

TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT OF LITHUANIAN LITERARY HISTORY

Summary

Lithuanian literary history, as genre of Lituianistic literary studies, got established in the end of the 19th beginning of the 20th century, when positivism reached Lithuania via Russian and Polish universities. The first conceptual variant of Lithuanian literary history manifested itself in the textbook by Professor Mykolas Biržiška *History of Our Writings* (1st ed. 1920, 2nd ed. 1925). It set an example of the general structure of Lithuanian literary history as well as prerequisites and methods of literary interpretation for almost a century to come. The pattern established by M. Biržiška could be characterized by dual (cultural and social) motivation of literary development, the extended notion of the literary object (Lithuanian literature being defined as comprising all works expressing Lithuanian self-awareness, even those written in other languages), shaping of literary history on the grounds of triple informative discourse (comprising review of an important cultural phenomenon, the writer's biography and description of his/her creative work) as prime element of the chronological sequence. Erosion of the M. Biržiška pattern could be observed in works by Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas and Motiejus Miškinis, published in late 1930s. Unfortunately, the further development of Lithuanian literary history pattern was disrupted by the catastrophe befalling Lithuania in summer of 1940: the loss of independence and the subsequent intensive "Sovietization" of the whole intellectual life. The impact of Marxist ideology is evident in Lithuanian literary histories published during Soviet times; nevertheless, even these works have inherited their structure from the M. Biržiška pattern. New qualitative examples of Lithuanian literary history, comprising results of the modern literary scholarship, have been presented by Vytautas Kubilius (*History of the 20th Century Literature*, 1995) and by the *History of Lithuanian Literature: the 19th Century* (2001), edited under guidance of Juozas Girdzijauskas. The prime principle of structuring these literary histories is the aesthetic conception of literature as verbal art. The work by Kubilius is particularly outstanding in this respect, whereas the pattern developed by Girdzijauskas could be defined as successful symbiosis of the positivist and phenomenological literary scholarship.