholic faith and comes from the Warsaw burgher estate; a Knight of the Order of St. Stanislaus, 2nd Class, and the Order of St. Anna, 2nd Class, and holds a bronze medal commemorating the war of 1853–1856; neither he nor his wife possesses any ancestral or acquired property.

He completed his studies at the Imperial University of St. Petersburg in the 2nd department of the Faculty of Philosophy, earning a candidate's degree in 1844; he subsequently passed the examination for a master's degree in botany, which was conferred upon him on May 31, 1846, with the Highest Imperial Majesty's permission, announced to the Russian Geographical Society by Privy Councilor Count Nesselrode, he was dispatched, together with Lieutenant Colonel Kovalevsky, who was heading to Egypt, to conduct ethnographic research in Central Africa in the basins of the White and Blue Nile; the Imperial Academy of Sciences also charged him with studying these regions from a natural history perspective. This journey lasted from November 6, 1847, to February 15, 1850. Having fulfilled his assignments, he submitted the appropriate reports, as well as the rich zoological and botanical collections gathered in the field.

It was by Imperial decree that the time spent on this journey, from November 1, 1847, to September 4, 1849, be credited toward his active service in the academic department.

By the Highest Order of the Civil Department, he was appointed acting professor of natural history at the Demidov Lyceum on the fourteenth day of May, 1850; the Minister of Public Education, on November 3, 1850, confirmed him as professor of the department he held, effective from the date of his appointment as acting professor, i.e., May 14, 1850; Pursuant to Art.[icle] 722 of Vol.[ume] III of the C.[ode] of L.[aws] of the Russian Empire (1842 ed.[ition]), the Stat.[ute] on Gov.[ernment] Serv.[ice], and the circular instruction of the Minister of Public Education dated August 30, 1852, he was confirmed in the rank of Collegiate Assessor, with seniority from May 14, 1850; on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Demidov Lyceum, he was graciously awarded a gift of 143 rub.[les] in silv.[er] on June 12, 1853;

By the Highest Order of the Civil Department dated December 5, 1853, he was promoted, for long service, to the rank of Court Counselor, with seniority effective May 14, 1853; He was transferred to the position of Acting Extraordinary Professor in the Department of Botany at St. Petersburg University on December 17, 1854; he was appointed Secretary of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at the University on May 30, 1855, after passing the required examination and defending his dissertation titled "On Lower Algae and Infusoria," the Minister of Public Education, in accordance with the decision of the Council of St. Petersburg University, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences on May 11, 1856; He was appointed by the Minister of Public Education as an extraordinary professor in the Department of Botany on July 18, 1856; By Imperial permission, he was sent on a one-year scientific mission abroad, with a lump-sum travel allowance of 666 rubles; he was on this mission from October 15, 1856, to October 15, 1857; pursuant to the Most Gracious Manifesto of August 26, 1856, he received a dark bronze medal commemorating the War of 1853–1856 on January 5, 1857; By the Highest Order of the Civil Department dated November 16, 1858 (No. 266), he was promoted, for length of service, to the rank of Collegiate Counselor, with seniority effective May 14, 1856; by the Emperor's gracious command, he was awarded the Order of St. Stanislaus, 2nd Class, for distinguished service at St. Petersburg University on May 4, 1860; pursuant to his petition of April 10, 1861, No. 10, submitted to the Ministry of Public Education, he was discharged from service due to illness; by order of the Minister of Public Education dated March 27, 1865, No. 7, appointed ordinary professor at the Imperial Novorossiia University in the Department of Botany, effective May 1, 1865; pursuant to the election by the University Council and upon the recommendation of the Trustee of the Odesa Educational District, No. 2446, he was approved as a candidate for judge of the university court for the 1865–1866 academic year, effective September 15, 1865; appointed a member of the Commission formed to draft a plan for the organization and placement of educational support institutions at the University and to calculate the funds required for these purposes; he served on this Commission from September 4, 1865, to April 20, 1866, that is, until the Commission ceased its activities; pursuant to the election by the University Council and upon the proposal of the Trustee of the Odesa Educational District, No. 3552, he was confirmed as a judge of the university court for the 1866–1867 academic year on December 10, 1866; He was graciously awarded the Order of St. Anna, 2nd Class, on December 20, 1868, for his excellent and diligent service; the Emperor, upon the most humble report of the Minister of Public Education, graciously consented to count toward active service, including, among other things, the period of service required for a pension in the educational sector, the entire time he spent abroad for educational purposes at his own expense, from April 10, 1861, to May 1, 1865, on March 26, 1870; by Decree of the Government Senate, through the Department of Heraldry, dated February 16, 1871, No. 687, he was promoted, for length of service, to the rank of State Councilor, with seniority effective May 6, 1861; by Order No. 14 of the Minister of Public Education dated July 31, 1871, he was discharged from service at his own request.

He did not participate in campaigns against the enemy, was not subject to disciplinary penalties, and was not under investigation or on trial; he took the following leaves of absence: in 1854, from August 2 for 14 days, which leave, with the permission of the Minister of Public Education, was extended until September 7 of the same year, and upon returning from this leave, he reported for duty on time; in 1858, he was abroad during the vacation period and returned to duty on time; in 1859, he was abroad for medical treatment for 29 days, in addition to his regular vacation time; this leave was postponed for four months, after which it was postponed for another 4 months, and he returned to his post on August 25, 1860, following this last period of leave; and on September 6 of the same year, he was granted leave to travel abroad for medical treatment for another year, but before the leave period expired, he submitted a request for discharge from service; in 1865, he was abroad during the winter vacation period and for an additional 28 days, but did not report for duty on time because of illness, as certified by a medical certificate; the resulting 28-day overstay was deemed justified by the University Council; in 1866, he was abroad for the summer vacation period and an additional 28 days and reported for duty on time; in 1867, he was abroad during the summer vacation period and for an additional 28 days, but did not report for duty on time because of illness, as certified by a medical certificate; the resulting 21-day overstay was deemed justified by the University Council; in 1868, he was abroad for the summer vacation period and 28 days and reported for duty on time; he was on leave from April 10, 1861, to May 1, 1865, and this period was credited to him as active service by Imperial decree; he is married to Alexandra Fedorovna Andreeva; he has a son, Evgeny, and daughters, Sophia and Julia, all born abroad; his wife and children are of the Orthodox faith.

He was not subject to any circumstances that would prevent him from being awarded decorations for long-term service during his tenure at Imperial Novorossiia University. In witness whereof, this certificate is hereby issued to Mr. Tsenkovsky, duly signed and affixed with the official seal. Odesa, November 24, 1872.

Signed

Rector of the Imperial Novorossiia University,
State Councilor and Knight F.[yodor] Leontovich
Secretary of the Council Orlovsky

II. Documents regarding the election of Leon Tsenkovsky as an honorary member of the Imperial Novorossiia University.

Document 10 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 11. D. 8. L. 1)

Letter from Ilya Mechnikov to the Council of Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the nomination of Professor Leon Tsenkovsky as an honorary member of the University, February 6, 1881.

February 6

No. 111
Council

To the Council
of Imperial Novorossiia University

I have the honor of nominating Leon Semenovitch Tsenkovsky, a former professor at our university and currently a professor at Imperial Kharkiv University, whose work as a scholar and educator is well known, for honorary membership.

Ilya Mechnikov
February 6, 1881.

Document 11 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 11. D. 8. L. 3)

Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the election of Leon Tsenkovsky as an honorary member, February 28, 1881.

Meeting of the Council, February 25, 1881

7. Proposal by Professor Mechnikov: "I have the honor to propose [...]"

L.S. Tsenkovsky has been elected an honorary member of Imperial Novorossiia University.
To be submitted for approval to M[r]. Trustee.

"As a result of the election held on this occasion, Prof. Tsenkovsky was elected by a majority of 13 votes in favor and 4 against".

To M[r]. Trustee of the Od.[esa]
Educ.[ational] District, Feb. 28,
1881, No. 455

Document 12 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 11. D. 8. L. 5)

Confirmation by Petr Lavrovsky, trustee of the Odesa Educational District, of Leon Tsenkovsky's election as an honorary member of Imperial Novorossiia University, March 3, 1881.

March 3

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
TRUSTEE OF THE ODESA
EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT

To the Council of the Imperial
Novorossiia University

Office
Odesa
March 2, 1881
No. 1850.

Pursuant to the submission dated February 28 of this year, No. 455, I hereby confirm the election by the University Council of Leon Tsenkovsky, ordinary professor at Imperial Kharkiv University, as an honorary member of Imperial Novorossiia University. I have the honor to inform the Council accordingly.

Trustee P. Lavrovsky

Document 13 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 11. D. 8. L. 9).

Letter of thanks from Professor Leon Tsenkovsky to the Council of Imperial Novorossiia University on his election as an honorary member, April 15, 1881.

Received: May 1, 1881

To the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia
University

The Council of Imperial Novorossiia University has elected me as its honorary member. I hasten to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Council for the kindness shown to me; I shall find in this a precious source of encouragement for my future work.

Kharkiv
April 15, 1881.

Professor L. Tsenkovsky

III. Documents regarding the establishment of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize.

Document 14 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 8. D. 17. L. 62-62v).

Letter from Ivan Shchelkov, Rector of the Imperial Kharkiv University, to the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University regarding the establishment of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize, November 7, 1889.

No. 1306
Counc.[il]
MINISTRY
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
Council
IMPERIAL
Kharkiv University
November 7, 1889.
No. 1611
Kharkiv

To the Council of the Imperial Novorossiia University

With a view to honoring the memory of Professor Tsenkovsky, the Council of the Imperial Kharkiv University initiated a petition to establish a prize in his name, which, following a report by his excellency the Minister of Public Education, received Imperial approval on October 16, 1888. Since Professor Tsenkovsky's professional and scholarly activities were successively associated with the universities of St. Petersburg, Novorossiia, and Kharkiv, the Council of Imperial Kharkiv University deems it fair that all the aforementioned universities and their affiliated Societies of Naturalists participate both in drafting the regulations for the prize and subsequently in awarding it.

To the Faculty of Physics and
Mathematics, November 17, 1889, No.
2522, forwarded.
To the Board of the Society of
Naturalists at Imperial Novorossiia
University, November 15, 1889, No.
2524, forwarded.

In forwarding three copies of the draft regulations for the aforementioned prize, the Council of the Imperial Kharkiv University has the honor to humbly request that they be submitted for discussion and that your conclusions be communicated to the Council of Imperial Kharkiv University as soon as possible in order to expedite the final revision of the regulations.

No. 17
1889

University Rector [Signature]

University Secretary [Signature]

Document 15 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 8. D. 17. L. 63)

Letter from Semen Yaroshenko, Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University, to the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics and the Board of the Society of Naturalists regarding the discussion of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize, November 1889.

1306
Counc.[il]
No. 2522
Rector

To the Physico-Math.[ematical] Fac.[ulty]
To the Board of the Society of Naturalists at the Novor.[ossiia] Univ.[ersity]
Herewith I am submitting copies of the letter from the Council of Imperial Kharkiv University and one copy of the draft Regulations Governing the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize. I have the honor to request that the draft be discussed and that your conclusion be sent to me at the earliest opportunity.

No. 2524
November
1889

Rector

Enclosed:
the letter from the Council of Imperial Kharkiv University
and one copy of the draft regulations.

Document 16 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 8. D. 17. L. 64)

Letter from the Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of Imperial Novorossiia University to the Rector concerning the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize, December 7, 1889.

1428
MINISTRY
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
Faculty of Physics and Mathematics
of the Imperial Novorossiia University
December 7, 1889
No. 142
Odesa

To His Excellency the Rector
of the Imperial Novorossiia University

In response to Your Excellency's proposal of November 17, No. 2522, requesting the Faculty's opinion on the regulations governing the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize, the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics has the honor to report that, in its opinion, § 15 of the aforementioned regulations should be amended as follows:

"A motion to amend these regulations may be initiated by any of the institutions awarding the prize, following prior consultation with all other such institutions.

In all ... and so on ..."

Dean [Signature]

Document 17 (SAOR. F. 45. Op. 8. D. 17. L. 65-66)

Regulations Governing the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize.

REGULATIONS
for the
L.S. Tsenkovsky
Prize.

§ 1. The L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize is funded from the interest on capital raised through a subscription authorized by Imperial decree dated October 16, 1888.

§ 2. As the prize fund accumulates, interest-bearing government securities shall be purchased with it; the collection of the fund, the safekeeping of the securities, the receipt of interest and principal upon maturity, the purchase of interest-bearing securities, and the awarding of the prize as intended shall be entrusted to the Board of the Imperial Kharkiv University.

§ 3. The awarding of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize shall commence two years after its principal reaches 5,000 rubles; the prize shall thereafter be awarded every two years in an amount equal to the total interest on the principal accrued over those two years.

§ 4. The prize may not be divided among several candidates but shall be awarded in its entirety to a single person.

§ 5. The L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize is awarded for the best of the works submitted for consideration, containing original research in the field of bacteriology, or, more generally, lower plant and animal organisms; the prize is awarded to the author or his legal heirs.

§ 6. Printed works in Russian, published no more than four years prior to the deadline for submission, are eligible for the prize.

§ 7. The prize is awarded alternately in Kharkiv, St. Petersburg, and Odesa by a joint commission consisting of the chair of the local Society of Naturalists and four members, two of whom are elected by the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of the local university, and the other two are appointed by the local Society of Naturalists. The commission's decisions are made by a majority vote.

§ 8. Members of the commissions specified in the preceding § may not simultaneously compete for the prize.

§ 9. The prize shall be awarded for the first time in Kharkiv, beginning on the date specified in § 3; the second award (two years later) shall take place in St. Petersburg, the third in Odesa, the fourth again in Kharkiv, and so on, in the same order.

§ 10. The deadline for submitting works for the prize is September 1; the prize must be awarded no later than six months thereafter, i.e., no later than March 1. The terms of the prize, as well as the deadlines and location for submitting works for the prize, shall be published for general information immediately after each awarding of the prize. [...]

§ 12. The commission's report on all works submitted for the prize and its decision on the awarding of the prize shall be published in the annual reports of the respective university and the Society of Naturalists.

§ 13. Members of the commissions have the right to nominate for the prize works not submitted by their authors, provided they comply with §§ 6 and 8 of these regulations.

§ 14. The L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize may not be awarded for a work that has already received any other academic prize.

§ 15. These regulations may be amended upon the request of the Council of Imperial Kharkiv University, following preliminary consultations and agreement with the Faculties of Physics and Mathematics and the Societies of Naturalists in Kharkiv, St. Petersburg, and Odesa. In the event of any amendments, however, the prize shall retain the name of L.S. Tsenkovsky and shall be awarded for a work in the natural sciences [...].

5. Conclusion

This study has introduced into scholarly circulation a body of archival documents held by the State Archives of Odesa Region. The documents fall into three thematic groups: records concerning Leon Tsenkovsky's resignation from service as an ordinary professor at Imperial Novorossiia University; materials relating to his election as an honorary member of the University; and documents concerning the establishment of the L.S. Tsenkovsky Prize. Their publication broadens the source base for research on Tsenkovsky's biography and enables a more precise reconstruction of the final stage of his Odesa period.

The sources examined confirm the importance of the Odesa period in Tsenkovsky's scholarly career and supplement the existing historiography with specific documentary evidence. They also allow his activities to be considered within the broader context of the development of university research, scholarly networks, and professional relations in the second half of the nineteenth century. Further study of documents held in archives in Ukraine, Poland, and other countries will facilitate the preparation of a more comprehensive biography of Tsenkovsky and a deeper understanding of his contribution to biology, microbiology, and university education.

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