**Exposition**

**Maironis and His Epoch: “I bequeath all my movable property”**

**Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis** – poet, playwriter, historian, scientist, professor, prelate. The voice of Lithuanian revival, one of the most prominent figure in Lithuanian poetry. The whole epoch of poetic culture is associated with his name.

**Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum** (at that time it was named Maironis Museum) was founded on June 28, 1936 on the fourth anniversary of poet's death. 3 memorial rooms opened their doors for visitors containing about 3000 of exhibits. In our days the museum is the house of Lithuanian literature. Valuable pieces are carefully collected and retained in the holdings, such as manuscripts, letters, books, personal belongings, art masterpieces which belonged to different artists. About 280,000 items in total. Maironis archive consists of 6,000 items, more than 50% of which are original ones.

In 2012, the year of Maironis, the personnel of Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum implemented a project funded by The Culture Support Foundation. A new exposition dedicated to Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis (October 21, 1862 – June 28, 1932) was created in the frame of the mentioned project. The title of the exposition is “I bequeath all my movable property”. The life of Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis and the most prominent moments of his art are narrated through the photographs.
**HOMEAND FAMILY**

The exposition starts with home environment of the poet. Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis born in Raseiniai area, Pasandavris manor house, and grew up in Bernotai village. On the first two stands we can see the photographs of the father Aleksandras Mačiulis, the mother Ona Kurmauskaitė-Mačiulienė, the sisters Pranciška, Marcelė, and Kotryna. The sister Marcelė did not marry, all her life she devoted to take care of her brother priest and lived in this house. Ona Palkevičiūtė-Eidrigevičienė, a member of the poet’s family and his nanny left a significant trance in his life. She taught little Jonas to read Lithuanian. Maironis and the members of his family were very close; the poet took care of the majority of them. For instance, the children of the youngest sister Kotryna lived in Maironis apartment for some time.

**THE YEARS OF EDUCATION**

Jonas Mačiulis studied in Kaunas Gymnasia starting from 1874 up to 1883. In 1989 this education institution was granted Maironis title. In 1883 Maironis started his studies in Kyiv University; however after 6 months of studies he left Kyiv and returned to Lithuania. The exposition includes some notes of lectures taken by Jonas Mačiulis. In 1884–1888 the poet studied in Kaunas Theology Seminary. In 1888–1892 he continues his studies in St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy. Portrait photographs of the student Jonas Mačiulis with his closest fellows and other students are displayed on the stands as well as copies of various documents including manuscripts of preaches.

**THE YEARS OF WORK**

After Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis graduated from St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy, he delivered lectures in Lithuanian and Latin in Kaunas Theology Seminary. The years spent in Kaunas were ones of the happiest years of Maironis life. However in 1984 he was invited in St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy to take professor position, and in 1900 Maironis was appointed as an inspector of the Academy. In 1904 he was granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity for his doctoral thesis “Lectures about justice and law”. He returned to Kaunas after 15 years.
In 1909 Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis was appointed as a Rector of Kaunas Theology Seminary where he worked for the rest of his life. A lot of photographs with priests and students of the Seminary taken during that period are retained in the Museum. A lot of manuscripts of various documents, preaches, and speeches are available as well. Starting from the day of foundation of University of Lithuania in 1922 Maironis was appointed as a Professor and delivered lectures.

CULTURAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis was very much welcomed everywhere as authoritative and respected person. He was very much involved in various activities. Maironis had a good understanding of worldwide political affairs, not to mention Lithuanian and European ones. He spoke seven foreign languages; he was highly cultured person. He raised high requirements to Lithuanian Government as well. The major motivation of the poet was honest, professional, and foremost self-devoted as well as unselfish work for the benefit of the homeland Lithuania, as the only true great love of Maironis was Lithuania.

The Museum has photographs of Maironis in the company of the Board Members of Lithuanian Artist Society, the moments of blessing of sessions of Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament), memorials, buildings, etc. In 1928 Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis was awarded 2nd Class Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, in 1931 the Pope honoured him with the title of protonotary which is the supreme title of Prelates of Honour.
Home, Friends, and Travelling

In 1909, after Maironis had returned from Petersburg to Kaunas, he purchased the mansion, which was built in the middle of the 18th century, settled in eight rooms on the second floor and the remained part of the mansion reserved for Lithuanian cultural organizations. Also Maironis managed the inner yard. He enjoyed gardening, liked flowers and was interested in fruiters, fostered surroundings.

The house of Maironis was very frequently attended by famous people of that time, starting from politicians, his excellence the President and finishing with writers and artists. About 600 of business cards left by the visitors in the ante-room in a posh baroque style vase retained in the Museum holdings. Maironis especially enjoyed celebrations of Easter, Christmas, and his name-day, the day of Jonas Kantiškis on October 21st.

The closest friends of Maironis were priests writers Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, Mykolas Vaitkus, Adomas Jakštas-Dambrauskas. The latter was the most frequent reader of manuscripts of Maironis as well.

Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis was very much fond of travelling. He used to attend his friend living in various provinces of Lithuania as well as spend his vacations in Palanga. He used to have his rest in Switzerland and Germany.

Maironis liked to pose for painters. Portraits painted by four different painters hang in his apartment. Exposition includes portrait of Maironis and its sketch painted by his close fellow Sofija Riomerienė. Maironis liked this creation so much, that he composed a poem dedicated to her and wrote it on the backside of the portrait.
OEUVRE

The interest of Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis in literature revealed in gymnasia, he composed his first poems at that time, however those were lost. The first poem of Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis “Misery of Lithuania” was published in 1885 in paper Aušra; in 1886 the first masterpiece of chronological history of Lithuania in the Lithuanian language Apsakymai apie Lietuvos praeigą (Tales about the Past of Lithuania) was written under nickname St. Zanavykas. This masterpiece was the only history educational book up to 1911.

The nickname Maironis appeared for the first time in 1891. The very first fiction book of the poet, i.e. the poem Tarp skausmų į garbę (Among the Pain Towards Honor), was published in 1895. However, Maironis became popular and famous as the author of collection of poems Paspasario balsai (The Voices of Spring). Patriotic poems describing the life of Lithuanian people in the hardest moment of the history of the country woken up the love to the homeland in the hearts of Lithuanian people; the majority of the poems became songs. Maironis published four editions of this collection of poems in 1985, 1905, 1913, and 1920. Every time it included new poems. The poet composed about 130 poems. The edition of Paspasario balsai (The Voices of Spring) published in 1920, attracted exceptional attention of critics, as the book was illustrated by photographs of women who Maironis considered to be his Muses.

The last authorized 1927 edition of Paspasario balsai (The Voices of Spring) which is a part of the exhibition was included into National Lithuanian Register of UNESCO programme “The Memory the World”.

Maironis also published five volumes of Raštai, left a few translations from other languages, wrote poems Jaunoji Lietuva, Raseinių Magdė, Mūsų vargai, Z nad Biruty. He also wrote Visuotinės literatūros vadovėlį (Textbook of Universal Literature) in 1926.
Maironis always admired the genre of drama. He created a dramatic trilogy about the history of Lithuania and Vytautas the Great – Maironis most favourite historical character. Performances were staged in Kaunas State Theatre according to these historical dramas in 1924, 1925 and in 1930. The fragments of unfinished manuscript of Maironis drama *Barbora Radvilaitė* remain in the holdings of the Museum.

**The Last Years of Maironis Life**

In the last years of his life Maironis became very much disappointed. He felt undervalued both as a clergyman and poet. He expected another kind of independent Lithuania. The last stand of the exposition narrates about one of the brightest moments of the last trip of Maironis to Jelgava (Latvia) in May 1932 to the evening dedicated to his poetry, where Maironis was honored and crowned with laurel wreath alike ancient Roman poet. The exposition also includes previously unpublished photographs of Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis funeral. Visitors may see rarely exposed personal belongings of the poet including photography albums, books from private library which includes almost 800 of books published in various languages. In addition to that, without any doubt, exposition includes original books written by the poet himself, manuscripts, publications with handwritten corrections of Maironis as well as a copy of his testament.

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