



To the History of Egyptology in Ukraine: Serhiy Donich

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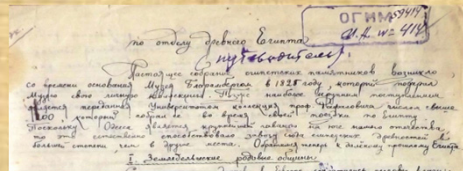
Serhiy Donich (1900-1958) was the only Egyptologist in Soviet Ukraine in the second quarter of the 20th century. He was born in 1900 at Dzegam (Azerbaijan). In 1921 he entered the University of Kamyanets-Podil's'ky and at the same time worked at the University Astronomical Observatory.



Serhiy Donich (photo 1921-1923)



The building of the Odesa Archaeological Museum of the NAS of Ukraine, present days



The draft of guidebook to Egyptian Hall of the Odesa Archaeological Museum written by Donich in 1930s



Serhiy Donich (photo about 1957)

In the summer of 1923 he moved to Odesa. Here, working at the Odesa University Observatory, he began to study Oriental and African languages, and the main subject of his interest became Egyptology. The second half of the 1920s and 1930s was the time of his most productive research activity. At this time he established contacts with other Soviet and Western Egyptologists (such as V. Stuve, T. Peet, K. Sethe, H. Gauthier). In 1929 he became a member of the Egyptological Section at Leningrad University and underwent an internship at the State Hermitage Museum in 1929. From 1927 to 1945 Donich worked as the head of the Department of "Ancient Egypt" at the Odesa Historical and Archaeological Museum (Odesa Archaeological Museum now). During this time he processed the Egyptian collection, made its inventory and created a card catalogue of identifications of more than 600 artifacts, created the new exhibitions, conducted tours, participated in archaeological expeditions, published articles in three languages in Odesa, Moscow, and Leningrad.



The Egyptian Hall of the Odesa Archaeological Museum in 1930-1940s



During the Second World War he worked at the museum. In 1945 he was arrested and unjustifiably sentenced to 10 years for allegedly assisting the Romanian administration in removing cultural property from the museum. His criminal case was soon reconsidered, and in 1946 he was released under an amnesty but his academic work in the area of Egyptology was practically forbidden. Donich was rehabilitated in 1997. His academic heritage still remains virtually unknown and invaluable to the academic community.

Selected works by Sergei Donich

- Donich S. (1929). "The Sarcophagus of Ptahtaru, No 3 of the History and Archaeology Museum of Odesa", *Doklady akademii nauk SSSR*, Ser. V, no. 8, pp. 149-51.
- Donich S. V. (1958). "O zvukovom potentsiale dvukh egiptskikh grafem", *Sovetskoye vostokovedeniye*, No. 6, pp. 85-8. (In Russian).
- Donich S. V. (1930). "Dodatky do opysu musul'mans'kykh pam'yatnykiv M. Spafarysa, shcho v XXXII tom 'Zapisok Odeskogo Obschestva Istorii y Drevnostey'", *Visnyk Odes'koyi komisyi krayeznavstva*, Sektsiya arkeholohichna, Nos. 4-5, pp. 60-61. (In Ukrainian).
- Donich S. V. (1930). "Try chypets'ki konusy Odes'koho Derzhavnoho Istrychno-Arkeholohichnogo Muzeyu", *Visnyk Odes'koyi komisyi krayeznavstva*, Sektsiya arkeholohichna, Nos. 4-5, pp. 59, 62-3. (In Ukrainian).
- Donich S. (1930). "Funeral cones of the Odesa Archeological Museum", *Sbornik egiptologicheskogo kruzha pri Leningradskom Gosudarstvennom Universitete*, No. 5, pp. 28-9.



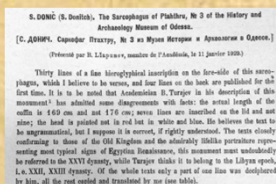
The house where Donich lived in Odesa, photo by author



Odesa center during WWII



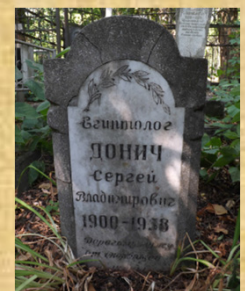
The Donich manuscript from the archive of OAM



The pages from one of the articles of Donich



Egyptian Hall of the OAM after the liberation of Odesa in 1944



The grave of Sergei Donich on the 2nd Christian Cemetery at Odesa, photo by author