

Preconditions of Forming Modern Center in Kamianets-Podilsky Studying History of Art

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Abstract: This essay deals with the preconditions of the emergence of art criticism center in Kamianets-Podilsky. Chronological borders cover the period of 19th and early 20th centuries. The investigation mentions cultural workers of the region, the participants of museum and local lore work, the associations of different directions, and the creative work that became the solid foundation for the formation of cultural art criticism center.

Keywords: Kamianechchyna, cultural life, art criticism, museum, artistic activity

INTRODUCTION

Art criticism researches have always attracted the attention of not only the experts in the field of artistic traditions and innovations, but also ordinary cultured people interested in experts' thoughts and reflections. Art investigations depended on the general conditions and cultural life of each region, therefore they should be considered in the context of the development and transformation characteristics of the whole range of visual arts.

Despite the significance of art criticism researches, little attention has been paid to the artistic activity investigations in Kamianets-Podilsky. In rare cases there were some solitary, rather popular publications about the artists written by authors and journalists without art criticism or art education. Such notes contained more biographical information about the artists of visual arts; they lacked the analysis of artists' professional activity.

At the same time, the emergence of significant number of artists and the activation of their creative researches, the appearance of a galaxy of scientists able to consider regional artistic expressions in the

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historical and contemporary aspects caused great interest in the process of creation and its analysis. Therefore, the problem of the art criticism activity has become relevant. So, the aim of the article is to highlight the prerequisites of art criticism processes formation and development in Kamianets-Podilsky cultural life in concern with the particular personalities' activity who lived in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

PERSONALITIES IN THE HISTORY OF ART CENTER

The studied period is extremely difficult because not only the state history, but also its cultural development was marked by drastic changes in people's minds, views on the art objectives and purposes. Formative and compositional characteristics of Kamianechchyna visual arts types show their similarities and conformity with the creative process throughout Europe, including Ukraine, allowing to bring them to the rank of an integral part of national art culture. It also must be stressed that local features each artist's works were expressed very clearly. The art of the region was formed under the influence of artistic traditions of other countries, such as Germany, Poland, Russia and others, therefore European trends in art education also had an impact on the development of professional art in Kamianechchyna.

It is of great importance to note that artistic and cultural processes in Kamianechchyna in the 19th century developed in co-existence of different types of art, architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, arts and crafts. Public institutions and societies, art associations, art education, museums and exhibition activities played an important role in the region creative individuals shaping. Furthermore, the personalities also played significant role in the cultural life of the region. That is why the development of the artistic life of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Kamianechchyna renewed interest in folk art, the emergence of art education, the desire to find a national face on the retrospective background exciting the curiosity of not only narrow specialists but also of ordinary citizens.

The 19th century presented the land with creative citizens who mentioned the existing Kamianets-Podilsky art objects in their historical works. A landmark feature of the region's artistic life of this period was the establishment and development of museums and active exhibition growth of art masters and collected samples for museum collections and exhibits. Thus, Podilsky Diocesan Historical and Statistical Committee affiliated to the diocesan administration based

on Kamianets-Podilsky Seminary was established in 1865. One of the representatives of the committee was Mykhailo Orlovsky (1807-1887), a priest in the Hliadky Proskuriv County, who left the rich artistic heritage to the posterity describing most of the county town of Podilsky diocese. He conducted an active scientific and literary activity, collecting a unique library of 2,349 rare books and manuscripts, some of which were given to Podilsky seminary (Fedorenko 1990a, 69-70).

Antoni Józef Rolle (1830-1894), the author of numerous books, articles and essays on the history of the right-bank Ukraine (the west bank of the Dnieper River) during the 16th – 19th centuries, is also worth mentioning, as his works were based on archival material from the private archives of the nobility published in many Polish editions; some works are in Russian translation, and they were subsequently published in nine series. He is the author of the collection of 80 books and essays titled *Historical narrative*, and others. Some mentions of the artists and their work (without analysis of art objects) can be found in Rolle's main work, *Zameczki podolskie na kresach multańskich* (Rolle 1880).

The work of the archbishop Demetrius and of his associates Yu. Sitsynsky and M. Javorsky transformed the Diocesan Committee to Local History Society. Travelling around the Podilsky diocese, archbishop Demetrius accumulated information about historical and archaeological sites, and he helped to collect church and local people's life monuments. He became a promoter and organizer of the abandoned ancient rock monastery clearing in the village Bakota.

An outstanding role belongs to the priest Yu. Sitsynsky, whose life and work were linked to the opening of the Museum Podilsky Diocesan Historical and Statistical Committee Antiquities that existed since 1890, then known as Podilsky Church Historical and Archaeological Society (1903). There is a collection of valuable things containing mainly religious antiquity, but also some objects of other antiques and art. This is the only Podilsky collection of antiquities, which held the monuments of archeology, history and ethnography of the region. Kamianets-Podilsky Historical Museum funds store a unique collection of Podilsky embroidery and authentic folk costumes samples collected by J. Sitsynsky. He did a great work establishing museums, collecting and publishing materials on the Podilia history, offering a cultural and art heritage about 200 publications (Secynskij

1909), doing a lot in the sphere of investigating, collecting, studying and systematization of Podolia ethnographic art objects.

Direct participation and assistance in organizing the “Antiquarium” and replenishing the museum with new exhibits were provided by L. Rakowsky, M. Greim, A. Prusevych, A. Tarnavsky and S. Lobatynsky. Significant role was played by V. Guldman (1854-1907), a local historian, statistician, and author of several publications on Podilsky settlements and the monuments of the regional antiquities.

MIKHAL GREIM

Publications by M. Greim (1828-1911) were dedicated to art criticism. He wrote book reviews, notes and articles, related to numismatics, description of the location “fossil treasures”, assessment and determination of their place in current classification. In 1909, the eleventh issue of *Numismatic and Archaeological Data* published a paper by M. Greim about five Roman gold coins found in Podolia, containing a description of “the medal coin Hallenia” with a diameter of 28 mm weighted 8 ducats and purchased in Khotyn in 1881 (Garztecki 1972, 109-110).

Kamianets-Podilsky Historical Museum collection stores *Numismatic and Archaeological Data*, published in Krakow in 1907, including an article by M. Greim that gives evidence about his work in art history research and preservation of cultural sites (Greim 1907). The article refers to an unexpected discovery made in 1907 Kamianets-Podilsky by the priest Petro Mankovsky. On the top floor of the tower the sacred images painted in oils and covered with multi-coated dust were found. According to Greim (1907),

Partially destroyed, the paintings have been brought down to the cathedral courtyard and cleaned; then they were presented to a specialist. It turned out that among a dozen beautiful religious paintings there were portraits: 1) the bust of an unknown Dominican priest, with a beautiful expressive face, but evil brush; 2) the bust of Mykhailo Pototsky with the inscription on the Rococo cartouches: “Illustrissimus Exellentissimus Dominus MICHAEL FRANCISCUS in Murachwa & Savince de Złoty Potok POTOCKI Kapitaneus Trembovliensis Munificentissimus FUNDATOR noster Ad multos annos vivat DEUM precamur”.

The artist photographer M. Greim stressed that

the main highlight of the finding was a lovely full size portrait of King Augustus II in a representative position, together with arms, decorations and sapphire cloak, lined with ermine; King's right hand rests on the rod, leaned on the richly carved chair, the lower part of which is covered with the helmet with a plume of black feathers and military gloves; the left hand rests on the hip, and next to him on the table there are the royal regalia: the crown, the apple and the electoral sword. At the bottom of the cartouches there is the Latin inscription: "Populi amor – post eclypsim solis Podoliae serenissimo sub nomine Augusto – Samenecum ad 1699 die 20 september. Polinae – restitutum utinam nunquam mori... vivat Patria. Posuit Stanislaus Hosius" ... The canvas size is 270×177 cm (Ibid, 520).

M. Greim wrote about another inscription on the portrait, which showed that the canvas was brought by Podilsky diocese bishop Stanislav Hozii in 1721-1732. The portrait was not mentioned in the inventory book of the cathedral; therefore, Greim suggested that the image probably has been placed in the City Hall court or at the residence of the fortress commanders in 1793, at the arrival time of the Russian authorities. As a restorer, M. Greim stated a high artistic level of the portrait of Augustus II the Strong, analyzing the possibility of the image attribution, and he was inclined to think that the canvas has been painted by Louis de Silvestre. The bust portrait of the king painted by the French artist belonged to M. Greim's collection; and it is a rare and valuable work of de Silvestre.

The photographer also expressed concerns about the fate of a commemorative marble table to Carlsbad Peace 1699, which was immured in a wall of the castle, but later removed and stored at the President's of the town Grzegorz Hzybovsky. Greim reminded people of a memorial board, hoping that it would be revealed (Greim 1907, 522).

The fact of finding the paintings was reported in the memoirs of P. Mańkowsky (1866-1933), a bishop who personally knew the photographer during the previous serving as the prior of Kamianets-Podilsky Cathedral between 1902 and 1911:

Another field of organizational activities was the old sacred images restoration. Here again, my assistant was Mr. Mykhailo Greim, an old man already, who was the owner of the printing press, and now possessing a declining photographic institution. However, he sold antiques and sacred images, as has been known in numismatics and cleared and restored old painting very skillfully. He renovated a large

number of destroyed and dirty sacred images from the church and the cemetery chapel, and there was one large canvas among them, which was found in the bell tower. Just now, after a skillful cleaning, the beautiful life-size full-length portrait of Augustus II has been shown to us. Below there is a badly destroyed inscription, but we were able to read it; this inscription glorified the memory of Kamianets return from the power of the Turks, led by Augustus the Strong. The portrait once hung in the church over the bishop's throne... (Mańkowski 2002, 166-167).

Bishop Mańkowsky also mentions M. Greim's active assistance in the restoration of the cemetery chapel (Ibid, 168).

It is worth noting that M. Greim was also the author of the French brochure *Monnaies polonaises* (1888) issued by the Company in Macon, which is an extraordinary bibliographic rarity of nowadays.

In terms of appeal to the architecture and art monuments, and the attempts to analyze them, an important role played Alexander Prusevych (1878-1944). He was a historian, ethnographer and museologist, who published the Polish monograph *Kamieniec-Podolski. Szkic historyczny*, in 1915. The publication offers not only historical facts, but art critical assessment of individual visual arts objects (Prusiewicz 1915).

“PROSVITA” SOCIETY

In 1906 the “Prosvita” Society was established in Kamianets-Podilsky, aiming to raise the inhabitants' cultural level. About the same time similar cultural and educational associations were set up throughout Ukraine (the first “Prosvita” was opened in Lviv in 1868). The members of the organization were engaged in reading rooms, libraries, publishing popular literature, in the opening of secondary and professional schools of art and folklore. Its founders were K. Solukha, M. Ivanetsky and Yu. Sitsynsky. Suppressed by the Soviet cultural and educational institutions, Podilsky “Prosvita” eventually ceased its work in 1922 (Fedorenko 1990b, 77). But in a short time, its representatives brought a significant contribution to the formation of the art center in Kamianets-Podilsky. An important role in preserving national cultural heritage and in the formation art center was played by Kamianets-Podilsky seminary, the representatives of which investigated and recorded facts of history, culture, ethnography and folklore of the region.

CONCLUSION

These examples show the existence of figures able to deal not only with their own practices, but also to seek out works of art, to restore, evaluate and analyze them, proposing sensible assumptions and publishing the results of their researches in Kamianets-Podilsky of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The strong rise of interest in the arts of the 20th century in the region had deep foundations enabling the flourishing of art education; by consequence, the development of an artistic center in Kamianets-Podilsky has continued to expand till the present days.

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