**“Babeș-Bolyai” University, The Faculty of Letters**

**The Romanian Academy, The Institute of Linguistics and Literary History “Sextil Pușcariu”**

**International Congress of Literary History**

**11-12 may 2018**

**Local convertible values: international narratives of national literary history**

**(*Cfp no. 2*)**

So far, literary history has already been “buried” several times along the 20th century; it has been contested for its methodological ambiguities, and outshined repetitively by literary theory and comparatism. But it is making a comeback. It is no coincidence that Franco Moretti’s *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*, one of the most influential and innovative literary studies today, mentions it in the title. If we still cannot speak of a unitary programme, as was once the case with Lanson’s positivist literary project, we can nonetheless read into the amount of variations that result from our treatment of the “historicity” of literature. Various lines of thought, like the analysis of the auctorial ethos (Jérôme Meizoz), the sociology of the creative singularity (Nathalie Heinich) or the approach of the linguistic and stylistic imaginary of the literary language (Gilles Philippe) amount to the reconstruction of the historical context of literary and social realities.

Also, a broad stream of tendencies have contributed to the revival of literary theory: the assimilation of Michel Foucault’s historicizing perspective on the “archives” and grammar of discourse in most of the areas of literary study; the sociological definition of literary studies and the propensity towards the investigation of institutional phenomena, both at the level of national histories (Alain Viala) and of transnational ones (M. Cornis Pope – J. Neubauer); the integration of literature within larger economical or political historicities and the openneness of literary studies to the interpretation of word-systems (Immanuel Wallerstein) or to conceptual history (Reinhart Koselleck); the temporal setting of the affective values promoted by literary works through an exploration of the collective emotions and passion in a historiographic framework (Ute Frevert). However, the rehabilitation of literary history is mainly related to an emancipation of the array of illusions and myths surrounding Literature and its singularity: the more we restore the link between the practices and institutions of literature and the cultural and social context that generated them, the more plausible and inevitable does the historical process become. Literary history becomes once again the study of what Boris Eichenbaum called “the literary fact”, as a multiple anchoring in the horizons of social life, a complex articulation of literature, culture, politics and existence.

Given the historicity of literary objects, our return to literary history stems from its capacity to remind us that they are, in fact, situated at a crossroads of methodological and disciplinary perspectives. More than an instrument that helps define a limited inventory of preoccupations and research topics, literary history represents a meeting point, one of the most open channels of communication with several other modes of knowledge available in the field of Humanities. Our aim is to create, in Cluj, a platform of debate on the theme of the historicity of literature and to encourage the contact of literary studies with other disciplines that are, in their turn, concerned with the historical dimension of social realities (history, anthropology, sociology, etc.). Such a context will enable us to approach the regional overlapping of a set of various “temporalities” resulting from the interference of multiple literary cultures. In accordance with the double tradition of literary studies from Transylvania, defined by multiculturalism and by a historist-positivist stance, we seek to create a place of dialogue between cultures and disciplines under the sign of literary history, and to bring together leading Romanian and international experts from the various fields of the Humanities.

The first edition of this event is dedicated to D. Popovici (1902 – 1952), a professor at the Faculty of History and Philosophy in Cluj between 1936 and 1952, who intended to write a national literary history in foreign languages. Carried out against the background of the dislocation of the University from Sibiu, during WWII, his studies were the result of a series of interwar intellectual experiences influenced by the new literary history and by the early days of European comparatism as a discipline. As opposed to the model of national literary history, seen as an extensive closed structure designed around a unitary and incommunicable specificity, the studies of D. Popovici offered a new type of representation of the local historical and literary facts, which was completely convertible into Western categories and values. Taking as our point of departure the intellectual biography of this founding figure of literary studies in Cluj, we intend to embark on a collective reflection on the ongoing exchange of values between the national and the transnational in the field of literary history.

1. First, we are interested in the contexts that made such intellectual projects possible, in the “supporting” factors that led to a transnational redefinition of a national history. We are mainly concerned with the interwar development of literary studies and with the epistemic possibility of a “nationally based” comparatism; also, we shall also focus on the coincidence between a dramatic historical context, namely WWII, and the profusion of historiographical projects. Like in the case of comparatism, stimulated by ricochet by the nazification of the German society and by the exile of Jewish philologists to Turkey or the United States, we can ask ourselves in what way did the War fuel and accelerate the crystallization of historiographical works, both in the field of literature and in the field of history.

2. Secondly, such an approach enables us to tackle the issue of the “translation/export” of national literary histories. It is from this perspective that we will attempt to discuss the relationship between “national” and “universal” values, a relationship that is essential to the definition of the ethos of literary historians and to the articulation between the ethical and the aesthetic in the case of peripheral cultures. This is a lens through which other numerous projects of national history projected or developed abroad can be seen: from Paul Valéry’s multinational collection of literary histories conceived during the interwar period to the histories signed by those writers who chose the path of the exile during the Communist regime or to the contemporary national histories written by the scholars of the Diaspora. All these examples revolve around several equivalence relations – translations, transpositions, analogies – but also around a more general interrogation of imported categories or of those categories that were designed for export. What literary histories – Western or regional – serve as a model for national histories? What “language” are local realities translated into?

3. Eventually, the theme of our congress opens a discussion on the contemporary exchanges between transnational and national literary studies. What are the effects of the globalization of literary studies on national literary history? This question focuses on the influence of comparatism on the present day understanding of literary history. The break from a “holistic” interpretation of literary facts, as part of an organic and comprehensive structure, is just one of the acquisitions that national literary histories owes to the assimilation of globalizing perspectives. However, our question can also be reversed, and switch its focus from the national literary history towards the means of transnational understanding of literary facts. A national literary history is not just a receptacle of raw data utilized in a transnational synthesis. It is also the ground on which the series of “literary” facts connect to the multiple facts of local cultural history: the space of reading and life experiences, the space of debate of moral and affective values of a community.

\*\*\*

Parallel to the panels of the Congress, the organisers wish to propose workshops for post-graduate students and we kindly ask you to forward this CfP to your Doctoral Schools and to your PhD students. The registration conditions, attendance fees and type of submission are the same for all participants, including PhD students.

We invite you to submit your individual proposals by 1 December 2017 and to also include information on the author, institutional affiliation, contact details, title of the paper and a max. of 500 signs abstract (in one single *doc., docx* or *rtf* file) at the email address istorielit.ubbcluj@gmail.com . The languages of the Congress are English and French. Notification of acceptance will be sent individually via email, by 8 January 2018. The participants will be asked to complete an attendance form and sent it to the organisers via email by 22 January 2018.

The papers will be published in a special issue of *Studia Universitatis Napocensis*, the *Philologia series*, edited by the Babes-Bolyai University, in a series of *Dacoromania litteraria*, edited by the Romanian Academy, and in a collective volume dedicated to D. Popovici (Presa Universitară Clujeană, CNCS B+).

The attendance fee is 200 Lei and it will be payed on-site, after registration, on the first day of the Congress. The fee covers the documentation concerning the Congress and meals.

Accomodation for Congress participants cand also be provided at special rates (single rooms, 100 Lei/night, or double rooms, 50 Lei/night) at Hotel Universitas (\*\*\*), situated in Iuliu Hațieganu Park (15 minute ride to the city centre and the Faculty of Letters). All particpants who wish to book rooms at this Hotel are kindly asked to mention this in their Registration Form. The accomodation has to be payed upon arrival at the Hotel Desk. The organisers can also suggest other accomodation venues in Cluj (most of them available on *Booking.com*) but will not make reservations.

In the name of the organizing committee

Prof. dr. Ioana Bican

Conf. dr. Levente Szabo

Cerc. dr. Adrian Tudurachi