

AN OUTLINE OF THE SCIENTIFIC
BIOGRAPHY OF VYTAUTAS VANAGAS

Summary

The article presents an outline of the scholarly and creative development of Vytautas Vanagas, focusing the chief attention on the main works by this literary scientist.

V. Vanagas enters the history of Lithuanian culture primarily as a researcher of Antanas Strazdas. In his monograph "Antanas Strazdas" this scholar has compellingly highlighted the unconventionality of life and works by A. Strazdas, establishing links between the discovered facts, drawing certain lines to connect them, and filling in the gaps with the available contextual material. In this study V. Vanagas has indeed demonstrated the great potential of the historical cultural school, making reconstruction of the hitherto almost legendary life of our literary classic.

The monograph "Dionizas Poška", for which V. Vanagas was granted his scholarly habilitation, presents biography and depicts personality of D. Poška, as well as discussing cultural activities and creative life of this writer of the beginning of the 19th century. Making use of the literary and the archived materials, the author of the monograph recreates the image of Dionizas Poška as a poet, historian, compiler of lexicons, and invigorator of the Lithuanian national consciousness, as seen upon the background of the historical shifts and changes.

The study by V. Vanagas entitled "Realism in Lithuanian Literature" should also be attributed to the history of literature. It contains synthetic review of expressions of realism in Lithuanian prose in the course of half a century (since 1890 until 1940), mainly concentrating on the works by sixteen authors. This generalizing, synthesizing, brave and ambitious scholarly work has filled in a huge gap in both the literary history and theory, making a good basis for further investigations of the Lithuanian realism.

The two editions of the "Compendium of Lithuanian Writers" belong to the encyclopedic works by V. Vanagas. In the second edition, 2340 authors are introduced, starting with the workers of the middle of the 15th century writings, and coming up to the literati born in 1976.

The important conceptual works in literary theory are significantly complemented and continued by the scholar's textual activities. Having started his textual work by editing books for the *Lituanistinė biblioteka* ('Lithuanistic Library') and *Versmės* ('Sources') series, V. Vanagas has in the course of almost two decades edited works by Motiejus Valančius, Antanas Klementas, Stanislovas Dagilis, Antanas Strazdas and Antanas Tatarė, collections of Lithuanian fables and didactical prose, the first volume of the anthology of "Lithuanian Poetry". Although being forced to work under the ideological censorship of the time, which frequently demanded expurgations in the already edited publications, the scholar had early in his life understood one of the main functions of the critical editing, i.e. presenting the canonic textual standard. The precise structure of the publications, comprising selected works of the author in question, the bibliographic references, commentaries on the realia, etc. indicate his mastership of the methodological attitudes, good knowledge of the variety of sources, and the practical textual approach.

Probably the most significant works by V. Vanagas of the recent decade include editing of the academic works by Vaižgantas (already 15 volumes have been published) and by M. Valančius (two volumes are published). They endow this scholar with an exceptional place in the constellation of Lithuanian philologists. Apart from the precision and systematic investigation into the documentary materials, which are typical features of all the important literary studies by V. Vanagas, the textual works mentioned above are characterized by the consistent application of general textual principles, which include authenticity of the literary works, their attribution, precise criteria for textual identification and publication.