

THE GREAT ONES IN THE SMALL HISTORY,
OR HOW ANTANAS BARANAUSKAS WAS DIRECTED
INTO THE ORDINANDS' PEW

Summary

The article discusses the disproportion between the summation of the writer's biography and his cultural activity, and the presentation of his works of fiction in the literary histories. It reviews the chapters, dedicated to the literature of the XIXth century in the Lithuanian literary history editions of 1957, 1979 and 2001. The article states that in case of the authors, who had written few works or their work is of a lesser literary importance, the greater part of the chapter is taken up by the discussion of such authors' biography. On the contrary, the biographies of the great authors are expounded in a more synoptical manner. The case of Antanas Baranauskas is especially appropriate to highlight this disproportion. His biography is discussed in an equally narrow or even more synoptical manner than those of the persons, whose work, as well as their cultural activity, was of a far lesser scope. The period, when Baranauskas wrote poetry, motivates the interest in the first 30 years of his life, while the rest 37 years, when he taught Lithuanian, translated Bible, served as the bishop of Seinai, makes up only 1/5 of the biography text. The life of Baranauskas as the ordinand in the Varniai seminary and the Spiritual Academy earn the greater interest of the literary historians than his service as a bishop. The article raises the question – at what degree does the constricted discussion of the biography and cultural activity of the great authors, leaving the better part of it to the presentation of their work, distorts the general principles of the construction of the literary history. The disproportions, indicated in the article, enable to raise the problem of the discrepancy, passing, and heterogeneity between the two histories – that of the texts and that of the people – in a more acute manner.