

## Summary

### Vilnius Musician, Photographer and Poet Faustyn Łopatyński (1825–1886): A Lithuanian Sketch of Creative Activities

Though in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the public life in Lithuania was under the constraints of the imperial regime, there was still a memory of the noble culture coming from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It determined the continuity of earlier political and cultural traditions inherent in the views of a part of the nobility of Lithuania: the noble intellectuals from artistic and other fields still repeated the name of Lithuania as if the code of personal identification. Due to the complicated circumstances of political or personal life, a number of those who preserved the self-conception close to the resident of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and considered themselves the patriots of historical Lithuania are not very well known today. In this case as well we can recreate a peculiar page of the cultural history of Lithuania – the creative biography of Faustyn Łopatyński (1825–1886), a musician, photographer and poet of noble descent (coat of arms Łopot), who lived in Vilnius in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – from separate fragments only.

The quality of cultural life in Vilnius, love for one's country, attention to the history of Lithuania and the Lithuanian language were among

the artist's major concerns. The book updates the dates of his birth and death, provides information about his noble descent, highlights the patriotic motives of his versatile activities and reveals his contacts with a number of figures of culture who played a role in the history of Lithuania: Władysław Syrokomla, Jan Karłowicz, Adam Honory Kirkor, Mikalojus Akelaitis, members of the Vilnius Temporary Archaeological Commission, founders of the Vilnius Museum of Antiquities, visitors of the Römer house, editors of *Album Wileńskie* (*vel Album de Wilna*).

Łopatyński lived during a particularly difficult period of the 19th century public life of Lithuania: his young days were marked by the suppression of the November Uprising (1830–1831) and the punitive measures deployed by the Imperial Russian government; the years of his artistic maturity were under the constraints of post-rebellion repressions and political censorship imposed on Lithuania after another ill-fated January Uprising (1863–1864). These events, which had devastating consequences on society, also left their imprint on cultural public life: Vilnius University was closed (1832); a number of schools, Catholic churches and monasteries suffered the same fate; a lot of figures of culture, including musicians, poets, photographers, were exiled. The intensifying Russification policy culminated in the Lithuanian press ban replacing the Latin alphabet with Cyrillic, which came into force after the 1863–1864 events. However, this new order humiliating national dignity provoked a growing response: Lithuanian books were printed in Lithuania Minor, the USA; the risky job of transporting these books was done by the so-called book-smugglers (Lith. *knygnešiai*).

After the November Uprising was defeated, a part of the nobility of Lithuania did not lose hope and aspiration to restore their state and to maintain the cultural traditions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

When the Vilnius Academy of Medicine and Surgery was closed in 1842 and the Theological (Roman Catholic) Academy was moved to Saint Petersburg, the project implemented by Eustachy Tyszkiewicz was of paramount importance for Lithuania: the Vilnius Temporary Archaeological Commission and the Museum of Antiquities founded by him brought together patriotically-minded individuals into a cultural movement and, in addition to scientific, educational and museum activities, promoted the idea of reopening Vilnius University. The Vilnius Temporary Archaeological Commission had several dozen members and museum supporters from around Lithuania, including the personalities of expressly pro-Lithuanian orientation with whom Łopatyński engaged in collegial communication and cooperation: Mikalojus Akelaitis, Adam Honory Kirkor, Władysław Syrokomla (real name: Ludwik Kondratowicz), etc.

Though Lithuania lost its statehood, it was not possible to denationalise and isolate it from Western Europe and the world completely. The progress of art, science and culture as well as the ideas of national movements known as the Spring of Nations made their way from various countries through the barriers of imperial censorship. The postulates of the Enlightenment and the aspirations of Romanticism revived the knowledge about the history of Lithuania and drew attention to the Lithuanian language. Russia itself witnessed more liberal periods of “thaw” which were also beneficial for Lithuania’s public and cultural life in one way or another. The expansion of Vilnius was driven by natural urban development needs.

The capital of Lithuania brought together the residents of various professions and social classes, with intellectuals playing an important role. The technical innovations of the epoch made their way to the

whole of the Russian Empire. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Vilnius became more accessible to the world by telegraph (the first telegram was sent from Vilnius in 1859) and railway (the railway line Saint Petersburg-Warsaw (through Vilnius) was built in 1862). The technical progress brought photography to life: at first, daguerreotypes – visual records on metal plates – were invented (they were used in Lithuania from 1839). One of the first photography studios in Vilnius was opened in 1845. From the middle of the century, when Łopatyński took the first steps as a photographer, the professionals of this field gradually undertook photography in the city: Aleksander Władysław Strauss, Albert Swieykowski, Abdon Korzon, Józef Czechowicz, etc.

Struck by traumatic experiences, the cultural life of Vilnius was unstable, but the start of Łopatyński's activities in the city coincided with its significant recovery: the activities of composer Stanisław Moniuszko which lasted until 1858 marked a particularly strong breakthrough. There are certain facts showing that Moniuszko and Łopatyński knew each other; besides, they were also linked by the personality of Syrokomla, as they both engaged in close communication with him. It is also confirmed by the address to the people who had known Moniuszko inviting them to publish their memories about him, which was published by Jan Karłowicz in the press in 1885. Łopatyński was also among those addressed by Jan Karłowicz.

The theatrical and concert movement, which arose in the city in the 1850s and 1860s, was especially intensive, with Łopatyński playing a role in it. Like in earlier periods, the City Theatre, though affected by painful and forced deformations, remained a cultural centre. In this respect, Vilnius surpassed other cities of the governorate. The exclusive activities of violinist Wolf Ebann brought much liveliness during the

difficult post-rebellion period: the famous Kėdainiai-born virtuoso of Lithuania led the orchestra of the City Theatre for over two decades (1864–1888) and took part in concerts (and often organised them) in which Łopatyński was quite a frequent performer.

Having recovered after the upheavals of 1863–1864, the situation of art education improved. New schools were established under western tradition: it was a huge merit of their directors. After the prestigious Russian Music Society (founded in Saint Petersburg in 1859) was called Imperial, its branch was also opened in Vilnius; meanwhile, a music school (led by Wolf Ebann) was opened under its auspices in 1874 and Łopatyński was invited to contribute as a teacher of violin.

Due to the unstable tenor of social and cultural life, people's personal and professional lives took rather different courses. The reflections of tragical political events were continuously felt in Lithuania's society. On the other hand, though severely suppressed, the two uprisings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century triggered the patriotic moods of residents in the regions of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania on an even broader scale. Isolated, yet eloquent, facts testify to the manifestations of such moods in Łopatyński's family having faced political persecutions. The surviving documents of Łopatyński's family include those with certain indications of patriotic anti-imperial views of the family members. It is also proven by the facts relating to Faustyn's brother. In 1863, Jan Aleksander Łopatyński, a former student of the Zhytomyr Gymnasium, was punished for singing patriotic hymns by sending him to military service as a common soldier in Suzdal Infantry Regiment.

Contemporaries saw Faustyn Łopatyński as a talented violinist and music pedagogue. He would often play in the concerts with his close colleagues, such as amateur violinist Jan Karłowicz, one of the

best European guitarists Marek Sokołowski, Italian baritone Achille Giuseppe Bonoldi and German pianist and composer Theodor Kahle, who had settled in Lithuania, as well as Vilnius-born pianist Mikołaj Wąsowski and pianist, composer and deportee of 1863–1864 Ludwik Nowicki, etc. His repertoire included the compositions of the most well-known violin virtuosos, such as Alexandre Joseph Artôt, Henri Vieuxtemps, Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst and other popular authors. Łopatyński used to astonish the public of Vilnius by his virtuoso performance of such works as Paganini's/Ernst's variations on the theme "Carnaval de Venise" or by playing Henri Vieuxtemps' *Fantasia* on the theme from Vincenzo Bellini's "Norma" (*Casta diva*) on a single string.

He taught violin at the Music School of the Vilnius branch of the Imperial Russian Music Society when it was led by Wolf Ebann. Some of Łopatyński's students successfully continued their studies in the conservatories of Saint Petersburg or Paris. Later, in the interwar period, his former student Michał Józefowicz became a professor of the Vilnius Conservatory.

Łopatyński contributed to the solution of arising problems by all means possible. In 1860, the musician undertook a particularly important initiative – he took an active role in the reorganisation of the orchestra of the Vilnius City Theatre. Authorized by the orchestra, he raised funds for new instruments and organised charity concerts for that matter in cooperation with Syrokomla.

Łopatyński's political-public position and the type of evaluation of certain events reflect in his immediate environment involving the people he communicated and cooperated with. They were mainly those people who took interest in the history of Lithuania, made a significant contribution for the sake of their country and considered themselves

the patriots of Lithuania; some of them spoke and wrote in Lithuanian. Łopatyński's worldviews coincided with the standing of Lithuania's intellectuals of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century who favoured the national aspirations of Lithuanians and their wish to preserve the Lithuanian language. It is best proven and the author's views clearly reveal in "Dajna" (The Song) for voice and piano composed to the Lithuanian text "Oj, pušyne, pušynėli" (Oh, Pine Forest). The author of this book found that the abovementioned text was created by Lithuanian writer and public figure Mikalojus Akelaitis. From the perspective of the Lithuanian studies, such musician's attention to the Lithuanian language (music to a Lithuanian text) is unique, especially considering the peculiarities of the musical life in Lithuania in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Faustyn Łopatyński wrote (or was planning to write) the opera *Bohdan* to the libretto by Władysław Syrokomla. There is no doubt that this work was based on well-known historical events – the wars of national liberation in Ukraine under the rule of Poland and the dramatic campaigns of the prominent leader of Ukrainian rebels, hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky.

Łopatyński's satirical poetry featuring the revival of the tradition of "rascals" (*szubrawcy*) was widely known in Lithuania and Poland. Social vices were held up to ridicule in his verses which appeared in the humorous and satirical publication *Alfabet* published in Vilnius. It was the initiative of 'E. Orzeszkowa i S-ka' bookstore, which faced the persecutions of the imperial government from the very beginning. The publication was banned after barely four issues; the bookstore was closed.

We may assume that it was not by accident that Łopatyński was invited to publish his verses in *Alfabet*: the author already had the literary texts of similar type printed in the humorous satirical illustrated

weekly *Kolce: kartki satyrystyczno-humorystyczne* (Spikes: Satirical and Humorous Pages) published in Warsaw. The publication mocking the vices of public life was published from 1871 to 1898. It is absolutely likely that it could have served as an example for *Alfabet* published in Vilnius.

Łopatyński (literary pseudonym F. Ryś) also created the poetic works of a different genre. His poetic expression was influenced by the *gawęda* genre favoured by his close friend Władysław Syrokomla. The beauty of the Lithuanian landscape, history and realities reflect in his poems “Wilija”, “Na grobie lirnika” (Near the Grave of the Poet), “Ogród botaniczny” (Botanical Garden). The rhymed pastoral “Wilija” is an idyll depicting the Lithuanian nature seen on the shores of “the native river of a Lithuanian”, its past and rulers Gediminas, Algirdas, Kęstutis, Jogaila.

“Na grobie lirnika” is dedicated to Władysław Syrokomla. Łopatyński wrote this poem after receiving an invitation to contribute to the publication dedicated to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of literary activities of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1879). However, due to unknown reasons, the poem did no longer appear in the final stage of the project. The poem was published together with “Wilija” in Vilnius in 1881. In this poem Łopatyński reiterates the thoughts expressed by Syrokomla in his poem “Lirnik wioskowy” (The Village Lirnyk) by stating that the purpose of the poet and the artist in general is to enlighten ordinary people, not to grow apart from them, love them and one’s country.

The humorous poem “Ogród botaniczny” is dedicated to Stanisław Bonifacy Jundziłł who made a significant contribution to the development of the botanical garden of Vilnius University. It depicts a very lively picture of Vilnius’ life. With light irony, the author draws the realities of the botanical garden: entertainment, environment and visitors by blending mild comments with harsh criticism.



The poet also wrote other poems, which he himself described as lyrical “Teorbanista” (Torban Player), philosophical “Zenon” and political “Epistoła” (Epistle), but he did not finish them.

It should be noted that Łopatyński would often ask his close colleague, linguist, ethnographer and amateur musician (violoncellist) Jan Karłowicz for his opinion on one or another literary work created by him. He highly esteemed Karłowicz both as a musician and as a scientist. His correspondence with Jan Karłowicz also testifies to this fact.

The book reviews Faustyn Łopatyński’s activities in the sphere of photography. It does not only present the newly identified current locations of his former studios but also displays most of his surviving photographs and reveals the stories behind them by identifying the photographed persons. Łopatyński was among the first promoters of photography in Lithuania. He cooperated with Aleksander Władysław Strauss, Waclaw Czyż, Stanisław Filibert Fleury and worked in his personal studio. It should be noted that the photographs of the actors of the Vilnius City Theatre (wearing costumes) were among his first works. His photography is predominated by the then popular portraits – *carte de visite* and *cabinet portrait* – taken in a studio room. The surviving photographs include the portraits of the representatives from different social classes: rebels of 1863–1864, Lithuanian nobles and top-ranking officials – civil governors. It is noteworthy that future Lithuanian composer Konstantinas Galkauskas and his family were also photographed in his personal studio. Łopatyński’s studio or that held together with Waclaw Czyż was attended by well-known, mostly noble, individuals. It is not surprising, considering the fact that photography was not cheap. A number of photographs of noble persons or those taking higher-ranking positions (Tyszkiewicz, Billewicz, Stolypin, Zubov

families, etc.) were made. The surviving portraits photographed by him (or in the enterprises held together with his companions) reflect the environment of a certain social class and provide information on the dawn of photography in Lithuania and the particular characteristics of the work of photographers at that time.

Faustyn Łopatyński was a popular and well-known resident of Vilnius. Lucjan Uziębło, a publicist, figure of culture and connoisseur of the history of Vilnius, mentions him among others “typical figures of Vilnius” (*typowych postaci wileńskich*). Musician, photographer and poet of Vilnius Faustyn Łopatyński died in Vilnius and was buried at Rasos cemetery.

The biography of Vilnius artist, noble musician, photographer and poet Faustyn Łopatyński is important in many respects: we can easily draw a Lithuanian sketch of his creative activities. The findings of the study addressing the creative, cultural and public activities of Faustyn Łopatyński suggest that he was among those intellectuals of Lithuania of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who was favourably disposed towards the Lithuanian National Revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (though perhaps he was in favour of Lithuania’s union with Poland). As it is well known, similar historical experiences, in addition to others, contributed to the viability of Lithuanianism under the conditions of Russia’s imperial regime and the formation of Lithuanian separatist statehood-focused attitudes at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.