

Pranciškus Smuglevičius (1745–1807), "Ruins of the Vilnius Lower Castle", 1785, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-3720



Vilnius City Wall, 1785, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-3722.

## IN VILNIUS

M. K. Oginskis life, political and public work was directly related to Vilnius. Here he lived with the family for shorter or longer periods, here he served as the Treasurer of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and here he was actively involved in public life. Mykolas Kleopas participated in the creation of Vilnius Topographer Society and Vilnius Charity Society, both of which he administrated for some time. Mykolas Kleopas took part in public meetings – he was an often guest in homes of his relatives and friends. He was a frequent visitor of Vilnius Catholic churches, particularly in the Church of St. Johns, where now stands Oginskiai (Body of God) Chapel, and in Rasos and Sun cemeteries, where many of his close relatives, other relatives and friends were buried. During the first days of the Kosciuszko Uprising in Lithuania, M. K. Oginskis signed the petition for the Vilnius townspeople and swore to serve the nation; he was one of the leaders of the uprising, which headquarters were settled in Slushko Palace. Since 1766, the palace was one of the most luxurious in Vilnius, it belonged to the Voivode of Vilnius, the distant relative of Mykolas Kleopas, the Great Hetman Mykolas Kazimieras Oginskis (1728–1800). Russian Tsar Peter the Great stayed there a few times. In his monumental book "The Lost Vilnius", V. Drėma writes about the Slushko Palace:

*"On the entry of Antakalnis, right after the bridge over the Vilnelė River, by the Neris River magnificent, the fortress-like Slushko Palace is situated. In this place, in the 16th century, Kiūkai Palace stood; in 1640, the owners to the King Wladyslaw Vasa, who ceded it to Pacai family, bestowed it. In 1690, Pacai sold the palace for 10,000 golden coins to the Voivode of Polotsk Domynekas Mykolas Sluška. He tore down the old palace of Kiūkos and in the other place, closer to the Neris River, up to 1700, built a new magnificent rectangular palace*

*with four massive towers at the corners. This type of buildings was widespread in the 16th century in Italian Mannerist architecture. The palace was designed and built by the architect Peter Perti, known for his sculptural works in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Vilnius. The palace was surrounded by an Italian-style park with channels, ponds, fountains and exotic vegetation. The owner of the palace nailed on the facade marble plaque with the inscription: "Between the mountains and vortices of Neris, I created a haven of peace and the first monument of Antakalnis. Entering the palace, guests should leave their rank togas and military symbols – here they will be soothed by the peace goddess and friendship of the moon." The palace interior was richly decorated with moldings. One of the halls had a glass ceiling, and above them was installed the aquarium, decorated with fishes and mermaids. In 1705 and 1708, Peter the Great set up his headquarters in the palace. In 1719, the palace became Potockiai family property, in 1727–1745, Puzinai governed it, and then again, Potockiai, in 1756, and after that, the Piarists bought the palace. After the Piarists did an overhaul, they established here a college and the famous printing house, where, in 1758, the legal historian Motiejus Dogelis published a three-volume document "Codex Diplomaticus Regni Poloniae et Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae". In 1766, Mykolas Kazimieras Oginskis bought the palace from the Piarists for 40,000 golden coins and equipped it in his own way. The architect Peter Rossi restored and reconstructed the palace. He left a drawing – the unique iconographic document showing the authentic look of the palace immediately after the reconstruction. In 1794, the Tsarist government confiscated the palace and turned into residential house on lease with 22 flats. In 1803, the merchant D. Zaikowski bought the palace from the government and built a sawmill and a brewery there. In 1831, the Tsarist government bought back the palace from D. Zaikowski*



126 | Portal of the Body of God Chapel in Vilnius Church of St. Johns'. 2014. Photo by Danutė Mukienė

and used it for a military fortress. Hospital, barracks, ammunition warehouses were equipped in the palace. In 1869, the palace became the property of the Tsarist Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 1872, there was established servitude prison. During the period of 1919–1940, a prison was set up there too. In 1965, the palace was turned into a school. The oldest image of the Slushko Palace is depicted in 1786 P. Smuglevičius drawing."<sup>271</sup>

V. Drėma writes that in the 17th century in Vilnius there were 25 noble residences. They were mainly situated in the Old Town: Pilies, Vokiečių, Dominikonø and Trakø streets (the latter two streets because of their noble population were also called Senators Street). Among the most exclusive palaces were the buildings belonging to the Dukes Oginskiai.

Building complex between Rūdninkø and Arkliø streets – where the Youth Theatre, "Lėlė" Theatre and several other institutions are still open to these days – is known under the common name the Oginskiai palace as it belonged to Oginskiai family for many years. From the end of the 15th century, the palace was mentioned in several written sources. There are no comprehensive studies about different owners and series of reconstructions of the palace. In his book about the Rūdninkø Street<sup>272</sup> (published in 2001), Antanas Rimvydas Ėaplinskas provides some valuable information. He writes that in the 16th–17th centuries in the Rūdninkø Street there stood a large palace, which occupied a huge area and belonged to the families of Astikai, Chodkevičiai, Oginskiai, and Valavičiai.

There is reason to believe that in the middle of the 18th century the architect Tomas Ruselis was commissioned to build the palace of Ignas and Elena Oginskiai in the 270th possession, between Arkliø and Rūdninkø streets. Under the assignment of the magistrate, the same architect modernized a facade of the Town Hall and designed many other important buildings.

Up to 1677, the palace belonged to Kuželinskas, later to the Pakamoris of Vitebsk Simonas Karolis Oginskis (died in 1699). He was an educated man, took care of the Orthodox in his youth, belonged to the Fraternity of St. Spirit (Vilnius), in 1672, he was the elder of this fraternity. Around the year 1680,

Simonas Karolis switched to Catholicism. He funded the construction of the Monastery of Discalced Carmelite and the former Church of St. Theresa in Fishermen suburb. S. K. Oginskis was buried in the Church of St. Therese in 1699. R. Ėaplinskas writes:

"S. K. Oginskis was married three times. He had two daughters and five sons. When he studied in Netherlands, in 1644, S. K. Oginkis married Franeker city mayor's daughter Tycjå Stockmans. Unfortunately, after returned to the homeland they divorced. His third wife Teresa Vainaitė-Oginskienė, the aunt of the King Poniatowski, inherited the palace in Arkliø Street. Before 1703, from T. Oginskienė, Teresa Vyhovska, who sold it for 900 thalers to Martynas Mykolas Oginskis and his wife Teresė Bpostovskaitė-Oginskienė, bought the palace. [...]

The new owner of the palace Martynas Mykolas Oginskis (1672–1750) was the Voivode of Vitebsk, the fifth son of S. K. Oginskis earned fame in the wars against the Turks and Cossacks. He was also known by the fact that not only he was the one that lived the longest of his brothers, but also he was a strong figure of political and social life. In 1773, French ambassador Monti named him as one of the most influential people and one of the smartest of the three minds of Lithuania. He belonged to the political opposition directed against King Augustus II in the apogee of his politician's career."

As the time passed by, M. M. Oginskis retired from politics and most of the time spent in his manors. He had manors in Marcijanov, Vitebsk, Zalesye, Maladzyechna, Izabelin, voivodship of Vilnius. He bought up houses around the Arkliø-Rūdninkø streets area in Vilnius. It was evident that he planned to expand holdings in this part of Vilnius.

M. M. Oginskis married several times and had many children. Most of them were from marriages with Teresė Bpostovskaitė (died in 1721) and Teresė Tyzenhauzaitė (died in 1729).

Before his death, in 1750, M. M. Oginskis bequeathed the palace to three sons from the first marriage with Teresė Bpostovskaite. The palace in Arkliø Street went to the Marshal of Lithuania, Vilnius Castellan Ignas Oginskis (1698–1775), brick Pavlovic house in Rūdninkø Street to Kazimieras Oginskis (died in

<sup>271</sup> Drėma V., *Dingęs Vilnius* ("Lost Vilnius"), Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2013, p. 271–272.

<sup>272</sup> Drėma V., *Dingęs Vilnius* ("Lost Vilnius"), Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2013, p. 237, 239; Ėaplinskas A. R., *Vilniaus gatviø istorija. Valdovø kelias. Pirmà knyga. Rūdninkø gatvė* ("History of Vilnius streets. Road of the Rulers. First book. Street Rudininkai"), Vilnius, 2001, p. 68, 70, 116, 151–154, 158–165.

1769), next to it, Zelonackienė house to the Voivode of Trakai Tadas Pranciūkus Oginskis (1712–1783). Kazimieras Oginskis inherited house named the brick-house of Pavlovic. Sadly, the fire destroyed it 1748.

In 1751, an empty plot left after the palace, K. Oginski ceded to his brother Ignas Oginskis and his wife Elena. In 1758, E. and I. Oginskiai took over to their disposal the house of Zalonackienė from Tadas Oginskis. Later, E. and I. Oginskiai purchased an empty plot of Buceviėienė next to the palace, a few other houses and began to build a new palace. They joined together all bought up houses and, in 1768–1771, built the small housing in Rūdninkø Street, also, in 1767, built a new street, which in the 18th century was Oginskiai Street (now it is called Etmonø Street). Ignas Oginskis (1698–1775) was the eldest son of Martynas Mykolas Oginskis. In 1744, he became the Palace Marshal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; later in 1750, he became the Grand Marshal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; in 1768, the Voivode of Vilnius. A. R. Ėaplinskas writes that climbing the career ladder helped for him successful marriages:

*"In 1739, he married Elena Oginskytė, the daughter of uncle Kazimieras Dominykas Oginskis. Contemporaries estimated her as an intelligent personality. She freely spoke several languages, was a beautiful and strong woman – "she had the great power that could break a horseshoe". In 1726–1727, she accompanied her parents to Courland and met the Princess of Courland Ana Joanovna. This friendship did not break up even after Ana became the ruler of Russia in 1730. Elena Oginskienė received gifts and graces, but despite publicly showed signs of friendship, Oginskiai did not achieve any conductive solutions for the Republic in their diplomatic journeys to St. Petersburg. It is not clear in what way, but in the middle of the 18th century, when I. Oginskis was still alive, the palace belonged to his wife E. Oginskienė. They did not have children. After their death, all wealth went to relatives. In 1755, E. Oginskienė her palace in Rūdninkø Street bestowed to husband's brother, the Voivode of Trakai Tadas Pranciūkus Oginskis (1712–1783), the last son of Martynas Mykolas. Tadas Pranciūkus was not a significant personality but he was an ambitious politician. What is true, his ambitions were quite one-sided. He wanted to be the Marshal of Seimas (but he*

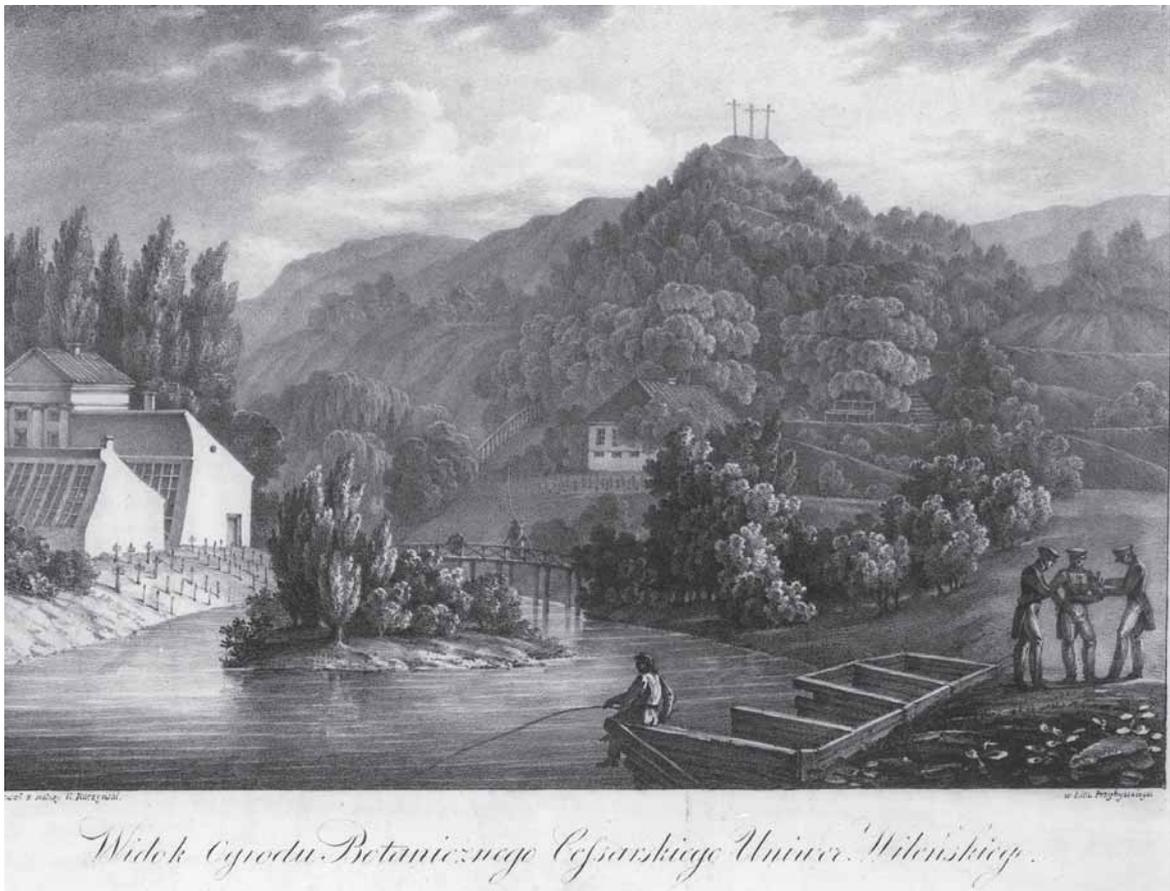
*did not agree to work at the Tribunal, which was no less influential), Tadas Pranciūkus sought for such public offices, which granted him the title of senator; he craved to prank out with medals. He achieved many of his aims: became a member of Lithuanian Treasury Commission, a member of Seimas. He worked very purposefully in Seimas. The most important concern of his work in Seimas was to prevent the introducing of new taxes. He was interested in political literature, wrote in a diary, and accumulated a rich library. He rarely visited Vilnius. Mostly he lived in Maladzyechna (Ałmena Powiat), where rebuilt and decorated the old palace of Zbaraskiai. He married twice. In 1737, his wife became Izabelė Radvilaitė. She died in 1761. After three years, he married Jadviga Zaluskytė-Tiškeviėienė. He had two sons from the first marriage – Andrius Ignotas Joachimas Juozafatas (often called Andrius) and Pranciūkus Ksaveras. Tadas Pranciūkus Oginskis died 1783, being 72 years old. Pranciūkus Ksaveras Oginskis inherited Oginskiai Palace in Vilnius, in the 54th block of the Old Town, between Arkliø and Rūdninkø Streets. He did not have descendants, therefore, the property was left to his brother Andrius Oginskis (1740–1787). [...] Andrius married Paulina Szembek, the widow of Celestin Lubenski and John Prosper Potocki. She gave birth to the daughter Juzefa and the son Mykolas Kleopas, who later became the successor of all A. Oginskis' property.*

*The list of Vilnius house, made in 1790, provides some more information about the construction of the Oginskiai Palace. 1808 Vilnius plan shows that at the time Oginskiai Palace surrounded a large rectangular courtyard between Arkliø and Rūdninkø streets.*

*In 1835, M. Balinskas wrote about the most famous buildings in Vilnius and mentioned the Oginskiai Palace, which, according to author, was among the largest in Vilnius, however, abandoned and incomplete. After the November Uprising in 1831, the Oginskiai Palace under Emperor's decree was sequestrated. During the year 1833–1859, it belonged to the youngest son of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis Irenėjus Kleopas Oginskis (1808–1863).*

*He had spent a long time abroad in his youth, until 1830, he worked in the Russian Embassy in Vienna. After his father died, he returned to Lithuania, took over his holdings, settled in Rietavas and undertook the restructuring of the town. He built a new representational palace, in 1835, abolished serfdom, fundamental-*

On the right (from the top): Victor Vincent Adam (1801–1866), Luis Philippe Alphonse Bichebois (1801–1850), Albertas Vaitiekus Pаметas (1821?–1876), Jan Kazimierz Wilczynski (1806–1885), "Verkiai", 1847, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-2663a; Karolis Raėinskas (1799–after 1860), "Vilnius University Botanical Garden", 1830, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-3711



ly transformed the town, established an agronomy school, where was taught in Lithuanian. He set up a hospital, where a separate maternity ward and a kindergarten, founded a primary school, music and singing schools. Most of his time he spent in Rietavas. He renewed the Body of God (Oginskiai) Chapel (funded by uncle's brother Pranciškus Ksaveras (1742–1814) in the Church of St. Johns church in Vilnius.

I. K. Oginskis married twice – two daughters of the Polish Army General Joseph Kalinowski: Juzefina (1816–1844) and Olga (died in 1899). He had two children with Olga: Bogdanas (1848–1909) and Mykolas (1849–1902); they were the last descendants of the particular Oginskiai branch.

Around the year 1859, Oginskiai Palace in Vilnius went to the Duke of Plungė Mykolas Oginskis (grand-grandchild of Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis), who rarely appeared in Vilnius, because he with wife Maria Skurzewska constantly lived in Plungė. After the uprising of 1863, Oginskiai Palace went to the state. In a part of the palace established the nobility club of Vilnius.

Mykolas and Maria Oginskiai did not have children. After husband's death, Maria Oginskienė adopted her relative Karol Janusz Skurzewski (1897–1977). He was the only successor of Oginskiai property. However, K. J. Skurzewski did not have children too, therefore after he died, there were any successors left.

Before the First World War gold and silver product, tobacco, footwear, sugar stores worked in some parts of Oginskiai Palace. After the war, a Jewish gymnasium and a Jewish theatre were opened there. In 1941, "Vaidila" theatre moved to the palace. One block of the palace was transformed into dwellings. During the Second World War, the Nazis established a Jewish council – the Judenrat – in that place. After the Second World War, the Military Officers House club was established in the palace, there also people lived, and dancing evenings were held in representative premises."

In 1975, "Lėlė" Theatre was established in the main part of the palace in Arkliø Street; in 1982 – the Youth Theatre. The reconstruction project was prepared by architects Birutė Ėibiraitė, Antanas Kunigėlis, Vitalija Steponienė. The southern courtyard building by a project of architect Zita Vana-

gaitė adjusted for Pranas Gudynas Center for Restoration of the Lithuanian Art Museum.

V. Drėma points out that architect John Hau-tinga designed the early classical style facade of Oginskiai Palace, in 1768, and architect Tom Russell reconstructed the palace<sup>273</sup>.

During the Soviet time, the complex adjusted for the Youth Theatre. A style of the facade has almost unchanged.<sup>274</sup>

The list of Vilnius house, concluded in 1790, provides some more information about the construction of the Oginskiai Palace. It is evident from 1808 Vilnius plan that at the time Oginskiai Palace surrounded a large rectangular courtyard between Arkliø and Rūdninkø streets. During this period, the palace was abandoned. A. Zaluski in his books emphasizes that M. K. Oginskis, after returned from emigration in 1800, took care of the classical-style palace construction in Vilnius.<sup>275</sup>

For many years, M. K. Oginskis paid exceptional attention to the Vilnius University.

As it is evident from M. K. Oginskis "Memoirs", he considered it as an important part in his life the participation in activities of the Vilnius Charity Society<sup>276</sup>, which until the 1940 was set up in the current Vilnius Street. In 1807, the society was founded by Vilnius Bishop Jan Kossakowski (1755–1808) and the professor of Vilnius University Joseph Frank (1771–1842). The Duke of Nesvizh Dominykas Jeronimas Radvila (1786–1813) provided the land-plot for the construction of a new complex. Oginskiai Chapel was founded in the Church of St. Johns, and for a long time it was also called the Body of God Chapel. It was built around the year 1573. Initially, the chapel was patronized by the Body of God Worship Fraternity, and in the 18th century M. K. Oginskis' grandfather, the Voivode of Trakai Tadas Pranciškus Oginskis (1712–1783) took over the chapel from the Jesuits and set up a mausoleum for Oginskiai family. T. P. Oginskis was buried there. In 1818, M. K. Oginskis in his testament decided to be buried in the chapel next to his two daughters' uncle (probably next to father Andrius Oginskis' brother Pranciškus Ksave-

<sup>273</sup> V. Drėma, p. 239.

<sup>274</sup> A. Zaluski, Vilnius, p. 16.

<sup>275</sup> Project prepared by Angel Schultz.

<sup>276</sup> M. K. Oginskis, *Laiškai apie muziką*, p. 27.



michal kleofas oginski-250

Ex-libris of R. Baeyens (Belgium). Submitted for the international ex-libris contest commemorating Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis 250<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary in Lithuania (2015). Dedicated to the artist Loreta Uzdraitė

ras Stanislovas Oginskis (1742–1814). However, his life events turned out otherwise and his remains now rest in the Holy Cross Basilica (Basilica di Santa Croce) in Florence (Italy). V. Drėma<sup>277</sup> writes:

*"One of the most valuable artworks decorating the Church of St. Johns is the stained glass of Oginskiai Chapel inserted in the middle of the 19th century. In 1860, the guardian of the chapel Irenėjus Oginskis (1808–1863) decided to decorate the chapel with spectacular stained glass. The Duke commissioned for J. K. Vilėniskas (the famous publisher of "Vilnius Album" and art connoisseur) to prepare a project and organize all work in the chapel. Under a mediation of Vilėniskas detailed miniature, Jonas Vincentas Puzinas made the stained glass design and the cardboard. The project, fortunately, has survived to the present day and is stored in M. K. Ėiurlionis National Museum of Art<sup>278</sup>".*

*Based on this project, the stained glass, in 1861–1863, was made in Lorane and Gzel workshop. In 1862, the artwork was awarded with the great medal in the World Exhibition in London. Manufacturing of the artwork costed 16,000 gold roubles. The stained glass was*

*made to cover two windows. Each window was divided into eight squares. In the middle of a square on ornamental background are drawn round and oval medallions. Six top medallions are with images of the saints most popular in Lithuania, and the two lower medallions covered with the coats of arms of Oginskiai family.*

*The Uprising of 1863 and after it entrenched severe restrictions conditioned that stained glass was not immediately inserted into windows of the church and stayed in warehouse of Vilėniskas for a long time. Only in 1890, the Tsarist administration allowed them to adjust for the intended purpose. Stained glass adorned the church until 1949. In the 6th decade of the 20th century, the church was turned into a warehouse and its hosts and the inspectors of cultural heritage did not notice that cubs almost finished beating out the stained-glass windows.*

*It was found in 1964, when only about five percent of the total stained glass surface was left. In 1980, restorer A. Grabauskas scarcely from those remains reconstructed the ornamental stained glass without the medallions, which were left blank.<sup>279</sup>*

<sup>277</sup> V. Drėma, p. 222.

<sup>278</sup> M. K. Ėiurlionis National Museum of Art.

<sup>279</sup> V. Drėma, p. 222.