

SUMMARY

Ignas Šeinius, a bilingual 20th century writer, is a Lithuanian author who wrote in both Lithuanian and Swedish. Literary scholars find Šeinius' work in Swedish to be an innovative, bicultural phenomenon which covers a variety of genres: essays on Lithuanian culture, blank verse, short stories, novels, journalistic writing and plays. Chronologically, his works are grouped into two categories – the early period of 1917 to 1927, and the late period of 1940 to 1959. This volume of *Raštai* (*The Works*) includes two plays by Ignas Šeinius: *Diplomater* (*The Diplomats*) and *Små ofullkomigheter* (*The Small Shortcomings*).

There are four surviving versions of the comedy *The Diplomats*: (1) *Diplomaten*, which was written in Swedish in 1920 and remained a typed script, (2) *Diplomatai*, written in Lithuanian and published in 1937 in Kaunas, (3) *Diplomaterna*, a 1939 typed edit of the earlier Swedish version, and (4) *Diplomater*, a typed edit of the 1939 Swedish version of the play, dated 1942. The final, 1942 version, and its translation into Lithuanian are included in this volume. The comedy *Små ofullkomigheter*, surviving as a manuscript and as a typed text, was also written in 1942. Both the typed *Diplomater* and the manuscript and the typescript of *Små ofullkomigheter* are kept in the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm (*Diplomater*: Stockholms Riksarkive; SE/RA/720985, Ignas Jurkunas-Scheynius archive, vol. 7, 146 l.; *Små ofullkomigheter*: Stockholms Riksarkive, SE/RA/720985, Ignas Jurkunas-Scheynius archive, vol. 4, 70 l.). Both plays are considered to be part of Šeinius' later period and neither of them has been published before: they are presented for the first time in Lithuanian (translated by Alma Braškytė) and in Swedish in this volume of *Raštai*.

Today, it is difficult to determine why these plays never saw the light of day at the time they were written. In some cases, Swedish publishers were doubtful of the demand for Šeinius' works – for example, the play *Den nya härskaren* (*The New Lord*) was deemed unworthy by the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Stockholm. Sometimes, unfavourable circumstances got in the way. There is evidence that the 1920 version of *Diplomaten* had been accepted by Strindbergs Intima Teater, but plans were first delayed by the theatre losing its property and then abandoned entirely. It is likely that the other versions of this play had also been prepared for production or publication, but these plans also remained unrealized.

Šeinius the playwright is Šeinius the critic. In the comedy *Diplomater* he takes an ironic approach to the diplomatic corps of the time, satirizing its parlour-politics, as well as the arrogance and careerism of the diplomats. In *Små ofullkomigheter*, he looks at the limited worldview of career officials, the clash of generations, domestic intrigues and other small shortcomings of life. The two plays published in this volume of the works of Ignas Šeinius not only link two cultures, but also deepen our understanding of the social and cultural context of the time and supply researchers of the genre of Lithuanian comedy with ample study materials.