

IN USUM STUDIOSAE JUVENTUTIS
JUOZAS GIRDZIJAUSKAS AND "THE ANCIENT
LITHUANIAN LITERATURE" BY JURGIS LEBEDYS

Summary

During the years of Soviet occupation, Professor Juozas Girdzijauskas edited almost the whole manuscript heritage by Professor Jurgis Lebedys (1913–1970); besides, he collected and published a volume of articles and memoirs about this most prominent figure in the Lithuanian literary history of the second half of the 20th century. Among the most important achievements of J. Girdzijauskas in publishing works by J. Lebedys, the textbook for higher schools "The Ancient Lithuanian Literature" (1977) should be named. On the grounds of notes taken down by a number of listeners attending courses of the literary history given by J. Lebedys, and also taking advice and suggestions from his former colleagues, i.e. teachers of Vilnius University and researchers from different other scholarly and cultural institutions, J. Girdzijauskas succeeded in editing a textbook which immediately won appreciation not only from the academic youth, but also from all those who were interested in the ancient Lithuanian culture on the both sides of the "iron curtain". The value of the textbook lay in its unpolitical academic contents, i.e. the broad and deep survey of Lithuanian literature, with special emphasis on discussion of the importance of works, literary events and separate cultural facts against the background of the regional cultural development. Rather than supplementing the image of the old Lithuanian culture, created by the Soviet literary historians, this significant publication continued the academic tradition of literary studies, created by professors Mykolas Biržiška, Vaclovas Biržiška and Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas prior to the Soviet occupation.