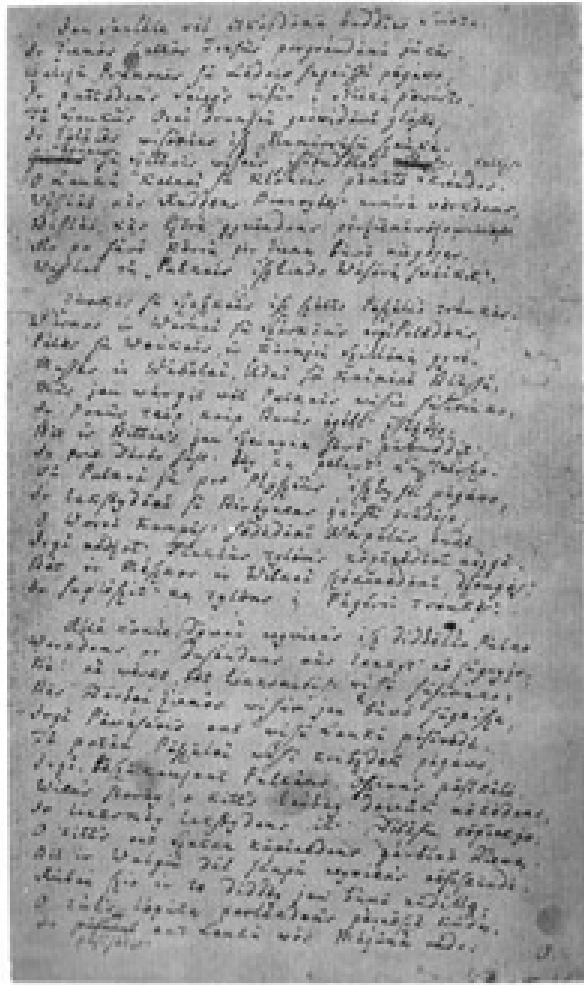





Historical materials:

EARLY REVIEWS OF DONELAITIS' POETRY

	 <p>Das J a h r in v i e r G e s ä n g e n, <hr/>ein l ä n d l i c h e s E p o s aus dem Litthauischen des Christian Donalaitis, genannt Donalitus, in gleichem Versmaass ins Deutsche übertragen von D. L. Z. Rhesa, Prof. d. Theol. <hr/>Königsberg 1818, gedruckt in der Königl. Hartung'schen Hofbuchdruckerei.</p>
<p>Example of Donelaitis' manuscript</p>	<p>Title page of the first edition of the The Seasons</p>

Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung, 1818

The following is the first German review of Donelaitis' poetry, written by P. I. A. (J. Penzel) in JENAISCHE ALLGEMEINE LITERATUR—ZEITUNG. Aug. 1818, no. 152, pp. 297-302. The work reviewed is: DAS JAHR IN VIER GE-SAENGEN: ein laendisches Epos aus dem Litthauischen des Christian Donalaitis, gennant Donalitus. in gleichem Versmass ins Deutsche uebertragen von D. L. Z. Rhesa. Profess, der Theol., Koenigsberg, 1818 The form of proper names used in the review was retained in this translation.

Except for the small area where it is native and spoken by the inhabitants, the Lithuanian language has been known only historically, and even then only by a few philologists and historians such as the late Thunmann in Halle. Except for *the* translation of the Holy Scriptures and of several didactic works (e.g. Freylinghausen's *Ordnung des Heils*), nothing had been printed in it, and professor Rhesa (our readers know this worthy man from his comments on the Lithuanian translation of the Bible which appeared recently in these pages) was the first to present us with a complete and classical work in that literature. The author of this work descended, if we may say so, from a Lithuanian patrician family; that is, from a genuinely Prussian one. This family had not immigrated, but had flourished on the shores of the Rominta at least since the days of the Reformation and perhaps even before that; it had supplied both the church and the state with servants of great merit. Our bard was entirely Prussian and had never left the borders of his homeland. He was born on New Years' day of 1714 in Lasdinelen, in the county of Zieguppenen; he probably attended school in Insterburg and later studied in Koenigsberg during the years 1732-37. (He was a member of the Lithuanian Seminary, which had been established by Schulz in 1718 and where he probably first acquired the taste for and the inclination to cultivate his native language. I doubt if he ever studied under Kypken, although Rhesa assumes it.) In 1740 he became Rector in Stallupenen and three years later he was made the parson of Tomingkemen near Gum-binen, a position he held for 37 years to his death on February 18th, 1780. He was an avid gardener he ground optical glasses, made thermometers and barometers which were famous in all of Prussia; he built pianos which he played himself excellently, but more than music he loved its close relative — poetry. Among his remaining writings there are Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and German poems (the editor has included a relatively good specimen of the latter on page XVIII). His masterpiece, however, is still the poem on the four seasons which has now been printed for the first time. The poet, to whom poetry had become such a part of his nature that he often used verse in corresponding with friends, however, did not consider publication when he wrote it. He wrote it for himself, his peasants, and his friends to whom he sent individual fragments for critical evaluation as soon as the fragments were finished. The editor supplies ten lines of the canto *Fall*, 613-622, obtained from such a letter. These lines are not in his manuscript, but they are so beautiful that we would like to quote them below as an example of the author's artistry, the meter, and the translation. A completed copy was found among his remaining papers. His widow gave this and the rest of his literary legacy to the superintendent Jordan in Walterkemen near Gumbin-nen. He gave the first two cantos from the author's own copy to the editor. The last two cantos from the author's manuscript were lost during the French troubles, but pastor Hohlfeld owned a copy and, since it agreed literally with the original in the first two cantos, it is more than likely that it also contains the original text in the last two.

The editor calls the work a 'pastoral epic'; even if one should disagree with the term, the editor certainly deserves our heartfelt thanks for its publication. A long time ago, Ruhig included in his Lithuanian dictionary a few folksongs (Dainos) whose high poetic value Lessing first praised in the *Literaturbriefe*. These songs had only the simple tone of the people; here, we see what the language can do in the hands of a man who unites in himself its complete mastery and a perfect spiritual culture. This poem gives a lasting monument to the language of the country; future grammarians and lexicographers will be able to base their work on it. The poem can be considered an example and ideal of Lithuanian poetry even more, because it has the stamp of originality on it and included nothing from foreign literature. All thoughts prevail in the poem are strong and true; the feelings breathe the spirit of a pure morality, domestic bliss, and faithful patriotism. The metaphors are well chosen, the descriptions truthful and detailed, and the interspersed didactic proverbs penetrate deep into the heart.

On page VII the editor warns us not to compare Donaleit with Thomson or Hesiodus because of the similar titles. That depends on one's view, but it cannot be called an imitation. It can be proved that our author never read Thomson, and the entire structure of the poem shows it that Hesiodus could never been the example. Donaleit usually begins with a description of the season he is going to sing about; in these descriptions he can be compared to Thomson (whom he never read) as securely and tastefully as the bard of the 'Maharabat' could be compared to Homer, or as Kali-das' *Mega-du-bah* could be compared to Aristophanes. A description of changes which the season brings in plants and animals follows. Then he continues, just as Hesiodus, with the activities of each season and especially criticizes the abuses prevalent at that time. In these guidelines for work he often quite fittingly inserts descriptions of natural phenomena and moral instructions. The end usually consists of an admonition to his countrymen to remain faithful to their old virtues and, with a humble look on God, to prepare themselves properly for the oncoming season.

So much for the manuscript. As far as the translation is concerned, Rhesa is generally known as such a thorough expert of his mother tongue, that nobody will doubt the exactness of his work. Everything, therefore, has to be confined to the external form on which I have the privilege to make a few remarks. Donaleitis has written his poem ('mirabile dictu', a German would be inclined to add here) in pure hexameters. He produced it in the forties of the last century, when the lonely country pastor in Tol-mingkemen had certainly not heard anything of Klopstock, who had then just begun to be known. Even if by some kind of miracle Klop-stock's hexameters had reached as far as Tolmingkemen, then the fragment on page XVIII of Donaleitis' German poetry is sufficient proof that the pastor would have never given himself to making poor German hexameters. The same nature that forced Homer to write in hexameters did so to Donaleitis. He found a language rich with spondees, diphthongs, vowels; a language where quantity did not depend on accent and intonation, which elided even more freely than Greek, loved participial constructions, and differed from Greek in that it completely lacked an article. In a serious poem which was to be more than a sounding 'daina', the hexameter must have come naturally, even though the poet had never read Homer or Virgil. The hexameter, therefore, is not a fetter to him; it is a wreath which he winds around his mother tongue, permitting it to move freely and unhampered within. In order to be exact, Rhesa retains the same meter with the added obligation of finding a German hexameter for each Lithuanian one. He does not take into consideration, however, that to him the wreath of flowers becomes almost a slave's chain. Instead, we would prefer that

Rhesa had chosen the decapodal iambic meter, for his hexameters are not only very hard, but often not even pure. It should be added that in most cases he models his German construction too forcedly, following the Lithuanian original. And although it seems to us (we do not dare consider it to be indisputable) that now and then his original contains Germanisms, it is certain that the translation is full of Lithuanianisms. It seems to us that the position of the adjective behind the noun has been repeated too often. Now and then, Rhesa uses words which not everybody would accept as being good German. 'Blot,' for example, although it is a very old German word form which the Latin 'lutum' is derived and also exists in the Slavic dialects (in Polish and Bohemian 'bloto' and 'blato'), has been eliminated from the cultivated language by common usage, in spite of its genuinely German origin. It therefore should be preserved only in a dialect dictionary as a treasure and should not be used in written language. Here we include III, 131 and IV, 86 'giestige' cows; 146 'Fleck' for the intestines of cows; 367 'Wrucken'. In Note 8 on page 144 Rhesa says that 'Wrucken' are a type of red beets, in Lithuanian 'Burrolai'; that name, however, is not listed there but 'Repukkai' is. Also, although the number 10 stands next to it, it must be a mistake, for the footnote printed on page 155 does not belong there, but to verse 333 where it is again falsely quoted in footnote 3. Page 374 'Abmachsel'; IV, 21 'taumelnd' (it might be a printer's mistake) instead of 'tum-melnd'; 126 'kalmausernd'; 150 'Stobben'. In the same category is 446 'zu Jahr unser Amtsrath', an idiom which more often means 'who was our Amtsrath last year'. It is time to stop here, however, and to give the little fragment which we promised as an example of the original as well as of the translation:

Mylas, ak! antai wertay pagirtinas Mylas,
 Buras rods nè Pons, alle wiezlibs mandagus Buras.
 Jo Namus, kad, kartais jus lankyt' uhgeisi;
 Lugey kaip Baznycze koke rasi redytus
 Stalas jo ney szwentas Altorus taw pasiròdys,
 Ant kurrio knygelés, szwentos gully padétos:
 Kad jis pats ar jo grazey mokiti Waikelei,
 Daug prisidirbe bey wissur wiernay trusineje,
 Tu su Giesmémis saldzioms linksmay pasidzaugtu Ir
 Wargùs szio Amzio saw lengwùs padarytu.

Mylas, jener wahrhaft hochzuverehrende Mylas,
 Ist zwar nur ein Bauer, doch fromm und edel an Tugend!
 Wenn du sein Haus einmal gastfreundlich wollest
 besuchen,
 Wie die Kirche geschmückt anständig wirst du es finden.
 Anzusehen darin ist der Tisch als ein heiliger Altar,
 Worauf immer ein Buch, ein heiliges, lieget, damit er
 Seliber, oder im Kreis' seiner wohlunterrichteten Kinder,
 Wenn sie getrau und flink sich müde gequalet in Arbeit,
 Gleich ergötzen sich mag an wonnenseligen Liedern
 Und aufheiternd also vergessen die Mühen des Lebens.

Whoever scans those verses merely by ear, even without the least knowledge of the language, will easily perceive that he bears pure hexameters without any effort. However, should some readers have such insensitive ears and not be able to find the correct scansion by themselves the writer of this article will mark the first five lines of the poem with metrical signs. They sound and are spoken like this:

Jāu sāu | lēlē | wēl | at | kōpdāmā | būddinō | Šwieta
 Ir Zie | mōs azalt | os Trū | sūs | par | graudāmā | jukēs?
 Šzalczū | Prāmō | nēs | | šū Le | dāis | | sū | gāiszi | pa | gāwō
 Tū Lāu | kūš | Ū | rāi drūn | gni | | gai | windāmi | glōste.
 Ir Zolē | lēs | | wis | sōkias | isz Nū | mirrūsū | száuķē.

There are only few spondaic hexameters, e.g. III, 277:

Prō Dūr | rīs | | isz | szokāū | irgi Ńa | mū | | pār | jōjāū.

There are two caesuras ('ris' and 'mu') where, however, the translator does not obligate himself to imitate them. In German, the line last quoted sounds like this:

Fast ge | doppelt (?) zur Thür und | schwang aufs | Ross mich zur | Heimkehr. Pages 135 - 162 contain footnotes which explain to the German reader everything that he does not know or finds remarkable about the Lithuanian habits. Very often the author refers to Lepner's *Der Preussische Litthauer*. More than 200 years have passed since this book appeared, and it honors the Lithuanian sense for tradition—that their habits are still the same as they were in the days of Lepner; exactly as one finds in an Arab camp the same institutions that existed in the tents of the arch-father Abraham. They are not really scientific, but they could provide *Lithuanian Letters* with rich material. I do not know, why 'Dessauer' and 'Anhalter' are separated, on page 159, N. 5, but it is even more strange to me, because I am a Dessauer and consider myself an Anhalter at the same time.

The work begins with a poetic dedication to the Prussian ambassador in London, Baron von Humboldt. During his stay in Königsberg, the latter had come to love the Lithuanian language and literature, and the author seems to ask him to resist the annihilation of the Lithuanian language that a sound policy might demand; for the objective philologist cannot really demand that the statesman see the various languages from the same perspective as Glottiker.

We do not wish anything more urgently than that Rhesa would soon fulfill 'his promise given in the introduction and would be the first to present us with the long-awaited collection of 'Dainos.'

The Saturday Review (London), 1869

The following is the first English evaluation of Donelaitis, which was published in THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF POLITICS. LITERATURE. SCIENCE. AND ARTS. Londo'n, Nov. 13. 1869. vol. 28, No. 733. pp. 642-843. under the title "Donalitiūs. the Lithuanian Poet". It is a review of Georg Heinrich Nes-semann's edition of Donelaitis' poetry: Christian Donalitiūs. LITTAUISCHE DICHTUNGEN. .. Koenigsberg. 1869. The notes and comments are not part of the original text and were supplied by Vincas Maciunas.

• Writers on the science of language have, it may be hoped, at length succeeded in impressing educated persons with a sense of the philological importance of the once despised idiom of Lithuania.1) It is now recognized as structurally the most elaborate of any living European tongue, and as nearer than any other to the common original of the great Aryan family. The claims of Lithuanian literature would be considerable indeed if they in any degree corresponded to those of, the language.2) It may be fairly assumed that a people endowed with so fine an organ of thought would not have been incapable of turning it to account under favourable circumstances.3) Unfortunate political and social conditions, attributable in great measure to the physical conformation of the country, must be held responsible for the almost sterility of Lithuanian literature. "In the land of the blind the one-eyed is king." Christian Donalitiūs, the solitary poet of Lithuania, occupies as such a far more conspicuous position than could otherwise have been accorded to a writer whose' unswerving fidelity to nature and manners is associated with but a slender share of more strictly poetical qualifications. As the chief literary representative, however, of a venerable and interesting language, he is entitled to, and will probably receive, a considerable share of attention. The study of Lithuanian is too important to be neglected by philologists; but few will care to bestow more time than is absolutely needful upon a task so devoid of all but philological interest. Herr Nesselmann's edition of Donalitiūs, accompanied by a metrical, and at the same time a nearly literal, version in German, and by a copious glossary, affords as short and agreeable a road to the knowledge of the language as is attainable under the circumstances.

The character of Donalitiūs is vividly exhibited in his writings, but his life was uneventful, and no anecdotes respecting him seem to have been preserved. His biography, therefore, need not detain us long. He lived from 1714 to 1780, and for the last forty years of his life was pastor of Tolkimen,4) a Lithuanian village on the eastern frontier of Prussia. He had received a regular theological training, and was an amateur in mechanics, music, and poetry. To the latter circumstance we are indebted for his works, which seem to have been undertaken in the first instance for amusement; and which, although completed at the insistence of friends, were not published for nearly forty years after his death. Though their poetical pretensions are not of the first class, they deserve the esteem of the writer's countrymen, no less than of philologists. They alone attest the finish and polish which the language might have attained; and they preserve a marvelously graphic representation of the life of Lithuanian peasants; that is to say, of ninety-nine hundredths of the nation. A more exalted inspiration on the author's part might have seriously impaired the value of his writings. He would probably have been captivated by foreign models, and have wasted his powers in the vain attempt to transplant their exotic beauties to the morasses of Lithuania. Fortunately, he seems to have been untroubled by cravings for fame, profit, or ideal excellence. He simply aimed at depicting the life he saw around him, and succeeded in a degree impossible to one disabled by education from participating in the feelings of a rude people. The state of society he describes is more than rustic; its coarseness would have repelled any person of moderate sensitiveness. Donalitiūs was enough of a poet to embody the feelings of his people in metre, and enough of a boor not to be discomfited by their clownishness. He has shown that the most unpromising subjects are not impracticable for poetry if attempted with honesty of purpose, without mendacious embellishment, and in the earnest persuasion that one man, wherever and whoever he may be, is always interesting to another.

The extant works of Donalitiūs (some have been lost) consist of six fables and five idyls. The former merely exhibit the author's unfitness for a species of composition in which conciseness is of primary importance. The four principal idyls, which are individually of very considerable length, form collectively a consecutive poem. They are a kind of Lithuanian "Seasons", respectively delineating "the blessings of autumn, the cares of winter, the pleasures of spring, and the labours of summer." They thus constitute a panorama of Lithuanian peasant life. The description of nature, though necessarily an important feature, is by no means the leading motive of the work. It is always unconventional, and frequently very felicitous; but the author's heart is with his human personages who are evidently taken from real life. He is thus much nearer to Crabbe5) than to Thom-son.6) Crabbe, indeed, far surpasses his Lithuanian congener in culture and literary art, but not in those qualities which form the distinctive excellence of both. Indeed he is here inferior to him, and excusably so, for his public would have never tolerated the preter-Dutch fidelity of Don'alitiūs. The only un-Lithuanian characteristic of the latter is the metre he has chosen — the hexameter; to which, however, his stately and polysyllabic idiom appears to accommodate itself without difficulty. Any regular metre must have been exotic in a language destitute of any poetical form but the simplest lyrical measures. In choosing the hexameter, Donalitiūs appears to have gone out of his way as little as possible.

The idyls of Donalitiūs are all constructed on a uniform pattern. They commence with a brief description of the season to which they relate, from which by an easy transition the poet passes to some scene of rustic merrymaking or agricultural occupation suitable to the time. He thus obtains an opportunity of introducing his dramatis per-sonae, whose energetic but long-winded harangues serve to convey the didactic instruction in which he delights, and Which no doubt constituted his leading object in writing at all. There is hardly a trace of any genuine poetic impulse. Properly speaking the writer is not a descriptive poet, but a satirist, and the idyllic form of his pieces is only selected for convenience. Writing for a homely and illiterate public, he must have felt the inu-tility of mere poetical embellishment, and the absolute necessity of strict fidelity of detail. He could not afford to lay himself open to correction from the boors for whose amendment he was labouring. Hence a sturdy uncompromising naturalism which goes far to compensate for the want of fancy and imagination. In describing autumn, for example, he concerns himself but little with the falling leaf and the imagery which it usually suggests. He lays

hold at once of that feature of the season which comes home most immediately to every Lithuanian — the universal miriness. The plashing of the mud under the feet is compared to the bubbling of broth in a caldron. The teams needed to draw the waggon are not forgotten; the clogged condition of the wheels is duly noted; even the sappy state of boots and shoes is not beneath the attention of the poet. From the accumulation of such circumstances we obtain a prosaic, ugly, vulgar, but wonderfully vivid representation of a Lithuanian autumn, as it appears to the natives a thousand times better, surely, than an ideal sketch founded upon classical precedents, which might have suited any country, or none. The same uncompromising fidelity prevails in the delineation of manners and customs. Great part of the same idyl is occupied with a description of a marriage - feast. There is not a glimpse of ideality, one vestige of romance. The young people scarcely appear. All is a rough carouse from beginning to end. The guests on their arrival are treated with brandy, which the lady of the house, in the fulness of her heart, presses even upon the young ladies. The sodden meat is extracted from the caldrons by huge forks, and handed to the carvers, who, "not having learned the gentlemen's manner of carving," grasp the joints with their fists, and slice them up with enormous knives. Beer is the favourite beverage at dinner, the thicker the better, "because it is more satisfying." After the meal the men smoke, the women gather around a huge jug of brandy, and talk about their ducks and geese. Low, sensual enjoyment has seldom been more vigorously painted; and yet the writer evidently values his descriptive passages merely as the vehicle for the interminable homilies he puts into the mouths of his favourite personages. These would be mere platitudes but for the graphic incidental delineation of the social state of Lithuania in his days, since materially altered for the better by the abolition of serfhood both in the Prussian and the Russian dominions.7) In the time of Donalitus every peasant was bound to perform a certain amount of forced labour, and the despotism of the landed proprietors seems to have been uncontrolled and most oppressive. A considerable portion of his poems is devoted to invectives against this class, whom he describes as haughty, cruel, neglectful of their dependents, and, through their bad example, the cause of most of the vices of the latter. Like most moral censors, the author is no admirer of progress, and although a pastor and a man of religious feeling, hints pretty broadly that the Lithuanians have gained little by forsaking the altars of Perkun.8) He is exceedingly inimical to foreigners, especially Germans; he is particularly scandalized that degenerate Lithuanians should in some instances have left off wearing bark shoes, and adopted boots in servile imitation of the stranger. The employment of the German language is another abomination. "That Germans should lie and steal," he says in one place, "is only what is to be expected, but you should know better." Many of his complaints, however, indicate a gradual improvement in the state of society, which he was unable to appreciate. In the idyl entitled "The Labours of Summer" an old farmer is introduced complaining of the rise of wages and the carnal appetites of his ploughmen. In his youth, he says, a dollar a year, with board, was considered good wages for a farm labourer. If the servant got in addition two pairs of shoes and a pair of trousers, he esteemed himself the most fortunate of mankind. Now he actually presumes to bargain for his salary. The fare consisted in the good old times of oatmeal porridge made with milk; occasionally, as a treat, of pea-soup in which a slice of bacon had been boiled. Now every labourer insists on having meat, and if it is not given him, he steals it. These particulars, though not so intended by the author, serve in some degree to relieve his otherwise dismal picture of the sordid churlishness of one class of society, and the extravagance of the other. It is remarkable that, notwithstanding his patriotic regard for his own race and language, there is not the slightest trace of any aspiration after national independence, or any allusion to the more numerous section of his countrymen then dwelling under the Polish sceptre.9) The tone employed with reference to all social matters is one of absolute hopelessness. A peasant complaining of oppression is promptly admonished that a pair of bellows, though excellent for keeping up a fire, is unavailing as a counterblast to the wind. Equally ineffectual is the breath spent in remonstrating with superiors,

The four principal idyls of Donalitus were first published in 1818, under the title of "The Year" (*Metas*),10) with a German translation by L. J. Rhesa,11) a countryman of the author. The present translator is very severe upon his predecessor, whom he accuses of disfiguring his author by capricious alterations, and sometimes misunderstanding him altogether. The errors of Rhesa's version, however, seem rather attributable to haste than to ignorance, and the alterations are generally dictated by an excusable, if not wholly justifiable, desire to render the original more acceptable to polite ears. The worst consequence of Rhesa's shortcomings appears to have been the mistakes into which, if Nesselmann may be trusted, they have seduced the illustrious philologist Schleicher, who edited the Lithuanian text in 1864.12) According to Nesselmann, Schleicher was misled into fancying that Rhesa had authority for his alterations, and treated his version with the same respect as the only two genuine MSS. His text is accordingly very corrupt. Nesselmann also implies that Schleicher, although an eminent grammarian, is a novice in the collation of manuscripts, and innocent of any tincture of aesthetics; that, in fact, like Dryden's lexicographer, he knows the meaning of any one word separately, but of no two words together. The force of these strictures is considerably diminished by the evident existence of ill-feeling between the rival editors. Nesselmann, in particular, is naturally nettled at one of the MSS. having been withdrawn from him while he was engaged upon it, and sent to his competitor.

As Donalitus is chiefly valuable on account of his language, we transcribe six lines in the original. It is not necessary to understand Lithuanian to appreciate their flexibility, stateliness, and sonorousness. They are hexameters; the scansion will be apparent at once. We have preserved the accents with all the respect due from ignorance to mystery: —

Tu, pauksteli mels, ne poniszkay prisiwalgai.
 Rebus mus' laszinei bei deszros tau nepatinka,
 Ir keptu bei wirtu walgiu musu nenori.
 Tu neliubyji pyragu neigi ragaisziu,
 Irgi newozyji gardzasio gerimo ponu,
 Bet, pasisotinusi prastay, tikt wandenio trokszti.

These stately verses, so dignified in exterior semblance, are part of a long address to the nightingale, which the poet here commends for partaking neither of the made dishes of the aristocracy nor yet of the bacon and sausages of the poor; neither, adds he, does she drink wine, but is a total abstainer. The passage is probably as unique among invocations of Philomela as Lithuanian is among European languages, and Donalitis among its literary representatives.

NOTES

1. The noted German linguist August Schleicher (1821-1868) has maintained: "Das Litauische ist die alterthuemliche unter saemmtlichen noch lebenden Sprachen indogermanischen Stammes und eben deshalb so ausserordentlich wichtig und wertvoll fuer die Erklaerung verwandter Sprachen." *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Philosophisch-historische Classe, IX, Jahrg. 1852. Wien, 1853, p. 538.
2. A. Schleicher, reading Donelaitis poem, lamented "dass eine solche Sprache zu Grunde geht, ohne eine literatur zu besitzen, die an Formvollkommenheit mit den Werken der Griechen, Roemer und Inder haette wetteifern koennen." *Handbuck der litauischen Sprache*, II. Prag, 1857, p. viii.
3. August Gotthilf Krause (1787-1855) is certain that the Lithuanian language would have reached as high a stage of development as Greek, if the Lithuanian nation had remained independent. Furtheron he writes: "Warum sollte es nicht moeglich sein, dass einst sich aus dem Staube noch erhebe ein neues litthauisches Koenigreich, das alle Stamme gleicher Zunge zu einem neuen Volke vereinte und an der Spitze einen weisen Fuersten habend dem litthauischen Volke neues Volksleben, neuen Ruhm verschafft." See his *Litthauen und dessen Bewohner*, Koenigsberg, 1834, p. 107.
4. Nesselmann used another form of this name: Tolminkemen. Lithuanian version of it is Tolminkie-mis.
5. George Crabbe (1754-1832) English poet. "He was perhaps the first to express with vigour and seriousness the dissatisfaction which many 18th century poets had felt at the sentimental pastoral. In *The Village* (1783), Crabbe made good use of his detailed observation of humble life and of the grim countryside of his home" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, VI, p. 689).
6. James Thomson (1700-1748),— English poet, known for his descriptive poem *The Seasons* (1726-1730)
7. The reviewer here refers to Lithuania Minor which was conquered by the Teutonic Knights and later became part of the Prussian state; and to Lithuania Proper, which was independent until the end of 18th century, when it was absorbed into the Russian Empire.
8. Perkūnas (Thunder) — principal ancient Lithuanian pagan god.
9. Reference here is to the Lithuanian Polish Common wealth, which had a common ruler, but maintained many features of independent states.
10. In Lithuanian language the plural form — Metai — is used here, but in various dialects, as well as in Donelaitis' poetry, the singular form — Metas — is also found.
11. Ludwig Jedemin Rhesa (Lith.: Liudas Gediminas Reza (177fi-1840), Professor in Koenigsberg University, publisher of the first large collection of Lithuanian folk songs (1825).
12. Christian Donalitis, *Litauische Dichtungen*. Este vollstaendige ausgabe mit Glossar. Von Aug. Schleicher. St. Petersburg, 1865 (not in 1864, as in the review). This edition was published by the Russian Academy of Sciences.

LETTER OF ERNST WIECHERT ON DONELAITIS

Dear Aleksis Rannit,

Commemoration of the dead is the privilege of men whose hearts are moved by devout emotion. It may be the feeling of awe in presence of the divinity which has "given and taken away" or reverence of the ancestors, of death, of the motherly earth in which the departed is to lie embedded.

To recall to memory the great Lithuanian poet Kristijonas Donelaitis — not with wreaths and monuments, but with an edition of his collected works — is an obligation for all of us, which we owe to the essence of peoptry as well as to that earth. The obligation is "even deeper, since thereby we would not only pay homage to the late poet, who recorded the life of his nation, but also to the nation itself, which has ever since walked the road of suffering, unanticipated even in the poet's darkest hours by his evocative and consoling voice. This road has led to{ unfathomable agony, and the tears of those banished and dying have fallen upon it.

Gone are the seasonal festivals which the poet has painted in his spacious and time-honored pictures. Gone is the spring's splendor, the summer's light and the autumn's radiance have vanished. Winter alone remains, and the wolves clamber over decayed fences as if into the regions of the land of the dead.

But we have not forgotten this land and its poet, who made a man of Goethe's stature think of the bard of the ILIAD and the ODYSSEY. We have not forgotten the somber beauty of his landscape, the dark streams, the lonely marshes, the garland of dunes, the melancholy of its songs. The East German had always felt at home there as well, where the greatness of the earth arouse before him once more before boundlessness opened beyond the boundary.

In a time marked by dissolution, it is good to recall those centuries when not all had yet vanished for the poets, and when they, with their simple hearts and hands, bound together, as if in the "Old Covenant," what for them belonged together: God, the earth, the peasant, the seasons.

And when we here call this late poet and his work back to our minds, we remember not one man and one nation alone, but the dolorous upheaval which has visited our earth. Of all the consoling voices that rise above this upheaval, that of the poet has, perhaps, the most imperishable ring.

*Most cordially,
Ernst Wiechert*

*Rütihof ob Uerikon am See
Switzerland / June, 1949*

Ernst Wiecher (1887-1950), the well-known German *romancier* and valiant inner emmigrée during the Hitler era, a frequent candidate for the Nobel Prize in literature, was born in Lithuania Minor, died in Switzerland. In his books Wiechert often referred to Lithuania and described the Lithuanian landscape. His wife was the daughter of Ludwig Passarge (1825-1912), translator and propagator of Donelaitis' *The Seasons*. Wiechert wrote this letter to Aleksis Eannit in connection with a new German language edition of *The Seasons*, planned for publication in 1948-1949. Because of the post-war monetary reform in Germany, the plan was not realized.