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National artist of Russia – parfen Parfenovich Chernikovich

Abstract. The article reviews the illustrative edition prepared by N.V. Chugunov, the biographer of P.P. Chernikovitch. The publication highlights important events in the personal and creative life of the artist who revived the bone-carving trade in the Nizhny Novgorod region and created a new artistic style – Varnavinsky bone carving. The artistic products of the master bone-carver presented in the article clearly show how the artistic style of the artist, who became the founder of a new bone-carving tradition that combined the techniques and images of Arkhangelsk and Nizhny Novgorod carving, changed.

Keywords: bone carving art, Varnavinsky bone carving, Nizhny Novgorod bone carving, bone carving artists.



Fig. 1. The cover of the book "Parfen Parfenovich Chernikovich. Founder of Nizhny Novgorod artistic bone carving"

The founder of Nizhny Novgorod artistic bone carving, the publishing house "Litera" published an anniversary edition dedicated to the artist on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Parfen Parfenovich Chernikovich [2] (fig. 1⁵⁸). The publication was prepared by N.V. Chugunov who is the biographer of the artist. The author conducted research work on the collection study and systematization of the artist's archive.

In the introductory article to the publication the author briefly describes the creative biography of P.P. Chernikovich emphasizing the relevance and importance for researchers of the artistic traditions of bone-cutting craft, the consolidated catalog of all the artist's works created by him in which each bone-cutting product is marked with a unique three-digit number.

The chapters of the publication are placed in chronological order of the periods of the artist's creative biography. In the chapter "Becoming an artist. 1920-1941" the author described the history of the relocation of the artist's family to the Arkhangelsk region and the beginning of the artist's creative biography which coincided with the revival of the Kholmogorsky bone-

⁵⁸ Fig. 2. – Parfen Parfenovich Chernikovich. The founder of the Nizhny Novgorod artistic bone carving: [to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the National Artist of Russia P.P. Chernikovich] / author-compiler N.V. Chugunov. – Nizhny Novgorod: Litera, 2020. – 264 p.

cutting industry. This section also contains short biographies of famous craftsmen from whom the artist studied and improved in the skill of bone carving.

The next chapter is "The rise of mastery. 1941-1968" opens with N.V. Chugunov's essay "Soldier and Artist" which tells about the severe injury of the artist during the Great Patriotic War after which he was demobilized having received the second disability group. The master was recovering for nine months and in December 1944 he began working in the Lomonosov artel as a master of bone carving. Overcoming the pain the artist worked on his first post-war work that was the vase "North" [2] (fig. 2⁵⁹). It was the first in his creative biography. For this work P.P. Chernikovich received an award of 10 thousand rubles [1]. The vase was awarded the first prize at a competition announced by the Committee for Arts Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Directorate of Industrial Cooperation of the RSFSR and the Scientific Research Institute of the Art Industry. The vase "North" was presented to F. D.



Fig. 2. P.P. Chernikovich.
Vase "North". 1944-1945.
Artistic bone carving

Roosevelt by the Soviet government as a gift to U.S. President. The artist depicted scenes of reindeer hunting in the through-openwork ornament of the vase.

At the end of the 1950s Soviet decorative and applied art was experiencing a change of styles which was reflected in the work of bone cutters who developed new motifs of slotted ornament, new compositions and forms. Specialists of the Scientific Research Institute of the Art Industry recommended that bone cutters develop samples of artistic products that do not require labor-intensive processing. During this period the artist created more than 150 samples of artistic bone-cutting products [2] (fig. 3-5⁶⁰) and became the leading artist of the Kholmogorsky craft.

At the end of the 1960s the artist was invited to Gorky to develop samples of artistic bone products for mass production and on the basis of folk art traditions it was proposed to create a new bone-cutting style. The next chapter of the publication is devoted to this period: "The founder of the bone-cutting tradition. 1968-1980».

The leadership of the region chose the work settlement "Varnavino" here in the former building of the transit prison after reconstruction an "Experimental art workshop" to organize the production of bone-cutting products. The artist developed technological maps for the production of each bone-cutting product and also taught the bone-cutting art of bone-cutting masters.

⁵⁹ Fig. 2. – Parfen Parfenovich Chernikovich. The founder of the Nizhny Novgorod artistic bone carving: [to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the People's Artist of Russia P.P. Chernikovich] / author-compiler N.V. Chugunov. Nizhny Novgorod: Litera, 2020. – p. 72.

⁶⁰ Fig. 3-5. – Parfen Parfenovich Chernikovich. The founder of the Nizhny Novgorod artistic bone carving: [to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the People's Artist of Russia P.P. Chernikovich] / author-compiler N.V. Chugunov. Nizhny Novgorod: Litera, 2020. pp. 88-89.



Fig. 3. P.P. Chernikovich. The Squirrel box. 1959

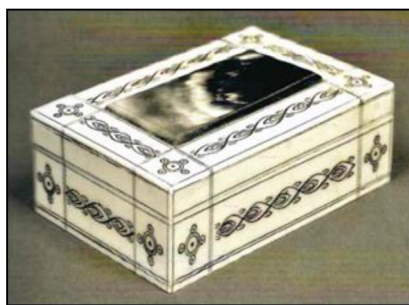


Fig. 4. P.P. Chernikovich. The box "Radiance of the North". 1960



Fig. 5. P.P. Chernikovich. The "Eye box". 1960

Artistic bone carving. All-Russian Museum of decorative arts (Moscow)

During the period from 1972 to 1979 P.P. Chernikovich created 76 samples of products for production. The artistic style of the products created by the artist was based on the traditions of ancient Nizhny Novgorod woodcarving and Gorodetsky painting. It was interpreted in the technique of openwork and relief bone carving. The artist combined the techniques and images of Arkhangelsk and Nizhny Novgorod carvings [2] (fig. 6⁶¹) becoming the founder of a new type of bone carving art called Varnavinsky.

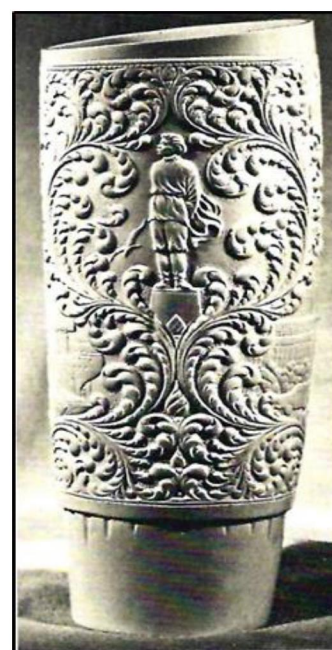
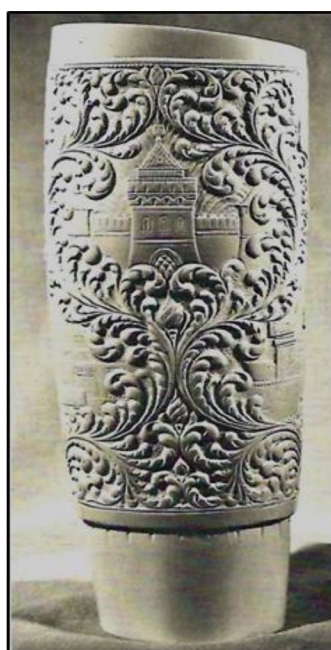
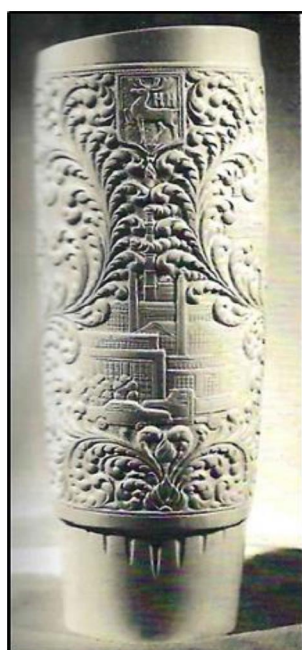


Fig. 6. P.P. Chernikovich. Vase "Nizhny Novgorod – Gorky city". 1971
View from three sides. Artistic bone carving. Union of Artists of Russia

⁶¹ Figure 6-9. – Parfen Parfenovich Chernikovich. The founder of the Nizhny Novgorod artistic bone carving: [to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the People's Artist of Russia P.P. Chernikovich] / author-compiler N. V. Chugunov. Nizhny Novgorod: Litera, 2020. – pp. 133, 168, 170, 150.

The artistic style of P.P. Chernikovich became the basis of the creativity of the Varnavinsky bone cutters whose products are distinguished by openwork or relief carvings and engravings.

In 1980 P.P. Chernikovich retired but continued to work in his workshop creating unique works of art. This period of the artist's life is described in the chapter "The fate of the master. 1981-2011». During this period the artist's products regain their Kholmogorsky features but there is no complete return to Kholmogorsky carving [2] (fig. 7, 8).



Fig. 7. The crest of the "Squirrel". 1990s.



Fig. 8. The ridge "Horses". 1990s.

Artistic bone carving. Private collection

For fifty years of creative search the artist has been an outstanding master of portrait carved miniatures. He created a gallery of images of great people of Russia. For example, in the portrait of M.V. Lomonosov the indigenous Kholmogorsky traditions and new ones acquired in the last 20 years of the artist's creative life organically merged. The portrait is made in the technique of sculptural relief from a plate of mammoth bone (fig. 9).

Throughout life P.P. Chernikovich met with creative people among whom were writers and artists. In the chapter "The eternal audacity of art ..." biographical essays about these people and their works dedicated to the master are published.

The publication is completed by "Appendices" which include: "Consolidated catalog of works by P.P. Chernikovich" "Works by P.P. Chernikovich at exhibitions" "Works by P.P. Chernikovich in publications" "Works by P.P. Chernikovich in museums".

The uniqueness of P.P. Chernikovich is that he turned out to be not only a talented artist but also a leader who participated in the revival and preservation of the bone-cutting industry in the Nizhny Novgorod



Fig. 9. P.P. Chernikovich. "Table portrait of M.V. Lomonosov". 1987-1989 Artistic bone carving. Private collection

region. The best products of bone cutters made in the artistic tradition of the Varnavinsky bone carving laid down by the artist are constantly exhibited at regional and international exhibitions in museums and exhibition halls in Russia and abroad.

Over seventy years of creative activity the talented artist has received recognition from colleagues and connoisseurs of bone-carving art awards in competitions and the title of "People's Artist of Russia". The master's works are kept in museum collections: 42 items in the collection of the Nizhny Novgorod State Museum-Reserve (Nizhny Tagil), 29 items in the Historical and Memorial Museum of M. V. Lomonosov (Lomonosov village Arkhangelsk region), 37 exhibits in the All-Russian Museum of Decorative Arts (Moscow), 23 items in the State Russian Museum (Saint-Petersburg).

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