

Non si pone, tuttavia, per la letteratura ungherese, il problema se il culto delle Muse vada o non d'accordo col fragore delle armi. Di questo avviso sembrava essere già D. Kosztolányi quando in un articolo per il *Pesti Hírlap* del 7.4.1935 — e di cui, come solitamente per i suoi scritti, non si sa cosa apprezzare di più, se la qualità della prosa o lo spirito critico che la anima — opponeva alla sostanziale verità dell'*Inter arma silent Musae* del ciceroniano *De domo sua* la non meno effettiva realtà della poesia *kuruc*, che dalle vicende e dagli slanci ideali della lotta antiasburgica prendeva ispirazione e significato. Ma questa non è — come il Kosztolányi riteneva — l'eccezione che confermava la regola, bensì la regola che quasi non ha eccezione. Perché così come è difficile poter identificare nel solo Seicento lo zriniano «secolo della rovina ungherese», altrettanto arduo sarebbe trovare, anche in altre epoche, le lettere ungheresi completamente e sempre al riparo delle calamità della guerra. L'idillio, nella letteratura ungherese, è fra i generi meno frequentati e, quando lo è, un'inquietudine latente ed un senso di instabilità e di fugacità lo percorrono e lo stravolgono.

Anche il libro della Jászay ripercorre, anche per vie sinora poco frequentate, le straordinarie fasi dell'incontro di uomini e idee italiani e ungheresi. La *Strada Ungarorum* è percorsa da nuovi personaggi. E sono gli umanisti ungheresi che ancora si formano nelle scuole italiane, almeno sino a tutto il primo trentennio del '500; e sono gli italiani che, sollecitati da vari motivi, assistono alla rovina d'Ungheria e ne riferiscono. Alla letteratura, alla filosofia, all'arte della guerra fa seguito la crisi della religiosa ed il tumulto delle varie confessioni. Anche qui, il tessuto è quanto mai lacerato, anche se alla Jászay riesce di identificare alcuni fili che da lontano (e qui è giusto parlare della Transilvania) tendono ad unire ideali e persone.

La divisione politica e la lacerazione delle coscienze sembrano dissolversi nella visione eroica della lotta — comune sottolinea la autrice del libro — al Turco. Questo poderoso capitolo della storia ungherese s'infittisce di personaggi italiani, anche se a una totale sintonia d'intenti è difficile pensare (basti menzionare qui la visione di uno Zrínyi e quella di un Montecuccoli). Ma ora che ci accingiamo a festeggiare il centenario della liberazione di Buda è doveroso tributare il dovuto omaggio — come fa anche la Jászay — a questo formidabile concorso di uomini e ideali che la resero possibile.

Il tempo, lo spazio e la giusta prudenza mi suggeriscono di fermarmi qui, ai capi-

toli della storia ungherese che meglio conosco e che più prediligo; non la piacevole lettura del libro, che altre e certo più profonde meditazioni e riflessioni richiederebbe. Ma mi sia concesso ringraziare la Jászay a nome di tutti coloro che hanno inteso scoprire la cultura ungherese non per facili ossequi alla moda, ma percorrendo la strada maestra della storia.

Amedeo Di Francesco

Andor Tarnai: "Hungarian Language on the Brink of Recording". *Literary Theory in Medieval Hungary*. Budapest, Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. 1984. pp. 345. (Studies on Literature and Review.)

This book can be put to the use by scholars and researchers of medieval Hungarian literature as a fundamental, pioneering work.

The author quotes in the title a remark of Beatus Rhenanus: "Ungaricus sermo nostra aetate primum scibi coepit". (Rerum Germanicarum libri tres. Basileae. 1531. Lib. II., pag. 108.) The noted Alsatian historian and disciple of Erasmus, in this illustrious sentence, cites the Hungarian instance to shed light on the origins where the German literary language stemmed from. Since the epilogue to Péter Bornemisza's Electra-translation (on the drama of Sophocles), the above sentence is considered by many of the Hungarian literati as the primary appearance of Hungarian language and literature in European culture, with some faint response, on the verge of its emancipation. (Cf. József Turóczy-Trostler: *Discovery of Hungarian Language*. In: *Hungarian Literature — World Literature*. Bp., 1961, Vol I., pp. 59—67, 102). By applying this quotation, Andor Tarnai sums up "the results of the first attempts to systematically detect medieval Hungarian literary sentiment" from the distance centuries, ranging from the very beginning of Hungarian Literature to the years of 1530. In the preface of his book, on defining the notion of "literary theory", he dedicated himself to "investigate the nature of the social requirements of an actually reacting or just fictitious public, whose expectations, from that time on, the so-called authors had to reckon with when conveying their ideas in verbal or written form." The monograph, based on an ample stock of data and their profound knowledge, furthermore, on a puzzling reconstruction, can, by all means,

claim the interest of even those who do not speak Hungarian. This is why we offer a summary of this book.

Among the three main parts, the first two treat the conscious literary activity of the contemporary men of letters as gathered from Latin literature prevailing in medieval Hungary, above all, from school-books, but from scattered theoretical comments and the terms of history of criticism as well. The earliest agents of Christianity were those foreign literati who imparted the craft of writing and reading to their first Hungarian apprentices in cloisters, collegiate churches, in the king's court, schools and offices, and in book-copying or record-publishing workshops. The education in schools can be infared by the scanty school-book heritage and from the catalogues of monastic libraries (Pécsvárad 1015, Pannonhalma 1093), which disposed of an abundant stock of books, reflecting the contemporary level of European erudition. Along with the acquisition of Latin language, gaining ground step-by-step, emerged those remarks and terms that attest to the existence of some literary theory and its deliberate application. Everyday writing and reading became an essential part of the life of a very narrow social layer. And it necessarily entailed the use of vulgar Latin. The first oral, set application of an official (swearing or legal formulas), and rhetorical or sacral (prayers) language came into being, which aspired to render the original Latin text according to its meaning, content or to a word for word reproduction. "It was this oral tradition ruled by Latin language that was upbringing Hungarian literature, primarily shaped by the activity of interpreting and preaching clergymen." The earliest occurrence of oral interpretation put down into writing is the primordial record of Hungarian Language, the Funeral Sermon. It was in the works of legendarians and historiographers, thus, for example, in Anonymus Latin chronicle, where the earliest signs of a literary consciousness, and the first endeavours for a scholarly reshaping of the oral tradition and for its original reconstruction, furthermore, for tracing back to the previous sources and their critical elaboration, according to postulated principles, presented themselves. The more the process of recording the vulgar language advanced, along with the formation and gaining ground of a systematic phonetic transcription and orthography, the more it appeared reasonable to put down Hungarian texts into writing. Hereafter the unrestrained alteration of interpreted texts, the "open"

oral tradition was succeeded by a "closed" type of written recording.

The second part of the monograph follows the unfolding of literary sentiment from the 13th century onwards, which equally was inspired by Latin sources. The author surveys here the circulating grammars studied mainly by a layer of society with higher education, dictionaries, the handbooks of *ars dictandi*, *praedictandi* and *orandi*, the various poetics, summaries of literary history in the genre of "de viris illustribus", and finally, gives a contemporary reading-list of antic or modern books. All these provided set formularies for a rather narrow circle of medieval intellectuals to be employed to hand down their knowledge, to explore the recorded tradition and rearrange it in an original order, and to aptly estimate the intact literary works as such. The stock of knowledge acquired this way served the practical needs of the clergymen and of the secular men of letters, progressively increasing in number; their erudition helped them to construct original works, glossaries, books of correspondence and formulations, sermons. The fact that the authors of the scanty literary remnants and original works were equipped with a well-based apparatus is vindicated by their usage of terminology, exploited and analyzed by the scholars of our times. For instance, in the serial publications of the printed liturgical books (breviaries, missals), the citations of prefaces and colophones testify to the familiarity of the editors with the history of criticism. To quote another example, the anonymous compiler of printed legends on the life of Hungarian saints, who supposedly belonged to the circle of highly educated men of letters, had set the primeval written tradition hating back to the 13th century as a model to be followed, which affected the national-feudal literary mentality well after the Middle Ages as well. The emergence of a literary consciousness can be detected in the chronicles of observant Franciscan and Pauline friars (the latter order was established in Hungary). It was the former ones who recorded the epitaph of Pelbárt Temesvári (Pelbartus de Temesvár) and the catalogue of the works written by Os-vát Laskai (Oswaldus de Laskó). The Pauline chronicle (*Vitae fratrum heremitarum ordinis Sancti Pauli primi heremitaie*) is based on a methodical assembling of medieval sources, where the editor, Gergely Gyöngyösi (Gregorius de Gyöngyös) enlisted the life and work of literary, masters, translators, writers of verses in chronological order as the general magisters succeed-

ed one another in their charges. It was one of the most crucial results of Tarnai's investigations when, on analyzing *Vitae fratrum* by philological reasoning, gave an account of the medieval chiliastic historical conception implied in Giachino da Fiore's comments on apocalypse, and of the new religious trend, *devotio moderna*, the theses of which Thomas Kempis had put forward in his *Dialogus noviciorum*. By these scientific achievements, Tarnai threw a new light upon the role that the order of hermits had played in the society of the late Middle Ages.

The third part of the book analyzes the correlation between recorded literary texts applying Latin or vulgar languages. The author refers here to the argument that János Horváth proclaimed more than half a century ago (*The Dawn of Literary Consciousness*. Budapest, 1931). The eminent scholar formulated in this book the theory that, from that time on, came to influence the following generations. He outlined his hypothesis on a two-step development regarding the co-existence of Hungarian and Latin. Namely, an oral interpretation based on the Latin original works, and as a later stage, recording the translation of these Latin patterns. Nevertheless, Tarnai has questioned these two separate phases of development, and, by considering the Latin language and its vernacular apprehension intertwined, he has suggested instead the possibility of the parallel existence of oral and written interpretation. In his opinion, it is the social role and erudition of *literati*, who rendered Latin writing into a spoken language, and vice versa, that can be regarded as pivotal in the rise of vernacular writing. As a proof, he enumerates the altered, multiple variations of the same translations. According to the author, the "colloquial" idioms of literary men, used in the course of their everyday activity, in offices and in court, in religious teaching and from the pulpit, affected the style and development of written literary language. Even the archaic texts (the Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, Confession, Ten Commandments), the relevant examples of chatecisms (spiritual mirrors, *modus confidenti*), and some prominent parts of the Bible translation (Beatitudes; Mt 5, 3-12 confirm that the religious rudiments prevailed mainly in oral form, and the translators recorded these tradition-shaped colloquial idioms. The careful examination of the glossaries leads to the same conclusion: it was spoken language that formed the terminology of literature, and the corresponding Hungarian terms were

brought into existence by the everyday needs of ecclesiastical and secular men of letters. The translation of rhetorical nomenclature was first used by preachers delivering sermons in spoken language, the same way as legal, political terms were applied by the clerks of secular administration. In the sermons, which represent the most popular genre of medieval Hungarian literature, the effect of their colloquial performance can also be observed, and the restrictions of Latin texts were slackened by the oral tradition of Hungarian language. It was the age-old experience of scribes, who, in the beginning, interpreted the texts of official documents in oral form, that evolved the Hungarian idiomatic phrases of correspondence. The third part, which encompasses the discussion on the developing Hungarian literature formed under the impact of Latin erudition, is rounded off with a survey of contemporary ideas on creative literary activity and of literature itself. The current notion of word for word translations and of didactic, explanatory interpretations adapting to the public requirements can be revealed by the application of such rhetorical terms as *imitatio*, *acomodatio* and *compilatio*. The texts enumerated here testify to the existence of a literary programme and a critical, theoretical attitude toward literary works in the Middle Ages.

Andor Tarnai's book covers the total field of recorded medieval Hungarian culture. By the author's own admission, "the lack of foreign comprehensive parallel studies and the want of supportive Hungarian scientific achievements" meant the greatest difficulties, he had to be confronted with in his work. Despite these drawbacks, he managed to substantiate his statements and hypotheses by an abundant stock of documents, by amply illustrated data, based on the total scope of pertinent Hungarian and foreign literature, ranging up to the year of 1976. The quality of his scientific apparatus is displayed by the fact that besides the basic text, comprising 192 pages, the book includes 888 numbered annotations on 125 small-typed pages, some of which are almost short articles as to scope and information. The author has read all the essential texts and even traced down the available but unexplored original sources of medieval Hungarian literary remnants. His style, notwithstanding his high competence in the field of medieval European literature and his proficiency in Latin language, is self-critical, simple and unpretentious. By his remarks, he calls the attention of his

inquiring readers to the uncertainties undermining assertions and to a whole series of problems that have not yet been resolved. However, his book is no light reading, above all for its mosaic-like composition. Although, proportioning the book by main and subtitles makes it easier for the readers to follow the logic of the author's reasoning loaded with cross-references, yet to grasp the full meaning of some statements, evident to the author alone and lacking any further explication, might, by all means, toil them down. Thus for the most part it falls to the readers's lot to ponder over and penetrate into the meaning of such terms as "open" or "closed" applied to the bequest texts.

As has been mentioned in the beginning, Tarnai explored and arranged in a systematic order those scanty theoretical remarks to be found in the recorded literary words that pertain to their authors and the works themselves. In his book, Tarnai repeatedly emphasized that his aim was to follow up the tradition of the history of literature, the traces of literary sentiment, the rise of literary self-consciousness, and the acquaintance of contemporary men of letters with the history of criticism, furthermore, to specify "the theoretical background" of the latter. Accordingly, his intention was not elaborating a systematic history of literature. Nevertheless, one may say the least of his inspiring book, supposedly to call into existence a new school of disciples, that since the above-mentioned synthesis of János Horváth (1931) and that of the academical handbook studying the history of literature (The History of Hungarian Literature up to 1600. Budapest, 1964), it will open up new vistas to put into true perspective the Hungarian literature of the Middle Ages.

Béla Holl

Béla Köpeczi: Staatsräson und christliche Solidarität. Die ungarischen Aufstände und Europa in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts. The *raison d'État* and Christian solidarity: The Hungarian insurrections and Europe in the second half of the 17th century. Translated by Mária Borbély. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983. p. 423.

The 1683 Vienna victory of Sobieski, leader of the united Christian armies, was one of the most significant events of the late Baroque that is still capable of triggering off heated international political-

literary and historiographical debates three hundred years after the event. Although European publicity unanimously welcomed the liberation of the imperial capital as a victory of the *respublica christiana* and of Christian solidarity, the contemporary manifestations of a pro-Habsburg but anti-imperial feeling reveal the fact that the late demise of the "Islamic half-moon", whose trajectory was blocked by the "battlements of Christianity" was accompanied by the sharply contradicting political interests of the Christian powers.

Béla Köpeczi's *Magyarország, a kereszténység ellensége. A Thököly-felkelés az európai közvéleményben* (Hungary, enemy of Christianity: The Thököly uprising and European public opinion; 1976), now available to foreign experts in German, too, joins the above polemy that has come down to our age. His research and evaluation of a rich collection of publicistic and literary source materials endows the critical investigation of the various issues of political history, diplomacy and the history of ideas with quite a number of new elements.

The novelty of Köpeczi's treatment of the topic stems from his analysis of the contemporary political ideas strongly influenced by two conceptions of the history of philosophy, the so-called *antemurale christianitatis* and the *raison d'État*. This is the ideological context in which he examines the independence struggles of the Hungarian nobility, Thököly's uprising, the French orientation, the seeking of alliance with the Turks and also the fatal outcome of this alliance with the heathens.

The somewhat humanistic ideology of the *antemurale* broadens the evolutionary perspectives of the issue at hand. The program of driving out the Turks and blocking the way of the Islam corresponded to one of the most effective and widespread "cross-national" ideas of the Baroque era. The *antemurale* ideology, which has never been completely free from elements of political propaganda, was quickly turned into a means of the European fight for power, a slogan of the fictitious Christian unity against the Turks, and became a "pendant" of top-level Bourbon-Habsburg policy as early as the 16th century. The aristocratic conception of the philosophy of history incorporating the idea of "Hungary, stronghold of Christianity", i.e. a several-centuries-long tradition of fighting the Turks, was present in the heroic age of the Baroque, in Zrínyi's oeuvre, for example. However, the contradicting religious and political interests revealed by the discrepancies between