

ELENA SKIRMANTAITĖ-SKIRMANTIENĖ – PIRMOJI LIETUVIŲ SKULPTORĖ

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Straipsnyje supažindinama su gerokai primiršta XIX a. Lietuvos skulptore, kuriai teko gyventi ir kurti itin sudėtingu laikotarpiu. Kilusi iš turtingos šeimos Elena Skirmantaitė-Skirmantienė (Skirmuntt) galėjo gauti tų laikų moteriai gana neblogą išsilavinimą, tačiau jos kaip menininkės galimybes itin ribojo kelios aplinkybės: silpna sveikata, šeimyniniai rūpesčiai bei sudėtinga kultūrinė-visuomeninė-politinė situacija krašte. Lemtingas tapo 1863 m. sukilimas, kurio metu skulptorė buvo ištremta į Rusijos gilumą. Visos šios priežastys lėmė, kad mūsų laikus pasiekė tik nedidelė ir labai išblaškyta dailininkės palikimo dalis. Straipsnyje pabandyta suregistruoti ir aptarti daugumą žinomų (išlikusių ir ne) E. Skirmantaitės darbų.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: Skirmantai, Pinskas, skulptūra, 1863 m. sukilimas, Lietuvos istorija, istoriniai šachmatai.

Kai kurie amžininkai šią, vos 46-erius metus nugyvenusią, menininkę vadino genialia skulptore, o ją pristatydama „Lietuvos dailės ir architektūros istorija“¹ išsivertė dviejomis pastraipomis. Lenkiškoji bibliografija, aišku, žymiai platesnė. Bene pirmasis platesnę visuomenę su neseniai mirusia kūrėja supažindino Juozapas Ignotas Kraševskis, kuriam skulptorė prieš mirtį spėjo pasiūsti savo kūrinį nuotraukų². Netrumpą straipsnį apie skulptorę ir svarbiausią jos kūrinį – isto-

rinius šachmatus – net per du savaitraščio „Kłosy“ numerius paskelbė kitas publicistas Adomas Plugas-An-tanas Petkevičius³. Netrukus po skulptorės mirties pasirodė ir Bronislovo Zaleskio biografinė apybraiža, pavadinta „Iš Lietuvės gyvenimo“, kurioje, remiantis laiškais ir užrašais, atkurtas šios kūrėjos gyvenimas⁴. Tiesa, didžiausias dėmesys knygoje sutelktas į herojės dvasinio gyvenimo istoriją, o meninė kūryba aptarta tik kaip vienas iš jos asmenybės aspektų. 1930 m. Pinske E. Skirmantienės dukros Konstancijos iniciatyva išleistas albumas, kuriame publikuota apie šešiasdešimt

1 Tadas Adomonis, Nijolė Adomonytė, *Lietuvos dailės ir architektūros istorija*, d. 2: 1770–1860 m., Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 1997, p. 203–204; paminėtina ir publikacija kataloge: *Kształcenie artystyczne w Wilnie i jego tradycje / Vilniaus meno mokykla ir jos tradicijos*, Torūnė–Vilnius, 1996, p. 298: il. II. 45.

2 Juzef Ignacy Kraszewski, „Szachy S. P. Heleny Skirmunttowej“, in: *Tygodnik ilustrowany*, 1875, 1 d. Nr. 366, p.11–13.

3 Adam Plug [A. Pietkiewicz], „Helena Skirmuntowa i jej szachy historyczne“, in: *Kłosy*, 1876, 2 d. Nr. 587, 588; p. 202–205, 218–219.

4 Bronisław Zaleski, *Z życia Litwinki 1827–1874. Z listów i notatek*, Poznań, 1876.

ELENA SKIRMANTAITĖ - SKIRMANTIENĖ (SKIRMUNT) – THE FIRST LITHUANIAN FEMALE SCULPTOR

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KEYWORDS: Skirmantai, Pinsk, sculpture, uprising in 1863, Lithuanian history, historic chess.

SUMMARY

Though Elena Skirmantaitė-Skirmantienė (Skirmunt) lived a short life (1827-1874) but it was rather interesting and rapid. Coming from a well-known and rich family, whose domains were mainly located in Pinsk district (current Byelorussia), she had access to proper education for a woman of that period (she learnt in Vilnius, Vienna, Rome, etc.) and was well aware of trends and fashions in European art of that period. Unfortunately, her artist's potential was restricted by a number of circumstances: weak health since childhood, family-related troubles after wedding with the relative Kazimieras Skirmantas, complicated social-political situation in the country. The anti-Russian uprising in 1863 had a fatal effect on her family: her husband and sculptor was exiled to the depths of Russia and later she had to experience the fate of an exile herself. Her life became calmer only at the end of it, when her family and she were forced to live in the Crimea.

The creation of the artist may be grouped into two periods clearly divided by the uprising in 1863. The first pre-uprising period is marked by intensive search for own artistic style. Some shorter periods may still be observed within it: amateur creation (1840–1850), period of studies in Vienna and Rome (1852–1854), self-dependent work in her motherland (1855–1861). Though all these 20 years were marked by a number of important works, they are seen as a period of preparation for serious work because at that time the artist was able to devote herself to creation only in fits and starts. The second period embraced life in Crimea, where she led a relatively calm and materially well-provided life and was able to fully soak herself into creation, even though this period was short.

Possessing talent and being very diligent, the artist tried herself in painting, created several tens of busts and portrait medals (mainly family members, acquaintances), reliefs of historic personalities. Four crucifixes and a series of historic chess created in the period of Crimea to commemorate the victory of the army of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth over the Turkish army near Vienna in 1683 are regarded as the highlights of her creation.

The creative path of Skirmantienė perfectly reflects an attempt of noble girl/woman – a typical representative of estate culture – to break free from relatively closed and conservative cultural environment conditioned by class system and political situation in the country of that time to the sphere of universal Western culture and to maximally realise herself as an independent creator and artist.

At her time E. Skirmantienė was a relatively famous artist. Unfortunately today, she is almost forgotten. This happened mainly due to the fact that very few works reached our days and only several are known in Lithuania. The main sources to familiarise with sculptor's creative works include photographs, reproductions and reports of her contemporaries. They were firstly applied trying to reconstruct the path of artist's life and creation, to register and discuss the majority of her well-known (extant and not only) works.