



Portrait of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis (25th September 1754 – 15th October 1810), painter François Grenier (1793–1867). The portrait is from the album "Archaeology Museum of Vilnius" by Jan Kazimierz Wilczynski (1806–1885). J. Lemercier's printing house (Paris), 1858–1859, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-368

A MAN WITH A SPIRIT OF EUROPEAN AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis (1765–1833) was a talented, prominent and influential figure of Lithuanian public and culture state, a multi-faceted personality that lived throughout the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th c. He was a renowned politician and a diplomat, the senator of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the finance minister of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the author of many social reforms, projects and ideas, the initiator of statehood restitution. M. K. Oginskis was one of the leaders in The Kosciuszko Uprising in 1794. He was also a writer and composer, gained the recognition from polonaises, of which the most popular is considered the Minor No. 13 "Farewell to Motherland" (*Les Adieux a la Patrie*). Mykolas Kleopas life credo was "To serve the Motherland".

M. K. Oginskis began his politician's career at the age young of 21. In 1786, he was elected as an envoy for the Voivodeship of Trakai in the Seimas of Warsaw. At that time, Mykolas Kleopas was a supporter of the King Stanislaw Augustus Poniatowski² and negotiated with opposition – the pro-Prussian statesmen. Among them, there was the Grand Hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Mykolas Kazimieras Oginskis³, half-brothers Feliks Ūbieński⁴ and Protazy Potocki⁵ and a number of other acquaintance noblemen. The first challenge for the young political leader

was becoming a member of the Treasury Commission of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He became the member in 1786 and was there until 1788. Mykolas Kleopas actively participated in the political life until 1822 when he decided to leave for a permanent time.

M. K. Oginskis had a spirit of European and the Enlightenment. He was born in Poland, subsequently spent a lot of time in Belarus and Lithuania. Being an official officer, M. K. Oginskis travelled around the Europe, visited Austria, France, Germany, Russia, Hungary, and served as a diplomat in Netherlands and the United Kingdom. At the same time, he took care of his manors and its staff, communicated with friends and colleagues. Under the request of upholders of the restitution of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, he lived in Turkey for several months, eventually settling down in Italy, where Oginskis lived the last ten years of his life.

Mykolas Kleopas' music was played in many European countries; it pleased the ordinary people as well as nobility and visitors of European salons. In 1826 and 1827 in Paris and Geneva, his book the "Memoirs" (4 volumes) published in French was very popular and welcomed.

At the time of M. K. Oginskis death, Europe was in a turbulent period – uprisings, revolutions, the greatest European powers were suppressing smaller ne-

² A. S. Poniatowski, supported by the Russian Empress Catherine II, was elected as a king on 7th of September 1764.

³ Michał Kazimierz Ogiński (1728–1800). One of the most famous war and political figures of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a distant relative – third generation cousin – of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis. He is also known as a poet, artist, art patron, musician, composer, book publisher. Born in 1728, and died on 31st of May 1800 in Warsaw.

⁴ Feliks Walejusz Woidysław Eubiński – Polish political and public figure, lawyer, stepbrother of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis (1765–1833). Born on 22nd of November 1758 in Minoga, died on 2nd of October 1848 in Guzow. Mother – Paula (Paulina) Szembek, father – king's nobleman Count Celestyn Eubiński.

⁵ Antoni Protazy Jacek Potocki – statesman, banker, industrialist, Voivode of Kiev, stepbrother of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis. Born on 2nd of September, 1761. Died in 1801. Mother – Paula (Paulina) Szembek, father (second husband of Paula (Paulina) Szembek) – Jan Prosper Potocki (1734–1761) – Polish war, political and public figure, lieutenant-general of the military, Voivode of Belz and an elder of Guzow.

ighbouring countries – therefore the memory of Oginskis' personality faded into oblivion. The only immortal thing left was his work. In the second half of the 20th c. M. K. Oginskis' creative and political work encouraged reopen the pages of Mykolas Kleopas life story and remember his contribution to the development of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth and his ambition to restore the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

After Lithuania regained its independence, the restoration of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis' manor in Rietavas and his grandchild Mykolas Mikalojus Markas Severinas Oginskis' (1889–1902) manor in Plungė was initiated. At the same time, the interest in the personality and written heritage of M. K. Oginskis increased in Lithuania. The initiative of museums specialists from Rietavas and Plungė extended the historical searches to Belarus, Poland, Great Britain and Russia museums and archives, establishing contacts with researchers of M. K. Oginskis cultural heritage. The approaching M. K. Oginskis 250th birth anniversary linked the researchers together and helped achieve common aims.

The Oginski Cultural History Museum of Rietavas was established in 1995, in the renovated building of the six-year music school (worked during the period of 1872–1909), established by the Duke Bogdanas Oginskis (1848–1909). There the researchers' movement of M. K. Oginskis life and heritage had formed. The cooperation of researchers and cultural figures from Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Great Britain, and Italy prepared the program for the M. K. Oginskis 250th birth anniversary, which was implemented during the year 2005–2014. The program consisted of the following sections: archival heritage research, cognitive and research expeditions, scientific conferences, publishing books about M. K. Oginskis and Oginskiai family and their descendants, revival and popularization of M. K. Oginskis and Oginskiai family musical heritage, development of an international cooperation. Consistent work of the historians created opportunities to raise awareness about the 18th–19th c. historical events in Lithu-

ania and other European countries, M. K. Oginskis and his associates' efforts to restore the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and to learn more about Mykolas Kleopas creative heritage.

In November 2013, UNESCO General Conference in Paris welcomed the cooperation of Lithuanian, Polish and Belarusian initiatives and incorporated M. K. Oginskis 250th birth anniversary into the important anniversaries list of global culture, education, science and history. On the 3rd of June 2014, the Lithuanian Parliament adopted the resolution "The Declaration to Announce 2015 the Year of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis and Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis 250th Birth Anniversary Program Confirmation" (No. XII-907). Due to this resolution the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the 15th of December 2014 adopted another resolution "The Approval of the Action Plan of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis 250th Birth Anniversary" (No. 1436). Under these favourable circumstances M. K. Oginskis personality and his merits were successfully represented and opened the possibilities for more meaningful work – actualizing M. K. Oginskis personality in the cultural and historical context of not only Lithuania, Poland, Belarus but also Europe and other foreign countries.

This book is intended to broaden and fine down the information about M. K. Oginskis' life and his work that was submitted in the book "Itinerary of Polonaises" (published in 2007). Since the release of the latter book, consistent scientific researches have revealed a lot new facts about M. K. Oginskis and his family life. This book is dedicated for those who are beginning to explore Mykolas Kleopas. You will find here many quotes from the already published editions and from yet unpublished manuscript of M. K. Oginskis "My Memories from Childhood until the Year 1788", which original copy is stored in the State Archives of Moscow. The main purpose of this book is to actualize the already published information and to reveal in the editorial office of the journal 'Samogitian Land' newly discovered facts about Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis.

