

Elena Lavinia Dumitru

: University degli Studi di Teramo Italy  
 : ilonadumitru@hotmail.com

## ANNALI

### *Annals*

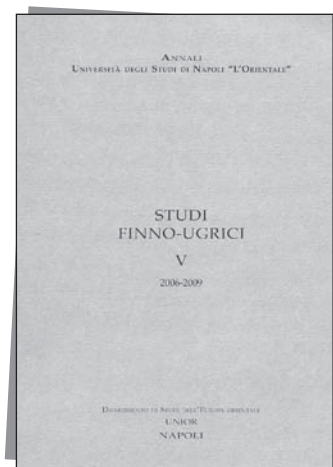
*Studi finno-ugrici V. 2006–2009*. University degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”. Dipartimento di Studi dell’Europa orientale, Unior, Napoli M D’Auria Editore

### 1. BRIEF SUMMARY

The collection “*Studi finno-ugrici*” (V. 2006–2009) is the result of a vast project coordinated by professor Amedeo Di Francesco at the University “L’Orientale” of Naples and involves a large team of scholars from different countries and disciplinary formation aiming to present a variety of approaches focusing on Hungary, on a vast scale of topics in the field of literature, linguistics, music, history, economics, politics and sociology.

### 2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The book represents a comprehensive collection of studies that discuss historically and critically the evolution of the Hungarian cultural, political, economical and social patrimony. What makes this book extremely relevant is that the authors offer an analytical perspective on various topics that connect the literary and linguistic interest to the wide social and historical analysis which offer a useful crossing point for the student and general reader alike.



### 3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book contains 16 essays offering a careful analysis of the subject and bonding different areas of research in a multitude of interpretations that represent indeed a valuable contribution in this very particular field of inquiry. In this universe characterised by variety, the main focus that unites the different essays regards Hungary and its social and cultural background that becomes an important factor in the process of the formation of a specific identity.

Starting with the first article by Raimo Anttila, we discover the connections related to the etymological research including the debate on parallels that link different languages. The second essay (Krisztina Boldizsár) represents an analysis of the influence of the Italian opera on the Hungarian repertoire from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century, with special attention to Italian opera on Hungarian themes related to Hungarian medieval history. In the third study, Mónika Dánél presents the idea of culture, nation and women through the literary production of three Hungarian woman writers who discuss these concepts in relation to the Hungarian culture and identity, including language, religion and family. In the fourth study of the collection, Amedeo Di Francesco examines the destiny of Jenő Dsida in the context of European literature, and also by making a deep analysis of the complex poetry of the exceptionally talented Transylvanian writer. It is, as emphasized by the author, a replacement between particular and universal, between one nation and Europe. The fifth study (Danilo Gheno) is essentially an evocative portrait of Pál Fábian, the first Professor of Hungarian language and literature after World War II at the University of Padua and also a witness of the events of 1956 in Budapest. With the sixth article, Susan Glanz provides an analysis of Hungary's economic well-being mainly in the period between 1950 and 1956 and examines the economic platforms of the various re-formed political parties with relevant information concerning the years 1956 and 1957. With her article, Lilyana Lesnichkova introduces the readers to the complex field of national stereotypes and the use of words and expressions with negative connotation to describe "the others" (for instance, Gypsies or Turks), with examples from Bulgarian and Hungarian. Sándor Maticsák provides in his essay an overview of the situation of the Finno-Ugric peoples living in Russia, with information about their conditions of life, the right of using their own language, the risk of extinction and the danger of "russification". The ninth article (Olga Ossipova) is an analysis based on comparative grammar that aims to prove that the possessive and definite declensions in Finno-Ugric languages could help to decipher Indo European heteroclitic declension. With the tenth article, Judit Papp provides a study about the Hungarian translations of the *Divine Comedy* with particular reference to the sources used by Mihály Babits for his translation of

Dante's epic poem. In the next article, Roberto Ruspanti offers a study about Gyula Reviczky, the poet of the Hungarian Decadentism and Verismo (realism) with a specific interest on his love poetry and his muses, and his capacity to become a "poet of atmosphere". In the twelfth study, the author (Paul Sohar) starts with more recent protests in Hungary and goes back to the 1980's by focusing on what he calls the "intellectual exchanges" of those years. The role of intellectuals in the Hungarian communication chasm is presented through some interesting examples the author uses to show the reader how also a "great mind can get off on the wrong track because of historical, political or psychological reasons". Géza Szentmártoni Szabó provides an article about Janus Pannonius and his birthplace through citations of various literary works describing the Drava River and the city of Varasd as the native land of the Hungarian Humanist. The fourteenth article (Steven Béla Várdy) analyses the Hungarian defeat in Mohács (1526) and the siege of Szigetvár fortress (1566), defended by Count Miklós Zrínyi, the hero of the epic poem *The Peril of Sziget (Szigeti veszedelem)*, with a complex framework of Hungary's history in relation with the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, together with a detailed history of the Zrínyi family. The fifteenth article, by Agnes Huszár Várdy and Steven Béla Várdy describes the dramatic experiences of hundreds of Hungarian economic immigrants, victims of the mine and blast-furnace disasters in Pennsylvania in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The tragic events were described by contemporary Hungarian American poets, who express their personal and ethnic sorrows. In the final essay, regarding *The Tale of Griselda*, Louise O. Vasvári focuses on the violence in the literal level of the story, dealing with a classic case of sexual abuse, characteristic for a patriarchal social structure, while the text also shows traces of a silenced incest story.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The authors of the book reveal a deep knowledge and understanding of specific questions and provide precise documentation which familiarizes the reader with Hungary and its destiny during the centuries. This is an ambitious work I recommend to anyone who wants to learn more about Hungarian history and culture, an excellent resource for students, scholars, professors and public at large.