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Mikas Vaicekauskas

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# To Edit a National Poem: The Editing of Kristijonas Donelaitis's Poem *Metai* and its Sociocultural Context

Mikas Vaicekauskas

*Abstract:* The poem *Metai* (*The Seasons*) by Kristijonas Donelaitis is unanimously recognized as one of the best and most fundamental works of the national canon of Lithuanian literature. The poem's first edition came out in 1818, almost forty years after the author's death. Already this edition was characterized by a huge editorial intervention in the authentic text of the work. Since that time, a variegated history of editing the poem's text began, ranging from romanticized presentation of the text of the work and critical editions in the nineteenth-century German tradition to the building of the national literary canon and very obvious editorial interventions in the text of the twentieth century editions. The editing strategies of the basic editions of the poem were determined by the sociocultural context of that time as well as the type and aims of the concrete edition. Descriptions of the poem *Metai* as the first or most fundamental work of Lithuanian *belles lettres* can be supplemented by adding that it is also one of the most intensely edited works in the history of Lithuanian literature.

IT IS UNANIMOUSLY RECOGNIZED, at least in Lithuania or by Lithuanian literary scholars, that the poem *Metai* (*The Seasons*, 1765–1775) by Kristijonas Donelaitis (1714–1780)<sup>1</sup> is one of the most outstanding (not to say: *the* most outstanding) and important works of Lithuanian literature.<sup>2</sup> Written in metrotonic hexameter, in the low style, and in a language close to colloquial speech (highly untypical of literature of that time), the poem represented the life and daily routine of eighteenth-century peasant serfs during the four seasons of the year, prescribed and defined by the divine order. It is unknown if the author himself tried to publish his poem or at least had such intentions during his lifetime. However, the surviving part of the poem's autographs shows how meticulously he worked on the text. Another important feature of *Metai* is that it can be described as one of

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<sup>1</sup> He was a pastor of the Tolminkiemis parish in Lithuania Minor (Lithuanian 'Mažoji Lietuva,' German 'Preussisch Litauen,' today's 'Chistye Prudy' in the Kaliningrad region in Russia) since 1743 until his death in 1780.

<sup>2</sup> For more on Donelaitis, see Vaškėlis 1964; Lebedys 1977, 194–316; Gineitis 1990; Doveika 1990; Gineitis and Samulionis 1993; Vaicekauskas 2001; Dilytė 2005; Radzevičius 2005; Krištopaitienė 2007; Vaicekauskas 2009; Jankevičiūtė and Vaicekauskas 2013; Dilytė 2014; Seferis 2014; Vaicekauskas 2014; Vaicekauskas and Krištopaitienė 2014; Vaicekauskas 2016.

the most intensely edited works in the history of Lithuanian literature. Historical periods and their socio-cultural context often determined the tendencies of editing or even publishing this nationally significant literary work. It is important to review and establish the main editing tendencies of *Metai* in different periods and different socio-cultural contexts, if only because Donelaitis's poem has acquired the general status of the founding work of national literature and a poetic masterpiece. In addition to these epithets, it can be said that *Metai* is also the work of Lithuanian literature that went through the largest number of editions. As socio-political changes brought about new cultural contexts for the work, practically every generation of readers and researchers felt the need for a new edition or reprint of *Metai*; this is particularly noticeable in the twentieth century. In its 200-year history of publishing and editing, the poem saw distinct changes of the aims of the edition and the main editing principles. Considering the symbolic importance of Donelaitis's *Metai* for Lithuanian national culture, the history of its publishing and editing reveals the general strategies of editing works of national classics and presenting them to the readers quite well, which are in turn characteristic of Lithuanian literature in general.

The poem *Metai* was published for the first time in 1818 ([Donelaitis] 1818), almost forty years after the poet's death. Based on the poem's autographs and copy, the edition was prepared by Martin Ludwig Rhesa (Martynas Liudvikas Rėza, 1776–1840), a professor at the University of Königsberg who also translated the poem into German.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Lithuanian fictional writing at that time was only in its formative stage and did not have any tradition to speak of. Realizing the value of Donelaitis's work, Rhesa sought to show that it was representative of the Lithuanian nation and its culture, and to do it in the most favourable way.

However, the representational nature of the publication, the personality of Rhesa himself (specifically: his penchant for idyllic tones), as well as the nineteenth-century Romanticist spirit, all determined the radical character of Rhesa's editorial interventions. So much so, even, that he would later be accused of taking too much liberty with the editing. Wishing to present Donelaitis's work and the Lithuanian peasant serfs depicted in the poem in the most favourable light (see Jovaišas 1969, 119, 120), Rhesa removed what were, in his opinion, expressions that were too drastic and rough, and sometimes even entire episodes (468 lines were cut out) that contained a negative view of Lithuanians and showed their faults as well as several naturalistic and extreme scenes (such as: passages blaming serfs for being conceited, lazy and ill-tempered [Vd 389–433],<sup>4</sup> cruel treatment of a horse [Rg 122–130], women's drinking in a wedding [Rg 189–209], stealing timber [Rg 549–590], etc.). Alongside these cuts, Rhesa added

<sup>3</sup> More about Rhesa's work on Donelaitis, see Citavičiūtė 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Hereinafter, continuous line numbering is given; the following abbreviations indicate the parts of the poem: "Pavasario linksmybės" ("Joys of Spring") — Pl, "Vasaros darbai" ("Summer Toils") — Vd, "Rudenio gėrybės" ("Autumn Wealth") — Rg, and "Žiemos rūpesčiai" ("Winter Cares") — Žr.

two lines of his own (between Rg 542 and 543, and Žr 641 and 642), and also inserted individual words here and there.

The most radical corrections were made in the poem's lexis. Rhesa changed the personal names, split the same character into several persons or, vice versa, merged several characters into one (e.g.: *Simas* ← *Stepas*; *Elzė* ← *Gryta*; *Enikė* ← *Katryna*, etc.; *Anusis*, *Bindus*, *Milkus*, *Lauras*, *Janas* ← *Krizas*, etc.; *Lauras* ← *Krizas*, *Paikžentis*, *Pričkus*, *Selmas*, etc.); replaced some words in the poem with others without any reason (e.g.: *kad* [that; as; if] ← *kas* [what; who]; *kiaunės* [martens] or *kregždės* [swallows] ← *žiurkės* [rats]; *Lietuvoninkams* [dat. pl. 'Lithuanians'] ← *baudžáuninkams* [dat. pl. 'peasant serfs']; *perdaug* [too much] ← *daug* [much]; *saldžiai* [sweetly] ← *šaltai* [coldly]; *štai* [here is] ← *tuo* [at once; right away], etc.); removed Germanisms for the purpose of language purification (e.g.: *durnas* [fool; dumb] ← *naras* [German 'Narr']; *keliaut* [to travel] ← *vandruot* [German 'wandern']; *midus* [mead] ← *brangvynas* [German 'Branntwein']; *žaidėjai* [musician; minstrel] ← *špielmonai* [German 'Spielmann']; *žvakės* [candles] ← *liktys* [German 'Leuchter'], etc.) (Krištopaitienė 2014, 54–58). Phonetic and morphological corrections were not abundant: sometimes he changed word forms — prefixes, tenses of verbs, and numbers of denominals — and restored full word endings from short ones. The spelling, punctuation and accentuation were quite well retained. Having made significant changes to the text, Rhesa thus created a romanticized or idyllic version of *Metai* that remained in use throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the mid-nineteenth century, two critical editions of Donelaitis appeared in the German tradition. The first was prepared in 1865 by August Schleicher (1821–1868) a professor of Jena University ([Donelaitis] 1865). He expanded his edition by including all the known works by Donelaitis. Schleicher based himself on the manuscripts, copies and Rhesa's edition. With the aim to convey the autographs as precisely as possible, he basically restored the places in the poem omitted by Rhesa. However, he was not very consistent either: omitted two lines (e.g.: *Ir kaip kiaulės almono (tik gėda sakyti)* [And like prize pigs (I am ashamed to say)]<sup>5</sup> Rg 186; *O mažu jie dar man čia būtų mušę per ausį* [And they might very well have boxed my ears] Rg 291), while retaining the two lines created by Rhesa. And while Schleicher reinstated the lexical barbarisms that were removed by Rhesa, as well as some of the words and forms that had been replaced, many interventions made by Rhesa remained in Schleicher's edition. Furthermore, new digressions appeared in Schleicher's edition, e.g., different phonetic and morphological forms (e.g.: *angielas* ← *angelas* [angel]; *broliau* ← *brolau* [voc. sg. 'brother']; *kemšia* ← *kemša* [fill; stuff]; *pasakysiu* ← *pasakysu* [I will tell you]; *seikėt* ← *saiķėt* [to measure]; *trūšas* ← *trūšas* [toil; work]; *vėversys* ← *vieversys* [lark], etc.). Finally, as Schleicher was mainly interested in the linguistic aspect of Donelaitis's work (as can also be seen from his abundant linguistic commentaries), his edition gave much attention to the spelling, accentuation and lexis (Lebedys 1972, 245–

<sup>5</sup> For English translation, see Donelaitis 1985; another translation was published in 1967 (Donelaitis 1967).

246). For example, Donelaitis's spelling was adapted to contemporary use, some words were given different accents according to the requirements of that time without taking into account the hexametric features, and Schleicher changed the text's punctuation. Hence, although Schleicher's edition is important as the first scholarly publication of Donelaitis's works, his editorial interventions prevented the edition from achieving the authenticity he claimed.

In 1869, a critical edition of *Writings* by Donelaitis ([Donelaitis] 1869) was prepared by Georg Heinrich Ferdinand Nesselmann (1811–1881), also a professor at the University of Königsberg. Nesselmann severely rebuked the former editors — Rhesa for his self-willed and unmotivated corruption of the text, and Schleicher for relying too much on Rhesa instead of turning to the autographs (Nesselmann 1869, IV, VII) and thus failing to correct Rhesa's corruptions. Nesselmann prepared his edition very scrupulously and accurately, and took his best efforts to follow the autographs as closely as possible (Lebedys 1972, 248). Having rejected the cuts and the lines added by Rhesa and Schleicher, Nesselmann's edition was the first to present the full text by Donelaitis that also retained the author's accentuation, which was the basis of versification. He only deviated from the autographs with regard to their spelling and punctuation. From the point of view of textual scholarship, this edition has not lost its value to this day, as it remains the primary source of "Autumn Wealth" and "Winter Cares", since the autographs of these two parts of the poem are unknown, and their copies were lost after World War II.

Schleicher's and Nesselmann's editions were aimed at the philological community rather than meant for general use. In addition, neither of these editions was distributed in Lithuania due to the sanctions of the ban on the Lithuanian press<sup>6</sup> even though Schleicher's book was published in Russia. Still, these books reached and were known to Lithuanian scholars, writers and other educated persons living abroad, or could be smuggled into Lithuania. As such, they were the first projects of such scale and philological quality related to Lithuanian literature. These editions showed to the Lithuanian community that artefacts of national literature could be objects of international academic research, and moreover, that national culture had a certain basis and classical tradition — in other words, that there was a heritage of national culture that could make one justly proud. It was particularly important in the process of formation of a national consciousness.

In 1914, philologist Jurgis Šlapelis (1876–1941) published *Kristijono Duonelaičio raštai* (*The Writings of Kristijonas Donelaitis*) ([Donelaitis] 1914), an edition meant for the Lithuanian reader, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the poet's birth. The edition was prepared on the basis of Rhesa's, Schleicher's and Nesselmann's earlier editions and was characterized by presenting all Donelaitis works and by the attempts to convey the authentic text without any cuts, though

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the Ban on the Lithuanian Press (1864–1904), see Merkys 1994a; Merkys 1994b; Merkys 2004; *Raidžių draudimo metai* 2004; Stonienė 2006, 17–32; Vaicekuskas 2012; Vėbra 1996.

24 lines of an early fragment “Fortsetzung” (“Sequel”) was included in the poem’s text. However, quite many minor inaccuracies from the earlier editions reappeared (e.g.: *gyvolį* ← *gyvuolį* [acc. sg. ‘animal’]; *pavargės* ← *parvargės* [tired]; *puikiokų* ← *puikokų* [gen. pl. ‘quite excellent’, etc.]); part of the dialectal forms were standardized and part were retained as authentic: the suffix *-in-* was retained in all verb infinitives with *-inti* and their derivative forms, except in the future tense (e.g.: *garbinti* [to worship] ← *garbysim* [we will worship]; *pamokindams* [instructing] ← *pamokysiu* [I will instruct]; *sveikinti* [to welcome; to greet] ← *pasveikys* [will welcome; will greet], etc.); along with authentic forms, standardized forms were used (e.g.: *bent* ← *ben* [at least]; *didžiai* ← *didei* [dat. ‘great’]; *rudenį* ← *rudenįj* [in autumn], etc.); forms of pronouns (e.g.: *kuo* ← *kuom* [wherewith]; *sau* ← *sav* [for oneself]; *šiame* ← *šime* [in this one], etc.) and words (e.g.: *bėdžius* ← *biedžius* [unfortunate creature]; *tik* ← *tikt* [only], etc.) characteristic of Donelaitis were discarded; many errors of authentic accentuation remained; spelling inconsistencies were very distinct, etc. The editor himself acknowledged his mistakes and gave an explanation in “Leidėjo pasiteisinimas” (“The Editor’s Excuse”):

Duonelaičio Raštai man netaip pasisekė išleisti, kaip aš juos dabar norėčiau matyti. Pradėjau juos spaudzinti ir pirmuosius lankus išspaudzinau dar 1909 metais, gerai į juos neįsigilinęs. Turinio ir prasmės, tiesa, niekur, rodos nebūsiu iškraipęs ir pagadinęs, bet rašyboje ir kirčiuose esu ne vienoje vietoje suklydęs. Vietomis visai be reikalo perdirbau paties Duonelaičio rašybą [. . .]. Bet daugiausia paklaidų įsibrovusių tai kirčiuose.

[I failed to publish the *Writings* by Donelaitis in the way I would like to see it now. I started to publish it and printed the first sheets back in 1909, without going deep into the subject. True, I do not think that I corrupted or spoiled the contents and the meaning in any place, but I did make some mistakes in spelling and accentuation. In some places I changed Donelaitis’s spelling without any reason [. . .]. Yet the majority of errors are in accentuation.]

(Šlapelis 1914, 88)

In the early twentieth century, the formation of the standard Lithuanian language was in the early stage, and strictly codified norms of the written language did not exist. That is why Šlapelis’s publication reflected the development of Lithuanian philology of that time.

In 1918, when the Lithuanian state was established and the national school began to be built, a need for textbooks of Lithuanian literature arose. The first textbooks of the national school had to build the canon of national literature and emphasize the cultural values of the emerging national state. One of such textbooks was prepared and published by literary historian Mykolas Biržiška (1882–1962) in 1918. *Donelaičio raštai* (*The Works of Donelaitis*) ([Donelaitis] 1918)<sup>7</sup> was a teaching manual, which contained Donelaitis’s works with linguistic and

<sup>7</sup> The book was reprinted in 1921 and 1927.

culture-specific commentaries, an overview of the poet's life, and the main features of his work. In these school editions, the text of *Metai* was prepared according to the Šlapelis's edition. There, the text was divided into thematic chapters, which were given titles. In addition, the text of the poem was heavily abridged to make it fit under these chapters. In most cases, the abridgements were not indicated (811 lines were cut out). Some rough, overly expressive or drastic scenes where the characters were presented in the negative light, or which contained obscene words according to the understanding of that time, were abridged. Sometimes such words were replaced with neutral ones (e.g.: *purvas* [dirt; mud], *šūdas* [shit; dung] → *niekas* [nothing; nil]). The text was characterized by inconsistent editing, standardization of dialectal words, and repeated mistakes from earlier editions. There were inconsistent adaptations of spelling, as the editor himself admitted:

[. . .] vaduojantis p. Šlapelio išleidimu, pirmajame lanke ligi 24 psl. mūsų nenuolatinis korektorius paliko vienas kitas rašybos savybes, kurios toliau jau nebepaliktos (pvz., augštas vietoj aukštas, stebūklingas vietoj stebuklingas, grištant — grįžtant, džiaugties — džiaugtis, Jieva — Ieva, prasiplatįs — prasiplatins, tuojaus — tuoju, daugiau — daugiau, jieškoti — ieškoti).

[[. . .] referring to Mr. Šlapelis's edition, in the first quire up to p. 24 our supernumerary proofreader did not correct certain spelling features that were further discarded (e.g.: *augštas* instead of *aukštas* [high; tall], *stebūklingas* — *stebuklingas* [magical], *grištant* — *grįžtant* [returning], *džiaugties* — *džiaugtis* [to rejoice], *Jieva* — *Ieva* [proper noun], *prasiplatįs* — *prasiplatins* [will be widened], *tuojaus* — *tuoju* [right away], *daugiau* — *daugiau* [more], *jieškoti* — *ieškoti* [to search]).]

(Biržiška 1918b, 89)

The editor also admitted that scholarly precision was not his basic aim in this publication:

Visos pataisos, pastabos ar šiaip nuomonės apie Duonelaičio teksto vartojimą ir paaiškinimus galima siųsti, be laikraščių, ir Lietuvos Mokslo Draugijai, pažymėjus: „del Duonelaičio raštų“. Gautoji kritikos medžiaga bus mielai priimta ir sunaudota, jei prireiks, antrajam vadovėlio leidimui; juo labiau, jog autorius nebūdamas kalbininkas, nėra per daug savimi pasitikįs. Jam rūpėjo ne tiek mokslo žvilgsniu tobūlas vadovėlis pagaminti, kiek praskinti kelias šitokiems padedamiesiems literatūros istorijos raštams.

[All the revisions, comments or opinions regarding the use and explanations of Donelaitis's text can be sent, beside newspapers, to the Lithuanian Scientific Society with a note "in regard to Donelaitis's writings". The received critical material will be gladly accepted and used, if necessary, in the second edition of the textbook. After all, not being a linguist, the author is not overconfident. He is more interested in paving the way for this kind of supplementary writings of the

history of literature rather than producing a perfect textbook from the scholarly viewpoint.]

(Biržiška 1918a, 79)

Literary historians of that time considered *Metai* a realist or classicist poem, which basically spoke about nature, peasant life and other aspects of folk culture, and thus devoted much attention to Donelaitis's life and his social and cultural environment (see Biržiška 1918a; Maironis-Mačiulis 1932; Miškinis 1939). As such, it completely complied with the goals of the emerging national state and its agrarian mentality. Šlapelis's and Biržiška's editions were not noted for scholarly precision, the aim of authenticity, nor for their printing quality, and they contained strong interventions in the authentic text (perhaps not so much made by Šlapelis and Biržiška as continuing from earlier editions), as well as new proofreading and typesetting mistakes and inconsistent standardization of spelling (Krištopaitienė 2007, 37–38, 142). And yet, *Metai* was a matter of national pride. Biržiška characterized the poem in the following words: “yra tai kilniausias lietuvių ir vienas žymiausių visuotinosios literatūros kūrinių” (“it is the noblest Lithuanian work of literature and one of the outstanding works of general literature”), which became “a national poem” (Biržiška 1918a, 74, 77).

While the school editions of *Metai* edited by Biržiška were still in circulation, in 1922 the Ministry of Education of Lithuanian Republic initiated the preparation of a new edition of Donelaitis's works. An agreement was signed with a German Baltic and Slavic scholar at the University of Königsberg: professor Reinhold Trautmann (1883–1951). He was most probably chosen because he had an easy access to Donelaitis's manuscripts and their copies held in Königsberg's archives, and because he was acclaimed as a highly qualified philologist at the time, taking interest in the history of the Lithuanian language (Sabaliauskas 1979, 212–215). The agreement provided that Trautmann would prepare Donelaitis's works from his autographs and copies and compare them with other editions of Donelaitis's works. However, for unknown reasons (in 1926 Trautmann moved to work at Leipzig University), this project was never came to fruition. We can only guess the type and quality of this edition and what further impact on the development of Lithuanian philology would have been. Judging by the demonstrated efforts, it would undoubtedly have been one of the most complex and important textual research and publishing projects in interwar Lithuania — a national culture that was still in the early stages of building its philological tradition and practice at that time.

The need for an extraordinary work of literature that would represent the national literary canon became even more acute in the interwar period. *Metai*, as was already mentioned, was well suited for that role. In 1936, the Ministry of Education once again initiated the preparation of a representational edition. Artist Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas (1907–1997) received a commission to make illustrations, and literary historian Juozas Ambrazevičius (1903–1974) had to edit the text. The first representational edition of the poem *Metai* came out in

1940 (Donelaitis 1940)<sup>8</sup> already in the first months of Soviet occupation. With the aim to preserve and convey the authentic text by Donelaitis, Ambrazevičius would base the edition on Donelaitis's autographs, copies and Nesselmann's edition, but also asserted that the text had to be easily readable and adapted for a wide readership and schools:

Kiti dabar laikai, kiti ir reikalavimai naujam leidimui. Viena – didžiojo ir pirmojo lietuvių klasiko veikalas turėjo būti reprezentacinis; antra — jis turėjo išlaikyti pilną ir autentišką tekstą; trečia — turėjo būti lengvai paskaitomas jaunimui ir masės žmogui per mokyklas ir bibliotekas. [. . .] Norint išlaikyti griežtai autentišką tekstą, geriausia tiktų leisti fotografuotinis veikalas. Tačiau jis būtų sunkiai paskaitomas ir dėl to nepopuliarus. Todėl ruošiant šį leidimą, teko eiti kompromiso keliu: atsisakyti nuo Donelaičio rašybos, bet išlaikyti visą jo žodyną ir sintaksę. [. . .] Šiame leidime vartojama dabartinė rašyba.

[The times have changed, and so have the requirements for the new edition. Firstly, the work by the great and first Lithuanian classic has to be representational; secondly, the full and authentic text has to be retained; thirdly, it has to be easily accessible for young people and society at large through schools and libraries. [. . .] With the aim to retain the strictly authentic text, a photographic edition would be the most suitable. But it would be very difficult to read and thus unpopular. That is why, in the preparation of this edition, we have to make a compromise: renounce Donelaitis's spelling but retain all of his vocabulary and syntax. [. . .] Contemporary spelling is used in this edition.]

(Ambrazevičius 1940, 182)

Thus, quite significant interventions in Donelaitis's authentic text were made. Ambrazevičius did not formulate consistent principles of editing, but in an attempt to make the text comprehensible to the readers without a philological grounding, he standardized, albeit inconsistently, the spelling, punctuation, phonetics, morphology, lexis etc. according to the rules of the standard language (Krištopaitienė 2005). He replaced authentic dialectal forms (e.g.: *niurnėti* ← *nurnėti* [to murmur; to grumble]; *siurbti* ← *surbti* [to sip; to swig; to drink]; *triūšas* ← *trūšas* [toil; work], etc.); standardized the verbs in the future tense with the ending *-su* (e.g.: *paminėsiu* ← *paminėsu* [I will mention]; *pridabosiu* ← *pridabosu* [I will take a look], etc.); and replaced some word forms with more common standardized equivalents (e.g.: *giria* ← *girė* [wood]; *grikis* ← *grikas* [buckwheat]; *skrynčia* ← *skrynė* [chest; coffer], etc.). Most probably because the edition was also meant for schools, the editor tried to give Donelaitis's language a "nobler" sound by replacing the words of obscene meaning in the understanding of that time with softer or neutral ones (e.g.: *juodvabalys* [dung-beetle] ← *šūdvabalys* [shit-beetle]; *kiaušas* [balls; eggs] ← *pautas* [balls; testicles]; *mėšlinėdams* [grubbing around/living in muck] ← *šūdinėdams* [grubbing around/living in shit]; *niekas* [nothing; nil] ← *šūdas* [shit; dung]; *teršia* [litter; soil] ← *meža* [piss], etc.). The editor explained these interventions in the following way:

<sup>8</sup> The book was reprinted in 1941 and 1948.

‘Metų’ tekstas duotas pilnas. Tik keliose vietose šiais laikais įgavę obsceniškos prasmės žodžiai yra pakeisti tais, prie kurių jau yra įprasta iš M. Biržiška’s leidimo.

[The text of *The Seasons* is given in full. Only in some places the words that nowadays have acquired an obscene meaning are replaced with those that have already become customary from Biržiška’s edition.]

(Ambrazevičius 1940, 184–185)

He also indicated concrete places in the text where the words had been replaced. Yet Ambrazevičius did not refer to Biržiška’s edition on all occasions, as almost all of such places had been cut out in that edition. Several new corruptions of words appeared (e.g.: *kailiuką* [little fur] ← *kuiliuką* [little pig]; *prisišokt* [to dance a lot] ← *prisikošt* [to get drunk]; *rėžių* [gen. pl. ‘strips of land’] ← *rečių* [gen. pl. ‘idle fields, fallows’]; *sukrovęs* [having stacked up] ← *surokavęs* [having arranged], etc.). Four lines of the poem were omitted: two due to their expressiveness: *Juk ir ponų vaikesčiai taipjau per subinę gauna, / Kad jie, kaip kiti vaikai, į patalą meža* [For gentry’s children too, like others, get / Their bum spanked when the bedding they have wet] Pl 312–313; and two most probably due to inattentiveness (of the editor or typesetter?): *Tuos žodelius savo tėvo aš tikrai nusitvėriau* [Father’s words firmly in my memory stay] Pl 453; *Kad tikt varnos dar biaurybę rudenio garbin* [That only crows laud horrid autumn days] Rg 52. Despite quite a strong intervention in the text, Ambrazevičius’s edition is considered to be culturally highly significant, as it was also noted for high printing quality and for the first time had original illustrations. It was this edition of *Metai* that both visually and textually conveyed the contemporaries’ view of Donelaitis’s poem as a classic of national literature that embodied the central element of Lithuanian identity — peasant mentality and culture, and naturally close relation to nature. Thus *Metai* became a representative of the national literary canon and a symbol of preservation of national culture.

The subsequent editions that came out in the Soviet period bear witness to the then prevailing tendency of standardizing not only the understanding of Donelaitis’s work, but also his language. The 1945 publication *Metai ir pasakėčios* (*The Seasons and the Fables*) (Donelaitis 1945) edited by Valys Drazdauskas (1906–1981) was prepared on the basis of Ambrazevičius’s edition. The presented text of *Metai* was incomplete — 49 lines were omitted (not all the cuts were indicated): some rough episodes and places containing obscene words were left out. Quite many interventions in the authentic text were made, and most often Ambrazevičius’s editorial corrections, corruptions and mistakes were mechanically repeated (e.g.: *bematant* [seeing] ← *bepamatant* [having seen]; *rėžių* [gen. pl. ‘strips of land’] ← *rečių* [gen. pl. ‘idle fields; fallows’]; *susėdę* [having sat down] ← *susisėdę* [having seated themselves]; *valyt* [to clean] ← *suvalyt* [to clean out], etc.). New mistakes also appeared — corrupted words, changed cases (e.g.: *jauti* [feel] ← *jaugi* [already]; *kirminai* [nom. pl. ‘worms’] ← *kirminų* [acc. sg. ‘worm’]; *sparnų* [gen. pl. ‘wings’] ← *sparų* [gen. pl. ‘joist’], etc.). Dialectal forms

were replaced with normative variants of the standard language (e.g.: *qžuols* ← *aužuols* [oak]; *rupūžes* ← *rupuižes* [acc. pl. 'toad']; *sau* ← *sav* [for oneself], etc.). In two places, printing errors occur, when two lines are merged by skipping the end of one line and the beginning of the next one (e.g.: *Tankiai mes tvanke, prastai maišydami gèrèm* Rg (1945) 366 (cf. *Tankiai mes tvanke prastai maišydami skinkį / Ir vandens malkus iš klano semdami gèrèm* [Often in heat waves nothing but thin beer / And water from a puddle we have drunk], Rg 366–367); *Šalant be šiltos stubos kuršolės srėbt ir siurbt nenorėsi* Žr (1945) 281 (cf. *Šalant be šiltos stubos išbūt negalėsi, / O šaltos kuršolės srėbt ir surbt nenorėsi* [Without a warm home you'll not bear the frost, / And you'll not want to sip cold beetroot soup], Žr 281–282)). Like in Ambrazevičius's edition, words with obscene meaning were left changed.

The edition of 1950 *Raštai* (*Writings*) (Donelaitis 1950) edited by Aleksandras Žirgulyš (1909–1986) was characterized by quite radical editorial interventions and particularly distinct standardization tendencies, although the editing principles were not declared and no arguments were given. The text of *Metai* was incomplete (59 lines were cut out; the cuts were marked). Like in earlier editions, the tradition of replacing obscene words persisted. In the text of the poem, almost all the most typical phonetic and morphological features of Donelaitis's language were discarded: the noun suffix *-ukas* was replaced with the normative variant *-iukas* (e.g.: *veršiukai* ← *versukai* [calves], etc.); the adjective suffix *-iausis*, *-iausi* was replaced with the normative variant *-iausias*, *-iausia* (e.g.: *brangiausia* ← *brangiausi* [the dearest], etc.); "hard" spelling words were replaced with normative variants with a soft sign (e.g.: *durniuoti* ← *durnuoti* [to fool around]; *niurnėti* ← *nurnėti* [to murmur]; *siurbti* ← *surbti* [to sip; to swig; to drink], etc.); authentic word forms were replaced with normative ones (e.g.: *nes* ← *nės* [because]; *sau* ← *sav* [for oneself]; *tik* ← *tikt* [only], etc.). In preparing this edition, the earlier editions of Ambrazevičius and Drazdauskas were taken into account, and thus some editorial interventions coincided (e.g.: *bematant* ← *bepamatant* [upon seeing smth.]; *gyvulį* ← *gyvuolį* [acc. sg. 'animal']; *išmėtęs* [having dropped] ← *išmėtęs* [having scattered], etc.). Other interventions in the authentic text were made (e.g.: *bedainuojant* [while singing] ← *bedejuojant* [while moaning]; *numatyti* [to allow] ← *numanyti* [to imply; to understand]; *vieni* [alone] ← *vierni* [faithful]; omitted words *taip* [so; thus] Žr 642; *vėl* [again] Pl 46, etc.). It is important to note that the editorial intentions, principles and reasons for making cuts in these editions remained undeclared.

In 1956, a Soviet representational edition of the poem *Metai* (Donelaitis 1956) canonizing the national poet, edited by Aleksandras Žirgulyš and illustrated by Vytautas Jurkūnas (1910–1993), came out. The illustrations complied with the standards of Soviet conjuncture and socialized art. Notably, in this edition after quite a long time the text was presented without any cuts. And, most importantly, the tradition of "improving" the poet's language by removing obscene words was rejected. Language standardization was less strict, and some dialectal forms replaced in the Žirgulyš 1950 edition were reinstated. However, some other dialectal forms were replaced with normative ones (e.g.: *bėdžius* ← *bie-*

*džius* [unfortunate creature]; *nės* ← *nes* [because]; *striokas* ← *strokas* [fright]; *šiame* ← *šime* [in this one], etc.). There was no consistency in morphological standardization, e.g., some words with the authentic suffix *-ukas* were retained (e.g.: *sturluks* [rabbit], etc.), while other words were standardized by adding the suffix *-iukas* (e.g.: *veršiukai* [calves], etc.). Quite many corruptions and inaccuracies were transferred from earlier editions (Nesselmann, Ambrazevičius, Drazdauskas), e.g., omitted or added words (e.g.: omitted: *taipjau* [as well as] Pl 312; *tik(t)* [only] Vd 442; added: *visur* [everywhere] Rg 434); confused words (e.g.: *pykčio* ← *papykio* [gen. sg. 'anger; rage']; *prisišokt* [to dance a lot] ← *prisikošt* [to get drunk]; *puikiai* [excellently] ← *paikiai* [foolishly], etc.); different tenses of verbs (e.g.: *dovanojo* [gave a gift] ← *dovanoja* [is giving a gift]; *klausiu* [I am asking] ← *klausiau* [I asked], etc.); different prepositions of nouns (e.g.: *nuo suolo* [from the bench] ← *po suolu* [under the bench]). One can think that the aim of authenticity of the text, in particular on the lexical level, was also related to the changed socio-cultural conditions in the field of Soviet culture. Soviet culture needed a work of classical literature representing peasant-proletarian mentality. Not only the scenes of work, but also the related vocabulary used by Donelaitis could perfectly serve that purpose. In this respect, Donelaitis used rather rough, presumably colloquial language, as critics put it, "smelling of earth and dung".

An important place in the history of Donelaitis's editions is occupied by a documentary and critical edition of 1977 (Donelaitis 1977), which was at that time considered a model of a scholarly publication in Lithuanian philology. The text of *Metai* was edited by philologist Kazys Ulvydas (1910–1996). The editor's aims were the stability and reliability of the text (Ulvydas 1977, 294). Donelaitis's authorial punctuation was respected and conveyed more successfully than in other editions. On the lexical level, the editor retained many word forms typical of Donelaitis (e.g.: *aužuolas* → *qžuolas* [oak]; *biedžius* → *bėdžius* [unfortunate creature]; *didei* → *didžiai* [highly; greatly]; *morkas* → *morka* [carrot]; *rudenis* → *ruduo* [autumn], etc.); adverbs with *-iaus* (e.g.: *baisiaus* [more scary], etc.); nouns with the suffixes *-atis*, *-atė* (e.g.: *ožkatė* [little goat], etc.), *-ukas* (*bernukas* [boy], etc.); and the syntax was fully retained (Ulvydas 1977, 303–312). This edition was prepared on the basis of the autographs and Nesselmann's edition, which was the least removed from the primal source, and thus the corruptions and inaccuracies that had been mechanically repeated in the earlier editions did not appear here. Yet, full authenticity was not achieved, e.g. authentic pronoun forms were discarded (e.g.: *sav* ← *sau* [for oneself], etc.); as well as the long suffix of verbs *-yn* (e.g.: *atsimyk* ← *atsimink* [remember], etc.); the regular forms of the first person singular of the future tense with the ending *-su* were not retained (e.g.: *krutėsu* ← *krutėsiu* [I will keep moving], etc.); forms of prepositions were standardized (e.g.: *nuo* ← *nu* [from], etc.); word forms were standardized (e.g.: *dosniai* ← *dosnai* [generously]; *išauštant* ← *išaušant* [at daybreak]; *stikliorius* ← *stiklorius* [glazier], etc.).

Another edition by the same editor was published in 1983 (Donelaitis 1983).

It was a representational edition with illustrations taken from the Ambrazevičius edition, dedicated to the 270th anniversary of Donelaitis's birth. The editing was inconsistent and imprecise, and the editing practice of the earlier Ulvydas edition was not taken into account. One of the reasons was that the book was intended for wide readership and representational purpose:

Šio leidimo tekstas ir dar vienu kitu mažmožiu skiriasi nuo 1977 m. K. Donelaičio raštuose paskelbto 'Metų' teksto. Visus tuos skirtumėlius lėmė ne tik pastangos siekti 'Metų' teksto stabilumo idealo, ne tik to teksto tolesnės studijos, bet ir paties leidinio paskirtis, taip pat atodaira į jo adresatą — plačiąją visuomenę.

[The text of this edition differs in some minor features from the text of *The Seasons* published in the writings of Donelaitis of 1977. All these differences were determined not only by the efforts to seek the ideal stability of the text of *The Seasons* and further studies of the text, but also by the purpose of the edition itself, and its target — society at large.]

(Ulvydas 1983, 176)

Authentic punctuation was not retained, and standardization was more conspicuous than in the 1977 edition. The editor gave very weak arguments for standardizing certain forms of nouns according to contemporary requirements, though he did not do it in the 1977 edition (e.g.: *bėdžius* ← *biedžius* [unfortunate creature]; *giria* ← *girė* [wood]; *išsiplėtęs* ← *išsisplėtęs* [expanded]; *kruopa* ← *kruopas* [grain]; *neprietičius* ← *neprietelis* [hostile], etc.). Like in Ambrazevičius edition, two lines of the poem were omitted (*Tuos žodelius savo tėvo aš tikrai nusi-tvėriau* [Father's words firmly in my memory stay] Pl 453; *Kad tikt varnos dar bjaurybę rudenio garbin* [That only crows laud horrid autumn days] Rg 52).

In the text of the poem published in the period of independent Lithuania in 1994 (Donelaitis 1994)<sup>9</sup> editor Vytautas Vitkauskas (1935–2012) declared his aim to retain the authentic dialectal forms:

Šiuo leidimu Kristijono Donelaičio grožiniai tekstai pateikiami tradiciniai, t.y. išsaugota visa autoriaus sintaksė, leksika, morfologija, nedėsninga fonetika.

[In this edition, the literary texts by Kristijonas Donelaitis are presented traditionally, i.e. the author's syntax, lexis, morphology, and irregular phonetics have been retained in their entirety.]

(Vitkauskas 1994, 169)

The verb forms with the long [i:] (<y>), standardized in the majority of previous editions, were reinstated (e.g.: *garbyt* ← *garbinti* [to adore]; *judykimės* ← *judinkimės* [let's move], etc.). The forms of the first person singular of the future tense with the ending *-su* were returned (e.g.: *krutėsu* ← *krutėsiu* [I will move], etc.).

<sup>9</sup> This edition was reprinted in 2000, 2002, 2010, and 2011.

Even more authentic word forms than in the 1977 edition were retained (e.g.: *kulšes* → *kulšis* [acc. pl. 'loins']; *sruba* → *sriuba* [soup]; *žynavimas* → *žyniavimas* [witchcraft], etc.). Yet, the text was not without faults: most probably basing on the 1983 edition, the word form *bėdžius* (← *biedžius* [unfortunate creature]) not used by Donelaitis was chosen; a colon in front of the conjunction *nės* [as; for] was replaced with a comma; a comma in composite sentences was replaced with a semicolon. There were several more minor inaccuracies (e.g.: *aplankyt* ← *atlankyt* [to visit]; *ir* [and] ← *ar* [or]; *prisivalgiusios* ← *pasivalgiusios* [having eaten to the full], etc.; omitted word *savo* [your own] Rg 299).

In conclusion, we could say that Kristijonas Donelaitis's poem *Metai* was and still is one of the most conspicuously edited works in the history of Lithuanian literature. The editing strategies of the major editions of the poem were determined by the cultural context of the time and the type and aims of the edition. In many editions that revised the earlier publications of *Metai*, the aim of authenticity of Donelaitis's work, above all, its language strongly related to the metrotonic hexameter was declared. The editors sought to present (i.e. edit) the text of *Metai* making it as authentic and close to Donelaitis's original text as possible compared to editions intended for general use or, as they put it, to reveal "the very roots of the Lithuanian poetic word". This approach followed from the assumption that Donelaitis was practically the first poet writing in Lithuanian, the father of Lithuanian poetry who wrote in the most authentic and genuine Lithuanian language, a language spoken by the peasants of his parish who were illiterate and ignorant of literary traditions.

In other words, in *Metai* and its vernacular, the essence of the Lithuanian language was revealed. Because of this status of the work, the authenticity of Donelaitis's language (e.g., dialectal forms, variety and irregularities of linguistic forms, non-normative variants as compared to contemporary usage) is almost unanimously acclaimed as having literary and cultural value. As Donelaitis's text could not be presented in its authentic spelling and punctuation to a reader without specialised philological training, editorial interventions in these fields were obligatory. However, in addition to this, one could say, formal editing, Donelaitis's phonetics, morphology and even lexis were also affected. Practically all editions of *Metai* meant for general use rather than scholarly purposes were edited with distinct interventions in Donelaitis's text; in other words, the text was corrupted. Besides all that, there was also the aim of the stability of the text — editing and presenting the text of *Metai* so that it would correspond to the norms of language usage of that time, but with the least possible intervention in the text, in order to ensure the reliability of the text, i.e. the author's original intent as witnessed in the autographs of his work.<sup>10</sup> The tendency to present Donelaitis's text in the most authentic form and interpret only the most complex cases related to the phonetic and morphological word forms used by Donelaitis, let alone radical editing, cuts or

<sup>10</sup> On the autographs of *Metai* and on writing, revising, correcting and retouching the text, see Vaicekauskas and Krištopaitienė 2014; Vaicekauskas 2014.

intervention in the vocabulary, which became apparent since the middle of the twentieth century, persists until today.

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