

## Foreword

The poem *Metai* (*The Seasons*) by Kristijonas Donelaitis, written circa 1765–1775 and first published in 1818, has been considered a living monument of national classics since the late nineteenth century. The poem grew in significance in the early twentieth century, as Lithuanians became concerned about the resources of their national classics. However, it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that *Metai* acquired the bibliographical form appropriate for a classical monument: the first edition of the poem was published in 1940, to be followed by several other luxurious editions. In the present study the greatest amount of attention is given to two editions published in 1940 (Ambrazevičius-Jonynas) and 1956 (Žirgulyš-Jurkūnas)<sup>1</sup>; it was these two editions that formed and established the bibliographical code of the poem, and it was not until recently that it has been brought into question. Both editions are characterized by obvious representativeness, which is expressed in a large variety of details: a large (*in quarto*) size, relatively thick quality paper, clear and easily readable type, spacious gaps in between the lines, wide margins, headpieces and tailpieces, decorative title pages for the entire book and each part individually, and vivid and suggestive illustrations. The editions of Ambrazevičius-Jonynas and Žirgulyš-Jurkūnas are undoubtedly similar in appearance, despite the fact that they appeared in different political and cultural conditions. The similarity and stability of the bibliographical code, which visually and distinctly conveyed the canon of reading the poem, would testify that the meaning of Donelaitis and his work for Lithuanian culture was realized in a similar way both in the twenty-year period of independence between the two world wars, and in the Soviet period, i.e. almost for the entire twentieth

<sup>1</sup> The main illustrated editions of *Metai* are named after the editor and the illustrator – in this case, Juozas Ambrazevičius and Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, and Aleksandras Žirgulyš and Vytautas Jurkūnas. For detailed descriptions of the editions, see further in the text and the list of bibliography.

century. The canon of reading *Metai*, closely related with the bibliographical code born in 1940, began to be questioned when the poem transcended the borders of the USSR and the socialist bloc in space (the Swedish edition), and later – in time (illustrations by Petras Repšys).

In the present study we use the term *bibliographical code*, which so far has been absent in the works by Lithuanian book historians, bibliographers, and textual scholars, in its classical sense, offered in the 1980s by the founders of social textual scholarship, American Jerome J. McGann (b. 1937) and New Zealander Donald F. McKenzie (1931–1999) who became prominent in the academic world of Great Britain<sup>2</sup>. McGann referred to the material body of the text as its bibliographical code. The text always has a material shape, but it must not necessarily be a printed publication – it can be a voice, a fixed or moving image. Each of these shapes has an appropriate structure, which influences the perception of meaning and the process of (re)construction of linguistically encoded meanings.

A size, layout, types (the form, size, and colour of the letters), paper (thickness, grain, texture, and colour), cover, binding, fly leaves, title page, illustrations, headpieces and tailpieces take part in the (re)construction of the meaning of the printed publication. This material body of the printed publication, or the totality of the elements that constitute its appearance, is called the bibliographical code. It influences the reading and assessment of the text, and also allows reconstructing the intentions of the publishers and those who commissioned the publication, as well as their relation with a linguistic text. This kind of approach to printed publications also expands the understanding of the aims of bibliography. According to the followers of social textual scholarship, one of the tasks of bibliography is to capture and register the material forms, which convey the meanings of the text, and their relations with the production, distribution, and use of printed publications.

The researchers of Donelaitis's *Metai* did address the questions of the material body of the poem, and the illustrations for the poem received the greatest amount of attention. This is quite understandable, as illustrations are one of the most important visual elements of the book, and after the text, they have the greatest influence on the perception of its contents. Specialists in graphic art analysed the illustrations for *Metai* in greatest detail. Those who wrote about the representative editions of the poem, above all, the illustrations by Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, also addressed other aspects important for the analysis of the

<sup>2</sup> See Jerome J. McGann, *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983; Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991; Donald F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Donald F. McKenzie, *Making Meaning: 'Printers of the Mind' and Other Essays*, edited by Peter D. McDonald and Michael Suarez, Amherst, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002.

bibliographical code, assessing the size of the book, the relation of the images and the text, the features of the layout, and the general impression made by the book. Particularly significant in this respect are the works by Ingrida Korsakaitė (see the list of bibliography), which are supplemented by the insights of the researchers of Jonynas's artistic heritage Tomas Sakalauskas and Rasa Andriušytė-Žukienė.

In preparation for the commemoration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Donelaitis's birth, we have set out to reread the text of *Metai* in an attempt to understand how our predecessors read it. One of the convenient ways to do it is to analyse the imaging of the text, its material expression or bibliographical code, which reflects the status of a concrete edition in the eyes of contemporaries, the meanings assigned to the poem by the publishers, who chose the paper and the type for the editions, commissioned the illustrations and the layout, and set the print run and the price, i.e. anticipated the conditions for the distribution of the publication and its addressee. Our aim is to trace the appearance of the dominant bibliographical code of *Metai*, to discuss how it acquired the power of canon, what impact this canon made on the reading of the poem and its further imaging, and to map out the symptoms of disintegration of the canon. We have sought to discuss the most remarkable manifestations of this process. Our aim to analyse the history of the bibliographical canon has determined the decision to concentrate exclusively on the complete editions of the poem. We rejected marginal cases, including the edition *Jau saulelė vėl...* (*The Climbing Sun Again...*) with an artistic cover and seven illustrations by Vytautas Kalinauskas (1963)<sup>3</sup>, containing the existing translations of the opening lines of "Joys of Spring" into other languages, which was similar to the illustrations by Jonynas and Jurkūnas, and a folder of illustrations of the same title<sup>4</sup>. Kalinauskas's illustrations were never used for a complete edition (containing the full text of the poem), although judging from the published variants – a book containing the translations of an excerpt from *Metai*, a folder of illustrations, and a booklet of miniature illustrations (1963)<sup>5</sup> – this visual interpretation was popular enough. In this study we do not analyse the editions of excerpts from the poem adapted for children, *Lakštingala* (*Nightingale*, 1949)<sup>6</sup> and *Mes vyžoti būrai* (*We, Bast-Shod Serfs*, 1957), illustrated by Domicelė

3 Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Jau saulelė vėl...*, redaktorius Juozas Jasinevičius, dailininkas Vytautas Kalinauskas, Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1963.

4 Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Jau saulelė vėl...* [Iliustracijų reprodukcijos], dailininkas Vytautas Kalinauskas, Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1963.

5 *10 iliustruotų knygų*: [Knygų iliustracijų reprodukcijos]: [kn. 1]: Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Jau saulelė vėl...*, dailininkas Vytautas Kalinauskas, Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1963, 1 folder (10 books).

6 Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Lakštingala*: Iš „Pavasario linksmybių“, atsak. redaktorius Eduardas Mieželaitis, iliustravo Domicelė Tarabildienė, Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1949. While creating the cover, the illustrator obviously had Jonynas's nightingale in mind, while Jurkūnas in his turn referred to Tarabildienė's composition. At first sight it may seem that this similarity relates *Lakštingala* with the development of the bibliographical

Tarabildienė<sup>7</sup> and, later, Albina Makūnaitė (1975, 1979)<sup>8</sup>. Neither did we include in our research the publications dedicated to the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Donelaitis's birth or published since 2012, e.g. the album decorated with photographic illustrations by Rimgaudas Maleckas and Dangirutė Maleckienė<sup>9</sup>. We presume that more than one anniversary edition will come out, giving us the possibility to see how the traditions of the dominant bibliographical code of *Metai* are followed or broken.

The present study is an attempt to reflect upon *Metai* by using the concept of the bibliographical code. The aims of the research required uniting the views of experts in literature and art. In this way a team of researchers – an art historian and a textual scholar – was formed. At first the results of the research were presented to a narrow audience of specialists. The presentation titled “Omnipotent Tradition: Illustrations to Kristijonas Donelaitis’s Poem *The Seasons (Metai)*” was read at the eighth annual conference of the European Society for Textual Scholarship “*InterNational and InterDisciplinary Aspects of Scholarly Editing = InterNationalität und InterDisziplinarität der Editionswissenschaft = InterNationalité et InterDisciplinarité de l’édition scientifique des textes: The Eighth Annual Conference of the European Society for Textual Scholarship*”, which took place in Bern University on 16 February 2012. The paper prepared on the basis of the presentation, “An Omnipotent Tradition: The Illustrations of Kristijonas Donelaitis’s Poem *Metai* and the Creation of a Visual Canon”, was published in the Society’s scholarly journal *Variants*<sup>10</sup> in early 2013. In preparing the paper, quite a large part of interesting comparative material had to be discarded – it would have required detailed explanations for an international reader and unnecessarily expanded the text. Though the Lithuanian audience can understand this material without much commentary, it remains unknown for the larger part of society. The aim to broaden the understanding of Donelaitis and the reception of his poem encouraged us to prepare this illustrated bilingual book and hold an

canon of *Metai*, but in fact the booklet only shows that its editors and designers interpreted the poem with conscious simplification and looked for a way to illustrate its excerpts with images of domestic life, which children would understand.

7 Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Mes vyžoti būrai*, redaktorė Irena Olšauskaitė, iliustravo Domicelė Tarabildienė, Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1957.

8 Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Mes vyžoti būrai*, atsak. redaktorius Jonas Stukas, iliustravo Albina Makūnaitė, Vilnius: Vaga, 1975; Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Mes vyžoti būrai*, antras leidimas, redaktorius Henrikas Bakanas, iliustravo Albina Makūnaitė, Vilnius: Vaga, 1979.

9 Kristijonas Donelaitis, *Metai*, idėjos autorius ir redaktorius Kazys Požėra, iliustracijų autoriai Rimgaudas Maleckas, Dangirutė Maleckienė, Kaunas: Kalendorius, 2012.

10 Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Mikas Vaicekauskas, “An Omnipotent Tradition: The Illustrations of Kristijonas Donelaitis’s Poem *Metai* and the Creation of a Visual Canon”, in: *Variants: The Journal of the European Society for Textual Scholarship*, t. 10, editor Wim Van Mierlo, associate editor Alexandre Fachard, Amsterdam-New York, NY: Rodopi, 2013, p. 211–234.

exhibition at the Vilnius Graphic Art Centre. It is part of the project “Donelaitis. 300” (2013–2014, Nr. LIT-7-8) supported by the Research Council of Lithuania and implemented in cooperation with the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Vilnius Graphic Art Centre, Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, and Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas Gallery of M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art in Druskininkai.

We extend our thanks to the bibliographer of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania Rūta Chlomauskaitė, who helped us to find some rare editions of *Metai* published abroad, and specified their bibliographical descriptions. Very helpful for the research was the possibility given to us by the director of Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas Gallery in Druskininkai Vida Mažrimienė to get acquainted with and reproduce the 1940 edition of *Metai* bound by Tadas Lomsargis and the earliest original prints of Jonynas’s illustrations held in the gallery’s collection. Valuable remarks from the reviewers, art historian dr. Ingrida Korsakaitė and culture historian dr. Eligijus Raila, have enabled us to improve our study, and the introduction by prof. Paulius V. Subačius has allowed to take the information and insights presented in the main text to the theoretical level and correlate it with contemporary research in textual scholarship and the history of art.

Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Mikas Vaicekuskas