Ex-libris (bookplate) - Ephraim Moses Lilien

Archive / Ex Libris Collection

Accession Nr.:	MLT 1686.1.146
Artist/Maker:	Lilien, Ephraim Moshe/Moses (1874 - 1925)
Place of production:	Berlin
Inscription:	E M Lilien
Materials:	paper
Techniques:	cliché
Dimensions:	height: 14,5 cm width: 10,8 cm

Born in Galicia, the Art Nouveau style illustrator E.M. Lilien moved to Berlin in 1899 after finishing his studies in Krakow. In the article "Zsidó művészet", published in the Magyar Zsidó Almanach in 1911 Lilien is praised as being undoubtedly the most popular contemporary Jewish artists. His symbolic, affecting style, inspired by century-old traditions, won him the hearts of the Jewish audience. Being a member of the Zionist movement, Lilien started to draw plaques and pages with Hebrew inscriptions. The Zionist weekly “Die Welt”, published in Vienna, reported on Lilien's ex-libris in 1899 (Nr, 51, p. 4).

The ex libris depicts a naked female figure, a silhouette of a white body against the black background. The picture gets its dynamism from the rich hair of the woman. The Hebrew inscription under the picture is a quotation from the New Testament reading: From the books of Ephraim Moses Lilien, son of Jacob Lilien. *To the pure, all things are pure*. (Titus 1,15).
One year earlier, in 1898, Otto Mühlbrecht published a volume titled „Die Bücherliebhaberei in ihrer Entwickelung bis zum Ende des XIX Jahrhunderts“. On page 166 he reproduced the early 16th century ex-libris of Hektor Pomer, featuring what might be the first Hebrew inscription on an ex libris. Lilien chose for his ex libris in 1899 the same quotation, which can be regarded as proof of Lilien having known Mühlbrecht’s book.

Literature

- Szerk.: Szilágyi András, Horányi Éva: *Szecesszió. A 20. század hajnala. (Az európai iparművészet korszakai.)*. Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 1996. - Nr. 7.44. (Horváth Hilda)



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