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Čiurlionis' Enigmatic Universe of Symbols and Metaphors

Summary

The article is dedicated to revelation of the origins behind and specifics of Čiurlionis' fine arts universe composed of symbols and metaphors. It begins with a concise discussion of the relationship between the concept of symbol and other related categories: artistic image, sign, metaphor, allegory. Later moving attention to the study of origins behind Čiurlionis' symbolic universe, there follows a succinct discussion based on common classificatory principles of the principal symbols pertaining to the canons of metaphysical, cosmic, archetypical, animalistic, floral, geometric and Theosophical colouring canons that were predominant in the great artist's painting. Special attention is dedicated to revelation of symbolic vocabulary and semantic meanings that

were dear to Čiurlionis. The author argues that the basis of this complex vocabulary derives from archaic Lithuanian sagas and legends, mythology of Asian peoples and various esoteric doctrines, and is associated with the following symbols: a bird, a holy grass-snake, the world tree, stars, the Milky Way, the sun. Throughout the research, particular importance of symbols that hint at personal development, spiritual search and differences between various universes is emphasized, namely those of high mountains, castles, towers, fortresses, pyramids, altars, stairs, unlimited expanse of water, ships, walls, gates, doors, windows, angels, demons. All of this multi-functional universe of Čiurlionis' symbols is crowned by a highly symbolic figure of powerful universal ruler, the *Rex*.

Keywords: Čiurlionis, Lithuanian fine arts, symbol, metaphor, aesthetics, Theosophy, Blavatsky, Flammarion, Stabrauskas (Stabrowsky), art, colour, symbolism.