


# Hungarian Literary Culture(s) in Transcultural Perspective (Foreword)

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## INTRODUCTION

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Four years ago, a working group was formed at the University of Bucharest, led by Éva Bányai, to write a history of Hungarian literature to be published in several languages, intended for non-Hungarian speaking readers of the Central and Eastern European region. The initiative was a response to the lack of a comprehensive handbook in Central and Eastern Europe that would bring Hungarian literary trends and significant achievements closer to the literatures of the region, which are spatially close, but which often seem distant.

In this thematic section of Hungarian Studies, we offer samples of this material. The possibility of a history of Hungarian literature written in Romanian/Slovak/Serbian/Croatian/Polish/German raises a number of questions, including how Hungarian literature can be made tangible not only in its foreignness and otherness, but also in its familiarity, both for the academic discourse of the neighbouring countries and for the Romanian/Slovak/Serbian/Croatian/Polish/German reader. A transnational/transcultural perspective seems fruitful in this respect, as it can be used by the research team, representing the institutions of Hungarian studies in nine countries, to disrupt the homogeneous national narrative of literary history and to expand it towards the recipient literature.

The selection published here is not intended to represent the structure of the planned handbook, but to give a sense of the diversity of the various phenomena, periods, genre traditions and themes of Hungarian literary history, presented to the reader in their dynamic movement. As the project is aimed first and foremost at Romanian readers, a number of studies will focus on Hungarian-Romanian transcultural interweaving and Transylvanian-related themes. Other texts present specific periods of Hungarian literary history and reflect on the multicentricity of Hungarian literature. Several authors examine selected moments and

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significant literary works written around the turn of the millennium and contemporary literature, while others deal with phenomena related to recent research, sometimes shedding new light on older texts in literary history.

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